



New Partner FAQs

Q: I want to stay in-the-loop about news on our Investees, volunteer opportunities, upcoming events, etc. Where do I go for this information?

A: There are a few useful SVP information sources that you should keep tuned into:

SVP Connect (<http://connect.socialventurepartners.org>) contains information that is only accessible to SVP Partners and staff. The most up-to-date SVP calendar, current Investee projects, meeting minutes, articles on philanthropy, and a Partner contact list can be found here, among many other resources. New Partners will receive their log-in credentials once their initial Partner contribution has been received.

The SVP newsletter is emailed to all Partners every 4-6 weeks. To make sure that you receive these important email updates, add social_venture_partners_connecti@mail.vresp.com to your “safe senders” list of your email client.

Our website (www.socialventurepartners.org/connecticut) lists events, but the most up-to-date calendar will be on SVP Connect. The website is a good source of information regarding the SVP model of venture philanthropy and a great forum for introducing SVP to others.

Q: What is SVP’s relationship to Fairfield County’s Community Foundation?

A: SVP is a field of interest fund at the community foundation and they administer the fund on our behalf. We have a strong collaborative relationship with FCCF. Karen Brown, Vice President of Innovation and Strategic Planning, is a co-founding Partner of SVP Connecticut and is a member of our Board. Several of our Partners are FCCF donor advised fund holders. FCCF also offers workshops and programs that our Partners have access to and potential opportunities to engage with the Center for Nonprofit Excellence (CNE) exist as well.

Q: How did SVP Connecticut begin?

A: In the summer of 2012, a group of like-minded individuals who shared the belief that social enterprise enhances the stability and capacity of an organization to support positive social change, gathered to discuss collaborating on support of such ventures. Don Kendall was the catalyst for this group and worked closely with Karen Brown of Fairfield County’s Community Foundation to consolidate interest and support. A field of interest fund, SVP Fund of Connecticut, was established at the community foundation in December 2012 to administer Partner and other donor contributions and nine co-founding Partners made 3-year financial commitments.

In July 2013 the group's first investment was made to the [International Institute of Connecticut \(IICONN\)](#) along with a \$50k loan, payable in \$10k tranches. (N.B. In July 2015, IICONN repaid the loan in full – two years ahead of the due date). In October 2013, the group officially joined the Social Venture Partners global network and became the 34th affiliate. By year-end there were 16 Partners and \$120k in pledged investment capital.

SVP Connecticut conducted its first public investment cycle in 2014 and selected its next two investees; [Connecticut Pre-Engineering Program \(CPEP\)](#) and Earthplace, The Discovery Center, with a focus on the nonprofit's [Harbor Watch](#) program. Both organizations received \$50k in financial support and the Partners approved reinvestment in IICONN as well. It was a year of tremendous growth for SVP Connecticut and by December 2014 the chapter had 42 Partners and \$230k in capital.

As of April 2016, SVP Connecticut has cumulatively invested \$384k in financial support and given more than 3000 volunteer hours of skilled strategic support to nonprofits in our community.

Q: I want to get in touch with another SVP Partner I met recently. Where can I find their information?

A: Contact information for all SVP Partners, both in Connecticut as well as the other global affiliates, can be found on [SVP Connect](http://connect.socialventurepartners.org/) (<http://connect.socialventurepartners.org/>). In the search bar in the upper right you can search for someone by name or by "(Name of City) Partner Directory" You can also find bios for most of our Partners on our [website](http://www.socialventurepartners.org/connecticut/who-we-are/our-partners/) (<http://www.socialventurepartners.org/connecticut/who-we-are/our-partners/>)

Q: I want to make the most of my SVP experience. What's the best way to start?

A: There are many ways to dive in to SVP-- the important thing is to follow your passions and interests. Share your skills, interests, and availability with us by filling out [your profile](#). This will help us to better connect you to the SVP activities that you might enjoy. Filling out your profile only takes about 10-15 minutes, and is the easiest way to help us get to know you. Then, check the calendar of events listed on the home space of SVP Connect and register for any events that interest you. If you'd like to volunteer to work with an Investee, contact our Engagement Manager, Clare Hare (clarehare@svp-ct.org) and she can facilitate your involvement.

Q: What is the governance structure of SVP Connecticut?

A: The Board is the governing body of SVP Connecticut. Its [six members](#) set SVP's strategic direction and provide financial oversight. The Board approves the annual operating and investment budgets. (The Investment Committee makes recommendations to the Board as to the appropriate allocation of the investment budget.) The Board Chair authorizes FCCF to release funds as directed and approved by the Board.

Q: The nonprofit investees – how does SVP select them?

A: We currently have one investment cycle per year. Any Partners interested in selecting our next Investee(s) join the Investment Committee (IC). The first step of the IC is to review and refine the investment criteria and release the Letter of Interest guidelines. An information session is held for potential applicants to explain the SVP model of grant making which also serves as an opportunity to

meet many of the nonprofit leaders in our community. At the conclusion of the submission period the Letters of Interest received are reviewed by the Investment Committee and a small selection of organizations are chosen as finalists and invited to submit a Proposal for Investment. Site visits are conducted with each of the finalists and the Investee(s) for that year are selected. Partners wishing to have a vote on the selection of investees needs to participate on the Investment Committee.

In the late Fall, the Portfolio Review Committee reconvenes again to review the current investment portfolio and vote on reinvestment.

Q: Once an Investee is chosen, what happens next?

A: The first step is for the Engagement team, the group of volunteer Partners led by the Lead Partner and the Engagement Manager, to facilitate the OCAT (Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool), a self-assessment process to help the Investee’s senior staff and board determine the nonprofit’s current strengths, weaknesses and priorities. Then a work plan is developed which outlines the projects and opportunities for Partners to engage with an Investee and also frames the over-arching goals and milestones of the SVP engagement.

The general framework of a multi-year engagement is a series of discrete projects of varying commitments of time and expertise that may be implemented by individual Partners or small groups of Partners, depending upon the nature of the work. These projects may be carried out simultaneously or in sequence depending upon the project requirements. The goal of an engagement is to match the needs of the Investees with the interests and expertise of our Partners to create a positive impact on all involved.

Q: I’ve been hearing lots of different terms – Investee, OCAT, capacity building – what do they all mean?

A: Like any organization, there is terminology used by its members that doesn’t always make sense initially. Check out the [SVP Glossary](#) for a brief description of some of the most common SVP terms.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact the SVP Connecticut staff. We’re always happy to help!

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