

The Language of SVP: A Glossary

Welcome to SVP Connecticut! We're glad you've joined the group and want to help you get oriented. Below is a list of some of the more common terms to help you understand just what someone means when they ask you about "joining an Engagement Team to facilitate the OCAT with a new Investee."

Social Venture Partners Connecticut (also **SVP Connecticut**, **SVP-CT** or just **SVP**) – The correct way to cite SVP's official name. Note that there is no "of" before "Connecticut".

SVP Network – SVP Connecticut is part of a global network supported by the Seattle-based "Network office" of Social Venture Partners International (SVPI). Each SVP affiliate within the network operates independently and leverages SVP's unique model to amplify the impact Partners' donations of skills, time, and dollars have in their respective communities.

The SVP Model – Developed in Seattle in 1997, the model has a dual mission that seeks to catalyze significant, long-term positive social change by creating communities of lifelong, informed and inspired philanthropists who make strategic investments that build long-term capacity for nonprofits so they can better achieve their missions.

SVP Connect – (<http://connect.socialventurepartners.org>) A secure password-protected interactive website for SVP's global Partners and Staff. Once your logon credentials have been generated by the SVP Network office, they will be forwarded to you soon after you join as a Partner. This online portal contains the most up-to-date calendar and information and allows Partners and Staff around the world to access that knowledge when, and how they need it:

- Getting sample documents, templates, or reports.
- Accessing the SVP-CT calendar of events and meetings as well as the SVP Network calendar.
- Working collaboratively on SVP projects and committees.
- Connecting to other Partners in Connecticut and across the network.

SVP Connect will be continually updated and developed and you are encouraged to use it as a tool not only for projects and events related to SVP Connecticut, but as a source of resources and connections to further your own philanthropic goals and education.

Affiliates - Local SVP organizations that sign an agreement with SVP International, licensing the name and agreeing to core principles and other operating standards. Connecticut became the 34th affiliate in October 2013 and as of January 2015 there were 39 independent affiliates in 8 countries: United States (27), Canada (4), India (3), Australia, China, Japan, Korea, United Kingdom. Affiliates are sometimes referred to as Chapters.

Capacity Building – The development of core skills, infrastructure, leadership, management practices, strategies, and systems to enhance an organization’s effectiveness, sustainability and ability to fulfill its mission. SVP’s focus on supporting the strengthening of an organization’s capacity is one of the ways that we differ from other grant makers who may restrict their funding to an organization’s programs which can inhibit the nonprofit from investing in their underlying systems and operations.

SVP takes on capacity building projects in any area of an organization’s infrastructure that needs fortification that our Partners’ expertise, interests, and skill sets allow. Examples include: (1) Mission, Vision, Strategy & Planning, (2) Earned Revenue Expansion/Development (social enterprise), (3) Human Resources, (4) CEO / ED / Senior Management Team Leadership, (5) Information Technology, (6) Financial Management, (7) Development, (8) Board Governance, (9) Legal Affairs, or (10) Marketing, Communications, & External Relations.

Venture Philanthropy – This idea was popularized in the 1997 article [“Virtuous Capital: What Foundations Can Learn from Venture Capitalists.”](#) Along with SVP, leaders in the development of venture philanthropy included the Center for Venture Philanthropy, [Robin Hood](#) and [REDF](#). This form of philanthropy involves long-term relationships between funders and grantees. Funders invest expertise and capital (time, talent and treasure) and focus on capacity and operational infrastructure with measurable outcomes. SVP aims to increase the capacity and sustainability of nonprofits while extending the impact of our members -- engaging donors beyond the checkbook alone.

Investment – SVP’s engagements with nonprofits are “investments” in their success. Our investments incorporate pro-bono consulting, smart strategic thinking, access to professional networks and resources, professional development and coaching, and financial resources in support of that work.

Investees – Nonprofit organizations selected through our annual investment cycle that receive multi-year financial and volunteer strategic support. To become “Investees” (which we capitalize), nonprofits go through a rigorous selection process and are vetted by SVP’s Investment Committee (or “IC”). All SVP investments are philanthropic, with no financial return to SVP. “Investee” instead of “Grantee” implies strategic and active giving, with an expectation of social return.

Investment Committee (the “IC”) – The group of Partners who volunteer to conduct the annual investment cycle during which they review applications from current and prospective Investees, conduct site visits, and select the Investees and confirm reinvestment in the current portfolio of nonprofits. Prior to 2015, all Partners were members of the IC, but as our Partnership has grown, a smaller, more distinct committee was created to facilitate the process. Anyone who would like to volunteer to be on the IC can do so beginning at the start of the investment cycle (generally in February). There is also an opportunity to get involved in the IC in the late Fall as part of the reinvestment review.

