

Anchor Mission Playbook

New Learnings and Findings
in Anchor Mission Execution

prepared by

Rush University System for Health

with support from

Healthcare Anchor Network



2 Aligning Business Imperatives with Anchor Mission Priorities

2.1

Return on Investment as an Anchor Mission Priority

Since the [original Anchor Mission Playbook](#), limited resources and budget constraints have become commonplace for many institutions. For Rush, this has resulted in the need for its anchor mission team to innovate and pursue leaner and more cost-effective operational models. As such, Rush has learned the importance of aligning business imperatives with anchor mission priorities in order to engage business departments in anchor mission efforts during times of organizational and financial strain. In particular, for Rush the future return on investment has become more important to demonstrate, and in turn, most successful initiatives have served purposes that are equally socially minded as well as solving for an operational need of the institution.

2.2 FIELD PERSPECTIVE

Support Services Employee Pipeline Initiative

An example of a strategic internal alignment for Rush was a collaboration among the Support Services department, the Human Resources talent acquisition team, and the Anchor Mission team to support the recruitment and onboarding of individuals in anchor mission focus communities who could staff frontline, patient facing entry-level roles at the newly built Joan and Paul Rubschlager Building, now known as the Rush MD Anderson Cancer Center. For Rush, frontline positions are defined as those that are patient-facing and crucial to hospital operations; they are not all necessarily entry level, but most are lower wage and have high risk of turnover. Recruitment for these frontline, patient-facing positions is typically difficult, primarily because of competition from corporations like Amazon (that pay over \$20/hour and can onboard new hires almost immediately), the length of the onboarding process (including background and drug testing) for healthcare institutions, and the general shift schedules required of new employees.



Representatives from Support Services, Human Resources, and Anchor Mission teams met regularly, analyzing the yield of applicants referred by over 20 community partners that worked with anchor mission residents, and optimizing the application cycle and onboarding process for these applicants. The project brought together three departments to address an organizational need while simultaneously prioritizing an anchor mission initiative.

Because a high percentage of Rush's anchor mission hires work in the Support Services department, the leaders of the Support Services department proposed working in partnership with community hiring efforts to recruit new employees for the Rush MD Anderson Cancer Center. This involved representatives from Support Services, Human Resources, and Anchor Mission teams meeting regularly, analyzing the yield of applicants referred by over 20 community partners that worked with anchor mission residents, and optimizing the application cycle and onboarding process for these applicants. The project brought

together three departments to address an organizational need while simultaneously prioritizing an anchor mission initiative.

2.3 FIELD PERSPECTIVE Fillmore Linen Services Partnership

For Rush, another example of aligning business needs with anchor mission initiatives was an external partnership with a newly launched laundry and linen facility in one of Rush's anchor mission neighborhoods, North Lawndale. The path to launch this venture stemmed from an immediate need among healthcare institutions after the pandemic to have access to a local vendor for the laundry-linen category. Three factors drove this urgency: current suppliers for this category were not local and were out of state and the quality of service for this category was not optimal. In addition, the category itself was often at a moderate risk of disruption due to limited redundancy among the facilities, with limited backup options or alternatives in place to ensure the continuity of operations during a supply chain crisis.



The partnership with Fillmore Linen Services allowed Rush to locally integrate their supply chain for this category and have more control over factors that impact operational efficiency.

With significant philanthropic support from the Steans Foundation (which filled funding gaps in the capital stack by making it possible for hospitals to not have to make a capital commitment in addition to redirecting their linen spend), and leadership from West Side United,

Fillmore Linen Services renovated a historic facility obtained from the City of Chicago, bought equipment, and secured working capital for its first months of operation that allowed it to provide competitive pricing to prospective clients. Rush was an early adopter and the first signatory with a contract agreement with Fillmore Linen Services to direct a partial amount of its poundage with the goal to fully redirect the entire category across the system to Fillmore by August 2024, which Rush anticipates will lead to significant savings on costs.

Fillmore Linen Services will create more than 175 jobs with advancing skill levels for rising incomes and has capacity to handle more than 30 million pounds of laundry annually with its first facility. This model is a good example of the potential collective impact that is possible: providing economic and social return to multiple healthcare system purchases, supporting a locally owned supplier, and creating significant quality jobs for priority communities.

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Over the past five years, the landscape for executing anchor mission strategies has drastically changed. The original **Anchor Mission Playbook** outlined strategies and insights to execute an anchor mission approach when the field was developing. Six years later, Rush University System for Health has derived new insights, implications, and tools to aid in the execution of the anchor mission framework.

In this update to Rush's original Playbook, we outline new learnings, challenges, developments and resources that have helped Rush University System for Health ensure the sustainability of its anchor mission in the current financial climate.

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