# *Data System*

An organization's data system is an important tool intended to guide decision making and provide valuable information about the work and direction of the organization.

## Quality in Practice

- Assure that all data collection is purposeful and intentional. Ask "what information needs to be collected and why?"
- Recognize that data collection includes many forms –numbers, dollars, interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc.
- Review the data that are collected periodically to assure the data continue to serve a purpose for the organization.
- Consider data collection within and outside the organization in order to gather the most relevant information. There are many kinds of data collected outside organizations that might be helpful to an organization, such as community employment data, housing data, income levels, volunteer participation, existence of hobby clubs, etc.
- In order to realize the full potential of data analysis, assure that data collection is:
  - ❑ person-specific (Personal Outcomes)
  - ❑ organization-specific (budget, safety, unusual incidents, etc)
  - ❑ community-specific (local resource allocations, employment, housing, etc)

- Make data collection and analysis as easy and seamless as possible (on-line forms; the use of every day language; automatic calculations; automatic distribution of information to more than one data file, etc.).
- Assure that any data collected are analyzed. Ask: "What does this information tell us?"
- Report the data analyses in a manner that is useful and understandable to stakeholders.
- Use stories to illustrate what the data mean.
- Use data analyses in the strategic planning processes. Ask: "How do we respond to what we have learned?"
- Track changes made in the organization based on data analysis.