

## 2012 - 2015 Initiatives

*The current and future initiatives of the Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE) build on CAISE's first five years of work. CAISE endeavors to support continued professionalization of the informal science education (ISE) field and foster communities and networks of practice that bridge the many varied forms in which informal STEM learning experiences are developed and delivered for learners of all ages.*

- **Evaluation Capacity Building:** CAISE recognizes that evaluation is critical to drive innovation, identify gaps, and make the case for the impact of informal STEM learning. To build capacity in this burgeoning field, CAISE will collaborate with evaluators of informal STEM projects, partner with the American Evaluation Association to increase diversity in the informal STEM evaluation field, and produce and disseminate tools and resources designed to stimulate new collaborations among and between evaluators and Principal Investigators (PIs).
- **Education and Public Outreach for STEM Professionals:** CAISE will work with the National Science Foundation (NSF) centers conducting cutting-edge STEM research to improve their broader impacts outreach through informal STEM learning efforts. CAISE will convene STEM researchers and informal STEM learning institutions, projects, and professionals to form strategic partnerships and will disseminate resources to build capacity for those charged with conducting STEM research and communication efforts.
- **Learning Research and Practice:** Building on questions and challenges identified by a cross-section of the informal STEM field at the 2012 ISE PI Meeting, CAISE will endeavor to connect the field of learning sciences research with current and potential PIs of informal STEM learning projects. The initiative will explore design-based implementation and action research, disseminate resources that will inform learning science research and informal STEM practice, and further refine fruitful areas of inquiry for informal STEM projects—keeping in mind that research is not the sole source of knowledge in informal science education.
- **Infrastructure Development:** CAISE has an ongoing charge to improve the integration and usability of the NSF's many investments in online infrastructure and resources. Building on previous infrastructure initiative efforts and input from the field, CAISE will integrate existing sites to provide a single portal for accessing these resources and a structure for informal STEM learning projects to contribute content and engage audiences. This work will also further expand existing CAISE online resources, including the Informal Commons ([informalcommons.org](http://informalcommons.org)), ISE Evidence Wiki ([iseevidencewiki.org](http://iseevidencewiki.org)), and the *PI's Guide to Managing Evaluation*.

To learn more about CAISE, visit [www.caise.insci.org](http://www.caise.insci.org) or email [info@caise.insci.org](mailto:info@caise.insci.org).

## Access the World of Informal Science Education Online

The Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE), in cooperation with the National Science Foundation, offers open sources of knowledge and information that support the informal STEM education (ISE) field. Three new resources inform the development of ISE projects and provide scholarly evidence to strengthen funding proposals.

*The ISE Evidence Wiki:* This is an online database of evidence about the impact of informal STEM learning experiences that uses a wiki format to provide the opportunity to join, use and contribute to this resource. The Wiki is a first stop for those looking for specific citations on special topics in ISE, which can be useful for project and proposal development or in the formation of research questions. Evidence Wiki article titles represent topics that are relevant to current research and practice trends in ISE—for example, what is known about how mobile devices and apps have been used in informal learning environments (like science museums) The wiki was initially seeded by a group of contributors with specific content expertise and interest, and is now open to everyone. This resource recently made its debut in mobile format at the ASTC Conference in Columbus, OH. Explore and add your own evidence for ISE at [www.iseevidencewiki.org](http://www.iseevidencewiki.org).

*The PI's Guide to Managing Evaluation of ISE Project:* The recently launched online Guide was designed to provide well-tested approaches to successfully integrating evaluation into the development and management of Informal STEM projects for current, new, and existing Principal Investigators. The Guide was written primarily by practitioners, who gathered methods, approaches, and compelling examples from the field. The Guide includes how to position evaluation as a valuable component of a project, finding and contracting with an evaluator, working with an evaluator to create an evaluation plan, and getting and disseminating an evaluation report that meets the needs of the project team as well as broader stakeholders. The Guide was originally posted online in a PDF format and is now also available in an interactive web-based format. Learn more at [www.caise.insci.org](http://www.caise.insci.org).

*The Informal Commons:* This website provides a one-stop search engine that searches across a comprehensive set of sites documenting project descriptions, exhibits, programs, evaluation reports and tools, research on learning, and media related to informal STEM learning. Users can type in a search term—for example, “astronomy” or “family learning”—and narrow down results using an extensive tagging system to find the resources that best fit their needs. For those new to ISE, the Informal Commons provides a valuable introduction to the rich range of activities and resources in the field. For ISE veterans, the Informal Commons is a portal that interconnects a growing range of online resources that allows for streamlined access to gathering and sharing timely information about the informal STEM field. Explore the Informal Commons at [www.informalcommons.org](http://www.informalcommons.org).