



Contractor Quality Assurance Policy

I. Overview

The City of Gaithersburg's Community Impact and Youth Enrichment Committees, in partnership with the grants management team of the Community Services Division, are tasked with awarding and monitoring grants to nonprofits to serve City residents in need and are responsible for ensuring the proper stewardship of public funds.

The Community Impact Committee is tasked with exploring gaps in social services for City residents, developing biennial priority need areas for the issuance of grants to nonprofit agencies and faith-based entities, reviewing and evaluating grant proposal submissions, participating in annual grantee site visits and report reviews, and making recommendations to the Mayor and City Council for funding. The Youth Enrichment Committee makes recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on funding impactful youth enrichment programs after identifying youth priority needs.

Quality Assurance and a Quality Improvement Plan of the Community Services Division provide evaluation of contract services, supports contractors, and makes recommendations for contract renewal, improvement, and support when needed.

Quality Assurance Reports, including the Quarterly Quality Assurance Report, Site Visit Quality Assurance Review, and the Desk-Side Site Visit Review, are scored on a 1–4 performance rating scale, evaluating accuracy, completeness, and compliance with contract requirements.

This scoring will help:

- call out performance successes
- alert to possible performance issues
- make the grant cycle more cohesive and consistent across funding areas

As questions arise that need to be addressed in these reviews and/or scores come in lower than satisfactory according to the signed contract, Community Services staff will set meetings with the respective contractors to determine how they can be supported to improve performance and scoring.

Quality Assurance scores will be reviewed and factored in on future grant application submissions, in the category of Past Performance with the City.

The Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement process works to support City objectives to enhance needed service delivery and achieve the best outcomes for City residents. Community Services is committed to a transparent and consistent approach that aligns with best practices in our grant evaluation and monitoring efforts.

II. Quality Assurance Ratings

On the Quarterly Quality Assurance Report, approved program outputs and outcomes, narrative reporting, financials, and addresses provided by the contractor will be evaluated. The narrative section of the report should support the data provided from reported outputs and outcomes. The scoring system ranges from 1 to 4, outlined as follows:

- 4 -- strong
- 3 -- satisfactory
- 2 -- unsatisfactory
- 1 -- poor/unacceptable

Detailed notes will be provided to contractors to clarify the rationale of any scores of 1 or 2 and will require follow-up action with the contractor to improve performance.

III. Site Visits Quality Assurance Review

Quality Assurance site visits are conducted once a year by the Community Services Division of the City of Gaithersburg. During these visits, the evaluator will assess several program components including environmental conditions, program implementation, and compliance and accountability of program services. These visits are scored on a scale of 1 – 4 as follows:

- 4 -- strong
- 3 -- satisfactory
- 2 -- unsatisfactory
- 1 -- poor/unacceptable

IV. Desk-Side Site Visit Review

A desk-side site visit is meant to provide a hands-on, collaborative review of a grantee's compliance and reporting practices in a more informal, supportive setting than a full audit. Visits will typically be conducted prior to Quarter 3 to verify compliance with contract requirements, including outputs, outcomes, addresses, invoices, financials, and, if necessary, client files.

These visits use the same 1–4 performance rating scale. If a score of 2 or 1 is assigned, a follow-up visit will be scheduled within two weeks of the initial meeting and/or a Quality Improvement Plan will be implemented.

The City has found that many reports, invoices, and address listings have often required revisions after submission. These desk-side visits are intended to reduce errors and ensure that report submissions are accurate and complete, while also providing an opportunity to address any questions or challenges contractors may have. The accuracy of reporting is an important part of the Quality Assurance process. Because Quality Assurance report scores impact future application and proposal evaluations, the City's goal is to help grantees achieve the highest possible Quality Assurance score.

1. Materials Needed 24-Hours Before Visit:

- Draft of Q2 or Q3 report so it can be reviewed ahead of time.
- If requested, a list of City resident client identifiers (such as client initials, client ID, or case number) receiving program services. From this list, 10 cases will be randomly selected for audit.

2. During the Visit, Please Be Prepared To:

- Show financial documents demonstrating that grant funds are being spent on approved expenses.
- Provide evidence of outcomes as outlined in your grant agreement.

V. Components of the Quality Improvement Plan

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) provides a structured approach to support underperforming organizations and help them align with the expectations from the City of Gaithersburg. The plan will typically include:

1. **Performance Review Meeting (PRM)** -- a one-on-one session between the City and the organization to review the Quality Assurance scoring. A discussion of specific areas of

concern, backed by detailed notes from the evaluation process will take place, along with directions on how to complete the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Form.

2. **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Form** -- Community Services will review the QIP Form with the Contractor during the PRM, in person or virtually. The QIP Form must be submitted within two weeks of the date of the PRM. Contractors can work with the grants management staff for support during this time. Community Services will then approve the plan or request more information. Site visits may also be requested. The QIP Form includes:
 - a. Root Cause Analysis -- identification of underlying reasons for underperformance, such as staffing shortages, resource gaps, programmatic challenges, etc.
 - b. Actionable Steps -- development of clear, measurable steps the organization plans to take to improve their performance and meet contract goals. This could include additional staff training, adjustments to service delivery models, revised program goals, etc. This could also include contract modifications, if necessary.
 - c. Support Mechanisms -- identification of resources or assistance the City can provide, such as technical support, connections to other successful contractors, or guidance on best practices.
 - d. Timeline for Improvement -- establishment of a realistic timeline including milestones for the organization to show progress in the identified areas of concern.
 - e. Follow-Up and Monitoring -- regular check-ins to assess the organization's progress and provide continued support. After the timeline concludes, a reevaluation of the organization's performance with adjustments can be made to the QIP as needed.

By implementing these Quality Improvement Plans, the City aims to ensure that all organizations under contract with the City have the tools and guidance needed to meet their contract goals. This approach is intended to not only strengthen individual organizations but also enhance the overall impact of collaborative efforts for the benefit of City of Gaithersburg residents.