

NEVADA

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK



State of Nevada
Department of Human Resources
Division of Child and Family Services

April 2005

Revised: July 25, 2005
Revised: March 28, 2006

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Purpose

The purpose of Nevada's quality improvement system is, first and foremost, improve outcomes for children and families. To this end, it is a system designed to ensure that child welfare services are delivered in accordance with best practice standards and State and Federal requirements. Furthermore, it is a system that focuses on continuous quality improvement - while being child-centered, community-oriented, and strengths-based. The quality improvement system was designed as a result of the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). It was designed to measure performance indicators that were found not in substantial conformity during Nevada's 2004 Federal Child and Family Services Review.

The primary means of measuring outcomes in Nevada will be through the use of a qualitative case review process. This review process is modeled after the Federal child and family services on-site review process. Nevada's Program Improvement Plan (PIP) states that the Quality Improvement Office "will develop a comprehensive case review instrument with Region IX input in accordance with CFSR outcomes." (PIP 31.3.2)

Functional and Organizational Structure

Nevada's child protective and child welfare services systems have historically functioned in a unique "bifurcated" manner. Nevada has 17 counties, two of which possess population bases of over 100,000 persons: Washoe (Reno/Sparks) and Clark County (Las Vegas/Henderson/North Las Vegas). Historically, Washoe and Clark Counties supervised and administered child protective services, while the State supervised and administered foster care and adoption services, as well as higher levels of care (therapeutic foster care, group/residential care, and other treatment levels of care). DCFS also supervised and administered both child protective and child welfare services in the 15 rural counties.

In 2001, the Nevada State Legislature determined that the bifurcated system was not conducive to promoting positive outcomes for children and families. Assembly Bill 1 mandated the transfer of state foster/adoption care services from the state to the counties with populations exceeding 100,000 (Clark and Washoe). The state transferred child welfare foster care/adoption services and staff to Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) in January 2003. The transfer of staff and services to Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) was completed in October 2004. The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) remains responsible for supervising and administering child protective/welfare services in the remaining 15 rural counties. Further, DCFS moves into a new role overseeing county-administered child protective and child welfare services delivery. Vestiges of Nevada's systemic "bifurcation" remain, however, in that DCFS continues to retain responsibility for administering higher levels of out-of-home care for children, including those in the custody of Washoe and Clark counties.

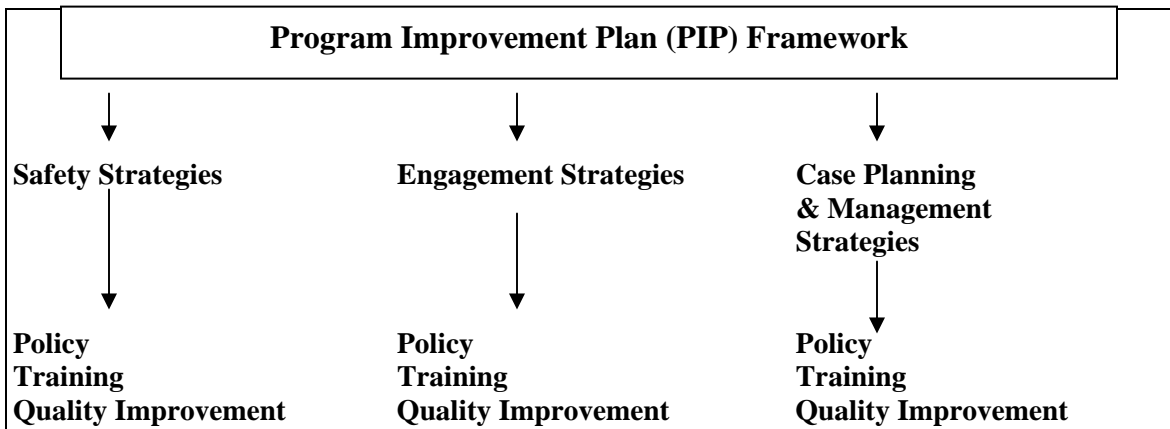
Based on the urban counties' state-supervised/county-administered, and rural state-supervised and state-administered child protective/welfare services delivery systems, Nevada functions as three regional service areas: DCFS Rural, WCDSS and CCDFS.

Due to the changes instituted through Assembly Bill 1, the Division of Child and Family Services now has the role of providing technical assistance, fiscal oversight for Federal monies, and quality improvement activities to those agencies providing child welfare services. It is ultimately the responsibility of DCFS to ensure that quality improvement activities are occurring. Agencies

providing child welfare services in both Washoe and Clark Counties will be intimately involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Nevada’s quality improvement system.

