



MAYORS FOR A GUARANTEED INCOME



MAYORS FOR A GUARANTEED INCOME EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program



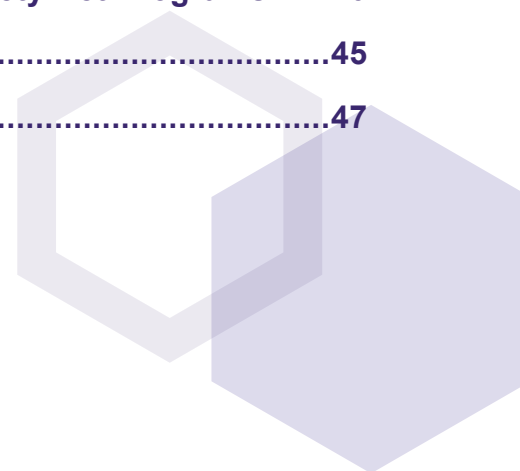
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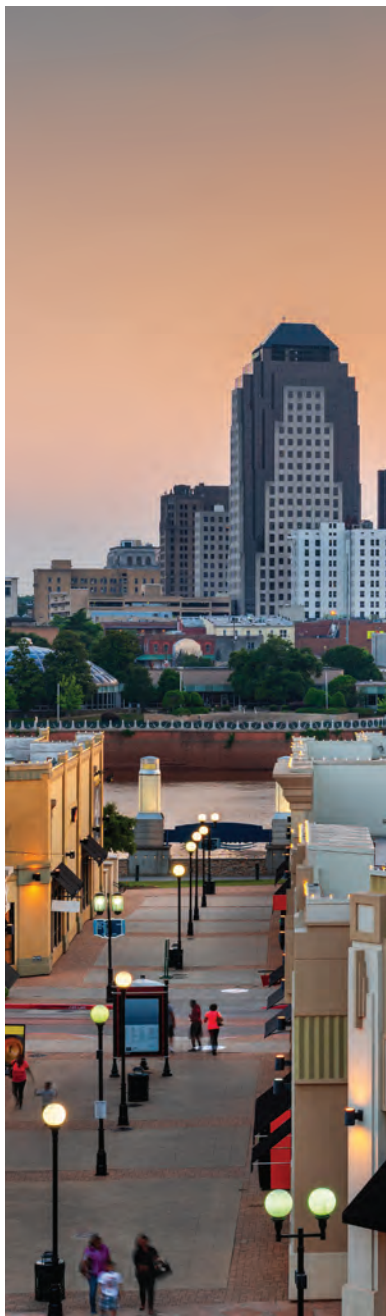
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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	v
Chapter 1: Introduction and Implementation	1
Chapter 2: Research Methods & Participants	8
Building the Research Sample	8
Data Collection and Analysis	9
Who Participated in SGIP?	11
Chapter 3: Shreveport Guaranteed Income’s Effect on Participants’ Quality of Life	14
Financial Well-being	15
Psychological Distress	18
Physical Functioning	19
Food Insecurity	21
Housing Security and Quality	22
Time Use and Self Care	25
Chapter 4: Parenting Practices, Child Well-being, and Children’s Educational and Behavioral Outcomes	26
Children’s Educational and Behavioral Outcomes	27
Parenting and Children’s Well-being	29
Chapter 5. SGIP’s Effect on Participants’ Agency, Hope, and Sense of Mattering	31
Agency and Hope	31
Community Connection and Relationships with Others	33
Chapter 6: SGIP’s Effect on Income and Work	35
Household Income	35
Job Quality and Satisfaction	38
Educational Enrollment and Attainment	39
Chapter 7. Lessons from SGIP about the Administration of Safety Net Programs.....	40
Chapter 8: Discussion	45
Works Cited	47



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We also want to acknowledge and thank the Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program implementation team for their support and coordination, including: the City of Shreveport's Office of the Mayor, City of Shreveport's Department of Community Development, and Shreveport Financial Empowerment Center (United Way of Northwest Louisiana).



Executive Summary

What was the *Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program*?






This report presents final results from a mixed methods evaluation of the City of Shreveport, Louisiana’s guaranteed income (GI) pilot, the *Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program (SGIP)*. The program was implemented by the City of Shreveport and United Way of Northwest Louisiana through the Shreveport Financial Empowerment Center. GI provides recipients with recurring cash payments they can use on any type of expense without having to participate in any other services. Central to the idea of guaranteed income is the notion that GI recipients themselves are better positioned than anyone else to know how to improve their own lives, and they will spend the GI accordingly. To this end, *SGIP* provided \$660 per month for 12 months, from March 2022 through February 2023, to 110 families led by single parents/guardians (Exhibit ES.1).¹

The general design for *SGIP*—providing benefits to low-income families led by single parents—was motivated by a desire to support low-income families and to change the narrative and associated stigma around these families and the social safety net.

Who Participated in *SGIP*?

The median income of *SGIP* parents at the time of application was \$12,434.70 annually, well below the eligibility threshold for the program of 120 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (Exhibit ES.2). The eligibility threshold was \$20,904 for a two-person household and increased by \$5,448 for each additional person. At the time of application, 70 percent of *SGIP* parents reported being food insecure, meaning they did not have enough money to purchase foods their family needed. Eighty percent

Exhibit ES.1: Eligibility Requirements for *SGIP*

Eligibility Requirements	
	Residents of Shreveport/Caddo Parish
	18 years or older at the time of application
	Primary caregiver for a child between 3 and 20 years old at the time of application
	Functionally single
	Household income at or below 120% of the federal poverty line

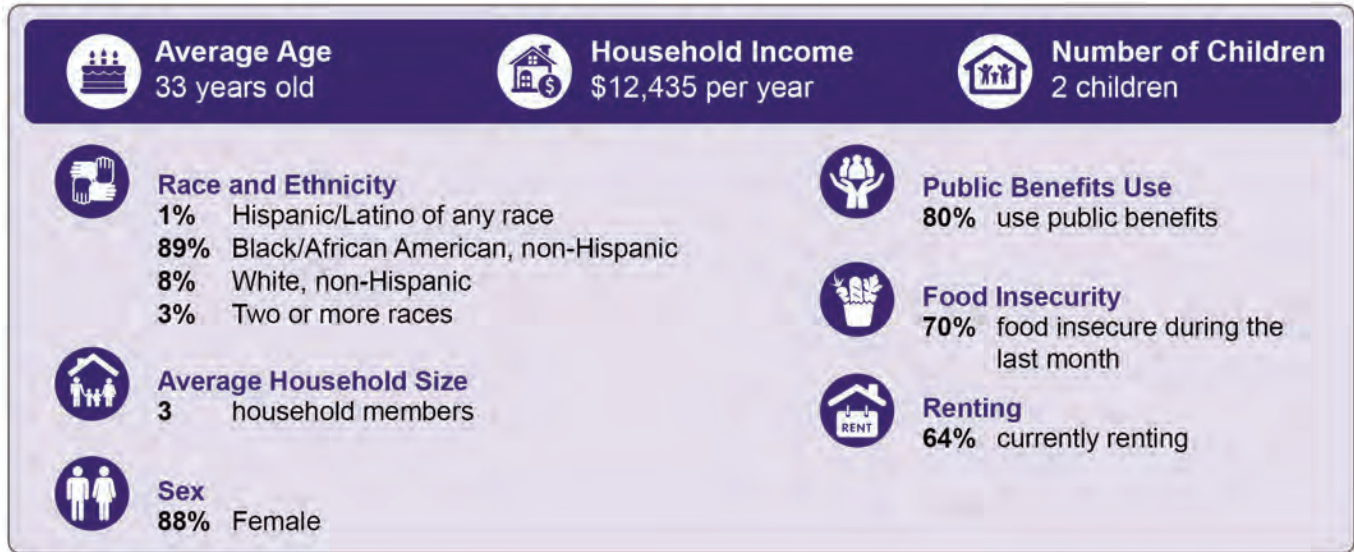
¹ In the remainder of this summary we refer to participants and other members of the study sample as “parents,” although they also included a small number of grandparents or other guardians.

received public benefits, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

The majority of participants reported renting (64 percent), with a number living in public housing

(11.5 percent) or staying with friends or family (11.5 percent). At the time of application, the *SGIP* participants were overwhelmingly Black women (88 percent women, 89 percent Black) and had two children on average. The average age of an *SGIP* participant was 33 years old.

Exhibit ES.2 Participant Characteristics at Application



How Did GI Affect Participants and Their Families?

The research team used a mixed methods research design to investigate the effects of GI on many aspects of participants' lives.

Indicators of quality of life

SGIP provided financial relief during the pilot.

At mid-pilot (at the 6 month survey), fewer *SGIP* parents than control parents said they were going into debt, and more reported they were “managing” financially. At mid-pilot, more *SGIP* parents than control parents said they could cover a \$400 emergency expense, and this was marginally statistically significant. Consistent with this, about half of interviewed parents said the pilot helped them pay for unexpected expenses including car repairs, high utility bills, and purchasing tickets for travel to visit sick family members. A few interviewed parents also noted the role of inflation during the time period and said that *SGIP* helped ease the budgetary implications of this. Some interviewed parents

felt GI helped them learn to budget and avoid accumulating more debt. After the pilot ended, these positive impacts of GI on financial health ended, as well.

During the pilot, interviewed parents felt GI reduced their stress. Survey results are generally consistent with interview findings, but differences between *SGIP* participants and the control group were not statistically significant. Interviewed parents reported that GI improved their mental health by reducing financial stressors during the GI pilot. Most described having a “weight lifted” or having “a little of the pressure off my shoulders.” Many parents talked about how the cash reduced the time they spent worrying about how to make ends meet, allowing them to feel more secure that they could meet their household needs. But a few parents also noted that as the end of the pilot approached, their stress levels returned to past levels or even exceeded them.

SGIP's effect on physical health is not clear from the data. Our survey did not detect any indications of improved physical health during the pilot. However, some interviewed parents noted improvements in their health, mostly due to reduced stress and increased time to prioritize their health by exercising. Some interviewed parents mentioned that GI helped them pay bills when they lost employment income when they got sick, had to recover from surgery, or became pregnant and could not work for health reasons.

Our survey findings show a significant and large reduction in food insecurity among SGIP households, although this topic was not discussed extensively by interviewed parents. At the end of the pilot (at the 12-month survey), surveyed *SGIP* participants were significantly less likely to be food insecure than control group members. Though not statistically significant, the estimates at mid-pilot and even at post-pilot (6 months after GI) are consistent with improved food security throughout the pilot, with effects diminishing post-pilot. Interview data suggest that a persistent improvement in food security could be related to families using the income to invest in kitchen supplies that increased their ability to cook at home. Some families also noted that the experience of receiving GI provided breathing room to step back and think about their budgets, which could potentially improve future food security.

Interview data suggest that housing security and quality improved for SGIP families during the pilot. Our survey findings are less definitive but consistent with the qualitative findings. We did not detect any significant or marginally significant effects on housing type during the pilot or at the end of the pilot. However, we saw a pattern of smaller changes, which taken together, suggest that participants might have had greater housing security while receiving GI. Interviewed parents described using the GI to pay expenses related to housing, such as rent, utilities, or mortgages. For some participants, the GI payments prompted a move to a new location for a variety of reasons, including better schools and better housing quality. Survey findings at the end of the pilot also showed a significant reduction in an index

of household chaos of 9 percent. However, there was some evidence that, like other areas described above, this improvement lasted only as long as families received GI. We found that *SGIP* participants were 7 percentage points more likely to be living with friends or family at post-pilot compared to the control group; this difference was marginally statistically significant. We also found a higher prevalence of mortgage default and evictions among *SGIP* parents post-pilot compared with control group members.

Interviewed parents in Shreveport suggested that GI offers an important way for participants to gain time to do self-care activities. Our survey did not ask questions about self-care, so we cannot examine differences between *SGIP* parents and the control group. However, most interviewed parents described having more time for self-care, reporting this was a direct result of participating in *SGIP*.

Parenting practices, child-well-being, and children's educational and behavioral outcomes

SGIP's impacts on children's educational and behavioral outcomes are unclear due to limitations of data. Some interviewed parents saw an increase in their children's confidence and happiness, and thus their children's positive relationship with school. Parents were able to pay for better haircuts and clothes, helping children feel more confident when attending school. A few parents saw behavioral improvements in their children because GI allowed parents to be more present and increased stability in their children's lives. At the end of the pilot, *SGIP* parents reported that their children had more absences compared with control group parents, but the average number of absences was quite low and the difference was only marginally statistically significant. We did not find significant or marginally significant effects in the number of reports home from school or in the percentage of reports that were positive. We also did not find significant differences between *SGIP* and members of the control group on measures of quality of children's schoolwork. Given the

low absence rate, the slight increase among *SGIP* parents' children might indicate greater parental awareness of their children's school attendance, or greater ability to keep children home from school when they are sick. At mid-pilot and at pilot-end, parents both receiving and not receiving GI reported at similar rates that they expected their child to at least graduate high school. At post-pilot, *SGIP* parents were 10 percentage points less likely to predict this outcome for their children than were control group parents. Based on our investigations of reporting patterns in the data, we expect that this finding is most likely due to chance.

Interviewed parents described their ability to meet their children's needs using the supplemental GI income as having a major effect on parenting practices and child well-being. Our interview data demonstrate that this took place through multiple mechanisms, including parents being better able to attend to children's needs and spend time with them and feeling less distracted by work and financial stress.

Feelings of agency and hope

We did not find significant effects at any time points on agency or hope, but interview data suggest that some parents felt an increase in their sense of agency. The general pattern from survey responses suggests that GI might have improved respondents' internal feelings about present and future goals at mid-pilot but worsened them post-pilot, but we cannot say this with any reasonable level of statistical confidence. We asked interviewed parents about self-perceptions of their mental health, levels of agency, and ability to set goals and take risks. Some parents reported an increased sense of agency while receiving the GI. A few interviewed parents attributed this to the ability to take more time for themselves. A few *SGIP* parents also described new aspirations that they had considered unobtainable before GI.

GI might have helped *SGIP* parents increase their sense of mattering during the pilot, primarily through helping them meet their children's needs and supporting their social network. Many interviewed parents felt

increased self-worth and a greater sense of confidence because they could better care for their children while receiving GI. Additionally, most interviewed parents reported investing more in their social network and community while receiving GI. We did not find significant effects in survey data at any time points, but the general pattern suggests that GI might have improved these outcomes for parents receiving GI at mid-pilot but worsened them post-pilot. However, we cannot say this with statistical confidence.

Income and work

SGIP increased household income, but by less than the amount of GI payments.

Some interviewed parents said that GI had no impact on their employment, but about half said that they reduced their work hours by cutting back on overtime, second, or gig jobs so they could spend more time with their children or could get some rare occurrences of rest. Most interviewed parents continued to work at least a full-time job or run small businesses from home. Post-pilot, both household and individual income were lower for *SGIP* participants compared with the control group, but significantly so for household income. The difference in number of jobs shrinks and loses significance after *SGIP* ends. This would be consistent with *SGIP* parents increasing work post-pilot, but not quite to control group levels.

GI might have allowed *SGIP* parents to look for higher-quality work opportunities. A few interviewed parents said GI helped them transition to a new job. Most interviews did not discuss the effect that GI had on attitudes towards employment, but some parents mentioned that it helped them increase their independence, such as starting their own business, or prioritizing their own needs. At the end of the pilot *SGIP* parents rated their jobs as significantly more fulfilling than did control group parents.

Some interviewed parents used financial stability from GI as an opportunity to return to postsecondary programs. Some parents were able to further their education or obtain career certifications while receiving GI. Some interviewed parents went back to school to complete a degree during the GI pilot.

How did *SGIP* Families Experience GI Implementation?

The *SGIP* implementation team aimed to destigmatize financial assistance for families with low incomes by making the application and onboarding process easy, and *SGIP* was mostly successful in achieving this goal.

Interviewed parents appreciated the flexibility that GI provided. GI's design differs from other benefits programs because GI is unrestricted and unconditional. This reduces parents' sense of stigma and shame because it allows them the flexibility to use and prioritize the benefit for their specific needs.

Implementation staff hoped that as part of enrolling people into the GI pilot, they could build a longer-term relationship and provide financial empowerment services to participants. Staff spent time listening and understanding participants' life experiences and needs during enrollment and benefits counseling in order to build trust with participants.

Interviewed parents reported having to address negative narratives about SGIP.

A few parents talked about how some people in the community spoke negatively about the pilot and its cost. A few said they felt they had to defend perceptions of laziness of *SGIP* participants that were inaccurate.

Despite anxiety about the pilot ending, many parents expressed appreciation for the relief the pilot provided.

Some interviewed parents felt anxious and worried about the end of the GI payments because it would worsen their financial stability. Asked whether they had any suggestions to policymakers about the design of a GI pilot, a few parents wanted the program to be offered to others in need because of how helpful it was to them. A few parents expressed a desire for the pilot to be longer.

What do the Findings Mean?

This evaluation of *SGIP* found that, compared to a control group who did not receive GI, *SGIP* improved several facets of participants' lives, such as their financial well-being, food security, and housing stability. Participants who were interviewed about their experiences noted that GI allowed them to pay their bills and provide for their families' needs while working less overtime or working fewer jobs. Parents spent this time taking care of their children and themselves. We also saw evidence that *SGIP*'s positive outcomes did not persist 6 months after the cash payments stopped.

The results from this pilot suggest that GI can improve families' quality of life while they are receiving cash assistance, but these benefits end when the cash assistance stops. Receipt of GI appears not to have affected employment rates, either positively or negatively, but instead lowered the number of hours that parents worked to a level that allowed them to be more present in their children's lives.



How Was the Evaluation Designed and Conducted?

The findings in this report are based on rigorous mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) research.

