

Child welfare matters.

Improving organizations, making a difference



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contents

Assessing and Improving Continuous Quality Improvement Systems in Child Welfare 1-10
Common State CQI Findings and Ideas 6-8 | Resources 11

Lessons from the Field: Assessing and Improving CQI Systems in Child Welfare

The NRCOI has assisted States in developing continuous quality improvement (CQI) systems for more than a decade. The field is now in a time of transition and opportunity. Most States are working to expand their use of data and information and a growing number of resources offer ideas and tools to help. The Children's Bureau (CB) is revising its Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process and also released an Information Memorandum on CQI in 2012, providing guidance for States on key system components.

This *Child Welfare Matters* issue profiles a CQI assessment approach the NRCOI designed and implemented in partnership with State agencies. This approach does not reflect formal CB guidance on CQI, but we believe agencies can adapt it as they develop their own comprehensive CQI systems. We urge you to take the time, step back and make active decisions about what CQI approaches will best serve your child welfare systems.

Please contact us for help.

- Peter Watson

Your goal is to help children, youth and families.

Our goal is to help you.

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) systems required in child welfare are complex and require engaged leadership, coordination among multiple agencies, unanticipated innovation and the willingness to regularly refine and evolve strategies. As examples from jurisdictions across the country illustrate, child welfare agencies share common challenges as they try to implement effective CQI systems that result in higher quality practices, better informed service delivery and improved outcomes for children and families.

Over the past 18 months the NRCOI has worked with several State agencies to design and implement a customizable assessment approach to building more comprehensive CQI systems. This newsletter summarizes that process and relevant examples. This process does not constitute formal CB guidance, but we hope child welfare agencies can use the ideas presented here, along with the resources listed on pages 11-12, to better understand CQI development efforts, assess the current status of their own CQI systems, prioritize areas that need attention and develop action plans to implement changes.

This assessment meeting provided a forum to identify the key barriers to implementing the statewide CQI system that we know is needed, and to develop and commit to actions designed to address those barriers.

- Comment from an assessment meeting participant



Assessing and Improving CQI in Child Welfare

How CQI Can Transform Organizations

In our experience, CQI offers a pathway to creating a “learning organization” in which managers, employees and stakeholders work collectively to improve their practice, systems and outcomes. The NRCOI’s working definition, also cited in the Children’s Bureau’s recent Information Memorandum (IM)¹ on CQI, reflects the comprehensive and collaborative nature of this approach:

CQI is the complete process of identifying, describing and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from and revising solutions. It relies on an organizational culture that is proactive and supports continuous learning. CQI is firmly grounded in the overall mission, vision and values of the agency. Perhaps most importantly, it is dependent on the active inclusion and participation of staff at all levels of the agency, children, youth, families and stakeholders throughout the process.

A brief review of the literature details the compelling idea that CQI relies on and reinforces an adaptive organizational culture. CQI is a proactive approach to removing barriers and achieving results using a dynamic feedback process (Bickman & Noser, 1999) informed by learning organization concepts. A learning organization is open to change, supportive of adaptation, and uses knowledge and information to act on important organizational issues (Botcheva et al., 2002). As a team-driven process, CQI requires an adaptive change in paradigm from top-down leadership to shared responsibility for collective outcomes, and from an incident-driven to a data-driven change process. For these reasons, implementing CQI requires strong and ongoing commitment to changing the way an organization does business.

CQI is also a set of technical competencies and system components such as collecting quality data and turning that data into usable information that engages agency staff and partners to act toward a common goal (Behn, 2006). The Children’s Bureau IM on CQI lays out five functional components child welfare agencies should consider as they assess and improve their CQI systems:

- CQI Foundational Administrative Structure

- Quality Data Collection
- Case Record Review Data and Process
- Analysis and Dissemination of Quality Data
- Feedback to Stakeholders and Decision Makers and Adjustment of Programs and Processes

Key activities within these components, coupled with a learning organization culture, are necessary to achieve the vision behind the CQI definition above. For example, an outcomes management system may serve as a catalyst to creating a learning organization (Hodges & Wotring, 2012) but a curious learning organization will create information to satisfy the need for ongoing knowledge building.

