1. Getting Started
Our agency was challenged to address the difficulty in obtaining statistical data for use in community planning and grant development. Agency staff waste significant time researching data to support agency and community activity and an improved method of obtaining this data would provide significant time savings for agency staff.

2. Assemble the Team
The Agency Administrator developed a team consisting of Department Heads from all departments including Nursing, Environmental, Homemaker, Family Centered Services and Parents as Teachers. All participants actively participate in planning and grant development. The team met on 3 occasions to evaluate the problem and potential solutions.

3. Examine the Current Approach
Team members explored their current approach to data collection and found each was researching data utilizing multiple sites and numerous staff hours. In some instances current data was simply not available. There was minimal sharing of data noted between departments and significant use of staff time was needed to obtain minimal data.

4. Identify Potential Solutions
The team determined the most promising solutions as follows:

- One site that could provide a wide variety of current data.
- Comparison data for a 3 year period; with other like-sized counties as well as the State of Iowa.
- A 1-2 page County Profile that would provide a “Snapshot” of our community.

Team members reviewed data sites from other States and reviewed what specific data they felt was needed to meet community planning needs.

5. Develop an Improvement Theory
The Iowa Department of Public Health is in the process of developing a “Data Warehouse” that will provide one-stop shopping for data about our community. Our Team developed a Community Health Profile Template and provided a list of indicators that should be included in the Data Warehouse to best meet our needs for planning and grant development. A copy of this report will be attached to this document.

6. Test the Theory
The actual test of our Theory is difficult due to the lack of availability of a comprehensive Community Profile. However, our staff did carefully review the template they developed to determine if all needed indicators were present. An additional indicator was added and it appears that all needed data is included in either the profile or in recommendations for Indicators to be included in the Data Warehouse. Actual testing will be determined when the Community Profile is accessible.

7. Check the Results
At this time, the Team is unable to study results without actual documents available through the Data Warehouse.

8. Standardize the Improvement or Develop New Theory
At this time, the Team is unable to standardize the improvement or establish future plans until the actual documents are available through the Data Warehouse.

9. Establish Future Plans
Our Team was very pleased with this opportunity to receive training on Quality Improvement through the use of Plan – Do – Study – Act. We are planning to provide additional educational opportunities and begin implementation of this method in all departments within the next 6 - 12 months.