



*Setting the Standards for
Information and Referral Services*

ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS Accreditation Manual

**Manual and Criteria Updated September of 2017
Standards for Professional Information and Referral, 8.0 Edition, January 2016**



Information & Referral
*connecting people to
community services*

The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) is a membership organization whose mission is "**To provide leadership and support to our membership and affiliates to advance the capacity of a Standards driven Information and Referral industry that brings people and services together.**"

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OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) Accreditation process is to determine the extent to which applicant Information and Referral (I&R) organizations comply with expected practices within the field as defined by the AIRS *Standards for Professional Information and Referral*.

Accreditation is a cooperative effort between the I&R agency and AIRS to establish a strong foundation on which the agency can build and grow. An agency considering accreditation should assess where it is in its development, its goals and whether it is ready for accreditation. Agencies must meet minimum requirements outlined in the 2017 *Accreditation Criteria* to become accredited.

Process Overview

Accreditation is a process that includes: a **Remote Database Review** to ensure that the resource database meets minimum requirements, a **Consultation Component** during which the I&R service completes and submits required documentation in consultation with a liaison assigned by AIRS; and the **On-Site Review** during which a review team is able to see the agency in operation and verify that its practices are consistent with the accreditation criteria. Prior to the site visit, the call handling component of the agency's service is evaluated through a **Secret Shopper** process.

All transactions between AIRS (including members of the site visit team and Accreditation contractors) and the applicant agency, and all materials submitted by the agency, are confidential. The only information that will be shared with other organizations and government agencies making an inquiry is information for which the applicant agency has provided written authorization for AIRS to share. The process for re-accreditation is the same as outlined above.

Timeline Overview

1. Within 10 months of receiving the Accreditation Packet from AIRS, the applicant agency will submit its Consultation Component materials. The goal is to have the database review completed before the end of the 10th month period, to allow for both components to be on the same timeline. Prior to this due date, an extension of 6-months can be requested; however, if the materials are not submitted by the extended date, termination of the process/revocation of Accreditation will occur.
2. Within 3 months of receipt of submitted materials, AIRS will review materials and send a Consultation report.
3. Within 3 months of receiving the Consultation report, the applicant agency shall make the necessary corrections and send a response to AIRS.
4. If multiple reports need to be submitted, an additional 3 month extension can be approved.
5. Once the applicant agency has passed all steps in the process, the agency has up to 3 months to schedule a site visit.
6. The maximum length of time an applicant agency can be in the Accreditation process is 25 months.

Accreditation Outcome & Responsibilities

Accreditation awards are made for a period of five years. Following an accreditation award, the agency is required to respond to an annual questionnaire reporting on the status of the organization and its activities. Failure to submit the annual questionnaire, following two emails and a reminder letter, may result in reduction of your accreditation award from five years to three. If you continue to be out of

compliance in year two, your award of accreditation will be either suspended or revoked. You are also required to notify AIRS of any changes that negatively affect your compliance with the Accreditation Criteria.

Approximately one year prior to the expiration of your accreditation award, AIRS will notify you of the need for another review.

Causes for Termination/Revocation

There may be situations in which termination of the accreditation process or revocation of the accreditation award is necessary to ensure the integrity of the process. Those situations are outlined below.

Termination of the Accreditation process will occur if:

- An applicant agency does not comply with deadlines (see timelines above).
- An applicant agency is unable to comply with the Accreditation Criteria.

Revocation of Accreditation will occur if:

- AIRS is notified and verifies, using multiple methods (other community agencies, newspapers, Better Business Bureau) that an illegal act had been committed by an agency with AIRS accreditation.
- Once accredited, the organization does not apply for renewal of their accreditation by the expiration date.
- An Annual Report (agency questionnaire) is not submitted.
- The renewal process is not completed in a timely manner (see timeline above).
- An applicant agency is unable to comply with the Accreditation Criteria during the renewal.

For more information about the accreditation process, refer to the Accreditation page on the AIRS website at www.airs.org, contact Charlene Hipes at charlenehipes@airs.org or (503) 257- 3537; or the Accreditation Support Community on the AIRS Networker at <http://airsnetworker.airs.org>.

This Accreditation Support Community is for organizations considering applying for AIRS Accreditation, for those considering renewing their Accreditation and those currently in the process. This is a place to post questions to the group and AIRS staff.

AIRS ACCREDITATION PROCESS DESCRIPTION

COMPONENT ONE: REMOTE DATABASE REVIEW

Information and referral agencies seeking AIRS Accreditation are required to develop, maintain, use and disseminate an accurate, up-to-date resource database that contains information about available community resources including details about the services they provide and the conditions under which services are available. The database must include resources that support the inquirer's right to accurate, comprehensive and unbiased information and the ability of the I&R service to be a non-partisan, non-ideological and impartial information source for available nonprofit, government and for-profit services that meet the organization's inclusion/exclusion criteria.

In order to verify that your I&R agency's database meets the AIRS criteria, an AIRS database reviewer will interview your resource database manager and conduct a remote review of your resource database.

The following topics are covered during the Remote Database Review:

- Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
- Data Elements
- Taxonomy
- Applying Style Guide Rules and Indexing
- Disaster Resources
- Searching the Database
- Maintaining the Database

Review steps:

1. In order to prepare for the review, the following documents will need to be sent to the AIRS database reviewer prior to the database review:
 - Inclusion/Exclusion Policy
 - Style Guide
 - Customized list of Taxonomy terms
 - Database maintenance procedures
 - List of towns in the service area
 - Report showing formal updates (unless this can be viewed within the software during the review)
 - List of agency names and their legal status type/agency type for comparison with inclusion/exclusion policy.
 - Database review questionnaire
2. The review will be conducted via GoToMeeting software that enables the reviewer to see the applicant's database online.
3. The length of the review varies, but on average is about 6 hours total, which will be divided into separate GoToMeeting sessions.
4. When the review is complete, the database reviewer will prepare a report and send it to AIRS for distribution.

5. For more information about the remote database review and what it will include, see the Remote Database Review description on page 52 of this document.

COMPONENT TWO: CONSULTATION

1. The Accreditation Manual includes the following:
 - a. Overview of AIRS Accreditation
 - b. A description of the Accreditation Appeals Process
 - c. The Accreditation Criteria.
 - d. Information on the Secret Shopper component
 - e. Information on the Remote Database Review component
 - f. Guidelines for Electronic Submission
 - g. Information on Submission of the Annual Report
 - h. **NOTE:** A preformatted Thumb Drive to use for submitting your documents is also included.
2. Within 10 months of receiving the Accreditation Packet, you must:
 - a. Review the Accreditation Criteria and contact the liaison with questions as needed.
 - b. Compile and label documentation for Accreditation Criteria.
 - c. Complete and have the Board President or other Chief Volunteer Officer and the executive director/I&R program manager sign the “Certification of Accreditation Documentation” form and submit it with your documentation.
 - d. Please submit an electronic copy of the consultation materials, including the Certification of Documentation Agreement form, via the provided flash drive and send to AIRS at the following address:

**AIRS-Portland
P.O. Box 33095
Portland, OR 97292
OR
AIRS Portland
15590 SE Millmain
Portland, OR 97233**
- e. All materials must be current at the time of submission.
3. Within six months of receipt of submitted documentation, AIRS will do the following:
 - a. Analyze the submitted materials and write a consultation assessment report identifying agency or program strengths, changes necessary to continue the accreditation process,

Refer to the Guidelines for Electronic Submission of Accreditation Materials on page 66 for formatting details.

and suggestions for improvement. AIRS will make every effort to respond as quickly as possible.

- b. Send a copy of the consultation assessment report to the applying agency.

NOTE: Most agencies will need to submit additional documentation during the Consultation Component. Please allow for this contingency in your plans. If additional documentation is requested, please submit two copies.

4. Please review the consultation assessment report and contact your AIRS liaison with any questions. The liaison is available to discuss any additional documentation that may be needed and to assist you in making the changes stipulated in the report. You need to respond to the consultation report and provide supporting documentation and evidence of implementation within six months.

To achieve AIRS accreditation, you must complete Component Two of the process before the On-Site Review. You may choose to stop the accreditation process after the consultation component, but if you do so, you will not be considered accredited. If you decided to reinstate the accreditation process after stopping, you must file another application, pay another fee and submit updated documentation.

COMPONENT THREE: ON-SITE REVIEW

1. Upon receipt of the final Consultation report, the organization should contact AIRS to schedule an on-site review. The review must take place within three months of the date the final consultation assessment report was completed.
2. All expenses related to travel (air fare, hotel, food, incidentals) by the review team are included in the application fee.
3. AIRS staff will schedule the review and identify volunteers for the review team. If there were any outstanding documentation issues, updated materials will need to be compiled for the team to review.
4. To ensure quality I&R is being delivered, a “secret shopper” process to assess call handling will be conducted prior to the site visit. Site Reviewers will complete a minimum of two calls per reviewer to the agency they will be visiting.
5. The review team will conduct the on-site review. At a minimum, the site visit includes:
 - ✓ A tour of the facility
 - ✓ A meeting with the agency’s volunteer leadership
 - ✓ Interviews with key I&R staff
 - ✓ Examination of documents per AIRS request
 - ✓ Debriefing with the agency’s administrative staff
6. At the end of the visit, the review team will debrief with the administrative team including the executive director, senior staff and board members in attendance.
7. The review team will complete the on-site assessment report with recommendations and send it to AIRS.
8. AIRS will send a copy of the on-site assessment report to the Accreditation Commission chair, who will review the report and finalize the accreditation decision.

9. AIRS will send you a letter indicating the outcome of the accreditation process:
 - a. Granting full accreditation for five years;
 - b. Granting conditional accreditation when an organization is in substantial compliance, but needs to take further action to comply with some criteria;
 - c. Denying accreditation.

NOTE : Applicant agencies who are being reaccredited are eligible for a modified site visit contingent on all Consultation materials submitted being approved.

