

Impact Study Update

Summary Report



The movement to revolutionize poverty-fighting

Slingshot Memphis is a poverty-fighting center of influence that's igniting a movement to revolutionize the way we fight poverty so all Memphians, regardless of circumstances, can have equitable opportunities for personal and economic success.

Unlike business, medicine, and other sectors that have objective methods for measuring outcomes, the poverty-fighting ecosystem simply doesn'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.

To accomplish this mission, Slingshot performs three primary functions:

- 1) Slingshot works alongside poverty-fighting organizations to study their effectiveness. The Slingshot Impact Study is conducted annually to measure performance across four dimensions: Benefit-Cost Ratio, Systems-Level Change, Use of Best Practices, and Measurement Infrastructure.
- 2) Slingshot identifies opportunities to enhance the outcomes that poverty-fighting organizations produce. Each annual impact study prioritizes 5–8 opportunities for an organization. Slingshot provides ongoing thought partnership to support organizations' efforts to strengthen their poverty-fighting effectiveness.
- 3) Slingshot's Accelerate Impact Fund invests directly in poverty-fighting organizations to amplify effective programs and services. Slingshot raises funds from the community and invests 100% of these funds based on an organization's effectiveness, with significantly more invested in the most effective organizations.

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 captures the changes in poverty-fighting effectiveness since the previous impact study.

This summary report has two primary objectives:

- Provide impact results, and the basis for those results, across the four dimensions of an 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:

- More than five meetings with the leadership team and other team members of the organization
- 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 analysis to monetize benefits and identify opportunities for greater impact

The following results for Advance Memphis are based on its 2022 impact study update:

- **Benefit-Cost Ratio: At least strong** – with limited change
- **Systems-Level Change: At least strong** – with higher impact result
- **Use of Best Practices: At least strong** – with higher impact result
- **Measurement Infrastructure: At least strong** – with improvement within result

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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, Systems-Level Change, Use of Best Practices, and Measurement Infrastructure
- One of five results is assigned to a dimension: Unclear, 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 results
- Evidence of less effective poverty-fighting capabilities or impact, as well as a general lack of evidence, leads to lower 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

Five possible impact results and 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

Unclear

Evidence is insufficient or indiscernible to confidently assign a result

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



Impact study results summary

Dimension	Unclear	Weak	At Least Neutral	At Least Strong	Very Strong	Trajectory
 <p>Benefit-Cost Ratio</p>	Insufficient evidence exists to confidently estimate benefits	Costs exceed estimated benefits	Estimated benefits and costs similar	Estimated benefits exceed costs	Estimated benefits substantially exceed costs	↔
 <p>Systems-Level Change</p>	Insufficient evidence to determine systems-level change	Evidence for the creation of systems-level change does not exist	Evidence for the creation of limited systems-level change	Evidence for the creation of moderate systems-level change	Evidence for the creation of significant systems-level change	↑
 <p>Use of Best Practices</p>	Indiscernible best practices or insufficient data on the 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	↑
 <p>Measurement Infrastructure</p>	Required information is inaccessible	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	↗

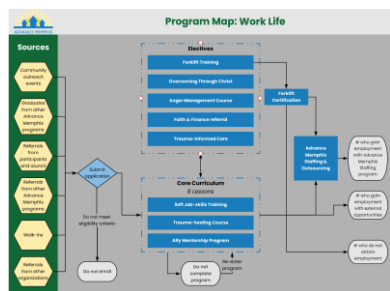
Four dimensions of the Slingshot Impact Study

	Description	Influence on poverty-fighting
 <p>Benefit-Cost Ratio</p>	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
 <p>Systems-Level Change</p>	Assesses the magnitude of an organization's poverty-fighting change in the community beyond its core programs	Validates the most impactful types of partnerships and policy changes an organization is positioned to pursue
 <p>Use of Best Practices</p>	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
 <p>Measurement Infrastructure</p>	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

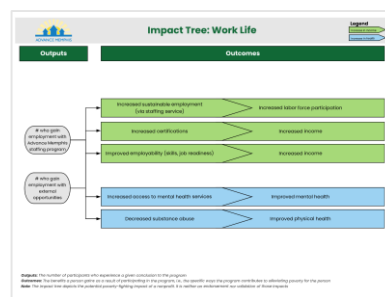
Benefit–Cost Ratio dimension

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

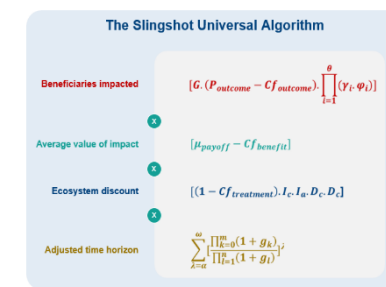
Program Map



Impact Tree



Benefit–Cost Analysis



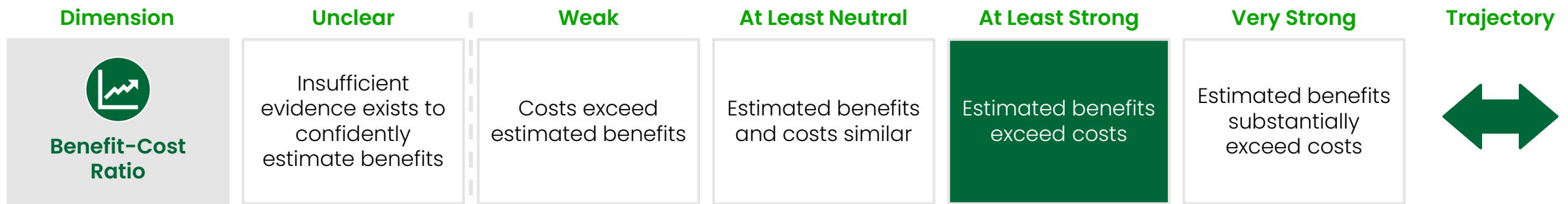
- Identifies the various interventions participants receive by completing the program
- Outlines the range of outputs for the program
- Informs the appropriate baseline population based on the primary sources of program participants

