Impact Study Update

Summary Report

The Movement to Revolutionize Poverty-Fighting Effectiveness

Slingshot Memphis is a poverty-fighting center of influence with a mission to catalyze a movement to revolutionize poverty-fighting effectiveness so all Memphians can have equitable opportunities for personal and economic success.

We do this by applying exceptional analytical rigor and extensive research to improve the quality of people's lives. As we help our community identify, improve, and support the most effective poverty-fighting efforts, we honor those experiencing poverty by ensuring they receive the interventions that give them the greatest opportunities to thrive.

Unlike business, medicine, and other sectors that have objective methods for measuring outcomes, the poverty-fighting ecosystem simply hasn't—making it nearly impossible to know which programs are effective. Slingshot has addressed this by developing a new, standardized methodology to measure poverty-fighting effectiveness. By providing previously unavailable insights, Slingshot empowers decision makers with the evidence to make the most effective poverty-fighting decisions.

Slingshot's work enables three primary impact objectives to be achieved in order to accomplish our mission:

1) Improve the effectiveness and outcomes of poverty-fighting organizations

2) Increase the allocation of financial resources to the most effective poverty-fighting programs

3) Equip decision-makers with the insights and tools to make more evidence-based decisions

Slingshot cannot achieve this mission on our own. Poverty is a complex combination of interconnected factors and we all have a role in creating an outcomes-driven approach to fighting poverty. We welcome your feedback and invite you to participate in this movement so we can maximize the poverty-fighting benefits for those in our community who are experiencing poverty.

Executive Summary

An impact study update is a comprehensive evaluation of an organization's poverty-fighting effectiveness.

This summary report has two primary objectives:

- Provide impact results, and the basis for those results, across the four dimensions of Slingshot's impact study
- Share opportunities for greater impact that could further enhance poverty-fighting capabilities and impact

Behind this report is a wealth of evidence that is used to conclude an organization's impact results, including:

- Numerous meetings with the leadership team and other team members over a several month process
- Data from the organization about its programs, its participants, and the benefits its participants experience
- Extensive literature reviews and external research to validate best practices and the benefits produced
- Quantitative and qualitative analyses to monetize benefits and identify opportunities for greater impact

The following results for Hope House are based on its 2024 impact study update:

- **Benefit-Cost Ratio: At Least Strong** – Estimated benefits exceed costs
- **Use of Best Practices: At Least Strong** – Most practices are effective and consistently applied
- **Measurement Infrastructure: At Least Strong** – Acceptable measurement infrastructure and use of data to understand and improve impact
- **System Collaborations: At Least Neutral** – Some practices are effective or inconsistently applied

Contents

Overview of the Slingshot Impact Study Results

Focus on capabilities and impact

- Dimension results summarize an organization's poverty-fighting capabilities and impact

- Slingshot's Impact Study has four dimensions: Benefit-Cost Ratio, Use of Best Practices, Measurement Infrastructure, and System Collaborations

- One of four results is assigned to a dimension: Weak, At Least Neutral, At Least Strong, or Very Strong

Assigned based on evidence

- Results are based on the strength of evidence for an organization's poverty-fighting capabilities and impact

- Evidence of stronger poverty-fighting capabilities and impact leads to higher impact results

- Evidence of less effective poverty-fighting capabilities or impact, as well as a general lack of evidence, leads to lower impact results

Updated annually

- The results provide an objective evaluation of an organization's current poverty-fighting effectiveness as measured over the previous year

- Slingshot updates an organization's impact study annually

- Results can change over time based on the evidence associated with adjustments

Four Possible Impact Results and Five Possible Trajectories

Impact results are assigned for each dimension

Very Strong — Evidence supports a significant contribution to poverty-fighting

At Least Strong — Evidence supports a contribution to poverty-fighting

At Least Neutral — Evidence supports a limited contribution to poverty-fighting

Weak — Evidence supports a contribution to poverty-fighting is lacking

Trajectories are measured since the previous impact study

Higher impact result
Performance improved one or more impact result

Improvement within result
Performance improved within the same impact result

Limited change
Performance remained similar

Regression within result
Performance decreased within the same impact result

Lower impact result
Performance decreased one or more impact result

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Impact Study Results Summary

