



CONNECTIONS



FEBRUARY 2013

Volume 28 # 2

Blazing The Trail

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2013 AIRS Training & Education Conference

“Blazing the Trail In I&R”

Plans are underway for the 2013 AIRS Training and Education Conference and we want you to be there! Go west and discover the city of Portland, Oregon. It has something for everyone - whether you enjoy hiking nature trails or prefer shopping, fine dining and museums. In the next few issues we will share information about the conference and help you plan your trip with a list of things to see and do.

Let's start with **The Top Reasons Why You Must Attend The Conference:**

- Connect with the right people at the right time
- Learn from top thought leaders in over 85 educational sessions and workshops
- Take home solutions to your tough challenges from our Exhibit Hall
- Learn new techniques and skills that you use immediately in your agency
- Earn CEUs for your professional development and advancement
- Communicate through power networking at our networking events
- It's economical and affordable, with over 30 sessions a day and many meals provided. We haven't raised our prices in years!
- Portland is sales tax free! Shoppers and budget-conscious attendees rejoice - you pay no additional sales tax in the city or state!

Please be sure to make plans to join us for our annual conference in trendy Portland, Oregon, June 2-5, at the lovely Hilton Portland & Executive Towers, located right in the central downtown area. We have negotiated a special discounted hotel rate just for you. Hotel rates are \$119 or \$113 for government (federal, state & local) employees. The deadline for this special AIRS discounted hotel rate is May 3, 2013.

In order to be able to bring you a conference of this magnitude, it is important that you stay at the conference hotel so we can continue to ensure the quality of our future programs and low hotel room rates. Call 800-HILTONS or www.hilton.com and reference "AIRS" to make your reservations at this special rate.

THE REGISTRATION BROCHURE WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE SHORTLY!

Blazing the Trail continued on page 2



Got a question? Not sure who at AIRS to contact? Email info@airs.org!

Blazing the Trail continued from page 1

Register by March 31 & SAVE!

AIRS Basic Level Member \$455
 AIRS Standard Level Member \$432
 AIRS Premium Level Member \$364
 Aging Network Member \$455
 NW AIRS Member \$364
 Non-Member \$600
 Single Day Basic Member \$240
 Single Day Standard Member \$228
 NW AIRS & Premium Member Single Day \$192

Registration Fees from April 1- May 17:

AIRS Basic Level Member \$525
 AIRS Standard Level Member \$498
 AIRS Premium Level Member \$420
 Aging Network Member \$525
 NW AIRS Member: \$420
 Non-Member \$675
 Single Day Basic Member \$280
 Single Day Standard Member \$268
 NW AIRS & Premium Member Single Day \$224
 Aging Network Member Single Day \$280
 Non-Member Single Day \$380

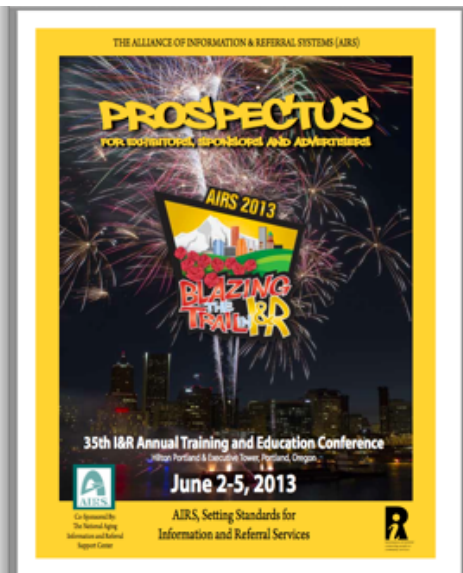
Register between May 18 - onsite:

AIRS Basic Level Member \$595
 AIRS Standard Level Member \$565

Visit the 2013 AIRS Conference Page:

www.airs.org/conference

New information is added regularly. Bookmark the page and check back often!



AIRS Premium Level Member \$476
 Aging Network Member \$595
 NW AIRS Member \$476
 Non-Member \$745
 Single Day Basic Member \$320
 Single Day Standard Member \$304
 NW AIRS & Premium Member Single Day \$256
 Aging Network Member Single Day \$320
 Non-Member Single Day \$420

Your Full Conference Registration Fee Includes:

Aging & Disability Summit - June 2
 Workshops - June 3, 4, 5
 Welcome Reception - June 2
 Breakfast - June 3
 Lunches - June 4, 5
 Portlandia Networking Reception & AIRS Silent Auction - Tuesday, June 4
 Daily admission to the Exhibit Hall, Breaks, Cyber Cafe

One-day registrants may attend Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday only. If you wish to participate in the Portlandia Networking Reception and Friends of AIRS Silent Auction you will need to purchase a separate ticket in addition to your one-day registration fee. For more details about what is included in a one-day only registration go online to www.airs.org/conference.



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The Alliance of Information & Referral Systems Inc., was incorporated in 1973 to improve access to human services for all people through the mechanism of information and referral. It is a member organization serving I&R interests.

The AIRS Newsletter is provided as a benefit to all AIRS members. For information about membership, contact us at 703-218-AIRS (2477).

