

Hannah Gray, M.P.A., B.A. English, Professional Writing, 2016

By Indygo Ray, Maelee Fleming, & Max Chambers

Transit Grant & Compliance Coordinator, Community Action of Southern Kentucky

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Hannah Gray (née Benward) graduated from Western Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Arts in Professional Writing and a minor in Political Science in May 2016. Gray also obtained her Master’s in Public Administration from WKU in 2018; this gave her the necessary skills to become the Transit Grant & Compliance Coordinator for the non-profit Community Action of Southern Kentucky (CASOKY). Gray explains, “I want to make a difference,” and non-profit work would help her change lives.

While pursuing her BA, Gray participated in the Department of English’s internship program, which she feels gave her “the tools to write professional correspondence.” Additionally, she cited the importance of the résumé and cover letters she wrote in PW courses and the audience analysis skills that are helpful in her MPA courses. Gray praised Dr. Angela Jones and Dr. Jeffrey Rice for their influence during her undergraduate coursework. Gray was especially appreciative of Dr. Jones’ internship course and Dr. Rice’s grant writing course for providing her with the necessary skills to succeed in her future career goals of working in non-profit.

As part of her MPA program, Gray served as a graduate assistant under Dr. Timothy Rich, assisting in classes such as Honors International Politics, Government and Politics in East Asia, and Seminar in International Affairs. In addition to teaching and grading responsibilities, Gray also formatted a paper of Dr. Rich’s for the Dutch political science journal, *Acta Politica*, and she helped him collect and organize documents that he used in his tenure portfolio.

After graduating with her MPA, Gray worked as Operations Manager for Blue Dot Cab Company. Her work at Blue Dot involved collaboration with local non-profits helping low-income people. Gray found that “it didn't take long for me to figure out that I really resonated with the work our clients were doing and that I wanted a bigger role in that.” She left Blue Dot for her position at CASOKY in 2019, which she regards as one of her best decisions ever. When she isn't working, Gray enjoys Zumba classes, *Game of Thrones*, spending time with her husband (pictured), and audio books of Edgar Rice Burroughs.



Gray encouraged English students to become familiar with a variety of citation styles, especially if they are considering a graduate degree. One final piece of advice Gray provided is, “just remember that you are valuable as an English major, and it isn't just your English professors who believe so. I have recently spoken with graduate students, professors, and working professionals—all with a political science background—who have told me that I have a distinct advantage coming from a bachelor's in English background.”

