



The Power of Outcomes:

*Strategic Thinking to Improve Results for
Our Children, Families, and Communities*

by Cornelius Hogan

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Foreword

Over the last ten years, governors and other innovative leaders have led the charge for strengthening the accountability of government for achieving results. They have shifted the focus of accountability away from error-rate reduction and regulation of how and by whom programs should be operated to accountability for results or outcomes that will be achieved by the program for those they are intended to serve. For example, governors have implemented education standards, school-based accountability systems and performance report cards in the K-12 system. They have put in place performance-based budgeting systems and implemented performance-based contracting under workforce, welfare and healthcare programs. Some are using performance management strategies to promote greater coordination of effort among state and local agencies.

Most efforts to strengthen accountability for results have focused on improving the performance of government agencies or programs. However, there is another strand of the “accountability for results” movement directed at mobilizing communities to take greater responsibility for improving their conditions, especially the well being of children and families. Improving results such as the quality of life in communities and changing the life trajectories of children in the community involves more than the work of one government agency. It requires partnerships between those inside and outside of government, alignment of resources around common purposes, and shared accountability for contributing to the achievement of shared goals. Almost half of the states have established broad indicators of family, child and community well being, and information systems to help communities and other stake-holders keep track of changes in these conditions.

Although these two aspects of accountability largely have evolved separately in different program areas, they are interrelated. They can be mutually reinforcing as the performance expectations of programs are aligned with the larger, common purposes that people and communities care about. The latter aspect of accountability is likely to grow in importance as states consider options for engaging communities and decentralizing decision-making authority in a wide range of human resources programs.

This is one of two papers being issued by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices that draw on state and community experiences to share lessons learned in bringing a results orientation to community mobilization, strategic planning, budgeting, management and accountability processes. Although the focus of these papers is on child and family policy, the lessons learned and advice given are just as relevant to other policy areas.

The Power of Outcomes: Strategic Thinking to Improve Results for Our Children, Families, and Communities by Cornelius Hogan, former Secretary of Human Services in the State of Vermont is a passionate essay on the remarkable improvements in child and family well being that can be achieved by focusing on outcomes.

Implementing Results-Based Decision-making: Advice from the Field by Sara Watson, program manager of the Better Results Group for The Finance Project, distills strategic advice from more than 50 leaders in using a results orientation to drive profound changes in the systems serving children and families. It contributes to a growing body of work that is moving the field from conceptual and language issues, to the politics and strategies of implementation.

These publications and other information on the state strategies to strengthen accountability for results across policy areas can be found at NGA's new *Managing for Results* Web page. Please see the NGA Center for Best Practices web site at www.nga.org.



Summary

As authority and responsibility steadily devolve from the federal level to the states, a fundamental change is occurring. Relationships are changing among local communities and their regional and state governments. At the same time, an “outcomes-based” movement is gathering momentum as states and communities strive to measure progress in the work of improving the well-being of their citizens in broader ways than the more traditional focus on trying to understand how well programs are working.



What We All Want

What we want is simple. We want healthy neighborhoods and communities and families that contribute to, and benefit from, a strong community life. We want to live in places that are safe, clean, and peaceful. We want access to high-quality education and work opportunities. Finally, we want all this to be translated into happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives for our children—our future.

The role of formal government can take us only so far on these quests. While government has an important, historic role in assisting people, we are now learning about the extent of the potential for contributions by people themselves. Using an idea well understood in business, we now are beginning to tap the extent and power of the intangible assets of our communities. There is enormous energy and capacity for change inherent in the spirit and talents of the people living in our neighborhoods and communities. I propose that the value of this potential is greater than the sum of the economic value of all the programs for which our taxes pay. This essay explores ideas based on finding common purpose and developing a better understanding of how to measure important indicators associated with that common purpose.

This is an optimistic paper. We want our communities to be healthy places in which to raise our families and to conduct our business. We yearn for the regeneration of the sense of community that has eroded over time. An outcomes approach represents the hope of a fuller understanding of our sense of community and recognition of the vital role communities play in the overall health and welfare of our children and families. With that better understanding comes the optimism that pervades this paper, and that sense of optimism is an important ingredient for the future of our communities. If we collectively want our communities, families, and children to thrive, they will.



Why It's Difficult to Make Progress

There are many dynamics, processes, and overall ways of doing business that pull us apart. In this age of super-specialization and proliferation of programs focused on single facets of multiple-faceted problems, the very number and breadth of programs available to assist people is literally beyond our capacity to measure. There are so many programs at so many levels—

both in and out of government—that it can be bewildering, not only to the general public, but to people doing the work. The sheer weight of the numbers and breadth of different efforts on behalf of people constantly pulls us apart. We simply don't have a framework to easily pull all of this together.

