



How to Complete Your Standards Inventory

Participant Guide & FAQ

This step-by-step guide will walk QUALITYstarsNY participating programs through the Standards Inventory and rating process. Consult the FAQ provided in this document to answer questions you may have during this process.

Your Quality Improvement Specialist is here to help support you through this process. If you have questions that are not answered in the FAQ, please reach out to your Quality Improvement Specialist. If additional assistance is needed, please visit qualitystarsny.zendesk.com and click “Submit a Request” to submit your question.

COVID-19 FAQ Addendum

An addendum has been added to this FAQ to address questions related to the Standards Inventory and rating process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please consult this addendum, beginning on page 6, if your program will be going through rating while the pandemic persists.



How to Complete your Standards Inventory

1. Review the QUALITYstarsNY Program Standards

- **Download the [QUALITYstarsNY Standard Guidance Document](#)** for your program type, which includes detailed information about each Standard and the documentation required for evidence.
- Review the Standard Guidance Document and identify which Standards your program meets.
- Discuss questions you have about any Standards or evidence requirements with your Quality Improvement Specialist.

2. Collect Documentation for your Standards Inventory Evidence

- Once you've identified the Standards your program meets, gather the necessary evidence to submit for the Standard.
- Paper documents and hardcopies must be uploaded and saved to your computer so it is accessible when you complete the Standards Inventory in the QUALITYstarsNY system.
- *Tip:* We suggest creating physical and digital folders to group the document you are collecting in the main Standards Categories: Learning Environment, Family Engagement, and Management and Leadership (Qualifications & Experience Standards are drawn from your program and staff information verified in Aspire). When saving your digital files, it can be helpful to name the file(s) after the Standard code it applies to.
- Instruct your staff to update their Aspire profile and submit any necessary documentation for verification in Aspire. Ensure that your Organization Profile is up-to-date.

3. Upload Evidence to your Standards Inventory in your Program Profile in the QUALITYstarsNY Data System

- To access your Standards Inventory:
 1. Log into your **QUALITYstarsNY Profile** through the **"Log In"** link in the top right corner of qualitystarsny.org.
 2. From your QUALITYstarsNY dashboard **click the "View Case Info" button**.
 3. On your case information page, **click the "Inventory" tab** on the right hand side.
- Under the "Inventory" tab, **click the "Edit" button** to begin working on your Standards Inventory by Standards area.
- Once you've entered the editing page of the Standards Inventory, you have the ability to upload documents for the Standards:
 1. In the evidence box on the right hand side, **click the "Select" button** to upload a file saved on your computer. You can select multiple files to upload at the same time.

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2. Once you've uploaded your evidence, **click the checkbox, "I have uploaded the required documentation."** on the left side. *If you do not have evidence of meeting the Standard, check the box for "My organization does not meet this standard."*
3. Scroll to the bottom and **click "Save and Exit"** to save your work in your Standards Inventory. Your Standards Inventory will not automatically save as you are editing it, so it's important to exit your Inventory through the "Save and Exit" button rather than click the X at the top of the page.

4. Review your Qualifications & Experience (Q&E) Report

- Before submitting your Standards Inventory, you must review your program's Q&E Report, which reflects the information being pulled in from your Organization and staff Aspire Profiles for your rating.
- To access your Q&E Report:
 1. **Navigate to the "View Case Info" page** in your QUALITYstarsNY Profile.
 2. On your Case Info page, **click the "View Qualifications & Experience"** button in the right side
- If any information is incomplete or inaccurate, the correct information must be submitted and verified in Aspire.
- You should only move ahead to review and submit your Standards Inventory when your Q&E report is up-to-date. Any changes made to your staff's Aspire profiles or your Organization profile after you submit your Standards Inventory *will not be* reflected in your Q&E report to calculate your program's rating.

5. Review and Submit your Standards Inventory

- Once you have completed your Standards Inventory and confirmed that your Q&E report is accurate, you're ready to submit your Standards Inventory:
 - **Navigate to the "View Case Info" page** in your QUALITYstarsNY Profile.
 - **Click the "Submit for Rating" button** in the box on the right to begin the process.
- Review each page of your Standards Inventory carefully. If you notice you missed a Standard or uploaded the wrong evidence, make any final corrections before hitting "continue" to move to the next page of your Standards Inventory.
- Continue until you have reviewed each page of the Standards Inventory. You may use the **Save and Exit button** at any time to save your progress.
- **Click the "Submit" button** on the last page of your Standards Inventory when you are ready to submit your Standards Inventory for rating.