A CQI Assessment Process That Uses a CQI Lens

In many State child welfare agencies CQI is currently at a formative stage. A number of basic elements or components may be in place, but often are disconnected or underdeveloped. The NRCOI has developed and refined an individualized technical assistance process States may use to step back and refine their CQI vision, assess the components they have in place and identify strategies and priorities for improvement. To date, the NRCOI has worked with Florida, Indiana, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wisconsin on CQI assessments. With some structured pre-work and preparation, other States can convene their own 2-day CQI assessment meetings to engage staff and stakeholders in developing a preliminary CQI action plan.

¹ Information Memorandum: Continuous Quality Improvement in Title IV-B and IV-E Programs, ACYF-CB-12-07, 8/27/12: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/im1207.pdf>

A scan of the agency’s current CQI elements, and decisions about who will be involved in the meeting, will influence the objectives and outcomes of the assessment process. Input from senior agency administrators (at the outset and during the meeting itself) will reinforce the link between the agency’s vision and mission and the goals of a CQI system. Some States have benefitted from smaller meetings with their internal CQI staff before engaging other stakeholders. Other States have asked a broader group of agency staff and external stakeholders for their input during the assessment meeting. Regardless of who attends, everyone must actively engage in the process and contribute their ideas. While encourag-

ing everyone to have a voice in the process can be challenging, it creates a spirit of collaboration and innovation.

The assessment process has been designed to mirror the content and steps of a CQI action planning process as shown in Table 1. This table might serve as a guide for any jurisdiction undertaking a CQI assessment. Details of the work supporting each step, and examples from the States, follow the table.

Table 1: Steps in the TA Assessment Process Mirror CQI Action Planning

Stages	Steps	Purpose	Activities/Approach
Pre-work	Set the stage – basic scan Pre-meeting work	Prepare for the meeting and gain consensus on meeting objectives Assign some form of pre-work for participants.	Interviews and/or surveys to identify key issues Ask participants to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare data to share; • Prepare region or county overviews; • Prepare pre-assessment of CQI components; or • Talk to staff in their regions, identify concerns.
Assessment Meeting Day 1	Vision	Focus on the results of an improved CQI system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you see if CQI were operating effectively? 	Use participant introductions to highlight CQI and/or meeting goals. Brainstorm results of CQI desired.
	Examine the current reality	Synthesize information and perceptions of the five key components.	Identify strengths and opportunities to improve and resource needs for each CQI component.
	Identify possible actions	Collect ideas on ways to improve components.	Brainstorming sessions in small and large groups.
Assessment Meeting Day 2	Set priorities and develop commitments	Review, analyze and interpret ideas and data from meeting. Develop commitment and consensus on next steps.	Use voting processes throughout meeting to build consensus on key themes, actions, priorities, etc. Small and large group action planning around 3-5 key themes.
	Establish leads and timelines	Ensure clear follow-up steps in near future and seek input to coordinate future planning and action plan refinement.	Small and large groups work with input from all and coordination across domains. Lay out important tasks in sequence and establish leads.
	Check out and cautions	Focus resolve and ensure buy-in.	Small and large group work. What worries you about the plan? What do you commit to doing to make the plan happen?
Post-meeting	Refine and implement CQI action plan	Finalize the CQI action plan after additional input. Develop and monitor implementation over time. Utilize technical assistance to develop specific skills, engage specific groups, or facilitate meetings to overcome barriers.	CQI team and others meet to refine action plan as necessary. Obtain additional input from key stakeholders. CQI team monitors the implementation over time and adjusts as necessary. Reconvene large group to update on progress.

