Frequently Asked Questions
FY27 Evidence-Based Budgeting

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

The FY27 evidence-based budgeting forms—the cost increase request and reduction form—are located on the state's budget instructions page. There, you will find additional support from the budget office and a link to OEI's evidence-based budgeting resources. **All forms are due Friday, Sept. 12, 2025**.

Have an idea of what you're looking for? Use these quick links to jump to the section you need:

General | Identifying Programs | Evidence & Impact Information
New/Pilot Program Requests | Contact Info | Clearinghouses

General

1. Will there be exceptions to any form requirements?

No. To ensure the budget team and governor's office have all the information they need to make informed decisions, the requirements outlined in the EBB forms and in the trainings stand for FY27. Agencies did well completing the forms in prior years, and we don't anticipate the need for exceptions.

2. Do I need to submit a reduction form for all reductions this year?

Yes. Just like cost increase proposals, all reduction proposals entered into the new budget system ***must*** have a corresponding reduction form. This includes both operational reductions and programmatic reductions.

3. Do I need to complete EBB forms if I am ***not*** submitting any cost increases or reductions?

No. If you are not submitting cost increases or reductions, these forms do not need to be completed.

Identifying Programs

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

If a **systematic activity has participants or recipients** and has its own name, it is likely a program. A program might be a *service*, *intervention*, or *practice*. Operational requests are those that do not impact core components of individual programs that serve constituents or the positions that oversee those programs.

Programmatic *Complete the EBB increase or reduction form in full.*	**Operational** *Complete sections 1-3 of the EBB increase form.*
• Program, service, intervention, or support • Disbursed grant, fund, or scholarship • Direct benefit to individual or family who meet qualifications at a set frequency (e.g., SNAP, WIC) • Education, communication, or marketing campaign overseen by the agency (e.g., training, class, awareness campaign) • *Requests/reductions for positions that manage or are directly tied to a program*	• Provider rate increases • Regulatory functions • Most internal operations • IT functions/projects • Advisory committees • Facility or building establishment, maintenance, or security • Requests/reductions for positions that serve general department management or operations
Examples • Tennessee Early Intervention System • Safe Baby Court • Tennessee Promise • Tobacco Quit Line • Launch TN • SNAP • ACES grants • Lottery scholarship • Major tourism or safety awareness campaign	**Examples** • Rate increase for direct support individuals • Professional licensure, permits • Legal, budget, purchasing, procurement • Warehousing/logistics • Accreditation • Oversight • General communications • IT improvement • Boards, advisory councils, committees, task forces • Internal staff training • Building safety

5. What type of program do you mean? Is it primarily social service programs?

There are **several types** of programs, not just social services. If a group of Tennesseans is being served, where some impact is expected as a result of that service, this should be considered a program. In some cases, state employees or future employees might be that group, such as statewide efforts led by DOHR. In other cases, counties or other localities might be that group, for programs related to economic & community development, for example. There may also 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). **Please contact the OEI team if you are unsure whether a request is programmatic.**

Evidence & Impact Information

6. We are requesting an increase (or proposing a reduction) for a program that is already in OEI's program inventory. Since OEI has our if/then statement, program data, and evaluations, do I still have to provide that evidence information?

No. Since the program inventory is complete, the EBB forms do not require this information for inventoried programs.

In the first section of the FY27 forms, please indicate whether the request is related to a program, and if so, whether the program is in the inventory. If the program is in the inventory, OEI has the necessary information to supplement your EBB form, so agencies do not have to track that information down. We hope this will continue to save fiscal teams time and make it much easier to complete the forms.

Fiscal officers will still want to **consult with program teams** to answer key questions—in particular, questions 2a and 2b. For programs in the inventory, there is no need to include a logic model statement or evidence/studies in question 2b, unless there is something new to share.

7. We have a request or reduction that is for an *existing* program that is *not* in OEI's program inventory. Do we need to provide additional information?

