

NPO Report Part 1: Organizational Structure

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Introduction

RGV Helping Hands is a non-profit organization that operates in South Texas, all along the Rio Grande Valley. The Rio Grande Valley comprises the border along Mexico and the cities of McAllen, Edinburg, Weslaco, among others. Their primary purpose or mission reads: “To help the disabled in our local community to meet the minimum of ADA requirements for their homes to be safer and a happier establishment” (<https://www.open990.org/org/471771568/rgv-helping-hands-inc/>). This non-profit organization helps people in need in plenty of different ways including but not limited to rebuilding houses. Some additional examples of what they have done in the past is help disadvantaged people when natural disasters have occurred along the Rio Grande Valley as well as helping with food banks, fundraisers, and taking part in school or community activities (<https://www.facebook.com/rgvhelpinghands>). I also chose them because they have some highly creative ways of raising money, including hosting a haunted house attraction throughout the year (<http://tolucaranch.com>).

Tax Status and Type of Organization

Based on the Determination Letter published on the IRS Website, RGV Helping Hands qualifies as a 503(c) (3) non-profit organization (<http://irs.gov>). This means the organization is exempt from federal income tax in the eyes of IRS. This also entails that RGV Helping Hands can receive tax deductible donations and gifts from an assortment of donors. While they do not pay taxes and can receive donations, they are still responsible to follow certain guidelines. In addition to that, the non-profit is required to file any of the following forms 990/990-EZ/990-N (<http://irs.gov>). If they do not follow through with their filing, there could be consequences for

them. If failing to file one of those forms three years in a row they could be at risk of losing their tax exempt status (<http://irs.gov>).

Legal Organization Structure

As stated on the website <http://open990.org>, this non-profit organization's internal structure consists of the following:

1. President- Georgina Gonzalez.
2. Vice President- Alyssa Serna.
3. Secretary- Kimberly Stuart Serna.
4. Treasurer- Julie Vera.

Since their responsibilities are not cited on the previous website, I contacted them over the phone for further information. I was informed that they could send me some information through postal mail, but it would take a few days. Instead, I spoke to the treasurer of the organization, who referred me to a website (<http://boardable.com/blog/nonprofit-board-role-job-descriptions/>) they use for guidelines. Based on that website and interview, the information follows:

1. The president may function as a spokesperson for the board, prepare agendas for meetings, oversee evaluation and selection of the CEO (if applicable), and oversees meetings and other committees among other functions.
2. Vice President- Prepares for all intents and purposes to assume leadership at some point, assists the president or board chair with decisions or when absent, works closely with all branches of the organization, among others.
3. Secretary- Takes care of the agendas for the meetings, distributes them beforehand, prepares minutes, and makes sure that important documents such as bylaws, tax forms and others are filed and readily available for members or public.

4. Treasurer- Serves as the financial officer for the non-profit, follows financial responsibilities, leads financial reports, aids in preparing annual budgets as well as presenting them, among other obligations (K. Stuart-Serna, personal communication, November 10, 2020).

For the most part, I think the responsibilities they follow were aligned to what we have learned in class so far.

Summary of Information from Formal Documents

When trying to find more information on bylaws or Articles of Incorporation, I obtained such from the interview over the phone with the secretary of the non-profit organization. I was advised that their articles of incorporation included the following:

1. Legal name of the organization: RGV Helping Hands, Inc.
2. Address of the organization: 328 W. Zacatecas St. Weslaco, Texas 78599.
3. Incorporator of the non-profit organization: Jose Arrambide (Gonzales & Arrambide).
4. Registered Agent/ Officer for the organization: Julie Vera (Treasurer).
5. Duration: Perpetual.
6. Purpose: To help the disabled in our local community to meet the minimum of ADA requirements for their homes to be safer and happier establishment.
7. Non-profit nature: 503 (c) (3).
8. Board: President, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
9. Membership: N/A
10. Amendments: Any amendment to the articles will be approved by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members.

Regarding the bylaws, I was told it included the following: their mission statement, management structure as to how they operate including their responsibilities, the provision for amendments

based on $\frac{3}{4}$ of the board members agreeing on something before is changed, and information about how they handle their monthly meetings and fundraisers (K. Stuart-Serna, personal communication, November 10, 2020).

Additional Information and Changes

Per their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/rgvhelpinghands>) , the phone interview (K. Stuart-Serna, personal communication, November 10, 2020), and the information on the website <http://tolucaranch.com> , the only major changes the non-profit organization has gone through are related to the fundraising activities and cross promotional efforts thereof. Such fundraising activities have included a haunted house attraction that is run by volunteers with all profits going directly to the non-profit organization. Additionally, the staff has engaged in cross-promotional efforts targeting different audiences from across the Rio Grande Valley resulting in increased profits for the organization.

Conclusion

I think this organization is small enough to include only those four members and while it seems to boast a great number of volunteers, I did not see much of that in my research. I am looking forward to learning more about the organization and apply what I know and what I am learning towards improving the impact of RGV Helping Hands in the community.

References

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