- Informs the data and research required to monetize the program benefits (outcomes)
- Identifies the potential poverty-fighting benefits created by the program interventions
- Slingshot defines poverty-fighting benefits as improvements in future earnings or health

- 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

Timeframe: January 2021 – December 2021



Summary

- Advance Memphis created between \$1.50 and \$1.75 in estimated poverty-fighting benefits for each dollar spent
- Work Life’s income-related benefits account for over 85 percent of total poverty-fighting benefits, while the health benefits associated with Work Life represent approximately 10 percent
- The Faith & Finances program account for the remainder of Advance Memphis’ estimated poverty-fighting benefits
- The largest benefits experienced by Advance Memphis’ participants are higher incomes due to increases in part-time and full-time employment
- Higher incomes are also associated with better financial literacy and reduced rates of recidivism
- Benefits from the Faith & Finances program include reductions in interest payments due to decreased debt, reductions of financial fees, and increased income from better budgeting in addition to the IDA matching contributions

Primary changes since previous impact study

- Advance Memphis’ estimated benefit-cost ratio decreased slightly compared to 2020 but not enough to trigger a change in trajectory
- Benefits from the LAUNCH program are no longer included, as the program was paused in 2021
- The number of Work Life graduates was 5 percent less than in 2021, resulting in lower aggregate benefits
- Income benefits per Work Life graduate decreased due to lower average wages per hour
- Benefits from the Faith & Finances program increased slightly since 2020
- Advance Memphis’ costs did not substantially change from the previous year

Systems-Level Change dimension

Assesses the **magnitude of an organization's poverty-fighting change in the community** beyond its core programs. Slingshot considers changes in two broad categories: *pathways* and *policy*

Pathways-level changes

- Poverty fighting benefits created by interactions between organizations, i.e., pathways created from one organization to another
- Benefits are experienced by program participants or others in the community

Policy-level changes

- Poverty fighting benefits created when powerful institutions and individuals are influenced to alter economic, social, institutional, or political systems
- Benefits have the potential to impact a much greater number of beneficiaries

Examples

A housing program creates a referral pathway with a job training program to provide its clients employment support

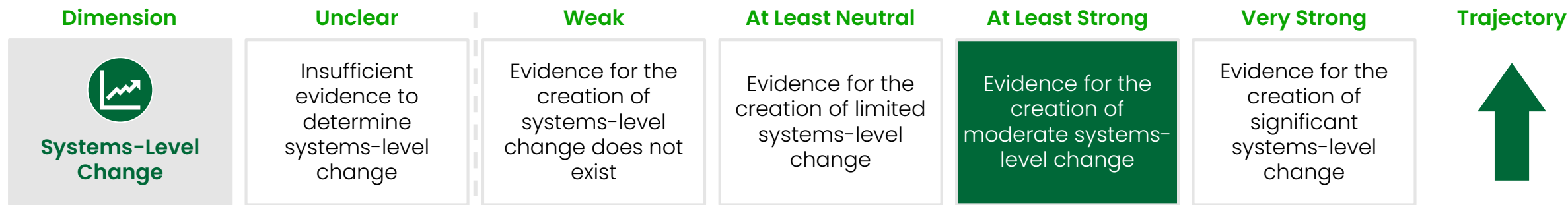
Multiple nonprofit and for profit organizations collaborate to host a neighborhood food distribution event

Examples

An organization successfully advocates for legislation that increases funding for job training programs statewide

An organization influences a school district to adopt policies that increase supportive services for students experiencing poverty

Systems-Level Change results



Summary

- Advance Memphis has four examples of systems-level change that create poverty-fighting benefits outside its core programs
- Each of the four examples is a pathways-level change

Pathways-level changes

- Partnership with Independent Bank to offer Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) to eligible, successful graduates from the Faith & Finances program
 - 2:1 matching savings program to save for purchasing assets or paying off debt
- Cultivation of a network of businesses in South Memphis with temporary staffing & warehousing needs
 - Advance Memphis fills orders via its own two warehouses, which employ participants and graduates from the Work Life program
 - Advance Memphis also temporarily staffs Work Life graduates by leveraging its network of local businesses

- Relationships with community rehabilitation programs across South Memphis
- As part of a grant via the state of Tennessee, Advance Memphis is developing a trauma-informed program in partnership with ACCESS Consulting
 - The Trauma-informed component will be incorporated in the Work Life curriculum and in the staffing and warehousing areas

Primary changes since previous impact study

- Advance Memphis has intensified its relationship with community rehabilitation programs like Karat Place and Project WIT by connecting those program’s participants with access to job-readiness training and financial literacy classes
- The partnership with ACCESS Consulting to develop the trauma-informed program began in 2021