Nonprofit – This is the sector SVP exists in support of; we refer to organizations as “nonprofits” (versus “non-profits” or “not-for-profits”. The term “not-for-profit” refers to an activity, whereas “nonprofit” refers to an organization.)

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501(c)3 – This is the most common type of tax-exempt nonprofit organization. A nonprofit is exempt from federal income tax if its activities have the following purposes: charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering amateur sports competition, or preventing cruelty to children or animals. Tax-exempt status is determined by the IRS. SVP Connecticut is not a 501(c)3. Fairfield County’s Community Foundation is our fiscal agent and SVP Connecticut is a field of interest fund administered by the community foundation.

SVP will not consider grant requests from individuals; organizations that discriminate; religious organizations for sectarian purposes; sports teams; political or lobbying organizations. Furthermore, we do not make grants to organizations for the sole purpose of fundraising events/auctions, debt reduction, endowment funds, consulting fees, or litigation/legal expenses.

Partners – What we call all of SVP’s members (to note, we refer to partners with a capital “P”). SVP Partners are donors of their time, talents and capital.

Donors – As a field of interest fund administered by Fairfield County’s Community Fund, anyone can donate to SVP as they would to any other nonprofit organization instead of, or in addition to, joining as a Partner.

Social Enterprise – An emerging model increasingly seen in the nonprofit sector, social enterprise generates revenue in support of social good, whether for-profit or nonprofit. SVP Connecticut’s preference is to engage with organizations that are using social enterprise methods that directly relate to their mission to earn revenue.

Committee – A group of SVP Partners working on activities that keep SVP running in Connecticut. Currently, other than our 2015 Investment Committee which has 13 Partner members, our committees (membership, finance) consist of single individuals. As our membership allows and needs demand, we expect to expand these and add others such as Partner Education and Communications.

Lead Partner (also referred to as the **LP**) – This is an active SVP Partner who has volunteered to serve as the liaison between SVP and the nonprofit Investee during the multi-year relationship. As the “Harbor Master” of the engagement with an Investee, s/he is responsible for overseeing strategy and work plans, initial and annual assessments, collaborating with the Engagement Manager and nonprofit Executive Director to develop volunteer opportunities for Partners within the Investee, and building a strong relationship with the Investee leadership. Ideally, the LP will be a mentor, advisor and trusted confidante for the Investee’s Executive Director. More information about the responsibilities of the LP and the engagement process can be found on SVP Connect.

Engagement Manager (also referred to as the **EM**) - A SVP Connecticut staff role. Works closely with the Lead Partners for each Investee and supports him/her in reviewing the OCAT and developing a work plan and annual milestones and goals. Similar to a “talent broker”, the EM is responsible for facilitating the engagement of Partners; matching Investee assistance needs with the current skill sets, experience and availability of SVP Partners; and communicating volunteer opportunities to the Partnership.

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OCAT (or, the **Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool**) – A self-assessment tool developed by McKinsey and Co. and customized for SVP that helps nonprofits determine where they believe themselves to be across dimensions of organizational health and development. It is a key mechanism in SVP's Investee evaluation and the first step in the engagement process. Out of the OCAT, the work plan is developed which outlines the projects and opportunities for Partners to engage with an Investee.

Engagement Team – The Partners who volunteer to work with our Investees on projects that arise out of the OCAT and work plan. Depending upon the parameters of the project and the skills, time commitment and expertise required, a Partner may work on a project independently or in collaboration with other Partners.

Brainstorming Visit – Open to all interested Partners, these 90-minute meetings are a low time-commitment opportunity to learn about nonprofits in our community and the issues facing organizations in that sector. Prior to the visit some pre-read materials are distributed to attendees to provide them with an overview of the organization, their programs and current financial status. Partners will meet with the Executive Director and Board Chair of the nonprofit as well as any other senior staff members that the ED deems appropriate. The format of the meeting is a Q&A with the nonprofit's team to brainstorm potential solutions for issues facing the organization. Particular attention is paid to discerning revenue earning opportunities. Following the visit, a memo is sent to the ED with the collated Partner responses to three questions: (1) If I were Executive Director I would ... (2) If I were a Potential Investor I would ... (3) My outstanding questions are ... These brainstorming visits provide nonprofits access to some high-level strategic consulting and the response to these memos from the ED's of the organizations we have met with has been very favorable.

Now you know! Need additional information or resources? Look at our home space on [SVP Connect](#) or contact camille@svp-ct.org or clarehare@svp-ct.org.