



**The SeaChange – Lodestar Fund for Nonprofit Collaboration**

**Two-Year Grant Survey Analysis**

**January 2016**

**Introduction and Methodology**

The SeaChange-Lodestar Fund for Nonprofit Collaboration (the “Fund”) was launched in 2009 to support nonprofits in exploring or completing mergers, acquisitions, joint-ventures, and other types of formal, long-term collaborations. Since then, the Fund has evaluated 347 transactions and made 84 grants totaling \$1.7 million. Every grant has included three reporting requirements: (i) semi-annual reports on success metrics for the collaboration over a two-year period; (ii) a final report on the overall collaboration at the end of the period; and (iii) a short survey to collect feedback on the collaboration’s successes, failures, and lessons learned.

In November 2015, the Fund sent the survey to 42 grantees whose collaborations had reached maturities of two-years or more (note: the survey was developed over 2015; 53% of the 42 collaborations surveyed were over two-years old). Grantees were given until mid-December to submit responses, and the overall response rate was 88%. This memo provides a detailed analysis of the responses by grant type (exploration vs. implementation).

Grant Type	Survey Response Rate by Grant Type		
	Sent	Responses	% Responses
Exploration*	8	6	75%
Implementation	34	31	91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>88%</b>

**Exploration Grants:**

Although the sample of exploration responses was small (only six), in five cases the information was submitted by an individual who had been directly involved in the transaction. Consistent with our overall experience, the collaborations being pursued included many types, in most cases the organizations used a consultant, and most collaborations did move forward, but only after six months or more of exploration:

Collaborations Pursued	
<b>Type</b>	
Merger/Acquisition	<b>33%</b>
Back Office/Administrative	17%
Programmatic Collaboration	17%
Alliance/Coalition	<b>33%</b>
<b>Consultant</b>	
Used	<b>83%</b>
Not Used	17%
<b>Length of Exploration</b>	
Less than six months	33%
Six to twelve months	17%
More than one year	<b>50%</b>
<b>Outcome</b>	
Implementation with original partner	<b>83%</b>
Did not progress beyond exploration	17%

*Note: Largest figures are in bold.*

Several consistent themes emerged from the responses:

1. Collaborations usually involved grantees that already knew each other well. Programmatic, cultural, and mission “fit” questions played a key role in the exploration process. As grantees concluded the exploration process, executive leadership, the financial condition of the organizations, and funder involvement gained in importance (all gained 5-10 percentage points), while all other factors became less influential. In fact, board composition and transaction costs lost all their importance at the conclusion of the exploration process. See below for a comparison:

Influential Factors	Importance by Stage	
	Beginning of Exploration	Conclusion of Exploration
Mission Fit	92%	84%
Program Fit	70%	64%
Familiarity with Each Other	68%	53%
Cultural Fit	68%	50%
Executive Leadership	55%	60%
Financial Condition	42%	50%
Funder Suggestion	38%	47%
Board Composition	32%	0%
Transaction Costs	26%	0%

*Note: Grantees were asked to rank the importance of each factor in their explorations. This table presents the weighted averages of the importance of these factors.*

2. All grantees – Including the one grantee that did not formalize a collaboration – believed the exploration process was valuable because it served as a “landscape” analysis that helped their organizations determine a best course of action. The potential collaborations gave grantees the opportunity to take a step back to (i) consider their impact as part of a larger ecosystem; (ii) assess their strengths and weaknesses; and (iii) and clarify and reaffirm their mission.

Overall, the exploration process resulted in grantees feeling better able to identify the benefits and risks of collaborating (though the due diligence phase, as cited by one grantee, did not uncover all the issues that might arise prior to or immediately after implementation). Half of the grantees reiterated the importance of the exploration process in solidifying a plan, identifying and forming committees to lead the exploration, and adequately setting aside resources prior to implementation. Having dedicated time and money to re-think current mission and programming, as well as possible shared services and processes, ultimately led to the exponential growth of at least two grantees and significant cost-savings/better programming for two others, which were able to afford more experienced staff as part of their collaborations.

**Implementation Grants:**

31 survey responses were received and 81% were submitted by an individual who had been directly involved in the transaction. Most collaborations pursued were mergers/acquisitions. In most cases consultants were not engaged. The majority of collaborations were implemented as originally conceived.

Collaborations Pursued	
<b>Type</b>	
Merger/Acquisition	<b>97%</b>
Programmatic Collaboration	3%
<b>Consultant</b>	
Used	42%
Not Used	<b>68%</b>
<b>Date of Implementation</b>	
One to Two Years Ago	32%
Three to Five Years Ago	<b>65%</b>
More Than Five Years Ago	3%
<b>Outcome</b>	
Exceeded Expectations	<b>61%</b>
Met Expectations	32%
Fell Somewhat Short of Expectations	3%
Failed	3%
<b>Current Status</b>	
Ongoing as Originally Conceived	<b>81%</b>
Different than Originally Conceived	19%

*Note: Largest figures are in bold.*

Several consistent themes emerged from the responses:

1. The vast majority of collaborations (93%) met or exceeded expectations, although 19% resulted in collaborations that were different than originally conceived. There are three reasons why these figures may over-estimate the underlying success rate for collaboration: (i) perhaps only higher capacity organizations take the time to reach SeaChange-Lodestar; (ii) SeaChange-Lodestar might only fund collaborations with better-than-average prospects; and (ii) self-reports

may be too optimistic. Nevertheless, the reported levels of success suggest that the large majority of collaborations have been successful.

2. Although two thirds of collaborations explored were alliances/coalitions, and back office/administrative or programmatic collaborations, almost all implementations pursued were mergers/acquisitions. It is possible that nonprofits do not seek funding to implement non-merger collaborations, as these are often less expensive than mergers. On the other hand, it is possible that some nonprofits that start out exploring a non-merger type of collaboration ultimately conclude that a merger is the better option.
3. The largest benefits of collaborating center on improving programs, growing in the range/number of clients served, gaining operational efficiency, and strengthening executive leadership.

