



C.O.I.P.P.

Children Of Incarcerated Parents Partnership

STRATEGIC PLAN

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CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS PARTNERSHIP, INC.

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Description of Strategy Formation

Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, Inc. (COIPP) was founded several years ago by one woman with a passion for serving children whose lives have been impacted by parents who had been, or currently are, incarcerated. Since its incorporation as a 501(c)(3) organization in 2011, this all-volunteer organization has added an Executive Director position, expanded the population it serves, and increased the number and type of programs it offers. It now serves:

- children birth through 18 who are impacted by having a currently or formerly incarcerated loved one (primary target audience),
- caregivers of children whose loved ones are currently incarcerated,
- incarcerated persons who have children in their lives, and
- formerly incarcerated adults who have children,

through the following programs and activities:

- Coffee with COIPP - education and discussion for formerly incarcerated parents
- Individual meetings with formerly incarcerated adults
- Sharing Fairs – hygiene products and other provisions for anyone who comes to visitation at Detention Center
- Children’s activities – bowling, pizza nights, etc. for primary target audience
- Detention Center library – for primary target audience
- Scholarships to Frederick Community College for caregivers, adult children, formerly incarcerated parents
- Outreach – filling immediate needs, such as diapers, gift cards, bus passes, etc. for caregivers of primary target audience, or formerly incarcerated parents of targeted group
- Parenting workshops – for caregivers and parents of target audience
- Parenting workshops - for educators and professionals who work with the primary target audience.

Until the present time, the organization has grown and changed naturally, as the needs of the population it served were recognized. The Board and Executive Director prudently realized that the time had come for COIPP to plan more thoughtfully and conscientiously in order to maintain its current programs and to grow in a sustainable fashion.

The Board engaged the strategic planning services of Hanberry Associates, LLC, to assist in this effort. The Executive Committee, Executive Director and the consultant met to discuss and come to agreement on the project scope of work, activities and timeline. Following this

meeting, the consultant conducted an ‘environmental scan’, contacting six people from a list compiled jointly, as well as participating in two focus groups, to determine how COIPP was viewed by its constituents. The results of this survey, which are an integral part of this Strategic Plan, are summarized in the Environmental Scan Report, attached.

A full-day strategic planning retreat was held on March 29, 2019 with all of the members of the Board, the Executive Director and some additional volunteers in attendance. This Strategic Plan is a result of this session. The consultant will engage the Executive Committee and Executive Director in one additional meeting to develop the first year Operational Plan, as a first step in implementing the Strategic Plan.

This Plan marks the beginning of a process, not an end. It is intended to be a ‘living’ document, one that is referred to, reviewed at least annually, and revised as needed, thereby serving COIPP and its constituents far into the future.

COIPP’s Impact, Mission and Business Plan

An organization’s mission forms the framework for everything it does, and is ‘ground zero’ for the strategic planning work to follow. It is, therefore, important for the group to confirm, or suggest revisions to, their mission statement at the beginning of the planning process. COIPP’s mission, as stated on its web site is:

“To foster the growth of strong, resilient, hopeful children who are impacted by an incarcerated loved one in the Frederick County region”.

Before the group discussed this Mission Statement, the consultant presented four additional ‘missions’ that appear on COIPP’s web site. The comments in parentheses are the group’s reactions to each:

- Helping families in need is our passion (too general)
- To assist children and their caregivers when a parent is incarcerated (too limited)
- We provide support, resources and services for the children, their caregivers and present and formerly incarcerated family members in the Frederick region (this is what we ‘do’, not the impact we want to have)
- Our belief is that children of incarcerated parents are a group of children who lack a voice of their own. Our work and our mission is to give them such a voice in the community, in the schools, and in their family (this is not our mission – we don’t do this)
- Our Mission is to assist children and their caregivers who are impacted by the incarceration of a loved one. [from Guidestar, added following the retreat as a reminder to the group to revise this on Guidestar]

Following small group work and a fruitful discussion with the whole group, the participants affirmed the current Mission Statement, as written at the top of this section. They recognized that the web site had morphed along with the programs, and that *it*, not the Mission Statement,

needs to be revised. It is not often that organizations affirm their Mission Statement so readily; the COIPP leaders are to be commended.

