



Capacity Building  
CENTER FOR STATES

# CQI Cycle of Learning and Improvement Worksheet

Step	Key Considerations	Comment	If Not Known, Record Steps Needed to Address Each Area. Identify Who Needs to Do What by When.	Record Final Answer
<p><b>1. Identify and understand the problem.</b></p> <p><i>For related training material, see Unit 3 (“Identifying and Understanding the Problem”) of the CQI Training Academy.</i></p>	<p>A. What should the agency change based on the CQI self-assessment? (Prioritize based on subdomain and area summaries.)</p>	<p>What outcome will be different when the system works as you think it should?</p>		
	<p>B. How do you measure this phenomenon?</p>	<p>Is this phenomenon measured accurately?</p>		
	<p>C. Once you have agreed on the measure, how much variation do you see across your agency?</p>	<p>Does everyone understand that you are measuring precisely this, and is there agreement and support for the indicators or measures?</p>		
	<p>D. Why is the agency getting the performance that it is seeing? What are the root causes of the problem it wants to address?</p>	<p>Is everyone moving in the same direction (systemic issue)? Is there much variation across managers, supervisors, and workers? In short, does something need to change across the whole agency, or is the issue office-, unit-, or worker-specific? At this point, it does not matter WHY, only what is.</p>		

Step	Key Considerations	Comment	If Not Known, Record Steps Needed to Address Each Area. Identify Who Needs to Do What by When.	Record Final Answer
		<p>It is key to understand why <b><i>before you decide to change anything</i></b>. Identify those elements that are within your control and those that are not.</p> <p>Understand the root causes of the problem rather than only the symptoms. You may need multiple sources of information to understand the root causes.</p> <p>Understand how the dimensions of capacity (i.e., resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership) relate to the problem you want to address.</p>		
<p><b>2. Research the solution.</b></p> <p><i>For related training material, see Unit 4 (“Researching Solutions”) of the CQI Training Academy.</i></p>	<p>A. Compile a description of possible/reasonable solutions for consideration.</p>	<p>Search for evidence-based or evidence-informed solutions. In the absence of evidence-based/informed solutions, identify other possible solutions.</p>		

Step	Key Considerations	Comment	If Not Known, Record Steps Needed to Address Each Area. Identify Who Needs to Do What by When.	Record Final Answer
<p><b>3. Develop the theory of change (ToC).</b></p> <p><i>For related training material, see Unit 4 (“Researching Solutions”), Module 2 (“Building a Theory of Change”), of the CQI Training Academy.</i></p>	<p>A. Identify a clear theoretical link between the root causes of the problem and the identification of a solution.</p>	<p>A ToC states a hypothesis for achieving an outcome intended to address identified problems and the needs of the target population. If you implement a given solution, will it reasonably lead to change in the problem and improved performance?</p>		
	<p>B. Specify steps in the change process that must occur to achieve better outcomes.</p>	<p>A ToC identifies steps that need to be taken to achieve identified outcomes.</p>		
	<p>C. Identify measures for each step in the change process.</p>	<p>These measures will help you know if you are achieving the ToC steps.</p>		
<p><b>4. Adapt or develop the solution.</b></p> <p><i>For related training material, see Unit 4 (“Researching Solutions”), Module 3 (“Adapting or Developing Solutions”), of the CQI Training Academy.</i></p>	<p>A. In light of the agency’s research and ToC, what solution fits within its scope of control and is ready for the agency to take steps to implement? Will the agency need to adapt an existing solution or develop a new solution?</p>	<p>What will you do over how long a period of time to achieve what kind of change? (Specificity is needed.)</p>		

Step	Key Considerations	Comment	If Not Known, Record Steps Needed to Address Each Area. Identify Who Needs to Do What by When.	Record Final Answer
	B. What will you look at to know if you are making a difference/gaining ground?	Be specific and upfront about how you will track progress (process measures, interviews, peer reviews, case readings, etc.). You may benefit from differentiating between measures developed for the ToC, specific implementation benchmarks/measures regarding implementation of the solution, and outcome measures. Note that you might not yet see change in outcomes as these often take a longer time to show change. Again, be specific.		
<p><b>5. Implement the solution.</b></p> <p><i>For related training material, see Unit 5 (“Implementing Solutions”) and Unit 7 (“Taking Action to Drive Implementation”) of the CQI Training Academy.</i></p>	A. Set up a work plan.	Who will do what to whom and when? Who will confirm that it is happening? How often will this be reported? Does the agency have an implementation teaming structure in place to make the work plan happen?		

Step	Key Considerations	Comment	If Not Known, Record Steps Needed to Address Each Area. Identify Who Needs to Do What by When.	Record Final Answer
	B. Address necessary supports/readiness to implement the solution.	Do you need to develop fidelity measures? How will you engage necessary stakeholders? Develop a monitoring plan with baseline performance.		
<p><b>6. Monitor and assess the solution.</b></p> <p><i>For related training, see Unit 3 (“Leading With Data”) and Unit 7 (“Data Analysis of the CQI Intensive Training Units”). Also see Unit 6 (“Monitoring and Assessment of Solutions”) of the CQI Training Academy.</i></p>	A. Track relentlessly. (Establish a firm schedule for monitoring, including who participates.)	This should be the subject (at least in part) of every agency meeting at the appropriate level. Managers and supervisors should have a role in including this in relevant discussions with individual workers, etc. What is management’s expectation? Is there fidelity to the solution being implemented?		
	B. Formally report out what you’ve learned.	Tell your staff what you learned: what worked, what did not work, what has changed in your thinking, and what you would like to do next—that is, return to Step 1.		