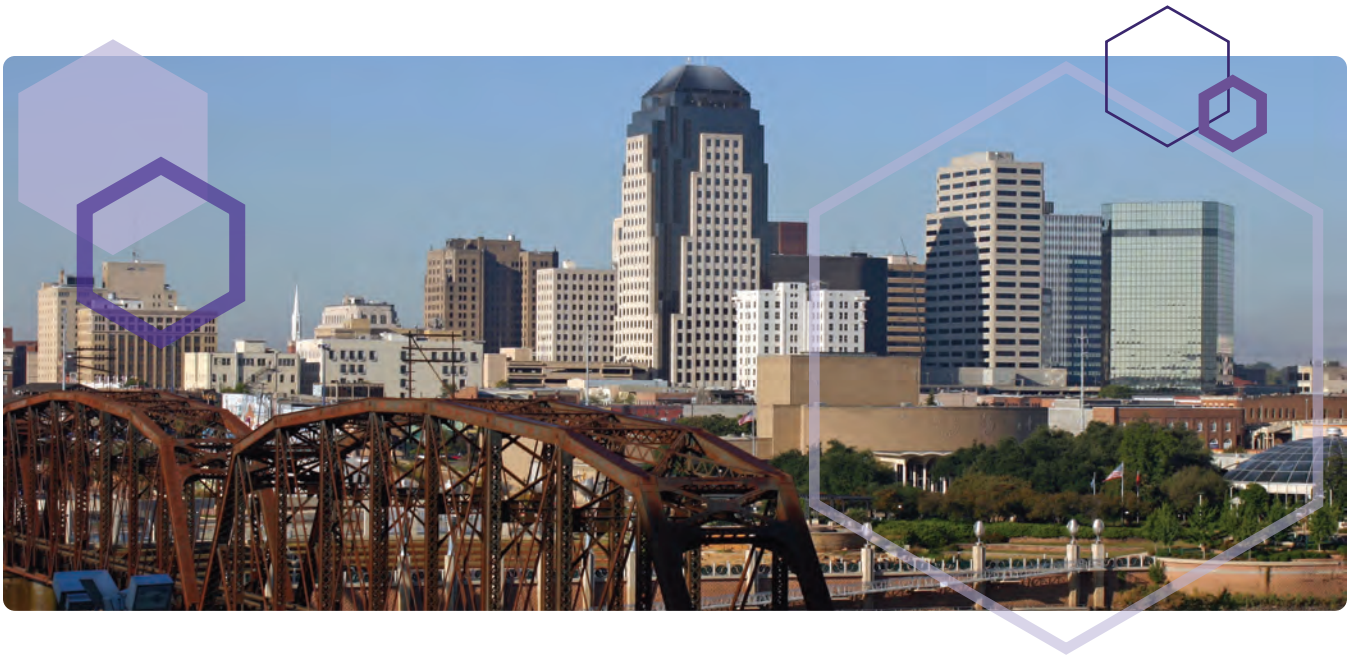
The research team used a randomized experiment to assess the causal impact of receiving guaranteed income; that is, randomly assigning applicants to an *SGIP* participant group ($n=110$) that received the offer of GI or to a control group ($n=132$) that did not receive it.

Along with completing a survey at the time they applied to the pilot, all participant and control group members were asked to complete a survey at 6 months (“mid-pilot”) and at 12 months (“end-of-pilot”) and then again 6 months afterward (“post-pilot”).

The research team estimated the impact of *SGIP* as the difference between the *SGIP* parents’ mean outcomes and the control group’s mean outcomes, making statistical adjustments to account for study members leaving the sample over time. The study’s pre-specified analysis plan identified outcomes that would best measure the program’s effect on *SGIP* parents’ quality of life, hope and agency, and income and employment.

The research team further used interviews conducted during the pilot with a subset of 25 *SGIP* parents to understand their lived experience of the program, to learn more about topics not explored in depth on the survey, and to help explain the story told by the survey data. The team also interviewed staff members at the City of Shreveport and Shreveport FEC involved in the design and implementation of the pilot to learn more about implementation challenges and successes.





Chapter 1: Introduction and Implementation

The Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program in Brief

- The *Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program (SGIP)* provided \$660 a month for 12 months (March 2022–February 2023) to 110 families with low incomes.
- Shreveport implemented GI in the context of wide racial opportunity gaps exacerbated by COVID and by a changing local economy. The city implemented GI because it believed GI would help families with low incomes thrive in Shreveport.
- The *SGIP* implementation team chose families led by single parents as the focus of the GI program because it believed that was the population in Shreveport who most needed the support.
- *SGIP* designers viewed GI as a way to financially stabilize households. Similarly, at the time of application, *SGIP* participants expected to use GI to pay their bills.

Guaranteed income (GI) programs provide participants with *unconditional* payments for a set period of time. Participants can decide how to use these funds to best suit their individual circumstances and needs, rather than having assistance earmarked for specific expenses. GI programs also generally establish eligibility once, at the start of the program, and do not conduct ongoing eligibility reviews. This removes the burden of needing to repeatedly recertify and the risk of losing benefits due to not successfully completing the recertification process. It also allows participants to make changes in their lives without the constraint of needing to maintain eligibility.

The City of Shreveport, Louisiana, undertook a GI pilot with support from the organization **Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI)**, a network of mayors advocating for GI to ensure that all Americans have an income floor. MGI-supported pilots are based on a theoretical framework developed by researchers at the Center for Guaranteed Income Research that prolonged episodes of scarcity exacerbate risky financial conditions, undermine coping strategies, generate negative health and well-being outcomes,

curtail hope, and psychologically trap individuals in the present.² Conversely, GI can alleviate scarcity and thereby improve mental health and other life outcomes.³

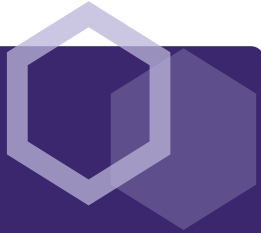
The *Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program (SGIP)* was funded by a grant from MGI and

matching funds from Caddo Parish. As part of that grant, the City participated in a rigorous evaluation of the GI pilot, led by Abt Global. This report presents the final results of a **mixed methods evaluation** (combining quantitative and qualitative data) of *SGIP*.

Shreveport Implemented GI in the Context of Racial Opportunity Gaps Exacerbated by COVID and by a Changing Local Economy

Shreveport, located in northwest Louisiana on the Red River, was founded by the Shreve Town Company as a cotton and agricultural product transportation hub in the early nineteenth century on land purchased from the Caddo Indians.⁴ It is the third largest city in Louisiana and located a five-hour drive from New Orleans, three from Dallas, and four from Houston.⁵ In the early twentieth century, with the discovery of oil and gas locally, it became a center of oil, gas and mining industries. In response to the declining oil and gas revenues and as an economic development strategy, the city welcomed several casinos, drawing on the city's rich cultural history such as the blues, hip-hop, zydeco, and the intersection of many Creole, Cajun and Texan culinary traditions. Through active tax incentives, the city has promoted a thriving film industry.

The city of Shreveport, Louisiana is located within Caddo Parish, and accounts for roughly 80 percent of the county's population. In 2020, at the start of the COVID pandemic, life expectancy for Caddo Parish residents was 72.7 years, with median earnings of \$27,412 annually. By contrast, the average life expectancy in the United States was 78.6 years, with median earnings of \$35,309 in 2020. By one measure, Caddo Parish ranked 27th



South Highlands has a life expectancy of 83 years, 72.3 percent of adults have a bachelor's degree, and the typical worker makes \$60,980 annually. Over 85 percent of residents are white. Across the highway in Caddo Heights, the average life expectancy is 70.5 years, 7.8 percent of adults have a bachelor's degree, and median personal earnings are just \$16,853. Over 90 percent of residents are Black.

—Lewis (2020)

out of 63 parishes in Louisiana in terms of life opportunities available to residents.⁶

The city of Shreveport is divided economically and racially, with stark variation for the neighborhoods on either side of Interstate 49, which runs through the center of Shreveport. The neighborhoods to the east of the highway (South Highlands) are predominantly White and had a human development index score of 8.55 in 2020, the highest in Caddo

2 Mani et al. (2013); Shah et al. (2012); West & Castro (2023); West et al. (2023).

3 West et al. (2023).

4 Brock (n.d.).

5 Louisiana Demographics (n.d.)

6 Measure of America has created a human development index to assess the life opportunities available to residents of states, counties, and parishes. The index assesses basic characteristics such as life expectancy, educational opportunity, income, and connection of youth. The maximum score attainable is 10, and the average score for the United States is 5.24.

Parish. By contrast, the predominantly Black neighborhoods immediately west of the highway (Caddo Heights) had a score of 1.51. These racial disparities between South Highlands and Caddo Heights, including disparities in life expectancy, education, and median income, are caused by decades of disinvestment and discriminatory policies like redlining and racial zoning that excluded Shreveport's Black communities from building wealth.⁷

The decline in the oil and gas sector over the last twenty years means that most jobs in Shreveport are now concentrated in the service sector, particularly in the healthcare, education, and leisure and hospitality industries. The latter is especially large, accounting for one in 20 jobs, but it is also low paying. For example, the 2022 median annual salary in arts and hospitality industries in Shreveport is \$17,500 for women and \$26,800 for men, whereas the 2022 median annual salary for agricultural and mining industry positions is \$71,600 for women and \$77,600 for men.⁸ The hospitality industry, and Shreveport's economy in general, have

suffered in recent years due to the COVID pandemic and the opening of nearby casinos in Oklahoma, which have drawn tourists away from Shreveport.⁹ At 24.5 percent in 2021, the poverty rate in Shreveport was more than twice the national average.¹⁰ Post-COVID inflation further cut into well-being.¹¹

Very few social supports exist to support Shreveport's families. The Brookings Institution's Safety Net Adequacy Project, which compares the average benefit amount available to a common set of families across states, ranks Louisiana 28th after adjusting for state-level cost of living, with 50 percent of benefits coming in the form of food or benefits that can only be used on food.¹² Louisiana does not mandate paid sick leave for workers, and it follows the federal minimum wage of \$7.25.¹³ The minimum wage has not increased since 2009, while inflation has led to a cumulative price increase of 43.76 percent. Shreveport's families with very low incomes, many led by single parents, are increasingly experiencing extreme economic hardship.

The City Envisioned GI as a Way to Help Families with Low Incomes Thrive and Worked with an Implementation Partner that had a Similar Goal

Mayor Adrian Perkins (2018-2022), who launched the GI pilot towards the end of his tenure as Mayor in 2022, was raised by a single parent, and witnessed his mother's struggle juggling multiple jobs to provide for her children. He wanted to break up narratives that surround families who live with too few economic resources, explicitly rewriting the story that these families are looking for a handout or are lazy: *"This group is just like most of us, just trying to make ends meet, just trying to take care of their families with dignity and respect."*

He also sought to address Shreveport's racial wealth gap and believed that GI was a way to invest in historically excluded and marginalized communities. He believed these families needed assistance to break the cycle of poverty and should be given resources to live and parent with dignity. Mayor Perkins chose to join the Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI) coalition in 2021 on the intuition that supporting parents with direct and unconditional cash assistance could help families with low incomes thrive.

⁷ Lewis (2020).

⁸ Statistical Atlas (n.d.).

⁹ Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas (2023).

¹⁰ Data USA (n.d.).

¹¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (n.d.).

¹² Schmidt et al. (2023).

¹³ Department of Children & Family Services (n.d.).



Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI)

is a network of mayors advocating for a guaranteed income (GI) to ensure that all Americans have an income floor. MGI was founded by the former mayor of Stockton, California, Michael Tubbs, following the two-year Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) launched in 2019. A group of 11 mayors, including Shreveport Mayor Adrian Perkins, helped form the coalition, which has grown to more than 100 mayors nationwide who advocate for GI as a tool for economic justice. MGI provides funding and technical assistance for cities looking to implement their own GI pilots.

The Shreveport Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) was the implementation partner for the pilot. Its focus is on building families' financial well-being, and thus it was seen as a natural fit for implementing GI. The Shreveport FEC had the additional benefit of being able to help link participants to additional services if they desired. This partnership also helped to realize City staff's larger vision of the *SGIP* as an economic development strategy to enable city residents with the fewest economic resources to thrive, and to reverse some of the historic patterns of disinvestment in particular neighborhoods.

Shreveport Focused on a Population They Believed Most Needed Assistance: Families Led by Single Parents

Shreveport implementation staff saw abundant reasons to target GI to households led by single parents and guardians.¹⁴ Staff knew the high levels of poverty in the city and understood that a core community development strategy needed to provide financial support to those families with the fewest resources. Implementation staff said that households led by single parents had the highest proportion of families living in poverty in Shreveport: *"We looked at the poorest population, actually, are single parents with school-age children."*

The implementation team also targeted *SGIP* to families led by single parents with incomes up to 120 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). According to the implementation team, they expanded beyond the poverty level because:

[We] wanted to capture those persons that were above the poverty line that didn't get any services. They were not poor enough to get the services that were targeted towards the poor, and the disadvantaged, and the disabled. But they didn't make enough money to sustain themselves over time.

The Shreveport Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) is a city program operated by United Way of Northwest Louisiana, modeled after other FECs across the country.






¹⁴ In the remainder of the report we refer to participants and other members of the study sample as "parents," although they also included a small number of grandparents or other guardians.

The *SGIP* provided \$660 a month for 12 months, from March 2022 to February 2023, to 110 selected participants.

Any single parent or guardian with one or more children older than 3 years old and younger than 20 years old living with them could apply for the program, provided they had a household income less than or equal to 120 percent of the federal poverty level and resided in Shreveport/Caddo Parish (Exhibit 1). Applicants were eligible regardless of their biological relationship to their children. Further, Shreveport identified “single parents” as those “effectively” single; that is, not living with a romantic partner.

The implementation team determined that 50 percent of GI recipients should be randomly selected from Shreveport’s five lowest income ZIP codes, reflecting the vastly differing opportunities available to residents of different neighborhoods and to redress historical disinvestment in these areas (Exhibit 2). The other 50 percent of participants were randomly selected from applicants from other areas of Caddo Parish.

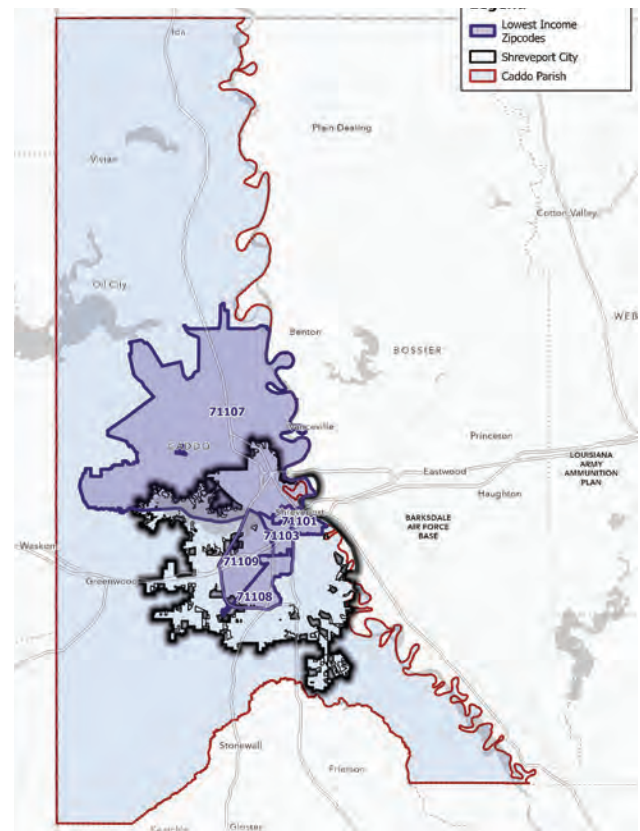
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	Primary caregiver for a child between 3 and 20 years old at the time of application
	Functionally single
	Household income at or below 120% of the federal poverty line

SGIP Designers Viewed GI as a Way to Stabilize Households

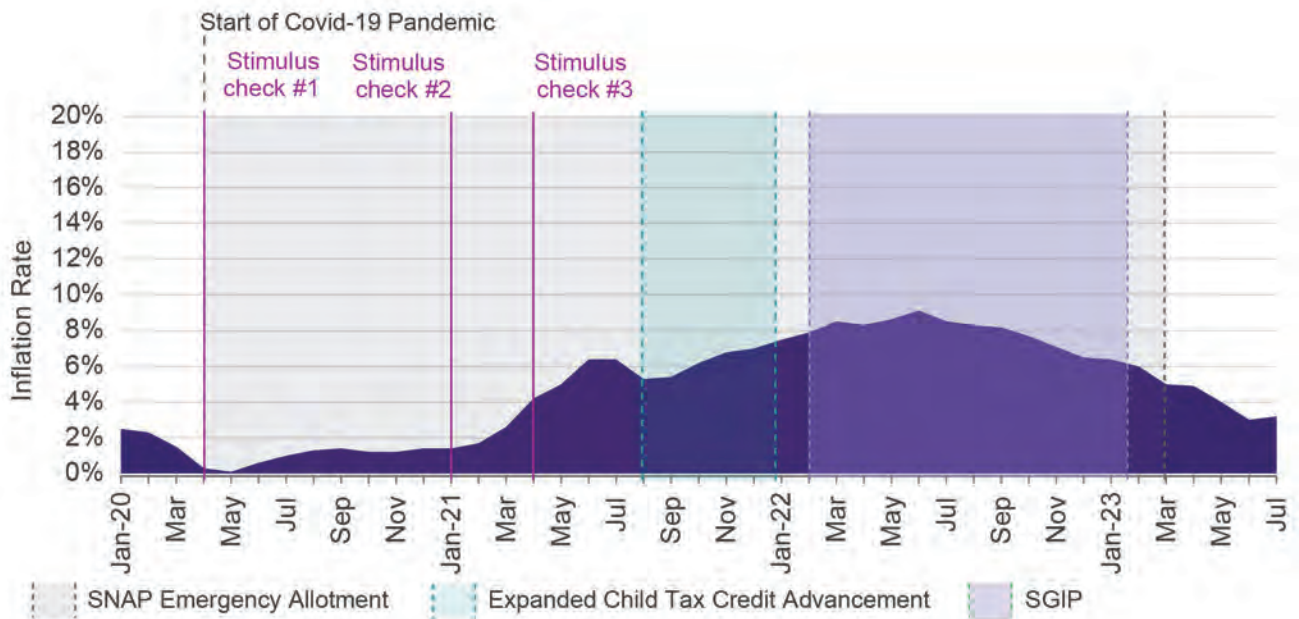
The implementation team hoped the GI pilot would stabilize those families led by single parents in the wake of the pandemic and

Exhibit 2: Map Of Caddo Parish Highlighting 5 Lowest Income Zip Codes



through a period of high inflation (Exhibit 3). Implementation staff expected that the cash payments would allow parents to buy more food and to purchase items for their children they would otherwise not be able to pay for. They expected that having a higher income not only would enable parents to better cover their basic needs but would also reduce stress and improve mental health, especially for mothers. City staff also observed that attendance and performance in school had declined as a result of the pandemic. They hoped that by stabilizing the families’ economic situation, it would improve children’s educational outcomes, particularly attendance and performance in school.

Exhibit 3: Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program Took Place at a Time of Historically High Inflation in the COVID-19 Pandemic



SGIP Participants Expected to Use GI to Pay Their Bills

At the time parents applied to the program, the research team asked each applicant to predict how most program participants would spend GI. Overwhelmingly, they said they expected the money to be used to pay bills. This focus reflects the theory of change that SGIP implementers articulated, theorizing that GI would help stabilize families by helping them pay their bills and afford basic necessities, rather than allowing for investments or spending on indulgences. The theory of change and participants’ expectations reflect how financially precarious most participants were and, correspondingly, how far they believed \$660 per month would go.

