



## Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services The Community Services Block Grant Program

### CSBG 500-1 ROMA

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 mandated states to provide a performance plan for the purpose of requesting funding under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program and a report of the outcomes associated with the performance plan beginning in March 2000 and each year thereafter. The following points were made regarding the expectation of the (GPRA) Act:

1. Establish performance goals to define the level of performance to be achieved by a program activity;
2. Express such goals in an objective, quantifiable, and measurable form unless authorized;
3. Describe the operational processes, skills and technology, and the human capital information, or other resources required to meet the performance goals;
4. Establish performance indicators to be used in measuring or assessing the relevant outputs, service levels, and outcomes of each program activity;
5. Provide a basis for comparing actual program results with the established performance goals; and
6. Describe the means to be used to verify and validate measured values.

The model established nationwide was Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA). ROMA was created in 1994 by an ongoing task force of federal, state and local community action officials – the Monitoring and Assessment Task Force (MATF).

ROMA requires each HRDC to establish goals surrounding the family, community and agency. Each HRDC is required to develop a plan showing how they will meet the needs of the low-income individuals and families specific to their service area as demonstrated by a needs assessment, use CSBG funding to mobilize resources and provide innovative solutions, and increase their own capacity to achieve results. This plan is used as a basis for the State CSBG application which is submitted bi-annually and the ROMA NASCSP Information Survey which is submitted annually.

ROMA is a performance-based initiative designed to preserve the anti-poverty focus of Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs) and to promote greater effectiveness among state and local agencies receiving Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding. It provides a framework of continuous growth and improvement among HRDCs and a basis for state leadership and assistance towards those ends.

Since 1994, Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs) have been guided by six broad anti-poverty goals established by the MATF:



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**Goal 1:** Low-income people become more self-sufficient.

**Goal 2:** The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.

**Goal 3:** Low-income people own a stake in their community.

**Goal 4:** Partnerships among supporters and providers of service to low-income people are achieved.

**Goal 5:** Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.

**Goal 6:** Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

To accomplish these goals, Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs) have been encouraged to undertake a number of ROMA implementation actions that focus on results-oriented management and results-oriented accountability:

### **Results-Oriented Management**

- Assess poverty needs and conditions within the community;
- Define a clear Agency anti-poverty mission for community action and a strategy to address those needs, both immediate and longer term, in the context of existing resources and opportunities in the community;
- Identify specific improvements, or results, to be achieved among low-income people and the community; and
- Organize and implement programs, services, and activities, such as advocacy, within the Agency and among “partnering” organizations, to achieve anticipated results.

### **Results-Oriented Accountability**

- Develop and implement strategies to measure and record improvements in the condition of low-income people and the communities in which they live that result from community action intervention;
- Use information about outcomes, or results, among Agency tripartite boards and staff to determine the overall effectiveness, implement annual and long-range planning, support agency advocacy, funding, and community partnership activities.

One of the Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs) accomplishments has been their willingness to understand and adapt to changing client needs, community conditions, financial support and public expectations while maintaining a steady focus on eliminating poverty. The



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most successful HRDCs have come to understand that community action thrives when it engages in continuous self-examination.

As an effort in progress, ROMA has built strong foundations for continuous program improvement and accountability among State agencies, community action associations, and local entities.

### **Results-oriented and accountability concepts:**

1. Insure that all Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs) are strong financially, administratively and programmatically and they achieve robust and measurable improvements in the lives of clients and communities;
2. Reinforce the role of the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) as an effective and accountable partner to other service providers, including faith-based organizations; and
3. Have State and Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs) understand and use ROMA for improved service strategies, strong program and fiscal management and ultimate accountability based on client and community change.

### **ROMA Implementation**

ROMA implementation has helped Human Resource Development Councils to:

1. Use ROMA as a framework for rethinking and redefining the Agency's overall mission, realigning services, empowering staff, and evaluating effectiveness;
2. Expand and enrich cooperation among community agencies and improve communication and coordination among State CSBG officials and HRDC Executive Directors.
3. Provide a focus for meaningful Agency outreach and create a common way to understand what community action does and how best to do it;
4. HRDCs have used results oriented management to target and coordinate services, document and publicize the resulting success of clients to become self-sufficient. These agencies have also used ROMA-generated data to gain additional political and financial support.
5. ROMA has prompted the development of new ways of tracking, recording and reporting what a HRDC does. Information systems permit collection, storage, retrieval and analysis of client-focused service and outcome information across funding sources.
6. HRDCs have used ROMA performance management principles to build new alliances and contractual relationships with other agencies that share responsibility for client or community outcomes.



