

## TIDES, INC.

### PROVIDING CENTRALIZED SHARED SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE OVERALL TIDES ENTERPRISE



Tides, Inc., an internal division of Tides, was founded in 2003 to offer centralized business services and leadership to Tides’ client-facing units including Tides Shared Spaces, Tides Foundation, and Tides Center.

Centralized shared services have evolved to include:

- Administration
- Facilities management
- Human resources
- Information technology
- Marketing and business development
- Finance
- Executive leadership
- Governance

Tides, Inc. employs staff who provide infrastructure to the whole of Tides, including the offices of the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer. The range of centralized leadership and shared services continues to grow into a networked model.

While each partner organization provides different external client services, Tides, Inc. is not a public-facing brand. Instead Tides, Inc. provides essential infrastructure support only to Tides organizations. Costs for Tides, Inc.’s services are billed on a monthly basis to partner organizations in two ways: core services are expensed based primarily on headcount; and additional special project-based work is charged as a fee based on usage.

#### Key Lesson Learned

- A successful network requires organizations to affiliate strongly with the mission and operations of both the meta organization (including the shared service provider) and their specific operating division.
- Shared services require strong support and leadership of the Board, Chief Executive, and Chief Financial Officers to champion and operate them effectively.
- Affiliates must build trust and adjust operating procedures to support collective work and purpose. This operational and cultural change takes time.
- Centralized shared services are intuitively more efficient because they reduce staff redundancies (for example, having one receptionist for the whole). However, substantial start-up coordination is required. This may reduce cost savings.
- Some shared services can build purchasing power through centralization, including administration and facilities. Other shared services, such as information technology, may not build purchasing power per se, but will increase the quality of services provided by centralizing expertise.

**Mission:** To partner with philanthropists, foundations, activists, and organizations across the country and across the globe to promote economic justice, robust democratic processes, and the opportunity to live in a healthy and sustainable environment where human rights are preserved and protected.

**Participating Organizations** Tides Shared Spaces, Tides Foundation, Tides Center

**Annual Budget** Combined budget of over \$134 Million

**Structure** Affiliated nonprofit organization

**Founded** 1976

**Website** [www.tides.org](http://www.tides.org)

**Location** San Francisco, California

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