Frequently Asked Questions
Evidence-Based Budgeting for FY23

To best support the state in meeting state fiscal policy objectives, Tennessee uses evidence-based budgeting (EBB), which facilitates the use of research and evidence to inform funding decisions in a way that improves outcomes. The goal is to identify the most effective, evidence-based programs to inform decision makers, and to increase transparency during the budgeting process using a common language and process across the enterprise.

The FY23 evidence-based budgeting forms—the cost increase request and reduction form—are located on the budget instructions page. There, you can also find BEARS user support, a copy of the training slide deck, and some short videos that review the Tennessee Evidence Framework, how to find evidence, and how to complete the forms. **All forms are due by Sept. 24, 2021**.

General

1. Do I need to complete an EBB form if I am not submitting any cost increases?

No. EBB forms are synonymous with cost increase requests and reduction forms. If you are not submitting cost increases or reductions, these forms do not need to be completed.

2. With a little over a month for budget submissions, will there be exceptions to some of these requirements?

To ensure the budget team and governor's office have all the information they need to make decisions based on evidence, the requirements outlined in the EBB forms and in the trainings stand for FY23. The agencies did a great job completing the forms last year, and we don't anticipate the need for exceptions. Remember, you are only asked to provide ***current, existing*** information. If outputs or outcomes are not currently being tracked, they do not need to be included.

A few other reminders:

- The cost increase request form is not needed for increases required by law.
- Operational increase requests only require sections 1 and 2 of the form.
- Operational reductions do not need a reduction form completed.

3. Should we complete the reduction form for *any* reduction in staff, or only staff "directly" involved in a program?

If a reduction would eliminate vacant positions, administrative positions, or positions that do not directly or solely manage a program, a reduction form is not needed. However, a reduction form should be completed if a position is being reduced or eliminated that directly affects a program. Often, reductions to programs will include position adjustments – be sure to document those appropriately in the form.

Identifying Programs

4. How do I decide whether a request is programmatic or operational?

In the context of evidence-based budgeting, a program is a systematic activity that engages participants to achieve desired outcomes. Terms often used in place of *program* may include *service*, *intervention*, or *practice*. If a systematic activity has participants and has its own name, it is likely a program.

Operational requests may include facility maintenance, infrastructure, or administration (adding non-programmatic positions). They are items that do not impact core components of individual programs that serve constituents or the positions that oversee those programs.

If you have further questions about this or would like support with deciding whether a request is programmatic or operational, please contact the OEI team.

5. What type of program is Part II targeting? Is it primarily social service programs?

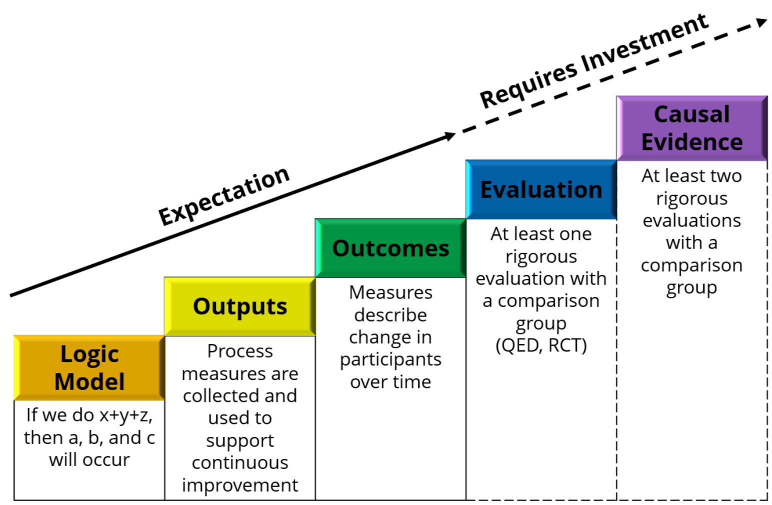
Primarily social service programs will be utilizing the form, but there may be other types of programs for which it is appropriate to submit the form. The key criterion is whether there is a group of participants in which a change in behavior or a benefit (other than or in addition to financial) is expected as a result of implementation of the program or policy. In some cases, state employees or future employees might be that group, such as statewide diversity and inclusion efforts led by DOHR. In some cases, counties or other localities might be that group, such as economic & community development programming. Finally, there may be programs in a non-social service department that are social service programs, such as educational efforts related to the department's work (this would be specific training efforts or classes, not general engagement strategies of the department).

That said, the key takeaway here is to please engage the OEI team if you have uncertainty regarding whether to complete Part II of the EBB form.

Completing the Evidence & Impact Table (Part II)

6. I am not familiar with the Tennessee Evidence Framework. Help!

While the evidence framework is new to the EBB forms this year, it captures information asked in last year's budgeting forms. See the figure to the right and consider watching the short videos on the framework and finding evidence for more information.



While some of Tennessee's programs have an evidence base, it may not be possible to conduct a rigorous evaluation for some programs for a variety of reasons. So ultimately, the expectation is that all programs are operating with a foundation of sound logic, collecting process data, and measuring outcomes.

Evidence-based budgeting forms ask only for data that currently exists. So, for example, if there are no output measures currently being collected for a program, it's okay to leave the field blank.

7. I am part of the budget staff, and don't have information about the program metrics. How do I complete the evidence table?