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
-

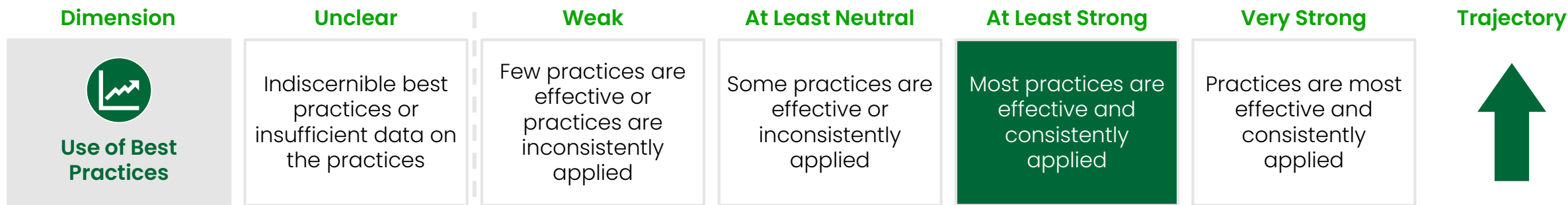
Program implementation

- Identify the processes used to help ensure program models are implemented as designed
 - Assess the consistency in 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



Summary

- The Work Life model incorporates evidence-based practices such as:
 - Strong links to local employers
 - Job readiness, basic skills, and hands-on technical skills training
 - Focus on one specific sector (warehousing)
 - Individualized services to support training completion and success on the job
- The Faith & Finances financial education program uses a nationally-recognized model. However, it has not been independently researched to validate its efficacy
- Strong procedures exist to monitor program performance, including exhaustive data collection, weekly leadership meetings, and reviews of program data each term

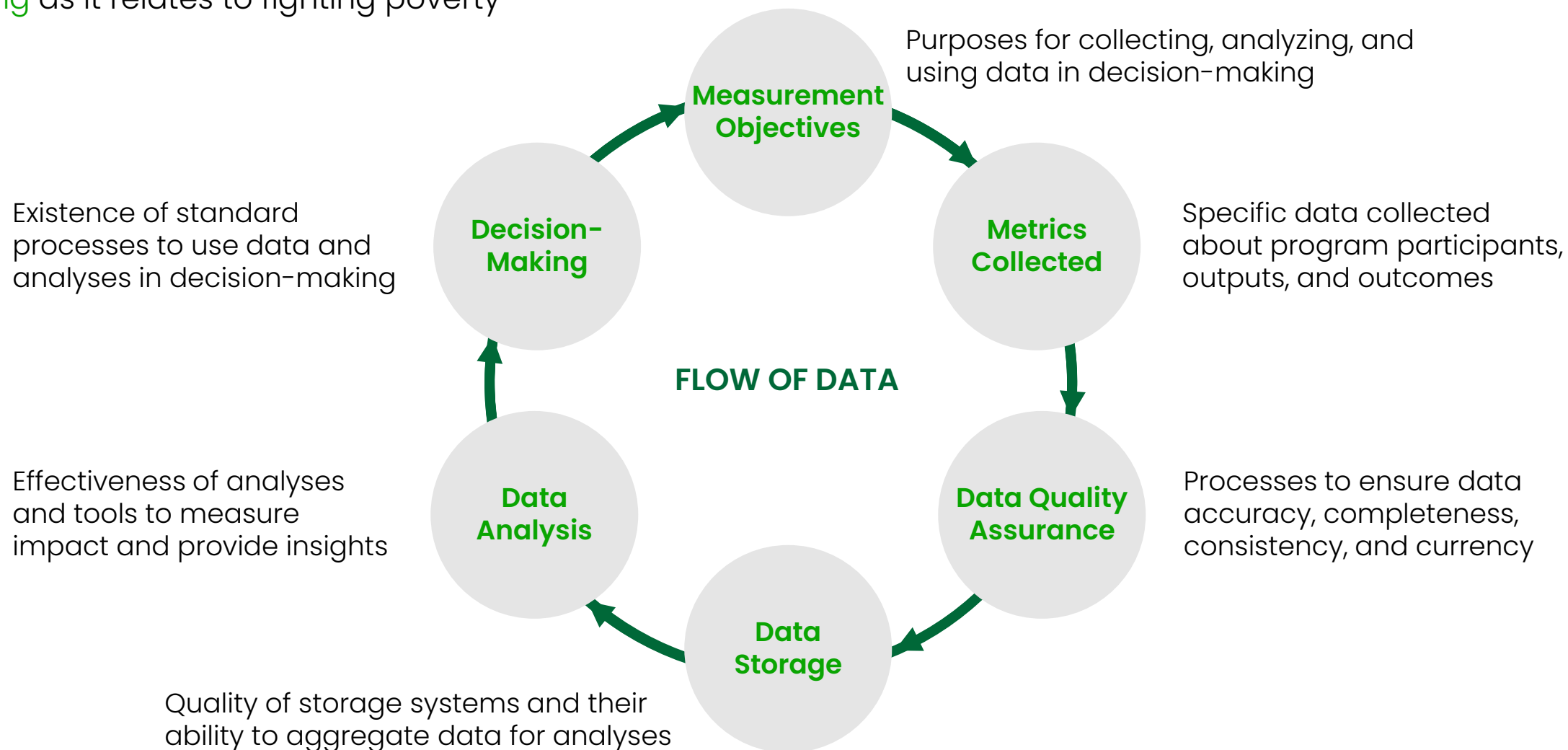
- To measure staff performance, managers source information from their own observations, employee self-evaluations, and program metrics
- Managers provide most feedback either during the weekly team meetings or during check-ins and debrief sessions with program directors and instructors
- Coaching is provided to staff on an ad hoc basis or when there is a specific training or project

