

Tennessee Government Leadership Black Belt Program E-newsletter September 2014

Welcome to the first-ever TGL BBP monthly e-newsletter!

First off, be aware that this is strictly a volunteer-run, informal method for keeping our small, but growing, community updated on what's happening in the world of the Tennessee government leaders' Black Belt Program.

Second, know that we welcome your contributions to the e-newsletter, and there are really no specific rules other than submit, submit, submit! If we can't cram it into the space this month, we'll get it in there next time.

Third, all members should feel free to make suggestions as to future content, information they'd like to receive in the e-newsletter, or changes in format they think would be helpful. We are all about continuous improvement!

Now then... that's all out of the way. Let's get to the good stuff!

Member News

Jimmy Bivens, TRICOR's Director of Business Excellence and a member of the BBP, was presented with the Tennessee Government Leadership Council's Leadership in Customer Service award on June 9th. The Tennessee Government Leadership Council created this award during its inaugural year (2013) to recognize outstanding State leaders for their customer service ethic. Congratulations Jimmy!!

Program News

Have you noticed the changes to the BBP website? First, the program name itself has been changed. Instead of being known as the TGL Black Belt Leadership Program (BBLP), we are now the Tennessee Government Leadership Black Belt Program (we deleted the second, rather redundant, "Leadership"). You'll also notice that our logo has changed slightly. The initials of the three state-wide leadership programs (LEAD, TGEI, and TGMI) have been removed from the three stars in the logo. We made the decision to keep the logo as it was, but delete the program initials, as it was decided that any graduate of a leadership program sponsored **or** sanctioned by DOHR, including agency-specific programs such as TDEC's Green Leadership program, would be eligible to join the BBP.

By the way – the BBP committee members would like to say a heartfelt "**THANK YOU**" to Mi Jones, our website "guru", fellow BBP member, and DOHR IT staffer, who built our web site from scratch, and continues to improve it and "rescue" us whenever we need help with our data/program info needs. Mi – you're wonderful! ☺

Belt award review is underway - 19 candidates for advancement were reviewed on September 2nd, and another review will occur in mid-October, as we want to present as many new belts as possible at the Tennessee Government Leadership Conference, being held at Belmont University on October 24th. So get those activities entered ASAP!

BBP volunteer committees are being formed now, and 16 BBP members have volunteered to help with BBP activities. Members who volunteer their time to these committees are eligible for Internal Service credits at the rate of 1 point per hour spent volunteering! We're starting off with 5 volunteer committees:

Communications Committee – Volunteers on this committee will assist in creating mass e-mails, alternate sending out “Welcome to the BBP” e-mails to new members, and assist with the monthly e-newsletter. BBP members interested in participating on this volunteer committee should contact Sendy Gregory at sendy.parker@tn.gov

White Belt Mail-Out Committee – Volunteers on this committee will assist in actually mailing out (or hand delivering, when convenient) White Belts to new BBP members. Interested in volunteering? Contact Sheila Marchman at Sheila.marchman@tn.gov.

BBP Champions Committee – Volunteers on this committee will assist new members who request help in navigating through the Yellow Belt level, answer questions, lend encouragement, and help generate ideas for creditable activities, if requested by the new member. They will also reach out via telephone or e-mail to members who've not entered any activities in a specified length of time to check on them and encourage them to “dive back in”! If you're interested in this type of volunteer work, contact Lynette Porter at lynette.porter@tn.gov.

Membership Drive Committee – Volunteers on this committee will help develop ideas for increasing membership in the BBP, focusing specifically on areas outside Middle Tennessee, and then work to actually implement these ideas. Interested members should contact Sherrie Artman at sherrie.artman@tn.gov.

Networking Committee – Volunteers on this committee will assist in planning and carrying out quarterly BBP luncheons for all BBP members who wish to participate, share their experiences, and enjoy some delicious networking time! If you'd like to volunteer with this group, contact Tammy Golden at tammy.golden@tn.gov or Richard Kennedy at richard.kennedy@tn.gov.

Program Stats

Membership is on the rise! There were 170 registered BBP members as of September 12, 2014. The total number of points entered by our members to date is 7,411, which can be broken down by category as follows:

Strategic Development = 4,243 points

Individualized Development = 1,575

Internal Service = 737

External Service = 856

Way to go, Black Belt Program participants!