ACCREDITATION APPEALS PROCESS

Included in the AIRS accreditation process are opportunities for the applying agency and the accreditation review team to discuss areas of the agency's program that need to be addressed in order to obtain accreditation. However, in order to ensure the integrity of AIRS accreditation, it is necessary to provide a process for agencies to appeal an unfavorable accreditation decision. NOTE: Appeals based on a disagreement with the Accreditation Criteria will not be considered.

An agency may appeal an interpretation of a criterion by following these steps:

1. The appealing agency submits a certified letter to the AIRS Accreditation Commission within 30 days of notification of the decision, indicating the rationale for challenging the accreditation results.
2. The appealing agency includes with that letter any documentation it feels supports its position, as well as any documentation requested by the Accreditation Commission.
3. The Accreditation Commission chair may request a telephone consultation with the appealing agency and the on-site review team to clarify any misunderstanding regarding the report findings.
4. Within 30 days of receipt of appeal, if it finds just cause, the Accreditation Commission may assign other reviewers to re-evaluate the agency.
5. In all cases, the decision of the Accreditation Commission is final.
6. The agency may re-apply for accreditation after one year.

CERTIFICATION OF DOCUMENTATION AGREEMENT

By my signature, as Board President/Advisory Committee Chair, I certify that this documentation is true to the best of my knowledge and provides an accurate representation of this agency/program. I understand that the penalty for intentional misrepresentation is immediate revocation of AIRS accreditation.

Agency/Program Name

**Board President/Advisory Committee Chair
Signature**

Date

Executive Director/I&R Program Manager

Date

ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL
SYSTEMS

ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Revised, September 2017

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

The Service Delivery standards describe the functions that are essential for providing information and referral to optimize access for all, including an individual assessment of need; clarification of the situation; information and/or referrals or problem solving assistance, as required; crisis intervention and advocacy, when warranted; and follow-up as necessary. The I&R service recognizes the inquirer's right to accurate, comprehensive and unbiased information provided in a confidential and/or anonymous, nonjudgmental manner; and is a non-partisan, non-ideological and impartial information source for available nonprofit, government and for-profit services that meet the I&R service's inclusion/exclusion criteria. Service is provided by trained I&R specialists and is delivered in a variety of ways that support the mission of the I&R program, the accessibility requirements of the community and the communication preferences of inquirers (for example, a combination of telephone, in-person, email, instant messaging (IM), text/SMS messaging, online chat, video relay service, social media and other methods of communication). Although the medium of service delivery may affect the nature of the interaction with inquirers, the essential elements of the I&R process remain the same.

STANDARD 1 – Information, Assessment and Referral Provision: The I&R service establishes and maintains rapport, conducts an assessment in which the inquirer has one-to-one interaction with an I&R specialist and provides appropriate information and referrals. The I&R process consists of active listening and effective questioning to determine the needs of the inquirer, clarifying those needs, providing requested information and/or identifying appropriate resources, making referrals to organizations capable of meeting those needs, and providing enough information about each organization (for example, describing how intake works and required documentation) to help inquirers make an informed choice. In situations where services are unavailable, the I&R service engages in problem solving to help the inquirer identify alternative strategies and manage expectations.

STANDARD 2 – Client Advocacy: The I&R service offers advocacy, when necessary, to ensure that people receive the benefits and services for which they are eligible. Client advocacy seeks to meet individual needs without attempting to change social institutions and, for purposes of these standards, does not include system advocacy or legislative advocacy (lobbying). All advocacy efforts are consistent with written policies established by the governing body of the I&R service and proceed only with the permission of the inquirer.

STANDARD 3 – Crisis Intervention: The I&R service is prepared to assess and meet the immediate, short-term needs of inquirers who are experiencing a crisis and contact the I&R service for assistance. Included is assistance for individuals threatening suicide, homicide or assault; suicide survivors; victims of domestic abuse or other forms of violence, child abuse/neglect or elder/dependent adult abuse/neglect; sexual assault survivors; runaway youth; people experiencing a psychiatric emergency; people with a substance use disorder who are in crisis; survivors of a traumatic experience; and others in distress.

STANDARD 4 – Follow-Up: The I&R service has implemented a policy that addresses the conditions under which follow-up must be conducted. The policy mandates follow-up, when feasible, with inquirers who are at risk and/or vulnerable and in situations where the specialist believes that inquirers do not have the necessary capacity to follow through and resolve their problems. Additional assistance in locating or accessing services may be necessary.

STANDARD 5 – Independent Access to Resource Information: The I&R service provides community resource information in a variety of ways to facilitate independent access for the general public and other human services professionals. These options extend the choice of preferred channels for inquirers and complement the alternative of mediated access through an I&R specialist.

STANDARD 6 – Service Delivery Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting: The delivery of I&R services generates valuable information about the problems/needs of a community and the availability of resources to meet those needs. The I&R service collects, analyzes and reports insightful data concerning inquirers and their needs in ways that are useful to themselves and their community partners. The I&R service establishes and uses a secure, confidential system for collecting and organizing inquirer data that provides a basis for describing requests for service and unmet needs, identifying service gaps and informing decisions about the scope of the resource database. Inquirer data includes information gathered during follow-up and customer satisfaction/quality assurance calls as well as data acquired during the original contact. The dynamics of the I&R process also reveal information relating to the internal patterns of service provision and illustrate opportunities to enhance both the quality and the productivity of each I&R service.

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

Overview: *It is very important for the reviewer to have a good understanding of your I&R service and its place in the community. Provide a description of your organization.* Is it independent or part of a larger organization such as a United Way, a government entity or an Area Agency on Aging? Is it comprehensive, specialized, a crisis line, or a combination? Is it a 2-1-1 or a candidate for that status? What is the annual budget for the agency and the I&R program? What is the population of the area served?

Include information about what I&R looks like in your service area, how many organizations are doing I&R, whether they are comprehensive or specialized, and your relationship with them. Also include a description of your organizational structure (administration, departments, services, etc.) with information about the range of your organization's activities. (Please keep your response to one page.)

Description:

- 1. Call Handling:** Prior to the site visit, the Accreditation Commission uses a "secret shopper" process to evaluate the call handling component of your service. We will focus on the extent to which your I&R specialists meet the following service delivery quality indicators (where applicable):

Information Only:

- Clarify the inquirer's initial request for information because information requests do not always accurately reflect the inquirer's actual needs and there may be an underlying or unstated problem.
- Provide information that is accurate and pertinent to the request of the inquirer.
- Encourage re-contact by the inquirer if the initial information proves to be incorrect, inappropriate or insufficient to link the individual with needed services.

Assessment and Referral Provision:

- Identify themselves and their program per agency guidelines.
- Establish rapport with the inquirer and use active listening skills and empathy to discern the presenting problem.
- Respond to each inquirer in a professional, nonjudgmental, culturally appropriate and timely manner.
- Use clear language and an appropriate tone of voice and inflection to convey empathy and engagement with the inquirer's situation.
- Make an accurate assessment of the inquirer's problems and needs asking relevant questions to discover the information necessary for an accurate referral.
- Explore when appropriate, to see if there is a more serious underlying or unstated problem.
- Confirm whether there are specific preferences or requirements such as language needs, evening or weekend hours, proximity to public transportation, or disability access.

- Clarify and confirm the inquirer's need(s) using techniques such as paraphrasing before providing referrals.
- Provide the inquirer with various approaches to addressing their situation that give them a range of options.
- Explore the inquirer's own resources (e.g., friends, family, faith-based community).
- Effectively use the I&R's resource information system to identify resources to meet the inquirer's needs.
- Where possible and practical, provide at least three referrals to give the inquirer a choice (and to protect the I&R service from being perceived as making a "recommendation") while being careful not to overwhelm the inquirer with too many options.
- Suggest ways the inquirer can advocate for him or herself, when appropriate (empowerment).
- If demographic information is being collected that is not directly relevant to the assessment, e.g., if required by contract or to enhance community reports, provide an explanation to the inquirer about why the information is needed. The primary goal of data collection is to gather enough information about the inquirers to help them address and/or resolve the problem.
- Encourages the inquirer to call back.
- Accurately record what occurred during the course of the inquiry as well as the problems and needs that were addressed for use in reports.

2. Accessibility:

a) How does your agency provide access to information about services 24/7? Please check all that apply. Minimum expectation: People in the community have after-hours access to information about services.

- Your agency provides live answer, 24/7
- Your after- hours calls roll over to another organization (live answer 24/7)
- Your agency's voice/auto message provides the phone number of another organization for after-hours assistance.
- Your agency provides direct connection via IVR to another organization after hours
- Your database is available to the public after hours
- Other, please describe:

b) What languages other than English are prevalent in your community? Describe community demographics and the steps you have taken to reach out to non-English speaking persons. What are the percentages of inquiries that you receive from non-English speaking persons? How do you handle inquiries from people who speak those languages? Minimum expectation: Staff speak the language(s) or they use an interpretation service or interpreters from the community. **Description:**

c) What steps have you taken to ensure that your service is accessible to inquirers from

the deaf/hard of hearing community or those who have speech impairments and need alternative arrangements? Minimum expectation: The service can be used by these groups without undue inconvenience; they have been consulted in the decision process regarding arrangements. **Description:**

- d) Is your facility free of architectural barriers to people with physical disabilities per requirements such as ADA or other applicable legislation? Yes No

Describe any limitations for people with disabilities who walk in for service and special provisions you have made to ensure that they have access. Minimum expectation: The facility meets legislative requirements for accessibility or there is an alternative way of accommodating inquirers with disabilities. You must be able to accommodate walk-ins with disabilities who are seen face-to-face. **Description:**

- e) What steps have been taken to ensure that your telephone service is accessible from all telecommunications devices (e.g., wireless, competitive local exchanges) within your coverage area? Minimum expectation: Service is accessible to people using wireless devices and landlines. **Description:**

- f) Are your core service and multi-channel access options available at no cost to the inquirer? (Inquirers are responsible for cell phone minutes, landline fees, pay phone charges, tax charges, etc.)? Yes No **Description:**

