

# Anchor Mission Playbook

New Learnings and Findings  
in Anchor Mission Execution

prepared by

**Rush University System for Health**

with support from

**Healthcare Anchor Network**



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## 4.1 Human Resources Initiatives

### Engaging Recruitment and Talent Acquisition Employees in the Anchor Mission

Engaging the individuals at the forefront of recruitment efforts is critical to onboarding an increased number of anchor mission hires from focus geographies into the larger workforce. Talent acquisition managers work to build intentional pipelines of qualified applicants, and recruiters engage directly with those individuals to help navigate the application and interview process. Ensuring a seamless interaction between both departments creates a smoother flow of qualified applicants into open positions.

### Training Recruiters to Advance Impact Workforce Goals

After introducing recruiters to the anchor mission framework and building buy-in around local hiring, the next step is to create resources that support recruiters and talent acquisition consultants as they seek to hire local applicants. It is important to distinguish this process as a procedural one based on equitable access to available roles rather than a preferential one that gives priority to certain applicants.

A recruiter toolkit can be added to the general training curriculum for recruiters and should cover the following areas:

#### Anchor Mission Geographic Areas

Provide an overview of the focus geography, how it was designated (for example, by identifying significant health disparities such as differences in life expectancy), and how quality jobs can help low-income residents achieve the financial security needed to maintain good health and live fuller lives.

#### Special Considerations for Anchor Mission Applicants

Provide recruiters with an overview of the specific challenges community residents may face, such as long-term unemployment, lack of childcare, gaps in employment, justice impacted backgrounds, and lack of healthcare-specific experience. These individuals may also experience intimidation during the application process and may need extra encouragement from workforce development community partners to complete their application.

#### Collaborating with Workforce Development Partners

Compile a list of at least 10-15 workforce development partners that can serve as sourcing organizations by referring multiple candidates to apply for available positions. Enlisting these partners usually involves an introductory phone call to learn more about the organization, outline expectations for a partnership, and determine a meeting cadence with the partner. Recruiters and talent acquisition leads can choose to work directly with the partner or designate a lead that communicates with partners on behalf of the organization.

## Facilitating the Flow of Qualified Local Candidates

Talent acquisition and recruiting leads should enact a strategy to review applications from focus geographies and ensure they are set aside for hiring managers to review if/when baseline job requirements are met. This strategy should include a designated time to review applications, follow up with candidates or workforce partners to provide feedback, and tracking the number of applications from individuals referred by workforce partners versus those that are successfully onboarded as employees (to determine the number of applicants encountering barriers in the process).

## Follow Up with Candidates to Assess Application Experience

Providing feedback to anchor mission applicants that did not secure positions at Rush and receiving feedback from applicants who completed the application process will ensure consistency in the flow of applications. This can be done individually by the recruiters or through a workforce development partner that works closely with the applicant.

## Tactical Tools for Local Hiring Success

### Create a Partnership Tier System

- Assess yield of applicants from workforce partners.
- Prioritize maintenance, investment, and cultivation for partners referring the most applicants and engaging with Rush HR leads.
- This saves time for talent acquisition professionals as they determine how to engage with partners and prioritizes meetings, events, and general interactions with partners that are the most effective in referring candidates that will complete an application.

### Leverage Applicant Tracking Systems

- Create designations on Applicants Tracking System (ATS) to identify anchor mission applicants.
- Create website landing pages that more efficiently direct candidates to the application.
- Design webpage that describes different clinical and non-clinical roles so applicants can learn more about them.

## Consider and Make Space for Residents with the Greatest Barriers to Employment

### Justice-Impacted Individuals

- Identify areas in the application process that have the potential to disqualify individuals with justice-impacted backgrounds, including language that might dissuade these individuals from applying to jobs they are qualified for.
- In collaboration with Legal and Compliance teams, determine the types of prior justice-related offenses that would disqualify an applicant and how much time may need to have lapsed before disregarding the record.
- Employ a case-by-case approach when an applicant shows justice-related offenses in their background check.

### Applicants with Disabilities

- Designate a talent acquisition lead to serve as a point of contact for individuals who identify as having a disability. This person can answer questions about access as prospective applicants apply for a role and ensure that there is equity in the hiring process.
- Rush has enacted various marketing campaigns to encourage employees to feel comfortable disclosing disabilities as part of their identity at Rush, which is often an important factor for prospective applicants when deciding to join the health system as an employee.

Beyond justice-impacted individuals and individuals with disabilities, there are other residents who may face difficulty getting through the traditional recruitment process. It is important for institutions to identify opportunities for interventions that can ensure an equitable flow of all candidates through the application process. For many institutions, non-traditional applicants could be closely tied to anchor mission geographies. It is helpful to analyze application trends and observe these connections in order to increase the flow of anchor mission hires.

## Formalizing Employee Volunteer Policies

### Process of Establishing a Policy for Volunteer Time Off (VTO)

Shaping a volunteerism program as part of community benefit initiatives provides a way to test the idea of volunteer programming before formalizing it as a human resources or benefit policy. At Rush, we have found that aligning employee volunteerism with employee engagement and employee benefits department leads has resulted in the most coordinated approach and has provided momentum to all three initiatives. In our work, we have found that formalizing a volunteer time off policy has financial and organizational implications that should be noted before embarking on the process.

Whether a volunteer program involves a formal policy or not, it is still a worthwhile endeavor that can be coordinated efficiently as a cross-departmental effort. Rush's volunteer program partners with community-based organizations in the anchor mission geography. Most volunteer opportunities at Rush are with food pantries or with educational organizations operating on the West Side, though Rush has ongoing efforts to expand the variety of volunteer opportunities available to employees as part of the Anchor Mission strategy plan.

## Formalizing a VTO Policy

Pros	Cons/Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• more parity in the ability of employees to take time off regardless of their role (hourly vs. salaried) at the institution</li><li>• increased accessibility for all employees to designate specific dates for volunteer activities</li><li>• can be promoted as a benefit alongside paid time off (PTO)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• not cost-efficient, especially within budget constraints</li><li>• needs approval from HR leadership</li><li>• requires incorporation of process into departmental structures</li></ul>

## Employing Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) in Support of the Anchor Mission

Engaging with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and Employee Resource Groups (ERG) can also strengthen anchor mission initiatives related to employee engagement. At Rush, the West Side Anchor Mission Employee Resource Group was created so that Rush employees could have the opportunity to learn more about community organizations serving the West Side and volunteer to support existing community development efforts. See [6.6 Aligning with Anchor Mission-Adjacent Internal Initiatives](#) to learn more about how to engage ERGs as a tool to advance anchor mission implementation.

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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