Assessing and Improving CQI in Child Welfare

Sample Assessment Meeting Agenda

Meeting Objectives:

1. Consider assumptions, processes and possibilities of CQI in child welfare
2. Develop a shared vision and commitment to action for key areas of improvement
3. Initiate action plan around 3-5 key areas of CQI system development
4. Identify needs for ongoing learning opportunities and support

Day 1

8:30	Introduction and Purpose of Meeting
8:45	Introduce participants When I leave this meeting, I hope we _____. To achieve this, I plan to _____.
9:15	What are the possibilities of CQI in child welfare? What is a learning organization? What is going on in other States? Where this works; concepts of a learning organization
10:00	Break
10:15	What results do we want from CQI? How will we know it is working? Brainstorm desired results; design CQI to achieve results.
11:15	The current state of CQI Feedback on interviews, strengths, opportunities, barriers, options and ideas across the five CQI components.
Noon	Lunch
1:00	What is the current and desired state of our CQI system and processes in the five components? Large and small group discussions on strengths, what we want in the future, ideas for how to get there, etc.
3:30	Break
3:45	Groups identify 5 or 6 areas for improvement.
4:15	Vote on the strongest possibilities.
4:30	Closing remarks: What will happen tomorrow?

Day 2

8:30	Opening remarks, form groups Directions for action planning groups
9:00	Action planning in small groups on key focus areas 3-5 groups flush out areas with the most votes (details/options).
10:15	Break
10:30	Small groups summarize action plans; large group critiques, adds. Groups share action plans and post them with other ideas.
11:15	Revisit the overall CQI action plan as a group. What is wrong with the overall CQI plan? What resources or supports are needed? Identify needs for other technical assistance, training, peer consults or resources.
11:45	Close out: personal commitment to the plan What steps toward implementing the action plan will you take when you return to your office?
12:00	End of the meeting

Pre-Meeting Work: Setting the Stage

Preparation for the meeting facilitates an efficient and thorough process, provides input for a responsive agenda, fosters objective discussions and accelerates action planning. It can include these ideas:

- Interview key personnel at different levels in the agency and critical stakeholders to identify key issues, the vision for CQI, current status, and areas for improvement.
- Survey larger numbers of staff and stakeholders, including people who may not attend the assessment meeting, to factor in their CQI knowledge and commitment, perceptions of the current system, and expectations for the meeting.
- Discuss interview and/or survey results and adjust the meeting agenda.
- Ask participants to prepare brief presentations for the meeting, such as: information on their regions/counties; their assessment of current CQI components and agency outcomes; data on CQI, such as what has been learned through the case review process or administrative data; input from local staff and supervisors.

Figure 1 shows results of a pre-meeting survey designed to identify CQI priorities. Staff in this State identified a need for improved data quality, data analysis, and the use of data to adjust and improve systems. Using these results, the NRCOI and State leads focused the CQI meeting agenda on those components.

Figure 1. Opportunities to Improve CQI Components



Visioning

It is important to discover the results participants anticipate from CQI early in the meeting. Facilitators might ask participants to introduce themselves and share what they value and dislike most about CQI. After grouping the responses, the facilitators focus a more formal visioning discussion on what an effective CQI system would look like. Focusing on the results helps participants compare their ideas for CQI changes against the results they want: *Will proposed changes to the CQI system result in the outcomes we desire?*

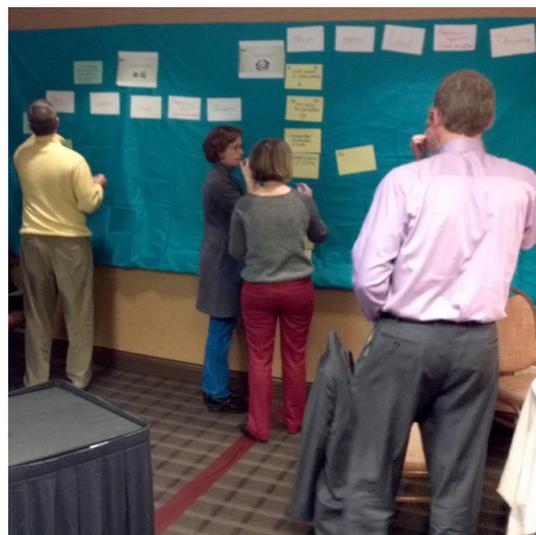
Vision Statements from Participants

- The agency will transform into a learning organization that is reflective, progressive, flexible, and action-focused.
- There will be a shared sense of responsibility for outcomes and more solution-focused collaborative efforts.
- We will see measurable and sustained improvement in outcomes.
- Both qualitative and quantitative data will be utilized for learning that results in action planning and follow-through.
- Practice will be more consistent and counties will share practice knowledge.
- Our CQI unit will be more responsive to the needs of the field.

