



Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. 2014 Innovative State Human Resource Management Program
Application from the Tennessee Department of Human Resources

Program Title:	Three Pillars of Human Resources	State:	Tennessee
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1. Please provide a brief description of this program. The Three Pillars of Human Resources Certificate

Training is a competency-based training initiative that provides basic education directed toward *entry-level* HR staff in the public sector. The goal of the initiative is to enable public sector HR staff to share basic competencies within the field of HR as determined by the Tennessee Department of Human Resources (DOHR) and the Tennessee Personnel Management Association (TPMA). The training includes essential competencies, defined educational components, recognition levels and a structured, sustainable implementation process. There are six foundational competencies that provide the framework for the Pillars curriculum. The competencies are: Mission Oriented, Ethics, Trust, Business Acumen, Communication, and Judgment. Each competency is highlighted throughout the curriculum and used as a backdrop for describing the essence of strategic HR. The topics covered in each Pillar are identified on the attached flyer which serves as the one-page summary.

Upon completion of each module, recognition is provided by DOHR. Once participants finish all three Pillar workshops, they receive recognition from TPMA, acknowledging the completion of the entire Three Pillars of HR program. The Pillar modules are a half day in length and may be taken in any order to provide participants maximum flexibility in achieving their Three Pillars of HR certificate.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? The first series of the Three Pillars of Human Resources was offered in March of 2012.



3. Why was this program created? HR within the public sector has historically been a primarily transactional function, frequently combined with other responsibilities. Transactional HR is no longer enough to successfully adapt to new and changing environments and to address the business demands required to attract and retain the top talent needed to effectively and efficiently serve the workforce who ultimately serve the citizens.

The Board of Directors of TPMA had a long-term goal based on the needs of its membership to establish an entry level HR certificate program designed to raise awareness within the public sector HR community and generate a more strategic approach to HR operations. The Board responded to its members' needs by establishing a committee to research and ultimately implement an entry level development program for public sector HR professionals. Because DOHR had an almost identical strategic goal for the state HR community, senior leaders within DOHR volunteered to serve on the TPMA program development committee. This partnership served a mutual goal of both organizations, which was to raise the awareness of HR and align HR with the business strategies of public sector agencies. This collaborative effort produced a competency based HR curriculum designed to give members of local and state HR communities a foundational understanding of three major areas within the HR function: 1) Strategic, 2) Legal, and 3) Administrative.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method? The Three Pillars of HR is a 12-hour, three-part certificate program in the essentials of HR management. The program was designed to give *entry level* public sector HR employees the basic information they need to understand HR strategy, the legal requirements they must follow, and an overview of HR administration, including ethical standards. There was not a fundamental HR certificate program available to assist in preparing HR professionals to go on to complete the IPMA-CP or Specialist certifications or SHRM's PHR/SPHR certifications. This certificate program has proven to be an innovative approach to creating a common language surrounding HR among municipal, county, and state



employees. This new approach to learning has been a unifying component for public sector HR at minimal cost, with high returns on the learning investment.

5. What was the program's startup costs? DOHR staff contributed their time to develop the curriculum and DOHR leaders facilitate the Pillar workshops at no cost. DOHR also provides the training booklets for participants. This program template is easily transferable to other organizations and the curriculum is available to be shared with other public sectors leaders who are interested in offering this competency-based program in their departments.

6. What are the program's operational costs? The operational costs are \$102.48 per participant, which covers the cost of the participant manuals, certificates and the cost of providing breakfast and lunch on the first day and lunch on the second day of the conference.

7. How is this program funded? Through registration fees charged to members. The registration fee per Pillar is \$50 if taken individually, and \$100 if registered for all three at once.

8. Did this program originate in your state? This program originated in the State of Tennessee.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? No

10. How do you measure the success of this program? Following each Pillar workshop, a feedback survey is sent to each participant. The feedback has been extremely positive. The workshop ratings are consistently 4.5 – 5 on a 1-5 rating scale. Each time the Three Pillars of HR series is offered, the workshops reach capacity, often with a waiting list for those wishing to be admitted into the program.

