



# 2022 GRADUATION PROGRAM

-- ASCENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM --

# SIX WORD STORIES

- 2022 ASCENT Graduates

"The real you awakens bold dreams."

Noticed my reaction. Isn't that interesting?"

"Mouth open to inhale and exhale."

"Leadership skills expanded; positive results experienced."

"Tidepool tentacles, poking fingers, swoosh... freedom!"

"Stress Less, Love More, Be Present."

"I fought at first, now grow."

"Disruption creates change, change fuels evolution."

"Creating change through partnership and intentionality."

"Departing from the well-beaten path."

"Continual learning is key to leadership."

"Fall Down, Stand Up, Start Over."

"The revolution begins with a cause."

"Trail blazed, look at that view."

"Be curious, Be open, Be present."



# ASCENT 2022

## 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.

*"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."*

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#### Inspiring leadership

Fariborz Pakseresht, Lisa Sumption, Andrew Stolfi, Joe O'Leary, Kris Strickler, Andrea Bell, David Gerstenfeld, and Madilyn Zike recognize that the future is filled with continued change and complexity. This requires new skills and a new consciousness. These state executives sponsor and champion continuous learning and transformation.

*"The ASCENT program has been transformative. The program has helped shift my vantage point to be more inclusive and mindful. I had always believed I was open minded, but I am learning that I can do more. With the help of models, I am rethinking my actions and tactics at work as well as in my personal life."*

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*"Reflection throughout the journey so far has allowed me to get clearer about many things. For example, my life purpose and values. Mind maps and models. Community, support and guidance. I've been able to integrate what I've learned through exploring my life purpose and values in incredibly practical, day-to-day ways, such as how I'm showing up in a meeting, or choosing whether or not to apply for a specific job."*

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#### Audacious sponsorship

The ASCENT Leadership Development Programs were founded in 2010 under the sponsorship of DAS-State Services Division (SSD). In 2012, ODOT and DAS-SSD collaborated to provide the 2012 ASCENT Leadership Programs. ODOT and DAS provided the initial financial and staff resources to create the foundation of the program. The motivation to collaborate was to make ASCENT programs available to more state employees and expand the transformational leadership skills and abilities that ASCENT programs produce.

The ASCENT Learning Coalition (ALC), our board, was formed in 2013 to provide program governance. Agency sponsorship has grown to eight agencies.

The ALC is a coalition of visionary state leaders who govern, resource, and sustain ASCENT Leadership Programs. The coalition promotes transformational leadership at every level and values the positive results it produces for organizations by investing in employee development and learning. The ALC is committed to resourceful collaboration that serves the evolving needs of the public both now and into the future.

ASCENT Leadership Programs 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.

*“Across the readings, the concepts of meaning and purpose come up time and again. The aspect that I have focused the most on to get closer to discovering my purpose has been identifying my personal values.”*

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### **Sponsoring Managers & Co-workers**

ASCENT intentionally makes a strong connection between workshop content and workplace application. Sponsoring managers and co-workers put action behind their commitment to support their participant's engagement by creatively managing workloads, courageously offering the gift of feedback, and demonstrate a willingness to apply new strategies to emerging and longstanding challenges.

*“I am becoming more self-aware of my personal being and how I come across to others. I am more aware of how my actions, my words, and my body language can make an impact on a situation. I have started to see how my reality is a reflection of my actions.”*

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*“ASCENT has opened my mind to the importance and connection that self-awareness and authenticity has with a leadership role; I hope to share whatever I learn with my team and in the work I do, to find ways of doing better and being more helpful to people.”*

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### **Engaging Content**

Course content is sourced from the success, failure, and enduring wisdom of other leaders, researchers, educators, and delivery partners. This includes the following special guest presenters who generously contribute their time, wisdom and humor: DHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht; OPRD Director Lisa Sumption; Shirlene Warnock and Jeannie Nyquist of Innovative Growth Solutions; and ASCENT associates: Jami Quiring (ODE), Deanna Dyer (DAS), Khris Ward (OYA), Aaron Harris (OED), Melissa Aerne (DEQ), Heather Gaona (ODOT), Brent York (OYA), Andrew DeLacy (DOR), Carole Paulson (OR Legis), Tina Boone (DCBS), Tony Rosendahl (DAS), and Chittirat Amawattana (ODOT).

*“I met with my pod and found community and connection; something I craved after working from home for two years. They created a space that allowed me to voice those feelings, understand my reactions, and see beyond that to what else ASCENT offers.”*

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## Coaches, Faculty, and Core Team

These leaders and coaches helped participants discover new pathways to leadership and identify the “things that derail progress”: POD coaches: Emerida Echevarria, Jami Quiring, Lisa Hylton, Tony Rosendahl, Alyssa Scarlata, Cassie Mance, and Paul Egbert. 360 coaches: Dan Shanahan, Dani Harp, Darlene Weaver, Deanna Dyer, Haven Garber, Jami Quiring, Kevin Nygren, Lisa Hylton, Lisa Martinez, Marina Nieblas, Talon Wood, Tony Rosendahl, Alyssa Scarlata, Cassie Mance, and Paul Egbert.