The Three Pillars of Nevada’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Policy Development and standardization, training, and quality improvement serve as the overarching framework to Nevada’s PIP. The plan is grounded in this framework and includes: realistic and identifiable time frames, benchmarks for improvement, and identification of specific staff accountable for facilitating and monitoring progress toward benchmark attainment. Based on CFSR results, improved outcomes for children and families will emerge with improvement in three child welfare practice areas. In Nevada’s PIP, these three areas are labeled: “Safety Strategies,” “Engagement Strategies,” and “Case Planning and Management Strategies.” The following diagram illustrates Nevada’s PIP framework:



The first segment of the framework is policy development. During this phase, existing policy is examined to determine if it meets the needs of Nevada’s children and families. If the policy is not sufficient, or does not exist, new policy is created. This is accomplished according to a new Policy Development and Approval Process, outlined in the PIP (1.1.2). Once policy, procedure, and/or practice guidelines have been approved, the second pillar of Nevada’s Program Improvement Plan is instituted. The Training Development and Delivery Process (PIP 1.1.3) introduces and trains on new policy, as well as reinforces existing policy. The final pillar to be introduced in Nevada is the quality improvement system. These three pillars have now been firmly established and Nevada’s quality improvement system has begun to initiate continuous quality improvement activities.

One of the foundations to Nevada’s Quality Improvement System is the recognition that policy, training and quality improvement will be involved in all aspects of the child welfare delivery system. The remainder of this document will focus primarily on the quality improvement pillar of this foundation.

Introduction to Quality Improvement

History of Quality Improvement in Nevada

Nevada does not have a history of a coordinated, statewide quality improvement system. When Nevada operated under a bifurcated system, individual regions were responsible for ensuring that a quality service delivery system was in place. Many of the processes and tools created by these jurisdictions still remain and are currently in use. It is the goal of the new quality improvement system to borrow from many of the successful tools already in existence, and utilize the expertise from those individuals who are currently engaging in quality improvement activities.

What is Quality Improvement?

Quality Improvement is “a formal set of activities that review and affect the quality of services provided.”¹ It is the activities, beliefs, and values that are put into place to increase overall system quality. Quality improvement should permeate an entire agency, not just a caseworker’s activities. It should be an overarching philosophy that describes how an agency strives to improve outcomes for children and families. Quality improvement also includes continuous quality monitoring. It seeks to describe those activities that are lending themselves to improved outcomes, as well as ensuring that they are allowed to continue.

What is a formalized Quality Improvement Framework?

A formalized Quality Improvement (QI) framework is a systematic method for incorporating quality into agency practice. It refers to the integration of monitoring efforts and change initiatives into the existing system. A comprehensive framework provides for review of all aspects of agency service delivery by ensuring that:²

1. There are outcome answers which address the questions, “Are we doing the right things?” and there are process results that respond to, “Are we doing things right?”
2. Agency data, information and outcomes are used to make improvements to practice and policy and to ensure adherence to regulations and standards.
3. The process of QI engages numerous stakeholders, such as staff at all levels, children and families served, and community partners.

What is Continuous Quality Improvement?

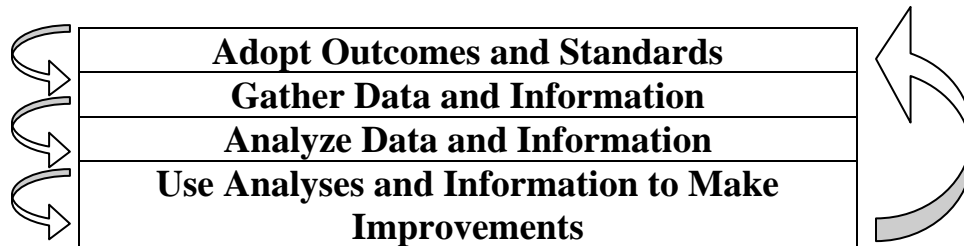
Simply stated, continuous quality improvement (CQI) involves the continuous evaluation and re-evaluation of a service delivery system. A well-developed continuous quality improvement system is one that is continuous, circular in design, and dynamic enough to promote, encourage and affect change. Quality improvement must cycle through all the steps of its quality improvement framework in order to be effective. The steps, or activities, in a quality improvement system are discussed below.

¹ Ballantyne & Shields, J. Quality Assurance Discussion Paper. Simcoe Children’s Aid Society. 2001.

² Spence, H. Creating a Learning Culture. Common Ground Newspaper of New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors. Volume 17, Number 2, pg.1 2003.

Nevada's Quality Improvement Framework

The framework for Nevada's quality improvement system is based on the work of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (NCWRCOI). The schematic below offers a conceptual view of this overarching framework for Nevada:³



Adopt Outcomes and Standards

The first element in quality improvement is to define those items that will be measured. For child welfare, this means incorporating State and Federal outcomes standards and CFSR performance indicators. The outcomes and standards become the child welfare agency's public statement about the goals they want to achieve. In addition, the outcomes and standards adopted by the agency help define the practice standards necessary to guarantee that children and families receive quality services to meet their needs. The outcomes and standards Nevada will measure are discussed later in this document.

Gather Data and Information

The second element in the quality improvement system is to gather data and information. This will primarily be accomplished through a combination of the following three activities:

- **AFCARS:** AFCARS collects case level information on all children in foster care for whom child welfare agencies have responsibility for placement, care or supervision and on children who are adopted under the auspices of the State's public child welfare agency. AFCARS also includes information on foster and adoptive parents. Trend analyses and short and long-term quality improvement planning can be derived from this data when compared to the other sources from the QI system. In our previous framework, we indicated that SOAR data would be used as part of the data analysis component. SOAR reports are incomplete due to AFCARS data clean up needs. As a result, SOAR reports will not be utilized at this time, but will be reinitiated upon completion of an AFCARS data clean up process, estimated to take between 2-3 years. Collaboration between the Division's Information Management System staff and the QI Team will occur on a regular basis to monitor the improvement in AFCARS data and usefulness of SOAR reports.

