

# *Demonstrating Social Venture Partners' Impact*



## **2007 Philanthropy Development Report**

Social Venture  
Partners International

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# Introduction

Social Venture Partners (SVP) is a network of individuals who combine financial contributions and professional skills with a passion for philanthropy. By leveraging their collective expertise and resources, SVP partners assist in strengthening nonprofits for maximum community impact. Promoting philanthropy among its partners is at the core of SVP's mission. This is achieved by engaging partners in a variety of activities, including philanthropic education through workshops and informational sessions, participation in grantmaking committees, structured volunteerism and opportunities to network and collaborate with other partners.

With 24 SVP affiliates in three countries, there are hundreds of anecdotal stories about the impact involvement with SVP has on its partners. This report was designed to support the anecdotal evidence using a quantitative survey analysis of the effectiveness of SVP's unique model.

Specifically, the survey measured three key outcomes SVP promotes:

- Changes in how much partners give (Amount of giving)
- Changes in how partners give (Strategic giving)
- Changes in partners' involvement in their communities (Community involvement)

## Key Findings

Based on analysis of the survey results, the following key findings were identified:

### **SVP has a significant positive impact on partner giving.**

- 72% of respondents indicated their total annual giving has increased since joining SVP.
- 51% of respondents cited SVP as one of the top two reasons their giving has increased. Community involvement beyond SVP was the other top reason.
- Serving on a grant committee, volunteering with an investee and meeting other partners were cited as SVP activities with the greatest impact on partner giving.

### **Involvement with SVP increases strategic philanthropy.**

- There was a 136% increase in the use of formal processes in grantmaking by those surveyed.
- There was a 141% increase in collaborative practices by those surveyed.
- There was a 219% increase in writing fewer but larger checks by those surveyed.
- 78% of respondents indicated SVP played some, significant or a primary role in changes in their giving strategies.
- Serving on a grant committee, meeting other partners and serving on an internal SVP committee or board were cited as activities with the most influence on partner philanthropic strategies.

## **SVP Partners show an increase in community involvement.**

- 69% of respondents had increased awareness of community affairs since joining SVP.
- 65% of respondents leveraged new volunteers or other financial resources on behalf of a nonprofit organization after joining SVP.
- 63% of respondents noted an increase in their volunteerism after joining SVP.
- 70% of respondents indicated SVP had some, significant or a primary impact on their community involvement.
- Meeting other partners was the most cited factor affecting changes in community involvement.

## **Methodology**

The survey was designed to measure SVP’s effectiveness in promoting philanthropy among its partners. It is one of several tools developed by SVP International (SVPI), the network association, to identify priority outcomes and help SVP affiliates demonstrate their impact. In 2004-2005, three SVP affiliates—Seattle, San Diego and Arizona—worked with SVPI to develop and pilot the original survey. The process was conducted by Blueprint Research and Design, a philanthropy consulting firm, with funding support from the Kellogg Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, the Lodestar Foundation and the Hewlett Foundation.

From 2005-2007, twelve SVP affiliates in the US and Canada conducted the survey among their partners. SVP International commissioned this report of the collective survey findings to further serve as a resource for SVP affiliates.

The twelve affiliates that participated in the survey were SVP Arizona, SVP Boston, SVP Boulder County, SVP Calgary, Cleveland SVP, SVP Denver, Los Angeles SVP, SVP Minnesota, Pittsburgh SVP, SVP Portland, San Diego SVP and SVP Seattle. In total 494 partners were surveyed.

SVP Seattle was the only affiliate to administer the survey in 2005 using the original version of the survey instrument. Later, the survey questions were modified slightly and used by the other eleven affiliates in 2006 and 2007. As a result, SVP Seattle’s data was omitted from some of the aggregate analysis due to variances between the survey questions used in Seattle and those used by the remaining eleven affiliates. In these cases, the omission of Seattle’s data is noted by using an asterisk (\*) in the section or sub-section heading.

It’s important to note that the information captured in the survey is self-reported by the SVP partners.

## **Description of Partners and Affiliates**

The surveys captured a broad sample of partners with a range of tenure, engagement levels and involvement in philanthropy beyond their connection to SVP.