AIRS accepts paid advertising for inclusion in its publications for products and/or services which are related to the purposes of AIRS and its members. The products and services advertised in AIRS publications do not necessarily imply endorsement by AIRS or its membership.

For more information about placing an ad in the AIRS Newsletter, or to submit articles, photos and updates contact:

Charlene Kloos

AIRS Communications Coordinator

newslettereditor@airs.org

Due to a high amount of spamming, please clearly indicate *Newsletter* somewhere in the subject line to avoid being blocked.

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Would you or someone you know like to have their company featured at the conference? Then make sure to download the Prospectus from the conference webpage for all the details!

Policy: OAA, AIRS Health Insurance Webinar & more

By Meredith Ponder

AIRS Public Policy Associate

Bob Blancato and Meredith Ponder have begun meetings this month with minority staff from the Senate HELP Committee and majority staff from the Primary Health and Aging Subcommittee to discuss the Older Americans Act reauthorization process. Both minority and majority staff were very receptive to discussing OAA reauthorization and we will keep you updated as meetings continue.

**

John O'Brien of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), who will be leading a webinar for AIRS members regarding the role of AIRS as navigators in the health insurance marketplaces, has provided information about a health insurance marketplace listserv that AIRS members are encouraged to sign up for in order to keep up with scheduled calls and released guidance on the marketplaces. The link to sign up for the listserv can be found [here](#). If you have any further questions for John, please contact Meredith Ponder at mponder@matzblancato.com.

**

On Monday, February 11, the Obama administration launched an online data center called Smart Disclosure Data Community, which can be found at Consumer.Data.gov. It is meant for both consumers and technology developers and it streamlines

approximately 400 government datasets from dozens of federal agencies. The administration said that companies are using the data to make mobile apps that assist users in finding health care options and understanding their 401(k) plans, among other things. Nick Sinai, deputy chief technology officer, said in a White House blog entry, "Using the community, entrepreneurs and innovators can access free federal data to create the consumer applications, products and services of the future — all in one convenient location."

**

The Washington Post published an article on Monday, February 4 entitled "For insurance exchanges, states need 'navigators' — and hiring them is a huge task" which can be found [here](#). The article discusses the challenges of hiring navigators for the new health insurance marketplaces.

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See you at the...
2013 AIRS Conference!
Booth 7

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Improve Your Online Forms to Increase Usability

By Tricia Burmeister

Usability and Data Manager, PA 2-1-1 Southwest United Way of Allegheny County

Forms are ubiquitous in the world of information and referral. Many of us use online intake forms to record caller data; we use online search forms in resource databases, and we provide forms for users and agencies to contact us. Poorly designed forms can cause confusion for users and result in bad information being entered. If users don't understand why they're being asked for certain information, they may simply refuse to provide the information. In their 2009 book *Forms That Work*, Caroline Jarrett and Gerry Gaffney propose that web forms involve three layers:

- The *relationship* of a form is the relationship between the organization that is asking the questions and the person that answers
- The *conversation* of a form comes from the questions asked, any other instructions, and the way the form is arranged into topics
- The *appearance* of a form is the way it looks: the arrangement of text, input areas such as fields and graphics, and the use of color.

The user experience involved in each of these three layers has implications for the success of a form.

Relationship and Conversation

It can be challenging to organize the flow of an intake form to promote accurate collection of information while facilitating natural dialogue between an I&R Specialist and a caller. Questions may seem random if each new piece of information doesn't relate to what's previously been asked. When an I&R Specialist is acting as an intermediary between a caller and an intake form, it's easier to explain why certain information is being requested – there's a more personal relationship and conversation happening. In a purely web-based setting, it becomes crucial to gain users' trust by clearly indicating who we are, why we're requesting certain information, and how that information relates to what the user has already entered. Ask anticipated or neutral questions before unexpected questions that may intrude on the user's privacy.

The relationship between your organization and the users of your online forms may usually be clear, but it always helps to make sure that your public online forms are clearly labeled with your logo, and provide reassurance to the user about how their information will be used and where it will be sent.

ZIP Code or County:

If you are looking for services, sharing your ZIP code or county will enable us to better assist you. All information is confidential.

Example of a form field with explanation for why info is being requested.

Appearance

Many software packages, content management systems, or online services like Google Forms or Formstack don't give users complete control over the appearance of their forms. They may not allow customization of field label displays, dimensions of input boxes, typography, or grouping and placement of fields. However, if you have control over the appearance of your online forms, I encourage you to consider how you can manipulate these elements to enhance their usability:

- Results from user testing of forms, including eye-tracking studies, indicate that users read labels above and to the left of fields. Putting labels above fields reduces the eye movement required to scan the labels and fields, but can result in the form appearing longer.
- Reading right-aligned text is harder than reading left-aligned text, especially if your question runs over more than one line. For simple, frequently-requested data, right-aligned labels will enable users to move swiftly through a group of fields. However, if your form asks unfamiliar questions that require users to scan labels to learn what's required, left-aligned labels work best.
- You **MAY** be *tempted* to use **bold**, *italic*, **CAPITALS**, and underlining to emphasize **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**. Problem: you can END UP with a sort of *VISUAL SOUP* where **none** of the *emphasis works*.
- Make your forms more organized by grouping related fields together. You can do this using placement, spacing, alignment, and background color.

