CONFERENCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Deadline for Submission: May 1, 2026
Conference Dates: October 13 & 14, 2026
Location: I Hotel and Illinois Conference Center, Champaign, IL
Submit Proposal: https://forms.gle/Yp6sBbN18At8CQ8QA or
EventsAir: submission link coming soon!
Submit questions to: CQICommunity@gmail.com

MISSION OF THE ILLINOIS CQI COMMUNITY GROUP

We are a community of human services professionals working to promote and enhance the value of CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) by providing opportunities for professional development, peer support, and collaboration.

ABOUT THE 2026 CQI CONFERENCE: "From Surviving to Thriving: The Next Chapter of CQI."

The 2026 Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Conference represents a pivotal moment for our field. As organizations navigate growing complexity, workforce pressures, and evolving community needs, CQI remains an essential framework for moving beyond day-to-day problem solving toward stronger, more resilient systems.

This year's conference focuses on how CQI helps organizations stabilize what matters most, strengthen relationships and processes, and build the capacity to sustain meaningful improvement over time. Sessions will highlight practical tools, lessons learned from the field, and forward-thinking approaches that help teams move from managing challenges to creating environments where people, services, and systems can truly excel.

Attendees will explore how to:

- Strengthen system reliability and reduce inefficiencies
- Support and sustain the workforce through smarter processes
- Deepen partnerships with families and communities
- Use data as a tool for learning and insight
- Design systems that work in real-world conditions
- Advance equity through improvement efforts
- Grow leadership capacity at all levels
- Turn short-term fixes into sustainable change

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

The CQI Community Group's annual conference is a capacity building and networking event that brings together leaders, practitioners, and visionaries from diverse sectors. It is an opportunity for people from a variety of professional backgrounds to come together to explore strategies for developing, managing, and participating in the CQI process that will lead to better outcomes for children, adults, families, and communities. The conference will have sessions for professionals of all levels from basic to advanced CQI knowledge and skills.

CQI IS FOR EVERYONE

When we say CQI is for everyone, we mean everyone. Our audience is primarily CQI staff, but also includes leadership and direct-service staff from community-based, academic, state, behavioral health, medical, and government settings. The CQI Community Group promotes diversity among workshop presenters and is committed to building a vibrant and empowered community.

We encourage submissions from a variety of professional affiliations (government, academic, corporate, non-profit, medical, behavioral health, or community-based providers), organization sizes (small, medium, or large), experience levels (whether you are a subject matter expert with a research team or a quality improvement peer with a great idea), and geography (both inside and outside Illinois). Collaborative sessions representing multiple organizations are also encouraged. We want to hear from you!

KEY FOCUS AREAS

We are seeking proposals that provide practical, proven, or promising CQI strategies, methods, and tools. Strong proposals will demonstrate how improvement efforts help organizations strengthen systems, support people, and create lasting impact.

Presentation styles include the following:

- **Impact Stories:** A short 15 minute, story-driven session highlighting how an organization created or implemented a CQI strategy or method, including key successes and challenges in the field (Ted Talk-Style).
- **Informative:** This session is centered on the transfer of knowledge through structured formats such as panels, case studies, lecture, or sharing practical organizational lessons learned.
- **Collaborative:** This session includes group activities, panels (Q&A), roundtables, or group learning with discussion between presenters and attendees.
- **Skill-Building:** This is a step-by-step skill-building interactive session with demonstrations, teaching, hands-on practice, and take-home resources.

Suggested topics include, but are *not limited* to:

- **Stabilizing Systems Under Pressure:**
  Improving reliability in high-risk or high-stress processes, reducing variability, strengthening safety practices, mitigating risks, and using CQI to create stability during times of change or uncertainty.
- **Supporting and Sustaining the Workforce:**
  Improving staff experience, reducing burden, strengthening engagement, and creating psychologically safe, learning-focused environments.
- **Strengthening Relationships with Families and Communities**
  Authentic engagement of families and individuals with lived experience, trust-building, feedback loops, culturally responsive practices, and community partnerships.
- **Using Data as a Tool for Learning**
  Meaningful measurement, data visualization, balancing qualitative and quantitative information, data storytelling, and shifting from compliance-driven reporting to learning-driven improvement.
- **Designing Systems That Work for Real Life**
  Process mapping, workflow redesign, reducing inefficiencies, simplifying systems, and designing with staff and families in mind.
- **Growing Leadership Capacity at Every Level**
  CQI as a leadership mindset, change management, shared ownership of improvement, and aligning CQI with strategic direction.
- **Moving From Short-Term Fixes to Sustainable Impact**
  Scaling improvements, embedding CQI into daily practice, governance structures, and building adaptive learning systems.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Virtual RFP Informational Sessions. Please register for one:
  - March 23, 2026 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. CDT
    https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/fNyRCqR9QNCtbuxnc8a0Sg or
  - April 22, 2026 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. CDT
    https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Vef7ej4tQpiJK8FRjKFk6w
- Proposals are due **May 1, 2026.**
- Proposals will be selected and presenters will be notified by June 22, 2026.
- If accepted, an informational session will be scheduled in early August 2026.
- Presentation(s) will be due October 9, 2026.
- Conference: October 13 & 14, 2026 at the I Hotel and Illinois Conference Center in Champaign, Illinois.
- Only 3 speakers per organization will qualify for the reduced speaker registration fee of **$275**.

SPEAKER REGISTRATION AND ACCESSIBILITY EXPECTATIONS

In keeping with universal design for learning, speakers will be asked to send their presentation materials in advance so participants have early access to the content in support of diverse learning and accessibility needs. Materials will then be posted on the CQI Community website after the conference.

RFP APPLICATION

PLEASE COMPLETE <u>ALL</u> FIELDS:

Primary Presenter *(individual with whom all communication will occur)*				
Name		Degree(s)		
Pronouns				
Position/Job Title				
Organization				
Address				
City		State	Zip Code	
Phone		E-mail		

Co-Presenter				
Name		Degree(s)		
Pronouns				
Position/Job Title				
Organization				
Address				
City		State	Zip Code	
Phone		E-mail		

Co-Presenter				
Name		Degree(s)		
Pronouns				
Position/Job Title				
Organization				
Address				
City		State	Zip Code	
Phone		E-mail		

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Title of Presentation:**

2. **List 3 to 4 learning objectives attendees will learn from your presentation:**

3. **Conference Presentation Description:**
   Describe your session in 200 words or less. Explain how your topic is practical and relevant for the attendees of this event. Use compelling language that will not only clarify what attendees can expect but will also encourage them to attend. Include your preferred target audience (ex. brand new to CQI, intermediate knowledge of excel etc.) This will serve as the workshop description in the conference program.

4. **What tools, techniques, engagement tactics, games, and/or handouts will be shared during your session?**

5. **Type of Presentation** *(select one)* Please refer to the* [CQI: 2026 Conference](#) *for more detail.*
   ☐ **Impact Stories (15 mins)**
   ☐ **Informative (45 mins)**
   ☐ **Collaborative (45-60 mins)**
   ☐ **Skill-Building (75 mins)**

6. **Preferred group size** *(select one)**
   ☐ **Small (up to 45)**
   ☐ **Medium (up to 75)**
   ☐ **Large (up to 150)**

7. **Suggested topics, but are *not limited* to** *(select 1-2 areas that best match your proposal) Please refer to the* [CQI: 2026 Conference website](#) *for more detail.*
   ☐ **Stabilizing Systems Under Pressure**
   ☐ **Supporting and Sustaining the Workforce**
   ☐ **Strengthening Relationships With Families and Communities**
   ☐ **Using Data as a Tool for Learning**
   ☐ **Designing Systems That Work for Real Life**
   ☐ **Growing Leadership Capacity at Every Level**
   ☐ **Moving From Short-Term Fixes to Sustainable Impact**
   ☐ **Other (please specify) _____**

8. **Is there any additional information you would like to share with the 2026 CQI Annual Conference Steering Committee as we review your application?**

We aim to honor your preferences whenever possible. However, please note that factors such as the size of the group and the duration of your presentation may be adjusted based on the overall needs of the conference schedule.

TO BE CONSIDERED, YOUR APPLICATION <u>MUST</u> INCLUDE ALL THE MATERIALS BELOW:
More than one file can be uploaded for each document below. After adding a file, click "Add file" again to add additional supporting documentation.
- Completed RFP Application
- Detailed presentation outline
- Resume for each presenter
- Biography for each presenter (150 words or less)
- High Resolution Headshot (3x4" at 300dpi., jpg file)

Optional at time of RFP submission:
- Draft slides/presentation handouts
- Short 90 second or less YouTube video sample

To be completed by October 9th and requested for the conference website and program:
- Presentation Slides/Handouts