Region V BIG Virtual June Training

National President’s Opening Remarks

National President, Honorable Doris Sartor, provided the following opening remarks during Region V’s June 26th Virtual June Training. She recognized the outstanding Region V leadership—Training Chair, Ms. Monica Dorsey; Council President, Ms. Adrianne Callahan; and Region V Directors, Ms. Deena Sheppard, and Ms. Pat Thompson. The remarks read as follows:

The theme of your training, “Adjusting the BIG Picture—Life Post COVID-19,” speaks to the current world situation. All the news surrounding the risks, challenges, and deaths associated with the current coronavirus, COVID-19, has definitely left us feeling vulnerable.

The global COVID-19 pandemic affects us daily from all angles — health, economics, logistics, politics, education, relationships, and more. For people working in all industries and sectors, this crisis creates a huge amount of fear and anxiety.

COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting Black Americans (according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Blacks make up 22% of all COVID-19 even though they represent just 12.7% of the population).

At the same time, we are battling the virus of injustice, with the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and countless others, due to callous acts of violence. This has left many of us feeling angry and frustrated over these events. Their deaths have left us demanding and fighting for justice.

We are battling the novel virus of COVID-19, the virus of prejudice, and the virus of injustice.

Now, where do we go from here? As an organization, Blacks In Government is committed to equity, excellence, and opportunity. We stand together in giving voice to the underrepresented, and in promoting social justice. We must renew our call to action as individuals, within our communities, and, as an advocacy organization.

Blacks In Government is proud to stand in solidarity, with more than 16 Black policy-making organizations in collaborating to address the critical health care issues faced by Black Americans as a result of COVID-19. These organizations include, but are not limited to:

- The World Conference of Mayors
- Historic Black Towns and Settlements Alliance, Inc.
- NAACP
- Southern Christian Leadership Foundation, Inc.
- One Hundred Black Men
- National Congress of Black Women
- National Black Leadership Commission on Health
• National Policy Alliance, just to name a few.

We stood as one voice and demanded from our national political leaders the following:

• Coronavirus testing sites in all communities where Black and disadvantaged people are concentrated;

• Special attention and Personal Protection Equipment to be immediately provided to nursing homes, law enforcement agencies, emergency response units, and jails;

• Expansion of Medicaid in all 50 states; and

• Start-up psychological counseling facilities to be prepared for long-term future fallout as a result of this pandemic.


To be successful, we need to get comfortable with the notion that we are all lifelong learners, and need to be open to ongoing skill sharpening, or even entirely re-skilling, as we progress. Blacks in Government training at the national, regional, and local levels will help us meet those needs.

The area of Education will be addressed during today’s training sessions. The topics include:

• How to Take Back Control of Your Financial Future

• How to Eliminate Practices of Racism and Racial Discrimination

• And, How to Protect your Legacy

They are all critical topics that will enable you to be more prepared as we move toward “Life Post COVID-19.”

There is a school of thought that looks at crisis and sees glimmers of possibility. I believe “Life Post COVID-19,” has many possibilities.

• Creating a world where our shared resources do more for more people.

• Continuation of remote work and virtual meetings.

• Increased reliance on tech and less on travel, such as this virtual training.

• Continued increased connections to our family, friends, and co-workers. For many of us, we have spent more time with our families during this crisis than at any time in our working careers.

• Increased engagement in our workplace, in our communities, and our organizations of choice, such as BIG, NAACP, sororities, and fraternities.

Our health, economic, and social well-being are all critical to our success Post COVID-19. And the foundation of our success is based on our collective voice. We must speak out on systematic
racism in our nation, which is reflected in disparities in health care, criminal justice, civil rights, police brutality, education, and so many other factors. This is a historic time, too important for us to remain silent.

We must not only VOTE, but vote for those who will act on our interests. We must elect government officials who are responsive to our needs, at the local, state, and national levels. In today’s government, people of color are underrepresented. For a racially just democracy to exist, we must achieve representation. Our elected officials must actually represent the experiences, and concerns of our diverse population.

It is our time, to act rather than react; to be agents of change, rather than complainers; to create rather than criticize; to be courageous in challenging situations, and most of ALL PRAY, and stay focused in our turbulent and ever-changing world.

My final thoughts, for those who are not members of Blacks In Government, I invite you to join our great organization that is committed to improving public service through promoting equity, excellence, and opportunity. Blacks In Government is a forward-thinking organization dedicated to the interests of public servants. Our priorities center on maximizing career opportunities while providing a mechanism for inclusion, growth, and advocacy.

For those who are BIG members, I challenge you to invite three (3) new members to join BIG in the next 30 days. As you know, there is strength in numbers and, as we grow, we become more powerful and impactful.

In closing, I sincerely thank Region V for providing such critical topics during today’s training session. Attendees, I congratulate you all for taking advantage of this great training opportunity. Please take the knowledge and skills you learn from this training back to your agencies, and communities to enhance their culture and mission.

Thank you all for Thinking BIG!