If counties are expected to have more consistency in practice, the CQI action plan might include plans for a sharing process to discuss effective practices among counties. Or, a CQI Unit could become “more responsive” by helping local offices use both quantitative and qualitative data in their action planning. Making the visioning “come alive” in this way can be challenging, and facilitators should remind participants about their vision statements during the action planning process on Day 2.

Examine the Current Reality of CQI Components

Participants spend the bulk of the assessment meeting reviewing their current CQI system and activities. Most States have organized their assessment efforts using the five CQI components outlined in the Children’s Bureau Information Memo. For each component, a brief summary of the current reality starts a conversation and the rest of the group joins in, asking clarifying questions, presenting opinions and feedback and providing ideas for improvements and action steps. Participants can vote for proposed improvements and action steps at the end of each discussion. As the assessment progresses, facilitators can point out emerging areas of consensus which will serve as the basis for CQI action planning.



Assessing and Improving CQI in Child Welfare

Common State CQI Assessment Findings and Ideas

Foundational Administrative Structure. Current administrative structures supporting CQI systems vary widely. Some States rely only on central office staff while others have CQI staff throughout the State. Revising the structure is a complex action, but as some States make changes to CQI they have stepped back to ask if the existing structure optimally supports a different vision. All States wanted to integrate and coordinate CQI activities more effectively among agency administrative groups/units such as training, research, case review, and information technology; and across regions, counties or local offices. Some wanted to coordinate with courts, providers and other stakeholders.

Despite different CQI administrative structures, every State identified the need to provide sustained leadership as CQI evolves and to develop ongoing messaging about the purpose of CQI.

- What message will communicate an expanded CQI vision and philosophy that involves more people in the process?
- How can we make CQI part of daily work?
- How can we help counties and regions experience an expanded role and potential for CQI?

State Strategies

to spread CQI practices and values throughout the agency

- Identify and support CQI champions.
- Convene meetings to engage local agencies.
- Develop a statewide CQI workgroup with quarterly meetings.
- Create and support local CQI committees.
- Present data to counties or regions and focus on one specific outcome initially.

States highlighted the need for CQI training and coaching on turning data into information and action planning processes for both staff and stakeholders who will engage in CQI activities. In one State, the NRCOI teamed with Casey Family Programs to provide an intensive week of training and coaching to a newly formed CQI team.

Quality Data Collection. Many States have recognized the need to link data from administrative datasets and quality case reviews. Because most States are unable to link practice and administrative data easily, CQI data often portray different stories about agency outcomes. These stories may appear inconsistent, incomplete or even contradictory and cause confusion within the agency and the broader community about the impacts of the child welfare system.

States also highlighted the need for streamlining data entry processes to improve the consistency and quality of administrative data. Several thought the increased use of data reports would improve overall data quality since report users across the agency might identify data errors or other problems.



Common State CQI Assessment Findings and Ideas

Case Record Review Data and Process. Most States have developed and implemented qualitative case review approaches in the last decade, often investing significant personnel and the bulk of their CQI resources. Developing the case review process may have been a first step in implementing CQI, creating new feedback mechanisms and engaging counties and regions with central office staff in quality assurance efforts. In some States, these reviews also helped document and measure progress on Program Improvement Plans (PIPs) and meeting Federal requirements. As a result, in a number of States CQI has become almost synonymous with the case review process.

During the broader CQI assessment meetings, some States found it difficult to link their case review components with other CQI components that may not have received the same attention and support. These discussions were sometimes emotional since States have invested so heavily in their case review processes. Improving and supporting other CQI components may require difficult staff and resource decisions.

Another issue that emerged was how to use case review results most effectively. For example, States struggle with the reliability and representativeness of their case review samples, both at the county and regional levels, and for specific practice areas such as investigations. Questions raised related to sample sizes included:

- Can a small sample of cases, focusing on children in foster care, be representative of the work in any county or region?
- If the results change across different reviews, is this due to actual changes or the ‘luck of the draw’ in a small sample?
- Should action plans be developed for each case only or can the results support action planning at the county or regional level?
- How can the case review process be expanded to include aspects of the State’s practice model or key policies or initiatives?

