



2020-2023

Strategic Plan: Closing The Opportunity Gap

| December 2020

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Partners,

It would be a tremendous understatement to say that 2020 was a difficult year. We are battling the COVID-19 pandemic. The economy has been knocked to its knees by the virus, creating enormous suffering for many people. We have experienced the continuing pain of racial injustice and seen the opportunity gap widen for those with the fewest resources like racial minorities, immigrants, opportunity youth, returning citizens, and the essential workers on whom we all depend.

Yet, the last year has given us all a deeper sense of community and a conviction that we must do better; that we must build an educational system and economy that allows all people to share in this nation's prosperity, to build lives with purpose, dignity and economic security. We are extremely proud of the work that we have done to catalyze action around these challenges. SVP Connecticut (SVP) helped bring business, government, and educational leaders together to create an inclusive workforce strategy for the state. SVP Partners created a new non-profit, 4-CT, to coordinate the state's philanthropic COVID relief efforts and launched an innovative Racial Equity initiative to support systems change to eliminate racial inequities. In addition, our Partners have done significant work at the community level in collaboration with nonprofits serving our most vulnerable residents.

Over the past year, more than 40 Partners participated in a year-long immersive strategic planning process resulting in a sharpened focus on closing the opportunity gap to achieve racial equity and economic security for all. We learned from community leaders and social impact field experts to better understand the drivers and dynamics that block progress in closing opportunity gaps, while developing a set of strategies we expect will have greater impact. Some key highlights from this work include:

- Putting race equity at the core of our mission
- Adopting a systems change approach to our work
- Increasing our focus on early childhood and career pathways/workforce development
- Leveraging SVP's human and social capital
- Developing key performance indicators for our work

The attached plan summary outlines our goals, vision, mission, values and behaviors, social impact strategies, and key metrics. The plan also identifies the key organizational and financial requirements to carry out these strategies. We expect that this plan will be a living document that will be continuously refined through our collective work across the state and our engagement with community partners. Read SVP's full strategic plan, with additional details and appendices, at <https://www.svp-ct.org>.

We are passionate about the opportunity to achieve significant social impact in the coming years. We believe that SVP has created a powerful "flywheel for human capital" that can meaningfully address some of our most pressing social problems in true partnership with community members. We invite you to join us on this exciting journey.

Sincerely,



Don Kendall, Chairman



Mark Argosh, Executive Director



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR VISION

We envision a thriving Connecticut with racial equity and economic security for all people.

OUR MISSION

Our engaged community leverages time and resources to advance equitable solutions for closing Connecticut's opportunity gap, while becoming more strategic and effective in our giving.

OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIORS

Impact

We cultivate and foster sustainable and equitable change in our communities.

- Bring curiosity and creative problem solving to our engagements
- Develop measurable goals and plans
- Balance passionate conviction with evidence-based decisions
- Embrace systems thinking to accelerate change process
- Acknowledge complexity of change

Partnerships

We build strong relationships based on integrity, humility, and mutual respect.

- Foster trusting relationships to create strong teams and vibrant leaders
- Demonstrate respect for diverse ideas
- Hold ourselves accountable for our actions and results
- Challenge our assumptions; listen and learn
- Seek candid feedback with an openness to change

Community

We bring people together to make a greater impact. Identify, listen to, and cultivate key stakeholders

- Act as allies for one another's growth and success
- Share ownership of successes with community partners
- Contribute time and funding to build community strengths and vitality
- Invest in SVP to increase our ability to invest in others

Equity

We believe ALL people should have the opportunity to succeed.

- Identify and engage voices that are not represented
- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, and appreciation
- Build an organization that reflects the diversity of our community
- Recognize privilege and seek to understand different life experiences
- Acknowledge power imbalances and work to level them

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Race Equity	There is high correlation between race/ethnicity and multiple socio-economic inequities in opportunities and, as a result, outcomes.
Systems Change	Change the underlying systems that sustain opportunity gaps and socioeconomic inequality in Connecticut.
Harnessing Our Human and Social Capital	To be effective, we must invest in our Partnership and continue to develop our "flywheel for human capital".

PRIORITY GOALS

Build effective education and career pathways for underserved populations resulting in sustainable livelihoods for all families in Connecticut.

1. Provide capacity building support, program design, and business connectivity for nonprofits working with underserved populations.
2. Work with business, government, and education sectors to implement Governor's Workforce Council's (GWC) strategies.
3. Develop and scale sector-based training programs that create opportunities for underserved populations.
4. Influence businesses to increase equitable access to high quality jobs through skills-based hiring, incumbent worker training, and providing supportive services to reduce barriers to employment.

Advance racial equity by applying an equity lens to our existing work and supporting organizations working to achieve systemic change.

1. Establish the SVP Race Equity Fund as a participatory grant-making pilot.
2. Train and deploy SVP Partners in mutual mentorship collaborations with organizations supporting the leadership and social capital development of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) leaders of nonprofits.
3. Promote organizations, collaborations, and solutions that eliminate racial inequities.
4. Design programming and create communities of practice that build SVP Partners' commitment and action.

Strengthen early childhood care and education (ECE) systems to provide high quality learning for all children resulting in workforce participation by caregivers and living wages for child care professionals.

1. Support nonprofits in capacity building, program development, strategy development, and building sustainable business models.
2. Engage employers on ECE issues; increase investments; and identify collaborative efforts.
3. Identify opportunities to support the Office of Early Childhood's ECE vision and statewide plan.
4. Assess additional opportunities for systems change through community engagement and capacity building such as enhancing the shared services infrastructure supporting child care providers and centers.

Build and sustain SVP's financial and operational capacity.