The challenges faced by parents were also reflected in the evaluation’s interviews. Interviewed parents described their lives before the GI pilot as “chaotic” and “a struggle.” Most described straining to make ends meet and juggling bills and expenses to cover what was most critical in the moment. Nicole,¹⁵ a young mother of one, explained, “*Before the Pilot I was struggling paycheck to paycheck. I was making ends meet, but it was just one of those*

things. I have to sacrifice... this thing and try to catch up another time.” A few parents mentioned that inflation during the pandemic further eroded their ability to afford necessities. As Erica said:

But everything — the cost of living is — the cost of living changed. I don’t know what the government may be having going on, but yes. The cost of living has really changed.

Some parents worked multiple jobs to cover their bills. The few who were not working reported they were unable to. Reasons included not being able to afford childcare, being fired after taking time off to care for their sick children or loved ones, and having poor health or a disability.

Most parents also said they could not show up for their children in all the ways they wanted. Parents often lacked the ability to spend quality time with their children due to working overtime or multiple jobs, and they could not afford purchases for celebrations or special occasions,

¹⁵ To protect the identify of participants, all names used in the report are pseudonyms.



and sometimes for basic needs. This caused the parents feelings of inadequacy, affected their perceptions of their parenting abilities, and affected their sense of self, as expressed by Andrea, a single mother of three children in their early teens:

At the beginning I couldn't do none of that. I mean, I couldn't throw birthday parties; I couldn't get things for birthdays. I couldn't get them things that they wanted for Christmas.

About This Report

Chapter 2 provides details on the research methods and participants. Chapters 3 through 7 present findings about participants' quality of life (Chapter 3); parenting practices, child well-being, and children's educational and behavioral outcomes (Chapter 4); subjective sense of self (Chapter 5); income and work (Chapter 6); and SGIP's implementation (Chapter 7).

The final chapter (Chapter 8) discusses these findings and their implications for future GI and other safety net programs.

A National Learning Agenda about Guaranteed Incomes

This report is part of a series of evaluation reports Abt Global is writing based on its evaluation of GI pilots in six cities in MGI's network. Portions of this report build on the first brief, *"My kids deserve the world": How children in the Southeast benefit from guaranteed income* (Kappil et al., 2023). All reports can be found at [Evaluating Guaranteed Income Programs | Abt Global](#).

Chapter 2: Research Methods & Participants

The evaluation of *SGIP* uses a rigorous mixed methods research design to answer research questions about how GI affects participants' quality of life, the relationship between GI and participants' subjective sense of self, how GI affects participants' incomes, and what participants' experiences teach us about the implementation of the pilot as compared to the administration of other social safety net programs.

In this chapter we lay out the research methods used for the evaluation. We then

Building the Research Sample

The research team assigned 110 applicants to be part of the *SGIP* **participant group** and 132 applicants to be part of the study's **control group**. The recruitment and selection of people to these two groups unfolded in three steps:

1. **Collecting applications from Shreveport/Caddo Parish residents.** On January 10, 2022, the research team launched an online application for interested people to apply to *SGIP*. The program was promoted by the City of Shreveport and Caddo Parish, and a link to the online application was available on the City's website. The online application had three components: (1) questions about whether the applicant met the eligibility criteria for *SGIP*; (2) text explaining the evaluation and asking applicants to consent to research activities; and (3) a voluntary *baseline survey* asking applicants to answer questions about their demographics and other topics of interest for the research. The application was open for one week, during which more than 4,300 people completed an application, with the application opened over 32,000 times.
2. **Random selection of *SGIP* participants and control group members.** The research team screened applicants

describe the characteristics of the participants in greater detail to provide context for the study's findings. Central to the idea of GI is the notion that GI recipients themselves are better positioned than anyone else to know how to improve their own lives and will spend the GI accordingly. We did not track how *SGIP* participants spent their household income, but we did measure the impact GI had on various aspects of their quality of life.¹⁶

for eligibility based on information they provided in their online applications. We screened out applicants whose addresses were not in Caddo Parish, did not meet the City's definition of being a single parent of a child between the ages of 3 and 20, had a household income above 120 percent of the federal poverty level, or were younger than age 18. We then randomly selected an initial group of 110 *SGIP* participants and 132 control group members from among the remaining eligible applicants. Random selection of participants was weighted towards lower-income areas of the parish: Approximately 50 percent of *SGIP* participants were randomly chosen from the five lowest income ZIP codes in the parish and the remainder from all other ZIP codes in the parish. The remaining eligible applicants were initially kept unassigned.

3. **Confirming participation of randomly selected applicants.** After randomization, Shreveport FEC contacted the 110 parents selected to receive GI to attend an onboarding appointment. At this appointment, Shreveport FEC staff worked with parents to verify their eligibility, provide counseling on how receiving GI might

¹⁶ The Stanford Basic Income Lab did track participants' spending from their bank accounts in a limited way. The spending data confirm the themes from our open-ended survey responses and interviews that participants spent the funds primarily on food and goods from retailers. The spending breakdown is available on the Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program dashboard: <https://guaranteedincome.us/shreveport>

affect other income-dependent public benefits, and confirm their participation in *SGIP*. To participate in *SGIP*, parents downloaded the Steady app, which linked to parents' bank accounts and disbursed the monthly GI payments. The app sent parents a notification when the GI payments were deposited and then showed parents a breakdown of their spending.

Among those initial 110 parents, those who could not be successfully onboarded—because they could not be contacted, were ineligible, or declined the GI—were replaced with applicants randomly selected from those initially kept unassigned. In total, FEC reached out to 165 applicants, 110 of whom were eligible and willing to

receive the GI (see Chapter 7 for more details on implementation).

The 45 applicants who were replaced but were eligible based on their applications (referred to as inactive participant group members) are included in our analysis to maintain the integrity of random assignment, as is standard practice in randomized experiments. This type of analysis is called *intent-to-treat* (measuring impacts of the offer rather than receipt of the intervention).

After this last step, the City and FEC announced that all participants had been chosen. The first GI payment was sent to the 110 confirmed participants in March 2022, and monthly payments continued through February 8, 2023.

Data Collection and Analysis

The evaluation of *SGIP* used a rigorous mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) research design. The quantitative research was a randomized experiment to assess the causal impact of receiving GI, with surveys fielded in both experimental groups (participant, control) to measure study members' outcomes. The qualitative research used interviews with *SGIP* participants to understand their lived experience of the program, to learn about topics we did not collect detailed quantitative data about, and to help explain the story behind what the quantitative data show.

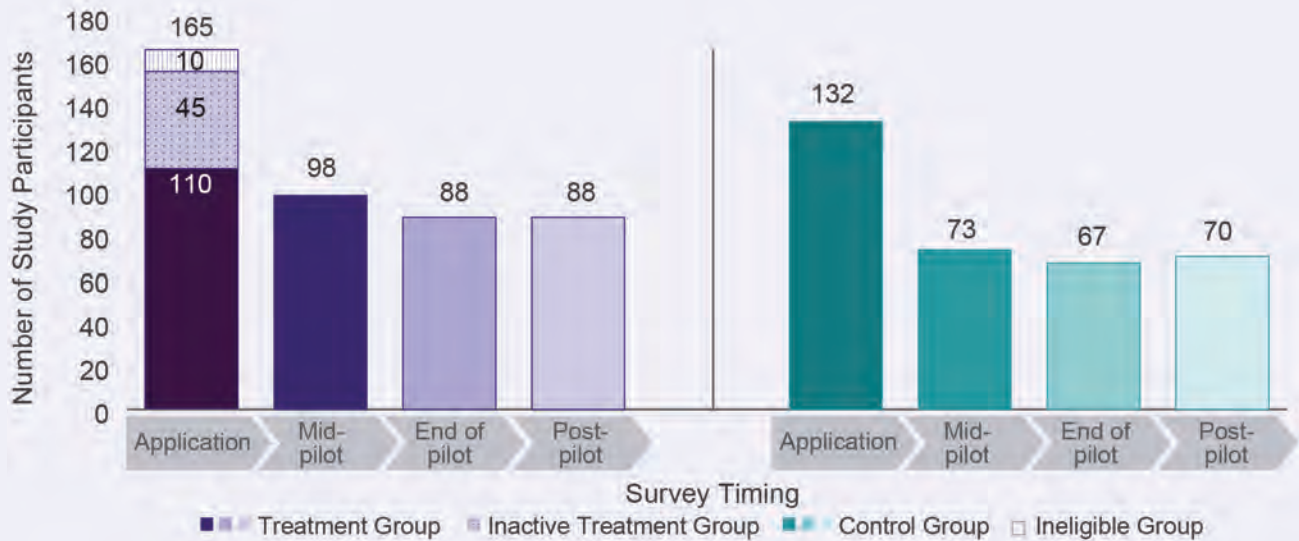
Quantitative Methods

All 110 *SGIP* participants who accepted the GI offer and the 132 randomly selected control group members were asked to respond to follow-up surveys, which were shortened versions of the baseline survey, at 6-month intervals through the end of the 12-month pilot and then 6 months afterwards. Respondents received a \$50 gift card after completing each follow-up survey.

The surveys asked study members about their personal characteristics and household composition, employment and income, financial well-being, psychological distress, physical functioning, housing stability and food security, and sense of self. Reflecting Shreveport's pilot design, we included a set of questions about children's academic achievement and behavior at school. The baseline survey was offered in English, Vietnamese, and Spanish. Due to low use of the Vietnamese and Spanish surveys, follow-up surveys were offered only in English.

Exhibit 4 shows the number of study members in the participant and control groups at the time of random selection and then at each of the three 6-month follow-ups.

Exhibit 4: Sample Sizes by Survey



The research team estimated impacts of the GI as the difference between the *SGIP* participants' mean outcomes and the control group's mean outcomes, making statistical adjustments to account for study members leaving the sample over time. The control group's experiences represent what would have happened to the participants without GI. The study's [pre-specified analysis plan](#) (Juras et al., 2023) identified outcomes that would best measure the program's effect on *SGIP* participants' quality of life, subjective sense of self, and income and employment.

The research team used classical statistical hypothesis tests to determine which impacts can be confidently attributed to the GI. In this report, only findings with p -values of less than .05, which is a standard threshold, are described as **statistically significant**. Findings with p -values of less than .1 are described as **marginally significant** and are interpreted with more caution, as they are more likely to have occurred by chance than are findings with smaller p -values.

Results that are statistically significant may still have occurred by chance, although the probability of any one significant finding being due to chance is small. Reports that examine a large number of outcomes, as this report does, are likely to find a small number of significant or marginally significant results by chance.

Qualitative Methods

The research team conducted interviews with a subset of *SGIP* participant group members ($n=25$) selected through convenience sampling and with the staff members at the City of Shreveport and FEC involved in the design and implementation of the pilot. Interviews lasted 60-90 minutes, were mostly in person with a few conducted virtually, and took place in February 2023, approximately 11 months into the pilot. We interviewed participants only at the single time point, which somewhat limits our understanding of how their experiences changed during and after the pilot. We also did not interview members of the control group, which limits our ability to interpret how and why outcomes changed for control group members.

GI prioritizes participants' agency by allowing them to choose how to spend their cash. Similarly, we chose qualitative research methods that also emphasize participants' agency, by conducting narrative interviews. That is, we asked open-ended questions about their life before receiving GI; experience with receiving GI,

including onboarding, payments, and the effects of GI on their life; experience with other benefits programs; and what the end of the pilot would mean for them. We then asked follow-up questions to better understand what interviewees had shared. This approach lets participants lead the interview with their experience of what was most important to them about receiving GI—rather than asking a more structured set of questions, as we did in our surveys.

Our goal in making sense of the interviews was to identify both what experiences were common and how parents' experiences differed. We include an overall snapshot of how common a theme was across the 25 interviews, using the conventions below.

All/Almost All	Between 23 and 25 cases (92%-100%)
Most	Between 15 and 22 cases (60%-88%)
About half	Between 11 and 14 cases (44%-56%)
Some	Between 5 and 10 cases (17%-40%)
Few	Between 1 and 4 cases (≤16%)

Synthesis

We synthesized the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data, using the qualitative data to help readers understand what participants' lived experiences of the pilot were, including how topics covered separately in the survey connect in everyday life. In this report, we draw heavily from our interviewees' own words. All names used are pseudonyms, and some identifying details (such as occupations and health conditions) have been omitted, but other details are unchanged.

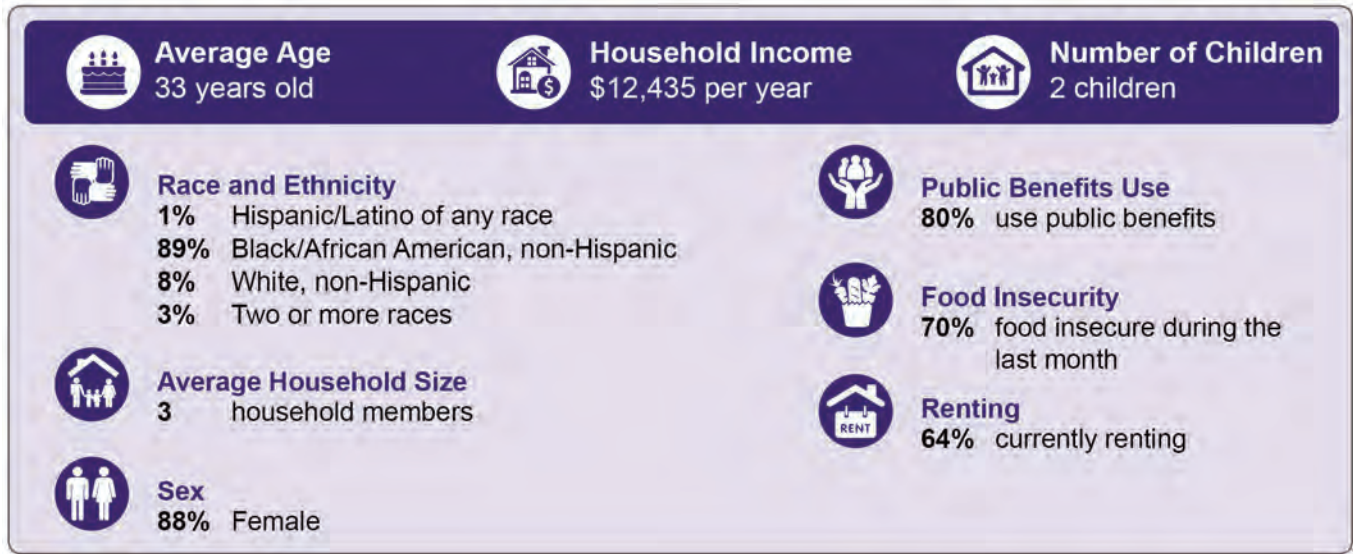
Who Participated in *SGIP*?

Shreveport's GI program was open to any single parent in Shreveport with income less than 120 percent of the 2021 FPL. That threshold of 120 percent of FPL was \$20,904 for a two-person household and increased by \$5,448 for each additional person. The median income of *SGIP* parents was well below this threshold, at \$12,434.70 (Exhibit 5). At the time of application, 70 percent of *SGIP* parents reported being food insecure, meaning they reported not having enough money to purchase foods their family needed. Eighty percent also reported receiving public benefits, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The majority of participants reported renting (64 percent), with others living in public housing (12 percent), with friends or family (12 percent), owning a home (8 percent), experiencing homelessness or living in temporary housing (1 percent), or in another housing situation (2 percent) (Appendix Table B.4).

At the time of application, the *SGIP* participants were overwhelmingly Black women (88 percent women, 89 percent Black) with two children. The average age of an *SGIP* participant was 33 years old.

At the time of the application, most parents reported having high or moderate stress levels. On a scale of Not Hopeful to High Hope, three quarters of applicants had the lowest response levels of Not Hopeful (43%) and Hopeful (32%).

Exhibit 5 Participant Characteristics at Application



The idea behind random selection of *SGIP* participants was to create two groups of parents—*SGIP* participants and a control group—who should look alike in every way except for their receipt of GI. We compared the characteristics of *SGIP* participants versus those of control group members at the time of their application, before the participants were receiving GI, and found **no systematic differences** between the two groups. See Appendix B for more information on the study sample at baseline.

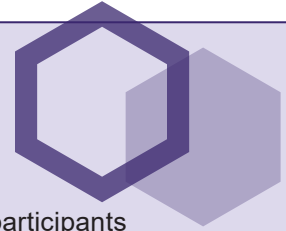
Participating parents were more economically vulnerable than other single parents in Shreveport (Exhibit 6). The median household income among the sample prior to the pilot was \$12,435—approximately \$27,000 lower than the median income of all single parents in Shreveport. In addition, *SGIP* parents were more likely to report being Black and women compared to Shreveport’s general population of single parents. About two thirds of *SGIP* parents were employed at the beginning of the program, compared to 85 percent of single parents.

Exhibit 6: Comparison of *SGIP* Parents and All Single Parents in Shreveport/Caddo

	<i>SGIP</i> Parents	All Single Parents in Shreveport/Caddo
HH Income	\$12,435	\$39,531
Female	88%	66%
Black	89%	75%
Employed	63%	85%

Information on *SGIP* parents is based on baseline data provided in the *SGIP* application. Information on all single parents in Shreveport/Caddo is based on responses to the American Community Survey.

How to Interpret Graphics in This Report



This report uses bar charts to show the impact of GI on participants' well-being at three points in time after they began receiving payments in March 2022:

- **Mid-pilot** is 6 months after GI payments started (September 2022), when *SGIP* participants had received half their payments. This time period tells us the most about the effects of receiving GI in real time.
- **End-of-pilot** is 12 months after GI payments started (February 2023), when participants were receiving their last payment. This was a transitional time when participants had just had an income shock (losing the GI payments).
- **Post-pilot** is 6 months after GI payments ended (August 2023). This time period can be understood as showing the lasting short-term effects of the pilot. It does not capture any changes that could take longer to show up, such as homeownership or completing additional education or training.

To illustrate the relative strength of the intervention at each time point, the graphics use different color saturations. Mid-pilot is darkest (corresponding to full GI payment), end-of-pilot is more lightly saturated (GI payment ending), and post-pilot is lightly saturated (no GI payment).

At each point in time, the bar charts show survey responses for the *SGIP* participants (purple) and the control group (green). The difference in height between the two bars should be interpreted as the effect of the intervention. Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** = $p < .01$; ** = $p < .05$; * = $p < .10$

Chapter 3: *Shreveport Guaranteed Income Program's* Effect on Participants' Quality of Life

A family's quality of life is closely tied to its economic circumstances, with low income and financial instability having been linked to an array of harms such as increased risk for mental illness, chronic disease, higher mortality, and lower life expectancy.¹⁷ Receiving GI could improve recipients' circumstances through increased financial stability and, as a result, access to the resources that are needed to support a healthy



quality of life. These include shelter in safe neighborhoods, reliable utilities, proper nutrition and healthy foods, and similar elements that define a person's standard of living.

