I am writing to express my interest in applying for the Master of Public Administration program at Evergreen State College. I am excited at the opportunity to continue to learn and grow both as a person and as a professional. I feel strongly that public service is my calling. I am a self-motivated, reliable, and organized person who wants to work with others to tackle complex challenges and help make a positive difference in the state and community where I live. I want to be a resource others can leverage.

I graduated from Michigan State University in 2015 and have been working in public service ever since. When I worked at the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA), I helped create and implement programs that increased food access to SNAP-eligible populations across the state. Additionally, I participated in the management and implementation of educational events, advocacy efforts, and several other state and federal grants and contracts.

At the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), I have worked as the Grant & Contract Coordinator, Contract Specialist 2, Contract Specialist 3, and Management Analyst 5 for Forest Resilience, from a program housed in Wildfire to being a stand-alone Division. My positions have all been administrative, primarily focused on creating processes for contracts and competitive procurement, as well as managing federal funding the Divisions receives. Ultimately, in these positions I'm helping program managers implement their work from behind the scenes, which I love.

Through my work experience, I've found that issues faced by both recipients and implementers of programs come from what some consider the "least interesting" areas of policy. Whether it's an USDA Food and Nutrition Service rule that only lets one location run one SNAP machine (a problem for farmers markets with multiple locations), or an RCW that doesn't list "grants" in a state agency's powers and duties – these small details end up compounding and altering the ways we can create programs that are meant to benefit the public.

In general, I've always wanted to earn a graduate degree, I find public policy and public administration endlessly interesting and want to continue to learn, even outside of a formal educational

setting. In particular, I feel I'm reaching a point in my career where there's a gap between my education and job experience, and the knowledge I need to be a responsible administrator. The position I'm currently in will become a leadership position, and I want to develop those skills, as well as learn more formally about topics like finance and budgeting in a public institution.

I'm interested in Evergreen in particular because of the emphasis on the qualitative aspects of public policy, and the blend of practical skills along with the concepts of public administration. Additionally, when I was researching graduate programs, I received many recommendations from alumni who really enjoyed their time at Evergreen. I'm excited about the courses offered when I review the course catalog, and I also I believe the elements of the MPA's mission align well with the ways that I want to move through both my life and career. I value working collaboratively with others and challenging the assumptions I'm making when building a process or interpreting a policy. I believe I'm at my best when I'm a part of a team that values each person's unique perspective and skillset.

Finally, logistically, Evergreen's MPA program is appealing to me because it's located in the city I live in, and is geared towards working students. I like that the program has built this in and I think that the thought and practicality of the structure in some ways is just as appealing as the range of courses offered.

I'm excited to apply to Evergreen's MPA program, and I'm looking forward to the opportunity to become part of a cohort!