



## Frequently Asked Questions FY24 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 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 FY24 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 Friday, Sept. 9, 2022.**

### **General**

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

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. Will there be exceptions to any form 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 FY24. 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, you will not include them.

A few other reminders:

- The cost increase request form is not needed for increases required by law.
- 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, only the BEARS entry. However, a reduction form should be completed if a position that directly affects a program is being reduced or eliminated. Often, program reductions 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?

If a systematic activity has participants or recipients and has its own name, it is likely a program. Terms often used in place of *program* may include *service*, *intervention*, or *practice*. Operational requests are items that do not impact core components of individual programs that serve constituents or the positions that oversee those programs.

Programmatic	Operational
<p><i>Complete the EBB increase or reduction form in full.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program, service, intervention, or support</li><li>• Disbursed grant, fund, or scholarship</li><li>• Direct benefit to individual or family who meet qualifications at a set frequency (e.g., SNAP, WIC)</li><li>• Education, communication, or marketing campaign overseen by the agency (e.g., training, class, awareness campaign)</li><li>• Requests for positions that manage or are directly tied to a program</li></ul>	<p><i>Complete sections 1-3 of the EBB increase form.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regulatory functions</li><li>• Most internal operations</li><li>• IT functions/projects</li><li>• Advisory committees</li><li>• Facility or building establishment or maintenance</li><li>• Requests for positions that serve general department management or operations</li></ul>
<p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tennessee Early Intervention System</li><li>• Safe Baby Court</li><li>• Tennessee Promise</li><li>• Tobacco Quit Line</li><li>• Launch TN</li><li>• SNAP</li><li>• ACES grants</li><li>• Lottery scholarship</li><li>• Tourism or safety awareness campaign</li></ul>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional licensure, permits</li><li>• Legal, budget, purchasing, procurement</li><li>• Warehousing/logistics</li><li>• Accreditation</li><li>• Oversight</li><li>• General communications</li><li>• IT improvement</li><li>• Boards or advisory councils or committees</li><li>• Internal staff training</li></ul>

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

Yes, but there are other types of programs as well. If a group of participants 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 diversity and inclusion efforts led by DOHR. In other cases, counties or other localities might be that group, such as economic & community development programming. 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).

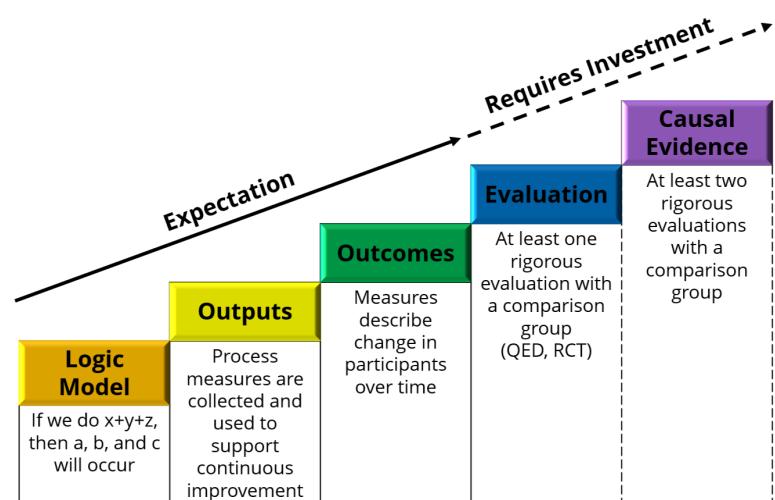
**Please engage the OEI team if you have uncertainty regarding the designation of a request as programmatic.**

## Completing the Evidence & Impact Section

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

The Tennessee Evidence Framework is designed to standardize the language we use about the level of available evidence that supports our programs. 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.



EBB forms walk through the framework step by step, asking only for data that currently exists. If there are no output measures currently being collected for a program, it's okay to leave the related question/table blank.

## 7. I am part of the budget staff and don't have information about the program metrics.

### How do I complete the evidence questions?

You'll want to collaborate with the manager of the program to complete program questions. Subject matter experts 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 complete 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 questions 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 [complete X activities],  
**then** [short-term outcomes] will result in [long-term outcomes].