We measured participants' quality of life by asking survey and interview questions about their cash flow, debt, and other markers of financial well-being; their stress levels; their physical and mental health; housing arrangements; and food security. We discuss the *SGIP* effect on each of these outcomes in turn in the sub-sections below. Throughout, we present quantitative and qualitative evidence together to describe how receiving GI might have affected participants' lives.

Findings on Quality of Life In Brief

- During the pilot, *SGIP* participants experienced more financial stability, were less likely to be going into debt, and were more likely to be able to cover an emergency expense of \$400 compared with control group members.
- Compared with their control group counterparts, *SGIP* participants reported modest improvements in their quality of life during the pilot, including less food insecurity and less household chaos. In interviews, parents described being less stressed and more able to be present for their children and take better care of themselves.
- After the cash payments stopped, these improvements did not persist.

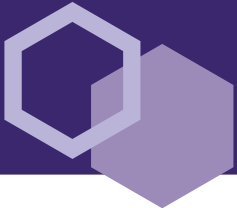
¹⁷ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (n.d.).



One Caveat to Keep in Mind.

The study's small research sample means that GI would need to have very large impacts on participants' outcomes for the evaluation to be able to detect them in Shreveport alone. One way to describe an impact's magnitude, for any type of outcome, is as an effect size stated in terms of the outcome's standard deviation. Previous large studies of the lasting effect of cash transfers to families with children have found that effect sizes as small as 0.05 standard deviations on key outcomes can be sufficient to make an intervention cost-effective if those effects persist for many years. In contrast, this study of *SGIP* cannot reliably detect impacts lower than about 0.4 standard deviations, or nearly 10 times as large. For example, at application 67 percent of parents in the control group had experienced food insecurity during the past month. Receiving a GI needed to decrease this rate to no more than 54 percent among *SGIP* participants in order for the study to reliably detect it as a statistically significant impact.

In other words, *SGIP* would need to have been extraordinarily effective for this study to be able to confidently report it as a success. However, by combining the results from this study of *SGIP* with the results from numerous studies being simultaneously conducted by Abt and the Center for Guaranteed Income Research in other cities using the same research methodology, the overall effects of GI on participants' well-being will come into much sharper focus.



Financial Well-being

Overall, our survey and interview findings demonstrate that GI improved the quality of participants' lives by helping families pay their bills and absorb unexpected financial shocks during the pilot. These outcomes did not persist six months after the pilot ended.

Several study measures provide a window into improved financial health for *SGIP* participants. We asked survey questions to participants about how they would classify their household financial situation. Parents taking the survey could choose one of the following options: "Going into debt," "Living on my savings," "Managing," "I have a bit of money left over," "I have enough left to save," or "I don't know/would rather not say."

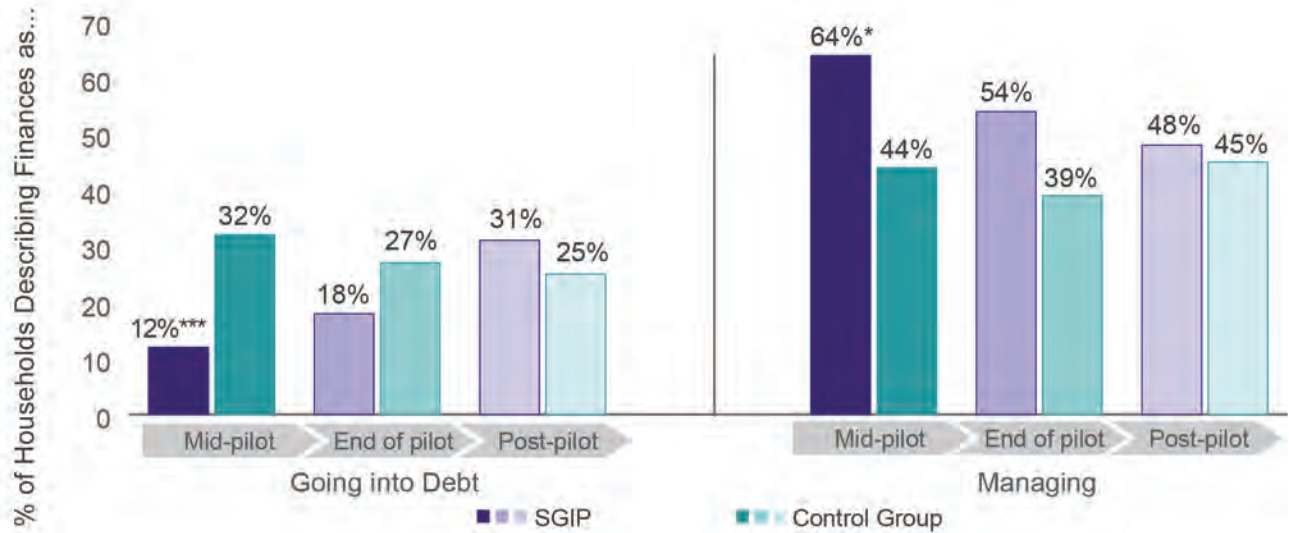
Midway through the pilot, *SGIP* parents were 20 percentage points less likely to report that they were "going into debt" compared with control group parents (Exhibit 7). More *SGIP* parents reported their household financial situation as "managing," and this difference was significant at 20 percentage points. At the end of the pilot and post-pilot, neither of these impacts was large or statistically significant.

Access to GI also increased participants' scores on a financial well-being scale by 8 percent, compared to the control group.¹⁸

The positive changes in participants' financial health during the pilot might be explained by how participants used the GI. All interviewed parents spoke about how they primarily used GI to pay their bills. For interviewed parents, bills encompassed rent, utilities, phone, or transportation expenses. Interviewed parents also noted that it helped them to know they had access to this consistent set of

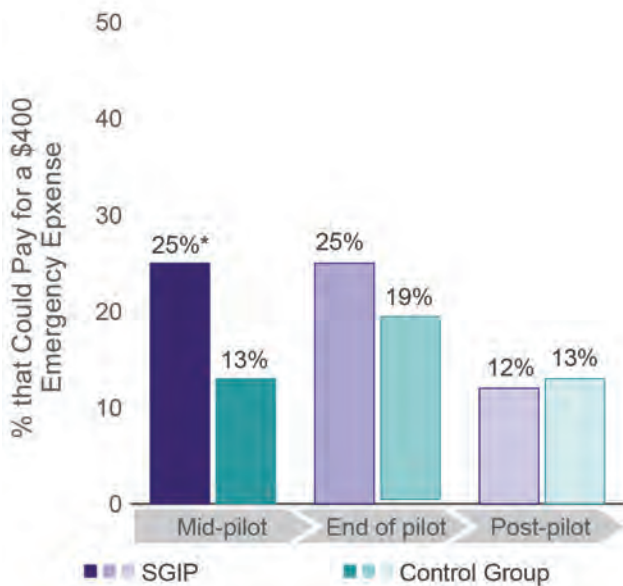
¹⁸ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (2017); the CFPB Financial Well-Being Scale measures general financial well-being on a 0–100 scale, with higher scores indicating greater financial well-being.

Exhibit 7: At Mid-Pilot, SGIP Parents were Less Likely to be Going into Debt and More Likely to be “Managing” Financially



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

Exhibit 8: SGIP Parents Were More Likely to Be Able to Cover a \$400 Emergency Expense at Mid-Pilot



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

funds during the pilot. For example, Jennifer explained how the consistency of GI helped relieve some stress and helped her pay bills:

You know...I don't have to worry about that...My rent is paid. Yeah, my car note is okay... at least the basic bills that you need...

The ability to cover unexpected expenses, such as car repairs or an unexpected medical bill, is an important element of financial health. At mid-pilot, analysis of survey data shows that a greater percentage of SGIP participants were able to cover a \$400 emergency expense, with 13 percent of control group members able to cover such an expense compared to 25 percent of SGIP parents (Exhibit 8). This difference is borne out in the interview data.

About half of interviewed parents said the pilot helped them pay for unexpected expenses. Unexpected expenses participants discussed included car repairs, high utility bills, and tickets for travel to visit sick family. A few parents mentioned how Shreveport's extreme heat in the summer and cold in the winter meant that utility bills would be very high during those months. Natasha described the unexpected utility bill she received during the summer and how GI helped her to pay it off:

Um, I would definitely say around this summer I got like \$650 electric bill, which is one of the reasons why I just moved. It can't be my fault the electric bill that high, like constantly. So I, um. I actually probably wouldn't have been able to pay it if I didn't have that income coming in, of course. So that's something unexpected that I was able to just pay.

About half of the parents also discussed using GI for expenses related to car travel: gas, maintenance expenses, or down payments on a more reliable car. Most *SGIP* parents relied on cars to travel to work and pick up their children because of the limited availability of public transportation in Shreveport, especially in neighborhoods that are historically disinvested and under-resourced. Parents talked about how reliable transportation reduced stress by making it easier to get around or saved them valuable time and money. Monica described how she reduced her transportation costs by buying a car:

Yeah, not paying people for rides and paying Ubers and stuff. That cut down a lot of my bills. Also, that was putting me way more in debt. With the money, I was able to pay—get my down payment and pay for the car notes and stuff. Things in that nature.

Inflation was high during the pilot period, as well. A few interviewed parents noted that the prices of many goods were increasing quickly during the pilot and that GI helped ease the budgetary implications of this. The price of gas rose almost 50 percent across the country during the pilot.¹⁹ One interviewee, Briana, spoke about how GI helped to ease these changes in the price of gas:

It was the gas crisis. That really took a toll on my pocket. But leaning back on the card, it was just very helpful [short pause]. Because I was filling up like probably two to three times a week because of like going back and forth to the kids, work, if we had to go grocery shopping. And it's like the gas ran out faster than before.

Briana said she is not sure what she would have done without GI at that time, that she might have had to rely on others to transport herself and her children.

Living without enough economic resources makes it hard to budget and plan. In these circumstances families can quickly spiral into a cycle of “*robbing Peter to pay Paul*” or using expensive loans that quickly accumulate interest. In such environments, families often find themselves with fewer and fewer economic resources available to cover their basic needs.²⁰ The result is living and planning on an immediate time-frame. Jessica described how GI helped her budget:

I budget differently. Let me see how I can say this. Before guaranteed income, I was having to daily try to make money versus receiving money monthly and budgeting it out monthly. So, I didn't have a monthly budget before. I had more of a daily budget. Now, I'm able to kind of see past the day money-wise.

Jessica had been receiving rental assistance prior to GI, but had lost it, was evicted from her apartment, and had moved in with her family. She had also lost her job. She discussed how before GI she would try to make the money she needed for that day through gig work.

Other participants mentioned similar themes. About half of interviewed parents mentioned that GI allowed them to budget for the first time. Some people were able to invest in household items that enabled reductions in food expenditures. For example, one participant spoke about buying pots and pans and other baking materials that allowed her to do more high-quality cooking at home and reduce expenditures on eating out. Other participants were finally able to create budgets and allocate line items for specific things such as “*outings*” or allowances for children that increased the quality of life of family members.

Having additional cash could help parents avoid taking on more debt. For example, Monica described how in the past, she would have to take out pay day loans when unexpected expenses occurred. During the pilot, however, the GI helped her cover unexpected expenses and, consequently, reduced her stress:

¹⁹ Bureau of Transportation Statistics (2022).

²⁰ Giardino et al. (2021); Thomas (2013).

It reduced a lot of stress. Yeah, it did. I wasn't worried as much. It kept me ahead a little bit. Every month something arrives. Something comes up. Every 2 months something comes up. It was good I was able to pay for things like that when something comes up. Instead of trying to go get a loan and pay them back, high interest rates on loans. It was something that was helpful.

Alicia described how the GI allowed her to pay her bills on time so that she did not have to pay late fees anymore:

One, knowing that I was able to take care of the bills on time, and not have late fees. That money helped a lot because I was—oh Lord, I had a lot of late fees. But then, when I started getting that in, all my bills got caught up correctly. No late fees. I paid a little bit more than what I was supposed to make sure I didn't have a big payment the next bill.

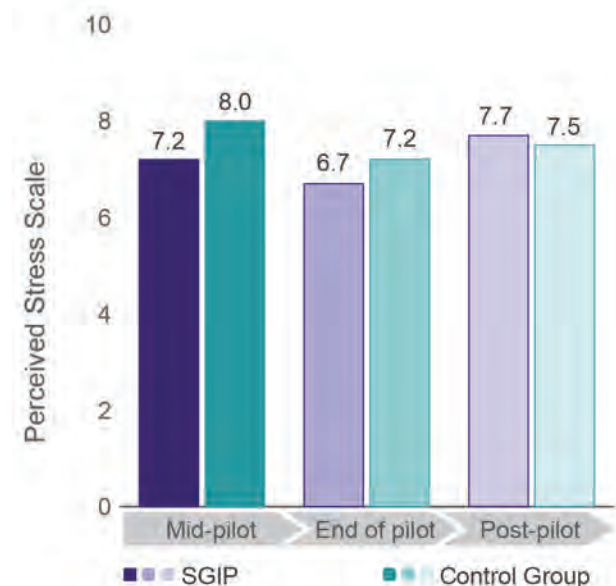
After the pilot ended, these positive impacts of GI on financial well-being ended, as well. When measured at the post-pilot time point 6 months after GI ended, there were no significant differences between *SGIP* participants and the control group on outcomes related to financial health.

Taken together, the data suggest that GI payments were helpful for families' financial well-being, with fewer going into debt and more families being confident about their ability to cover an emergency. However, these impacts show only during the GI period. It appears that the GI payments temporarily helped families with their household finances, easing families' financial stress. Post-pilot, *SGIP* parents and control group members had similar financial well-being scores, ability to pay for a \$400 emergency expense, and financial situations.

Psychological Distress

Our survey asked questions about psychological and physical well-being.²¹ It was also a topic that parents discussed during interviews, reporting improvements. Survey results are generally consistent with these positive findings, but we found no statistically significant differences between the *SGIP* parents and the control group over the course of the pilot (Exhibit 9). That said, the small sample could have reduced the research team's ability to detect a statistically significant difference, as interview data indicated that GI had meaningful positive effects.

Exhibit 9: *SGIP* Parents and Control Parents Experienced Similar Levels of Stress



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

Interviewed parents reported that GI improved their mental health by reducing financial stressors during the GI pilot. Most described having a “weight lifted” or a having “a little of the pressure off my shoulders.” Whitney described the effects of knowing she could afford to pay for her child’s needs:

²¹ The survey asked a series of questions about physical and psychological well-being. Physical well-being questions included those about doctor’s appointments, role limitations due to physical health, and bodily pain. Psychological well-being questions were from the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, which can be used to screen for depression, anxiety, and psychological stress more generally (Kessler, 2002). Additionally, the survey included a perceived stress scale that included questions about parents’ recent levels of stress.

My mental health has gotten a lot better because, like I said, I used to stress a lot over trying to make sure everything is paid for, everything is taken care of, making sure my son is taken care of, then making sure I'm taken care of. So it helped a lot mentally because I didn't have to worry as much about bills and, oh, does my son have enough pull ups? Does my son have enough food because, yeah. I might be getting food stamps, but it doesn't last the whole month.

Many parents talked about how the cash reduced the time they spent worrying about how to make ends meet, allowing them to feel more secure that they could meet their household needs. For example, Chelsea discussed how GI helped her think less about having to find other jobs and instead focus on what her child, whose father had passed away, needed:

I must say, that was \$660 I didn't have to worry about. Now, that allowed me to spend a little bit more time with them. ... even if it's just my little baby... she has separation issues now since her dad passed. ... I didn't have to worry about, hey, let me go find some more part time jobs or let me go find a job to help worry about this. Now, I got \$660 coming in so I can spend a little bit more time with them or I don't have to work so hard doing this to try to make things balance out. So that's how that kind of helps us.

However, speaking to the complex factors that influence stress, a few interviewed parents noted that financial stress was only one of many stressors. All interviewed parents were grateful for the GI, but a few noted it did not remove other stressors. For example, Destiny mentioned that stress related to racism and being Black in America was always present in her life:

I'm Black. It's—I don't care how much money you have, how much. It's always those life pressures are—whether small or big, are always there.

A few parents interviewed as the end of the pilot approached noted that their stress levels had returned to past levels or even exceeded them. Sierra described it this way:

I feel like it's more pressure when it starts to end just because it's like, okay, I need to start getting back to how I was before. Budgeting towards this and not having that extra wiggle space.

Physical Functioning

We might expect that GI could help participants improve their health by increasing their ability to spend time on health related activities, like accessing healthcare, exercising, spending time preparing food, or taking time off work to rest when they were sick. GI could also increase the resources available to invest in health, or improve physical health by reducing stress.

Our survey did not detect any indications of improved physical health during the pilot (Exhibit 10). However, some interviewed parents noted improvements in their health. One parent discussed the reduction in blood pressure that he directly attributed to dropping his second job and feeling more financially secure:

A typical day now is [short pause], trying to figure out what we want to eat from [laugh]. That's a typical day now, that we have no there's no reason like we don't overdraft my credit card or my debit card anymore [long pause] or I guess you could say that I'm relaxed. I'm just, like, stress-free. And let's not forget that my blood pressure has dropped [significantly] within a year's time. Yeah. So I was stroke level at first, and now it's like I'm relaxed.

Others noted that GI enabled them to find time to exercise, or to prepare more meals at home, or otherwise improved their diet, changes that might have a longer time horizon in improving physical health measures. See **Nina's story** for an example of how GI helped her to cut back some work hours and prioritize her physical health.

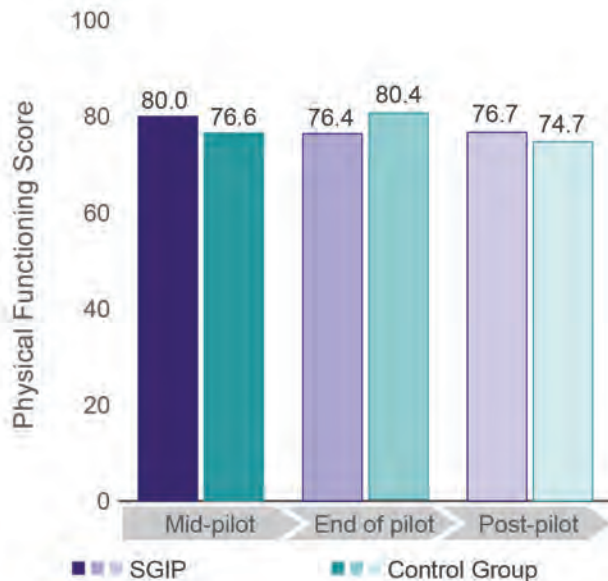
Nina's Story

Nina's experience receiving GI shows how interrelated the effects of GI were across different areas of parents' and families' lives.