Primary changes since previous impact study

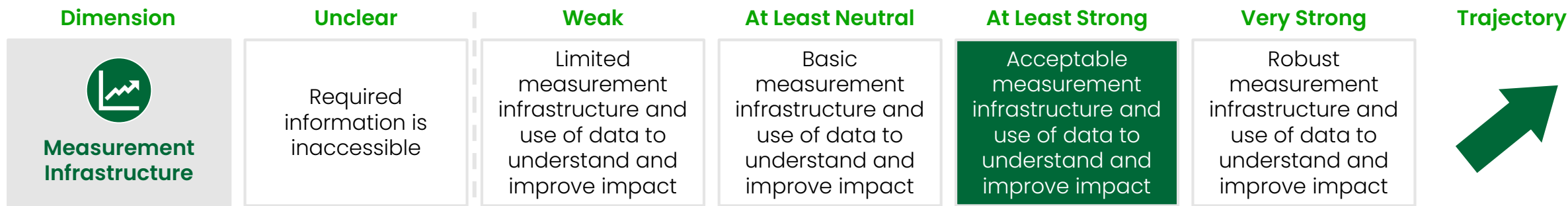
- Advance Memphis introduced a trauma-informed model to its existing programming
- Advance Memphis received a grant to continue developing the trauma-informed curriculum in partnership with ACCESS Consulting
- The LAUNCH program stopped accepting new participants in 2021 as the program is no longer in operation

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



Measurement Infrastructure results



Summary

- Data storage tools and data-driven decision-making are the strongest components of Advance Memphis’ measurement infrastructure
- Measurement objectives are not documented but are well-known to the leadership team
- The measurement objectives focus primarily on outcomes, which enables the organization to better communicate its impact to the community by using a combination of metrics and qualitative interviews
- The organization collects a robust set of participant, program, and post-program metrics
- To collect data from participants, Advance Memphis uses paper and then manually inputs the information into Salesforce

- Strong manual data quality assurance processes exist that involve highly-qualified team members who are responsible for completing specific tasks
- Salesforce is used as the primary data storage system and CRM, making data easy to aggregate and interoperable for analyses
- Most analyses are descriptive with several automated dashboards used to communicate insights
- The strategic decision-making incorporates multiple perspectives and utilizes objective decision criteria

Primary changes since previous impact study

- Advance Memphis expanded its data collection to include more post-program metrics, which allows the organization to better understand its impact

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 only 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 diagnosed 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 cut across multiple dimensions

Process to prioritize

- Slingshot estimates the magnitude of poverty-fighting impact for each potential opportunity
- Preliminary opportunities are reviewed and refined in collaboration with the poverty-fighting organization
- Selected opportunities seek to balance the magnitude of impact with the timing required, 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

The impact study identified the following opportunities that Slingshot thinks would help enhance Advance Memphis' poverty-fighting capabilities and impact

Significant impact	A	Strengthen retention services and post-employment advancement services
	B	Conduct diagnostic analysis into the application pipeline to improve program strategy
Considerable impact	C	Formalize and enhance existing coaching initiatives
Moderate impact	D	Document staff performance standards and align them to specific roles
	E	Transition data collection tools from paper forms to digital collection tools

Significant impact: Opportunity A

Strengthen retention services and post-employment advancement services

Description

- As part of the Work Life program, Advance Memphis has a team dedicated to career services, job placement, and retention services
- Collecting data from participants after they complete programs, exploring which job-retention services Advance Memphis is equipped to provide participants, and better understanding what incentives participants are most likely to respond to could grow the organization's capacity to train participants for long-term success in their jobs

Poverty-fighting impact

- Post-employment retention and advancement services are meant to assist participants beyond the placement stage
- The ability of Advance Memphis to not only help participants find a job, but to give them the tools to be successful in the long-term, is one of its main differentiators, and a key outcome in addressing poverty

Potential approach

- Conduct post-program surveys at 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, and 3 years after participants graduate from Work Life to better understand current job retention capacity of Work Life graduates
- Provide job-retention services (workplace counseling, crisis management, career planning, etc.) to Advance Memphis' participants once they find a job
- Institute a retention rewards program where Advance Memphis offers small bonuses to graduates who manage to retain their jobs. The program also helps to keep graduates involved with Advance Memphis, which should aid the data collection initiative

Significant impact: Opportunity B

Conduct diagnostic analysis into the application pipeline to improve program strategy

Description

- Given the environment that Advance Memphis is currently operating in, it is becoming more challenging to recruit participants for the Work Life program
- Better understanding the pool of applicants could help Advance Memphis delineate a tailored strategy to effectively reach out to participants
- Advance Memphis has several partners in the community that refer participants to its programming, apart from their own team of staff who search for possible participants
- Starting the analysis with investigating what referral sources can share about participants can yield valuable insights into decision-making

Poverty-fighting impact

- One of the main, growing concerns for Work Life is the acquisition of new participants. The fewer the participants, the less the poverty-fighting impact created
- By understanding more about the pool of applicants, Advance Memphis can either focus on specific groups that have a higher likelihood of applying or tailor its solutions to its wide variety of sources to try to increase application and acceptance rates overall

Potential approach

- Select an initial set of applicant characteristics to analyze
- Collect data on the referral of each applicant and create a pipeline that tracks how far participants progress through the process, whether they enter Work Life, and whether they end up graduating
- Include in existing surveys a question on why an applicant decided to enter Advance Memphis instead of going somewhere else
- Analyze that question, the pipeline, and any other metrics of interest by separating participants into referral groups and looking at the different responses. Analysis can be done by age groups, previous experiences, etc.

