



# Moving Toward Evidence-Based Practices:

A Guide for Domestic Violence Organizations

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Resource Center on Domestic Violence:  
Child Protection and Custody

A project of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges





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**The Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody (CPC Resource Center), operated by NCJFCJ, provides access to leadership, training, technical assistance, publications, and resource tools for professionals working on issues related to child protection and child custody in the context of domestic violence. For assistance please call 1-800-52PEACE.**

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**Suggested Citation:** The Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody. (2016). *Moving Toward Evidence-Based Practices: A Guide for Domestic Violence Organizations*. Reno, NV: Author.

The NCJFCJ would like to thank our project partners who provided valuable input and feedback on the project.

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This document was supported by Grant Number 90EV0415 from the Administration of Children, Family and Youth Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Its contents are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official view of DHHS.

**Acknowledgements:** The NCJFCJ's Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody would like to acknowledge the advocates whose insightful and rich conversation at the Domestic Violence Coalition Working Group meetings shaped this document.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the last five years, the domestic violence field has actively sought to participate in evidence-building practice (EBP) and evidence-based documentation. Responding to national conversations suggesting that programs and practices should be able to demonstrate empirical evidence of their effectiveness, advocates and survivors have sought to define and document successful outcomes and interventions.

EBP are typically defined as programs or practices that have undergone rigorous research evaluations with positive outcomes, multi-site replication, and publication in peer-reviewed journals (often referred to as the gold standard evidence-based criteria). Many researchers and proponents of EBP believe that all practice should be evidence-based. In fact, the common definition of empirical evidence is “information acquired by observation or experimentation, which is then recorded and analyzed as part of the scientific method.” While this may be an ideal, it is not entirely practical, and doesn’t acknowledge the decades of practice-based prevention and intervention that the domestic violence field has developed, refined, revisited, and enhanced in consultation with survivors and the systems they work with. Practice-based evidence emerges from the programs and services provided for survivors who achieve safety and well-being; practice-based services also emerge from the stories of survivors who define what did and did not work for them, and why. It is a deeply held principle within the domestic violence movement that this kind of practice-based evidence should inform practice and policy.

Many programs and practices have evolved over decades and have anecdotal evidence that they are successful at assisting the populations they serve. The movement to end domestic violence, for example, was built on women’s stories and a commitment to amplify those voices. It didn’t have or use science to guide it. Early activists relied on their own skills and experience and the personal experiences of the women they were hearing from to inform what services and supports to build. When they heard women say “I’m in danger at home,” they set up safe homes and shelters. When they heard women say, “I don’t have anyone to talk to. No one believes me” they created support groups. When they heard women say, “My complaints are not taken seriously,” they created advocacy programs. Transitional housing and a broader range of non-residential services also emerged in response to survivors’ expressed needs.

Although practice-based evidence does not include the hard data considered necessary to evaluate effectiveness, it typically provides important contextual information that can be used to inform research or evidence about a specific program or practice. Practice-based evidence is less stringent, but important for two reasons: 1) to guide practice in the absence of empirical evidence, and 2) to inform the direction of evidence-based research.

The goal of the *Moving Toward Evidence-Based Practices: A Guide for Domestic Violence Organizations* (EBP Guide) is to help programs identify where they are in the process of documenting empirical evidence to support their effectiveness so they may identify ways to move up the continuum of evidence. Every program will be in a different place and have different resources available to them regarding to their capacity to evaluate its programs and practices. The EBP Guide is meant to be informative, to help you determine your current readiness to evaluate your own programs and practice, and to help you move forward with evaluation when you are ready to do so.

Consideration of programs and practices that meet less rigorous research criteria is helpful to an evolving field such as the domestic violence profession for a number of reasons:

- The work itself is, by nature, difficult to evaluate.

- The number of experimental studies is modest.
- The controlled nature of experimental studies limits their generalizability and transportability to on the ground programs.
- EBP are based on specific/narrow populations that present a norm and don't account for underserved populations. EBP may not work with underserved/less studied populations of victims.
- Programs and service providers may lack the capacity to evaluate their own work empirically.
- The field does not have, and will likely never have, the resources (funding, time, etc.) to generate gold standard evaluations.
- There are varying definitions and requirements of what it means to be evidence-based or even how to describe current practices.

Providing evidence of effectiveness (even if not at the level of evidence-based) is essential to help inform any field of what types of programs and practices are currently being used and what evidence supports these programs. Practice-based and anecdotal evidence can help to identify emerging programs and demonstrate effectiveness. To further advance the field, it is also important to take steps to move toward the development and implementation of EBP.

Instead of a strict dichotomy that brands practices as evidence-based or not, it is best to evaluate empirical evidence of effectiveness on a continuum, ranging from harmful or detrimental effects of a program to well-supported (evidence-based) programs and practices. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends such a continuum (for more information see <http://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/evidence/>). The CDC model allows for opportunities to look at the empirical evidence of programs when the gold standard evidence-based criteria have not been achieved, but there is proof to demonstrate that the program works.

The domestic violence field has responded positively to this expanded, collaborative, and well-designed continuum. There is an increased commitment to document what is done and more systematically define and measure outcomes. There is a more widespread interest in participating in well-structured efforts to determine the impact of services and related advocacy efforts and to initiate research. There is increased attention to discovering best practices, including those from other fields, and then properly replicating them or adapting them responsibly to different community realities. There is a greater willingness to support funding for research and evaluation, even in the face of limited funding for services. This guide is a result of those expressions.

