



## Measuring Performance and Managing for Results

A MAKING CONNECTIONS PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MATCH BETWEEN  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE LEADS TO ACTION

*Part of a Series from the  
Technical Assistance Resource  
Center of the Annie E. Casey  
Foundation and the Center  
for the Study of Social Policy*

©2003, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland.

***The Annie E. Casey Foundation***

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).*

***Center for the Study of Social Policy***

*The Center for the Study of Social Policy, based in Washington, D.C., was established in 1979 with the goal of providing public policy analysis and technical assistance to states and localities. The Center's work is concentrated in the areas of family and children's services, income supports, neighborhood-based services, education reform, family support, community decision-making, and human resource innovations. The Center manages peer technical assistance as part of the Foundation's Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC).*

# CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| BACKGROUND .....   | 2  |
| SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE MATCH .....  | 2  |
| THE CONSULTATION.....  | 3  |
| Changing Organizational Culture.....   | 4  |
| Using Performance Management to Change, Monitor, and<br>Inform the Provider Contracting Process..... | 8  |
| LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS .....   | 12 |
| WHAT IS <i>MAKING CONNECTIONS</i> ?.....   | 17 |
| WHAT ARE PEER MATCHES? .....   | 18 |

## BACKGROUND

Through the *Making Connections* initiative, the Annie E. Casey Foundation is working with communities across the country to strengthen neighborhoods and support families. One of the principal aims of *Making Connections* is to link neighborhood residents to the economic opportunities, social networks, and effective services that will improve the lives and well-being of children and their families.

Since the mid-1990s, Montgomery County, Maryland, has been on the cutting edge of accountability, working to ensure that every dollar spent is geared toward improving the conditions of its residents.

As part of this initiative, the Foundation offers the participating sites access to technical assistance that will help them achieve their goals for strengthening families in a neighborhood context. Peer technical assistance, which allows the sites to capitalize on the practical knowledge that emerges from innovators in other places, is a particularly valuable resource these communities can use to address issues and solve problems they have identified in their own neighborhoods.

From April 18–19, 2002, a team of leaders from the government and nonprofit sectors in Montgomery County, Maryland, participated in a peer match with a team from Philadelphia’s Division of Social Services/Quality Management Unit and Quality Management Workgroup to learn more about how Montgomery County has used a results-based accountability framework to achieve better outcomes for families and children. For more information about *Making Connections* and peer matches, see page 17.

## SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE MATCH

Philadelphia’s Mayor Street has made it a priority to ensure that public funds devoted to social services are directed in the most efficient and effective way to produce the most positive results for families, children, and individuals. To this end, Susan Kretsge, director of Quality Management for the Division of Social Services (DSS), has been leading a Quality Management Workgroup to learn about and guide the development of a new system to better manage and measure the results of its work.

In fiscal year 2001, DSS instituted a performance measurement system to improve the focus of its efforts on achieving positive changes in the lives of the people it serves. Over time, this system will include a wide variety of other service providers as well, acknowledging the importance of a strong and trusting partnership between public and private agencies in bringing about successful client outcomes.

Since the mid-1990s, Montgomery County, Maryland, has been on the cutting edge of accountability, working to ensure that every dollar spent is geared toward improving the conditions of its residents. It has learned that achieving better outcomes requires a commitment to change, persistence, timely data, adequate data systems, effective measures, analysis of community and consumer demographics, and a system that provides decision-makers with key information. They've also learned that accountability means taking responsibility, and learning to adapt.

Because the Philadelphia DSS is taking on this relatively new challenge with the strong support of the city's mayor and other key leaders, a peer match between teams from Philadelphia and Montgomery County, a recognized leader in results-based accountability, was arranged. The match was facilitated by senior consultant Beth Leeson of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, who has helped a larger group of Philadelphia stakeholders—primarily city government leaders—think about how to move toward a results framework and performance measurement.

## THE CONSULTATION

Through conference calls between the Philadelphia and Montgomery County teams and their facilitator, as well as specific requests from the Quality Management Workgroup, an agenda was developed that included the following learning objectives for the peer match:

- *Objective 1:* To learn about strategies to change organizational culture to embrace results-based accountability, performance measurement, and performance management.