	Expected Benefits of Collaborating Achieved				
	Exceeded	Met	Fell Short	Failed	N/A
Program Quality	<b>68%</b>	26%	6%	0%	0%
Operational Efficiencies	42%	<b>52%</b>	3%	0%	6%
Range of Clients Served	<b>48%</b>	39%	6%	0%	6%
Executive Leadership	35%	<b>52%</b>	6%	3%	3%
Board Leadership	29%	<b>55%</b>	16%	0%	3%
Cost Savings	23%	<b>61%</b>	10%	0%	6%
Technology/IT	26%	<b>58%</b>	6%	0%	10%
Financial Sustainability	<b>42%</b>	39%	16%	3%	0%
Geographic Expansion	32%	<b>48%</b>	3%	0%	16%
Policy/Advocacy	35%	<b>45%</b>	0%	0%	19%

Note: Largest figures are in bold.

4. Nonprofits pursuing a collaboration are up against a consistent set of challenges. Cultural integration was the biggest challenge to implementing a collaboration. Though not unsurmountable, better planning, positive messaging from executive leadership, and set, measurable expectations, made cultural integration easier. The availability of limited funding and a challenging fundraising environment, was a close second. Two grantees surveyed experienced reduced funding from pre-existing funders, limited immediate financial returns, and difficulty raising funds for new programming. Barriers to financial sustainability included inadequate planning by the executive directors and board. One organization reported losing board members during the process.

Integration Factor	Impact on Collaboration			
	Easily Managed	As Expected	Difficult	Failed
Cultural Integration	16%	<b>55%</b>	26%	0%
Funding/Fundraising	26%	<b>42%</b>	19%	3%
Board Integration	39%	<b>45%</b>	10%	0%
Staff Integration	16%	<b>74%</b>	10%	0%
Systems Integration	23%	<b>65%</b>	10%	0%
Branding/Communication	23%	<b>71%</b>	6%	0%
Program Integration	39%	<b>58%</b>	3%	0%

Note: Largest figures are in bold.

Collaboration resulted in larger grants, a stronger financial base, and expanded services for most grantees. For three grantees surveyed, collaboration opened doors to new donors and funding opportunities, and for two others, it meant the difference between “failure” and remaining a going concern. New approaches to programming yielded better services and more efficient systems and processes to measure agency, businesses, and staff performance, all of which pulled both grantees involved in the transaction back from instability.

**Conclusion:**

Our analysis reinforces that exploring and implementing collaborations is not without challenges, and requires clear, mission-focused thinking, and a deliberate process to explore issues related to mission alignment, programmatic fit, leadership, staffing, economics, branding, etc.. Though most collaborations met or exceeded expectations in terms of cost savings, operational efficiency, program quality, geographic reach, range of clients served, executive leadership, and improved IT systems, on balance, it is difficult to be objective about the impact of our grantmaking. However, we are confident that SeaChange – Lodestar funding and technical assistance have been important resources for nonprofits considering collaborations. Much of this confidence comes from reading the words of our grantees. In the following appendices, we have included word clouds of the most frequently used words in survey responses and a sample of the most memorable and/or representative quotes (Appendix A), in addition to the full survey responses (Appendix B and Appendix C).

## Appendix A: Word Clouds and Notable Quotes

### Challenges



- Cultural integration is more challenging than expected.

“Culture is important, the words each nonprofit uses about themselves may be defined the same in the dictionary but may be used very differently within an organization's culture.”

“Never underestimate the impact of culture and the time it takes to change.”

- Collaboration is expensive. Financial management and planning is key.

“It is important to remember that collaborations are expensive and the financial returns may not be immediate.”

“Merging two organizations is about more than the big vision, branding, and legal paperwork. The day-to-day financial management of the merged organization needs to be a top priority.”

“If one of the merging parties is having financial difficulty it can create great financial stress on the merged organization...mergers are expensive.”

## Lessons Learned & Successes



- Executive and board leadership is crucial.

“Truth telling/transparency on the part of the Chief Executives was critical, as was reality testing. The level of CEO attention and effort needed was greater than expected (e.g. CEOs needed to push back on and guide the lawyers as they often would take things off course.)”

- Due diligence and planning is critical.

“Due diligence is everything. Don't rush into the merger implementation date. Do as much preparation as possible before 'pulling the trigger'. More advance program development, change management strategies, and deeper dives into financial performance can allow for better clarity, smoother staff and cultural integration, and allow forward progress earlier than having to continue to discover and mitigate challenges not identified in due diligence.”

“Mergers are a powerful way to expand - but they take time and mentoring. We appreciate the support we got from SeaChange!”



**Appendix B: Survey Responses – Exploration**

**1. What best describes your connection to the collaboration?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
I was part of the planning team		83.3%	5
I became involved after implementation		0.0%	0
I joined the organization after implementation		0.0%	0
I have no direct connection but am responsible for grant reporting		16.7%	1
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>6</b>

**2. What best describes the type of collaboration you initially explored?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Merger/Acquisition		33.3%	2
Back Office/Administrative Consolidation		16.7%	1
Programmatic Collaboration		16.7%	1
Alliance/Coalition		33.3%	2
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>6</b>

**3. What was the outcome of the exploration process? (Please choose all that apply.)**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Still in exploration with original partner		0.0%	0
Moved forward to implementation with original partner		83.3%	5
Did not progress beyond exploration with original partner		16.7%	1
In exploration with a different partner		0.0%	0
Subsequently collaborated with a different partner		0.0%	0
Changed the initial type of exploration (please explain, below)		16.7%	1

<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>6</b>
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If something changed from the initial type of exploration, please describe what changed (e.g., changed from alliance to merger, etc.).

#	Response
1.	N/A
2.	N/A
3.	We moved toward both a back office/space/admin collaboration as well as a programmatic collaboration.

