



## **Social Venture Partners Boulder County Call for Letters of Inquiry - Deadline: January 12, 2009**

1. Background on SVP Boulder County
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3. The SVP Philosophy of Funding Levels During an Investee's Life-Cycle
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Please note: **To be eligible** to submit a Letter of Inquiry, all prospective investees must **attend** one of three **Prospective Investee Workshops**, scheduled for **November 13, 4:00-5:00 pm**, **November 18, 8:30-9:30 am**, and **November 25, from 12:00-1:00 pm**, at The Community Foundation, 1123 Spruce St. in Boulder. Kindly RSVP to [jennie@svpbouldercounty.org](mailto:jennie@svpbouldercounty.org) or 303-442-0436, ext. 114.

### **1. Background on SVP Boulder County – Investing in Boulder County Nonprofits**

*The mission of Social Venture Partners Boulder County is to strengthen organizational capacity and sustainability of local nonprofits while inspiring the philanthropy and volunteerism of our partners.*

SVP Boulder County is a fund of The Community Foundation. Since 2000, SVP Boulder County has provided \$840,000 and thousands of hours of management consulting to thirteen nonprofits in Boulder County.

We are a different kind of funding organization. We will not solely write a grant check to a great nonprofit and ask to hear from you one year down the road. Nor is there a single decision-maker within our partnership. We are an active group of philanthropists working collectively to impact our community.

We have a team of partners (who are both our donors and capacity building volunteers) who serve on our Portfolio Grants Committee (PGC). The Committee will review the Letters of Inquiry and finalists' proposals, conduct site visits with finalists, make a recommendation to the full partnership, and then all of our partners weigh in to make a decision on what groups we support with contributions of cash and consulting. While decisions will be made by May 31, 2009, grants will not be disbursed until the second half of 2009 and may be made in more than one payment.

We seek to support organizations that will benefit from a long-term relationship with SVP Boulder County, including hands-on involvement by individual partners, who have a range of talents and skills to offer nonprofit organizations.

Partners are not your traditional volunteer. We ask that you think out of the box when you elaborate on ways partners can help strengthen your organization. Partners are successful businesspeople, venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. They can consult in numerous areas – from accounting to marketing. So 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.*

SVP makes initial single-year financial awards with the intent of establishing longer-term partnerships with its investees (typically lasting 3 years). At the end of each year of support, the program and organizational outcomes and relationship potential with each investee are reevaluated by our PGC for further support. Reinvestment for up to three years is likely but not automatic. One of our long-term goals is to help develop the organizational capacity and sustainability of the nonprofit organizations we fund.

An important element in our proposal review process is finding organizations that are ready and willing to benefit from SVP advice and direction on capacity building projects.

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

- Management – i.e. breaking down organizational objectives and developing systems for monitoring and accountability at all levels of the organization
- Strategic Planning – i.e. facilitating strategic planning sessions for the investee's key stakeholders, to define mission, vision, and organizational structure
- Outcome Measurement and Program Evaluation – i.e. reviewing and enhancing current tools, assisting in tool development, coaching on agency implementation
- Human Resources – i.e. assisting in the writing and posting of job descriptions, coaching management staff through the interview process, advising staff on what to look for in a new hire, developing an employee manual, coaching staff on running an effective volunteer program
- Replication and Expansion – i.e. leveraging capital, helping develop feasibility study to assess best strategies for expansion
- Finance and Accounting – i.e. transitioning an investee's accounting system to a new, updated software, training staff on the new system, and facilitating data conversion
- Boards and Governance – i.e. Board recruitment, training, and development
- Marketing and Communications – i.e. creating a marketing strategy; developing a marketing plan; upgrading marketing materials;
- Legal – i.e. reviewing legal documents, providing legal counsel on various issues
- Real Estate – i.e. assisting with market analysis, real estate negotiations
- Fundraising – i.e. developing a fundraising plan, special event planning assistance, assisting with new donor cultivation and outreach
- Technology – i.e. Assessing current technology system and needs and making recommendations for improvements

*“A lot of non-profits don’t have experience working with consultants and they imagine that the consultant will come in and do the work for them. Working with SVP is having a partnership in which you have to do even more work than you would without them. The process is great, but you have to put the time in. In that case, you’ll get results and you’ll learn so much about running a successful organization.”*

*Kristin Aslan, former Executive Director, Project YES and Teens, Inc.*

## **2. Selection Criteria – SVP Boulder County Spring 2009**

Eligible nonprofit organizations need to address one or more of the following community focus area problems and/or root causes of community problems, and/or serve one or more of the following populations in Boulder County:

- 1) Strengthening Educational and Economic Opportunities for Latinos
- 2) Health Care Access
- 3) Homelessness & Housing

### 1) Organizations Strengthening Educational and Economic Opportunities for Latinos:

From 1990-2000, the Latino population in Boulder County grew from an estimated 15,000 to 30,500. 28 percent of all Latinos are school-aged children. In 2006, Boulder Valley School District posted the second highest gap in CSAP scores statewide and the highest in the Denver metro area, with a 40 percentage point spread in passing rates of non-Hispanic white students and Hispanic students, across all grades. The median household income in Boulder County for Anglos in 2005 was 37% higher than Hispanic households. Organizations focusing on education (from pre-K through the school years, to parenting, vocational, and adult education) as a cornerstone for social and economic advancement, while maximizing the cultural assets of the Latino community, are encouraged to apply. To be eligible, a majority of the population served by the prospective investee organization must be Latino and demonstrate financial need.