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7. HRDCs have used ROMA as a tool to build greater staff cohesion, commitment, and effectiveness. ROMA information has helped all staff understand their connection and contribution to agency goals and client/community/organizational outcomes.

ROMA is far more than a measurement and reporting strategy. It is both necessary and appropriate to apply ROMA concepts to the work of community action, not CSBG alone.

### **Core activities that have constituted ROMA implementation:**

#### State Agency:

1. The Department ensures that the HRDCs have developed, in coordination with other eligible entities and the Department, a statewide commitment to the goals and purposes of community action within the State that supports the six (6) national ROMA goals. The Department also encourages each HRDC to also participate in, and contribute to the broader State anti-poverty/community development initiatives with outcome measures and goals compatible with ROMA;
2. The Department, in coordination with each HRDC, has trained all HRDC staff and its Board in outcome-based management to guide needs assessment, Agency mission review, activity planning, resource allocations, service delivery, measuring and reporting results;
3. The Department reviews Agency work plans and program reports to determine if each Agency describes activities to achieve projected outcomes and evaluate results based on measurable improvements of condition(s) among clients and/or communities served; and
4. The Department submits complete, accurate, and timely annual reports to Office of Community Services (OCS) on the measured performances of the HRDCs in the State as required by Section 678E of Public Law 105-285 of the Community Services Block Grant Reauthorization Act of 1998.

#### Community Action Agencies:

1. The Agency and its Board complete regular assessments of the Agency's overall mission, desired impact(s) and program structure, taking into account:
  - a. the needs of the community and its residents;
  - b. the relationship, or context, of the activities supported by the Agency to other anti-poverty, community development services in the community; and
  - c. the extent to which the Agency's activities contribute to the accomplishment of one or more of the six ROMA national goals;



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2. Based upon the periodic assessments described above, the Agency and its Board has identified yearly (or multi-annually) specific improvements, or results, it plans to help achieve in the lives of individuals, families, and/or the community as a whole;
3. The Agency organizes and operates all its programs, services, and activities toward accomplishing these improvements, or outcomes, including linking with other agencies in the community when services beyond the scope of the Agency are required. All staff are helped by the Agency to understand the direct or indirect relationship of their efforts to achieving specific client or community outcomes; and
4. The Agency provides information to the Department that describe client and community outcomes and that capture the contribution of all Agency programs, services, and activities to the achievement of those outcomes.

The six (6) national ROMA goals reflect a number of important concepts that transcend CSBG as a stand-alone program. The goals convey the unique strengths that the broader concept of community action brings to anti-poverty efforts:

1. Focusing efforts on client/community/organizational change, not particular programs or services. The goals provide a basis for results-oriented, not process-based or program-specific plans, activities, and reports.
2. Understanding the interdependence of programs, clients and community. The goals recognize that client improvements aggregate to, and reinforce, community improvements, and that strong and well administered programs underpin both.
3. Recognizing that CSBG does not succeed as an individual program. The goals presume that community action is most successful when activities supported by a number of funding sources are organized around client and community outcomes, both within an Agency and with other service providers.

Technical assistance:

The Intergovernmental Human Services Bureau (IHSB) is providing all Human Resource Development Councils (HRDCs) within the State with quality technical assistance and training for all aspects of ROMA. Training and technical assistance is available from IHSB for all Agency staff and Boards to assure full compliance with ROMA requirements and reporting activities.

Also, training and technical assistance is available from IHSB for entering information into the computerized Client Database System (CDS) to assure that the Agency reports correctly on the six (6) National ROMA goals and for the Agency to use information and reports from the CIS for planning and community reporting purposes.



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IHSB is committed to meet the ongoing technical assistance needs among Agencies, particularly those related to strengthening overall program administration, fiscal management and ROMA outcome-based strategies. Agencies need to contact IHSB for further assistance.