6. Provisional Rating

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- Once the QUALITYstarsNY Rating Team has reviewed and rated your Standards Inventory, you will receive email notification that your Provisional Rating has been awarded.
- If you believe any points were awarded incorrectly, you have 28 days from when your Provisional Rating is issued to appeal your rating. Please speak to your QI Specialist first about your concerns before appealing your Provisional Rating.
- *If you are awarded a Provisional Rating of 1-2 Stars:* Your Provisional Rating will become your Active Rating after the appeal window has passed.
- *If you are awarded a Provisional Rating of 3-5 Stars:* You qualify for an ERS assessment to be conducted by our independent assessment team. Your average score from the ERS assessment will contribute to the calculation of your final Active Rating.

7. Active Rating

- You will receive email notification when your Active Rating is awarded.
- Print out your program's Rating Certificate to celebrate this tremendous achievement! To access your rating certificate:
 1. **Navigate to the "View Case Info" page** in your QUALITYstarsNY Profile
 2. **Click the "View Rating Certificate" button** on the right side to download your Rating Certificate, which you can save and print.
- Share the news with your staff, families you serve, and community. Regardless of your Star Rating, your QUALITYstarsNY rating reflects a commitment to excellence. By voluntarily participating in this process, you have demonstrated a dedication to creating the best program you can for the children and families you serve.
- *Your QUALITYstarsNY rating is valid for three years from your Active Rating date, however, you may start the re-rating process as early as 18 months after your Active Rating was awarded if you feel your program has made significant progress on your quality improvement work.*
- **Please keep in mind:** *you must begin the re-rating process 6-9 months BEFORE your rating expiration date* to ensure you have a new rating awarded before your current rating expires. You will receive email notifications when it is time to begin the re-rating process.

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FAQs for the Standards Inventory Process

Evidence Questions

Do I have to indicate which parts of a longer document (ex. parent handbook, program policies) applies to the Standard I'm uploading the evidence for?

If you are submitting evidence from larger documents, either only upload the applicable part(s) of the document or mark up the document to indicate where the applicable information is located for the specific Standard. This ensures the rating team is able to easily and accurately identify and evaluate the relevant information.

The information in my Qualifications & Experience (Q&E) Report is incorrect. How do I correct it?

Before you submit your Standards Inventory for rating, you must review your program's Q&E Report to ensure all your staff's training, qualifications, and experience information is accurate in Aspire. To access your Q&E Report, navigate to your Case Info page in your QUALITYstarsNY Profile. On the Case Info page, **click the "View Qualifications & Experience" button** on the right hand side to download your program's report. If you notice any inaccuracies, your staff must correct their information in The Aspire Registry. All applicable information must be approved in Aspire and reflected in your Q&E Report **BEFORE** you submit your Standards Inventory for rating.

What if I do not have the documentation showing that we did the Standard policy or practice but we are planning to later in the year?

If the policy or practice has not happened yet, evidence cannot be submitted for the Standard.

Technology Questions

Can I complete the Standards Inventory on my phone?

Yes, but it may be more challenging than completing it on a computer. Follow the same instructions as above to login and access your Standards Inventory on your phone. Your evidence files must be accessible from your phone (saved to your phone or a cloud-based platform) in order to upload them.

Can I upload documents if I don't have access to a scanner?

It is possible to use your phone to save your files if you do not have access to a scanner. There are free apps (ex: [Adobe Scan Digital PDF Scanner](#) and [CamScanner](#)) available to download on your phone that allow you to take pictures of your documents and save them as a PDF. Picture files are also acceptable to use as evidence. Keep in mind, your files must be transferred from your phone to your computer (via email or saving to a cloud-platform, etc.) if you are editing and uploading evidence to your Standards Inventory on your computer.

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What file types can I upload as evidence?

PDFs, photos, Word documents, and Excel spreadsheets can all be uploaded as evidence. Here is the full list of acceptable files: doc, docx, jpeg, pdf, png, tif, xls, xlsx. Ensure that there are no special characters in your file name when saving. The maximum file size that can be uploaded is 400MB.

