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**Report to  
The Vermont Legislature**

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**Report on**  
Improving Grants Management for Results-Based Programs

**In Accordance with 3 V.S.A. §3022a:**  
IMPROVING GRANTS MANAGEMENT FOR RESULTS-BASED PROGRAMS.

**Submitted to:** General Assembly

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**Report Date:** February 5, 2021



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### 3 V.S.A. §3022a Statutory Language

#### § 3022a. Improving grants management for results-based programs

(a) The Secretary of Human Services shall compile a grants inventory using the Department of Finance and Management's master list of all grants awarded during the prior fiscal year by the Agency or any of its departments to any public and private entities. The inventory should reflect:

- (1) the date and title of the grant;
- (2) the amount of federal and State funds committed during the prior fiscal year;
- (3) a summary description of each grant;
- (4) the recipient of the grant;
- (5) the department responsible for making the award;
- (6) the major Agency program served by the grant;
- (7) the existence or nonexistence in the grant of performance measures;
- (8) the scheduled expiration date of the grant;
- (9) the number of people served by each grant;
- (10) the length of time the entity has had the grant; and
- (11) the indirect rate of the entity.

(b) Annually, on or before January 15, the Agency shall submit the inventory to the General Assembly in an electronic format.

(c) The Secretary of Human Services and the Chief Performance Officer shall report to the Government Accountability Committee in September of each year and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations annually, on or before January 15, regarding the progress of the Agency in improving grant management in regard to:

- (1) compilation of the inventory required in subsection (a) of this section;
- (2) establishing a drafting template to achieve common language and requirements for all grant agreements, to the extent that it does not conflict with Agency of Administration Bulletin 5 – Policy for Grant Issuance and Monitoring or federal requirements contained in 2 C.F.R. Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, including:
  - (A) a specific format covering expected goals and clear concise performance measures that demonstrate results and which are attached to each goal; and
  - (B) providing both community organizations and the Agency the same point of reference in assessing how the grantees are meeting expectations in terms of performance;
- (3) executing Designated Agency Master Grant agreements using the new drafting template;
- (4) executing grant agreements with other grantees using the new drafting template; and
- (5) progress in improving the overall timeliness of executing agreements.

## **I. SFY20 Agency of Human Services Grants Inventory**

Drawing from the Department of Finance and Management inventory of FY20 Grants, the Agency of Human Services incorporated columns to satisfy the requirements of the report. In order to complete this inventory, the Agency of Human Services worked with each Department to validate a working Catalog of AHS Programs and Services (COPS). AHS is further developing the COPS in order to include a list of services delivered by programs and associated performance measures.

For the purposes of the Grants Inventory and the COPS, “program” has been defined as “an identifiable segment of State government delineated by a set of activities with specific goal.” Definitions of all additional terms are included in the Excel sheet labeled “Definitions” within the attachment and are to be used as a guide to understand the detail of the Grants Inventory.

Please see Section V for the Grants Inventory Report spreadsheet.

## **II. Draft Template for Grant Agreements (Attachment A) and Grants Management Process Improvement Project**

The Agency of Human Services piloted a template to strengthen the way that we measure and monitor the effectiveness of grants toward comprehensive strategies to improve conditions of well-being for the Vermonters we and our community partners serve. On Page 6 is a reproduction of that initial template (*Attachment A: Specifications of Work to be Performed*) that clarifies common language around performance measurement and monitoring and standardizes the use of Results-Based Accountability in alignment with Vermont’s Act 186.

Due to the importance of other initiatives at the Agency of Human Services, including value-based payments and an agency-wide performance improvement project to advance recommended changes across the grants management system, which will shift the format and protocol associated with grant agreements to Designated Agencies and all other partners, further use of the piloted template is not applicable. The spirit of value-based payments is in large part aligned with the interests of Results-Based Accountability insofar as emphasizing the imperative of useful, correct, and reliable performance data reporting on a frequent enough basis to establish bases for improvement and payment.