The EBP Guide presents a series of questions to help you assess the evaluation capacity of your

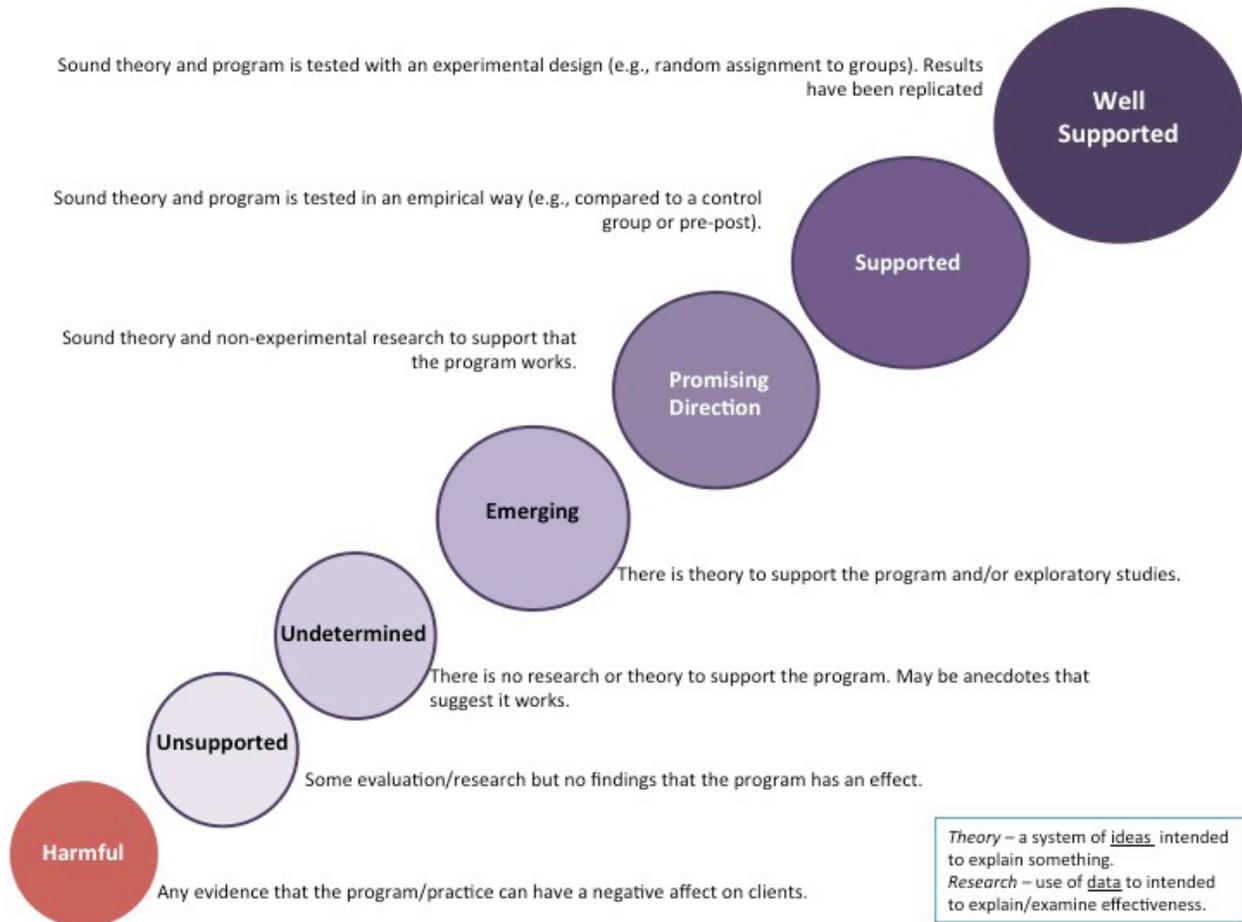
### Evidence-based Practice and Practice-based Evidence

Evidence-based practice is practice that has been evaluated (i.e., data has been collected) to determine its effectiveness.

The field also benefits from practice-based evidence, where the practitioner uses her skills, experience, and expertise to make decisions about the needs of and response to the clients she serves. Practice-based evidence typically provides important contextual information that can be used to inform research or evidence about a specific program or practice. However, it often does not include the hard data considered necessary to evaluate effectiveness.

These complement each other in practice.

## THE PATH TO EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE



This graphic is based on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness. See Puddy, R. W., & Wilkins, N. (2011). *Understanding Evidence Part 1: Best Available Research Evidence. A Guide to the Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