Nina is a self-employed artist. Nina lost her job in healthcare in 2020 because of COVID restrictions and turned to art to help pay her family's bills, recruiting clients from social media and working days and nights from her home. Because she had to continue working after her children got home from school, they stayed in the house with her so she could watch them. In the year that she received GI, she was able to reduce her workday by four to five hours. This gave her time to take her child to a sports league where he made friends and stayed active. She could also take her youngest son to special education classes, which improved his communication skills. She had wanted to enroll him in this class for a while but had not previously had the time to take him.

Nina also felt less stress in the year she received GI with more time to better care for herself. She exercised more and prioritized doctor appointments. Her reduction in stress led to drastic weight loss. She enrolled in college to finish the last semester she needed for an associate degree. She was able to spend more quality time with her children and be more involved with their school. She said that with the GI, her children "have more time to be a kid."

Exhibit 10: SGIP Parents and Control Parents had Similar Physical Functioning Scores



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

In our survey, we find that *SGIP* parents were more likely to report having difficulty performing work or other activities or having to limit activities because of physical health at the end of the pilot; this difference was marginally significant. We do not find this difference at other time points and also do not find other indications of worsened health at the end of the pilot.²² We interpret these null findings as suggesting that this single marginally significant finding could be due to chance and is not a reflection of true effects of GI.²³ It could also indicate that while receiving GI, participants felt less financial pressure to show up for work sick or in poor physical health.

Another mechanism through which we might expect GI to improve participants' physical health is in their ability to spend money on their health, such as by going to the doctor when they are sick or paying for medicines and treatments. However, very few interviewed

²² The other indicators of health captured in our survey are a measure of general health, a measure of physical functioning, and a measure of psychological distress due to medical problems.

²³ This finding is significant at the 90 percent level, meaning that we would find a difference that large in our sample only 10 percent of the time if no true difference was caused by GI.

parents mentioned using GI to pay for healthcare costs. One hypothesis is that as Louisiana residents with very low income, many SGIP participants might have access to Medicaid, which Louisiana expanded in 2016.²⁵ As a result, residents would not incur large health-related expenses as these are covered by Medicaid. A few interviewed parents mentioned using GI to support their children's health by helping to purchase over-the-counter medications or other things needed to help their child recover at home after sickness or surgery. Some interviewed parents also mentioned that GI helped them to pay bills when they lost employment income when they got sick, had to recover from surgery, or got pregnant and could not work due to health reasons. For parents who may have had limited access to paid sick time, GI made it possible for them to take time off when they needed to do so for their health without facing dire economic consequences.

Food Insecurity

Survey findings show a significant and large reduction in food insecurity among *SGIP* households, although this topic was not discussed extensively by interviewed parents. At the end of the pilot, *SGIP* participants are significantly less likely to be food insecure compared with control group members, with 42 percent of *SGIP* participants reporting being food insecure compared to 64 percent of control group members. Though not significant, the estimates at mid-pilot and even at post-pilot are consistent with improved food security throughout the pilot, with effects diminishing post-pilot. A few *SGIP* parents mentioned that GI helped them purchase food for their families. Whitney mentioned how helpful GI was because her SNAP benefits often ran out before the month was over. GI helped her access food for her growing child. She noted that prior to GI, she would donate plasma when her SNAP benefits ran out for the month, which often left her feeling unwell afterwards:

That's when I would go and donate... plasma and I would use that to pay for food because...I was making \$160 a week doing the donation...because it was \$80 each time. And then sometimes they'll give you—if you do it so many times a month, they'll give you an extra \$30, stuff like that... I was doing that twice a week. And when I got the guaranteed income, I didn't have to go there. I stopped going because the thing is I didn't have to because I didn't need the extra money to pay for things. So it kind of freed up at least two hours, almost three hours, because sometimes I wouldn't feel too great after. So I would have to take a—an hour nap just to basically feel better after doing it.

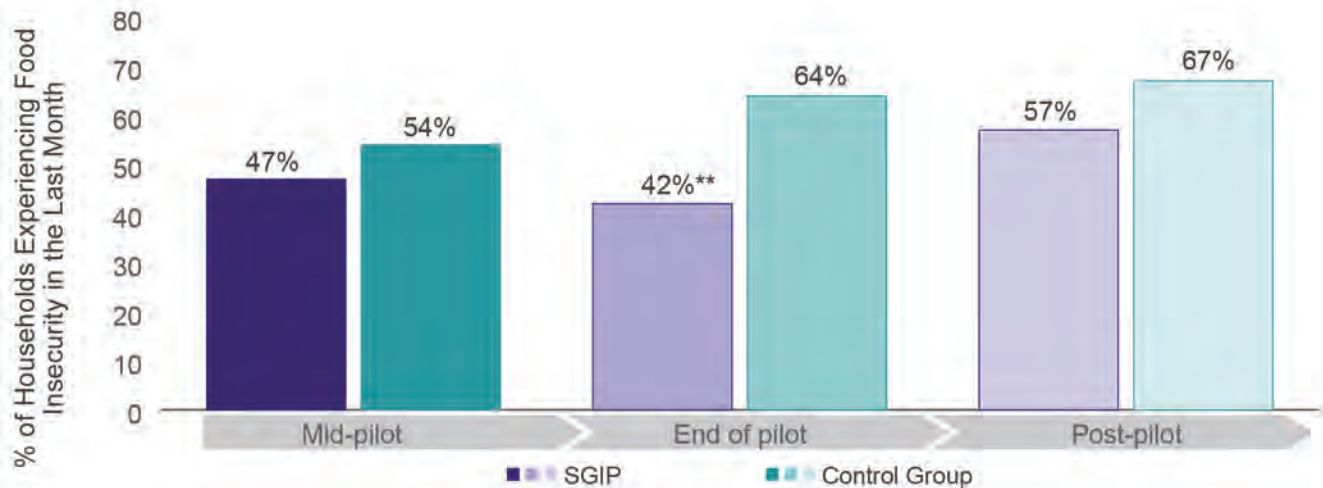
That food insecurity remains lower for *SGIP* parents than for the control group post-pilot—even though the difference is not significant—is intriguing given that most evidence of positive effects during the pilot period disappears at post-pilot. Interviewed respondents point to a potential mechanism—a persistent improvement in food security could be related to families using the income to invest in their ability to do more cooking at home, such as by buying kitchen supplies. Some families also noted that the experience of receiving GI provided breathing room to step back and think about their budgets. This could potentially improve future food security.

However, it is important not to overstate this finding, as the differences between *SGIP* and control groups are not significant during the post-pilot period, meaning that it could also be that improvements in food security are not persistent and differences post-pilot occurred due to chance.

²⁴ According to healthinsurance.org, the Medicaid eligibility threshold for adults younger than age 65 is 138 percent of the FPL.

²⁵ Healthinsurance.org (n.d.).

Exhibit 11: *SGIP* Parents Were Less Likely to Experience Food Insecurity



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

Housing Security and Quality

Interview data suggest that housing security and quality improved for *SGIP* families during the pilot. Survey findings are less definitive but consistent with the qualitative findings.

We do not detect any significant or marginally significant effects on housing type during the pilot or at the end of the pilot (Exhibit 12). However, we see a pattern of smaller changes that, taken together, suggest that participants might have had greater housing security while receiving GI. At mid-pilot, *SGIP* participants were 10 percentage points more likely to be renters, compared to the control group, and 2 percentage points more likely to be homeowners. They were 5 percentage points less likely to be living with friends and family and 5 percentage points less likely to report “other” living situations, which include homelessness and temporary housing arrangements. *SGIP* parents also reported evictions and mortgage default at lower rates than did the control group. Particularly, at mid-pilot, *SGIP* parents were significantly less likely to experience a mortgage default. However, the differences for mortgage default and eviction were not significant at other time points.

About half of interviewed parents described using the GI to pay expenses related to housing, such as rent, utilities, or mortgages. In some instances, the GI payments prompted

a move to a new location. One participant was doubled up with her grandmother and decided to move so she and her son could have more space and privacy for themselves. This was especially important because the participant’s grandmother had health problems, and their progression was difficult for the participant and her son to continue to live with.

Another mentioned moving to a larger space knowing that the GI payments would help cover the rent payments. Kayla was a full-time student and had tried repeatedly to get childcare vouchers but was not able to. She was using her school refund that came twice a year to manage all of her family’s household expenses while she finished an online degree in the medical field. The parent of several young children, she described how she used GI to pay rent and move during the pilot:

I mean, I used it for my rent. That’s mostly all I really pay because my rent—when I stayed in one place, it was—it covered like the whole thing. I didn’t really have to worry about it. And then when I moved to another place, it was higher. So—but it was—my rent went up double of that. So, I knew as long as I had the other half, I still was okay, if that makes sense.

Another parent mentioned that with the extra funds from GI, he moved to a better neighborhood with a better school. Brandon described his motivation to use GI to move:

Because of the I mean, the program with the extra funds that we received every month, we're able to get a better apartment...It's a better community, a better school. So I think both of us are happy with it.

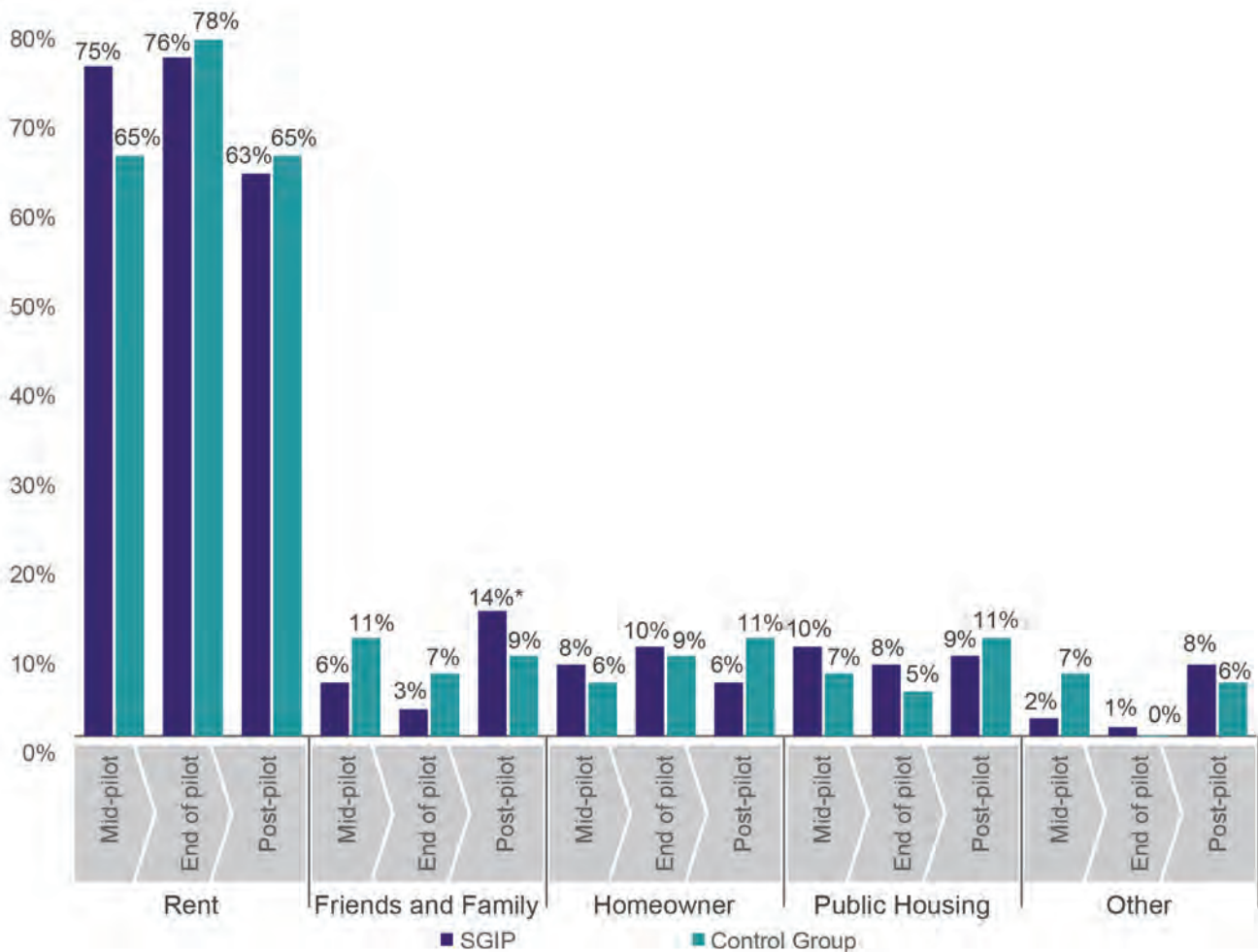
SGIP parents mentioned other reasons for wanting to move, such as poor infrastructure and maintenance issues in former units, living in areas without easy access to hospitals or libraries, or relocating to save money on utilities. Having the GI helped ease the transition of moving by helping parents pay

deposits, buy furniture, or pay rent they could not otherwise afford. Kimberly described how she used the GI to purchase things for the house she had bought during the pilot:

So we finally got a two-bedroom apartment, the apartment's not much. So, like I said, [we] only have the two [of us]... And then I had to get enough saved to where I used it to buy furniture, but I have to pay a bill on my furniture every month.

Survey findings also show a significant reduction of 7 percent at the end of the pilot on an index of household chaos. The household chaos index is based on a series of questions including some about household commotion, feeling relaxed at home, and noise levels, among other topics.

Exhibit 12: SGIP did not Significantly Change Participants' Housing Status



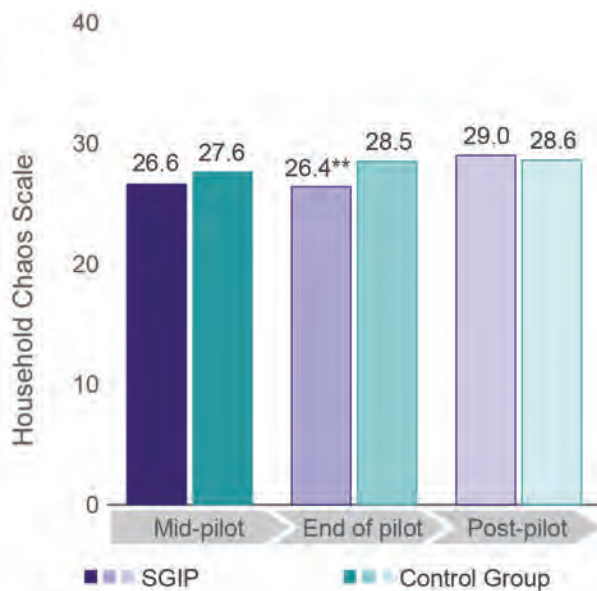
Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

SGIP parents also reported lower household chaos at end-of-pilot, though the difference is not significant or marginally significant (Exhibit 13). A reduction in chaos might be the result of families being able to live on their own, or generally having more control over their living situation with the help of GI payments.

However, there is some evidence that, like other areas described above, this improvement lasted only as long as families received GI. We find that SGIP participants at post-pilot were 7 percentage points more likely to live with friends

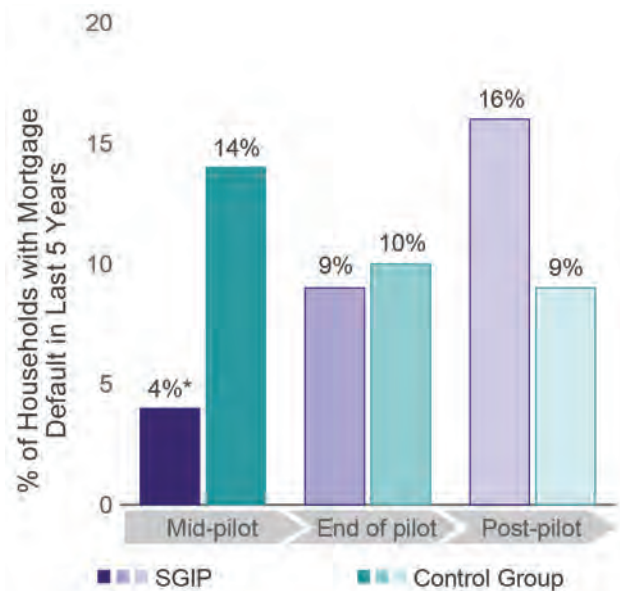
or family as compared to the control group; this difference is marginally significant. We also find higher prevalence of mortgage default and evictions among SGIP parents post-pilot, though only the finding on mortgage default is marginally significant (Exhibit 14, Exhibit 15). These findings are broadly consistent with a pattern of improvements in living situations during the pilot that participants could not sustain after GI payments ended, resulting in more precarious housing situations post-pilot.

Exhibit 13: SGIP Parents Reported Less Household Chaos at End-of-Pilot



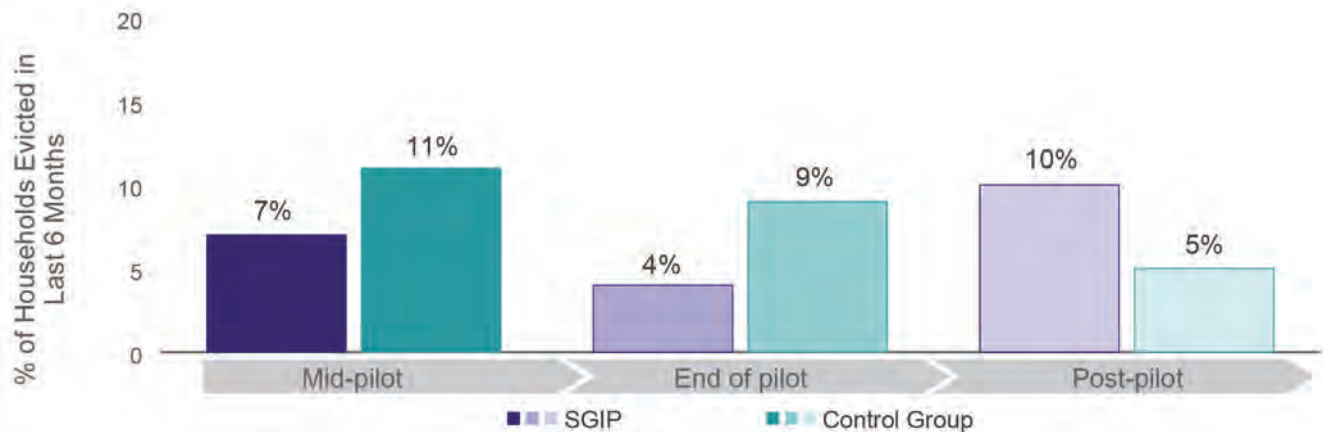
Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

Exhibit 14: SGIP Parents Reported Lower Rates of Mortgage Defaults at Mid-Pilot



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

Exhibit 15: SGIP did not Significantly Change the Percent of Parents Experiencing Evictions



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

Time Use and Self Care

Our study was interested in understanding whether GI had any effect on participants' ability to engage in self-care, theorizing that GI could allow parents to increase time and money spent on self-care for themselves. Self-care can look different for each person but might include caring for one's physical self through grooming activities such as skin and hair care, spending time with friends and family, or resting when tired. Self-care activities are important to maintain a positive environment for the development of optimal household well-being and can create a virtuous cycle for better health outcomes. Researchers have found that parents raising children with few economic resources lack sufficient time for self-care activities, resulting in poor mental health.²⁶

Interviewed parents suggest that GI offers an important way for them to gain time to do self-care activities. Our survey did not ask questions about self-care, so we cannot examine differences between *SGIP* parents and the control group. However, most interviewed parents described having more time for self-care, reporting this was directly a result of participating in *SGIP*. Self-care looked different for each interviewed parent. Some parents talked about how GI had helped them afford products and grooming activities for health or allowed them to purchase work clothes. Whitney described how GI helped her to better manage her acne through affording appropriate skin care products:

Yeah. Because I—at first I had really—really bad acne. So since then, I've been able to actually do more I guess hygienically. I don't want to say hygienically because it sounds like I don't bathe and I was bathing fine. More like appearance-wise because I was able to get skin care things that I needed because I had a little bit of extra money to take care of my face because I'm not one of them people who could just do soap and water and it clears up my face.

Some parents talked about self-care as spending time with their children and how this improved their sense of self-worth and well-being. For example, Briana described how important it was to spend time with her children, describing the joy it gives her: *"I just like to cook and be with the kids and watch them be funny. I'm a homebody."*

The survey asked parents about the extent to which they find it difficult to fulfill commitments outside of work (such as chores or childcare) because of the amount of time they spend working. We found no significant differences between *SGIP* participants and the control group at any point in time on this measure. However, most interviewed parents mentioned having more time and better-quality time with their children because of GI. With GI, about half of interviewed parents reduced their work hours by reducing overtime or quitting second jobs to spend more quality time with their children (see more information in Chapter 6). Nicole described how prior to receiving GI, she took extra shifts at her Certified Nursing Assistant job, including night shifts, to pay her family's expenses. She noted that in the past, she barely had any waking hours with her son. With GI, she was able to take a moment, reflect, and make a choice:

But you know you pick up extra shifts, well that takes away from being a mom and just a whole life thing. So, it's like I had to okay, do I want to spend all my life at work? Am I being a mom? Or get a job where I can work daytime and still be a mom but then I'm taking the paycheck cut.

Similarly, others mentioned changing to a better shift or taking time to look for another job that works better for their schedule to spend time with and parent their children, as noted in the next chapter.

²⁶ Long et al. (2019); Torres-Soto et al. (2022).

Chapter 4: Parenting Practices, Child Well-being, and Children’s Educational and Behavioral Outcomes

Research has established that living in poverty worsens every type of life outcome for children, from physical and mental health to earnings, educational attainment, child welfare involvement, and risky behavior.²⁷ It also established that increasing household income can improve these same outcomes.²⁸ Increasing household income can mean parents have more time and money to invest in materially improving their children’s lives, and it can reduce parental stress to improve and increase time parents have with their children.²⁹

As noted in Chapter 1, the city of Shreveport/Caddo Parish and the implementation team hoped that GI would stabilize families, such that it would increase child well-being. They were particularly interested in understanding children’s educational and behavioral outcomes, given some challenging patterns of parish-wide school absenteeism post COVID.



GI could potentially have affected educational and behavioral outcomes in a variety of ways. Students might have more time to spend on school if GI decreases the need for them to work, or for older children to care for younger children. Students might also benefit from additional parental attention, which might increase attendance. GI might also help students come to school prepared to learn, through reductions in household chaos, improved nutrition, or other factors.

Findings on Parenting Practices, Child Well-Being, and Children’s Educational and Behavioral Outcomes In Brief

- *SGIP*’s impact on children’s educational and behavioral outcomes is unclear due to limitations of data. Some interviewed parents reported an increase in their children’s confidence and happiness, and thus their children’s positive relationship with school.
- Based on parent reports, we find marginally significant evidence that *SGIP* children had more absences compared with control group children, but the average numbers of absences are quite low. This could reflect greater parental awareness of their children’s absences, rather than higher absences.
- Interviewed parents described their ability to meet their children’s needs using the supplemental GI income as having a major effect on parenting practices and child well-being.

27 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine et al. (2019).

28 Akee et al (2010); Akee et al (2018) ; Bullinger et al. (2023).

29 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine et al. (2019); Cooper & Stewart (2021).

Children’s Educational and Behavioral Outcomes

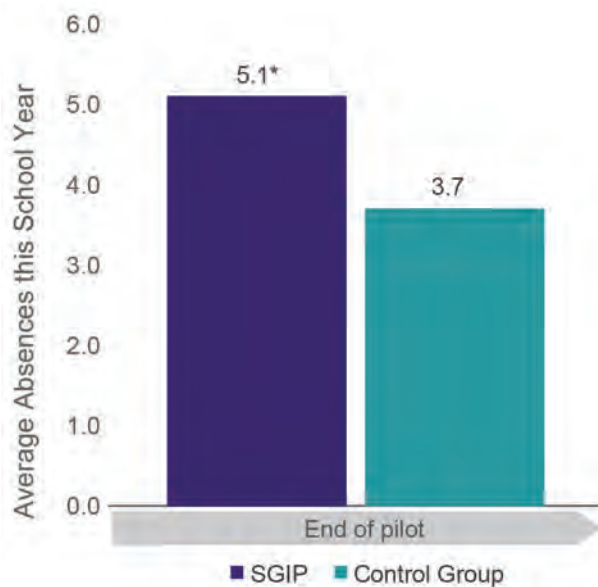
We asked parents several survey questions about their child’s educational outcomes and behavior in the current school year. The mid-pilot and post-pilot time points occurred very early in the school year, when we would expect parents to have limited information on their children’s performance for that year. For this reason, we primarily analyze responses from the end-of-pilot time point, which occurred late in the school year. We think of this time point as describing student performance in the school year during the GI pilot.

At the end of the pilot, *SGIP* parents reported that their children had more days absent from school than the control group; this difference was marginally significant. However, the average numbers of days absent from school for the year are quite low: 5.1 for the *SGIP* families and 3.7 for the control group through most of a school year (Exhibit 16). For context, 27 percent of students in Caddo Parish were “chronically” absent in the 2022-2023 school year, meaning they were absent from school 15 or more days. This figure was 29 percent for Black students and 32 percent for students who were from households that were economically disadvantaged.³⁰

SGIP parents’ reports of higher absenteeism might reflect greater parental knowledge and memory of their children’s attendance, rather than actual absences. It could also reflect parents being more able to keep children home from school when they are sick.

The survey asked parents about the number of reports they received from their children’s school and the nature of the reports they received. We do not find significant or marginally significant effects in the number of reports home from school or in the percentage of reports that are positive. The survey also asked parents about the quality of their child’s schoolwork, measured on a 5-point scale from “Excellent” to “Failing,” with higher scores denoting better schoolwork. We do not find significant differences between *SGIP* and control group families on this measure.

Exhibit 16: *SGIP* Parents Reported More Children’s Absences in Current School Year at End-of-Pilot

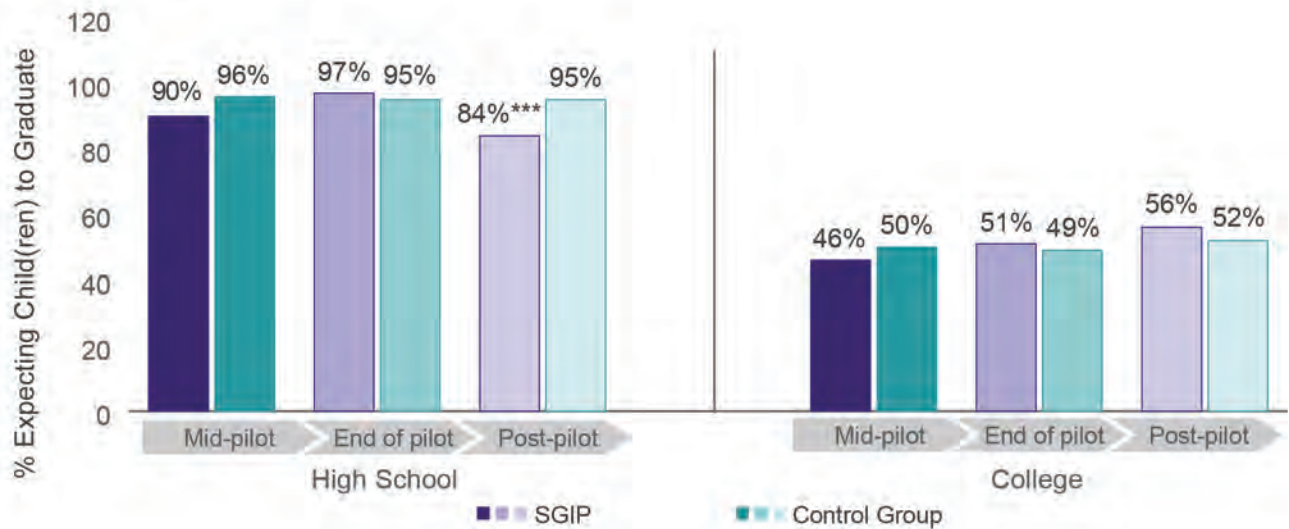


Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

We also asked parents how much education they expected their children to receive. We analyze these outcomes at all time points. At mid-pilot and at pilot-end, all parents reported at similar rates that they expected their child to at least graduate high school. However, at end-of-pilot, *SGIP* parents were 11 percentage points less likely to predict this outcome for their children than were control group parents (Exhibit 17). We do not find similar decreases in expectations for other levels of education such as graduating college, which we might have expected to see if parents had lower expectations about their children’s future education, nor in measures of hope, which we might have expected to see if parents were less optimistic in general. Because we do not find other results consistent with this one, we believe that this finding may be due to chance.

³⁰ Louisiana Believes (n.d.).

Exhibit 17: SGIP Parents Were Less Likely to Expect Their Children to At Least Complete High School at End-of-Pilot but Similarly Likely to Expect Their Children to At Least Complete College



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

Some interviewed parents reported an increase in their children’s confidence and happiness, and thus their children’s relationship with school. Some parents used the GI to pay for school supplies, tuition, and school uniforms. Parents were able to pay for better haircuts and clothes, helping children feel more confident when attending school. Andrea explained:

You know how kids want to go to school with the nice shoes and the nice—the new uniforms. And at one point in time, I wasn’t able to do all of that. They was wearing hand-me-downs or cheap shoes and stuff like that. So I guess he—they feel more confident about their self because they got better clothes, better shoes. And they’re looking good and keeping their hair cut.

Some interviewed parents reported feeling the GI improved children’s performance at school because of this confidence.

A few parents, such as Briana, felt like they saw a behavioral change in their children because GI improved the stability in their children’s life and because they were more present:

My son. He was really acting out a lot during the time I was working two jobs. Mostly because I just wasn’t around enough. So, he doesn’t do that at all now because he is getting more attention. So, he’s not trying to seek that from school. He’s getting it at home.

But there were a few other parents who said that their children always had good performance at school, both before and during GI, because they always enjoyed school.



Parenting and Children’s Well-being

Interviewed parents reported that the increased ability to meet their children’s needs with GI had a major effect on their parenting practices and children’s well-being. The interview data demonstrate that this took place through multiple mechanisms, including parents being better able to attend to children’s needs and spend time with them, and feeling less distracted by work and financial stress.

GI also allowed parents to better attend to children’s health, mental health, and developmental needs. Parents were able to spend more time with their children, which also affected children’s mental health (see Chapter 6 for more information).¹ Misty described how she feels like she can attend to her children’s needs because she is home with them:

Just life...Day to day stuff, and being able to be home with [my kids]...and get through their schoolwork in order...one of them had a weakness with math, one of them had [a weakness] with social studies and science...and I just been able to be at home and be able to work with them and do little stuff, because it takes time.

Some interviewed parents said that GI helped them meet the needs of their growing children because they could buy them shoes and clothes. About half of parents used GI to pay for enrichment activities such as sports or dance. Jessica, a single mother of two young children, noted:

If I wasn’t receiving the guaranteed income, I would not be able to allow my children to participate in a lot of things. So, it really has made the quality of life and my children’s school experience for their first year, it really has helped to enhance that experience for all of us.

Most parents reported being able to do small things that were out of the ordinary for them, such as eating out; buying small treats; or taking children to paid activities such as trampoline parks, science centers, and movies. For some parents, these small experiences had a significant influence on the quality of their interactions with their children. For example, Rhonda, a grandmother who was the guardian for several children described taking her grandchildren out:

Because when I took them places that...I wouldn’t have been able to take them... We get in the car and we’re going to go to Chuck E Cheese.... Then that’s a smile that’s on their face, you know what I’m saying? Because they’re able to go somewhere. I was like, okay, well... we’re going to do McDonald’s today or whatever. Then that’s a smile. So yeah, it did impact them. Or I’m going to go and get them some shoes today. You know, our kids—when they see new shoes and they be so excited, you know what I’m saying? I was able to get them dolls and shoes or whatever. I said, okay, for Christmas, I’m going to get my grandkids some nice stuff, whatever. So to see the light on their face. So yeah, it did have an impact on them because they were actually happy that they got a chance to get things that I wouldn’t be able to get them. So to see the smile on their faces...

Some parents credited GI with helping them feel better about their parenting because it allowed them to show up for their children in ways they could not before. Parents aspired to meet the needs of their children. When they could not, their self-esteem and self-worth suffered. (See Chapter 5 for more information on this topic.)

31 Li & Guo (2023).

Brandon's Story

Brandon is a single dad with one son. His story shows how GI affects multiple aspects of families' lives, leading to interrelated and compounding improvements in overall well-being.

Brandon reported that the GI pilot caused “a great change in a small amount of time” for his family. He experienced increased financial security during the pilot, which decreased his stress levels and blood pressure and improved his overall health. With the extra income, Brandon could afford to quit his second job. The extra time and cash, along with his improved health, allowed Brandon to spend more quality time with his son. He made more effort to regularly play sports and go out to restaurants and arcades with his son. Brandon expressed gratitude because “we were able to afford the little things, like the little things in life that that I know that [my son] wants and that he would like.”

SGIP also helped improve his son's schooling. Brandon moved to a safer neighborhood with a school that is better suited to his son's needs:

I feel like he's getting the proper, the one-on-one education that he needs. The deans at school, now, they communicate with me. They call me every day. Just give me updates, make sure his schoolwork is up to par. Grades are improved...I'm talking about from D's and C's to, he's A, B honor roll now. So it's a big difference.

Brandon also could afford to enroll his son in more extracurricular activities and academic programs. With the GI, Brandon began giving his son a monthly allowance to teach him how to spend and save money.

Brandon also went back to school to complete his associate degree, using the GI to help pay tuition. At the time of his SGIP interview, Brandon was interviewing for jobs that aligned with his degree and interest. Brandon said that the “biggest change” was the newfound sense of stability:

Sometimes you wonder, especially being behind on bills and trying to make ends meet or robbing Peter to pay Paul...we don't worry about that anymore. We don't worry about the lights being cut off or somebody come knocking on the door with the eviction notice...we're very happy now. And it's amazing how much like a little impact, a little financial help will help out.



Chapter 5. *SGIP*'s Effect on Participants' Agency, Hope, and Sense of Mattering

Living in poverty and experiencing economic uncertainty make it challenging to create and execute plans. This uncertainty can cause people to feel a loss of autonomy and a lack of confidence in their ability to deal with new situations. One potential effect of receiving GI could be an increased ability to deal with unpredictable situations and plan for the future.³² This could translate to participants having greater hope for the future, an increased sense of their own mattering and self-worth, and a more positive sense of self in general. Further, with the stable income from GI, *SGIP* participants could choose to shift their time away from work to focus on spending time with their children, which could improve their positive feelings about themselves as parents.

In this chapter we present quantitative and qualitative evidence together to describe how receiving GI might have affected participants' sense of self.

Findings on Participants' Agency, Hope, and Sense of Mattering In Brief

- Interview data point to some improvements in participants' agency and hope during the pilot, and there are hints of these improvements in the survey data. However, we do not find significant effects at any time point for the survey-based scale we used to measure agency and hope.
- GI might have helped *SGIP* parents increase their sense of mattering during the pilot, primarily through helping them meet their children's needs and supporting their social network.

Agency and Hope

We measure various aspects of the subjective sense of self using the Adult Hope Scale.³³ The scale asks questions about respondents' internal feelings about present and future goals. We do not find significant effects at any time point (Exhibit 18). The general pattern in scores suggests that GI might have improved these outcomes for parents receiving GI at mid-pilot but worsened them post-pilot; we cannot say this with any reasonable level of statistical confidence, however.

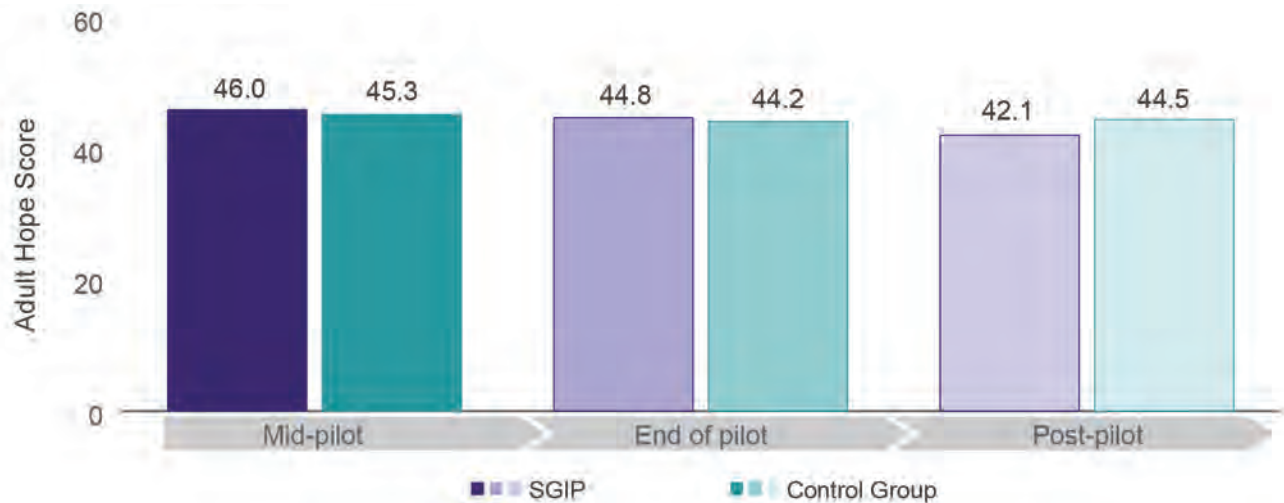
In interviews, parents were asked about self-perceptions of their mental health, levels of agency, and ability to set goals and take risks. Some parents reported an increased sense of agency while receiving GI. A few interviewed parents attributed this to the ability to take more time for themselves, including Briana: “[GI] made me feel like a new person. Being able to just have free time to myself, have more time with the kids. I feel brand new.” Some parents felt more confident while receiving GI because their finances, and subsequently their lives, were more stable. Brooke, mother of three teenagers, described feeling more confident because she “just know[s] that [GI] is going to be there.” Leslie said about receiving GI:

It's freedom. And knowing that you can provide, you know, and take care of stuff and not have disconnect notices and all that other stuff.

