

Richmond Youth Program Quality Intervention Process Details

Getting Started

The YPQI Assess-Plan-Improve sequence begins in August of each year with the *Kickoff* event and continues throughout the year. Each site designates a staff member to serve as the Site Lead. The Site Lead is usually a site manager, supervisor, or director, but could be anyone at the site. It is important that this person has sufficient time to coordinate the process and attend all trainings. An OST time organization that operates multiple sites should designate a Site Lead for each site, rather than having one person designated for multiple sites.

Learning the Basics

Following the *Kickoff* event, which is held as a welcome and introduction for the new sites, the Site Lead attends the *Basics* training. *Basics* is an all-day training that prepares the Site Leads to conduct the program self-assessment. At the training, participants will learn about the continuous quality process as well as the PQA (Program Quality Assessment) tool that will be used in the self-assessment process. The PQA evaluates the quality of youth experiences as youth attend workshops and classes, complete group projects, and participate in meetings and regular program activities. Sites can choose to use either the Youth PQA (for grades 4 – 12) or the School-Age PQA (for grades K-6).



Self Assessment Process



After the Site Lead completes the *Basics* training, he or she then assembles the site team that will conduct the assessment. This team is typically comprised of program staff, but may also include volunteers, youth, board members, parents, or even community members. In addition to the Site Lead, it is recommended that the team consist of 1-3 additional members. After the site team members have been selected, the Site Lead will train the other team members on the PQA as well as create a schedule for the self-assessment. The schedule will give each team member an opportunity to observe an offering and ensure a variety of offerings are observed and scored on the PQA. After all of the data has been collected, the Site Lead guides the team in scoring a single, site-wide PQA. These scores are then entered into the online Scores Reporter by the Site Lead. A brief, one hour webinar will familiarize new Site Leads with the online Scores Reporter system.

External Assessments

While the Site Lead is coordinating the self-assessment with the site team, an External Assessor will also come into the site to conduct an assessment. External Assessors are fellow Site Leads, supervisors, and managers from OST time organizations within the Richmond Region who are also involved in the YPQI process. In order to become an External Assessor, a participant must attend a two-day training that primarily consists of practice video scoring of the PQA. Participants who successfully achieve acceptable levels of reliability (80% at the item level) through a video reliability check become "Endorsed Assessors" and are able to collect "research quality data." After the first year, External Assessors attend a one-day refresher training and must successfully achieve acceptable levels of reliability. The External Assessor also inputs the scores from the assessment into the online Scores Reporter.

Improvement Planning

The Assess-Plan-Improve sequence continues with the *Planning with Data* training. Assessment and evaluation can supply a wealth of valuable data about the quality of a youth program. But assessment just provides the data – a list of numbers and words. *Planning with Data* is about examining data to make meaningful improvement plans. This training prepares Site Leads to develop effective program improvement plans and to take this planning process back to their program settings where they will develop an Improvement Plan with their site team.



Once the Improvement Plan is entered into the online Scores Reporter system, it is now time to implement the final aspect of the Assess-Plan-Improve sequence. Implementing a program improvement plan can be considered the most important step. While it is crucial to assess and plan for improvement, unless change actually happens, the process was in vain. In order to support this process, various Methods trainings are offered for both the Site Lead and staff members to attend. These 2 ½ hour workshops are aligned with the items on the POA and are facilitated by other members of the Richmond Region who have attended the Youth Work Methods Training of Trainers. The sites then spend the remainder of the spring and into the summer to implement their Improvement Plans and gear up for another year.

If you are interesting in participating in the next cycle of YPOI, please contact Shekinah Mitchell at sdmitchell@vcu.edu.