### **Length of involvement with SVP:**

0-1 year.....	19%	3-4 years.....	14%
1-2 years.....	19%	4-5 years.....	12%
2-3 years.....	13%	Over 5 years.....	24%

### Level of involvement\*

Respondent is the only adult in the household involved with SVP	43%
Respondent and their partner are both actively involved	19%
Respondent and their partner are both inactive members	4%
Respondent's partner is more active than respondent	11%
Respondent's partner is less active than respondent	23%

### Type of SVP involvement

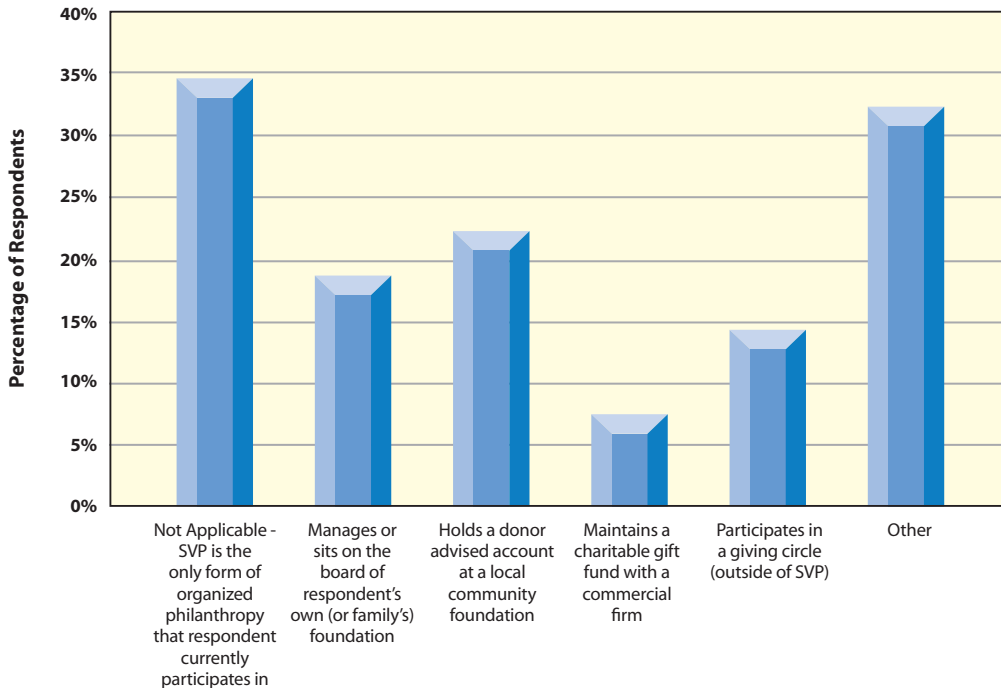
No involvement in SVP beyond monetary donation	14%
Volunteered with an SVP investee	51%
Served on a grant committee	55%
Served on SVP's board or an internal working committee	45%
Attended at least one donor education event per year	62%

The majority (86%) of partners surveyed indicated that they were involved with SVP beyond their initial monetary donation. In fact, as indicated above, many partners were engaged in multiple SVP activities.

### Involvement beyond SVP

In order to get a better sense of respondents' broader engagement in philanthropy and the community, the survey included a question about involvement beyond SVP.

**Involvement in other forms of Organized Philanthropy**



Approximately one-third of respondents indicated that SVP was their only form of organized philanthropy. At the same time, many of the remaining respondents were involved with multiple forms of organized philanthropy in addition to SVP.

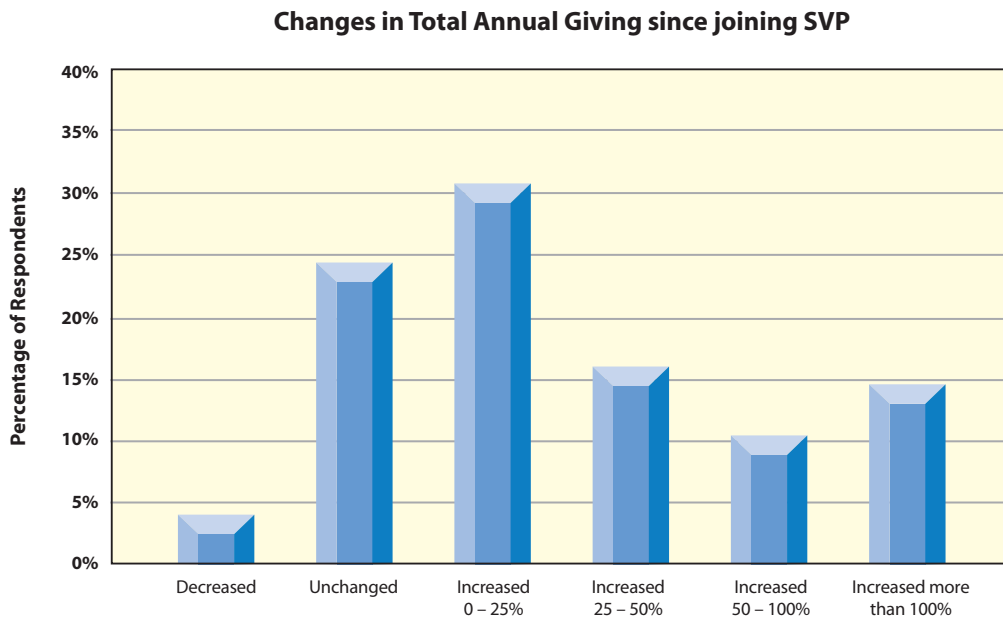
## Annual contribution amount\*

When asked about their annual contribution to SVP, 35% of respondents indicated that it was more than half of their total philanthropic giving in the last year. Conversely, 65% indicated that their contribution to SVP was not more than half of their total giving. Since the minimum annual contribution to SVP is \$5000<sup>†</sup>, the survey data suggests that the majority of partners are giving more than \$10,000 in charitable contributions annually.