Can I save my progress on my Standards Inventory to return to it later?

You may save your Standards Inventory as you are editing and uploading documentation to complete it over multiple sittings. To save your Standards Inventory when working in the “edit” window, scroll down to the bottom of the page and **click the “Save and Exit” button**. Your Standards Inventory will not automatically save as you are editing it, so it’s important to exit your Inventory through the “Save and Exit” button rather than click the X at the top of the page.

NOTE: If you have other questions about your Standards Inventory or rating process, first contact your QI Specialist. If additional assistance is needed, please visit qualitystarsny.zendesk.com and click “Submit a Request” to submit your question.

Questions During COVID-19

Can I get an extension on my Standards Inventory due to COVID-19?

New participants: The QUALITYstarsNY rating process provides new participants with a benchmark for their program quality and generates critical insights to inform the creation of their Quality Improvement Plan. We understand the challenges many programs are facing as they work to complete their Standards Inventory during this time, however, it is a foundational first step to help programs identify opportunities for improvement based on the results of their rating report. Once a program uploads their Participation Agreement and is officially accepted into QUALITYstarsNY, they will still have 42 days to complete their Standards Inventory. Some flexibility will be allowed for programs with extenuating circumstances. Please work closely with your Quality Improvement Specialist to discuss any concerns regarding your submission deadline and coordinate a reasonable extension, if needed.

Programs going through re-rating: Extensions have been given to any program with an Active Rating that was set to expire between April, 2020 through April, 2021. Please check your QUALITYstarsNY profile to see your program’s new rating expiration date. Please note: Your Standards Inventory is due **90 days** before your rating expiration date to ensure your new rating is awarded before your current Active Rating expires.

Have any of the Standards been changed due to COVID-19?

QUALITYstarsNY has evaluated our Program Standards and identified a small number of Standards that required additional flexibility in light of the pandemic. Please reference the addendum on the front page of our Standards Guidance documents, [available on our website](#), to see these temporary updates. These COVID-19 updates will be in effect until December 31,

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2021. These changes are also reflected in your Standards Inventory in the QUALITYstarsNY data system.

Can documents from two different years be submitted for COA 5 (Center & School-based Standards)/COA 4 (Family Child Care Standards)?

Yes, as long as the assessments reflect a consecutive 12 month period for one child, which can date back as far as 2018.

What do I do if I don't have access to my program to collect documentation for my Standards Inventory?

Work with your QI Specialist to discuss any further exceptions needed for your Standards Inventory deadline if you cannot yet access your program.

Can I submit evidence about our program operations and practices from before the pandemic?

We understand that some quality practices your program had in place before the pandemic are not able to be resumed during COVID-19. Unless there is a stated timeframe in the Standard Guidance, you should submit the most recent evidence you have of the policy or practice.

What if my program receives a Provisional Rating of 3-5 Stars, qualifying us for an ERS assessment?

Programs that earn a Provisional Rating of 3-5 Stars automatically qualify for an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment conducted by our independent assessment team, which contributes to their Active Rating. However, due to COVID-19, our ERS observations are suspended until further notice. The health of our participants is our top priority. We do not expect to resume ERS assessments until at least early 2021. This suspension of the ERS assessments is consistent with the [statement issued by the Environmental Rating Scale Institute \(ERSI\)](#), which recommends the ERS not be used under pandemic conditions to evaluate overall program quality in an official assessment, but rather used to inform program improvement.

While our ERS assessments remain suspended, programs Provisionally Rated 3-5 Stars will maintain their Provisional Rating until it is safe to resume ERS assessments. After the ERS assessment is complete, their final Active Rating will be awarded. Active Rating expiration dates will be based on the date the Provisional Rating was awarded—three years from the Provisional Rating date—rather than their Active Rating date. This does not apply to programs Provisionally Rated 1-2 Stars.

Is the appeal process impacted by COVID-19?

The appeal process will remain the same during COVID-19. Programs that believe points were awarded incorrectly in the rating process will still have the usual 28 days after receiving their Provisional Rating to appeal before their Active Rating is awarded.

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NOTE: If you have any other questions related to your participation or rating process during COVID-19, first contact your Quality Improvement Specialist. If additional assistance is needed, please visit qualitystarsny.zendesk.com and click “Submit a Request” to submit your question.