1. Raise \$2 million budget to support our mission and strategic priorities.
2. Expand fundraising capacity to support growth and impact strategies by increasing revenue from corporations, foundations, and SVP Partners.
3. Redesign investment process to align with strategic pillars.
4. Develop advocacy capacity to support systems change initiatives.
5. Strengthen SVP's financial and operational management processes.
6. Build capacity of our Board and diversify its membership (race, ethnicity, gender, expertise, geography, etc.).
7. Develop robust communications and marketing platform to engage partnership and key stakeholders in our work.

Grow our statewide partnership to 500 members while building a human capital flywheel for social impact.

1. Grow SVP into a statewide organization by expanding the partnership to Hartford, Waterbury, and New London, and developing corporate partnerships to more efficiently increase the number of Partners.
2. Increase the diversity of Partners and staff by building deeper community networks throughout Connecticut.
3. Expand professional staff to implement this strategic plan. Priorities include communications, development, advocacy, metrics, and additional consulting and Partner recruiting managers for new geographies and corporate partnerships.
4. Develop professional development programming for Lead Partners, project teams, and nonprofits. Conduct Partner events and workshops to broaden learning and engagement opportunities.
5. Invest in and develop knowledge management processes.

HISTORY

KEY DATES IN SVP HISTORY

2013

SVP Connecticut founded by 12 SVP Partners and Fairfield County's Community Foundation (FCCF)

2013-2015

Traditional SVP venture philanthropy and initial nonprofit partnerships

- 46 SVP Partners

2016-2019

Growth and mission-based approach

- First strategic plan led to focus on closing the opportunity gap in Connecticut
- Launched a cradle-to-career investment approach
- Hired first Executive Director
- Grew to 12 nonprofit partners and strengthened consulting model
- Expanded to New Haven
- SVP's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee began leading actions to increase our diversity, apply a racial equity lens to our work, and change the culture of our organization
- 154 SVP Partners

2020

Expanding focus on race equity, economic security and systems change

- Revised SVP's vision and mission to reflect shift in focus to race equity, economic security, and centering equitable solutions to closing Connecticut's opportunity gap
- Deeper engagement in systems change
- COVID relief and response
- SVP becomes a 501c3, increases Board size and diversity
- Expanded to Hartford and Waterbury
- 200 SVP Partners



THE OPPORTUNITY GAP

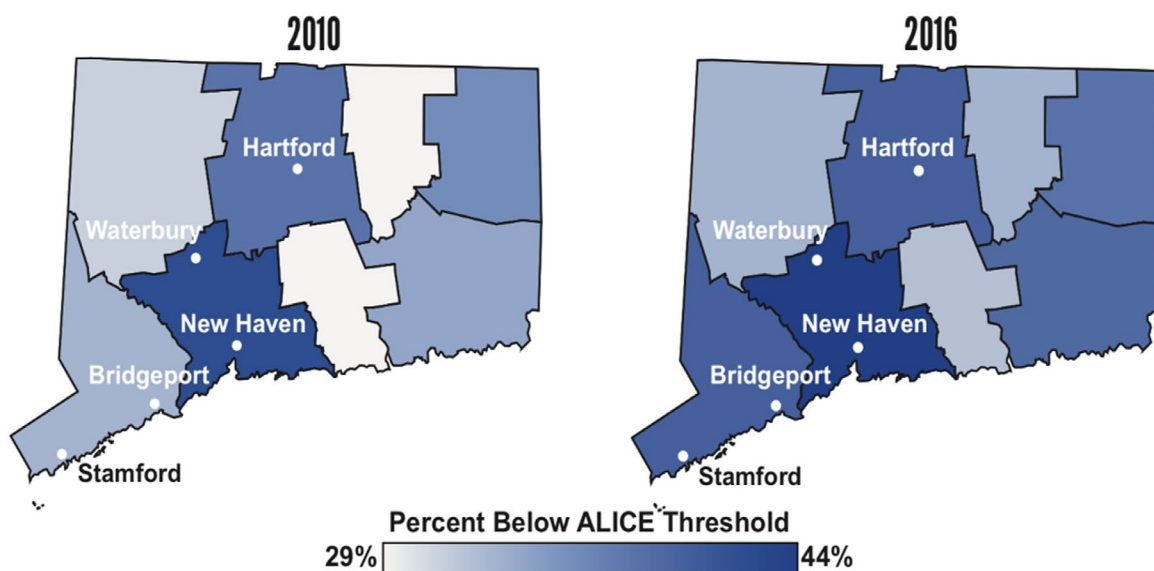
The opportunity gap, or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities, means that, for many, opportunities in life are determined by circumstances such as race, ethnicity, ZIP code and socioeconomic status.¹ In Connecticut, more than 520,000 households (40% of the state's households) are unable to support a minimal household budget with their earnings.² The maps below show this is an issue that exists statewide across urban, suburban and rural communities.

In *ALICE: A Study in Financial Hardship – 2018 Report* published in 2020, Connecticut United Ways reported: "From 2010 to 2018, Connecticut showed steady economic improvements according to traditional measures. Unemployment in the state and across the U.S. fell to historic lows, GDP grew, and wages rose slightly. Yet in 2018, eight years after the end of the Great Recession, 38% of Connecticut's 1,378,091 households still struggled to make ends meet. And while 11% of these households were living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), another 28% – more than twice as many – were **ALICE** households: **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. These households earned above the FPL, but not enough to afford basic household necessities."

Closing the opportunity gap requires our addressing the root causes – racial and income inequalities driven by a long history of systemic racism (e.g. redlining,

segregated and unequal public education systems) and the loss of middle class jobs due to economic changes. These problems are further exacerbated by the lack of alignment between educational institutions and employers, barriers to opportunities (e.g. child care, housing, transportation, the criminal justice system), policy-driven disincentives (e.g., tax system, benefit cliffs), and changes in technology.

Eliminating the opportunity gap is an enormous task requiring a sustained commitment by public and private stakeholders. During the past four years, SVP has built strong partnerships with many leading nonprofits in education and workforce development, particularly in our work supporting the Governor's Workforce Council's development of a comprehensive education and workforce strategy for Connecticut. "We also expanded our focus in early childhood through engaging the Office of Early Childhood, the Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, and other key stakeholders interested in developing strategies and systems capacity to bring greater equity and accessibility to high quality early childhood care and education for all people in the state. Finally, we committed ourselves to help address racial inequities at a systemic level by launching a multi-prong Race Equity Initiative. Our mission is no less than to rewrite the social contract with a fresh push to expand and institutionalize opportunity for all.



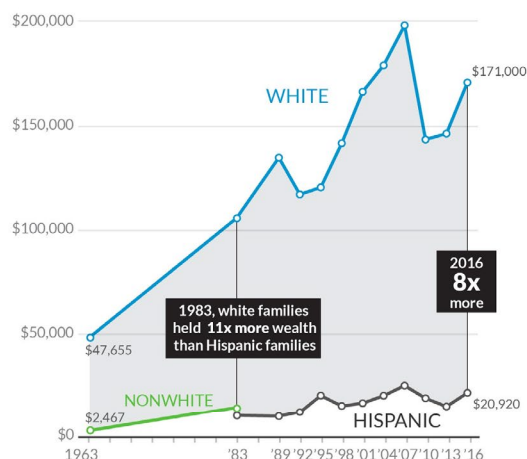
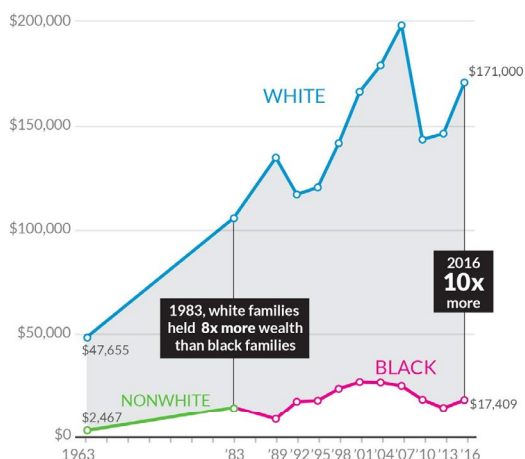
1. <https://www.edglossary.org/opportunity-gap/>

2. <https://alice.ctunitedway.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-ALICE-Executive-Summary-10-28-18.pdf>. ALICE threshold indicates households that are Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed.

SVP STRATEGIC PILLARS: RACE EQUITY

Racial equity must inform all of our work. We cannot eliminate opportunity gaps without acknowledging the high correlation between race/ethnicity and socio-economic inequity. To do otherwise would prevent us from achieving real change. We recognize that systemic inequities in education and employment have resulted in a massive wealth gap.

Median Family Wealth by Race/Ethnicity, 1963-2016



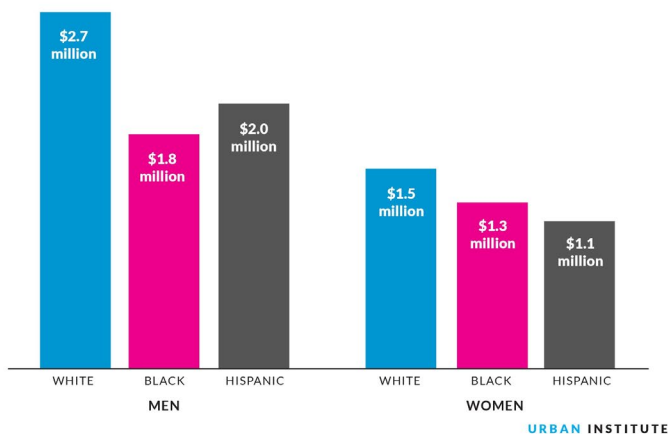
Source: Urban Institute calculations from Survey of Financial Characteristics of Consumers 1962 (December 31), Survey of Changes in Family Finances 1963, and Survey of Consumer Finances 1983-2016.

Notes: 2016 dollars. No comparable data are available between 1963 and 1983. Black/Hispanic distinction within nonwhite population available only in 1983 and later.

Wealth disparities persist and have been growing, driven by income inequality, which adds up over a lifetime. Inequalities in wealth-building measures such as home ownership and retirement savings vehicles both contribute to the gaps.

Addressing these issues starts with a foundation of equitable, high quality, accessible and affordable early childhood care and education, and requires an equitable K-12 and post-secondary system that is aligned in the need to prepare all children for careers with living wages. We can only succeed by acknowledging and challenging the roots and causes of structural and systemic inequities that present huge challenges in building education, workforce, and social systems that are responsive to the needs of all Connecticut residents in the 21st century.

Average Accumulated Real Lifetime Earnings at Ages 58-62 for People Born 1950-54, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity



Source: Melissa Favreault, Urban Institutes tabulations from the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation matched to Summary Earnings Records through 2012.

Notes: 2015 dollars. These people are ages 58-62 in 2012. Excludes people outside US for more than 10 years of adulthood; this is especially important for Hispanics, who are more likely foreign born. Earnings are accumulated using assumed interest rates from the OASDI trustees report.