The group then developed its Business Plan (Attachment). Several essential questions and observations were raised during this activity, as follows:

- Because there is not an intake process, some activities, such as Coffee with COIPP and Parenting from Afar, include adult participants who either do not have or care for children, or whose children are grown or, in the case of Coffee with COIPP, have no connection with incarceration whatsoever.
- The geographic area served is difficult to define, since some participants live or are incarcerated in jurisdictions other than Frederick, and presentations and training are often provided in other areas of the state or country.
- The Executive Director often provides training, addresses, etc. outside of Frederick which are sometimes paid, sometimes not. The Director is looking for guidance as to whether these are official COIPP activities or are done on her own, the answer to which will provide guidance on the Director's use of time and where the remuneration should be directed.
- This same question raised a larger issue, which is whether COIPP should a) confine its activities to direct service provision in the Frederick area; b) consider providing direct services in other jurisdictions; or c) pursue creating a model of the program to license to other jurisdictions.

This discussion lead to one clarification on the spot, which is that 'children' is defined as 'birth through 18". This confirmation of the parameters of the target population, and the revelation that non-parent/caregivers and adults with no connection to incarceration are being served, will require some changes to the organization's procedures and processes.

COIPP's Strengths

The Environmental Scan Report describes the strengths of the organization, as perceived by several of its constituents, including its program participants. The Board and Executive Director either affirmed or added to these, by outlining the following strengths:

- Shari – our Executive Director and our totally committed, passionate, energetic Founder
- Diversity of services
- Uniqueness – only group in the area that works with caregivers, children and people who have been incarcerated
- All volunteer – this impresses donors; all money raised goes directly to services
- Talents of board members
- Multiple awards have been won by the organization
- Working board – hands on
- Passion and enthusiasm and belief in what we do

- Non-judgmental, especially with their participants
- Visionary, responsive to current needs
- Immediately responsive to people in need currently
- Do well in Unity Campaign
- Silent auction – make a lot of money, community knows about it and relates it to COIPP
- Affection among board members

These strengths very closely parallel those mentioned in the Environmental Scan, with the addition of the strength mentioned in the Environmental Scan that the Executive Director has made steps to take a less active role, which is imperative to the long-term survival of the organization.

COIPP's Areas for Improvement

Every organization has areas where it can improve and grow, and COIPP is no exception. Several were mentioned in the Environmental Scan, and may be found in that report. A strong organization will recognize its own areas for improvement, which COIPP did during the strategic planning session, citing the need to:

- Set boundaries about programs and services, avoid mission creep
- Increase marketing – for donors, participants, goodwill, volunteers; revise web site, etc.
- Replicate the model/assist others in replicating COIPP's model
- Say 'no' to certain gifts
- Improve communications within the group/condense the messages
- Move on from being "Shari's" organization; engage in succession planning
- Develop the board/cross train within board/board succession planning
- Increase diversity on the board/volunteers – legal, business, males
- Increase speaking engagement capacity
- Enhance programming for older kids – adolescents
- Concentrate on/talk about ACES – effects on children, what do we do about it?
- Increase diversity of funding sources
- Provide better/more services for non-English speakers (LEP)
- Organize marketing and presentation materials and equipment
- Grow organizational capacity: More active volunteers? Paid staff? Space?
- Develop donor and volunteer recognition/celebration
- Consider establishing a headquarters – looking at Federated Charities now
- Develop measurable outcomes and data collection
- Produce an annual report
- Coordinate with police department, so they can provide info for caregivers
- Educate educators and adolescents about effects of incarceration – trauma informed
- Develop groups for caregivers

This list provides fertile ground for the Strategic Plan to grow!