Considerable impact: Opportunity C

Formalize and enhance existing coaching initiatives

Description

- Advance Memphis has strong feedback mechanisms including weekly team meetings and additional meetings as needed
- Coaching practices are more likely to be ad hoc, meaning they happen when a specific need arises or for specific training/projects
- While there are examples of coaching within Advance Memphis, there is an opportunity to take a more proactive approach in setting structures that both promote coaching employees throughout the year and set up more concrete goals about what Advance Memphis wants to accomplish with this practice

Poverty-fighting impact

- Helping staff develop their strengths can increase their motivation and enable Advance Memphis' leadership team to ensure that role responsibilities align with staff members' strengths, which can lead to more effective program implementation
- Coaching initiatives will help Advance Memphis understand what motivates their staff and how they can manage their work in a way that promotes the right person for the right initiative

Potential approach

- Advance Memphis' leadership team determines the right frequency for one-on-one meetings
- Meetings are designed to include checking in on staff, reviewing goal progression, identifying opportunities to improve in the short-term, and discussing long-term professional aspirations
- Promote professional development opportunities based on the conversations during coaching sessions
- Establish monthly one-on-one meetings focused exclusively on discussing how staff members are feeling, if they have made progress on their goals, and if there are upcoming opportunities that align with professional development goals

Moderate impact: Opportunity D

Document staff performance standards and align them to specific roles

Description

- Advance Memphis has a strong staff performance management process already in place
- As part of existing staff performance procedures, managers offer their observations and staff are expected to complete a self-evaluation
- Having specific performance standards for each role would help both managers and staff to be more objective about their assessments

Poverty-fighting impact

- Clear and role-specific performance standards can improve expectations and communication between managers and staff members and lead to improved performance
- They can also help drive behaviors that align with the organization's core values, goals, and strategies
- Staff who have a full understanding of their role's responsibilities are typically better positioned to implement programming with fidelity

Potential approach

- Design a consistent template across roles for role descriptions and performance standards
- Review current performance standards for each role and identify roles where further detail can be added
- Draft performance standards within the template for roles identified as needing additional detail
- Communicate with staff to ensure all responsibilities have been captured and linked to a corresponding performance standard
- Observe the effectiveness of the new standards, making adjustments where needed

Moderate impact: Opportunity E

Transition data collection tools from paper forms to digital collection tools

Description

- Advance Memphis collects its initial application forms in paper format, and then a staff member manually inputs that information into Salesforce
- Implementing digital data collection tools would streamline data collection and provide greater data quality assurance

Poverty-fighting impact

- Digitalizing all sources of information will reduce time spent on manually inputting data and reduce data errors that stem from human error
- The less time Advance Memphis spends inputting data, the more time it can spend focusing on delivering high-quality programming to participants experiencing poverty
- The shift will also allow for the implementation of data validation tools directly in the forms (check boxes, required fields, min-max values allowed, etc.)
- Enhanced data quality enables analyses and decision-making that can positively influence program outcomes

Potential approach

- Prepare for the transition by reviewing existing data practices
- Take the opportunity to re-think how information is being collected
- Establish dedicated computers or tablets to be used to complete intake forms
- Set up staff training sessions to explain how to use those computers or tablets to fill out the intake forms and how to best assist applicants in filling out the intake forms
- Start with a pilot program with one staff member to detect pain points and develop a set of best practices for the full implementation

Program map methodology







What is a program map?

A program map visually depicts the flow of participants through a poverty-fighting program. It shows the most significant interventions our ultimate stakeholders – our neighbors experiencing poverty – would experience by completing the program.

How to read the program map?

Slingshot's program maps are intended to be read from left to right. The map starts with the main sources of program participants, shows the primary poverty-fighting interventions they experience, and concludes with the program outputs.

Below is an explanation of what each shape depicts:

-  a source of participants for the program
-  a decision point in the program
-  a potential end point for participants
-  a component or intervention of the program
-  a cluster of interventions or components
-  flow of participants through the program

How does Slingshot use program maps?