SVP STRATEGIC PILLARS: SYSTEMS CHANGE

Systems change is defined by FSG Consulting “as shifting the underlying conditions that hold the problems in place”.³

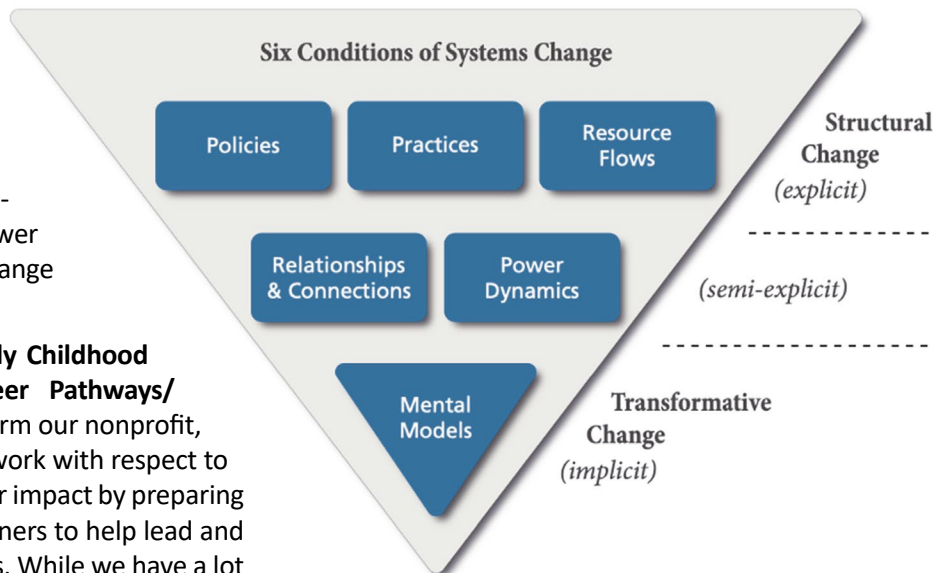
This includes structures (policies, practices, how resources flow); relational change (relationships, power dynamics); and transformative change (mindsets, mental models).

Our systems change work in **Early Childhood Care and Education** and **Career Pathways/Workforce Development** will inform our nonprofit, community level, and statewide work with respect to these issues. We can maximize our impact by preparing and equipping our volunteer Partners to help lead and contribute to these change efforts. While we have a lot to learn about being effective in these roles, external stakeholders are seeking SVP’s direct involvement in these efforts. **At the same time we are building deeper relationships with community leaders through our race equity work that promises to expand the power of this movement.**

While there are examples of systems change nationwide, the one most salient for SVP is the success of SVP Portland’s \$130 million Preschool for All initiative. This effort involved SVP Portland’s co-leadership of a collective impact group of 95 community leaders, nonprofit organizations, policy organizations, and governmental officials from more than 50 organizations to develop the vision and plan for Preschool For All. The success of the initiative demonstrated the value and necessity

of long-term persistence in pursuing systems-level change. The referendum was the culmination of 10 years of building capacity to dramatically increase the number of childcare providers in underserved Portland communities.

Our cradle-to-career approach to systems change acknowledges the critical roles of partnership and collaboration. After careful analysis of our capabilities, expertise, and strongest points of leverage, we have refined the focus of our systems level work to **Career Pathways/Workforce Development**, where we are heavily engaged with the Governor’s Workforce Council, and **Early Childhood** where we are deepening our systems-level efforts.



Cradle-to-Career Sectors	Early Childhood (SVP is deepening systems level efforts)	K-8 Education (SVP is learning and investing in community projects)	9th-College-Career Readiness (SVP is deepening systems level efforts)	Workforce Development (SVP is heavily engaged in systems change)	Economic Security (SVP is learning and investing in community projects)
Three Key Disciplines for Systems Change <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross-sector Partnerships (collective impact) 2. Community Organizing (leadership/empowerment/ownership) 3. Capacity Building (scaling program and systems capacity) 					
Centering Marginalized Populations in The Process Using Equity and Anti-Racism Lens <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participatory Grantmaking 2. Supporting Advocacy Organizations Addressing Systemic Inequities 3. Leadership + Social Capital Development of BIPOC 4. SVP Partner Education 					

3. Kania, J., Kramer, M., and Senge, P. The Water of Systems Change. May 2018. https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change

SVP STRATEGIC PILLARS: HARNESSING OUR HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

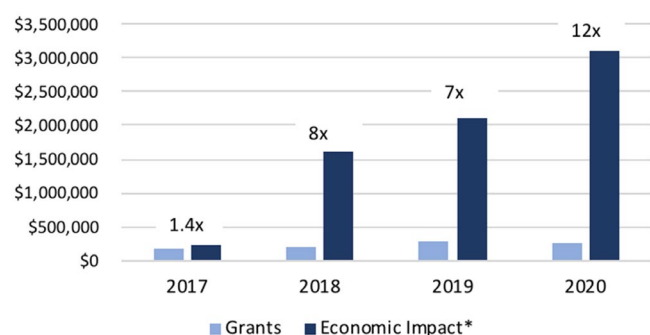
SVP's impact strategy is all about harnessing our human and social capital including the power of our relationships and community partnerships. We believe that we are building a new type of social impact organization that combines skills-based volunteering, empowering community change makers, convening leaders across sectors, and influencing policies, practices, and resource allocation for social good. We also think that we are only at the beginning of this work. We need to deepen our partnerships with leaders of color in urban communities. We must engage business, government, philanthropic, and educational leaders to work together to make changes. We must expand the partnership to all corners of the state. We must hone our abilities to bring people together to co-create the solutions for closing the opportunity gap. And, for true transformational change, we must deeply interrogate our own organization and actions, and shift our mental models in regards to how we do this work.

