



## LEADERSHIP OKLAHOMA CITY, INC.

### Applying for Oklahoma City's LOYAL program

#### WHAT IS THE LEADERSHIP OKLAHOMA CITY LOYAL "CLASS"?

The Leadership Oklahoma City LOYAL Program adult class is a community leadership training program. It is designed to increase the participant's *knowledge about, commitment to, and effectiveness in* the community in order to provide the region with a larger, more effective pool of volunteer leaders. The program consists of 10 class sessions and an Opening and Closing Retreat. Topics covered in the class include board skills, fund raising, special event management, presentation skills, networking, risk-taking, and other skills useful to effective civic leaders.

#### WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE CLASS?

A typical class session begins at 4:30 with a networking session to enhance class members' familiarity with each other. From 5 to 6 p.m., a community leadership skill is presented. A light meal is served from 6 to 6:30, and then a hands-on exercise, usually tied to the skill taught earlier, is conducted. From 7:30 to 8 p.m., class members may work in groups on their service projects, known as LOYAL Action Projects, or LAPs.

#### WHEN ARE THE SESSIONS?

## CLASS VII

### 2011-2012 Calendar

Opening Retreat is mandatory in its entirety. Class members may not miss more than 2 of the remaining sessions. (The Welcoming Reception and Graduation are not included in the attendance requirement.)

|                     |                      |                        |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Welcoming Reception | Tuesday, October 11  | 5 to 6:30 p.m.         |
| Opening Retreat     | Sunday, October 16   | 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.       |
| Class 1             | Tuesday, October 25  | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 2             | Tuesday, November 8  | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 3             | Tuesday, November 29 | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 4             | Tuesday, December 13 | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 5             | Tuesday, January 10  | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 6             | Tuesday, January 24  | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 7             | Tuesday, February 7  | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 8             | Tuesday, February 21 | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 9             | Tuesday, March 6     | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Class 10            | Tuesday, March 27    | 4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.     |
| Closing Retreat     | Tuesday, April 10    | 4:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.     |
| Graduation          | Thursday, April 26   | 11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. |

## **WHAT'S THE PROJECT COMPONENT LIKE?**

Every class member is assigned to a community service project, usually in a group of 10 or class members. The service projects are known as LOYAL Action Projects, called LAPs for short. These projects are selected from a pool of projects proposed by local community agencies each year. There is usually one project per 10 class members. Past projects have included such as planning and implementing some part of a special event for organizations such as the Central OK Humane Society and the OKC Metro Literacy Coalition, creating ten boards for OKC Beautiful and Big Brothers Big Sisters, designing an alumni-tracking database for Celebrations preschool, and revamping the OK Visual Artists Coalition's annual Momentum art show. The LOYAL Actions Projects are an important component of the LOYAL experience, giving class members real-time, hands-on experience in community service. They also provide valuable assistance to community organizations.

## **HOW MUCH TIME OUTSIDE OF CLASS DOES THE LAP TAKE?**

While it varies widely from project to project and individual to individual, one can expect to spend an average of 20 hours outside class on the LAPs.

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN LOYAL TO ME?**

*You will learn.* We can guarantee that every participant will increase his or her knowledge of community leadership skills. No matter how expert you may be in some areas, the breadth of the LOYAL experience will engage you in new ideas. While intended to enhance your civic life, many of the skills and experiences will have significant application to your professional and personal life as well.

*You will increase your network.* You will meet new people, leaders in business, government, education, volunteer and charitable organizations.

You will get to know most of your classmates quite well, and you will become friends with many of them. Presenters and planners for the class sessions include leaders from all sectors of the city.

*You will gain new perspectives.* Our class members are selected for their diversity of perspectives, so you will hear perspectives that are deeply felt, strongly supported, and very different from your own. You will speak for your experiences and beliefs to others who have not heard your voice before.

*You will reinforce and energize your commitment to community service.*

As a result, you will be considerably more effective in your business and community work.

## **HOW CAN ANYONE GIVE UP THAT MUCH TIME IN A YEAR?**

*You have to want to.*

All our participants are incredibly busy people.

*You have to be able to.*

You can't miss any of the Opening Retreat (October 16, 2011) and you can't miss more than two of the other sessions. If your job or family will require you to miss more than that, you should not apply.

## **How can I justify that time away from my work?**

*Why would businesses permit, even encourage, their best and brightest to leave work early 10 days a year?*

LOYAL graduates are better employees after their LOYAL experience. The training that Leadership Oklahoma City provides to the class often has direct application to one's work as well. And this training is locally based, so class members continue to have access to what they have learned and the contacts they have made. In fact, some companies so value the LOYAL experience that they hold informal "mini-selections" within their companies to select the most qualified candidate to support.

