



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## INTRODUCTION

The Performance and Quality Improvement (PA-PQI) Standards for public agencies provide the framework for an agency-wide PQI system that increases agency capacity to make data-informed decisions and effectively identify and implement interventions that support the achievement of performance targets, program goals, individual and family outcomes, and staff and consumer satisfaction. Building and sustaining a comprehensive, mission-driven PQI system is dependent upon the active engagement of staff, persons served, and other stakeholders throughout the improvement cycle.

**Interpretation:** *While the language used in this section intentionally highlights both performance and quality, COA recognizes that various terms are used by the field to reference the systemic improvement process including, but not limited to, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and Quality and Performance Management. The standards are intended to accommodate the agency's preferred language and not to prescribe particular tools or techniques for implementing the PA-PQI standards.*

**Note:** *The Performance and Quality Improvement (PA-PQI) standards were revised in August 2016 as part of COA's release of new Standards for Public Agencies. For more information, please refer to the [PQI Standards Updates Summary - Public](#).*

**Note:** *Please see the tip sheet [How to Read the Standards and Tables of Evidence - Public](#) for further information on interpreting requirements according to public agency structure.*

**Note:** *Please see [PA-PQI Reference List](#) for a list of resources that informed the development of these standards.*

## Table of Evidence

### Self Study Evidence

#### **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- a. Describe how the agency defines and promotes a culture that values learning and improvement, including:
  - a. how strategic priorities influence the quality improvement process; and
  - b. recent and upcoming special initiatives/approaches that promote a commitment to building on organizational culture of continuous learning and improvement. (PA-PQI 1)

## **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- b. Describe the resources devoted to PQI. Include in your response:
  - a. a brief overview of fiscal, staff, training, and technological resources; and
  - b. a list of key PQI staff, including their role, qualifications, and experience. (PA-PQI 1, PA-PQI 3)
- c. Provide a list of measurement/data collection tools being used including:
  - a. a brief description of the tool;
  - b. why each listed tool was chosen;
  - c. if the tool is standardized; and
  - d. if the tool is used for contract monitoring. (PA-PQI 4)
- d. Describe how the agency's PQI system integrates external monitoring activities (i.e. applicable federal reporting requirements and reviews, litigation) to identify priorities for PQI planning and ongoing monitoring.
- e. Describe the agency's case review processes including an overview of the various types of case reviews the agency conducts. (PA-PQI 5)
- f. Describe the agency's status with implementing the PQI standards, including:
  - a. strengths and accomplishments; and
  - b. any challenges the agency is experiencing with implementing the PQI standards.
- g. Provide any additional information that will increase the Peer Team's understanding of the agency's implementation of the PA-PQI standards.
- h. Completed Stakeholder Survey Recipient Reporting Form - Private, Public, Canadian (see Stakeholder Survey Instructions)**Note: The Stakeholder Survey Recipient Reporting Form is associated with COA's Stakeholder Survey Process which is an integral part of the accreditation process. Agencies should not upload documentation related to any internal survey process they may be conducting. For more information about COA's Stakeholder Survey Process, see: COA's Accreditation Guidelines.** **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**
  - a. Describe how the region promotes a culture of learning and improvement and ensures staff involvement in PQI activities. (PA-PQI 1)
  - b. Describe the region's status with implementing the agency's PQI plan, including strengths, accomplishments, and challenges.
  - c. Provide any additional information that will increase the Peer Team's understanding of the region's implementation of PA-PQI and its participation in the statewide PQI system.

### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.

### On-Site Evidence



## Performance and Quality Improvement

No On-Site Evidence

### **On-Site Activities**

No On-Site Activities

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## (FOC) PA-PQI 1: Culture of Learning and Improvement

The agency actively promotes and demonstrates a culture of learning and continual improvement.

**Interpretation:** *The implementation and continuous refinement of an agency-wide PQI system can transform agencies from being narrowly compliance-focused into true learning organizations. Performance and Quality Improvement goes beyond only ensuring compliance with discrete requirements by pushing agencies to identify and address the systemic factors that impact practice and outcomes.*

### Rating Indicators

#### 1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions; exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.
- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard manner.
- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.
- Capacity is at a basic level.

#### 4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance

### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.Â Â
- The agencyâ€™s observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of neglect, stagnation, or deterioration.  
*Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.Â*

## Table of Evidence

### Self-Study Evidence

#### **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- See long-term or strategic plan in PA-AM 3 (PA-PQI 1.01)
- See annual plan(s) in PA-AM 4 (PA-PQI 1.01)
- PQI system budget allocations (PA-PQI 1.01)
- PQI department or program meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for the previous quarter
- Leadership team, management and staff meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for the previous quarter (full administrative staff and large department meetings)

#### **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**

- Regional PQI planning meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for the previous quarter
- Regional management and staff meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for the previous quarter (full staff and large department meetings)

### On-Site Evidence

#### **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- PQI department or program meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for the previous and current calendar year
- Leadership team, management, and staff meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for the previous and current calendar year (full staff and large department meetings)

#### **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**

- Regional PQI meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for the previous and current calendar year
- Regional management and staff meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for the previous and current calendar year (full staff and large department meetings)

### On-Site Activities

#### **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

## **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- Interview:
  - a. Agency leadership
  - b. Staff at all levels **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**
- Interview:
  - a. Regional Director
  - b. Agency leadership
  - c. Staff at all levels

### **PA-PQI 1.01**

The agency's leadership demonstrates a clear commitment to fostering a culture of learning and continual improvement by:

- a. using quality improvement results to guide strategic planning and capacity-building efforts;
- b. allocating resources for an agency-wide PQI system; and
- c. modeling and communicating methods for data-informed decision-making at the worker, program, region/community, agency, and system level.

**Interpretation:** *Examples of ways to demonstrate standard implementation include, but are not limited to:*

- a. *The agency leadership actively use PQI information to mobilize financial and other resources to strengthen organizational capacity and increase organizational resilience; establishes the expectation that management, staff, and other stakeholders will be involved in the PQI system; and allocates sufficient resources, including technology resources, to sustain the PQI system.*
- b. *Senior Managers champion the goals of the PQI system as related to overarching agency goals, ensure the involvement of staff and stakeholders in the PQI process, and actively use data to inform operational decisions and support service improvement efforts.*

**Note:** *The Narrative Question #1 provides evidence for PA-PQI 1.*

### **PA-PQI 1.02**

Staff demonstrate the agency's culture of learning and continual improvement and can articulate the goals of the PQI process.