The Three Pillars of HR series has been in high demand and as word about the program spread, the outreach grew tremendously over the past two years. This type of outreach initiative has given DOHR the opportunity to work with other public sector organizations such as the TN Association of Utility Districts (TAUD) the TN Association of Municipal Clerks and Records (TMCAR), and the University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Services (MTAS) and County Technical Advisory Services (CTAS). We have presented at conferences,



regional meetings, and/or professional development workshops for these organizations. And finally, the program has been nationally validated by the HR Certification Institute (HRCI) and has been awarded 11.25 recertification credit hours toward the PHR and SPHR certifications.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? DOHR and TPMA piloted the program together in March of 2012. Following the pilot, the program development committee worked together to adjust and revise the content to address the feedback received from the participants in the pilot series. This continuous improvement approach is how the program curriculum has stayed relevant and current for the human resource community.

We've also learned to adjust to the audience, by not always beginning with the strategy pillar, since several of the organizations we're now reaching don't have human resource professionals on staff, but must have an overall awareness of HR in order to survive in today's world.

DOHR places significant value on continuous improvement. As part of the continuous improvement process for the department, DOHR leaders are committed to serve as educators of human resource strategy and leadership, technical skill implementation in HR policies, practices, and training. The cycle of improvement is on-going and the curriculum is updated to stay current with HR laws and regulations.

The Three Pillars of Human Resources

Certificate Training

The Three Pillars of Human Resources Certificate Training is a competency-based training initiative that provides basic education directed toward entry-level human resources staff in the public sector and could be a stepping-stone to further education or the attainment of certifications. The goal of the initiative is to enable public sector human resources staff to share basic competencies within the field of human resources as determined by the Tennessee Personnel Management Association and the Tennessee Department of Human Resources. The certificate training includes essential competencies, pre- and post-testing, defined educational components, recognition levels and a structured, sustainable implementation process. Certificate will consist of three categories, or pillars, each comprised of relevant topics to the human resources function.

The competencies that form the basis for the certificate are:

- Mission Oriented – understands the public service environment and the direction and purpose of their organization
- Ethics – demonstrates fundamental values related to honesty, integrity, confidentiality, fairness and respect
- Trust – builds trust-based relationships through alignment between words and actions
- Human Resources Business Acumen – shows understanding and ability to apply basic principles of human resources law and policies
- Communication – uses effective speaking and writing skills in a manner that helps others to understand and take appropriate actions
- Judgment – makes rational decisions based on facts

Pillar 1

The Role of Human Resources in the Public Sector

Participants learn how the role of human resources can contribute to the success of the overall organization and the accomplishment of its goals.

Module Topics

- Human Resources as a Trusted Advisor
- Management Skills (Planning, Organizing, Directing, Controlling, Evaluating)
- Human Resources as a Strategic Business Partner
- Employee and Leadership Development

Pillar 2

Legal Issues in Human Resources

Participants gain knowledge of state and federal laws that impact the workplace. Human resources staff learns how an organization creates and maintains an environment of fair and consistent treatment.

Module Topics

- Employment Law Basics
- Title VII and the Tennessee Human Rights Commission
- FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act)
- FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act)
- ADAAA (Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act)
- USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act)
- ADEA (Age Discrimination in Employment Act)
- Workplace Safety

Pillar 3

Human Resources Administration

Participants gain an understanding of basic human resources functions and issues related to people such as ethics, compensation and the life cycle of the employee.

Module Topics

- Ethical and Professional Standards
- Hiring and Interviewing Skills
- Applications and Announcements
- Orientation and On-boarding of Employees
- Classification and Compensation
- Separations – Voluntary and Involuntary

Each Pillar is ½ day

Upon completion of each module, recognition will be provided by the Tennessee Department of Human Resources. Upon completion of all three modules, participants will receive recognition from the Tennessee Personnel Management Association (TPMA) acknowledging the entire Three Pillars of Human Resources program. Modules may be taken in any order.

