

Vermont Accountability Group

In October 2017, the Vermont Accountability Group (VAG) Steering Committee analyzed the results of brief interviews conducted with key stakeholders in state government, the legislature, and the non-profit sector. Answers to the interview questions have provided a foundation upon which the VAG will adapt our strategies to be most effective in support of our mission moving forward. Below is an overview of the VAG and our priorities for the next few years.

What do we want?

Desired Outcome: All Vermonters are thriving in sustainable and connected communities

Indicators: Act 186 indicators of individual, community, environmental health and well-being

Who are we?

VAG Mission

The Vermont Accountability Group advances a culture of accountability by creating a forum for sharing information, and developing and supporting a network of public and community partners who are working at population and program levels to “turn the curve” on key issues facing our state.

The Vermont Accountability Group is a group of leaders of nonprofits, private foundations, state government, Marlboro College - Benchmarks for a Better Vermont, and the legislature who have received RBA training and are committed to bringing greater accountability to their organizations, their sector, and Vermont through the use of RBA.

The VAG's role is defined in terms of three priorities for contributing to a culture of accountability aimed at turning the curve on key Vermont issues: (1) Training and Education, (2) Building Data Capacity, and (3) Coordinating and Aligning Efforts and Communications. The VAG is the statewide clearinghouse, connector, and catalyst for prioritizing, encouraging, and coordinating statewide efforts in these areas.

What do we do?

- Provide support to organizations and collaborations utilizing Results-Based Accountability
- Promote RBA training and facilitation resources
- Promote use of common language and tools to demonstrate measurable impact
- Support organizations to use performance measures and population indicator data to monitor trends and turn the curve
- Advocate for policies, statute, resources, and initiatives that build data capacity, encourage measurable and outcomes-oriented accountability, enable systems thinking across silos, and that strengthen infrastructure for collective impact

Who do we serve?

- Non-profit organizations
- State government agencies/departments
- State Legislature
- Private organizations
- Philanthropies
- Collaboratives

How would we know if anyone were better off?

- Organizations know how to use baseline data.
- Organizations are measuring “is anyone better off?”
- Organizations and collaborations know where to find population indicator data.
- Organizations and collaborations know where to find solid evidence about “what works.”
- The Legislature is using Act 186 to monitor trends across the state and set the context for a common agenda.
- Different initiatives to improve outcomes or systems speak to the ends they contribute to achieving.

Vermont Accountability Group Priorities

1. Legislature
 - Support the Government Accountability Committee to use and promote Act 186
 - Support use of simple RBA questions in testimony/committee rooms and provide quick references
 - Support the Government Accountability Committee's recommendation around performance notes
2. State Government
 - Support training, but emphasize mentoring, coaching, facilitating the use of tools and concepts
 - Support the use of common application questions for grant agreements
 - Support expansion of the open data portal and other data hubs (AHS Community Profiles)
3. Non-profit sector
 - Examine training resources and curriculum and plan for the future
 - Support mentoring, coaching, facilitating in order to foster meaningful and disciplined discussion
 - Promote materials, templates, tools, posters that reinforce simplicity and practicality
 - Support accessing hubs for accessing data resources
 - Support accessing hubs for research and best/promising practices
 - Support around data collection and data management
4. Private funders
 - Support the use of common application questions for grant agreements