COIPP's External Threats or Barriers

It is important for organizations to recognize those systems, forces, trends, etc. that are external to the organization and not subject to its control, which may create barriers for the sustainability and/or growth of the organization. These 'threats' are rarely seldom fatal; however, the organization must be cognizant of them in order to develop 'work arounds' or other ways of dealing with them. The participants in the strategic planning retreat created a thoughtful list of COIPP's threats and barriers, both current and potential:

- Detention center policies
- Changes in funding
- FCPS confidentiality policies
- Prohibition on giving/selling Parenting from Afar curriculum (by the funder)
- Transportation for families
- Decreasing population in detention center and treatment centers due to changes in sentencing guidelines; population fluctuates
- Fundraising – stigmas associated with incarcerated people
- Lack of reliability of participants

COIPP's Opportunities and Collaborators

Collaboration is not simply doing activities alongside another organization, or making referrals between organizations; it is providing services together that neither could provide on its own. COIPP already has some of the best examples of collaboration in Frederick.

COIPP's closest collaboration is with the detention center: it is allowed to hold groups in the Detention Center and sharing fairs on the Detention Center grounds. The Detention Center staff work closely with the COIPP volunteers to identify potential COIPP participants and to ensure their participation in the activities.

COIPP also works closely with the Mental Health Association of Frederick County on a grant from the Governor's Office for Children called Families Impacted by Incarcerated Program (FIIP). In essence, the Mental Health Association administers the grant, and COIPP personnel provide the services to the participants, under contract to MHA.

The group suggested other collaborators, all of which could be categorized more as partnerships or referral sources than as actual collaborators. These included substance use organizations, pediatricians, the Police Activity League, Blessings in a Backpack, and the School Homelessness Initiative Partnership. They suggested that large corporations could be good sources for human resources support and possibly office space.

COIPP's Competitors and Competitive Advantages

Since collaboration and partnership are stressed so strongly in the nonprofit world, nonprofit organizations do not like to think that they are in competition with other nonprofits. COIPP's Board and Executive Director could not identify and direct competitors, that is, other organizations that serve the same population groups with the same services in the same region. They recognized, however, that they have many resource competitors, that is, those with whom they compete for volunteers, funds, board members, etc., which include most human service nonprofits in Frederick. Specific resource competitors, whose primary service recipients are children, listed were:

- School Homelessness Initiative Partnership
- Child Advocacy Center
- Blessings in a Backpack
- Headstart
- Boys and Girls Club
- YMCA

It is not at all unusual for potential collaborators also to be competitors – such is the world of nonprofit organizations!

The reason for identifying competitors, is that it is important for a group to determine its competitive advantages, that is, those elements of its mission and service that distinguish it from other nonprofits doing similar things. The strategic planning participants identified COIPP's competitive advantages as follows:

- COIPP serves a unique population with unique services in the Frederick area
- It is an all-volunteer organization, which translates to low overhead, which is attractive to donors
- The board is hands on; they work directly with the participants, as well as serve as a governing board. Discussion following this point indicated that this may or may not be an advantage to COIPP.
- Non-board volunteers work directly with the participants, unlike in many organizations where volunteers are relegated to the front desk or file room.
- The Founder of the organization has 'lived experienced' with the issue at the heart of the organization.

Using these competitive advantages is a way for COIPP to make itself visible in the community and attract donor dollars, volunteers, etc. which otherwise could go elsewhere.

COIPP's Critical Issues

Prior to formulating COIPP's strategies for the future, it was imperative during the retreat to identify the critical issues that the strategies are to address. These critical issues are based on all of the information that had been shared and discussed previously, including COIPP's strengths, areas for improvement, challenges, opportunities, competitors, its competitive advantages, and the Environmental Scan results, which can be summarized as follow:

Given COIPP's:

- Commitment to its mission: To foster the growth of strong, resilient, hopeful children who are impacted by an incarcerated loved one in the Frederick County region;
- Its strengths of an extremely passionate and energetic Founder and Executive Director; a committed Board of Directors; its ability to identify and respond to needs as they are identified; its uniqueness in the community, and the fact that it is an all-volunteer organization;
- Its need to set boundaries about programs and services to avoid mission creep; to grow its organizational capacity, including the possibility of paid staff and office space; to engage in succession planning for both the Executive Director and Board; to increase its public awareness through increased marketing efforts; and to address the question of remaining a direct service organization or developing a model for others to replicate; and
- The constraints presented by other organizations which could limit COIPP's continued growth...