- g) Is toll-free access provided to all people living within the area you serve? Yes No **Description:**

- h) What is your policy/procedure for handling transactions via IM/chat, text/SMS messaging or other forms of social media? Do you have guidelines for the number of simultaneous contacts staff can handle? **Description:**

- i) What are your procedures for managing challenging inquirers? **Description:**

3. Confidentiality: Submit a copy of your confidentiality policy. At a minimum, the policy must:

- Include an appropriate definition of “confidentiality”.
- Address any exceptions.
- Include an agreement form signed by staff (or other evidence) to indicate that staff are in compliance with the policy.
- Include a nondisclosure agreement form that is signed by others with access to confidential information.
- Address the issue of written versus verbal permission by the inquirer.
- Address confidentiality as it pertains to domestic violence or other endangerment situations.
- Have provisions for protecting and maintaining as confidential data collection forms and inquirer information. Organizations outside the I&R service see only aggregated data.
- Be reviewed with staff at least annually.
- If the agency is part of a cooperative service delivery arrangement under which client records are shared, restrict identifying information to those in the collaboration.
- When telephone technology allows for the collection of identifying information about inquirers without their explicit permission, protect the right of inquirers to privacy and anonymity while preserving I&R specialists’ ability to provide for the individual’s safety should personal identification become necessary.
- The principles of confidentiality remain applicable in cases involving independent access. In situations where online information can be gathered, relevant legislation is observed and information about individual activities is only made available in aggregate form. Privacy policies are clearly displayed and reflect the general trends in “cyber ethics.”

4. Advocacy: Submit a copy of your advocacy procedures and identify the role of advocacy in your organization. At a minimum, the policy must authorize:

- Making the initial contact with a service provider to verify eligibility or service availability, and notify them of the inquirer’s forthcoming contact or schedule an appointment.
 - Initiating a warm transfer, i.e., using 3-way calling to contact an agency and introduce the inquirer and their situation before ending their participation in the call.
 - With the service provider’s permission, listening in on a call or sitting in on an interview while the inquirer attempts to explain the situation, providing assistance only when necessary.
 - Representing the inquirer with a service provider.
 - Negotiating on behalf of the inquirer and, when necessary, escalating the intervention by speaking with a senior manager regarding the inquirer’s situation.
- a.** What are the circumstances under which inquirer advocacy is undertaken? Minimum expectation: Advocacy must be an activity of the I&R service. Circumstances under which advocacy is mandated are documented in the procedures statement and are reasonable. **Description:**

b. What are the conditions under which supervisory staff needs to become involved?
Minimum expectation: Conditions are documented in their procedures and are reasonable.
Description:

c. What are your I&R specialists instructed to do in situations where the level of advocacy required by the inquirer exceeds the limits of your advocacy procedures or an effective use of your resources? Minimum expectation: Referral to an advocacy agency. **Description:**

5. **Crisis Intervention:** What role does crisis intervention play in your organization? NOTE: if your I&R service is AAS Certified, you may skip this section.

- We are a formal crisis intervention service, are AAS certified and are skipping this section.
- We are a formal crisis intervention service, but are not AAS certified.
- We do not provide formal crisis intervention services but have a prearranged agreement with an appropriate crisis center that does. Provide a copy of your MOU or other agreement.

If your I&R service is NOT AAS Certified, the following requirements apply:

Submit a copy of your crisis intervention policy and procedures. At a minimum, the policy and procedures must address:

- Lethality risk assessment procedures.
- Call handling procedures for specific types of emergencies including a staff debriefing protocol.
- Mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse and elder/dependent adult abuse.
- Rescue services (e.g., Caller ID, call tracing requirements) and protocol for connecting inquirers in crisis with ongoing assistance following stabilization.

6. **Follow-Up:** The purpose of follow-up is to ensure that the needs of people who are identified as at risk or vulnerable have been met. Submit a copy of your follow-up policy and procedures.

Minimum expectations: Follow-up generally is done within 1-3 days in endangerment situations and 7-14 days in non-endangerment situations. Situations in which follow-up is required are described and are reasonable. Obtaining permission to conduct follow-up is required. Additional referrals are provided when necessary. Situations under which follow-up is not allowed or must be conducted under special circumstances for safety reasons (e.g., domestic violence situations) are described and are reasonable.

7. Independent Access to Resource Information:

- a. Online Resource Database: If the I&R service makes all or a portion of its resource database available on the Internet at no cost, it must meet the following minimum expectations:
- An easy to remember URL
 - A prominently displayed search button
 - A search page that is clean, well-organized and easy to navigate
 - A guided search with picture or graphic icons representing service concepts as the most prominent search option, or similar strategies that promote “hot topics” lists and other embedded “user friendly” search strategies framed in natural language
 - A keyword search window placed below or to the side of the guided search...
 - Keyword searches include partial and full-word matching. Entered text must appear at the beginning of the word, not somewhere in the middle, e.g., a search on “aging” will retrieve “aging information” but not “imaging”
 - The ability to search agency, site, program and AKA names
 - The ability to filter by geographic location/area served
 - Cleanly designed search results lists that include the data elements that are most important in providing inquirers with the details they need to make informed choices about their options.

Our resource database is available on the Internet at: _____

- b. Other Channels for Access: What other forms of Independent Access do you provide? (e.g. mobile application, directory) **Description:**
- c. Timeliness of Response: Where the public can contact the I&R service through additional channels (e.g., email, Voicemail, Instant Messaging), a minimum expectation is that there are guidelines in place for “timeliness of response”. **Describe your guidelines:**
- d. Contacting an I&R Specialist: When using the online database or other means of access, the public must be given information about how to contact an I&R specialist for assistance. **Description:**

8. Service Delivery Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting:

- a. The agency must have an inquirer data collection form that has a standardized set of inquirer data elements that are used for reporting purposes. Submit screenshots showing your data collection form. At a minimum, the data collection form must allow the agency to record and distinguish the following types of required activities.

- Information Only
- Assessment and referral (met/unmet needs)
- Assessment without referral (met/unmet needs)
- Crisis intervention (met/unmet needs)
- Advocacy
- Follow-ups completed, including follow-up results

NOTE: If your data collection terminology is different than above, **Define and Describe:**

- b. Submit a copy of the procedures that describe the information that is collected and how it is used.
- c. Do you collect data from sources other than your telephone service, e.g. from walk-ins, voicemail, or email contacts? **Description:**
- d. What are other types of I&R activities, in addition to I&R inquiries about which you collect data for reports? For example, do you collect data regarding website activity, staff presentations or distribution of publications? **Description?**
- e. Submit a report that shows the agency's complete I&R activity. It should be formatted and include an explanation of the meaning of the reports and the context in which it should be understood to make it useful to the agency and to community partners. Minimum Expectation: the report should include the following:
- Total number of inquiries
 - Total number and type of problem/needs presented by inquirers
 - The number and/or percentage of inquiries involving Information only, Assessment and referral, Assessment without referral, Crisis intervention and Advocacy
 - Met and unmet needs
 - The organizations discussed during the course of an inquiry or to which referrals were made
 - Follow-up results
 - Geographic and other demographic information about inquirers in aggregate form to protect the confidentiality of inquirers

f. How are your agency's reports used in the community? Whenever possible, it is expected that the agency will produce reports to support a range of community activities, such as:

- Human service needs of inquirers
- Cross tabulations of types of problems/needs by geographic location and/or geographic locations and the problems/needs within them
- Trends in the community service provision/gaps in service
- System advocacy
- Community needs assessment
- Community planning
- Allocation of funding
- Research

Description:

SERVICE DELIVERY DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Submit copies of the following:

- Policy/procedures for handling transactions via IM/chat, text/SMS messaging or other forms of social media.
- Confidentiality policies that address confidentiality of client records or use of Caller ID or other applicable technology.
- A sample of the form that is signed by I&R staff agreeing to the confidentiality policy. Do NOT send all of the forms your staff have signed!
- The nondisclosure form signed by others with access to confidential information.
- Your advocacy procedures.
- Proof of your AAS certification (if you are skipping the Crisis Intervention section).
- The signed, written agreement you have with the crisis intervention center with which your I&R service has an arrangement.
- Your crisis intervention policies and procedures which must address:
 - Lethality risk assessment procedures.
 - Call handling procedures for specific types of emergencies
 - A staff debriefing protocol
 - Rescue services
 - Mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse and elder/dependent adult abuse.
- Crisis protocol per agreement with the local crisis center.
- The form your I&R specialists use to complete a lethality (risk) assessment. If your lethality assessments are in electronic format, submit a screen shot.
- Your follow-up policy and procedures
- Screen shots of your inquirer data collection form
- Your procedures regarding the information you collect about inquirers and how you use the information
- A report that shows the number and/or percentage of:
 - Information only, Assessment and referral, Assessment without referral inquiries
 - Inquiries involving Crisis intervention
 - Inquiries involving Advocacy
 - Follow-ups conducted
- Follow-up results report
- Current reports (including met/unmet needs, sample cross-tabulations, trends). Reports should be finished and formatted.
- An explanation or a user guide to the reports you provide for those on your distribution list

- A list of agencies/organizations to which the reports were provided
- Provide a definition of Terminology used to categorize contacts

The Site Review Team will review the following on-site:

- The form that is signed by I&R staff agreeing to the confidentiality policy
- The nondisclosure form signed by others with access to confidential information
- If there are walk-ins, accessibility of the agency's facilities
- Sample completed inquirer records
- Data collection methods for various caller data included on reports

RESOURCE DATABASE STANDARDS

The Resource Database standards require that the I&R service develop, maintain, use and disseminate an accurate, up-to-date online resource database that contains information about available community resources including details about the services provided and the conditions under which they are available. The database supports the inquirer's right to accurate, consistent, comprehensive and unbiased information and the ability of the I&R service to be a non-partisan, non-ideological and impartial information source for available nonprofit, government and for-profit services that meet the organization's inclusion/exclusion criteria. The database is used internally by I&R specialists to identify resources for inquirers and is maintained by trained resource specialists. Resource data is also available externally to other human services organizations and the public via an online database that is structured to make searching as intuitive and user friendly as possible.

