



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:
R.I.S.E. PROGRAM

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Executive Summary

R.I.S.E. (Resilient-Independent-Social-Empowerment) is a therapeutic recreation day program for adults with disabilities. Community input and a review of existing programs helped Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation Department realize a need for year-round adult with disabilities programming. As a result, R.I.S.E., which operates every Friday at Nike Park in Carrollton, Virginia was developed. The program’s goal is to promote socialization, increase independent living skills, and participate in recreational activities. It is a group setting that offers an excellent opportunity to join a community with common goals and abilities. R.I.S.E. includes group activities, arts and crafts, pop-up field trips, physical activities, outdoor exploration, and a wide variety of workshops. The success of R.I.S.E. has made it an integral part of the Parks and Recreation Department’s inclusion programming. Adult inclusion programming serves two primary goals. First is to provide the opportunity for adults of Parks and Recreation programs, who exhibit the need for therapeutic intervention, the opportunity to overcome any program barriers and continue participation. Second is to educate Department staff on how to effectively work with participants who have varying disabilities. These goals assist residents of Isle of Wight County and neighboring localities with safe and effective adults with disabilities program participation. R.I.S.E. has become a successful addition to the department’s inclusion programming plan.

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Full Description

Prior to 2023, Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation Department lacked a therapeutic recreation program. Consequently, the county had very little in the way of programs for adults with disabilities. In 2023, the county hired its first-ever Therapeutic Recreation Specialist to support the needs of people with disabilities in the community. The Therapeutic Recreation Specialist immediately recognized a demand for a year-round, consistent program that would provide opportunities specifically for adults with disabilities. Thus, the R.I.S.E. (Resilient-Independent-Social-Empowerment) Program was born. R.I.S.E.'s goals are designed to promote socialization, increase independent living skills, provide leisure education, increase participation in recreation and leisure activities, and allow participants to be part of a group that shares similar skills and abilities. It is a comprehensive program aimed at enhancing the quality of life and overall health and well-being of adults with disabilities in the community. The program's goals are achieved through various learning opportunities as well as recreation activities like sports, outdoor exploration, games, arts and crafts, music, and dance. All the participants develop social skills, build friendships, and gain confidence in their abilities. Each activity is designed to cater to the unique goals and abilities of participants. Because participants congregate every Friday, consistency promotes continued growth toward their individualized goals and activity objectives.

The R.I.S.E. Program is facilitated by an experienced and qualified Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) who is passionate about helping adults with disabilities. But because Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation has only one CTRS, the entire Parks and Recreation Department programming team works together to make R.I.S.E. a success. This also allows staff without a background and experience in disability education the chance to gain knowledge and familiarity with therapeutic recreation. They work closely with R.I.S.E.

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participants to ensure that their needs are met, and they receive the support necessary to achieve their goals. As a result, staff knowledge transfers into the service of other programs like sports and camps. Now we can better serve individuals with disabilities in many aspects of parks and recreation programming.

Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation Department has a limited operating budget that must cover a wide variety of youth and adult programs. Consequently, only a small share is designated for therapeutic recreation programs. So, to support R.I.S.E. with limited resources, the Therapeutic Recreation Specialist collaborates with many community organizations. Outside speakers and guests are invited to work with the participants, such as the Isle of Wight County Museum, local libraries, the Sheriff's Office, a nutrition expert, and a music therapist. The Isle of Wight County Museum teaches the participants about community history using hands-on activities. Library visits are also very popular. R.I.S.E. participants look forward to their diverse range of engaging group activities. These activities include creating book and magazine collages, participating in book clubs, adult story times, playing brain games, and discussing paranormal investigations. The Sheriff's Office also visits the program to discuss safety around the home and community. Their K9 division brings dogs for the participants to interact with and learn about their law enforcement duties. In addition, the group has the privilege of receiving routine visits from a nutritionist who teaches them about healthy eating habits, which goes hand in hand with independent living skills. The nutritionist offers recipes and works hands-on with the group to prepare meals so that each participant can learn how to make delicious and healthy foods. To facilitate music therapy for R.I.S.E. participants, the music therapist teaches the basics for a wide variety of instruments. Then, each participant chooses a song, and the group plays along with their newly learned instruments. She encourages them to try out different instruments for each song. If any participant is feeling the beat, they are encouraged to get up and dance and sing.

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The R.I.S.E. Program has also formed a partnership with the local YMCA. During field trips to the YMCA, staff educate R.I.S.E. participants on program information. The first YMCA field trip was an eventful day that included a guided tour of the facility, meeting with all the staff members, open gym playtime, a fun-filled Zumba class, and a group discussion where participants shared their aspirations and goals. Future YMCA visits are scheduled to include yoga, aquatics programs, and fitness center equipment orientations. The R.I.S.E Program also has occasional field trips throughout the year, such as visiting an indoor glow-in-the-dark mini-golf course and lunch at Chick-fil-A. During these trips, each participant orders and pays for their meal independently or with a little prompting and encouragement from the Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.

Feedback on the program has been overwhelmingly positive. Attendance throughout the years has remained strong and the program is at full capacity. R.I.S.E. will be continuously evaluated as part of the Department's program lifecycle review. But it is evident that R.I.S.E. will remain a staple of our programming portfolio for a very long time. This one-of-a-kind Isle of Wight County program is enriched with a range of various educational and fun-filled activities that benefit all participants. Overall, it is an excellent, well-rounded, and fulfilling experience for everyone involved. So, the R.I.S.E. Program is a strong contender for the Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award.

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R.I.S.E. PHOTOS



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R.I.S.E. VIDEO

YouTube

https://youtu.be/k-8oL4J4x3Q?si=X7ewil9PeWO_VxIO

Website:

https://www.co.isle-of-wight.va.us/departments/parks_and_recreation/therapeutic_recreation.php