Users with different experience levels and motivations will interact with web forms differently. By providing well-organized and easy-to-use forms for the public and for I&R Specialists, we'll be more likely to succeed in collecting the information we need.

Further reading:

Friedman, V. (2008, July 4). Smashing Magazine. "[Web Form Design Patterns: Sign-Up Forms.](#)"

Jarrett, C. & Gaffney, G. (2009). *Forms that Work: Designing Web Forms for Usability*. Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.

Penzo, M. (2006, January 23) UXMatters. "Evaluating the Usability of Search Forms Using Eyetracking: A Practical Approach." <http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/>

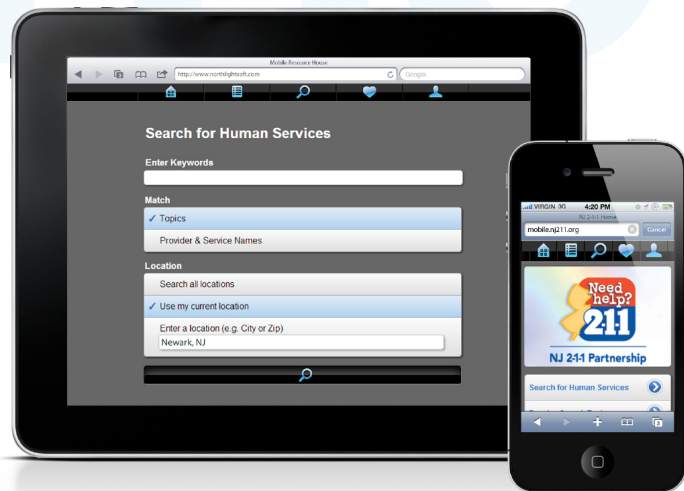
"Finally a solution to the hard copy directory for agency professionals on the road, NJ 2-1-1 Mobile is easy to use and always up to date."

Laura Zink Marx — Executive Director NJ 2-1-1



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northlightsoft.com

- Tap to Search by *your* Popular Topics
- Keyword search: topic, and provider or service name
- Location-based searches using city, ZIP, and the mobile device's built-in GPS
- Tap to place a call to providers, email them and link to their website
- Tap to Email or Text search results

Results for the AIRS NETWORKER Contest!

In the last issue we announced an information scavenger hunt on the AIRS Networker. All the correct entries received would be entered into a draw and the winner would receive an authentic AIRS sweatshirt.

The questions and the correct answers were:

- 1) Q - Name one of the two agencies who have supplied an example of a Telecommuting Policy on the I&R General Resources folder of the Open Forum library. **A - United Way of Greater Toledo, OH or 211 Hudson Valley, NY**
- 2) Q - Which state/province has the most individuals listed on the Networker? (Hint: Use the Directory's advanced search). **A - This was the tough one and the answer is WISCONSIN!**
- 3) Q - What was the name of a blog posted on Nov. 8/12? **A - The Future is (Always) Yesterday (But Even More So Today)**
- 4) Q - What is the definition of Shrinkage contained in the Networker's glossary? **A - The percentage of scheduled staff who are unable to work for unforeseen reasons.** It is important for larger call centers to factor shrinkage into their scheduling because the unexpected can be expected with some degree of predictability.

Thank you to all who took part in the contest. We had 8 correct entries received: Christopher Moore, Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities, Annapolis, MD; Corinne Gallois, Findhelp Information Services, Toronto, ON; Cort Martin, Ceridian, Minneapolis, MN; Elizabeth Cramer, First Link, Fargo, ND; Grace Long, Union-Snyder Community Action Agency, Selinsgrove, PA; Kimberly Croft, Champlain Community Care Access Centre, Ottawa, ON; Mindy Coleman, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County, Asheville, NC; Vicki Carlson, Ceridian, Minneapolis, MN.

And the winner of the AIRS sweatshirt (available from www.cafepress.com/airs) is... Grace Long! Congratulations to Grace and everyone who entered ... we'll have another competition next month.

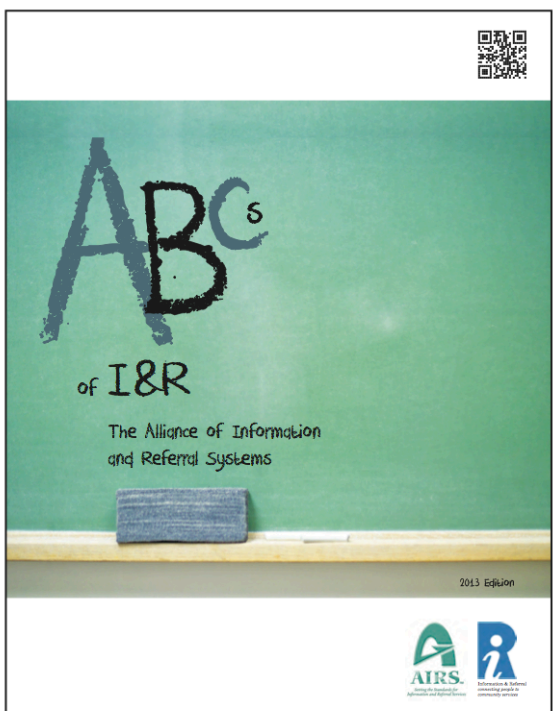
Want to be a Conference Presenter? Better hurry!