**4. How long did the exploration process for which our grant was given take?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Less than three months		0.0%	0
Three to six months		33.3%	2
Six to twelve months		16.7%	1
More than one year		50.0%	3
Still ongoing		0.0%	0
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>6</b>

**5. If applicable, at what stage did you decide not to move forward?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Initial (pre-due diligence) stage		0.0%	0
During due diligence		0.0%	0
Board approval stage		0.0%	0
Other (please specify below)		100.0%	1
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>1</b>

If other, please specify.

After recommendations from consultant

**6. Please indicate how the following factors influenced your decision to explore the collaboration.**

	1 (least important)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (most important)	Total Respo nses
Mission Fit	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	4 (66.7%)	6
Cultural Fit	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5
Program Fit	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (66.7%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	6
Financial Condition	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6
Transaction Costs	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5
Funder Suggestion	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5
Executive Leadership	1 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	1 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	4
Board Composition	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5
Familiarity with Each Other	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6
Other (Please Specify Below)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2

**If other, please specify.**

#	Response
1.	Conflict over donors and geographic territory
2.	Serving the community together
3.	A handful of national organizations were operating with parallel strategies and budgets but were completely disconnected after historical breakdowns in practice and communications. We needed to help build their capacity to work in alignment around advocacy, research and scale.


**7. Whether the exploration succeeded or did not succeed, please select and rank the top 5 factors that influenced this outcome in order of importance.**

	1 (least important)	2	3	4	5 (most important)	Total Responses
Mission Fit	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (80.0%)	5
Cultural Fit	1 (25.0%)	1 (25.0%)	1 (25.0%)	1 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4
Program Fit	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	2 (40.0%)	2 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5
Financial Condition	0 (0.0%)	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2
Transaction Costs	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0
Funder Reaction	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3
Executive Leadership	1 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (50.0%)	2
Board Composition	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0
Familiarity with Each Other	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3
Other (Please Specify Below)	0 (0.0%)	1 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (50.0%)	2

**If other, please specify.**

#	Response
1.	Terms unacceptable to one party
2.	Serving the community together

### 8. In retrospect, how would you judge the exploration process?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Glad we did it; learned something		100.0%	6
Disappointing, but still worthwhile		0.0%	0
Not worth the resources (staff/board time and financial), given the failure to proceed		0.0%	0
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>6</b>

### 9. What was the biggest benefit from the exploration process?

#	Response
1.	We resolved complicated questions that we'd been wrestling with for years.
2.	We were able to identify the benefits and risks of merging two organizations and we got to know each other better as individuals.
3.	From the process, the Breakthrough Schools organization was formed. Today, we are one of the highest-performing networks of public charter schools in Ohio, operating 11 schools and serving 3,300 children.
4.	This group of providers are producing collaborative projects, grant requests, advocacy messages. It was a huge success.
5.	<p>During this process, the non-merging partnership, now called NAME, was able to explore in depth all possible shared services and processes. Not all expected outcomes were reached, and in some cases the anticipated need, or area of shared service, could not be adequately argued or defended.</p> <p>For instance, Development and Fundraising was initially thought to be a key priority and the shared personnel and processes were thought to prove eminently successful for all three organizations. Working closely with the consultant, the three organizations reviewed current development strategies and environments, created a matrix of development functions and hours spent in each function, reviewed models of other development collaborations, determined new staffing structure for shared development under the umbrella of NAME and created job descriptions for key personnel.</p> <p>The draft of this new development model proved quite large in number of personnel and salary requirements. But the goal was to create a solution that would accommodate all needs. NAME needed to make some adjustments as we learned more about our needs and potential reception of our plan to future stakeholders.</p>

Key Areas Of Greatest Need And Greatest Impact - Leading to more time and resources dedicated to programming:

A deeper audit of time spent by all staff members in non-programming areas resulted in defining the two leading areas, that if sourced, would put actual working hours back into programs, as well as assist each ED with financial and operational support. In the end, the most effective plan was to fill the roles of finance/operations and event planning for each organization - shared staff members focused on each of these areas.

None of the organizations currently have finance and operations staff, but all outsource all or portions of those functions. The total cost for outsourcing, combined, is between \$6-8K/month. In addition, the tasks performed by contract support do not supply the necessary planning, cost comparison, maintenance of overall organizational well-being and other functions that a full-time staff member would supply. This is a significant gap that, if closed, would greatly assist the ED's in the overall operations of the organizations, help determine long-term organizational planning for all three organizations as well as the evolution of NAME operations and finances and help strengthen the common infrastructure (back office, HR, technology, data handling and record keeping, along with the financial controls and processes) of all three organizations.

For the NAME organizations there is a further need to develop a more efficient and cost effective solution to the many and various needs for conference and training space. Currently, many of the workshops and trainings for each organization are held off-site. One solution would be to increase the size and type of conference space, and better design of conference space, to drastically cut our need for outside vendor support – saving both time and money. Alternatively, the many hours used by each organization on event planning (more than just space acquisition, this includes load in/out logistics, catering and overall yearly planning for each organization), could be supplied by a shared staff member as Event Planner for all NAME organizations.

As an example of the effect a shared Event Planner would have, A&BC currently hosts 42 unique events outside of its current office space. This includes client and volunteer workshops, trainings, and networking events - all vital to our program and constituent work supporting our mission. Based on previously budgeted and accounted program time allocation, we expect to spend nearly 250 hours in event planning next year. Those hours are currently taken out of program staff time. The goal is to centralize the events and the event planning and give back the 250 hours to focus on program content and execution – thus increasing our programmatic impact in the community greatly. Our program strength is our program staff and the time they have to dedicate to maintaining high quality, effective programs.

In addition, the added assistance to development staff for A&BC's annual Gala would eliminate the need for outside consultants in planning and execution, saving both time and money. Added part-time staff or contract support can range from \$5-10K each year, in addition to the hours of staff management and training.