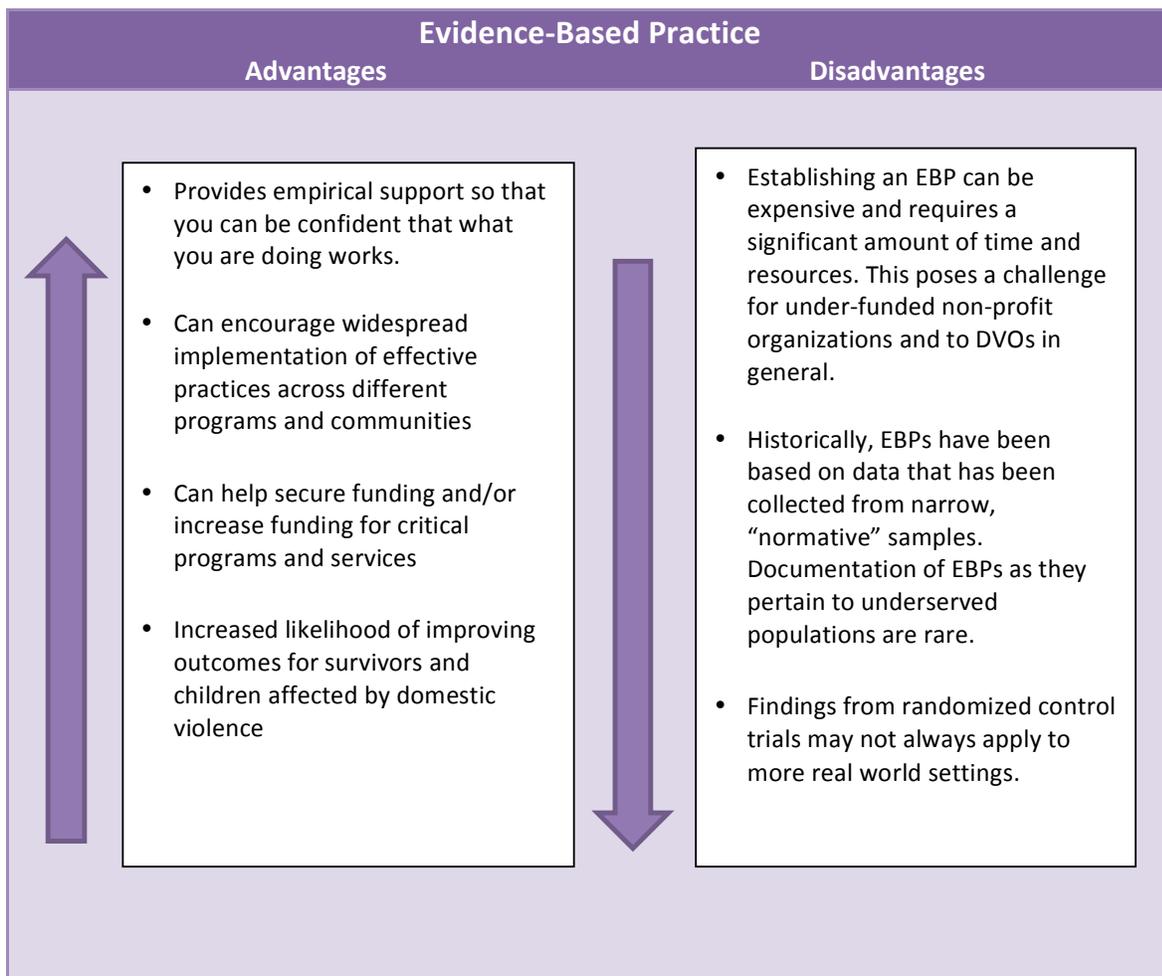
program. Evaluation capacity is defined as any resources (e.g., data, personnel, evaluation plans) that the program may already have in place that will facilitate the process of documenting the effectiveness of the programs or practices with the clients you serve. It can help you to:

- think about evaluation and evidence, including what questions to consider;
- gather information about what resources you currently have available;
- initiate dialogue with project staff, partners, and researchers;
- determine what data or evaluative information you already have and how to move to the next step;
- create data sharing agreements that protect confidentiality and clarify roles and expectations; and
- obtain additional technical assistance on how to move toward an evidence-based practice.

The EBP Guide is a result of the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and

Custody’s Domestic Violence Coalition Working Group (Working Group). The Working Group consists of executive directors, legal and policy staff, and system reform and children’s’ advocates from domestic violence programs across the country (please see page ii for a full list). The EBP Guide was developed with their consultation and feedback. On their behalf and ours, we hope it will be a useful tool on your journey to document the effectiveness of your programs and services.

## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES TO BUILDING AND USING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES IN THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FIELD



**For further assistance, please contact the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody at [FVDinfo@ncjfcj.org](mailto:FVDinfo@ncjfcj.org) or 1-800-52PEACE.**

### Helpful Resources from Domestic Violence Advocate Organizations

**The Domestic Violence Evidence Project (DVEP)** is operated by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. The DVEP houses an online resource center to increase the awareness of domestic violence programs of evidence-based practices and increase domestic violence service providers' access to information on effective interventions that are trauma-informed and evidence-based. The website is located at: <http://www.dvevidenceproject.org>.

**The Promising Futures: Best Practices for Serving Children, Youth and Parents Experiencing Domestic Violence** is a website developed by Futures Without Violence. This database of resources includes best practices, evaluation tools, and research-informed strategies to mitigate the negative effects of domestic abuse on a child and help break the cycle of violence. The website is located at <http://promising.futureswithoutviolence.org>.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The EBP Guide is meant to help program staff think through their current resources and needs related to evidence (including evaluation/research needs). As such, it poses a series of questions that cover a broad array of topics related to program goals, anticipated outcomes, data, and available and needed resources. To complete the EBP Guide successfully, it will be important to ensure that the right people are at the table. This should include individuals that created, selected, or implemented the program; staff and volunteers actively working on the program; and, anyone that may be collecting information from program participants (this may mean IT, data analysts, or even program staff who enter data into an Access or Excel database). If the program has evaluation support or a staff person with research or evaluation expertise, inviting them to participate in this conversation may also be helpful.

After pulling together the correct people, it may take some time to work through the following questions. Plan to have at least two hours together to start thinking through the responses (although it may take significantly longer for complex programs with many stakeholders involved). It may be helpful to break the guide into sections and work through one section at a time. Any time the answer to a question is *No* or *Unknown*, it will be important to think about whether this is needed, and what it might take to make this answer a *Yes* or *Known*. After completing the guide, the information gathered can serve multiple needs, including: 1) functioning as a needs assessment to help identify what is needed to build the evidence for the program; and 2) functioning as important context for a potential evaluator (if evaluation efforts are not underway) to help them better understand what resources are available and to better create a tailored evaluation plan to meet the needs of the program.

On the following page is a diagram indicating the section topics of this toolkit. We recommend that all readers review Sections I and II on assessing available resources and identifying program-specific goals and outcomes. Then, depending on where your organization falls in the process, readers may move onto Section III to cover initial stages of evaluation, Section IV for data collection and collaborative efforts, or Section V for evaluating the effectiveness of previously identified programs or practices.

