

Destiny Unveiled: A Purpose-Driven Statement of Intent

Celebrating five years of sobriety from the clutches of addiction and mental health to be able to apply for an MPA program empowers me to continue the challenging work as a rocket blazing through the sky on a mission to help others. As I stand here at the crossroads of my life, I reflect on the profound beauty that lay behind the scenes. Over the last few years, the beauty has inspired me as it laid the foundation of my future with critical knowledge through higher education, enlightenment because of self-awareness, and practical skills of a meaningful life well spent. Growing up in two different lifestyles, both marked by trauma, has allowed me to develop a deep sense of gratitude for the experiences that life has brought my way. These experiences, while challenging, have shaped my character, and instilled in me a resilience and appreciation for the present moment. I have learned to embrace my past experiences as a valuable teacher and approach life with gratitude and curiosity.

Returning from the vast plains of Texas after a long and arduous battle with substance abuse, I found myself at a pass. Sobriety had granted me a newfound freedom, but reintegrating into society was a daunting task. Just five years ago at the ripe age of twenty-eight, my life experiences had already had unimaginable hardships. I had been immersed in street life, plagued by addiction, and faced numerous barriers that most people never encounter in a lifetime. Seeing the grime of the world at a young age was precisely what ignited a deep passion within me for human services and supporting others.

As I transformed from my previous self into a healed and empowered individual, shedding my inhibitions as a snake sheds its skin, I became acutely aware of the challenges faced by many who have experienced similar journeys. This realization sparked a deep commitment within me to drive positive change in direct services, dedicated to making a significant impact in my community through volunteer work, nonprofit initiatives, and collaborative efforts. As a manager for Catholic Community Services overseeing operations for the largest homeless shelter in Thurston County, I was always striving to increase my awareness and ability to help through gaining applicable knowledge relevant to my position. Within my leadership role, I learned how to budget, review contractual agreements, shape policy, and harness the lived expertise I have in a way that assists positive change without breaking ethics or boundaries. This was a steppingstone along the way too much bigger things as my vision became clearer with each passing day. This practical knowledge coupled with the strategic planning of my education allowed me to get the most out of each experience. My academic road has been incredibly unique as I work towards an encompassed curriculum to better serve the community at large that I will be diligently seeking to improve. It was not until I spoke within the legislation on SB 5134 in 2022 that I became enthralled in the world of policy and the impact they have on society, addressing social issues, promoting public welfare, protecting rights, regulating behavior, and providing a legal framework for governance. Knowing that my fellow justice-impacted peers have struggled through barriers to reintegrating back into society without proper services or even an increase of gate money due to inflation began sparking a new wave of determination inside of me.

In my current position, I wear three different hats as I volunteer at a local shelter to provide grieving counseling to people who have lost any loved ones. Through the neuroscience associated with verbiage and communication, I go to various parts of the state to train de-escalation with a wide range of providers from corrections to school districts. Additionally, I am working through a pilot program with the Department of Corrections to provide tailored self-regulation to justice-impacted individuals. While wearing these hats I enhance my ability to recognize the broader picture outside of the program that I used to run, the impact that policy has is greater than any one individual. Providing services in different domains across Washington State has allowed me the ability to listen with intention to providers around me so I can understand how the development and implementation of coordinated policies shape their roles.

As I reflect on my transformation to a healed and empowered individual and someone who is deeply committed to driving positive change, the MPA program encourages me as the next step in my journey. This program would allow me to pursue one of many pathways dedicated to helping others through developing and implementing policies and programs aimed at assisting individuals who are transitioning back into society after displacement, homelessness, substance misuse, incarceration, and more. The solid foundation gained from this program would allow me to work together as a mentor to create a collaborative environment for community, nonprofit organizations, and government to work together for the betterment of communities. We must look at where we have been to understand where we are going, and I can see the journey I have set up for myself and the impact it will have on a larger

scale. Having the vision to create something bigger than myself is no easy task; each day swaying on what route would be the best option for myself and the individuals I will serve. Taking this leap to apply for the MPA program is not just a step forward, but a vital stone on my journey to assisting others and making a lasting influence. I passionately believe that this program will equip me with the necessary knowledge and skills to understand and navigate the complexities of policymaking and implementation. It will empower me to develop and execute effective strategies and programs aimed at helping individuals in their transition back into society. I am excited to embark on this new chapter and contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive community for all.