

The Department of Human Services honors Seven Outstanding Public Service Award Winners

The winners are part of the annual National Public Service Recognition Week, May 3-9, which honors the people who serve our nation as federal, state, county and local government employees

The Department of Human Services (DHS) staff includes some of the hardest working, passionate, smartest, kindest, most innovative people. There are countless staff members who spend their every working hour trying to keep children and adults safe. Others spend time making sure people get the services they need to keep going, to keep feeding their families, to stay safe and healthy. We have staff who make sure our elders and our children with intellectual and developmental disabilities can live their lives in safety, love and dignity. Staff also work tirelessly with our partners to get people into jobs that are satisfying and pay a living wage.

Initially, the DHS award winners were also going to be part of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) recognition events. At this time, DAS has postponed the public award portion due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There may be a public event planned for later this year.

During Public Service Recognition Week, we honor these selected individuals who have been nominated by their peers for their outstanding work. Their work is exemplary. They are truly champions for those we serve.

Ambassador of Public Service Awards

This award is given to those who exemplify the best ideals of our agency, someone who exhibits exemplary communications with their peers, customers and partners; is a change champion and leans into new opportunities, ideas and possibilities and brings others along with motivation and positivity.

Melyssa Lloyd, Branch Operations Manager, Oregon Health Plan 5503 Processing Center

Melyssa Lloyd is described by her peers as amazing; as being someone who brings out the best in each person she works with. She is a proponent of getting her staff the training each need so they can be the best at their job.

Here are excerpts from her nomination letters:

“She has been one of the most amazing and attentive managers I have had in the five years I have worked for OHP (Oregon health Plan). She is a very selfless person who is detail oriented and truly takes the time to really push her team to greatness. We always have all the tools we need to do our job to the best of our ability. She also is actively involved in helping the less fortunate in our community, which says a lot about who she is as an individual.”

“Always tries to brighten our day with acknowledgement whether it be a card or a chocolate, some type of kudos. Makes everyone feel special and needed. Very important for the work that we do.”

“She is the rock of our team. I value her supportive leadership. She goes an extra mile to be loyal, kind, caring, and I admire her enthusiasm and resourceful way of keeping us informed and updated with work and community happenings. I really want to thank Melyssa for helping to encourage us to growth within the company.”

“Melyssa exemplifies the Core Values of this agency in everything she does. She fully supports her team by continually providing us with information to do our jobs working to provide health benefits to Oregonians. She is the force behind each of us to learn and grow in our positions. She is committed to our continual growth, working in innovative ways to provide us opportunities to increase our knowledge of Self Sufficiency Programs and making us more confident as we move towards Integrated Eligibility.”

“Within a short amount of time as our manager, she effortlessly formed a bond with each one of us on a truly personal level. Her goal was to get to know us as individuals, so she could formulate a game plan for success. She is punctual, professional and courteous. She is present in her thoughts, in her words and most of all in her actions. She’s very informative, transparent and proactive in our work environment. She wants nothing more than for all of us to find, develop, and implement our personal best.”

“She inspires me to be a better person.”

Rosa Coppola, Human Service Specialist 3, bilingual eligibility worker, Self-Sufficiency Programs, Newport branch

Rosa Coppola is known as someone who “makes things happen.” She is someone who takes an idea and makes it a reality. She engages others to join her and address issues of inequity in her community. She is described as a true change agent and lives her servant leadership role.

Here are excerpts from her nomination letters:

“Rosa is an authentic Ambassador of Public Service and a change agent. She is a compassionate collaborator, empowers others and uses privilege to do good. Additionally, she has created opportunities to connect and address issues facing all members of her community. She started and chairs the Coastal Equity and Inclusion Committee (CEIC). Specific to the COVID-19 response, she has worked tirelessly to serve Oregonians. She has translated between intakes, supported staff who were not sure where to turn and advocated for materials in Spanish and Mam.”

