

**Name of alumni:**

Jonathan Blanton, Esq./MPA

**Where are you currently working?**

Mount Holly, NC

City of Mount Holly

**What is your job title?**

City Manager - City of Mount Holly

**What inspired you to pursue your MPA degree?**

As far back as I can recall, I have enjoyed helping people. During college, I became very involved in local government-related issues and found a great deal of personal and professional joy in helping enhance the quality of life for residents within communities. By pursuing my MPA, I was able to obtain the professional skillset necessary to do what I have enjoyed doing my entire life: helping make a difference in people's lives.

**How has your MPA/MPP degree helped you in your career?**

Having my MPA has not only given me the theoretical knowledge necessary to tackle challenging issues in the public sector but also to network with peers in the profession in order to develop relationships that have assisted me in my career. For example, I learned of my first city manager position via the UNC-Charlotte Google group and continue to help others via internships and mentoring opportunities that are provided through the University of North Carolina Charlotte.

**What do you love about being an MPA/MPP alumni?**

What I enjoy most about being an MPA alumni is the opportunity to share my experiences with aspiring local government leaders. From speaking at alumni conferences, to participating in seminars, and to helping with panel discussions, I greatly enjoy sharing the exciting things that a career in local government can provide.

**What advice would you give to persons pursuing a career in public service?**

The best advice that I can give is threefold: (i) find what you care mostly about and pursue it; (ii) humble yourself and do not allow your ego to interfere with your professional responsibilities; and (iii) treat people with respect, kindness, and listen to them.