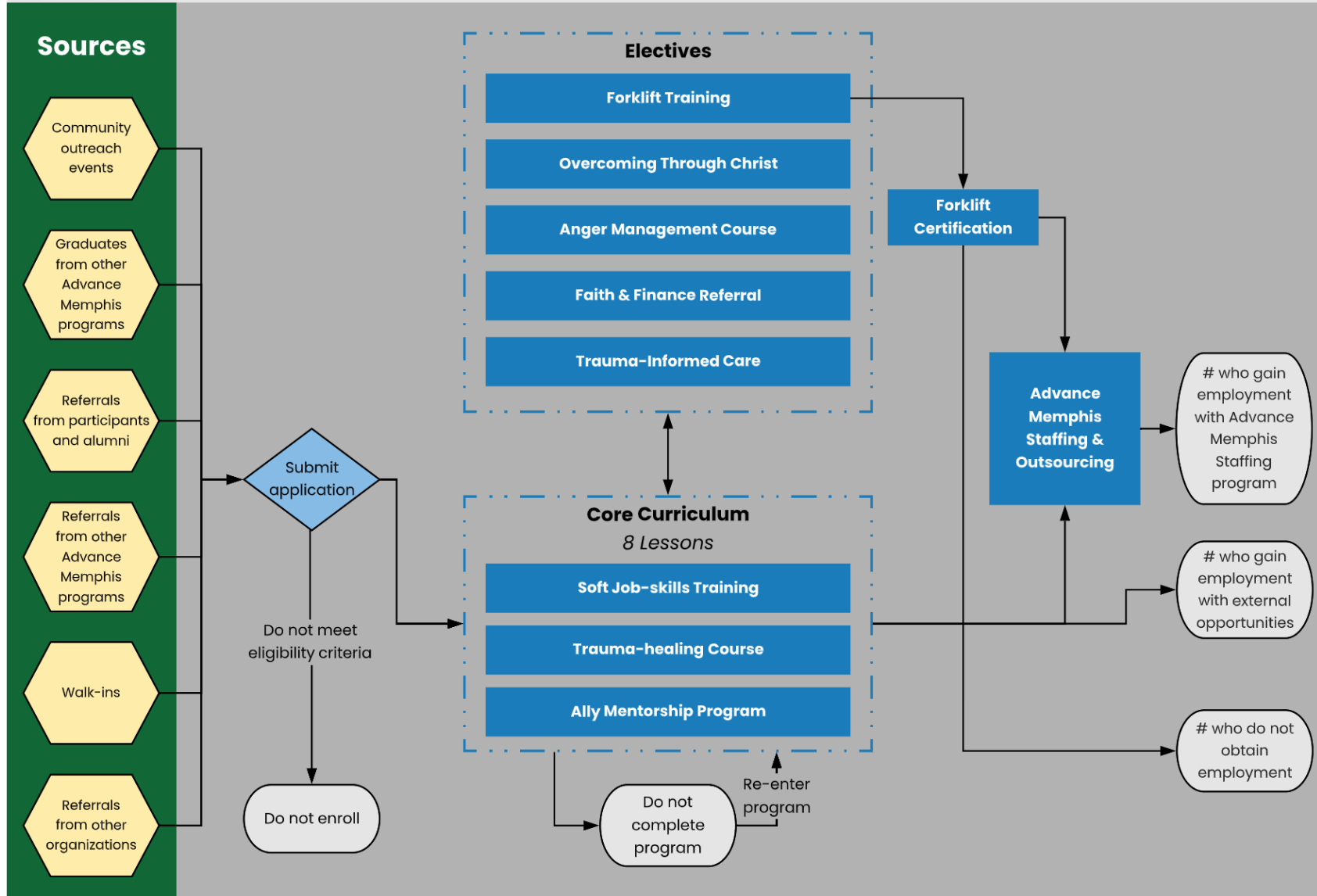
- Ensure accurate understanding of a program
- Help inform the baseline by understanding the primary sources of program participants
- Provide foundation for potential benefits experienced by participants by systematically identifying all interventions
- Identify program outputs as the first step in the benefit-cost analysis

How can poverty-fighting organizations use program maps?

- **Comprehensive understanding:** Communicate to stakeholders how programs operate
- **Participant experience:** Enhance how programs are experienced by participants
- **Program structure:** Improve interventions and mitigate potential inefficiencies with the programs
- **Resource allocation/acquisition:** Apply resources to overcome bottlenecks and achieve the desired type and number of outputs



