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Marty Lowrey Receives NSDTA Career Achievement Award

Longtime workforce development leader recognized for more than two decades of innovation and service to the human services sector

Salt Lake City, UT — October 6, 2026: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is pleased to recognize **Marty Lowrey**, Director of the Child Welfare Partnership at Portland State University, as the recipient of the **National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) Career Achievement Award**.

The Career Achievement Award was presented during the [NSDTA Education Conference 2026](#), taking place October 4–7 in Salt Lake City, UT. The award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated a career-long commitment to human services training, organizational development, workforce development, or staff development through significant leadership, innovation, education, and service to the human services sector.

Lowrey has led Portland State University's Child Welfare Partnership for 21 of its 33 years, helping steward one of the nation's longest-standing Title IV-E state/university partnerships through significant changes in child welfare practice, leadership, and workforce needs. Since 2021, she has also co-led the university's Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services.

Throughout her career, Lowrey has helped strengthen how human services professionals are prepared and supported through education, training, evaluation, and simulated practice. Her leadership has contributed to innovations including the Partnership's evaluation and simulation programs and a comprehensive redesign of Oregon's training system for new child welfare workers.

In 2016, Lowrey led a nearly two-year collaborative process to redesign that training system, bringing together former foster youth, caregivers, child welfare workers and administrators, Tribal representatives, partner organizations, trainers, and evaluators. The resulting model continues to serve as the foundation of Oregon's training for new child welfare workers.

Her leadership has also helped expand educational pathways into the human services sector. Through the Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program, more than 300 students have received support toward bachelor's or master's degrees in preparation for careers with Tribal or state child welfare agencies. Lowrey also helped develop a virtual practicum for Portland State's new human services undergraduate major, building on the Partnership's decade of experience using simulations in workforce training.

Lowrey's steady leadership has been particularly evident during periods of significant change. When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted in-person training, the Partnership transitioned its preservice child welfare worker training online in approximately two weeks while maintaining consistent evaluation outcomes. Innovations developed through that transition later earned NSDTA's 2021 Technology Innovation Award.

Beyond individual programs and accomplishments, colleagues consistently point to Lowrey's ability to bring people together, listen to different perspectives, and translate a shared vision into action. Her collaborative approach has built lasting relationships across state, Tribal, university, and community partners while helping professionals and emerging leaders recognize and build upon their own strengths.

Katharine Cahn, Professor Emerita and retired Director of the Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services, said in support of Lowrey's nomination, "A key opportunity of a national career award is to provide an exemplar of the association's values. I can think of no person better suited to represent the long-standing values of NSDTA than Ms. Lowrey."

Lowrey's career reflects more than two decades of sustained investment in the people who make human services work possible. Through thoughtful leadership, collaboration, and a commitment to continuous learning, she has helped build stronger training programs, stronger practitioners, and stronger leaders—creating an impact that will continue well beyond her own tenure.

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About APHSA: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) supports leaders from state, county, and city human services agencies to advance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities nationwide. As a bipartisan membership association, APHSA works with its members to generate pragmatic solutions grounded in lived experience. For more information, visit aphsa.org.

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