



Evidence Portfolios for State Agencies

Background

Annually, Colorado state agencies undergo a budgeting process to determine upcoming state investments that meet the priorities of Colorado communities and decision makers. The Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) collaborates with executive branch agencies to develop the Governor's annual budget proposal, which it submits to the legislature's Joint Budget Committee (JBC) every year on November 1st. State agencies have expressed a need for greater support in using data to inform budget and policy priorities and develop their budget submissions. In response, the Colorado Lab developed an Evidence Portfolio Process that can be replicated and adapted by agencies to meet this need.

While the Evidence Portfolio Process was developed for budgeting purposes its use cases extend beyond to the areas of: Evidence Building and Use; Implementation Practice; Communication; Securing Resources and Partnerships; and Operational Excellence. Evidence portfolios can support state agencies in applying evidence to drive outcomes, leveraging evidence to inform learning and action, and building evidence on what works and for whom, while promoting innovation. Read more on the value of evidence portfolios through [this summary](#).

Tool

- This template serves as a starting point for agencies wishing to adopt the Evidence Portfolio Process. With the support of the Colorado Lab, the tool is adapted to meet each agency's needs.
- Training and ongoing technical assistance is provided by the Colorado Lab. A guidance document to accompany this tool will also be provided after training.

Part I: Program/Practice Description

This section clarifies what the program is.

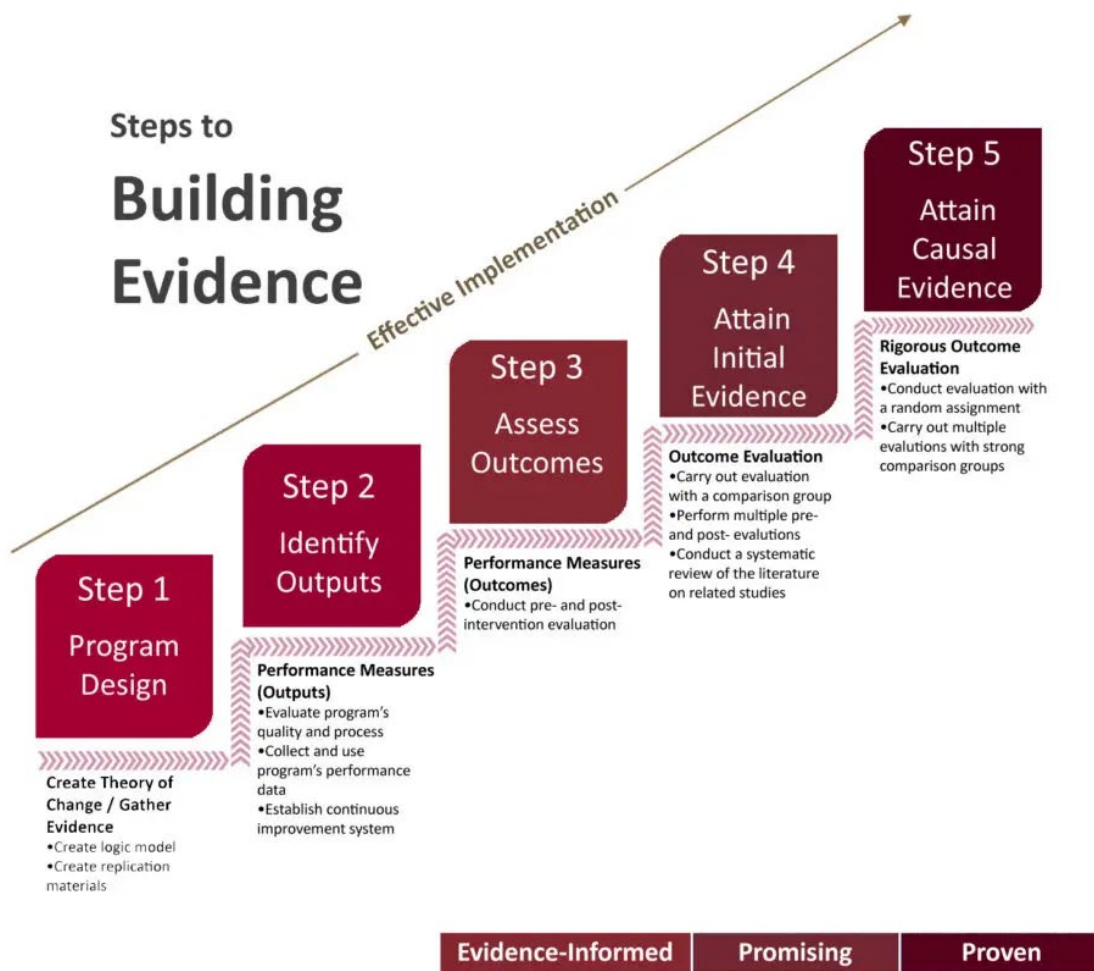
- Program/Practice Name:
- Description (max: two sentences):
- Objective (max: one sentence):
- Reach and Access Summary (max: two sentences):
- Target Population:
- Current Scale:
- First began in Colorado (month, year):
- Which agency/division strategic goal or outcome does the program map to?
 - [drop down list generated as part of initial onboarding and during development of the organizational theory of change]

