

ENDING FOOD INSECURITY

A Partnership between Community Food Share
and Social Venture Partners Boulder County

June 2016 to November 2019



community[™]
FOOD SHARE



**SOCIAL VENTURE
PARTNERS
BOULDER COUNTY**



PARTNERSHIP PURPOSE

To better meet its mission, Community Food Share will have in place a strategic plan, as well as the board, staff, processes, and infrastructure to successfully implement the plan.

Goals

- A 3- to 5-year strategic plan, including a compelling and engaging vision statement.
- A strong message or “story” of Community Food Share, which clarifies who we are, what we do, and how we are distinguished from our agency partners and their work relating to food security.
- A stronger foundation of community engagement and trust.

OUTCOMES

SVP Boulder County’s engagement with Community Food Share successfully achieved the goals set out at the beginning of the project. Most significant were development of the strategic plan, which drove subsequent activity, as well as branding and communications work. Meaningful follow-on projects – in areas such as board development and human resources – helped the board and staff navigate new issues as they arose, prevented ‘reinventing the wheel,’ supported their efforts to strategically recruit new board members, and positioned Community Food Share for continued success.

OVERVIEW

- Years of relationship: June 2016 through November 2019
- Consulting hours: 1,470+
- Other pro bono support: creative services from Vermilion Design + Digital
- Cash grants: \$26,500

“Completion of the new strategic plan – including outcomes to optimize the local food distribution network, improve food access, amplify our community’s efforts to eliminate hunger, and develop resources that meet community needs and sustain Community Food Share operations – is a very big deal. It allows them to dig deeper and understand the broader landscape, beyond simply moving pounds of food. The board and staff now have greater alignment and clarity. As a maturing organization, Community Food Share is already a leader in the field, playing a crucial role as an intermediary to other food providers and services. Now, the organization is poised to achieve its full potential in addressing hunger – a critical need in our community.”

Deborah Malden, SVP’s Co-Lead Partner working with Community Food Share



RATIONALE FOR SVP INVESTMENT

At initial investment, SVP Boulder County believed Community Food Share was an impressive organization with both significant and broadly reaching services; and that the nonprofit was poised to grow into an organization that would dramatically increase its community impact in reducing hunger, today and in the future. Community Food Share demonstrated characteristics needed for successful capacity building with an effective executive director and board chair, a board eager for capacity building, a vision for a scaled future, a commitment to evaluation, and opportunities for exciting and challenging Partner engagement. SVP recognized we could be integral in helping Community Food Share strategically develop and navigate a new role in the community and that it would be difficult to accomplish without our support.

COMMUNITY FOOD SHARE PROFILE

- Vision: A hunger-free community.
- Mission: Eliminate hunger in Boulder and Broomfield Counties through engagement, collaboration, and leadership.
- Founded: 1981
- Contact: 303.652.3663, communityfoodshare.org
- Overview: Community Food Share provides direct support to families, seniors, and other individuals who struggle with hunger in Boulder and Broomfield counties.
- Major programs or services:
 - Feeding Families
 - The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
 - Mobile Pantries
 - Emergency Food
 - Elder Share

* 30% of Community Food Share's food is distributed through the programs listed above; 70% is distributed through partner agencies.



"Becoming an SVP Catapult Investee allowed Community Food Share to build capacity in many areas – to reinvent and revive our work in ways we could not have done on our own. Beyond the financial value of the services and support provided by SVP, the caliber of Partners has been well and above what we could have connected to ourselves. We – and the food insecure people we serve in Boulder and Broomfield counties – have benefited immensely from the experience and commitment of everyone we've worked with at SVP Boulder County."

Michelle Orge, Executive Director of Community Food Share, 2015-2019



INTRODUCTION

SVP's longest-running initiative, Catapult aims to strengthen local nonprofits from the inside out – from board governance and leadership development to strategy, fundraising, communications, technology, and more. For Community Food Share, the Catapult program helped align their board and staff around a new strategic plan, resulting in a greater focus on delivering the organization's mission, and more definition to its collaborative approach. As well, SVP's investment achieved greater community awareness of the work and impact of Community Food Share, also helping to dispel myths about what hunger looks like in our community. This report describes the process and deliverables – and the mixed, but overall positive results – of Community Food Share's participation in SVP's Catapult program.