“I would add that Rosa is one of those people who ‘makes things happen.’ Others might talk about something being a good idea, but Rosa jumps in with both feet and brings those ideas to fruition. This can-do attitude is evidenced by her collaborative efforts in the startup of our

local HispNet ERG (Hispanic network Employee Resource Group) group and her taking the lead to make a coastal chapter of the District 4 Equity and Inclusion committee a reality. Rosa is fearless about reaching out and engaging folks to join with her in addressing issues of equitable service delivery and inclusivity. You know from talking with Rosa that this is not just something she does because she's on a work committee, but rather this is the way she lives her life and serves her community. And, she has that unique ability to engage others in her mission. People want to collaborate with Rosa because of her unflinching dedication and ability to connect at that personal level with everyone she meets."

"What stands out to me, that is very noteworthy, is that Rosa has a huge heart and hunger to reach the seemingly 'unreachable', and to love the seemingly 'unlovable'. Along with her enthusiastic empathy for coworkers, customers and partners, she is proactively compassionate about providing additional resources to meet the needs of the low income, undocumented citizens and refugees of her community. Rosa's focus of concern is truly for those who do not have a voice and may be in greater risk of being forgotten."

"Rosa Coppola is a member of Equity and Inclusion Committee in District 4. The purpose of Equity and Inclusion Committee is, "To better assist and advocate for Oregonians, DHS staff should feel acknowledged and empowered to be educated and educate on disparities going on in our communities." Ms. Coppola approached her management and Community Engagement Manager at OEMS (Office of Equity and Multicultural Services) about starting/creating a Coastal Equity and Inclusion Committee in her local community along with community partners. Rosa's commitment to the Oregon Department of Human Services and her local community astonishing. She is always working to bring better services to her community. She is very well trusted amongst her peers and her community."

"Rosa is well respected as a change agent and Ambassador! Rosa lives many servant leadership characteristics. Most notable, Conceptualization, Listening, Commitment and Persuasion. Rosa is someone I look up to and admire as a real-life hero! She moves me to do more and be more! Talk about leadership from every chair!"

Nadia Yakovich, Manager, Self-Sufficiency Programs, Gold Beach

Nadia Yakovich is known for her enthusiasm, positivity, and encouragement. She has spurred increased productivity in her team and has helped to interconnect her staff and provide them the needed help to do their jobs in an ever-changing environment.

Here are excerpts from her nomination letters:

"From the moment that Nadia began serving Oregonians in D7, she has demonstrated that she will lean into new opportunities with creative ideas and with the attitude of 'look at all of the possibilities before us.' Nadia wasn't with us long before her positive outlook and ability to bring employees along in the process of change was clear. We saw a change in not only increased productivity with employees, but an eagerness to learn under her as she has an inherent ability to meet people one-on-one and challenge individuals to be their best.

“As we approached the OneSystem, Nadia has been a great encouragement to all staff and management. Her communication skills and desire to ensure that we are all on the same page has brought positive changes in our North Bend branch, as well as in Gold Beach. Her drive to have North Bend and Gold Beach interconnected has improved processes, morale, and the ability of staff to have what is needed to complete their work.”

As we’ve maneuvered through the many new processes, policies and transmittals related to COVID-19, Nadia has seamlessly moved into this challenge and has been an integral member of management in this everchanging environment that we find ourselves in. Not even a global pandemic can contain the enthusiasm, positivity, and encouragement that Nadia brings to the table daily. If anything, she’s leaning in more and making sure that D7 employees remain connected, motivated, up to date on changes, and can serve Oregonians through this difficult time. It is both an honor and a pleasure to serve her and with her.”

Kathie Young, District Manager for District 8, Aging and People with Disabilities
Kathie Young is known by her staff and community as being a strong leader who bring people together. She has nurtured relationships, which have resulted in partnerships with government entities, private business and non-profit organizations.

Here are excerpts from her nomination letters:

"Kathie has been a strong leader and an inspiration to her entire district consisting of 13 managers and 173 line staff, which includes Human Service Case Managers, Human Service Case Aides, Financial Eligibility Specialists, Support Staff, Adult Protective Service Investigators, Diversion/Transition Coordinators, and Adult Foster Home Licensors.

