

TOOL #1: IDENTIFY CRITICAL ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Choosing a strategy begins by identifying the critical organizational issues you want to address. How you identify these issues can be achieved through a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), the OCAT (Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool), or some other data tool. The questions below are one method for helping you determine your organizational critical issues.

BACKGROUND

What is your VISION for the organization?

How do you want to see your organization in three years? What have you accomplished by then?

STRENGTHS

What do you see as your organization's biggest STRENGTHS, as an organization and as a partner?

How can your organization LEVERAGE and build on these strengths?

WEAKNESSES

What are your organizational WEAKNESSES?

What might your organization do to address these weaknesses?

BIG PICTURE

In your experience, how has your work environment changed (or not) over the last five years? What are the implications for your organization?

Which organizations are doing a really good job on work like yours right now? What makes them effective?

OPPORTUNITIES

If every challenge is a source of opportunity, what significant opportunities does the current environment present?

How can your organization be a more effective partner in leveraging those opportunities? If your organization no longer existed, what would be missing from the field?

CONCLUSION

Given the answers above, if you had to identify the most important two or three issues for your organization to address in the near term, what would they be?

Of the nonprofit organizations you work with, are there any that have some or all of the necessary resources – human, financial, other – that could help you address your key issues? If so, who are they?