

Understanding Performance Management

Performance management is a systematic and continuous process through which organizations align their operations, strategies, and resources with defined goals and measurable outcomes. It involves planning, monitoring, evaluating, and improving organizational performance to achieve mission-driven results. A strong performance management system ensures that employees not only meet expectations but also continuously improve in service delivery and outcomes. In the context of community action, performance.

Performance Management in the Context of the CSBG Act

According to the 1998 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act, performance management is defined as “A sound management practice that incorporates the use of outcomes/results into the administration, management, and operation of community action agencies.” This definition underscores the federal expectation that agencies use measurable results to guide program design, service delivery, and strategic decision-making. Performance management, therefore, is not only a compliance requirement but a framework.

ROMA: The Tool for Performance Management

The Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) framework serves as the central performance management tool for Community Action Agencies. ROMA provides a structured process for integrating outcomes-based management into agency operations. It supports agencies in demonstrating accountability, tracking results, and telling a comprehensive story of change.

The ROMA Cycle and Process

ROMA operates as a dynamic performance management cycle that guides agencies through five interrelated stages:

1. **Assessment:** Understanding individuals/families, agency, community needs, and resources.
2. **Planning:** Developing goals and strategies based on identified needs.
3. **Implementation:** Executing programs and services aligned with strategic priorities.
4. **Achievement of Results:** Measuring outputs and outcomes that reflect client and community progress.
5. **Evaluation:** Analyzing performance data to assess effectiveness and using the results to refine programs, reallocate resources, and strengthen overall agency impact.

This cycle enables agencies to maintain a balance between accountability and learning, ensuring that data informs decision-making and fosters a culture of excellence. ROMA provides a structure for agencies to align their strategic goals, improve service coordination, and enhance staff and board engagement around shared outcomes.