**Section I: Organizational Resources for Evaluation**

*Section I can help you identify your current capacity for evaluation.*

**Section II: Specific Program/Practice**

*Section II can help you spell out all the necessary aspects of your program to help you prepare to discuss evaluation and move efforts forward.*

**Section III: Plans for Evaluation**

*Section III can help you plan for upcoming evaluations, particularly if you have not already started the evaluation process.*

**Section IV: Data Collection**

*Section IV will help you to identify the types of data you are already collecting.*

**Section V: Previous Evaluations of Identified Program/Practice**

*Section V can help you to identify what evaluation efforts have already begun or been completed, as well as assess these evaluation efforts for what information they can provide.*

Please read through the questions and fill them out to the best of your ability. The information you provide can help to determine where your program falls on the CDC continuum, as well as create a starting place to help identify ways to move toward an evidence-based practice. These questions will help sites to identify their own strengths and where they could use some assistance in evaluation capacity building.

Technical assistance in moving your program forward can be provided by the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Child Custody. Providing the Resource Center with the completed survey can help facilitate dialogue about your organizations' readiness and technical assistance needs.

## SECTION I: ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES FOR EVALUATION

This section relates to the Domestic Violence (DV) Coalition or Program generally. The questions are meant to determine evaluation capacity.

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
Is your organization interested in evaluating a program/practice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
What resources are available (check all that apply) to your organization to conduct an evaluation of your practice(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment of organizational leadership to conduct evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Staff with data experience ( <i>data experience could include being able to enter data in Excel and run computations, having worked on a prior project, having an understanding of survey development and use, etc.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Program level data ( <i>data includes survey responses, or other numbers or qualitative responses collected</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Staff time to conduct evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Funding for evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership with University <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
Do you feel that you have sufficient resources to evaluate your own programs or practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
Do you have any staff with a current understanding of evidence, evaluation, or research (e.g., what constitutes an evidence-based practice, how to collect data, etc.?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	

## SECTION II: SPECIFIC PROGRAM/PRACTICE

This section is specific to the program or practice you are interested in evaluating. The program should be identified below and all responses to the items in this section should be specific to this program or practice (not the overall site, or other programs that may be occurring simultaneously).

**Program or Practice of Interest:** \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
Does the program/practice have clearly stated goals? <i>A goal is the broad outcome that you hope to accomplish when the program is completed.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, what are the goals?		
Does the program/practice have clearly stated objectives? <i>An objective is the more specific action or event that you expect will lead to the accomplishment of your goals.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, what are the objectives?		
What are the specific desired outcomes of this program/practice? <i>An outcome is the desired result of the program or practice.</i>		
How do you know the program/practice is working in the way that it is meant to be working?		
Does that program/practice have an implementation guide/manual that others can read to better understand the program and how to implement it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
<p>If yes, is the implementation guide/manual comprehensive or partial?:</p> <p><i>A <b>comprehensive</b> manual would include all relevant material needed to implement the program or practice. A <b>partial</b> guide would include some information on the program or practice, but not be sufficient (on its own) to replicate the program elsewhere.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partial</p>	
<p>Is there conceptual evidence that the program/practice is based on? <i>Conceptual evidence might include similar programs/practices that have been shown to be effective either in the field of domestic violence or in other fields, or theories or concepts the program is based on that have been proven to work.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p>	
<p>If yes, on what conceptual evidence is the program/practice based? Please provide citations where applicable.</p>		
<p>Has this program or practice already been implemented, or is it currently being implemented in one or more local jurisdictions?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p>	
<p>If yes, in how many different settings/jurisdictions?</p>		
<p>Is a target population for the program identified?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p>	
<p>If yes, what is the target population?</p>		

### SECTION III: PLANS FOR EVALUATION

This section is specific to assessing future plans for evaluating the program/practice identified in the above section. These questions DO NOT pertain to already completed evaluations; rather, this section focuses on plans for future evaluations (even if you have already conducted an evaluation in the past).

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
Is there a plan for evaluation of the program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, what type of evaluation? <b>Process/Formative</b> evaluations examine fidelity, i.e., how the program (or practice) is being implemented and how it is currently functioning (i.e., is it doing what it is supposed to be doing). For example, a process evaluation would examine how many people have been served, what services/supports were offered, how often, etc. <b>Outcome/Summative</b> evaluations examine whether the program or practice has the desired results (i.e., did the program result in the outcome you thought it would).	<input type="checkbox"/> Process/Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes/Summative	
What questions would you like answered about your program?		
Have data points/variables of interest been identified that answer the questions above? <i>Data points/variables of interest include anything you wish to know about the program, outcomes for target populations, number of persons trained, attitudes, behaviors, knowledge acquisition, etc.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, what are the data points/variables of interest?		
Have ways to collect data on variables of interest been identified or created?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
If yes, what ways to collect data have you identified or created?		
Will another organization and/or agency assist in data collection?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, what role will this organization and/or agency play in the data collection process?		
If no, develop a list of organizations and/or agencies that might be a potential collaborative partner.  <i>Appendix C offers some guidance on outreaching to other agencies/organizations.</i>		
Has a data agreement been created between your organization and the partnering agency?  <i>Appendix D provides a sample data sharing agreement.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
Have you determined how data collected will be stored and recorded?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, how will collected data be stored and recorded?		
Have you determined how you will analyze the data to make sense of it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, how will you analyze the data?		
Do you have a plan for how you will report/use the findings of your evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, how do you plan to report/use the findings of your evaluation?		

## SECTION IV: DATA COLLECTION

This section pertains to current data being collected regarding to the identified program/practice, either for evaluation or other purposes.

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
Is data already being collected as part of the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If data is being collected, what variables are being collected?  <i>For example, # of referrals, # of participants, demographic data on participants, # of staff/program personnel trained, # and type of materials disseminated, and # of persons trained</i>		
Are there other potential data sources available (e.g., participants, advocates, case files, social services reports or other child welfare agency data, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, what other sources of data are available?		
If data is currently being collected, how is it being used?		
Is there someone on-site who can analyze data?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
Is there anecdotal evidence (e.g., stories from staff or participants) that indicate the program may be useful/effective?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, what type of anecdotal evidence do you have that indicates the program may be useful/effective?		