In addition, most of the tens of thousands of programs in our communities and across the nation have different articulated objectives. Different program objectives set an environment in which it becomes harder to work together. We all know of “turf” wars between programs that view other programs as a threat to their own existence.

The adage “follow the money” is appropriate to describe the impact of funding sources on program objectives and on programs themselves. At the local, state and federal levels, the categorized nature of funding is often traced back to incompatible laws across programs and funding sources. This contributes enormously to the pulling apart of a total effort.

Ours is a vast nation. The ways of doing business in different places, as well as the impact of geography on how we undertake our work, cannot be underestimated. Different languages, both in an ethnic sense and in a programmatic sense, have a dramatic impact on our work. Very often, across programmatic sectors, the jargon and ways of expression are so dense and different that it is difficult to conduct coherent conversation across programs and initiatives. If you have ever been in a room where academics and people responsible for on-the-ground programs meet to discuss evaluation technique, you might ask, “Do these people really understand each other?”

The rhythms of our political lives also pull us apart. After a political transition, the constant positioning for advantage by officials that connect them to programs and efforts on behalf of people complicate the sustainability of the work and contribute to dividing us over time as we lurch from solution to solution.

Basic timetables for the work, which differ from place to place, program to program and government level to government level, also hamper our ability to serve in a coordinated and connected way. For example, the difference between state fiscal years and the federal fiscal year produces a budgetary puzzle of overlapping times for program cycles that makes it difficult to align efforts. Furthermore, nonprofit agencies often operate on different fiscal schedules as well.

In many places across the country, the competition between levels and layers of government to do the work poses a difficult issue. This is particularly true in states where there is not a direct relationship between state government and localities. In many places, we've created a governmental stew into which piles of programs are expected to align rationally and with common purpose. Also, hampering any progress is the general inertia associated with change. Invariably, the more complex the governance, the greater the inertia.

Our lives are changing rapidly by technology, the information explosion, the geometric growth of the knowledge base and the increasing ability to move from place to place in shorter periods of time. All this change makes it more difficult to mobilize and get the job done.



What Can Pull Us Together...Common Purpose

There are important points in our history where a sense of common purpose for the nation or a community has united disparate forces to achieve common ends. It is in these moments that the agenda overcomes the centrifugal forces that pull us apart.

- ❏ “No taxation without representation!” brought the nation together in its formative period. It became the rallying cry that initiated the Boston Tea Party and the Thomas Paine papers. Energy and human contribution started the revolution and brought about its results.
- ❏ “Win the war!” (And win it from the position of underdog and unpreparedness at the time of Pearl Harbor.) That common purpose forged a machine that in four years transformed this nation from being isolationist and inward looking to being the strongest power the world has ever known.
- ❏ “Put a man on the moon within 10 years!” was a bold and visionary statement that united our nation. The fear of losing the space race to the Soviets because of their early satellite technology successes energized this moment of common purpose.
- ❏ At a neighborhood level, “clean out the crack houses” is a scenario that has played out in city after city and neighborhood after neighborhood across the nation over the last 10 years. Khatib Waheed tells the story of neighbors coming together and marching the streets of St. Louis to send an unmistakable message to drug merchants. The action translated into civic action and community improvement. Unquestionably, the sense of common purpose brings communities and neighborhoods together.

The development and evolution of complex organizations in this country, be they business or governmental, almost demands an organizing framework around clear and common ends. A well-articulated common purpose can bring extremely complex and broad-based organizations together. The reason is straightforward. No matter what the official statutory responsibility of the organization, there is common and higher purpose with other organizations and programs. The successful articulation of this common purpose across agencies and organizations is key to a powerful outcomes framework.

Over time, a results-and-common-purpose approach brings unified language and definition to the table. This is essential because one of our biggest problems is the proliferation of language that is nonaligned among our various enterprises. In this essay, *results*, *outcomes* or *goals* are defined as conditions of well-being for a population in a given geographic area; *indicators* or *benchmarks* are measures that help quantify the achievement of a result, outcome or goal;

strategies are defined as a connected collection of actions aimed at improving results, outcomes or goals; and *performance measures* tell us how well public and private programs and agencies are working.¹

A well-articulated common purpose promotes special relationships among people. The spirit of togetherness in a group that believes in the same things can be extraordinary. In government, the idea of “ending welfare as we know it” was espoused by a majority of people of both parties at every level of political leadership and was embraced by the general public. The result has been unprecedented change in how welfare programs are conceived and operated throughout the nation. Common purpose cut a considerable swath across the previous inertia of programs associated with welfare.