³² West et al. (2023).

³³ Snyder et al. (1991).

Exhibit 18: SGIP did not Significantly Change Parents' Sense of Agency and Hope



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

These parents attributed their increased sense of agency to the existence and consistency of GI funds, which allowed them to meet their household obligations and provide a stable living situation for themselves and their family members. It follows that after the pilot and consistent payments ended, parents' sense of agency and hope decreased, as suggested by the survey results.

A few SGIP parents described new aspirations they had considered unobtainable before GI; they described aspiring towards or reaching new goals, including homeownership, increasing their savings, improving their credit, buying a car, pursuing career certifications, and finding new jobs that aligned with their career goals or allowed them to better care for their children. A few interviewed parents said that receiving GI allowed them to begin thinking about long-term goals. When talking about her goal of homeownership, Andrea said:

I'm leaning to buying a house. Because I do want to buy a house...by me getting the extra money, by me working, I felt like, okay. You probably can do this. You probably got a shot or a chance.

Rhonda talked about wanting to start a small business in which she would make and sell baby clothes. She said that before the pilot she "probably wouldn't even be thinking about it" because she did not have sufficient funds to take this risk.



Community Connection and Relationships with Others

Our survey included the Interpersonal Mattering Scale, which asks questions about respondents' perceptions of their relationships with others.³⁴ We do not find statistically significant differences between *SGIP* parents and the control group (Exhibit 19).

For *SGIP* participants, increases in self-worth are likely due to the numerous ways that GI helped parents meet their children's needs. Many interviewed parents reported increased self-worth and a greater sense of confidence because they could better care for their children while receiving GI. Interviewed parents reported an increased ability to spend quality time with their children; to afford necessities such as food, clothing, school supplies, and healthcare; and to "say yes more." Half of interviewed parents reported that having more time and money allowed them to show up more for their children, thus improving their mental health and happiness. Jessica shared that "the guaranteed income really kind of gave me a cushion and a way to be there for my children in the way that I wanted to."

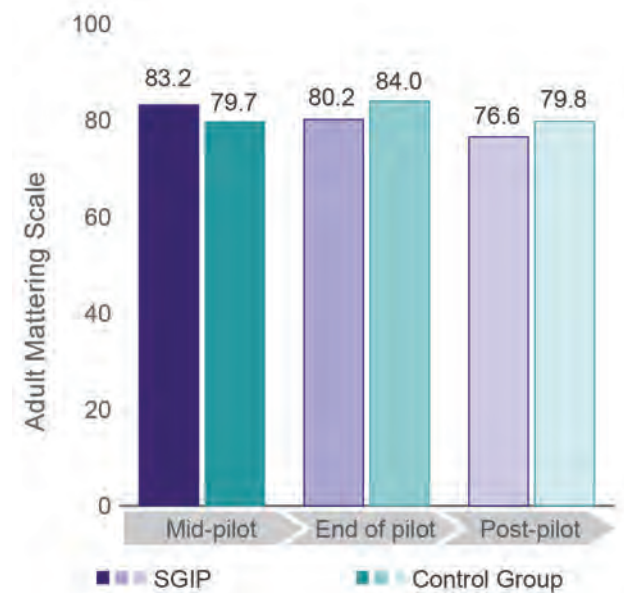
Said Crystal:

When I got the money [pause], it made me feel better about myself when it came down to that part. As a mother, you as a parent, I'm going to say as a parent, because there are a lot of single fathers, as a parent, it just changes your whole mind frame. It changes how you feel, how you see things, how you can look towards your kids and say, "I'm good, I can do this. I can spend time with my kids."

Additionally, most interviewed parents reported investing more in their social network and community while receiving GI. They were better able to tend to personal relationships because they had the means and mental and emotional energy to attend to the needs of friends and family. For example, about half of interviewed

parents provided direct financial assistance to other people in their life, particularly family members. This included paying siblings', parents', or grandparents' rent and utility bills as well as other necessities such as medicine and groceries. One interviewed parent had a friend stay with her to help the friend with rent. Participants, including Rhonda, reported that GI "was a helping hand for not just me but the people around me, as well."

Exhibit 19: *SGIP* did not Significantly Change Participants' Sense of Interpersonal Mattering



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

For some interviewed parents, the increased resources—time and money—allowed them to provide emotional support and help with specific tasks for family members and friends. For example, one participant spoke about how GI helped her pay for car insurance and gas, which allowed her to better care for her disabled mother by taking her to doctor's appointments. Another participant used GI to purchase a car after hers broke down. She used this new car to visit her stepmom regularly after her dad passed. Without the GI, she would have had to get a loan for the car. Another participant,

³⁴ Elliott et al. (2004); for example, the Interpersonal Mattering Scale asks respondents if there are people who are proud of them for their successes, if other people listen to them, and if there are people who care enough about them to criticize when necessary.

Brooke, discussed how GI helped her regularly support her girlfriend and babysitter by buying them gas and groceries: *“I was helping my friends and family before you gave me the money. It just helped me do it more confidently.”* She also let her sister’s coworker stay with her for a reduced rent rate.

A few interviewed parents, while receiving the GI, were able to socialize and engage more in their social networks. For example, Leslie was able to buy gifts for her mother to thank her for helping with the children:

Since I know I have that money coming, it can go towards my utilities. So extra money that I have, I can go and get my mother, you know, to be honest, like a bottle of wine and roses or clothes or something to show that I appreciate her for getting the kids while I’m working those long hours.

Another interviewed parent, Brandon, talked about having more time and energy to be *“more social”* and *“out meeting new people.”* He experienced greater levels of happiness

and confidence because he could spend more quality time with friends and could see more of his friends than before the pilot. He said the GI helped him feel:

A sense of pride, more confident, more social. Yeah. We’re out meeting new people. I’m happy with life right now. It’s been a big change for me. Usually, I would go to work...Now I’m able to have a coffee. I’m able to go 9:00 in the morning and go have a coffee with a friend. I’m able to get to my group brunch. So everything has changed.

In light of the positive outcomes that many interviewed parents attributed to GI, it is plausible that losing GI would have had a negative effect on these very outcomes. In the post-pilot survey, *SGIP* parents reported lower levels of hope and mattering compared to the control group, but the differences are not statistically significant so we cannot attribute them to the effects of *SGIP* with confidence.

Chapter 6: *SGIP*'s Effect on Income and Work

The net effect of GI on family income is unclear. GI can provide much-needed cash for food and other essentials or facilitate additional paid work by covering expenses such as childcare or auto maintenance, increasing income. Conversely, GI could allow parents to dial back on second or third jobs to spend much-needed quality

time with their children, potentially decreasing income depending on how much parents decrease their work. In this chapter we examine these and other tradeoffs by asking questions about paid and unpaid labor hours, income, job quality, and education.

Findings on Income and Work In Brief

- *SGIP* parents forewent some additional earnings while the GI payments augmented their income, resulting in total income that was similar to or higher than the control group's.
- When *SGIP* parents worked less, they did so primarily by dropping extra shifts or second and third jobs. *SGIP* parents reported filling the time when they were not working by taking care of their children and themselves.
- Some interviewed parents used the financial stability of GI to return to and complete postsecondary programs.

Household Income

We find that *SGIP* parents had annual individual income \$2,863 higher than control group members at mid-pilot, and this difference is marginally significant. We find a similar-sized estimate for household income, and this difference is also marginally significant. If participants' earnings had been unchanged, we would have expected GI to increase their income by \$7,920, which suggests that one of the primary ways participants used their GI was to cut back on work.

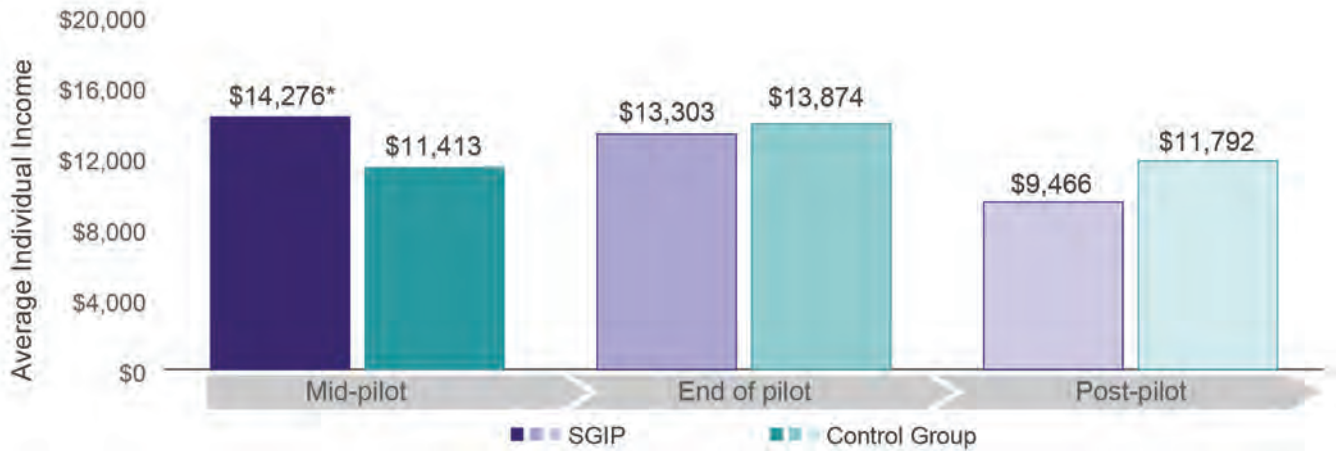
Interestingly, we do not see evidence of significant effects on individual or household income at end-of-pilot. Post-pilot, both individual and household income are lower for *SGIP* participants compared with the control group, but only significantly so for household income. This pattern would be consistent with *SGIP*

parents gradually cutting back on work over the course of the pilot, such that by the end of the pilot they had reduced earned income by the amount of the GI payment, and then increasing their work post-pilot, but not to pre-pilot levels.

In the survey, *SGIP* parents reported having fewer jobs than members of the control group at mid-pilot (Exhibit 22). When we examine the likelihood of holding one or more jobs, there are no significant differences between *SGIP* participants and the control group. As such, we interpret the lower number of jobs as being a function of *SGIP* parents cutting back on second or third "supplemental" or "gig" jobs while maintaining at least one primary job. This pattern is also consistent with interviewed parents' discussions of the changes they had made to their work.

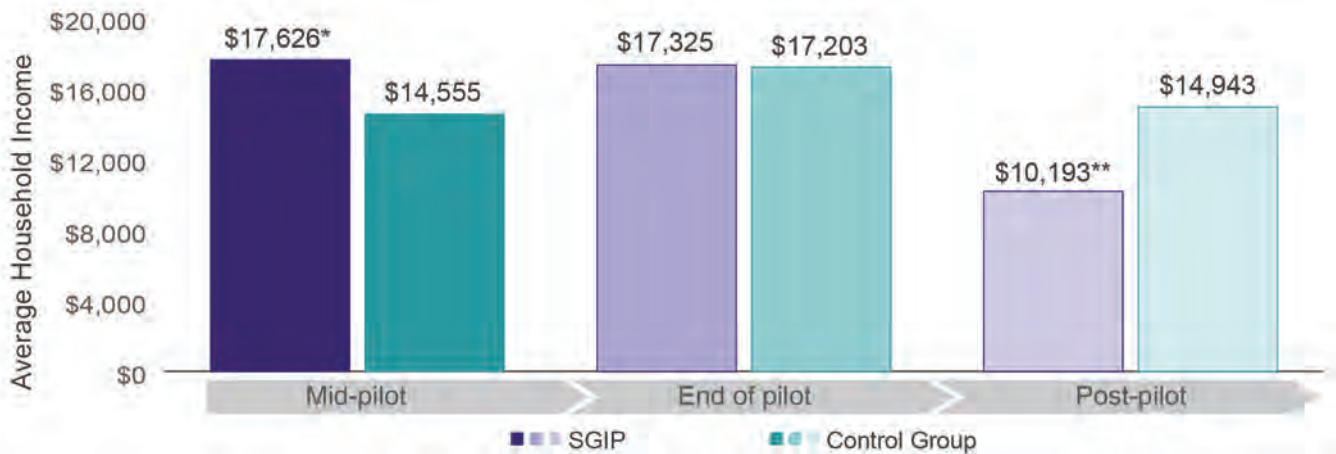
³⁵ All participants were single parents at the time of application but could have had additional household income beyond their individual income if children in the household worked, received child support, or received public benefits. Some participants might also have lived with additional members of the household who were not romantic partners or who were not present at application. We did not collect detailed information on these other sources of income.

Exhibit 20: *SGIP* Increased Individual Income at Mid-Pilot



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

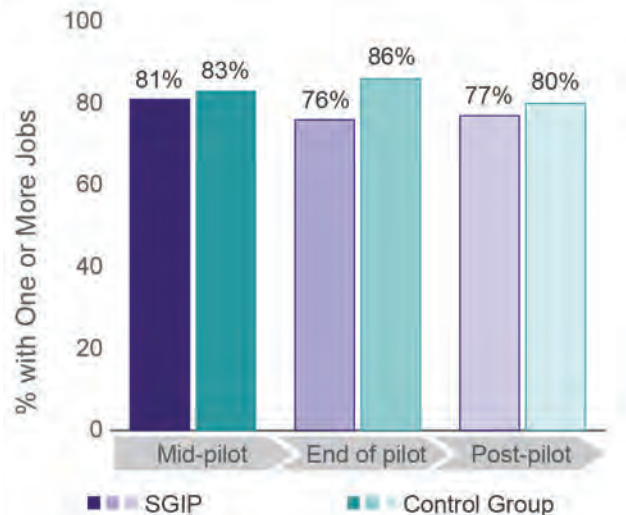
Exhibit 21: *SGIP* Increased Household Income at Mid-Pilot and Decreased Household Income at Post-Pilot



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

Some interviewed parents said that GI had no impact on their employment, but about half said that they reduced their work hours by cutting back on overtime, second jobs, or gig jobs so that they could spend more time with their children or get some rare occurrences of rest. Most interviewed parents were working low-wage jobs, some with inconsistent work schedules, often at big box retailers, restaurants, or in fast food. Often these were shift jobs, and overtime seemed to be a common mechanism that parents used to meet their expenses.

Exhibit 22: *SGIP* Did Not Significantly Change the Proportion of Parents with At Least One Job



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

Brooke described feeling less stressed and more empowered to rest and care for herself because she could afford to work less overtime while receiving the GI:

I don't have to stress about—like, I work my regular hours, but for both of the jobs... there's overtime available. I didn't have to worry about, okay, I need to work this amount of overtime to make ends meet, because I have a backup.

Most interviewed parents continued to work at least a full-time job or run small businesses from home. Most of the parents who said they cut back on work explained doing so in order

to spend more time with their children and be better caregivers. Crystal discussed how rare it had been for her to have two days off in a week:

I've never actually had it to where I've had two days off in a week [pause]. I've only sometimes I didn't even have one, I would have to, I would feel like, "Oh, I have to work. Go ahead and make some more extra money."

When the interviewer asked Shannon, a mother of two young children, how she "filled" the 4 to 5 hours she cut back on work, she responded: "I fill it with my kids and myself."



Kimberly's Story

Kimberly is a single mom to a young child. Her story shows how GI can help stabilize households as parents secure consistent employment.

In the beginning of the pilot, Kimberly worked at a restaurant chain. Prior to receiving GI, she would have her mother watch her son while she worked, but she put him in daycare once the pilot started because the daycare hours were more reliable. One day, a few months after the pilot started, the daycare called her and said her son was sick, so she had to pick him up. She brought him to her work, which was typical in the past and never caused problems or conflict. However, a customer complained about him, and Kimberly was fired a few days later. She got another job at a fast food chain a few weeks later, but she wasn't getting as many hours as she wanted at that job. She had

to use a ride-service to get to work because her car was unusable after she had lent it to someone, and paying for ride-services such as Lyft and Uber to and from work cost more than what she was paid during her shifts. She quit her job at that fast food chain and started working at a different one where she had more hours and was paid more.

Throughout these employment transitions, Kimberly used GI to pay her bills. This included partial rent, wi-fi, electric, and phone bills. If she had not received the GI payments, she would have donated plasma to pay for these expenses, as she had in the past. GI allowed her to have financial stability while she found a reliable job. Kimberly said GI also helped her get her son clothes and toys and helped her learn to budget and save.



But, a few parents also carefully calculated the tradeoff between paid work and unpaid work. Rhonda mentioned leaving her job at a childcare facility because it neither paid enough nor allowed her to meet the needs of her grandchildren:

I was working at a daycare, but it's really kind of hard to be able to work and then try to take care of them because then if I—childcare only going to pay so much and if you're working or whatever. So childcare wasn't paying full-time. So I might as well stay at home and be able to take care—because I'm not really balancing—you know what I'm saying?

Job Quality and Satisfaction

In the survey, we also asked parents how they felt about their work and whether they had looked for work because they wanted to or because others thought they should. At mid-pilot and the end of the pilot, *SGIP* parents were more likely to report they had looked for work in the past 6 months because they wanted to find work, compared with control group members; these findings are significant at the end of the pilot, but not mid-pilot (Appendix Table C1).³⁶ Because we asked this question of parents regardless of their employment status, and almost all parents were employed, we interpret this as primarily describing parents looking for better work, rather than deciding whether to be employed. This would suggest that *SGIP* parents were more likely to be looking for opportunities that offer better pay or better schedules or are otherwise better for their lives.

At the end of the pilot, *SGIP* parents were more likely to report that their job was fulfilling, which might suggest they were able to be more selective about their employment towards the end of the pilot (Exhibit 24). By post-pilot, however, *SGIP* parents reported similar levels of fulfillment as the control group, which we

In the survey data, survey data shows that the difference in number of jobs between *SGIP* participants and control group members declines and loses significance after *SGIP* ends, supporting the idea that households felt able to temporarily cut back on some work to prioritize other things, such as spending time with family. We do not find significant effects on participation in paid or unpaid work (Exhibit 23), although *SGIP* parents were more likely than control group members to be workers post-pilot (Appendix Table C1). This could reflect parents using gig work to make up for hours they let go during the pilot. We do not find significant effects on employment status (full-time, part-time, etc.) at mid-pilot or the end of the pilot (Appendix Table C1).

might expect if they needed to be less selective to replace the lost GI income.³⁷ It is also possible that *SGIP* parents had a less positive outlook on the same kinds of jobs post-pilot, because they had been able to take a break from them or were less optimistic in general in response to the end of GI.

