

PEER NETWORKING MEETINGS Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose for Philadelphia's Peer Networking Meetings and who is the intended audience?

Sponsored by Philadelphia's After School/Youth Development Network, the purpose of the meetings has been to give area out-of-school time (OST) staff an opportunity to meet one another, share challenges and victories, and develop new relationships in an informal environment.

How did the networking meetings begin? Extensive research on effective professional development for OST staff had been conducted by the Out-of-School Time Resource Center. This research revealed staff-reported need for peer-to-peer support as a means of enhancing professional development in addition to more formal venues such as workshops and conferences. With no such network in place locally, the OSTRC consulted with similar large networks in other cities (including Pittsburgh and Baltimore) to find out how to launch the venue. An advisory committee of peers from local OST organizations was formed to help plan meeting details such as date, location, content, and other logistics.

When and where do meetings take place? The Network officially meets once every month (breaking only during the summer) at the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Dates and times vary, but are scheduled based on participant survey response, potential time conflict with other OST conferences and events, and similar factors.

What activities take place at meetings? What topics are covered? Meetings offer area staff an opportunity to meet one another, share challenges and victories, and develop new relationships in an informal environment. Activities include: socializing and refreshments, introductions and announcements, and a brief formal panel discussion with questions and answers. Topics for the panel discussion are generated by participant surveys, filtered through the advisory committee, and range from "Youth Voice & Choice" to "Behavior Management."

How do I participate? There are no fees or requirements to join, other than being closely associated with out-of-school time in the greater Philadelphia region. You may contact the OSTRC at 215-898-0793 or johnep@sp2.upenn.edu in order to be added to the email distribution list.

What should I bring with me to a meeting? Participants are not required to bring any particular item, but are encouraged to bring along business cards, announcements, and other appropriate information and materials to share.

Can I obtain professional credit for attending? Yes. One hour of United Way IMPACT Initiative training credit is available for Philadelphia Safe & Sound participants. Two hours of PaKeys credit, through Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare, are available for all participants.

Where can I find more information? For notices of upcoming meetings, dates, locations, and topics, please visit the Peer Networking Meeting website at: <http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc/interactive.html#pnm>. You may also contact the OSTRC at 215-898-0793 or johnep@sp2.upenn.edu in order to be added to the email distribution list.