CCA produces currently 6-10 professional workshops, a one-day conference in November and numerous intercultural programs and dialogues, totally 16-20 events annually. They also plan one major fundraising event, "MOSAIC" each May and usually attracts about 250 guests. With limited staff resources, CCA has had to reassign professional program staff and management to event planning functions. This current year, CCA has spent more than 250 hours focused on event logistics planning, operational functions and office tasks such as mailing and tracking of invites, event prep and personal follow up alone.

Taking program staff away from their prepping, planning and executing community programming support in their specialty areas.

AARCH currently produces 12-15 events/workshops/convenings for the dance community annually at external event spaces. Logistics involved in securing the spaces and working with shifting venue management results in lost staff time and inefficiencies.

Time and resource savings from the collaborative approach for Event planning can be extremely advantageous for our collective on several other levels. Rather than each of the partners using part time event/development staff at fragmented intervals, it affords us the ability to hire an experienced full time professional shared amongst AB&C, AA and CCA. This seasoned professional in the field, not only could bring a high level of expertise, but could also provide a wealth of knowledge to inform the collective partners on best practices, innovations in the field and ways in which through our combined efforts/events, we are building momentum and a larger footprint in the community and in the field.

Shared ticketing services for events and the development of an "NAME" database could result in greater impact, more efficient sales reporting, and again, increased marketing and earned revenue potential. AARCH already sells more than 3,000 tickets per year to dance events through its website. This ticketing/broker service could be extended to A&BC and CCA, creating a shared database of cultural patrons. This list would not only benefit the NAME participants, but could serve as a platform for cultural consumer research for the funding community.

Combined efforts on event planning would also provide cost savings on our collective ability to negotiate better rates and access to venue selection and space rentals, food costs, invitations, entertainment and other material costs.

This final planning round, with the addition of the limited roll-out and testing described above, has been invaluable in creating a momentum in NAME action, and has supplied the necessary insight and level of maturity that leads NAME to invest in thoughtful planning and implementation over the next 3-5 years.

The three partner Executive Directors have grown in their understanding of the need and

benefit of the long-term implementation of NAME. They have learned through the process that NAME must maintain a solid foundation, but be nimble and able to adapt to the many changes each organization and the sector will face.



What solidified in all of the work on the collaboration, was that the long-term objectives, of delivering higher quality, relevant, and effective programming that strengthens and grows the arts in Chicago, remain the core mission of this venture. The effort will take a deep commitment of all three organizations, increased workload during build-up and implementation and the support of the community, funders, and other stakeholders in order to actualize vital strengthening of the sector.

6. It led to a merger of 9 organizations and a reinvention of our organization.

### 10. What was the biggest disappointment from the exploration process?

#	Response
1.	That nothing concrete ultimately came of it.
2.	The due diligence phase did not uncover all the issues that needed to be dealt with prior to or immediately after merger.
3.	N/A
4.	They continue to hold on to the divisions in their internal discussions and need more support to see the field as a movement of which they are all an important part.
5.	I will be intentionally brief here. There were delays and annoyances along the way - boards dragging their feet, staff turn-over of one organization resulting in several month delay - but nothing was a real disappointment. We learned so much from the process and have now completed a contractual agreement and are entering a new round of implementation funding. Reception from funders has been positive.

### 11. Did you use a consultant to help with the exploration process?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		83.3%	5
No		16.7%	1
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>6</b>

### If you used a consultant, how would you rate his/her performance?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Very helpful - strong		100.0%	5



recommendation		
Somewhat helpful - would use again	0.0%	0
Okay - would not use again	0.0%	0
Unhelpful - made things worse	0.0%	0
	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>5</b>

## 12. Please provide any other lessons learned or thoughts that might be of value to nonprofits considering exploring a collaboration.

#	Response
1.	It is important to clarify the reasons for possible collaboration, define a clear process, identify leadership individuals and committees and maintain transparency. Be aware of cultural differences between organizations and do a thorough benefits/risk analysis. Establish benchmarks for before and after comparisons. Select a leader for the new organization who understands the challenges of managing a newly merged organizations. There will be challenges and surprises.
2.	Explore and meet with other organizations doing similar work and learn best practices.
3.	<p>This was well worth the big commitment of time and effort. At the end of the day, it came down to the personalities involved and the dedication to finding a new business model that will allow us to have a greater impact in the arts sector. You have to like those you're partnering with and believe in their mission as well as your own.</p> <p>Cost savings in shared services and back office are modest, but meaningful. The real value is the staff time we're able to put back into programming.</p> <p>One lesson we learned is that what we set out to do wasn't going to be a fixed model, but something more flexible and adaptable to changes. We've created a foundation now, but there is much to test and evolve. During the process itself, we threw out a number of preconceived ideas of how the collaboration would exist and be run.</p>
4.	Our merger process was very successful, but we didn't adequately plan for the resources we would need for implementation. We would advise merging organizations to consider the legal merger a milestone within a much longer process.

## 13. Do you have any comments on how we might make this survey better?





#	Response
1.	We initially undertook a process to identify possibilities for deeper collaboration including merger. You question about what we didn't really ask for this possibility.

## 14. Is there other information you would like to provide?

#	Response
1.	Mergers are not easy. There are surprises along the way and apprehension on the part of the staffs of the organizations involved. Engaging a consultant who has advised mergers in highly recommended. Financial support from SeaChange was also deeply appreciated.