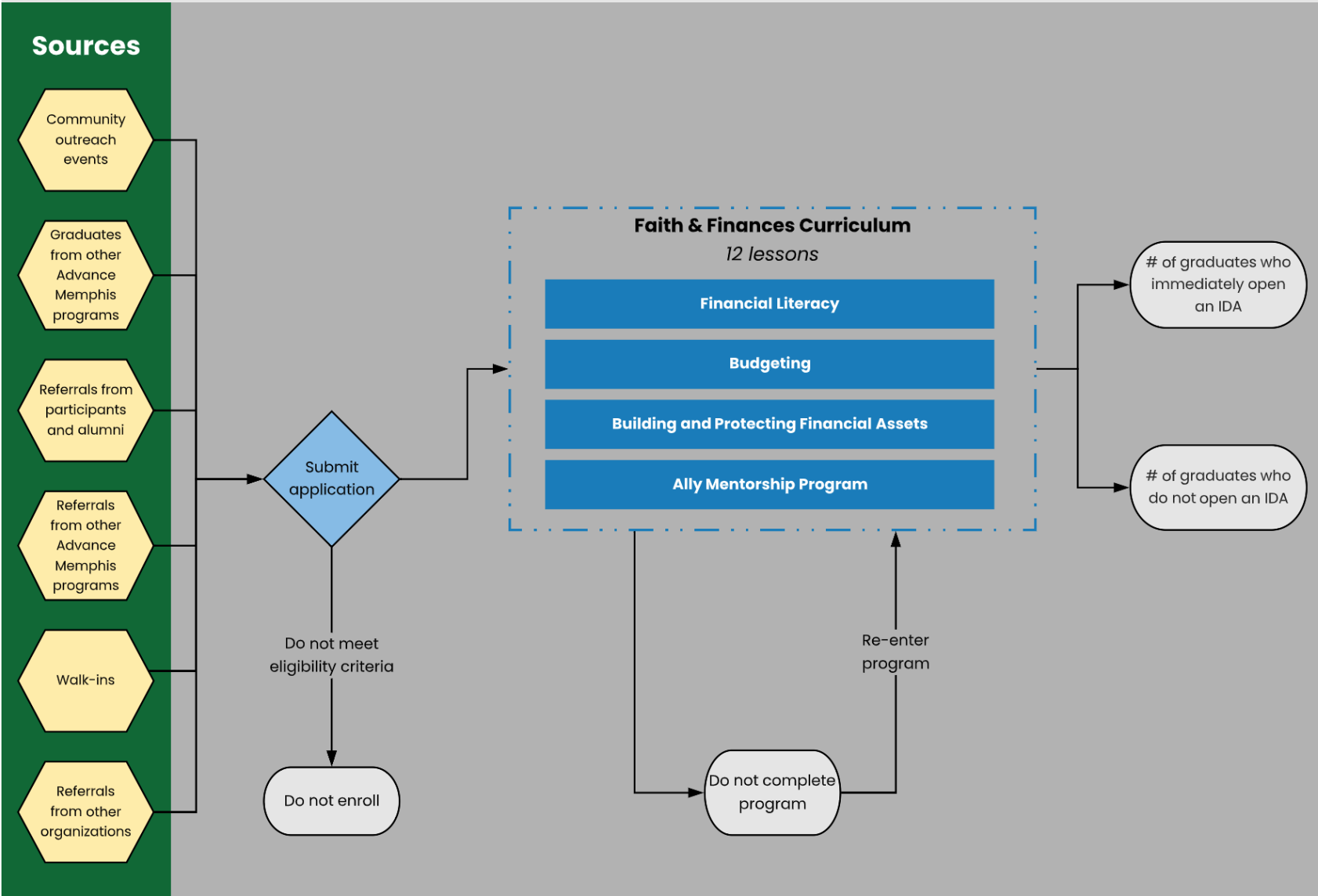
Program Map: Work Life



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Program Map: Faith & Finances



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Impact Tree methodology

What is an impact tree?

An impact tree visually depicts the potential poverty-fighting benefits participants would experience as a result of participating in a program. Poverty-fighting benefits are categorized as improvements in future earnings or health.

How to read the impact tree?

Slingshot's impact trees are intended to be read from left to right. The tree starts with the program outputs identified in the program map and identifies the sequence of outcomes participants might experience.

Slingshot defines program outputs and program outcomes as follows:

- **Program output:** The number of participants who complete and benefit from the program
- **Program outcome:** The benefits experienced as a result of participating in the program, i.e., the specific ways a program contributes to alleviating poverty for participants

How does Slingshot use impact trees?

- Disaggregates desired outcomes into discrete benefits
- Develops a comprehensive set of potential income and health benefits created by a program
- Informs the data and research required to monetize the program outcomes
- Provides framework for the benefit-cost analysis

How can poverty-fighting organizations use impact trees?

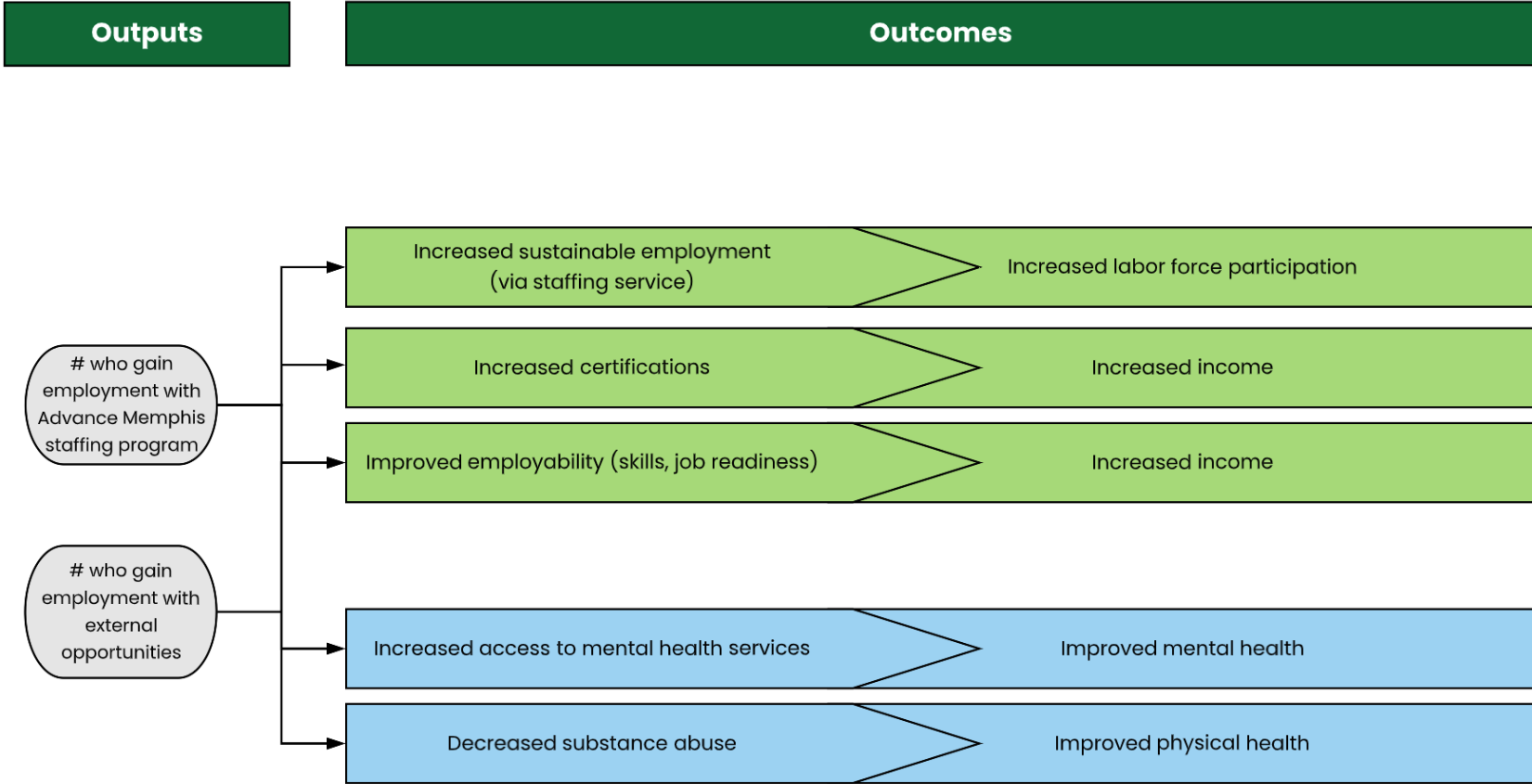
- **Comprehensive understanding:** Communicate the potential benefits its programs provide participants
- **Programs/interventions:** Modify or create new programs and interventions to ensure the desired benefits are experienced by participants
- **Measurement:** Enhance data collection and analyses to better support outcomes
- **Resource allocation/acquisition:** Better attract and allocate resources with greater understanding of the benefits created



