

Year in Review



Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

The College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario protects the public through effective regulation and instills confidence and trust by ensuring that occupational therapists are competent, ethical and accountable.

Vision

Excellence in regulatory leadership.

Values and Commitments

Treating everyone with dignity and respect

We consider the uniqueness of each situation. We are respectful of all voices, conscious of bias, open-minded, and dedicated to learning.

We are committed to integrating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) practices throughout our organization and the occupational therapy profession to protect the public interest.

Maintaining trust and confidence

We are fair, open, and responsive. We are proactive. We hold ourselves accountable for our decisions and actions.

Partnering for quality

We listen. We work together to ensure quality occupational therapy services across the province.

2020-2024 Leadership Outcomes

**Public
Confidence**

**Qualified
Registrants**

**Quality
Practice**

**System
Impact**

Key 2020 – 2024 Projects

- Supporting equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and Indigenous OTs
- Governance modernization
- COVID-19 pandemic response
- Enterprise system
- New national Competencies
- Revised Standards of Practice
- Quality Assurance program redesign
- Mental health scope and supports



Public Confidence

- 1.1 The public trusts occupational therapy regulation.
- 1.2 The public understands the role of the College and its value.
- 1.3 College governance is responsive, effective, competency-based, and accountable.
- 1.4 College decision-making processes are open, transparent, and accountable.
- 1.5 College operations are transparent, effective, and efficient in serving and protecting the public interest.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion



Establishing the foundation and moving forward

- **In 2020**, equity, diversity and inclusion were included in Strategic Plan.
- COTO began review of activities and functions to learn how to improve. Work included:
 - Ongoing education of staff and Board conducted by EDI subject matter consultant.
 - Implementation of equity impact assessment tool for decision making.
 - Participation on Health Profession Regulators of Ontario (HPRO) Anti-Racism Steering Committee.

Public Confidence

1.1 The public trusts occupational therapy regulation

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

In 2024:

- Values and Commitments highlight focus on EDI and EDI is established as core element of next strategic plan.
- **Equity Perspectives and Indigenous Insights Advisory Committees** formalized with established Terms of Reference.
- *Competencies for Occupational Therapy Practice* include Culture, Equity and Justice.
- Dedicated web page provides information on expectations for culturally safe services for patients and clients..
- *What to Expect When Working with an OT* video reflects focus on dignity and respect, human rights and cultural practices.



Supporting Indigenous OTs, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

In 2020, COTO recognized the first step to “increasing the number of Indigenous professionals working in health care” is to understand how many registrants identify as being Indigenous.

- COTO began asking registrants to self-identify if they are Indigenous.

In 2024, the College initiated work on the National Race-Based Data Collection project using the **Canadian Institute for Health Information** and ACOTRO, with plans to begin collection with Annual Renewal 2025.



Canadian Institute
for Health Information

Institut canadien
d'information sur la santé

ACOTRO
ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY REGULATORY ORGANIZATIONS



ACORE
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES ORGANISMES
DE RÉGLEMENTATION EN ERGOTHÉRAPIE

Public Confidence

1.1 The public trusts occupational therapy regulation



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Outcome

- EDI is now a regular consideration in all our work.
- We continue to learn, unlearn and relearn on a journey that protects all members of the public and supports better outcomes for everyone.
- Registrants support the delivery of safe practice.
- Registrants understand the expectations for **cultural safety**.
- Public protected through safer care and understanding.

College Performance Measurement Framework (CPMF)

The Ministry of Health requires all health regulatory Colleges to report on how well they are doing their job of protecting the public interest.

To help the public understand how well colleges are doing their job and to help continually improve accountability, transparency and oversight, all colleges are reporting on their work in the CPMF Reporting Tool with 50 measures.



