

Grading Key

-  No progress
-  Some action
-  More progress
-  Completion

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



2018 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).	2017: Bills introduced in both houses to increase the minimum wage to \$15/hour. Hearings and testimony but no further action. 2018: Increased EITC to 36% from 32% of the federal credit. Passed S. 40 increasing the minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2024; vetoed by governor.	
Eliminate benefit cliffs.	2017: Act 29 of 2017 raised the asset limit for Reach Up recipients, and excluded education savings from eligibility for child care subsidies. 2018: The vetoed minimum wage bill would have adjusted eligibility for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) to ensure that families did not lose benefits as a result of the increased minimum wage.	
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.	2017: The budget increased the child care financial assistance program (CCFAP) by \$2.5 million. 2018: Increased CCFAP payments for infants and toddlers and updated income eligibility, but the assistance remains far below federal guidelines.	
Open state-administered retirement plans to everyone.	2017: Act 69 established the Green Mountain Secure Retirement Plan (GMSRP), so employees without access can participate in state-administered plan. 2018: Implementation work continues on the GMSRP; scheduled to go live in January of 2019.	
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."	2017: The asset limits for eligibility were raised (see above). 2018: Need calculation will no longer be based on 2004 costs, but will use current costs to better reflect how much assistance falls short. Work requirements were also eased.	

Advance cost containment and public funding of health care.

Advance cost containment and public funding of health care.	2017 & 2018: Both the fiscal 2018 and 2019 budgets included funding for more competitive wages for mental health care workers, which should reduce turnover, 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.	2017: Act 69 of 2017 established a workforce working group to recommend improvements to current workforce training and preparedness and a new Career Pathways Coordinator. 2018: The working group issued recommendations in January 2018.	

Increase public investment in infrastructure.

Fund transportation in ways that are both financially and environmentally sustainable.	2017: Four proposals for a carbon pollution tax were introduced in the House (H. 528, 531, 532, 533). No hearings held.	
Ensure that state investment in high-speed Internet benefits the public.		
Repair Vermont's aging drinking water, waste water, and solid waste systems.	2017: 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.	2017: 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.	2017: Governor Scott issued two executive orders to improve government efficiency and effectiveness. Order 3-17 established the Government Management and Efficiency Team (GMET) to assess government efficiency and recommend improvements. Order 4-17 created the Program to Improve Vermont Outcomes Together (PIVOT) to implement GMET's recommendations. 2018: Administration established Targeted Action Plans to improve operations and trained state employees on PIVOT.	
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.	2017 and 2018: The governor submitted the most comprehensive Current Services Budgets (CSB) to date, with detailed line-item estimates. Future CSBs will reflect the current-year need calculation for Reach Up described above.	
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.	2017: Bills were introduced in both houses to expand the current income-based system, and the Senate Committee on Education held hearings.	
Avoid business tax incentive gimmicks.	Incentive funding remained unchanged for fiscal 2019, and a recent State Auditor report questioned their value.	