



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2019 Capacity Building Grant Opportunities

SOCIAL VENTURE PARTNERS SEATTLE

Social Venture Partners (SVP) Seattle cultivates effective philanthropists, strengthens nonprofits, and invests in collaborative solutions. Together, we build powerful relationships to tackle our community's social challenges.

Since 1997 SVP Seattle has given more than \$17 million in grants and consulting funds, and more than \$3.5 million in skilled volunteer time to more than 100 nonprofit organizations throughout King County. Our work is focused on local nonprofits that work to improve the lives of kids and protect our environment, and SVP Seattle has adopted the following three community-wide goals to guide our grantmaking:

- All children enter kindergarten ready to learn
- All students graduate from high school on time, ready to be successful in college or a career
- Puget Sound is a place where all communities thrive, balancing environmental sustainability, economic opportunity, and racial equity

SVP CAPACITY-BUILDING MODEL & INVESTEE PARTNERSHIPS

SVP invests in nonprofits with effective programs and strong leadership that want to take their work to the next level. To achieve this, we give more than money. We build long-term strategic relationships with the organizations we support (our Investees). With an eye to increasing the capacity of the nonprofit, we provide high-level volunteer or professional assistance, in addition to general operating support grants, to meet the distinct needs of each Investee.

By working together, our Investees and our Partner volunteers develop a unique mutually beneficial relationship. Our Investees gain from the valuable expertise, guidance and mentorship of our Partners. In return, the experience allows our Partners to gain rich insight into community issues and the nonprofit sector, and develop a deep connection to the Investee and to the entire community.

SVP's relationship with each Investee includes:

1. **An unrestricted grant of up to \$30,000** in the first year. SVP makes an initial single-year grant with the intent of longer-term partnerships. Partnerships can last for up to 4 years of capacity building support and up to \$165,000 in general operating funds. At the end of each year, the grant outcomes and relationship potential are evaluated to determine further support.
2. **An assessment of your organization's strengths and weaknesses** conducted by key Investee staff using an [Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool](#). After completion, SVP and the Investee work together to identify and prioritize opportunities for capacity building.
3. **A vision & detailed plan** for improved organizational capacity and growth developed collaboratively and documented in a shared Annual Work Plan. The work plan helps to define the capacity building goals and provide a roadmap for partnering with SVP. Each Investee is expected to engage on 3-5 capacity building projects annually.
4. **A highly engaged working partnership** that taps into the intellectual capital and volunteer support of SVP Partners. Areas of support: board development, leadership development, financial management, fund development, marketing & communications, strategic planning, human resources, program outcomes and evaluation, information technology, and legal affairs.

5. **Accountability-for-results** through semi-annual meetings to review progress on the Annual Work Plan. These conversations are an opportunity for Investees to share successes, challenges, mid-course corrections and lessons learned. SVP seeks to respond to challenges and opportunities with creativity, expertise and resources.

For more information on our capacity building partnerships and model, [please visit our website](#).

READINESS TO ENGAGE IN CAPACITY BUILDING

SVP believes we have the greatest opportunity for impact working with organizations that have:

- Understanding of the importance of building organizational capacity to achieve their mission
- A compelling long-term vision for the organization's programs and infrastructure
- Strong, stable & committed leadership
- The internal capacity (staff & financial) to embrace an SVP partnership, which includes intensive self-assessment and working with volunteers and paid consultants
- Compelling evidence of outcomes & demonstrated impact (e.g., research-based program models) and is committed to using evaluation to provide the most effective programs
- An organizational commitment to discipline, transparency, accountability, flexibility & results
- Specific infrastructure challenges that currently prevent achievement of their full potential

While SVP has made investments at various stages of organizational development, and will consider investing at any stage, we typically invest when an organization has moved beyond the initial 'start-up' phase and is ready for next-stage growth and development. In addition, SVP has found that our investments have greater impact when Investee staff and board leadership enable and share the following qualities:

- A hunger for new thinking and a belief that SVP can be a key partner for achieving change goals
- A commitment to investing significant staff time in a multi-year, capacity-building partnership
- An eagerness to expand the organization's depth and/or breadth of impact

COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

Racial equity is an integral part of SVP's grantmaking. We are committed to achieving a community where, *regardless of race*, all children receive an excellent education and all people live and work in a healthy environment. We know that on average there are disparities in every key indicator of education and community well-being that cut along racial lines, with communities of color faring worse than the broader population.

While SVP aspires towards shared and universal goals, through our grantmaking we are interested in supporting targeted strategies that are focused on people and communities that have been left behind. **In short, racial equity is the path to racial equality.** We prioritize funding organizations who recognize and address the disparities that exist in our communities.

READINESS TO ENGAGE IN COLLECTIVE ACTION

SVP understands the importance of collaboration, alignment, and pooled resources to address big social challenges while building on our expertise in capacity building and engaged philanthropy. *Collective Action* describes a strategic approach to addressing important social issues that are beyond the scope of any single entity. As it relates to our grantmaking – SVP seeks to fund organizations that effectively coordinate with partners in pursuit of collaborative and community-wide efforts. We are interested in partnering with organizations that see their role in community-wide efforts and participate in developing, implementing and assessing individual and collective progress towards shared community goals.