



Needs Assessment for Evidence Building

A Decision-Support Tool

Use these questions to ensure evidence-building efforts are grounded in clearly defined needs, aligned with context, and positioned to inform action.

Step 1: Clarify the Problem

- ☐ What specific problem are we trying to solve?
- ☐ Who is affected, and how?
- ☐ What happens if this problem is not addressed?

Output: A concise problem statement grounded in real-world conditions.

Step 2: Define the Gap

- ☐ What does the current state look like (using available data)?
- ☐ What is the desired state?
- ☐ What is the measurable gap between the two?

Output: A clearly articulated need that evidence can address.

Step 3: Identify Stakeholders

- ☐ Who experiences the problem directly?
- ☐ Who influences decisions or implementation?
- ☐ Who needs to trust and use the evidence?

Output: A stakeholder map that informs data collection and interpretation.



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Step 4: Gather the Right Data using multiple data sources to triangulate findings

- ☐ What quantitative data describe outcomes or trends?
- ☐ What qualitative data explain why those trends exist?
- ☐ What contextual or demographic data affect interpretation?

Output: A balanced evidence base, not a single indicator.

Step 5: Interpret With Context

- ☐ What patterns emerge across data sources?
- ☐ How does local context shape these patterns?
- ☐ What assumptions need to be tested or challenged?

Output: Evidence that explains, rather than describes, the problem.

Step 6: Prioritize Needs

- ☐ Which organizational or customer needs are most urgent?
- ☐ Which are within our capacity to address?
- ☐ Which are supported by the strongest evidence?

Output: A short list of high-priority needs that guide action.

Step 7: Link to Action

- ☐ How will these findings inform programmatic and policy-related decisions?
- ☐ What outcomes will signal progress?
- ☐ How will evidence be revisited as conditions change?

Output: A direct line from needs to strategies to results.