## SECTION V: PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS OF IDENTIFIED PROGRAM/PRACTICE

This section pertains to any previous efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the identified program/practice. This could refer to evaluating whether the program/practice is being implemented as intended and/or the outcomes.

<p>Has <b>any</b> type of evaluation of the program/practice been conducted before?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p>	<p>If <b>NO</b> or <b>I DON'T KNOW</b>, you are done with the tool.  If <b>YES</b>, continue to answer questions in the two sub-sections below.</p>
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### SUB-SECTION A: PROCESS/FORMATIVE EVALUATION

Process evaluations examine **fidelity**, that is, how the program (or practice) is being implemented and how it is currently functioning. Process evaluations often identify who is being served by the program, what is being done (or to what extent a practice is being changed), and the challenges and successes of the program.

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
<p>Has a formal/informal process evaluation been conducted on the program or practice?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p>	<p>If <b>NO</b> or <b>I DON'T KNOW</b>, please skip to sub-section B labeled <b>Outcome Evaluation</b>.  If <b>YES</b>, please respond to the questions below.</p>
<p>Are data being collected from program participants (e.g., satisfaction with the program)?  <i>If yes, please indicate what types of data (check all that apply)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demographics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Number served</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Satisfaction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge change</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attitude change</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Behavior change</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes of interest</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____</li> </ul>	
<p>If not, is there a plan to collect data from participants?  <i>If yes, please describe the plan.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p>	
<p>How many staff personnel have been trained to implement the practice/program?</p>		

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
<p>Have results from the process evaluation been used to make changes to the program?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p>	
<p>Did the evaluation reveal expected or unexpected changes in the understanding, attitude or behavior of the participants?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Expected  <input type="checkbox"/> Unexpected  <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know</p>	
<p>Please explain further what expected or unexpected changes were revealed through the evaluation.</p>		

## SUB-SECTION B: OUTCOME/SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Outcome evaluations examine whether the program or practice has the desired results. Outcome evaluations often include the variables of interest such as what the long-term outcome of a custody or child welfare case is, or personal perceptions of how a program impacted a person who used it.

ITEM	RESPONSE	NOTES/STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD
Has any type of outcome evaluation been conducted on the program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	If <b>NO</b> or <b>I DON'T KNOW</b> , stop. If <b>YES</b> , please respond to the questions below.
What type of study design was used?	<b>Quantitative</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Randomized control trial (RCT) <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-test/post-test <input type="checkbox"/> Post-test only  <b>Qualitative</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Surveys <input type="checkbox"/> Other  <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
What types of data analyses (e.g., descriptives: frequencies, means, pre-post, t-test, regression, etc.) were used?		
Were the outcomes examined consistent with the goals of the program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
Did the results indicate the program was effective?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, in what way(s)?		
Did the results of the outcome evaluation indicate that the program might have a harmful effect?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
If yes, in what way(s)?		
Did the results indicate that the program had no effect?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	
How many evaluations have been conducted?		

## IN CONCLUSION... NOW WHAT?

Now that you have worked through the questions in this Guide, you might be thinking *now what?* The purpose of the questions was to help you think through where you are in the process, what resources you currently have, and what you might need to move to the next step of evaluation for your program or practice. After you have worked through as many of the questions as you can, here are some ideas for what to do next.

- Ask yourself - what do we need? Review your responses to the questions to determine if it gives you a better understanding of where you are and what you might need to get to the next step. The table below provides some examples to think about.

SECTION	IF YOU...	CAN YOU...
1	Do not have any resources to evaluate your own programs or practices	Hire someone? Build a relationship with a university partner.
2	Do not have clearly stated goals and objectives	Work with project staff to identify what you think the program will achieve?
3	Do not have a plan for evaluation of the program	Create one? Build one into the next cycle of funding?
4	Do not already collect data	Think about how you might (e.g., Excel files, surveys of participants, access to legal files)?
5	Already have a process or outcome evaluation in place	Identify ways to improve upon the data or findings? Think about ways to disseminate the findings to others in the field?

- *Explore available resources.* There are additional, highly credible resources to help professionals and organizations in the domestic violence field with data and evaluation-related efforts. For instance, The Domestic Violence Evidence Project website ([www.dvevidenceproject.org](http://www.dvevidenceproject.org)) provides a broad range of information and tools pertaining to program evaluation that can help professionals and programs in all phases of the data collection and evaluation process (e.g., from understanding what evaluation is, to figuring out how to get started and what data to look it, to collecting and analyzing data, and to communicating and reacting to findings).
- *Discuss responses with your project team.* If you have a project team, others in your agency with an interest in the work, or a collaborative team focused on these efforts, the answers to these questions can be shared to facilitate dialogue of next steps related to evaluation.
- *Consult with a research partner.* Working with a local university faculty or students can provide mutually beneficial research-practitioner partnerships. Identifying a researcher who does similar work (even if not local) is also an option. Some may be willing to assist for free, others may require a contract. Talk to a researcher to help better understand where you are in the process and what you need to do to get to the next step. Bring your responses with you and use these to facilitate a discussion of needs.
- *Outreach to technical assistance providers.* By understanding where you are in the process, you have a better sense of what you need. You can take these responses to a technical assistance provider (such as the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody at [FVDinfo@ncjfcj.org](mailto:FVDinfo@ncjfcj.org) or the Domestic Violence Evidence Project ([www.dvevidenceproject.org](http://www.dvevidenceproject.org)) and

ask for assistance. Although the resources and scope of many technical assistance providers are limited, they may be able to point you in the right direction and some may have resources to provide more in-depth assistance on projects that can help you begin moving the work forward, or at least facilitate planning for future evaluative efforts.