*“One of the most striking changes I noticed after beginning the program was a calmness and more centeredness in myself. After learning more about positive mindsets, the cages we build around ourselves and people, and refining my purpose, I began to let go of some of the “cargo” that has been slowing me down and holding me back and began to be more focused on my path forward.”*

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## Wise Mentors

Managers and executives share their learning and hard-won wisdom. This contribution helps sustain momentum after graduation and reinforce a culture that values learning and ongoing development – essential to finding solutions to adaptive challenges.

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can make a big difference; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

**MARGARET MEAD**

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## Willing Colleagues, Partners, Family & Friends

Each person enrolling in an ASCENT Leadership Program performs in an existing system of relationships. Systems working as they do, means that each colleague, partner, family, friend in a participant’s network, is impacted by the participant’s new actions and results. Their support is a significant factor in each participant’s success.

*“I have enjoyed our monthly POD group sessions, as we get to dive deeper into what we learned from the prior month’s workshop days. We get more personal in our reflection time by going over our action learning assignments, readings, and make commitments or goals for the next month. It also gives us the opportunity to discuss what is going on in our personal and work lives and share successes we are having and where we feel we need improvement on.”*

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## Other contributions include

- Program administration: Lori McCauley, Robin Taylor, Ann Butte and Shannon Myrick
- Budget & Accounting: Kellie McDonald, Sarah O’Callaghan, Shasta Prunk, Juliati (Yully) Lengkong, and Jill Reece.
- Publishing & Distribution: Carlee Justis and Rich Verdugo
- Photography: Tim Miller
- Contracting: Kellie McDonald and Susanna Ramus
- Design of illustrative graphics and documents that engage and inform
- Delivery of models, activities, and materials

**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

# The ASCENT Leadership Programs

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

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ASCENT is a portfolio of leadership development programs and services that are offered to Oregon state employees and partners. All programs and services focus on transformational leadership, cultivating knowledge and skill to lead transformation, in times of complexity and change. ASCENT works with executives, managers, team leaders, and individual contributors at all levels. The program portfolio includes:

**Transformational Leadership Program**

**Promise of Leadership workshop**

**Developing and Implementing an Outward Mindset workshop**

**Leader to Leader Series**

**Authentic Leader Workshop**

**Coaching and Consulting Services**

**Mentoring Services**

Based on a platform of leadership research, ASCENT programs are intended to help participants build leadership capabilities that will help move Oregon state government forward successfully.

*“Reflecting on the past couple of months in ASCENT, I am realizing that getting comfortable with my emotions, identifying core values, intentions and what is most important in life has created a clearer path for developing a leadership style. It takes individual work and commitment to sustain good leadership skills. Having a sense of humility and curiosity can provide new ways of learning and add to a leadership skill set.”*

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ASCENT Programs are comprehensive, skillfully designed, rigorous adult learning programs. Participants explore work-related issues in participatory workshop sessions that use a coaching model of development. In addition to workshop sessions, participants also receive small-group, 1:1 coaching, and extensive feedback to support the discovery of new ways of thinking and acting.

*“My Leadership Circle Profile was also very educational. I got a peek at what my colleagues think of me, and it reinforced why I’m in ASCENT: to work on my courageous authenticity and caring connection traits. Then, it was like a light switched. Over the next few workshops, we learned about authenticity in the context of performance mindsets, and we learned about the role that courage and vulnerability play in being authentic. All those conversations were, I feel, applicable to me.”*

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The kind of organizational change we have been striving for requires more than skill development of our leaders. It requires that leaders upgrade their internal operating system and have increased awareness of their beliefs and assumptions, their actions and reactions, and their impacts on others. Informed by leading research in psychology, neuroscience, organizational change, and leadership studies, people learn unique mental models that create new possibilities for action and hence new results. Participants re-define their view of leadership, work, partnership, commitment, accountability, intention, risk, and learning – all skills needed for leadership in the 21st Century.

*“A course like this helps remind me of the importance of the balance between the social and reflective moments in my life that I must consciously take the time to digest, assimilate and create. I believe this is the method of relationships, which evokes the balance of self-control, authenticity, and honesty.”*

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### Outcomes and Results

- Using timely and valid feedback that results in increased awareness and openness to disconfirming information and adjustment in thinking and actions
- Enhancing achievement by strengthening integrity based on clarity of individual 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 interrelationship 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 systemically
- Mentoring and developing others

**ASCENT** thanks the leadership of our sponsoring agencies and partners who make our services possible and available to Oregon state government.

