

# Boundless Staff FAQ About the Boundless and Merakey Affiliation

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## Section 1: What's happening, when is it happening, why is it happening

### What is happening?

Boundless is joining Merakey USA, a nationally recognized nonprofit organization, as its Midwest Regional Affiliate. As a result, Merakey USA is becoming the parent company of Boundless. While this is a significant milestone for Boundless, the experience for the families and communities we serve will remain consistent. Under this affiliation, Boundless will continue as a nonprofit serving the families and communities who rely on us today, while maintaining our Boundless identity, local board governance, CEO, and leadership team.

By joining Merakey USA, Boundless will also become the first organization in a new national affiliate model we have been collaboratively developing. This model is designed to unite strong, community-based health and human service organizations across the country, preserving local leadership and local service delivery while leveraging the scale, infrastructure, resources, and shared expertise of a national parent organization.

## When is this happening?

This affiliation will be effective after all the required approvals are received. We anticipate an effective date in July, 2026.

## Why is Boundless becoming an affiliate of Merakey USA now?

Many human services organizations are facing significant challenges today. These include:

- Workforce shortages
- Rising costs
- Increasing regulatory requirements and administrative burden
- Insufficient funding to fully cover the cost of care

Leaders at both organizations believe working together will help position us for long-term strength and sustainability. By joining together, we can better support employees, improve services, and continue helping people for many years to come. In simple terms, we believe we can accomplish more together than we could apart.

## What does “Midwest Affiliate” or “Regional Affiliate” mean?

Boundless will expand its presence into four additional states: Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana, and Wisconsin over the coming months and years.

By becoming the Regional Affiliate of Merakey USA, Boundless plans to become a cornerstone organization in what will become a national system of care. Boundless will be a Regional Affiliate with Merakey USA as the parent organization. As additional Regional Affiliates are added, we will continue to keep staff updated and informed.

## Section 2: How will this affect Boundless?

### Will Boundless still exist?

Yes. Boundless will still continue as its own nonprofit organization. The organizations are joining via membership substitution, which allows Merakey USA to become the parent company of Boundless without fully integrating the companies or dissolving Boundless. Boundless will keep:

- Its leadership team, including its own CEO
- Its programs and services
- Its trusted community relationships
- Its local board governance
- Its culture

The goal is to help Boundless remain strong while preserving the trust and identity people already know.

## Is this the same as one company buying the other?

No. This is not a sale or purchase. Legally, Merakey USA will become the parent organization of Boundless. Since both organizations are nonprofits, one does not buy the other. However, the affiliation is intentionally designed to preserve Boundless' local leadership, programs, and strong community connections.

These two organizations are choosing to come together because we share a common mission and values; and believe we can accomplish more together in advancing that mission.

## Why affiliate if both organizations are already strong?

We believe this is the best time to plan for the future, rather than waiting until challenges become more difficult to address. By working together now, we can *proactively* build strength and stability for the years ahead.

For Boundless, this affiliation will create:

- Expanded opportunities to grow programs and services
- Greater ability to invest in and support our staff
- Access to more advanced technology and infrastructure
- Resources that would be difficult to achieve independently

For Merakey, this affiliation:

- Establishes a model for a national framework of Regional Affiliates that share a common mission and values
- Expands services and impact in the Midwest

## What are the advantages of coming together?

We believe human services organizations need stronger systems of support to thrive in the future.

By working together, the organizations can:

- Strengthen technology and operations
- Attract, support, and retain employees
- Improve quality of care
- Expand services and reach
- Share knowledge, data, and best practices

- Build long-term stability
- Strengthen our voice in policy and advocacy
- Create an opportunity to lead the sector and elevate the needs and opportunities for those we serve to a national level

The goal is not simply just to grow bigger: it's to provide better care and stronger support for the future.

## How does becoming larger help care?

We believe growth only matters if it leads to better operations and higher-quality services.

Our goal is to create:

- Stronger support systems
- Greater workforce stability
- Improved learning, collaboration and coordination
- Long-term sustainability

Our focus is on improving care, not simply becoming larger.

## What does “shared infrastructure” mean?

“Shared infrastructure” means combining certain systems and support services to operate more efficiently and effectively.

Examples include:

- Technology systems
- Compliance and regulatory support
- Workforce training
- Data and reporting tools
- Administrative support

The goal is to better support employees and strengthen service delivery.

## What does membership substitution mean? Wasn't it a membership substitution when Koinonia became part of Boundless?

“Membership substitution” is the legal term for the type of affiliation being used. It means that Merakey USA becomes the sole member of Boundless.