Given Partners' level of involvement within SVP, involvement in the broader philanthropic community, and the proportion of annual giving directed to SVP, the survey analysis suggests that SVP's model has the power to attract both veteran and unseasoned philanthropists. What all partners seem to share in common is philanthropic inclination.

## Amount of Giving

One of the three key outcomes used to evaluate SVP's impact in promoting philanthropy is measuring changes in the amount of giving among partners since joining SVP and the extent to which SVP played a role in that change.

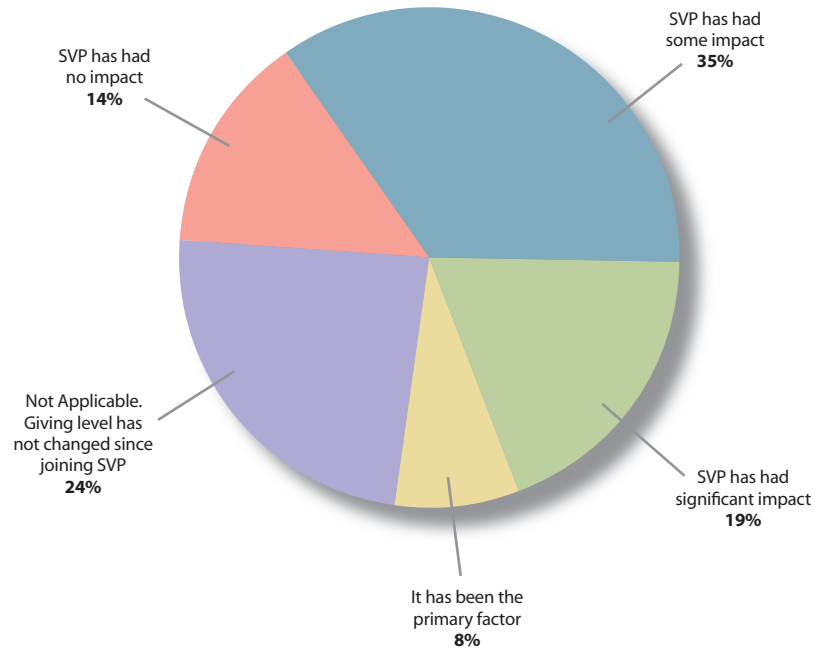


72% of respondents indicated that their total annual giving increased since joining SVP.

<sup>†</sup>SVP Denver Partners contribute \$2500 annually

## SVP's role in Changes in Giving

Extent to which SVP has been a factor in Changes in Giving



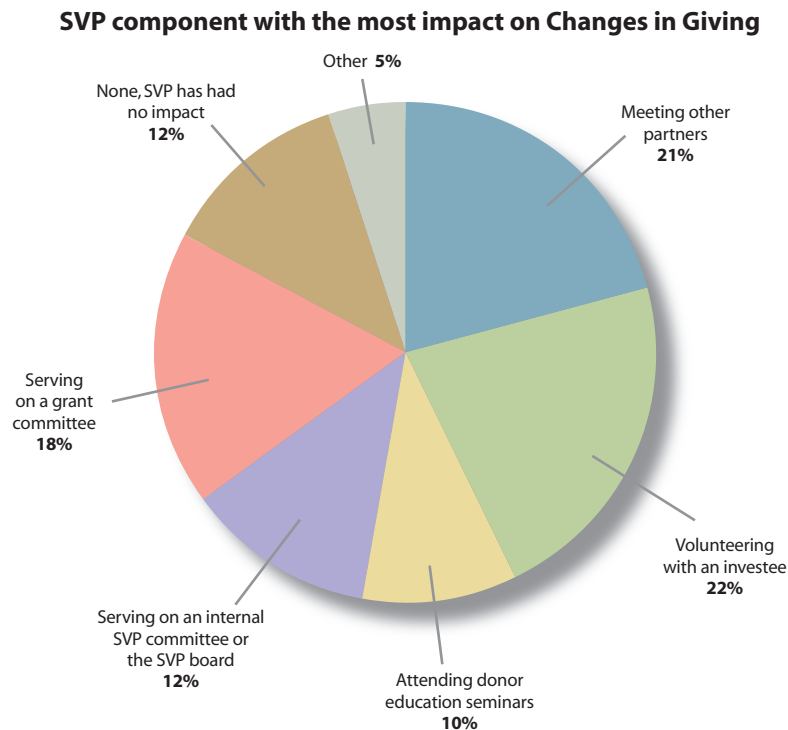
Looking more closely only at respondents whose giving level had changed for any reason, 82% indicated that SVP had some role, a significant role or was the primary factor in that change. In fact, 36% credited SVP as having significant or primary impact on their changes in amount of giving.

