



## Building Innovative Service Models

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

# Starfire Business Plan

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### Abstract

After a thorough analysis of who Starfire is, our values and core beliefs, this plan outlines the journey and process that Starfire will embark over the next few years.

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## Starfire Business Plan

Starfire has provided individualized supports since 2016. At this time the Community Connectors program began. There is also the Learning Network that provides trainings and the Family Leadership Network.

Starfire's purpose is to heighten the collective imagination of what is positive and possible in our community.

The outcomes of the services that Starfire provides focuses on:

- **Identity.** Supporting people with disabilities, their family members and the general public to explore and develop and claim personal identities based on positive strengths that hold potential for connections between them.
- **Connections.** Providing opportunities for people with disabilities, their families and the general public to initiate, develop and deepen many ongoing connections that hold potential for relationships.
- **Contribution to a better culture.** Partnering with people with disabilities, their families and the general public to make local, personal and collective contributions to a more inclusive culture.

The Community Connector work has the potential to be meaningful to people and families with the above outcomes. The billable rate is limited and does not cover the cost of service, but our staff have the potential to add more to the organization beyond the billable hours. The connectors can provide material for our Learning Network. The work of the connectors can also be used to market to the philanthropic community.

### Key Questions to Explore

- How many people with disabilities is the "sweet spot" for Starfire to support in the Community Connector program?
  - What is the budgetary impact of various scenarios?
    - How much fundraising is needed to supplement Medicaid rates?
    - How many partnerships can we support that are non-Medicaid (for people without waivers?)
    - How many stories are helpful/necessary for marketing Starfire's contributions to the community to funders?
  - What are the possibilities for scale within this program?
- What is the basic design of the Community Connector program?
  - Program model (hours together, hours apart, longevity of work, follow-up/maintenance period)
  - PATH planning for people and for projects
  - Citizen involvement during and beyond the partnership
- What learning from the Family Network can be overlaid on the Community Connector program?
- What learning will we need to invest in to support staff, people with disabilities and their families, and the general public in deepening their skills and understanding of the work?

- What are the contributions of Community Connector program staff, families and people with disabilities to Starfire’s Learning Network?

## Connector Staff involvement in Learning Network

Two connector staff have been involved in the Learning Network at Starfire. They have invested in creating content and being a part of presentations and trainings. Those two staff will continue to spend part of their time supporting that effort.

The other 3 staff will be invited to join in trainings as needed. In May of 2021, two staff attended a presentation and shared a short story of their connecting work. These stories were well received and added to the content. These opportunities will continue.

Staff will also be able to lead small group conversations, when necessary, for contracts and presentations.

This will add to the quality of Starfire’s Learning Network that could grow and support the Connecting work’s budget deficit.

## Connector Staff Development/Investment

Starfire has quality staff working in the role of Community Connector. In order to retain these staff, Starfire is investing in their training and development.

All Starfire staff are required to attend trainings as set by DODD. They should also be trained on Social Role Valorization, Asset Based Community Development, 5 valued experiences and design thinking. Whenever possible staff should attend these topics when offered outside of Starfire.

Other topics can be added as discussed with staff and supervisors as beneficial to the organization.

In May of 2021, 4 staff attended “The Ask: Invitation to Engagement” presented by the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services Learning. The workshop covered opportunities and challenges and guidelines to the role of inviter.

Starfire connector staff will attend a 3-day session, “Using SRV to Enhance Neighborhood Belonging” presented by Jo Massarelli and Mary Keefe in June.

Starfire has started to consider families as an extension of their staff. This helps families become informed champions and partners in our work. Possible costs incurred: stipends for attending trainings, training registration fees, any travel expenses

## Connector Staff Prototypes for 2021

- 3 staff co-mentoring a family project (potential to mentor families in 2022, increasing number of people served)
- 1 staff co-mentoring a “chosen family” project with citizens leading the project and inclusion of person with a disability. (Potential option as a phase out year, potential for Starfire staff to make an official “citizen advocacy match”).
  - Mentoring began in March 2021 and will conclude in December 2021. These staff will be learning the process of mentoring a project and help to develop a handbook for mentors

to be used in the future. Each of these staff could then mentor projects on their own the following year, expanding the number of people and families served.