**Interpretation:** *Examples of ways to demonstrate standard implementation include, but are not limited to:*

- a. *supervisors clearly convey the goals of the PQI system, the values that*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- undergird the PQI process, and staff roles in the process;*
- b. supervisors help staff to interpret data within the context of individual supervisory relationships, case-level practice discussions, and group supervision activities;*
  - c. staff across the agency can articulate the purpose and goals of the PQI process and explain associated procedures related to their work;*
  - d. staff use available data to inform case-level decisions;*
  - e. staff are supported in connecting the interpretation of data to their roles and responsibilities;*
  - f. staff are empowered to report their performance and quality improvement concerns and suggestions and are updated on applicable corrective action or follow-up; and*
  - g. staff are updated on PQI-related information in a timely manner.*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## (FOC) PA-PQI 2: PQI Infrastructure

The PQI system has an infrastructure that gives the agency capacity to:

- a. ensure the integrity of measurement practices, including data collection and analysis;
- b. identify agency-wide, as well as region- and program-specific areas of strength and areas for improvement; and
- c. identify, implement, and monitor improvement strategies.

**Related:** PA-CFS 1

**Note:** See *Model PQI Plan - Private, Public, Canadian, Network for assistance with implementing PA-PQI 2.*

### Rating Indicators

#### 1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions: exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.
- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard manner.
- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.
- Capacity is at a basic level.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.





## Performance and Quality Improvement

### 4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.Â Â
- The agencyâ€™s observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of neglect, stagnation, or deterioration.  
*Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.Â*

### Table of Evidence

#### Self-Study Evidence

##### County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity

- PQI operational procedures (procedures related to program or office specific PQI processes, not otherwise submitted in PA-PQI)
- PQI Plan
- Document or chart detailing the agency's PQI structure including committees and work groups with member lists, as appropriate **State**

##### Administered Agency (Regional Office)

- Regional PQI operational procedures
- Regional PQI plan
- Document or chart detailing the region's PQI structure including committees and work groups with member lists, as appropriate

#### On-Site Evidence

##### County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity

- Networks only:
  - a. Network contracts with network service providers **State**

##### Administered Agency (Regional Office)

- No On-site Evidence

#### On-Site Activities

##### County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity

- Interview:
  - a. Agency head
  - b. Agency leadership
  - c. Program field personnel
  - d. Community stakeholders
  - e. PQI Director
  - f. IM/data analysis manager
  - g. Contracted providers

##### State Administered Agency (Regional Office)

### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- Interview:
  - a. Regional Director
  - b. Agency leadership
  - c. Program field personnel
  - d. Administrative personnel (HR, Training, PQI, IM)
  - e. Community stakeholders
  - f. Contracted providers
  - g. Persons served

### **PA-PQI 2.01**

Each region or site within the agency's jurisdiction, and each program or service area, are part of the agency's PQI system and addressed in the PQI plan.

**Interpretation:** *For child and family services agencies, the PQI system must include all the jurisdictions in which the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan are provided.*

### **PA-PQI 2.02**

A PQI plan and accompanying procedures operationalize the agency's PQI system, and:

- a. articulate the agency's approach to quality improvement including specific models and methodologies it employs;
- b. describe the PQI system's structure and outline all major PQI activities;
- c. define staff roles and assigns responsibility for implementing and coordinating the PQI process (PA-PQI 3)
- d. identify the core areas of performance being measured and the purpose or goals for measuring these areas; (PA-PQI 4, PA-PQI 5)
- e. define measurement practices including data collection and analysis methods, process, and applicable timeframes (PA-PQI 6); and
- f. reflect how the PQI system is evaluated.

**Interpretation:** *For state-administered agencies, regional PQI plans should directly correlate with the agency-wide plan while also being responsive to the region's specific needs. The regional plan and accompanying procedures explain the structure for carrying out PQI activities in the region, including any region-specific committees, processes, and performance measures. Additionally, if the region contains any unique programs, the regional PQI plan should address the PQI activities and measures for those programs.*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

**Interpretation:** *Among other things, evaluation of the PQI system should include assessing how well PQI activities align with best practices in measurement including (1) is the agency asking the right performance questions, (2) how well do chosen metrics answer the performance questions being asked, and (3) is the agency accurately measuring change over time.*

**Interpretation:** *The agency's PQI plan, as the guiding document for implementing and refining the PQI system, is distinct from time-sensitive actionable plans that the agency develops to target improvement activities such as the Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plans.*

**Note:** See [PQI Operational Procedures Worksheet - Private, Public, Canadian](#) for assistance with this standard.

### **PA-PQI 2.03**

The PQI plan:

- a. defines a broad range of internal and external stakeholder groups; and
- b. specifies how these stakeholder groups will be involved in the PQI process.

**Related:** PA-OST 7.03, PA-OST 9.17

**Interpretation:** *An agency's "stakeholders" are any institutions or individuals who will be impacted by the agency's decisions, i.e. they have an interest or "stake" in the agency's success at achieving its mission or purpose. Stakeholder involvement is fundamental to any well-designed PQI system and is crucial to a public agency's ability to achieve its mission and elicit public trust. Stakeholders are often thought of in terms of categories or groups of people--sometimes referred to as communities of interest.*

*Common stakeholder categories include:*

- a. persons served, including children and youth when applicable;
  - b. community-based organizations and neighborhood associations;
  - c. service providers, particularly contracted providers;
  - d. community-based business entities;
  - e. public agency partners, including other social service agencies and the court system;
  - f. statewide or national advocacy organizations; and
  - g. academic, learning and research institutions.
- Stakeholders should participate in a broad range of activities including*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

*involvement in PQI planning activities; activities that gather qualitative data on the experience of receiving services or providing services as a contracted provider; reviewing and interpreting summary data information; and identifying, implementing, and monitoring solutions.*

**Interpretation:** *While staff are a common stakeholder category, throughout the PA-PQI standards, staff are intentionally differentiated from other stakeholders in order to highlight their unique involvement in the PQI process.*

**Research Note:** *Participatory design is an approach that involves stakeholders in the development and structuring of systems to promote system responsiveness to stakeholder needs. By encouraging stakeholders who are involved and/or invested in the day-to-day-work of the agency to participate in the development of the PQI process, agencies can better ensure that the end-product of their efforts have a positive and sustainable impact on persons served.*

*An effective way to improve stakeholder involvement and foster participatory design is to do an assessment of the agency's current relationships with its partners and collaborators. Eco -mapping is an effective method of evaluating agency relationships with stakeholders, setting the groundwork for improved participatory design. See PA-AM 5 and PA-AM 6 for more information on effectively engaging stakeholders in the development and structuring of systems.*

**Note:** *COA's [Stakeholder Involvement Tip Sheet](#) provides examples of different stakeholder groups often identified by agencies and describes different ways stakeholders can be involved in an agency's PQI system.*

### **PA-PQI 2.04**

The PQI plan outlines the flow of information between frontline workers and those responsible for implementing and coordinating the agency's PQI process to ensure:

- a. staff at all levels of the agency receive information on PQI evidence and findings;
- b. frontline staff and their supervisors have timely access to the information they need to clarify expectations and implement practice improvements; and
- c. timely, effective delivery of data and feedback back to PQI system administrators.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## (FOC) PA-PQI 3: Roles and Responsibilities

Staff at all levels of the agency participate in, conduct, and sustain performance and quality improvement activities.