A common theme among interviewees in a 2020 survey of SVP nonprofit partners was how empowered they felt by their successes. In one case, an SVP volunteer team collaborated with Horizons National and two Horizons summer learning programs serving Bridgeport students to build out a city-wide expansion strategy. This resulted in creating a new entity, Horizons Bridgeport, to support program growth as well as deeper collaboration with the educational systems in Bridgeport to expand opportunities for all. In another case, SVP supported the hiring of a data professional and the development of data systems that has enabled the nonprofit and the school district to develop integrated longitudinal data systems to analyze student growth. The Executive Director stated: "It's not just that I got a data person — it is what this data person has been able to produce and we are now known as an organization that has data. So this shows that we are making an impact and moving the needle, so now the dollars are coming in." **In 2019–20, over 100 SVP Partners provided high quality, professional-grade consulting support, equaling an estimated 20,000 hours of volunteer time. This resulted in an estimated \$3.1 million in economic impact from \$252,000 in investments — leveraged factor of more than 12x.**

A 2020 survey of SVP nonprofit partners conducted by a consulting firm, The Strategy Group, noted that organizations value our consulting most highly. The following are direct quotes from the evaluation:

- *"The volunteers are generous, kind, and thoughtful — they offer resources, relationships, and we couldn't be more grateful for their time."*
- *"SVP provided us a level of expertise and impetus — we would have gotten where we are today, but it would've been at a much slower pace."*
- *"Our biggest success was SVP's helping us build our senior management structure."*
- *"We learned a lot about the space and the market through conversations with the Partners — we would not have had the time to get in front of anyone had we not partnered with SVP."*
- *"SVP brought in models from other states and pushed us to look at ourselves and think about how we could be a model for others."*

SVP Economic Impact 2017-2020



* Economic Impact estimate includes direct grants, hours of SVP consulting and additional funds raised/leveraged

MAXIMIZING IMPACT BY LEVERAGING SVP'S CAPABILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

The Plan – Race Equity Initiative: In 2016, SVP's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee began leading actions to increase our diversity, apply a racial equity lens to our work, and change the culture of our organization. As a result, SVP has increased the diversity of its board, staff, and partnership. We also made changes in our investment process to focus on DEI, while incorporating equity principles into our nonprofit work.

Yet, in our strategic planning process, we decided that racial equity needs to be at the center of our work as we strive to close the opportunity gap. Given the numerous racial disparities in both opportunities and outcomes in Connecticut, we concluded that we will be a more effective agent of systems change by acknowledging the racial inequities in both opportunities and outcomes resulting from those systems. ***This inclusion of a "racial equity lens" in our work and, in the culture of our organization is a multi-step process that begins with the Race Equity Initiative.***

Theory of Action: Engaging in these racial equity initiatives will provide SVP with a starting point to initiate a fundamental change in the culture and perspective of the organization. This change – an explicit and con-

sistent acknowledgement of the racial disparities exacerbated by existing systems and processes – will result in our making better decisions and integrating a racial equity perspective in all of our work.

Context: Feedback from the SVP Environmental Scan completed by The Strategy Group in March 2020 indicated our need to develop cultural competency through consistent active listening and a shift in mindset from deficit-based thinking to asset-based thinking on all our teams working with nonprofits. COVID and its subsequent health and economic effects impacted the BIPOC populations much more severely than the overall population. In particular, the death rates and unemployment rates among Black and LatinX populations in the State were markedly higher than the same rates for whites in the same geographic areas. Furthermore, the racial and ethnic animosity highlighted by the highly publicized murders of Black citizens by policemen brought the systemic inequities into full relief and sparked a nationwide reconsideration of the role race plays in the systematic exclusion of people of color from basic opportunities to reach their potential as human beings.

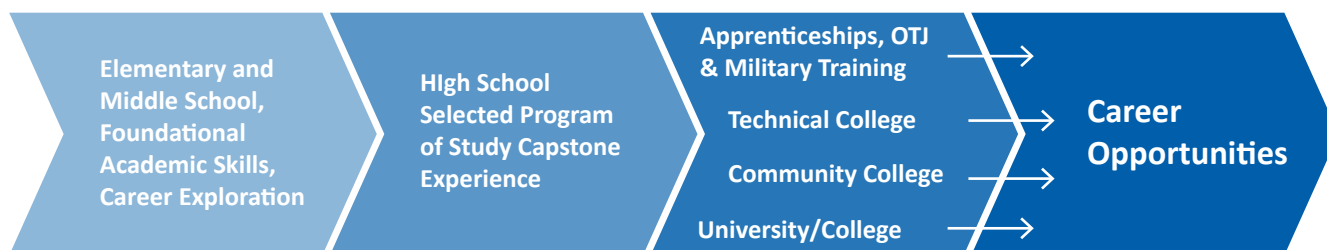
Strategic Pillars and Components of Our Plan: These four initiatives are currently running in parallel, and each is a pathway to changing how SVP will work going forward.

Community Voice	The Race Equity Fund is a participatory grantmaking pilot funded by SVP Partners and managed by community members who make funding decisions. It will support organizations led by BIPOC who are directly addressing racial equity issues. It will also deepen our relationships in New Haven and Bridgeport while expanding our commitment to building community led organizations and institutions.
Learning & Listening	Mutual mentorship learning endeavor with Five Frogs in which individual SVP Partners are paired with nonprofit leaders to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. This initiative will leverage our social capital, while educating our Partners on the opportunities to support leaders of color around the state.
Cultural Competency	SVP Partner education and preparation for working with nonprofit organizations by recognizing extant systemic socioeconomic racial disparities that inform individual's work and lives. Focusing on developing consistent behaviors, attitudes and practices among SVP Partners.
Advocacy & Support	SVP Partners deployed to assist nonprofits in mission-driven initiatives to address systemic inequities that disproportionately affect people of color. In the process, we will learn how to serve as strong allies for these nonprofits.