Part II: Portfolio Rubrics

Evidence portfolios are completed for an identified program/practice. All criteria in Part II (the rubrics) refer to the program/practice under consideration. There are four rubrics: one for each evidence-based decision-making domain (best available research evidence, community needs and implementation context, and decision-maker expertise) and one for Reach and Access.

EBDM Domain: Best Available Research Evidence

This section will also help you identify where the program/practice is in the [Steps to Building Evidence](#), illustrated below. This is indicated in **red bold text** below the criteria and will inform the summary flow chart at the end.



Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
1. Has a clear theory of change (or conceptual framework) for driving change. Step 1.					
2. Has materials to support basic delivery and replicability (i.e., expansion with fidelity to the model). Step 1.					
3. Systems are in place for <u>routinely</u> collecting data on outputs and relevant outcomes. Step 2.					
4. Processes are in place to leverage routinely collected output data to inform program improvement, fidelity, and learning. Step 2.					
5. Has <u>Colorado-specific</u> reach/access evidence and is reaching target populations. OR There is clear and direct applicability of national data to the Colorado context. Step 2.					

Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
<p>6. Has <u>Colorado-specific</u> initial evidence that shows positive outcomes for the target population, gathered through performance measures and correlational designs. OR There is clear and direct applicability of national data to the Colorado context.</p> <p>Step 3.</p>					
<p>7. Processes are in place to leverage routinely collected outcome data to inform ongoing implementation.</p> <p>Step 3.</p>					
<p>8. Has impact evidence that shows positive outcomes for the target population, gathered through an outcome evaluation and quasi- or full-experimental designs.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> If only national data are available, rate this no higher than a 3. If Colorado-specific outcomes data are also available OR there is clear and direct applicability of national data to the Colorado context, this can achieve up to a 4.</p> <p>Steps 4/5.</p>					

Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
9. Has a viable evidence-building plan aligned with the Steps to Building Evidence .					

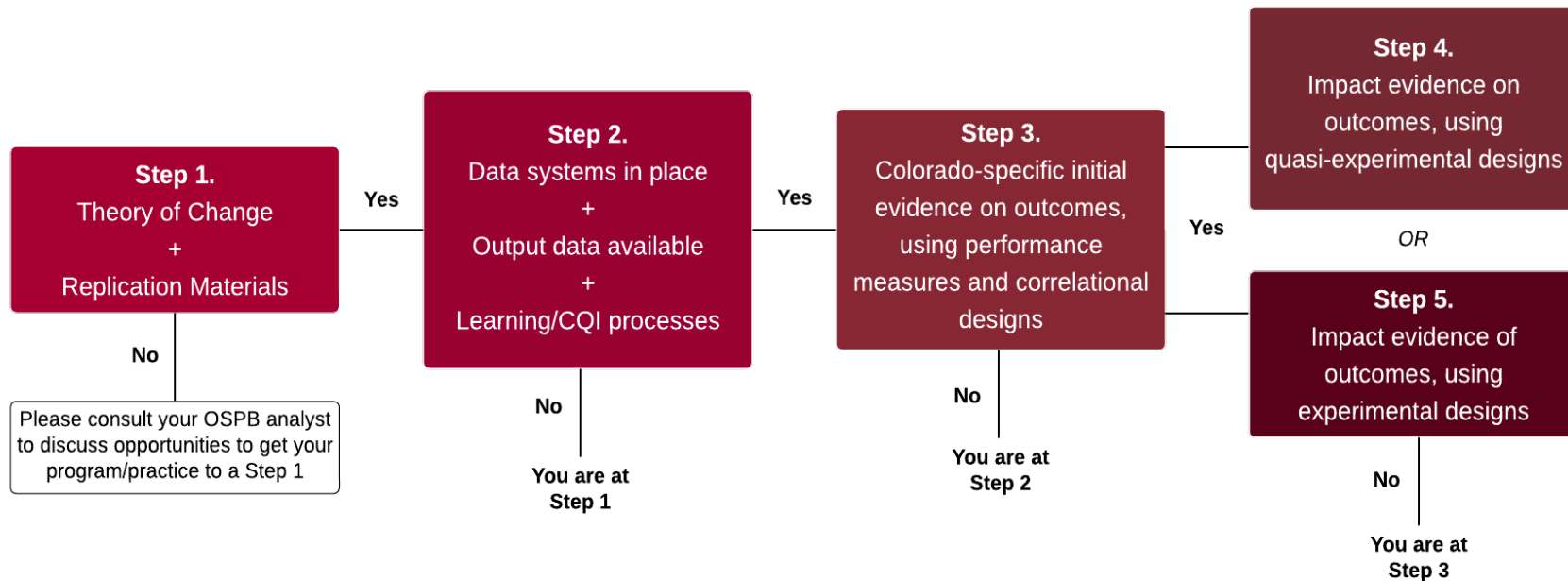
Domain Total: Add up the scores for each item above.