### Rating Indicators

#### 1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions; exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.
- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard manner.
- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.
- Capacity is at a basic level.

#### 4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.
  - The agency's observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of neglect, stagnation, or deterioration.
- Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## Table of Evidence

### **Self-Study Evidence** **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- Job description of staff person(s) responsible for implementation and coordination of the PQI department or program (PA-PQI 3.01, 3.02)
- Staff PQI training description and curricula table(s) of contents (PA-PQI 3.03) broken down by job category including:
  - a. staff coordinating the agency's PQI system (PA-PQI 3.01, PA-PQI 3.02)
  - b. supervisors, program directors, and senior managers (PA-PQI 3.04)
- Job description of regional staff person(s) responsible for oversight and coordination of PQI activities, if applicable (PA-PQI 3.01, 3.02)
- Training materials pertinent to local PQI activities

### **On-Site Evidence** **All Agencies**

- Training curricula and materials
- Training files, database, or personnel files that demonstrate attendance at required PQI trainings

### **On-Site Activities** **All Agencies**

- Interview:
  - a. PQI staff
  - b. Managers and program directors
  - c. Staff at all levels
- Network only interview:
  - a. Subcontracted providers
  - b. Staff participating in the network-level PQI activities

## **PA-PQI 3.01**

Staff responsible for implementing and coordinating the agency's PQI process demonstrate competency in sound measurement practices including:

- a. identifying indicators of quality practice for the programs being evaluated;
- b. implementing internal and external evaluation methods, such as benchmarking, appropriate to the programs being evaluated;
- c. ensuring proper data entry and data integrity; and
- d. collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from a range of sources.

## **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## **PA-PQI 3.02**

Staff responsible for implementing and coordinating the agency's PQI process demonstrate competency in effectively engaging people throughout the agency by:

- a. assessing staff and other stakeholder training and resource needs; and
- b. communicating evidence and findings to staff and other stakeholders in a manner that facilitates their active engagement and reflects an understanding of the practice standards associated with the programs being evaluated.

## **PA-PQI 3.03**

Staff receive ongoing training in PQI activities, including, as appropriate to individual roles and responsibilities:

- a. the goals, relevance, and inherent value of the PQI process;
- b. the roles of all staff in implementing the PQI process;
- c. data collection tools and forms;
- d. the key decision-making junctures in their work and how data should inform decisions; and
- e. case review processes and associated forms.

**Interpretation:** *Training on the case review processes should include conflict of interest guidelines, mechanisms for addressing safety concerns in the cases under review, and procedures for conducting case-related interviews, as applicable. See PA-PQI 5 for more information.*

**Interpretation:** *Job descriptions must outline each position's PQI responsibilities to inform the content of PQI training for various job categories. Please see PA-HR 3.01 for more information on job descriptions.*

## **PA-PQI 3.04**

Supervisors of direct service staff, program directors, and senior managers demonstrate competency in:

- a. collecting, monitoring, and interpreting data and using this evidence to evaluate and discuss performance as it relates to outcomes;
- b. targeting areas of improvement;
- c. supporting staff in ensuring data collection and integrity; and

## **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- d. supporting staff in using data as evidence to inform casework and operational decision-making.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.





# Performance and Quality Improvement

## (FOC) PA-PQI 4: Measures and Indicators

The agency's mission, mandates, and strategic priorities drive the identification and utilization of measures and indicators for evaluating the following within the agency and with any contracted providers within the service delivery system:

- a. the impact of services on individuals and families;
- b. the quality of service delivery; and
- c. management and operational performance.

**Related:** PA-CFS 5.11, PA-FEC 12

**Interpretation:** *Measures, indicators, and tools required by regulation can be utilized to go beyond measuring compliance by engaging staff and other stakeholders to:*

- a. *review data that is important for their work or interest;*
- b. *use data to benchmark results with other agencies providing the same funded services; and*
- c. *compare data with additional or other data collected by the agency not covered by contractual requirements to improve services.*

**Research Note:** *The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) encourages child and family services agencies to align CFSR activities with other monitoring and review activities, including the state-wide continuous quality improvement system.*

### **Rating Indicators**

#### **1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance**

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions; exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### **2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance**

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

performance.

### 3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.Â Â
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.Â Â
- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard manner.Â Â
- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.Â Â
- Capacity is at a basic level.

### 4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.Â Â
- The agency's observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of neglect, stagnation, or deterioration.  
*Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.Â Â*

## Table of Evidence

### Self-Study Evidence

#### County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity

- See PQI plan (PA-PQI 2) for a description of what is being measured, including:
    - a. outcome measures
    - b. process and quality measures
    - c. data sources
    - d. performance indicators
    - e. performance targets (PA-PQI 4.02, PA-PQI 4.03, and PA-PQI 4.04)
  - Documentation of staff/stakeholder involvement in ongoing review of measures, indicators, data sources, and performance targets (PA-PQI 4.01)
  - See PQI outcomes/outputs documentation provided in the service narratives
- #### State Administered Agency (Regional Office)
- See Regional PQI plan for region-specific measures or indicators, if appropriate (PA-PQI 4.02, PA-PQI 4.03, PA-PQI 4.04)
  - Regional documentation of staff/stakeholder involvement in ongoing review of measures, indicators, data-sources, and performance

### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

targets (PA-PQI 4.01)

- See PQI outcomes/outputs documentation provided in the service narratives

### On-Site Evidence All Agencies

- Regulatory/licensing or other external reviews/reports (PA-PQI 4.05)
- For agencies seeking re-accreditation:
  - a. Pre-Commission Review Report (PCR)
  - b. Final Accreditation Report (FAR)
  - c. Maintenance of Accreditation (MOA) Reports for the three most recent years

### On-Site Activities All Agencies

- Interview:
  - a. PQI staff
  - b. Relevant staff
  - c. Other relevant stakeholders

### PA-PQI 4.01

Staff throughout the agency and stakeholders, including contracted providers, participate in the ongoing review of outcome and process and quality measures, as well as related:

- a. quantitative and qualitative indicators;
- b. data sources, including measurement tools and instruments for each identified measure; and
- c. performance targets.

