

TOOL #8: COMPARISON OF MISSION STATEMENTS

A clear, agreed-upon mission statement is one of the primary characteristics of a successful nonprofit organization. The mission statement should be able to answer, in a few sentences that will be easily understood by the major stakeholders, the following questions:

- A. What is your purpose or end goal? (e.g., a home for every person)
- B. What is your business or means for achieving your goal? (e.g., to develop affordable housing)
- C. Whom do you serve and, perhaps, where? (e.g., Cook County residents)

One of the first steps for investigating a possible merger between two organizations is to examine the mission alignment between them. Remember, it is key for the missions of each organization to be aligned in order to execute a successful merger strategy. Each party should look carefully at its own mission statement as well as the mission statement of its potential partner to ensure they are compatible. Representatives of both parties can come together to do this.

For this exercise, you will examine your mission statement and your potential partner's mission statement side by side to understand each organization's purpose, its business, and its target population. Please see the exercise on the following page.

EXERCISE:

1. Write each organization's mission statement down:

Mission Statement #1:

Mission Statement #2:

2. Now, circle the end goal for each mission statement. Discuss what was circled: Are they similar or dissimilar? If dissimilar, do they complement each other?

3. Next, circle the part of each mission statement that identifies the business, or means for achieving the end goal. How is each organization's business the same or different? Can the businesses be leveraged? Are there potential conflicts in terms of the core competencies?

4. Finally, circle the part of the mission statement that describes the core constituency being served. How are they similar or dissimilar? Are constituencies aligned in any way?

5. Summarize the results of this conversation, and decide how the mission statements are aligned or not aligned. Discuss the significance of your discoveries in terms of a merger strategy.