In practical terms, this means the organizations are formally joining together while allowing Boundless to maintain its local leadership, identity, and community presence. While this is the same legal structure used when Koinonia joined Boundless, the integration plan will be very different in this affiliation.

## Will people lose their jobs?

No job reductions are planned as a result of this affiliation.

Our employees are our greatest strength, and this partnership is intended to support and strengthen our workforce over time.

As Boundless always has, we will continue to evaluate our programs and services and make the necessary adjustments needed to ensure our organization remains healthy and our programs and services are sustainable over time; but there are no planned job reductions due to the affiliation.

## Will pay or benefits change?

No immediate changes are planned.

Over time, employees may have access to expanded benefit options due to the combined scale and purchasing power of the two organizations.

## What are the benefits of this affiliation for Boundless employees?

We believe this partnership can provide a range of benefits for staff, including:

- More opportunities for promotions and career growth
- The option to pursue jobs in other states, if desired
- Expanded options for health and other benefits
- Increased access to training and professional development
- Improved technology and systems
- Access to a range of experts and professionals from across Merakey USA for learning and collaboration

## Will reporting lines or job duties change?

Reporting lines and job duties will not change for most employees as a result of the affiliation. Boundless will continue to have regional leadership, including its CEO and leadership team, responsible for program operations and community relationships. We do anticipate that some

executive, administrative, and support functions will shift to have functional alignment with Merakey's administrative departments and anticipate working closely together to support the vision of the joint organization. Anticipated shifts in reporting lines primarily affect executive and senior leadership staff.

## What changes should people expect soon?

At this stage, most integration activities are focused on planning and preparation behind the scenes.

The Boundless logo is being refreshed to indicate our connection to Merakey USA. There are no immediate process or systems changes planned, but over time we anticipate some will evolve to help both organizations operate more effectively together. Our commitment to quality care and to delivering the services needed in the communities Boundless serves will continue.

## What is NOT changing?

Both organizations are committed to preserving:

- Our mission and quality of care
- Local leadership
- Support for employees and families
- Community trust
- Programs and services

The goal is to strengthen both organizations without losing what already works well.

## Will organizational culture change?

We understand that many people worry about the Boundless culture changing as a result of organizational change. The goal is not to erase what makes either organization special. Instead, we aim to preserve the values and trust that already exist while building stronger support systems for the future.

## Who will make decisions?

Boundless will continue to have its own CEO and leadership team.

Local leaders will continue to manage day-to-day services and community relationships. At the same time, certain support systems and administrative functions may be shared in the future. Merakey will also retain approval authority over high-level decisions, such as annual budgets and strategic plans.

## Are HR, payroll, or technology systems changing right away?

No immediate changes are planned.

In the future, leaders will evaluate opportunities to strengthen systems and support services. Any changes will be communicated clearly in advance.

## What is the transition timeframe?

Leaders in both organizations will work collaboratively on integration efforts. We expect this process to take place over the next two years or more. Transitions will be carefully planned and communicated throughout the process. There will be many areas, such as programs and services, where we expect to learn from one another and share best practices, while remaining operationally distinct over the long term.

## Section 3: How will this affect others?

### What are the benefits for the people and communities we serve?

The people we serve should continue to see the same programs, locations, and staff they know today.

Anticipated benefits over time include:

- Improved staff retention and less burnout
- Expanded services available over time
- Enhanced technology and easier access to services
- The ability to access care across the Merakey USA network nationwide

### Will any programs or services end because of this?

There are no planned service reductions or closures related to this affiliation. In fact, we believe this partnership will strengthen Boundless and expand the range of services we can provide.

As always, we will continue to evaluate our programs to ensure they align with the needs of the communities we serve.

### Will the Boundless name and brand continue?

Yes. The Boundless name is important in the communities we serve.

While the logo is being refreshed to reflect our affiliation with Merakey, the Boundless brand and its identity will remain strong and recognizable.

## Will local donations still support local programs?

Yes. Donations to Boundless will continue to support local programs and communities.

Maintaining strong community relationships and local impact remains a priority.

## How will this help advocacy and influence?

Stronger partnerships and shared knowledge allow organizations to more effectively influence policies and funding decisions.

Together, we believe we will have a stronger voice in advancing the human services field.

## Section 4: About Merakey

### How large is Merakey?

Merakey is a non-profit organization that serves people in 12 states, including Ohio. Its services include I/DD support, mental health and addiction treatment, veterans' services, primary care, speech therapy, and more.