OUR WORK TOGETHER

Strategic Plan

Goal: Develop a robust planning process leading to the adoption and implementation of Community Food Share's first ever strategic plan so that Community Food Share can demonstrate measurable progress on its recently-adopted mission, pivoting away from standard food procurement and distribution to a focus on ending hunger: *"To be a leader in our community's effort to end hunger in Boulder and Broomfield counties."*

Outcome: Community Food Share adopted a five-year strategic plan with four outcomes that prioritize improved internal operations, working collaboratively with key stakeholders, and amplifying the community's efforts to eliminate hunger. (View the plan at communityfoodshare.org/plan.) The plan has:

- helped strengthen relationships with pantry partners, allowing improved delivery of services;
- solidified Community Food Share's position as the local leader in addressing food insecurity;
- enhanced Community Food Share's ability to recruit quality staff and board members who have the passion, skills, and experience to successfully implement the new plan;
- articulated a vision and mission around which board, staff, and other stakeholders can coalesce; and
- identified a timeline of activities for improved accountability.

SVP's Catapult program provides nonprofits with 3.5 years of deep-dive consulting, and works side by side with nonprofit leadership to reach strategically identified goals for greater organizational impact. Supporting cash grants enable capacity- and capability building within the nonprofit.

***Capacity:** Ability (core skills, management practices, strategies, and systems) of an organization to deliver programs at the targeted or desired scale with effectiveness, sustainability, and impact.*

***Capability:** Agility of an organization to implement and deliver programs according to the way they were designed (fidelity) and with quality, achieving expected impact.*



Strategic Plan (continued)

It took longer than ideal to identify the best match of SVP Boulder County Partners with both strategic planning experience and the right cultural fit with Community Food Share. And early on, delineation regarding the roles of the executive director, planning committee, and SVP Boulder County were unclear, which led to frustration on all fronts. However, with a strong fit and clear expectations, both organizations gained the requisite momentum for the work at hand.

Project: Three SVP Boulder County Partners provided comprehensive strategic planning consultation, including guidance on planning processes/frameworks; facilitation of a retreat, meetings, and consensus conversations; serving as accountability partners; and reviewing work products.

Strategic Branding and Data-Driven Communications

Making the case for support

Goal 1: Develop a key messaging strategy and visual expression of Community Food Share's brand to reinforce Community Food Share's mission, vision, and why the organization is critical to our community.

Goal 2: Create a messaging framework that uses data and storytelling to communicate the impacts and magnitude of food insecurity in Boulder and Broomfield counties.

Outcome: Community Food Share's new branding and communications campaign, launched with the adoption of the strategic plan, raised Community Food Share's profile in the community. Fresh, innovative, welcoming messages resonate with key stakeholders – partner agencies and community collaborators, staff and volunteers, food and financial donors, and program participants (i.e., food insecure individuals and families in need). Greater and more positive awareness among stakeholders and the community at-large has far-reaching impacts, helping Community Food Share secure the resources it needs and better meet its mission. As well, the board and staff gained a better understanding of who they are as an organization.

Summary of SVP Investments

Consulting Hours*	1,470+
Consulting Value**	\$294,000+
Cash Grants	\$26,500
Projects	15
Partner Volunteers	20

* Does not include hours provided by Vermilion Design + Creative

**Rate = conservatively valued at \$200/hour

“I had never done a rebrand before. Through SVP Boulder County, I had the opportunity to work with a seasoned professional who guided, informed, and advised me according to best practices ... every step of the way. It was an incredibly gratifying learning experience for me that also resulted in our clients feeling more welcome and respected.”

Julia McGee, Director of Communications for Community Food Share



Strategic Branding and Data-Driven Communications

(continued)

Making the case for support repositions Community Food Share’s communications with donors and stakeholders, which historically focused on what Community Food Share does rather than the problems it solves. Better educating donors and volunteers about Community Food Share helps strengthen connections, leading to greater support.

Project: Two SVP Boulder County Partners, along with two external professionals they recruited, conducted extensive research, evaluation, and creative work to rebrand Community Food Share. The team produced a creative brief and a brand identity guide, including a logo design, color palette, typography, taglines, messaging, and more. The result was a completely new brand and communications package. One SVP Boulder County Partner worked on data-driven communications through storytelling.

