



moving forward, together

Month-by-Month Guide to AAHSA Quality First

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There is no one right way or chronology to implementing AAHSA Quality First in your organization. AAHSA offers a “Step-by-Step Guide to AAHSA Quality First” and a one-page “Quick Guide to AAHSA Quality First”; some aging services organizations may prefer this “Month-by-Month Guide”. All of the guides, as well as materials noted below, are available on our web site, www.aahsa.org/qualityfirst.

You may also want to use the check-boxes next to each item as you complete it.

The most important things to do every month:

- Review the AAHSA Quality First web site for useful information, resource materials, and success stories told by your fellow members.
- Include information about your AAHSA Quality First progress in your communications to residents/clients (newsletter, web site, bulletin board, meeting).
- Set a date for the next month’s meeting for the committee/task force that is working on AAHSA Quality First.
- Get creative, experiment, share stories, and focus on integrating AAHSA Quality First into your organization’s mission.

The most important things to do each individual month:

Month 1 _____

- Familiarize yourself with AAHSA Quality First at the AAHSA Quality First web site (www.aahsa.org/qualityfirst).
- Brief your staff leadership and governing board about AAHSA Quality First.
- Sign the Quality First Covenant and send it to AAHSA so that your organization can be listed on our web site.
- Establish your Quality First committee (or use an appropriate existing committee). You might consider creating a committee that includes all key stakeholders, such as staff, residents, family members, management and board of trustees. Identify the committee chair.
- Put AAHSA’s upcoming conferences and your state association’s conferences on your calendar.
- Set a date for a meeting of the committee or task force that is working on AAHSA Quality First.

Month 2 _____

- ❑ Schedule periodic (but regular) AAHSA Quality First briefings for your staff and your board of trustees.
- ❑ Your Quality First committee will determine which groups should complete the AAHSA Quality First Self-Study.
- ❑ Complete the AAHSA Quality First Self-Study.

Month 3 _____

- ❑ Review the results of your AAHSA Quality First Self-Study and develop a plan based on your findings. Most likely your organization is doing quite well in many areas, and needs to improve in other areas.
- ❑ Celebrate the positive results of your Quality First Self-Study. Look at the resource materials in the Public Relations section of our web site to identify ways to tell your story to your residents/clients and their families, the media and others.
- ❑ Prioritize the Quality First Elements of Quality that you want to improve; establish goals.

Month 4 _____

- ❑ Identify tools and resources that you need to further assist your organization with implementing Quality First. Many resource materials are listed in the Resources section of the AAHSA Quality First web site. Feel free to contact us with questions.
- ❑ Begin to implement your improvement initiatives based on your Self-Study results.

Month 5 _____

- ❑ What kind of resistance are you running into so far? From the staff? From your Board? From your residents/clients? Should you sidestep the conflicts, take them head on, or retreat? View the AAHSA Quality First web site for help in addressing these questions; see the Frequently-Asked Questions section.
- ❑ Identify ways to further improve the most appreciated and successful programs and practices of your organization. When your residents/clients are “satisfied,” this is proof that these programs have the potential to be an outstanding source of happiness and productivity throughout the organization. Develop these programs that could be your organization’s trademark.

Month 6 _____

- ❑ Review your AAHSA Quality First Self-Study. Which goals have you accomplished? What new goals would you like to pursue?
- ❑ Now that you have established Quality First into your organization, consider which employees (both management and staff) have a particular affinity to Quality First. Reach out to these people, and offer to develop their talents in ways that will help integrate and enhance the quality of your services. Even if you can think of nothing to offer them, tell them you appreciate their excellent work, and that you can tell the residents/clients feel the same way.

Month 7 _____

- ❑ Customer satisfaction surveys serve a useful purpose by reporting in the aggregate. Incorporate the survey results in your action plan.

Month 8 _____

- ❑ Consider how to make Quality First an ongoing and shared process within your organization, in the aging services field in general and in your local community. How can you tell your story? In fact, ask your board, management and even your residents/clients, “What is our story?” and “How are we proud of this story?”
- ❑ Tell this story to each other in your organization, the local media, community organizations and your fellow providers.

Month 9 _____

- ❑ Return to your AAHSA Quality First Self-Study. Which goals have you accomplished? What new goals would you like to pursue? In light of your mission and diverse feedback, consider whether you want to spend most of your energy enhancing strengths or improving weaknesses.

Month 10 _____

- ❑ Identify newsworthy aspects of your AAHSA Quality First initiative; contact your local media. Visit the AAHSA Quality First web site’s Public Relations section for guidance.
- ❑ As you plan for the next year, review the AAHSA Quality First 10 Elements of Quality and how your organization addressed its strengths and weaknesses regarding each element.

Month 11 _____

- ❑ Consider how your organization can continue to improve quality and earn public trust next year. Given the characteristics of those in your organization (residents/clients/staff/board), how should you proceed?

Month 12 _____

- ❑ Recap your AAHSA Quality First accomplishments for the past year. Celebrate with your staff, board and residents/clients! Give reassurance, recognition, and encouragement to all who need and deserve it.
- ❑ Review your AAHSA Quality First Self-Study. Which goals have you accomplished? What new goals would you like to pursue?
- ❑ Communicate with other members, and return again and again to your organization’s mission, for this will never lead you astray.