

STAKEHOLDER LETTER  
Q2 - 2021**Executive Summary**

- The first batch of Slingshot's Impact Profile Summary reports, a new type of report that synthesizes the insights about an organization's poverty-fighting effectiveness into two pages, is now available on our [website](#)
- These reports are the next step in Slingshot's evolution as a poverty-fighting center of influence to empower stakeholders with objective insights to further enhance the effectiveness of their efforts
- Slingshot is excited to enhance its effectiveness by incorporating opportunities for improvement shared by [MDRC](#), a world-class education and social policy research organization, after MDRC evaluated several Slingshot Impact Studies

I am thrilled to share my first stakeholder report after transitioning into the role of CEO at Slingshot Memphis. I am grateful to build upon the foundation that was established by Justin Miller, our Board, and our team to help accelerate the growth and scale of Slingshot's work. I am humbled and appreciative of the support many of you have shared with me and look forward to working with you as we continue to build a movement that revolutionizes the way we fight poverty in Memphis.

**New Impact Profile Summary Reports on Slingshot's Website**

The purpose of the Impact Profile Summary is to distill an organization's poverty-fighting effectiveness into an easy-to-digest format. This condensed format enables us to make poverty-fighting effectiveness more transparent and accessible, so you and other stakeholders can use the insights to help inform your poverty-fighting efforts. We celebrate the organizations we work with for their commitment to transparency by allowing Slingshot to publish their Impact Profile Summaries.

Slingshot has developed Impact Profiles for each poverty-fighting organization we work with. An Impact Profile is a repository of information that enables the accurate conclusion about an organization's poverty-fighting impact. These profiles consist of 50-100 pages worth of evidence, data, research, and analysis stored in a structured and standardized way.

From Impact Profiles, Slingshot can produce various types of reports to communicate insights about a poverty-fighting organization. In 2019, we produced only a comprehensive report that was more than 50-pages and included extensive research and footnotes. In 2020, we added a

summary report that was primarily bullet points and typically 20-30 pages. In 2021, we added the two-page Impact Profile Summary that shares the key insights of an organization's Impact Profile.

The Impact Profile Summary report includes the following information:

- Overview of how an organization fights poverty
- Severity of the challenges its work addresses in Memphis
- Current impact results across Slingshot's four dimensions of performance
- Trajectory of performance since the previous Impact Study (when applicable)
- Key insights for each of the four dimensions of performance
- Potential opportunities for greater impact

We anticipate publishing a second batch of Impact Profile Summary reports this fall. We continue to produce more detailed reports for each organization and these are available upon request for most organizations.

### **Evolution of Slingshot as a Poverty-Fighting Center of Influence**

Slingshot has validated its methodology and is prepared for a rapid phase of expansion. This includes not only the number of organizations we work with but also the breadth and depth of insights we can provide to further empower the poverty-fighting ecosystem.

Unlike business, medicine, and many other sectors that have established, objective processes for measuring outcomes, the poverty-fighting ecosystem simply doesn't. This makes it nearly impossible to know which programs and services most effectively reduce the social and economic gaps in our city.

Slingshot has addressed this by developing our standardized methodology to measure poverty-fighting effectiveness. By providing previously unavailable insights about poverty-fighting outcomes, we empower decision makers to allocate financial and other resources toward solutions that produce effective outcomes for our neighbors experiencing poverty.

We believe that as our community embraces this new methodology—or “Poverty-Fighting Feedback Loop”—we can measurably reduce poverty and accelerate access to equitable opportunities for all Memphians.

As Slingshot's work expands, we are excited to build a unique set of data and tools that will produce poverty-fighting insights not otherwise possible. We are rebuilding our website into a hub of poverty-fighting information — a resource that will provide a wealth of insights to help

empower nonprofits, foundations, government agencies, businesses, philanthropists, etc. Some of these plans include the following:

- Insights not only about single organizations but also about entire segments of the poverty-fighting ecosystem, e.g., after-school programs, workforce development programs, re-entry programming, etc.
- Supply and demand analysis to understand how many nonprofits exist to address specific social challenges in Memphis compared to the number of people who need assistance with those challenges
- Curated research about the most effective practices and program models to achieve the desired outcomes for various types of services

### **Slingshot's Opportunities for Improvement Provided by MDRC**

MDRC is committed to finding solutions to some of the most difficult problems facing the nation — from reducing poverty and bolstering economic self-sufficiency to improving public education and college graduation rates. It designs promising new interventions, evaluates existing programs using the highest research standards, and provides technical assistance to build better programs and deliver effective interventions at scale.

MDRC and Slingshot partnered in early 2020 to investigate opportunities to drive greater poverty-fighting impact via our shared evidence-based approaches. During 2020, MDRC participated in Slingshot's Impact Studies for The Soulsville Charter School and Juvenile Intervention and Faith-Based Follow Up (JIFF). MDRC used this experience to identify some strengths of Slingshot's Impact Study process as well as opportunities for improvement.

Some of the strengths MDRC noted are shared below:

- Slingshot creates an inclusive environment where feedback is welcomed from the organizations we work with
- Opportunities for greater impact presented at the end of the Impact Study are clear and actionable
- The timeline for presenting results and sharing reports is quick, making it easy for organizations to address insights and opportunities
- The Impact Study process and expectations are laid out clearly from the onset
- Slingshot ensures poverty-fighting organizations do not feel overburdened with requests during the process

Some of the opportunities for improvement MDRC shared include:

- Streamline when and how information is requested to help reduce inefficiencies and the need to clarify information
- Develop methods to systematically incorporate experts with domain knowledge relevant to specific programs and services being studied

- Strengthen data collection methods by building capacity among team members to incorporate additional best practices from qualitative research
- Consider ways to amplify the innovative operational changes observed in poverty-fighting organizations due to the pandemic
- Provide additional information to help organizations better understand the evidence base used to reach conclusions about best practices, benefit-cost ratio, and systems-level changes

In the coming weeks we will share a report from MDRC that provides additional details about these findings. The report will conclude the first phase of our partnership with MDRC. Phase 2 of the partnership is being finalized and will commence later this year as our organizations pursue opportunities to scale our impact to larger segments of the poverty-fighting ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Jared Barnett & Team Slingshot

### **About Slingshot Memphis**

Slingshot Memphis is a poverty-fighting center of influence that's igniting a movement to revolutionize the way we fight poverty. To turn our mission into reality, we work with poverty-fighting organizations to study their effectiveness, identify opportunities to enhance their outcomes, and invest directly to amplify high-impact programs and services. Slingshot cannot achieve this mission on its own, however, as stakeholders from across the poverty-fighting ecosystem must embrace an outcomes-driven approach in order to create equitable opportunities for personal and economic success for all Memphians.

There are numerous ways you can support this movement:

- Use Slingshot's [Impact Profile summaries](#) and other reports in your efforts
- Encourage other stakeholders to incorporate Slingshot's reports into their work
- Invite poverty-fighting organizations to [consider working with Slingshot](#)
- Actively follow and contribute to Slingshot's [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)
- Invest in [Slingshot's Impact Accelerator Fund](#) to support poverty-fighting organizations based on their demonstrated effectiveness and improvement

To learn more about Slingshot, visit [www.slingshotmemphis.org](http://www.slingshotmemphis.org).

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