



QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS) PROGRAM GUIDES

Many States develop QRIS program guides to articulate participation expectations and detail program benefits. While the structure of program guides varies, there are often common topics that are specific to the State's quality framework. Rather than creating a program guide, some States use their QRIS Web site as a mechanism to share information and as a repository for program forms and applications. The following provides examples of both approaches and includes State examples of the topics most commonly covered.

Program Guides and Web Sites

State Program Guides

Currently, twenty States' (AR, AZ, CO, DE, FL, GA, HI, KY, MD, ME, MT, ND, NE, OH, OK, RI, TX, VT, WA, and WI) QRIS have program or policy guides posted on their Web sites that provide readers with detailed information about the QRIS. Some topics are universally included in these guides, while other topics only appear in a few States' guides. Florida has a county-based QRIS with unique program or policy guides for each.

State QRIS Web Sites

Some States do not post program guides but share program policies and participation expectations on their QRIS Web sites. The table provided in this document presents examples of States that include a majority of QRIS topics and communicate the information in a customer-friendly and understandable way on their Web sites. Examples of States that take this approach include IA, IL, IN, MA, MS, NV, NM, NY, OR, PA, and SC (identified in the table by an asterisk [*]).

- Iowa's QRIS Web site includes links to program rules, tools and resources, and other general information.
- Illinois' QRIS Web site provides an overview of ExceleRate, describes incentives and supports available to participants, details program policies and expectations, and includes videos to share information about its system.
- Indiana includes program forms that can be downloaded by participants, an overview of the quality standards, and an online enrollment request form on its Web site.
- Massachusetts provides general information on its QRIS Web site including links to measurement tools, forms, and other resources.
- Mississippi has created an online Quality Stars Manual that is broken out by topic.

- Nevada's QRIS Web site provides an overview of Silver State Stars which includes a description of their site visit protocol and access to Easy Folio, their online portfolio system.
- New Mexico's QRIS Web site includes a detailed description of its program philosophy, quality standards, and participant applications.
- New York has created online program guides specific to each eligible setting that include required documentation, a comprehensive overview of the point structure and rating process, and Frequently Asked Questions that define general participation expectations and policies.
- Oregon's QRIS Web site includes videos for participants that provide tips for completing portfolios, sources of evidence, and other useful resources.
- Pennsylvania's Web site includes comprehensive information about eligibility requirements, grants and awards, forms and tools, as well as other information specific to the QRIS on its Web site.
- South Carolina's QRIS Web site posts eligibility requirements, standards, and required documentation.

Other States not included above may share information about their quality standards, general participation expectations, or links to external resources on their Web sites. While these States may have developed program guides, they are not readily available on the public Web site.

Common Topics Included in QRIS Program Guides and on QRIS Web Sites

As seen in the table that follows, all States that have program guides or post similar information on their Web sites include an overview of their specific QRIS. There are seven States (AR, FL, MA, NM, NY, WA, and WI) that translate their program guide into other languages or provide other types of translated materials. Other topics typically included in a program guide or on a state Web site include:

- General information about what a QRIS is;
- The roles, responsibilities, and authority of the entities involved, that is, the different agencies and partners;
- Programs that are eligible to participate in the QRIS;
- Detailed information about the initial and renewal application process;
- QRIS standards;
- Detailed information about the evidence required to demonstrate each standard;
- In-depth information about program assessment tools, such as the Environment Rating Scales or the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS);
- Adverse or punitive actions that can or will result from failing to meet QRIS standards;
- The process for a provider to appeal a rating;
- Financial incentives and other program supports including professional development and technical assistance;
- How a program can leave or discontinue participation in the QRIS;
- In-depth information about either the research specifically behind the States' QRIS or about how the State is evaluating the QRIS's efficacy;
- The data system or Web interface used in the QRIS; and

- A definitions list, glossary, or acronyms list.

For States with program guides, only those topics that are addressed in the program guide are identified in the table. Those States, however, often post other relevant information on their Web site, including program standards and information about the incentive structure.

Program Policy Information Covered in Program Guides and State QRIS Web Sites

State QRIS Documents and Web Site Links	What is a QRIS?	Translated Resources	Program Overview	Roles, Responsibility, Authority	Eligibility	Application Process (Initial and Renewal)	Standards	Evidence Accepted for Standards Met	Program Assessment Tools	Adverse Action	Appeals or Grievances	Incentives and Supports	Leaving the QRIS	Evaluation and Research	QRIS Data Systems	Definitions or Acronyms
Arizona Quality First Participant Implementation Guide			X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Arkansas Better Beginnings Rule Book		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X					X
Colorado Colorado Shines Program Guide			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				
Delaware Delaware Stars For Early Success Program Guide 2014	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

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Florida-Duval Guiding Stars of Duval Manual and Worksheets for Centers	X		X				X			X						X
Florida – Miami/Dade Quality Counts Manual		X	X	X	X	X									X	
Florida – Palm Beach Strong Minds Provider Manual			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Georgia Quality Rated Program Manual	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				
Hawaii Policies and Procedures Manual			X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Illinois* ExceleRate Illinois	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X				
Indiana* Indiana Paths to Quality			X				X					X		X		
Iowa* Iowa Quality Rating System			X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X

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Kentucky STARS for KIDS NOW Program Type I Licensed Child Care Centers STARS for KIDS NOW Program Type II Licensed and Certified Family Child Care Homes			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Maine Quality Rating System Application Manual			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X
Massachusetts* Massachusetts QRIS Resources		X	X			X	X		X			X			X	
Maryland Maryland Excels Guidebook for Family, Center-Based and School Age Child Care Programs			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X
Mississippi* Mississippi Quality Stars	X		X		X	X	X	X	X			X				X

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Montana Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Guidance Document and Procedures			X	X	X	X			X	X		X			X	X
Nebraska Step up to Quality Program Guide	X		X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X			X
Nevada* Nevada Silver State Stars			X		X	X	X		X			X		X	X	
New Mexico* New Mexico Focus		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X			X	
New York* QUALITYstarsNY	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X
North Dakota Bright & Early North Dakota Partner Handbook			X		X	X			X		X	X				
Ohio Step Up To Quality Guidance Documents	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

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Oklahoma Reaching for the Stars for Child Care Centers	X		X			X	X	X			X	X				X
Oklahoma Administrative Code Language			X	X		X				X						
Oregon* Oregon's Quality Rating and Improvement System			X		X		X	X	X			X			X	
Pennsylvania* Keystone Stars			X		X	X	X	X	X			X		X		
Rhode Island BrightStars Information and Policies BrightStars Information and Policies for Family Child Care BrightStars Information and Policies for School Age	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
South Carolina* ABC Quality			X		X	X	X	X	X			X				

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Texas Texas Rising Star Provider Certification Guidelines			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
Vermont STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) Standards			X	X			X			X	X	X				X
Washington Early Achievers Participant Operating Guidelines		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Wisconsin YoungStar Policy Guide	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X

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