Dimension	Weak	At Least Neutral	At Least Strong	Very Strong	Trajectory
Benefit-Cost Ratio	Costs exceed estimated benefits	Estimated benefits and costs similar	**Estimated benefits exceed costs**	Estimated benefits substantially exceed costs	↔
Use of Best Practices	Few practices are effective or practices are inconsistently applied	Some practices are effective or inconsistently applied	**Most practices are effective and consistently applied**	Practices are most effective and consistently applied	↔
Measurement Infrastructure	Limited measurement infrastructure and use of data to understand and improve impact	Basic measurement infrastructure and use of data to understand and improve impact	**Acceptable measurement infrastructure and use of data to understand and improve impact**	Robust measurement infrastructure and use of data to understand and improve impact	↔
System Collaborations	Few practices are effective or practices are inconsistently applied	**Some practices are effective or inconsistently applied**	Most practices are effective and consistently applied	Practices are most effective and consistently applied	

Changes Since Previous Impact Study

Changes Since Previous Impact Study

Impact Result

Trajectory

Benefit-Cost Ratio

- Slingshot updated some of its Benefit-Cost estimates
- There were no changes in the methodology for calculating the Benefit-Cost Ratio

At Least Strong

Use of Best Practices

- Slingshot enhanced its evaluation of program design and staff performance management processes
- In 2023, Slingshot added new subdimensions for implementation related to goals, monitoring, and learning and improvement
- Hope House now has an on-staff nurse to provide support to clients in both Social Services and Early Childhood Education programming

At Least Strong

Measurement Infrastructure

- Slingshot evaluated this dimension at the program-level and added new sub-dimensions related to governance and external communications
- Slingshot enhanced its evaluation of data analysis
- Hope House now uses a data system that has the capability to analyze and aggregate organizational data

At Least Strong

System Collaborations

- Slingshot redesigned the Systems-Level Change dimension to this dimension in 2024

At Least Neutral

N/A

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Four Dimensions of the Slingshot Impact Study

		Description	**Influence on poverty-fighting**
	Benefit-Cost Ratio	Estimates the benefits created by an organization for the people it serves relative to the cost of creating those benefits	Enhances the allocation of resources by understanding the poverty-fighting benefits created by programs and interventions
	Use of Best Practices	Determines the extent to which an organization adheres to best practices for its programs and staff performance management	Improves the magnitude of poverty-fighting outcomes achieved by using evidence-based interventions that have the greatest efficacy
	Measurement Infrastructure	Evaluates the effectiveness with which an organization collects, analyzes, and uses data to improve decision-making as it relates to fighting poverty	Provides the foundation for an evidence-based continuous improvement process that enables greater poverty-fighting impact
	System Collaborations	Assesses how well an organization collaborates with other organizations to connect its participants to additional poverty-fighting benefits	Identifies the processes needed to effectively collaborate with other poverty-fighting organizations in the community

Benefit-Cost Ratio Dimension

Estimates the benefits created by an organization for the people it serves relative to the cost of creating those benefits

Outline Programs

- Identifies the various interventions participants receive by completing the program

- Outlines the range of outputs for the program

- Informs the appropriate baseline population based on the primary sources of program participants

Identify Outcomes

- Informs the data and research required to monetize the program benefits (outcomes)

- Identifies the potential poverty-fighting benefits created by the program interventions

- Defines poverty-fighting benefits as improvements in future earnings or health

Benefit-Cost Analysis
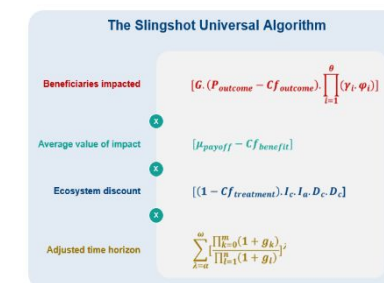
- Collect data and perform research to validate which benefits can be monetized

- Monetize benefits for participants and their immediate families; societal benefits are not included

- Aggregate the value of all the monetized benefits and divide it by the organization's total costs

Benefit-Cost Ratio Results

| Weak | At Least Neutral | **At Least Strong** | Very Strong |

Summary

- Hope House created between $1.80 and $2.05 in estimated poverty-fighting benefits for every dollar it spent

