

1/30/25 VECAP Data & Evaluation Committee Full Notes

Participants: Morgan Crossman, Dora Levinson, Kendall Fortney, Joanne McClellan, Grant Cotherman, Kitty Foster, Amy Shaefer, Erin Roche, Hannah Ossoff, Katie Salina, Teri Hata, Keely Agan, Erik Post, Kristina LeBlanc, Tim Morgan, Lauren Eicher, Kim Laroche, Erin Oalican, Alyssa Mullan, Stephen Kirby, Emily Smith, David Kelley, Kheya Ganguly, Emma Spett, Tiffany North-Reid, Anthony Jackson-Miller, Cynthia Greene, Renee Kelly, Ann Dillenbeck, Carol Lang-Godin, Janet McLaughlin, Clare Waterman

Key Points:

- Kendall Fortney, Program Director of VERSO at UVM, talked about the value of open source data, and about some of the projects he and his team are working on
- A common thread throughout the meeting was concern around the safety of individuals' data once it has been collected
- Another topic that came up frequently was the siloing of different partners in the state, and the misalignment of data that is collected by different entities. Attendees emphasized the need to focus on linking and analyzing the data we have

Updates

- Emily Smith - VDH, Family and Child Health Division: wrapping up analyses on Child Care Health and Safety Survey, writing report, will hopefully be presenting around March, then will be opening up for analytic requests
 - Will get info to Dora to send out to everyone
- David Kelly - Agency of Education got their fall data this year using Ed Fi; first time doing this; not different data, just a new tool; Grant will be publishing some prek reports, a legislative report on Act 166 (no definitive timeline yet), and later in the spring should be a new Ready for Kindergarten
- David Kelly (AOE) & Dora Levinson (BBF) - AOE and CDD teams came together to work on UPK data, which was a great example of collaboration; worked on a system to make sure both data systems are receiving updates as they come in
- Dora Levinson (BBF) - [The State of Vermont's Children](#) was released, also just published a [Needs Assessment](#), which was a meta analysis of other needs assessments, and for which BBF will be doing an update on an annual basis
- Next Grand Rounds will be on March 24** and will be a roundtable on Act 76
 - Currently planning out the next year of Grand Rounds, send in your suggestions; topics covered so far include prek, preschool, equity and data collection, and family leadership panel
 - **The date mentioned in the recording is February 24, but has since been updated to March 24

Full Notes

Kendall Fortney, Program Director at Vermont Research Open Source Program Office (VERSO) at UVM (Kendall.Fortney@uvm.edu)

- VERSO - Vermont Research Open Source Program Office
 - ORCA Program
- Open Source
 - Creating, sharing, and maintaining resources together
 - Data, software, process, documentation, publication, etc.
 - Open data is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) by anyone for any purpose
 - Licensing - a key component of open source
 - Open Licenses

- Data Content Licenses
 - Most common one you'll see is CCO - Creative Commons License Zero
 - Effectively makes something public domain
 - CC BY - Creative Commons Attribution
 - If you use something, you need to credit the original data set
 - Additional licenses also exist
- ORCA - Open Research Community Accelerator
 - Translating academic research or community needs into open source projects through a passionate group of students
 - Examples - Heard and Understood App, Vermont Zoning Atlas, Vermont Livability Map
 - Trying to figure out how to support data, data services and questions in the state of Vermont
 - Project Bank - potential ideas

Discussion:

- What are key missing pieces to advance the welfare of children and families?
- Who are the key users that can change the picture?

- Questions came up around navigating data sharing. Kendall noted that an advantage of the work he is doing now is that the state generally wants things to be open, and he tends to stick to open data sources. When data is closed, concerns range from protecting private information (in which case it makes sense to keep it closed) to concerns about someone else taking an idea (in which case we should ask whether you want this info to actually change something, if so it should be open).
- Attendees voiced concerns around the safety of the storage of individuals' data that might include sensitive information, particularly in the current political atmosphere.
- Kendall noted that whenever we are thinking about creating new resources, we need to consider questions such as who will manage these services, how do we build them, and how do we keep them up to date? He noted that it is important to find the right partners for any given project.
- Kendall noted that when thinking about issues we are trying to solve, we also need to think about what information we actually *need* to do the work and also need to focus on breaking people out of their silos.
 - The idea of bringing together partners from different sectors/silos, and finding ways to link the data those partners possess, was a priority for many of the attendees.
- Attendees discussed the challenges that come with analyzing data when the regions that are used for gathering that data are different from those used in other systems.
 - Kendall noted that part of the issue is that VT doesn't use counties in the way that other states do; and also emphasized that this misalignment also contributes to the siloing of different organizations.
- Kendall talked about the need for storytelling when presenting data for purposes such as policy making and community discussions, as you can't just hand someone a dataset and expect them to understand it.
- Dora discussed the importance of efficiency, in the sense of doing work once and maintaining it rather than it having to be done over and over.
- Kendall was asked one recommendation would be for a group of partners who collect data differently but want to make it accessible. His suggestions were to figure out what the problem is that you are all trying to solve, and go from there to figure out what you need; and to have a place for everyone to ask

questions and start to build these things, which will hopefully make the data questions feel more necessary rather than inconvenient.

Morgan initiated a discussion of tensions, challenges, and limitations we have in our data, and how this committee wants to move forward in an advisement capacity.

- Attendees discussed how we can leverage previous recommendations. The question was brought up of whether we are tracking barriers to implementation, and Morgan noted that one thing to consider is that these challenges change over time.
 - Morgan also noted that this comes back to having antiquated systems and needing to build buy-in to why it's valuable to provide information.
- A concern was brought up around the policy recs that center on data collection, and whether we ought to focus more on linking data rather than collecting more, where we already collect so much.
 - Attendees agreed on the importance of emphasizing the value of data analysis work, and of creating roles centered on this work - looking at applications as well as outcomes
- Morgan brought up the possibility within this committee of creating a collaborative data brief on existing data systems, infrastructure, and capacity needs in the state of VT
- The idea of linking different data systems was a common theme, and Morgan noted that these conversations are happening in various areas
 - Morgan also mentioned that there might be a subgroup created to have these conversations around linking to reduce things being siloed
 - Concerns around confidentiality and individuals losing control of where their data ends up were brought up in the context of data being linked and shared
- Attendees emphasized the importance of making sure that all of this data work ends up having practical applications that are useful to the people whose data is being collected
 - Morgan noted that beyond thinking about linking things on the back end, we also need to be thinking about how we can share data in meaningful ways, and ways that are not harmful to individuals; she mentioned the importance of talking to each other about when it is important to share data and when it is not
- In the vein of thinking about safety concerns, there was a discussion around different ways that we can collect data, such as collecting qualitative rather than quantitative data, and thinking creatively about verifying eligibility requirements for specific programs/services (i.e., getting confirmation of demographic information over the phone rather than in writing)

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 20 1:00 - 2:30pm