

A Lasting Commitment to Silicon Valley's Nonprofit Sector: **Grantee Spotlight**



Some of Sobrato's GOS grantees have grown substantially in a relatively short period of time for a number of different reasons. This spotlight presents perspectives on GOS from the following “fast-growth” agencies:

Organization	Years of GOS Grants	Annual Revenue & Full-Time Employees (FTEs), per application	
		First Available	Most Recent
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula (BGCP)	2005, '07, '11, '13, '15, '17	\$3.7 million (2005) 52 FTEs (2005)	\$8.7 million (2017) 60 FTEs (2017)
Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)	2010, '12, '14, '16	\$0.6 million (2010) 8 FTEs (2010)	\$5.3 million (2017) 30 FTEs (2016)
Opportunity Fund (OF)	2006, '08, '11, '15, '17	\$2.2 million (2008) 17 FTEs (2006)	\$16 million (2017) 92 FTEs (2017)
Silicon Valley Children's Fund (SV Children's Fund)	2005, '09, '11, '13, '15, '17	\$0.9 million (2005) 2 FTEs (2005)	\$3.1 million (2017) 34 FTEs (2017)

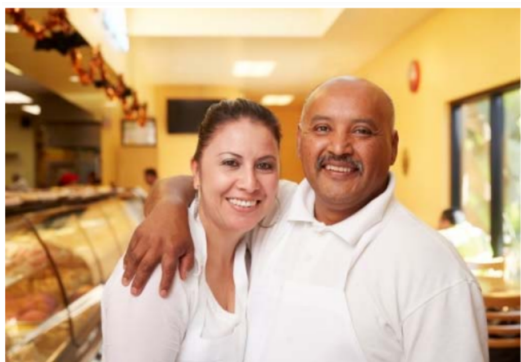
All of these organizations secured their first Sobrato GOS grants between 2005 and 2007, and have received a total of four to six GOS grants. They represent a range of sectors—youth development, legal services, financial support, and education—and are located across Santa Clara and San Mateo counties (in San Jose, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto). All of these agencies' boards have been highly engaged with fundraising.

GOS FUNDING: As their revenues and fundraising needs have grown dramatically in recent years, these grantees continue to appreciate Sobrato's unique role as a high-profile funder that provides GOS funding. Elise Cutini, CEO of SV Children's Fund, explained, **“It's always so nice to meet a funder who understands the need for GOS;** there aren't enough of them. I really appreciate that they take the time to understand the work of the agency and partner with our leadership team by trusting us to use the funds in the best way to support our mission.” Even for these relatively large organizations, sizeable unrestricted grants can be hard to come by. Two of the four organizations shared that a significant source of additional unrestricted funds they receive are through smaller grants, individual donations, or corporate giving. Becky Pinger, CLSEPA's Development Director, noted that its GOS from all sources is not keeping pace with the growth in restricted funding for its programmatic growth.



Grantee Spotlight

GRANT AMOUNT: Across all four organizations, interview participants agreed that Sobrato's GOS grants continue to be significant for their organizations. As one grantee explained in a 2016 outcomes report, "This grant is one of our sole sources of general operating funds that can be invested in organization-wide needs." **These grantees also noted that, while the grants have grown, they are not keeping pace with their organizational needs.** One grantee remarked, "We've grown in size at least six times...the actual size of the grant itself hasn't grown that big, [but] it's definitely grown as well." Another noted, "If we're going to be a [multi-]million dollar agency, it doesn't quite scale for the general operating needs that we have."



LEVERAGING NETWORKS: These organizations rely on staff and board networks to enhance their fundraising capacity and reach. Recognizing the continued importance of relationships as they grow, grantees especially value Sobrato's willingness to serve as a partner and convener. BGCP's Vice President of Development, Sean Mendy, described Sobrato as "funders who are actually interested in truly being partners" and "pushing things forward," and

CLSEPA's Executive Director Phil Hwang observed that Sobrato "has watched the trajectory of [grantee] organizations." These agencies found Sobrato's support with helping them build networks to be particularly valuable. Priya Mistry, SV Children's Fund's Director of Community Initiatives, characterized Sobrato as "very active" in helping connect them with new opportunities, and added, **"If we ever needed advice, or if we needed some feedback... they're responsive in supporting us as a thought partner and providing a different and important lens."** OF's Chief Development Officer, Gwyneth Galbraith, sees Sobrato as a leader in "funding, convening, getting conversations going, building a network, and really trying to build a collaborative approach."

MOVING FORWARD: BGCP's Mendy reflected, "General operating support has been critical to our evolution—and without the general operating support, the evolution doesn't happen." As they grow, these agencies will need to continue building their organizational capacity. According to Eric Weaver, OF's Founder, their most pressing capacity issues include fundraising, as well as ongoing technology enhancements to streamline communications, stating that "we're growing and our need is growing." The others also recognized a range of organizational capacity needs, with data and evaluation rising to the top among all three.



SV Children's Fund's Cutini shared that, in addition to rebranding and communications, SV Children's Fund is focused on "using data and becoming a data-driven learning organization." Mendy from BGCP would like evaluation to inform program design, and noted, "I want our impact and evaluation team to design a data plan that informs our program team's practice." CLSEPA recently worked with another foundation to prioritize its organizational capacity needs, which included finance, information technology, office space, board development, communications and branding, and evaluation. Regarding the latter, Hwang described CLSEPA's desire to look at "how we measure success...and how effective we've been year to year, beyond just outputs of x number of people got served." He added, "We're trying to get at everything we can and there's just not enough dollars or support to actually do [it all]." **Moving forward, unrestricted funding will be crucial for sustaining and enhancing these growing capacity needs.**