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

## 9. What is the difference between outputs and outcomes?

Outputs	Outcomes
Answer the question: Is the program happening?	Answer the question: What is the program's impact?
Are concrete, countable results of program activities	Measure change in participant/recipient behavior or benefit
Show a snapshot of one point in time	Show impact over a specified period of time (ideally at least a year)
Often are part of existing program management systems or project plans within your agency to demonstrate efficiency	Include directionality that demonstrates impact of the products or services (increase, decrease, etc.)
Are products or services that can be measured in tangible terms or totals	Can be identified in the short-term (impact to individuals) and/or long-term (impact to systems or organizations)

Example Outputs*	Example Outcomes*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$ spent</li> <li>• # or % of families served</li> <li>• # or % of children placed</li> <li>• # of items shipped</li> <li>• # of trainings delivered</li> <li>• Acceptance rate (for one year, cycle, or point in time)</li> <li>• % of those surveyed who approve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % increase in participants who achieved and maintained employment for at least X months</li> <li>• \$ per \$1 spent (ROI)</li> <li>• % increase in skilled workers qualified for jobs in high-demand areas over X time period</li> <li>• Reduced time to youth permanency by % over X period</li> <li>• % increase in participants reentering custody over X period</li> <li>• % increase in students scoring proficient or above over X years</li> </ul>

\*When reporting output and outcome data, actual dollars, numbers, percents, and years/time period should be provided.

## 10. What does a strong outcome look like?

Here are two strong examples of outcomes; a document with a few more examples is available on the [OEI website](#).

### Example: Large health program for individualized support of a population with special needs

Outcome	Result	Year(s)
<p>Outcomes describe the <b>impact</b> of activities; typically, they show benefits or changes in behavior for <b>the participant/recipient</b>. They include <b>directionality</b> and can be individual benefits or system-level changes. What changes in behavior or systems are you seeing? <b>Provide 1-3 outcomes, with the most recent data, that tell the strongest story about the program.</b></p>		
1. Increase the number and percentage of working age adults with I/DD enrolled who are employed in an integrated setting earning at or above the minimum wage	Increase of 70% over 4 years (2016 baseline: 1,145)	2016-2020

Why is this a good outcome?

- Focus on impact to participants (adults receiving services)
- Covers multiple years
- Shows an expected direction and the actual result
- Notes a baseline output to give context about the size of the program



### Example: Agricultural cost-share program with return-on-investment calculation (ROI)

Outcome	Result	Year(s)
<p>Outcomes describe the <i>impact</i> of activities; typically, they show benefits or changes in behavior for <i>the participant/recipient</i>. They include <i>directionality</i> and can be individual benefits or system-level changes. What changes in behavior or systems are you seeing? <b>Provide 1-3 outcomes, with the most recent data, that tell the strongest story about the program.</b></p>		
1. Maintain a positive return on investment (calculated by the University of Tennessee Agri-industry Modeling & Analysis Group)	Each program dollar generates \$3.89 for local economies	ROI last calculated in 2019, analyzing data from 2014-2018

Why is this a good outcome?

- This program may not capture data regarding the specific impacts to farmers, but there is a broader impact to economies that the agency is working with a partner to capture
- Names the source of the ROI calculation; if the calculation is internal, we may request additional information regarding your formula
- Specifies the year the ROI was last updated and what years are included in the calculation

### 11. 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 tables are empty. However, it is important to discuss with your leadership team strategies for collecting those data as part of your program management plans to inform continuous improvement and future decision-making activities.

### 12. We are proposing a new/pilot program. How do I complete the evidence questions?

For proposals outlining a new or pilot program/service, we expect you will complete the logic model step. If the program is backed by studies and is established as evidence-based in a clearinghouse, please cite that information in the Evaluation/Causal Evidence section as directed.

Leave the Outputs and Outcomes questions unanswered—this is a cue for OEI that this is a new program that does not yet have data. If there is a detailed evaluation plan, please share that as a separate attachment.



## **13. 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.

Some subject areas may not have these resources, such as emergency management, military, revenue, financial services, etc. These are areas where, if the department has programs, we expect nothing further than outcomes on the evidence steps. However, if you are aware of a research study that applies to the program, please include it.

## **14. 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. Some subject areas may not have these resources, such as emergency management, military, revenue, financial services, etc. These are areas where, if the department has programs, we expect nothing further than outcomes on the evidence steps. However, if you are aware of a research study that applies to the program, please include it.

## **Contact Information**

### **15. 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 FY24 EBB forms.
- OEI's [evidence-based budgeting page](#) contains additional resources like more information on the evidence framework, short refresher videos, and the slide deck from the live training, on has additional resources.
- The [BEARS user support page](#) contains additional information on the budgeting system.

You can contact the OEI team at [OEI.Questions@tn.gov](mailto:OEI.Questions@tn.gov), or email OEI's evidence coordinator directly at [Amanda.K.Armstrong@tn.gov](mailto: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**

### **Federal Registers**

- Compendium of Evidence Based Interventions and Best Practices for HIV Prevention | <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/research/interventionresearch/compendium/index.html>
- Child Care & Early Education Research Connections | <https://www.researchconnections.org/>
- 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>
- Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse | <https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/find-interventions>
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Review | <https://tppevidencereview.youth.gov/EvidencePrograms.aspx>
- Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse | <https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/>
- 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://lib.adai.washington.edu/ebpchecksearch.htm>
- 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/>