## **SNAPSHOTS OF DATA AND EVALUATION EFFORTS IN THE DV FIELD**

- The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) houses a Legal Assistance for Victims Program (Program) which provides legal help to financially eligible survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking. Resource Center staff met with Program staff and asked them a series of questions about their current needs and resources. The questions were similar to the ones in the EBP Guide. From this discussion, Resource Center staff learned that there were no specific protocols or plans in place for collecting data that may help inform the advocacy Program. However, there was data available in two forms: a screening tool used by domestic violence advocates assigned to Program cases, and a database provided by a primary funder, the U.S. Department of Justice, for reporting purposes. Resource Center staff talked through the goals and expected outcomes for the Program, and helped design and implement a small study. The study report helped the site to identify data strengths and weaknesses, plan for more advanced evaluation, and gain a better understanding of outcomes in the Program.
- The West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WVCADV) organizes numerous training and outreach programs to help increase application and awareness of three statewide policy changes: 1) Eliminating Failure to Protect language from petition allegations; 2) Co-petitioning; and 3) Battered parent. The WVCADV had three main data and evaluation-related questions. First, were their trainings effective in changing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding the aforementioned policy changes? Second, to what extent are these changes being implemented statewide? Third, are these changes leading to better outcomes for survivors and children involved in the West Virginia child protection system? The WVCADV drew on existing sources of data, primarily collected by the West Virginia Court Improvement Program, to determine that 1) These policy changes were not being implemented as broadly or frequently as desired; and 2) Co-petitioning was significantly related to positive outcomes in child abuse and neglect cases, such as expedited time to permanency and decreased likelihood of removal. The WVCADV also worked with the Resource Center to develop and refine the pre- and post-surveys used to assess the extent to which their trainings impacted participants' attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors regarding these policy changes. A new survey methodology (with post-surveys being distributed immediately following trainings rather than several months following the trainings) is being implemented and should illuminate how training participants plan to make changes in their work to foster implementation of these policy changes aimed at helping domestic violence survivors and their children.

## APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EVIDENCE PROJECT

Where evidence and practice intersect

The Domestic Violence Evidence Project (DVEP) is designed to help state coalitions, local domestic violence programs, researchers, and other allied individuals and organizations better respond to the growing emphasis on identifying and integrating evidence-based practice into their work. The project is operated by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDV) with funding from the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, Family and Youth Services Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The objectives of the DVEP are:

- To increase the capacity of domestic violence programs to respond comprehensively to the traumatic effects of abuse by increasing their awareness of evidence-based practices; and
- To increase domestic violence service providers' access to information on effective interventions that are trauma-informed and evidence-based thus helping them better serve victims of domestic violence and their children who are experiencing the mental health and traumatic effects of intimate partner violence.

During this highly collaborative project, the NRCDV has developed the DVEP online resource center to house a conceptual framework, theory of change and comprehensive evidence reviews, and profiles of innovative programs and practices related to the project's initial focus area of domestic violence core services. The project has expanded to explore the evidence related to intimate partner violence prevention and reducing abusive behavior. These focus areas will include a conceptual framework paper and theory of change, evidence reviews, and program and practice profiles. Technical assistance and training tools will continue to be developed to enhance the domestic violence field's capacity to review thoughtfully and responsibly and/or translate evidence-based practices and practice-based evidence into their work.

To learn more about the DVEP that includes links to Focus Areas, What Works, Evaluation Tools, and Publications, please visit <http://www.dvevidenceproject.org>.



The Promising Futures: Best Practices for Serving Children, Youth and Parents Experiencing Domestic Violence is a website developed by Futures Without Violence designed to help domestic violence advocates enhance their programming for children and their abused parents. The website has information and tools that can help domestic violence programs advance policies that reflect an equal commitment to domestic violence advocacy, child abuse prevention, and interventions in intergenerational cycles of violence. To find out more, please visit <http://promisingfutureswithoutviolence.org>.

## APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

**Comprehensive manual:** A handbook that includes instructions and materials necessary to implement a specific program or practice.

**Conceptual evidence:** This is information supported by theory or based on individuals' experiences, perception, expertise, and knowledge. It is also sometimes called experiential evidence. For instance, new advocates may hear from very experienced advocates that a certain practice has been effective in their work throughout the years. Conceptual evidence also can include applying a concept or information of effectiveness to a different field. For instance, therapeutic drug specialty courts have been shown to be effective, so the same therapeutic principles may apply to some court cases involving domestic violence.

**Contextual information (also called contextual evidence):** Describes community characteristics that may impact an intervention's success. Contextual factors include but are not limited to community history, social norms, etc. Census data, community needs assessment, surveys and focus group data can be helpful in providing contextual information about a community.

**Data points/variables of interest:** Information about the characteristics or attributes of the program/practice, population being served or targeted, larger community, etc. Data points can be descriptive in nature (e.g., number of persons being trained or served by a program/practice) or assessment-based (e.g., gauging attitudes, behaviors, knowledge acquisition, etc.) of the target population.

**Empirical evidence:** Information acquired through observation or experimentation, which is then recorded and analyzed as part of the scientific method. Empirical evidence differs from conceptual and contextual evidence in that empirical evidence requires systematic collection and analysis of data, which is guided by specific protocols.

**Evidence-based practice:** A program or practice that has been supported by the results of empirical studies using randomized control experimental designs. The positive findings of such studies should be replicated across multiple sites and are typically published in peer-reviewed journals.

**Focus group:** A group of individuals are brought together and asked about their opinions, beliefs and attitudes about a topic (e.g., a product, service, etc.). Focus groups are led by a trained facilitator; however, questions are asked in a manner to illicit interaction between focus group participants.

**General program section:** Items are meant to determine the evaluation capacity of a general Domestic Violence Coalition or program. Items assess current available resources, whether resources are sufficient to conduct an evaluation, and whether staff has an understanding of evaluation and research.