Impact Tree: Work Life

Legend

- Increase in income (green arrow)
- Increase in health (blue arrow)



Outputs: The number of participants who experience a given conclusion to the program

Outcomes: The benefits a person gains as a result of participating in the program, i.e., the specific ways the program contributes to alleviating poverty for the person

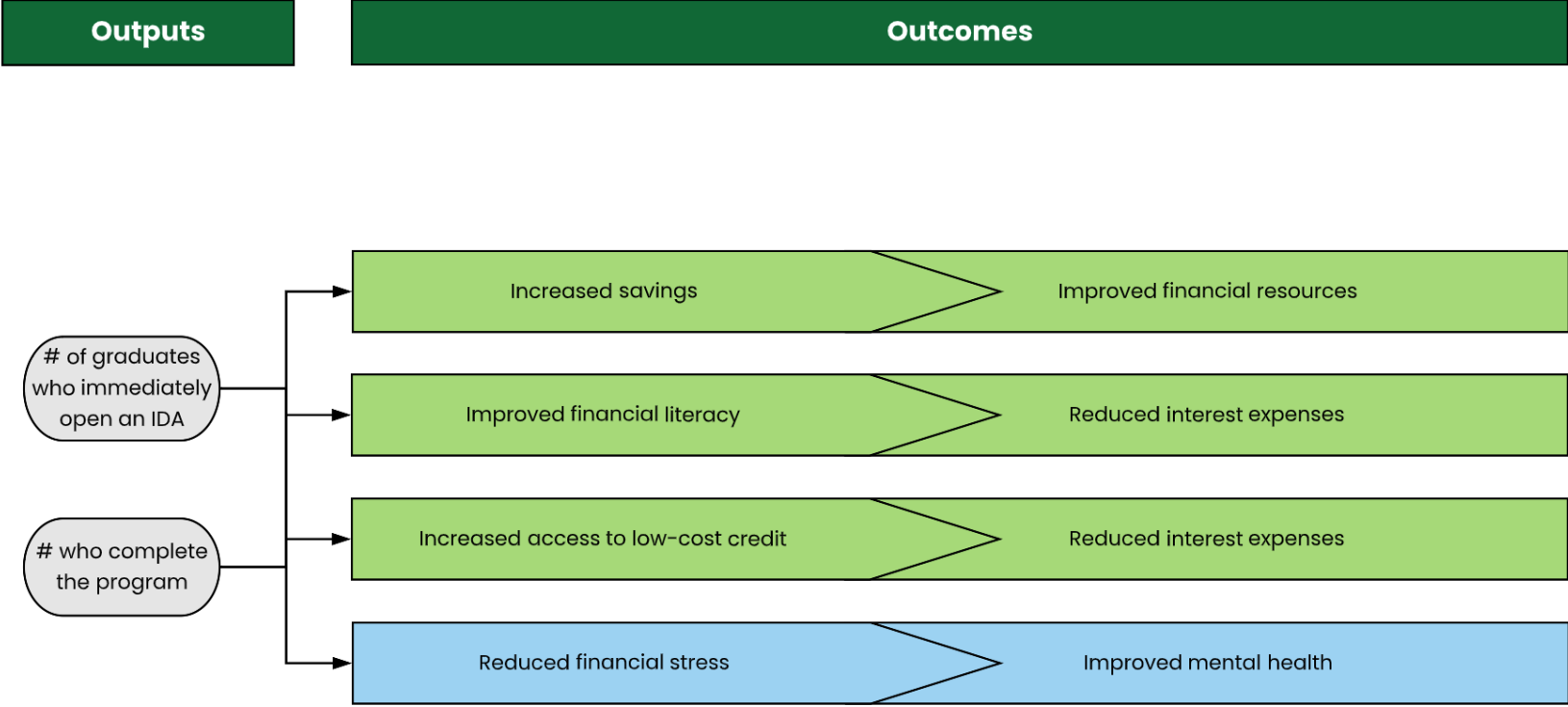
Note: The impact tree depicts the potential poverty-fighting impact of a nonprofit. It is neither an endorsement nor validation of those impacts



Impact Tree: Faith & Finances

Legend

- Increase in income
- Increase in health



Outputs: The number of participants who experience a given conclusion to the program

Outcomes: The benefits a person gains as a result of participating in the program, i.e., the specific ways the program contributes to alleviating poverty for the person

Note: The impact tree depicts the potential poverty-fighting impact of a nonprofit. It is neither an endorsement nor validation of those impacts



Slingshot Memphis is a poverty-fighting center of influence that's igniting a movement to revolutionize the way we fight poverty.