

## Decision Package Narrative Field Tab: Detailed Descriptions

- 1. Proposal Overview (Brief):** Please provide a 3-5 sentence brief statement about this initiative. Include the initiative name, the funding requested (by fund source), and the top three most important things to know about the initiative and the problem to which it is responsive. You can choose whether to format this as a list or a paragraph.
- 2. Opportunity Statement:** In this section, clearly explain the problem that exists today and the opportunity that your request aims to capitalize on. The best opportunity statements thoroughly explain, with as much detail as possible: (1) where we are today; (2) where we want to be in the future; and (3) why there is the gap between where we are and where we want to be. The best opportunity statements also quantify key variables wherever possible. For example, describe where the state is today in the absence of the proposed initiative, and if possible, quantify what isn't working as well as desired (consider things such as workload, operational efficiency, service delivery effectiveness, etc.).

Agencies are encouraged to submit strategic constrained submissions that redirect funding away from programs/services that are not evidence-based or not aligned with agency mission. Such strategic reductions can also be combined with expansions, increasing funding for an agency priority in order to allow for cost-cutting on layers of bureaucracy or lower-priority program areas.

For constrained proposals that are submitted to meet the target reduction amount but are not related to strategic prioritization, you should use this section to describe why you have put forward this proposed reduction rather than any of the many other reductions that might have been available to your agency in order to meet your target budget.

- 3. Proposal Details:** You should use this section to provide a detailed description of the initiative that you are proposing to respond to a problem/issue (see #2 above for instructions for the opportunity statement for the problem/issue narrative component). Your narrative in this section should clearly explain how your proposed initiative will close the gap between the current state and desired future state. In this section, the agency should describe the expected result. The agency should describe and, to the extent possible, quantify, where you want to be in an improved future state. What specifically will work better in this future state? What outcome do you expect to achieve with full funding of this request? What other impacts might be relevant for the Budget Office to consider when analyzing this request and for the Governor when considering this request? It should be as thorough and detailed as possible, aiming to preemptively respond to all follow-up questions that you envision Governor's Office or legislative staff asking. It should not restate your narrative in the "Proposal Overview" section; rather, it should expand upon that narrative with additional details, quantifying key variables wherever possible.

If not readily apparent, please attach an excel file under the attachments tab showing how the budget for this initiative was calculated. Please clearly label the headings and display all assumptions and formulas so that calculations can be understood. Your assigned budget analyst will be reaching out to review the file following submission.

For unconstrained requests, the following questions can help to guide your narrative: What new initiative are you proposing? How will your proposed initiative address the above-described

problem? Why do you believe that this is the best possible solution to the above-described problem? What outcomes do you anticipate seeing from implementation of this initiative? What solutions to the identified problem have already been attempted using existing resources? What were the results of those previous attempted solutions? For human services programs: What target population do you anticipate serving? How many people do you expect to serve?

Your narrative for constrained submissions will, necessarily, be different than the narrative that you would submit for unconstrained requests and should clearly explain why your agency has chosen to propose this cut over other potential reduction items and detail the expected impact of the reduction on agency mission, goals, and operations. For reductions that are intended to realign spending with your agency's strategic priorities or direct funding away from low-performing programs, use this section to identify specific activities/functions/programs that will be subject to reduction or elimination, how you identified these for reduction, and the outcome that you expect that this reduction will lead to at your agency. The following guiding questions can be instructive in helping you to shape this narrative: What specific activities, functions, or programs will the agency reduce, eliminate, or shift the funding source for? How were these activities identified for inclusion in the constrained submission? Do other existing programs in your agency or other state agencies address the program's goals/mission? Could these be redeployed or leveraged as partners to meet this need, in the absence of funding for this particular program/service? Who will be affected by this reduction - what are the anticipated outcomes from the proposal?

