

Next Generation Contracting: Applying Results-Based Accountability™ Principles in Contracting¹

Each of the following provisions, for a contract or grant, incorporates a principle from Results-Based Accountability™.

Provision 1: Focus on the most important performance measures.

Specify the most important 3 to 5 measures (a combination of measures of (a) how well services are provided and (b) whether the desired impact was achieved for the customers of the services. If these measures are not identified in the contract itself, the contract should specify a process for quickly agreeing on the measures, with possible reference to the RBA 5 step process in Appendix G of the RBA book.

Provision 2: Engage in a systematic, data-driven, continuous improvement process.

Specify that the contractor will use a continuous improvement process (e.g., RBA Turn-the-Curve Thinking) to monitor and improve performance over time. The contract must specify that this process takes place (usually monthly) at the highest level of overall contractor performance (usually agency or major program level) but should also, if possible, specify that the process will be used (or phased in) to every supervisory relationship.

Provision 3: Funder and contractor (or grantee) will partner to improve performance.

Specify that the funder and contractor will meet periodically (most likely quarterly) to jointly assess performance on the 3 to 5 measures, the story behind the baselines for these measures, and what each party can do to improve performance in the coming period. These meetings should be preceded by the submission of a performance report in RBA format from the contractor to the funder. In these meetings, the funder and contractor act as co-equal partners in helping facilitate improvement. This means that the funder will agree to tasks that can help the contractor improve, such as providing technical assistance, working to break barriers the contractor may be experiencing in getting access to necessary resources or cooperation from other agencies, essentially anything within the funder's means that can materially support the contractor's performance improvement. Nothing in this provision lessens the funder's usual responsibility for oversight of the contractor's performance and use of funds. Nothing in this provision substitutes for the grantee's ongoing improvement process (Provision 2) nor for the contractor's responsibility to pro-actively solve its own problems without the funder's help.

Provision 4: Simplify and standardize performance accountability.

The funder agrees to actively pursue agreement with other funders who also purchase services from the contractor for the purpose of simplifying and standardizing grant application and contractor reporting requirements.

For more information on Next Generation Contracting, contact Phil Lee at the Results Leadership Group, the Nation's Leading Results-Based Accountability Resource, www.resultsleadership.org (ph: 301-907-7541).

¹ Excerpted from "Next-Generation RBA Contracting" (2009, <http://www.resultsaccountability.com/RBA-OBA%20Ideas.htm>) by Mark Friedman, author of *Trying Hard in Not Good Enough* (Trafford 2005). Edited and adapted by Phil Lee, Results Leadership Group, www.resultsleadership.org.