Distribution of Benefits

Explanation of benefits

- Housing support programs accounted for 70 percent of the total estimated benefits primarily due to improved access to housing assistance, reduced rental and other housing/ utilities cost burdens
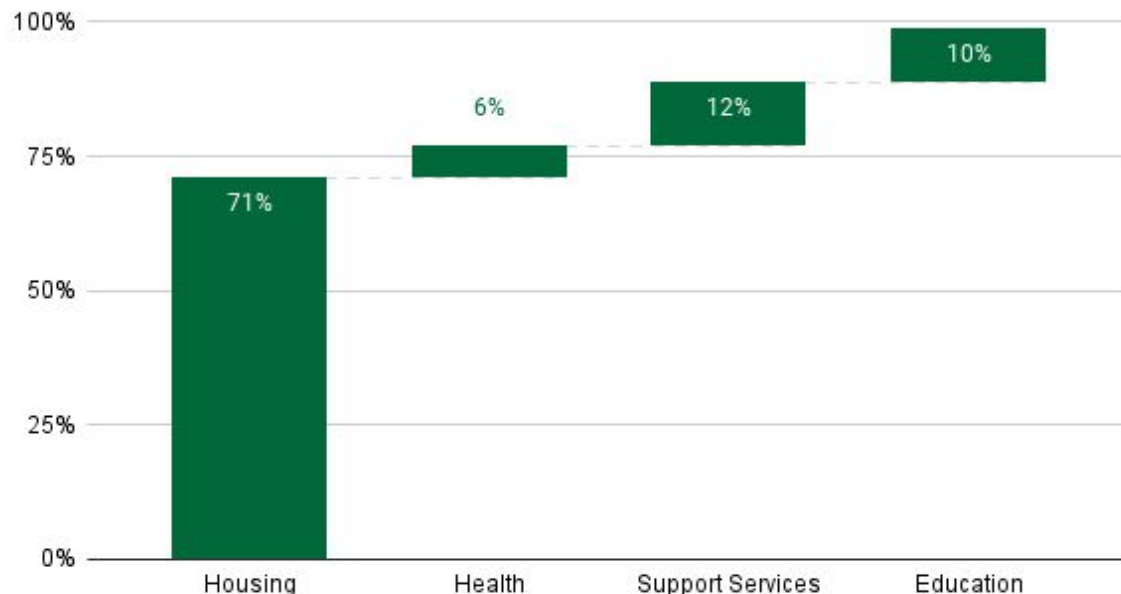
- Health-related social services represent more than 5 percent of total benefits by increasing access to care coordination leading to viral load suppression through HIV coordination and providing incentives

- Additional health benefits include improvements in mental health due to counseling and group therapy

- Other support services such as provision of transportation facilities and gas cards, disbursement of food benefits, as well as outreach, testing & counseling contributed slightly more than 10 percent of the total poverty-fighting benefits

- Daycare and pre-K services, particularly access to play therapy, generated the remaining 10 percent of poverty-fighting benefits predominantly due to improvement in kindergarten readiness

- Overall, the result is very similar to last year's with a small increase in costs and a corresponding small increase in benefits

Use of Best Practices Dimension

Determines the extent to which an organization adheres to best practices for its programs and staff performance management

Program design	• Identify the models used to deliver programming • Research the models that evidence supports as the most effective • Validate the efficacy of the program models employed versus research verified best practices
Program implementation	• Identify the processes used to help ensure program models are implemented as designed • Assess the consistency with which participants would experience a program model as designed
Staff performance management	• Identify the existence of important practices that support staff performance in effectively administering programs • Validate the efficacy of these practices versus research-verified staff performance management best practices

Use of Best Practices Results

| Weak | At Least Neutral | **At Least Strong** | Very Strong |

Strengths

Opportunities

Program Design

- The Social Services program design is aligned with the evidence-based interventions and practices
- Hope House's child care program follows all the key evidence-based practices of successful child care programs
- Hope House has a diverse set of staff members, qualified in different positions to be able to serve participants in a more effective way

Program Implementation

- Hope House staff receive program specific onboarding and ongoing training directly related to their role
- Hope House has an extensive, systematic process to identify program implementation issues and has structured procedures in place to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to address any concerns with programming

- Aggregate students' Lap B-K, Brigance, and CBCL assessments to compare progress towards the overall goals of the Early Childhood Education programs
- Create an employee feedback survey on program implementation to complement the participant surveys that are currently offered

Staff Performance Management

- Hope House uses a self-input professional development plan and includes manager observations in their employee evaluation process
- Employees set job-specific, organization-specific, and personal goals each year in their professional development plan

- Incorporate measurable performance standards for employees to further clarify performance expectations and job responsibilities
- Incorporate additional observations of employee performance such as peer observations or participant feedback in employees' annual evaluations
- Employ a strengths-based approach to the employee evaluation process
- Incorporate set employee/manager touch points throughout the year where employees have the opportunity to review their progress towards performance standards

Measurement Infrastructure Dimension

Evaluates the effectiveness with which an organization collects, analyzes, and uses data to improve decision-making as it relates to fighting poverty