Merakey's annual revenue exceeds \$800 million—approximately 4–5 times larger than Boundless.

### How did we select Merakey as a partner?

Boundless leadership and members of the Board have long recognized the challenges facing human services organizations and the need to strengthen and grow the organization over time. As part of this effort, we spent more than 18 months exploring potential partners and selected Merakey based on strong alignment in culture, values, and approach. We believe this partnership positions us to achieve our long-term goals.

### Will there be other Regional Affiliates of Merakey in the future?

The goal is to build a nationwide system of care supported by strong Regional Affiliates like Boundless, with Merakey USA as the parent organization. We will continue to share updates as additional Regional Affiliates are added.

### How can I learn more about Merakey?

You can go to [www.merakey.org](http://www.merakey.org) to learn more about Merakey and the services they provide.

## Section 5: Staff Questions by Topic Area

### Organizational Structure & Staffing

Will Boundless be a nonprofit after the affiliation?

Yes, Boundless will continue to be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Will the P&C team merge with another HR team?

No immediate changes to the People & Culture team are planned as a result of this affiliation. Any potential future adjustments to departmental structures would be determined during integration with input from leadership of Merakey and Boundless. Integration planning is expected to begin near the effective date.

Will this impact department staffing? Will any open positions be paused? Is there planned turnover?

There are no planned staffing reductions or open position pauses as a result of this affiliation. As always, staffing and hiring decisions will continue to be guided by organizational needs and available resources.

When IT hears "reduced administrative costs" folks immediately think they may be let go in favor of a Managed Services Provider. Do we know anything about the new organizations' IT support structure/methodology?

There are no immediate changes planned to the roles within the Boundless' IT department as a result of this affiliation. IT support structure for Boundless as an affiliate will be considered during integration with input from leadership of Merakey and Boundless.

Boundless is expected to maintain the IT infrastructure needed to support its staff and programs, in coordination with Merakey's IT organization.

Will funding sources change with this partnership? Our current funding seems to limit us to provide one on one intensive services to clients that need it if their school districts are not open to school contracts, which sometimes feels like it limits our ability to provide more individualized care to clients that could really benefit from it. It would be nice if additional funding opportunities could give us the ability to better support our clients.

We will explore any potential funding sources that this partnership may make possible. A key goal of this affiliation is to leverage greater scale to expand and enhance services, which may help address current funding limitations over time.

## Will the details of the new plan be released in phases, or will we be given all of the information once the partnership is finalized?

This affiliation is not a traditional merger or acquisition and is specifically structured to balance the benefits of scale and resources of a shared national parent organization with the value of local leadership, services, and relationships. There are many details related to integration that have been intentionally not decided yet. The plan is for these details to be worked out collaboratively with leaders of both Merakey and Boundless over time. As this integration is planned and implemented over time, information will be updated and communicated as soon as it becomes available.

## Employee Pay, Policies and Benefits

### Will benefits be changing?

Boundless staff will participate in Boundless' health, dental, vision, and other related benefits open enrollment process and will continue under Boundless' benefits program for the first full year. Those who enroll during the May/June 2026 open enrollment period will have the benefits described in the 2026-2027 open enrollment brochure. We will also explore opportunities this affiliation may create for staff to access a broader array of benefits options in future open enrollment cycles.

### Would the handbook and Boundless' policies be changing?

No immediate changes to Boundless' staff handbook or Boundless' policies are planned as a result of this affiliation. Reviewing handbooks and policies will be part of the integration process which will be supported by leaders from Merakey and Boundless. Staff will be informed of any changes as early as possible.

### Will there be any changes to pay rates?

No immediate changes to Boundless' pay rates are planned as a result of this affiliation. Throughout the integration process, leadership from Merakey and Boundless will continue evaluating how to best position compensation to remain competitive across all markets where services are provided, including Ohio.

### Will out-of-state travel be required? How will out of state travel be compensated if required?

Most staff will not experience any changes to travel requirements as a result of this affiliation. Certain leadership positions may require additional out-of-state travel. Staff who may be impacted will be kept informed. Until otherwise notified, Boundless staff will follow Boundless' travel policies.

## **Culture & Engagement**

### **Is there a plan in place for training?**

No immediate changes to training are planned as a result of this affiliation. Planning for any future changes to training components or processes will be included in the integration planning.

### **Is Merakey partnering with Boundless as far as DEI and our ERGs are concerned? Are both organizations aligned?**

Merakey is committed to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and has similar staff opportunities to support their diverse workforce. Exploring potential alignment of DEI and ERG policies and processes will be part of integration planning.