## **HOW DO I JOIN?**

The Leadership Oklahoma City LOYAL Program is limited to an annual class of members who are chosen from applications by a committee in the late summer of each year.

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?**

### **Requirements for Application**

- Applicants for the LOYAL Program must be at least 23 years of age and no older than 35 years of age on the date of the Opening Retreat of the class for which they are applying: (October 16, 2011 for Class VII)
- Applicants must live, work, or have a demonstrated substantial interest in Oklahoma City.
- In addition, it is preferred that LOYAL class members not be fulltime students, have some work experience, and have some community volunteering experience.

## **IS THERE AN EDUCATION RESTRICTION? DON'T YOU HAVE TO BE A COLLEGE GRADUATE TO APPLY?**

No. There is no expectation of completion of any particular level of education.

## **WHEN IS THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS?**

All applications must be postmarked by August 12, 2011 or hand-delivered by August 15, 2011.

## **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?**

Tuition is \$400. In addition to the training, tuition includes meals for the class sessions, materials, activities, and two places at Graduation. Many businesses or organizations pay all or some of the tuition for class members from their organization.

## **CAN I PAY THE TUITION OVER A PERIOD OF TIME?**

Yes.

## **IS FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE?**

Yes, tuition waivers up to \$200 are available.

## **IF I ASK FOR A TUITION WAIVER, WILL THAT HURT MY CHANCES FOR ADMISSION?**

No, not at all. The Selection Committee does not consider requests for tuition waivers in its work. In fact, they don't even know who has requested a waiver.

## **ISN'T IT IMPOSSIBLE TO GET IN?**

No. At least 50 people are admitted most years. Since we receive more applications than that, many people are not admitted, but the only sure way not to be admitted is not to apply. Re-applications are encouraged in subsequent years.

## **DON'T YOU HAVE TO BE A BIG DONOR IN ORDER TO BE ADMITTED?**

No. Information about our contributors is not provided to the Selection Committee.

## **HOW DO I GET AN APPLICATION?**

Contact Leadership Oklahoma City directly or download an application from our web site.

**Leadership Oklahoma City, 730 W Wilshire Blvd., Suite 116, Oklahoma City OK 73116, Phone 405-463-3331, email [info@lokc.org](mailto:info@lokc.org), web site, [www.lokc.org](http://www.lokc.org)**

## Questions About the Selection Process

**WHO'S ON SELECTION?** The President of the Leadership Oklahoma City Board of Directors appoints two Selection Co-Chairs from among the Board members. Together, they then select the remaining members of the Selection Committee. While LOKC policies require no fewer than 6 additional "at-large" members, the Selection Committee more typically has between 10 and 15 members, to assure diversity and breadth of knowledge among committee members. Selection Committee members include other Board members, graduates, and community leaders who have not personally participated in an LOKC class.

**DO YOU HAVE TO "KNOW SOMEBODY" TO BE ADMITTED?** Notebooks are assembled with photocopies of all application materials, including two letters of recommendation but not any information about requests for tuition waivers, and distributed to Selection Committee members about a month before the selection date. Committee members are instructed to read all the applications and complete a ranking sheet prior to the final selection meeting. Consequently, committee members are very prepared to decide among applicants, even though they will personally know few if any of the applicants. *It is not uncommon for Selection Committee members to know none of the applicants personally.*

**DON'T YOU HAVE TO BE NOMINATED BY SOMEONE IMPORTANT?** Any adult, 23-35, who lives, works, or is involved in Oklahoma City may apply. *Applicants do not have to be "nominated."* We ask our graduates to distribute applications to candidates they think will make good class members, but there's no requirement that a graduate recommend an applicant.

**IS MORE BETTER WHEN IT COMES TO RECOMMENDATION LETTERS?** *Lots of phone calls and/or letters of recommendations will not make a difference.* The Selection Committee is given only two letters of recommendation and no reference to any phone calls made on a candidate's behalf.

**CAN MY COMPANY "BUY" MY WAY IN?** Only the information in the application itself is used as a basis for decisions. *It doesn't matter to whom the applicant is married, or how much money may have been donated by the applicant's company, or what the applicant may have accomplished but didn't put in the application.*

**AREN'T THERE SOME ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE RESERVED SPACES FOR AN APPLICANT EVERY YEAR?** *There are no "slots" or spaces reserved for certain organizations' applicants.* If a company or organization appears to have a class member most years, it's because they always have a well-qualified applicant or applicants in the pool. There is no "Sim City Public Schools slot" or "Bank of Whatzit slot."

