

# Expanding My Horizons: My Journey in Southwest's Emerging Leader Development Program

As an ambitious, hardworking single mother of two boys, it's necessary for me to reflect and ensure personal growth. I'm passionate about seeking new and fulfilling ways to guide my sons in the right direction. I found myself doing just that in late 2016 when I joined Southwest's Emerging Leader Development Program (ELDP).\*



### Stepping Outside My Comfort Zone

At the time, I was a General Manager for a large corporation with 10 years of service. I always felt as if there was something missing—there was more out in the world for me to see and experience.

After much thought and consideration, I truly believed that my family's future was worth taking a risk on. I also knew that if I was going to take this leap of faith it needed to be with a company that aligned with my personal values and my passion for purposefully serving others. When I discovered the opportunity to join Southwest's ELDP program it was a hard one to pass up. The position offered the opportunity to learn and lead in several operational departments. I took a chance, and here I am!

### Expanding My Horizons in ELDP

I was born and raised in an area in uptown New York City known as Washington Heights. My desire to explore and travel has taken me to several different states via relocation with my prior employer and has continued during my time in ELDP at Southwest. In the program, we complete three, six-month rotations where we learn all of the different job responsibilities that keep Southwest's operation running smoothly before beginning our work as a Supervisor over a specific workgroup. My 18-month journey took place in Tampa, Florida.

As one can imagine, the thought of starting over in a new industry was overwhelming. It was a great relief to see the well-structured training plan put in place. It was clear to me that the program was designed with our success in mind, no matter how much experience you had prior. After onboarding, I had approximately eight weeks of training where I learned expectations of each position and rotation. This was followed by a few more weeks of Supervisor training, where I was exposed to our day-to-day operation from a different level.

During this timeframe, I also made several visits to our Headquarters in Dallas where ELDP participants debriefed our training. It was always great to see our Leaders involved and requesting feedback on how to improve the program. While in Dallas we also attended Leadership classes to help level set and create consistency among the Leaders in the Company.



Leading with My Heat

My time in Tampa was amazing! This aspect of the program was one of my favorite parts—building relationships with friends that become like Family. It wasn't easy to uproot my children; however, it is something that continues to build character and helps us adapt to change. It takes a village, and I am grateful to have met some welcoming, helpful Coworkers who understood and took a genuine interest in making our transition smoother.

After graduating the program in January 2019, I was placed as a Ramp Supervisor at Chicago Midway International Airport (just in time for the Polar Vortex!). It was quite the experience leaving consistent 80 degree weather to negative 50 degree, but one that I would never want to change. I trained in deicing procedures with other passionate Supervisors who were willing to spread their knowledge. I've been able to work alongside an amazing group of Agents and Leadership Team who are willing to answer my many questions and take my feedback into consideration. Just recently, I was promoted to Customer Service Manager. I continue to learn, grow, and look forward to the future.

The Possibilities are Endless

I am humbled and extremely grateful to have stumbled upon this opportunity with ELDP. If you find yourself wanting more out of life, then the possibilities are endless. If you're willing to invest in yourself and your family you have several tools available to meet you halfway in this journey. The time is now—let's get it!



Applications for Southwest's Emerging Leader Development Program are open now through Friday, August 16. To learn more, visit [careers.southwestair.com](https://careers.southwestair.com) or check out our [Southwest Careers Discussion Forum](#).

\*ELDP is an 18-month job rotational program that seeks to train and develop excellent Frontline/Operational Leaders for Southwest Airlines. Participants are placed anywhere in the Southwest system for on-the-job training in a Leadership role, as well as Leadership training at Headquarters in Dallas. Upon successful completion of the program, Participants are placed in a Leadership role anywhere in the Southwest system, based on business need.