



2026 GRADUATION PROGRAM

-- ASCENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM --

FAVORITE ASCENT QUOTES

“Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change.”

– Brené Brown

Life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”

– George Bernard Shaw

“The conversation is the relationship.”

– David Whyte

“Everything you want is on the other side of fear.”

– Jack Canfield

“Conscious leadership is creating outcomes that matter.”

– The Leadership Circle

“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.”

– Anais Nin

“Leaders bring the weather.”

– James Geiger

“The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are.”

– Joseph Campbell

“There is no safe path to greatness.”

– Bob Anderson



The ASCENT Leadership Programs

Cultivating leaders who are **authentic, intentional, and engaged** to power transformation.

ASCENT offers a range of leadership development programs and services for Oregon state employees and partners. Each program focuses on transformational leadership, helping participants build the skills and mindset needed to lead through complexity and change. ASCENT supports leaders at all levels—executives, managers, team leads, and individual contributors. The program offerings include:

Transformational Leadership Program
Promise of Leadership Workshop
Outward Performance Workshop
Leader to Leader Development Series
Coaching and Consulting Services
Mentoring Services

“I love that this program exists in state government. It really shows that the state sees the bigger picture. It’s not just about performance reviews, statistics, and how much they can get out of workers. ASCENT is about developing transformational leaders, leaders that will raise the consciousness of their agency and challenge other leaders, managers, and employees to raise their level of consciousness.”

ASCENT GRADUATE

ASCENT programs help people grow as leaders and as part of a team. The goal is to strengthen leadership across Oregon state government so we can better serve everyone in the state. These programs combine timeless wisdom with modern approaches to create a learning experience that supports personal growth and lasting results.

“Beyond the clear value of what I am learning and who I am learning it with, I am impressed by the conceptual level underlying everything. In other trainings or self-help books I’ve experienced, it often goes too far in emphasizing what it can explain and help you do. ASCENT is clear – whatever we learn here and whatever conclusions we come to, it is all the start of a life-long everchanging journey.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

ASCENT programs offer hands-on, in-depth learning. Participants work through real workplace challenges in interactive workshops that use a coaching style. They also get support through small-group sessions, one-on-one coaching, and detailed feedback. This helps people find new ways to think, solve problems, and lead others.

“The conversations and discussions invite us to define who we want to become, align ourselves and our behaviors with that identity, to remain flexible and treat ourselves with the kindness and respect we afford others...This is a thread that I’m still pulling on and using to weave my own story.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

“I have learned so much about myself. I know that I have more to learn, but I have gleaned so much from the insights, tools, and discussions that have taken place.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

The kind of change we need in state government requires more than basic skill building. Leaders must understand their beliefs, assumptions, actions, and how their behavior affects others. Using research from psychology, neuroscience, organizational change, and leadership studies, ASCENT teaches new ways of thinking that open the door to better choices and new results.

By the end of the program, participants take a fresh look at what leadership means. They explore new ideas about partnership, accountability, intention, risk, and learning—skills that leaders need to be successful in today’s world.

“This journey has pushed me, stretched me, and revealed pieces of myself that I have avoided for years. And while I am still in the thick of it, I am beginning to trust that every uncomfortable step is bringing me closer the person I am meant to be.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

Outcomes and Results

- Building stronger self-awareness through timely feedback and a willingness to adjust thinking and actions.
- Improving achievement by strengthening integrity through a clear understanding of personal purpose, values, and vision.
- Growing greater awareness of self, relationships, and systems within demanding and complex environments.
- Increasing energy and resiliency, managing stress, uncertainty and setbacks—for self and others.
- Demonstrating interrelationships of decisions and strategy development.
- Encouraging courage and authenticity.
- Promoting flexibility in thinking, innovation, and actions, in consideration of near-term and distant goals.
- Building influence, collaboration, and trust while thinking and acting systematically.
- Mentoring and developing others.

