

***PEER NETWORKING AT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION -  
GOOD PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES***

***Ten good practices of peer networking:***

- Provide a safe, trustful place for participants to interact on topics important to them
- Encourage personal as well as professional interactions among participants
- Customize the peer networking structure to meet specific participant needs
- Promote opportunities for participants and their organizations to collaborate
- Encourage participant feedback about the strengths and challenges of peer networking
- Build the activity's initial success before broadening its range of participants
- Offer resources for participants to translate ideas into action
- Create sub-groups within the peer networking activity to focus on particular topics of interest
- Shape the activity by analyzing the successes of other peer networking activities
- Level the playing field by sharing basic information about the focal area of peer networking

***Ten challenges of peer networking:***

- Peer networking is costly in both time and money
- Participants in peer networking may find it difficult to take action on good ideas they've developed
- The goals of peer networking may be difficult to identify and to share with others
- Peer networking may be difficult to integrate with other activities of its sponsor
- It may be challenging to balance equality with expertise in selecting peer networking participants
- Organizational complexity and culture of a peer networking sponsor may limit chances for success
- It may be challenging to develop a good exit strategy for a peer networking activity
- Replicating peer networking activities may be difficult
- Participant turnover may limit the success of peer networking
- Individual and group psychological factors may limit the success of peer networking

Excerpt taken from *Peer Networking and Community Change: Experiences of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*, by Thomas E. Backer, Ph.D. The full report is available at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).