Progress Narrative Guidance

For Year 4 OD2A Progress Reports

October 2026

Under your Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant, you must submit quarterly progress reports. We use these reports to:

- Track grant compliance
- Track performance measures required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Identify support needs
- Prepare quarterly updates and yearly progress reports for our CDC partner

For OD2A grant year 4, each activity now has one narrative section (Rather than the previous format of Success/Challenge/Narrative). Use this space to give a general progress update that covers your successes, challenges, and how you worked to overcome barriers.

This guide will help you write clear, useful reports that help us tell your story to our federal funders. If you have questions while completing your report, please contact us. We are happy to help.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact vini.emery@vermont.gov.

Instructions

On your quarterly report, you are given the following promopt: *Describe your progress to date, including progress in engaging your population of focus. Highlight any significant successes or challenges. Describe barriers and how you overcame them (or plan to address them), and any relevant facilitators.*

- **Success highlights.** Describe what is going well and what you accomplished this quarter.
- **Challenges and barriers.** Focus on specific challenges you face in carrying out your program. Outline how you address or plan address the barriers.

  Challenges should not include the underlying problems of the populations you serve, rather barriers to providing services. For example, if your population of focus is people experiencing homelessness, lack of housing is not a challenge in carrying out your program. It is the underlying problem your program aims to help address. When writing about your challenges and your plan to address them, focus on issues that you can affect.

So, instead of this:

A challenge we faced this quarter was a lack of housing options and inclement weather

Try something like this:

Because of the change in weather and recent encampment sweeps by law enforcement, we struggled to provide outreach because people were no longer in known locations.
To address this, we increased our presence at local community dinners. We provided overdose prevention bags, naloxone, and brochures. We also spoke with people who could tell us where to find others for outreach. These people know our program and are trusted ambassadors. They took extra supplies to share with their communities.

Tips

- **Summarize both qualitative and quantitative work completed this quarter** (for example, stories and observations as well as counts and other numbers).
- **Highlight community partnerships.** You name your community partners elsewhere in your report, so you do not need to list them again here. Instead, highlight new connections and specific collaborations.
- **Write for a reader who does not know your community or work.** Avoid acronyms or spell them out the first time you use them.
- **Stay objective.** Tell the story of the work, not your opinion.
- **Use AI discriminately.** AI can be a helpful tool for formatting, outlining, and editing, but it's best to avoid use for creation, as it removes the important human effect on your story, can make errors, and uses up natural resources. (note from Vini: Having attempted to write federal grant updates using your reports, I have found that when folks use AI, the reports say LESS and I am left with word salad, with very little meaning, your voice matters here).
  When using AI to assist with your reports please:
  - Verify all data and citations: Cross-check all data and number to combat "hallucinations"
  - Stay authentic: Your voice matters and is valued and helps us understand the importance of your work in a way a robot cannot.
  - Be your own author if you use AI, use it as an assistant or editor. This will help to keep your report distinctive rather than generic.