“The single most eye-opening moment of this journey has been my Leadership Circle Profile 360 feedback. I had no idea people saw my work and held me to a higher standard than I held myself. I have been operating under an internal narrative that undervalued my contributions. Seeing this disconnect was both humbling and liberating. It gave me permission to step into a version of myself that had always existed but that I had been afraid to claim.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

ASCENT: The act of intentional movement in a direction that is upward rising or returning to source; to climb, to succeed.

- Adapted: Webster and Oxford

Our History

The ASCENT Leadership Program was founded in 2010 under the sponsorship of the Department of Administrative Services – State Services Division (DAS-SSD). In 2012, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and DAS-SSD collaborated to expand ASCENT offerings, providing staffing and financial resources that established the foundation of the program. Their joint efforts broadened access to ASCENT programs for more state employees.

In 2013, the ASCENT Learning Coalition (ALC) was formed as a group of visionary state leaders who governed, resourced, and sustained ASCENT Leadership

Programs. The coalition played a pivotal role in promoting transformation through investment in employee development and leadership growth across state agencies.

The coalition completed its work in July 2025. In its place, a new model for leadership development will be implemented under the guidance of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and a supporting committee. This updated approach will continue the mission of ASCENT, ensuring effective, values-based leadership development for the state workforce, while streamlining oversight within DAS.

ASCENT Leadership Programs will continue to build Transformational Leadership capacity across Oregon State government.

Transformational leaders are guided by strongly held values, powered by purpose, ethical, and inspire a shared vision to create needed change. They expand their awareness and influence by seeking feedback and personal development.

“I have been reminded that everyone has their own story, and when I am struggling with a co-worker or someone in my personal life, it is usually not about me. It is about where they are, what they are carrying, their own journey. We are all such interesting and complicated beings and it’s important to remember that one tone in an email, one interaction, is just one string in the complicated web.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

2026 Transformational Leadership Program

COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

ASCENT is a collaborative effort across Oregon government to develop transformational leaders. ASCENT Programs benefit from the contributions of many individuals and organizations.

Inspiring leadership

ASCENT has grown through years of commitment from leaders across Oregon state government. From its beginning, the program has been grounded in a shared belief that strong leadership creates a stronger future. Today, ASCENT continues to prepare leaders who act with purpose, uphold core values, and inspire positive change.

Many state executives have helped shape ASCENT's direction over the years. Leaders such as Fariborz Pakseresht, Lisa Sumption, and Betsy Imholt have demonstrated the importance of investing in leadership development. Their dedication has helped keep learning and growth at the center of ASCENT's mission.

"In addition to openness, I find that thought and reflection are key elements to the program, along with a great deal of courage and vulnerability, teamwork, support and encouragement. And trust! Trust in others, myself, and in the learning process itself."

2026 TLP GRADUATE

"I have been shifting my focus from time to energy, recognizing that energy levels very throughout the day and that performance is directly tied to how well those energy levels are maintained and refilled. I have observed meaningful improvements in my overall productivity."

2026 TLP GRADUATE

"I wholeheartedly believe ASCENT has helped me gain confidence in my role. With the support of my management team and the opportunity I've had to participate in this program, I feel I lead with purpose now. I know I am not where I want to be quite yet, but I feel I am on a different path now."

2026 TLP GRADUATE

Engaging Content

Course content is provided by experienced practitioners and peer leaders who bring practical insights and proven strategies into the learning environment. We are grateful to the presenters who generously share their time, knowledge, and expertise: Oregon Health (OHA) interim Director Fariborz Pakseresht; Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) Director Lisa Sumption; DAS Chief Human

Resource Office Workforce Development administrator (DAS CHRO WFD) Krista Campbell, Innovative Growth Solutions Shirlene Warnock and Jeannie Nyquist; ASCENT alumni and associates: Brett Murphy (OSU), Isabel (Maria) Ramirez-Falcon (OYA), Jeremy Wright (DAS), Tony Rosendahl (DAS), Haven Garber (DCBS), Hilary Mankofsky (ODE), Victoria Binning (ODA), Brian Stafki (OHA), Lisa Hylton (DAS), Travis Miller (Legislative Fiscal office), Jami Quiring (SOS), Paul Egbert (OCWCOG).

