

LeadingAge[®]
Minnesota



QUALITY SPECIALIST Certificate Program

2026 DATES

Session #1: Aug. 26-27

Session #2: Sept. 30-Oct. 1

Session #3: Oct. 28-29

Session #4: Dec. 2-3

Eligible for
38 clock hours



QUALITY SPECIALIST Certificate Program

About the Program

Quality continues to drive how your organization succeeds in the marketplace impacting your reputation and bottom line. With the growing complexity of quality payment programs, measures, and consumer expectations, it is important to have strong quality leaders to manage your quality program.

This program supports individuals working in aging services who are serving as quality leads within their organizations or have an interest in expanding their knowledge of quality, safety, and performance improvement.

Staff in nursing homes or assisted living, new to or with experience in quality, will gain a solid understanding of quality-related regulatory requirements, federal and state quality programs, and how to help drive continuous improvement within your organization.

This eight-day interactive program is scheduled over four months to maximize learning and provide opportunities to apply concepts and strategies in practice between sessions. The program combines lecture, discussion, experiential learning, assignments, small and large group practice, and opportunities to interact with a variety of guest experts.

Who Should Attend?

Any staff within your organization who is or will be assuming a lead or supporting role in your quality program.

Why Attend? Participants in this Program Will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of state and federal quality measures and programs and learn strategies to prioritize and address opportunities to improve your organization's performance, maximize reimbursement, and minimize citations and penalties.
- Discuss and apply the foundational principles and strategies of quality improvement.
- Learn practical strategies for building a fair and just culture in your organization.
- Gain a deeper understanding of root cause analysis and practice applying this approach to common quality and safety issues.
- Learn and apply an effective five step approach to process/quality improvement and apply this approach to an improvement project.
- Identify strong solutions to prevent adverse events from occurring or re-occurring in your organization.
- Explore and apply strategies to effectively use data to drive improvement.
- Learn the importance of approach, deployment, learning, and integration (ADLI) in creating systematic and effective processes throughout your organization and apply ADLI to key organizational processes.
- Examine and apply strategies to create and sustain a culture of resident and staff engagement.
- Create and/or strengthen your quality management/QAPI plan and approach.

LOCATION

Sessions 1 and 2

Minnesota Humanities Center
987 Ivy Ave E, St. Paul, MN 55106

Sessions 3 and 4 - Virtual Zoom Meetings

DATES

Session #1: Aug. 26-27
Session #2: Sept. 30-Oct. 1
Session #3: Oct. 28-29
Session #4: Dec. 2-3

TIME

Sessions start between
8 and 8:30 a.m. and
end times vary.



QUALITY SPECIALIST Certificate Program

Eligible
for 38
clock hours

SCHEDULE

(see full program schedule for complete details)

Session #1 – In-Person

Aug. 26–27

Day 1: Introduction to Quality and Quality Culture

Day 2: Learning Culture (USER Model) and Root Cause Analysis

Session #2 – In-Person

Sept. 30–Oct. 1

Day 3 and 4: Data, Data, Data

Session #3 – Virtual

Oct. 28–29

Day 5 and 6: Quality Assurance

Session #4 – Virtual

Dec. 2–3

Day 7: State and Federal Quality Programs

Day 8: Wrap-Up and Presentation of QI Projects

About the Certificate

Participants who attend the entire series will earn a Certificate of Completion which demonstrates in-depth professional study of a topic area on an individual basis. It does not denote certification or that someone is certified as a quality leader. In-person sessions are not recorded and cannot be made up if missed.

Continuing Education Credits

This program has been designed to meet the CEU approval criteria for the Minnesota Board of Executives for Long Term Services and Supports (MN-BELTSS) and the continuing education requirements for the Minnesota Board of Nursing for contact hours. Participants may also request a general certificate of attendance. CEUs are earned only for the individual registered.