This is the final call! If you would like to be a presenter at the 2013 AIRS Conference in Portland, Oregon on June 2nd to 5th then please submit your proposal by March 1. No previous AIRS conference presenter experience is required - newbies are welcome!

Remember that you don't need to do this on your own – you can also be part of a panel approaching the same subject from different angles (e.g. coaching versus evaluation tools) or different opinions (e.g. text versus talk). We are particularly looking for ideas and formats that will effectively involve workshop attendees and that brings forth the challenges faced in I&R today.

The program tracks include 2-1-1, Aging and Disability, Disaster, I&R Management, I&R Service Delivery, Serving the Military, Resource Database and Technology. However, we are interested in anything interesting, no matter where it fits! We are also emphasizing cross-over that exists among various tracks. Special attention will be given to sessions that can be represented in multiple tracks, including panelists from multiple tracks in one presentation.

For more information and to apply visit www.airs.org/conference. The deadline is March 1, 2013.



2013 ABCs of I&R Now Available!

AIRS is pleased to announce that the 2013 version of the ABCs of I&R is now available and it's better than ever! Do you have your copy yet?

The publication is provided free to AIRS Premium members and costs \$450 for other users. Are you a Basic or Standard level AIRS user? Then why not choose to "move on up" to the Premium level? All you have to do is pay the difference between Premium and your current membership level.

The latest version is 600 pages and covers the foundational knowledge for both I&R Specialists and Resource Specialists over 25 sections. We encourage each speciality to use the publication to better understand the challenges of their colleagues.

The RFP for design services was awarded to Findhelp Information Services of Toronto, Ontario, and we appreciate the great work of Findhelp staff members Jackie Andrews and John Allec in taking the final product to a higher level than we anticipated.

The ABCs is now a searchable PDF that allows users to quickly find any topic. It also becomes much easier for every staff member to have the current edition on their computer.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy or exploring how to move your membership to Premium, please email moayad@airs.org.

AIRS Online Training Announces New Course

Have you visited the AIRS Online Continuing Education site at www.cequick.com/airs lately? We offer convenient and affordable single courses and multi-course packages for I&R professionals.

NEW! Anatomy of a Good Call

People calling I&R services portray complex circumstances and needs using an equally complex array of communication styles. This course outlines those required skills from greeting to closure, illustrating techniques for making the caller feel heard and empowered with the overall objective of achieving top-notch customer service on every I&R call. This course is intended for all staff providing Information and Referral to the public within all applicable sectors of human services. This course incorporates audio clips that illustrate the correct phone techniques and model the preferred behaviors. Only \$15!

For details on this course and a complete list of all offerings, visit: <http://airs.cequick.com/online-airs-training-courses.aspx>.



The following programs received their award of AIRS accreditation in 2012. They worked very hard for this recognition and AIRS is proud of their successful completion of this process and their commitment to providing quality I&R services. This brings the total accredited sites to 147. **Congratulations!**

Those who are recognized for reaccreditation are listed in **green**.

State/Province	City	Program/Agency Name
Arizona	Phoenix	24 Hour Helpline/Community Information and Referral
California	Los Angeles	INFO LINE of Los Angeles/211 LA County *
California	Rancho Cucamonga	2-1-1 San Bernardino County/Inland Empire United Way
Florida	Lantana	2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast/The Center for Info & Crisis Services *
Indiana	Ellettsville	2-1-1 Infolink & Aging and Disability Resource Center/Area 10 Agency on Aging
Indiana	Fort Wayne	First Call for Help/United Way of Allen County
Indiana	Lafayette	Lafayette Crisis Center
Louisiana	Lafayette	232-HELP/Louisiana 211/SW LA Education & Referral Center, Inc.
Louisiana	Lake Charles	310info/211/Volunteer Center of SW Louisiana
Louisiana	Shreveport	2-1-1 Connections/Centerpoint Community Services, Inc.
Maryland	Baltimore	First Call for Help/United Way of Central Maryland
Missouri	St. Louis	United Way 2-1-1 Missouri/SW Illinois/United Way of Greater St. Louis
North Carolina	Greensboro	Senior Line/Senior Resources of Guilford
Ohio	Canton	2-1-1/United Way of Greater Stark County
Ohio	Dayton	HelpLink 2-1-1 Information and Referral/United Way of the Greater Dayton Area
Ohio	Newark	211 Crisis Hotline and Information Center/Pathways of Central Ohio
Ohio	Springfield	2-1-1 of Clark & Champaign Counties/United Way of Clark, Champaign & Madison Counties
Oregon	Portland	211info
Texas	Abilene	2-1-1 Texas A Call for Help/United Way of Abilene
Texas	Amarillo	United Way Helpline/ United Way of Amarillo & Canyon
Texas	Sherman	2-1-1 Texas/Texoma Region/Texoma Area Information Center
Texas	Tyler	2-1-1 East Texas/United Way of Tyler/Smith County
Virginia	Roanoke	2-1-1 VIRGINIA - Southwest Region/Council of Community Services
Washington	Seattle	Community Information Line/Crisis Clinic
Washington	Tacoma	South Sound 2-1-1/United Way of Pierce County
Wisconsin	Green Bay	2-1-1: Get Connected, Get Answers/Brown County United Way
Wisconsin	Madison	United Way 2-1-1/United Way of Dane County
		<i>*This is the third time this agency has been accredited by AIRS.</i>