STANDARD 7- Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria: The I&R service develops criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of human services agencies and programs in the resource database. The criteria are uniformly applied and available so that staff and the public are aware of the scope and limitations of the database.

STANDARD 8 - Data Elements: The resource database contains data elements that provide information about organizations that meet criteria for inclusion, the services provided by each organization, and the locations (sites) where those services are available. Each record contains all required data elements, where applicable (e.g., a mailing address is included only if one exists). However, the specific data elements that are seen by a particular group of users (e.g., resource specialists, I&R specialists, the general public) may vary.

STANDARD 9 - Classification System/Taxonomy: The I&R service uses the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services (formally titled *A Taxonomy of Human Services: A Conceptual Framework with Standardized Terminology and Definitions for the Field*) to index and facilitate retrieval of resource information, increase the reliability of planning data, make evaluation processes consistent and reliable, and facilitate state/provincial and national aggregations and comparisons of data. Additional classification structures such as keywords, if used, are connected to the Taxonomy rather than functioning as independent indexing systems.

STANDARD 10 - Content Management and Indexing: The I&R service ensures through training, database management procedures and supervision that resource specialists organize information about human services into database records that accurately and concisely reflect the agency, its locations and its services/programs; index the services provided using the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services in accordance with recognized and consistently applied practices; and assign other search keys in a way that accurately reflects the conditions under which services are available.

STANDARD 17 - Disaster Resources: The I&R service develops, maintains and/or uses an accurate, up-to-date computerized resource database that contains information about available community resources that provide services in times of disaster. Database records include descriptions of the services organizations provide and the conditions under which services are available; and are indexed and accessed using the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services.

STANDARD 11 – Database Quality Assurance: The I&R service has a quality assurance review process to ensure that information in the resource database is accurate and complete.

STANDARD 12 – Resource Database Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting: The creation and maintenance of I&R resource databases generates valuable information about the services and programs available with a community. The I&R service collections, analyzes and reports insightful information regarding the types of services available, the organizations that provide them, and the areas in which services are available (and unavailable) in ways that are useful to themselves and community partners. An analysis of the resource database maintenance process also reveals information that can enhance both the quality and productivity of each I&R service (for example, by identifying issues for staff training).

NOTE: Compliance with resource database requirements are assessed via the Remote Database Review. See page 52 for more detailed information.

COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP STANDARDS

An I&R service must work in a collaborative fashion with other I&R services at local, regional, state/provincial and national levels while also participating in the broader service delivery system in their community. The Cooperative Relationships standards focus on the responsibilities of the I&R service to establish and maintain meaningful cooperative relationships at all relevant levels.

STANDARD 13 - Cooperative Relationships Within the I&R System: In communities that have comprehensive and specialized I&R providers, the I&R service develops cooperative and respectful working relationships to build a coordinated I&R system that ensures broad access to information and referral services, maximizes the utilization of existing I&R resources, avoids duplication of effort and encourages seamless access to community resource information. I&R services with broader geographic reach (e.g., statewide, province-wide, regional or national level programs) strive to develop similar working relationships within the area they serve.

STANDARD 14 - Cooperative Relationships With Service Providers: The I&R service develops cooperative working relationships with local human service providers (e.g., food pantries and local homeless shelters) and larger service systems (e.g., those serving populations with mental health and substance use disorder issues) to build an integrated service delivery system that ensures broad access to community services, maximizes the use of existing resources and facilitates the ability of people who need services to easily find the most appropriate provider. I&R services with broader geographic reach (e.g., statewide, province-wide, regional or national level programs) strive to develop similar working relationships within the area they serve.

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

Identify and describe your relationships with other I&R services in your area and with service providers and other key organizations within the broader community. Because this section primarily requires written narratives, it is important that you read and fully respond to all aspects of each question.

1. Identify all of the other I&R services in your community. Included might be:

- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Aging I&R/A
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Comprehensive I&R/2-1-1
- Comprehensive I&R/Non 2-1-1
- Library
- Mental Health/Crisis Service
- Military Family Service/Support Center
- N-1-1 services (e.g. 311 Program, 911 Service, etc.)
- Volunteer/Donations Management Center
- Other: _____

2. Describe the relationships you have with the I&R services you have checked above. What is the nature of each relationship? What are you doing to create relationships where none currently exist? Minimum expectation: Comprehensive I&R services have a relationship with the Aging I&R/A, the ADRC and the Child Care Resource and Referral programs in their area; and, if applicable, a relationship with local Military Family Service/Support Center(s). Aging I&R/A and ADRC programs and other specialized I&R services have a relationship with the comprehensive I&R service in their area and with other specialized programs, as applicable. Submit copies of agreements with other I&R programs in your community, if applicable. **Description:**

3. It is expected that the I&R service will engage in cooperative planning and decision making activities with other I&R services for the purpose of eliminating duplication of I&R service in their community and ensuring that inquirers reach the I&R service that best meets their needs. At a minimum, the agency should:

- Be involved in I&R service delivery coordination.
- Maintain information about other I&R services and their activities.
- Participate in cooperative I&R efforts.
- Initiate new cooperative service arrangements if nothing currently is in place.
- Participate in resource database collaboration where it exists.

Description:

4. Do you have an AIRS Affiliate? Yes No If yes, describe your organization's involvement over the last two years. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service participates in the activities of its state/provincial or regional I&R association. **Description:**
5. What is your I&R service doing to build cooperative working relationships with service providers and other key organizations in your community? Describe the community partnerships and/or projects that the agency is involved in as well as any networks, coalitions, task forces, boards or other similar entities of which your I&R service is a member. Address your role and the range of activities in which you are regularly engaged. Explain the significance of the work and any noteworthy contributions your agency has made. Minimum expectation: The I&R service has significant interaction with the larger community. **Description:**
6. In what community issues are you actively engaged? Housing? Transportation? Employment? Health Care? Describe your activities and what has been accomplished. Minimum expectation: The I&R service is engaged in community issues. **Description:**

COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Submit copies of the following:

- Copies of agreements with other I&R programs in your community, if applicable

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS STANDARDSAIRS ACCREDITATION

I&R services assess their role in meeting the needs of their community during times of disaster, which may vary depending on the population they serve. The role I&R services play in disaster situations may also vary by the phase of the disaster, (i.e., preparedness, response, relief and recovery). Specialized I&R services may be more active in preparing the people they serve to be ready in advance of a disaster whereas comprehensive I&R programs/2-1-1s may be more frequently contacted for assistance in the relief and recovery phases of a disaster. The I&R service is prepared to assess and provide referrals for inquirers who are experiencing a crisis due to a disaster of natural or human origin, or who want to offer assistance and contact the I&R service for a means to do so. Preparation includes development of an emergency operations and business contingency plan that enables the I&R service to continue to provide services if its own facility is damaged or destroyed; and to support its ability to effectively accumulate, validate and disseminate accurate disaster related information, provide information, assessment and referral assistance for individuals impacted by a disaster and provide community reports regarding inquirer needs and referrals.

STANDARD 15 - Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan: The I&R service has a written emergency operations and business contingency plan that specifically addresses disasters common to the area, but one that also prepares for emergencies in general. The plan has two components:

- a) An emergency operations component that defines what constitutes a disaster as well as the organization's disaster response expectations, both internally and from the perspective of external stakeholders; and describes the steps the organization needs to take to meet the needs of the community in the aftermath of an event.
- b) A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) component that references emergency preparedness and mitigation activities such as structural alterations and changes in business operations; and delineates the steps to be taken before, during and after an emergency to prevent or minimize interruptions in business operations and ensure long-term recovery.

Some organizations have two separate plans to meet this requirement.

STANDARD 16 - Relationships with Emergency and Relief Operations: The I&R service participates in ongoing cooperative disaster response planning in the community and establishes relationships, as necessary, to become recognized as an integral part of the community's emergency preparedness and response network.

STANDARD 21 - Disaster Training and Exercise: The I&R service trains staff on emergency operations and business expectations upon hiring and provides ongoing training at least annually. The I&R service actively participates in community disaster exercises to test the organization's emergency operations plan.

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

Overview: Describe the role, both formal and informal, of your I&R service in your community during times of disaster. If applicable, provide examples of disasters/emergencies involving your organization over the past 5 years. **Description:**

1. **Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan and Reporting:** The I&R service must have a plan that includes procedures for specific types of emergencies, contacting police/paramedics and maintaining service delivery during/after the incident; an evacuation plan; a description of designated roles and responsibilities; an increased demand plan for the telephone system and other technology; an employee preparedness strategy; steps taken to ensure facility preparedness; and provisions for drills to practice emergency procedures outlined in the plan.
 - a. Submit a copy of the agency's emergency operations and business contingency plan. At a minimum, the plan should include:
 - Procedures for specific types of local and community-wide emergencies that could occur in your community.
 - Building evacuation plan.
 - Designated leadership description that outlines roles and responsibilities of managers and staff before, during and after an incident.
 - Procedures for maintaining service delivery during and after an incident.
 - An increased demand plan, including telephone expansion and other hardware needs, that ensures you can respond to the high volume of inquiries that occur during and in the aftermath of an emergency.
 - An employee preparedness strategy that encourages staff to develop emergency preparedness plans for their own homes and families.
 - Procedures for providing critical incident stress debriefing for staff.
 - b. Describe the steps you have taken to ensure that your facility is capable of handling and/or adapting to increased needs during a disaster, particularly in situations where a large number of volunteers will be working at the facility. Include information about the plans you have in place for financial needs including petty cash, electrical power, air conditioning, cleanliness and sanitation, parking, security and other issues that may arise. **Description:**
 - c. Describe the drills your organization arranges for staff to practice the emergency procedures as outlined in the plan. Include information about how often they occur, what you have learned as a result of your drills, what changes you have made in the plan as a result of what you learned, and the date of your last drill. Minimum expectation: The drills occur at least annually. **Description:**
 - d. Describe the preparations you have made to collect and distribute disaster-related service request information from inquirers. Include information about your plan for producing regular reports for the community regarding disaster-related referrals, service availability

and unmet needs, as well as an after-action report that documents your agency's special activities before, during and after the event with a focus on what worked well and what needs to be improved through revisions of your disaster plan and/or additional training for staff. Include a description of your distribution plan for reports. Minimum expectation: Must have the capacity to collect referral information, produce referral-related and after action reports, and distribute the reports to the community. **Description:**

2. Formal Relationships with Government/Private Sector Agencies:

- a. Describe the efforts you have made to develop relationships with emergency management personnel at city, county and state/provincial levels and private sector organizations with a role in the disaster relief and recovery efforts in your community. Include information about the barriers you have encountered, areas where you have been successful, and your next steps. Minimum expectation: The I&R service has taken steps to develop necessary relationships. **Description:**

- b. Describe your participation and role in local, statewide/province-wide, multi-state/multi-province and/or national disaster exercises. Minimum expectation: The I&R service participates in community exercises. **Description:**

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Submit copies of the following:

- Your Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plans.
- A disaster-related service request report, if you have had occasion to produce one.

