



## results-based accountability

**THE ROAD TO BETTER RESULTS**  
Targeting Capacity Building and  
Philanthropic Partnerships



2005  
Legislative leaders begin  
meeting with Mark Friedman

OCTOBER 2007  
First Casey-sponsored  
RBA session with funders

NOVEMBER 2007  
First Casey-sponsored  
RBA session with nonprofits

### About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of UPS, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

OCTOBER 2008

Elm City Fellowship for Children & Families  
launched in New Haven

2009

General Assembly passes Public Act 09-166,  
requires the Legislative Program Review and  
Investigations Committee to assess selected  
human services programs using RBA

JANUARY 2009

New Haven RBA coaches launched

JANUARY 2009

RBA capacity-building sessions merged into  
Professional Development Series

## Dear Friends,

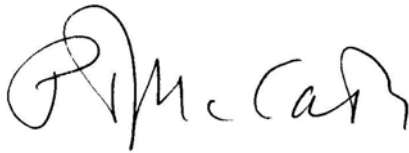
We at the Annie E. Casey Foundation believe, as you do, that all children should thrive, grow up in financially secure families and live in safe communities. Yet too many children face serious risks to school success, and too many families are struggling to provide economic security for their children.

To help children, families and communities, we all must be clear about the results we seek, and we all must be accountable for achieving those results. We have found that anchoring our work within a results framework — in this case, Results-Based Accountability™ — helps us to work smarter and more effectively to improve conditions for children and families.

In recent years, we have invested in a multipronged capacity-building effort with our partners in Connecticut. This report tells the story of how these partners have worked to build and sustain a results culture throughout the state, and especially in New Haven. The report describes the efforts underway, shares the lessons learned so far, and offers advice from the experience of hundreds of individuals.

Connecticut has become a national leader in the use of results accountability. We are proud to be part of a network that includes legislative, nonprofit and philanthropic leaders. We believe Connecticut's focus on results holds great promise for improving conditions for children and families, and we hope you will find this report useful in your work.

Sincerely,



**Patrick T. McCarthy**

President and CEO

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation*

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JULY 2010

United Way of Greater New Haven gathers all of its grantees by result areas to develop shared performance measures

DECEMBER 2010

Graustein Memorial Fund and Casey Foundation partner to sponsor second round of RBA coaches for Discovery Communities Initiative

## A Note From the Author

This report does more than tell the story of the work of targeted capacity building and partnerships. It also aims to capture the journey of individuals who have a belief in and a passion for making a difference in the lives of children and families who face obstacles that threaten their well-being and their opportunities to succeed in school, work and life.

It is my distinct privilege to be the author, although it does present the awkward situation of being part of the story and writing the story. As awkward as it is, I have taken the advice of my colleagues to refer to myself in the third person throughout this report. None of this work in Connecticut would have been possible without John Padilla, the Casey Foundation's lead program officer in Connecticut. John is a results-based leader whom one can count on not to mince words when it comes to challenging people to make a difference, and to then stand beside them to help forge a pathway to success. I deeply appreciate being his partner in accelerating and sustaining the work of change and tackling the hurdles along the way.

Since the mid-1990s, I have had the privilege of being friends and colleagues with three people who have influenced my work to help improve the well-being of children and families. In my journey as a Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) coach and Results-Based Facilitator (RBF), I am deeply indebted to Jolie Bain Pillsbury, RBF architect of Sherbrooke Consulting, Inc., who as my coach held the highest standard of performance and whose voice continuously whispers prompts in my ear. I am deeply appreciative of Donna Stark, the Casey Foundation's vice president for Talent and Leadership Development, an inspirational force for RBA practice who trusted me to help shape the RBA capacity-building work at the Foundation. This RBA journey would not have been possible without Mark Friedman's simple and common sense approach. Mark's incredible achievement to advance the use of RBA in our country and abroad is especially noteworthy when I recall the rough road encountered 16 years ago, when RBA was new territory. Now it is the new normal.

My note would not be complete without a heartfelt expression of appreciation to a most extraordinary group of people known as the Connecticut RBA coaches. To be part of their journey is simply a joy. We have shared successes, trials and tribulations. Their transparency and trust in one another to be partners in the RBA journey is truly remarkable. They have, in the words of Gandhi, "become the change they want to see in the world."

Phyllis Rozansky

*Pathways to Results, LLC*

2011

Public Act II-109 requires annual Results-Based Accountability Report Card for evaluating state agencies and programs impacting children

JUNE 2011

United Way of Greater New Haven and Casey Foundation agree to use a core set of shared measures across grantees on results related to income and assets

SEPTEMBER 2011

Second Statewide RBA Conference sponsored by four philanthropic partners

SEPTEMBER 2011

Governor's Health and Human Services Cabinet charges cross-agency workgroup with creating population results statements (Casey represented)



OCTOBER 2011  
RBA coaches program launched through  
Hartford Making Connections

NOVEMBER 2011  
The three groups of RBA coaches  
are merged into one network

NOVEMBER 2011  
Grantees from United Way of Greater New Haven and Casey Foundation  
meet to assess and reach agreement on shared performance measures

## Foreword

In recent years, funders have increased their focus and investment to build “capacities” in nonprofits. Of paramount importance for capacity-building strategies is making the connection to what is to be achieved as well as what it takes to do it well. I view building capacity to be about improving the ability of an organization to produce a desired outcome repeatedly, at a consistent level of desired quality, over time. Capacity building is rarely about completing a project. Rather, it is a discrete set of activities that roll up into a new way of working. Not to be underestimated in the capacity discussion with nonprofits is the need for a funding partner who supports the effort over time and provides the patient capital needed to bring about the new normal.

This report aims to tell the story of the work with funders and nonprofits to target capacity building more effectively to improve results for children and families living in areas of concentrated poverty. Our work in New Haven and across Connecticut has affirmed for me that capacity building begins with mobilizing people who are truly committed to learning and to making a difference. They are committed to learning because they really want to know why, despite their hard work, passion, and commitment, they often do not see an improvement in the conditions of the people they care about. To quote Mark Friedman, the architect of Results-Based Accountability, people really want to know why “trying hard” isn’t good enough. RBA helps people answer that question for themselves.

Many thanks are in order. First, I thank the Annie E. Casey Foundation, whose commitment to pursuing better results for vulnerable children and families led me down this path and to this story. I have been supported with resources, intellectual challenge and encouragement to build this effort to see where it leads. Donna Stark, our vice president of Talent and Leadership Development, was particularly encouraging in helping me think through my approach and connecting me with Phyllis Rozansky. None of this work would have been possible without Phyllis’s personal commitment, and she has my heartfelt appreciation for her support, wisdom and sage advice.

I also want to thank our RBA coaches for their continued commitment to our work. They volunteered their time, talent and passion to make this possible and are the reason we have been able to spread RBA in a much deeper way in New Haven. To my colleagues at the United Way of Greater New Haven, the Graustein Memorial Fund, and the Universal Healthcare Foundation of Connecticut, a very special thank you for your willingness to partner in this work. It is because of you that results accountability has spread to more networks and in communities! Finally, I thank everyone who accepted the invitation to learn about RBA and consider it as a new way of working to produce better results for children and families in Connecticut. *Mil Gracias!*

**John E. Padilla**

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation*

## introduction

Today the urgency to do better — and not simply to do more — is driven by the conditions facing children and families who grapple daily with the demands and obstacles of living with insufficient income to support their health and well-being. The data show that the current economic recession moved thousands more into poverty in New Haven and across Connecticut. Both the public and private sectors face the challenge of producing better results with fewer resources. When it comes to doing more with less, one core strategy for achieving better results (all too often not sufficiently addressed or resourced) is building the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities to manage toward results.

The purpose of this report is to tell the story of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's strategic efforts and investments in Connecticut, and specifically in New Haven, to contribute to building and sustaining a results culture. The theory behind the work is that targeted capacity building in the use of specific results on the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) model contributes to achieving better results for disadvantaged children, youth, and families.

The Casey Foundation's application of RBA focuses on three strategies: **impact**, improving results for program participants and whole populations of children and families in various geographies; **influence**, scaling impact through changes in policies, practices, and public will; and **leverage**, in service of impact through the use of co-investments that take that impact to scale. Targeted capacity building is viewed as an influence strategy as it engages various audiences, provides tools and skills to change their practices to lead with results; identifies measures to track to know if they are making a difference; uses data to inform decision making; and works with partners to take action.

This report does not make the case for using Mark Friedman's RBA model, nor does it provide a primer on the model's components. The focus is to assess the impact of targeted capacity building in changing organizations' cultures. Providing trend-line data on community indicators or program performance from nonprofits and communities using RBA to report on their successes is beyond the scope of this report, which includes findings mined from working with individuals, organizations and funders — and offers advice derived from the Connecticut experience.

We hope this report contributes to a better understanding of how capacity to use RBA must be intentionally built and sustained — at the individual, organizational, and community level — so that it becomes a “way of working” rather than an episodic, “flavor of the month” activity. We also hope that it is clear that having a set of performance measures does not mean “we have done RBA.” We believe that increased capacity in the application of RBA is a contributing factor for individuals, organizations, and communities to improve their performance, to transform their culture, and to achieve better results.



"It's not that important how many clients we serve but whether they are better off when we serve them."

Clifford Beers Survey Respondent

Lastly, this is a story without a final chapter. It is a story that we continue to write as the work proceeds with new and existing audiences to delve deeper into RBA practice. RBA continues to spread and deepen with nonprofits, funders and communities in Connecticut as it has in more than 40 states; however, it remains a work in progress, and one that we are committed to support as the journey continues.



#### 2011 RBA COACHES SPONSORED BY THE CASEY FOUNDATION AND GRAUSTEIN MEMORIAL FUND

Front (from left to right): John Padilla, Daisy Sanchez, Gloria Bent, Catherine Bradshaw, Ruth Quiles, Malwin Davila (of Graustein)

Back: Phyllis Rozansky, Kim Bohlen, Lori Hart, Cindy Guerreri, Paul Vivian, Ron Manning

## charting a course

### Assessing the Environment

When John Padilla became the lead for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's work in Connecticut in 2007, his charge was to build a grants portfolio to improve quality-of-life conditions for families living in areas of concentrated poverty in New Haven. Padilla's priority was to implement a continuum of family economic success strategies to increase the employment skills, income, earnings, and assets of New Haven residents.

In assessing the environment, there were three key factors to address to advance the family economic success agenda. First, for many New Haven nonprofits, the continuum of family economic success strategies was relatively new territory. A number of organizations provided employment services targeting different low-income populations. Success rates were modest across the board and even lower with populations needing additional supports, such as ex-offenders. Few organizations provided asset development or access to work supports that go hand in hand with employment. The use of a "bundled services" approach in order to increase job placement and retention rates presented a new opportunity for agencies to transition their service delivery.

Second, there was a prevailing mindset among a number of nonprofits that equated the level of program activity with program success. More focus was needed on 'What difference is our work making?' The challenge was to help them make a shift without casting blame or disparaging anyone's work or organization. "By asking people to describe how their clients were better off as a result of coming to their organization and how they knew that, I was able to engage nonprofit leaders to use a different mindset by asking a different set of questions. These conversations opened the door to introduce a different way of thinking about their work using RBA," Padilla said.

Third, nonprofits operated with a wide range of performance management systems to track program performance and participant results. Many New Haven organizations lacked the data capacity and infrastructure to support a performance management system. Given the requirements imposed by both public and private funders, service providers too often viewed data collection and reporting as a funder compliance activity rather than the means to inform decision making and foster accountability.

