

# **Weighing the Pros and Cons of Collaboration**

## **Opportunities/Advantages/Hopes**

- May enhance the quality, productivity, and efficiency of services and operations.
- May reduce (or control) operating costs, especially for administration.
- May reduce competition (or conflict) among nonprofit organizations operating within the same service area.
- May promote greater division of labor within and among organizations, allowing staff members to perform only those tasks that each does best. This may provide new opportunities for staff development and improve staff morale.
- May provide an opportunity to develop new services and new "products" - or to expand existing services into a wider geographic area.
- May provide "one-stop" services for clients, constituents, and members.
- May expand the donor base and enhance fundraising, increasing the likelihood of sustaining endangered programs (or endangered organizations).
- May enhance public recognition for the nonprofits and for issues they champion.
- May draw new members into the organization(s) and onto the board(s).

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## Dangers/Risks/Concerns

- May dilute, distort, or divert core mission(s) and hard-won corporate identity.
- May reduce or eliminate valuable services deemed "inefficient" or "duplicative."
- May erode local accountability and lose grassroots support within the community.
- May make everything more precarious by putting all the "eggs" for social services or affordable housing or some other nonprofit activity into one "basket."
- May result in the elimination of positions and the termination of dedicated staff.
- May combine competing executives, incompatible staffs, contradictory values, and clashing cultures in a single organization that becomes fraught with conflict.
- May lower morale, antagonizing staff and chasing away present board members.
- May discover "time-bombs" ticking away within either organization that become obvious only after collaboration or consolidation is a "done deal."
- May require a larger, more sophisticated, and more expensive staff to run the operations of a larger, more complex organization.
- May incur significant legal costs in transferring assets and merging corporations.