In the rare case that you are requesting funds for an existing program that was not captured through the inventory process but should have been, OEI may follow up with fiscal officers for additional information. If this is necessary, someone from OEI will reach out promptly.

It is possible that your request is for an effort that is operational or otherwise does not meet criteria to be included in the program inventory. In this case, no information beyond the EBB form is required.

New Pilot/Program Requests

8. We are proposing a new/pilot program, so it is not in the program inventory. Do we need to provide additional evidence information?

Make sure all questions in the EBB form are answered thoroughly. Pay close attention to the response in question 2b, which should include metrics the department plans to track, a **logic model** statement (if/then), and any existing **rigorous evidence** (see question 10) related to the proposed program. If there is a detailed evaluation plan, please describe that in question 2b, or share as a separate attachment. This 12-minute video from last August has additional guidance for new/pilot program submissions. While the recording is from last year, all of the guidance applies to FY27. If more information is needed, someone from OEI will reach out promptly.

9. How can I find rigorous evaluations or evidence for a program?

We suggest starting with the Results First clearinghouse database. This database combines evidence from several 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. See the appendix of this document for a list of other clearinghouses to try.

Some subject areas may not have these resources, such as emergency management, military, revenue, financial services, etc. These are areas where, if the department is proposing a new program, we don't necessarily expect to see rigorous evidence. However, if you are aware of research that applies to the program, please include it. If you would like a tutorial on how to use the resources above, please reach out to the OEI team.

Contact Information & Additional Resources

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

Here are a few important resources available online:

- F&A's budget instructions page contains links to download the FY27 EBB forms.
- OEI's evidence-based budgeting page contains additional resources like more information on the evidence framework and the slide deck from the live training.

You can contact the OEI team at OEI.Questions@tn.gov, or email OEI's evidence coordinators directly at Ayron.Hall@tn.gov or Amanda.K.Armstrong@tn.gov. To contact the appropriate budget team member, search for your area on the budget agency assignments page.

Appendix: Additional Clearinghouse Resources by Policy Area*

**Registers included in the Results First clearinghouse database are not included here.*

Education

- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Program Guides | https://www.casel.org/guide/
- Evidence for ESSA, Johns Hopkins University https://www.evidenceforessa.org/

Health

- Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (York University) | https://www.york.ac.uk/crd/
- Clearinghouse for Maternal and Child Health Programs, Georgetown University | https://www.mchlibrary.org/
- Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews | http://www.cochrane.org/
- Curated Library about Opioid Use for Decision-makers, Oregon Health & Science University | https://www.opioidlibrary.org/resource_category/policymakers/
- Effective Child Therapy: Evidence-based Mental Health Treatment for Children and Adolescents | https://effectivechildtherapy.org/
- Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs, U.S. National Cancer Institute | https://ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/index.do
- Evidence-based Practices (EBP) Resource Center (SAMHSA) | https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center
- Evidence-Based Reports, U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality | https://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/evidence-based-reports/search.html
- Society of Clinical Psychology | https://www.div12.org/treatments/
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) | https://www.sprc.org/
- The Community Guide, U.S. Centers for Disease Control | https://www.thecommunityguide.org/
- What Works for Health, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute | https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health

Justice

- Model Programs Guide, U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention | https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/model-programs-guide/home
- What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse | https://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/

Labor

- Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research, U.S. Department of Labor | https://clear.dol.gov/
- Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse | https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/find-interventions

Social Policy

- Child Trends/What Works | http://www.childtrends.org/what-works/
- Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness | https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/
- Connecticut Clearinghouse | https://www.ctclearinghouse.org/
- Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness, U.S. Administration for Children & Families https://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/
- PracticeWise | https://www.practicewise.com/
- Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center, Vanderbilt University's Peabody College of Education and Human Development | https://pn3policy.org/
- Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ReCAPP) | http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/
- Social Programs That Work | http://evidencebasedprograms.org/
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center, U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration | https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs
- The Campbell Collaboration | https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/
- Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse, U.S. Administration for Children & Families | https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/