COIPP has identified the following Critical Issues:

1. How do we sustain/build our organizational capacity and resources to fulfill our Mission? How do we plan to replace our current Founder and Executive Director, who could fall into a crevice in the Himalayas and be unable to serve in her current capacity; should we add paid staff and, if so, when; should we create central office space; how will we pay for paid staff and office space? How do we ensure we attract the talent we need on the board and plan for board member succession?
2. Where are we going as an organization: Do we continue to provide direct service only; do we replicate our services elsewhere ourselves; do we create a model to license to others?
3. How do we determine what data we should be collecting and how to we collect and report it?
4. How can we increase the public's knowledge about COIPP?
5. How do we better engage our active followers and volunteers and move them ahead in the organization? What systems do we need to recruit, screen, orient, train, and manage our volunteers? How do we increase the diversity of our volunteers?

COOPP's Strategies

Non-profit organization strategies are defined as, “A coordinated set of actions aimed at creating and sustaining a competitive advantage in carrying out the non-profit’s mission”. They serve as the jumping off point for developing smaller, more discrete action steps in the annual Operational Plans. The consultant has developed the following strategies for each of the Critical Issues. The Executive Committee and Executive Director are free to modify these strategies.

The strategies may appear to be overwhelming. It is important to remember that this is a *strategic* plan, meant to be reviewed, implemented, revised, re-implemented over many years – not next week!

1. How do we sustain/build our organizational capacity and resources to fulfill our Mission?

a. How do we plan to replace our current Founder and Executive Director?

We will determine the functions and skills necessary for an Executive Director to sustain and to grow the organization; we will develop a job description for the position based on these functions. We will determine the salary/benefits necessary for the position (or determine whether it is possible to find a volunteer). We will task the current Executive Director with creating written documents of any functions/processes, etc. that are not already documented. We will develop a timeline with the Executive Director, including plans and dates for a communication plan, recruitment and retirement date. We will determine how the recruiting will be handled. We will not allow the Executive Director to continue to work following the stated retirement date, to avoid putting off the difficult job of finding her successor.

b. Should/when should we add paid staff?

We will determine the functions and skills necessary to sustain and grow the organization in addition, and complementary, to those of the Executive Director. We will develop job description(s) based on the functions required to be carried out. We will determine whether these functions can be achieved by Board members or other volunteers. We will determine the salary/benefits necessary if the decision is made to hire staff.

c. How do we ensure we attract the talent we need on the board and plan for board member succession?

In conjunction with 1b, we will identify the functions we need board members to carry out (in addition to their governance responsibilities), including whether hands-on work will continue to be a requirement of board membership. We will determine the skills and kinds of diversity needed on the board and recruit new board members specifically for those skills and diversity.

d. Should we create central office space?

We will list the pros and cons of central versus decentralized space. We will document our needs for space, taking into consideration possible future staff, including desks, storage, meeting space, etc. We will research market availability and determine the cost of renting sufficient space.

e. How will we pay for staff salaries and office space?

Based on the information gathered above, we will determine our revenue needs. We will research and decide on which funding sources to pursue, such as annual giving, major gift campaigns, foundations, other grants, fee for service, licensing fees, etc. The skills needed to carry out this activity will be considered in 1b and 1c, above.

2. Where are we going as an organization: Do we continue to provide direct service only; do we, ourselves, replicate our services elsewhere; and/or do we create a model to license to others?

We will review our current programs to ensure that they are in line with our Mission (to avoid “mission creep”). We will task a group with creating the pros and cons of each of the three options, including the possibility of one or two of the options being sources of funds. Once the full board has made the decision as to which option(s) to pursue, we will develop an action plan to implement the option, including a timeline for implementation. We will allow ourselves the possibility of abandoning the option at any point if it appears not to be feasible or is detrimental to current operations.