Computer Based Certification: Testing the Test in Houston

By **Sandra Ray, CIRS**

Manager, Information & Referral, United Way of Greater Houston, 2-1-1 Texas/United Way Helpline

When AIRS approached 2-1-1 Texas/United Way Helpline at the United Way of Greater Houston to provide feedback on the new computer-based testing process for certification exams, we enthusiastically agreed. We were asked to find several persons with CRS, CIRS, and CIRS-A credentials on our team to gauge their experience using computers instead of the traditional paper/pencil version.

One person taking each exam type was asked to intentionally fail the exam. Since the results of the test are sent by email, having both successful and unsuccessful examinees would allow us to experience the responses that future recipients would receive by getting their results electronically.

As a precaution, a security program should be installed on each exam workstation to block other programs and browser sessions. We were able to seamlessly install the program on 10 of the 12 workstations selected prior to beginning the exam. With troubleshooting and more time, we feel confident the other workstations would have been ready for examinees.

What did we love about the computer-based test?

- The computer version has a timer visible in the upper right hand corner that counts down the time remaining.
- When you skipped a question, the computer version has a “dashboard” to help keep track of these items. During our session, the skipped questions were shown in bold font.
- Maybe you’re one of those nervous test-takers who give an answer, but you’d like to come back later and see if your choice still feels like the right one. A flag option marks the question on the dashboard to help you locate it when you’re ready for review.
- You get a warning if you try to submit the test without answering all the questions. (NOTE: It will let you submit without answering all the questions, though. Make sure to read all prompts on the screen carefully.)
- Results are emailed within 2-3 days of completing the exam. Persons with a failing score are given immediate feedback on the areas where they need to improve their knowledge and skills. Previously, examinees had to request this information from AIRS.

If an agency plans to host a computer based test, make sure all computer equipment is in working order several days in advance. Ideally, the IT department could install software 24-48 hours early to avoid issues like ours on exam day. Our proctor, a United Way employee outside of the 2-1-1 department, installed the software and observed proctor responsibilities. New AIRS requirements for computer-based testing state that proctors cannot be employed by the organization or have any interest in the outcome of the exam (an I&R advisory committee member, for example). There should not be any technology issues for the proctor to address; however, have the IT department on standby just in case.

Other than the glitch with our software installation, we had a positive experience with the test. Most of the work of an I&R specialist or resource specialist is performed via computer. Changing the medium for taking the exam may result in a higher comfort level for examinees. We look forward to scheduling our first computer-based test and commend AIRS for taking this step for the field.

New AIRS Certified Specialists

The following were awarded the Certified Information & Referral Specialist, Certified Information & Referral Specialist in Aging or Certified Resource Specialist designation. Congratulations!

CERTIFIED INFORMATION & REFERRAL SPECIALISTS

Washington, Delecia - Centerpoint/211, Shreveport LA

CERTIFIED INFORMATION & REFERRAL SPECIALISTS - Aging

Clawson, Kimberly - Area Agency on Aging Palm Beach/Treasure

Coast, Inc, West Palm Beach FL

Gluck, Ruth - Area Agency on Aging Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc,
West Palm Beach FL

Murphy, Erin - Area Agency on Aging Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc,
West Palm Beach FL

Petrassi, Katherine - Area Agency on Aging Palm Beach/Treasure
Coast, Inc, West Palm Beach FL

I&R in the News & Local Happenings

This section provides a snapshot summary of articles that discuss local I&R initiatives. A link to the entire article is provided. If you would like to include an article on new launches, initiatives, or sources of funding that I&Rs have tapped into, send a link to newslettereditor@airs.org and include the word *Newsletter* in the subject line. AAA and ADRC articles are especially welcomed.



2013 marks Connect2Help's 25th

Anniversary as an independent nonprofit agency... "I received a call from a 71 year old lady on Monday. She lives in the home with her twin daughters who are 40 years old. She started off the call by saying that she was in an abusive situation. Ms. Smith (name has been changed) explained that one of her daughters would become upset and throw furniture and bottles at her, all stemming from money issues. As the conversation went on, it seemed like Ms. Smith was the only one with an income and taking care of everyone. Ms. Smith had already called Salvation Army and Julian Center without any success. While on the phone with her, her two daughters came in the room and started yelling at her. With the help of the Connect2Help Supervisor, we were able to get the police out to her home. While waiting on the police, I called the Salvation Army again with her and was able to get her into their Emergency Bed Space. We got disconnected after the intake. I called back after a few minutes and the police had arrived and Ms. Smith was in her car on the way to Salvation Army."