- *Objective 2:* To learn ways to use performance management to change, monitor, and inform the provider contracting system.
- *Objective 3:* To gather ideas and strategies to help publicly funded systems work with one another to produce systemwide results.
- *Objective 4:* To strategize about methods for including performance expectations in provider agency contracts and using outcomes data to improve policy advocacy and drive a strong agenda for results-based decision-making.

## Changing Organizational Culture

**How do we work with authority figures and others who are intractable, believing (and hoping) results-based accountability and performance measurement are just passing fads?**

This work—performance measurement and results-based accountability—is an iterative process. It doesn't happen overnight, and it doesn't pull in a lot of supporters initially. The Montgomery County team described the series of meetings held with tiers of staff and decision-makers to explain the process and why it is important. The county used every method of reinforcement it could imagine and partnered with the United Way and others in the community to build support. It also learned that performance measurement requires training to help staff understand what it is and how to do it. Two courses of free training are offered by Montgomery College, helping participants learn about a common framework for measuring outcomes, language use, logic models, how to develop a core set of measures, and how to understand the “story behind the trend lines.” Both teams have learned that some staff and providers quickly understand the importance of performance measurement, some eventually grow supportive, and a few remain nonsupportive. Even the most intractable staff become more interested as performance measurement becomes more commonplace, as staff in various units discover

the advantages of having data to make their case during budget hearings, and as positive recognition replaces distrust and blame.

**How do we work with and “bring in” the unions?**

While Montgomery County is just on the verge of working with its unions, some units in Philadelphia have begun to move forward. A representative from the Recreation Department, for example, expressed how its union has embraced performance measurement. Unions appreciate fairness and have found performance measurement to be an accurate means for decision-making. The Recreation Department shared information and planning ideas with the union during the early stages of developing the performance measurement system, and the union consequently felt part of a partnership. Another Philadelphia team member noted that performance measurement discussions with unions are best held during non-negotiation times. When unions are participating in contract negotiation and bargaining, every conversation takes on a different slant and becomes enmeshed in potential conflict.

**How can performance measurement and results-based accountability bridge systems and departments to encourage them to work together?**

The Montgomery County team described the community-wide results that have been adopted and how everyone can find his or her own interests in these broad results. After many consultative sessions with community leaders and groups, the county agreed to the following outcomes:

1. Children and vulnerable adults are safe;
2. Children and adults are physically and mentally healthy;
3. Individuals and families achieve their maximum possible level of self-sufficiency; and
4. Young people make smart choices.

Using an all-inclusive process to determine these community-wide outcomes, Montgomery County initially described 12 outcomes, but eventually narrowed the list down to a more manageable number. The county discovered that this process takes a long time and a lot of patience, but pays dividends. It is important to get many community voices involved to make sure that residents and employees all feel they have a stake in the adopted outcomes.

Using a “cross-funders” approach called the Montgomery Organization Development Group, the county is also beginning to form common measurements for various providers working with the same population, such as service providers helping people who are homeless.

Philadelphia’s Division of Social Services is on the edge of a significant innovation that will eventually have a considerable impact on the ability to measure performance: a cross-system management information system.

Both teams described partnerships between departments (Philadelphia) and across the community, such as with the United Way, other funders, and nonprofit organizations (Montgomery County) that are helping to make cross-systems work more the norm than the exception. Although support from leadership isn’t absolutely critical, both teams have realized that it is often the buy-in or direction from authority figures that makes these partnerships work best.

Philadelphia’s Division of Social Services is on the edge of a significant innovation that will eventually have a considerable impact on its ability to measure performance: a cross-system management information system. Still in its infancy, the integrated data system will eventually be capable of producing aggregate reports and information that can improve both performance accountability and customer service and support cross-systems work.

**How can performance measurement make funding decisions less political?**

Both teams agreed that some decisions will continue to be driven by politics rather than by performance data, but the trend is changing. When decision-makers are presented with good, timely data, they begin to use it. The group shared several success stories of how performance data can change the course of decisions. One participant offered a warning flag: when decision-makers realize what a powerful tool performance measurement can be, they may expect the data development

agenda (which can be a slow and painful process) to move faster and more accurately than staff are able to produce it.

