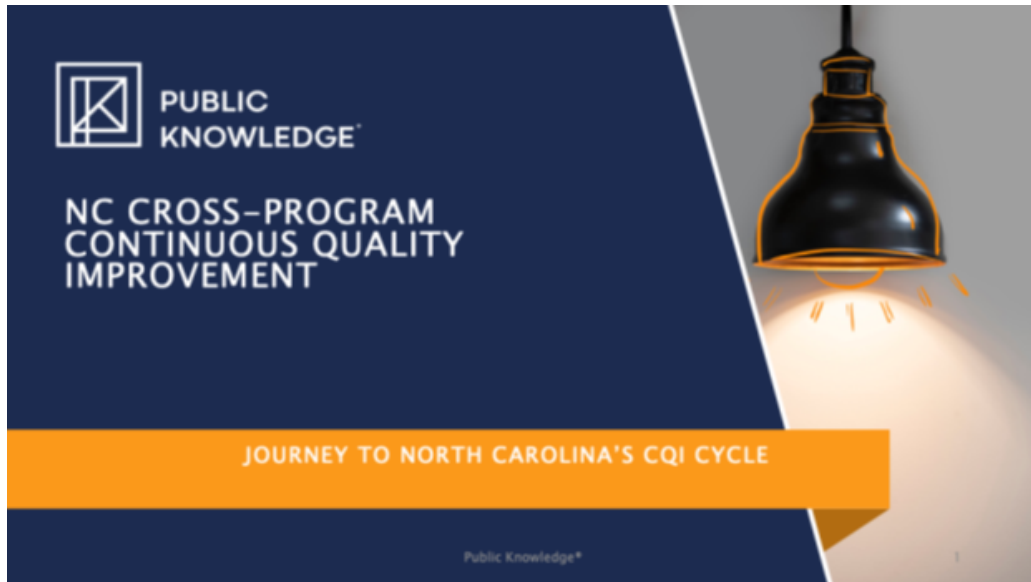




Journey to CQI video



RYLAN'S LAW

Key Points



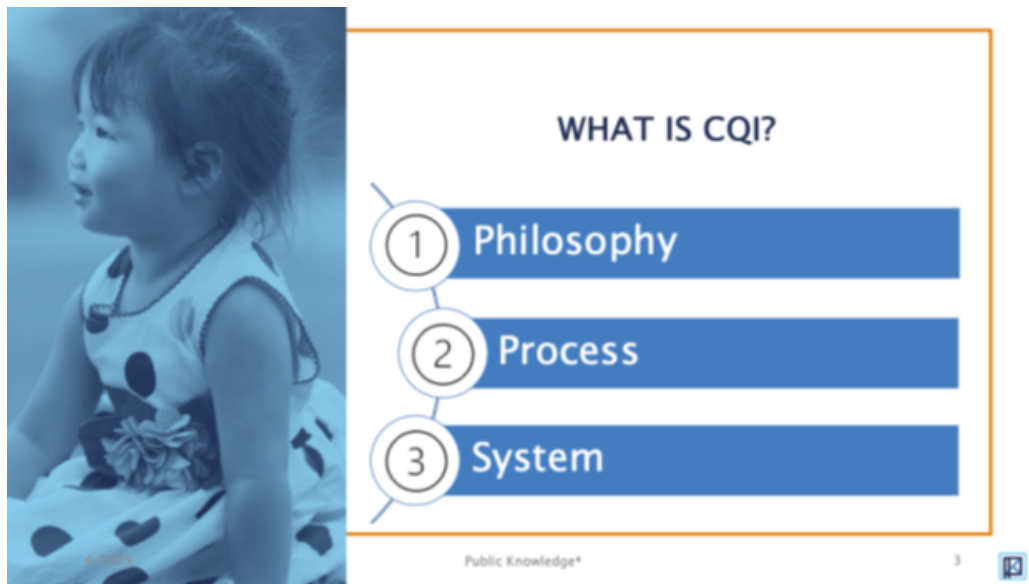
- System Reform
- Regional Supervision
- Memoranda of Agreement
- Child Well-Being Transformation Council
- Regional Departments of Social Services

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Rylan's Law, enacted in 2017, governs a legislatively required, statewide reformation of North Carolina's social services and child welfare programs. North Carolina recognizes that more accountability and oversight are needed for County Departments of Social Services to produce better performance and outcomes. Rylan's Law provides North Carolina with a blueprint for how we can collectively transform social services to improve outcomes for families and children. There are 5 key components to Rylan's Law.

- 1) It requires an independent assessment to evaluate the current system. NC chose Public Knowledge to be its partner in that process and remains a partner today.
- 2) The law requires that NC move towards a regional structure to improve collaboration,
- 3) All counties have a contractual obligation with DHHS to monitor annual performance for all social service programs.
- 4) To promote a more coordinated approach to services that help improve outcomes for children, the General Assembly created the Child Well-Being and Transformation Council to work collaboratively in providing public services to children. And
- 5) Rylan's law gives counties the option to create regional departments of social services to provide more flexibility to combine resources and improve the provision of social services among more than one county. Having a strong CQI process that promotes proactive responses to challenging situations is critical for enacting Rylan's Law across social service departments.

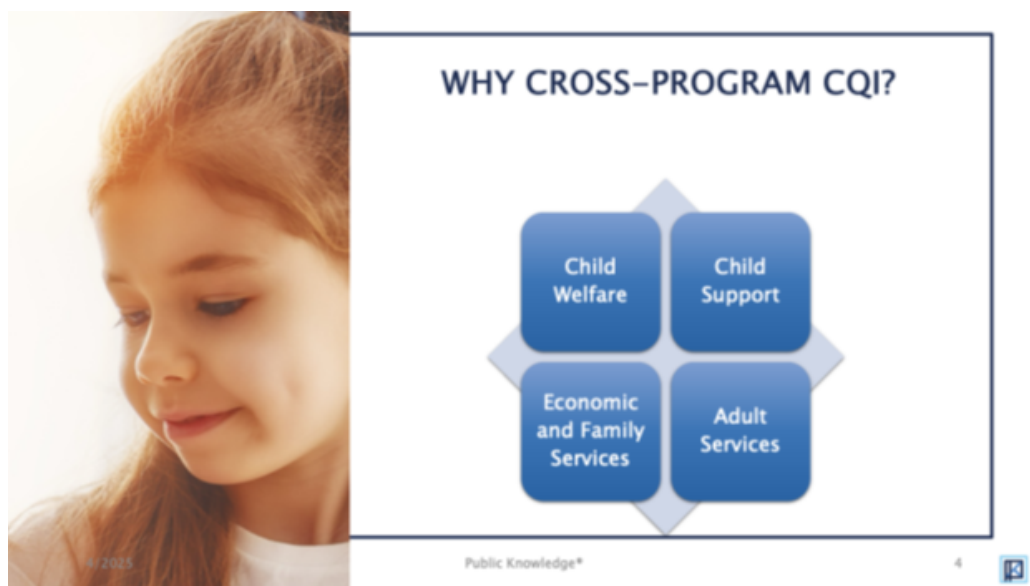




CQI is defined as the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions.¹ It relies on an organizational or system culture that is proactive and supports continuous learning. It is dependent upon the active inclusion and participation of staff at all levels of the agency as well as system partners. Partners may include youth, families, adults, courts, and other stakeholders.

- It is a philosophy; that places a high value on improvement.
- It is a process; that seeks to identify, describe, and analyze strengths and problems, then test, implement, learn from, and revise solutions.
- It is a system, a coherent set of components that supports the continuous improvement process²

The CQI process includes a set of essential tasks that take organizations from problem identification to developing a credible hypothesis about its cause. The process may be iterative as the discovery of new information can lead to new questions and deeper data analysis.



Successes and challenges are a regular part of work in the human services. Successes help validate our decision to work in a field that supports the people of North Carolina. Challenges can be frustrating and leave us feeling at a loss. But how do we improve? How

^{1,2} National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement



do we know what actions we should take for improvement? And how do we know if our actions are having the intended impact? That is the goal of continuous quality improvement or CQI.

In 2022, North Carolina with support from Public Knowledge, developed a CQI cycle to use across the following programs: Child Welfare, Child Support, Economic and Family Services including Food and Nutrition Services Work First, and Adult Services. A goal for the North Carolina Cross-Program CQI cycle is to establish a common framework facilitated by authentic partnerships and a teaming structure that supports the seamless and quality delivery of services and benefits to those served.

Successful implementation of the cycle included training, coaching, and support to train staff and apply the model to improve practice and impact for all services involved families across systems.

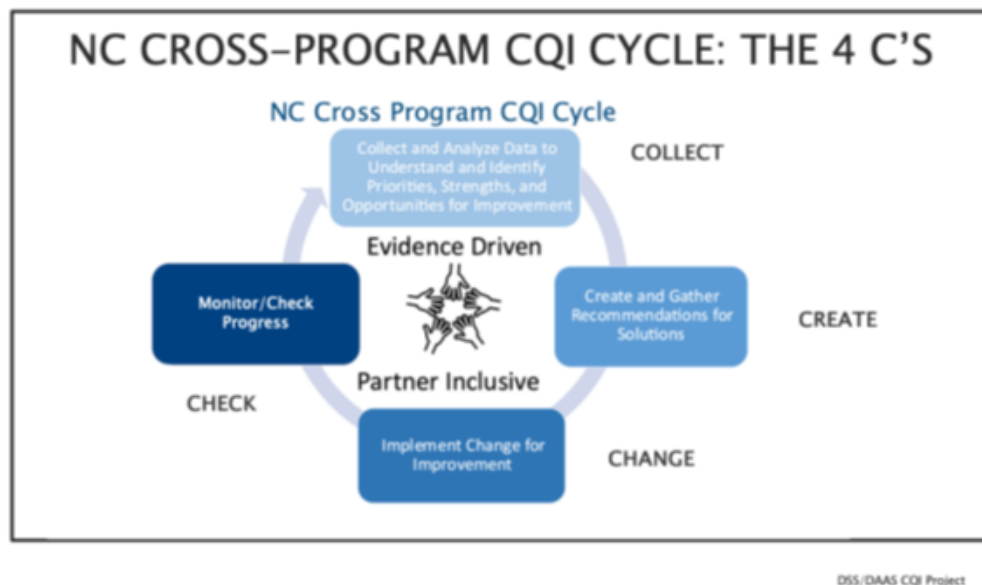
The North Carolina Cross-Program CQI Cycle allows DSS and DAS programs to effectively use data to systematically make decisions that will lead to desirable change at the state, regional, and county levels.



Developing a new cycle for CQI requires multiple steps. First, a Governance team was established that included representatives from DSS and DAS program areas. This multi-disciplinary team set a vision for CQI, set goals and strategic priorities, and promoted a program culture and climate to support CQI efforts at the state, program, regional, and local levels. Once a Governance team was established, A readiness process that aimed to assess staff and stakeholder motivation and capacity across all program areas was



established. This work included identifying data sources and developing surveys to assess department readiness. Thorough research was conducted on various cycles that were already adopted by North Carolina DSS and DAS programs, noting similarities and differences. And finally, a CQI foundational training program was developed to provide problem-solving approaches to social service issues across departments.



Leadership across the divisions spent several months going over individual CQI cycles in use in each division' and crafted the cross-program CQI cycle to be used across all divisions. The primary purpose of this is that while the content may be different, the state wants counties to experience the same way consistently.

The resulting four step CQI cycle is called the Four C's:

In the first phase of Collect, DSS and DAS programs examine multiple sources of data to identify programmatic strengths at the state, regional, and county levels and identify a root cause to an issue.

In the second phase of Create, programs research solutions to address the root cause of the problem by assessing its feasibility and effectiveness.

In the third phase of Change, the program develops an implementation plan for addressing the solution, which includes defining the activities and goals, developing a communication plan, and delivering training to program area staff.

In the last phase of Check, programs monitor the progress of the implemented solution to the problem. This evaluation requires actively assessing data, asking the right questions,



and identifying strengths and opportunities of the solution and the implementation process. Now that you have a background about NC's CQI cycle, please talk to your supervisor about accessing the CQI foundational training, which digs deeper into CQI and each phase of the cycle.