2021 CPMF submission: 47/50

2022 CPMF submission: 49/50

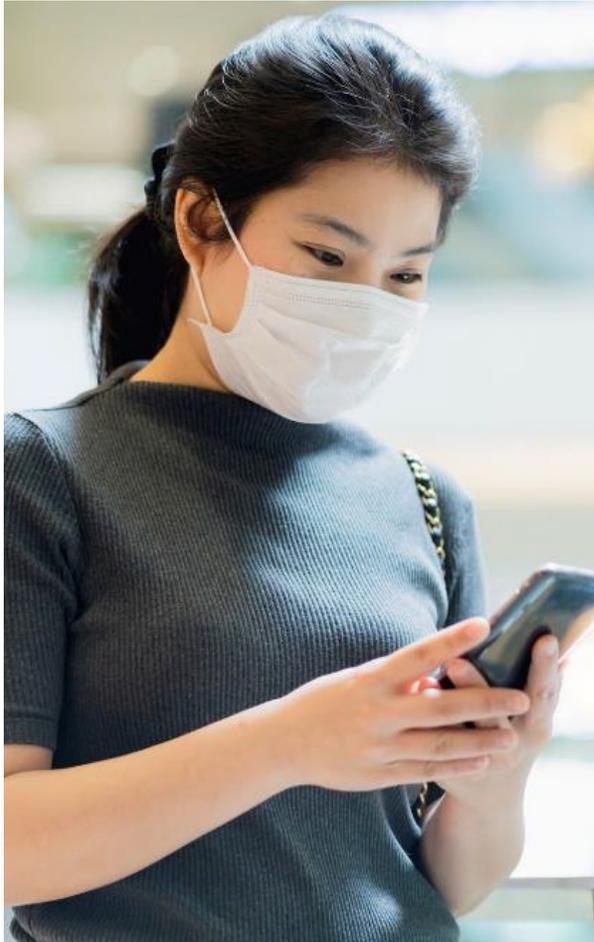
2023 CPMF submission: 49.5/50

2024 CPMF submission: 50/50

CPMF reports are available to the public on **coto.org**.

COVID-19

Caring for patients, clients, registrants and partners



COTO COVID-19 pandemic response

Messaging (*February 2020 -May 2024*)

- calls, guidance, eblasts, social posts
- COVID-19 information on website
 - 61,000+ webpage views
 - 45,000+ users

Outcomes

- College served as trusted resource for registrants and others
- Revised business continuity plan, emergency and crisis response plan, issues management process
- Created virtual services guidance
- Emergency regulation in place

COVID-19

Delivering Public Health Guidance



Collaboration

College's **COVID-19 Task Force** developed messaging, resources, and support for registrants.

Clarifying Direction

Collaboration with HPRO rehabilitation Colleges about guidance and the application of Ministry of Health Directives

Registrants shared appreciation for timely updates and consistent public health messages on vaccinations, school guidance, redeployment, patient transfers, and more.

Improving Clarity and Access to Information

Refining Logo and Adding Tagline

2023 update to the College's logo to distinguish our regulatory role.



Leveraging College Social Media

COTO social channels build awareness of College and OTs as licensed health professionals.



- Social media followers across channels: **7349**
(123.58% increase in followers from 2020 to 2024)
- Total views of COTO videos: **509,631**
(total views from 2020 to 2024)

Building Awareness of College Role

Articles, videos, and social posts videos build awareness of COTO's public protection role and what to expect when working with licensed OTs.



2023-2024 Communications Snapshot

- 764 posts to COTO social media channels
- 92,369 views of COTO videos across our channels (*YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, X/Twitter, LinkedIn*)
- 8 community news articles (digital and print)
- 2 radio spots (2.9 million reached)



Governance Modernization Journey

January 2020 Board approved plan

- Reduce Board size
- Have competency-based Board and Committees
- Separation of Board and Committees where possible (reducing overlap and supports efficiency and enhanced decision-making)
- Restructured Executive Committee and introduced Board committees
- Changes in titles and terminology

Context

- Governance modernization has been a priority for the College since 2020.
- The College has made best practice structural changes that update and strengthen the integrity of our regulatory system and mandate to ensure public protection.
- All governance changes were done within our legislative framework.

Governance Reform

Accomplished **by 2024**:

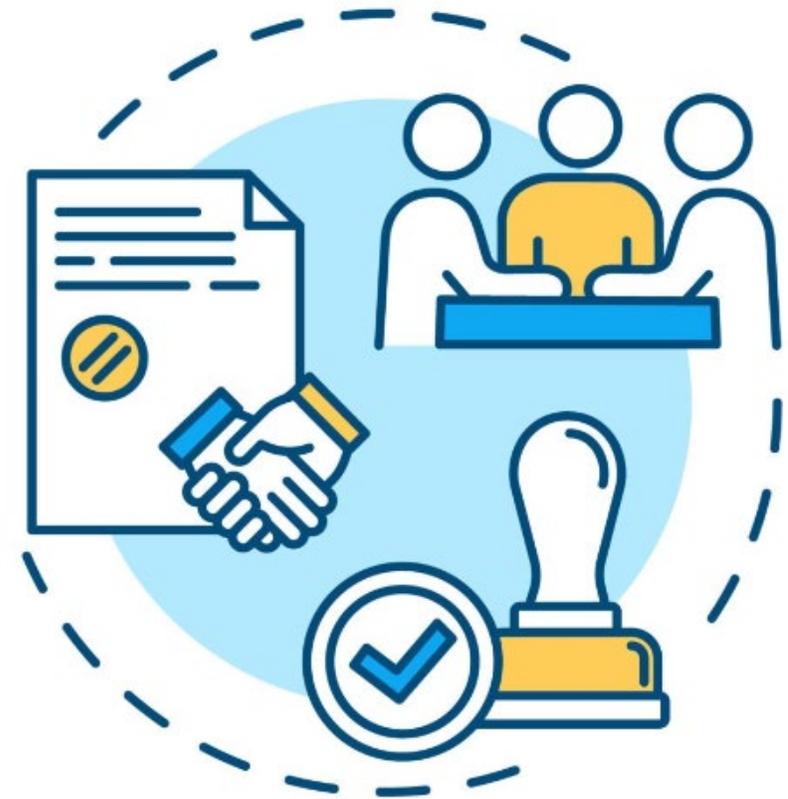
- Mandatory interactive pre-election and appointment module
- Electoral districts restructured and reduced from 6 to 3
- Nominations Committee established
- Action plan approved to address recommendations from third-party governance assessment report



Governance Reform

Outcome

- Public best served by modernized governance
- Board focus on strategic decision-making
- Increased opportunities for registrant involvement at the Committee level.



Public Confidence

1.5 College operations are transparent, effective and efficient in serving and protecting the public interest

Advancing the Enterprise System (COTO Portal)

The new COTO Portal is a streamlined and efficient enterprise system that provides a strong foundation to support the College and its mandate.

2023: Quality Assurance requirements in COTO Portal
2024: Annual Renewal completed in COTO Portal

Outcome

- Effective and efficient operations
- Improved workflow and efficiency
- Increased capability
- Access to enhanced data and reporting to best serve public interest and decision-making





Qualified Registrants

- 2.1** Entry to practice requirements and processes are effective for ensuring qualified practitioners.
- 2.2** Decisions about registrants are transparent and accessible.
- 2.3** The public register provides accurate information about current or former registrants.

Qualified Registrants

2.1 Entry to practice requirements and processes are effective for ensuring qualified practitioners

National Competencies Support Registration of Qualified Registrants

- Many years of collaborative national work led to the release of the *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada*. ACOTRO, ACOTUP & CAOT (2021) in November 2022.
- These Competencies reflect the broad range of skills and abilities required of all occupational therapists in Canada at every stage of their career.
- The 2022 national eLearning Module *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada* was developed with the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations ([ACOTRO](#)) in partnership with occupational therapy regulators across the country.



COMPETENCIES FOR
OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPISTS
IN CANADA

Qualified Registrants

2.1 Entry to practice requirements and processes are effective for ensuring qualified practitioners



Improving Access for Qualified Practitioners

Re-entry Updates

- COTO temporary certification improves access by re-entry applicants to supervising therapists.

National Occupational Therapy Certification Exam (NOTCE)

- 2024 first full year of 3 sittings for NOTCE in April, September, and December.
- The national exam will start using its new NOTCE Blueprint based on the *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada* (2021) starting September 2026.