The timing was right and the environment was ripe to use RBA as an approach to help local nonprofits strengthen the impact of their work in order to achieve better results in programs and communities. At the time, RBA was establishing a firm footing in Connecticut through the leadership of several state legislators, including co-chairs of the Joint Appropriations Committee, Rep. Diana Urban and Sen. Toni Harp, who championed the adoption of RBA in the Connecticut General Assembly in 2005, and Sen. Bob Huff, a member of the Appropriations Committee. Mark Friedman made multiple visits to Connecticut to meet with legislators. "Connecticut stands out as a leader in the use of RBA around the world," Friedman said. "The state is unique in the breadth of RBA application, which spans across the executive and legislative branches of

"The benefits of RBA are collaboration, people utilizing best practices and looking to larger community trends, using data more effectively and an improved ability to tell a comprehensive story about our work."

Community Action Agency Survey Respondent

government, and across local governments, nonprofit agencies, and the philanthropic sector. This remarkable progress reflects the hard work of many people across the state who care about the well-being of their customers and communities and for whom the status quo is not OK. This progress was made possible by the extraordinary leadership of RBA champions in the Connecticut Legislature and by many other key leaders in the government and nonprofit sectors."

### Shaping a Capacity-Building Strategy

To begin developing a strategy to engage philanthropic and nonprofit audiences, Padilla sought the advice of Donna Stark, the Foundation's vice president for Talent and Leadership Development. Stark, who as co-chair of the Foundation's Results Workgroup had championed building RBA capacity among Casey staff, grantees, and partners, helped Padilla conceptualize his strategy, became a co-investor and connected him with Rozansky, a senior consultant at the Foundation who managed the workgroup's capacity-building work.

As staunch advocates for RBA, Padilla and Rozansky made a good fit. Padilla first learned of RBA in 2004 when he was a consultant with the Foundation's community change initiative *Making Connections*. RBA resonated with Padilla's previous work in the private sector using quality improvement techniques to bring about process reengineering. Rozansky first used RBA in 1995 when, as executive director of a Casey-funded Governor's Initiative (Missouri's Family Investment Trust), she worked with Friedman to help engage the state public agencies and Community Partnerships to work collaboratively to improve six population-level results for children and families. Rozansky also played a role with *Making Connections* in building RBA capacity with the initiative's communities and developing an online data collection system to track community-level indicators and performance measures.

As partners, Padilla and Rozansky work in tandem, developing the strategies, defining their roles, and sharing accountability. Padilla functions as the overall manager of the work, building and negotiating partnerships with targeted audiences, recruiting individuals to the RBA coach network and Elm City Fellows Leadership Program, establishing guidelines with the grantees, and brokering co-investments with funders including the Foundation's Results Workgroup. Rozansky is accountable to Padilla to design and conduct the capacity-building activities, manage the RBA coaches program, and produce tools and resources.

### Mapping a Strategy to Reach Targeted Audiences

The RBA capacity-building strategy had a very modest start, evolving over time to reach more audiences and to expand the scope of opportunities provided. The incremental approach evolved based on the interest and response of the targeted audiences. The sections that follow describe the efforts to partner with philanthropic organizations, to target capacity building with nonprofits and with individuals in their roles as coaches and leaders.

## RBA COACH SPOTLIGHT

Monique Turner-Lopez

Service Development Director, Easter Seals Goodwill Industries



One of the first things Monique Turner-Lopez did after hearing about RBA at a Casey Foundation grantee briefing was buy *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough*, Mark Friedman's seminal book on RBA theory and practice.

"The title jumped out at me," she said. "I had always worked hard and was not sure I was making a difference."

Implementing RBA within her program at Goodwill Industries was challenging, given that multiple departments with various funding streams had different priorities. Focusing on the youth and family programs, Turner-Lopez noted that staff was receptive. Some acknowledged that RBA gave them "a compass that we needed." To get bottom-line data on results, staff began to survey the people they served. Parents who sent their children to after-school programs, for example, were asked about changes they experienced or saw in their children's knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes.

Performance trend-line analysis for Goodwill's Hill Family First Initiative revealed the program was not helping many families overcome significant barriers they faced because of living in a high-poverty area. So the staff decided to redesign services using evidence-based practices to reach the most vulnerable families. Additionally, the analysis sparked staff to engage different partners who offered services better suited to families served through the program.

For many staff, this "was a hard pill to swallow," Turner-Lopez said. "We had to look hard at the data and re-tool. RBA helped us to learn what we needed to do."

Turner-Lopez said the New Haven coaches network has been an invaluable resource, one that gives her peer support in overcoming fears about data analysis and evaluation. Turner-Lopez's advice to other organizations is, "Don't use RBA just because it is popular with funders. Use RBA because it works. Be committed to using it."

**RBA Gem:** "Search for the right partners. Don't partner just for the sake of partnering."

## The Value Add of Using RBA

Given citizen, public-sector, and philanthropic demand for better results, the use of outcome or results frameworks is more popular now than ever before. RBA has widespread appeal to multiple audiences because of its common sense approach. Since the publication of *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough* in 2005, Friedman's model is building momentum in more than 10 countries and 40 states, and in governments from local to federal levels, philanthropic organizations, nonprofits, and community partnerships.

According to Friedman, RBA “is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve the quality of life in communities, cities, counties and nations” (population accountability) “and also to improve the performance of programs, agencies and systems” (performance accountability). RBA starts with defining the ends (the conditions of well-being for populations in communities or ways that people served in programs are better off) and working backward step by step to the means. RBA shifts the focus from the “means” to the “ends.” This is a mental model shift for many service providers and even funders who spend their time in doing the work (i.e., the means). RBA points out that the most important measure is not how much programs do, but whether people served through programs are any better off because of the service provided. In other words, do the people served have more knowledge, increased skills, changes in behaviors or attitudes, or improved circumstances?

In practice, population accountability calls for stakeholders to commit to be partners to align their actions and to be accountable to change the conditions of well-being for populations of children, individuals, or families in a specific place. These partners use data to inform their decisions on indicators and strategies and to make course corrections to assure improvement in the selected indicator trend lines. Performance accountability helps people to see the link between an agency's work, its performance, and the results achieved for the people served by the agency's programs. (See Appendix A, Results-Based Accountability Fundamentals at a Glance.)

As a results model, RBA provides users — be they funders, community organizations, collaboratives, public agencies, neighborhood groups or legislatures — a simple concise way to direct step by step way to direct the work of creating strategies to improve results for clients and community populations and to track their efforts in real time. It is a valuable resource for community change work, as it levels the playing field in decision making by using data and assessing factors affecting the trend line to inform the process rather than the influence or authority of specific individuals.

## partnering with philanthropic organizations

To begin the work of engaging audiences in the use of RBA, Padilla turned to his peers in the philanthropic community. In October 2007, he invited five philanthropic organizations and one local government agency to learn about RBA. The session produced mixed results, with responses ranging from no interest to learning more about how to use it in their grant making. In retrospect, the session opened the door for future partnerships with the United Way of Greater New Haven, the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund, and the Universal Health Care Foundation. Padilla walked away with insights. “I realized that I needed to do more homework and spend the time to seed the RBA ground with funders,” he said. “I thought funders would readily see the benefits of a results-oriented approach that relied on data to inform decision making and would be excited by the possibility of identifying opportunities for joint grant making. I was reminded that we as funders are wedded to our ways of doing business.”

Consequently, Padilla decided to recalibrate, taking a more organic and opportunistic path connecting RBA to each funder’s interests and priorities. Funders such as the United Way of Greater New Haven and the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund acknowledged that the incentives for funders to apply RBA are different from those of nonprofits and that more than a capacity-building strategy was needed with funders. In Casey Foundation parlance, Padilla targeted specific funders and sought to reach out and engage them to influence their grant-making practices and policies by using RBA and to identify opportunities to partner with them for better results for families and their children. This approach aimed to understand their interests and the fit for their culture and grant making with individual funders through:

- co-investing directly to build their grantees’ RBA capacity
- providing technical assistance to a funder on using RBA for strategic planning
- partnering and co-investing to sponsor RBA capacity-building sessions with applicants and grantees from multiple funders
- using shared performance measures tied to a population result
- engaging funders to sponsor a statewide RBA conference
- co-investing directly in a funder’s population result shared by the Casey Foundation

### Partnerships Change Ways of Working

Padilla aimed to work closely with several funders in order to learn collectively about what it takes for funders to partner together in using a common results practice and to build capacity internally with their grantees. The descriptions below highlight the changes that several funders have made in their ways of working internally, with one another, with their grantees and with stakeholders across Connecticut.

**Common Results Language and Framework.** RBA use is spreading a common language of change on the program and community level in the public, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors.



“RBA helps us take the ‘murky’ out of the work, build consensus and stay focused on our mission. It provides tools and knowledge to set priorities and make strong decisions.”

Project M.O.R.E Survey Respondent

This is not to say that people still do not grapple with a language maze. They do. However, the influence of private funders, combined with the thrust from the Connecticut legislature and the public agencies, is producing increased usage with common definitions of results, indicators, and performance measures to incorporate when talking about change in programs, agencies and systems, along with change for whole community-level populations. By holding the integrity of the RBA language, funders are contributing to a common language practice. As one funder recently commented, “I now go to community meetings, and providers talk RBA using the same language. It is a start.”

**Funders Adopt RBA.** Of the six funders who attended the October 2007 introductory RBA session, half are using RBA. The scope of RBA use varies across the three funders. The William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund incorporated RBA into its existing Discovery Communities Initiative across more than 50 community-level collaboratives in Connecticut. The Memorial Fund has invested in capacity building with its collaboratives and its community liaisons and consultants to use RBA with a specific emphasis in their five-year plans. For the United Way of Greater New Haven (UWGNH), the timing was right as they sought to retool their Community Impact areas, and RBA became the right fit to do so with their board, Community Impact Council and funded programs. UWGNH decided to adopt RBA with all their grantees, to build their own internal capacity to apply RBA and to reconstruct their grant-making process and data collection to sync with using RBA grant making. The Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut took a different pathway by using RBA internally for its own strategic planning. As Vice President Frances Padilla recalled, “I have seen RBA used and misused in both public and private agencies become a deterrent to adopting it. As a funder who works with grassroots community groups and advocacy organizations, we want to be very careful. By using it ourselves, it gives us credibility.”

**More Nonprofits and Community Collaboratives Use RBA.** The simple act of funders requiring the use of RBA resulted in more nonprofits and community collaboratives using it. These three funders influenced more than 100 nonprofits and community collaboratives (Graustein Memorial Fund: 52; Discovery Communities, United Way of Greater New Haven: 36; Casey Foundation: 20). Additionally, it is estimated that at least another 60-plus nonprofits are applying RBA through the Casey-sponsored RBA sessions. Of particular interest to the funders is the scope of uptake or application across an organization. UWGNH and the Casey Foundation estimate that about half of the funded organizations are using RBA in other programs beyond the RBA-funded program. The Discovery Communities Initiative is also influencing its member organizations to use RBA, though specific data is not available on the extent of their usage. UWGNH and the Casey Foundation would like their grantees to adopt RBA as their way of working beyond just their funded programs. In the RBA capacity-building sessions, Rozansky polls participants on their organizations’ use of RBA, ranging from “the funder requires it” to “implementing agency-wide” in order to assess interest and promote use beyond the funder requirement.