Sponsoring Managers & Co-workers

ASCENT intentionally connects workshop learning with real workplace applications. Managers and co-workers show their support by adjusting workloads, giving thoughtful feedback, and trying new strategies to address both ongoing and new challenges.

“One of the first lessons that comes to mind is that every moment is always full of choice. And for us to be able to make choices, we need to be truly present and aware at each moment.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

“I believe the conversations in the workshops have opened the door for me. They have normalized having courageous conversations; reflective, deep, philosophical, and focused.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

Coaches, Faculty, and Core Team

These leaders and coaches helped participants discover new approaches to leadership and understand the behaviors and habits that can slow or hinder progress; POD coaches: Hannah Aeby, Tina Boone, John Day, Jami Quiring, Alyssa Scarlata, Robert Shaffer, Jeremy Wright. 360 coaches: Christina Boone, Krista Campbell, Jenni Chambers, Emerida Gonzalez, Gary Farnsworth, Cassie Mance, Sean Nickerson, Marina Nieblas, Benita Picazo, Jennifer Puentes, Jami Quiring, Alyssa Scarlata, Robert Shaffer, Dan Shanahan, and Talon Wood.

“My coach did such a great job of communicating trust and safety and really helped me process my feelings about the survey results and what my feelings were saying about how I would like to show up as a leader.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

“I am excited to continue to learn and grow from this transformational leadership program and I hope the changes I have made positively impact my work success.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

Wise Mentors

Experienced leaders and long-time employees share their knowledge and guidance through mentoring. Their support helps graduates maintain momentum and encourages continued growth, both of which are essential for navigating complex challenges.

Willing Colleagues, Partners, Family, and Friends

TLP teaches that each person is part of a relationship system made up of coworkers, partners, family, and friends. In these systems, one person's growth can influence the people around them. As participants practice new ways of thinking and working, those close to them may notice changes and adjust in their own ways. This shared impact is a normal part of growth, and the support of these relationships plays an important role in each participant's success.

"I have grown to appreciate the diversity of the individuals going through this journey with me. Their ideas and perspectives have helped me grow my understanding of others in ways I did not expect."

2026 TLP GRADUATE

Other contributions include:

Program Administration:

Amanda Rodriguez, Kaitlyn McAllister

DAS Budget and Accounting:

Carolyn Mauroni

DAS Publishing and Distribution:

Carlee Justis, Duane Schmidt,
and Jeremiah Johnson

DAS Shared Financial Services:

Jeffrey Fehl, Mini Fernandez, Daisy Tran

DAS Procurement Services:

Jennifer Jolley and Stefani Tew

Photography:

Tim Miller (ASCENT Alumni)

"One of the impactful moments for me was working with the Life Wheel. It helped me recognize that several important areas of my life were not receiving enough attention. This realization pushed me to create a plan with clear steps to bring more balance and alignment in my life."

2026 TLP GRADUATE

"We are a collection of our past experiences. Each has shaped us into the people we are today. Some for the better and others for worse. I recognize now that my past experiences are part of what has shaped me, but they don't need to define me."

2026 TLP GRADUATE

"I will only continue to grow, but in all reality, I don't feel that I am just growing. I feel as if I am starting to blossom."

2026 TLP GRADUATE

Transformational Leadership Program



“Hearing alumni share their experiences helped settle my expectations. The next few months became a rhythm of reflection, learning, absorbing new material, and connecting with a cohort I genuinely admire. I feel fortunate to be a part of such a thoughtful and experienced group of people to learn from and lean on.”

