



Reflections > Path Forward

SVP Tucson 15-Year Impact Report

This report was inspired by a question: What is SVP Tucson's story?

We knew the answer would be in the minds and hearts of our partners, support network, and greater community. To answer this question, we initiated a series of interviews with our partners in the summer and fall of 2021.

As we continue to work together as partners and peers in 2022 and beyond, we must hold ourselves accountable. A meaningful starting point is to acknowledge the learnings that have led to our evolution, and to hold in our hearts that it is only through listening that we can take action.

This report was released in April of 2022



KICKOFF

It's hard to tell we're living in a moment in history when we're "in it." But here we are, during an understandably difficult time for many, many people around the world.

Fifteen years ago, when Social Venture Partners Tucson formed, we could never have imagined such a curveball, in which inequalities are accelerating — with so much tension in our political and social circles. The dissonance has not been easy to wrap our minds around. But it's part of our reality and lived human experience. **If we want to see better outcomes in our communities, it's up to us to create them.**

As we embark into a new phase of our collective and individual journeys as partners and teammates, we find ourselves with more questions than answers. **We know our vision for an equitable and inclusive Tucson will not be easy to achieve — however challenges have never scared us.** We are here on this earth, right now and together. We have proven to ourselves time and time again we are capable of doing hard things.

Let's reflect on how far our organization has come, together.

JOURNEY

Over the past five years we have asked ourselves some hard questions:

Who are we accountable to? What are the strengths and limitations of the original SVP model of strengthening and scaling nonprofits one at a time? How do we make the difference we want to see in our community?

By focusing on these questions, we have homed in on several key framing statements to unite our thinking and collective action.

- We invest in vital nonprofits that are poised to take their work to the next level through multifaceted capacity-building relationships.
- We bridge the gap between philanthropists and nonprofits — driving relationships and resources between these areas, and ultimately building resilience in nonprofits and the Tucson community.
- We are a nexus of creating nonprofit partnerships and collaborations with a successful history of working alongside nonprofits and building community-driven solutions that single organizations can't tackle alone.

Along the way, every partner has been an important part of SVP Tucson's story. We have experienced so many shared milestones and evolved into a group that is truly making a difference in our community. With each year that passes, SVP Tucson becomes more diverse, recognized, and influential.

Fifteen years into our journey, we are empowered with a strong foundation.



“SVP partners are champions of our most challenging work, work that will serve us and the community well in the future. They align their efforts with ours and help increase our collective impact. SVP is and continues to be essential in helping co-develop community-based solutions.”



OUR COLLECTIVE STORY

Through our years of collaboration, we've developed a shared lens into what SVP Tucson can offer the world.

WHY: Due to inequitable systems, our world and our community do not provide equal opportunity for all people.

WHAT: We build stronger communities by strengthening nonprofits, investing in collaborative solutions, mobilizing resources, and empowering philanthropists. We challenge the old way of philanthropy and introduce a new way.

HOW: We do our work in and with community (not for). We center voices that have long been neglected in philanthropy with the understanding those closest to the issues have the answers. We work in true partnership, bridging the gap between nonprofits and philanthropy. We amplify long-forgotten voices.

“SVP serves as a model for what a true and impactful partnership looks like between a funder and a nonprofit.”

THE PATH FORWARD

Empowered with a \$2,000,000 Challenge Grant, and with the backing of a powerful network of nonprofit collaborators, committed philanthropists, and SVP partners, SVP Tucson has built a web of infrastructure to bring our vision for systemic change into reality. We are well-equipped to build the world we want to see, and we are part of a global network of philanthropists who are working toward the same goals.

With rising, cutthroat economic inequality, philanthropy is taking on an increasingly important role in shaping the future of our community.

We are tackling larger-than-life challenges, built on systems that predated our generation — and that have shown decline rather than improvement in our lifetimes. The hard yet mission-critical work ahead of us means going deeper into the trends that shape our everyday world. That means asking more questions.

Thanks to support from the Connie Hillman Family Foundation, all new and increased donations made to SVP Tucson will be matched!

KEY CHANGES DEFINING SVP'S TRANSFORMATION:

- *Committing to a practice of listening*
- *Prioritizing a collaborative approach above a hierarchical approach*
- *Centering diverse voices in our decision-making*
- *Establishing an intentional culture*
- *Willingness to be bold and take risks*



OUR EVOLUTION TO GREATER IMPACT

Our first 15 years were about building a strong foundation based on community, partnerships, and early stewardship. Now, with key systems in place, we are expanding our nonprofit capacity-building and community resilience-building.

Our evolution is fueled by the act of LISTENING.

With the creation of our coaching program in 2018, we developed a more intensive and intentional practice and discipline of deeply listening to nonprofit leaders at the forefront of our biggest social problems. This program has become one of the most valued elements of our capacity-building work and has been replicated across our network.

In 2019-2020, we held robust community listening sessions with school districts, business leaders, nonprofit leaders, government, and foundations to assess the greatest needs in Tucson and the greatest opportunity for SVP's action. During this same timeframe we evaluated how the SVP model was evolving in other cities to learn from the innovation within our global network.