## RBA COACH SPOTLIGHT

Addys M. Castillo

Alternatives to Incarceration Center Director, Project M.O.R.E.



In her former role as director of the Alternatives to Incarceration Center (AIC), Addys Castillo led a team of 24 staff members within Project M.O.R.E., a nonprofit in New Haven that connects men and women returning to the city from prison to supports and services.

For Castillo, becoming an RBA coach in February 2009 coincided with AIC's funder, the state of Connecticut Court Support Services Division, announcing that contractors would be required to use performance measures to assess quality-of-service delivery and to quantify the difference they were making for their clients.

Castillo set out to engage AIC staff in RBA by conducting on-site overview sessions and encourage them to attend Casey Foundation-sponsored RBA convenings. She approached RBA "as a team-building tool, showing how it can help us perform better," she said.

Essentially, Castillo took an immersion approach to incorporating RBA within her unit. This included such activities as using wall charts to make data, indicators, trends and results visible. RBA capacity building has to be ongoing, Castillo said, especially as staff turnover can be a serious barrier to full implementation.

RBA has made a difference for Project M.O.R.E. "Staff were able to communicate more effectively as to what they were achieving in each program," Castillo said. "They were more focused on results and less focused on census tracking." In addition, tracking data on a constant basis allowed staff to fine-tune outreach and services.

Castillo urges users of RBA not to "be afraid of failure if the data says you are not succeeding." Using good data and focusing on results will be key to success in the long run.

**RBA Gem: "RBA is a journey, not a destination. Use it to fit the work of change."**



**Cosponsoring RBA Capacity-Building Sessions.** Mutual interest and needs spurred new arenas for partnership among funders. As UWGNH positioned itself to announce that its 2010 funding cycle would be directed toward the newly adopted community results, Executive Vice President Jennifer Heath sought to equip applicants with sufficient knowledge of RBA to be successful in their proposals. This synced with Padilla, and they jointly sponsored an RBA capacity-building session for both sets of potential applicants, sending a message to nonprofits that funders were collaborating in capacity building and the use of RBA. On a similar path, the Graustein Memorial Fund (GMF) had made RBA capacity building available to their Discovery Communities and wanted to target a specific audience. As Malwin Davila, a program associate, pointed out, “We have to build the capacity of the capacity builders who work with the Discovery Communities.” The New Haven RBA coaches network appealed to Davila and Program Officer Carmen Siberon because, as Siberon noted, “We want to have the capacity within the Discovery Communities to support the application of RBA.” These two interests led to a partnership with Padilla to launch an RBA coaches program for the initiative’s community representatives and consultants.

**Shared Grantee Performance Measures Connected to a Community Result.** Building upon their shared capacity-building work with applicants, recognizing that they form a common group of grantees, and responding to nonprofits’ interest for funders to use the same performance measures, UWGNH and the Casey Foundation began to assess the feasibility of doing so. Staff met to compare the existing and potential measures related to the result of “low-income families are working and have increased assets.” Once in agreement, the funders invited all of their grantees to a session to test the measures. The grantees refined the draft set of measures and proposed new ones. And, the funders and the grantees agreed to collect the data quarterly (an increase in frequency for both of them). An important factor in this approach with grantees was that the set of shared performance measures did not preclude each grantee from using other measures specific to their program. Grantees are now tracking and will gather together to report on the shared performance measures relating to employment, retention in the labor force, utilization of work supports and income above 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The funders are providing technical assistance to grantees to address data collection issues. For UWGNH, the use of shared performance measures is also a practice applied with its School-Age Youth grantees.

The chart on the following page shows the specific benefits of using shared performance measures for funders and grantees, as well as the mutual benefits for both parties.

**Funders Partnering to Support RBA Momentum and Knowledge.** Increased use by public agencies with their grantees, new state legislation calling for annual report cards by state agencies, and private funders implementing RBA all contributed to its increased application across the state. The questions were “What are people learning?” and “What impact is the use of RBA having on the condition of well-being of children and families in Connecticut?” Interest in these questions spurred the four funders who were working as partners — the Casey Foundation, United Way of Greater New Haven, Graustein Memorial Fund, and the Universal Health Care Foundation — to join together to sponsor a daylong RBA conference in September 2011. More than 180 participants from state government, the philanthropic community, nonprofits, and community collaborations shared their successes, lessons learned, challenges, and what it takes to mobilize organizations, agencies, and communities to achieve a greater scale of results for children and families.

## THE CASE FOR SHARED PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Benefits for Funders	Mutual Benefits	Benefits for Grantees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides for more informed decision making*</li> <li>• Provides comparable data across grantees to assess effectiveness of a strategy/program</li> <li>• Helps to assess scale of collective impact within a portfolio</li> <li>• Informs where investments will have the most impact</li> <li>• Attracts co-investments by funders in community-wide initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows connection to community population-level indicator(s)</li> <li>• Provides more reliable data on the scale of impact</li> <li>• Informs the story behind the data to narrow factors to develop more effective strategies</li> <li>• Builds evidence and effective practice</li> <li>• Informs grantees and funders in setting targets</li> <li>• Identifies policy and practice barriers to be addressed</li> <li>• Provides a forum for collaborative problem-solving</li> <li>• Produces better-quality data</li> <li>• Builds and strengthens the partnership between grantees and funders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps staff better understand what is truly happening across programs and/or the organization's clientele</li> <li>• Reduces time to gather different data and use separate data systems for different funders</li> <li>• Provides peer learning opportunities with partner agencies</li> <li>• Clarifies accountability for performance with partners, funders, and community</li> <li>• Informs practice and leads to continuous improvement</li> <li>• Creates new connections with partners within or outside their area of focus</li> </ul>

## Lessons Learned

### A funder's declaration of population-level results to achieve has multiple benefits.

The shift to declare and to commit to a set of results for populations of children and families benefits multiple audiences, including boards of directors, nonprofits, public agencies, donors, collaborative bodies, policy and advocacy groups, funders, school districts and the community at large. Such clarity on results serves as a gatekeeping function for them as partners to unite around a common result and align their efforts to contribute to better results in their community. With a defined set of population-level results, indicators, community change or policy strategies, coupled with performance measures, funders are better able to make decisions on grant applications, track progress, build evidence, and report on success. Program officers can align their portfolios to assess RBA impact and begin to address the challenge of scaling-up specific strategies for community-wide impact.

### RBA can be a hard sell to funders.

"RBA represents a paradigm shift in our notion of success and the way we do business. Given that we are often wedded to our ways, RBA represents having to transform them," Padilla said. "I needed to spend much more time bringing people together to recognize that the RBA approach complemented their existing frameworks. Other funders, such as the United Way of Greater New Haven, were ready and looking for a more effective framework."

Funders ask grantees to use RBA even when they don't. Many public and private funders find value in the RBA approach. But too many ask grantees to use it before applying it within their own institutions and work, which sends a mixed and counterproductive message.

### In private philanthropies, the leadership of the president is pivotal.

For a private philanthropy, the president's role in calling for RBA in grant making and across operations is essential to build and sustain a culture of results. The president and leadership team also set the standard for the scope of application, determining whether to apply RBA in all grant making, in specific initiatives or through committed program officers.

### Grantees look for alignment in the use of approaches among funders.

A common request from New Haven grantees is for other local funders to use RBA. Many grantees see the value of RBA to bring consistency in the use of a common language and common performance measures. Grantees see the benefit of developing funding proposals that can use indicator data on target populations and make the case for supporting a specific strategy tied to a community-wide result. Grantees are better able to market the contribution their services provide to the community.

## Advice

### Be prepared to invest in RBA capacity building for the long haul.

In building the ability of your grantees (or contractors, in the case of government agencies) to use RBA as a new way of working, be prepared to provide capacity building over time. The capacity-building sessions confirmed that people need multiple doses of RBA to apply it effectively versus mechanically. This investment extends to grantees' data capacity and infrastructure. All too often, unless the grantee is involved in a national initiative, there is very little or no support for nonprofits to build data capacity or infrastructure. And, grantees are operating in an environment that is increasingly demanding the use and reporting of performance data.

### Distinguish between a "reporting culture" versus a "performance culture".

The increased attention to the use of data to inform decision making can bring about unintended consequences with grantees when they perceive the funder's priority is merely reporting performance data. Grantees can figure out very quickly how to comply with the funder's request for data on how much, how well, and who is better off. However, the intent is to use the data as a new way of working to better understand the factors affecting their trend lines and to use these factors to make adjustments, be they the population served, the skills of staff, the application of best practices, etc. Funders need to communicate clearly that the purpose of data is to inform decision making to improve performance and lead to a greater impact for the people served.

### Address upfront concerns about the consequences of falling short of expectations.

Grantees live in fear of funders using RBA to punish them when the data falls short of targeted performance levels. Funders need to be forthright with grantees about consequences when initial client data does not achieve expected or targeted performance levels. Funders need to communicate to grantees that the setting of performance targets uses data to ensure decisions are informed by the population served, the program's track record, existing standards for performance, etc. Funders need to communicate how RBA helps them use data to understand the various factors affecting the trend line and work with grantees

to determine course corrections. Nothing will do more to undermine a funder's efforts to improve grantees' program performance than to use the "A" in RBA in a punitive or "gotcha" manner.

### Partner with other funders to align frameworks.

Nonprofits yearn for alignment across funders in the public and the private sector. Having to negotiate a maze of funders using different approaches to measure performance is frustrating and time-consuming. We hear requests from organizations at sessions and in individual conversations for funders to work more collaboratively to use common results language, shared performance measures and reporting periods.

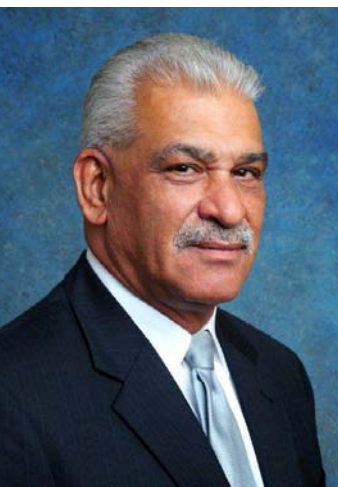
Invest in your own capacity and data infrastructure. Many funders — including the Casey Foundation — have found that it is critical to invest in their own RBA capacity, including the mechanics of grant making with requests for proposals, applications and reporting forms. Many Foundation data systems and structures are not currently designed to support RBA, such as evaluating the collective impact of grantees within and across portfolios to assess targeted population-level indicators.

### Partner with grantees to develop shared measures.

Working with grantees on developing shared measures goes a long way toward increasing their understanding of how to use RBA to assess and improve performance, and how not to use it as a punitive method. This shared work provides a meaningful role in shaping the terms of their accountability. It benefits funders by providing data that informs strategies and priorities, builds credibility for using RBA, and contributes to a lasting partnership with grantees. For grantees, shared measures provide data for dashboards to report to leadership and governing structures and to create new avenues for partnering with other grantees, thus reducing some of the traditional competitive boundaries. They also provide a vehicle for spurring increased alignment in taking action.

## RBA COACH SPOTLIGHT

Dan Jusino  
Executive Director, EMERGE Connecticut, Inc.



In early 2010, Dan Jusino helped launch a new transitional jobs program to create employment for formerly incarcerated individuals. Jusino used RBA to design the organization, which was a collaborative effort of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and four local agencies, and helped it focus on defining specific performance measures while also drawing on effective practices in the field of re-entry services and workforce development.