The work required to conduct on-site reviews sometimes results in reports being generated months later, reducing their relevance. Despite the strengths of case review processes, many States concluded that their current case review processes were not sustainable and sometimes even a barrier to developing and supporting a more comprehensive and integrated CQI system.

State Strategies

to make the case review process more sustainable and reliable

- Involve a broader range of staff and community partners as reviewers.
- Conduct more case reviews at the local level.
- Convene post-review meetings to share results.
- Change case review tools to incorporate key practice model or policy elements.
- Expand the case review to include intake and investigations or family assessment cases currently not being reviewed.
- Examine administrative data before the case review process and target local case reviews to understand practices underlying specific challenges.

Strengths of the assessment meeting included involvement by all participants, time and encouragement for all perspectives to be heard, and action oriented plans with timelines.

– Comment from an assessment meeting participant

Assessing and Improving CQI in Child Welfare

Common State CQI Assessment Findings and Ideas

Analysis and Dissemination of Quality Data. Many States have a large amount of data and raw data reports, but struggle to turn that data into information that conveys a cohesive story and supports action planning.

State Strategies

to support action planning with data

- Examine existing reports and prioritize those that all supervisors or regional managers should be comfortable using.
- Develop shorter, more focused reports useful for frontline workers or supervisors.
- Develop reports that can be drilled down to the local level and train staff to use these to explore high priority issues.
- Review data regularly and use data at every meeting.
- Share data in many ways, such as posting reports in State, county or local offices.
- Train CQI staff to prepare and present data, discuss implications and engage others in action planning. Training detailed in some CQI action plans:
 - Provide data analysis skills training throughout the agency.
 - Implement a “Data Fellows”² program or similar process to build analysis capacity among a core group of staff throughout the agency.
 - Train community partners to understand and use agency data.

² See “Using Data to Drive Improvements for Children in New Jersey,” presentation by Aziz Haidi, NJ Department of Children and Families at the 2011 Policy to Practice Dialogue. <http://www.nrcadoption.org/programs/policy-to-practice/conference-2011/2011-powerpoint-presentations/>

Feedback to Stakeholders and Decision Makers and Adjustment of Programs and Process. There was near universal agreement across States that using data and information to support a process of action planning and change is just beginning. Most child welfare agencies have put more resources into the other CQI components—increasing the accessibility of data and the number of CQI staff engaged in the process, and focusing on practice and outcomes— but agencies have expressed concern that CQI activities have not always led to the improvements envisioned. Strengthening, supporting and coaching the use of data and information during action planning offers a major opportunity for strengthening CQI’s overall impact on outcomes.

However, shifting to this approach requires changing the expectations for how staff and external stakeholders engage in the action planning process—a process that must become integral to the CQI system and to the organization’s approach generally.

State Strategies

- Begin with a limited number of key outcomes and use data for each outcome to engage local levels in analysis, discussion, action planning, and monitoring the effects during implementation. This approach provides an opportunity to learn and practice the full CQI process.
- Be more explicit in expectations for and communications about CQI staff who will work more closely with local offices on action planning activities in the future. This requires assessing and building skills among CQI staff to support action planning, including facilitating, presenting data, developing and measuring small scale experiments, teaming with local managers, etc.
- Define a more specific action planning process, timeframes, formats and structures, and communicate with local offices about how CQI staff would be involved. For example, one State plans to facilitate action planning meetings with local office managers, staff and stakeholders at the completion of final case review reports.

States identified philosophical impediments to providing feedback to stakeholders and engaging them in making program adjustments. There may be a lingering perception that counties, regions, supervisors, judges and others do not have the expertise to engage in CQI without the leadership and objectivity of State or external reviewers. Tension also exists between historical compliance approaches and the CQI expectation of making incremental and sustainable improvements in the quality of case work. Overcoming this tension may require CQI staff and units to give up the role of ‘expert’ and become ‘collaborators’ in innovation.