The Site Review Team will review the following on-site:

- Availability of Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plans to staff.
- An emergency evacuation plan that is clearly posted.
- Evidence that the agency holds periodic practice drills.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS STANDARDS

The Organizational Effectiveness standards describe the governance and operational structure an I&R service needs in order to fulfill its mission. Included are establishing itself as or within a legal entity, developing policies and procedures that guide the organization, developing an organizational code of ethics, establishing sound fiscal practices, providing a conducive physical environment, managing personnel, providing staff training, increasing public awareness regarding the availability of information and referral services and their value to the community, and providing for ongoing program evaluation and quality assurance.

STANDARD 22 – Governance and Oversight: The auspices under which the I&R service operates ensures the achievement of the agency mission and I&R goals.

STANDARD 23 - Technology: The I&R service uses technology that improves access to information and enhances its ability to serve inquirers efficiently and effectively. The main role of technology is to enhance and strengthen information sharing while accommodating people's communication preferences. "Technology" includes telephone systems, telecommunications, computer systems and applications, assistive technology for people with disabilities such as speech-to-text and text-to-speech applications, instant messaging (IM), text/SMS messaging, online chat, video relay/chat, social media, I&R software platforms, electronic directories and self-service mechanisms such as automated attendants/interactive voice response systems, video relay services, community kiosks and searchable I&R databases on the Internet.

STANDARD 24 - Personnel Management: The I&R service has in place a framework and mechanisms for program and personnel management that provide for the continuity and consistency required for effective service delivery.

STANDARD 25 - Staff Training: The I&R service makes training available to employees and volunteers.

STANDARD 26 - Promotion and Outreach: The I&R service establishes and maintains a program that increases public awareness of I&R services, their objectives and their value to the community.

STANDARD 27- Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance: The I&R service has the ability to assess the quality and effectiveness of all aspects of its operation including its service delivery, resource database, reports and measures, cooperative relationships, disaster preparedness and organizational structure. These determinations are made through ongoing quality assurance procedures supported by the collection and utilization of information that can be used to manage and continuously improve resource database management and the service delivery process; and periodic, formal evaluations that are used to implement measurable improvements.

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Governance and Oversight:

- a. What is the legal status of your I&R service?
 - Private, nonprofit.
 - Government.
 - For-profit.

- b. Describe the governance and oversight arrangements for your I&R service and use the checklist below to provide information about how each of the listed responsibilities is carried out by these bodies. Minimum expectation: All of the responsibilities listed below are handled by either the Board of Directors or the Advisory Committee.

- c. I&R services need to have a Board of Directors ¹ that is constituted according to the laws of its state or province, represents the diverse interests of the community and oversees implementation of program goals and objectives to assure quality of service. In situations where the I&R service is part of a larger organization and the Board is remote from oversight of the I&R service, an Advisory Committee² handles these responsibilities. Submit a copy of the roster for your Board of Directors/Advisory Committee.

Board	Advisory	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Formally adopts policies of the I&R service and ensures that they are followed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensures that the I&R organization has an executive director or Program manager who is accountable for the operation of the I&R service.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assists in procuring financial and technical assistance to sustain the I&R service.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsible for contracting, adopting an annual budget, maintaining financial records and providing an annual audit by an independent certified public accountant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promotes the I&R system throughout the community ensuring appropriate publicity, public relations and outreach.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oversees the evaluation of the I&R service.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintains minutes of all official proceedings that any interested party can inspect.

- d. Submit a copy of your organization's Policies and Procedures Manual (or other evidence) that a governance and administrative structure is in place that meets the standards for this section. The I&R service has formally adopted, dated and

¹ **Board of Directors:** The governing body of an organization that is responsible for program planning and evaluation, policy setting, personnel administration, program oversight, public relations and fiscal management.

² **Advisory Committee:** A formally constituted group of local stakeholders that provides information about community needs and issues, recommendations regarding program planning and development activities and other forms of support that help to ensure that the agency maintains effective connections with the people it serves.

regularly reviewed written policies that clearly articulate the general principles by which the I&R service is managed. At a minimum, the Policies and Procedures Manual must include:

At a minimum, the Policies and Procedures Manual must include:

- Board/Governance Policies and Procedures
- Employee Policies and Procedures (made available to staff on request)
- Fiscal Policies and Procedures
- Hiring Policies and Procedures
- Policies that are formally adopted by the board, dated and regularly reviewed.
- A process for registering and resolving complaints from inquirers and staff members including those specific to violations of privacy and confidentiality.
- A code of ethics that all staff receive and agree to follow.
- A nondiscrimination statement that prohibits all forms of discrimination.

- e. Describe the public policy activities you have engaged in within your community and in response to requests from state/provincial and national I&R organizations that seek to further the overall goals of the I&R movement. Minimum expectation: The I&R service has implemented a policy that encourages advocacy on issues of importance to the I&R movement and access to community services. **Description:**

Describe the system advocacy efforts you have engaged in during the last 12 months and what they achieved. Activities might include letter writing campaigns, visits to political representatives, testimony at public hearings, holding press conferences, writing articles for local newspapers, providing interviews to local media, speaking to groups, and working through coalitions. Minimum expectation: The I&R service identifies up to three system advocacy initiatives the organization or their Board has participated in during the last 12 months. **Description:**

2. Technology:

- a. What process do you use to define your technology goals? How do you ensure that your technology goals reflect the contact needs and preferences of inquirers in your community? **Description:**
- b. If your I&R service has caller ID or other technology that allows your specialists to collect identifying information about inquirers without their permission, (e.g., on a crisis call involving threat of suicide), describe your policies for using the technology to preserve the person's safety while preventing access to the information in other circumstances. **Description:**

- c. Submit a copy of your backup policies and procedures which demonstrate how you safeguard critical data and systems. Policies and procedures should include
- provisions for the storage, retrieval, use and ultimate disposition of all records
 - address security arrangements for inquirer data, the resource database and critical operational records such as payroll, personnel, reports, legal documents and email
 - methods for testing data and system restoration protocols
 - how to access backup in emergency situations
- d. How do you ensure that your technology is appropriately maintained? Describe your provisions for ensuring a priority response to any breakdowns in key infrastructure. **Description:**
- e. Describe your organization's plan for regularly updating your technology based on the anticipated lifecycle of all systems that support effective service delivery. Has the plan been approved your governing body? **Description:**
- f. Describe how your agency meets ADA requirements for staff with respect to technology. **Description:**

3. Personnel Management:

- a. Describe the steps you have taken to hire service and administrative staff who are reflective of your community. Minimum expectation: The I&R service has taken steps to attract qualified and capable employees and volunteers who are reflective of the community they serve. **Description:**
- b. Submit a copy of an organizational chart that shows all positions within the agency and/or I&R service. Submit written job descriptions for all employees and volunteers of the I&R service. They should outline responsibilities, essential job functions and lines of accountability. Describe your hiring process, including a strategy for posting job listings for employee and volunteer positions that ensures the listings are broadly available throughout the community. **Description:**

- c. Describe the screening procedure for evaluating candidate applications and/or resumes against position requirements. Submit your employment interview questions for each of the positions within the I&R service and the rating form used to evaluate responses. **Description:**
- d. Describe how you provide ongoing performance monitoring for all staff. Minimum expectation: There is a clear mechanism for providing ongoing supervision and measuring employee performance. The agency uses a standardized observation form for I&R specialists and a standardized performance appraisal form specific to each job category. There is an evaluation for all staff that addresses specific responsibilities and job functions as outlined in the individual's job description. The agency uses call monitoring/remote listening in which live or recorded calls are randomly selected for review and feedback on a regular basis, and uses mentoring/coaching. **Description:**

When performance problems are identified, how are they addressed? Describe what you do. Minimum expectation: A clear way of dealing with performance problems is in place. **Description:**

- e. Describe the call management system reports, measures and other indicators you use to assess individual I&R specialist efficiency and productivity. Are you able to track the number of calls routed to and answered by a specialist? Average speed of answer? Call handling times? Schedule adherence? Minimum expectation: A system is in place for determining how well individual I&R specialists are helping the I&R service meet agency service goals. **Description:**
- f. What tools do you use to evaluate the work of your resource specialists? Describe the quality and productivity measures you use. Minimum expectation: A system is in place for determining how well individual resource specialists are helping the I&R service meet agency service goals. **Description:**

How do you review your resource database and evaluate the work of your resource specialists? How many records do supervisors review each month? What indicators of quality do you use? What quality/productivity measures do you use? **Description:**

- g. If you have I&R specialists who work at home or in other off-site locations, describe your requirements for the arrangement. Minimum expectation: Specialist have the ability to make three-way calls to connect inquirers to external services (including language translation services); contact emergency services while maintaining a connection with the inquirer; work in a distraction-free environment that allows confidential interviewing; access supervisory assistance, when required, and for supervisors to exercise quality assurance measures; and have personnel policies and training opportunities that reflect off-site circumstances. **Description:**

- h. What does your I&R service do to support staff regarding workplace health, wellness and ergonomics? **Description:**

4. Staff Training:

- a. Describe the structure and general contents of your training. Minimum expectation: Training is provided for all employees and volunteers; the training is based on predetermined, written training goals with written learning objectives; trainees are evaluated and must meet a minimum level of competency before assuming duties; there are procedures for addressing employees and volunteers who fail to demonstrate competency at the required level. **Description:**

How many hours of training do you provide? _____

Number of hours for staff orientation: _____

Number of hours training for new I&R specialists: _____

Number of hours training for new resource specialists: _____

Number of hours of ongoing training required annually: _____

Submit a copy of your training goals with written learning objectives defining behavioral outcomes for each module. What training methods do you use?