"...The Value of 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network: Benefits/Costs Analysis 2011 -2021. Part of the conclusion is "In Texas, the benefits of the statewide 2-1-1 exceed the costs by 50 percent or more, depending on the year. In the baseline year, net value reaches nearly \$9.3 million. Over a ten year period, it is estimated that net present value benefits exceed the costs by

over \$155 million dollars....Many of the benefits, such as the development of social capital and the frequently cited "relief and reassurance" value of 2-1-1, cannot be expressed in monetary terms. For this reason, the net value and benefit to cost ratios underestimate the true comprehensive value of 2-1-1."

Connect2Help.org

NORTH CAROLINA

TAKE 5: Dial 2-1-1 for information and referral service

"This week, we Take 5 with Jan Hayes, the executive director of The United Way of Lee County, about the 2-1-1 information telephone line, which provides a gateway for finding community health and human service resources....Almost 90 percent of North Carolinians SEMD including all of us who live in Lee, Harnett, Chatham and Moore counties SEMD live in the 2-1-1 service area, where more than 18,000 resources are available by phone. But for those who live in areas without phone access, what other options are available? The good news is that counties are joining every day — Rutherford, for example, is planning to begin service next month — and, soon, we hope to have phone coverage everywhere in the state. Until then, you can still use the service online at www.nc211.org or through a free mobile app that works on the iPhone, iPod touch and iPad. Both of those options allow you to search the same database used by 2-1-1 operators."

<http://www.sanfordherald.com/news/>

Transitioning 2-1-1 for a Sustainable Future

By **Lucinda Nord**

VP, Public Policy, Indiana Association of United Ways

On "2-1-1 Day" (February 11), 211US released "*Transitioning 2-1-1 for a Sustainable Future*," a document that outlines the current state, challenges and opportunities for the near future. It is hoped that this document will spur dialogue and engagement from 2-1-1 Centers, I&Rs, United Ways, key partners and all those who have a commitment in making the 2-1-1 system all that it can be.

While our movement had decades of preparation, 2-1-1 emerged just 15 years ago, and already 90% of Americans have access (contrast that with 9-1-1, which took 40 years to reach similar access). We have experienced phenomenal successes in the 2-1-1 network: rapid expansion, quality service, disaster response and strong utilization, despite low awareness.

However, the reality is that 2-1-1 is not operating in an optimal environment. We are at risk from our own lack of capacity. Challenging circumstances require us to work together to create a new future.

The 211US Steering Committee will schedule time with groups for conference calls, webinars and as available, in-person meetings. We seek an ongoing dialogue and engagement from 211 Centers, key partners and funders to ensure that we can make this an effort that serves the goals and objectives of all those who have a commitment in making the 2-1-1 system all that it can be.

The 211US Steering Committee invites interested folks to join our efforts and participate in the dialogue and formation of the future 2-1-1 system. Download the document (linked to <http://www.211us.org/bigdocument.htm>).



Did you know?

Due to gravitational effects you weigh is slightly less when the moon is directly overhead.

If you could drive to the sun at a speed of 88.5 km or 55 miles per hour it would take around 193 years.

Who is a Veteran?

By Mark Munger

Resource Branch Head, MCB Camp Lejeune, Jacksonville NC

Everyone that has joined the Military since 1973 has made a voluntary sacrifice to serve our Country. A key point to understand is that when you have earned the right to be called a Marine, Soldier, Sailor, Airman it cannot be taken away. That might sound like a fairly ego driven and strong statement...it is centered around pride. I believe it is important when serving customers who are Veterans to realize that they are proud. Sometimes even when circumstances have all gone out of control in their life, the pride of being a Veteran can make it difficult to ask for help.

Active Duty: The Armed Forces of the United States of America have been an all volunteer force since 1973. Yes, 18 year old men are still required to register for the draft, but that system is solely there to ensure that if Armed Forces cannot be properly staffed by volunteers then as an emergency the draft could be re-instated. In the Marine Corps for a standard enlistment which is a period of eight years, a person makes an active duty commitment of four years and then is in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) for a period of four years.

Individual Ready Reserve (IRR): When the Marine reaches their End of Active Service or (EAS) they are required to provide good contact information and hold onto their uniforms. If there was a need in that next four years those personnel in the individual ready reserve could be called back to active duty. It is important to understand that if called back into active service your civilian job would be waiting for you when you returned. This makes for a combined eight years of service, four active duty and four in the individual ready reserve. The IRR is not paid unless they are recalled.

Marine Corps Reserve, Army Reserve or National Guard: An individual does have an option of signing up for the Marine Corps Reserves, Army Reserves or National Guard at the end of their active service. If they sign up for one of the Reserves they would be with their Reserve unit one weekend a month and two weeks a year. Staying with the Reserves for four years would complete the eight year service requirement, that second four years of Reserve time they would be receiving pay.

Retired vs Separated: Those who serve for less than 20 years are considered Separated. By completing their service and gaining an Honorable Discharge they are eligible for various VA benefits. The Post 9/11 G.I. Bill is one of the major benefits for those separating today. VA home loans are another benefit that all with an Honorable Discharge can utilize. A separated service member is not eligible to continue to use the medical benefits of Tricare. Those that serve for 20 years or longer are eligible to Retire. A retiree enjoys VA education and VA home loans, but is also still covered by Tricare. Whether separated or retired anyone with an Honorable Discharge is eligible to seek out VA medical assistance, but only a Retired veteran is eligible for TriCare.

The key take away is that anyone who has served their Country in the Armed Forces of the United States of America is considered a Veteran.



FEMA Major Disaster Declarations January 18 - February 18

[Mississippi Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding \(DR-4101\)](#)

Incident period: Sunday, February 10, 2013 Major Disaster Declaration declared on Wednesday, February 13, 2013

[Connecticut Severe Winter Storm \(EM-3361\)](#)

Incident period: February 8, 2013 to February 11, 2013 Emergency Declaration declared on Sunday, February 10, 2013

Join the conversation, get the latest news and share information on:



<https://www.facebook.com/pages/AIRS-the-Alliance-of-Information-and-Referral-Systems>



<http://twitter.com/airsplace>

Information and
Referral/Assistance

AIRS
NETWORKER

Bringing People and
Services Together

Certification Test Dates

Each year over 75 AIRS certification test dates are offered across North America. This newsletter section contains only newly confirmed dates or changes, so please visit <http://www.airs.org/certification> for the complete list, more details on the certification process and requirements, and to find a location near you. Note: Canadian applicants must apply to [InformCanada](#).

SPECIAL NOTICE: AIRS is in the process of switching to a computer based testing system. All exams before May 1st will be done on the usual pen-and-paper Scantron system. All exams after September 1st will be computer based only. Exams taking place between May 1 - Sept. 1 may be on either system and is indicated with each listing.

NEWLY ADDED TEST DATES:

APRIL 19, 2013 - Raleigh, NC

9:00 - 11:00 am

Hilton North Raleigh/Midtown, 3415

Wake Forest Rd

Rachael Nygaard 828-255-0696

rachael.nygaard@uniteywayabc.org

ABCs of I&R Pre-Conference Intensive

April 17, prior to NCAOA Conference.

APRIL 25, 2013 - Annapolis, MD

9:00 - 11:00 am

AA County Heritage Bldg, 2664 Riva Rd,

2nd Floor, Chesapeake Rm

Sandra Berkeley 410-222-4257

agberk81@aacounty.org

APRIL 26, 2013 - Edmonton, AB Canada

3:30 - 5:30 pm

#400 10025 - 106 St

Lindsay Somerset 780-732-6648

lsomerset@thesupportnetwork.com

APRIL 29, 2013 - Camarillo, CA

5:30 - 7:30 pm

4001 Mission Oaks Blvd

Kelly Brown 805-485-6114 x201

kbrown@icfs.org

APRIL 29, 2013 - Cincinnati, OH

9:00 - 11:00 am

155 Tri County Pkwy, 2nd Floor Conf. Rm

Alisa Bevins 513-345-3373

abevins@help4seniors.org

MAY 3, 2013 - Charleston, WV

12:00 - 2:00 pm (Scantron Exam)

United Way of Central WV, One United Way

Robin Smith 304-376-3102

rarsmast@aol.com

MAY 3, 2013 - Concord, NH

10:00 am - Noon (Scantron Exam)

129 Pleasant St

Wendi Aultman 603-271-9068

waultman@dhhs.state.nh.us

MAY 3, 2013 - Oklahoma City, OK

10:00 am - Noon (Scantron Exam)

3801 NW 63rd St, Bldg 1

Louis Paugh 405-840-9396 x167

lpaugh@heartlineoklahoma.org

MAY 7, 2013 - Pittsburgh, PA

Noon - 2:00 pm (Scantron Exam)

DHS/Allegheny County Area Agency on

Aging, One Smithfield St, Homestead

Grays Room

Ethel Novogradac 412-350-4052

enovogradac@alleghenycounty.us

MAY 13, 2013 - Green Bay, WI

1:00 - 3:00 pm (Scantron Exam)

K I Convention Ctr, 333 Main St (ADRC Conf.)

Steven Peterson 414-289-5797

steven.peterson@milwcnty.com

MAY 13, 2013 - King City, ON Canada

1:00 - 3:00 pm (Scantron Exam)

Seneca College Residence - King

Campus, 13980 Dufferin St

Laura McDonald 905-450-4353

mcdonald.laura@yahoo.ca

There is a \$5 parking fee.

MAY 15, 2013 - Seattle, WA

10:00 am - Noon (Scantron Exam)

9725 3rd Ave NE, Ste 300

Milissa Smith 425-264-0301

milissa@win211.org

MAY 24, 2013 - Durango, CO

10:00 am - Noon (Scantron Exam)

Double Tree Hotel, 501 Camino del Rio

Nicole Hartog 303-480-6786

nhartog@drcog.org

\$25 admin. fee for anyone not living or

working in SW Colorado, Region 9.