## Appendix C: Full Survey Responses – Implementation

### 1. What best describes your connection to the collaboration?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
I was part of the planning team		80.6%	25
I became involved after implementation		3.2%	1
I joined the organization after implementation		9.7%	3
I have no direct connection but am responsible for grant reporting		6.5%	2
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>31</b>

### 2. What best describes the type of collaboration you pursued?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Merger/Acquisition		96.8%	30
Back Office/Administrative Consolidation		0.0%	0
Programmatic Collaboration		3.2%	1
Alliance/Coalition		0.0%	0
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>31</b>

### 3. How long ago was the collaboration implemented?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Less than one year ago		0.0%	0
One to two years ago		32.3%	10
Three to five years ago		64.5%	20
More than five years ago		3.2%	1
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>31</b>

### 4. What is the current status of the collaboration?





Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Ongoing as originally conceived		80.6%	25
Different than originally conceived (please explain, below)		19.4%	6
Discontinued		0.0%	0
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>31</b>

If you responded “Different than originally conceived,” please describe all of the differences (e.g., different partners, added partners, expanded program and/or geography, etc.).

#	Response
1.	Although the collaboration is as originally conceived of pro grammatically, we had tried a co-executive leadership model and that has not continued. We now have one CEO for the merged organization.

2. The collaboration was very successful! In fact, so successful, it has positioned us to undertake significant expansion and we are beginning another merger!
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. Since the original merger between NAME and NAME there has been another merger, we are now the NAME.
6. We become our own organization - grew out of the collaboration
7. When our two organizations originally joined forces, we believed it would result in serving significantly more students during afterschool hours. However, as we began to expand this work it became evident that providing high quality afterschool programming with primarily state and city funds was very difficult. Instead, we were able to take learnings and capabilities that were previously used primarily for afterschool programming and pivot a focus on summer programming, an impact stream which we are now aggressively pursuing and believe has tremendous potential. Our work in the afterschool space still exists, but is more limited than we originally anticipated.
8. The original merger envisioned us merging the missions and staff of both organizations into one larger organization with two offices. Unfortunately, following the merger the economy collapsed and we found that the foundations and individuals who used to give to both organizations continued to give to the merged organization - but not at the same rate. Donors who used to give \$100 to each organization, now just gave \$100 to the new organization. This gave us about 1/2 the operating funds that were budgeted. Additionally, the ED of the new organization was not forthcoming with this information and inflated the fundraising prospects in the budget. As such, the financial issues of the organization were not addressed until a major correction needed to be made. The result was that we were forced to close one office and lay off 50% of the staff. I was hired at this point to stabilize and rebuild what was left of the organization, and to refocus our efforts on what could be done successfully with the remaining downsized staff structure.






## 5. Taken as a whole, how would you judge the success of the collaboration?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Exceeded expectations		61.3%	19
Met expectations		32.3%	10
Fell somewhat short of expectations		3.2%	1
Failed		3.2%	1
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>31</b>

**6. Please indicate how the expected benefits of the collaboration were exceeded, met, fell short, or failed.**

	N/A	Exceeded	Met	Fell Short	Failed	Total Responses
Cost Savings	2 (6.5%)	7 (22.6%)	19 (61.3%)	3 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Operational Efficiencies	2 (6.5%)	13 (41.9%)	16 (51.6%)	1 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Program Quality	0 (0.0%)	21 (67.7%)	8 (25.8%)	2 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Geographic Expansion	5 (16.1%)	10 (32.3%)	15 (48.4%)	1 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Range of Clients Served	2 (6.5%)	15 (48.4%)	12 (38.7%)	2 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Financial Sustainability	0 (0.0%)	13 (41.9%)	12 (38.7%)	5 (16.1%)	1 (3.2%)	31
Executive Leadership	1 (3.2%)	11 (35.5%)	16 (51.6%)	2 (6.5%)	1 (3.2%)	31
Board Leadership	1 (3.2%)	9 (29.0%)	17 (54.8%)	5 (16.1%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Technology/IT	3 (9.7%)	8 (25.8%)	18 (58.1%)	2 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Policy/Advocacy	6 (19.4%)	11 (35.5%)	14 (45.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31

**Please provide any specific comments about the above responses.**

Response	Chart	Percentages	Count
Anticipated		18%	3
Expand		37%	6
Impact		0%	0
New York		12%	2
Overall		12%	2
Program Integration		18%	3

#	Response
1.	Board representatives from the our pre-merge organizations gained appreciation for types of experience and perspectives from each other.
2.	I was not involved in the planning and execution of the merger, but I have interviewed many of the staff and board members who were. I do believe that the merger was a good concept, and could have been successful. The merger of the two organizations was executed well, including the creation of a great new mission statement and program descriptions, professional brochure and website, and equipment and IT to manage the two offices.

<p>Unfortunately the ED who was in charge of running the business of the non-profit fell woefully short. Too much time was spent on chasing big new potential projects, and not enough time was spent looking at the actual day-to-day financial realities of the organization. Information was sugar coated for the board, and they did not intervene until the ED had resigned.</p>
<p>3. In every area, our actual experience far exceeded our hopes and expectations for the project. It has been a great success.</p>
<p>4. It has been challenging to raise the needed funds for the merged organization. We are mid range in size so we are too small for some funders and too large for others. We also are missing some government funding do to a state budget impasse.</p>
<p>5. Many of our large corporate partners are dealing with significant change that is impacting our revenue line. It would have impacted at a greater level if we were still separate orgs.</p>
<p>6. Significant cost savings were achieved and a 90-year-old organization serving individuals with high needs was quite literally saved. Program quality expectations were ramped up and delivered upon, while new programs utilizing the strengths of both organizations were implemented. Our greatest challenge has been merging technology/IT in both daily operations and fundraising.</p>
<p>7. The NAME 1 was very skeptical about the transaction. They are now very enthusiastic. NAME2 also has exceeded our expectations in terms of an advocacy boost to the organization.</p>
<p>8. The merger resulted in a deep dive into previous performance. While both sides of the merger were known to have significant business challenges, a deeper exploration uncovered even more challenges than we expected. We needed to eliminate losing projects, and even closed one line of business. We right-sized the program, and have built from a much stronger foundation. We became more financially sustainable, with stronger financials that either organization has had for over 15 years pre-merger.</p>
<p>9. [Anticipated] We continue to appreciate benefits of the merger in many ways we did not originally anticipate.</p>
<p>10. [Anticipated] We were able to attract more business donors in the Portland area (the location of the museum we merged with/acquired. We gained some new members but not as many members and donors as we had anticipated</p>
<p>11. [Anticipated] [Expand] We have been able to make more improvements than anticipated. We also have secured larger grants because of our expanded continuum of care, with has expanded our client reached.</p>
<p>12. [Expand] At the time of the merger, both organizations were struggling and had, to a considerable extent, lost and been unable to implement a vision for each of their futures. The merger has given the combined organization a focus and an expanded sense of their combined place and role in the community and its future. The combined organization is addressing and</p>