³ O'Brien, Mary & Watson, Peter. A Framework for Quality Assurance in Child Welfare. National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, March 2002.

- **Supervisory Review Tool:** A standardized supervisory review instrument that monitors individual case managers' use of the key priority practice areas - as identified and discussed in the PIP.
- **Case Review Process:** A process modeled after the Federal child and family services on-site case review process. It is a qualitative case review process that measures outcomes for children and families.

According to NCWRCOI, gathering data and information should involve four separate elements: quantitative data collection; a qualitative case review system; a mechanism to listen to and involve the agency's clients and invested stakeholders in assessing quality; and a mechanism to utilize information gathered from other sources, such as internal and external evaluations of agency programs, legislative audits, surveys, etc.

Analyze Data and Information

Once data and qualitative information has been collected, analysis and dissemination of that information will be conducted. The analysis of the data and information will involve both internal and external stakeholders, and the reports that are generated must be understandable and relevant. This element of the quality improvement system involves analyzing the data and information as it relates to the adopted outcomes and standards. It also involves producing reports that assist the agencies strategize and make necessary improvements. In Nevada some of the reports that will be generated include:

- **Supervisory Review Reports:** A report that will summarize the aggregate data from the various service regions and report back performance on the measured outcomes. This report will aid individual child welfare units and agencies and provide the State with aggregate data on how Nevada is meeting the needs of its children and families.
- **AFCARS Reports:** These reports will provide exception information related to the six national standards which allow supervisors to evaluate individual caseworker compliance and performance as it relates to the standards. This report also allows managers and quality improvement staff to view statewide performance in these individual areas.
- **Case Review Summary of Findings Report:** This report will provide individual child welfare agencies a summary of performance from the qualitative case review. The report summarizes the results of the case review and includes recommended strategies for agency improvement. The report also summarizes any additional quality improvement activities that have taken place in the jurisdiction during the past review period. This includes aggregate data from supervisory reviews, surveys and questionnaires, and case or topic-specific case reviews. Finally, the report will also synthesize data from AFCARS. The overall purpose of the summary of findings report is to give a comprehensive quality improvement report for the identified jurisdiction for the period under review.

Use Analysis and Information to Make Improvements

The final element of the quality improvement process is to use the data and information to make necessary changes and to enhance the quality of services for children and families. According to the NCWRCOI, an effective quality improvement system must:

1. **Create Feedback Loops:** Data and information gathered and analyzed must be filtered down to all levels of the agency. It is important that all staff have access to the results of

instruments used to evaluate outcomes for children and families. This is imperative not only for management as they consider recommended strategies to address areas not in substantial conformity, but also for caseworkers and supervisors. All levels of the agency should be aware of the strengths of their organization, and understand what areas need improvement – and what steps are being taken to address those areas.

2. **Make Improvements:** Once the Quality Improvement Team has distributed reports - and the agency has communicated the results of the reports, an agency will institute necessary changes within the organization. Again, these systemic changes to practice will involve all levels of staff as they attempt to improve outcomes for children and families.
3. **Evaluate Actions Taken:** Once changes are instituted, it is critical that agencies evaluate the effects of these changes. In Nevada, the Quality Improvement Team will be working with agencies to help monitor and evaluate the changes. Actions taken that do not improve outcomes for children and families should be re-evaluated for overall effectiveness and, if they are not working, should be eliminated or altered. Those actions that are proving to be effective should be modeled for other service areas to examine and incorporate into their organizations.

The four elements in a quality improvement framework discussed above incorporate all the steps necessary to make systemic and practice changes within an agency. The philosophy of continuous quality improvement, however, mandates that these four steps be continuously applied. At each step, the Quality Improvement Team must evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and make necessary modifications if needed. In addition, once step four is completed, the system must return to step one and repeat the process again – in a continuous quality improvement loop.

What’s Measured: National Outcomes and Program Improvement Plan Indicators (Element One: Adopting Outcomes and Standards)

Nevada’s quality improvement system will measure outcomes in all areas of the child welfare and child protective arenas. It will make recommendations for improvement in practice - and assist agencies in identifying barriers to successful completion of stated goals. Nevada will measure performance on the six national standards. These standards are described in the table below. The shaded items represent those areas where Nevada was successful during the CFSR:

Statewide Data Indicator	National Standard	Nevada’s Results	Description
Recurrence of maltreatment	<6.1%	7.6%	A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the period under review, 6.1% or fewer children had another substantiated or indicated report within six months.
Incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care	<0.57%	0.17%	A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children in foster care in the State during the period under review, the percentage of children who were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff is 0.57% or less.
Foster care re-entries	<8.6%	6.9%	A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who entered foster care during the year under review, 8.6% or fewer of those children re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.
Stability of foster care	<86.7%	94.9%	A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all

placements			children who have been in foster care less than twelve months from the time of the latest removal, 86.7% or more children had no more than two placement settings.
Length of time to achieve reunification	>76.2%	90.9%	A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, 76.2% or more children were reunified in less than twelve months from the time of the latest removal from the home.
Length of time to achieve adoption	>32%	29.2%	A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who exited foster care during the year under review to a finalized adoption, 32% or more children exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home.