2026 TLP GRADUATE

2026 TLP Participants

Participants	Agency	Sponsoring Manager
Stacy Adams	DCBS	Haven Garber
Adejoke Babatunde	OHA	Pamela Ferguson
Dana Castano	DELC	Lloyd Commander
Graciela E. Cisneros Tellez	OED	Alma Flores
Thea Conbere	BOLI	Emily Nazarov / Josh Nasbe
Deke DeMars	ODOT	Jess Brown
Bradley Eagleson	DEQ	Ranei Nomura
Alyssa Engelson	DAS	Valya Rizzo
Lisa Foust	ODOT	Mary Hamby / Sarah Griffin-Watkins
Andrea Deigh Heywood	DOR	Joel Hernandez
Jeremiah Johnson	DAS	Tony Rosendahl / Tim Hendrix
Jeff Isaiah Mouzakis Knotts	SOS	Albert Salinas
Olha Koval	OED	Eduardo Rodriguez
Kristin Lamb	OHA	Jennifer Crane
Simi Rochelle Loyd	DOR	Christopher Wytoski
Haley Miller	DEQ	Sanne Stienstra / Michele Martin
Nathaniel Taggart Morrison Miller	DCBS	Emi Giovingo
Marissa A. Pantley	OHA	Ray Hanosek
Tabitha D. Payton Wood	DAS	Krista Campbell
Janice Irene Richards	PERS	Jason Stanley
Kaia T. Shire	OED	Ellie Johnson / Kelley Ofoni / Kaitlynn Chritton
Christy Temple	ODOT	Sara Keck / Ben Kahn
Ekaette Okon Udosenata Harruna	OBMT	Robert Ruark
Tera A. Widger	ODHS	Heidi Wormwood



Stacy Adams

**Dept. of Consumer and Business Services
Compliance Specialist II**

I pledge to lead with a creative mind, an authentic heart, and a balanced outlook.

- I will encourage curiosity and unconventional ideas.
- I will respect a home life balance and prioritizing human well being.
- I will be my true self and communicate with transparency and honesty.
- I will bring my authenticity to work and embrace others.
- I will use my knowledge to support and encourage others.
- I will advocate for acceptance and understanding.



Adejoke Babatunde

**Oregon Health Authority
Continuous Quality Improvement Coordinator**

I Pledge:

To BEing present, authentic, and audaciously grounded in my values.

With the influence I hold, I recognize the power in choice and intentionality.

I practice reflection as a pathway to growth and alignment, examining my patterns, impact, and assumptions with honesty and grace.

I explore new approaches, learn from what does not work, and invite others to grow alongside me.

I hold space for compassionate curiosity, toward myself and others, where people feel seen, heard, and empowered to be fully themselves.

I lead by co-creating the conditions that invite people and possibilities to ignite transformation, one fierce conversation at a time.



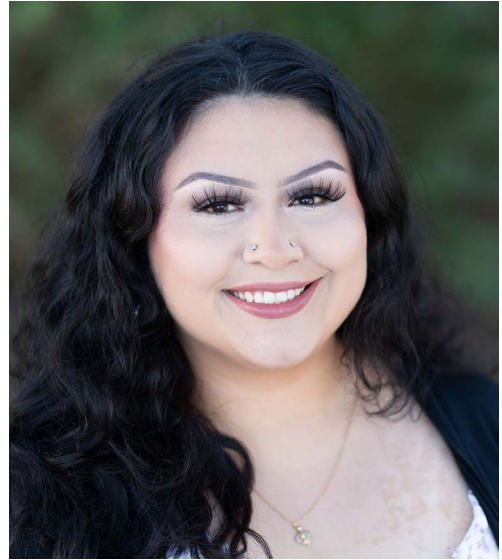
Dana Castano

**Dept. of Early Learning Care
Oregon Tribal Early Learning Alliance Liaison**

My commitments as a leader are to foster:

- **Creativity:** Through collaboration, cultivate collective wisdom, generate new ideas, and focus on solutions that move us forward.
- **Resilience:** Embrace challenges, be accountable, take risks, and see mistakes as opportunities.
- **An Empowered Community:** Create a caring, inclusive workplace where everyone feels they belong, are valued, respected, and supported to leave their comfort zone.
- **Authenticity:** Speak our truths, listen to understand, be courageous, honor differences, and practice kindness.
- **Inspiration:** Lead by example, be transparent, and strive to embody the person and leader I aspire to be.

In this carefully cultivated environment, we can all lead and live with legacy and abundance.



