



Call for Letters of Inquiry

Deadline: January 11, 2020 @ 4:00 p.m.

1. About SVP Boulder County
2. Selection Criteria
3. The SVP Philosophy of Funding Levels
4. Frequently Asked Questions
5. Application Process
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1. About SVP Boulder County – Investing in Nonprofits

SVP envisions a more vibrant and thriving Boulder County community for all. That is why we invest volunteer-powered consulting, education, mentoring, and supporting cash grants to build the strength and sustainability of local nonprofits.

This type of “capacity building” addresses the core skills, management practices, strategies, and systems that lay a sturdy foundation for excellent service to the community. When nonprofits are strong, more of our community members can thrive.

Once chosen for investment, a nonprofit will typically receive pro bono consulting support valued between \$200,000 and \$400,000. SVP makes single-year awards with the intent of establishing longer-term partnerships with its Investees (typically lasting 3.5 years). At the end of each year, the relationship with each Investee is re-evaluated for further support.

The areas in which SVP Boulder County Partners currently provide consulting include:

- Strategy and Planning – e.g., a strategic or business planning process, lifecycle assessments, environmental scans
- Management – e.g., breaking down organizational objectives and developing systems for monitoring and accountability at all levels of the organization; executive coaching
- Outcome Measurement and Program Evaluation – e.g., planning, reviewing and enhancing current tools, assisting in tool development, training board and staff on tools (e.g., logic models)
- Human Resources – e.g., developing full organizational restructuring; assessing and addressing culture issues; assisting in the development of job descriptions; coaching on the hiring process; auditing employee benefits and handbooks;
- Replication and Expansion – e.g., leveraging capital, develop feasibility study to assess best strategies for expansion, scaling models
- Information Technology – e.g., auditing databases; researching solutions for data, web, or network systems; IT planning; serving as liaison with an IT contractor

IMPORTANT - Please Note

To be eligible to submit a Letter of Inquiry, all prospective applicants **must RSVP for and attend** one of these **Information Sessions:**

- Boulder, December 11, 9:00 a.m.
([Register Now](#))

- Lafayette, December 11, 3:00 p.m.
([Register Now](#))

- Longmont, December 12, 1:30 p.m.
([Register Now](#))

- Boulder, January 7, 11:00, a.m.
([Register Now](#))

Questions? Contact [Spencer Downing](#)

- Finance and Accounting – e.g., developing cash flow analysis; developing new budgeting systems; transitioning an Investee’s accounting system to updated software, training staff on the new system, and facilitating data conversion; establishing stronger board oversight of financial well-being; coaching on financial management skills
- Boards and Governance – e.g., Board recruitment, training, and development; board coaching
- Marketing and Communications – e.g., branding and marketing plans; collateral materials; re-naming; focus groups
- Legal – e.g., reviewing legal documents, providing legal counsel on various issues
- Fundraising, Earned Income, and Social Enterprise – e.g., fund development planning, developing earned income strategies, development coaching
- Board Leadership & Development – e.g., auditing and/or developing a board recruitment and training process, board education, board member coaching

2. Selection Criteria

SVP has historically found the most success in conducting capacity building with organizations that demonstrate several key characteristics. Therefore, we will give strong preference to Boulder County nonprofits that have the following features:

- Nonprofit organization - 501(c)(3) status or fiscally sponsored ✓
- At least 50% of services provided in Boulder County ✓
- Budget at \$200,000 or more ✓
- A paid staff of three or more ✓
- A board of six or more members ✓
- In a growth, mature, or turnaround stage (no start-ups) ✓
- Applicant attends one of SVP’s Information Sessions ✓
- Applicant needs and is committed to incorporating SVP consulting volunteer support to build and strengthen their organization’s internal capacity ✓
- Applicant is committed to using outcomes measurement/evaluation ✓
- Applicant has strong and passionate leadership at the staff and Board level, demonstrating qualities of social entrepreneurship ✓

If you’re concerned that your organization is close to, but doesn’t quite meet, one or two of these criteria, please contact Spencer Downing at 720.815.5675 to discuss.

SVP strives to maintain a balanced portfolio of investments that reflects:

- a Survive-to-Thrive continuum
- service to residents throughout Boulder County
- deep and broad impact.

3. The SVP Philosophy of Supporting Cash Grants to Investees

SVP will provide varying levels of volunteer consulting and financial resources over the life of its relationship with a nonprofit and supporting cash grants are specifically intended to be “in service of” capacity building. We know the intensive project work with SVP will take time away from other efforts and uncover areas that need more financial investment. Recognizing that organizational infrastructure is a necessity, SVP’s cash grants are for general operating support. (SVP Boulder County does not fund requests for endowments or capital campaigns.)

The first year of funding provides an opportunity to learn about each other and begin our work on capacity building projects. Over year two, the SVP/Investee partnership is strengthened, and capacity building efforts move forward in earnest. By the final year of investment, SVP anticipates a focus on sustainability for the Investee. Funding levels mirror this changing relationship. In general, an investee with a 3.5-year relationship with SVP may expect to receive between \$35,000 and \$50,000 in funding.

SVP Cash Grant Model

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total Potential
Guaranteed Grant	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$35,000 to \$50,000
Investees may also receive up to an additional \$5,000 each year, depending on specific consulting projects and SVP's resources.				

Funding levels and investments in capacity building are based on the needs of the Investee and the available resources within SVP. Each Investee will benefit from support tailored to their unique situation and should expect to receive different funding levels than other Investees. From time to time, SVP may choose to fund an organization at an amount outside of these ranges.

4. Frequently Asked Questions

What is capacity building?

SVP Boulder County defines capacity building as the development of core skills, management practice, systems, and strategies. It builds the internal infrastructure and leadership of an organization.

What kind of people do you look for in the Investees you fund?

SVP Boulder County's Investees are led by social entrepreneurs -- innovative, passionate leaders with vision and ideas about effecting change, solving problems in the community, and creating more social value from their limited resources. They often use traditional business skills to achieve their goals and desire to improve their use of proven business practices. Most make creative use of limited resources to doggedly pursue their social mission. They deeply value volunteer involvement in their organizations and have a mechanism to work effectively with volunteers.

How many investees will SVP select in spring of 2020?

SVP will most likely select one new Investee to work with in 2020/21.

5. Application Process

Attendance at one of four information sessions is expected. SVP strongly encourages at least one staff and one Board member to attend. Please click on the links at the beginning of this document to register. The session will introduce you to the concept of partnering with SVP Boulder County, address any questions you may have about the application or selection process, and ensure you submit the most successful application. For additional questions, feel free to contact [Spencer Downing](#).

To be considered for support, organizations should submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) electronically **by 4:00 p.m. on January 11, 2020**. LOIs should not exceed three pages and should include **no additional**

attachments. Some of us have well-used eyes, so we ask that fonts not be smaller than size 11 and margins should be one inch.

The Letter of Inquiry should include the following information:

- Your organization's name, EIN, address, website, contact name, email address, and phone.
- One paragraph summarizing your organization's mission and history.
- A summary of your organizational goals and specific program or service activities. Please include all the following details: the number of clients served, geographic client service area, key requirements for service provision, the number of paid staff, the number of volunteers, and the number of donors.
- A brief summary or list of other community supporters such as collaborators or funders.
- A **specific** description, including **two to three proposed projects (or ways)** in which you could use SVP's strategic consulting assistance (***this is a critical component of your letter***).
- One paragraph summarizing your leadership's vision for the organization and where you see the nonprofit in three to five years.
- A list of board members' names and city of residence.
- At least three dates in April when your executive and board chair would be able to host a site visit with SVP Partners (in the event you are chosen as a finalist).
- Budget figures: a) the organization's total 2019 operating budget. ***Please note: Do not submit a line item budget. For example, applicants need only state, "Our total agency budget for FY 2019 is \$524,000."***

Please submit Letters of Inquiry by 4:00 p.m. on January 11, 2020, via email attached in PDF format labeled with your organization's name followed by *LOI 2020* (e.g., *Awesome Impact LOI 2020*) to spencer@svpbouldercounty.org.

6. Timeline* for Prospective Investees

- December and January: Info Sessions at locations in Boulder, Longmont, and Lafayette. ***Attendance*** at one is ***expected***.
- January 11, 2020, 4:00 p.m.: Letters of Inquiry Due
- February 4, 2020: Three finalist organizations will be selected, and all applicants notified.
- February 2020: Prospective investee finalists complete SVP's Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) and an SVP-facilitated consensus conversation.
- March 7, 2020: Full Proposals Due from Finalists (*based on Colorado Common Grant App*).
- March - April 2020: Two reps from SVP attend one of your board meetings.
- April 2020: Site Visits (*scheduled individually*).

May 2020: SVP selects one new investee. Finalists notified of investment decisions.

Please Note: We ask that you think out of the box when you elaborate on ways Partners can help strengthen your organization. SVP Partners are not your traditional volunteer. Partners are successful businesspeople, consultants, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. They can consult in numerous areas – from accounting to marketing. When you look at how to best use SVP, think outside the realm of traditional volunteers, and think big: how could you use a consultant to effectively strengthen your organization? *This is one of the most important components of your Letter of Inquiry, and what makes your LOI to SVP different from a typical LOI to a more traditional funding organization.*