She brings dedication, hard-work, humor and compassion to the sometimes difficult work, in Aging and People with Disabilities. As district manager, she bridges the field work in Jackson and Josephine counties with the direction and guidance of Salem. She navigates and facilitates discussions, listening for understanding to inform, inspire, heal and keep information flowing.

Over the 21 years that Kathie has worked as APD D8 District Manager she has led her district with understanding and respect, soliciting ideas, concerns and bringing people together to work through technical processes to result in closer relationships, solid teams, and greater efficiencies. Kathie is respected and esteemed by her staff and coworkers as well as community partners who consider her an ally, always open, approachable and sincere in her quest for serving the community.”

“Kathie Young is a true Ambassador of Public Service in Oregon and has displayed this for over 25 years with Aging and People with Disabilities within the Department of Human Services in Jackson and Josephine counties. Kathie has been leading these teams for over 21 years as the District Manager and four years as a line supervisor.

Kathie leads her teams of over 180 people with passion, positive energy and compassion, while being a good steward of state funds and following the guidance and policies of state and

federal government. The success she has found in the Jackson and Josephine counties is also displayed in the partnerships she has developed and nurtured with other government entities, private business and non-profit organizations.

Kathie loves her Southern Oregon home and always states the mantra when at state level meetings when people ask about her district, “D8 is great, always has been and always will be,” meaning in government lingo, District 8, Jackson and Josephine counties.”

Angie Albiar, Organization Development Advisor, Organization and Employee Development

Angie Albiar is described as being an inspiration to others. She creates an environment where positive change is not only talked about – but she makes it happen.

Here are excerpts from her nomination letters:

“Angie exemplifies the concept of servant leader and is a force for positive disruption to systems that don’t serve everyone. She has done incredible work on her own and has been instrumental in creating an environment where those around her are able to not only dwell in possibility but are able to bring dreams to reality. I met Angie when I started a developmental rotation to her team at the Organizational and Employee Development Unit in Shared Services. One of the first things we did as a team was create a ‘field of dreams’ where ideas for future projects could live until we had resources to develop them into trainings.

With Angie’s leadership, encouragement and dedication, we were able to accomplish many of the projects on that list including creating workshops to develop psychological safety, build a culture of resilience, provide expanded interpersonal skill building opportunities for managers, and weave equity, inclusion and a trauma informed lens into existing trainings. Angie is courageous in speaking truth to power even when it’s not comfortable because she knows change is often not a comfortable experience that happens by itself, but it is needed to provide the best outcomes to those we serve. She is inspiring in how she leads with love. Even the tough conversations are had with grace and compassion. I’ve learned so much from Ms. Albiar and continue to reflect on her example when I feel challenged by new circumstances.”

Commitment to State Service, one to two years of service:

This award is given to someone with one to two years of state service who is committed to state service and to DHS values and ideals; is a change champion and someone who leans into new opportunities, ideas and possibilities, and brings others along with motivation and positivity.

Jamie Frost, Social Safety Specialist, Child Welfare, District 14

Jamie Frost is described as going the extra mile to help families get the support and services they need and truly makes a difference in people's lives. She is someone who works selflessly and positivity and has jumped in to help in to fill position in several different counties – often spending many working hours and days traveling to help out.

Here are excerpts from her nomination letters:

“Jamie is an asset, not only to our agency, but also to the community we serve. She has gone out of her way to ensure our families have their needs met, in multiple branches/counties. For several months now, Jamie has been traveling from office to office, living in hotels, and managing high caseloads to ensure child safety in Oregon's homes.

“Jamie is a kind and approachable worker and is someone you want to be the introduction to Child Welfare, as she builds amazing relationships with families and community partners; she makes everyone feel heard and, most importantly, validated. She is caring and goes the extra mile to ensure our families know they have services, support, and the opportunity for success. She is a shining light in the field of Child Welfare. Jamie has made it very clear that she has a passion for helping others and, though she may have been working with DHS for only a short time, has made such a difference in the way Child Welfare is viewed in our community. I, personally, have heard families and children talk about how Jamie has made a difference in their lives and helped them manage difficult circumstances. When I think ‘commitment,’ Jamie is the first to come to mind.”