Graciela E. Cisneros Tellez

**Oregon Employment Dept.
Contributions Support Services Supervisor**

I pledge to lead with humility by listening, serving, and lifting others up.

I commit to lifelong learning, remaining curious, and embracing growth through both my successes and failures.

In the next year, I will continuously welcome feedback, seek understanding, and lead with integrity, kindness and courage.

I will be present, supportive and grateful to those who guide and inspire me.

Above all, I pledge to stay grounded, stay teachable, and never lose sight of the person I am becoming through the people and experiences that shape me.



Thea Conbere

**Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries
Rules Coordinator**

My leadership will be alongside my community, not above it. I will show up authentically as myself and help others do the same, and cultivate an environment where disagreements are normal and safe and playful creation is prioritized.

My leadership will be empathetic. I will listen and learn from others, be curious about obstacles, and remain open to feedback.

My leadership will be active, pushing for change and improvement. I will act when needed and help others utilize their skills and knowledge to make systems fairer for the people impacted by them.



Deke DeMars

**Oregon Dept. of Transportation
Compliance Specialist 3**

Serve faithfully,
empower people,
unlock potential.



Bradley Eagleson

**Dept. of Environmental Quality
Senior Environmental Engineer**

As a leader I believe we are stronger as a whole and pledge to create a compassionate and empathetic space where relationships can thrive. I pledge to encourage others to believe in themselves and seek a vision that we as a community can move toward. I pledge to create a space in which all voices feel safe and know that they are heard. I pledge to find joy in the little things and express my gratitude for what is accomplished.

At DEQ I pledge to bring staff, cities, districts, municipalities and industry together in recognition of our shared environmental and cultural resources to find sustainable solutions that ensure future generations inclusive of all walks of life, have access to clean water.



Alyssa Engelson

**Dept. of Administrative Services
Senior Accounting Analyst**

In the next year, I will lead with kindness, integrity, courage, and service.

I will act with honesty and clarity, even when challenges arise, to cultivate environments where people feel safe to learn, grow, and bring their best selves forward.

I will serve with patience, accountability, and genuine care, striving to uplift others and strengthen connection.

I commit to leading in a way that inspires trust, encourages curiosity, and honors the unique perspectives of everyone I engage with.



Lisa Foust

Oregon Dept. of Transportation
Transportation Services Representative 2

I will make lasting connections and empower others through my bravery and example. I will recognize and acknowledge strengths in those around me to increase positive and lasting growth in myself and all those who interact with me.



Andrea Deigh Heywood

Oregon Dept. of Revenue
Quality Assurance Operations & Policy Analyst

As a leader, I pledge:

- To look for opportunities for exploration.
- To strive to understand each person's individual needs, to help people grow into responsibility, identity and belonging.
- To meet people where they are and find ways to bridge connection and common ground.
- To lead with empathy, and to listen for meaning behind behavior. To build trust across differences.

In the next year, I will look for opportunities to explore and build connections where they are lacking.

"We work to better ourselves and the rest of humanity."

– CAPTAIN JEAN-LUC PICARD



Jeremiah Johnson

**Dept. of Administrative Services
Production Manager
Printing Production Coordinator**

I pledge to lead with reason, collaboration, and understanding. I will remain true to who I am, grounded in my principles and committed to doing what is right.

I will listen before I judge, understand before I react, and lead with purpose rather than emotion. I will recognize the potential in others and will challenge, encourage, support, and put my trust in those I lead.

I will earn trust, respect, and confidence through my actions. I will remain steady in times of turbulence and bring levity when work is heavy.

I will hold myself to the same standards I expect from others.

This is the leader I choose to be.



Jeff Isaiah Mouzakis Knotts

**Oregon Secretary of State
Network Analyst ISS6**

I pledge to lead with compassion, humility, and to live my purpose. I believe that every person has untapped potential, and I will strive to create an environment where others feel seen, valued, and empowered to discover the best within themselves.

I will treat others with grace, respect, and kindness, especially when challenges arise. I will use humor to bring people together, compassion to understand their experiences, and patience to give them the space they need to grow. Rather than seeking to have all the answers, I will listen deeply, ask thoughtful questions, and encourage others to find confidence in their own abilities.



