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## DELAWARE'S QUALITY IMPROVEMENT UNIT

### **Background:**

Delaware's Quality Improvement Unit (QIU) was developed as a consequence of an agency-wide need for a formal Quality Assurance Program that was identified by an internal workgroup in 2003, and due to an immediate need to address reoccurring data reliability audit failures as identified via federal audit processes.

DCSE began defining the QIU tasks during a two-year federal 1115 Demonstration Grant in 2004. The purpose of the grant was to *Stabilize the Paternity Establishment Participation Rate and Improve Paternity Related Data Reliability*. Once the grant ended, the division expanded the quality assurance related grant activities and formed the Quality Improvement Unit.

The formal Quality Improvement Unit began with the designation of the Quality Improvement Administrator on February 1, 2007 and the lateral transferring of three senior Child Support Specialists on April 9<sup>th</sup> and April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Staff Credentials:**

Each QI staff member has over 11 years of child support experience. Also, the unit has a collective wealth of experience in the area of DCSE Operations, DCSE CSU, departmental auditing and court experience. Though not by design, the Division has QIU representation in each of our three counties.

### **Purpose:**

To conduct quality assurance tasks that will ensure that the division performs well in various audits and evaluations; to identify agency strengths and weaknesses, and recommend improvement strategies.

### **Objectives:**

- 1) Review Paternity Guides. This is an internal Quality Improvement data gathering tool that is used to obtain wedlock and paternity information. This is one of the unit's primary tasks.
- 2) Assist in researching Federal Data Reliability Audits (DRA) cases. Five (5) Federal performance measures (*phased-in tasks*):
  - a) Paternity Establishment Percentage
  - b) Percent of Case with a Child Support Order
  - c) Percent of Current Support Collected
  - d) Percent of Cases with Arrearage Collections
  - e) Cost Effective Performance Levels

- 3) Assist with any data reliability clean-up projects
- 4) Conduct internal Data Reliability Audits (DRA) that mirror the federal audit (*phased-in tasks*):
- 5) Manage/Conduct the Annual Self-Assessment Review (OCSE Requirement)
 

a) Case Closure	e) Expedited Process (6 months) (12 months)
b) Disbursement of Collections	f) Interstate Services
c) Enforcement of Orders	g) Medical Support Enforcement
d) Establishment of Paternity and Support Orders	h) Review and Adjustment (Modifications)
- 6) Assist in researching Organization-wide audit cases (*aka State auditors*)
- 7) Assist in completing the Customer Satisfaction Survey
- 8) Analyze new agency-wide Worker Performance Report which will provide performance outcomes by worker and by county.

**Unique QIU Duties:**

Although QIU members are no longer a part of the division's Operations and Customer Service sections, they are required to attend court mediation once per month and assist with our Customer Service call center. This requirement has been beneficial because it:

- 1) Sends a "team work" message to everyone
- 2) Expands QIU skills
- 3) Helps the division identify inconsistencies across county lines
- 4) Reminds QIU members how it feels to have their work scrutinized

**Lessons Learned:**

- 1) Have QI representation in each county, but, when possible, do not assign staff to conduct reviews in their home office
- 2) Encourage Operations personnel to challenge QIU findings ("win/win" for DCSE)
- 3) Give staff the ability to brainstorm ideas
- 4) Respect staff experience and abilities