In addition to the six national standards, Nevada’s Decision Making Group is evaluating the benefit of adding these four outcomes areas for inclusion into the quality improvement process. Definitions and baseline criteria for these outcomes are in the process of development. They are:

1	Total number of placement moves. For closed cases, a point in time number of placement moves.
2	Percentage of children living with relatives (kinship care).
3	a. Total number of face-to-face visits with children and birth parents when reunification is the permanency goal. b. Total number of face-to-face visits with substitute caregiver when the goal is other than reunification.
4	Educational tracking to include educational moves (school-to-school) and the reasons why.

Nevada must also measure outcomes as determined by the Child and Family Services Review. The CFSR measured seven outcomes for children and families and seven systemic factors. Within the seven outcomes areas, there were 23 performance indicators that were measured during the review, all related to safety, permanency, and well-being. Within the systemic factors, there were an additional 22 items that were measured. During the CFSR, numerous performance indicators were found not in substantial conformity. In its PIP Nevada addressed performance indicators – and systemic factors, not in compliance. In addition, Nevada addressed systemic factors not in substantial conformity.

There are eight performance indicators that the Federal Children’s Bureau has asked Nevada to pay close attention to. The tables below detail each of the 23 performance indicators - and 22 systemic factor items. The shaded items in the first table represent those indicators the Children’s Bureau is collecting statistics on and upon which it has asked Nevada to focus:

Performance Indicator Items

PI #1	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment
PI #2	Repeat maltreatment
PI #3	Services to family to protect children in home and prevent removal
PI #4	Risk of harm to child
PI #5	Foster care reentries
PI #6	Stability of foster care placement
PI #7	Permanency goal for child
PI #8	Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives
PI #9	Adoptions
PI #10	Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement
PI #11	Proximity of foster care placement
PI #12	Placement with siblings
PI #13	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care
PI #14	Preserving connections
PI #15	Relative placement
PI #16	Relationship of child in care with parents
PI #17	Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents
PI #18	Child and family involvement in case planning
PI #19	Worker visits with child
PI #20	Worker visits with parents
PI #21	Educational needs of the child
PI #22	Physical health of the child
PI #23	Mental health of the child

Systemic Factor Items

Item 24	State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.
Item 25	Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parents that includes the required provisions.
Item 26	Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.
Item 27	Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less than every 13 months thereafter.
Item 28	Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.
Item 29	Provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to the child
Item 30	The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children.
Item 31	The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.
Item 32	The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.
Item 33	The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.
Item 34	The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under Title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children

Item 35	The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families to determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.
Item 36	The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP.
Item 37	The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families serviced by the agency.
Item 38	In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child and family agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.
Item 39	The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports or progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP
Item 40	The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.
Item 41	The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and childcare institutions, which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.
Item 42	The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions receiving Title IV-E or IV-B funds
Item 43	The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.
Item 44	The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.
Item 45	The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoption or permanent placements for waiting children.

Nevada must report statistical information regarding the percentage of improvement made relating to the eight performance indicators highlighted in the first table. It must show a negotiated percentage of improvement over time. Many of the quality improvement instruments are designed to measure these items. The supervisory review instrument, for example, is designed to capture performance in these eight key areas. As mentioned however, Nevada must address and demonstrate progress in all non-conformant areas.

Getting Started: Planning for Nevada's Quality Improvement System (Element Two: Gather Data and Information)

The Quality Improvement Team

Much of the anticipated success of Nevada's quality improvement system will lie in the involvement and participation from both internal and external stakeholders. It is essential that Nevada's child welfare agencies participate in both the creation and maintenance of the quality improvement system. Furthermore, it is critical that all stakeholders view the quality improvement system not as a punitive system, but rather as one that exists to improve services for Nevada's children and families. Maintaining a Quality Improvement Team will facilitate ongoing input into the quality improvement system by both internal and external stakeholders.

As mentioned earlier in this report, a critical function of the Quality Improvement Team is to oversee the work of various workgroups. PIP Benchmark 31.2.1 states, "The State will establish a Quality Data Improvement Team to develop an action plan for ongoing data clean up in UNITY to ensure data reports are accurate". The QI team in expanding our use of other reports in the QI process to enrich the analysis of the data being produced. This group reports data needs and trends to the Decision Making Group on a regular basis.