Jusino strongly believes in the use of performance data to manage the program, inform decision making and exercise accountability. He regularly uses data to make course corrections — including a recent staff reorganization. With a new complement of managers, trend lines measuring community service hours, skill building and work readiness began to go up.

RBA also changed the way Jusino went about engaging partners. Instead of reaching out to people he knew, he asked, “Who are the partners who can contribute to making our program better? Who would be willing to use RBA and share their information with me?”

Participating in the New Haven coaches network gave him valuable insight, Jusino said. “After 30 years in the field, I thought I had all of the learning I needed. Not so. I learned that I could map out where my program was falling short and recruit other people to help. And that making mistakes is OK.”

Jusino advises new programs or emerging organizations to use RBA right from the start. “Train people to collect data and track performance from the start, and they will learn to use data to make changes needed to improve trend lines.”

**RBA Gem:** “Keep your eye on the data, and it will tell you where you are heading.”



"RBA affords me the opportunity monthly to see the progress of the residents as well as identify any barriers to ensure that they are receiving quality case management. It is a very valuable tool for effectively supervising the case managers."

Project M.O.R.E. Survey Respondent

## targeted capacity building

### REACHING AND ENGAGING NEW HAVEN NONPROFITS

In 2007, there was no demand from nonprofits to build capacity for applying RBA within their programs or across collaborative bodies. To test the waters, Padilla reached out to a network of organizations, inviting them to attend an RBA 101 session sponsored by the Casey Results Workgroup and conducted by Rozansky in November 2007. Participant feedback at the session and post-session requests created sufficient demand to offer two RBA sessions in 2008. The RBA 101 sessions aimed to seek out early adopters to be catalysts for leading the work to implement RBA within their home organizations. Demand continued and resulted in increasing the availability of sessions and incorporating them into the Casey Family Services/Annie E. Casey Foundation Professional Development Series beginning in 2009. Additionally, the demand for more intensive and focused sessions led to topical sessions such as “Advanced Use of Performance Accountability and Achieving Better Results for Children,” “Youth and Families Through Collaborative Partnerships” and providing individual agency technical assistance.

#### Engaging Participants in Capacity Building

Sessions were designed for multiple audiences including those there solely because the funder invited them and those who sought to use RBA as a vehicle to transform their organizational culture. Sessions began with a candid conversation with participants about the purpose of the RBA capacity-building sessions. This conversation acknowledged a prevailing skepticism that RBA was just the new flavor of the month for foundations and government. RBA’s potential benefits for individuals and organizations were highlighted including: connecting with participants’ desire to make a difference for their clients, and, at the end of the day, to know how they have made a difference; RBA as an approach that draws partners together to better collaborate to achieve better results; and nonprofits applying RBA can get a head start, given the increased use in the Connecticut General Assembly, state public agencies and local and national funders.

Session design aimed to create a safe peer learning environment for a cross-section of learners and range of organizations focusing on an array of populations, results and services. The use of presentations, large group work, and small group “table talks” helped participants begin to apply RBA to their own work using various resource tools and worksheets.

The sessions attracted a wide range of participants including board members, executives, managers, evaluation staff, development officers, grant writers, trainers, front-line staff, and volunteers from a cross-section of organizations. This mix of people in different roles from different types of organizations provided opportunities for more in-depth conversations on target populations served, performance measures, accountability, the use of data, and the role of partners aligning actions for better results. The benefit was that this mix of organizations and people showed participants that RBA has great utility, regardless of the organization or role.



"RBA helped us identify new partners. There were some organizations we worked with previously but did not view as partners. We're now doing work with agencies that we would not have imagined working with four years ago."

Cynthia Rojas, RBA coach, Clifford Beers Clinic

## Assessing Reach and Benefits

From November 2007 through October 2011, Rozansky and members of the New Haven RBA coaches network (individuals who participated in a program to accelerate the uptake of RBA in their home organizations) conducted 15 capacity sessions reaching more than 130 organizations. More than 40 percent of the organizations attended more than one session, and 22 percent attended three or more. The repeat attendees included individuals who sought multiple doses and other organization representatives. The duplicated count of participants surpassed 650. The RBA coaches' organizations were high-end users of these sessions, enabling people to get multiple doses, orient new staff, and reach out to additional organizations about ways they could apply RBA.

TABLE 1: RESULTS FROM THE RBA 101 CAPACITY-BUILDING SESSIONS

<p><b>How much did we do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 capacity-building sessions</li> <li>• 130+ organizations participating</li> <li>• 650+ duplicated participants</li> </ul>	<p><b>How well did we do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40% of organizations attended more than one session</li> <li>• 89% of participants reported session results were met</li> <li>• 90% of participants reported the tools as being useful</li> <li>• 92% reported the facilitation as being effective</li> </ul>
<p><b>Is anyone better off?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of organizations use RBA in at least one program</li> <li>• 92% of participants report understanding RBA fundamentals</li> <li>• 91% of participants report they can apply RBA to their work</li> </ul>	

Five themes emerged across participants as the most valuable takeaways:

1. **Performance measures:** Developing measures, understanding the three questions and the importance of better-off measures.
2. **Using performance measurement data:** Collect, report on, and use the trend-line data more often with staff and managers.
3. **Clarifying our focus:** Start with results, focus the organization on results and know the difference between RBA at the community level and in programs.
4. **Applying data:** To make decisions on programs and performance, make our approach to collect data better and more effective, use with funders and donors to make the case, and to report progress and use data with staff.
5. **Doing a better job:** Serve our clients more effectively, improve my own work to focus on results, and help staff think more clearly about results.

The question of whether the increased capacity within organizations to apply RBA has led to improved results for their client populations varies cross organizations. As noted in the introduction, a comprehensive assessment with organizations to determine the scope of RBA application and the extent to which they have improved performance measure trend lines is beyond the scope of this report. Participants in subsequent sessions or in individual technical assistance sessions have provided examples of how they have applied RBA and improved a performance measure trend line, or in RBA parlance, “turned the curve.” We do know from anecdotal data from both funders and RBA coaches that use of performance measures to improve service-delivery processes has increased and that programs are beginning to report improved results for the children and families they serve. In addition, a high percentage of repeat participants (especially those in leadership roles) report that RBA implementation is underway in these organizations.

## Lessons Learned

### Offer RBA in multiple doses.

In the sessions, people find RBA deceptively simple and easy to use. When they return to their home organizations, they face the challenge of how to use it. As such, people often attended multiple trainings, often as many as four or five. People say they pick up additional insights each time they attend an RBA session. We found that offering multiple sessions over time builds confidence among users, helps them to more fully apply RBA practices, opens up opportunities to expand the use of RBA, and attracts new users from organizations.

### Focus on Performance Accountability.

Understandably, people want to know if and how RBA can help them to achieve better results for the clients they serve. We found participants were less engaged in starting the sessions with a segment on the results sought for populations of children, families or residents of the community. As such, we reordered the sequence, starting with an introduction to RBA followed by applying performance measures, using the seven steps of Program Performance Accountability and concluding with the results sought for specific community-wide populations and how each organization connected to them. This reordering did not bypass organizations from recognizing their contribution to a specific community-wide result or the connection to their work.

### There are multiple pathways to implementation.

The impetus for and the scope of implementing RBA practices varies and depends upon a range of factors such as the organization's leadership calling for RBA, its culture and capacity for change, early adopters being willing to serve as catalysts, or fulfilling requirements from funders. We found the most common approach is to implement RBA in one or more programs before implementing organization-wide. The challenge with program-by-program implementation is that, unless there is a plan and commitment to organization-wide implementation, it is more likely that RBA will not extend beyond the early adopters.



## Advice

### Reach out to organizational leaders.

Having leaders from organizations — be they the top executives or the middle-level leaders in managerial and supervisory roles — is vital to an organization using the capacity-building knowledge to implement RBA. Consistently, organizations whose leaders are at the capacity-building table implement RBA more deeply and extensively. Frontline staff report that if their leaders are not at the table, the implementation is an uphill struggle and most often limited to use in their own work or program. In addition, be wary when organizations only send the grant-writing staff to attend capacity-building sessions. This is usually a sign that the interest in RBA is just to meet a funder's requirement in their grant application.

### Frame RBA as a way to make a difference.

Recognizing that people work in their jobs or as members of a community collaborative because they want to make a difference serves to join and unite people in a common purpose. Framing RBA as a method to help people make a greater difference by shifting focus from the means (collaborating, integrating services, etc.) to the ends (the results) enhances their engagement. Understanding RBA as a way of working — and not as an addition to their work — is key to opening people up to a different way of thinking and taking action. Asking individuals to name “What is the value add for me to use RBA?” contributes to building their ownership in RBA practice.

### Invite small teams to participate.

Having partners works. People need partners in the work of starting up RBA in their organizations. Having team members at a session enables them to use their own data in activities, create a plan of action they can take back to their organizations and provide support for each other as they get started. The aim is to have one person in an organizational leadership role on every team.

### Customize capacity-building sessions to the audience.

The sessions strive to give people more than a conceptual understanding of the RBA framework. The aim is for people to be able to apply RBA as a way of working. Designing sessions that incorporate relevant and applicable results, data, and indicator and performance measure metrics enables participants to draw on their experiences and make the link more readily to their work. Participants frequently comment that this customized approach helps them to “get it” more readily.

### Provide engaging, interactive, learner-responsive sessions.

People are more engaged learners when they are active participants. Factoring in various types of learning styles and preferences increases the speed and degree of uptake. Using interactive and experiential types of learning — including hands-on learning activities, lightly competitive team activities, and even group quizzes coupled with a mix of small group and large group work — all helps to increase adult learners' engagement. Having fun through giving away prizes (Friedman's book or DVD, “Results Matter” flash drives) and having meals and snacks always works.

## SUPPORTING AND INFLUENCING GRANTEES TO ACHIEVE BETTER RESULTS

The fundamental challenge for a program officer is engaging grantees and applicants to use RBA not on the basis of a funder's request but because the use would help them to achieve higher rates of success with their clients. At the time, the Casey Foundation expected its program officers to make sure that the letters of agreement contained performance measures that specified how much, how well and the difference made. Padilla opted for an "invitation to expectation approach" that involved extending the invitation to grantees to learn about RBA practice in anticipation of grant applicants being expected to use it in the next year. Padilla's priority was to build applicant buy-in versus compliance. He recalls, "I was sensitive to the skepticism, and the last thing I wanted was for a group of potential grantees to feel that RBA was being forced on them whether they liked it or not. I made it clear I was offering them a head start on learning about how to apply RBA in their programs."

The RBA capacity-building sessions were designed to engage grantees and applicants in understanding the "value add" of RBA and how they could apply it. Participants were encouraged to test the approach in their programs and to share their views about what would help them apply RBA. Coaches invited participants to be transparent about their reasons for attending, including whether they came at a funder's request. The sessions served as a forum to understand RBA as a "way of working" versus using RBA (specifically, the steps of Performance Accountability) solely to develop grant proposals or strategic plans. This is not to say that all applicants and grantees came to the RBA table eagerly. Some did not. However, most expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn about RBA and to build their internal capacity and infrastructure to better manage and improve their performance.

This investment in capacity building is beginning to produce returns in the form of five types of changes among grantees:

1. **Applicants are submitting better-quality proposals.** The proposals more explicitly make the case for reaching target populations through funded strategies and programs that are more likely to achieve. Proposals contain more client performance measures for whether children and families served are better off, versus the traditional counting of "clients served" or "service units delivered."
2. **Grantees are using data to inform decisions.** More grantees are using performance data to assess the impact of services on different population groups and to make course corrections to increase impact. In other instances, grantees are changing processes and procedures to recognize that improving program quality (such as increasing attendance and completion rates in job readiness classes) contributes to higher placement rates. Figure 1 (see p. 24) illustrates that partners are changing trend lines and having collective impact in the strategy of increasing the use of income supports.
3. **Grantees are improving their methods and infrastructure to collect, manage and report data.** Grantees have made various changes. One grantee revamped the data collection software to include "better off" performance measures instead of simply tracking demographics and attendance rates. Another redesigned client surveys to include self-assessment questions related

to changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, or attitudes for themselves or the children served in the after-school program. Another grantee linked their measures across funders in their data system. These changes are becoming common among grantees.

**4. Grantees are changing the way they relate with other nonprofits and community groups.**

Grantees are using RBA practice to identify partners who can contribute to better results for the children and families they serve. For example, when a local jobs program discovered many participants lacked basic reading skills, they partnered with an adult literacy provider to create a customized training and education curriculum. This led to more participants completing the program. Previously, the program staff would have developed their own literacy model. By bringing in a partner with specific expertise, clients are now completing the training program at a higher rate, and the program can better focus its efforts on the job-training component.

**5. Grantees are using RBA beyond their Casey-funded program.** A scan of 12 Casey grantees from 2008 to 2011 indicates that 80 percent are using RBA in programs other than those funded by the Foundation.

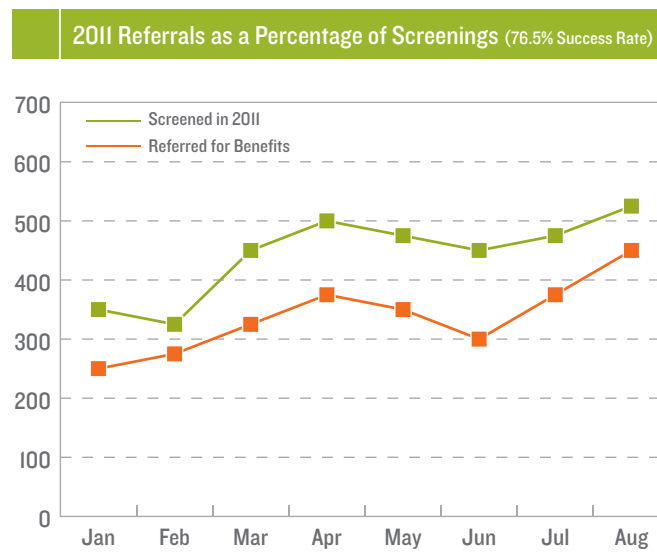
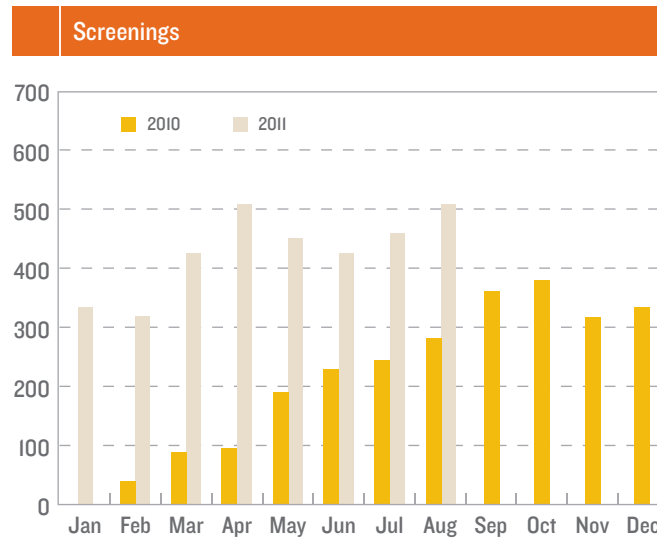
Padilla's Connecticut portfolio also included the Foundation's community-change grantee, Hartford *Making Connections*. The Foundation's 10-year *Making Connections* initiative embraced RBA as a practice across the sites. In mid-2010, the three anchor organizations in Hartford — Connecticut Association of Human Services (CAHS), Co-opportunity, Inc., and Hartford Areas Rally Together decided that they wanted RBA to be part of their legacy and to deepen its application within each of their organizations, and working together to do so. Padilla supported their decision by making the RBA sessions available to their staff and linking them with Rozansky to provide ongoing coaching.

The CEOs of the three organizations collaborated to steer the work of RBA uptake across and within their organizations. They committed to working towards applying RBA organization-wide, named the results and indicators they had in common and begun to work on shared performance measures in areas of common work, such as building and sustaining assets with families. In October 2011, the CEOs designated eight individuals across their organizations to begin an RBA coaches program to deepen and sustain RBA practice in their organization's culture.

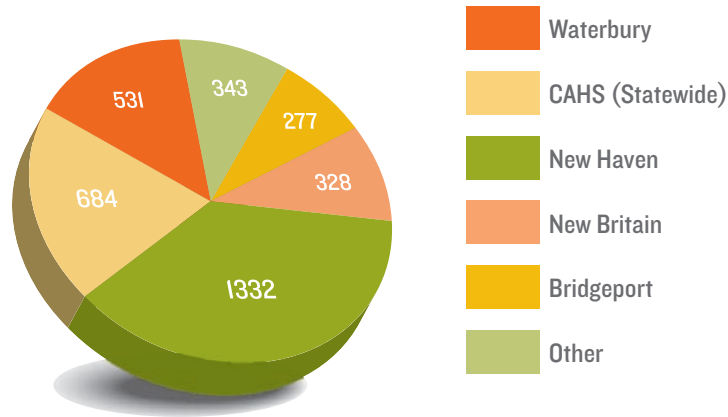
"The notion of, 'Are we making a difference?' has created a clearer benchmark for my work. While the usual data points continue to be collected, the underlying outcome data is being tweaked to demonstrate the impact of services. This has not been easy, and we have more work to do to understand the impact we are having."

Easter Seals Good Will Industries Survey Respondent

FIGURE 1: GRANTEES COLLABORATING TO INCREASE FINANCIAL STABILITY AMONG LOW-INCOME FAMILIES



### Where Families Are Served



### Connecticut Earned Benefits Access Campaign

**FES Strategy:** Advance financial stability among low-income families by connecting them to work supports that supplement income earned from wages.

- **How Much?** More than 6,700 people/families screened in 19 months since launch of campaign.
- **How Well?** Of 6,745 people screened, 4,519 (67.5%) were eligible for at least one new income support benefit not currently being received.
- **What Difference Does It Make?** Increased food security: +95% of those referred for income support benefits are eligible for SNAP (food stamps); estimated total value of work supports is \$6.9 million.

- Launched in February 2010 through statewide funding collaborative convened by Casey Foundation.
- Operating in 12 Connecticut cities and towns.
- Estimated value of income support benefits received by low-income families: more than \$3.5 million.
- Top three benefits claimed: SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, and HUSKY (child health care).

## RBA COACH SPOTLIGHT

Jennifer Heath: Executive Vice President, United Way of Greater New Haven

Amy Casavina Hall: Director of Income and Health Initiatives, United Way of Greater New Haven



In November 2009, Jennifer Heath and Amy Hall were positioning UWGNH to transition to RBA from a logic model framework. The RBA coach network appealed to them as a way to help advance the use of RBA within UWCNH and with their funded programs. As Heath noted, “We had too many outcomes, and RBA helped us streamline the list and connect program performance measures to population change and provide a common language on measurement.”

They worked in tandem to accelerate the RBA uptake with Heath engaging the senior management team and Hall working with the Community Impact Cabinet as they decided upon three result areas related to children, youth and families, and a corresponding list of indicators. In 2010, they implemented a series of steps that included converting the UWGNH grant application into RBA language, offering an RBA capacity-building session for applicants in partnership with the Casey Foundation, convening grantees to develop a set of shared performance measures and establishing an online data reporting system. Heath also arranged for UWGNH staff to participate in their own RBA capacity-building session.



After the first round of data reporting from their 36 grantees, Heath and Hall recognized that “while we knew that data collection and infrastructure was going to be a challenge, it was more of one than we thought.” Some organizations needed greater capacity and infrastructure to support not only collecting the data but also using the data to inform their decision making. There was also a need to revisit the measures and to provide greater clarity on the data-collection definition for performance measures. Heath and Hall have met with grantees to refine the measures and to share their performance data.

“Is it enough for organizations to simply do good work?” Heath asked. “The emphasis on ‘trying hard is not good enough’ provided a radical shift to raise the bar with organizations. We have to continue to work with programs to increase their performance.”

“Participating in the coaches network provided the level of training and knowledge needed for us to successfully transition to RBA and deepen our practice,” Hall said. “We would not be where we are with our grant making without involvement in the network. Having fellow coaches who are direct service providers informed my thinking and actions as a grant maker.”

**RBA Gem:** “The work may not be perfect but we can’t stop and wait until it is perfect.”

## Lessons Learned

### Grantees are effective partners in building capacity.

Grantees using RBA can be very effective advocates with their peers. Their peers value their voices in transmitting RBA's benefits while at the same time tempering opposition among colleagues who believe the approach is mostly about conforming to funder expectations. Through their experience, they offer ideas on what works, encouragement and shared knowledge.

### Resistance is not necessarily to RBA.

Initially, it may appear that skepticism is about the RBA framework itself. Yet we found it was not always about the framework; rather, it was about the belief that RBA was a passing fad, so there was a reluctance to commit the time and effort to master its use. Some resistance stemmed from how some funders used, or rather, misused, it. Individuals voiced their concerns that performance measure targets were set without their input or recognition of the population being served or prevailing success rates.

## Advice

### Be willing to invest resources over the long term.

Building RBA capacity does not happen over the course of a single grant period. Funders need to be prepared to invest, including in building data capacity and infrastructure. If funders are not willing to do so, perhaps it is not in the best interests of grantees to ask them to use RBA. Funders are known for asking grantees to do more with less. However, it is not fair to ask them to implement RBA without committing to support it. This investment does not mean that funders are giving grants to use RBA. None of the New Haven funders have given grants to use RBA.

### Engage grantees with RBA.

It is critically important to find ways to encourage grantees to go beyond using RBA because the funder requires it. Imposing RBA on an organization will not promote buy-in; at best it will create a mechanical application of RBA in which program reports identify the “how much,” how well” and “who is better off” measures, but staff continue to work in the same ways they always have. Such an approach generally does not open the door to lasting change or sustain a results culture in an organization. RBA is a way of working, not a way of reporting.

### Provide high-quality capacity building.

Quality capacity-building sessions do make a difference in engaging first-time users to understand the fundamentals of the RBA model and, most importantly, how they can apply it to their work.

## CONTRIBUTING TO CONNECTICUT'S RBA MOMENTUM

The primary focus areas for capacity building were individuals, nonprofits and, to a lesser extent, community collaboratives. In 2009, the increased use of RBA in the public and private sectors suggested it was time to gather people from across Connecticut to share practices and findings, and to seed the building of networks and fuel the momentum for the broader adoption of RBA. Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Results Workgroup, Padilla invited the Charter Oak Group — which provides support services, including RBA training, to organizations — to join as a sponsor for Connecticut's first statewide RBA conference.

More than 120 leaders from across public and private sectors attended this milestone event. Evaluations found a high level of readiness among participants for deepening their RBA practice in their roles and engaging others. More than 90 percent reported that the “the plenary session with Mark Friedman and What Works Workshops influenced my thinking about better ways to implement RBA” or that the conference “gave me insights about RBA practices and specific actions to take in my work.” As one participant stated, “This conference renewed my enthusiasm for RBA!”

To achieve the aim of seeding new networks, the Charter Oak Group announced the launch of an RBA Practitioners Network. This network is one of the conference's (and Connecticut's) success stories as the Charter Oak Group continues to organize and support quarterly gatherings of practitioners, averaging 35 people in attendance. The network's 200-plus email list includes people across the state, of which more than 60 percent have attended at least one network meeting. The network offers capacity-building sessions across the state attracting people from nonprofits, government agencies and community collaboratives.

Two years later, the increased momentum across the public and private sector and in communities suggested that the time was ripe for another statewide conference. One indicator of the momentum building was the four philanthropic organizations that had partnered on capacity-building strategies, co-investing in an RBA coaches program and deciding to use a core set of shared performance measures with their grantees. The four funders decided to sponsor a second conference called “Results Matter in Connecticut: Partnering to Make a Difference.” The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, the United Way of Greater New Haven, the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, and the Casey Foundation hosted nearly 180 participants (a 50 percent increase from 2009) from the public and private sector for the September 2011 conference, which focused on participants exchanging lessons learned and ideas on what works in the use of RBA practice in nonprofits, communities, community collaboratives, and state and local government.

Participants completed a pre-conference survey showing that 65 percent have used RBA for one or more years, and that most view RBA having the greatest impact when it comes to paying attention to results, increasing awareness of using data to track progress, informing decisions and improving partner alignment. More than half reported that they are changing trend lines. The indicator trend-line data spotlighted the realities of increased poverty, homelessness and unemployment for Connecticut families serving, to unite participants to renew their efforts to make a difference in their organizations and communities.



## RBA COACH SPOTLIGHT

**Rachel Heerema**  
Executive Director, Citywide Youth Coalition



When Rachel Heerema became executive director of Citywide Youth Coalition (CWYC) in 2008, she and the board of directors were poised to make changes in the coalition's direction. According to the board's president, Monique Turner-Lopez, the coalition operated as a network for like-minded folks who supported positive youth development through work training programs.

Heerema attended an RBA capacity-building session later in 2008 and soon afterward became an RBA coach. She decided initially to focus on RBA capacity building with the CWYC board, through internal and external Foundation-sponsored sessions. Later in 2009, Heerema convened an RBA session for directors of organizations.

"RBA gave us a roadmap," she said. "What we were doing wasn't working for youth. RBA became a floodlight that gave us extraordinary clarity on how to move forward."

Using RBA sparked a number of changes in the coalition, which consisted of more than 480 youth-serving staff, community stakeholders and individuals. Those changes included reframing the mission statement, agreeing upon three population-level results, forming community workgroups around the results, using them to assure fidelity to the coalition's priorities, shaping strategies, and shifting the coalition's marketing and branding.

The coalition focused on three result areas: (1) More youth graduate from high school; (2) more have a plan and hope for success; and (3) more families support youth's positive development.

"RBA helps us navigate when we get stuck by focusing on results," Heerema said. "Using RBA has been a game changer for me."

**RBA Gem:** "Tread lightly when engaging people in RBA. They need to own it."

## investing in individual coaches and leaders

### POSITIONING COACHES TO ACCELERATE AND ANCHOR RBA PRACTICE

#### The Rationale for RBA Coaches

The “RBA 101” sessions worked to introduce RBA to organizations and attract early adopters; however, these sessions were not sufficient to support the widespread application within organizations or sustain practice. Beyond providing capacity-building sessions, Padilla was interested in a strategy to spur widespread use and to build results cultures within nonprofits to achieve greater results. The hypothesis was that if a key group of large nonprofits committed to using RBA, then they would influence other nonprofits to use RBA. There was emerging evidence from the experience with the RBA coaches program at the Casey Foundation and with a few *Making Connections* sites that a coaching model does work to accelerate and, more importantly, sustain the application of RBA. Padilla tasked Rozansky with shaping the design, given her role with Casey’s coaches program and *Making Connections*.

#### Recruiting a Cadre of Coaches

Padilla’s strategy in recruiting coaches was twofold. First, he targeted organizations that were well-known in the community and had the potential to influence other organizations. Second, he used his personal networks to reach individuals he thought had the passion, commitment and reliability to take up the role of a coach. Candidates were offered a three-part value proposition: (1) a head start on learning a practice that would soon be commonplace in the nonprofit sector; (2) ongoing training and support to build their competency so they could coach others in the use of RBA; and (3) the prospect of using this newly acquired expertise to advance their professional credentials.

This proposition aligned with what the coaches said about what motivated them to sign up: a desire to achieve better results in their own work and to contribute to their organization’s effectiveness. The coaches appreciated the opportunity to acquire a new skill set to advance their professional development and career trajectory. Coaches joined the network over a period of 10 months from November 2008 through October 2009. Initially, the coaches network consisted of a mix of six nonprofit agencies, two private philanthropic organizations, and a community-wide collaborative. Three organizations had multiple coaches, including the Community Action Agency of New Haven, which had three coaches: the CEO, a program manager, and a frontline staff person. Most coaches had management roles, and 70 percent had been with their organizations for more than four years. Verbal handshakes were made with the coaches’ employers as they assumed their new role in the context of their existing responsibilities. Two coaches from the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut left the program early because of the demands of launching a statewide campaign. The coaches represented:

- Christian Community Action
- City Wide Youth Coalition
- Clifford Beers Clinic

“We need to focus on the quality of the results, not just the quantity.”

Christian Community Action Survey Respondent

- Community Action Agency of New Haven
- Easter Seals Good Will Industries
- Empower Enterprise
- Project M.O.R.E.
- United Way of Greater New Haven

### Designing the New Haven Coaches Network

Designing an RBA coach program was new territory. Beyond Friedman’s two-day “Training of the Trainers/Coaches” offering, there was limited information on developing and deploying RBA coaches in organizations. The decision was made to develop the coaches network as a prototype drawing on best practices and customized to the coaches’ interests, priorities and challenges in their organizations and guided by a set of assumptions that included:

- Coaches play different leadership roles in their organizations, have varied skill sets, and would need skills beyond RBA in order to accelerate its uptake in their organizations.
- Some coaches had organizational leaders who had authorized the implementation of RBA, while others did not.
- Coaches would encounter reluctance and resistance from a portion of managers and staff when trying to shift to RBA.
- Organizations were at very different places in their capacity to use data to inform decision making, track progress, and to report on success.

The prototype curriculum design drew upon existing theories and best practices relating to adult learning, human behavior and change theory, Myers Briggs Type Preference Inventory, Peer Learning Networks, and the work of Ronald Heifetz and Ed Oakley. Additionally, Rozansky drew heavily upon the work of Jolie Bain Pillsbury and her Results-Based Facilitation model to equip the coaches’ with skills to work with individuals and groups effectively.

In the first year, coaches participated in six one-day sessions interspersed with conference calls during which they shared successes, problem-solved challenges and codesigned the upcoming session. The coaches’ sessions were a mix of presentation, small and large group work, role-play simulations, and reflective practice. Sharing their findings, successes, and challenges with one another created a peer learning community among the coaches and deepened both their personal and professional relationships. Honoring the group norm of “what is said in the room stays in the room” helped the coaches cross the traditional boundaries between funders and nonprofits and accelerated learning from and with one another.

Coaches focused their initial RBA work on capacity building by engaging their colleagues, leaders and board members in agency-sponsored sessions and recruiting them to Casey-sponsored sessions. Within their organizations, the coaches' capacity building included formalized large group sessions for boards and staff, small team sessions, and one-on-one "snippet coaching." They served as catalysts, change agents, cheerleaders, translators, advocates, and problem solvers. Coaches also were both pragmatic and strategic in developing their role within their organizations and recognizing the existing culture as well as the demands on staff. They sought different avenues to connect RBA to the work of individual staff. The coaches' profiles in this report provide a glimpse into the different approaches used to build trust with their colleagues and provide hands-on assistance in using RBA. They were also creative in addressing naysayers, those attached to existing models or those who viewed RBA as the flavor of the month. One coach shared his success in using "water cooler conversations" to talk colleagues through their skepticism about the value of RBA.

Six months into the first year, the coaches developed performance measures for the network and made quarterly progress reports beginning in July 2009 through 2010, as depicted in Table 2.

TABLE 2: RBA COACHES' PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<p><b>How much did we do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54 training sessions held</li> <li>• 300+ people trained</li> </ul>	<p><b>How well did we do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 87% of staff participating in an RBA session</li> <li>• 100% of organizations have performance measures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Is anyone better off?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of organizations using RBA practice</li> <li>• 50% of governing bodies are using RBA</li> <li>• 80% of organizations are using data to adjust programs</li> <li>• 90% of organizations reporting better program-level results</li> </ul>	

A component added to the prototype was convening teams from each of the coach's organizations to meet with other teams. The purpose was to support the coaches in their roles and to expand ownership of the work within their organizations. It was important to assure that organizational members did not view the work of RBA application as solely the responsibility of the coach. These gatherings helped to clarify the coaching role, engaged organizations in assessing their progress, and enabled peer learning across the network.

To further build their capacity, coaches had the opportunity for hands-on experience by serving as "table coaches" at the Casey Foundation's RBA sessions. This provided the coaches the opportunity to conduct various learning activities and to facilitate conversations. Frequently, this involved coaches bringing teams from their own organizations. Rozansky would provide in-the-moment coaching, and the coaches would debrief what they learned during and after the sessions.

## RBA COACH SPOTLIGHT

Cynthia Rojas

Director of Strategic Advancement, Clifford Beers Clinic



Introducing RBA to a mental health clinic presented Cynthia Rojas with a challenge.

“Clinicians focus on taking action — such as wanting to increase access to care and holding families together in tough times,” Rojas said. But Rojas found that one simple question asked repeatedly worked to engage people in a different conversation: What are the results you want to achieve? Rojas helped staff shift from their individual work to the agency’s overall results for children and their families.

RBA impacts her work and organization in multiple ways, Rojas said. “We can better understand the impact our work has on children. We can make improvements to achieve higher rates of success such as the relationship of treatment length to changes in children’s behaviors.”

And now the clinic reports and uses data in ways that are easier for people to use. “I now report our data according to the percent of people who are better off,” she said. RBA measures are used across all communication products and reports. This has helped the clinic make a better business case for its services and attract more funding.

“Our agency’s population-level result of All Children in New Haven are Healthy has enabled us to connect with new partners in a broader sense,” Rojas said.

She cites two important factors in growing RBA in an organization: (1) seeking out early adopters who can make the approach exciting and engage others and (2) starting small. “Let RBA take root and grow incrementally,” she said, cautioning organizations to pay attention to support the infrastructure needed to collect, track and report data.

Rojas sums up her experience in the New Haven coaches network simply: “The peer-to-peer learning was invaluable and helped build my confidence in transforming my organization.”

**RBA Gem:** “Start conversations about successes. Use data to excite people, not to threaten them.”

Coaches also called upon other coaches or Rozansky to join them in their own organizations for capacity-building sessions.

