

# The Vermont Accountability Compact

This Compact honors the long Vermont tradition of partners working together to improve the quality of life of our people and our communities. The Compact signals our intent to promote a culture of accountability in pursuit of those ends.

Due to the long history of Results-Based Accountability™ in Vermont, its widespread and growing application across the nonprofit and state sectors, and our belief in the collective impact of a shared framework, the Compact features an RBA approach. We recognize that there are many alternative pathways to greater accountability and welcome all efforts to that end.

By signing the Compact, we commit to support, promote, and regularly assess our progress on the implementation of a culture of accountability in our work.

As a guide towards increasing accountability in our organizations and our communities, we suggest the following steps:

## HOW WE THINK AND TALK

### 1. Language Discipline

- a. Using core language discipline across the public, private and nonprofit sectors in order to work together effectively.
- b. Understanding the difference between two levels of accountability: *population* and *program performance*.
- c. Using specific language around measurement, including:
  - i. *Population results* or *population outcomes* to reference population-level quality of life conditions,
  - ii. *Indicators* to reference the class of measures that tell if those population-level conditions are getting better or worse, and
  - iii. *Performance measures* to separately reference the class of measures that tell if programs, agencies and services systems are working.
- d. For our performance measures, using a framework focused on customer outcomes that asks: *How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?*
- e. Understanding and using baseline data with history and forecasting so that we define success as *turning the curve* rather than comparing to a single point in time.

### 2. Training to Support a Shift in Culture

- a. Providing RBA training to build common understanding of concepts, foster core language discipline, and create a culture of working together to make a difference.
- b. Building in-house capacity to train and support the use of RBA as part of a larger program

of organizational and professional development.

### **3. Communications**

- a. Promoting efforts to “spread the word” about RBA concepts and practices.
- b. Building and participating in an RBA learning collaborative or community of practice.
- c. Developing shared messaging amongst public, private and nonprofit entities to communicate our practices relative to population and performance accountability.

## **WHAT WE DO**

### **1. Infrastructure Improvements**

- a. Working with funders and grantees to simplify and standardize grant applications and grant reporting.
- b. Reviewing our forms to ensure consistency with an outcomes-based approach.

### **2. Planning and Budgeting**

- a. Designing strategic plans to reflect our role in improving community or population-level quality of life, and using performance measures to show how well we are fulfilling that role.
- b. Ensuring that budgeting systems support our role in improving population-level quality of life, and support our use of performance measures, with a focus on customer outcomes, to improve the quality of our services.
- c. Using data transparently to track and drive performance.
- d. Creating a Data Development Agenda and an Information and Research Agenda to support our growth as a learning organization.

### **3. Making our Progress Visible**

- a. Developing visible strategies to reinforce performance accountability, including charts on the walls, and 3 to 5 measures for each level of programming.
- b. Using data on a regular basis for supervision, program oversight and grant and contract reporting.

### **4. Partnering**

- a. Building a network amongst public, private and nonprofit partners to improve the community’s quality of life.
- b. Using *population outcomes* to articulate community ambitions and *population indicators* to assess progress and plan for the future.
- c. Partnering with communities, especially our customers, to improve our services and help others improve theirs.