

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/spotlight-on-fiscal-sponsorship-with-vera>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

For more than 50 years, Vera has been well known for helping to improve the justice system by combining expertise in research, program innovation, and technical assistance. Of the more than 50 demonstration projects Vera has incubated over these years, 18 have gone on to become separate entities. Some of these spin-offs, like [Safe Horizon](#) and [Project Renewal](#), are now even larger than Vera.

What many people don't know is that Vera offers [fiscal sponsorship](#) to share its expertise with outside charitable efforts and help foster their development. Through fiscal sponsorship, a nonprofit organization can extend legal and tax-exempt statuses to other groups engaged in activities related to the organization's mission. This was the case when Vera sponsored VeloCity, an organization started by three experts in urban planning and community development that sought help in building a sustainable cycling-based education program for youth from underserved communities. Vera recognized that VeloCity operated at an exciting intersection, highlighting justice-related issues like community access to resources, engaging youth from marginalized communities, and using innovative methods like community mapping to accomplish its goals.

Over the two years that Vera has sponsored VeloCity, the support it provides goes well beyond back-office (fiscal and administrative) services. Since becoming a sponsored project, VeloCity has completed its first strategic plan, refined bylaws and roles for its board of directors, and has worked with Vera to develop and meet goals for building its capacity and infrastructure. Today, VeloCity helps young people understand the complexity of social forces and processes that influence the built environment of local communities and empowers them to take an active role in community development. As VeloCity continues to adapt and refine its program model, Vera is excited to provide support and guidance as its fiscal sponsor, fostering innovation and leadership across various disciplines that advance justice.

As a case study, VeloCity illustrates just one approach to fiscal sponsorship. At Vera, fiscal sponsorship can take a number of forms, depending on the needs of the sponsored project. For example, some sponsored projects are interested in fiscal sponsorship solely as a means to accept grants and tax-exempt donations. Others seek the support of Vera's back office services, and still others come to us for more comprehensive consultation on how to strategically grow their project in a cost-effective way. Vera charges an administrative fee to offset the cost of the support that we provide.

Currently, Vera sponsors five projects and has served as sponsor to three others that have grown to independence. This is the first in a series of posts that will highlight some of Vera's current and former projects to show how fiscal sponsorship services have helped these projects thrive.

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