Set Priorities and Create Preliminary CQI Action Plan

The last key activity during the CQI assessment meeting is prioritizing and action planning to further develop the CQI system. As detailed in Table 1, facilitators use a voting process throughout the “current reality” discussions to gauge participants’ ideas about various proposed actions. After posting all ideas generated, facilitators can rearrange the ideas into common groupings and each participant can “vote” for his or her top 3 ideas. Adding this visual component helps participants see consensus as it emerges around different ideas and proposed actions.

After working through all 5 components, most States could identify 3-5 areas they wanted to focus on. Some themes were identical to CQI components while others related to more than one component (e.g., engage and support field staff in CQI, incorporate data into all meetings, etc.). During the action planning exercise, small groups drafted action plans for each CQI theme, including specific action steps, leads and time frames wherever possible. As small groups summarized their plans, the large group made revisions and identified issues needing attention to ensure coordination across the work in the major themes.

The meetings should conclude with a clear discussion of next steps, including how to solicit input from other key stakeholders, who will take responsibility for revising the action plan and leading overall implementation efforts, and how each participant in the meeting will commit to make the plan happen.

We were able to identify current CQI system processes, barriers and action steps; and commit to moving forward together.

– Comment from an assessment meeting participant

Post Meeting: Refine and Implement Action Plan

While the CQI assessment meetings have involved intensive work among participants, the hard work of developing the draft CQI action plan is just beginning. In most cases, State CQI staff have taken the lead in soliciting additional feedback and refining action plan elements, time frames and implementation strategies. Several States scheduled immediate feedback meetings with county directors to summarize the action plans, explain the implications for the State-county relationship and ask for feedback and ideas on how to strengthen the plan and work together during implementation. Other States plan to reconvene meeting participants periodically and use them as a steering committee to help develop and monitor implementation.



Assessing and Improving CQI in Child Welfare

Conclusion

The NRCOI has continued working with most of the States participating in the CQI assessment process, and the following lessons have emerged:

- CQI managers and staff need to engage with a broad group of staff and stakeholders as implementation moves forward. CQI action plans will need to be adjusted in response to unanticipated challenges or changing conditions, and getting feedback from outside the CQI organization will help maintain broad-based support for CQI in the agency.
- The action plans developed through the assessment meetings are well-intentioned but often somewhat ambitious. CQI takes time, so strategically adjusting time frames and sequencing will be critical. For example, many States are considering revisions to their case review systems, but the dearth of comprehensive case review models in the field, aside from the CFSR and QSR models, means States may have to commit more resources and time to this activity than they realize.
- Consider additional technical assistance from the NRCOI or other organizations that have assisted with CQI assessment and development work (See pp. 11-12). Outside facilitation, examples and perspectives can provide a strong incentive for engaging with staff and stakeholders during implementation efforts and also may reduce some pressure on internal CQI staff.

As child welfare agencies begin using CQI as a catalyst for change, States should consider a few common themes that emerged during the CQI assessment meetings in the past year. The idea of creating a comprehensive CQI system that integrates the core philosophical values and practices with the five functional areas outlined in the Children's Bureau's Information Memorandum is

relatively new. At the outset, child welfare administrators and even CQI managers may not fully understand or appreciate the range of activities and the new way of doing business that needs to be integrated into a CQI system and disseminated throughout the agency and among stakeholders. Implementing CQI is an iterative process that evolves over time, rather than a specific program with well-developed child welfare strategies and expected outcomes. It requires patience, persistence and structure, with room for innovation.

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Tell us what you think. We welcome your comments! Please use the contact button on our website to give us your feedback: www.nrcoi.org

Resources

From NRCOI— www.nrcoi.org/qi.htm

Contact us for more information on the CQI assessment process and other related issues:

- Developing and implementing CQI action plans
- Using data and information at all levels of the agency
- Implementing model CQI practices and techniques from other State and Tribal agencies

CQI Working Papers. During a national CQI working meeting convened by NRCOI in August, 2012, representatives from 23 States and numerous other organizations reviewed and refined working papers on components of CQI systems. Five are now available on the NRCOI website: qualitative case review processes, turning data into information, action planning, program evaluation basics, and building the capacity of the CQI workforce.