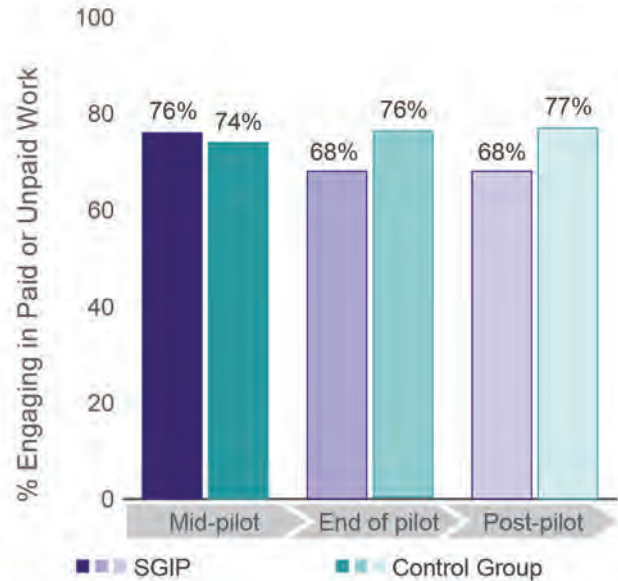
A few interviewed parents said GI helped them transition to a new job. For example, Rhonda said that the income helped her transition out of her previous employment and find a work-from-home job. This was important because she could not find affordable and safe childcare. She noted that the work-from-home job was still not providing her with the income she needed to take care of her family and move in a more stable direction, but it allowed her to take care of her grandchildren: *“It’s—I’m still not getting ahead. You know, whatever. So I just stay at home and take care of them.”*

Most interviews did not discuss the effect that GI had on attitudes towards employment, but some parents mentioned that it helped them increase their independence through starting their own business or prioritizing their own needs. One parent mentioned she had

³⁶ Respondents were asked to report their agreement with the statement “In the last 6 months I looked for work because I wanted to” on a 5-point scale, with higher scores indicating greater agreement.

experience completing taxes in the past and was able to use GI to purchase software to create her own business. Another mentioned that it allowed her the space to deal with a

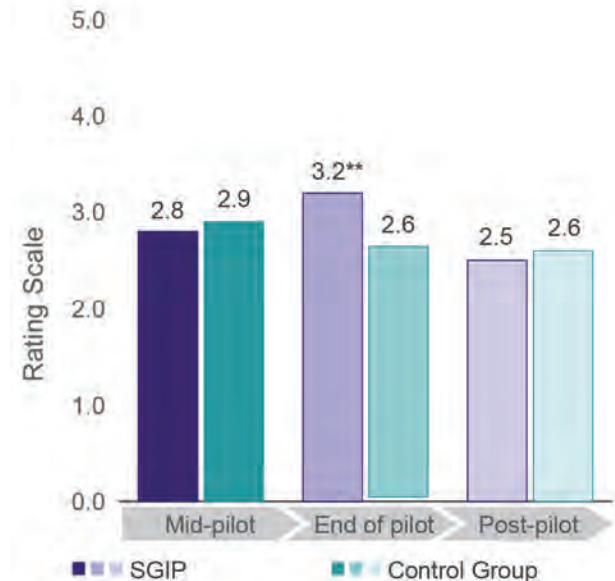
Exhibit 23: SGIP did not Significantly Change the Percentage of Parents in Paid or Unpaid Work



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

personal tragedy and not take on outside employment, instead focusing on running her small business.

Exhibit 24: SGIP Parents Agreed More Strongly that Their Job Was Fulfilling at End-of-Pilot



Asterisks denote statistically significant differences, as follows: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

Educational Enrollment and Attainment

Some parents were able to further their education or obtain career certifications while receiving GI. Some interviewed parents went back to school to complete a degree during the GI pilot. One parent used GI to help pay tuition for his associate degree. Another parent reported that GI allowed her to go back to her associate degree program because it freed up her time. Because GI provided a reliable source of income, she no longer had to work 12- or 13-hour days to make ends meet, cutting back her work hours by 4 to 5 hours each day to study. A few parents went back to school because their stress and anxiety levels decreased while

receiving GI, which allowed them to focus on their education. Natasha shared,

I actually have like generalized anxiety and ADHD and this which I really didn't realize until I tried clinicals for the first time. And I just couldn't focus. But it's hard trying to do your work and you think about how you're going to pay this and that. So I can say that the income did help me in that area because I wasn't stressing about little, small, simple stuff like that anymore.

37 Respondents were asked to describe how personally fulfilling their job was on a scale from "Not at all fulfilling" to "Very fulfilling."

Chapter 7. Lessons from *SGIP* about the Administration of Safety Net Programs

The philosophy of GI as unconditional, unrestricted, and trusting in participants' agency differs markedly from the philosophy of the means-tested and often conditional nature of existing U.S. social safety net programs. Applying for and receiving benefits can make recipients feel distrusted, both by the agencies administering the benefits, which can require extensive documentation and personal details, and by other parties such as politicians and members of the public who sometimes criticize people receiving benefits, suggesting they are lazy or undeserving.

One goal of the evaluations of MGI-supported GI pilots in six cities is to learn more about participants' experiences with a different and less administratively burdensome safety net program. To that end, this chapter describes the implementation of *SGIP* in more detail and compares participants' experiences to those they have had with other programs such as SNAP. These lessons can be applied to future GI pilots and programs and incorporated into reforms of existing programs.

Implementation Lessons In Brief

- The *SGIP* implementation team aimed to destigmatize financial assistance for families with low incomes by making the application and onboarding process easy; *SGIP* was mostly successful in achieving this goal. Interviewed parents spoke about the ease and friendly nature of the FEC staff.
- A few interviewed parents reported having to address negative narratives about *SGIP* in the community.
- Some interviewed parents reported feeling anxious and worried about the end of the GI payments because it would worsen their financial stability.

The *SGIP* Implementation Team Aimed to Destigmatize Financial Assistance for Families with Low Incomes by Making the Application and Onboarding Process Easy

The stigma surrounding public benefits usage can sometimes be perpetuated by the way benefits programs are operated. Staff from FEC reported that 75 percent or more of parents in the pilot were receiving some kind of means-tested benefits. Both implementation staff and some parents discussed the stigma and judgement surrounding public benefits usage, including misconceptions that people who use public benefits are lazy or undeserving. Jennifer described that:

People who make the money don't understand the people who don't. I think they think that we're lazy and we don't work and we don't want to work if we're on government assistance. And we're all you know, I think that they need to understand that you know, some people are working to be better. We're not all lazy because we're on food stamps. You don't have to put your nose up because we have government assistance, because some of us are actually trying to make it and want to do better. I don't want to use that. I have food stamps as a crutch. I want it to help me, you know, because at this point right now, I can't afford to do all of it.

The implementation team’s vision was to make the application and onboarding experience for SGIP easy and positive, and they were mostly successful in achieving this goal.

When asked how the GI application and baseline survey compared to that of SNAP, some interviewed parents said that the SNAP application was longer and more difficult; a few said they were about the same. Briana reported that *“the SNAP application is actually harder to fill out than the guaranteed income was”* because *“SNAP, they kind of get down and dirty. They want to know a lot. They want to know everything.”* She went on to talk about benefits programs’ complicated application processes and the lengthy wait times:

With food stamps and childcare assistance and anything that you get from the state, it can be—it’s a 30 day—like you have—you do the application, and then you have to wait up to 30 days for a decision. And you have to turn in paperwork, and jump through hoops and, you know, prove everything. With you guys, it was just like, okay, you get—you’re qualified, we’re going to give it to you, that’s it.

A few interviewed parents did report feeling that the GI application and survey were long or that the questions were *“very personal.”*

Alicia described the application process for Supplemental Security Income for her child as worse than that of GI because she had to talk to many people and wait a long time to receive the benefits. The agency also asked comprehensive questions about her child’s biological father, which was retraumatizing because she did not know the biological father. Asked how this experience compared to her experience with the GI application and survey, she said:

This program here is more relaxing. I mean, yes, you all have a lot of questions, sometimes. But you all know how to ask the questions without making it feel uncomfortable. And places like that Social Security Office and stuff, they ask them personal questions that’s not even supposed to be asked. I would rather go through a program like this than go through the Social Security Office.

The ease of and environment in an onboarding process can also make a difference in how people feel about their participation in benefits programs. Interviewed parents appreciated that the onboarding staff at FEC were friendly and kind, and the process was smooth, clear, and simple. Interviewed parents said they applied through a link on the pilot website, received a phone call if they were chosen, and attended the onboarding appointment at FEC.

At the onboarding appointment, parents provided onboarding documentation and downloaded the Steady app. FEC staff then explained the pilot program and process, provided benefits counseling, and answered any questions. They also offered optional financial counseling services to participants that would be administered by the FEC. FEC staff reported that the onboarding process took about 30 minutes per participant and that staff took extra time to hear parents’ needs and stories if they shared:

We’re hearing all those stories. But naturally for us, that’s what we’re here for. Even though we’re financial counselors and we help people in that aspect, it’s kind of like we’re counselors first. It’s us listening to them and seeing if there’s any way that we can support or help them. Then we get to the other parts.

FEC’s approach to the onboarding appointment centered parents’ feelings and personal experiences and helped parents feel at ease. Brandon said of his FEC onboarding experience:

I met with [FEC staffer] in the office. [My son] was actually at school, but, I mean, [the FEC staffer] sat down and talked to me. Got information and she told me that we were eligible. So yeah, I mean, in the group there at that office [laugh], that group is amazing. They’re so down to earth. I love them. Like all of them. Like it was several people in the office that came out and like right after, you know what I’m talking about. So it was, yeah. It’s a great office. Great, great group of people



A few interviewed parents also appreciated that the turnaround time to receive GI was short. They compared this to the turnaround time for other benefits such as housing vouchers. Crystal said:

You all’s [process] was more easy. It didn’t feel as [pause] stressful to do because I have been waiting on any type of housing relief for 3½ years.

The FEC Staff Hoped to Build a Strong Rapport with Participants During Onboarding

Implementation staff hoped that as part of enrolling participants into the GI pilot, they could build a longer-term relationship with them and provide them with financial empowerment services. In addition to explaining the pilot and providing benefits counseling, FEC

staff informed participants of FEC’s financial counseling services during their onboarding appointments. Staff also spent time listening to and understanding participants’ life experiences and needs during enrollment in order to build trust with participants.

Interviewed Parents Appreciated the Flexibility That GI Provided

GI’s design differs from other benefits programs because GI is unrestricted and unconditional. This reduces parents’ sense of stigma and shame because it allows them the flexibility to use and prioritize the benefit for their specific needs. This flexible design was a surprise to a few parents. Brooke said that she thought the pilot “*would be some sort of catch. Like we were going to... have to do something, and it wasn’t like that at all. It was just given to us.*”

GI’s flexibility is evidenced by the wide variety of expenditures for which people used GI, including rent, utilities, medical bills, groceries, transportation, outings with children, clothes for children, savings, and debt, among others. Asked whether she preferred to use SNAP or GI, Monica explained:

Oh, guaranteed income [laughs]. Of course. But I mean that it would be great too if next year I could put the guaranteed income on there and just give them like maybe half and they could put half, but they would put my rent up to like \$700 when I can't afford. That's going to be all the income from the guaranteed so you can't win or lose. You kind of have to make a choice. Do you want to be struggling again, do you want to save

money for your house? You have to pick one. At that time, I needed to catch up on my bills, and catch up when kids needed refrigerators and clothes, they needed blankets. They didn't have any. They needed a lot."

Monica was able to use the GI for her and her children's immediate needs because she had the flexibility to use the GI for anything.

Participants Reported Having to Address Negative Narratives About SGIP

Interviewed parents discussed the local public's perceptions of the SGIP in Shreveport. A few parents talked about how some people spoke negatively about the pilot and its cost. Said Sierra: "Older generations saying it's taking taxpayer's money. Money could go towards other things, things like that." Felicia, another SGIP participant, pointed out that perceptions of laziness are inaccurate because she herself was working 40 hours per week while receiving the GI:

It was negative stuff. They need to work, and they shouldn't be getting free money. They should have a job and I was like, I have a job. I work 40 hours a week. And still nothing. So, if you're getting it you're lazy. It was some negative stuff. It wasn't all peaches and cream.

Jacqueline addressed misconceptions that people who received GI did not need it to improve their lives:

[People said] they just giving out free money again. People really don't need it. And I did jump in. They didn't, of course, looking at me, they didn't assume like, yeah, she's one of them, but I was like, people do need it. You don't know what people are going through. You don't know how people's lives are. It's like—I'm living proof. You don't know what's going on.

A FEC staff member who onboarded pilot participants and regularly works with people who have low incomes, similarly said:

We see those clients that really truly are trying their best to budget. They just don't have enough money to be able to make ends meet, or they don't have enough money to be able to have a better quality of life.



Some Interviewed Parents were Worried as the End-Of-Pilot Approached and had Suggestions for Modifications to the Pilot Program

Parents were interviewed towards the end of the pilot. During the interviews, some parents reported feeling anxious and worried about the end of the GI payments, because it would worsen their financial stability. Amber shared:

It's going to go back to being a hard fight, baby. It's going to go back to being a hard fight. But then, I mean, I don't have no choice. I still got to—I got to just push through and do what I have to do, you know what I'm saying? So, yeah, it will be different because it's going to be a hard fight. Because I feel like with the last year that they have given it to me, that was income, like you said, that was guaranteed income. And I knew that I could be able to pay these things with that. So now that I'm going to lose it, which I knew wasn't going to last forever, but I'm just still saying. So that puts me back in the position that I was.

Parents anticipated managing the end of the pilot in different ways. During the pilot a few parents were able to find better-paying jobs or jobs that were in their field of interest. A few said they would have to find a second job to make ends meet after the pilot. One parent said they would no longer be able to pay for their children's extracurricular activities. Another said they would have to move closer to family for help with childcare.

Despite anxiety about the pilot ending, many parents expressed appreciation for the relief the pilot provided. When asked whether they had any suggestions to policymakers about the design of a GI pilot, a few parents wanted the program to be offered to others in need because of how helpful it was to them. A few parents wanted the pilot to be extended, with Destiny specifying that 2 years would be beneficial:

I think 2 years is enough time for somebody to find another position that would cover what that—what the guaranteed income was bringing them. That's enough time. No matter what it is, you can get an AA degree in 2 years.

A few parents also preferred to receive payments at the beginning of the month because that's when most household bills are due. Briana spoke to her belief that GI should be an additional benefit that doesn't count towards your income when determining eligibility for other benefits:

I feel if they add it as an actual income, like you're earning it, then that's going to still take away from like if you get SNAP like me, then that's going to take away from that. And then they're going to cancel that out. So, you're going to have to pay for food. So, you're still not going to get ahead on anything.

Chapter 8: Discussion



The Shreveport Guaranteed Income program's primary goal was to stabilize families in the wake of COVID. Overall, the pilot had success in meeting this goal for the duration of the pilot, improving the lives of *SGIP* parents in many ways. These include higher income, greater food security, and lower household chaos, as well as likely greater financial wellness and ability to pay a \$400 emergency expense. Data from participant interviews also highlights success on parents' well-being, such as reduced stress and increased time for parenting. However, we did not detect improvements in other areas where they might be expected, such as survey-based measures of physical health or agency. This might be at least partially due to the small number of study members, which limits our ability to detect impacts. It also likely reflects the limits of using a 1-year intervention to address entrenched and complex needs resulting from the experiences of families living in poverty in Shreveport.

The quantitative data show that when GI disbursements stopped, *SGIP* parents' experiences largely returned to the prior levels of well-being. It is possible that returning to

the extraordinary levels of work many of the *SGIP* parents had been maintaining prior to GI and the financial insecurity that came without GI mostly erased the improvements achieved during the pilot. Though some interviewed parents reported using GI in ways that might potentially be long-lasting, we do not see evidence that these kinds of investments in future well-being improved participants' lives on average after the GI payments ended.

This is not surprising considering the short duration of the cash and the intersecting barriers that *SGIP* parents face, including a city confronting economic uncertainty; limited state and local supports for low-income families; lack of access to good-paying jobs; and the compounded, systemic, and often traumatic barriers and experiences faced by being Black, women, and the sole provider for a family. It could also reflect the limited length of follow up in this study, which is not able to comment on the results of longer-term investments in future well-being, such as obtaining an associate degree.

Recommendations

Future short-term GI pilots might consider whether program modifications could result in more sustained gains in well-being or ease the exit from GI. Three possibilities arise from the findings discussed in this report.

Consider lengthening the duration of the pilot or tapering the funds. Prior research has established the sustained benefits of long-term cash transfers.³⁸ Some benefits of cash transfers, such as those observed in *SGIP*, emerge immediately. However, particularly for single parents with low incomes who face systemic barriers such as limited childcare options, low wages, and limited familial support, a 1-year pilot might not be long enough to make sustainable changes. There is some evidence that *SGIP* increased participants' aspirations for long-term goals such as homeownership, starting their own business, and further education. But given the limited duration of the GI, few were likely to achieve those goals during the pilot. These types of outcomes take years of financial stability and time to materialize. For example, as noted by a parent above, an associate degree takes 2 years to earn. A longer duration could help participants achieve goals that result in continued payoff such as starting a successful small business or completing a postsecondary education or training program.

Continue to offer participant-led voluntary services. One of the defining features of GI is that participants are not required to engage in any additional services. However, some GI programs offer optional services designed to support participants in meeting their needs and goals. The optional nature of these services allows participants to choose which supports,

if any, to use, based on their own judgement and their unique lives. The FEC offered *SGIP* participants financial services during on and off-boarding. Future pilots and programs could consider offering additional resources to help connect participants to other wraparound services. Access to continued support, such as long term educational or workforce training programs, are valuable supports that could be offered for those parents who are interested in them. We suggest GI program implementing organizations work with participants in equitable, participant-led ways to support them in reaching their self-defined life goals.

Create a longer and more robust offboarding process or taper off GI. This could help parents feel supported or build a sense of connection with support providers. As noted by many interviewed parents, the FEC's excellent onboarding process had already begun to build rapport with participants. Developing a more robust offboarding process could leverage this rapport to help parents access additional wraparound services to proactively plan for the end of the GI benefit. Additional voluntary wraparound supports could include benefits connection or reconnection support, service navigation, or peer support groups. Another approach would be to taper the cash benefit, gradually reducing its value over time so its end is not such an abrupt financial shock.

In summary, this report points to promising short-term results in Shreveport/Caddo Parish and suggests ways policymakers might productively modify program design.

³⁸ Akee et al. (2010); Boyd-Swan et al. (2016); Bullinger et al. (2023); Cooper & Stewart (2021).

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