### Top two factors that influence Changes in Giving Levels

In order to better understand the factors that influenced changes in giving levels, the survey included a question about the “top two” factors that influenced changes in giving levels among partners.

Across all twelve cities, 51% of respondents cited SVP as one of the top two factors influencing changes in giving levels. Involvement in the community beyond SVP and changes in personal income were the other factors most frequently cited.

## SVP component with the most impact on Changes in Giving



As noted above, when asked to consider SVP's role more closely, 88% of respondents indicated that some element of SVP played a role in changes in giving. Among these, volunteering with an investee and meeting other partners were most influential.

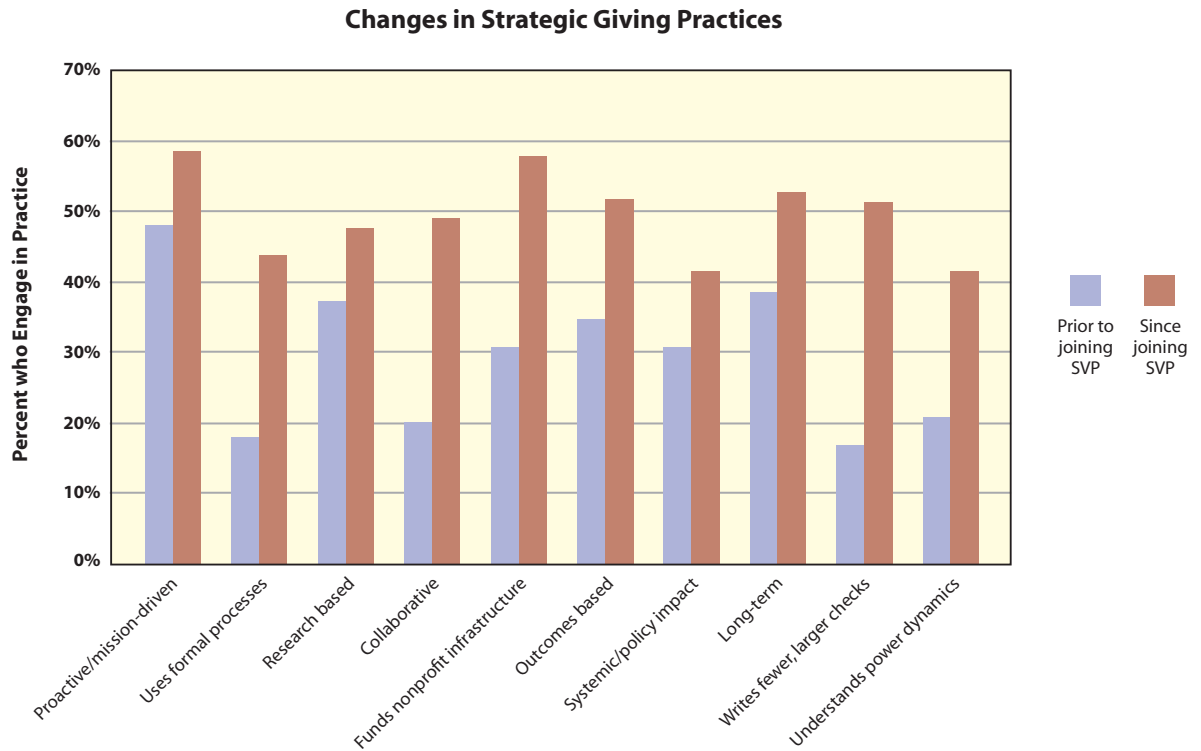
## Strategic Philanthropy Practices\*

One of the most impressive outcomes of the SVP model is its influence on philanthropic practices among partners. To evaluate how giving practices have been impacted, SVP conducted a review of the field of philanthropic development and identified ten criteria of strategic giving. These criteria included:

- Proactive/mission-driven
- Uses formal processes
- Research based
- Collaborative
- Funds nonprofit infrastructure
- Outcomes based
- Systemic/policy impact
- Long-term
- Gives fewer, larger checks
- Understands power dynamics

A more detailed definition of the indicators is included in Appendix A. The indicators above were used to contrast giving practices before and after joining SVP.