Qualified Registrants

2.3 The public register provides accurate information about current or former registrants.

Identifying risks in practise



Collecting registrant practice information about occupational therapy assessments and approaches in occupational therapy practise to inform planning and resource development.

Starting with Annual Renewal in March 2024, these included:

- Power mobility assessments
- Swallowing assessments
- Driving assessments
- Capacity assessment
- Cost of future care assessment
- Splinting
- Use of psychotherapy approaches



Quality Practice

- 3.1** Occupational therapists are competent, safe, effective and accountable
- 3.2** College complaints and discipline processes are effective, fair, and accessible to the public.
- 3.3** The College engages occupational therapists to advance quality, ethical practice.
- 3.4** Professional standards are up-to-date and reflect evolving practice.
- 3.5** Educational programs and outreach support continuous quality improvement

Quality Assurance Program Redesign

Annual requirements

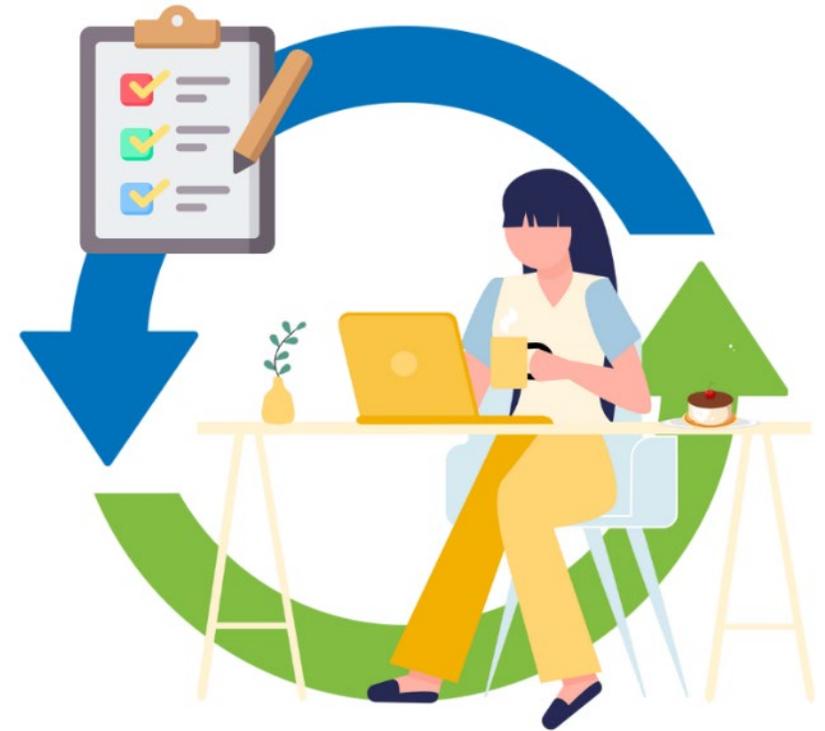
- New Annual Learning Plan activity based on new *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada, 2021* (self-assessment and plan, now one activity)
- 2023 Annual eLearning Module *Building a Sound Foundation* supports introduction of the new Competencies and Standards of Practice
- Registrant survey results: relevant, positive impact on practice, increased knowledge

Competency assessment

- New competency assessment processes and tools introduced
- 100 assessments completed (*Sept 2023-May 2024*)
- Analyzing data to identify areas of strength and learning needs for OTs
- Analyzing data to revise indicators for risk-based selections

Outcome

- Evolution of QA program supports continuing competence of occupational therapists.
- Provides supports to address key areas of risk and need to ensure public interest is protected. College exists to serve the public interest.
- Presenting QA Journey at 2024 CNAR Conference



Learning About Concerns & Complaints

- Sharing data and trends to support registrant and public understanding
- New simplified infographic of complaints process
- Reducing legal jargon, increasing readability and adjusting tone
- Web pages with more information about:
 - the reports and complaints process
 - how to address concerns about another OT
 - the health inquiry process

The infographic is titled "Complaints Process" and is set against a white background with a purple border. It features the COTO logo at the top left, which includes the text "College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario" and "Regulator of occupational therapists in Ontario". The process is outlined in five numbered steps, each with a corresponding icon and a brief description of the step. Step 1, "Submit a concern", uses icons for a document, microphone, and envelope. Step 2, "Confirmation", uses icons for a telephone and speech bubbles. Step 3, "Investigation", uses icons for a document and a magnifying glass. Step 4, "Decisions", uses a gavel icon. Step 5, "Appeals", uses a circular arrow icon. At the bottom, there is a footer with contact information and a link to the Public Register.

