

## Partnering for Greater Access to Technology

NAAEE offers a program called “NAAEE Technology Solutions”, or “NTS” for short, where the Association makes available Internet technology developed over the past 5 years to state, regional, and national EE organizations.

The core of the NTS offering is the “On-line Information Clearinghouse” or OIC for short. The OIC is a web application that allows EE providers to enter organization, program/resource, calendar event, contact and other information into a searchable web directory. Schools, curriculum consultants, EE providers and other community consumers then use the directory to locate, contact, and coordinate with EE providers.

### Roles for Technology in State and Regional EE Organizations

The OIC has been under continuous development since its introduction in 1999. The OIC can fill many roles for a state or region including:

- Being a rich yellow pages searchable and browseable directory so users of EE services and resources can find providers
- Supporting networking in the state (and among states) by making it easy for providers to find each other and coordinate programming and events.
- Providing a calendar of events for a state, a region within a state, or for multi-state regions and even national listings of events.
- Acting as a membership management tool for state associations. Much of the information needed to add an organizational entry to the OIC is identical to that involved in managing a membership database.
  - o Online membership updates and payments are also possible which can streamline maintenance of, and access to, membership information for all involved parties.
- Acting as a tool to increase a state association’s ability to add new members. Some of our users have seen significant gains in membership once the system became available with the OIC acting as a strong membership benefit.
- Improving state and regional programs’ grant seeking ability in several ways. The introduction of the OIC is a fundable concept in itself. Because the OIC can also help a state association grow, and coordinate and network with providers, the OIC enables new capabilities (capacity building) in the state that make it much easier for grant programs of any type to be able to present viable and attractive operational plans no matter what the focus. States find that a strong and connected community buoys all programming.
- Increasing community awareness and participation by accommodating online reviews of EE programs and resources.
- Providing a centralized location for volunteer opportunities

### Changing Approach to Technology At NAAEE

Since beginning the project in 1999 NAAEE's state technology program has spread to over a dozen States. Starting after the 2004 annual conference, NAAEE is now going to make a simplified version of the OIC service available in all States. This change is part of a program expansion plan to make NAAEE technology more broadly accessible and to tailor the structure and offerings of the NTS program more directly to the needs of State EE organizations.

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