PLAN FOR CAREER PATHWAYS/WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: THE GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PILLARS

The Plan - Career Pathways/Workforce Development: SVP will help build more equitable and effective workforce systems in Connecticut by supporting the implementation of the Governor's Workforce Council (GWC) plan and by connecting this work to nonprofit organizations. SVP supported the development of a comprehensive education and workforce strategy in 2020. As a part of this work, SVP played a leadership role in helping to convene and align key stakeholders in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. The GWC strategic plan has already generated strong and significant leadership for systems change, in building a more inclusive workforce system, in which the barriers to workforce participation are removed so that all people have the opportunity to build sustainable livelihoods.

Theory of Action



Organizational Capacity Building

SVP's Role in Nonprofit Capacity Building: Equity and Access

- Support nonprofits enabling underserved populations to achieve postsecondary and career success
- Organizational capacity building, program development, strategy development, business support, connecting nonprofits to workforce opportunities. Current nonprofit partners:
 - Opportunity Youth: DOMUS, Career Resources, Inc.
 - Returning Citizens: CRI, Domus, EmergeCT
 - Immigrants: Building One Community
 - Educational Pathways: ReadyCT, Achieve Hartford

Systems Capacity Building / Collective Impact

SVP's Role in Building Education and Career Pathways

- Support GWC in implementing Education and Career Pathways
- Develop/scale sector-based training, WBL programs (e.g. Healthcare Technician Training)
- Influence business leaders to change their hiring and employment practices.
 - Adopt skills-based hiring
 - Expand opportunities to underserved populations
 - Invest in quality jobs (living wages, benefits, training opportunities, working conditions, supportive services, employee participation, etc.)

Context: The economic devastation wrought by COVID-19 - especially for lower-skilled workers who experienced depression-like collapse of their labor markets - has worsened hardships. Simultaneously, essential workers have shouldered an enormous burden. Unfortunately, Connecticut has repeatedly possessed one of the widest educational attainment gaps in the nation:

- The high school graduation rate for low income (eligible for free lunch) students is 66.6% versus 93.1% for students who are ineligible for any lunch subsidies.
- While Connecticut has a strong higher education system, low-income and minority students disproportionately attend community colleges.
- The three-year graduation rate for Connecticut community colleges is just 15% and ranks in the bottom quartile nationally.

Positive changes are already in progress. Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) is planning to implement a guided pathways system across the State's community colleges that has proven effective in other states in closing the opportunity gap. There also remains a tremendous amount of work to do in removing barriers to education and work faced by vulnerable, underserved populations, including returning citizens, immigrants, the homeless, and opportunity youth.

PLAN FOR CAREER PATHWAYS/WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: THE GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PILLARS

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

- Regional Sector Partnerships will serve as the anchor strategy to reinvigorate Connecticut's demand-driven approach to workforce development.
- Educators and trainers will partner with businesses to develop strategies that fill gaps in the regional talent supply chain.
- Students and other jobseekers will benefit from a more clearly articulated job demand picture and improved availability of training and support.
- Businesses will lead in adopting skills-based hiring practices that will expand access to opportunities for all.
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs will be integrated with state workforce strategies.

CAREER BUILDING AND EDUCATION

- Align training and education with occupational demand and career opportunities.
- The cultivation of career pathway systems and in-demand, sector-based training will serve as the anchor strategies to achieve this alignment.
- Career Building strategies will promote lifelong learning and modernize core skills in digital literacy, problem solving, teamwork, and communication.
- Need to invest in our teachers' professional development if we are to succeed.
- New approaches to student advising and a redesign of our adult education system will also be critically important change initiatives.

EQUITY AND ACCESS

- Addresses persistent barriers that undermine access to sustainable work and training arrangements.
- Identifies the foremost barriers facing Connecticut's lower-paid workforce: child care, transportation, benefits cliffs, and access to behavioral health services.
- Many barriers disproportionately affect specific underserved populations and are exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis.
- Fundamentally recognizes that a motivated person with a good job or training opportunity is often thwarted by systemic barriers not of their making.
- These plans will help Connecticut workers and jobseekers, create a positive return for the State and its taxpayers, and recognize the talent potential that can be unleashed through thoughtful, data-driven policy initiatives.
- A by-product of these efforts will be the broadening of our workforce and widening the talent pipeline.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND DATA DRIVEN MANAGEMENT

- Use technology to increase accessibility, transparency, and accountability, allowing a better understanding of program outcomes and the return on investment in training and supportive services.
- Program managers and policy-makers will be able to create and revise programs based on real-time data. Analysts can study the overlapping impacts of government initiatives to improve their design.
- Jobseekers will gain clarity on career options, pathways, and specific educational programs, leveraging an online platform.
- Businesses will contribute to this user platform, creating a feedback loop while gaining access to a broader talent pipeline.

THE PLAN - EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SECTOR

High-quality early childhood education can generate a 13% ROI annually, strengthening families and benefiting siblings and multiple generations.⁴ For children, the opportunity gaps can be mitigated before they develop by ensuring academic skills and readiness and addressing emotional health and trauma in early childhood. Programs that improve parental mental health can reduce the incidence of depression, child abuse and neglect. All of this results in businesses' realizing increased productivity and retention, and decreased absenteeism, while caregivers, especially women, have a greater opportunity to work full-time, which is central to inclusive economic growth. Improvements that include investments in the early childhood workforce will address systemic inequities and low wages faced by the workforce.