**Interpretation:** *Agencies should assess variation in service population, service area, staffing and other factors in order to develop baselines, performance targets, and benchmarks that are tailored to the local area or program.*

**Interpretation:** *Outcome Measures are the observable and measurable effects of a program's activities on persons served. See PA-PQI 4.02 for more information.*

*Process and Quality Measures track management and operational performance and service delivery processes and the quality of service provision. See PA-PQI 4.03 and PA-PQI 4.04 for more information.*

### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

### **PA-PQI 4.02**

To track the impact of services on individuals and families on an ongoing basis, each of the agency's programs uses outcome measures related to the following areas, as applicable:

- a. change in clinical status;
- b. change in functional status;
- c. health, welfare, and safety;
- d. permanency of life situation;
- e. quality of life; and
- f. other outcomes as appropriate to the program or service population.

**Related:** PA-NET 7.05, PA-NET 8

**Interpretation:** *Whenever available the agency should use standardized or recognized evaluation tools to gather and analyze the impact of its services on persons served. Functional assessments permit the analysis of an individual or family's status over time and, in the aggregate, this case-level data can inform the analysis of trends and relationships to correlating service delivery components.*

**Interpretation:** *For child and family services agencies, outcome measures must align with the safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes assessed by the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs).*

**Interpretation:** *In an EAP common outcomes include, for example, personal and/or workplace productivity and healthy workplace relationships.*

**Research Note:** *Research recommends that child and family services agencies track placement and permanency outcomes by race and ethnicity in order to gain a better understanding of how racial and ethnic disparities and disproportionality are impacting children and families.*

### **PA-PQI 4.03**

To evaluate the quality of its service delivery practices, the agency identifies and uses process and quality measures and indicators related to the following:

- a. outreach, intake, assessment, and service planning and delivery processes;
- b. training, and supervision of program staff;
- c. review of immediate and ongoing risks related to service delivery; and
- d. consumer satisfaction.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

**Related:** PA-RPM 2.03, PA-RTX 7.04, PA-GLS 13.05

**Interpretation:** For child and family services agencies, implementation of PA-PQI 4.03 should include an examination of relevant systemic factors assessed by the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs).

**Note:** Implementation of PA-PQI 4.03 requires that the program conduct periodic case reviews as outlined in PA-PQI 5 in order to assess the quality and effectiveness of service delivery practices.

### **PA-PQI 4.04**

To evaluate management and operational performance, the agency identifies and uses process and quality measures and indicators across the agency and with contracted providers, when applicable, to:

- a. strengthen performance and build capacity;
- b. measure progress toward achieving its strategic goals and objectives;
- c. evaluate operational functions that influence service delivery; and
- d. identify and mitigate risk.

**Related:** PA-HR 4

**Interpretation:** Examples of process and quality measure related to operations and management can include:

- a. efficiency in the allocation and utilization of its human and financial resources in furthering or impeding the achievement of agency objectives (PA-HR 2);
- b. effectiveness of risk prevention measures (See PA-RPM 2);
- c. staff retention/turnover and satisfaction (See PA-HR 4);
- d. the cost of delivering a unit of service as compared to similar programs (See PA-FIN 3.06)
- e. the relationship of service delivery costs to the benefits derived by persons served;
- f. achievement of budgetary objectives (PA-FIN 3);
- g. effectiveness of public education and outreach (See PA-AM 7.01); and
- h. staff fidelity to the process and quality standards set by the agency.

**Interpretation:** For child and family services agencies, implementation of PA-PQI 4.04 includes an examination of relevant systemic factors assessed by the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs).

**Interpretation:** Agencies that use contracted providers may also measure important contract oversight and system integration processes, such as:

- a. the proportion of services that are meeting defined outcomes for persons

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

served;

- b. *the proportion of services that are evidence-based or meet nationally recognized treatment guidelines developed by consensus groups;*
- c. *the integration of performance and outcomes data across the system;*
- d. *the integration and coordination of service provision processes across the system including ease of access to services;*
- e. *the effectiveness of contractor training and technical assistance efforts;*
- f. *the satisfaction of stakeholders, such as high volume referral agents (e.g., judges, court workers, schools, and law enforcement); and*
- g. *results of case reviews, including the percentage of charts in which a placement decision includes an appropriate application of clinical criteria.*

### **PA-PQI 4.05**

The PQI system enables the agency to address the findings of external review and monitoring processes, including, as applicable:

- a. licensing and other reviews related to federal, state, and local requirements;
- b. litigated third party oversight, including consent decrees;
- c. government and other funder audits;
- d. accreditation reviews; and
- e. other reviews, where appropriate.

**Interpretation:** *When agencies are involved in litigated third-party oversight, such as consent decrees, strategic plans and PQI plans (agency-wide plans or jurisdiction-specific plans) should indicate how the overall PQI system balances pursuit of compliance with the larger quality improvement agenda.*

**Interpretation:** *For child and family services agencies, the PQI system must incorporate the findings of the Child and Family Services Review and support implementation of the strategies outlined in its Program Improvement Plan.*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## (FOC) PA-PQI 5: Case Review

The agency maintains case review processes for each of its services that inform performance and quality improvement activities by evaluating:

- a. the impact of service delivery on each program's service population;
- b. the quality and effectiveness of service delivery practices; and
- c. the quality of documentation and data entry.

**NA** The agency is a network management entity.

**Note:** *The case review processes addressed in PA-PQI 5 produce aggregate qualitative and quantitative data from across each service area that can be used to evaluate the impact of the agency's service delivery practices on the outcomes of its service populations. These reviews are distinct from the case-level, supervisory review that is conducted for individual cases on a quarterly or more frequent basis to assess service plan implementation and the individual's progress towards meeting his or her service goals and desired outcomes.*

### Rating Indicators

#### **1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance**

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions; exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### **2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance**

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency performance.

#### **3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance**

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard manner.Â Â
- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.Â Â
- Capacity is at a basic level.