Olha Koval

**Oregon Employment Dept.
Compliance Specialist 2**

Every day, I choose to live a better version of my life.

I am committed to serving others, leading with integrity and purpose, and creating a positive impact.

I pledge to take action, pursue happiness, and continue growing through every challenge and opportunity.

I will lead by example with energy, optimism, and intention.

I will inspire others to believe in their potential, support them in achieving their goals, and empower them to create meaningful change in their own lives.



Kristin Lamb

**Oregon Health Authority
Human Resources Manager 1**

As a leader, I pledge to see people as people, to be curious, to listen so others feel heard, and to seek to understand so I can serve them well.

I pledge to be brave in the face of uncertainty, to embrace the growth that comes from my mistakes, and to give others the grace to learn and grow from theirs.

I pledge to be present for my team, to follow through on what I say I will do, and to never stop looking for ways we can be better than we were yesterday.



Simi Rochelle Loyd

**Dept. of Revenue
Seasonal Support Supervisor**

In leadership and in life I pledge to be authentic, compassionate, and curious. I will seek out diverse perspectives, lead as both an educator and a student, and listen actively with the intent to understand – not just respond. I will prioritize the need to see the person behind the role, their strengths, and how to support them in their personal and professional growth.

Most importantly I pledge to use my leadership not to stand above my communities but to strengthen them from within through connection, understanding, and authenticity.



Haley Miller

**Dept. of Environmental Quality
Grant Coordinator**

I choose to lead with clarity and courage.

I will turn challenges into growth, and service into lasting impact.

To me, leadership is not about authority or control.

It is about earning trust, listening empathetically, and serving the common good.

I commit to protecting the natural spaces we depend on.

I commit to strengthening the communities we share.

And I will measure my success not by recognition, but by the growth, resilience, and well-being of those I serve.



Nathaniel Taggart Morrison Miller

**Dept. of Consumer and Business Services
IT Project Manager**

I am committed to changing the world through authentic, compassionate, human connection. In my leadership, you can count on me to ask who and what matters and why, to listen with humility and curiosity, to. I believe that when people can be their whole selves, they are free to be their most creative selves: Like a plant whose roots become choked and contorted by a pot that is too small, so our creativity becomes stifled by spaces that do not allow us to thrive. This abundance of human-centered creativity and growth will change the world.



Marissa A. Pantley

**Oregon Health Authority
Reporting Analyst**

I will lead with collaboration and compassionate empathy, creating space where everyone feels heard, valued, and supported.

Over the next year, I commit to listening more deeply, responding with intention rather than reactivity, and building a healthier, more connected team environment.

I will face conflict directly and respectfully, working toward solutions that strengthen trust, openness, and our shared success.



Tabitha D. Payton Wood

**Dept. of Administrative Services
ASCENT Program Development Strategist**

I pledge to lead with compassion, creativity, and presence. I commit to cultivating genuine human connection by listening with openness, engaging with empathy, and showing up fully for people and the communities I serve. I will nurture environments where creativity can flourish, voices can be heard, and individuals feel seen, valued, and supported.

I choose to lead as a source of light and joy, uplifting others through warmth, optimism, and authentic encouragement. Through my actions and example, I will illuminate possibility, inspire collaboration, and foster a culture where the humanity, imagination, and inner brightness of every person can shine.

In the next year, I will walk forward with quiet power leading through presence and purpose.



Janice Irene Richards

**Oregon Public Employees Retirement System
Principle Internal Auditor**

As a leader I will –

Act with integrity, honoring my commitments to others and to myself by following through and keeping my word.

Show kindness in my words and actions, as I build relationships and trust and use empathy and understanding when saying what needs to be said.

Strive for continued growth as a leader, auditor, and in the other roles I serve through continued curiosity, the support of others, and practice of what I have learned. I will also create opportunities for my team to develop and grow in their skills as we adapt to the changes within our organization together.

Contribute to the betterment of my team, my organization, and the broader community around me through my work and in living my truth.