**AREN'T MOST CLASS MEMBERS FROM NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS?** The Board has directed the Selection Committee to select approximately two-thirds for-profit class members and one-third "other" class members, representing non-profits, education, government, and community volunteers. *The class is not mostly non-profits; in fact, there are usually less than 10% of class members from non-profit agencies.*

**ISN'T IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE FROM NORTHWEST OKLAHOMA CITY TO BE ADMITTED?** Diversity of all types is a strong consideration in selection. The whole point of Leadership Oklahoma City is to increase participants' network and capacity for implementing community improvement in today's society, and you can't do that if the class entirely is made up of people who already know each other. However, since the majority of our applications have typically come from folks who live in northwest Oklahoma City and work downtown, it is typically true that the majority of the class reflects that applicant pool. *It is true that it is somewhat easier (statistically more likely) to be admitted if you don't live northwest and work downtown, but the majority of class members do, so it's not a death knell for an application.*

**IS THERE ANY REASON TO RE-APPLY IF YOU WEREN'T SELECTED THE FIRST TIME?** Some people, having not been admitted the first time they apply, vow never to reapply. Others tell us that they are going to apply annually until they are admitted or no longer eligible. Every class has about a quarter to a third of its members from the pool of re-applicants. Presidents of the Leadership Oklahoma City Board of Directors and Program Co-Chairs are among the graduates who will tell you they applied more than once before being admitted to a program. The most common reason for an individual not to be admitted is that he or she comes from a crowded demographic pool (which varies from year to year). For example, if there are 15 bankers in the pool, it's going to be less likely that a particular banker is admitted that year. If there is only one government official in the pool, it is more likely that that individual will be admitted that year.

***The only sure way not to be admitted is not to apply.***

## **What Can an Applicant Do to Increase Chances of Being Admitted?**

### **COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FULLY.**

You'd be surprised how many applications we receive with missing or incomplete information. Names and zip codes are the most commonly missing items, and while we can figure it out from other information, it doesn't look good. Our tongue-in-cheek slogan is "**It isn't a graphic design test—don't leave white space!**" Be thorough listing the community activities in which you have participated, and explain how you were involved. Don't forget church work, your school and sports activities, political campaigns on which you've worked, and professional organization work in addition to volunteering you've done with charitable agencies.

### **ASSUME NOTHING**

Occasionally someone applies who appears to think that he or she and his/her accomplishments are so well-known that it is not necessary to complete the application fully—at least that's what the committee assumes, since the application is mostly blank. If you don't write it down, it isn't taken into consideration, no matter who you are. Also, please don't assume that organizational abbreviations and acronyms are known by committee members. President of AJLI? What's that? Is it a big deal or not? Add a little explanation so the committee knows just what you've really achieved.

### **PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO YOUR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.**

**What** the letter says is far more important than **who** signs it. A three-sentence letter from a Governor—"He's a fine fellow and I enthusiastically recommend him"—is not nearly as compelling as one from someone who appears to have worked with you personally on some project, or who knows you well and can illuminate how you would benefit from inclusion. It's better to have letters from local people if possible, and it's better to have letters from someone whose opinion is known to be thoughtful. But it is most important to have letters from people who truly know you and genuinely support your candidacy. A letter that begins, "I don't know him well, but he seems like a good fellow" is actually damaging rather than helpful—couldn't he find anyone who really knows him to write a letter? Letters from close relatives are permitted, but probably not perceived as the best choice.

### **SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM THE CROWD.**

Virtually all the applications we receive are from well-qualified candidates. Try to make yourself stand out from the others who may at first glance seem to be much like you. If you've not been very involved in the community and now have more time, talk about how you intend to make a difference, where you hope to focus. If we've not had many of your occupation in the program, point that out. If you represent a group that's a little out of the ordinary, say so. Your application is not a place to be reticent about yourself.

### **FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS.**

No, really! It's not like it's hard—just **don't hand-write the application**, be sure to send in your photograph and application fee, make sure two letters of recommendation actually materialize in the office, and don't attach a résumé or answer a question with "see attached." If you do, we'll cut, reduce, and paste whatever you attach onto your application form as best we can, which looks really bad and flags you as someone who didn't read the instructions!

## **QUESTIONS?**

Call Beth Shortt, Executive Director, at (405) 463-3331, or e-mail her at [info@lokc.org](mailto:info@lokc.org)