Some of the key responsibilities of the Quality Improvement Team will include:

- Developing team charters to guide its work.
- Adhering to the quality improvement process. The Quality Improvement Team is tasked with evaluating and revising the quality improvement framework before it is sent to the Decision Making Group. The Decision Making Group makes recommendations for changes and/or revisions to the overall framework, and is included in the structure of the system.
- Evaluating and monitoring the success of the quality improvement instruments used to evaluate systemic quality in the child welfare system. The Quality Improvement Team is tasked with continuous quality improvement of the quality improvement instruments utilized by the QI office. They will make recommendations for changes to the instruments to the QI office for consideration and revision.
- Providing input on systemic changes. The Quality Improvement Team is tasked with reviewing final reports generated by the Quality Improvement Office to make recommendations to the Decision Making Group. Recommendations are added to the quarterly reports submitted through the Quality Improvement Office to the Decision Making Group.
- Ensuring that data collected and input into UNITY are accurate, ensuring that reports generated from UNITY, and elsewhere, are accurate and reliable, and helping design new reports that reflect the information the Quality Improvement Team wants to convey.

On March 3, 2005 the NCWRCOI held a statewide meeting in Nevada. During this meeting, the framework for membership on the Quality Improvement Team was established. The statewide team has been revised. The composition of the QI team reflects the core number of representatives.

	Representation From:	Internal/External
1	CCDFS – Quality Improvement Specialist	Internal Stakeholder
2	CCDFS – Manager of QA/QI	Internal Stakeholder
3	CCDFS – Supervisor / IT	Internal Stakeholder
4	WCDSS – Quality Improvement Specialist	Internal Stakeholder
5	WCDSS – Supervisor	Internal Stakeholder
6	WCDSS – Supervisor / IT	Internal Stakeholder
7	Rural – Supervisor (DCFS)	Internal Stakeholder
8	DCFS – FPO	Internal Stakeholder
9	DCFS – FPO	Internal Stakeholder
10	IMS / UNITY (DCFS)	Internal Stakeholder
11	University Partner	External Stakeholder
12	Victim advocate	External Stakeholder
13	CJA Task Force Representative	External Stakeholder
14	CIP Representation	External Stakeholder
15	Foster Parent(s) Representation	External Stakeholder
16	Nevada PEP Representation or other parent advocate group	External Stakeholder
17	Citizen’s Review Board Representation	External Stakeholder

Supervisory and Case Review Instruments

During the March 3, 2005 meeting with the NCWRCOI and members of the Quality Improvement Team, a draft of the supervisory review instrument and process was distributed. The group spent much of the two-day meeting going over the entire instrument and crafting it to reflect a qualitative-style tool that would be useful for both supervisors and caseworker. On March 8, 2005 during a meeting with the Decision Making Group the supervisory review instrument and process was approved. The supervisory review instrument and process was implemented on July 1, 2005.

The qualitative case review instrument and process has been through several revisions since the PIP was written and approved. Following the continuous quality improvement model, revisions to the case review and supervisor review instruments will be made on an ongoing basis.

Supervisory Review Process

The purpose of the supervisory review instrument is to ensure positive outcomes for children and families by uniformly measuring caseworker performance on nine key areas within the CFSR across all agencies providing child welfare services. The supervisory review instrument is a qualitative review instrument that incorporates information gathered through caseworker-supervisor discussions and review of case documentation. The focus of the supervisory review instrument is instructional and is intended to be a tool to help supervisors reinforce best practice with workers.

The supervisory review measures items 1,2,3,4,7,17,18,19, and 20 from the CFSR.

Supervisors are required to complete one case review, per worker, per quarter. Every caseworker, in all agencies providing child welfare services, will have a minimum of four (4) supervisory reviews per year conducted on their cases.

Supervisors and managers working in child welfare agencies will ensure that supervisory reviews occur at the minimum frequency, and that aggregate results from the reviews are forwarded to the appropriate persons in the Quality Improvement Office.

In completing the review instrument supervisors are required to consult with caseworkers regarding the identified case under review. Based on the information from the case record and discussions with caseworkers, supervisors will determine whether an item is a “strength” or an “area needing improvement.” The review instrument includes detailed instructions to guide supervisors on how to rate each item.

Supervisors are asked to determine if the needs of the child and family are being met through the appropriate provision of services. In addition, the review document contains some questions that focus on key policy and practice areas.

The supervisory review instrument is intended to be used as a system of reinforcement for the caseworker. The instrument should be viewed as a teaching instrument to help caseworkers adopt optimal practice standards. Supervisors complete the review with the caseworker and review the results with the worker upon completion. By utilizing the instrument as a teaching mechanism, both the supervisor and the caseworker will be afforded an opportunity for brainstorming best practice ideas. The action plan portion of the instrument (included at the end of the instrument), allows supervisors to focus on workers strengths to address areas needing improvement. .For

these reasons, revision of the instrument, instructions and training will be provided and requested PIP extension completion dates modified upon approval.

According to PIP Action Step 30.1, Benchmark 31.1.6, “Child Welfare managers (will) collect supervisory review data from unit supervisor(s) and forward data to the Quality Improvement Office.” Each agency providing child welfare services will develop a system whereby the aggregate data from the supervisory review instruments are collected and distributed to the Quality Improvement Office. Data results will be forwarded to the Quality Improvement Office on a quarterly basis.

The Quality Improvement Office will take the aggregate data from each child welfare unit and office and complete the feedback loop by providing the agency with a summary report. The report will detail how each office performed on the various items from the instrument. The report will also include recommendations to improve overall performance in the key areas being measured in the review.