Accommodations

LeadingAge Minnesota has negotiated an annual corporate rate with the Delta Hotels Minneapolis Northeast. The room rate will be the lesser of the listed rate per month or the percent discounted rate for King rooms: June – Oct. \$154, Nov. – Dec. \$119, or 15% off standard rate (rates are set based on hotel availability). Fees are subject to local and MN taxes. Individual reservations can be made by using this [booking link](#).

Handouts

Participants will receive links to electronic handouts before each session and are encouraged to print them in advance or download to view on a laptop or tablet.

Cut-Off/Cancellation

Registration cut-off date/cancellation deadline is 5 p.m. on Aug. 18, 2026. Cancellations must be made in writing and are subject to a \$25 processing fee. No refunds will be provided for no-shows. LeadingAge Minnesota reserves the right to cancel this training or any individual session.

Conference Registration Fees

LeadingAge Minnesota Members – \$800 per person
Prospective Members – \$1,125 per person

Registration fee includes a continental breakfast, morning and afternoon breaks, and lunch for in-person days.

**REGISTER
HERE**

For Further Information

Olivia Scott, Events and Education Coordinator, at oscott@LeadingAgeMN.org or 651.603.3559 for assistance or if your registration has not been confirmed.

Program Schedule

Session #1– In-Person

Day 1: Wednesday, Aug. 26 • 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Introduction to Quality and Quality Culture

Introduction to Quality

- Describe the history of quality improvement principles and strategies.
- Compare and contrast quality assurance and performance improvement and how each impacts quality.
- Examine leadership's role in creating a culture of continuous quality improvement across an organization and practical strategies you can bring back to your organization.

Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; Sandy Delgehausen, RN, PHN, Quality Consultant, Champlin; and Matt Tobalsky, Associate VP of Operations, Cassia, Edina

Building a Quality Foundation: Teamwork and Communication

- Describe principles of TeamSTEPS® 2.0 for Long-Term Care that can be applied to create well-functioning teams, team communication, and teamwork to drive improvement.
- Apply key strategies to daily practice to bring back to your organization.

Cyndi Siders, RN, MSN, DFASHRM, CPHRM, CPPS, CWCA, Executive Consultant, Siders HealthCare Consulting, Grand Forks, N.D.

Science of Safety: Fair and Just Culture; Reporting Culture

- Evaluate your organization's current culture on key aspects of a Fair and Just Culture.
- Define the concept of a Fair and Just Culture and how it applies to older adult services settings.
- State what a reporting culture is and why it is important.
- Describe how to create a culture of trust and the importance of speaking up as part of that culture.
- Explain the basics of a human factors approach to quality and safety.

Christy Brinkman, Administrator, Essentia Health Oak Crossing, Detroit Lakes; and Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis

Day 2: Thursday, Aug. 27, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Learning Culture (USER Model) and Root Cause Analysis

U = Understanding the Problem to Be Solved

- Examine the role of a root cause analysis process to understand the key factors contributing to an adverse event or quality, safety, or process issue.
- Explore how to use root cause analysis processes proactively to strengthen your systems and prevent an error or system issue.
- List the steps in using a common cause approach to examine multiple similar events or issues.
- Apply strategies and tools to common real-life case study scenarios.

Process Improvement Projects

- Define the components of the process improvement projects that individual participants will complete by the end of the Quality Specialist Certificate Program.
- List the five steps of a process improvement/quality improvement project.
- Apply a prioritization grid and quality improvement strategies to identify and prioritize process improvement projects for individual projects and to bring back project selection strategies to your organization.

S = Strong Solutions

- Examine how to select strong solutions to address problems to be solved uncovered in a root cause analysis process.
- Apply solutions strategies to common real-life scenarios.
- Participate in a World Café approach to discover potential solutions and implementation strategies for key quality and safety topics, such as dietary safety, CPR issues, falls, medication errors, elopement, or change in condition.

