



Quality Improvement 101 for Healthy Start Grantees

On June 4, 2015, Dr. Lea Ayers LaFave, a senior Consultant at John Snow, Inc., facilitated a presentation focused on the value of implementing a Quality Improvement (QI) systematic approach as a way of improving Healthy Start grantees' programs. During the webinar, Dr. LaFave introduced an approach to improvement, outlined basic elements of QI and the value that QI implementation can bring to HS grantee programs, and offered four basic QI tools. Dr. LaFave also demonstrated effective use of QI principles and tools through a case example. The tools highlighted during the presentation represent a sample of all QI tools.

During the webinar, grantees asked several great questions, all of which have been answered below.

In case you or a colleague missed the webinar, a recording can be found on the EPIC Center website's [Training Calendar](#).

For the 5 Ps Systems Assessment process, does it matter in which order the five components are assessed?

Typically, Purpose, People/participants, and Professionals/staff components are addressed first, and lay the foundation for assessment of Processes and Patterns. However, for assessment of Processes and Patterns, the order does not make a difference. The team should decide which works best for themselves.

How frequently should grantees assess their goals?

While a team is involved in an active QI project, goals should be addressed frequently. Teams should meet weekly or every other week, to be sure that efforts are on target. However, a good practice is to incorporate QI efforts into existing meetings rather than setting up additional meetings which can pose a burden on busy staff. The ultimate goal is to create a culture of QI by embedding QI practices into routine, day-to-day tasks, so awareness of performance indicators should be built into regular staff meetings.

If a Healthy Start project is implemented across three different sites, should each site work on a separate change project or should all three sites work together on a single change project?

It depends. Each organization has its own culture and personality, meaning that an issue at one organization may not be an issue at another.

If all three organizations share a common issue, they have an added benefit of sharing ideas about improvement and needed changes. A shared goal or factor also provides the opportunity for cross-organization feedback. Alternatively, the HS project could select a common topic that each site approaches from a different direction and with a different lens.

Regardless of the approach taken, the most important piece of the process is relevance – the selected project must be relevant to the people involved.

EPIC Training FAQs



Can Healthy Start grantees request TA for QI projects?

Yes! Part of the last poll shared during the webinar looked at how the EPIC Center might be able to provide regional support, including QI TA provision, to any grantee expressing need. In fact, the EPIC Center's current TA process was designed around the QI model.

Grantees can request TA directly through the [EPIC Center website](#).

What are some other QI methods?

Some other commonly used and increasingly popular methods include Lean, Six Sigma, and Microsystems amongst many others. The concept and practice of QI grew from the business sector with an initial goal of increasing profitability, meaning that the initial science supporting QI was developed in the business world. Next, QI was adopted by the healthcare world, and has, most recently, been applied to public health settings. Implementing QI in public health can present some challenges given the changing landscape and lack of control inherent to an environment of such routine progression. Public Health QI examines outcomes that take place over an extended timeframe, which varies from the other more business- oriented QI models available for use.