This is where your agency's program subject matter experts (SMEs) come in. You'll want to collaborate with the manager of the program to complete the table. SMEs should have, or know where to find, information and data for their program's outputs and outcomes. Remember, the EBB forms are meant to capture a program snapshot, and therefore only require the key, *current* measurements for outputs and outcomes—no new data needs to be collected for these forms.

8. We don't have a built-out logic model for our program. Do we need one?

No, you don't need to have a full logic model for a program. To complete the evidence table in the EBB form, all that is required is a one-sentence if/then statement, or theory of action, for the program. For example:

> ***If*** we allocate [X resources] to [complete X activities],
> ***then*** we expect to see [X short-term outcomes] resulting in [X long-term outcomes].

A full logic model can be helpful, but is not necessary, in crafting this sentence that captures the essence of the program. The logic model box is the only place in the evidence table you should develop a response if it doesn't exist yet.

9. What is the difference between outputs and outcomes?

Outputs	Outcomes
Are concrete, countable results of program activities	Are changes in behavior or benefit over time in a particular direction
Are products or services that can be measured in tangible terms or totals	Are the *impact* of the products or services
Often are part of existing program management systems or project plans within your agency	Can be identified in the short-term (impact to individuals) and/or long-term (impact to systems or organizations)
Examples • $ spent • # of families served • # of children placed • # of items shipped • # of trainings delivered • Acceptance rate (for one year, cycle, or point in time) • % of those surveyed who approve	**Examples** • % increase of families served over Y years • X decrease in number of placements between 2019 and 2020 • X acceptance rate remained steady since Y year • Participant satisfaction rose X percentage point between the first and second survey • Submission rate fell by X between January and May

10. My program has existed for a while but does not have data or metrics for outputs and/or outcomes. What can I do?

Remember, the EBB form is designed to capture *currently* collected information. So, if you are not currently collecting outcomes, do not create them—just leave the field blank. It's okay if parts of the table are empty. However, it is important to discuss with your leadership team strategies for collecting those data as part of your program management plans, in order to inform continuous improvement and future decision-making activities.

11. We are proposing a new/pilot program. How do I complete the evidence table?

For proposals outlining a new or pilot program/service, we expect you will only complete the logic model step. Check the Logic Model box and add an if/then statement.

Then, leave the Outputs and Outcomes boxes unchecked—this is a cue for OEI that this is a new program that does not yet have data—but if you know which output/outcome measures you plan to collect, feel free to note those in the appropriate boxes.

If the program is established as evidence-based in a clearinghouse, please cite that information in the Evaluation/Causal Evidence column as directed.

12. Where do I start looking for rigorous evaluations/evidence for a program?

We suggest starting with the Results First clearinghouse database, powered by Pew. This database combines evidence from multiple clearinghouses in the social service areas.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) also compiles research in various social and human service areas and contains added benefit-cost analyses and meta-analyses. Because many states offer similar services, consulting other states' inventories like Minnesota's can also be useful.

13. I can't find existing studies for my program in the database. Where else can I look?

See the appendix of this document for a list of other clearinghouses to try. If you still cannot find any, it's possible the evidence does not yet exist in a clearinghouse. In this case, leave the Evaluation and Causal Evidence boxes in the FY23 form blank.

Contact Information

14. I still have questions or need more support. Who can I contact?

More information is available on F&A's budget instructions page, including links to download the FY23 forms, short refresher videos, the slide deck from the August training, and BEARS user support.

You can contact the OEI team at OEI.Questions@tn.gov, or email either of OEI's evidence coordinators directly at Kaitlin.L.Reynolds@tn.gov and Amanda.K.Armstrong@tn.gov. To contact the right person on the budget team, search for your area on the budget agency assignments page.

Appendix: Additional Clearinghouse Resources

Federal Registers

- Compendium of Evidence Based Interventions and Best Practices for HIV Prevention | https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/research/interventionresearch/compendium/index.html
- CrimeSolutions.gov | https://www.crimesolutions.gov/
- Effective Interventions HIV Prevention that Works | https://effectiveinterventions.cdc.gov/
- Evidence-based Practices (EBP) Resource Center (SAMHSA) | https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center
- Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) | https://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/
- National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP) | https://samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp
- OJJDP Model Programs Guide | https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Review | https://tppevidencereview.youth.gov/EvidencePrograms.aspx
- What Works Clearinghouse | https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
- Youth.gov | https://youth.gov/

Non-Federal Registers

- Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development | http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/
- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) | http://www.cebc4cw.org/
- Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (York University) | https://www.york.ac.uk/crd/
- Child Trends/What Works | http://www.childtrends.org/what-works/
- Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness | https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/
- Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews | http://www.cochrane.org/
- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Program Guides | https://www.casel.org/guide/
- Connecticut Clearinghouse | https://www.ctclearinghouse.org/
- Effective Child Therapy: Evidence-based Mental Health Treatment for Children and Adolescents | https://effectivechildtherapy.org/
- Evidence-Based Practices for Substance Use Disorders | http://adai.uw.edu/ebp/
- PracticeWise | https://www.practicewise.com/
- Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ReCAPP) | http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/
- Results First Clearinghouse Database | http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/multimedia/data-visualizations/2015/results-first-clearinghouse-database
- Social Programs That Work | http://evidencebasedprograms.org/

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) | https://www.sprc.org/
- The Campbell Collaboration | https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/
- Society of Clinical Psychology | https://www.div12.org/treatments/
- What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse | https://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/