## Strategic Giving Practices prior and since joining SVP



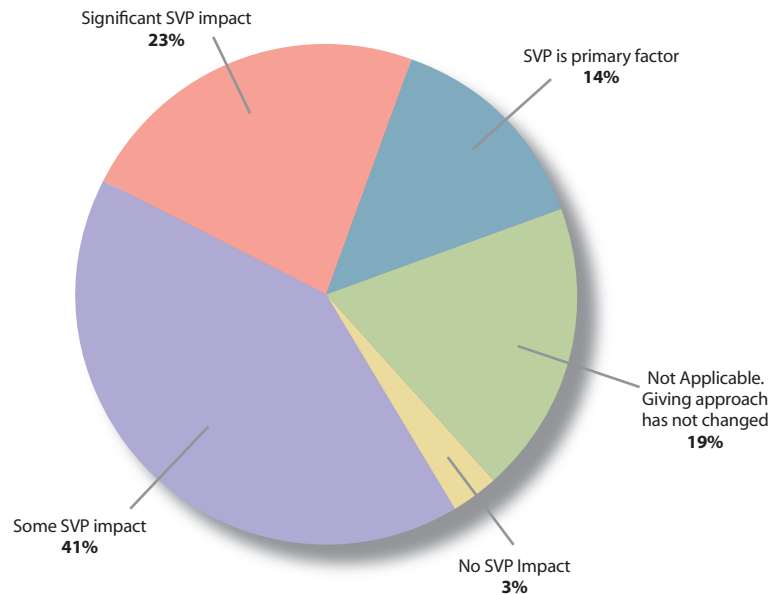
### Elements of Strategic Giving

As illustrated above, respondents increased their strategic giving practices in all ten areas since joining SVP. In a few cases, the increases were dramatic:

- 136% increase in the use of formal processes in grantmaking
- 141% increase in collaborative practices
- 219% increase in writing fewer but larger checks
- 81% increase in funding nonprofit infrastructure
- 89% increase in understanding of power dynamics

## SVP's role in Changes in Strategic Giving

Extent to which SVP has been a Factor in Changes in Giving



When asked whether SVP had an influence on changes in giving, 78% indicated that SVP had some, significant or was the primary factor in changes in their giving practices. For 37% of partners, SVP played a primary or significant role in changes in their strategic giving practices.

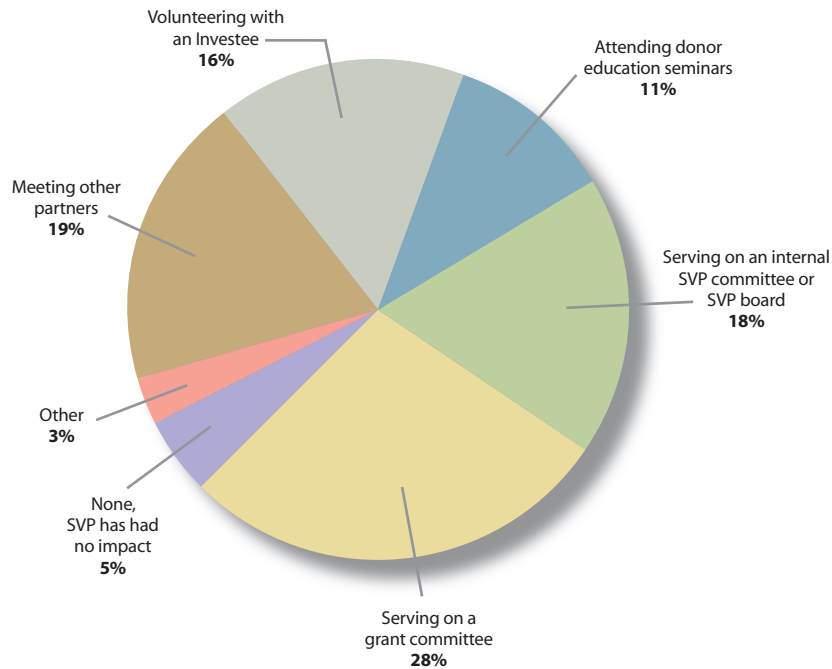
### Top two factors that influence Changes in Strategic Giving

To more fully understand the factors that influence changes in strategic giving, the survey asked respondents to consider the top two factors that had the greatest influence on strategic giving practices.

- Among all 12 affiliates, SVP was cited most often as a factor influencing giving strategies.
- 77% of respondents indicated SVP as one of their top two factors influencing changes in their strategic giving practices.
- "Involvement in the community not associated with SVP" was the second most cited factor (50% of respondents).

## SVP component with the most impact on Strategic Practices

**SVP component with the most Impact on Strategic Philanthropy Practices**



When asked about the SVP element that had the most impact on their philanthropic practices, 28% cited “Serving on a grant committee.” This is a notable result because it demonstrates that SVP’s grant committee process does indeed engage partners in learning about nonprofits in the community and how they operate, how to evaluate nonprofit organizations and conduct due diligence and how to support nonprofit organizations in an effective manner.