Finally, and most importantly, a well-articulated common purpose across organizations and levels of government and community helps establish an environment where any individual, program, organization, school, family, business, or community can make specific and important contributions to that common purpose. When the question, “What can you or your organization do to contribute to the well-being of our people as described by the outcome we’ve agreed upon?” is posed regularly, forcefully, and in every budgetary and program process, the answers will begin to align over time, as will the resources attendant to the contribution. Anyone and everyone can contribute, and that is at the center of finding ways to accumulate and focus our broad-based efforts on behalf of the people we all serve.

Well-articulated, clear, and compelling statements of common purpose build a platform that encourages contributions from all. Well-constructed outcomes can bring a value-added aspect of increased energy and support of people working together toward common ends with considerable effect.

A well-constructed outcome is a condition of well-being and a strong statement of common purpose. Arraying outcomes into a larger framework serves to organize our work in ways that can help establish basic indicators to track our progress. A thoughtful framework can assist communities and agencies in understanding their contributions to the improved well-being of the population they serve.



One Outcomes Framework that Produced Results

Following is an outcomes framework that is an amalgamation of statements of common purpose from Georgia, Missouri and Vermont. It illustrates the possibilities associated with clear definitive statements of common purpose. A distinguishing feature is that the outcomes are expressed in universal terms. “All” children are ready for school means just that. Children

¹ These definitions draw from the work of Mark Friedman of the Fiscal Policy Study Institute in Baltimore, Maryland.

of *all* economic and social circumstances are covered by this approach. The goal statement reflects our highest ideals and expectations; it does not send us down the slippery slope of targeting only children at risk or children already in trouble. The focus on all children pushes us further down the road to the work of prevention.

This idealized framework is also posed in human development terms. The articulated outcomes tend to connect us more emotionally than traditional frameworks that identify result areas in more sterile terms, such as “economic security,” “safety,” or “health care.” Describing our lives from birth to death through fundamental statements of desired results or outcomes can be emotionally engaging. This human attachment to the idea is a basis for bringing heretofore untapped human energy to efforts that can make measurable, real contributions to outcome achievement.



A Sampling of Outcomes and Indicators

Choosing indicators to quantify outcomes is one of the key processes in developing a healthy and workable outcomes-and-indicator framework. It is a process in constant and careful evolution. Indicators can make the case for actions more compelling because of the age cohort possibilities. For example, the indicator of child abuse rates for ages birth to six is much more powerful when connected to the outcome “children are ready for school” than when reported in the aggregate across all ages. Indicators may also show differences in conditions and point of view from place to place.

One way to show local variation is to have a core list of indicators and outcomes measured on a statewide basis and to encourage communities to supplement this list with their own more localized indicators. Buy-in by localities can be the basis for important value-added energy. Over time, this combination of local and core indicators can engage communities more fully in the overall decisionmaking process about strategies and programs that affect their people, particularly in an environment where place-to-place comparison of indicators becomes the norm.

Indicators are most effective when comparable from place to place. Comparability appeals to our human nature—we all desire to do a better job than the person, neighborhood, or community around the corner. If managed well, this comparability can establish a healthy sense of competition. However, it is also true that communities can create useful measures that are unique to their own place and are not comparable.

The following box illustrates how to quantify three broad developmental outcomes for children by creating a cluster of indicators that generally describe and track progress toward larger outcomes.

INFANTS AND CHILDREN THRIVE	CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL	CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low Birthweight Rate ■ Pregnant Women Smoking Rate ■ Percentage of Births with Adequate Prenatal Care ■ Percentage of Women with Prenatal Care in First Trimester ■ Infant Mortality Rate ■ Toddler Immunization Rate ■ Percentage of Young Children with Health Insurance ■ Rate of Injury Resulting in Hospitalization ■ Young Child Poverty Rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child Abuse/Neglect Rates (Birth to Six) ■ Incidence of Childhood Lead Poisoning ■ Incidence of Childhood Asthma ■ Incidence of Hunger/Malnutrition ■ Preschool Participation ■ Percentage of Fully Immunized Kindergartners ■ Percentage of Children Ready for Kindergarten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School Attendance Rate ■ High School Graduation Rate ■ Student Suspension Rate ■ Percentage of Children Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade ■ Child Poverty Rate ■ Student–Teacher Ratio ■ English/Language Arts Assessment Scores ■ Arts Assessment Scores ■ New Standards Math Assessment Scores ■ Percentage of Students with Special Education Plans ■ Scholastic Assessment Test Scores

The outcome statements are short and declarative. They don't sound like government and they are easily understandable.