Kaia T. Shire

**Oregon Employment Dept.
OPS Administrator**

I believe leadership is not about having all the answers. It is about being willing to listen, to learn, and to help others find their own strengths.

I believe every person matters. Every voice, every idea, every small action can create a ripple bigger than we realize.

In the next year, I will lead with curiosity, compassion, and creativity. I will make space for people to be heard, simplify what I can, and invest in the people around me. I will not be afraid to ask questions, try something new, or learn from what does not work. I want the people I lead to feel valued, supported, and capable of more than they thought possible.

That is the kind of leader I want to be.



Christy Temple

**Oregon Dept. of Transportation
OCA Organizational Change Analyst**

I will practice compassionate curiosity as I set the stage for others to play on. A stage built of psychological safety, strong enough to support conscious conflict and embrace diversity. A stage draped in the acknowledgment and welcoming of our differences in backgrounds – designed to create a culture of inclusivity – a precursor to belonging.

A stage facing an auditorium of “Awe”. Inspired by discovery as it awakens from the abyss, brought to life by the sharing of story – weaving ideas into profundities. Sparking epiphanies and revealing the simplest of truths.

I will lean into my strengths shaped by the fluidity of life. When the floods come, I will breathe underwater and encourage the wisdom of the room to resurface.



Ekaette Okon Udosenata Harruna

**Oregon State Board of Massage Therapists
Operations & Policy Analyst**

I pledge to lead with clarity, courage, and purpose. Rooted like the Iroko tree, grounded in my values, and steady through challenge. I will elevate others by honoring their strengths, voices, and contributions, creating an environment where people thrive, dignity is protected, and growth is nurtured.

My leadership will model collaboration, respect, and service to the collective good. I will acknowledge my own progress with intention, practicing courage even when unseen.

In the next year, I will create stronger alignment across my team by fostering partnerships that strengthen our shared goals and by building spaces where every person feels valued, supported, and empowered to contribute fully.

Rooted clarity.

Courageous leaps.

Dignity always.



Tera A. Widger

**Oregon Dept. of Human Services
Learning & Development Specialist 2/
In-Action Course Point**

I lead with hope and a human-centered heart, rooted in compassion, and empathy.

I see each person's dreams and potential, and I commit to lifting that potential through service.

I cultivate spaces where safety, belonging, equity, inclusion and growth can flourish.

I lead with integrity, authenticity, vulnerability, and courage—showing up fully and inviting others to do the same.

I connect our shared purpose to each person's "why," trusting that meaning creates momentum.

Guided by my values: Community, Hope, Family, Growth, Respect, Creativity, and Gratitude—this is my pledge.

SIX WORD STORIES – 2026 ASCENT GRADUATES

“Keep Working. Don’t Give Up. PROGRESSION”

“Past experiences, lessons learned, impactful change.”

“Learning, growing, becoming my authentic self.”

“Unraveling threads, weaving my next chapter.”

“Stepped afraid, staying growing, emerged stronger.”

“Our small choices become lifelong changes.”

“Transformation shadows jack-in-the-box Courage, Rey, Shark.”

“When the universe calls, answer.”

“Showed up anyway. Sometimes that’s enough.”

“Pulling from within, she rediscovered herself.”

“Show up. Knocked down. Stand Again.”

“Into unknown – fearless, growth inevitably follows.”

“She came to grow, she blossomed.”

“My fear has blossomed into courage.”

“Walk my path. Continue my journey.”

“Born here. Lived well. Questioned Much.”

“Life’s more than just a chore.”

“Gifted myself growth – witnessing my becoming.”

“Explore excess, explore deficiency, find balance.”

“Their roots grew through shared knowledge.”

“Empower others, be a memorable example.”

“Growing my connection, community and voice.”

“I arrived hopeful. I leave ascended.”

“It won’t get easier, go now.”





WWW.OREGON.GOV/DAS/HR/PAGES/ASCENT
ascent.oregon@das.oregon.gov

DAS
DEPARTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES

-- Cultivating Authentic Leadership, Powering Transformation --