**Are cross-system partnerships and leadership from the top enough to change organizational culture, or must there be bolder practice changes as well?**

After spending the better part of the afternoon discussing what drives organizational change, both teams brainstormed about what they believe is necessary to reach a “tipping point” for changing organizational culture to accept and expect performance measurement and results-based accountability. These ideas emerged:

- Many people collectively “own” a broad set of outcomes or results.
- Staff believe that the quality improvement function doesn’t belong to just one person or unit, but that everyone is responsible for quality improvement and performance measurement. The language used changes from “here are *your* data” to “here are *our* data.”
- Staff view themselves as part of a larger whole, working toward the same ends for the people they serve, rather than as entirely separate agencies and departments with individual goals.
- There are champions, leaders, and ambassadors who support, encourage, and even demand performance accountability. They are willing to talk about it publicly and frequently.
- Outcomes and performance measurement must be tied to budget allocations.
- When providers negotiate their contracts or ask for rate increases, improved outcomes or performance measurement data must back up their requests.
- Funding proposals are automatically expected to include outcome and performance measures before being considered.
- Regular and constant communication about achieving outcomes and performance measurement is the norm, instead of occasional reports that many people don’t even look at.

- Managers and supervisors talk to their staff regularly about their data and how to interpret and use their findings to improve results for the people they serve.
- Staff come together in routine staff meetings, and performance measurement and management is a standard agenda item.
- Outcomes and performance measurement are used to drive staff development/training opportunities, helping staff to enhance their skills in areas that are highlighted as needing improvement during the review of performance measures.
- The private sector, with its established record of achievement and literature around quality improvement, is looked to for lessons learned.

## Using Performance Management to Change, Monitor, and Inform the Provider Contracting Process

### **What tools do provider staff need to learn how to analyze and review outcomes and improve the services they deliver?**

The Montgomery County team described the cross-systems training they have developed (courses entitled Outcomes Management 1 and Outcomes Management 2) that is mandatory for all providers requesting funds. Initially, only the service providers were required to take these courses. But over time, they have strongly encouraged their own contract monitors to also attend so that they are able to understand what the providers have learned about performance measurement and what is expected of them. It is important that contract monitors understand what they are looking for and that providers understand how to write/propose outcomes that have a measurable impact on their clients' lives. In Montgomery County, they

have tried to incorporate and align at least some of the providers' measures with those that are required by the state and federal governments to make the providers' data gathering and analysis a little easier.

Providers often feel that they don't have the staff or the expertise to collect and analyze the data. Contract monitors or other staff from Montgomery County now meet individually with providers to talk them through what is expected and help them shape their performance measures. Sometimes the providers are already collecting the data that are needed, and the information just needs to be reshaped a bit to make it more useful. Also, the United Way in Montgomery County is willing to review suggested outcomes ahead of proposal submissions to help providers determine if they have the "right" outcomes or how they can be reworked if necessary.

In Philadelphia, DSS departments included language in fiscal year 2002 contracts notifying providers of the city's shift to a performance management approach and inviting them to participate in developing this new system. Some of the DSS departments have worked together to develop fiscal year 2003 contract language and performance measures. A couple of the departments have engaged consultants for technical support for both department and provider organization staff. One of the more exciting approaches is the Department of Human Services' (DHS) move to performance-based contracting for foster care services. Based on a model that has been successful in Illinois, DHS is designing the contract language and payment process in partnership with provider organizations.

The Quality Management Unit of Philadelphia's DSS has assisted department staff directly and, in collaboration with a consultant, is planning for the fiscal year 2003 contract changes. Training sessions for individual departments were held to assist the departments in developing and implementing contract work plans.

Members from both teams also discussed the use of uniform reporting formats (spreadsheets) that remain the same over time so that providers can become accustomed to the forms. Information that is standard or previously submitted can be

It is important that contract monitors understand what they are looking for and that providers understand how to write/propose outcomes that have a measurable impact on their clients' lives.

input before sending it on to the provider for additional information, which also makes the provider's job a little easier.

**How do we prepare service providers for the change to an outcomes-based performance measurement system?**

This change requires a shift in thinking, planning, and working. It doesn't usually happen easily or quickly. While most service providers in Philadelphia will be operating under the new system as of July 1, 2002, the first year will be considered a transitional year and, in most cases, providers will not be expected to hold performance contracts (in other words, their funding will not be solely dependent on their achieved outcomes or performance).

Training is key, as is access to quality management staff who can help departments and their providers understand what is expected. Also, communication is a critical factor for success. Giving providers and staff access to lots of information about the performance measurement system, talking about it at staff meetings, and posting information on walls and in newsletters helps everyone to understand what is happening and what is expected.

In some departments, staff and providers meet together on a regular basis to talk about performance measurements and related issues. As one of the participants noted, "It's like group therapy." Staff have come to understand that they share the responsibilities of writing good outcomes/performance measures and negotiating appropriate contracts with providers and together they feel like they own the work and the contracts.

Several team members also talked about the usefulness of rewards. If providers know that they may be rewarded with additional resources for exceptional performance, the incentive can help improve performance and outcomes.

**When you have providers who are expected to produce measurable results but the contracting department makes changes that impact procedures or client outcomes, how can the data be useful and the providers not be held responsible for changes outside of their control?**

The Philadelphia team member representing the Department of Corrections presented a data dilemma. In his department, prisoners take workforce development courses that hopefully will reduce recidivism by preparing them to live outside the walls of the prison. However, when prisoners are transferred due to the need to fill empty beds in various facilities, or for other reasons, they are removed from the job training courses before completion. How can data be collected and interpreted when the “clients” are frequently moved prior to completion of the training? The Montgomery County team suggested using subsets of data—comparing those who complete the training to those who don’t—to determine the effectiveness of the workforce development training. It was also suggested that if data show more positive outcomes—in this case less recidivism—for those prisoners who complete the training, this information could be used to advocate against moving prisoners throughout the system without regard to the training in which they are enrolled.

**What kinds of qualitative data are collected, and how are they used?**

Qualitative data refer to those measurements that gauge quality of life. Customer satisfaction measures are often used to gauge quality, but in fact, there are standardized scales and measures that can be used.

Montgomery County has developed community review panels. Although not “pure” measurements of quality, these review panels are able to make generally sound judgments about the quality of various programs. The panels consist of a broad range of neutral observers from every walk of life (never providers, clients, or others who have been directly involved with the services). Panel members work in teams to visit funded service sites, review records and budget information, interview providers and clients, and rate both customer service and infrastructure. While not a perfect

approach, the Montgomery team continues to improve it, and expressed an interest in working with the Philadelphia team to find ways to enhance the process and scale of the community review panels.

**How can we cope with and communicate “bad,” disappointing, or unexpected data/results?**

Most people, whether they are staff, providers, or politicians, don’t come readily equipped with the knowledge to easily understand and interpret data. It’s important to help people to not only understand what these data mean, but also to help them convert their findings into information that can be used to improve performance.

Preparing audiences to understand data means also to be prepared to explain the “story behind the data.” For example, when these data show that the incidence of a sexually-transmitted disease like chlamydia has increased dramatically, it can be interpreted in various ways. If the reporting procedures have been improved or expanded, it’s possible that there isn’t actually an increase in the incidence, but instead an increase in reporting. In Philadelphia, quality management staff discuss data with the departments that are reporting them. Do they understand what their findings mean and why there are changes (or why there are not changes)? Not every manager is data savvy, so quality management staff help them to understand the data and think about trends (for example, legislation, a dip in the budget, or other actions that may be impacting the data). One suggestion was to brief city council staff so they understand what they are seeing in the data.

“It’s good to see that people from both sites are coming up against some of the same issues, and we’ll use the participant list to stay in touch to work together. It’s great to find new peers.”

Jeff Petraco, Philadelphia Division of Social Services

## LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

Participants from both teams wrapped up the peer match by describing the ideas, strategies, and lessons that had emerged during the meeting. Some common themes included:

- *Work first with the places and the people who want to be involved with performance measurement and management.* Don't "beat your heads" against a wall of disinterest and no support.
- *Involve a cross-section of departments, nonprofit organizations, and other external partners in your work.* The desired outcomes and results are too expansive and inclusive to be accomplished by single departments alone.
- *Recognize and reward every step forward.* "Catch people doing good things!" As you find successes, even small ones like data processors who are doing a good job on data entry, reward them. Use gift certificates for pizza or movies, or a monthly recognition program, or a blurb in the agency newsletter, or a periodic awards ceremony to reinforce and celebrate the good work. Even a day off from work could be used as a reward, for example, for a caseworker who can cite data showing that her caseload has made substantial improvements. Departments could develop a "*Changing Lives*" initiative, which rewards and recognizes units that have made the biggest difference in the lives of the people they serve, and that can use data to prove it.
- *Encourage early adopters to persevere.* *Staff working on developing a performance measurement system shouldn't worry too much about their self-esteem as other staff begin to avoid them.* Eventually colleagues won't turn and walk in the opposite direction. (Although this comment drew laughs, the person offering it was serious—initially many colleagues shy away from those who are attempting to bring about change through performance measurement.)
- *Find performance measurement champions at every level of the system, including those who can influence politics.* Even a single champion who is savvy about politics and how things work can help others understand and buy-in to the importance of results-based accountability.