Online courses?

Lectures? Audio/visual materials? Reading assignments? Oral/written exercises? Role plays? Modeling by experienced workers? Other?

Description:

Is the content of the staff training program consistent with the AIRS I&R Training Manual (previously known as the ABCs of I&R)? Are training objectives consistent with the tasks, knowledge and skill requirements of AIRS certification programs, CIRS, CIRS-A/D and CRS ? Are trainees evaluated using objective (e.g., written tests) and subjective (e.g., observation) measures and demonstrate a minimum level of competency before assuming duties? **Description:**

Describe when and how testing or assessment of stated competencies occurs. Describe your procedures for addressing trainees who do not demonstrate competency at the required level. **Description:**

- b. What is covered in the orientation for all I&R staff, including I&R and resource specialists, managers, administrative staff? **Description:**

What steps do you take to stay current with federal and state/provincial laws affecting service delivery? **Description:**

What training do you provide that ensures that policies and procedures related to privacy and confidentiality are understood and observed? **Description:**

- c. Submit a Table of Contents for your training manual that shows a detailed list of all topics covered in your I&R specialist training program.
- d. Submit a Table of Contents for your training manual that shows a detailed list of all topics covered in your resource specialist training program.
- e. What do you do to evaluate the effectiveness of your training program and the performance of your trainers? **Description:**
- f. What ongoing training and professional development do you provide for I&R staff? Do you provide in-service training? What topics are covered? Do staff have opportunities to attend conferences and workshops? How do you track the type and amount of additional training that staff receive? **Minimum expectation:** Some type of ongoing training is provided for I&R specialists and resource specialists. **Description:**

What percentage of I&R and resource specialists and managers are certified?
Minimum expectation: 51% of I&R staff and managers and 51% of resource specialists and managers have professional certification or are in the process of becoming certified.

Description

5. **Promotion and Outreach:** Use the questions below to verify that you meet the Promotion and Outreach standard. Minimum expectation: There is an outreach plan that takes the demographics of the community into consideration. Steps have been taken to track and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.
- a. Provide a description of your outreach plan. Include information about its objectives, the populations and the organizations in your community the plan targets and how the methods you use are targeted to meet the needs of diverse populations. Has the plan been successful? **Description:**

 - b. What outreach methods have you used? **Description:**

 - c. Describe the steps you have taken to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of your plan. Indicate the sources you have used in the evaluation process, e.g., demographic data, tabulation of referral source data. Give examples of how you have modified your plan based on evaluation results. **Description:**
6. **Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance:** Respond to the questions in this section to verify that your I&R service meets the Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance Standards.
- a. The agency is able to create and use management reports that allow staff to evaluate the effectiveness of planning efforts including goals, strategic objectives and outcomes in key operational areas; target the allocation of staff and other resources; and improve staff performance against operational targets. Minimum expectation: The agency is able to track the following:
 - call volume/total calls answered
 - average speed of answer
 - average talk time
 - occupancy rates

- service level
- abandonment rate
- average call-handling time

What organizational changes have been made based on the analysis of these data reports? **Description:**

b. Do you conduct regular customer satisfaction/quality assurance surveys with a statistically significant number of inquirers to assess overall service performance and I&R service outcomes? Describe, in detail, what you do. Include information about when and how your surveys are conducted, your selection criteria for participants, the number and/or percentage you target per year, the customer satisfaction and service outcome questions you ask and how you have used the results to improve your program. Minimum expectation: A structured way of measuring customer satisfaction/quality assurance has been implemented, and feedback from the process has been used to improve service delivery outcomes. **Description:**

If, during the course of conducting client satisfaction/quality assurance surveys, it is determined that the original need of the inquirer has not been met or that the inquirer has new needs, are your specialists able to provide additional information, referrals or advocacy? How you handle this type of situation? **Description:**

How do you use service outcomes information obtained during the course of customer satisfaction/quality assurance surveys in reports on follow-up activity? **Description:**

c. Describe the process you use to evaluate your program's strengths, accomplishments and needed improvements. What steps do you take to ensure that your I&R service continues to meet the changing needs of your community? Is the evaluation conducted by your own staff or by an external contractor? What data sources do you use for input? What are your selection criteria for participation in the survey? What evaluation methods do you use? Minimum expectation: A program evaluation process is in place that allows the organization to examine the viability of its I&R program, the effectiveness of its services, its appropriate involvement in the community and its overall impact on the people it serves. Information gathered during the process has been used to improve service delivery outcomes. **Description:**

Provide three examples of things you learned from an evaluation and the program changes you made in response. **Description:**

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Submit a copy of the following:

- The roster for your Board of Directors/Advisory Committee.
- Administrative policies and procedures manual(s).
- Most recent audit or review for the organization.
- An organization chart that reflects all of the positions within your agency. If you are part of a larger organization, submit a functional organization chart for the I&R service. The organization chart must be aligned with the job descriptions requested below.
- Job descriptions for all of the positions within the I&R service.
- The standardized form and screening procedure you use to evaluate each candidate's application or resume against the I&R staff position requirements.
- Your employment interview questions for each of the positions within your I&R service and the rating form you use to evaluate responses.
- Your succession plan for key staff.
- Policies and procedures relating to the use of off-site I&R staff.
- Backup policies and procedures.
- A detailed, day-by-day agenda for both your I&R specialist and resource specialist training that shows topics covered, materials used, training methods (how material is presented), timeframes and objectives/outcomes for each section.
- Examples of subjective and/or objective evaluation tools used for measuring an I&R trainee's level of competency.
- Your I&R training evaluation form.
- Your I&R trainer evaluation form.
- Proof of professional certification for I&R staff.
- An outreach report for the I&R service describing the plan, the outputs and outcomes (what was accomplished)
- Sample written supervision plan for I&R staff.
- Observation forms that are used for I&R staff.
- Performance appraisal forms that are used for I&R staff.
- Sample individualized performance improvement plan for I&R staff.
- Summary report from your call management system/ACD or the annual report you receive from your telephone company documenting call volume, number of abandoned calls, average speed of answer and average call length.
- Rating sheet for I&R call monitoring.
- Most recent customer satisfaction/quality assurance report for the I&R service.
- Written goals, objectives and I&R service work plan for the current year.
- The most recent evaluation report for the I&R service.

The Site Review Team will review the following:

- The office has space and furnishings to perform the work of the I&R service.
- A confidential space is available for interviewing people who walk in, where applicable.
- The agency has equipment and technology to perform the work of the I&R service.
- The work space is able to accommodate staff with disabilities.

ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS

TEST CALL PROCESS

TEST CALL PROCESS

To gauge the quality of the I&R that is being delivered, a test call or “secret shopper” process is being conducted as part of the site visit process.

Prior to the site visit, Site Reviewers will complete two calls per reviewer to the agency they will be visiting. This will enable the Site Visit Team to hear I&R in action prior to doing the site visit.

Each call must receive a score of 15 or greater to be deemed passable. If 25% of the monitored calls are not deemed passable, the site reviewer will conduct at least one more call per reviewer.

Date	
Time	
Name of agency	
Name of mystery caller	

Was the phone answered by a live person? (i.e. no IVR)	Yes	No
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Comments on experience of getting through to service:

Greeting/Rapport			
Clearly identified agency/program name	Yes	No	NA
I&R Specialist provided own name	Yes	No	NA
Offer of assistance	Yes	No	NA

Assessment of Need			
Mystery callers concerns/requests were clearly acknowledged	Yes	No	NA
I & R Specialist paraphrased the requested services for clarification and confirmation	Yes	No	NA
Assessed for additional needs if appropriate	Yes	No	NA
Tone was appropriate to the nature of the request and the situation	Yes	No	
Speaking voice was clear and engaged	Yes	No	
Displayed empathy	Yes	No	
Appropriate procedures were used if you were put on hold or subjected to silence	Yes	No	N/A

Referral Provision

I & R Specialist avoided giving advice/personal opinions	Yes	No
I & R Specialist provided all pertinent information about the referrals (name, phone, hours, service program, documents needed to bring, any eligibility info) <u>did you get what you need to use the referral provided</u>	Yes	No
I & R Specialist offered more than one referral when appropriate.	Yes	No

Data Collection

Asked for geographic region, (ZIP code, town, city)	Yes	No	NA
Asked demographic data	Yes	No	NA

Call Closing

I & R Specialist offered further assistance	Yes	No
I & R Specialists educated mystery caller to call back if any information was not correct or the referral did not provide what they needed	Yes	No
Thanked for calling	Yes	No
Did Specialist invite you to call in future	Yes	No

Overall comments on call handling:

Each Yes or NA response is worth 1-point – Total Points

ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS

REMOTE DATABASE REVIEW

REMOTE DATABASE REVIEW

The AIRS Accreditation process includes a remote database review which allows us to ensure your organization's compliance with the Accreditation Criteria for the Resource Database. The review is conducted by telephone using GoToMeeting software which enables the reviewer to see your database online and ask questions pertinent to the accreditation requirements. We estimate that the review may take up to six hours, which can be scheduled in several sessions.

In order to prepare for the review, AIRS will need the following documents:

- Inclusion/Exclusion policy
- Style Guide
- Customized list of Taxonomy terms used
- Your rules for when and how to use target terms (Target policy).
- Database maintenance procedures
- List of towns in service area
- Report showing formal update dates (unless this can viewed within the software during the review)
- List of agency names and their legal status type/agency type in order to compare types with your Inclusion/Exclusion policy.

We want to make sure that your review is completed by the date your other accreditation materials are due. This allows for the completion of both components of the Accreditation process close to the same time. Consultants under contract with AIRS will be conducting your review. They will be in touch with you approximately 4 months prior to the due date of your Consultation materials to schedule your on-line review. **If you wish to start earlier, contact your Accreditation Liaison.**

When the database review has been completed, the reviewer will prepare a report and send it to AIRS for distribution.

To prepare for the review, please familiarize yourself with the summary of requirements for accreditation that will be the focus of the review and the form that will be used to record notes from the interview which shows, step-by-step, how the review will proceed. Both are located in separate sections below. Together, they will help you understand the elements that will be covered during the remote review and how compliance with each accreditation criterion will be verified.

Additional information about the AIRS accreditation process has been posted on the AIRS Networker in the Accreditation Support Community.

REMOTE DATABASE REVIEW: SUMMARY OF ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

Resource Database AIRS Standards include Standards 7-12, 17

INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA: The database review will verify that the I&R agency follows its inclusion/exclusion criteria, that its database listings are impartial, and that exceptions to the policy are applied consistently.

Minimum Expectation: An Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria Policy exists and is reviewed and updated every 12 months. NOTE: It was a deliberate decision of the Accreditation Commission to make this requirement stronger than what is reflected in the Standards.

DATA ELEMENTS: The database review will verify that a standardized profile has been developed for each organization in the database, and includes all required data elements. If an element is non-applicable, an explanation will be requested.

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM/TAXONOMY: The database review will verify use of the Taxonomy; verify that if keywords are used, they are connected to the Taxonomy and used consistently; and verify that the Taxonomy has been updated within the last 12 months.

Minimum Expectations:

- The I&R service uses the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services as the classification system for their resource database.
- If keywords are used, they are connected to Taxonomy terms.
- The Taxonomy has been customized and reflects the needs of the community

APPLYING STYLE GUIDE RULES / INDEXING: The database review will verify that Style Guide rules are applied consistently; that only primary services are indexed; that there are no “disconnects” between service descriptions and indexing relating to services that have been described; that service information supports the ability of I&R specialists to make accurate referrals; that there is differentiation between location of service and area served; that area served in service descriptions is accurately applied in the geographic search filter; that the Taxonomy customization is adhered to and applied consistently; that double indexing and using terms from multiple levels on the same Taxonomy branch are avoided; that indexing of service and target terms is sufficiently accurate and consistent to produce good search results; and that the database is professional in appearance and there are no spelling or grammatical errors.

Minimum Expectations:

- Includes rules for structuring resource database records into agency, site and service components.
- Addresses how to correctly identify the principle unit of the agency and how to configure an entry or series of entries to accurately reflect the structure of the organization.
- Includes rules for structuring agency, program and site names.
- Requires AKAs for agency, program and site names, when applicable.
- Includes rules for structuring program and service group names which ensure that program names are determined by the agency in question and service group names are assigned by your resource specialists.

- Includes rules for configuring address information.
- Provides rules for the format, writing style and content of narrative descriptions.

DISASTER RESOURCES: The I&R service develops, maintains and/or uses an accurate, up-to-date computerized resource database that contains information about available community resources that provide services in times of disaster. Database records include descriptions of the services organizations provide and the conditions under which services are available; and are indexed and accessed using the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services.

Minimum Expectation: The database includes permanent records for organizations active in disaster; the Taxonomy is used to index the records; there is a reasonable process for identifying, verifying, adding and making available resources that emerge in the course of a disaster.

SEARCHING THE DATABASE: The database review will verify that the database can be searched using names and associated AKAs, Taxonomy terms and associated use references (synonyms), target populations and area served; and that Taxonomy definitions and see also references can be displayed.

MAINTAINING THE DATABASE: The database review will verify that database maintenance procedures include a process for conducting an annual survey with all organizations in the database, collecting and entering interim changes, and identifying and verifying information about new agencies/services.

REMOTE DATABASE REVIEW: INTERVIEW

INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA: *The database review will verify that the I&R agency follows its inclusion/exclusion criteria, that its database listings are impartial, and that exceptions to the policy are applied consistently.*

	NOTES
Does the database include all provider types listed for inclusion?	
Does the database contain any provider types that should have been excluded?	
Does the database contain or omit records that conflict with the policy? If the database includes for-profit organizations, for example, do they meet conditions for inclusion in the policy, e.g., their services are free? The reviewer will spot check to verify compliance.	
Do the organizations in the database reflect the legal status types approved in the policy?	
If exceptions to the policy are specified, do they appear to be consistently applied?	
Are the listings impartial and non-partisan?	

<p>Has the Inclusion/Exclusion policy been reviewed within the last 12 months.</p>	<p>Date of last policy review:</p>
<p>Is there a fee for inclusion in the database, if yes, under what circumstances?</p>	
<p>Does the review process combines an internal and external focus, such as:</p> <p>Incorporating from their reports Assessing unmet needs?</p> <p>Analyzing organizations according to their importance as referrals?</p> <p>Discussions with I&R specialists?</p> <p>Input from key stakeholders in the community</p>	
<p>What steps have been taken to ensure that the database includes resources that meet community needs.</p>	
<p>How is the inclusion/exclusion policy published?</p>	

DATA ELEMENTS: The database review will verify that a standardized profile has been developed for each organization in the database, and at a minimum includes all the mandatory data elements required by the Standards, which are listed below. If an element is non-applicable, an explanation will be requested.

The Resource Manager will be asked to open one record, starting with the agency screens, moving to site screens, and then to service screens to verify that the software can accommodate all items on checklist below. If an element is not populated, an explanation will be requested.

AIRS Data Elements	AIRS Data Record Category		
	Agency	Site	Service/Program
<i>Name</i>	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
<i>AKA (Also Known As) Name(s)</i>	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
<i>Legal Status</i>	Mandatory	x	x
<i>Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN/FEIN)</i>	Recommended	x	x
<i>IRS Status</i>	Recommended	x	x
<i>Licenses or Accreditation</i>	Recommended	x	x
<i>Street/Physical Address(es)</i>	x	Mandatory	x
<i>Mailing Address(es)</i>	x	Mandatory	x
<i>Phone Number(s) and Types</i>	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
<i>Website URL(s) including Social Media</i>	Mandatory	Recommended	Recommended
<i>Email Address(es)</i>	Mandatory	Recommended	Recommended
<i>Name and Title of Director/Manager</i>	Mandatory	Recommended	Recommended
<i>Description</i>	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
<i>Days/Hours of Operation</i>	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory
<i>Access for People with Disabilities</i>	x	Recommended	x
<i>Travel Information</i>	x	Recommended	x
<i>Eligibility</i>	x	x	Mandatory
<i>Geographic Area Served</i>	x	x	Mandatory
<i>Languages Available</i>	x	x	Mandatory
<i>Documents Required</i>	x	x	Mandatory
<i>Application/Intake Process</i>	x	x	Mandatory
<i>Fees/Payment Options</i>	x	x	Mandatory
<i>Taxonomy Term(s) for Services/Targets</i>	x	x	Mandatory

<i>AIRS Data Elements: Record Administration</i>	
<i>Unique ID Number</i>	Mandatory
<i>Record Ownership Code</i>	Mandatory
<i>Date of Last Formal Verification</i>	Mandatory
<i>Contact for Formal Verification</i>	Mandatory
<i>Date of Last Interim Change</i>	Mandatory
<i>Contact for Last Change</i>	Mandatory
<i>Resource Specialist for Last Change</i>	Mandatory
<i>Record Status (Active/Inactive)</i>	Mandatory
<i>Record Inclusion (e.g. displayed online, in specific portals, directories, etc.)</i>	Mandatory

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM/TAXONOMY: The database review will verify use of the Taxonomy; verify that if keywords are used, they are connected to the Taxonomy and used consistently; and verify that the Taxonomy has been updated within the last 12 months.

	NOTES
<p>Is the resource database indexed using the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy?</p>	
<p>Are keywords (sometimes known as alternate terms) used?</p>	
<p>If the database uses a separate keyword/alternate term system, are the keywords connected to Taxonomy terms? How are the connections documented and displayed?</p>	
<p>How do you ensure that keywords/alternate terms are used consistently, i.e., that when you assign a Taxonomy term to a record, that you also always assign the associated keyword/alternate term? The reviewer will look at the Resource input side of the software to see how the Resource Specialist assigns keywords/alternate terms.</p>	

APPLYING STYLE GUIDE RULES / INDEXING: The database review will verify that Style Guide rules are applied consistently; that only primary services are indexed; that there are no “disconnects” between service descriptions and indexing relating to services that have been described; that service information supports the ability of I&R specialists to make accurate referrals; that there is differentiation between location of service and area served; that area served in service descriptions is accurately applied in the geographic search filter; that the Taxonomy customization is adhered to and applied consistently; that double indexing and using terms from multiple levels on the same Taxonomy branch are avoided; that indexing of service and target terms is sufficiently accurate and consistent to produce good search results; and that the database is professional in appearance and there are no spelling or grammatical errors.

There are three sections to this stage of the review: checking for 1) adherence to style rules, 2) indexing for best practices, and 3) indexing that is sufficiently accurate and consistent to produce a good search results list. The first section begins below.

	NOTES
At least 5 multi-site agencies will be reviewed to verify that the structure of the organization is accurately reflected, the principle unit of the agency is correctly identified and the entry or series of entries accurately reflects the structure of the organization.	
The reviewer will verify that Style Guide naming rules for agencies and sites are applied consistently.	
The reviewer will spot check AKAs, noting whether style rules have been consistently applied.	
The reviewer will verify that rules for structuring program and service group names are applied consistently. How are program names and service group names determined and assigned? By the provider agency or the resource specialist?	
The reviewer will verify that style rules are applied consistently in street addresses.	
Do narratives follow Style Guide rules that relate to format, writing style and content of narrative descriptions?	
Do narratives include information about the conditions under which services are provided, as specified in the Style Guide? (eligibility, fees, area served, payment methods, languages.)	