Governance	Personnel and ethical policies in place before collection and analysis
Metrics Collected	Specific data collected about program participants, outputs, and outcomes
Quality Assurance	Processes to ensure data accuracy, completeness, consistency, and currency
Storage	Quality of storage systems and their ability to aggregate data for analyses
Analysis	Effectiveness of analyses to measure impact and provide insights
Stakeholder Communications	Practices to communicate impact and insights with other stakeholders

Measurement Infrastructure Results

Weak	At Least Neutral	**At Least Strong**	Very Strong

Strengths

Opportunities

Governance

- Hope House has strong PII policies in place to ensure that data practices are ethical and provides initial and ongoing training on these policies

- Document the specific responsibilities associated with the data collection, analysis, and reporting of grants implementation and compliance

Metrics

- House House collects all essential metrics needed to measure the impact of both their Social Services and Early Childhood Services programming

- Document each of the metrics Hope House collects (i.e., participants, program, and outcomes) that align with the intended impact of the program

Quality Assurance

- House House effectively utilizes the capabilities of CAREWare to ensure that the participant data they are collecting is complete and consistent

- Document policies used to ensure that the data Hope House collects is complete, consistent, accurate, and current

Storage

- Hope House has strong policies for what they consider sensitive data and appropriately deploy customized access rights

- Connect with Shelby County to get more information or develop a contingency plan for the restoration process for CAREWare, should Hope House lose any data

Analysis

- Analyses are performed to measure program outputs and outcomes and baseline data is used to contextualize participants' progress

- Document processes used to analyze data
- Include data visualizations in internal reports to better convey to employees Hope House's progress towards meeting their intended outcomes and program goals

Stakeholder Communications

- Hope House communicates their insights with key decision makers beyond direct service providers through their participation in the C2P coalition
- Insights are shared directly with other direct service providers through Ryan White provider meetings and through the HIV coalition

- Incorporate baseline or comparison data when communicating Hope House's impact on the website and in the annual report to further highlight the strength of their work
- Increase the use of outcomes oriented language when explaining impact

System Collaborations Dimension

Assesses how well an organization collaborates with other organizations to connect its participants to additional poverty-fighting benefits

Identification	Approach to identify additional types of poverty-fighting services a participant needs beyond those provided by the organization
Selection	Processes and criteria used to determine which organizations to connect participants with
Communication	Mechanisms to establish and maintain consistent communication with partner organizations
Evaluation	Methods used to understand and measure the impact the partnership had on participants

System Collaborations Results

| Weak | **At Least Neutral** | At Least Strong | Very Strong |

Strengths

Identification

- Hope House employs a variety of perspectives (front-line staff, program directors, clients, etc.) to identify participant needs outside of what Hope House is able to provide
- Hope House's psychosocial assessment, that is conducted during intake, identifies participant needs at the onset of programming
- Client needs are reviewed every 6 months when care plans and treatment plans are reassessed

Selection
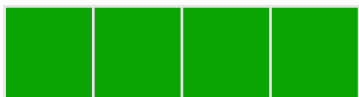
- Multiple levels of staff contribute ideas on the best organizations for Hope House to partner with to provide additional support for their clients
- Hope House looks at a variety of potential partners before deciding which organization is best suited for their clients' needs

Communication
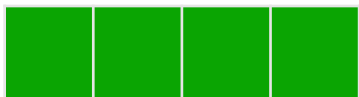
- Hope House has documented MOUs and/or explicit division of labor responsibilities with many of their referral partners, particularly for physical and mental health services and services for survivors

Evaluation

- Hope House receives organic feedback from clients on their experience with a referral partner. Clients feel comfortable expressing their experience and opinions with Hope House staff

Opportunities

- Incorporate a process to aggregate and analyze client needs to better understand which referral pathways are most needed for clients

- Incorporate regular client feedback on their experience with referral organizations
- Conduct data analysis on at least an annual basis to measure the intended outcomes of referral partnerships to ensure that Hope House is referring participants to the organizations best equipped to serve their clients

Policy-Level Changes

What are policy-level changes?

Policy-level changes occur when people and organizations use their influence to alter economic, social, institutional, or political systems in ways that create benefits for groups of people experiencing poverty.

What are examples of policy-level changes?

- The elimination of a state-wide policy that hindered people experiencing poverty from accessing job training programs
- The passage of a city-wide policy that improved educational opportunities for children experiencing poverty
- A business that adjusts its hiring practices to remove barriers for people with certain types of criminal records

Why policy-level changes are not included in the Slingshot Impact Study?