#### 4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.Â Â
- The agencyâ€™s observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of neglect, stagnation, or deterioration.  
*Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.Â*

### Table of Evidence

#### Self-Study Evidence

##### County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity

- Policies and/or procedures for:
  - a. Qualitative case reviews (PA-PQI 5.01, PA-PQI 5.02, PA-PQI 5.04)
  - b. Case record reviews (PA-PQI 5.03, PA-PQI 5.04)
- Qualitative case review scoring tool(s) (PA-PQI 5.01, PA-PQI 5.02, PA-PQI 5.04)
- See the case record review scoring tool in PA-RPM 7 (PA-PQI 5.03, PA-PQI 5.04)
- Sampling methodologies
- Aggregate reports from the most recent case review processes (PA-PQI 5.01, PA-PQI 5.02, PA-PQI 5.03)

##### State Administered Agency (Regional Office)

- Aggregate reports from the most recent case review processes (PA-PQI 5.01, PA-PQI 5.02, PA-PQI 5.03)

#### On-Site Evidence

All Agencies

- Results of external case record audits, if applicable.

#### On-Site Activities

All Agencies

- Interview:
  - a. PQI staff
  - b. Relevant staff

#### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.





## Performance and Quality Improvement

### **PA-PQI 5.01**

At least annually, qualitative case reviews within each service area evaluate the impact of service delivery on the outcomes of individuals and families served by examining:

- a. the quality and effectiveness of services provided; and
- b. outcomes for individuals and families served.

**Interpretation:** *Qualitative case reviews monitor the quality and effectiveness of services provided by evaluating the following, as appropriate to the program:*

- a. *safety, well-being, and/or progress of the individual or family;*
- b. *timeliness and comprehensiveness of the completed assessment;*
- c. *appropriateness of the service plan and related service decisions for the individual or family;*
- d. *family engagement;*
- e. *collaboration with external service provider(s);*
- f. *achievement of service goals; and*
- g. *level to which service implementation and results are being monitored, evaluated, and modified.*

**Interpretation:** *Qualitative data obtained from case reviews (PA-PQI 5.01) can provide greater insight into the underlying practices causing a change in the quantitative data (PA-PQI 5.03). Conversely, the quantitative data can be used to determine the scope or breadth of a practice concern (e.g. system wide, regional, worker, etc.). As such, both qualitative and quantitative data have a critical role to play in any effective PQI system.*

**Research Note:** *Some public agencies have successfully involved frontline staff and supervisors from other regions and/or sites and various community partners in qualitative case reviews. Agencies that have experience with this approach report that such involvement of various stakeholders provides a unique learning opportunity for personnel, the agency, and the service delivery system.*

**Research Note:** *The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CF SR) allows agencies to utilize the state's own case review process if it is determined to be well aligned with the CF SR On-Site Review Instrument.*

### **PA-PQI 5.02**

Annual, qualitative case reviews include case-specific interviews with persons served, workers, and other stakeholders involved with the case.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

### **PA-PQI 5.03**

Quarterly reviews of case records evaluate the presence, timeliness, clarity, quality, continuity, and completeness of required documents.

**Note:** *The case record review scoring tool should reflect the standards in PA-RPM 7: Case Records as well as applicable regulatory and funding requirements. See PA-RPM 7.08 for more information on the case record review scoring tool.*

### **PA-PQI 5.04**

Case review processes include:

- a. staff at all levels of the agency including frontline staff;
- b. a stratified, random sample of both open and closed cases;
- c. uniform scoring tools to ensure consistency and permit comparison of information;
- d. measures to minimize conflict of interest such as ensuring that reviewers do not review cases in which they have been directly involved as a provider, supervisor, or consultant;
- e. measures to maintain process integrity such as third party quality assurance checks; and
- f. mechanisms to address safety concerns identified in cases under review.

**Interpretation:** *Sampling: The chosen sample must reflect all of an agency's regions and/or sites, each of its programs and service areas, and the various types of record reviews the agency conducts. Agencies should choose a sampling method that satisfies any applicable regulatory requirements and is appropriate to their size and agency structure.*

*Closed cases: COA does not define the percentage of closed cases that must be included in the sample. The majority of cases the agency reviews should be open, but the agencies must include a sample of closed cases to evaluate documentation related to discharge planning, case closing, and aftercare.*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## **(FOC) PA-PQI 6: Gathering Data and Communicating Information**

The agency's data management practices facilitate the collection, analysis, communication and interpretation of data.

**Related:** PA-CFS 5.11

### **Rating Indicators**

#### **1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance**

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions: exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### **2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance**

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency performance.

#### **3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance**

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.
- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard manner.
- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.
- Capacity is at a basic level.

#### **4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance**

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.
- The agency's observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

neglect, stagnation, or deterioration.  
Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.Â

## **Table of Evidence**

### **Self-Study Evidence** **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- Policies and/or procedures for:
    - a. Maintaining and accessing PQI data (PA-PQI 6.01)
    - b. Data management (PA-PQI 6.02)
    - c. Reviewing and aggregating data (PA-PQI 6.03)
  - Aggregate data reports and additional summary documents (e.g., performance dashboards, reports of gains made against goals, annual scorecards, etc.) (PA-PQI 6.04)
  - Documentation of stakeholder review and discussion of PQI results, including meeting minutes and agendas for the previous 3 meetings (PA-PQI 6.05)
  - Documentation of reporting to:
    - a. staff, oversight entities, and stakeholders at least annually (PA-PQI 6.06)
    - b. the public (PA-PQI 6.07)
- ### **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**
- Aggregate data reports and additional summary documents (e.g., performance dashboards, reports of gains made against goals, annual scorecards, etc.) (PA-PQI 6.04)
  - Documentation of stakeholder review and discussion of PQI results, including meeting minutes and agendas for the previous 3 meetings (PA-PQI 6.05)
  - Documentation of reporting to:
    - a. staff, oversight entities, and stakeholders at least annually (PA-PQI 6.06)
    - b. the public (PA-PQI 6.07)

### **On-Site Evidence** **All Agencies**

- See PQI meeting minutes in PA-PQI 1

### **On-Site Activities** **All Agencies**

- Interview:
  - a. PQI staff
  - b. Relevant staff
- Review of information systems functioning regarding collecting, analyzing, and communicating data

## **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## **PA-PQI 6.01**

The agency's information systems ensure timely access to PQI data in order to support informed decision-making at the worker, program, region/community, agency, and system level.