BBP On-Line Activity Tracker – Tips and Tricks

Now that the BBP Committee has conducted two belt award reviews, we've developed several suggestions for entering your activities that will help ensure a smooth belt award review, reduce delays, and virtually eliminate almost any questions you might receive from the committee as they review the activities you've entered. We're going to be sharing these with all new members in their welcome packets, but also wanted to be sure our current 170 members are informed!

1. Although some activities related to your job responsibilities can be claimed for credit in the Strategic Development category (such as attending conferences, seminars, webinars, lunch and learns, etc.), internal and external service activities are usually not creditable if they are part of your normal job responsibilities. A good rule of thumb when making these determinations is to ask yourself "If I left this job, would the person they hired to replace me, or someone else in my department, be expected to perform this activity?" However, if you are still unsure whether you can claim an activity for BBP credit, you can always send an e-mail to the Leadership.Council@tn.gov for clarification.
2. When you enter an activity, enter the date(s) and time(s) of your participation, as well.
3. Don't enter your activities before they are actually completed. Exceptions to this would be a committee membership, for example, that lasts for a year. As you attend each meeting, you may enter the points (hours) for those meetings. If you're not sure whether to "enter as you go" or wait until something is completed, don't hesitate to send a message to the BBP Committee at Leadership.Council@tn.gov.
4. Avoid acronyms, except for State agency names.
5. Claim all the internal and external service hours you earn. Even if you already have plenty to earn your next belt advancement, "extras" will roll over and count toward subsequent belts!
6. If you're ready to undertake your Individualized Development activity and you think you want to go the project route, take the time to outline your idea and the intended outcome and benefits to the State and send it to the BBP Committee for prior approval. It could save you time (and disappointment) if the idea you developed was not what was expected by the Committee to fulfill this requirement.
7. Be sure to maintain documentation of your activities (see the "Preparing My Portfolio" tab in the BBP member website) in the event the Committee has questions during your next belt award review.
8. Remember to answer the 4 questions that are required at the end of each belt level. They should appear when you enter the last activity/point needed for a specific belt, and all you need to do is e-mail your answers to the BBP Committee at Leadership.Council@tn.gov. The questions are also located on the member website at: <https://dohr.onapps.tn.gov/bblp/Members/PortfolioAbout.aspx>.

Opportunities to Be of Service

When you first joined the BBP, were there questions you needed answered, but couldn't find on the website? We are developing a "New Members Welcome Packet", and we'd love to hear from you about the types of information we should include.

If you're looking for an opportunity to serve in a volunteer capacity, on a community board, etc., and aren't sure how to begin, check out these links: <http://www.hon.org/> (Hands On Nashville) and www.givingmatters.com (Giving Matters). If you know of or are involved in community volunteer opportunities you'd recommend to your fellow BBP members, send it in and we'll publish them here in upcoming e-newsletters.

Out of almost 1,200 activity entries by BBP members since the program began 10 months ago, only 10 are for donating blood or plasma. The American Red Cross desperately needs all eligible donors' help to rebuild the available blood supply in anticipation of the upcoming holidays, so roll up those sleeves and give now – and again in 56 days!

New Members

The following leadership program alumni have joined the BBP community since August 1, 2014.

1. Nathan Burton, Secretary of State
2. Marcus Dodson, Treasury Department
3. Pamela Franklin, Environment and Conservation
4. Ashlee Hatfield, Tennessee Regulatory Authority
5. Anthony Hogan, Environment and Conservation
6. Christy Montgomery, Labor and Workforce Development
7. Joy Pierson, Human Services
8. Shana Teasdale, Human Services
9. Bren Thompson, Dept. of Intellectual Disabilities
10. Phil Wilson, Health

We're so glad to have you all, and wish you a challenging and rewarding leadership development journey!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

October 24th – Attend the Annual Tennessee Government Leadership Conference at the Curb Event Center at Belmont University. Click here to register:

<https://adobeformscentral.com/?f=5JBIAWAm7buvWrdGbGFdnQ>

December 19th – DOHR and the Black Belt Committee will host a Black Belt Luncheon in the Department of Human Resources Training Center. This will be a great opportunity for all of us to get together and share information about the program. More details to come!

Just for Fun

One of the BBP Committee members found and ordered the display jar pictured below for her BBP belts at: http://www.karatejoes.com/Cylinder-Belt-Display_p_6140.html. She felt good about the price, but of course there are tons of sites out there, so you may want to shop around!



We hope this first edition of the Black Belt Program e-newsletter has been interesting and informative. Send your feedback or future articles to sendy.parker@tn.gov.