JUNE 4, 2013 - Columbus, OH

1) 10:00 am - Noon (Scantron Exam)

2) 2:00 - 4:00 pm (Scantron Exam)

195 N Grant Ave

Stephanie Andrian 614-221-6766 x130

sandrian@handsoncenralohio.org

JUNE 5, 2013 - Iowa City, IA

10:00 am - Noon (Scantron Exam)

Center for Disabilities Development, 100

Hawkins Dr, Remboldt Rm #115

Jessica Carey 319-573-2454

jessica-carey@uiowa.edu

Parking fee, contact Jessica for more info.

JUNE 13, 2013 - Kirksville, MO

12:30 - 2:30 pm (Scantron Exam)

Rural Advocates for Independent Living,

1100 S Jamison

Carolyn Chambers 660-627-7245 x18

rpas@cableone.net

Quotable Quotes:

The greatest results in life are usually attained by simple means and the exercise of ordinary qualities. These may for the most part be summed in these two: common-sense and perseverance.

- Owen Feltham

NASUADs CIRS-A Train the Trainer & Conference Symposium

By Sara Tribe

Policy Associate, National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities

CIRS-A Train-the-Trainer Initiative

In an effort to reach as many Aging and Disability I&R/A staff as possible, the National Aging & Disability I&R/A Support Center is working with AIRS to identify and coordinate Certification for Information and Referral Specialists in Aging (CIRS-A) trainers nationwide. We plan to schedule 2-3 conference calls in the next 3 months with current CIRS-A trainers on which we will:

- Share information on the training materials we all use
- Discuss improvements and promising practices for CIRS-A training
- Create a final product that can be used for future CIRS-A trainings
- Discuss NASUAD's Train-the-Trainer initiative
- Figure out ways to outreach to future CIRS-A trainers
- Discuss the Train-the-Trainer launch during the Aging & Disability Summit at the AIRS Conference on June 2, 2013

The first workgroup call will be held on Thursday, February 28, 4-5p ET. If you have questions or would like to be included in this short-term, informal workgroup, please contact Sara Tribe at STribe@nasuad.org or 202-898-2578 x 305.

National Aging and Disability Information & Referral/Assistance Symposium (at the AIRS Conference)

Starting with a pre-conference I&R/A Summit for Aging and Disability professionals, and a full complement of

workshops, panel discussions and lively conversation throughout the week, the Symposium is essential for keeping apprised of the latest developments in aging and disability I&R/A. Join us to experience an exciting blend of workshops facilitated by I&R/A, ADRC, CIL, and Federal and National Association professionals from across the country discussing cutting edge initiatives in aging and disability information and referral programs. This is your opportunity to gain insight that will help you to revitalize your I&R/A programs as you continue to serve aging and disability populations, families, and caregivers.

Conference proposals are due March 1!
[Click here for more information.](#)

The National Aging and Disability I&R/A Symposium is convened by the National Aging I&R/A Support Center at NASUAD in collaboration with the U.S. Administration for Community Living and n4a.

The Pre-Conference Summit will be held on Sunday, June 2, 2013 from 9a-3p. Launching a new format this year, the Summit will be a lively and thought-provoking day of interactive events and discussion with I&R/A and national association professionals prior to the start of the AIRS Conference. It is the only scheduled opportunity during the AIRS conference for Aging and Disability I&R/

A professionals to gather and focus exclusively on industry trends, initiatives, challenges and solutions. Throughout the Summit, participants will have opportunities to network with peers from around the country, participate in group discussions, learn about innovative strategies for service delivery, and consider new approaches to aging and disability I&R/A development.

The Pre-Conference Aging and Disability Summit will include:

- A networking breakfast at which participants can catch up with their national Aging and Disability I&R/A counterparts and mingle with staff from ACL, NASUAD and n4a.
- A discussion focused on state-to-state interaction and technical assistance where participants will share their experiences and ask questions about current trends, new initiatives and upcoming national events in I&R/A service delivery.
- The kick-off of the National I&R/A Support Center's Train-the-Trainer Initiative for the National coordination of CIRS-A (Certification for I&R Specialists in Aging) and Aging/Disability-related CRS (Certification for Resource Specialists) training.

There is no additional charge but please pre-register at 202-898-2578 x305 or stribes@nasuad.org along with questions or to suggest topics that you would like to discuss at the Summit.

Welcome New Members

Individual Members

Linda Daily - Arlington, VA
Nancy Findeisen - Sacramento, CA

Agency Members

Lakeshore Legal Aid - Clinton Township, MI
Midland Empire Resources for Independent Living, Inc. - St. Joseph, MO

Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living - Ann Arbor, MI
Ride Connection, Inc - Portland, OR
National Alliance on Mental Illness Orange County - Santa Ana, CA
Jewish Senior Life - West Bloomfield, MI
Somerset County LINK - Somerset, PA
Vintage, Inc. - Pittsburgh, PA

Thank you for renewing your AIRS Membership!

We appreciate the support of all of our members that have submitted their renewals. If you aren't one of them then please do so immediately so that you don't lose your valuable member benefits!
Email moayad@airs.org if you need another invoice sent to you.