3. How do we determine what data we should be collecting; how do we collect and report it?

We will determine our grant funders’ needs for data (output/outcome/financial) as well as our own needs, based on what our donors (and we) want to know about how the organization is doing. We will identify the sources for the data and develop the systems needed for collecting and reporting it. [This function should be taken into account in #1]

4. How can we increase the public’s knowledge about COIPP?

We will review our social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat) to ensure that the messaging and branding is consistent. We will assign responsibility and procedures for ensuring that each medium is kept up-to-date [ed. note: COIPP’s Facebook page is amazingly active and up-to-date]. We will consider other sources of public communication, including PSAs, community TV (interviews and ‘scrawls’), and newspaper and magazine articles. [These functions also should be taken into account in 1b]

5. How do we better engage our active followers to convert them to volunteers, and our volunteers to move them ahead in the organization? What systems do we need to recruit, screen, orient, train, and manage our volunteers? How do we increase the diversity of our volunteers?

We will develop, document and centralize our volunteer policies and procedures to ensure consistency in identifying, recruiting, training, overseeing and recognizing volunteers. In concert with 1b, we will determine the functions needed to be carried out to sustain and grow the organization and will recruit volunteers (or engage current ones) for specific functions. We will develop a means for communicating directly with volunteers such as Constant Contact or otherwise staying in touch personally with the most active volunteers. [Another function to be taken into account in 1b].

These Critical Issues and associated Strategies form the Strategic Plan. Following the development and approval of this document, the board will engage in creating an Operating Plan annually, which will delineate the specific steps needed to address each Critical Issue during the coming year.

COOPP's Strategy Screen

The participants ended the retreat by developing a 'Strategy Screen', that is, a list of criteria by which strategies and programs, both existing and proposed, should be measured. It is important to use this screen before making any major decisions regarding programming, especially when addressing the question in #2 above about the future of the organization.

COIPP will adopt strategies and create programs that:

- Are consistent with our mission
- Fill a need in the targeted community
- Can be executed within a reasonable time frame
- Have demonstrable/measurable outcomes
- Can be accomplished within our fiscal limitations and bring with them, or have the potential to generate, financial resources
- Do not duplicate other programs
- Leverage our competitive advantages
- Are sustainable

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COIPP now has a Strategic Plan that, when coupled with actionable and realistic annual operational plans, will carry the organization far into the future.

COIPP'S BUSINESS PLAN

Scope	Includes	Does <u>not</u> include
Geographic Service Area	Frederick County Region Some of Washington, Carroll, Montgomery counties At least one family member/caregiver/child lives and/or is incarcerated in Frederick and surrounding counties	
Customers Served	Children birth through 18 who are impacted by having a currently or formerly incarcerated loved Caregivers of children whose loved ones are currently incarcerated Incarcerated persons who have children in their lives Formerly incarcerated adults who have children	People who have no connection to Frederick Regional area
Programs or Services Offered	Coffee with COIPP – formerly incarcerated parents (or not) Individual meetings with formerly incarcerated people Sharing Fairs – anyone who shows up for visitation at Detention Center, provide hygiene products, stuff for kids, diapers, underwear, provide information Children's activities –for primary target audience Detention Center library – for primary target audience Scholarships to FCC for caregivers, adult children, formerly incarcerated parents Outreach– provide diapers, gift cards, bus passes, etc. for caregivers for primary target audience, or formerly incarcerated parents of targeted group Parenting workshops for caregivers and parents of target audience Parenting workshops for educators and professionals around this topic Keynotes – anywhere, about COIPP model Information and Referral to other resources	Providing curriculum for Parenting from Afar to other organizations Housing Paying bills/utilities; cash Christmas gifts Counseling Childcare Formal education Transportation except bus passes Health care Mentoring Advocacy Promotion of religious beliefs
Funding sources	Current sources of funding and why we pursue these sources Families Impacted by Incarcerated Program through MHA Donations Unity Campaign Silent Auction Other grants: Rotary, Ausherman, Impacted Club, Women's Giving Circle, etc. 3 rd party donations	Funding sources we do <u>not</u> have or seek Fees for service from customers Workshop and consulting fees (may consider) Federal grants Chick-fil-A Funding that puts restrictions on participants