
BeMo

Graduate School Statement of Purpose Example for Public Health (755 words)

Public health issues have always been a beast with many heads for me. The preservation and education of public health is a multifaceted, multidisciplinary effort, and the ongoing problems that contribute to public health concerns are the same. They cross disciplines and socioeconomic classes. The dynamic nature of public health has always been of interest to me, from the time I first experienced some of the problems affecting my hometown community's health and well-being. Homelessness was a longstanding and noticeable problem in our community, exacerbated by issues like drug addiction, poor mental health resources and prejudice. While not all of these are considered direct public health matters, they are all connected threads of a deeper, darker beast.

I was aware of these problems in my community on a surface level, but as I grew up, I began to take notice and pay more attention. My father served as a city councillor for many years, and we often attended community events together as a family. One of his favorite things to say was that "everyone can contribute something", whether we were gathering food bank donations, fundraising for the local town arena or volunteering at the soup kitchen. Everyone pitched in. Everyone contributed something of their time, or money or care. The community worked together to address points of concern. When I sat in on council meetings my father attended, I saw the issues of homelessness and drug addiction were often debated and discussed. Everyone was trying to collaborate on a solution. Meanwhile, very little was actually being done to address the problems, and they continued to worsen. One of the town homeless shelters was shut down after the provincial government pulled funding, and the community saw an uptick in health-related issues, especially among marginalized groups.

I volunteered at homeless shelters in my area for many years, and I heard firsthand the struggles about getting access to healthcare resources such as counseling, safe prescriptions and even first aid. Without the homeless shelter and the more comprehensive resources it provided, such as safe sites and mental health counseling, people were struggling. The shelter coordinators had previously worked long hours to be able to provide the resources they could, but they'd never received enough funding to implement anything more than band-aid solutions. Even after the homeless shelter was shut down, several staff members did what they could to help regular clients at the shelter. After the shelter closed, we lost many of our regular visitors since they could no longer access medical care. Many individuals were arrested on drug charges, exacerbating the tension between the marginalized members of the community and the police, and taxing an overtaxed system.

Experiencing these things at an impressionable age sparked the desire in me to be of service to the community. One more set of helping hands was always welcome, and as my dad told me: "everyone can contribute something." I wanted to contribute. I decided to study for my Bachelor of Science in social work, intending to continue my work with the homeless and do what I could to improve public health in my community. I've worked as a social worker for



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the past 5 years, as a counselor, advocate and friend of the homeless members of our community. I've worked to educate and raise awareness, supervise the installation of temporary homeless shelters, collect and distribute donations, and host free skill-building classes. I've been privileged to grow from an eager volunteer to a professional public health and social worker who demonstrates empathy, compassion, creativity and resilience.

However, in fighting this multi-headed beast I realize the problems easily multiply. I can defeat one issue for a while, and two new ones pop up. I wanted to be a part of ending the problems once and for all.

By getting my Master's in Public Health, I'll be able to gain a deeper and more nuanced education of the issues surrounding public health. I'll be able to use that education and my growing professional skills to make sustainable changes in communities like mine. I'll be able to test and implement solutions that fit the community instead of imposing cookie-cutter solutions to diverse and complex situations. I'll be able to contribute in a meaningful way.

To your program I will bring my drive and my passion for public health, as well as the skills I've built as a social worker, volunteer and community member. I know I have more to give back, and I look forward to the opportunity to be a part of the solution.