Cyndi Siders, RN, MSN, DFASHRM, CPHRM, CPPS, CWCA, Executive Consultant, Siders HealthCare Consulting, Grand Forks, N.D.; and Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis

Program Schedule

Session #2 – In-Person

Day 3: Wednesday, Sept. 30 • 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Data, Data, Data

Data to Drive Improvement Basics

- Describe data basics that drive data-informed decision making.
- Explain the foundations of an effective approach to data.
- Discuss how to go beyond the numbers by using real time information.
- Identify and apply metrics, data collection methods, and data displays and reports using common real-life case studies.

E = Evaluation; R = Revised as Needed

- Examine and apply different methods of evaluation.
- Discuss and develop a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles for improvement.
- Define strategies and tips for sustainment of successful improvements.

Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, and Jeff Bostic, Director of Data and Financial Policy, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; Sandy Delgehausen, RN, PHN, Quality Consultant, Champlin; and Jesse Noska, RN, LALD, Vice President of Clinical Services, Vitality Healthcare Management, LLC, Aitkin

Day 4: Thursday, Oct. 1, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

A Culture of Continuous Improvement

Performance Excellence

- Describe the components of an organizational excellence framework.
- Explain the importance of approach, deployment, learning, and integration (ADLI) in creating systematic, effective processes throughout your organization.
- Apply ADLI to one of your organization's processes and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Amy Kay Czechowicz, MBA, RYT, President and CEO, Performance Excellence Network, St. Paul; and Anneliese Peterson, LALD, SVP Operations/COO, Benedictine, Fridley

Systems and Processes

- Describe simple techniques to improve processes and workflow that can be applied to any process in your organization.
- Apply process strategies to common real-life case studies.

Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis

Leveraging Technology to Advance Quality Outcomes

- Identify key ways technology can support and enhance quality improvement and safety efforts in senior care.
- Explore practical examples of how technology tools and systems can streamline workflows, support staff, and improve care delivery outcomes.
- Apply strategies to effectively integrate technology into existing quality improvement processes while maintaining a focus on people and culture.

Joel Prevost, CMO, Prevost Partners Inc., Plymouth

Session #3 – Virtual

Day 5: Wednesday, Oct. 28 • 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Quality Assurance Performance Improvement (QAPI)

Quality Management/QAPI Plan and Process

- Explain the of nursing home QAPI requirements and assisted living quality management requirements.
- Discuss leadership's role in QAPI/quality management.
- Create/strengthen your Quality Management/QAPI Plan and approach.

Practical Strategies to Apply Quality Management/QAPI in Your Organization

- Identify QAPI/quality management citations, requirements, and practical strategies for a successful QAPI/quality committee structure, agenda, meeting, and minutes.
- Examine and apply strategies for selecting, creating, monitoring, and sustaining Performance Improvement Projects (PIPs).
- Apply strategies to common real-life case studies.

Cyndi Siders, RN, MSN, DFASHRM, CPHRM, CPPS, CWCA, Executive Consultant, Siders HealthCare Consulting, Grand Forks, N.D.; and Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis

Day 6: Thursday, Oct. 29, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Quality Assurance

OHFC - Preventing Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Exploitation

- Describe the role of the Office of Health Facility Complaints.
- Apply lessons learned from the program to prevent future adverse events in top categories of OHFC substantiated events through case studies and small group discussion.
- Evaluate strategies to prevent incidents of abuse through exercises, case studies, and small group discussions.

Matthew Heffron JD, NREMT, State Rapid Response Operations Manager, Health Regulation Division, Office of Health Facility Complaints, Minnesota Department of Health, St. Paul; and Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis

Licensing Survey – Process Improvement to Prevent Survey Citations

- Describe the licensing survey process.
- Discuss top deficiencies, including IJs, Level 3s and 4s, and strategies to proactively address related processes and systems within your organization to prevent citations.

Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, and Kelly Conrad, LALD, LSW, Director of Assisted Living Services, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; and Dr. Kari Everson, RN, LNHA, LALD, Vice President of Clinical Services, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis and President, EverCare Aging Services Consulting, St. Paul

Program Schedule

Session #4 – Virtual

Day 7: Wednesday, Dec. 2 • 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

State and Federal Quality Programs

Nursing Home/Assisted Living Breakouts

Nursing Home Federal Quality Programs

- Summarize, at a detailed level, the federal quality measures and programs.
- Identify steps to effectively report and track quality program data and interpret reports.
- Discuss strategies to use quality program data to improve performance and outcomes.
- Assess your own quality measure reports to understand the data source and coding for various risk adjustments and exclusions that can impact your quality measures including Value-Based Purchasing, Quality Reporting Program, Care Compare, 5 Star Quality Rating System, and getting the most out of your MDS.

Stephanie DeWees, BS, HSE, LNHA, LPN, IP, RAC-CT, Quality and Regulatory Specialist, LeadingAge Ohio, Columbus, Ohio and Business Owner, Squared Business Solutions, Westerville, Ohio

Assisted Living Federal Quality Programs

- Summarize, at a detailed level, the future of quality in assisted living at the federal level.
- Explain the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule.
- Discuss assisted living licensing survey and citations, including food code, emergency preparedness, and life safety citations.

Kelly Conrad, LALD, LSW, Director of Assisted Living Services, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; Jodi Eyigor, Vice President, Health Policy, LeadingAge, Washington D.C.; and Dawn Nickleson, CDM, CFPP, Pastry Chef, Owner, Passion for Dining and Nutrition, Cottage Grove; and Shanna Swanson, LALD, Assisted Living Director, Care Suites by Vivie, Edina

Nursing Home State Quality Measures and Programs

- Summarize, at a detailed level, Minnesota's quality measures and programs.
- Identify the steps to successfully participate in QIIP and PIPP pay for performance.
- Identify important features of the Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) Initiative funds.

Topics:

- **Understanding the State Reports and PIPP/QIIP Programs** – Teresa Lewis, Nursing Facility Rates and Policy Division, Department of Human Services, Minneapolis
- **Value-Based Reimbursement (VBR)** – Jeff Bostic, Director of Data and Financial Policy, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis

State and Federal Quality Programs cont'd.

- **CMP Program** – Munna Yasiri, Compliance and Intergovernmental Regulations Director, Nursing Facility Rates and Policy Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services, St. Paul

Bringing It All Together – Nursing Home

- Evaluate strategies and tips for how to manage the data, reports, and programs to successfully prioritize improvement opportunities and drive sustained improvement.

Sandy Delgehausen, RN, PHN, Quality Consultant, Champlin

Assisted Living State Quality Measures and Programs

- Describe the metrics included in and current implementation status of Minnesota's Assisted Living Report Card.
- Discuss the activities of the Home Care/Assisted Living Advisory Group.

Topics:

- **State Assisted Living Report Card** – Lauren Glass, MSW, LGSW, HCBS Quality Improvement Consultant, Aging and Adult Services Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services, St. Paul
- **AL Quality Measures and Tracking Tools** – Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis
- **Home Care and Assisted Living Program Advisory Council (HCALP)** – Anna Petersmeyer, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Vista Prairie Communities, Champlin

Bringing It All Together - Assisted Living

- Evaluate strategies and tips for how to manage the data, reports, and programs to successfully prioritize improvement opportunities and drive sustained improvement.

Jesse Noska, RN, LALD, Vice President of Clinical Services, Vitality Healthcare Management, LLC, Aitkin

Day 8: Thursday, Dec. 3, 9 a.m. – Noon

Wrap-Up and Presentation of Quality Improvement Projects

Small Group Discussion

- Discuss strategies and lessons learned throughout the program.
 - » What have you learned and applied in your organization?
 - » What are you planning to begin/change in your quality program?
 - » What questions do you still have for your colleagues?
 - » What feedback do you have for future training programs?

Quality Improvement Project Presentations

- Presentation of Quality Improvement Projects by program participants.