The Attachment A template pilot provided useful insight into areas of opportunity to enhance AHS grants management processes across the system.

Then Deputy Secretary Martha Maksym sponsored a performance improvement project in 2019 to pursue those opportunities and improve grants management practices across the Agency of Human Services, to be facilitated by Director of Performance Improvement Dru Roessle. The project is now sponsored by Secretary Smith. The project was put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic and Agency of Human Services response, which required the attention of leadership and staff who are critical to the effectiveness of the project. The project is tentatively set to recommence in 2021, integrating lessons learned in grantmaking during the pandemic.

The goals of this project are to make agency-wide reforms to the process that increases visibility and transparency of grants management, enables strategic decision-making about our investments to improve outcomes, and reduce the administrative burden and cost associated with grants at the state and provider level. These goals are defined within the project as to ensure a future state in which the following statements are true:

- AHS, community partners, and other stakeholders understand how AHS grants facilitate community impact, improved outcomes, and use of best practice across the state
- AHS is a consistent, reliable, and engaged funder
- All units utilize standard formats, language, processes, and tools that improve over time
- Staff can efficiently manage grants and leverage technology to meet expectations
- Agency-wide grants information is readily available (cost, geography, performance, providers, etc.)
- Partners can easily apply for AHS grants and report performance and deliverables

The project includes three major components: (1) establishing a vision for the grants management system and capability at AHS; (2) analyzing, designing, and standardizing a set of processes to guide a consistently resource-efficient and effective system for initiating, writing, monitoring, and partnering through grant agreements across all departments and divisions; and (3) preparing for future implementation of a technology system for automating critical components of the grants management system to be used by applicants, grant partners, and the state. Standardizing the use of templates, inclusive of an Attachment A informed by Results-Based Accountability, is a critical component of the project that is not dependent on implementation of technology.

When it is appropriate to consider technology, AHS will work with the Agency of Digital Services (ADS) to analyze state-owned applications against our documented technical and user needs, in the interest of leveraging existing applications owned by the State of Vermont to automate major components of grants management. If none is available or appropriate, AHS will work with ADS and the Agency of Administration to issue an RFI.

**ATTACHMENT A:  
 SPECIFICATIONS OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED**

**1. PROGRAM NAME**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**A. Brief Program Description**

*Brief Program Description*

**B. Program Purpose**

i. Program-Specific Population

*Who is the program designed to benefit? Briefly describe the population of people who will be served (demographic profile as well as eligibility requirements).*

ii. Purpose(s) of the Program

1	<i>What does the program seek to accomplish?</i>
2	
3	

**C. Scope of Work**

i. Description of Strategies or Services to be Performed

*Describe the strategies or service array that Grantee will provide to accomplish stated purpose. Include expectations for services provided, including standards or regulations governing services, evidence-based practice or tools.*

**D. Performance Measurement**

The Grantee will report the following performance measures to the State in order to measure achievement of stated program purpose(s). Performance measures measure **quantity** (“how much are you doing?”), **quality** (“how well are you doing it?”), and **impact** of services delivered (is anyone better off?) in accordance with grant requirements and expectations.

*Table 1: Performance Measures*

	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Monitoring Method</b>	<b>Type</b>
1	<i># of people served</i>				<i>Quantity?</i>
2					<i>Quality?</i>
3					<i>Impact?</i>

*\*Further specifications for data collection referenced in separate document.*

**E. Program-Specific Monitoring and Reporting**

The following table identifies how performance measures and other data will be reported, monitored, and improved. This section meets State of Vermont Bulletin 5.0 requirements for grant monitoring.

*Table 2: Monitoring Procedures*

<b>Monitoring Activities</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Frequency/ Due Date</b>	<b>Recipient/ Attendees</b>	<b>Purpose / Information Required</b>
<i>Performance measure reporting</i>	<i>Electronic Report</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Emma Harrigan, DMH</i>	<i>Performance monitoring</i>
<i>Site Visit</i>				

*[End of template]*