An easy way to differentiate between an outcome and the result of a particular program is to use the basic rule that indicators measure broad population- or community-based outcomes that are bigger than any program, organization or individual. If any program, organization or individual does not have total control of the result, it is an outcome. The more sectors there are supporting a given outcome, the more broad-based contributions can be made and the better the overall result.

Indicators are best presented over time. Presenting indicators over time shows direction, and direction is the compelling characteristic of indicators that leads to action. Ideally, it is important to present indicators over time, beyond any single political cycle so they contribute to a sense of common purpose.

By their very nature, the best outcomes are those that are positive not negative. "All babies are born healthy," is an example. Similarly, indicators are best stated in positive terms, such as, "increase the rate of early childhood immunizations." However, some indicators may have to be expressions in the negative; for example, "decrease the rate of infant mortality." Using short, full, declarative sentences helps connect outcomes to our hearts and souls. Likewise the content of the outcome. The stronger the emotional attachment, the more likely a broad range of partners will be engaged in working toward that outcome.



An Emerging Framework for Accountability and Responsibility

An outcomes-and-indicator approach to responsibility and accountability is different from traditional accountability systems. It looks outward across programs rather than inward, into a program. Traditional systems measure activity levels, productivity and effectiveness, which by and large indicate how well programs and organizations are functioning. Activity measures of accountability are most common because they measure the work we do by units of input, the easiest type to measure. The number of people seen, the number of miles driven as a caseworker, or the number of hours worked are all measures of activity, not results.

Measuring productivity of programs produces a higher level of accountability. For example, miles driven per hour, hours worked per week or clients seen per day are measures of activity. These can be used to assess the productivity and efficiency of a particular program or of particular people.

An emerging form of accountability measures program effectiveness. However, most measures of this type have been confined to specific programs and issues related to those programs. There is a long history of attempts to measure program effectiveness by using control group studies in a variety of social sciences. This has been difficult because it is usually not possible to attribute the contribution of each participating organization to the effectiveness of a program in measurable ways. This is because contributors typically extend beyond the walls of the programs themselves.

Though the ability to measure program effectiveness and output has significantly improved, the cumulative effectiveness of multiple programs is what we need to think more clearly about. This level of accountability focuses on outcomes across programs. It lifts the work beyond the continuing importance of the accountability of individual programs and shows contributions to broader outcomes. The idea emphasizes the broader responsibility we all have to contribute to a strong common purpose.

Thinking about responsibility across programs is a positive and motivating way to add energy and capacity to the collective effort. An outcomes-and-indicator framework promotes a sense of shared responsibility among programs and stakeholders for achieving common purposes. This, in turn, gives individual programs a stronger sense of contributing to a common purpose. Using common indicators to measure general progress in improving the well-being of populations also provides a healthy balance between encouraging stakeholders to take greater responsibility for achieving better outcomes and program or system accountability.

The increasingly dynamic nature of our systems and the growing need for real-time feedback on results make measuring change in outcomes and indicators an important complement to the work of traditional evaluation systems.

The highest-level accountability question for outcomes is this: “Is the well-being of the population changing, and at what rate?” The answer lies in the choice of indicators.

Another level of outcome evaluation is to have each program answer the following question: “What did your program do to contribute to the articulated desired change in well-being of the population of a place?” Here, there are many possible types of evaluation techniques that can draw heavily on traditional approaches, such as longitudinal studies, control group evaluation, and even “story”-based anecdotal descriptions. Bob Sheets describes this as a “line of sight” from activity to mission.² This approach can help determine the contribution of a specific program or strategy to a larger outcome of broader common purpose. In other words, are we addressing the causes and conditions that serve as barriers to achieving the desired outcomes? It also helps us discern whether a strategy or intervention is substantial enough to make a measurable difference.



From Common Purpose to an Outcomes Framework

The measurement of effectiveness must reach beyond individual programs. The outcomes-and-indicator framework, which looks at the effect of a variety of programs, systems, or environment on a defined population, is an emerging way of thinking about longer-term responsibility and accountability. In this regard, indicators can be constructed broadly enough so that all can contribute to improvement. At the same time, indicators must be narrow enough to be measured clearly. In this context, individual programs and people become contributors to overall well-being.