Case Review Process

The qualitative case review instrument and process will be reviewed by the Quality Improvement Team for revisions and suggestions. It will then be forwarded for review and approval by the Decision Making Group. The case review process, described below, is a draft of how the review process might look, once it has been reviewed and approved. Although this is only a proposal for the future case review process, many of the elements of the process are found in the PIP. The review process attempts to mirror continuous quality improvement, and is reflective of the Three Pillars of Nevada’s Program Improvement Plan (Policy, Training and Quality Improvement). Most importantly, the case review process described below mirrors the four steps outlined in Nevada’s quality improvement framework.

Preparation (Gathering Data and Information)

When the region, or service area, to be reviewed has been selected, notification is sent to the agency child welfare director. The notification asks the director, or designee, to complete the following:

- Identification of cases to be reviewed. IMS will randomly select the cases to be reviewed, equally dividing the cases between in-home and out-of-home cases.
- Based on results of the field-testing, it was determined that two (2) cases per day may be reviewed. Based on these results, the following number of cases is the minimum number recommended for a case review:
 - Four review teams (one lead from the quality improvement office and one designated person from the agency being reviewed)
 - Twelve (12) cases reviewed during the five-day review week.
 - Each review team to review three (3) cases during the week (Monday-Thursday).
- Compile statistics related to all supervisory reviews conducted during the period under review.
- Files prepared; and
- Designate location, dates, and staff to participate or assist in the review.

The agency director, or designee, along with the Quality Improvement Office, will discuss and mutually agree upon possible dates and locations for the review. The Quality Improvement

Office will discuss any required assessments and audits that need completed before the review team arrives to ascertain if there are any questions.

Concurrently, the Quality Improvement Office and the Quality Improvement Team will work to secure the services of case reviewers to participate in the review. During the preparation period staff from the Quality Improvement Office will train reviewers on the process and all instruments. Case reviewers from the same jurisdiction being reviewed, should have no connection with either the caseworker assigned to a particular case, or the unit from which the case belongs. Case reviewers should be free from any conflict of interest, and should work closely with the case review lead to insure impartiality.

<p>Time frames: Once preliminary arrangements have been made for the case review, child welfare agencies will have 5-6 weeks to prepare for the review.</p>

Case Review (Gathering Data and Information)

In preparation for the review, the Quality Improvement Office will collect and synthesize supervisory review data from the agency being reviewed. These reviews will serve as the starting point for the case review process. In addition, the results from any other reviews, surveys, or questionnaires will be collected in preparation for the review.

The review team will function similarly to the federal CFSR on-site review. A staff member from the Quality Improvement Office will serve as the review lead. He or she will direct the activities of the reviewers, as well as participate in the review. Two reviewers will be assigned to each case. Using this model, coupled with the shortened interview schedule (see below), it is expected that a review team will review a minimum of three (3) cases during the review.

An entrance interview will occur the first morning of the on-site review. This meeting will be an opportunity to introduce the reviewers, become familiar with the physical layout of the office(s), and to coordinate the activities for the week.

Nevada's qualitative case reviews are intended to measure the outcomes for children and families. Although the reviews won't be as extensive as the CFSR on-site review, it is expected that reviewers will interview key stakeholders involved in the case. It is recommended that many of the interviews take place using the telephone if face-to-face in-office interviews are not possible. It is expected that, at a minimum, parents and children (if appropriate) and caseworkers and/or supervisors be interviewed.

It will be the responsibility of the agency being reviewed to arrange for all interviews.

The review will conclude with a closing interview with designated child welfare staff. During this exit interview the review team will give initial impressions and an outline of the agency improvement plan to follow.

<p>Time frames: It is expected that the actual on-site case review should take approximately one week to complete. Additional time may be necessary in complex cases or if not enough review teams are available.</p>

Revised Data Element Comparison

CASE REVIEW INSTRUMENT AND AFCARS DATA ELEMENTS

SIX NATIONAL STANDARDS	CASE REVIEW INSTRUMENT	AFCARS ELEMENT	UNITY REPORTS
1) Recurrence of Maltreatment	<p>Item 1 <i>investigations of reports of child maltreatment</i></p> <p>Item 2 <i>Repeat maltreatment</i></p> <p>Item 4 <i>Risk of harm to child</i></p>		Response Time Report
2) Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care	<p>Item 6 <i>Stability of Foster Care Placements</i> Would be indicated in the qualitative justification</p>		Substantiation Report
3) Foster Care Re-Entries	<p>Item 5 <i>Foster Care Re-entries</i> Questions 1 thru 4</p>	<p>#19-Total Number of Removals #21-Date of Latest Removal #23-Date of Placement in Current Foster Care Setting</p>	
4) Stability of Foster Care Placements	<p>Item 6 <i>Stability of Foster Care Placements</i> Questions 1 thru 4</p>	<p>#24-Number of previous placements #41-Current Placement Setting</p>	
5) Length of Time to Achieve Permancy	<p>Item 7 <i>Permancy goal for child</i> Questions 1 thru 8</p>	<p>#5 -Date of most recent periodic review #18-Date of first removal from home #43-Most recent case plan goal #47-Mother's date of TPR #48-Father's date of TPR</p>	Foster Care Summary Report
6) Length of Time to Achieve Adoption	<p>Item 8 <i>Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Relative Placement</i></p> <p>Item 9 <i>Adoption</i> Questions 1 thru 5</p>	<p>#16-Has the child ever been adopted? #17-How old was the child when the child was adopted? #43-Most recent case plan goal #55-Outcome Information #56-Date of Discharge from foster care #58-Reason for discharge (core)</p>	Foster Care Summary Report

Data Collection and Interpretation (Analyzing data and information)

At the conclusion of the case review, the Quality Improvement Office compiles the results of the review and submits a final report to the Decision Making Group. This report, similar to the CFSR final report, details areas of strength and areas needing improvement, as well as any promising practices found in the field. Copies of the final report are sent to key agency personnel and to members of the Quality Improvement Team.