After the first year, the network evolved from skill-focused and practice sessions to more shared peer learning through quarterly half-day sessions. The network also continued to convene teams from their home organizations and several coaches increased their role as co-trainers with the Foundation-sponsored RBA sessions. The network has continued to evolve with coaches calling on one another to help develop data capacity, produce dashboards, and conduct RBA training sessions for new audiences. Other nonprofits have begun to call on the coaches to assist them in applying RBA in their organizations.

In 2011, the coaches added a new dimension to their relationships with one another. They decided to join as partners to commit to a community-wide population level result: New Haven families are not living in poverty. The coaches sought the backing of their organizations, having worked to agree upon a core set of community-wide indicators, map their strategies and programs and align their actions to contribute to the result.

### Assessing Impact

Coaches and individuals in the organizations provided an abundance of anecdotal data suggesting that the use of a coaches network helped accelerate the uptake of and build capacity for RBA within participating organizations. However, more rigorous data was needed. In late 2010, an online survey about the impact of using RBA was sent to each coach's organizational leadership and staff. A look at the respondents:

- 55 percent were in a leadership role as supervisors or managers
- 43 percent had four or more years of employment in their organizations
- 87 percent attended RBA capacity-building sessions in their organizations
- 53 percent attended more than one session within or outside of their organization
- 50 percent reported having basic knowledge of RBA
- 40 percent could explain or use RBA in their work

The survey found that respondents were using RBA for multiple purposes: to develop funding proposals; design or redesign services; set program targets; develop strategic plans for their organizations and reports to their boards, funders, partners and the community; create customer satisfaction surveys; and assess the performance of internal teams. Fewer respondents (40 percent) said they were using RBA to inform budget decisions, and only 30 percent to track overall community change or assessing staff performance. Table 3 addresses the views of respondents on how RBA was helping their organization and compares them to the views of the RBA coaches who completed a comparable survey.

### Assessing the Influence of RBA on Organizational Behavior, Culture and Impact

As Table 4 (see p. 35) shows, coaches said RBA had more influence on organizational behavior, culture, and impact on children and families served than did their colleagues. It is not surprising that their views are different, which could be attributed to such factors as their inside role in

TABLE 3: SURVEY RESPONSES ON BENEFITS OF USING RBA

RBA helps our organization to	Organization Respondents	RBA Coaches
<b>Define Results</b> Be clearer about the impact on the clients we serve or the population in the community	82%	100%
Have better indicators (for whole populations) or performance measures (for programs) to assess impact	78%	100%
<b>Use Data</b> Put a greater priority on the impact we are having versus counting how much we do	78%	100%
Collect data more frequently on our services and strategies	78%	100%
Have more accurate and reliable data to use	77%	90%
Tell the story behind the data by looking at the factors that increase and decrease the trend line	77%	80%
Use data to track our progress more regularly	75%	100%
Use trend-line data to help make better decisions about our strategies, services and/or resource allocations	64%	90%
<b>Identify Partners</b> Identify partners and align our work with partners to achieve better results	75%	90%

TABLE 4: INFLUENCE OF RBA ON ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR, CULTURE AND IMPACT

Influence RBA is Having on My Organization	Organization Respondents	RBA Coaches
People in my organization or collaborative are focusing more on the results to achieve	87%	100%
I have changed how I work to focus more closely on the results to achieve	80%	100%
People in my organization or collaborative are using data more frequently to improve our performance	80%	100%
I use data more frequently to help me improve my performance in my role	77%	100%
I work more closely with others as partners to align my actions to achieve a greater scale of impact	75%	90%
People in my organization or collaborative are working more closely with others as partners to align our actions to achieve a greater scale of impact	74%	100%
We expect that the data will tell us in six months that we are improving our results (changing trend lines) in one or more programs or strategies	70%	100%
The data is telling us now that we are improving our results (changing trend lines) in one or more programs or strategies	66%	90%
We now have reliable trend-line data that we can use to improve our work	65%	90%

the day-to-day application or their own bias about the extent of use. Additionally, the coaches completed their survey six months later than their colleagues did. Each group gave the highest scores to the focus on results and the use of data to improve performance. The encouraging news is that people in both groups believe RBA has had a significant effect on the way their respective organizations operate.

### Benefits of RBA to Their Organizations

In response to an open-ended survey question about RBA's value to their organization, coaches, organizational leaders and staff shared common themes:

- “We are focusing more on the results we want to achieve.”
- “We use data more to track progress on measures.”
- “We focus more on impact for all of our clients, not just some.”
- “We have a common language.”
- “We talk more about the impact we are having through our programs.”

The coaches named the benefits through the lens of their role:

- Increased skills such as teaching others about the use of data, and effectiveness in my role to engage staff in setting performance measure targets
- Having a common language to use among staff and with colleagues, especially around measuring data
- Keeping me focused on the results to set priorities and providing a road map
- Helping me set and measure targets — improve my priorities and help achieve desired results
- Engaging others to use data differently and better in evaluation
- Assessing performance
- Applying accountability openly
- Making decisions informed through data

### The Next Generation of Coaches

In 2010, the Graustein Memorial Fund approached the Casey Foundation to explore strategies to deepen the application of RBA as a way of working in its Discovery Communities Initiative, a statewide effort in more than 50 towns and cities. GMF had already introduced RBA into the communities in 2007. The aim was to help communities use RBA beyond a planning tool and to have increased ground support for the community-level collaboratives. Through their participation in Casey's RBA sessions, Graustein program officers learned of the RBA coaches network and thought that approach would work in the Discovery Communities as well. Carmen Siberon, a GMF program officer, looked to the coaches program to increase the initiative's capacity to deliver RBA training and technical assistance across their communities. The Casey Foundation and Graustein Memorial Fund partnered to co-invest in the next round of the coaches program, which included a new cohort of people in various roles with the initiative plus staff from Community Action Agency of New Haven and the United Way of Greater New Haven.



The curriculum design drew on what worked from the New Haven network prototype. The program consisted of four two-day sessions, and the curriculum incorporated the same design features from the New Haven program with an increased focus on Results-Based Facilitation, Myers Briggs learning preferences and more time for live practice. Coaches completed RBA skill assessments quarterly and made action commitments at the end of each session. A fundamental difference between the two groups of coaches was that the New Haven coaches focused on capacity-building activities with their home organizations. Because the Discovery Communities had (and do have) access to RBA capacity-building sessions through GMF, the coaches focused more on engaging people in the use of RBA and doing such work of RBA as selecting or affirming indicators and performance measures, increasing alignment across partners, and using data to inform decision making. While an online survey was not used with the second round of coaches, the session evaluations and debriefs indicated that the coaches improved their RBA and Results-Based Facilitation skills and are now taking up their roles as coaches both informally and formally. The coaches also expressed the desire for continued support to build their skills to more fully take up their roles. These coaches and those from New Haven and Hartford have become the Connecticut RBA Coaches Network, consisting of 26 members.

## Lessons Learned

### Data capacity and infrastructure need to be addressed early on.

RBA does not call for a sophisticated data system. However, the combination of funders and their grantees and community-level collaboratives using shared measurement platforms does. We underestimated the need to incorporate into the coaches network design the capacity to collect, track and report on data and the infrastructure to support that capacity. As one coach pointed out, there is a need to clarify “who is actually going to collect the data, and how much time will it take.” Most organizations are not accustomed to using report cards or dashboards to report their data.

### The role of leadership in authorizing coaches in their role is critical to their success.

Early on, coaches recognized other coaches were making greater inroads into their organization’s uptake of RBA. When they assessed the factors that were contributing to the more rapid uptake, the role of the organization’s leader to commit to RBA and to authorize the coach to build capacity and to work with staff to apply RBA stood out. Without leaders picking up their role to create the conditions and expectations for RBA in their organizations, coaches found their impact was essentially limited to program areas.

When the coach’s CEO embraced and made RBA visible within the organization, there were higher and more widespread rates of pickup.

### Self-assessment is subjective.

We found that the use of self-assessment tools to determine the general understanding of concepts and the skill proficiency can be useful. However, they need to be used in conjunction with an application or testing of the knowledge and/or skills, given that people tend to assess their knowledge and skills at a higher level than they possess. Using self-assessment with very specific behavior descriptors helps minimize such inflation.

## Advice

### Assess the organization's leadership and culture to implement RBA.

The breadth and depth of RBA application is directly affected by an organization's leaders — at both the top and the middle levels. Assessing leadership buy-in up front is essential. Middle-level leaders and managers are key to the infusion of RBA into the day-to-day working within the organization. Hand in hand with the leadership factor is an organizational culture that values learning, continuous improvement, transparency about performance and sharing accountability for results.

### Equip coaches with more than RBA competency.

Coaches need skills in Results-Based Facilitation to be effective in listening to and engaging people; understanding relationships, roles and tasks; using proposal-based decision making; recognizing and responding to conflict. The role of a coach extends beyond his or her own RBA competency. They must be able to address resistance, whether it stems from using a new model or from fears about the consequences of low performance.

### Customize coaching networks to fit the coaches.

A one size fits all approach does not make the “what works” list. The application of the practices, the speed, the timing and depth of them are dependent upon the group's composition and the relationship of the coaches and the lead coach. When starting a coaches network, select people who are passionate about change, risk takers, eager learners, and willing to commit to the work and to others in the network. Being intentional about selecting people who play different roles in their organizations gives coaches better insights into how to manage from the bottom up as well as from the top down. The formation of personal relationships among coaches also serves to heighten commitment to success.

## SEEDING RBA PRACTICE WITH EMERGING LEADERS

Results-driven leaders are essential to building a results culture within organizations and communities. In sync with the RBA capacity-building strategies, Padilla sought to influence New Haven's next generation of nonprofit and public sector executives. In 2008, Padilla partnered with faculty (first with Jolie Bain Pillsbury of the Casey Foundation's national Child and Family Fellowship program and later with Raj Chawla, who joined in 2010) to launch the Elm City Fellowship for Children and Families, a nine-month program designed to foster results-driven leadership. The competency-based curriculum includes RBA as an integral skill for a results-based leader. The program calls for each fellow to target a result and apply RBA within his or her organization to achieve it. Over the several fellow classes, the faculty observed that building RBA competency works effectively when it is synced to the pace of the group, with repeated focus on language and concepts coupled with peer accountability.

While the fellowship has a wider scope of competencies and leadership focus than the RBA coaches program, they hold in common the work of applying RBA in one's role and organization. In addition, 20 percent of the fellows are also RBA coaches. Twenty-three leaders from 12 nonprofits, state agencies and philanthropic organizations have completed the fellows program. Nearly half have participated in other RBA capacity-building activities or sought additional RBA coaching.

In 2011, an online survey of 18 fellows (excluding those who are RBA coaches) affirmed that more fellows use RBA today than they did at the beginning of the leadership program. After completing the fellowship, nearly 75 percent of participants say they apply RBA practice in their roles. Seventy-eight percent reported that they were influencing their organizations to use RBA, with 84 percent reporting that their organizations were using RBA. It is important to note that a number of fellows were from organizations that were already beginning to use or were users of RBA. The reach of RBA varied across the fellows' organizations, with half reporting that it reached less than 50 percent of their programs, while the other half said it reached all client programs or organization-wide. The reach extended to their boards, with 40 percent indicating that their boards used performance measures. Table 5 (see p. 40) illustrates the contribution RBA is making to the fellows' organizations. Similar to the RBA coaches and staff from their organizations, the fellows reported that the highest-rated contribution is clarifying the impact or result that is to be achieved. Three out of four reported that the data indicated they were improving their performance measure trend lines or expected to do so in six months.