**Oregon Department of Administrative Services**

**Oregon Department of Transportation**

**Oregon Youth Authority**

**Oregon Parks and Recreation Department**

**Oregon Employment Department**

**Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services**

**Oregon Department of Human Services**

**Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services**

**Chemeketa Center for Business & Industry**

**Oregon Department of Corrections**

# Transformational Leadership Program



“Now I’m seeing things in a new light. I’m daring to expand my dreams and not settle for what I already have. Yes, I’m happy where I am. Is it perfect? Of course not. How could it be better? I have some ideas...I work to balance self-acceptance with self-improvement. I work hard and I save time and energy for myself, my family, my friends, for reflection and for relaxation. It’s a lot to balance. And I practice forgiving myself when the balance topples over. When I lose a day to grief, doubt, or exhaustion, or when I dive so deep into my work that I don’t come up for air for a week. Compassion is one of my values. Sometimes I need to be reminded to apply it to myself as well.”

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# 2022 TLP Participants

Participants	Agency	Sponsoring Manager
Ann Andrews	DAS-EIS	JoLene Swint
Elizabeth Arellano	OYA	Gunnar Browning
Bertina Balajadia Grajo	OVMEB	Cass McLeod-Skinner
B Grace Bullock, Ph.D.	ODE	Carmen Xiomara Urbina
Chris Cheng	ODOT	David Amiton
Ximena Cruz Cuevas	DEQ	Kevin Parrett
Leo Edmunson	DCBS	Misti Timshel
Dennis J. Fisher	DCBS	Misti Timshel
Laura Gleim	DEQ	Harry Esteve
AJ Gosney	OYA	Mike Runyon
David Graf	ODOT	Rick Shankle
Mason Hendrickson	DAS	Vern Kilmer
Rachel Hill	WSP/OPRD	Bryan Robinson, Eric Timmons
Caleb Huegel	LUBA	Hilary Zamudio, Melissa Ryan, Michelle Rudd
Will Lawrence	ODF	Frank Lertora
Katie McCarthy	DAS	JoLene Swint
Jara Poppinga	OHA	Curtis Cude
Tiffany Purn	OED	Erin McGladrey
Eduardo Rodriguez	OED	Michele Presley
Brian Stafki	DEQ	Jaclyn Palermo
Melody Taber-Charpentier	DOR/ODOT	Stefan Hamlin, Dawn Farr
Kelly Toynton	OMD	James Arnold
Angela Van Grunsven	DCBS	Mark Peterson
Renee Wakeen	OED	Jason Baurer



**Ann Andrews**  
Department of Administrative Services



**Elizabeth Arellano**  
Youth Authority



**Bertina  
Balajadia Grajo**  
Veterinary Medical Examining Board



**B Grace  
Bullock, Ph.D.**  
Department of Education



**Chris Cheng**  
Department of Transportation



**Ximena  
Cruz Cuevas**  
Department of Environmental Quality



**Leo Edmunson**  
Department of Consumer  
and Business Services



**Dennis J. Fisher**  
Department of Consumer  
and Business Services



**Laura Gleim**  
Department of Environmental Quality



**AJ Gosney**  
Youth Authority



**David Graf**  
Department of Transportation



**Mason  
Hendrickson**  
Department of Administrative Services



**Rachel Hill**  
WSP (previously with Parks and  
Recreation Department)



**Caleb Huegel**  
Land Use Board of Appeals



**Will Lawrence**  
Department of Forestry



**Katie McCarthy**  
Department of Administrative Services



Jara Poppinga  
Health Authority



Tiffany Purn  
Employment Department



Eduardo  
Rodriguez  
Employment Department



Brian Stafki  
Department of Environmental Quality



Melody Taber-  
Charpentier  
Department of Revenue



Kelly Toynton  
Military Department



Angela Van  
Grunsvan  
Department of Consumer  
and Business Services



Renee Wakeen  
Employment Department

*"What is my identity – as a worker and a leader, but also as a person? I appreciate that ASCENT is asking us to know this (the person) first and foremost... what is the difference between who you have always thought you are, and what you really are? I feel like we often live by stories that we've told ourselves so many times, that they have hardened into the truth, even if some parts are true, other parts are the calcified feelings that may not serve us any more or make opaque other aspects of the story that offer wisdom."*

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*"I can say this has been a very introspective experience. Not only is it challenging me to think about how I show up in my everyday work, but these lessons are also leaching into my personal life choices as well. It is helping me to discipline my mind and to begin to question the things that are not in alignment with the person I want to be."*

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## Notes

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## Notes

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[www.ASCENTOregon.org](http://www.ASCENTOregon.org)

## FAVORITE ASCENT QUOTES

“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

“Awareness precedes Choice precedes Change.”

– Influenced by Robin Sharma

“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