**Gold standard:** When discussing evidence, the gold standard usually refers to the randomized controlled trial research design (defined below) to which all other research designs are compared. Gold standard also may be used to describe evidence that has been obtained through randomized control trials and supported by several study replications.

**Individual interviews:** An individual is asked a series of questions about their opinions, beliefs and attitudes about a topic. The interview is conducted in-person or on the phone by a trained interviewer.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB):** A committee that is designated by a larger entity (e.g., a university) to approve, monitor and review research involving human subjects.

**Partial guide:** A handbook that provides some information on a specific program or practice; however, the information is not sufficient (on its own) to replicate the program elsewhere.

**Pre-test:** A test administered *prior* to a specific intervention. The pre-test is considered a baseline measure and is compared to tests administered following an intervention.

**Post-test:** A test administered *after* a specific intervention. The results of the post-test are compared to the pre-test results. The difference between these tests can be used to assess whether study participants have reacted favorably or unfavorably to an intervention.

**Process/formative evaluations:** A study that examines the fidelity of a program or practice. A process evaluation might examine how the program or practice is being implemented and whether it is doing what it is supposed to be doing.

**Outcome/summative evaluations:** A study that examines whether the program or practice has the desired results.

**Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT):** A study design that randomly assigns individuals into a particular group (e.g., an experimental/intervention or control group). The sole difference between these groups is the outcome variable being studied (e.g., the effect of the intervention).

**Regression:** Regression is a statistical test that is conducted to examine the relationship between two or more variables. For instance, a regression analysis may examine the relationship between parents' service plan compliance and the likelihood of reunification in a child abuse and neglect case. Although a regression analysis can demonstrate a significant relationship, it cannot determine causality. In the above example, results from a regression analysis cannot determine if increase compliance actually caused reunification; it can demonstrate only that the increased compliance was significantly related to reunification.

**Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Child Custody:** The Family Violence and Domestic Relations Program of the NCJFCJ provides leadership and assistance to consumers and professionals dealing with the issue of child protection and custody in the context of domestic violence. For more information, call 800-527-3223 or visit <http://www.ncjfcj.org/>.

**Specific program section:** Items are meant to evaluate one specific program or practice within a larger organization. Items clarify the program's specific goals, objectives, and desired outcomes, as well as the target population.

## APPENDIX C: OUTREACH TO RESEARCH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Domestic violence coalitions or programs (Programs) may not have resources to collect data or conduct their own evaluations. However, there may be opportunities to partner with other agencies or researchers from a local university. These partnerships can benefit both parties. Partnerships with other agencies could result in greater dialogue about how the work is connected and may allow for the sharing of data that can inform multiple projects and the direction of the work. For example, there may be opportunities for Programs to partner with legal services agencies or the courts in data collection. This could result in a better understanding of survivors' decision-making and protective strategies, enhanced communication about unintended consequences, and improved safety and outcomes in custody and child support cases.

Researchers from a local university are another potential partnership. Researchers/evaluators can come from many fields, including public health, public administration, social work, psychology, criminal justice, etc. They may be interested in learning more about the Programs and their projects and could potentially offer assistance in data collection or evaluation. Programs would get a partner who understands data and evaluation that can help assess current progress and/or outcomes and academic partners would get experience doing applied work. The academic partner may be interested in publishing the work so it will be important to discuss the partnership and set restrictions at the outset.

Outreach efforts should set the tone for future work with the agency, organization, or university, including clear communication about expectations, needs, and products. Each outreach effort should be viewed as an important opportunity to build relationships with organizations/agencies that could help facilitate systems change efforts.

Some suggestions for outreaching:

The first step is to identify yourself, your organization, and your interest in a partnership.

- Communicate your interest. *Why do you want to partner with them? How can the relationship be beneficial to both of you? Do they have any interest in partnering?*

If the interest in a partnership is mutual, the second step is to set clear expectations.

- Discuss confidentiality. *How is confidentiality critical to each of you? What are your confidentiality needs? Do they have human subjects protection training? What assurances do you have that information will be kept confidential?*
- Identify needs. *What are the specific needs of your program? What are the specific needs of the research or evaluation partner? Are you looking for a data sharing partner (with another agency) or do you need someone to conduct the evaluation? What would you like help with?*
- Discuss expectations for data. *Who owns the data? Who has access to the data? How will the data be used? (See Appendix D for a sample Data Sharing Agreement.)*
- Agree on goals and products. *What do you want to achieve with the partnership? Will any products be produced? Who owns them? How will they be shared? Is publication of the evaluation an option? Will the program be de-identified or identified?*

## **APPENDIX D: SAMPLE DATA SHARING AGREEMENT**

[Insert Logos for Both Organizations]

### **DATA SHARING AGREEMENT**

between

***[Insert Organization #1]*** and ***[Insert Organization #2]***

#### **ENTITIES RECEIVING AND PROVIDING DATA**

##### **ENTITY RECEIVING DATA:**

**CONTACT PERSON:**

**TITLE:**

**ADDRESS:**

**PHONE FAX NUMBER:**

**FAX NUMBER:**

**EMAIL:**

##### **ENTITY SHARING DATA:**

**CONTACT PERSON:**

**TITLE:**

**ADDRESS:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

**FAX NUMBER:**

**EMAIL:**

#### **I. PURPOSE, AUTHORITY AND TERM OF AGREEMENT**

##### **A. PURPOSE**

Data will be shared with [Insert Organization Name] by [Insert Organization Name] in order to evaluate the [Insert program or practice information]. [Insert Organization Names] are entering into an agreement that will allow the exchange of data and clarification of data access and utilization. [Insert Organization Name] will share all data collected between [Insert Timeframe] with [Insert Organization Name]. The data variables requested by

the [Insert Organization Name] are similar enough to allow for aggregate findings and potentially be used to make multi-site comparisons on retention, attrition and referrals. The data will remain confidential and be used only for the purpose of this study. This data sharing agreement may be renewed annually until terminated by either party.

