



## **Why engage in a development assessment?**

An assessment is the first step in building a successful development effort. The assessment measures an institution's readiness for success and spells out specific activities and how they should function to achieve the desired results. An assessment also ensures all activities are integrated and accounted for. This is especially important in large organizations where programs may engage in their own fund raising efforts. An effective assessment will summarize comparative performance of both the overall effort and the individual activities. In the process, the institution will learn improved techniques for measuring fund development outcomes so they can set goals and measure return on investment in future efforts. From the assessment report, a staffing plan is developed so that recruitment can be focused and effective. Development assessments often inform the next round of strategic planning or lay the groundwork for major foundation investment in a capacity building initiative.

On Course Consulting conducts development assessments for the purpose of understanding and improving an organization's capacity for increasing private sources of revenue, with an emphasis on unrestricted contributions. Unrestricted revenue is the most precious revenue because it can be used where the need is greatest. Unrestricted private funds allow an organization to engage in activities to raise the visibility of the mission, promote the organization, and educate the community on social issues. Unrestricted private funds are essential to the financial health of the organization because they can be used to eliminate deficits, build reserves, and improve the general cash position. Seeking private sources of funding encourages organizations to forge community partnerships and cross-sector solutions, rather than operate in isolation. Unrestricted revenue can also serve to form the basis of an endowment, thus securing future stability for the organization.