- *Consider using an “outcomes team,”* similar to the Quality Management Workgroup in Philadelphia’s Division of Social Services. The shared commitment to outcomes and the process of learning together create a positive and supportive atmosphere for change.
- *Don’t be tempted to do too much of the performance measurement work for others.* Even if there is a team such as the Quality Management Workgroup, make sure that departments are expected to be very hands-on in designing their measures, collecting their data, formatting the data into reports, and defending the data. Hold them accountable for the accuracy, timeliness, and meaningfulness of their data and measurements.
- *Be sure to communicate the importance of the work and the successes in many formats.* Use posters, staff newsletters, and reports at meetings, training opportunities, and other venues to continually communicate about performance measurements.
- *Don’t get so locked into a single reporting format or framework for all agencies and departments that you lose sight of the reason for performance measurements—improving the lives of the people you serve.* Although different formats and frameworks cause confusion, the most important key to this work is that staff understand that they are trying to improve outcomes, and they keep their eyes on that goal.
- *Don’t penalize staff who can’t “get there” fast enough.* Some staff and units may be doing their best to design measures and collect accurate data, but may lag behind. Imposing stiff penalties or humiliating them won’t necessarily improve their performance, but may make them reticent to participate or be honest about how they are doing.

Participants from each team also took a few minutes to describe what they personally found the most insightful during the peer match and how they will make use of their new ideas and strategies.

- “I really like the idea of briefing city council staff prior to council meetings!”
- “Rewards and awards for performance is a great idea, and it also helped to hear that it is best to work first with those who want to get involved in performance measures.”
- “The community review process is really interesting. I also think it’s a great idea to ‘give back the data and work’ to the departments, not taking on too much of it on their behalf.”
- “I learned a lot about how to work interactively with providers.”
- “The idea of gathering data in subsets is a really good one that I hadn’t thought of!”
- “It’s important to ‘share the pain’ with contract monitors, and I also like the idea of developing training and specific standards/modules so analysts consistently get the same training. We don’t automatically come equipped with this type of knowledge.”
- “I’m really intrigued with the ROMA process and would like to learn more. I’m also going to be very interested to know how our [Montgomery County] ideas and strategies work for Philadelphia, so we’ll know how useful our own lessons are to others.”
- “I learned a lot about how to calm down! I realize now that performance measurement is a long-term and reiterative process, and we can learn and improve as we go. I’ve learned it’s okay to take the scenic roads and run into some dead-ends, because otherwise we’ll miss opportunities to learn.”

- “It’s good to see that people from both sites are coming up against some of the same issues, and we’ll use the participant list to stay in touch to work together. It’s great to find new peers.”
- “We picked up lots of information that we’ll share back home [Montgomery County], and we’ve learned from you, too. Also, I’m really impressed with Philadelphia’s strong commitment to the rehabilitation of prisoners.”
- “I’m learning how to connect better with my peers, knowing more about how to frame what we need to learn, and getting some very specific tools, too.”
- “I’m really enjoying the collaborative work, especially learning about how to convert data into practical information and practice.”
- “I learned about how to use data in looking at funding proposals, especially the idea of using changes from year to year to assess proposals.”
- “I’m pretty new and an intern, so all of this will be useful. I’ve now got a framework for thinking about outcomes and performance measurement.”
- “I’ve realized that co-learning between peers is incredibly powerful!”
- “I have a whole new set of ideas about how to communicate the work, and Montgomery County’s communication pieces are beautiful! I’ve learned a lot about how to present materials and data.”
- “I learned a lot about how peer-to-peer matches work and also a lot about performance measurement and results-based accountability.”
- “I’ve learned so much, but I’m especially pleased to learn how much we, as Philadelphia’s Quality Management Workgroup, have done right and well.”