### **Will our ERGs remain separate? Could Boundless staff join Merakey's ERGs?**

There are no immediate changes planned to Boundless' structure and membership of ERGs as a result of this affiliation. Exploring potential alignment of DEI and ERG policies and processes will be explored and planned during integration.

## **Systems & Platforms**

### **Will there be any immediate changes to the systems we use?**

There are no immediate changes planned to the systems Boundless uses as a result of this affiliation. In the event that any future changes are identified during integration planning, staff should be assured that we will communicate these as soon as possible.

## **Services**

### **Do we offer any services Merakey does? Will Boundless add additional services in the State of Ohio?**

Please visit Merakey's website [www.merakey.org](http://www.merakey.org) to learn more about the services they offer and the states they operate in. Part of the intent of this affiliation is for the Boundless service array to expand and grow. These are long-term decisions that would be part of integration and a joint strategic plan for the future. We will communicate any changes as soon as possible. We do anticipate Boundless welcoming programs which Merakey USA offers in Ohio and Michigan into our newly regional organization in the near future; but the exact timeline and details associated with this have not been determined yet.

### **Did the Newark Center close because of this affiliation? Are there additional closures planned?**

Boundless made the decision to close the Newark Center program based on the demand for center services in Newark not matching what was projected or needed for the program there to be sustainable. This decision was not related to this affiliation.

Our commitment to financially sustainable programs and services has always been a key component of what makes Boundless successful as a provider and will continue to be core to how we operate. We will continue to evaluate our programs and services and make the necessary adjustments needed to ensure our organization remains healthy and our programs and services are sustainable over time. As always, whenever necessary changes are identified, we will work with the staff and communities impacted to communicate these changes and ensure continuity of care.

### Are the changes that are being made to Community Based Services, BEST, School-Based Services or After School Services in certain locations because of this affiliation? Are more program changes planned?

Boundless notified staff of our intention to reorganize, consolidate or wind down a small number of programs that are serving a small number of individuals in certain parts of the state based on decreasing local demand or funding that has ended or will end soon (e.g. grants) for those services. These decisions are completely unrelated to this affiliation.

Our commitment to financially sustainable programs and services has always been a key component of what makes Boundless successful as a provider and will continue to be core to how we operate. We will continue to evaluate our programs and services and make the necessary adjustments needed to ensure our organization remains healthy and our programs and services are sustainable over time. As always, whenever necessary changes are identified, we will work with the staff and communities impacted to communicate these changes and ensure continuity of care.

### Are the changes that are being made to the I/DD residential management structure because of this affiliation? Are more changes to residential management structure planned?

Boundless made the decision to reorganize a small number of management roles within I/DD residential programs due to 1) the need to ensure ICF costs match ICF reimbursement rates (which are determined by the state annually) and 2) the need to align Supported Living costs with Supported Living reimbursement rates. Those decisions were completely unrelated to this affiliation.

Our commitment to financially sustainable programs and services has always been a key component of what makes Boundless successful as a provider and will continue to be core to how we operate. We will continue to evaluate our programs and services and make the necessary adjustments needed to ensure our organization remains healthy and our programs and services are sustainable over time. As always, whenever necessary changes are identified, we will work with the staff and communities impacted to communicate these changes and ensure continuity of care.

## Other

### How can my department help?

Many departments will have a role in shaping and executing the integration plan. Look for more information as it becomes available from departmental leadership. As questions arise or speculation is heard, please refer questions to the appropriate place, see Section 6.

## Section 6: How to stay updated on what's happening

### How will leaders communicate updates?

Boundless is committed to providing as much information as possible in a format that works for the majority of staff members and other stakeholders. We will share updates regularly through email and SharePoint, as well as through town halls and meetings. We will make sure that supervisors have up-to-date information. We will always communicate directly and be honest about what we know and what we don't.

### Where can employees get accurate information?

Employees should continue checking:

- Your Boundless email inbox
- Leadership updates and town halls
- Updates from your manager(s)
- The dedicated SharePoint page: [Merakey Affiliation](#)

More communication tools and additional FAQs will become available as the process continues.

### Where can I send my Questions?

Please send your questions or concerns to [feedback@iamboundless.org](mailto:feedback@iamboundless.org).

### This all sounds great, how can I get new Boundless gear with the new logos?

We have updated the websites of all of our partners for Boundless gear with the new logos and branding options. These items are available for purchase now.

- [Bonfire Store](#) – Casual Options
- [Lands' End](#) – Professional Options