Needs Assessment (Final Phase)

Goal: Complete the final phase of a food security needs assessment initiated and led by Community Food Share in conjunction with Community Food Share’s pantry partners for Boulder and Broomfield counties.

Outcome: The needs assessment process played a significant role in building trust between pantry partners and Community Food Share. Collaboration among organizations on the frontlines in addressing food insecurity has increased, and the shared data that was captured is the first of its kind in Boulder and Broomfield counties. The data is being used to identify gaps in services and redundancies, enabling Community Food Share and all of pantry partners to better meet their missions. According to Boulder County Housing & Human Services, the shared data is driving the county’s efforts to create an integrated system of care for the community, which will improve patient care, reduce cost, and improve health outcomes.

Project: Two SVP Boulder County Partners facilitated two workshops with Community Food Share’s larger pantry partners to support greater collaboration on priorities around food security. Additionally, an SVP Boulder County Partner developed a Scope of Work for a follow-on data analytics project that was transitioned into the data-driven communications project.

“What I like most about partnering with SVP Boulder County is not only the huge benefit to our organization and the community members we serve, but also the professional growth and development of our staff.”

Julia McGee, Director of Communications for Community Food Share



SVP volunteers assist with sorting vegetables at Community Food Share.



Human Resources/Leadership Development

Goal: Align staff and organizational goals to help ensure a high functioning team with low turnover through team development; coaching and mentoring for some members of staff leadership; improved evaluation processes; and proven practices for quality feedback.

Outcome: Staff and board member participants in coaching, mentoring, and facilitated peer learning met a majority of pre-determined goals for improvement in leadership and management practices. A critical department that had experienced turnover and conflict found cohesion and improved its ability to meet team goals for the organization. All of these activities strengthened relationships, while building knowledge and skills.

Project: Three SVP Boulder County Partners provided long-term executive coaching or mentoring to staff or board leaders. Two Partners facilitated a multi-year, peer learning group in which the executive director participated. Additionally, a Partner worked with a staff department to enhance the working relationship between members, maximizing effectiveness through a series of facilitated conversations intended to improve group cohesion, address conflict, develop support and self-care, and create connections.

Executive Search

Goal: Hire a highly qualified executive director with the skills, experience, and enthusiasm needed to successfully implement Community Food Share's strategic plan, and meet the organization's mission.

Outcome: The search process was robust and generated high interest. This resulted in the board finding a new, highly qualified executive director in a relatively short time.

Project: A SVP Boulder County Partner advised the chair of the Search Committee on conceptual approaches and operational details of conducting a quality executive search.



“Due to limited resources, nonprofit leaders often don’t have access to coaching and self-improvement. I really appreciated stepping away from my day-to-day responsibilities to benefit from the safe space that SVP coaching provided me. It was a unique opportunity to be open about challenges and opportunities with a neutral party, and to grow and become more accountable as a leader.”

Julia McGee, Director of Communications for Community Food Share



Board Development

Goal: Community Food Share board members gained communication and collaboration skills for productive strategic planning and implementation; Community Food Share will strategically recruit and onboard new board members, as needed; and roles and responsibilities of the CEO and board will be clearly understood, leading to a healthy and productive relationship.

Outcome: The board has experienced 100% turnover since the beginning of SVP's engagement, with the majority happening in the past year. Much of this turnover is due to term limits (six years); other turnover reflects board burnout because the strategic planning process, which was board- and executive director-driven, was more comprehensive and took longer than anticipated. Additionally, our partnership did not solve a lack of alignment within the initial board group. SVP provided less support in board development than needed, due to lack of Partner availability on the part of SVP and receptivity on the part of some Community Food Share board members. However, thanks to the board assessment and coaching completed by SVP Boulder County Partners, Community Food Share successfully and strategically recruited new board members. The new team is cohesive and well-positioned to execute on the strategic plan.

Project: Two SVP Boulder County Partners completed some of the needed board development activities, including facilitation of two interactive board trainings focused on clarifying board versus executive director roles and responsibilities; research and a report identifying challenges and opportunities for improving board and board/executive director dynamics, board engagement, governance practices, and skills/experience gaps on the board; facilitation of a board retreat discussion on recommendations; and sharing resources that highlight governance and leadership proven practices.