Theory of Action (In Progress) – Centered on Quality and Equity

SVP's early childhood care and education focus is on ensuring children in historically underserved communities across Connecticut are ready for Kindergarten through affordable access to high-quality, equitable programs. Three key areas for capacity-building include: 1) non-profit organizations, shared services organizations, and partnering with the networks and philanthropies that support them; 2) partnerships with critical systems leaders such as the Office of Early Childhood; and 3) exploring opportunities for investing in collective impact and mechanisms to increase underrepresented voices of parents and caregivers. We expect this theory of action to continue to evolve, particularly as the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) state plans progress in 2021.

Context

ECE in Connecticut is challenged by issues of access, affordability, and quality. Prior to the COVID crisis, nearly 44% of Connecticut residents lived in a child care desert (an area with an insufficient supply of licensed child care).⁵ Connecticut has the fifth highest child care costs in the U.S.⁶ National data reveals how the shortcomings of the system disproportionately impacts children from low-income families, half of whom are at risk of not being fully prepared for kindergarten. The ECE system also involves issues of gender and racial equity with respect to the workforce. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 93% of the ECE workforce are women and 45% are Black, Asian, or Latinx. The median income for a daycare worker in Connecticut is \$12.27 per hour⁷ (less than \$25,000 annually); the median salary for a preschool teacher is approximately \$37,000. The pandemic has only exacerbated the fragility and inequity of ECE. The ability to go back to work, even for those able to work from home, is limited by the availability of ECE, the "big factor" threatening economic recovery.⁸

In response to this crisis, Connecticut has a strong foundation to build from and is well positioned to be a national ECE model. It is ranked highly in national surveys of preschool enrollment.⁹ The state also has a strong and innovative Office of Early Childhood (OEC), which has been adept at responding to the COVID crisis. ECE in Connecticut is also supported by: strong nonprofit and advocacy organizations; philanthropic leadership; and nationally recognized collaborative initiatives.

Strategic Pillars and Components of Our Plan

Nonprofit Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure capacity building, program and strategy development, business support• Strengthening networks through increasing network reach and utilization; leveraging best practices, statewide resources and opportunities to expand shared services; and building collaborative partnerships• Identify ways to partner with local philanthropy, seeking opportunities to leverage and enhance existing efforts
Systems Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting OEC's vision and plan through: Governor's Workforce Council, engaging businesses on ECE issues to increase private sector buy-in and investments, and more as opportunities arise
Community Engagement & Collective Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage and invest in community-rooted efforts to increase capacity and increase parent and caregiver voice

4. Quantifying the Life-Cycle Benefits of a Prototypical Early Childhood Program, available at: <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/lifecycle-benefits-influent-early-childhood-program/>

5. Rasheed Malik and others, "Child Care Deserts: An Analysis of Child Care Centers by ZIP Code in 8 States" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2016), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2016/10/27/225703/child-care-deserts/>

6. <https://ctvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Issue-Briefing-Book-2020-Final-Abridged-Version.pdf>

7. <https://www.careerexplorer.com/careers/childcare-worker/salary/connecticut/>

8. <https://www.washingtonpost.com; July 3, 2020>

9. Connecticut ranks 4th according to US News based on preschool enrollment; in Zero to Three's State of Babies report, Connecticut is one of twelve states to receive the highest rating "working effectively"; Connecticut is 12th according to Waltheub based on access and quality of pre-k alternatives; and Connecticut is ranked #1 in Care.com's Care Index on the State of Childcare.

THE PLAN - ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Partnership: Growth, Retention and Development:

One of SVP's strategic pillars is harnessing our human and social capital. We call this our “flywheel for human capital.” In order to do this, we should continue to grow the partnership to 500 members by 2024 and extend to all parts of Connecticut. We must also increase the diversity of the partnership from a demographic, geographic, occupational and skill sets standpoint. This will enable our organization to center our work in equity, incorporate more diverse perspectives and lived experiences, and have the capacity to build partnerships and support the key initiatives outlined in this plan. In the area of retention, we will need to maintain a 90% Partner retention rate through effective Partner engagement and communications. It will also be critical to enhance our Partner development and consulting effectiveness, build out our processes to support project teams, improve quality assurance for high quality services and invest in knowledge management. All efforts will be aligned with our values and behaviors.

Increasing our Financial Capacity: We will need to increase our financial capacity to carry out this mission. We should grow our revenues from \$1.2 million to \$2 million over the next three years to provide resources for some key staff hires, and to support a larger organization, both geographically and from a program standpoint. From a development standpoint, we will focus on: 1) increasing support from corporations and foundations through encouraging them to contribute financially, as well as engaging their employees in the SVP project work and 2) building a stewardship process to attract increased giving from Partners who have greater financial capacity. Beyond maintaining our current SVP staff, our priorities for using these funds include:

- Marketing and communications (*Internal and external*)
- Advocacy
- Evaluation and metrics (*SVP and nonprofits*)
- Developing professional partnerships (*Corporate, Foundations, Individuals*)
- Corporate partner relationship manager
- Consulting and recruiting staff for new geographies
- Funding strategic initiatives (i.e., Early Childhood Education, Workforce Development, and Race Equity)

Strengthening Our Business and Operational Processes:

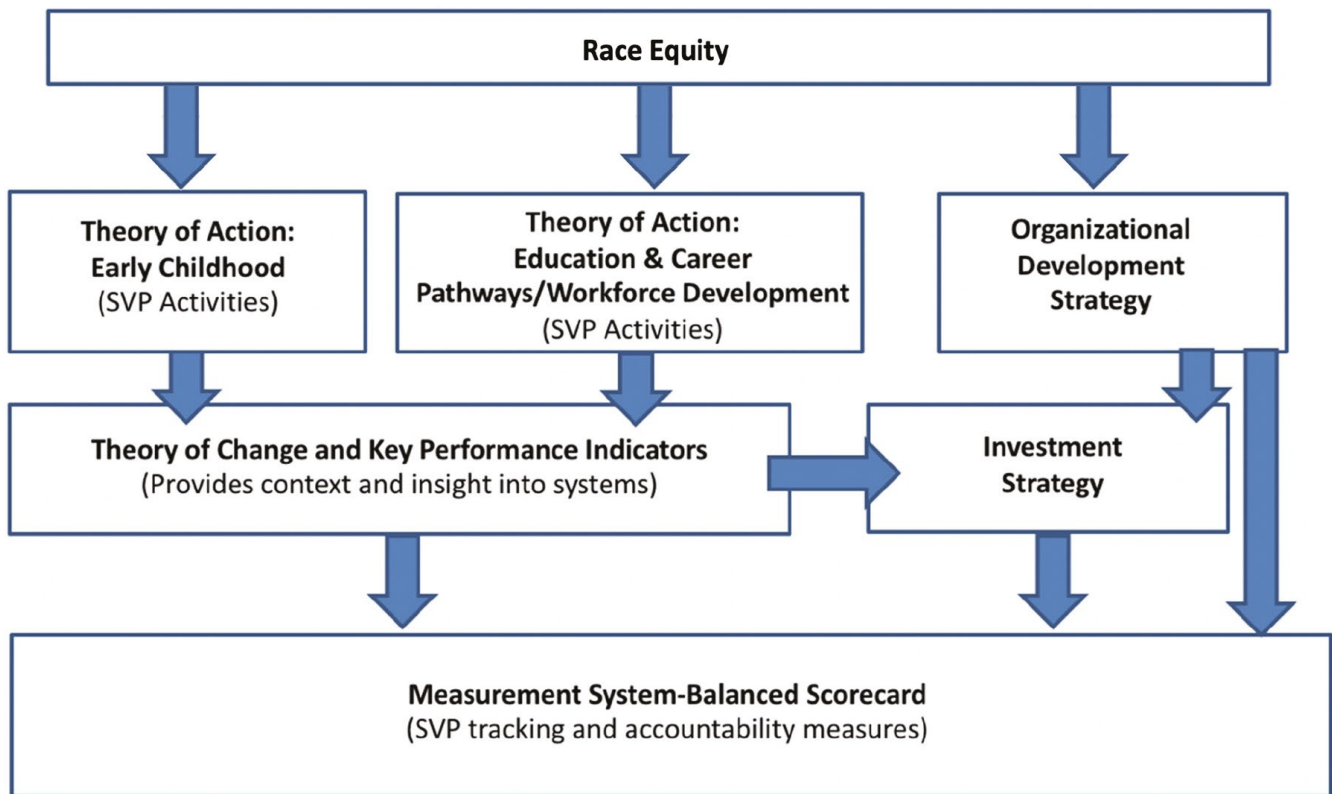
We will need to continue to build our internal infrastructure to support our mission. We have created a strong technology foundation through creating a customized version of Salesforce, and automating many other processes like nonprofit investing, project team collaboration, and our financial and human resources processes. We need to make further investments in these capabilities and have significant work to do to improve our communications capabilities. We will need to hire a communications professional to improve our internal and external communications. Other critical infrastructure projects include:

1. Strengthen our investment processes. We recognize that our investment process has the opportunity to be better aligned with our values and to help us build better relationships in the sectors.
2. Examine and revise our hiring practices, seeking to access more diverse sources of candidates, which will result in more diverse staff perspectives and voices.
3. Expand our Board from 12 to 21 members while improving our processes and increasing our diversity, specifically in: sector and functional experience, lived experience, geography, race/ethnicity and SVP experience.
4. Automate and strengthen operational processes: Salesforce capabilities for tracking partnership information, financial recordkeeping and grantmaking.
5. Invest in marketing and communications capabilities to connect with and influence internal and external stakeholders.
6. Develop an advocacy capability that is aligned with our systems change initiatives.

MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

In order to meet our strategic plan goals, we must hold ourselves accountable through intentionally identifying, measuring and tracking key organizational and impact metrics. Discussions with foundations, nonprofit organizations, state agencies and SVP Partner data and measurement experts informed our approach. The insights gained from these discussions catalyzed a measurement framework designed to incorporate systems insights, SVP's values and activities, development strategies, and investment strategies into the metrics to be tracked. Several external stakeholders articulated the challenge of determining their own contribution to a state-level systems goal. Given our focus on systems change, we felt it was critical to include metrics specifically related to our own capacity-building as well as our state-level systems goals in order to keep a laser focus on the efforts aimed at systems change. This also reflects one of our core values and beliefs in community – we bring people together to maximize impact, share successes, and act as allies for one another's growth and success.

Our focus on race equity will inform our actions as an organization both internally and externally for all the reasons mentioned previously in this plan. Our success depends on the leadership, input, and contributions from the communities directly affected by the system changes we endeavor to change.



In the next stage of the Strategy and Metrics Committee, we will engage SVP Partners to assess and refine the initial set of metrics, and to set up an implementation plan for measurement and tracking. As a statewide organization engaged in increasing connectivity, building stronger integration and alignment, SVP also needs to consider effective ways to measure activities, such as the increased activation of our network of nonprofit partners.

SVP PARTNERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Thank you to the SVP Partners who participated in building the 2020 Strategic Plan, for their commitment and leadership. We also recognize the many SVP Partners who attended or facilitated collaborative learning sessions or provided insights through interviews and research.

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- Michael Van Leesten
- Gayle Weinstein*
- Rich Wenning*
- Rob Wechsler
- Christine Yang

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