

Grading Key

-  No progress
-  Some action
-  More progress
-  Completion

**A Framework for Progress:
Investing in Vermont's people,
infrastructure,
and good government**



2017 Report Card

1. Ensure that work pays and families meet their basic needs.

Make work pay.

● Increase the state minimum wage and state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) so that working families have a livable income.	Bills introduced in both houses to increase the minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2020, 2022, or 2026. Hearings were held but no further action was taken.	
● Eliminate public benefits barriers that reduce incomes when earnings increase.	Act 29 of 2017 raised the asset limit for Reach Up recipients, and excluded education savings from eligibility for child care subsidies.	
● Expand short-term compensation programs to help employers avoid layoffs.		

Ensure family economic security.

● Make high quality, affordable early care and education available to all who need it.	The budget increased the child care financial assistance program (CCFAP) by \$2.5 million, but the program still falls short of federal guidelines.	
● Open state-administered retirement plans to everyone.	Act 69 of 2017 established the Green Mountain Secure Retirement Plan, so private employees without access to plans can participate in a state-administered plan.	
● Ensure that Reach Up fulfills its statutory purpose to serve the "well-being of children by providing for their immediate basic needs, including food, housing, and clothing."	The asset limits for Reach Up eligibility were raised. See above.	

Advance cost containment and public funding of health care.

● Advance cost containment and public funding of health care.	The budget included funding for more competitive wages for mental health care workers, which should reduce turnover and improve access to care and decrease the need for emergency treatment.	
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2. Make smart, evidence-based investments.

Improve Vermont's education system.

● Add two years to public education.		
● Improve adult education and workforce training.	Act 69 of 2017 establishes a workforce working group to recommend improvements to current workforce training and preparedness. The new Career Pathways Coordinator will work with Career Technical Education to improve the current system.	

Increase public investment in infrastructure.

● Fund transportation in ways that are both financially and environmentally sustainable.	Four proposals for a carbon pollution tax were introduced in the House (H. 528, 531, 532, 533). Each would reduce a different tax to lessen the burden on low and moderate income Vermonters. No hearings were held.	
● Ensure that state investment in high-speed Internet benefits the public.		
● Repair Vermont's aging drinking water, waste water, and solid waste systems.	Additional capital funding was included for clean water initiatives but \$1 million was cut from the Clean Water Fund for the housing bond described below.	
● Invest in long-term improvements in affordable housing.	The budget diverted \$1 million from Lake Champlain cleanup funds for a \$35 million housing bond for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to increase affordable housing.	

3. Restore public confidence in state government.

Restore government's capacity to do its job.

● Strengthen performance measurement and results-based accountability throughout state government.	Governor Scott issued two executive orders to improve government efficiency and effectiveness. Executive Order 3-17 established the Government Management and Efficiency Team (GMET) to assess efficiency throughout state government and recommend improvements. Executive Order 4-17 created the Program to Improve Vermont Outcomes Together to implement GMET's recommendations.	
● Restore policy and planning staff.		

Include long-range planning in the budget process.

● Provide clear estimates of spending now and at least five years into the future, as is done with revenue.	The governor's 2018 budget plan had the most comprehensive Current Services Budget to date, with detailed line-item estimates.	
● Increase rainy day funds and make them easier to use.		

Fund state services equitably.

● Replace school property taxes on primary residences with an income based tax.	Bills were introduced in both houses to expand the current income-based system and the Senate Committee on Education held hearings on S. 58. No further action was taken.	
● Avoid business tax incentive gimmicks.		