As a result of these initiatives, it became clear the future of SVP Tucson needed to recognize that scaling nonprofits one at a time will not create the change we desire — change that our community needs, and Tucsonans deserve.

Our new approach is more robust. We are centering our key capacity-building services alongside community convening and collaboration building. Our expanded approach recognizes the complexity of the challenges and the interdependencies of nonprofits as well as the barriers families face to accessing vital services.

While the way we strategize is through listening, the way we lead is through action. Through the alliance and collaboration of nonprofits in our ecosystem, SVP bridges the gap between philanthropy and nonprofits.

When we come together, we are a powerful movement of the people, positioned to drive community-level change.

“We need to recognize that we are all connected, and if a part of our community is struggling, we are all struggling. We need to help philanthropists understand that SVP is the place that bridges and closes this gap. Tucson’s a city of a million people in a town of 50,000. It is time to come together.”

THE POWER OF REPLICABLE FRAMEWORKS

Today, SVP Tucson is morphing into a movement much more powerful than we could have imagined at the beginning of our journey. This movement is founded in a deeply rooted network across nonprofits, philanthropy, generations, and communities.

Our mission is clear: create equal opportunity for all Tucsonans.

Our 2Gen and Fast Pitch programs are two vehicles for getting there.

2Gen is about getting tangible resources into the hands of communities to self-stabilize and understanding the power of a decentralized yet coordinated community effort to break the cycle of poverty. Research shows that the well-being of parents and caretakers is crucial to their children's health, well-being, and academic success. At the same time, parents' and caretakers' ability to succeed in school and the workplace is substantially affected by how well their children are doing. Every family needs unique support — especially with inequities having compounded due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through Fast Pitch we push an external message to donors, individual philanthropists, corporations, and grant makers to directly state the value of making investments in frontline nonprofits, especially those led by the populations they serve. Research shows that the majority of philanthropic funding is not directed to organizations closest to the issues, yet they are the ones best positioned to solve them. As Fast Pitch shifts to highlight more leaders of color and more leaders who represent the populations they serve, we increase exposure, resources, and viability of these groups.

Implementing these frameworks requires patience, care, listening, and out-of-the-box thinking. Our first 15 years were about building a strong foundation. Now, with key systems in place, we are expanding upon capacity building, resilience building, and scaling as we take on community wide problems and increase the number of nonprofits we support.

We've set a bold vision. We've challenged ourselves to do something big. Achieving this goal means stepping up to do what is right, not what is easy. It means working in true partnership, across sectors and throughout community. It means dismantling the "savior" mindset that has driven so many philanthropy efforts to date. It means paving the way for true transformation to happen.

We are here to serve — to do the hard work of creating the Tucson that needs to exist.



KEY LESSONS

Our connectedness is our vehicle to delivering a more promising future for Tucson — and the entire world.

We are powerful agents of change, together.

We are reckoning with, and learning from, our history to create a better future for all.

We have no choice but to reimagine what it means to be a philanthropist.

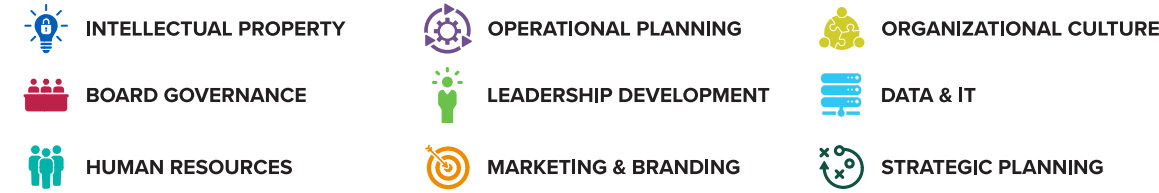
We can, and we are doing it.



OUR TIMELINE

Through our years of collaboration, we've developed a shared history. Everything we've achieved, we've done together.

KEY PROJECTS



"Fast Pitch placed us in front of an audience that we've never reached before. It opened up new connections and revenue streams to drive social change in our community."

GROWTH

October 2006:
Helaine Levy and Steve Alley bring the SVP model to Tucson, and launch SVP Tucson with 8 Partners.

2008:
SVP has 70 Partners and an annual budget of \$104,300.

2010:
SVP has 74 Partners and an annual budget of \$254,300.

2014:
SVP explores ways to expand its impact and prepares to introduce the Fast Pitch program to the Tucson community.

IMPACT

2006:
SVP strategically focuses its community investments on literacy and welcomes its first nonprofit partners, Literacy Volunteers and VOICES.

2008–2010:
SVP invests in Make Way for Books, expanding programming to schools, childcare centers, and neighborhood locations, and fueling dramatic growth to ensure that more than 30,000 kids have access to books annually.



2009–2011:
SVP invests in Sunnyside Parents as Teachers, supporting family-based early learning environments.



2010:
SVP has invested \$325,000 in 5 nonprofits. Grant dollars are amplified by the professional volunteer hours of SVP Partners.