**Note:** *The need for, and use of, technology related to maintenance of PQI data should be addressed in the agency's written technology and information management plan as described in PA-RPM 5.01.*

**Note:** *Please see PA-RPM 5 for more detailed information on the information systems.*

## **PA-PQI 6.02**

Data is collected and maintained in a manner that allows for:

- a. tracking and monitoring identified measures;
- b. identifying patterns and trends;
- c. comparing performance over time; and
- d. comparing data against the results of internal or external targets or benchmarks, when appropriate.

**Research Note:** *While research has identified significant racial and ethnic outcome disparities in public child welfare, inconsistent collection of race and ethnicity data often impedes analysis at the state and local level. As such, agency reporting systems should collect data on race and ethnicity and have the capacity to track and identify racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes and access to services for children and families.*

## **PA-PQI 6.03**

Procedures for collecting, reviewing and aggregating data:

- a. ensure data integrity and reliability;
- b. engage staff at all levels of the agency, including frontline staff; and
- c. facilitate the development of useable reports for analysis and interpretation.

## **PA-PQI 6.04**

Summary reports of PQI information:

## **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- a. are distributed in a timeframe and format that facilitates review, analysis, interpretation, and timely corrective action;
- b. reflect multiple data sources, when appropriate, including quantitative and qualitative data and formal and informal information gathered;
- c. enable the comparison of data against the results of similar programs, internal or external benchmarks, etc.; and
- d. facilitate compliance with regulatory data reporting requirements.

**Interpretation:** *The content and format of PQI summary reports should take into account the needs of regional and/or local offices to ensure the data is presented in a useful way that facilitates corrective action at the worker and program level.*

**Interpretation:** *In regard to element (a), timely corrective action includes ensuring information is distributed early enough that regional and local offices can evaluate and implement changes prior to the next round of internal or external reviews. See PA-PQI 4.05 for more information on incorporating the findings of external review processes into the PQI system.*

*In regard to element (d), in addition to the data itself, child and family services agencies participating in the Child and Family Services Reviews must be prepared to provide the federal government with:*

- a. *the data source;*
- b. *the methodology for calculating or analyzing the data;*
- c. *the scope of the data (i.e. geographic, population, etc.);*
- d. *the time period applicable to the data;*
- e. *information pertaining to the completeness, accuracy and reliability of the data; and*
- f. *other known limitations of the data.*

**Research Note:** *Graphic presentation of data is very useful in communicating results of PQI activities. Data visualization techniques can facilitate understanding of complex information and reveal underlying patterns and relationships within the data that may otherwise go unnoticed.*

### **PA-PQI 6.05**

The agency has mechanisms for sharing and reviewing findings with staff and stakeholders including discussion of:

- a. areas of strength and quality practice;
- b. areas for improvement; and

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- c. how to prioritize targeted areas, identify interventions, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions over time.

**Interpretation:** *In order to engage in meaningful discussions about the data being collected, agencies need to decide how results will be communicated to staff and stakeholders. Agencies can start by determining who needs what data, with what frequency, and how best to share the information. Methods for sharing findings include:*

- a. *performance dashboards, report cards, or other types of summary reports;*
- b. *using monthly reports of key service delivery outcomes in staff supervision activities;*
- c. *conducting focus groups and presentations at community meetings;*
- d. *soliciting feedback via interviews or surveys;*
- e. *providing quarterly reports to the oversight entities, stakeholder advisory groups, and leaders on important data related to key operations and management functions; and*
- f. *quality review activities that engage community providers.*

### **PA-PQI 6.06**

The agency has a mechanism for reporting, at least annually, to oversight entities, stakeholders, and staff on:

- a. key PQI activities that are ongoing, have been resolved, or that need further intervention;
- b. issues that require continued monitoring within the PQI system; and
- c. PQI priorities and goals for the coming year.

### **PA-PQI 6.07**

The agency shares PQI information with the public as part of its public outreach and education strategy.

**Note:** *See PA-AM 7.01 for more information on developing a public outreach and education strategy.*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## PA-PQI 7: Transforming Information into Action

The agency acts on findings at the worker, program, region/community, agency, and system level in order to build capacity, improve quality, and positively impact outcomes for persons served.

**Interpretation:** *Information generated by the PQI system serves as evidence for identifying interventions in relation to:*

- a. *fulfilling the mission and meeting legal mandates;*
- b. *monitoring progress toward strategic plans and long-term goals;*
- c. *managing programs and operations efficiently and effectively;*
- d. *supporting direct service staff to meet program goals, make informed case-level decisions, and have a positive impact on persons served; and*
- e. *meeting regulatory requirements.*

### Rating Indicators

#### 1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions: exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.
- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard manner.
- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.





# Performance and Quality Improvement

- Capacity is at a basic level.

## 4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.Â Â
- The agencyâ€™s observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of neglect, stagnation, or deterioration.  
*Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.Â*

### Table of Evidence

#### **Self-Study Evidence** **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- Current agency and/or program improvement plans (PA-PQI 7.02)
- Documentation of:
  - a. Decisions made at the agency level based on PQI findings (Correct actions, initiatives, etc.) (PA-PQI 7.01)
  - b. Tracking the impact of decisions made (data reports that link to areas named in annual reports, etc.) (PA-PQI 7.03)

#### **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**

- Current regional and/or program improvement plans (PA-PQI 7.02)
- Documentation of:
  - a. Decisions made at the worker, program, and regional level based on findings (Corrective actions, initiatives, etc.) (PA-PQI 7.01)
  - b. Tracking the impact of decisions made (data reports that link to areas named in PIP, annual reports, etc.) (PA-PQI 7.03)

#### **On-Site Evidence** **All Agencies**

- See leadership team, management, and staff meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes in PA-PQI 1 (PA-PQI 7.04)

#### **On-Site Activities** **All Agencies**

- Interview:
  - a. PQI staff
  - b. Staff at all levels
  - c. External stakeholder groups

### PA-PQI 7.01

The agency works with relevant partners, including contracted providers

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

when applicable, to take action at the worker, program, region/community, agency, and system level based on PQI findings and feedback, which may include:

- a. developing solutions;
- b. replicating good practice;
- c. recognizing and motivating staff;
- d. updating staff training and other professional development activities;
- e. improving organizational systems, processes, policies, and procedures;  
and
- f. eliminating or reducing identified problems.

**Interpretation:** *State administered agencies should manage a statewide and regional performance improvement action planning process in order to make system-wide improvement and also allow for targeted improvement activities based on regional context.* **Interpretation:** *Improvement Plans should be implemented when issues have been identified that will involve ongoing effort and monitoring. Improvement Plans formally lay out the actions that will be taken to address areas in need of improvement that are identified by staff and stakeholders as crucial to meeting the agency's goals and delivering quality services. Improvement plans should be implemented when it is necessary to monitor and address the issue over time.*

### **PA-PQI 7.02**

The agency develops improvement plans when issues have been identified that will involve coordinated and ongoing activities and monitoring.

**Interpretation:** *Improvement plans formally lay out the actions that will be taken to address areas in need of improvement that are identified by staff and stakeholders as crucial to meeting the agency's goals and delivering quality services. Improvement plans should be implemented when it is necessary to monitor and address the issue over time.*

**Interpretation:** *State-administered agencies should manage a statewide and regional performance improvement action planning process in order to take system-wide action and also allow for targeted PQI activities based on regional context.*

### **PA-PQI 7.03**

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

The agency monitors the effectiveness of interventions at the worker, program, region/community, agency, and system level and adjusts interventions as needed.

### **PA-PQI 7.04**

Agency leaders, senior managers, program directors, and supervisors:

- a. keep PQI on the agenda of management and staff meetings;
- b. integrate data discussions and outcomes monitoring into case reviews, supervision, performance review, and contract monitoring;
- c. regularly evaluate the need for and uses of data at the worker, program, region/community, agency, and system level; and
- d. evaluate the PQI infrastructure, processes, and procedures.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## PA-PQI 8: Contracting Practices

The agency enters into contracts as a purchaser of social and human services with due regard for practices that promote positive service recipient outcomes and efficient use of resources.

**Related:** PA-ETH 2.02, PA-FKC 11.08, PA-CFS 20.06

**Interpretation:** *The standards in PA-PQI 8 apply to all contracts entered into by the agency in which it acts as a purchaser of social and human services, including contracts with provider organizations as well as contracts with independent contractors.*

**NA** State-administered agency regional office

**Note:** *For additional guidance, please see [Applicability of COA Standards to Contracts and Non-contractual Service Agreements - Private, Public, Canadian](#) or [Applicability of COA Standards to Contracts and Non-contractual Service Agreements - Network](#).*

### Rating Indicators

#### 1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions; exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.
- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard

### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

manner.Â Â

- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.Â Â
- Capacity is at a basic level.

#### 4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.Â Â
- The agencyâ€™s observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of neglect, stagnation, or deterioration.  
*Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.Â*

### Table of Evidence

#### Self-Study Evidence

##### **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- Contracting and procurement policies, procedures, and applicable regulations
  - List of social and human service contracts
  - Sample social and human service contracts (3)
- ##### **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**
- Evaluated at the Central Office Only

#### On-Site Evidence

##### **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- Additional Social and human service contracts
- ##### **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**
- Evaluated at the Central Office only

#### On-Site Activities

##### **County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office), or other Public Entity**

- Interview:
    - Agency head
    - Contract manager(s)
    - Contracted providers, including independent contractors
- ##### **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**
- Evaluated at the Central Office only

### PA-PQI 8.01

The agency is aware of and engaged in the procurement process to the

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

greatest extent possible given applicable state law or regulation.

### **PA-PQI 8.02**

The pursuit of contracts is:

- a. consistent with the agency's mission and practice model;
- b. aligned with, and supportive of, the agency's service array and resource development goals; and
- c. responsive to the identified needs and desired outcomes of persons served.

**Related:** PA-OTP 9.01

**Note:** See also PA-AM 6 for more information on service array and resource development.

### **PA-PQI 8.03**

The agency:

- a. establishes a system of standardized contracting practices; and
- b. conducts due diligence in contracting activities, including review of possible risks.

### **PA-PQI 8.04**

The agency has a process for verifying that prospective contractors:

- a. have sufficient human and financial resources to fulfill the terms of the contract;
- b. are licensed or otherwise legally authorized to provide the contracted services;
- c. employ appropriately qualified staff; and
- d. have a history of satisfactory performance under previous contracts with the agency, as applicable.

**Interpretation:** *The agency should have a process for verifying the qualifications of independent contractors or personnel employed by contracted providers, including confirmation that providers:*

- a. possess relevant licenses and/or credentials;
- b. have the desired expertise and competencies for the contracted service,

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- including cultural responsiveness and sufficient experience delivering services to the population served; and*
- c. *receive appropriate supervision.*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



# Performance and Quality Improvement

## PA-PQI 9: Contract Monitoring and Quality Improvement

The agency monitors, evaluates, and enhances the quality and effectiveness of social and human services purchased from other provider organizations or independent contractors.

**Related:** PA-EAP 4

**Interpretation:** *Contracting of services does not relieve the public agency of their responsibility to ensure that individuals and families are receiving high quality, effective services. Contract monitoring practices ensure contracted providers are in compliance with applicable law and regulation, providing high quality services, and are achieving desired outcomes. For networks, PA-PQI 9 applies to services purchased from all service providers, including owner and partner organizations, and individual practitioners, if applicable.*

**Interpretation:** *Public agencies must have a well-defined monitoring process that is laid out in its contract monitoring procedures. For state-administered agencies, this includes identifying the role of regional offices in implementing each of the contract monitoring and quality improvement activities identified in PA-PQI 9. For example, when case responsibility is shared by the regional office and the contractor or when the contract originates at the regional office, it may be appropriate for the region to be more directly involved in contractor monitoring and quality improvement.*

**Note:** *For additional guidance, please see [Applicability of COA Standards to Contracts and Non-contractual Service Agreements - Private, Public, Canadian](#) or [Applicability of COA Standards to Contracts and Non-contractual Service Agreements - Network](#).*

### Rating Indicators

#### 1) Full Implementation, Outstanding Performance

A rating of (1) indicates that the agency's practices fully meet the standard and reflect a high level of capacity.

- All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, with rare or no exceptions: exceptions do not impact service quality or agency performance.

#### 2) Substantial Implementation, Good Performance

A rating of (2) indicates that an agency's infrastructure and practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement.

### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.





# Performance and Quality Improvement

- The majority of the standards requirements have been met and the basic framework required by the standard has been implemented.Â
- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality or agency performance.