	building competence all of the categories listed in question 7 in a manner, and with competence, not present immediately before the merger.
13.	[Expand] NAME now has more resources to expand our program and services.
14.	[New York] [Expand] The SeaChange-Lodestar Fund supported our project to merge a Colorado-based nonprofit news organization with a New York City-based nonprofit news organization to form a new national organization with two founding locations and the potential to expand. We successfully merged the two organizations to form NAME, and have since expanded to two new locations with one on the way and more to come. As a result of the merger, we have realized significant returns to scale and, more importantly, have seen our social impact grow.
15.	[New York] [Expand] We were able to expand our after school programs in East New York as NAME received one of the highest number of awards in response to the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development's Out-of-School Time (OST) RFP. NAME has more than tripled the numbers of young people served in after-school programming, and added several juvenile justice programs. NAME 2 FY11 audit indicates an overhead rate of 21%. In comparison, NAME 'soverhead for FY13 is a more competitive 12.75%. As a division of NAME1, NAME2's former programs have benefited from our economies of scale and lean administrative structure.
16.	[Overall] Financial support was diminished as a result of the merger as funders reduced their overall giving
17.	[Overall] Overall we had good success with the merger. Two area we fell short on were retaining the board members from the smaller organization and increasing volunteer recruitment in the merged territory.
18.	[Program Integration] The NAME 2model, of which the NAME 2merger was the first example, has continued to grow and stay true to mission and outcome. Changes in executive leadership, however, have slowed some of the program integration planned.
19.	[Program Integration] We are programmatically quite well integrated but the back office functions including finances, HR and database, are lagging behind the program integration.
20.	[Program Integration] [Expand] As expected, Program and leadership were a natural fit. Systems, esp. IT, recruitment, and training areas required more work to integrate/expand than expected, but has been

substantially accomplished.

## 7. Please indicate how the following integration factors impacted your collaboration:?

	Easily Managed	As Expected	Difficult to Resolve	Failed to Resolve	N/A	Total Responses
Cultural Integration	5 (16.1%)	17 (54.8%)	8 (25.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.2%)	31
Staff Integration	5 (16.1%)	23 (74.2%)	3 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Board Integration	12 (38.7%)	14 (45.2%)	3 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.5%)	31
Systems Integration (e.g., IT, payroll & benefits, client records, etc.)	7 (22.6%)	20 (64.5%)	3 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.2%)	31
Program Integration	12 (38.7%)	18 (58.1%)	1 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Branding/Communication	7 (22.6%)	22 (71.0%)	2 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Funding/Fundraising	8 (26.7%)	13 (43.3%)	6 (20.0%)	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	30

## Please provide any specific comments about the above responses.

#	Response
1.	Our program directors are able to share promising practices with each other that was allowed through the merger.
2.	Board members from the smaller organization felt lost in the larger group and missed the hands on approach of the smaller organization.
3.	Merging the museum collection database and the membership database was complex, but it was expected to be difficult.
4.	Cultural integration and fundraising are an ongoing challenge due to the vast differences in the community cultures of our two main services areas.
5.	As with all mergers, the most difficult aspect is the culture. NAME 2 was a global, virtual culture. NAME 1 is a more office-based culture. It took us a full year to work thru all the aspects of this and find a good blended culture. We got there, but better planning would



	have minimized some of the bumps in the road.
6.	Bringing together two different workplace cultures proved more difficult than anticipated. Staff who had worked for 10-20 years in each organization set up an 'us and them' scenario that was difficult to penetrate. We did prevail and became one team over the course of the first year post-merger. Bringing a new philosophy of program implementation was quite difficult on one side of the merged entity, but ultimately accepted and effectively implemented. It took a huge investment of executive leadership resources to carry the message, set and measure expectations, and positively promote new ways of doing things. We made it, though!
7.	Staff integration, i.e. recruitment, training, credentialing, retention processes provided challenges that were not entirely anticipated. IT integration also worked out differently than expected, and is ongoing.
8.	We have done well with the cultural integration and it was very challenging because of how different the executive leadership was. Which also made staff and board integration a challenge, though that was expected. Three years later we are still working on culture.
9.	Our team has come a long ways in the past three years. Having two offices creates challenges but our team has done a great job!
10.	Very little Board uptake on PIP side. Would have liked to see more readiness/involvement of the PIP Board
11.	We expected it to be difficult to integrate the staff and cultures, and that proved to be true.
12.	as above. in addition it took longer to build recognition and support among individual givers although corporations quickly jumped on board
13.	The most significant challenges we faced in this project came from separating one of our merging institutions from the nonprofit it was originally a part of. Legal guidance was crucial. We also had significant branding and marketing needs, but with the support of this grant, we were able to address all questions.
14.	All NAME2 programs were fully integrated into the NAME 1 organizational structure. Its afterschool programs are now one of three afterschool divisions, by geographic region, within the organization and its NAME 2 for Success post-secondary program and Single Stop services are fully integrated into our continuum. The programs have been re-branded as NAME1 programs and staff receive all agency benefits and supports.
15.	Merging the culture of two organizations was challenging. Employees of both organizations had to be more cognizant of one another's strengths and differences. This really came together this past year (third year into the merger), and I would say we are now to the point of really working together as a team. The other major challenges had to do with branding and communication as well as fundraising and IT. Over this next year, we will be undergoing a branding initiative that will better tie to the two organizations together in all of our communications to the public.
16.	Staff support for NAME has increased significantly.
17.	Nothing was truly "easy". But it all went very well.
18.	Integration was pretty smooth and successful. The Board integration ended up being a more short term integration, which was somewhat expected. I believe the previous board members of NAME1. were interested in making sure the properties were in good hands with the existing board of NAME2. Once they felt assured, they were more comfortable

retiring from long-term board positions (over 10 years on the previous board!).