## Community Involvement

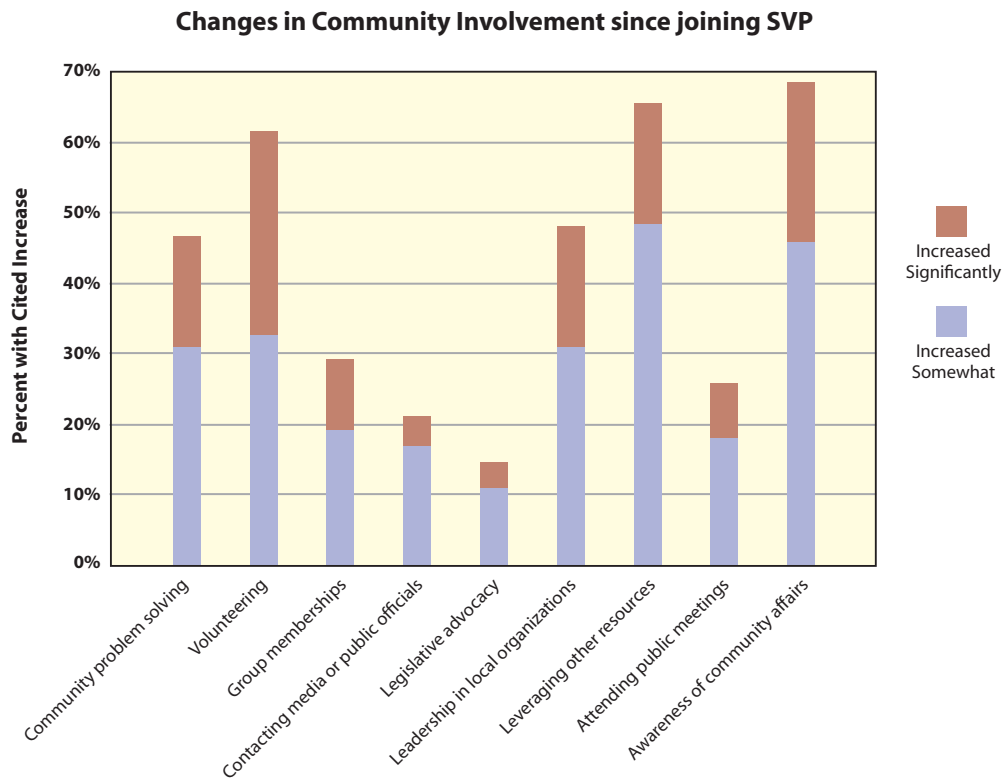
The third major outcome used by SVP to evaluate its effectiveness is to assess how levels of community involvement have been impacted as a result of affiliation with SVP. Do SVP partners become more involved in the community after joining SVP? Does SVP play a role in their community involvement levels? The answer is yes in both cases.

### Changes in Community Involvement\*

After reviewing literature in the field, SVP identified nine criteria of community involvement. See Appendix B for detailed definitions. These criteria included:

- Community problem solving
- Volunteering
- Group memberships
- Contacting media or public officials
- Legislative advocacy
- Leadership in local organizations
- Leveraging resources
- Attending public meetings
- Awareness of community affairs

## Changes in Community Involvement since joining SVP



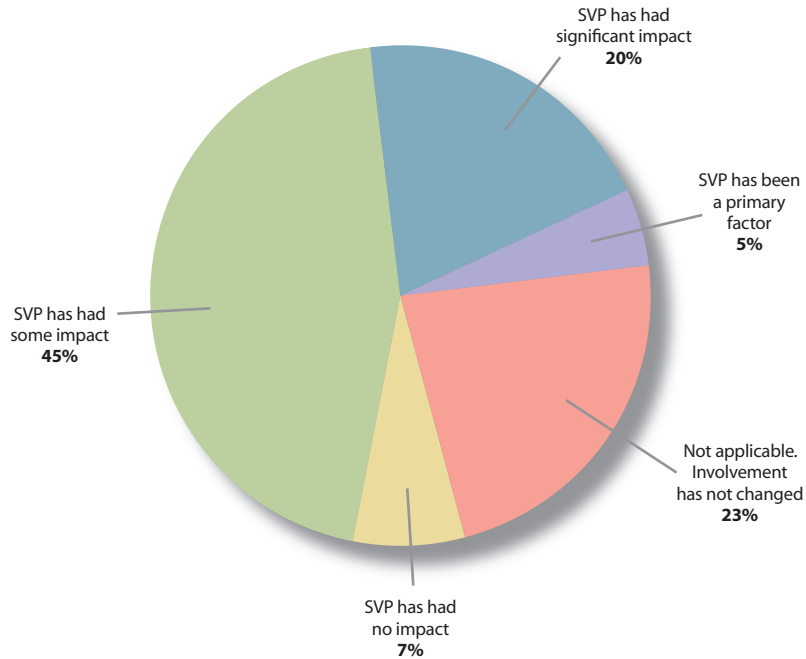
### Types of Community Involvement

As shown in the chart above, partners showed increases in all nine areas of community involvement. Most notably, partners showed the greatest increases in:

- Awareness of community affairs (69% of respondents)
- Leveraging of resources (65%)
- Volunteering (63%)

## SVP's Role in Changes in Community Involvement

Extent to which SVP has been a factor in Changes in Community Involvement Levels

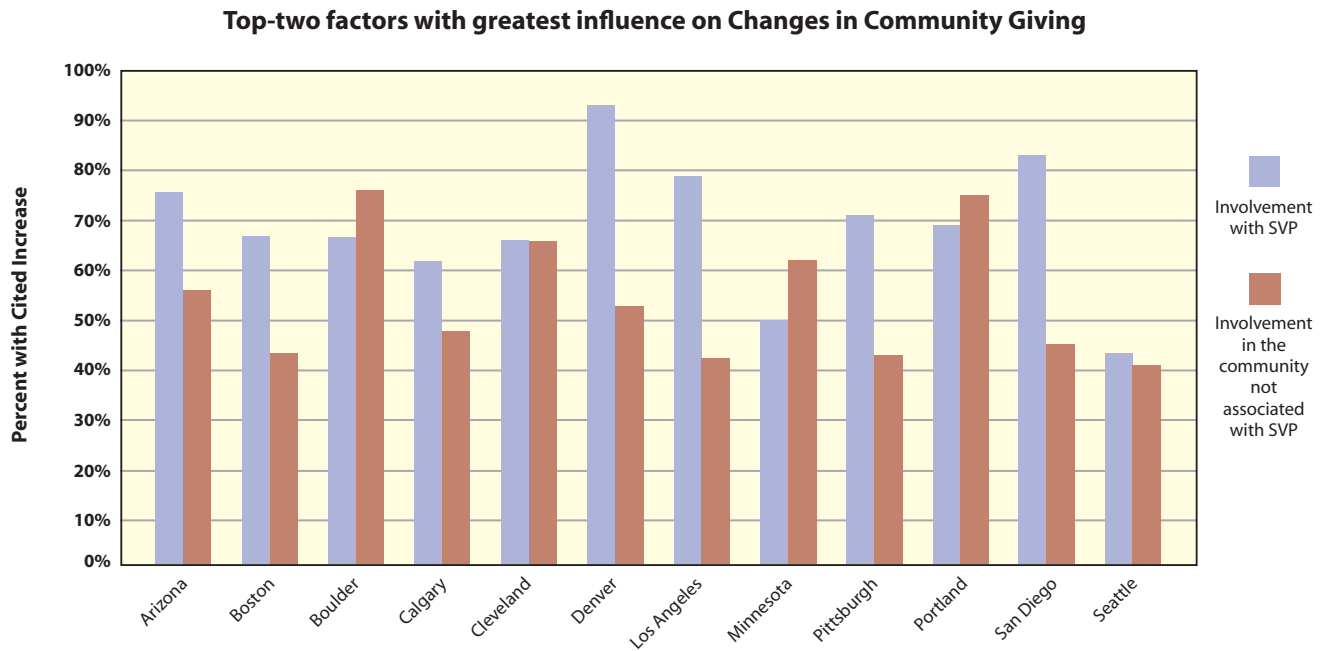


70% of respondents indicated that SVP had some impact, a significant impact or was the primary reason for increased levels of community involvement.

### Top two factors that influence Changes in Community Involvement

Partners were asked to identify the two factors that had the greatest influence on changes in community involvement. SVP was cited as one of two most influential factors across all affiliates.

## Top-two factors with greatest influence on Changes in Community Giving

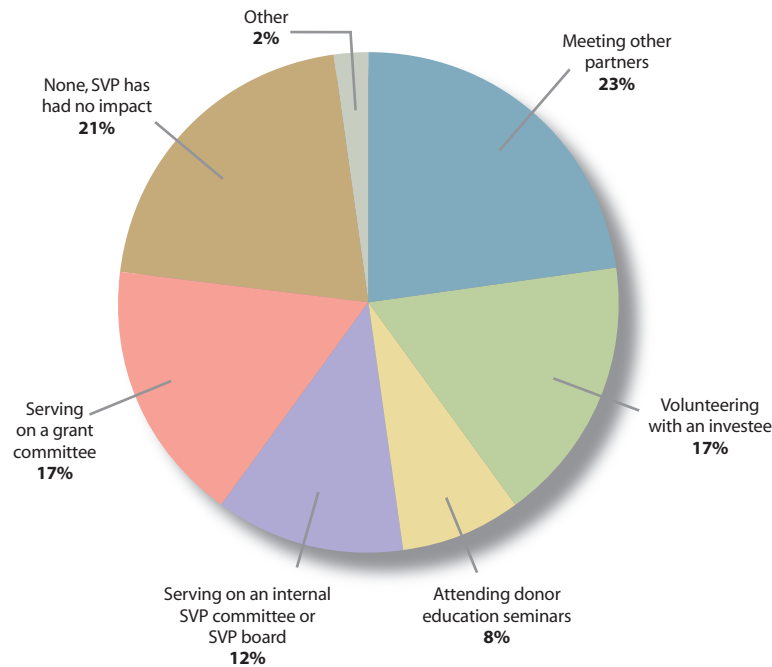


As indicated above, SVP was the most influential factor in eight of twelve affiliates while “Involvement in the community not associated with SVP” was the next most commonly cited factor.