www.nrcoi.org/qi_workingpapers.htm

CQI Research Project. This project provides information, based on semi-structured interviews with CQI leads in 33 States, on how States are approaching continuous quality improvement. The website includes State descriptions, and summarizes information by topic (committees, department structure, plan, policy and training development, qualitative reviews, quantitative data, reports, software, stakeholder involvement, staff responsibilities and qualifications, and training).

www.nrcoi.org/cqipproject.htm

CQI Peer Network. This network enables CQI staff to share information and learn from one another through regular network calls, a list serve and a website.

www.nrcoi.org/QINetwork.htm

A Framework for Implementing Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Framework developed by NRCOI and Casey Family Programs to guide development and implementation of CQI systems in public child welfare agencies (2005). www.nrcoi.org/telefiles/6.09.05.pdf

Child Welfare Matters Newsletters: Implementing Change at the Local Level (Fall/Winter 2008). This issue provides examples of three strategies agencies can use to engage the local level in change. www.nrcoi.org/rcp-dfs/cwmatters8.pdf

Taking Action: Keys to Using Data and Information (Fall/Winter 2010). This issue explores how agencies are using seven key factors that support using data to improve practice and outcomes. www.nrcoi.org/rcpdfs/cw-matters10.pdf

Information Memorandum: Continuous Quality Improvement in Title IV-B and IV-E Programs. ACYF-CB-12-07, 8/27/12. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/im1207.pdf>

CFSR Technical Bulletin #7, March, 2014. Announcement of the next round of reviews and changes to review process. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws-policies/technical-bulletins/cw-monitoring>

CQI Assessment Evaluations

Evaluations of the technical assistance we provided on the CQI assessment process have shown that participants generally report a better understanding of the current state of their CQI systems, and agree that the meeting generated specific ideas for improvement in all five of the functional components. We hope you'll consider using this process on your own, or contacting us to assist with the process.

Other Useful Resources

CQI in Child Welfare Module. At the CFSR Information Portal, an E-Training Platform contains a CQI in Child Welfare Module, providing an overview of CQI and its benefits. Module sections include:

- Defining CQI and Building a CQI Framework
- Effective Leadership and Creating a Learning Environment
- Functional Components and Processes of CQI, describing the five components of the Children's Bureau Information Memorandum
- Implementing and Sustaining Systems Change

<https://training.cfsrportal.org/e-training-platform/2741>

Framework for Managing with Data. From the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRC-CWDT), this tool discusses five steps in selecting, sharing and using data:

- Identify areas of focus
- Select data and measures
- Build tools to present data
- Integrate data into business processes
- Monitor data

<http://www.nrcwdt.org/2013/07/framework-for-managing-with-data-an-overview/>

Currently Underway: CQI Training Academy. Through a cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau, JBS International and the Center for the Support of Families are delivering an 8-month CQI Training Academy for approximately 140 child welfare staff from across the country. It runs from January to August, 2014 and includes 7 distance learning modules, self-directed lessons, and a web-based resource center. For more information see "Child Welfare CQI Training Academy Launches in 2014," in the November, 2013 issue of *Children's Bureau Express*. <https://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=website.viewArticles&issueid=151§ionid=1&articleid=4012>

ChildStat: Leading Systems-level Improvements Based on Case-level Experiences. Webinar from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI), 9/21/11. Highlights this model for using data during regular management meetings. <http://ncwwi.org/index.php/resources/national-webinar-series-archives>

Child Welfare Information Gateway: Approaches to Quality Improvement. https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/practice_improvement/quality/approaches.cfm

Putting the Pieces Together: Guidebook for Fact-based Decision Making to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families. Explores data, analysis, presentation and communication; and highlights 3 jurisdictions using data—VA, NJ and Erie County, NY. Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health. (2012). <http://tapartnership.org/docs/Putting%20the%20Pieces%20Together.pdf>

Coming Soon! The National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections (NRC-PFC) Spring 2014 Issue of *Permanency Planning Today* on Continuous Quality Improvement. To be notified of release, subscribe to NRC-PFC's Weekly Update http://www.nrcpfc.org/is/weekly_update.html

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