“Jamie Frost has stepped up to fill-in in the other branches over and over again, pretty much being away from home for the last eight months. She goes above and beyond and she deserves to be recognized apart from the praises of her peers. She is a Rockstar; the State of Oregon is beyond lucky to have her!”

“Jamie Frost is the epitome of what Public Service is all about. Jamie's devotion and drive to ensure the safety of children, especially in a mostly thankless career, is uncanny! Jamie not only assists children and families in Malheur county, but she has spent the past nine months providing assistance to families and children in Grant, Harney and Baker counties with an unconditional eager willingness to serve these communities. Her dedication and passion for what she does is not only immeasurable but admirable, and her selfless tenacity is awe-inspiring.”

Commitment to State Service 30 or more years of service

This award is given to someone with 30 or more years of state service who is committed to state service and to DHS values and ideals; is a change champion and someone who leans into new opportunities, ideas and possibilities, and brings others along with motivation and positivity.

Nancy Allen, Treatment Services Placement Manager, Child Well Being Residential Unit, Child Welfare program

Nancy Allen has always excelled in the many roles she has had at the Department of Human Services. She is seen as a tireless fighter in helping those who need to become healthy, productive adults. She has enduring commitment to the most vulnerable youth who need supports to get through difficult times. She fosters respect, creativity, independence and teamwork.

Here are excerpts from her nomination letters:

"Nancy has tirelessly served the State of Oregon for over 35 years, most of which with DHS Child Welfare. She has previously been a Caseworker, Social Service Assistant and Hard to Place Program Coordinator. After a (relatively) brief stint at OHA, (Oregon Health Authority), Nancy returned to Child Welfare for her current role as Placement Services Manager within the Treatment Services Program.

Nancy is peerless in her commitment to ensuring that our most vulnerable, complex, high needs youth receive the services and supports they need in order to become healthy, productive adults. She has been innovative in her approach to working with youth that have been long underserved. Nancy has worked to cultivate relationships with system partners and has maintained these relationships for years. She understands better than anyone the need for systems to come together and serve youth and families holistically and without unnecessary barriers.

Her longest role with DHS was as the Hard to Place Coordinator in Multnomah County. She was instrumental in bringing systems and providers together to serve complex youth with multidisciplinary needs. She served as a liaison to local schools, mental health, I/DD services and other systems. She educated DHS workers on those systems and systems partners on how Child Welfare works. She provided consultation on cases to caseworkers, community partners and the Hotline. It was in this role that she became "THE Nancy Allen." She left this position to share her skills and knowledge with the Oregon Health Authority's Children's Mental Behavioral Health team.

During her time at OHA, Nancy helped create the Juvenile Psychiatric Security Review Board program and the Transition Age Youth group homes.

In April 2017, Nancy came back to her home at Child Welfare and took on the role of Placement Services Manager in the Treatment Services Program. For her, that has included exceptionally long hours on-call, managing a large, geographically scattered team and taking on a program at the brink of crisis.

At Child Welfare, she has been integral in decreasing the number of youth in Temporary Lodging and Out of State Residential Treatment. She has been on the front lines of the fight to build capacity for youth in need of residential treatment and intensive, holistic community services. She is always one step ahead of the rest of us in any crisis and comes up with innovative and creative approaches to problems and barriers. Somehow (she calls it magic), Nancy is able to make things happen that nobody else can.

Nancy directly supervises the statewide Residential Resource Consultants and FOCUS program. As a supervisor, Nancy is very supportive, empathetic and fair. She fosters respect, creativity, independence and teamwork. Even during times of crisis, the team knows that we can count on Nancy to be in the trenches with us, not just supervising from above. She has an unparalleled work ethic and never stops thinking about ways to make our jobs easier and improve the lives of the children and families of Oregon. Most importantly, she genuinely loves about what she does and the people she works with. The State of Oregon is so fortunate that she chose public service and would be an entirely different place without her."