



25 YEARS OF  
SOCIAL IMPACT

# EXPLORING NONPROFIT MERGERS AND COLLABORATIONS

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December 2, 2025



# What is Elevate NP?

We are creating a **stable, connected and accessible network of capacity-building resources** that builds on existing assets, fills gaps in service and connects nonprofit organizations to high-quality, effective solutions to maximize their community impact.

# About The Bridgespan Group

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The Bridgespan Group is a global nonprofit organization that collaborates with mission-driven leaders, organizations, and philanthropists, to make the world more equitable and just.

BOSTON

JOHANNESBURG

MUMBAI

NEW YORK

SAN FRANCISCO

SINGAPORE

# Our team



**Michael Ciccarone**  
Partner  
The Bridgespan Group



**Vlad Nedelea**  
Senior Manager  
The Bridgespan Group



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Manager  
The Bridgespan Group

## Today's context:

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### What organizations are facing:

- **Funding and policy** changes
- Changing perspectives and policy on **work that serves specific groups**
- **Sustained or increasing need** for services

### How organizations are responding:

- Engaging in **scenario planning**
- Making **short-term shifts**
- Making **long-term strategic pivots**
- Streamlining **capabilities and processes**
- Exploring **partnerships and collaborations**

# We have observed four main types of strategic collaboration

Less

Level of integration

More

## Associations

(including coalitions & collaboratives)

- Work together over an extended period of time to **accomplish shared goals**
- **Formal agreement** in place
- Governance remains **separate**

Example:



## Joint Programming

- Work with another organization to **co-deliver a program** over an extended period of time
- **Formal agreement** in place
- Governance remains **separate**

Example:



## Shared Support Functions

- Share **support functions** (such as accounting, HR, IT)
- One organization **contracts with another** or two or more organizations **jointly hire a third party**
- **Formal agreement** in place
- Governance remains **separate**

Example:



## Mergers

(including affiliate and subsidiary structures)

- Legally **link the governance** of two organizations
  - Dissolves one entity into another, or
  - Establishes an affiliate or subsidiary, or
  - Creates a new legal entity
- Governance is **shared**

Example:

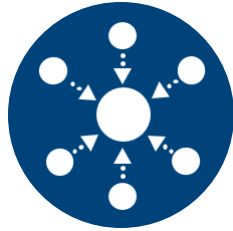


# Best practices for exploring collaborations

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**Develop a clear rationale for collaboration**



**Proactively source, screen, and diligence potential partners**



**Negotiate and structure the collaboration**



**Engage stakeholders, including funders**

# There are trade-offs to exploring mergers and acquisitions

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**Under the right conditions, mergers can unlock real impact:**

- Expand reach and access
- Improve quality and consistency of programs
- Strengthen advocacy and field leadership
- Increase financial resilience

**However, nonprofit mergers face significant barriers**

- Require significant focus and unrestricted resources
- May be harder to realize value
- Challenges with board, brand, and culture
- Limited capacity and expertise available

## Fireside chat:

We will now hear from  
two leaders who have  
been through merger  
processes



**Brian Gorman**

Executive Director  
Summit Legal Aid



**Donna Goyak**

Senior Advisor &  
Former Executive Director  
Chatham Baroque

Questions?



# Conversation starters to engage your team on considering collaborations and mergers

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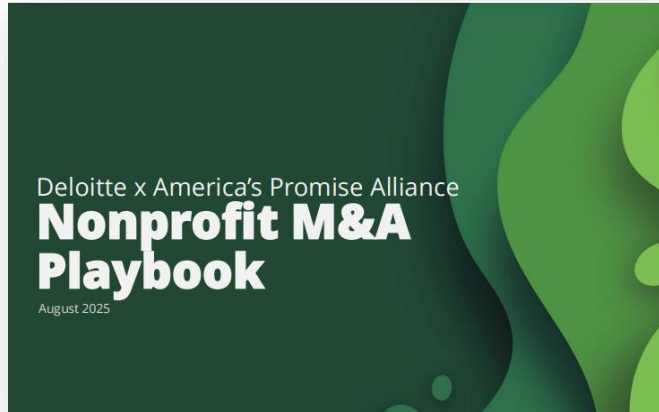
**Are there opportunities for us to have greater impact or more efficient operations through partnerships or shared services?**

**Are there other organizations in our landscape that share our mission and needs that might be a good fit for collaboration?**

**Are there pending leadership transitions (e.g. retirement of a founder) or other shifts that may fundamentally change our organization?**

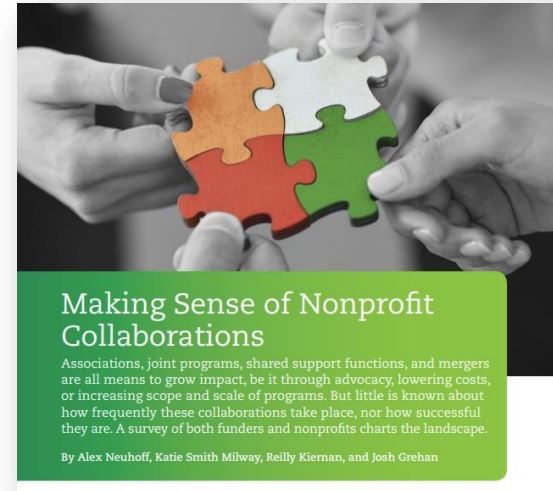
**Can we imagine a future where our impact and sustainability could be advanced through a merger with another organization? What might that look like?**

# Additional resources



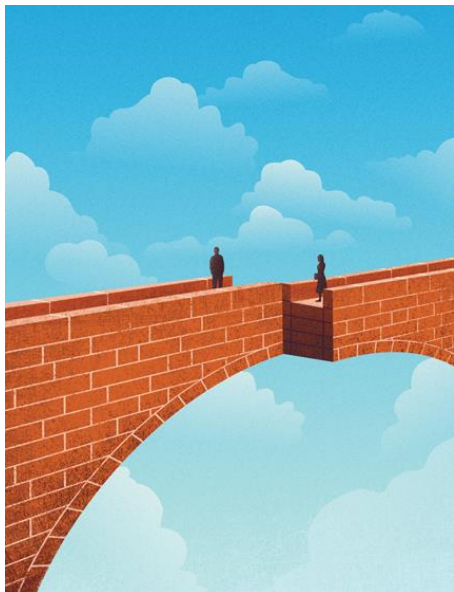
## [Nonprofit M&A Toolkit](#) from Deloitte and the America's Promise Alliance

*Starting point on  
collaborations and mergers,  
including key definitions and  
detailed process overview*



## [Bridgespan article](#) on Nonprofit Collaborations

*Further detail on the full  
spectrum of collaboration,  
from alliances to mergers*



## [Why Nonprofit Mergers Continue to Lag](#)

SSIR, Bridgespan article

*Barriers to success in mergers  
and potential solutions*



**La Piana**  
DRIVING SOCIAL IMPACT since 1998

## La Piana Consulting [Blog](#)

*Frequently asked questions about  
mergers and acquisitions*

# Thanks for joining!

Questions? Feedback?

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