### 2) Health Care Access

Inequities in access to health care are an issue facing many Boulder County residents, adding to the challenge of rapidly rising health care costs. Wellness programs and preventative care are some of the most efficient methods to curtailing expensive procedures and long-term care needs, and yet many insurance plans do not cover these. Mental health continues to face stigma and declining state funding, despite growing need. Access to health care coverage is not equitable and income is a significant contributor to lack of insurance. Close to 80% of the uninsured in Boulder County have at least one working family member. And, it is estimated that 45% of our community lacks dental insurance. Organizations focused on preventative care and wellness programs, services not covered by insurance, and comprehensive healthcare are encouraged to apply. To be eligible, the majority of the population served by the prospective investee must be either uninsured or qualify for reduced-rate or no-cost services.

### 3) Homelessness & Housing

Homelessness and Housing challenges continue to face our community and the issue is complex. In 2006, fifty-five percent (55%) of Boulder County's homeless reported at least one disabling condition (including physical disability, mental illness or substance addiction). Sixty-two percent (62%) were working at the time of homelessness, and 31.8% reported high housing costs as the reason for their homelessness. Our county's median family income in 2006 was \$81,600. However, 12% of the population lives below the federal poverty level which was \$9,800 for an individual and \$20,650 for a family of four in 2007. At the same time, the median home price in Boulder County was over \$360,000 and the median price of a condo or townhouse is above \$215,000. While the issue is not one of supply, it is one of income. To be eligible, the majority of the population served by the prospective investee organization must be either low-income, housing deficient, and/or facing co-related issues such as addiction, mental illness, or physical disability. Organizations addressing the root causes of homelessness and housing inequalities are also encouraged to apply.

*We recognize that there may be overlap among the above focus areas. However, proposals that achieve the best fit within one program area's highest priorities receive greater consideration than proposals that marginally address several priorities.*

**If your organization meets one or more of the focus areas listed above, read on.**

Those items listed below that are followed by an \* are *required*. SVP Boulder County seeks to partner with organizations that have the following characteristics:

- Nonprofit organization - 501(c)(3) status, or has a fiscal sponsor\*
- Based in or have a significant presence in Boulder County\*
- Attend one of three possible Prospective Investee Workshops\*
- Strong and passionate leadership, demonstrating qualities of a social entrepreneur
- In need of and committed to incorporating SVP volunteer support to build and strengthen their organization's internal capacity to deliver programs and services\*
- Seek to launch, expand, or replicate an innovative program
- Committed to using outcomes measurement and evaluation to provide the most effective programs possible\*
- A majority of service recipients (more than 50%) are low-income or qualify for reduced-rate services
- Have a long-term perspective on their impact on the client population
- Organizations must demonstrate either:
  - A track-record of successful program/service implementation, making measurable impacts on populations served and/or issues addressed;
  - Reasoned methodology, i.e. needs assessment or replication of a model program, to demonstrate potential for success;
  - Or in the case of some new organizations, provide a revolutionary approach to solving a community issue. Social entrepreneurs are welcome to apply.
- Collaborates with other nonprofits

Recognizing that organizational infrastructure is a necessity, SVP Boulder County welcomes requests for general operating support, or specific program or project support, most commonly aimed at building organizational capacity. SVP Boulder County does not fund requests for endowments or capital campaigns.

### **3. The SVP Philosophy of Funding Levels During an Investee's Life-Cycle**

It is the intent of SVP to establish long-term partnerships with its investees (typically lasting 3 years). SVP will provide varying levels of both volunteer and financial resources over the life of its relationship with an investee. The first year of funding provides an opportunity to learn about each other and begin work on capacity building projects. Over the next two years, 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 three-year relationship with SVP may expect to receive between \$35,000 and \$70,000 in funding.

#### **SVP Funding Levels Model**

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Total
High	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$70,000
Low	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$35,000

#### *Please Note*

- 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 fellow investees.
- Ideally, the percentage of SVP funding will be a smaller portion of the Investee's total revenue over time. It is SVP's mission to support the development of sustainability in local nonprofits.
- These funding levels should be viewed as general guidelines. From time to time, the Portfolio Grants Committee (PGC) or the full partnership may chose to fund an organization at an amount outside of these ranges.
- Each year the SVP/investee relationship is reviewed and evaluated by the PGC and the full partnership votes on whether or not to continue funding.

### **4. Frequently Asked Questions**

#### What can you say about your investees? What are their characteristics?

The organizations that SVP Boulder County currently funds are in need of and committed to an infusion of SVP volunteer support to build and strengthen their organization's capacity to deliver programs. Most are seeking to replicate or expand an existing innovative program or to launch a new program. They tend not to be start-ups, nor fully mature organizations, but organizations in a growth stage of development. The organizations are committed to developing or enhancing program evaluation and measuring outcomes. And, finally, they have a long-term perspective on their impact on the target population.

#### 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 and 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 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 large are the individual awards given by SVP Boulder County?

Past awards have ranged in size from \$10,000 - \$25,000. SVP Boulder County's awards are typically general operating support. *(Please see the Funding chart on Page 5.)*

What criteria will SVP Boulder County apply to choose investees?

SVP Boulder County seeks potential investees with strong leadership, bold ideas that have achieved small scale success, people with vision to have a broader, growing impact on the community, and measures of performance. An important element is finding organizations that are ready and willing to partner with us and benefit from SVP advice and direction on capacity building projects.

How many investees will SVP select in spring of 2009?

SVP will likely select two new investee with whom we will partner in 2009. Assuming the relationship is strong, and benchmarks are achieved, SVP will support the new investee for up to two additional years following the initial year's funding.

## **5. Application Process**

**Prospective investee workshops** are scheduled for November 13, 4:00-5:00 pm, November 18, from 8:30-9:30 am, and November 25, from 12:00 to 1:00 am, at The Community Foundation, 1123 Spruce St. in Boulder. **Attendance at one of the three workshops by prospective investees is required.** Please contact SVP Executive Director Jennie Arbogash at 303-442-0436, x114, or via email at:jennie@svpbouldercounty.org, to RSVP. The goal of this workshop is to introduce you to the concept of partnering with Social Venture Partners Boulder County, and to address any questions you may have about the application and selection process. Questions are welcome anytime.

To be considered for support, organizations should submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) **by 5:00 pm, January 12, 2009, to SVP Boulder County.** The letter should not exceed two pages in length, and should include no attachments. Electronic submission is strongly preferred, see further directions below.

The letter of inquiry should include the following information:

- One paragraph summarizing your organization's mission and history
- A summary of your goals and specific activities to be supported by the award. Please include details around the population you intend to serve and how it addresses one of the two focus areas described in this call for letters of inquiry.
- A **specific** description, including **two to three proposed projects or ways**, of how you could use SVP partners' strategic consulting assistance if given an SVP award (this is a critical component of your letter)
- A description of how you will know – and how you will measure – if the partnership with SVP Boulder County is a success, *and* your organizational objectives/program objectives are met
- A one-sentence description of your philosophy (as Executive Director) of leadership.

- Budget figures: a) the amount of financial support requested from SVP in 2009; b) the total budget for the requested project, if project-specific support is sought; c) the organization's total 2009 operating budget.

**Please note:** For the letter of inquiry, you do not have to submit a line item budget. For example nonprofits need only state, "We are requesting \$15,000 in general operating support from SVP for our XYZ program. The total program budget is \$100,000 and our total agency budget for FY2007 is \$500,000."

**Please submit Letters of Inquiry by 5:00 pm, January 12, 2009, preferably via email,** with the Letter of Inquiry attached, (and attachment file named the same as your organization's name 2009, i.e. The Nonprofit 2009), to [jennie@svpbouldercounty.org](mailto:jennie@svpbouldercounty.org).

If you are unable to submit your letter via email, mail directly to Jennie Arbogash at SVP Boulder County, 1123 Spruce Street, Boulder, CO 80302. **Mailed submissions must be received in office by January 12, 2009, no exceptions.**

## **6. Timeline for Prospective Investees**

- **November 13, 2008**, 4:00-5:00 pm: Prospective Investee Workshop, at The Community Foundation, 1123 Spruce St., Boulder\*\*
- **November 18**, 8:30-9:30 am: Prospective Investee Workshop, at The Community Foundation, 1123 Spruce St., Boulder\*\*
- **November 25**, 12:00-1:00 pm: Prospective Investee Workshop, at The Community Foundation, 1123 Spruce St., Boulder\*\*
- **January 12, 2009**: 5:00 pm: Letters of Inquiry Due
- **January 28, 2009**: Finalists invited to submit full proposals
- **March 13, 2009**: Full Proposals Due
- **April 6 to 24, 2009**: Site Visits (scheduled individually)
- **June 1, 2009**: Investees notified of awards

\*\* **Attendance** at one of the three workshops by prospective investees is **required**.