

## Pennsylvania's Approach to Continuous Quality Improvement

Implementing change at the local level is critical to the achievement of positive outcomes for children, youth and families, particularly in a state-supervised and county-administered state. Therefore, Pennsylvania has established a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to support the achievement of these improved outcomes.

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is the cyclical process of identifying, interpreting, and analyzing strengths and concerns and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. One component of Pennsylvania's CQI effort includes the opportunity to conduct in-depth case reviews, also known as Quality Service Reviews (QSRs). QSRs provide an opportunity to learn more about what is working and what needs improvement. During QSRs, reviewers gather feedback from those providing and receiving services in the Child Welfare System. Once feedback is gathered, it is evaluated with best practice standards in mind. Then, case specific and systemic recommendations are made. Further root cause analysis is conducted and strategies to improve the system are developed, implemented and monitored.

### What did you like most about the Quality Service Review Process?

"The ability to share my cases with professionals who may better the lives of children in care. The interview was handled well and easily accomplished. The process was smooth and successful!"

- *Court Appointed Special Advocate*

"I felt heard with everything that was said and notes were taken."

- *Family Member*

"I appreciated that the interviewer seemed genuine and truly invested in ultimately helping these families—not simply gathering statistics or information."

- *Child Welfare Professional*

"We were able to be honest with the reviewers about what we liked and did not like about the direction in which the case was going."

- *Family Member*

"It was a tiring process but very rewarding. I would do it again."

- *QSR Reviewer*

"The discussion was open and I was able to express all the positives I have seen and the negatives."

- *Parent's Attorney*

"I was able to talk freely about my concerns."

- *Biological Parent*

"This is a rewarding experience and provides us with an opportunity to be part of social change."

- *Service Partner*

## PENNSYLVANIA'S CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI) EFFORT

### Becoming a Quality Service Review (QSR) Reviewer



"This was an excellent experience. I felt very welcomed by the county agency, and felt like they were very open to the outcomes."

- *QSR Reviewer*

## QSR Reviewers

There will be a pair of reviewers identified for each case that is to be reviewed as part of the QSR. Each pair of reviewers will include a “local” reviewer (including but not limited to county agency staff and any local system partner) and a “state” reviewer (including but not limited to representatives from statewide key stakeholder groups).

To be a QSR Reviewer, you must commit to the process and the tasks at hand; therefore, QSR reviewers are advised to ensure that their regular job responsibilities are covered so that their focus can remain on the entire QSR process. To be a QSR reviewer, an individual agrees to:

- Participate in a two-day training or refresher training to be a certified QSR reviewer.  
NOTE: Once a reviewer attends the QSR training they are certified to be a reviewer, but they will be asked to be ‘refreshed’ each round by attending a QSR refresher training.
- Travel to a county to participate in the onsite QSR in which a QSR review team:
  - ◆ Conducts a case file review - an overview of the actual case record;
  - ◆ Explains the QSR process to interview participants involved in the child/youth/family’s case and then interviews key players involved in the child/youth/family’s case;  
NOTE: Interviews may go into the evening hours to accommodate family’s schedules
  - ◆ Identifies and applies a range of interview techniques, balancing the need for gathering information while still allowing interviewees to tell their story;
  - ◆ Uses a strength-based, culturally competent approach during interactions with agency staff, interview participants, peer reviewers, and the QSR site leads;
  - ◆ Scores a case using a 6-point scale that measures child/youth/family outcomes as well as quality practice;
  - ◆ Provides feedback to caseworker (and supervisor) assigned to the child/youth/family’s case;
  - ◆ Verbally shares information gathered during the review process and provides recommendations at a debriefing session (with fellow reviewers); and
  - ◆ Develops a written case story that includes findings and recommendations that outline how to improve the outcomes for the child/youth and his/her family as well as any suggestions to improve the child welfare system.
- *OPTIONAL: Attending an Exit Conference (with QSR reviewers, county agency staff, and key stakeholders) and a Next Steps meeting where the findings from the onsite QSR are shared and next steps to improve the local child welfare system are discussed. (These meetings are optional, but QSR reviewers are encouraged to attend.)*

## Volunteers Needed

This is a voluntary commitment; however, if you are representing an agency, your agency may consider this part of your work. As a result, reviewers are often able to be reimbursed by the agency/organization for their role as a QSR reviewer. It is important to note that individuals who commit to this process are doing so in lieu of their regular job responsibilities. Therefore, they are to be present as a QSR reviewer and not available to attend to other work responsibilities during the course of the onsite QSR.

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.” - M.K Gandhi

**Are you ready to sign up to be a QSR reviewer?**

Fill out the application here:

[www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/qsr-app.asp](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/qsr-app.asp)

**Do you have further questions?**

Please contact us at:

[qsreview@pitt.edu](mailto:qsreview@pitt.edu) or  
717-795-9048