COTO College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
Regulator of occupational therapists in Ontario

Complaints Process

- 1 Submit a concern**
Complaints must be recorded and sent to the College. This can be in writing, or an audio or video recording. Complaints can also be submitted through the College's online complaint form (available on coto.org).
Contact investigations@coto.org for help or accommodations.
- 2 Confirmation**
Staff from the College will call the person who made the complaint to discuss the details of the complaint.
College staff are neutral. They will listen and be in contact with both sides.
The occupational therapist will get a copy of the complaint. Any information about the complaint will be shared with the occupational therapist.
- 3 Investigation**
All complaints are investigated. The College's Investigations team or an external investigator will collect any relevant documents and speak to any relevant witnesses.
When the investigation is complete, all the collected information is sent to the occupational therapist so they can respond.
- 4 Decisions**
The College's complaints committee will review all the information and make a decision. The person who made the complaint and the occupational therapist do not attend these meetings.
The complaints committee cannot:
 - require an apology.
 - require the occupational therapist to go back and fix the issue.
 - issue a monetary reward.
 - take away the occupational therapist's license.For more information about decisions the committee can make, visit: coto.org/complaints/decisions
- 5 Appeals**
Committee decisions can be appealed.
The person who made the complaint and occupational therapist can appeal if they do not agree with the committee's decision. Once they receive the decision, they will get more information about how to appeal.

Check the College's [Public Register](#) for up-to-date information about occupational therapists.
Questions? Need help? Contact investigations@coto.org
Learn more at coto.org/complaints

Quality Practice

3.3 The College engages occupational therapists to advance quality, ethical practice



Connecting with Registrants

Each year, consultation, engagement and outreach to registrants evolves to meet needs of registrants and interested parties.

In 2024:

- 16 university and college presentations reaching 500+ people
- 7 workplace and health organization presentations reaching 300+ people
- 3 presentations to other regulatory organizations reaching 30+ people
- 2 sessions at provincial association conference
- 3 online consultations with registrants to inform decision-making

Outcome

- Engaged registrants share perspectives that inform resource and program development
- Audiences educated on COTO expectations, resources and opportunities to participate in self-regulation
- Delivery of quality, ethical practice is advanced

Quality Practice

3.4 Professional standards are up-to-date and reflect evolving practice

Supporting Best Practice

National Competencies support the delivery of safe practice and evolving landscape



Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada, ACOTRO, ACOTUP, CAOT (2021)

Culture, Equity and Justice in Occupational Therapy Practice

reflected in

Revised Standards of Practice integrate the new *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada, ACOTRO, ACOTUP, CAOT (2021)* and culture, equity, and justice practice expectations.

Quality Practice

Supporting Best Practice

New 2023/2024 Resources

Privacy Legislation and Occupational Therapy Practice

COTO College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
Regulator of occupational therapists in Ontario

- Q&A resource to support the ‘updated Standards of Practice webinar’
- Case scenarios and Q&As to support how to apply the rules of practice
- Privacy Legislation and Occupational Therapy guidance document & pre-recorded webinar to support application of guidance
- Q&A on remote (virtual) practice across jurisdictions

Outcome

- Standards support best practice in the delivery of occupational therapy service.
- National collaboration supports consistency in the delivery of occupational therapy services.



Highlighting Mental Health Scope

Psychotherapy

Supporting occupational therapists in the delivery of mental health services.

Mental health services part of occupational therapists' training and within scope.

Increased demand for mental health services post-pandemic and due to health human resources crisis

Outcome

Resources such as the Standard for Psychotherapy, 2023 and published Q & As support OTs in delivery of high-quality services for patients and clients.



System Impact

- 4.1 The College is a collaborative, effective regulatory leader
- 4.2 Collaboration supports the College's effectiveness and impact as a regulator.
- 4.3 Collaboration promotes systems alignment to support quality practice by occupational therapists.

Leading Regulatory Practice Provincially and Nationally

Leadership roles in:

- **Health Profession Regulators of Ontario (HPRO)**, collaborating with all 26 regulatory health regulators to further delivery of public protection mandate.
- **Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO)** which represents 10 provincial regulators, working together to standardize best practices and public expectations for safe occupational therapy services across the country. Reflected in the *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada*, national eLearning modules and other initiatives.
- **Governance modernization** and performance measurement, sharing best practices with provincial and national regulatory partners as they begin their own projects on these key issues.

Building Effective Processes Together

Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO)

This national group works together throughout the year to advance excellence in occupational therapy regulation across the country. This is critical for labour mobility and provides economy of scale for national initiatives.

Outcome

- Labour mobility support agreement
- Substantial Equivalency Assessment System
- National eLearning module related to the *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada*
- Remote practice memorandum of understanding
- Developing a common pathway for Re-entry to Occupational Therapy Practice
- National statements for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Truth and Reconciliation

Collaboration in Preparation for Regulation of Applied Behaviour Analysis

COTO and four other Colleges developed clear and consistent communication for registrants using **Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)** who may be affected by the decision to create a protected title for ABA practitioners.

Outcome

- Standardized communication document for use by six provincial regulatory bodies
 - COTO, CPO, CRPO, CASLPO, ECE, OCSWSSW
- Increased registrant understanding of existing and emerging regulatory obligations
- Removing obstacles for qualified mental health practitioners helps more clients get the mental health services they need.

System Impact

4.3 Collaboration promotes systems alignment to support quality practice by occupational therapists

Emergency Regulation

The Minister of Health approved changes under the *Occupational Therapy Act*, 1991, amending the registration requirements of the Emergency Certificate of Registration.

The regulation changes grant the Board the authority to determine when emergency circumstances exist, and whether it is in the public interest to open the **Emergency Class**.

Outcome

By changing the regulations under the *Occupational Therapy Act*, the College is making sure to reduce barriers for applicants in emergency situations.



College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
@CollegeofOTs

With [#Bill106](#), the Government of Ontario amended the Regulated Health Professions Act to require all health regulatory Colleges to establish an Emergency Class of registration.

NEW Review our proposed amendments and share your feedback in our consultation: surveymonkey.com/r/3KP9K26



College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
Regulator of occupational therapists in Ontario

Consultation

Proposed Emergency

Class of Registration



ALT

System Impact

4.3 Collaboration promotes systems alignment to support quality practice by occupational therapists

Ensuring Resources



- COTO engaged in long term forecasting and planning for College resources to ensure it maintains its ability to meet its public protection mandate to deliver safe, competent, ethical occupational therapy services.
- Ensuring adequate resources is critical for delivering our programs and meeting our public interest mandate, executing operational initiatives, and fulfilling regular operating duties effectively.

2024-2027 Strategic Priorities

Meaningful Engagement

The College builds trust in its role and value through purposeful and meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Quality Practice

The College embraces leading regulatory practices to protect the public.

System Impact

The College collaborates for access to the profession and consistent quality practice.

Performance & Accountability

The College maintains strong corporate and governance structures and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

2024-2027 Projects

- Governance
- Data
 - Updated standard
 - Race-based data
- Re-entry program
- Competencies for Occupational Therapists
- National Code of Ethics
- Enterprise system (COTO Portal)
- Document management system
- Practice guidance
 - AI
 - OTA
 - Privacy
 - Psychotherapy
- New registrant engagement
- Employer engagement
- National eLearning module

2024 – 2027 Strategic Goals

Meaningful Engagement

- New registrant and employer engagement
- Mentorship and practice supervision
- Increased French resources

System Impact

- Health human resources (HHR) work
- Scope of Practice
- National processes

Quality Practice

- Ongoing improvements to the QA Program
- Re-entry program
- Practice documents
- Leveraging data

Performance and Accountability

- Governance
- Enterprise system
- Accounting system

COTO

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