



Continuous Quality Improvement
at Casey Family Services

CQI

Casey Family Services is committed to improving the lives of at-risk youth and strengthening families and communities by providing high-quality, cost-effective services that advance both positive practice and sound public policy.



specialized foster care

Established by UPS founder Jim Casey in 1976 as a source for high-quality foster care, Casey Family Services today offers a broad range of programs aimed at achieving lifelong families for vulnerable youth and strengthening fragile families throughout the Northeast and in Baltimore, Maryland. Programs include permanency-focused specialized foster care, permanency planning for youth in the public child welfare system, and support for keeping youth safe and preventing them from returning to the child welfare system.

The direct service agency of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Services is a fully licensed and accredited nonprofit child welfare agency operating an administrative office in New Haven, Connecticut. Eight divisions operating a total of 11 offices are located in Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. Established in 1948 by Jim Casey and his siblings, the Foundation works to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is an organizational process in which staff identify and implement ongoing improvements in service delivery. CQI provides a vital way to assess and monitor the delivery of services to ensure that they are consistent with the organization's mission. Casey Family Services' mission is to improve the lives of at-risk youth and strengthen families and communities by providing high-quality, cost-effective services that advance both positive practice and sound public policy.

OUR WORK IS PERMANENCY FOCUSED.

We believe that every youth deserves a safe, stable, and legally permanent family to grow up in and to rely upon in young adulthood. In our permanency planning services, we work to transition youth, some of whom are in CFS specialized foster homes, from the foster care system to legally-permanent family relationships through reunification with birth parents, guardianship with kin, or adoption. In our family strengthening services, we work to keep children safely with their families to prevent them from re-entering the child welfare system.

OUR WORK IS SAFETY FOCUSED.

We recognize that because of histories of severe maltreatment some youth we serve may be at risk of further victimization. They also may engage in risk-taking behaviors that threaten their safety and well-being. Our work in specialized foster care, permanency planning, and family strengthening services involves specific interventions to minimize the likelihood of further harm or maltreatment.

OUR WORK IS EVIDENCE BASED.

Our work helps to ensure the well-being of youth and families by providing services that are evidence based and informed by best practices in the fields of social work, mental health, and medicine.

OUR WORK BUILDS ON THE STRENGTHS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL.

Casey Family Services works with youth and families to help them marshal strengths to improve their lives and grow and change in healthy ways. We take into account the specific needs and strengths of each youth and family.

OUR WORK IS OUTCOME FOCUSED.

Beginning with the initial service plan, Casey staff members work closely with youth, families, and other members of the permanency team to set measurable goals that reflect the specific strengths, needs, and challenges of each youth and family. We also evaluate our programs to ensure that the services we provide are effective.



post-permanency services



post-permanency services

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IS STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER DRIVEN

Continuous quality improvement at Casey Family Services utilizes staff, stakeholders, and consumers to improve service quality. Staff at all levels of the agency – administrative, direct services, supervisory, and managerial – participate in CQI.

Stakeholders, such as the Center for Effective Family Services and Systems' Board of Advisors, contribute by defining our mission and providing feedback on data collected in the five CQI domains noted below. Providers in the community have input through division-level focus groups. Consumers contribute through such activities as foster parent meetings, youth advisory boards, and biannual agency-wide consumer satisfaction surveys.



figure 1

Governance

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IS DATA DRIVEN

The CQI committee meets each quarter to analyze and interpret data and to design and carry out plans to improve services in the five domains depicted in Figure 1. These domains comprise:

Accreditation and Safety involves preparing the agency and its divisions for accreditation and licensing by various state departments and responding to recommendations of the accrediting and licensing bodies. In addition, the agency works to comply with safety requirements concerning properties, equipment, and employees.

Case Record Quality ensures all agency records meet case practice standards and include high-quality documentation.

Critical Incidents are occurrences that represent a risk to a client, foster family, staff member, the community, or Casey Family Services. Examples of critical incidents include a youth in foster care who is suspended from school or is hospitalized for a psychiatric problem.

Results Indicators offer important measures of system performance and consumer outcomes. For example, results indicators for the specialized foster care program include the number of youth exiting foster care to a legally permanent home.

Consumer and Stakeholder Satisfaction is solicited through surveys, focus groups, and advisory boards designed to evaluate the needs of the children and families we serve, as well as the needs of foster parents, providers, and other members of the community.



family reunification and preservation

AGENCY-WIDE COMMITTEE

Each division has a representative on the agency-wide CQI team who serves a term of two years. Every effort is made to ensure that members from the divisions represent all job categories. Deputy directors in each of our eight divisions are standing members of the CQI team, as are a number of representatives from different disciplines in our administrative office in New Haven.