In addition to the case review results, the final report may include data from the various other instruments utilized by the Quality Improvement Office. These data sources may include the supervisory reviews, licensing reviews, qualitative interviews and surveys, CPS reviews, and any case-specific reviews that were conducted during the review period. Data is gathered from UNITY and AFCARS reports to help in the overall development of the final report.

The final report issued to the child welfare agency includes recommendations for the child welfare agency on how to improve practice. The recommendations from the Quality Improvement Team categorize the recommendations into short, and long-term objectives. They are also categorized into the three pillars of Nevada's PIP – Policy, Training, and Quality Improvement. The Decision Making Group reviews the recommendations and selects which improvement strategies they wish the agency to engage in continuous quality improvement and make revisions to the instrument and process as necessary.

Concurrently, the Quality Improvement Office works with team members from IMS to enter all statistical data from the reviews into a centralized database. This database tracks information on agency compliance to Federal PIP requirements, and overall CFSR compliance.

Time frames: It is expected that the Quality Improvement Office will submit a final report to the child welfare agency and to the Decision Making Group no later than six weeks after the case review. The Decision Making Group will be asked to review and approve the recommended strategies for improvement created by the Quality Improvement Team.

Program Improvement (Using data and information to make improvements)

Once the child welfare agency receives the final report, it will create an internal action plan to address the DMG-approved recommendations. The agency-created program improvement plan is an action-plan format and includes action steps, measurable benchmarks, expected timeframes for completion, and accountable persons. Each agency's improvement plans are reviewed quarterly at the DMG in a verbal format. The agencies program improvement plan will also be monitored and reflected in the second on-site case review with each jurisdiction. When and where necessary and appropriate, the Program Improvement Office will offer technical assistance to the child welfare agency to help it achieve its stated goals.

Time frames: It is expected that the child welfare agency will institute program improvement activities as soon as the Decision Making Group has approved the recommendations. Agencies will be working on short-term, and long-term objectives as they relate to policy, training and quality improvement. Success of the agency's program improvement strategies will be measured by performance in the next round of case reviews. Case reviews will be repeated in the same jurisdiction every nine-months.

Other Qualitative and Quantitative Instruments

In addition to AFCARS, the supervisory review instrument, and the case review process, the Quality Improvement Office may utilize other qualitative and quantitative methods to measure success in Nevada's child protective and child welfare systems. Some of these instruments or methods include:

- Policy Reviews
- Case-Specific Case Reviews
- Foster parent survey
- CPS Reviews
- Licensing Reviews
- Staff Satisfaction Surveys
- Client Surveys
- Stakeholder Surveys


Qualitative Case Review Schedule

The following schedule denotes a case review schedule for Nevada. Although there are other approaches used to measure quality in child welfare services, the time frames for Nevada's Quality Improvement system have been developed around the case review process (described above). As stated earlier, quality improvement activities take place in a continuous and cyclical fashion. Nevada's process utilizes the case review timelines as a means of defining a "period of review." Therefore, although the QI activities take place in a continuous fashion, there is a specific starting place and an ending place for purposes of measurement and report writing. In Nevada that time period is nine months.

As this table illustrates, each month a different quality improvement activity will take place in the various service areas, or regions. The table demonstrates that there is a total of three months devoted to preparation, data collection and actual reviews, followed by a period of program improvement activities. Finally, the table shows the cyclical nature of the process – how the process begins again after the nine-month process is completed:

Case Review Schedule for Nevada

Month	Clark	Washoe	Rural	Other QI Activities
August, 2005	Preparation			Supervisory Review / SOAR – Quarter 3
October, 2005	Case Reviews			Supervisory Review / SOAR – Quarter 3
October, 2005	Compile Data			Supervisory Review / SOAR – Quarter 4
November, 2005	Improvement Activities	Preparation		Supervisory Review / SOAR – Quarter 4
December, 2005	Improvement Activities	Case Reviews		Supervisory Review / SOAR – Quarter 4
January, 2006	Improvement Activities	Compile Data		Supervisory Review / SOAR – Quarter 1
February, 2006	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Preparation	Supervisory Review / SOAR – Quarter 1
March, 2006	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Case Reviews (Carson City)	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 1
April, 2006	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Compile Data	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 2
May, 2006	Preparation	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 2
June, 2006	Case Reviews	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 2
July, 2006	Compile Data	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 3
August, 2006	Improvement Activities	Preparation	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 3
September, 2006	Improvement Activities	Case Reviews	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 3
October, 2006	Improvement Activities	Compile Data	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 4
November, 2006	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Preparation	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 4
December, 2006	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Case Reviews (Elko)	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 4
January, 2007	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Compile Data	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 1
February, 2007	Preparation	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS – Quarter 1
March, 2007	Case Reviews	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS/SOAR – Quarter 1
April, 2007	Compile Data	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS/SOAR – Quarter 2
May, 2007	Improvement Activities	Preparation	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS/SOAR – Quarter 2
June, 2007	Improvement Activities	Case Reviews	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS/SOAR – Quarter 2
July, 2007	Improvement Activities	Compile Data	Improvement Activities	Supervisory Review / AFCARS/SOAR – Quarter 3
August, 2007	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Preparation	Supervisory Review / AFCARS/SOAR – Quarter 3
September, 2007	Improvement Activities	Improvement Activities	Case Reviews (Fallon)	Supervisory Review / AFCARS/SOAR – Quarter 3

 = Supervisory Reviews due to the Quality Improvement Office

The schedule addresses area-specific case reviews. The Quality Improvement Team, with direction from the Decision Making Group, identifies a site-specific schedule, i.e., Carson City District Office versus the Fallon District Office in the Rural Region. In addition, the team identifies which types of cases (in-home versus out-of-home) are reviewed during each case review.

Resources

Quality improvement activities are conducted in partnership between Division of Child and Family Services, regional child welfare agencies, and external stakeholders. It is the quality improvement unit's mission to ensure that appropriate staff and/or volunteers are included and trained to participate in quality improvement activities. Some of the activities, such as the supervisory review, are conducted exclusively by the agencies providing child welfare services. Other instruments and surveys may be conducted by staff in the Quality Improvement Office.

Phased Implementation

Implementation of Nevada's quality improvement system began with the adoption of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Full implementation of the supervisory review and case review process began in September 2005. The supervisory review instrument was implemented beginning May 2, 2005 for a two-month field test. Full implementation of the supervisory review began with the quarter starting July 1, 2005. The Quality Improvement Team was convened and oriented to this QI framework, as well as the case review instrument and process.

The supervisory review instrument, instructions, and training will be revised and implemented as follows:

Instrument Revision Date: June 2006

Instructions Revision Date: June 2006

Training Completion Date: September 2006

Implementation Date For Use Of Revised Instrument: September 2006

Tracking Progress: Evaluation, Reports, and Continuous Quality Improvement

(Element Three: Analyze Data and Information)

(Element Four: Use Analysis and Information to Make Improvements)

It is the responsibility of the Quality Improvement Office to monitor and ensure quality improvement activities are implemented and ongoing statewide. It is also the responsibility of the Quality Improvement Office to create and distribute quarterly reports to the Decision Making Group. Some of the reports generated by the Quality Improvement Office include:

- **Supervisory Review Reports:** The Quality Improvement Office has generated reports after collecting aggregate data from the child welfare agencies. The reports summarize data captured from the supervisory reviews and provide the child welfare agency an overall picture of performance based on the reviews. It also includes recommendations for improvement. These reports were provided to the Decision Making Group and will be provided on a quarterly basis, and to key agency personnel and members of the Quality Improvement Team.
- **Case Review Summary of Findings Report:** This report is generated 45 days after a child welfare agency has undergone a case review. The report summarizes all the findings from the case review, indicates strengths and areas needing improvement, and

includes a narrative section that summarizes qualitative information gathered during the review. This report also includes recommendations for future improvement.

The Quality Improvement Team has the responsibility of ensuring the overall success and fluidity of Nevada’s quality improvement system. Since the majority of the members from the Quality Improvement Team are employees from the various child welfare agencies, it is crucial the committee is actively involved in the development and maintenance of Nevada’s quality improvement system.

As the following table demonstrates, the Quality Improvement Team is scheduled to meet quarterly. The purpose of the meetings is to review initial and final reports, examine the health of the overall quality improvement system, and strategize methods to overcome any obvious barriers in the system. It should be noted that the Quality Improvement Team may be required to meet more frequently during the initial implementation of the quality improvement system in Nevada.

The table below demonstrates the revised schedule for the Quality Improvement Team to meet. It also incorporates the revised case review process and the reports-schedule. For example, in February 2006 one can see that the Rural Region will undergo a formal case review. During the same month the Quality Improvement Team will meet to review reports from the previous quarter. In March 2006 both the Rural Region and Clark County will have reports generated (Rural will have an initial report issued, while Clark County will have its final AIP report generated). Finally, in April 2006 the QI Team meets again to discuss the reports issued in March, as well as any other systemic quality improvement issues statewide:

Quality Improvement Team Schedule

Month	Quality Improvement Team meets to review initial reports and final agency reports – including recommendations for improvement
August, 2005	QI team to meet
September, 2005	
October, 2005	
November, 2005	QI team to meet
December, 2005	
January, 2006	
March, 2006	QI team to meet
March, 2006	
April, 2006	
May, 2006	QI team to meet
June, 2006	
July, 2006	
August, 2006	QI team to meet
September, 2006	