B. LEGAL AUTHORITY

1. The [Insert Organization #1] is a [Insert brief description]
2. The [Insert Organization #2] is a [Insert brief description]

C. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

This Agreement shall be effective when signed by both parties and shall continue until terminated pursuant to the termination clause contained herein.

II. **DESCRIPTION OF DATA/DATA WORKPLAN**

The following data will be provided under this agreement: a database in a [Insert preferred platform (e.g., Excel, Access)] that includes all [Insert Timeframe] collected responses for the variables listed below:

[List Variables of Interest]

All data generated by this project shall be approved for dissemination by [Insert Organization Names] prior to dissemination.

III. **ACCESS TO DATA**

A. METHOD OF ACCESS AND TRANSFER

3. Data will be obtained in the following manner: Data will be sent to the [Insert Organization Name]. Give a brief description of how data will be shared (e.g., uploaded to a secure server or copied to a CD). Attach a copy of any Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to exchanging data (if applicable).

B. PERSONS HAVING ACCESS TO DATA

Only [Insert Organization Names] staff with current human subjects' protection training will have access to the data. De-identified and aggregated data can be accessed by other research staff, as it will contain no identifying information. Prior to the transfer of any data, staff members and researchers who will have access to the data shall sign this data sharing agreement, which includes a confidentiality agreement.

4. If requested, data will be shared with grant-funding entities, such as [Insert Funding Organizations].

C. FREQUENCY OF DATA EXCHANGE

Data will be exchanged between [Insert Organization Names] on [Insert Timeframe, e.g., ongoing] basis.

IV. **SECURITY OF DATA**

All reasonable precautions shall be taken to secure the data from individuals who do not specifically have authorized access. [Give a brief description of how data will be secured,

stored, and reported].

V. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

A. REGULATIONS COVERING CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

The use and disclosure of information obtained under this contract shall be subject to [Insert applicable U.S. Codes (e.g., 42 CFR Part 476)]. [Insert Organization Names] shall maintain the confidentiality of any information that may, in any manner, identify individual subjects.

B. NON-DISCLOSURE OF DATA

[Insert Organization Names] shall not disclose, in whole or in part, the data described in this agreement to any individual or agency not specifically authorized by this agreement. Data shall be provided [Insert number of days] of request.

C. [Insert Organization Names] will not disclose directly to, or use for the benefit of, any third party confidential information, knowledge or data acquired by virtue of its relationship with the other party named in this Agreement, without the prior written approval of the other party. It is understood and agreed by the parties that the obligations of this paragraph shall survive the expiration of termination of this Agreement.

VI. **PAYMENT**

[Give a brief description, if applicable].

VII. **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

Original data provided by the respective party will remain the sole property of that party, and as such, shall have complete oversight and input as to how the data is used, when it can be reported, and whether it can be shared. Original materials prepared by [Insert Organization Name(s)] using this data, including, without limitation: reports, proposals, analysis, writings, sound recordings, pictorial reproductions or materials of any type whatsoever, are and shall remain the property of [Insert Organization Name(s)]. Original materials prepared by [Insert Organization Name(s)] using this data, including, without limitation: reports, proposals, analysis, writings, sound recordings, pictorial reproductions or materials of any type whatsoever, are and shall remain the property of [Insert Organization Name(s)].

**Data Use and Ownership**

All papers or reports created by the [Insert Organization Name(s)] from this data will fit into the study design as approved by the [Insert IRB information, if applicable] before such products are submitted for presentation or publication.

[Insert Organization Names] shall be cited as the source of the data in all tables, reports, presentations, and scientific papers, and [Insert Organization Names] shall be cited as the source of interpretations, calculations, and/or manipulations of the data for any papers/presentations they author. [Insert Organization Names] shall be cited as the source of interpretations, calculations, and/or manipulations of the data for any papers/presentations they author.

At [Insert number of days] prior to submission or presentation at a meeting/conference, [Insert Organization Name] will furnish a copy of a proposed publication or presentation to the [Insert Organization Name] for review and comment. [Insert Organization Name] will have [Insert number of days] after receipt of the proposed materials to request that [Insert Organization Name] remove confidential or sensitive information from the materials or rewrite the materials to protect confidential information from disclosure. [Insert Organization Name] may use, reuse and analyze, for teaching and research purposes, the data and findings as reviewed by and approved by [Insert Organization Name].

[Insert Organization Name] shall provide copies of proposed publications or presentations to the [Insert Organization Name] when using data shared by [Insert Organization Name].

**VIII. SEVERABILITY**

If any provision of this Agreement or any provision of any document incorporated by reference shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions of this Agreement which can be given effect without the invalid provision, if such remainder conforms to the requirement of applicable law and the fundamental purpose of this agreement, and to this end the provisions of this Agreement are declared to be severable.

**IX. TERMINATION**

This data sharing agreement terminates on [Insert Contract End date]. Parties may choose to renew the agreement for subsequent years with a written agreement signed by both parties. At any time, either party may terminate this Agreement upon [Insert number of days] prior written notification to the other party. If this Agreement is so terminated, the parties shall be liable only for performance rendered or costs incurred in accordance with the terms of this Agreement prior to the effective date of termination.

**X. RIGHT OF INSPECTION**

[Give a brief description, if applicable].

XI. **ALL WRITINGS CONTAINED HEREIN**

This Agreement contains all the terms and conditions agreed upon by the parties. No other understandings, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject matter of this Agreement shall be deemed to exist or to bind any of the parties hereto.

[Insert Organization #1]:

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Data Capacity Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

[Insert Organization #2]:

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Data Capacity Representative: \_\_\_\_\_



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