DIVISION COMMITTEES

Each division has five subcommittees – one for each CQI domain. The division director or deputy director works with division staff to select subcommittee members based upon their interests and expertise. Subcommittees meet at least once per quarter. They assist in establishing quality improvement goals for CQI domains and in working toward achieving these goals within each division. Subcommittees play a pivotal role in carrying out improvement work within their divisions.

Committee Activities

CREATING GOALS

CQI representatives work with division subcommittees to establish CQI goals which representatives record in the five domains of the CQI database. All staff can access this database to view and track their participation in CQI goals. Representatives also assist in reviewing data from the critical incident and case record quality databases. CQI goals are individualized to the division's needs, measurable, and time focused.

PREPARATION AND ACTION PLANNING

Division CQI representatives prepare for quarterly agency-wide meetings by reviewing data from the five domains to identify division trends and working with the subcommittees to revise goals or formulate new ones. After the agency-wide meeting, representatives brief their division management and CQI subcommittees and resume planning for the current quarter and year.

When the CQI committee identifies agency-wide trends or challenges, it either establishes a work group to learn more about such issues or recommends to agency management that specific changes be made to agency policies or case practice standards.



specialized foster care

Committee Structure

FEEDBACK

The director of clinical services provides ongoing feedback regarding CQI activities to the Executive Committee and the Management Team. The deputy executive director of field operations also communicates important developments from the CQI team to the Executive Committee. When CQI members complete a large-scale project – such as a consumer satisfaction survey – the findings are presented to the agency’s Management Team and the Center for Effective Family Services and Systems’ Board of Advisors. The CQI team provides summary reports from these studies to consumers and to staff throughout the agency. The Management Team reviews the agency CQI plan annually to ensure that it addresses organizational or programmatic changes that have occurred during the past year.

CONCLUSION

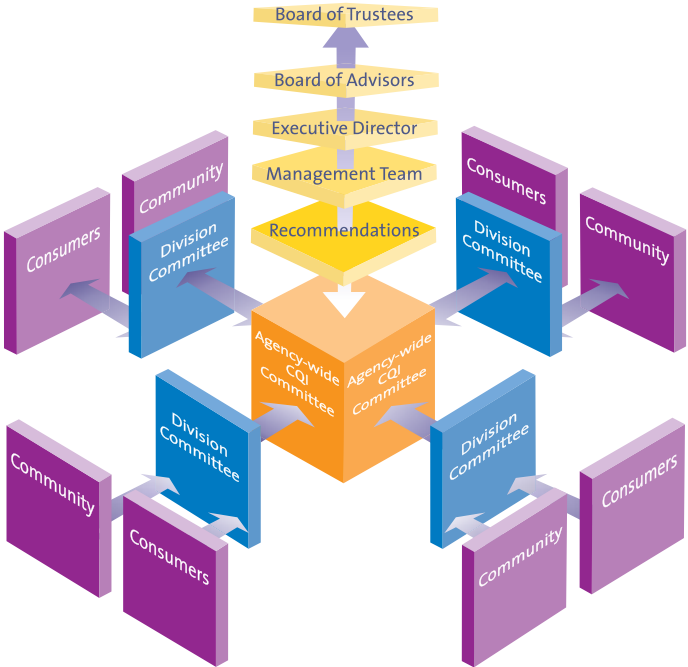
Since its start in 1976, Casey Family Services has evolved into a model child welfare agency that contributes to best practice. Since 2006 through our Move to Greater Permanence initiative, we have focused intensely on ensuring that youth in the child welfare system achieve legal permanency through reunification, guardianship or adoption. Particular emphasis is placed on serving older youth who are at high risk of aging out of the foster care system without a legal parent and, consequently, becoming vulnerable to many of the poor outcomes such as homelessness and incarceration associated with this population.

As we carry the lessons of our work to others, Casey continues to improve the quality of its direct service work so that it reflects the agency’s mission. Casey Family Services remains committed to its mission to provide high-quality, cost-effective services to vulnerable children and families that advance positive practice and sound public policy.



transitioning into adulthood

figure 2



Summary



Improving the lives of at-risk children and strengthening families and communities



The Annie E. Casey Foundation

701 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.547.6600
www.aecf.org

Casey Family Services

127 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510
203.401.6900
888.799.KIDS
www.caseyfamilyservices.org



THE ANNIE E. CASEY
FOUNDATION



THE DIRECT SERVICE AGENCY OF
THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION