The Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, or BILLD, provides annual training on leadership and professional development for newer state legislators from the Midwest. This page highlights key upcoming BILLD dates and includes news about the program as well as BILLD alumni.

New BILLD leadership team in place

Four state legislators have been selected to lead the interstate, bipartisan committee that governs the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, or BILLD. Nebraska Sen. Sara Howard (BILLD class of 2013) and Minnesota Rep. Laurie Halverson (class of 2015) will serve as co-chairs. Iowa Rep. Amy Sinclair (class of 2016) and Indiana Rep. Holli Sullivan (class of 2015) are the co-vice chairs.

The BILLD Steering Committee includes legislators from every Midwestern state. It met in May to choose the 2019 BILLD class. It will next gather this summer in conjunction with the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting in Chicago (July 21-24). Along with selecting each class of BILLD fellows, this committee establishes rules for the application process, provides guidance on fundraising initiatives, and oversees development of the institute’s curriculum.

BILLD is a signature program of CSG Midwest and the Midwestern Legislative Conference. Since the institute’s inception, 840 state legislators have received training through BILLD; many have gone on to serve in top legislative leadership positions.

Milestone year, record number of BILLD applicants

In a landmark anniversary year for the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, the regional program reached an important milestone — a record number of legislators vying for a BILLD fellowship. Those applications are reviewed by the BILLD Steering Committee (see above), which oversees the competitive, nonpartisan selection process and awards the fellowships. The June edition of Stateline Midwest will highlight the 2019 BILLD class.

This year, BILLD is celebrating its 25th anniversary as the premier leadership institute for Midwestern state legislators in their first four years of legislative service. Legislators from the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan also take part in the institute.

This year’s program will be held Aug. 9-13 in Minneapolis and include sessions to help participants:

- understand the meaning of leadership and individual leadership styles;
- build civil discourse in the legislative arena;
- communicate with the media, colleagues and constituents;
- manage time and focus while facing multiple demands and distractions;
- craft legislation that withstands judicial scrutiny; and
- negotiate and build consensus in order to achieve legislative goals.

This year’s program also will feature policy sessions on the economy and workforce challenges; health care management and cost containment; state government.

As the ranks of graduates of the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development have grown, so too have the roles that BILLD alumni play in The Council of State Governments. At the CSG national level, Wisconsin Rep. Joan Ballweg (class of 2007) is the current chair elect and will serve as national CSG chair in 2020. Ballweg will join four other BILLD alumni who have held this top position since 1995, 14 BILLD graduates have served as chair of CSG’s Midwestern Legislative Conference, including the current MLC chair, Illinois Sen. Elgie Sims Jr. (class of 2014). Two other BILLD alumni are among this year’s MLC officers: Michigan Sen. Ken Horn (class of 2007), first vice chair; and Indiana Sen. Ed Charbonneau (class of 2008), immediate past chair. In addition, a number of the MLC’s policy committees are being led by BILLD graduates during this biennium:

- Illinois Sen. Mattie Hunter (class of 2005) and North Dakota Rep. Shannon Roers Jones (class of 2017) are co-chairs of the MLC Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee; Indiana Sen. Mike Crider (class of 2015) is the vice chair.

- Nebraska Sen. John McCollister (class of 2016) is a co-chair of the MLC Economic Development Committee; Indiana Rep. Karlee Macer (class of 2016) is the vice chair.

- South Dakota Sen. Jim Bolin (class of 2012) is a co-chair of the MLC Education Committee; Ohio Sen. Heurel Craig (class of 2015) is the vice chair.

- Kansas Rep. Susan Concannon (class of 2014) and Iowa Rep. Shannon Lundgren (class of 2018) are co-chairs of the MLC Health & Human Services Committee.

- Manitoba Minister Kelvin Goertzen (class of 2008) is a co-chair of the MLC Midwest-Canada Relations Committee.

Please submit Alumni News to Laura Tomaka, CSG Midwest program manager for BILLD. She can be reached at ltomaka@csg.org.