F. Quality Control System

1. Program intent

Quality Control (QC) provides information about eligibility and the correctness of benefits. This is a part of a federal and state Performance Reporting System.

The results of the information gathered by QC serve as a management tool. Federal agencies or state management in CAF, DMAP or APD may use the information gathered by the Quality Control Unit (QCU). QC review information may influence agency policy decisions or legislative actions. The QC information also influences corrective action plans. A part of the QC data includes case and household characteristic information.

2. Quality Control; overview

QC is a multipurpose system. QCU conducts QC reviews to determine:

- If households are eligible for benefits and receiving the correct benefits;
- If the decision to deny, terminate or suspend benefits was correct.

QCU conducts QC reviews on federally matched programs. The programs reviewed include SNAP and Medical. Cases are chosen monthly for review. Other programs (i.e., TANF, OSIP, including related medical) may be affected in the course of the QC review. They are from a statistically reliable statewide sample.

QCU uses specific review methodology to conduct the reviews. The QC reviews are also conducted using state policy, approved waivers after implementation, federal regulations and state and federal laws.

An important function of QC is to determine the number and kinds of errors in the total caseload. QCU analyzes the case findings and shares the results for management decisions. With the knowledge gained, management can determine the cost/benefit of corrective actions.

3. Client cooperation with QC

Cooperation with QC is an eligibility requirement for programs receiving a federal match. Therefore, SNAP and OHP clients must cooperate with the QC review process. Refusal to cooperate will result in the termination of their benefits. The QC reviewer will notify the branch office when a client fails to cooperate. When this happens, send a 10-day notice to end benefits for the entire filing group.
The household may reapply for benefits, but will not be eligible again until they cooperate with the QC review. The QC disqualification may last a lifetime for the Medical Programs.

Client Requirement to Cooperate in Quality Control Review; ERDC, REF, REFM, SNAP, and TANF: 461-105-0410

> SEE SNAP-J.7 FOR SNAP DISQUALIFICATION INFORMATION.

4. **Branch action on cases selected for QC review**

A branch office must do all the following when notified that a case has been selected for review:

- Gather all case material from the worker’s desk and filing area. Include any other material found elsewhere in the office;

- Mail the material within three working days to (or hold for) the QC reviewer, as requested;

- Do not discuss the pending review with the client before the QC home visit. The one exception is if the client has failed to cooperate with the QC reviewer. QC will use the form *Quality Control Request for Branch Assistance (DHS 375) (QC form)* to request branch office assistance;

*Note: This includes not contacting the client after receipt of the error decision notice, *Quality Control Unit Medicaid Case Review Report (DHS 372) (QC form)*, to discuss statements made to QC. Only discuss restoration of benefits or a repayment plan.*

- Notify QCU immediately if QC selects a case, and the branch transferred the case to a different branch. Inform QCU of the date the transfer occurred and the branch receiving the case;

- If a worker needs information from a case record being read by QC, contact the QC reviewer to obtain the information;

- Any changes made on the case after the branch is notified that the case is to be reviewed will impact future benefits but will not impact the benefits under review.

5. **QC review process**

The QC review process focuses on verification of all factors of eligibility and benefit amount. The QC reviewer obtains verification through case record review and field investigation. Case record review includes the paper case file and the agency computer
screens. Field investigation includes a personal interview with the client and any collateral contacts needed to obtain verification.

The QC reviewer looks at eligibility and the amount of benefits for a point in time. The reviewers make a determination about eligibility for the sampled month. If eligible, the reviewer determines if the correct benefit amount was authorized. If the review is of a denied, suspended or terminated case, the QC reviewer determines if the decision to deny, suspend, or terminate was correct.

6. **QC relationship with branch offices**

QCU uses information from the records in the branch office and may use certain branch office resources for gaining additional information. The review itself must be completely independent of the branch office, with one exception. The exception is to gather additional medical information needed to prove eligibility. The reviewer may ask the branch to request medical information or a report.

QC staff is responsible for evaluating the information and making an eligibility determination. QC does not share this responsibility with the branch.

7. **Distribution of QC findings**

QCU shares individual case review decisions with branch/agency staff when the review is completed. The branch has five working days to agree or disagree with the QC findings. If the branch does not respond by agreeing or disagreeing within the five-day time frame, the reviewer’s findings and conclusions are considered final.

To disagree with the review findings, the branch must present factual evidence and documentation about why the review finding is in error. QCU must receive the facts supporting the disagreement within the five working day period.

In addition, when they disagree with the QC decision, local offices can ask QC to expand the review and make further contacts or look at different policies. However, the final decision on the review is with QC alone.

QC and the agency must resolve the disagreement before the QC completion deadline. Program or other appropriate staff may help resolve the disagreement.

8. **Data analysis**

QCU analyzes QC data to give management a clear picture of QC findings. The analysis includes the following:

- Which error rates are increasing or decreasing;
- Estimated caseload dollar loss associated with the error rate and different types of errors;

- Identify errors that corrective action can specifically address;

- Identify the cause of the errors;

- Prepare clear and concise summaries and explanations of QC findings for distribution and use to plan or evaluate corrective actions.

QCU distributes information monthly to appropriate management staff. QCU also generates semiannual and annual reports for corrective action planning.