

The Merger Conversation

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

Governance

- What will be the name and brand of the new organization?
- What will be the mission of the new organization?
- How will the board be composed?
- How will officers of the board be decided?

Program

- Will we add new programs or stop other programs and how will we decide?
- How will our clients feel about possible changes? How can we ease their concerns?
- How will we evaluate our effectiveness?
- Do we have the right infrastructure to track services and meet funder requirements from both organizations?

Human Resources

- Who will lead the new organization?
- Who will comprise the leadership team?
- Are pay and benefits equitable between the two organizations?
- How do we maintain staff morale after the merger?
- Will jobs be lost as a result of the merger? If so, how will we handle severance?

Financial

- What will the new finance office need to look like?
- How will all funders and contractors be notified of the change?
- Will insurance coverage be adequate for the new organization?
- Are there any audit or financial review issues in need of being addressed?

Fundraising

- How will donors be notified of the merger?
- What steps will both organizations take to blend the donor pool?
- Is the donor tracking software for both organizations compatible?
- How will timing of annual appeals and special events be blended?

Capital Issues

- Where will the new organization be housed? Will new office space be needed? Will old office space no longer be needed?
- Are there legally binding agreements, such as leases or rental agreements, which will need to be re-negotiated?
- What are the hardware and software needs of both organizations? Are systems compatible? Will one group require a substantial upgrade?
- How does the state of office equipment and supplies compare between the two organizations?

Communication

- How will we keep in touch with employees during a merger?
- How will we stay in touch with other key constituencies during negotiations – e.g., funders, donors, contractors, community leaders?
- How will we handle the media? Who will serve as spokesperson for the new organization?
- What opportunities does a merger present for enhanced positive media presence?
- If we decide against a merger, how will we message that decision?