

# Chapter 1:

## The RBA Framework As A Whole

### \*1. WHAT IS RBA?

This is an excerpt from Chapter 1 of “Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough.” Chances are you have already read this, but it might not hurt to read it again. It might give you an idea about your elevator speech for RBA. When people (in an elevator) ask me what I do, I say “I help people work together to improve quality of life in their communities and improve the performance of their programs.”<sup>1</sup> It’s not perfect. Twenty words. Maybe you can do better. The best elevator speech of all time belongs to the CEO of ICANN<sup>2</sup>, the international organization that manages the internet. His speech: “We manage the dot in dot com.” Impressive.

Results-Based Accountability (RBA), or Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA) is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve the quality of life in communities, cities, counties, states and nations. RBA can also be used to improve the performance of programs, agencies and service systems.

RBA starts with ends and works backward, step by step, to means. For communities, the ends are conditions of well-being for children, adults, families and the community as a whole such as *Children Ready for School, A Safe Neighborhood, A Clean and Sustainable Environment, and A Prosperous Inclusive Economy*. For programs, the ends are the ways customers are better off when the program works the way it should, such as the percent of people in a job training program who get and keep living wage jobs.

Many people have been frustrated by past efforts that were all talk and no action. RBA is a process that gets you and your partners from talk to action quickly. It uses plain language and common sense methods that everyone can understand. The most basic version of RBA can be done in less than an hour and produces ideas that can be acted on immediately. RBA is an inclusive process where diversity is an asset and everyone in the community can contribute. Like all meaningful processes, RBA is hard work. But it is work that that makes a difference in peoples’ lives.

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<sup>1</sup> For readers in the E.U., Australia and New Zealand, the term “program” will be used to mean “service.”

<sup>2</sup> Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers