Administrative Policies and Procedures: 1.3

Subject: Continuous Quality Improvement: Communication, Meetings, Information Sharing, Policy Development and Review

Authority: TCA 37-5-105 (3); 37-5-106; 37-5-112; 37-5-128

Standards: DCS Practice Standards: 2-100A, 2-206, 8-306; COA: AM 6, 7

Application: To All Department of Children’s Services Employees and Contract Provider Employees

Policy Statement:
The Department of Children’s Services (DCS) shall promote an environment that encourages open communications, information sharing and team building among all employees and shall establish a formal, centralized system of Continuous Quality Improvement for facilitating communication within DCS. DCS employees at all levels shall have timely access to information related to the mission, vision and values, guiding principles, professional practice standards, goals, policies and procedures, other practice-related documents and processes of the department resulting in positive outcomes for children, youth and families.

Purpose:
DCS establishes and maintains a Continuous Quality Improvement Program to ensure regular channels of communication that are necessary for delegating authority, assigning responsibility, supervising work, coordinating efforts and complying with standards of professional practice.

Procedures:

A. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

1. The Office of Continuous Quality Improvement is organized under the direction of the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Continuous Quality Improvement. The Division of Performance and Quality Improvement is responsible for effective implementation of a collaborative statewide CQI program.

2. The department establishes written and consistent CQI standards, practices and requirements within the Performance and Quality Improvement Program Manual.

3. The Department applies the CQI process consistently across the State with a designated CQI Coordinator located in Central Office, each region and Youth Development Center (YDC).

4. All staff participates in the CQI process through Unit staff meetings and CQI workgroups in which all staff have an opportunity to participate.

5. CQI workgroups utilize agency and other data available whenever engaging in problem solving or engaging in discussions regarding outcomes for children and families.
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1. DCS policies and procedures are developed or revised when there is a need to **regulate**, **direct**, or **inform** and to guide DCS practices, operations and services to ensure compliance with applicable State and Federal Rules and Laws, Best Practice Standards, judicial mandates and managerial decisions and directives. (Refer to the DCS **Manual for Developing and Maintaining Policies and Procedures**.)

2. Whenever possible and appropriate, policies are written or revised in the context of a collaborative CQI meeting with all key stakeholders present to ensure adequate input is received during development.

3. A comprehensive review of all departmental policies and procedures and related documents is performed at least annually, or as prescribed by DCS Management.

6. All Central Office Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Executive Directors and Directors, Regional Administrators, Youth Development Center Superintendents, Supervisors and Managers or their designees ensure meetings are scheduled and held as often as necessary with applicable employees and relevant community partners to revisit the department’s vision, mission, values and goals, explore problem areas, engage in quality improvement activities and to facilitate communication, information sharing and team decision-making.

7. Regular agency meetings, such as staff meetings and routine CQI meetings should be held monthly when appropriate, but no less often than quarterly.

8. A schedule for regular meetings is established so that employees are aware when meetings will be held so they can arrange their schedules and appointments.

9. **Documentation and Distribution of Meeting Minutes**
   a) All meeting minutes are:
      - Documented appropriately and kept up-to-date
      - Distributed timely, within five (5) business days of the meeting
      - Maintained on file for review for two (2) years (Records Disposition Authority (RDA) Policy SW05)
      - Meeting minutes are documented on form **CS-0987, Meeting Minutes**.
   b) For the purposes of cross-functionality and continuous quality improvement, all agency meeting minutes are maintained on the agency shared drive.
   c) Executive Directors and/or Central Office Directors or their designees are responsible for distributing regional/field/facility/contract provider meeting minutes to designated Program Supervisors-Managers to facilitate communication, and to enhance policy development, policy review and technical assistance as outlined in the DCS **Protocol for Communication of Policies and Procedures and Practice-Related Documents: Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors**.

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**B. Policy development, review and communication**

Original Effective Date: DCS 1.3, 04/01/97
Current Effective Date: 03/29/18
Supersedes: DCS 1.3, 06/25/15
CS-0001
RDA SW22
4. When new/revised policies and procedures, protocols, manuals or other practice-related documents are implemented, Managers and Supervisors or their designees must provide instruction, review and/or training on policies and documents that are relevant to an employee’s position and/or job duties.

5. Policy review, instruction and/or training may be accomplished through a formalized communication process (e.g., meetings, on-the-job training, video conferences, computer-based training, mentoring with other employees, etc, or a combination of these examples). Review DCS *Protocol for Communication of Policies and Procedures and Practice-Related Documents: Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors*.

6. All DCS offices, facilities and contract provider locations ensure employees have access to all applicable DCS policies and procedures, manuals, protocols, work aids or other practice-related documents.

7. DCS policies and procedures are reviewed and approved by the appropriate program Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Executive Director, Director, Legal Counsel and official approval (by signature) of the Commissioner.

### C. Local procedures

1. Local procedures may be written by DCS regions/facilities when an official DCS policy does not cover a subject or procedure that is *unique* to the particular region/ facility/office, or when there is a need to *expand* procedures for the region/facility/office.

2. Refer to the DCS *Manual for Developing and Maintaining Policies and Procedures, Local Procedures* section for additional information and instructions on formulating local procedures.

3. All local procedures are documented on form *CS-0251, Local Administrative Procedures*.

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**Forms:**

- CS-0251, Local Administrative Procedures
- CS-0479, Acknowledgement/Verification of Policy Review and Other Documents
- CS-0724, Employee Monthly Training Roster
- CS-0987, Meeting Minutes

**Collateral documents:**

- *Protocol for Communication of Policies and Procedures and Practice-Related Documents: Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors*
- *Manual for Developing Policies and Procedures*
- *Performance and Quality Improvement Program Manual*
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td>Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):</td>
<td>The complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. It relies on an organizational culture that is proactive and supports continuous learning. CQI is firmly grounded in the overall mission, vision, and values of DCS.</td>
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