### 3) Partial Implementation, Concerning Performance

- A rating of (3) indicates that the agency's observed infrastructure and/or practices require significant improvement.Â
- The agency has not implemented the basic framework of the standard but instead has in place only part of this framework.Â
- Omissions or exceptions to the practices outlined in the standard occur regularly, or practices are implemented in a cursory or haphazard manner.Â
- Service quality or agency functioning may be compromised.Â
- Capacity is at a basic level.

### 4) Unsatisfactory Implementation or Performance

- A rating of (4) indicates that implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all.Â
- The agency's observed administration and management infrastructure and practices are weak or non-existent; or show signs of neglect, stagnation or deterioration.  
*Please see [Rating Guidance](#) for additional rating examples.Â*

## Table of Evidence

### **Self-Study Evidence County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office) or other Public Entity**

- Contract monitoring procedures
- Sample contract monitoring plans (3) (PA-PQI 9.02)
- Contract monitoring tools and scoring mechanisms (PA-PQI 9.02)
- Information provided to contractors (PA-PQI 9.03)
- Sample contractor improvement plans (3) (PA-PQI 9.04)
- Sample contractor progress reports (3) (PA-PQI 9.04)
- A description of technical assistance resources for contracted providers (PA-PQI 9.05)
- Sample job descriptions for contract manager(s) (3) (PA-PQI 9.06)

### **State Administered Agency (Regional Office)**

- Documentation of reporting/information sharing between the region and the central office regarding the quality of services from contracted providers (PA-PQI 9.04)

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

### On-Site Evidence

#### County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office) or other Public Entity

- See social and human services contracts in PA-PQI 8 (PA-PQI 9.01)
- Additional contract monitoring plans (PA-PQI 9.02)
- Documentation of technical assistance to contracted providers (PA-PQI 9.05)
- Training curricula for contract manager(s) (PA-PQI 9.06)
- Training files, database, or personnel files that demonstrate training for contract manager(s) (PA-PQI 9.06)

#### State Administered Agency (Regional Office)

- No On-Site Evidence

### On-Site Activities

#### County/Municipality Administered Agency, State Administered Agency (Central Office) or other Public Entity

- Interview:
  - a. Agency head
  - b. In-house counsel
  - c. Contract manager(s)
  - d. PQI personnel
  - e. Contracted providers
- Network only interview:
  - a. Provider CEO/CFO
  - b. Provider contract manager(s)

#### State Administered Agency (Regional Office)

- Interview:
  - a. Agency leadership
  - b. PQI personnel
  - c. Contracted providers

### PA-PQI 9.01

Written contracts contain all significant terms and conditions in accordance with applicable law.

**Interpretation:** "Significant terms" can include, but are not limited to:

- a. roles and responsibilities of participating agencies;
- b. services to be provided;
- c. service authorization, including eligibility criteria;
- d. provisions and/or requirements for provider training and technical assistance, as necessary;
- e. duration of contract, including delineation of follow-up services;
- f. policies and procedures for sharing information, including access to case

### Purpose

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

*record provisions;*

- g. *methods for resolving disputes;*
- h. *utilization management protocols;*
- i. *performance and quality improvement responsibilities;*
- j. *a plan and procedure for timely payment, and consequences for failure to pay;*
- k. *documentation necessary for, and means of reporting to, funding or oversight bodies;*
- l. *required levels of insurance; and*
- m. *conditions for termination of the contract.*

### **PA-PQI 9.02**

The agency integrates contract monitoring into its performance and quality improvement activities by developing a plan for monitoring contractor progress that:

- a. is developed in partnership with the provider and tailored to the service being provided;
- b. establishes goals and performance measures for service quality, consumer satisfaction, and outcomes;
- c. specifies monitoring activities including frequency and responsible parties;
- d. establishes specific requirements for provider participation in performance and quality improvement activities including qualitative and quantitative data reporting and corrective action;
- e. outlines how performance data will be monitored and reported out ; and
- f. establishes mechanisms for ongoing, regular communication between the public agency and the contracted provider.

**Interpretation:** *In regards to element (d), the collection, analysis, and distribution of contract monitoring data should be aligned with the agency's performance and quality improvement system ensuring that incoming data is used to inform continuous quality improvement of purchased services. In regard to element (e), in addition to sharing findings with relevant staff within the public and private agency, the agency may also wish to tailor reports for additional stakeholder groups that have an impact on or vested interest in performance achievement such as the public, courts, provider networks, citizen review boards, and legislators.*

**Interpretation:** *Examples of monitoring activities include, but are not limited to:*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

- a. review of performance reports from contracted providers to track progress and identify trends/concerns;
- b. case reviews;
- c. meetings; and
- d. visits to the program.

### **PA-PQI 9.03**

Contracted providers receive information on:

- a. agency mission, principles, practice model and system-wide performance indicators;
- b. relevant service-delivery policies and procedures;
- c. relevant federal and state requirements;
- d. technical assistance procedures;
- e. the conflict resolution and provider appeal process; and
- f. other information necessary to establish consistent practice and policy implementation.

### **PA-PQI 9.04**

Systems are in place to collect and respond to contractor performance concerns and, when areas of concern are identified, the agency:

- a. develops an improvement plan in conjunction with the contractor;
- b. ensures contractor follow-up and remediation; and
- c. terminates contracts if contractors do not comply with improvement action/remediation plans.

**Interpretation:** *The agency must be able to demonstrate that it is responsive to concerns identified by public agency staff at all levels, including frontline staff and their supervisors.*

### **PA-PQI 9.05**

Contracted providers receive technical assistance, as needed, to:

- a. use the information management system for data reporting;
- b. understand how data will be used to track performance;
- c. ensure service continuity and quality; and
- d. support implementation of system-wide practice initiatives.

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.



## Performance and Quality Improvement

### **PA-PQI 9.06**

The agency assigns qualified personnel to oversee and monitor contracts and contract managers receive training and supervision on:

- a. facilitating partnership and collaboration;
- b. understanding and using data collection and monitoring tools;
- c. the relationship between the PQI system, contract monitoring, and quality service delivery;
- d. report writing; and
- e. contract requirements.

**Interpretation:** *The agency assigns each contract to a specific, qualified individual or individuals who are charged with monitoring the progress and outcomes of each service contract in accordance with an established monitoring plan (see PA-PQI 9.02). When monitoring responsibilities are spread across divisions, personnel should work collaboratively to ensure their efforts are aligned, findings are shared, and duplication of effort is minimized.*

### **Purpose**

An agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement system effectively engages staff, persons served, and other stakeholders in advancing the agency's mission and achieving strategic goals through continuous, integrated, data-driven efforts to improve service delivery and administrative practice.