Domain Score: Divide the domain total by 9.

Narrative Explanation of Domain Score: [complete, one paragraph max]

Where is this program on the Steps to Building Evidence?

Map your answers above to the flowchart below. Only answer “yes” if you scored the criteria as a “2” or above.



Based on the flowchart above, where is your program/practice now? (e.g. “Step 2”):

The ideal in Colorado is for all programs/practices to achieve Step 3 of evidence building and an HB24-1428 designation of *evidence-informed*. Some will target Steps 4 or 5. Where would you like your program to be in three to five years? (E.g., “Step 3”):

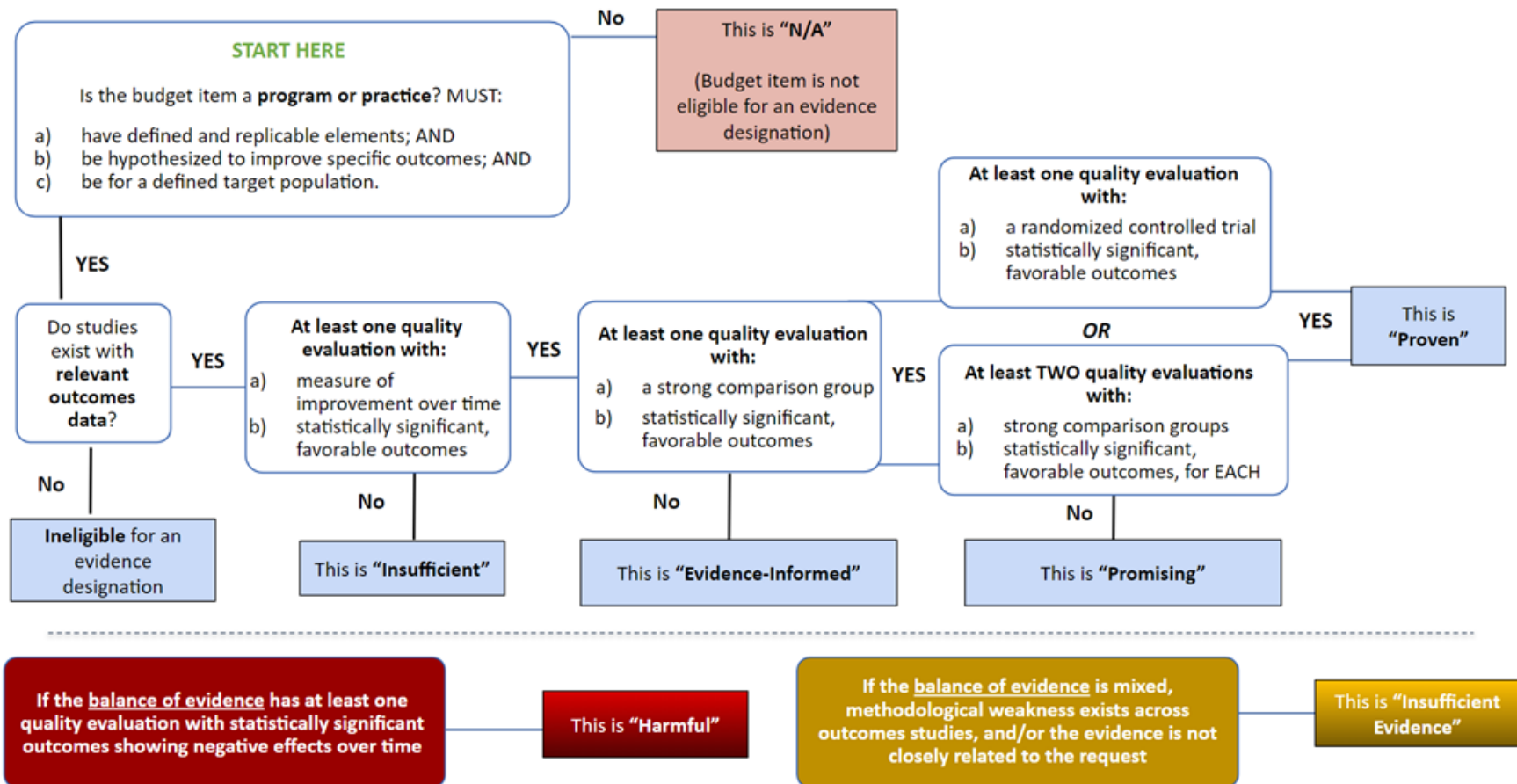
- In identifying your aspirational Step to Building Evidence, you should consider what is necessary, what is feasible, and what will most meaningfully illustrate the program/practice’s value.