For constrained proposals that are submitted to meet the target reduction amount but are not related to strategic prioritization, you should use this space to provide more details about the reduction as applicable and to describe the adverse impacts that you expect to result from the reduction. You should make sure that you clearly articulate the harm that you expect this reduction to cause for agency staff, agency mission, and/or citizens who receive agency services. You should also detail any available strategies that could mitigate the adverse effects that you expect to result from the reduction. You should explain how your agency and the relevant program/department will continue to meet goals and deliver services if this cut is approved.

This narrative is your opportunity to advocate for your proposal. The more information that you include in your submission, the better equipped your analyst will be to accurately describe the problem that the agency is facing and your corresponding request.

4. **Future Expected Costs:** In this section, provide a brief overview of how initiative costs are expected to increase or decrease in future years consistent with how you will fill out the Budget tab detailing projected costs for the next five fiscal years. If costs are expected to change over time, be sure to explain why that is expected to occur. If the initiative is time-limited or has a defined sunset date, note that here and explain why.
5. **Relationship to Agency Mission:** Discuss how any expansion request relates to the agency's mission and goals and how it will influence key performance indicators. Identify connections to the agency's strategic plan as necessary. This section should also describe how the request

relates to the Governor's agenda.

6. **Timeline for Implementation:** In this section, you should describe how long the initiative will take to implement and by what date it will be fully implemented. If the initiative will not be shovel-ready on July 1, explain how the agency budget has been adjusted to reflect the requisite ramp-up period for the initiative. Additionally, this section should describe when, following implementation, meaningful change resulting from the initiative is expected. For example, the completion of a proposed training initiative, return on capital investment, or attainment of program targets. If long-term savings are expected to result from this initiative, make a note of total savings that are expected on an annual basis and when you expect these to begin.
7. **Timeline for Outcomes:** Describe when, following implementation, you expect to see meaningful change resulting from the initiative (example: completion of a proposed training initiative, return on capital investment, attainment of program targets, etc.)? If you expect long-term savings to result from this initiative, make a note of total savings that you expect on an annual basis and when you expect these to begin.
8. **FTE Details & Requirements:** For initiatives proposing expansion or contraction of current programs, provide details here about how many FTEs currently work on the program and the total cost of salaries and benefits for those FTEs. For all initiative types, if the proposal would require the elimination of existing FTE positions or the hiring of new FTEs, provide a detailed overview of how the initiative would impact FTE levels. Be sure to include the titles or anticipated titles and total salary and benefits costs for impacted staff or proposed new staff in your narrative here. If this proposal would not impact agency FTE levels and/or does not involve an existing program, simply include the following narrative: *This proposal would not have an impact on FTE levels.*
9. **Federal/Other Funds Impact:** Describe what impact this proposal would have on federal or any other fund sources including restricted receipts. For example, whether this initiative utilizes federal funds or if general revenue is required in order to access federal funds / avoid the loss of federal match. Other potential impacts could involve indirect restricted receipt funding increases stemming from an increase in federal grant funding. A separate tab on the Decision Package form is available for revenue source impacts.
10. **Interagency Impact:** Describe any anticipated impact the requested change in your agency budget may have on other agencies in state government. For example, if an agency proposes to close a residential center, the clients could spill over into another agencies' caseload. Note whether the other agency has been made aware of this proposal and whether the impact on the other agency will be included in their analysis. If the proposal is likely to have an impact on another agency but that impact is not quantifiable, you should also note that here. If this initiative will not have an interagency impact, simply include the following narrative: *This initiative will not impact any other agencies.*
11. **Information Technology Needs:** If the proposal requires an information technology component or change this section should provide an overview of that component or change including if and how you expect it to impact the DoIT ISF. Any estimates regarding cost components and timeframes should be provided. These include IT projects or projects where there is an IT

component, regardless of funding source. IT is the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data. If this initiative will not impact information technology, simply include the following narrative: *This initiative will not impact information technology.*

- 12. Statutory Implications:** For initiatives that will require a budget article item to be implemented, agencies should identify the impacted statute and include an attachment with fully formatted proposed new statutory language to accompany this Decision Package form, and a Statutory Impact Summary Memo, which describes the technical changes to the law as well as the budget and policy implications of those changes. If an article will not be required, simply include the following narrative: *This initiative will not require a budget article.*
- 13. State Comparisons:** In this section, please describe how Rhode Island would compare to neighboring state or other relevant states/jurisdictions if this initiative were implemented. Please include specific details and note areas in which a direct state comparison is not fully possible or differences between Rhode Island and the other states being compared that must be known and considered in this evaluation. You could also include national rankings produced by third party sources if available.

## Decision Package Performance Measurement and Evidence Base and Evaluation Field Tab: Detailed Descriptions

- 1. Anticipated Outcome/Impacts** – In this section, the agency should describe the expected result of the proposal and how it advances the agency’s mission. The agency should describe and, to the extent possible, quantify, how this proposal improves the efficiency or outcomes of a process or program. What specifically will work better in this future state? What outcome do you expect to achieve with full funding of this request? What other impacts might be relevant for the Budget Office to consider when analyzing this request and for the Governor when considering this request?

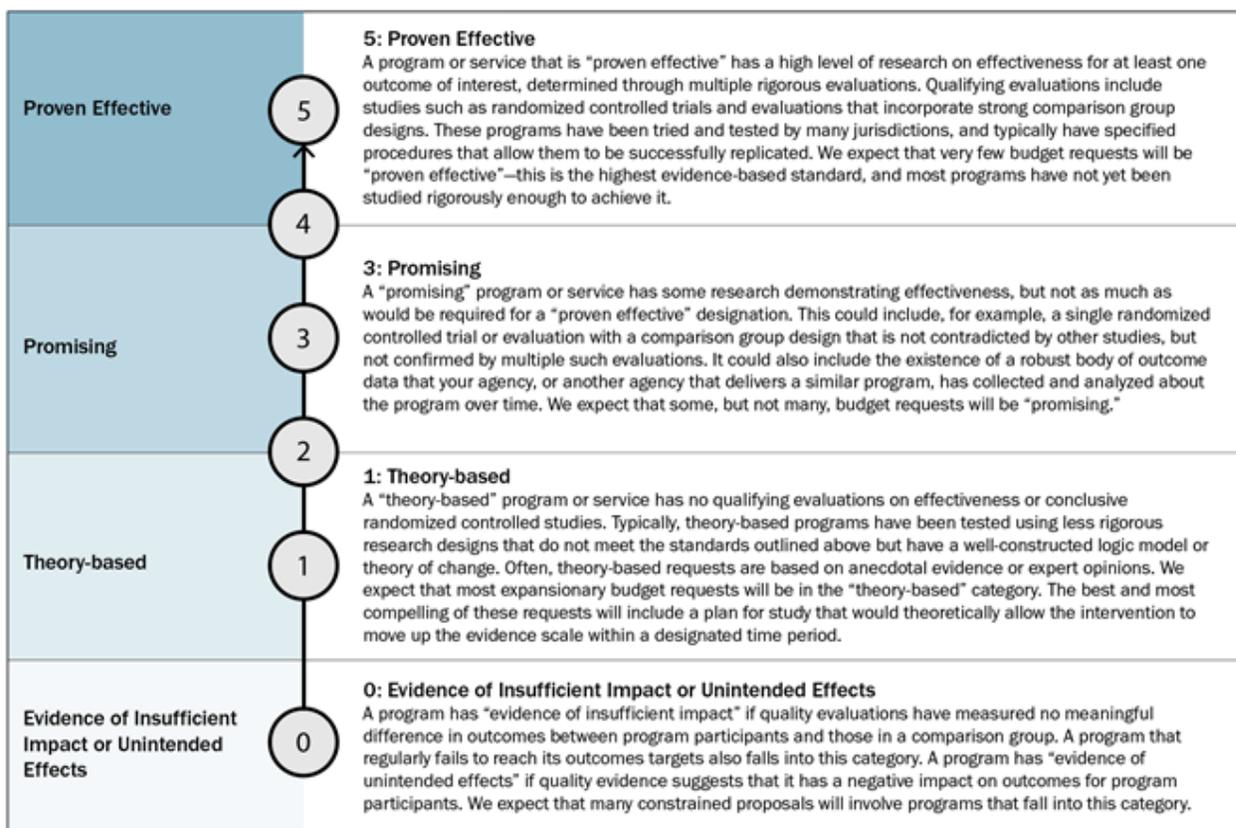
This section should also describe your agency’s plans to evaluate this initiative in the future if your request is approved. Your narrative should include the specific metrics that you plan to track, the methods you plan to use to evaluate the initiative, and the types of data that you will collect. You should explain why and how you’ve arrived at this evaluation plan. You should also quantify what success looks like for this initiative, based on the metrics that you plan to track.

- 2. Existing Performance Data:** For Unconstrained – Expansion, Constrained – Adjustment, and Constrained – Elimination Initiatives: Describe the data that currently exists for this initiative and your agency’s approach to performance measurement and evaluation of the initiative. If you don’t collect any performance data on this initiative, you should explain why data is not available. If you do collect performance data, your narrative should include details about the types of data collected and the sources of that data, note the specific metrics that are tracked for the initiative, and, wherever possible, report the metrics for the last three fiscal years. If you’ve used the data to make programmatic changes in the past, you should include details about that. Your narrative should make clear whether or not the available data indicates that this initiative has been successful in reaching its goals.

For Unconstrained – New Initiatives: Simply include the following narrative: This is a request for a new initiative about which the agency does not currently collect any data.

3. **Evidence Ranking: [0]/[1]/[2]/[3]/[4]/[5]:** Please rank the proposed initiative’s current level of evidentiary support on a scale from 0-5, based on the RI Evidence Scale, with one being the least evidentiary support and five being the most evidentiary support. You can use tools like the Pew Results First Clearinghouse and the Social Programs That Work database to determine whether the type of initiative that you are proposing has been rigorously evaluated in other jurisdictions. The Office of Management & Budget understands that the majority of agency requests will likely not be in the top evidence tiers at the point of submission, and you should certainly feel free to submit requests that are “theory-based” on the scale rather than “promising” or “proven effective.” Please note that “theory-based” submissions should include a robust and compelling measurement and evaluation plan in the Performance Measurement section.

**The Rhode Island Evidence Scale**



4. **Description of Evidence Base:** Describe the justification for your evidence scale ranking. What evidence exists that makes you think that the proposed initiative will work? Where is there uncertainty of effectiveness? It is helpful to include citations, links, or attachments of the evidence source(s) that you draw on in making this assessment. The Results First Clearinghouse Database includes evidence evaluations of more than 3,000 programs and is available at <https://evidence2impact.psu.edu/evidence-to-impact-4-cores/research-translation-platform/results-first-resources/clearing-house-database/>

**5. Forward-Looking Evaluation Opportunities:** For Unconstrained – New, Unconstrained – Expansion, and Constrained – Adjustment Initiatives: Describe your agency’s plans to evaluate this initiative in the future if your request is approved. Your narrative should include the specific metrics that you plan to track, the methods you plan to use to evaluate the initiative, and the types of data that you will collect. You should explain why and how you’ve arrived at this evaluation plan. You should also quantify what success looks like for this initiative, based on the metrics that you plan to track. If this initiative is ranked as a 3 or lower on the Rhode Island Evidence Scale, your narrative here should explain how the data that you will collect will enable you to build the base of evidentiary support for this initiative.

For Constrained – Elimination Initiatives: Simply include the following narrative: This is a constrained request for elimination of a program; future performance measurement and program evaluation will not be required.