## WHAT IS *MAKING CONNECTIONS*?

*Making Connections* is the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s initiative to improve outcomes for some of the nation’s most vulnerable children and families. The initiative is conducted through deep and durable partnerships with selected cities and neighborhoods across the United States—currently 22 cities that make up the broad *Making Connections* network. Several core ideas underlie *Making Connections*:

- *Making Connections* is based on the recognition that the greatest number of American children who suffer from “rotten outcomes” live in city neighborhoods that are in many ways cut off—disconnected—from the mainstream opportunities of American life. Thus, *Making Connections* is “place-based”—it focuses on specific neighborhoods in specific cities.
- *Making Connections* has a simple theory: that children do better when they grow up in strong families, and families do better when they live in supportive neighborhoods. Thus, *Making Connections* strategies are aimed at helping families obtain what they need to be strong, and helping neighborhoods gain the resources they need in order to support families well.
- *Making Connections* focuses on three major types of “connections” that help families grow stronger and achieve what they want for their children. The first of these is helping families connect to **economic opportunities** and to jobs that provide income, assets, and an economic future. Research and experience suggest that this type of connection is unlikely without two others: strong connections to the **social networks** of kin, neighborhood groups, and other informal ties that sustain families when times get tough, and to high-quality, **effective services and supports** that help families reach their goals.

*Making Connections* focuses on improving results for children and families in tough neighborhoods. Core results that *Making Connections* communities are mobilizing around include:

- Families have increased earnings and income;
- Families have increased levels of assets;
- Families, youth, and neighborhoods increase their participation in civic life;
- Families and neighborhoods have strong informal supports and networks;
- Families have access to quality services and supports; and
- Children are healthy and ready to succeed in school.

A key task in ensuring the success of *Making Connections* is making available the learning and technical assistance that the participating sites need to move forward with their work. One of the ways that the Foundation provides this kind of support is by making peer matches available.

## WHAT ARE PEER MATCHES?

Since 1995, as part of a broader effort to rely more intentionally on the experience of people working in the field, the Center for the Study of Social Policy began working with several partners and funders to develop and offer a rather intensive form of peer technical assistance known as peer matches. Peer matches are structured opportunities for teams of people from two or more jurisdictions who are working on a similar issue to exchange experiences and practical knowledge toward resolving a particular challenge that has been identified in advance.

The rationale behind peer matches is straightforward. Often, the people best able to provide hands-on help are the “doers” themselves—people from states and communities who have successfully addressed a problem or created an effective new policy or strategy. These are the people who have an acute sense of what has and hasn’t worked, and why and why not. They have developed good tools and strategies they can share. And they are usually eager to help others because of a strong sense of shared mission. But while good peer matches are informal, they are never

casual, using a carefully designed process and structure to focus the common interests, roles, and goodwill that exist between peers on producing meaningful change for a community.

Peer matches are a resource and time intensive strategy. Careful consideration of when, where, and how to use this approach is therefore always warranted. Experience has shown that careful preparation and execution of the matches are critical factors for their success. This approach tends to work best when the following conditions are in place:

- A specific problem or issue has been identified, and the people looking for help are at a key decision point with respect to the design or implementation of a state or community strategy;
- Stakeholders are invested in and have a high degree of ownership in solving a problem;
- The timing is right—e.g., a decision or action that will affect the community’s family strengthening agenda is going to be taken and/or someone needs to be convinced to take action; and
- A reasonably small number of people have the authority and ability to act on what they learn in the match.

To date, the Center has brokered over 60 peer matches on topics ranging from creating resident-led community development corporations and governance structures, to establishing multilingual homeownership assistance centers, to building integrated services models. As illustrated in the case summaries that are part of this series, peer matches help spread good policies and practice, build relationships among different stakeholders who may not always have a chance to work together, and enable people to put changes in place that improve results for children, families, and neighborhoods.





**The Annie E. Casey Foundation**

701 St. Paul Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410.547.6600  
410.547.6624 fax  
[www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)

Center  
for the  
Study  
of  
Social  
Policy

1575 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.371.1565  
202.371.1472 fax  
[www.cssp.org](http://www.cssp.org)