TABLE 5: ELM CITY FELLOWS' VIEWS ON RBA VALUE ADD TO ORGANIZATIONS

RBA is helping our organization to...	
Be clearer about the difference/impact that we aim to make for the target group of clients we serve or the population in the community	87%
Have better indicators (for whole populations) or performance measures (for programs) to assess impact	73%
Put a greater priority on the impact we are having versus counting how much we do, use data to track our progress more regularly, have more accurate and reliable data	67%
Collect data more frequently on our services and strategies	60%
Tell the story behind the data by looking at the factors that increase and decrease the trend line	50%
Use trend-line data to help make better decisions about our strategies, services and/or resource allocations	47%
Identify partners and align our work with partners more frequently to achieve better results	40%

TABLE 6: ELM CITY FELLOWS' VIEWS ON ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Impact RBA is having on you and your organization	
People in my organization are focusing more on the results to achieve	90%
I have changed how I work to focus more closely on the results to achieve	74%
People in my organization are using data more frequently to improve our performance	100%
I use data more frequently to help me improve my performance in my role	73%
I work more closely with others as partners to align my actions to achieve a greater scale of impact.	86%
People in my organization are working more closely with others as partners to align our actions to achieve a greater scale of impact	86%
We expect that the data will tell us in six months that we are improving our results (turning the curve) in one or more programs, The data is telling us now that we are improving our results (turning the curve) in one or more programs	73%

"RBA provides a consistent focus and clarity on results to achieve, including measuring the difference made instead of how much is provided."

Elm City Fellow

## RBA COACH SPOTLIGHT

Cynthia Watson

Administrative Director, Christian Community Action



One of Cynthia Watson's first steps as RBA coach for Christian Community Action was to use the agency's data committee as a forum to speak with program directors about their performance measures — the story behind the data and factors affecting progress — without finger pointing.

With this type of approach, "people better understand what RBA is and its power," Watson said. For example, a director who was extremely hesitant about using RBA in her program at first was able to let go of her fears through continued meetings and discussion. Now "there is no doubt in her mind that she and the program are doing better work since they began really looking at outcomes," she said.

Converting to RBA presented challenges for staff. Some thought it was a fad. And some staff veterans resisted changing the organization's culture. In response, Watson said she took a low-key, "let's talk about it" approach to engage people in assessing the similarities and differences of various models. She used the RBA process to open up problem solving on issues such as finding housing for clients and exploring which roles partners can play.

Trend lines now are changing in several agency programs, including the transitional housing and emergency shelter efforts. By developing a quarterly review system, staff found that families who set their goals upon entering the program had higher rates of moving into permanent housing than those with no goals.

"Data is such a powerful tool," Watson said. "RBA training helped me understand its potential and develop a new and higher respect for it. I now use the lens of data to view my work."

**RBA Gem: "Data is not your enemy. Understand it — use it!"**

## conclusions and the road ahead

### Conclusions

RBA is the new normal in Connecticut. A culture of results is more visible across the state. From small organizations to communities to the halls of the General Assembly, RBA is recognized as a way of working. The Casey Foundation has promoted the RBA framework because of its distinct advantages of being a simple and common sense method to connect the work of programs to community-level change, and to promote strong, shared accountability across partners to make a difference in their communities.

Survey data affirms that more funders, nonprofits, local governments, state agencies, school districts and community collaboratives are using RBA now than three years ago. More importantly, users are increasingly reporting that the program performance measure trend lines are improving, as are some community-level indicators.

The needle has moved on several fronts: New Haven nonprofits are becoming better at using data to inform their work, drive decision making, and improve program performance. RBA also has provided a way to break down siloed thinking and disrupt turf battles that have long characterized how local nonprofits interacted with one another. Summarized below are our core conclusions.

**Capacity building does matter to increase the use of RBA.** After years of working with funders and nonprofits, we have concluded that capacity does matter. Data from funders and organizations with RBA coaches show that targeted capacity building is changing behaviors and cultures. We've also learned how RBA is transformative. Clearly, our experience over recent years points out that building capacity in RBA practice is vital to its application. Low-quality capacity building leads to a mechanical implementation and can even create a backlash against RBA for being too difficult. Capacity building is not a onetime event — rather, it calls for multiple doses tied to taking action concurrently to apply in real-time settings. A one-size-fits-all capacity-building approach does not work. Forced compliance because of funder demands also fails to build capacity for and ownership of the approach. What's called for is ongoing and customized capacity building that aims to embed RBA practice into the organization's culture and, eventually, begins to spread across communities.

**The starting points for building RBA capacity differ among organizations.** We know that positioning RBA as a competing framework or as an “add-on” — for example, to be applied only when funding proposals are submitted or strategic plans are developed — limits its use and devalues its benefits. We also know that leadership matters. Senior managers who authentically embrace the approach prevent RBA from becoming a flavor of the month, and signal to the rest of the organization that it is important. At the same time, funders need to be cautious about overzealousness. RBA is not a reporting tool. It is a way to create a new type of culture in an organization that is geared toward quality performance and continuous improvement.

“RBA helps me to see the progress that the case managers are making with the residents and identify any barriers that may be preventing the residents from reaching their goals. This helps me to assist the case managers with referrals to remove barriers and see what programming changes may need to be made.”

Easter Seals Good Will Industries Survey Respondent

**Capacity building should not function independently of normal operations.** It has to be linked and infused with the daily work of a funder, nonprofit or government agency. As an effort to change attitudes and behaviors, align actions with partners, and use data to inform decision making and report progress, RBA takes time — and lots of it. Organizations achieve a higher degree of success when staff see RBA not as something they have to do in addition to their work, but as their way of working. Collaboratives achieve higher rates of success when members recognize that being part of a collaborative helps them to take aligned actions that contribute to better results in their programs and in their community.

**Coaches can help to accelerate RBA application and practice.** Organizations with coaches tend to have much more robust and widespread application of RBA. Although an agency or nonprofit can get there without coaches, we’ve learned that coaches help embed RBA quicker, deeper and for the long term. Our experience leads us to believe this is true even when there are transitions in coaches and other internal RBA champions.

### The Road Ahead

At the community level as well as across Connecticut’s philanthropic and nonprofit sector, building capacity to use RBA to help achieve and sustain better results for children and families continues. For the four funders who have partnered in this work of building capacity, the work continues to embed RBA practice in their grant making and in partnership with one another. The United Way of Greater New Haven and the Annie E. Casey Foundation are working together to amplify and sustain RBA practice with all their grantees through using shared performance measures and creating learning communities across the grantees. In 2012, they will convene grantees to report on and assess collectively their performance data. The United Health Care Foundation of Connecticut is also building RBA capacity among its grantees and partners to identify shared performance measures for advocacy and public policy work.

The Graustein Memorial Fund and the Casey Foundation are committed to supporting ongoing peer learning for the 26 RBA coaches who comprise the Connecticut coaches network. Also, in 2012, Casey’s Professional Development Series, cosponsored by Casey Family Services, is offering a four-session course designed for agency or collaborative teams and comprised of people in leadership roles, frontline staff, and data management to build their individual capacity and to steer the implementation of RBA.

In the public sector, work by the General Assembly and the governor is embedding RBA practice into the way that state government works. Legislation passed in 2011 requires an annual Results-Based Accountability Report Card for evaluating state agencies and programs impacting children. This public report card will provide a highly visible and transparent means to share



accountability to improve conditions of well-being for children and families across the state. The governor formed the Cross Agency Population Results Workgroup under his Health and Human Services Cabinet to create population results statements this year.

As stated at the outset of this report, this is a story of targeted capacity building and partnering with philanthropic organizations to accelerate the use of RBA in Connecticut. While progress is being made there is a need for more rigor and accountability to fuel the urgency to work smarter and better to produce better results for children and families. The journey continues on the road to better results.



## RBA COACH SPOTLIGHT

**Amos Lee Smith**

**President and Chief Executive Officer, Community Action Agency**



In his role as CEO of the Community Action Agency (CAA), Amos Smith championed RBA from the start. He said he wanted to send a message to the agency's board, managers and staff that its leadership was 100 percent behind changing to a results culture. Moreover, Smith wanted each staff person to see his or her role in the work.

He walked the talk. CAA staff hold the distinction of attending nearly two-thirds of 12 Casey Foundation-sponsored RBA sessions offered in New Haven from 2008 to 2011.

The extensive use of performance measures changed the way CAA viewed and used data, Smith said. Staff is shifting from seeing data as something funders require to actually owning the information and using it to improve their performance — in ways that range from reducing wait time for people seeking help at CAA offices down to 12 minutes from two hours to increasing the percentage of adults and youth opening savings accounts in the agency's financial education programs.

Smith also used performance measures to tackle CAA's \$650,000 annual budget deficit. By assessing the performance of its 18 programs, the agency was able to identify and cut duplicative and underused services. Performance data also helped streamline and transfer programs back to organizations with more expertise than the agency had internally, thus reducing staff and helping balance the CAA budget for the first time in a decade.

Smith views RBA as a valuable tool to “help us look at our work through a results-driven and performance-based lens. We've been able to see 85 to 95 percent of the families that receive more than one service from us get a tangible benefit that made them better able to function and showed an overall improvement in their lives.”

Smith credits the RBA coaches network for “helping me to understand that I had a greater responsibility to deliver real change in people's lives.”

**RBA Gem: “Leaders need to implement RBA fully rather than halfheartedly.”**

## appendix

### Results-Based Accountability Fundamentals at a Glance

<p><b>Population Accountability Language</b></p> <p>Result is a population condition of well-being for children, adults, families and communities</p> <p>Example: Children are healthy, families are economically stable, and communities are safe.</p> <p>Indicator is a measure that helps to quantify the achievement of a result.</p> <p>Example: Percent of families with income above 200 percent of federal poverty level.</p>	<p><b>7 POPULATION Accountability Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the quality-of-life conditions we want for the children, adults and families who live in our community?</li> <li>2. What would these conditions look like if we could see them?</li> <li>3. How can we measure these conditions?</li> <li>4. How are we doing on the most important of these measures?</li> <li>5. Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better?</li> <li>6. What works to do better, including no-cost and low-cost ideas?</li> <li>7. What do we propose to do?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Performance Accountability Language</b></p> <p>Performance measures tell how well a program, agency, or service system is working, and specifically whether the customers are better off.</p> <p>Performance measures answer three questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How much did we do?</li> </ol> <p>Examples: # of people served, # of activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. How well did we do it?</li> </ol> <p>Examples: % of tasks performed on time, attendance rates, % of customers who report being treated well, unit cost per service, % of standards met</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Is anyone better off?</li> </ol> <p>Examples: # and % changes in skills, knowledge, attitude, opinion, behavior or circumstance.</p>	<p><b>7 PERFORMANCE Accountability Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who are our customers?</li> <li>2. How can we measure if our customers are better off?</li> <li>3. How can we measure if we are delivering services well?</li> <li>4. How are we doing on the most important of these measures?</li> <li>5. Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better?</li> <li>6. What works to do better, including no-cost and low-cost ideas?</li> <li>7. What do we propose to do?</li> </ol>

Source: *Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough* © 2005 Mark Friedman

"The approaches used in RBA signify the importance of being client-driven, with the end result or client outcome always being placed at the forefront, then looking at the methods used to ensure that the impact for clients can be measured to determine how we got to where we are and whether any client is better off."

Community Action Agency Survey Respondent





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