SVP invests in Reading Seed and begins an analysis of the community's literacy needs.



2011:
SVP facilitates the merger of 5 nonprofits to form Literacy Connects, multiplying their impact and resulting in an 8,000% increase in clients served.

2012–2014:
SVP invests in Youth on their Own, expanding programs for homeless teens by 319%.



2013–2015:
SVP invests in Tucson Youth Development, resulting in expanded education and job training for teens.



FOUNDATIONAL YEARS: 2005–2010

GROWING YEARS: 2010–2015

“SVP’s way of approaching things and their compassion was the type of support I did not know I needed as a professional. The lessons given to me in coaching are things I use every day in my leadership now”

2015:
SVP has 82
Partners and an
annual budget of
\$350,741.

2015:
SVP launches Fast Pitch
program, providing community
collaboration, skills-building
and increased awareness to
nonprofits. The first year’s
sold-out event is a success.

2018:
SVP has 102
Partners and an
annual budget of
\$445,965.

2018:
SVP makes organizational
commitment to racial justice and
forms Equity Committee.

2018:
SVP Tucson hosts SVP
International Racial Equity
Learning Lab, bringing SVP
partners from affiliates all over the
world together to learn and grow.

2015–2017:
SVP invests in OPCS,
supporting strategic shift to
a “housing first” model.



2016–2018:
SVP invests in
SARSEF as they
expand programming
to title 1 schools.



2017:
In partnership with University of Arizona’s
Eller College of Management, SVP completes
a 10-year impact study validating its
capacity-building services and showing
profound growth in their nonprofit partners,
including the following averages:

- 259% growth in the number of clients served
- 83% increase in annual budgets
- 53% increase in financial reserves

2017–2021:
SVP invests in Higher Ground,
supporting the expansion of
programming into schools and
the development of a
transformational mapping
program that streamlines
services for at-risk youth.

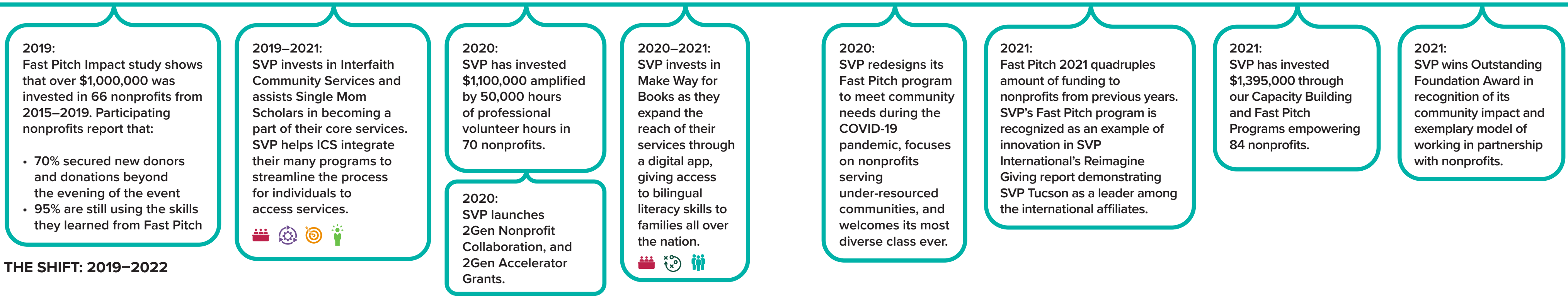
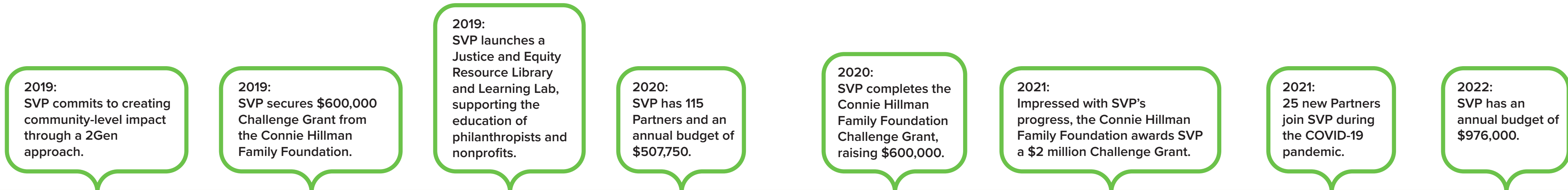


2018:
SVP launches Coaching
Program, offering in-depth
professional development to
nonprofit employees.

2018–2021:
SVP invests in JobPath, supporting
the organization’s growth in
infrastructure, facilitating key funding
relationships, and streamlining
programming and internal systems to
take on more students.



“I watched SVP shift their direction based on those meetings they had with nonprofit leaders, and I thought, ‘they actually listen.’ The 2-Generation focus is a direct result of those conversations.”



THE SHIFT: 2019–2022



Relationships. Resources. Resilience.

This report was released in spring 2022 and captures SVP Tucson's evolution and impact from 2016 – 2021.

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SVP Tucson is a supporting organization of the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona.