



Building Innovative Service Models: Riverview Industries Inc. (RVI)

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

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Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

Building Innovative Service Models: RVI

Riverview Industries Inc. (RVI) conducted an assessment of their strengths and needs as an organization. and found that although it had come a long way since 1973 when it was started by parents and advocates, its evolution was not clear overall gestalt. Through the assessment process, RVI was able to clarify the overarching value that connected the array of their programs. In addition, development of a Business Plan brought to light **the value** that RVI wanted to drive their organization forward— **Inclusion**. The organization feels strongly that building on the principles of inclusion and interdependence with the community for all of its services will create a cohesive path forward.

RVI believes in the value of belonging and finding meaningful community memberships for the people they serve. Their mission “is to move people toward the life *they* want to live.” To achieve this mission RVI programs need to create avenues for ensuring meaningful community membership. RVI is expanding how they accomplish this from small groups in the community to volunteering in the community, leisure activities that expand social connections. It is expanding the concept of what can occur at the main facility through bringing the community into the facility with options such as a shared workspace and small group meetings. RVI believes that no matter what a person’s ability is everyone has something to offer to the community and is worthy of belonging. RVI has been successful in this area and looks forward to growing and expanding its success with Inclusion.

This report explores how all of RVI programs and expansion efforts will be under the cohesive umbrella of Inclusion.

Inclusion

To establish an inclusive organization that is interdependent with the community in assisting participants to be active members of the community it is essential that all staff have a clear understanding of why community inclusion is critical to participants’ lives. To this end RVI is working on:

- Information provided to all new staff during orientation will be expanded to explain why inclusion and community connections are important for participants.
- Examples will be created of what is and what is not community connections and inclusion for all staff.
- Managers will use these examples to help staff understand community connections and the importance of networking.
- RVI will conduct training on resource mapping with all staff early next year.
- RVI will create a map of the agency’s connections that can be built on for community inclusion and networking support.

- Executive Director has already presented at the Rotary about the importance of inclusion and how it strengthens the community, also at two different county boards, transformation Tuesday, a panel for the Disability Studies Department, and is invited to meet with the Recreational Therapy Department at the University of Toledo this Fall to discuss the connection between RVI and the Department.
- RVI will be hosting an onsite meeting this Summer with legislators, Executive Director Davis and other stakeholders to highlight RVI's efforts in creating services that are inclusive.
- RVI will look for ways to fade out CTRS once community involvement is increased, and will use technology as a way to provide support, as needed.
- RVI will create a tracking system to collect data on the number of hours people have spent with professional supports versus natural supports to measure their success.

Financial and Staff Retention

It is essential that RVI recruits and retains the right staff to be successful. This is not a situation that is unique to RVI—organizations across the Nation are struggling with this issue. In particular, retention was acutely difficult last year: 45 out of 75 employees voluntarily left their jobs and 34 of those who quit had worked at RVI at least for one year. Using the average hourly rate of \$11 for overall staff at RVI and the US Department of Labor's projection that the cost of replacing an employee is 30% of their annual salary, RVI's total cost of replacing 34 quits would be about \$236,966.

Improving staff retention will not only provide a major financial gain for RVI, it will also increase its ability to achieve its mission. To this end, RVI has set some clear innovative approaches to onboarding the right staff. RVI is currently examining a formal system of conducting, analyzing, and tracking exit interviews of staff members to identify what improvements to make in the workplace. The Executive Director is currently designing questions for the exit interviews for that purpose. She will also record a video clip on why RVI is a great place to work.

RVI is in the process of creating a task force consisting of RVI Managers and one Board Member to develop recommendations on implementing hiring strategies. The task force will explore approaches such as the effectiveness of placing positions on different social media outlets such as Spotify or Reddit and plan to complete their recommendations by September 2021.

RVI is hopeful that if the projected savings are realized by increased retention, a portion could be used to create a new position responsible for securing grants and private dollars to support RVI programming and expanding resources to address Inclusion—that the community is stronger when it includes everyone.

RVI has hired a person to assist in making videos and publishing blogs to reframe how the community views RVI as a resource that they can be part of. The first video will be ready to stream during ADA's 30th Anniversary celebrations with legislators.

Expansion of Focus Groups

RVI has chosen a very creative approach to Day Services that truly targets community inclusion and can expand community connection. This approach is focus groups, where a small number of RVI participants are involved in activities in the community that are directly related to their interests. The organization is currently working on formalizing instructions and guidelines for staff on how community activities should connect to building relationships for the members and how to facilitate individual interactions. RVI is also planning to expand this concept to keep it sustainable by conducting at least two more focus groups this year –one in Lucas County and the other one in Ottawa. In January of 2022 outreach will begin in Wood County to recruit members for the focus groups. RVI is engaged in a word-of-mouth campaign driven by parents and supporters to create excitement about the concept of having two new focus groups soon. RVI will also be conducting at least one Lunch and Learn session related to the focus groups. An informational document to assist SSA's in understanding focus groups is being created.

Technology

RVI leadership is excited about how technology can assist people to be more independent and at the same time a part of the community. To this end, staff will take part in the technology training offered by the State. Quarterly, RVI Managers will consider ideas on how technology could be used to expand independence and work to expand their knowledge base.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan

The Business Plan was approved by the Board in April 2021. The Board intends to use the Business Plan as the foundation for the Strategic Plan ensuring both are in sync and can guide RVI forward on a pathway of inclusion and innovation. The Board will share the approved Business Plan with staff and stakeholders to solicit ideas and feedback.

The Strategic Plan will at the very least explore the development and expansion in the following areas:

- Establishing a service for individuals with Mental Health disabilities.
- Obtaining CARF Certification in order to be a Provider of services for OOD
- Pre-ET services
- Taking the steps necessary to make waiver nursing service more sustainable
- Ensuring technology is integrated into services to increase independence in the community.

RVI's focus on inclusion will allow the organization to achieve its mission and create new partnerships to help grow and expand its innovation.