Reflect on what supports you need to achieve this aspirational evidence-building step. Are data collections systems adequate? Do you need to consider an external evaluation team? Is further staff support needed?

- Consult the Colorado Lab and your Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) analyst for ideas around evidence building and possible funding sources.

What evidence designation does my program/practice have according to HB24-1428?

Based on results of Domain 1 (best available research evidence) and mapping your program/practice to the Steps to Building Evidence, use the flowchart below to now determine the evidence designation for this program/practice, in accordance with HB24-1428.



When results are significant and favorable, Step 3 corresponds to *evidence-informed*, Step 4 with a single study corresponds to *promising*, and Step 4 with multiple studies or Step 5 with a single study corresponds to *proven*.

EBDM Domain: Community Needs and Implementation Context

This is about community/constituent needs and implementation context (external/outward facing).

Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
<p>1. <u>State-level staff</u> have the skills, resources, and desire to continue implementation (workforce). AND <u>Local-level implementation partners</u> have the skills, resources/systems, and desire to continue implementation (workforce).</p> <p><i>Note: need both to get to a 4.</i></p>					
<p>2. Has a strong administrative system in place to support continued delivery (infrastructure) at: a) the state level; and b) the local level.</p> <p><i>Note: need both to get to a 4.</i></p>					
<p>3. Is aligned with family needs and community-identified priorities.</p>					
<p>4. There is no substantial family or community opposition or indication of harm.</p> <p><i>Note: If strong opposition, and no ability to address and it is relevant opposition, score this low (reverse scoring). If strong opposition, but reason to believe this can be</i></p>					

Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
addressed or is not fully relevant, score higher. If no opposition, score higher.					
5. Has champions (partnerships, collaborations) outside of the agency who support this work <i>or</i> there is a clear, viable plan to partner with champions positioned to support this work. <i>Note:</i> If no active champions, only potential champions have been identified, can only get to a 3.					
6. Meets a need for a historically underserved or under-resourced portion of the target population in Colorado.					

Domain Total: Add up the scores for each item above.

Domain Score: Divide the domain total by 6.

Narrative Explanation of Domain Score: [complete, one paragraph max]

EBDM Domain: Decision-Maker Expertise

This is about professional viewpoints and perspectives (internal/inward facing)

Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
1. Has internal agency leadership to champion the work into the future.					
2. The agency is uniquely situated to have ownership (i.e., another agency/organization could not absorb this).					
3. Is aligned with the organizational theory of change and division strategic goals. [insert link to strategic plan and organizational theory of change and make clear where it shows up]					
4. Is aligned with agency priorities and/or the agency’s WIGs for the Governor’s Office (Wildly Important Goals). [insert link to WIGs and make clear where it shows up]					
5. No major challenges exist that could get in the way of continuing ¹ OR there is a clear, viable plan in place to address those challenges. <i>Note: If major challenges and no ability or plan to</i>					

¹ “Continuing” could be sustaining, scaling, or lifting a new or previously existing service. This should be matched to the intent of the budget item.

Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
address, score this low (reverse scoring). If major challenges, but also a strong ability and plan to address, score higher. If no challenges, score higher.					
6. Opportunities are present that could help with viability of continuing (i.e., sustaining, scaling or lifting anew)					
7. Serves as a complementary effort necessary for the agency to prevent a collapse in another significant area (e.g., if this is not funded, another program will also fall down).					

Domain Total: Add up the scores for each item above.

Domain Score: Divide the domain total by 7.

Narrative Explanation of Domain Score: [complete, one paragraph max]

Where is this program/practice at in the organizational theory of change? [brief narrative]

- Most immediate outcome(s) the program/practice feeds into:
- How does the program/practice contribute to the immediate outcome(s)?:

Reach and Access Screen

Goal: Explore how and to what extent the program advances reach and access. This will help inform the reach and access section of the budget instructions, facilitate movement forward of the agency’s reach and access goals, and model accountability and transparency in how these considerations are a core ingredient in successful evidence-based decision making.

Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
1. Is this program/practice designed specifically to support an underserved or marginalized community?					
2. Do data and learning systems facilitate exploration of disproportionality and disparity?					
3. Is there evidence that the program/practice is correlated with reduced disparity for underserved or marginalized populations?					
4. Does the evidence-building plan pay attention to understanding equitable reach and access?					
5. Has community/family voice been included in making meaning of available data?					

Criteria	Documentation <i>Links and/or short narratives</i>	1 (Does not exist)	2 (Present, needs improvement)	3 (Present, adequate)	4 (Present, exemplary)
6. Has community/family voice been included in design, implementation, and/or ongoing improvement of this program/practice?					

Reach and Access Total Points: Add up the scores for each item above.

Reach and Access Score: Divide the total by 6.

Narrative Explanation of Reach and Access Score: [complete, one paragraph max]

Part III: Results Synthesis and Request

This final section synthesizes results of the tool, pulls out key information, and documents recommendations of the team.

Total EBDM Score: Average Together all Domain Scores, *except Reach and Access Screen.*

Total Reach and Access Score:

Narrative Explanation of Total EBDM Score: [one paragraph max. Include major strengths and areas of improvement]

Key Action Items

What 3 to 5 Actions will you take based on learnings from the Evidence Portfolio? Use the framing question and categories below to help guide your thinking.

Framing question: What would it take to apply learnings from this Evidence Portfolio?

Categories of Application	Key Action Items
Operational Excellence (e.g., direct resources—time, money—where they are most needed)	
Communication (e.g., efficiently answer questions; tell the story of impact of a program)	
Securing Resources (e.g., show how the program is a good public investment; grants)	
State’s Budgeting Process (e.g., meet HB24-1428 requirements; develop concept papers)	
Implementation (e.g., drive quality improvement; monitor fidelity and shore-up gaps)	
Evidence Building (e.g., measuring what matters most, align with agency-wide metrics)	

Funding Request and Justification (Applicable only if putting forward a budget request)

What is the current (this state fiscal year) total budget for this program/practice?

What is the new (upcoming state fiscal year) total budget requested for this program/practice?

Budget rationale/narrative (one paragraph; i.e., what will the money do?)

If this request is for an INCREASE in funding:

Why are you requesting an increase in funding? (e.g., to scale the program, to shore up known challenges, to increase access, to build evidence, etc.). Briefly explain (one paragraph).

If this request is for a DECREASE in funding:

Why are you requesting a decrease in funding? (e.g., program underspent funds without negative impact to successful delivery, program had a ramp up period and maintenance costs are less, etc.)

If this request is for MAINTAINING at current level of funding:

Why are you requesting sustaining at the current funding level? (e.g., current funding level is right-sized to program goals, current funding level is adequate to maintain at current scale, etc.)

If this request is for NEW funding:

Why are you requesting new funding and how is the amount justified? (e.g., new program/practice to fill an identified gap)

What **OTHER SUPPORTS** do you need to help improve, grow, or sustain into next year?