We acknowledge that policy-level changes can have meaningful poverty-fighting benefits. Slingshot's methodology, however, is designed to measure the impact of interventions on an individual's income or health and not broader societal impact. Due to this, we simply identify these efforts rather than attempt to quantify their impact.

Contributions to policy-level changes

- No policy-level changes 2023-2024

Overview of Opportunities for Greater Impact

Intent of opportunities

- Slingshot identifies opportunities for greater impact to help organizations further enhance their poverty-fighting capabilities and impact

- These opportunities are not comprehensive and Slingshot acknowledges other opportunities could improve an organization's poverty-fighting impact

- Opportunities for greater impact are shared as suggestions

Basis for identifying

- Each of the four dimensions is comprised of numerous subdimensions with evidence collected for each subdimension and compared against a rubric

- Opportunities are surfaced at the subdimension-level by identifying the largest gaps between the collected evidence and the Very Strong result on the rubric

- Slingshot also identifies opportunities that build on strengths and cut across multiple dimensions

Process to prioritize

- Preliminary opportunities are reviewed and refined in collaboration with the poverty-fighting organization

- Selected opportunities balance the magnitude of impact with the time required to execute, the feasibility to implement, and the fit with the organization's mission

- Slingshot provides ongoing thought partnership to help address opportunities for greater impact

Opportunities for Greater Impact Summary

Of the opportunities identified by the impact study to enhance poverty-fighting capabilities and impact, the following were selected and developed in more detail

A   Include measurable role-specific performance standards in the staff performance management/employee evaluation process

B   Incorporate baseline or comparison data when demonstrating impact on the Hope House website and annual report and increase the use of outcomes oriented language when explaining impact, especially around viral suppression

Opportunity A

Include measurable, role-specific performance standards in the staff performance management/employee evaluation process

Description	• Hope House has a strong personal reflection component of their annual evaluation process • An opportunity exists for Hope House to introduce measurable role-specific performance standards to their staff performance management process to ensure that employees have a way to know what is expected from them in their role; Hope House can then objectively provide feedback on employees' performance relative to expectations • A performance standard is an expression of expectations that must be upheld for a particular level of performance[1]
Potential approach	• Begin by focusing on one specific role, e.g., social workers • Review the responsibilities assigned to that role and identify which behavioral expectations can be measured in a performance review process • Develop expectations of what excellent, above average, average, etc. look like for each of the identified standards • Share these expectations with relevant team members for review and comments • Create a template to recreate this process for all roles, incorporating feedback received during the previous step • Add standards into staff evaluations in advance of bi-annual and annual reviews to give staff members time to adjust their expectations and performance as needed • Build performance standards metrics into a coaching and goal-setting process

Opportunity B

Incorporate baseline or comparison data when demonstrating impact on the Hope House website and annual report and increase the use of outcomes-oriented language when explaining impact, especially around viral suppression

Description	• Hope House currently communicates its impact by listing many program outputs (i.e., number of families who received rental and transportation assistance) and some local context • Hope House can better contextualize the impact of its services by sharing the outcomes of their clients and comparing the outcomes to those of Memphians living in poverty • Using comparison data enables Hope House to highlight their effectiveness at addressing community-level issues, such as HIV viral suppression and housing security

Potential approach	• Compile Memphis- or Tennessee-level poverty and HIV statistics and research related to Hope House's work
	• Establish a running list of Hope House statistics that cover the outputs and outcomes of each program
	   – Consider updating this list on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis, depending on how often Hope House wants to share about its impact (e.g., monthly social media posts, annual report published to website, etc.)
	• For each Hope House statistic, find a similar Memphis- or Tennessee-level statistic
	   – From the CDC[1]: "67% of Tennesseans with diagnosed HIV are virally suppressed. When a person with HIV takes their medicine regularly, they become virally suppressed, allowing them to live a long and healthy life and have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting HIV"
	   – Hope House's viral suppression rate: 73.91%
	• Develop language for sharing Hope House's impact with local comparison data or Hope House baseline data
	   – Memphis has a viral suppression rate of 64%. Hope House's viral suppression rate is 74%. The CDC says: "When a person with HIV takes their medicine regularly, they become virally suppressed, allowing them to live a long and healthy life and have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting HIV"[2] Hope House helps community members living with HIV to create treatment plans, helping them live healthier lives
	• Create a plan to share Hope House's impact to internal staff, on the website, and/or on social media

1: HIV Prevention to End the HIV Epidemic in the United States: Tennessee. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/policies/profiles/cdc-hiv-tennessee-SSP.pdf
2: Ibid.

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