



Building a System of Prevention: A Foundation for the Future

Results Accountability

What is it?

Results accountability is a different way of thinking. It organizes the work of programs, agencies, communities, cities, counties, and states around the end conditions we seek for those who live in our community and those receiving service. It uses those end conditions as the grounding for all of the work, including decision making and budgeting.

What are the basic ideas behind Results Accountability and results-based decision making and budgeting?

- **Start with ends, work backward to means.** What do we want? How will we recognize it? What will it take to get there?
- **Be clear and disciplined about language.**
- **Use plain language, not exclusionary jargon.**

Examples would be:

all children born healthy
all children succeeding in school
a safe community

- **Keep accountability for populations separate from accountability for programs and agencies.**
Results are end conditions of well-being for populations in a geographic area: children, adults, families, and communities. They are the responsibility of partnerships.
Customer or client results are end conditions of well-being for customers of a program, agency, or service system. They are the responsibility of the managers of the program or agency.
- **Use data (indicators and performance measures) to gauge success or failure against a baseline.**
- **Use data to drive a disciplined business-like decision-making process to get better.**

Examples of data indicators would be:

the rate of low-birth weight babies
third grade reading scores
the crime rate

- **Involve a broad set of partners**, the people and agencies, public and private, who have a role to play in doing better.
- **Get from talk to action as quickly as possible.** Strategies are made up of our best thinking about what works and include the contributions of many partners. No single action by any one agency can create the improved results we want and need.

Turning the Curve

The process for using results accountability is called Turning the Curve.

Turn the Curve Exercise: Population Accountability

1. Starting Point: identify the Population and Goal
2. Indicator baseline
 - ✎ choose and estimate the baseline for 1 Indicator
 - ✎ estimated forecast – OK or not OK?
3. Story behind the baseline
 - ✎ forces/root causes at work
4. Partners
 - ✎ partners with a role to play in turning the curve
5. What works? (What would it take?)
 - ✎ what could work to do better?
 - ✎ each partner's contribution
6. Strategy
 - ✎ 3 best ideas (using criteria)

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Illustration from Phil Lee, The Results Leadership Group. “Turning the Curve” concept from Fiscal Policy Studies Institute.

The Results Accountability framework was created by Mark Friedman, the founder of the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute. For more information, go to www.raguide.org.