This way of thinking about what we do and how we do it does not replace the more traditional ways of determining accountability within programs. These historical measures of management structures ensure programs are productive and maintain needed activity levels. But results-based responsibility and accountability is a higher, more holistic view of the effect of all programs and all of the people associated with them. Broader common purpose is at the center of results-based responsibility.

Ideally, with this approach, we all contribute and take credit. This produces a more positive culture wherein all contributors participate and receive encouraging feedback, regardless of where they work, who they work for or what they do.

Outcomes and indicators lead to new forms of financial arrangements across agencies and programs. A strong common purpose can pull resources toward it. Resources often determine how we do our work. A new fiscal insight emerges using the outcomes-and-indicator

² Bob Sheets, Director of Research and Development, Business and Industry Services, Northern Illinois University, in a speech at the Managing for Results Conference, April 29, 2000.

approach.³ Cost-benefit issues move to the forefront and become readily accepted as ways to unite programs and agencies.

This broader mode of mutual responsibility is a good balance to programmatic accountability, which has been focused on sanctions and measures of activity, productivity and effectiveness. Strategies and programs for workforce, vocational education, adult education, and even welfare are moving rapidly in this broader direction. The effectiveness of the outcome-and-indicator movement is best expressed when contributors to better outcomes are rewarded. Rewards can take many forms and are limited only by the imagination. Rewards balance sanctions by adding the concept of responsibility to existing systems of accountability. When the outcome or indicator is broader than a single program, organization, or individual, accountability widens into the community sense of responsibility and satisfaction.

This approach provides fertile ground for improving community trust. That trust develops when communities agree with government—and government agrees with communities—on their priorities for improvement. The indicators-and-outcomes movement can bring communities and government together to work in specific ways to improve indicators of well-being.



Powerful Strategies

An outcomes-and-indicators approach can also lead to more strategic thinking. Program strategies can become strategies designed to achieve better outcomes.

Outcomes, by definition, are population-based, so effective strategies typically apply to entire populations. For example, there are clear connections between access to health care and improved outcomes for children and families. These broad-based strategies are more prevention-oriented and thus more cost effective over time. The cost-benefit of these broad-based investments can be tracked and summed totaled overtime.

³ Cornelius Hogan and David Murphey, *The Economics of Prevention* (Washington, D.C.: The National Finance Project, December 2000).



Some Positive Results for Children and Families

Vermont has achieved several positive indicator changes over the last decade. The state is small, with a population of less than 750,000. In most places, this might be viewed as a county or even a small city catchment area. However, Vermont’s experience, as illustrated below, suggests improvement in results can occur in modest-sized catchment areas.

VERMONT OUTCOME INDICATORS	ACCUMMULATED INDICATOR IMPROVEMENTS
Total child support collections	150
Child support collections (percentage of all cases)	86
Child sexual abuse, ages birth to 6	62
Children ages birth to 5 with elevated lead levels	59
Teen sexually-transmitted diseases	58
Rate of alcohol-related motor vehicle deaths	52
Parentage established (for child support cases)	47
Families on welfare working and earning	43
Late or no prenatal care	43
Young teen pregnancy rate (ages 15–17)	42
Average monthly earnings families on welfare	42
Child sexual abuse, total (all ages)	42
Rate of motor vehicle crash deaths	41
Young child poverty (ages birth to 5)	39
Deaths from cardiovascular disease	34
Rate of property crime	34
Children on welfare	32
Families on welfare	32
Teen birth rate	31
Repeat births to teens	31
Suicide rate	30
“Welcome baby” visits offered	29
Rate of deaths from breast cancer	26
Two-year-olds fully immunized	24
Rate of homicide	21

Source: David Murphey, *The Social Well Being of Vermonters 2001-A Report on Outcomes for Vermont’s Citizens* (Waterbury, Vt.: Vermont Agency of Human Resources, Planning Division, February 2001).

Note: based on data over the last decade or the closest reporting period.



"Tipping Point" Dynamics

There are many pathways to well-being, and indicators in an outcomes framework are one way to describe those pathways. In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell⁴ argues

⁴ Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Little, Brown and Company, 2000).

persuasively that there is a tipping point where an accumulation of small improvements in a variety of indicators reaches a critical mass. This causes other indicators to improve, thus accelerating the overall improvement. In other words, results beget results.