19. Resolution of all of the issues listed in the question by definition have involved, and were expected to involve, difficulties. While none of these has yet been fully achieved, the combined organization is on the path to achieve them, is committed to achieving them, and is confident that they will be achieved in due course.

## 8. Please describe what the collaboration has meant to your organization.

#	Response
1.	The merger doubled both organizations and has turned Hazon into a national organization with a local home-site. It has solidified us as the leader of our field.
2.	Being able to maximize our resources to fulfill our mission and deliver services with quality and build capacity for sustainability.
3.	Major win and strategic milestone for the group and team .
4.	The merger opened doors to new donors and members and positioned the museum as a leader in the field.
5.	It has been a game-changer for Aspire, giving us a strong presence in the city of Chicago and a new path for growth.
6.	NAME has broadened its reach in terms of donors and deepened its technical capabilities due to collaboration with Thrive Water field staff.
7.	Absolutely everything. Both organizations were failing. The merger rescued both and created a platform for sound new approaches to the businesses we operate, a new program philosophy which produces better results for our participants, clean systems and processes for measuring performance of the agency, its businesses, staff and our results.
8.	Through the merger, NAME has sustained and expanded services to children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and delays and their families, and established agency as premiere resource for families in St. Louis region.
9.	Our organization would not exist in it's current form without the collaboration. We entirely depended upon the merging of NAME Branches and I think it's safe to say that, though not without challenges, the transition has been a great success.
10.	It has allowed us to provide on stop comprehensive and coordinated services to victims of family violence, rape/sexual assault and human sex trafficking
11.	Made us stronger and more of a positive force in the community which has benefited the people we serve
12.	It has uniquely positioned the organization as regional impact agency.
13.	Greatly enhanced our presence in New Jersey. Impacted staff and consultant change (positively) and brought new funders to the table.
14.	We thought that the addition of NAME would be a "nice to have." Instead, it became essential to our advocacy work.
15.	The collaboration and the resulting merger was truly a turning point. Because of the merger we have increased our funding and we've been able to serve more individuals and

	families. We are a stronger, more relevant organization, and we believe the organization will stand the test of time.
16.	We have been much more successful in winning organizing and advocacy campaigns. We are still growing into our larger geography, but we're working on it.
17.	Collaboration has opened the door to further expansion as a result of the successes experienced with the merger
18.	We were able to expand our funding base to include national sources of support; strengthen our infrastructure, especially our leadership team and our technical expertise; and expand our social impact so that we are reaching more communities and achieving more significant impact.
19.	NAME is a nonprofit that helps young people growing up in poverty find opportunities for success. The merger allowed NAME to expand quality services to the high-need communities of East New York and Bedford Stuyvesant.
20.	This collaboration has meant higher quality programs and services, offering greater impact to the fragile men, women, and children served by both organizations. It's been an incredible partnership for which we are very grateful.
21.	because of the merger with NAME, we have the opportunity and resources to make our programs and services grow to reach more parents of blind children.
22.	We are more effective, more stable, better able to meet the needs of our communities and better positioned for additional growth and expansion. We have gone on to successfully acquire and integrate four additional practices since our 2013 merger.
23.	We have created a high school path for our students!
24.	The collaboration has strengthened NAME through expanding professionalism and organization to our agency. We have successfully secured affordable housing that may have been lost to the community without the collaboration.
25.	Although we had many challenges, this merger continues to be a great asset to our r community.
26.	We believe the merger ultimately will allow us to present symphonic and operatic programs of a quality and breadth that the two pre-merger organizations had not achieved, and probably could not achieve absent the merger.
27.	Our two organizations joining forces has been helpful in both strengthening the evidence base and bringing more codified practices to NAME1 programming, and has also allowed NAME2 to expand its impact across San Francisco, specifically in the mission neighborhood.
28.	The new brand " NAME " was critical in positioning us to help fight Ebola - what became a more than 2M award winning program -#ISurvivedEbola.
29.	We are left with the merged mission and workload, but with half the staff and resources to do the job. We are in the process of refocusing our work to better align with our resources.
30.	The collaboration has enabled us to reach more people touched by cancer, increase the geographic scope of our services, expand existing programs and develop new ones, increase our research capability; it has also increased our fundraising capacity and streamlined our operations.

**9. How has this collaboration influenced your decision to participate in future collaborations?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
We have participated in, or considered subsequent collaborations		60.0%	18
We will not participate in other collaborations		0.0%	0
We have not participated in subsequent collaborations, but are open to the possibility		40.0%	12
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>30</b>

**10. Did you use a consultant to help with implementation?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		41.9%	13
No		58.1%	18
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>31</b>

**If you used a consultant, how would you rate his/her performance?**

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Very helpful - strong recommendation		76.9%	10
Somewhat helpful - would use again		7.7%	1
Okay - would not use again		15.4%	2
Unhelpful - made things worse		0.0%	0
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>13</b>

**11. Please provide any other lessons learned or thoughts that might be of value to nonprofits planning a collaboration.**