When considering all affiliates as a whole (aggregate), 60% of respondents cited SVP as one of the top two reasons their giving has increased.

## SVP factor with the most impact on Community Involvement

SVP factor with the most impact on Community Involvement



Meeting other partners was the factor cited most often (23%) among respondents who indicated that SVP had a role in changes in their community involvement. This finding underscores the importance of SVP as a convening space for individuals with similar interests and as a creator of social capital.

## Conclusion

As the survey data suggests, SVP's unique blend of philanthropy, volunteerism and community engagement has a significant impact on individuals who participate in the organization. While people who participate in SVP arrive with a philanthropic inclination, one finding is very clear: SVP has a positive impact on overall levels of giving, strategy and community involvement.

This opportunity for impact will continue to grow as more people become involved with SVP in their communities and the network of affiliates continues to grow globally.

## Appendix A: Definitions of strategic giving

The strategic giving criteria listed below are drawn from best practices research in the field including the following resources:

- New Visions Philanthropic Research and Development: *Philanthropy's Forgotten Resource?*
- *Engaging the Individual Donor: The State of Donor Education Today & A Leadership Agenda for The Road Ahead* By Dan Siegel and Jenny Yancey.
- Tracy Gary and Melissa Kohner in *Inspired Philanthropy: Creating a Giving Plan*
- New Ventures in Philanthropy, Donor Education Knowledge Lab, Aspen Wye River, MD, November 15-17, 2004.
- Venture Philanthropy Partners' *High-Engagement Philanthropy: A Bridge to a More Effective Social Sector*.
- The Rockefeller Foundation's *The Philanthropy Workshop*.

### Strategic giving criteria

**Proactive/mission-driven:** Partner has a vision for change and contributes to nonprofits based on advancing his or her overall giving goals and/or strategies.

**Uses formal processes:** Partner uses established, documented criteria for grant or donation assessment, conducts due diligence (such as site visits or interviews), has a plan for assessing whether a gift met its goals.

**Research-based:** Partner uses issue analysis and research to inform decisions about which organizations he or she wants to fund.

**Collaborates with others:** Partner solicits input from and collaborates with other funders, donors and/or community members to understand community needs, make informed grant decisions, and have greater impact.

**Funds nonprofit infrastructure:** Partner supports more than nonprofit programs, but also invests in the organizational capacity (staff and systems) of the groups he or she supports.

**Outcomes-based:** Partner seeks information about nonprofit performance and uses outcomes data to inform funding decisions.

**Focus on systemic/policy impact:** Partner includes funding for efforts that address systemic change (e.g. advocacy, organizing activities).

**Long-term approach:** Partner makes multi-year gifts, maintains contact with nonprofit after grant is made.

**Writes fewer, larger checks:** Partner makes fewer gifts each year, but the average value of each is significantly higher.

**Understands power dynamics:** Partner considers how issues of power and cultural differences (language, values, communication styles etc.) can impact the effectiveness of his/her philanthropy.

## **Appendix B: Definition for community involvement**

The community involvement criteria listed below are drawn from best practices research in the field including the following resources:

- Civic Engagement Index (developed in 2003 by researchers at George Mason University, Rutgers and DePaul and funded by Pew Charitable Trusts).
- Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (developed in 2000 by the Saguaro Seminar at the John F. Kennedy School of Government and funded by three dozen community foundations).
- Leadership Development Survey (part of 10-year Violence Prevention Initiative completed by The California Wellness Foundation).

### **Community involvement criteria**

**Community problem solving:** Partner has worked with a person or group to solve a problem in the community where he or she lives.

**Volunteering:** Partner has volunteered within or outside SVP.

**Group membership:** Partner has joined groups, either locally, nationally, or internationally and participated as an active member (PTSA, labor, rotary, community group, etc.)

**Contacting media or public officials:** Partner has written a letter to the editor or contacted the media and/or public officials on behalf of an organization or issue.

**Legislative advocacy:** Partner has started or joined a legislative advocacy effort on behalf of an organization or issue.

**Leadership in local organizations:** Partner has held a leadership role (such as a board member, officer, or committee chair) of a local organization or community group.

**Leverages resources:** Partner has recruited new volunteers and/or financial resources on behalf of an organization or community group.

**Participates in public meetings:** Partner has attended and/or spoken at public meetings in which there was a discussion about community affairs.

**Awareness of community affairs:** Partner knows what is going on and talks about community affairs.