I would expound on this idea. First, there is no single or prescribed pathway to improved well-being; in fact, there are multiple, even unlimited pathways. Second, using the idea that one thing always leads to another, good or bad, we learn if one indicator is improving, odds are high that others are also. The reverse is also true. If we see an important indicator getting worse, we can be sure others are also getting worse.

Therefore, in an effort to improve well-being by focusing on indicators, starting anywhere, leads to everywhere. This is important because we don't have the ability to work on everything well at the same time. By working on a few important indicators now, we will, over time, improve the broad range of indicators.

For example, we know if we want to improve infant mortality, we will work to lower smoking rates for pregnant women. We may do this through stronger education efforts. We also know education levels are connected to teen pregnancy and dropout rates and dropout rates are connected to child abuse rates. The neck bone is clearly connected to the leg bone in this way of thinking.

For example, in the mid 1980s in Vermont, we began to see improvements in:

- deaths from breast cancer,
- infant mortality,
- immunization rates,
- deaths from cardio-vascular disease,
- prenatal care, and
- young child poverty.

Almost all of these early changing indicators were health related. Most can be connected to early state policy to take advantage of emerging options in the national Medicaid program.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Vermont saw improvements in an additional set of indicators:

- child abuse and neglect (under age 18),
- alcohol-related motor vehicle deaths,
- child abuse and neglect (under age 5),
- motor vehicle crash deaths,
- teen birth rate (ages 15–19),
- young teen pregnancy rate (ages 15–17),
- property crime,

- parentage establishment,
- children with health insurance, and
- teen sexually-transmitted diseases.

This is an emerging, connected set of interactive and cumulative indicators. We do not fully understand the extent of the connectedness, but connected they are.

By the mid to late 1990s, the following indicators were also improving:

- families and children on welfare,
- suicide rates,
- repeat births to teens,
- child support collections, and
- children with elevated lead levels.

Tracking the accumulation of changing indicators brings the idea of the interactivity of indicators and the tipping-point concept to life.



Summary

All of us, regardless of the work we do, seek some common ground in the goals we want to achieve in our work and for our families and communities. First, we work and live best in an environment where we strive for the same results, particularly if the outcomes we seek are expressed in understandable language. Ideally, those results are measurable and can be compared over time and place. Results described within a framework of our life's journey are more likely to be embraced instinctually and emotionally and to continue to motivate us.

We also expect our hard-earned taxpayer dollars to be spent effectively and for the right things. We need to know the benefits of our public dollar investments. This means we have to learn more about how to make and assess multi-year investments. This line of thinking inevitably leads to making investments at an earlier, more preventive level.

AN OPTIMISTIC EXPRESSION FOR THE FUTURE

Government alone cannot solve the many vexing problems in our communities. Nor will government ever be a position to pay the full price, were it so inclined. Nor can any single program or nonprofit community do it alone, no matter how well meaning or how effective it may be. The search for common purpose across all of our systems of intervention, education, and services marshals individuals, families, and communities to expend the needed human capital that will produce measurable, significant change. Achieving success on multiple fronts allows us to share credit broadly for those results.



About the Author

Cornelius Hogan is a senior consultant for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a faculty member of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, chair of the National Advisory Committee for the Robert Wood Johnson initiative for strengthening families after welfare reform, and a member of the Advisory Committee for the National Center for Children in Poverty. He was secretary of Vermont's Agency of Human Services from 1991–1999. For nine months during this period, he also served as acting chair of the Vermont Health Care Authority.

Mr. Hogan earned his undergraduate degree from Rutgers University. He holds a master's degree in government administration from Wharton Graduate Division of the University of Pennsylvania. He recently was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Vermont, where he presented the commencement address for the graduating class of 2000.

He is a past president of the American Public Human Services Association (formerly APWA), and he is a director of the Vermont Community Foundation; and a new foundation, The Permanent Foundation for the Well-being of Vermont's Children and Families.

Mr. Hogan had a 15-year career in corrections, beginning as a corrections officer and completing that part of his career as Vermont's corrections commissioner. He was also president and CEO of a mid-sized corporation for a decade in the 1980s.

Mr. Hogan has been active in numerous efforts to improve the well being of children and families. His work includes closing Vermont's only children's reform school, closing Vermont's only training school for persons designated developmentally disabled, and greatly reducing the census at the Vermont State Hospital. During his tenure as secretary, Vermont implemented the nation's first statewide welfare reform program in 1994 and established outcomes and indicators throughout the state that have demonstrated measurable, significant improvement in the well-being of Vermont's citizens.

He has worked in appointed positions in five Vermont administrations and for both Republican and Democratic governors.