

Statement of Purpose

Summer Anderson

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Hello, My name is Summer Anderson and I am a student at Evergreen College currently completing my Bachelor of Art degree. I am writing to express my interest in the Masters of Public Administration. As you might or might not have realized, I come to higher education later in life and am approaching my 45th birthday. I have a grown son and several grandchildren and because of them feel the need to continue my education. I want to be an example for them and be in a position to leave something more than monetary. I want to make positive contributions to whichever communities we are a part of.

For a large portion of my life that was not my outlook. Like many, I grew up entrenched in chaos, trauma, and poverty that later led to addiction issues and regular stints of incarceration. It wasn't until I was twenty-seven that I started to make my way out of that life and put myself back together. Last week I celebrated sixteen years in recovery. When I reflect back, as I often do on recovery birthdays, I no longer view the dark periods of my life with regret and shame. Instead I have chosen to view it as a first hand experience of some of the most vexing social problems of our time and because of that I feel I have something to contribute towards solutions. Several years ago I began to use my life experience as a Peer Counselor working for a substance use treatment center. During this time I was connected to the Washington Recovery Alliance (WRA) and participated in legislative advocacy for the first time. This was such a powerful experience for me, knowing that parts of my story and hardships could be used in a positive way to make change for others. I was also introduced to Recovery Cafe's and their amazing model for creating a recovery community and connection. I was discouraged by the lack of recovery community resources in my community and began to take some initiative. With the support of the WRA and other community members we formed the Salish Recovery Coalition as well as pursued the opening of a Recovery Cafe. At that time I possessed only a GED, life experiences,

and a lot of fortitude. I found that I really enjoyed the community engagement and organizing but lacked the technical skills required to bring these projects to fruition. Because of this deficit I began to look at higher education and other leadership programs. I completed an associate degree in Organizational Leadership and Resource Management at Olympic College as well as joining the Leadership Kitsaps class of 2019..

As I approach the end of my bachelors degree here at Evergreen I feel I still have much to learn in the way of grant writing, policies, budgets, contract management and beyond. I believe the Master of Public Administration offered at Evergreen would provide me with the exact type education and experience to best serve my community and provide for my family. My time at Evergreen thus far has been challenging, engaging, and reasonably affordable and because of that wish to continue my studies here. Further I am excited by the cohort model of learning. I have found that for myself, I best learn when they feel known, seen, and part of a community.

I recently accepted a job as the interim Director of a New Recovery Resource Center in my hometown. It has literally been my dream to see this type of service offered in my community. I am thrilled to be in a position to use my life experience to help others on their recovery journey but am slightly terrified by all the administrative aspects of the work. I hope that being in the Masters of Public Administration program will give me the tools and confidence to help grow this organization and better serve my community. Please consider me for the cohort of 2024.