

Self-Assessment of Continuous Quality Improvement

June 2022

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is a process for identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions to address those problems. As SRAE grant recipients, you are likely already practicing some CQI-related principles and practices. The purpose of this assessment is to help you further understand what processes your organization has in place to support CQI and what processes you can add or strengthen.

The self-assessment is organized into five factors that support strong CQI practices:

- Improvement mindset and culture
- Program monitoring
- Processes for managing feedback from clients, staff, and partners
- Skills to support effective CQI
- Components of improvement work that are relevant across all CQI approaches

Before you begin, here are some areas of consideration:

Gathering information for the self-assessment

- *Gather input from a range of staff as you complete the self-assessment.*
- *Consider how to gather honest feedback from staff.* You could reflect together during a staff meeting and gather thoughts verbally. If staff are hesitant to share honest feedback, gather feedback anonymously.

Considering appropriate ratings for your program

- Select “Does not describe us” when your program does not adhere to a practice or principle.
- Select “Just getting started” if you have some elements related to a practice but think your program could do more. For example, for the statement “We review and monitor activities and outcomes,” you might select this rating if the program reviews outcomes twice a year while putting together grant reports but does not examine key outcomes outside of those instances.
- Select “Almost there” if you feel you have some strong practices but still want to improve. For example, for the statement “We develop and test strategies that are informed by research, data, and user experiences,” you might select this rating if the program tests improvement strategies to address challenges but rarely consults sources other than staff.
- Select “Describes us well” if you believe your program has an established practice.

Next steps after completing this assessment

- If you rate a practice as “Describes us well,” think about the next step for building on the practice. For example, if you’re strong in gathering stakeholder feedback, are you also making sure to continuously reflect on the feedback and plan changes?
- For quick wins in building CQI capacity, consider focusing first on how to strengthen or expand on what you’re doing, whether you’re just getting started, almost there, or doing something well.

A. Improvement mindset and culture

	Does not describe us	Just getting started	Almost there	Describes us well
1. We are always seeking to improve our practices.				
2. We have an organizational culture that supports trying new things and learning from failure.				
3. Our staff are comfortable making suggestions for improvement.				
4. We have staff dedicated to CQI efforts (such as a CQI team).				
5. We have resources dedicated to CQI efforts (such as training to support CQI or on data collection).				

What steps can your team take to improve in some of these areas?

Resources:

- SRAE CQI module: [Module 2 – Defining your core CQI team](#)
- SRAE webinar: [Building a Learning Culture](#)

B. Program monitoring

	Does not describe us	Just getting started	Almost there	Describes us well
1. We track activities (what we do) and outcomes (what we hope to achieve) that align with our program logic model.				
2. We review and monitor activities and outcomes that are included in our program logic model on an ongoing and regular basis.				
3. We review activities and outcomes to inform program improvement beyond reporting.				
4. We have systems and processes for securely collecting, storing, and using data.				
5. Staff understand the importance of using data for learning.				
6. Staff have clear expectations for how and when to input and update data.				
7. We make data reports broadly accessible to staff (such as sharing reports or discussing during meetings).				

What steps can your team take to improve in some of these areas?

Resource:

- SRAE CQI module: [Module 1 – Introduction to Continuous Quality Improvement \(CQI\)](#)

C. Processes for managing feedback from clients, staff, and partners

	Does not describe us	Just getting started	Almost there	Describes us well
1. We administer feedback surveys, conduct interviews, or engage in other feedback opportunities with key people involved with our program, such as clients, staff, or partners, to learn about their experiences.				
2. We share feedback data with key people involved with our program, such as clients, staff, or partners, as appropriate, so they can see the data and help interpret what we learn.				
3. We use feedback to inform programming changes or adaptations.				

What steps can your team take to improve in some of these areas?

Resources:

- Tool: [Sample feedback survey](#)
- SRAE webinar: [Measurement in CQI](#)

D. Skills to support effective CQI

	Does not describe us	Just getting started	Almost there	Describes us well
1. We have someone on our team (internal or external) with skills to design a feedback survey, interview or focus group guide, or both.				
2. We have someone on our team (internal or external) with skills to carry out new data collection (such as conducting a focus group with youth).				
3. We have someone on our team (internal or external) with skills to analyze and interpret different types of data (for example, survey data, administrative data, interview transcripts).				

What steps can your team take to improve in some of these areas?

Resources:

- SRAE CQI module: [Module 9 – Data collection and analysis plan](#)
- SRAE CQI module: [Appendix A – Tips and considerations for data collection to support improvement](#)

E. Components of improvement work

	Does not describe us	Just getting started	Almost there	Describes us well
1. We set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) improvement goals to be clear about what we hope to achieve.				
2. We identify or develop benchmarks to track progress toward improvement goals.				
3. We try to get to the bottom of a problem and understand its root causes before we start developing strategies to solve the problem.				
4. We develop and test solutions that are informed by research, data, and user experiences.				
5. We begin a change process on a small scale before implementing the change program wide or long term.				
6. When trying out a change, we collect feedback to learn how it is working.				
7. When piloting a solution, or testing it on a small scale, we focus on the implementation of the solution (how it was carried out) rather than just outcomes (end results).				

What steps can your team take to improve in some of these areas?

Resources:

- SRAE CQI modules: [Modules 3–10](#) (Defining the challenge; Improvement a SMART goal, Understanding root causes; Improvement strategies and rationale; Road testing; Learning questions; Data collection and analysis plan; Assessments and reflection questions)
- SRAE webinar: [Foundations of CQI](#)

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