



Are Your Results Different Than Expected? Interpreting Your Community's SPOC Results

System Planning and Optimization Concepts (SPOC) aims to help communities visualize the potential impact of a few examples of system changes, if they were to occur while holding everything else constant. It is intended to be a thought-provoking way to consider the impact of possible system changes and improvements, **not a detailed system planning and analytics tool**. SPOC results illustrate the potential impact of a change, as well as the relative impact of each approach; results may differ from expected values for any of the reasons listed below. This document is intended to help you interpret the results of SPOC in your community and answer questions about any surprising results.

1. SPOC results accurately reflect what your data says!

This may be the first time you have looked at your community's data in this way, and you may be surprised by the impact that some changes (like improving project performance) can have.

2. SPOC models a single change at a time

SPOC's inputs are intentionally simplified to allow communities to explore system change concepts in a quick and easy way. As a result, it does not consider the many different complexities that may exist in a community to affect the way a homeless system functions. SPOC assumes that all projects of a project type perform identically and provides only a few different options to describe project performance, when in fact homeless response systems are all uniquely complex. All results represent estimates and are best viewed relative to one another, rather than as absolute outcomes.

For comprehensive analysis and data-driven system planning that takes into account the complexities of your community and system, Focus Strategies offers our [System-Wide Analytics and Projection \(SWAP\)](#) analysis, which includes system performance analysis and population modeling at the individual project level.

3. SPOC assumes the data you enter adequately reflect your community

SPOC allows users to enter and test any data they choose; there are no built-in checkpoints or error messages to indicate that data may be inaccurately entered or that data points are inconsistent with one another.

While this makes SPOC easy to use, it can result in misleading outputs if errors are made. For example, if the Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing capacity entered is significantly less than the sheltered Point In Time count population, modeling results may show a larger decrease in the homeless population than expected. To help communities understand their data and its quality, the first stage of SWAP analysis includes detailed evaluation of key data quality indicators. Check out the [SWAP frequently asked questions](#) for more information on analyzing and assessing data quality.

4. SPOC provides generalized community descriptions and recommendations

SPOC generates a brief community description and offers recommendations for system change options that may be helpful for your community. However, these descriptions and recommendations are simplified and will not capture the nuances of your community and homeless system. For example, SPOC analyzes the proportion of your community's unsheltered homeless population before analyzing system capacity and performance. Communities with a large unsheltered population will see a recommendation to improve system performance, even if their reported performance is already very good. In this situation, the "Improve Performance" option may not have a large effect on the size of the community's homeless population, even though improving performance is likely beneficial in the real world. SPOC users are encouraged to try all of the System Change Options, even those that aren't recommended by SPOC, to visualize the relative effects they have on the size of the community's homeless population. For more detailed and customized analysis and planning, communities should consider SWAP.

If you run into any additional questions about your results or about SPOC in general, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@focusstrategies.net.