Corporate Engagement

Goal: Assess and improve corporate engagement strategies (including the Corporate Challenge) to stabilize and increase funding support from the local business community.

Outcome: While overall goals were not met, this process provided the catalyst to evaluate the current structure and make beneficial changes. A new corporate engagement program now includes the Corporate Challenge, but is far more comprehensive, providing several entry points for corporate engagement. Challenges to success included both Community Food Share staff turnover and a lack of availability within the SVP Boulder County volunteer corps to provide as much support as needed.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Goal: Develop a monitoring framework with quantitative indicators that provide actionable information to the board, management, donors, and other stakeholders regarding achievement of Community Food Share's strategic plan.

Outcome: A delay in the overall project occurred, in part due to the resignation of the executive director. The board's priorities appropriately shifted to recruitment of a new executive director, as well as new board members. While we did not meet the...



Monitoring & Evaluation (continued)

overall goal of having a monitoring and evaluation framework in place at the end of our partnership, the work completed positions Community Food Share to move forward in creating a practical and effective framework. A hurdle in identifying a measurable goal for the strategic plan – measuring food insecurity for those specifically served by Community Food Share – was cleared after SVP Boulder County Partners were educated on the complexities of data availability in this field.

Project: Two SVP Boulder County Partners worked with the board and staff toward developing a monitoring and evaluation framework that is both practical and effective. The Partners presented a process based on Theories of Change, and built a shared empathetic of outputs, outcomes, and impact to the board – and facilitated staff discussion on the topic, as well. Our organizations worked together on building consensus and buy-in on what to measure and why.

Wrap-up

Community Food Share representatives believe many positive impacts came from the partnership, and they would participate again, if given the opportunity. They find that many of the changes are hard to describe, but say invaluable connections have been made through SVP Boulder County – e.g., individuals and groups that know and support them as a result of their work with SVP.

Both parties wish we'd done less to shield some of the staff from the "extra work" of SVP projects. We wanted to balance the number of projects to align with the strategic plan rather than taking on too much, but there were additional activities we could have undertaken together.

On SVP's part, Community Food Share is one of the largest nonprofits to receive investment from SVP Boulder County. Some desired changes were more difficult to effect in a larger organization, and expectations may need to be adjusted in future investments in larger nonprofits.

On Community Food Share's part, there was an expectation that SVP had access to enough volunteers in every area of capacity building that there would always be someone available and immediately. SVP Boulder County's actual size and resources were not always what they'd hoped. On the other hand, "there were Partners with knowledge that we didn't expect to be as wonderful – so we were surprised on both angles."

Visit *Page 10* to see how Community Food Share grew over the past three years and how SVP Partner members volunteered on consulting projects with the nonprofit.



COMMUNITY FOOD SHARE GROWTH

	2016	2017	2018	2019 to date
Total Clients (unduplicated)	11,500	11,500	12,400	14,100
Employees	29	29	31	32
Volunteers (unduplicated)	3,584	4,471	6,600	6,234

SUMMARY OF SVP CONSULTING

Consulting Areas	Volunteers
Strategic Planning	Rob Alderfer, Ali Kole, Keith Kegley
Needs Assessment Facilitation	Barb Truan and Rebecca Alderfer
Scope Development for Data Analytics	Rebecca Alderfer
Strategic Branding and Communications	Tony George
Data Analytics Communications	Tony George
Corporate Engagement	Elisa George, Hal Brown, Jeff Blattner
Board Development	Ranelle Randles and Jennie Arbogash
Executive Director Evaluation	Ranelle Randles
Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	Tom Briggs, Kay Paine
Executive Coaching	Jodi Grossman and Stephanie Wilson
Executive and Board Chair Mentoring	Dennis Berry, Deborah Malden
Board Annual Retreat Facilitations	Keith Kegley, Ranelle Randles, Tom Briggs
Human Resources – Team Building	Roland Evans
Executive Search	Paige Henchen
Executive Director Facilitated Peer Learning	Kristin Imo and Jodi Grossman
Lead Partners	Deborah Malden and Dennis Berry