#	Response
1.	It seems to us that the cultural integration and back office pieces are the most challenging to resolve.
2.	Open communications, shared values, and willingness to learn and listen are critical. Board and staff's buy-in is critical. Communications with our supporters at the early stages help to

	continue their partnerships with our organization.
3.	The npo sector falls far short of using these combinations for success.
4.	Important to remember that collaborations are expensive and the financial returns may not be immediate. Also that a strong communications plan including all levels of stakeholders is essential to a successful outcome.
5.	The "acquisition" model was definitely the right one for us, versus a "merger". Thank you for your help! Happy to talk in more detail.
6.	Due diligence is everything. Don't rush into the merger implementation date. Do as much preparation as possible before 'pulling the trigger'. More advance program development, change management strategies, and deeper dives into financial performance can allow for better clarity, smoother staff and cultural integration, and allow forward progress earlier than having to continue to discover and mitigate challenges not identified in due diligence. We were dealing with a 'parent organization'. In that case, I recommend seeking absolute clarity of roles of each merger partners'
7.	Everyone (board and staff leadership) need to leave their egos at the door. Be prepared for resistance to and fear of change on part of staff.
8.	Never underestimate the impact of culture and the time it takes to change. And the importance of the CEO in leading that change.
9.	This was a journey! We had to get to know each other, spend some time dating before anyone felt comfortable with the 'M' word. Having a clear business case and communication plan is critical. Take your time and be transparent.
10.	Truth telling/transparency on the part of the Chief Executives was critical, as was reality testing. The level of CEO attention and effort needed was greater than expected (e.g., CEOs needed to push back on and guide the lawyers as they often would take things off course.) I'd be happy to say mmkore if you'd like to interview me on this.
11.	Spend the time up front to scope out all of the issues which are likely to surface during implementation of a merger. Better to understand the expected challenges so you'll be ready to deal with them. Papering over differences to get a deal is a mistake.
12.	Aligning the organizational cultures after the merger is critical. Along with that - truly assessing the executive leadership staff compatibility is more important than we realized. When retaining the top executive leadership from two organizations you have to be realistic if things start to go in a bad direction and be willing to make some tough decisions. In our case the two executive directors were retained and one became second in command. After the first year it was clear that this arrangement was not working out. Unfortunately, this was not addressed and the situation continued for too long. It would have been better to confront earlier, deal with the pain and help the organization move on.
13.	It is important to have a sound process when working on the collaboration so that you can hit the ground running once merged. The first few years after merger are hard enough - you need to be standing on solid ground that is built through a good inclusive process.
14.	Culture is important, the words each nonprofit uses about themselves may be defined the same in the dictionary but may be used very differently within an organization's culture. Realistic expectations for outcomes are also important, especially the length of time (years) it takes to raise sustaining funds in a new geographic area.

15.	One unanticipated reality that we wish we had seen in advance was the challenge of personnel. We made sure that our leadership was in alignment, but didn't fully consider the alignment of all personnel. In the future, we will think about any merger as a decision to hire every individual staff member on the new team, rather than just focusing on leadership alignment.
16.	Be open and flexible. Some things that you anticipate will be challenges, we go fairly smoothly, and some things you think will go smoothly, will end up being your greatest challenges.
17.	Mergers take a lot of work and energy. There will be challenges as people don't like change. Keep moving forward and persistent to reach the final goal and the merger can be successful.
18.	Taking your time, respecting the challenge of the changes and celebrating victories were all important throughout the process.
19.	Don't assume anything. Complete all due diligence and allow for more time than anticipated to complete the process smoothly and comfortably.
20.	If one of the merging parties is having financial difficulty it can create great financial stress on the merged organization. On going consultation for 1 to 2 years after the merger would have helped resolve some board and funding issues. Mergers are expensive.
21.	In our case, further financial diligence, focusing specifically on factors that the organization had little control over (city and state funding available for continued support), and the degree to which private funders who previously supported one or both organizations will continue to support at the same level, would be helpful to better understand upfront.
22.	Mergers are a powerful way to expand - but they take time and mentoring. We appreciate the support we got from SeaChange!
23.	Merging two organizations is about more than the big vision, branding, and legal paperwork. The day-to-day financial management of the merged organization needs to be a top priority. Transparency is critical as the merged organization works through new issues and situations. The leadership that envisions the merger may not be the best personnel to see it through - there are very different skills involved in these steps.

## 12. Is there other information you'd like to share?

#	Response
1.	Thanks for SeaChange-Lodestar Fund for Nonprofit Collaboration for the support in the initial stages of our merger. It validated our goals for our merger and enabled us to leverage the support to secure additional support, both financially and programmatically.
2.	No
3.	The initial investment from the SeaChange/Lodestar Fund was extremely important to the success of this merger and encouraged other donors to similarly invest.
4.	Our upcoming newsletter focuses on our dramatic expansion of services due to this collaboration--it should be out in the next few weeks--happy to share.
5.	I am leaving Good luck and many thanks for your great interest in collaboration...wishing

	you continued success!
6.	This merger has brought our organization to a new level of impact and operational effectiveness. Now coming from strength, we approached another community partner, and have again merged - 2 mergers in 3 years! We now need help with the new merger implementation, integration and business expansion. In the last merger, we had to get smaller to grow. Now we can grow significantly-combining unique strengths and creating more jobs for eth individuals and community we serve. It's a great story!
7.	We will always be grateful to the support received by SeaChange, which was there for us when we most needed support for the vital merging and restructuring of our organization!
8.	I'd love to participate in the creation of a "lessons learned". This was my 2nd merger.
9.	SeaChange-Lodestar is critical in this environment and was a great partner throughout the process. I believe the need will grow in the months and years ahead.
10.	Without the support of the SeaChange-Lodestar Fund, and the hands-on strategic advice provided by its leadership, the deal would never have happened.
11.	We were truly honored to have received the support we received from SeaChange-Lodestar. Thank you again so much!
12.	I've attached our merger MOU if that is helpful
13.	no -- just a huge thanks for your help!
14.	None that I can think of. We very much appreciated the support!
15.	Thank you for your support and guidance in this process. Three years later, we can say with 100% confidence it was the right thing to do for our organizations, for our community, and for the people served in our programs.
16.	Just a deep thank you!
17.	Please see attached.