- Questions to be explored by this prototype:
  - How can we bring more mentors online that have deep experience both in project design/implementation as well as mentoring others to do it?
  - How might we develop materials for the Learning Network to teach others to mentor project implementors?
  - What is the role of Starfire “mentors” beyond working with families? Might the “mentorship model” work with groups of citizens or with staff at other organizations supporting people with disabilities?
  - What are the financial/quality implications of Starfire staff being project mentors to families/citizens/staff instead of implementing projects directly?
    - Are stipends/project budgets cheaper than direct service staff?
    - Is there a role for mentors as connectors with no billable Medicaid time? (e.g., on the ground in a neighborhood, asset mapping with families/citizens/staff, interviewing citizens, hosting planning sessions, etc.?)
- 1 staff is going to work on connecting with fewer in-person hours than traditionally offered. Staff will connect and network outside of billable hours to create connections and potential collaborators for a project. The person receiving services will be able to join as much as possible for them but will not depend on them. This prototype will begin in June 2021 and be analyzed and documented for six months.
  - Questions to be explored by this prototype:
    - What are the financial/quality implications of Starfire staff as connectors with little/no billable Medicaid time? (e.g., on the ground in a neighborhood, asset mapping with families/citizens/staff, interviewing citizens, hosting planning sessions, etc.?)

## General Sketch of Community Connector Program

(Subject to iteration based on learnings from prototypes above)

Starfire staff have had the benchmarks of onboarding, exploration, deepen, collaborate and maintain to consider in their work. A challenge identified is that our Community Connector work seems to get stuck in the “maintain” phase. Starfire needs to clearly define what the Community Connector’s role will be during this phase. The Maintain Phase offers convenience and stability but is problematic in terms of the financial sustainability of the organization. Funders want to see Starfire’s work scale, so potential to work based on deliverables and to a modified maintain phase. The following model includes additions to make connecting work more sustainable and meaningful to people with disabilities and their families.

- Program Model:
  - Full-Time Connector Staff partnering with 8 people with disabilities for roughly 2 years
    - 4 of the partnerships are in Phase 1, which entails:
      - Phase 1A: Onboarding (~3 hours/week for ~3 months)
        - Exploring possible identities/preferences

- Asset Mapping
  - Getting to know each other as partners
  - Family communication/Engagement
    - Monthly 1-hour session similar to Family Projects
    - Emailed content similar to Family Projects
- Initial PATH Plan session @ 3-month point
  - Set a plan, generate partnerships, begin Phase 1B
- Phase 1B: Deepening (~3 hours/week for ~6 months)
  - Carry out goals from PATH
  - Exploring and Developing Connections
  - Visit 10 places related to goals/identities
  - Interview 15 people related to goals Identities
- Project PATH Plan Session @ 9-month point
  - Invite project topic experts
  - Develop Project ideas/goals
  - Begin Phase 2
- 4 f the partnerships are in Phase 2, which entails:
  - Phase 2A: Project planning and implementation
    - Roughly 6 months long
    - Monthly rhythm:
      - Committee meetings
      - Communications with committees
      - Individual meetings
      - Marketing/Promotion
      - Notes/Goals
      - Event Logistics
    - Event Celebration/Wrap-up
  - Phase 2B:
    - Maintenance
      - 1 hour/week check-in
      - Identification and Invitations to potential Citizen Advocates
      - Sustainability Plan
    - Reflection/Lessons
      - Storytelling
      - Gifts for Committees
    - Project planning document for future implementation
- Program staff participating in Learning Network offerings/content creation
  - Trainings
  - Blogs
  - Podcasts
  - Videos
  - Design Sessions
  - Storytelling sessions

- Program staff participating in Learning/Reflection with colleagues
  - Team meetings
  - Sharing learnings
  - Formal trainings/conferences
- Possible Variations
  - Could families whose adult children are in the Community Connectors program get project stipends and mentors from the Family Network?
  - How early could we start identifying potential Citizen Advocates for the Sustainability Phase?
- Budget:
  - 3 “Full-Time Equivalent” Connector Staff (24 partnerships—12 in Phase 1 and 12 in Phase 2)
  - Annual Expenses:
    - \$150,000 in Salary/Benefits
    - \$18,000 in program expenses (\$1,000 for each of 12 project budgets, \$500 for each of 12 pre-project partnership expenses)
  - Annual Medicaid reimbursements
    - Scenario 1: \$60,303.36
      - 2 hours/week/person @ \$24.16 per hour (24 people)
      - All are Medicaid eligible
    - Scenario 2: \$55,278.08
      - 2 hours/week/person @ \$24.16 per hour (22 people)
      - 2 are non-waiver, therefore no reimbursement
    - What are costs associated with billing Medicaid and are they worth this level of reimbursement?

## Timeline for Solidification and Implementation

Timeline	Action
May-June 2021	Edit and finalize Business Plan
June 2021	Submit Business Plan to DODD
June-December 2021	Wrap up current Connectors Program Prototypes
January 2022	Integrate learnings from 2021 Prototypes; set personalized timelines/goals for each staff/partner pair
January-December 2022	Implement Projects for first nine partnerships; recruit new partners for next 9
December 2022	Evaluate Year 1 outcomes
January 2023	Integrate learnings from 2022 and set personalized timelines/goals for each new staff/partner pair
January-December 2023	Implement Projects for next 9 partnerships; recruit new partners for next 9