



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Vermont General Assembly  
From: Government Accountability Committee  
Date: November 5, 2020  
Subject: Annual GAC Report

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***I. Introduction***

The Government Accountability Committee (GAC) focuses on how Vermont State government can be more accountable to Vermonters. Pursuant to [2 V.S.A. § 970\(g\)](#), this annual report sets forth GAC's activities and recommendations to the General Assembly.

In 2020, the GAC's work was curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting extended legislative session. However, during the 2020 session, in [Act No. 166](#), Secs. 17–20, the General Assembly tasked the GAC with approving population-level indicators for Vermonters who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), clarified the purpose of the State's outcomes and indicators, and enacted other provisions of law relating to State data collection and analysis. These and other recent legislative actions help further GAC's work in performance accountability.

This report will provide an overview of the GAC and its prior work and describe its plan for establishing new indicators for BIPOC Vermonters.

## *II. Overview of GAC*

The GAC was created in 2008 to focus specifically on establishing a system of greater accountability and effectiveness in State government. GAC's charge is set forth in [2 V.S.A. § 970](#). This statute requires the GAC to “recommend mechanisms for State government to be more forward-thinking, strategic, and responsive to the long-term needs of Vermonters” and provides nine specific tasks in pursuit of this goal.

The GAC is a joint legislative committee. However, the State's Chief Performance Officer serves as a nonvoting liaison to the Committee and, together with the advice of and collaboration with other important partners in the Executive Branch and other interested legislators, the GAC and its collaborators work for the purpose of ensuring State government is effectively and efficiently operating for the good of the State. This occurs in large part by analyzing data that demonstrates the performance of the operation of government. For example, *see* [the GAC's 2020 Report](#) for more information on how data can be used to craft effective legislation; the [GAC's 2019 Report](#) for more information on performance accountability tools that can be used during the legislative process; and [the GAC's 2018 Report](#) for more information on the work GAC did to establish the State's population-level indicator data related to the State's outcomes.

## *III. State Outcomes and Indicators*

### *A. Generally*

GAC worked to establish in law the State's 10 outcomes (goals) for our State's well-being that are now codified in [3 V.S.A. § 2311\(b\)](#), and GAC is authorized by law to approve the [population-level indicator data](#) for those outcomes that the Chief

Performance Officer reports in the State’s annual [State Outcomes Report](#). The State Outcomes Report annually provides data on the State’s progress in reaching the 10 outcomes so that the data can be analyzed over time and assist the State in making decisions on how to spend its resources. GAC worked with relevant Executive Branch agencies and legislative committees of jurisdiction in establishing the current indicator data.

### *B. Purpose*

In 2020, Act No. 166, Sec. 18, the General Assembly amended 3 V.S.A. § 2311 to clarify the purpose of the State’s outcomes and indicators:

“Vermont’s population-level quality of life outcomes are intended to reflect the well-being of all Vermonters, and indicators reported to measure the extent to which outcomes are achieved are intended to represent the experience of all Vermonters, including and especially Vermonters who are members of marginalized groups.”

This statutory language helps describe that outcomes are the goals of well-being for all Vermonters, but the indicators demonstrate how well all Vermonters are faring in reaching those goals, especially Vermonters in marginalized groups who may experience inequity in attaining the quality of life the outcomes describe. [Vt. Const. Ch. II, Art. 7](#) provides that “government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people[.]” Our indicators help us determine how well our State is adhering to that principle.

### *III. Indicators Demonstrating Quality of Life for BIPOC Vermonters*

Related to the importance of State outcomes and indicators demonstrating quality of life for all Vermonters, in Sec. 17 of Act No. 166, the General Assembly directed GAC

to consult with the Executive Director of Racial Equity, the Social Equity Caucus, and the Chief Performance Officer and to accept recommendations from other relevant entities in order to approve by March 1, 2021 population-level indicators that demonstrate the quality of life for Vermonters who are BIPOC, as those indicators relate to the existing State outcomes. Currently, there are no indicators that specifically demonstrate the quality of life for BIPOC Vermonters.

Accordingly, GAC is meeting during 2020 Adjournment with these partners and the Agency of Human Services' Director of Performance Improvement to understand what the best available indicators are to measure the quality of life for BIPOC Vermonters. GAC looks forward to establishing these indicators so that the State Outcomes Report better represents the experience of all Vermonters, and as a result, this more complete data can help better guide the State on how to improve the lives of Vermonters. Approving these new indicators by March 1, 2021 will enable the new data regarding BIPOC Vermonters to begin to be reported on in the 2021 State Outcomes Report.

#### ***IV. Conclusion***

GAC appreciates the work the State is doing to ensure State government is more accountable to Vermonters. GAC looks forward to continuing this progress in the 2021–2022 biennium.