During the second section of this component of the review, the reviewer will audit at least 8 records for indexing best practices. The Reviewer will select the agencies.

Are primary services described and distinguished from secondary services?	
Are all primary services described in the narrative indexed?	
Is there indexing for services that are not described in the narrative?	
Are secondary, ancillary, phantom or indirect services indexed?	
Is indexing confined to terms within the customized set?	
Is double indexing avoided?	
Is use of terms at multiple levels on the same Taxonomy branch avoided?	
Are geographic area served requirements described and distinguished from the area in which the agency is located?	
Is area served in service descriptions accurately reflected in the geographic filter? The reviewer will compare narrative information to filter information.	

During the third section of this component of the review, the reviewer will verify that Taxonomy indexing is sufficiently accurate and consistent to produce a good search results list. Consistent use of the same terms/targets is required.

	NOTES
Is indexing consistent? (e.g., is the selected service always indexed using the same Taxonomy term? Is the selected service always coded at the appropriate level?)	
What controls are in place to ensure that the resource specialist is indexing using only the customized set of service terms and targets?	
Are target terms (Y terms) used?	
What is your policy for use of target terms? NOTE: Your I&R service must have a policy regarding use of Target terms, even if they are not used. The policy can state that Targets are not being used.	
If target terms are used, how do you ensure that they are used consistently throughout the database? Is a quality control process in place to ensure consistency? The reviewer will ask for a description of what is done.	
The reviewer will ask to see examples of targeted terms to verify consistent use. The reviewer will select the terms.	
The reviewer will check to see if there are there stand-alone targets, i.e., instances where a target term has been used without a service term.	
In situations where more than one target term is attached, are they added in a consistent order? (Is one group coded Health Related Support Groups*Lung Cancer*Women, for example, while another group is coded Health Related Support Groups*Women*Lung Cancer.) What is the rule? Is the rule documented in the Target policy?	

	NOTES
If other filters are used, are they applied consistently? The reviewer will ask what other filters (language, age, etc.) are used and will spot check for consistency.	
What is the process you use for managing records for seasonal agencies or services (e.g. Christmas and Thanksgiving baskets or meals).	
What is the process you use for identifying new agencies, ensuring that they meet inclusion/exclusion criteria, acquiring information about them, and ensuring that the entries are verified by the agencies upon inclusion in the database.	
What types of records do you keep for organizations that have been removed from the database or omitted because they do not meet your inclusion/exclusion criteria? Is information about why the organizations removed/omitted included in the records?	

DISASTER INDEXING

Does the database include permanent records for organizations active in disaster?	
Is the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy used to index disaster resources?	
How are resources that emerge during the course of the event indexed?	
Are there special procedures for verifying information about disaster resources; the ongoing viability of information throughout the response, relief and recovery phases of the disaster?	

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

Is the database professional in appearance and free of spelling and grammatical errors?	
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DATABASE SEARCH METHODS: The database review will verify that the database can be searched using names and associated AKAs, Taxonomy terms and associated use references (synonyms), target populations and area served; and that Taxonomy definitions and see also references can be

	NOTES
Can the database be searched using organization names and related AKAs?	
Can the database be searched using site names and related AKAs?	
Can the database be searched using program names and related AKAs?	
Can the database be searched using Taxonomy terms?	
Does the Taxonomy search retrieve terms based on associated use references?	
Does the Taxonomy search display See Also references upon request?	
Does Taxonomy search display Taxonomy definitions upon request?	
Can the database be searched using target populations, where applicable?	
Can the database filter searches by area served (generally by entering the inquirer's ZIP code)?	
Can other filters be used for searching?	

MAINTAINING THE DATABASE: The database review will verify that database maintenance procedures include a process for conducting an annual survey with all organizations in the database, collecting and entering interim changes, and identifying and verifying information about new agencies/services.

	NOTES
How does your I&R service pursue feedback from organizations that do not return surveys? How many times do you attempt to obtain feedback before taking other steps? What methods do you use when you have to pursue feedback?	
What steps do your resource specialists take when information cannot be verified?	
How do you track due dates for annual surveys (also known as "formal updates")?	
What is the oldest date of last formal update for an organization's entry in your database? Can you produce a report of organizational records in the resource database whose date of last update is older than a specified date? Approximately how many records have a date of last update that is older than one year?	
Does your I&R service have a process for gathering information about changes that occur between surveys, verifying changes and integrating them into the workflow within an appropriate time frame? The reviewer will ask you to describe the process.	
Does your I&R service have a process for identifying new agencies and services, ensuring that they meet inclusion/exclusion criteria, acquiring information about them and ensuring that the entries are verified by the provider agency upon inclusion in the database. The reviewer will ask you to describe the process.	
How your I&R service measure the agency's level of satisfaction with the accuracy of the information contained in their record, their familiarity with and opinion of the I&R's online resource database, and any interaction with resource staff?	

RESOURCE DATABASE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

The Remote Database Review Team will require the following documents prior to the review:

- Inclusion/Exclusion Policy
- Style Guide
- Customized List of Taxonomy terms
- Database maintenance procedures
- List of towns in the service area
- Report showing formal updates
- List of agency names and their legal status type/agency type for comparison with inclusion/exclusion policy

The Site Review Team will inspect the following on-site:

- Products
- Outstanding issues from the remote database review

ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS

APPENDICIES

SUMMARY OF ALL ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Service Delivery Documentation Requirements:

- Policy/procedures for handling transactions via IM/chat, text/SMS messaging or other forms of social media.
- Confidentiality policies that address confidentiality of client records or use of Caller ID or other applicable technology.
- A sample of the form that is signed by I&R staff agreeing to the confidentiality policy. Do NOT send all of the forms your staff have signed!
- The nondisclosure form signed by others with access to confidential information.
- Your advocacy procedures.
- Proof of your AAS certification (if you are skipping the Crisis Intervention section).
- The signed, written agreement you have with the crisis intervention center with which your I&R service has an arrangement.
- Your crisis intervention policies and procedures which must address:
 - Lethality risk assessment procedures.
 - Call handling procedures for specific types of emergencies
 - A staff debriefing protocol
 - Rescue services
 - Mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse and elder/dependent adult abuse.
- Crisis protocol per agreement with the local crisis center.
- The form your I&R specialists use to complete a lethality (risk) assessment. If your lethality assessments are in electronic format, submit a screen shot.
- Your follow-up policy and procedures
- Screen shots of your inquirer data collection form
- Your procedures regarding the information you collect about inquirers and how you use the information
- A report that shows the number and/or percentage of:
 - Information only, Assessment and referral, Assessment without referral inquiries
 - Inquiries involving Crisis intervention
 - Inquiries involving Advocacy
 - Follow-ups conducted
- Follow-up results report
- Current reports (including met/unmet needs, sample cross-tabulations, trends). Reports should be finished and formatted.

- An explanation or a user guide to the reports you provide for those on your distribution list
- A list of agencies/organizations to which the reports were provided
- Provide a definition of Terminology used to categorize contacts

Cooperative Relationships Documentation Requirements:

- Copies of agreements with other I&R programs in your community, if applicable

Disaster Preparedness Documentation Requirements:

- Your Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan.
- A disaster-related service request report, if you have had occasion to produce one.

Organizational Effectiveness Documentation Requirements:

- The roster for your Board of Directors/Advisory Committee.
- Administrative policies and procedures manual(s).
- Most recent audit or review for the organization.
- An organization chart that reflects all of the positions within your agency. If you are part of a larger organization, submit a functional organization chart for the I&R service. The organization chart must be aligned with the job descriptions requested below.
- Job descriptions for all of the positions within the I&R service.
- The standardized form and screening procedure you use to evaluate each candidate's application or resume against the I&R staff position requirements.
- Your employment interview questions for each of the positions within your I&R service and the rating form you use to evaluate responses.
- Your succession plan for key staff.
- Policies and procedures relating to the use of off-site I&R staff.
- Backup policies and procedures.
- A detailed, day-by-day agenda for both your I&R specialist and resource specialist training that shows topics covered, materials used, training methods (how material is presented), timeframes and objectives/outcomes for each section.
- Examples of subjective and/or objective evaluation tools used for measuring an I&R trainee's level of competency.
- Your I&R training evaluation form.
- Your I&R trainer evaluation form.
- Proof of professional certification for I&R staff.
- An outreach report for the I&R service describing the plan, the outputs and outcomes (what was accomplished)
- Sample written supervision plan for I&R staff.

- Observation forms that are used for I&R staff.
- Performance appraisal forms that are used for I&R staff.
- Sample individualized performance improvement plan for I&R staff.
- Summary report from your call management system/ACD or the annual report you receive from your telephone company documenting call volume, number of abandoned calls, average speed of answer and average call length.
- Rating sheet for I&R call monitoring.
- Most recent customer satisfaction/quality assurance report for the I&R service.
- Written goals, objectives and I&R service work plan for the current year.
- The most recent evaluation report for the I&R service.

Remote Resource Database Review Documentation Requirements:

The Remote Database Review Team will require the following documents prior to the review:

- Inclusion/Exclusion Policy
- Style Guide
- Customized List of Taxonomy terms
- Database maintenance procedures
- List of towns in the service area
- Report showing formal updates
- List of agency names and their legal status type/agency type for comparison with inclusion/exclusion policy

GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF ACCREDITATION MATERIALS

The following suggestions/reminders are intended to help you present your program to the Review Team in the best possible light. Always call your AIRS liaison if you have questions or need further clarification.

Guidelines for Electronic Submission of Documents:

- Your documents should be **submitted on the provided preformatted Thumb Drive**. They can be in PDF and/or MS Word format. (Do not email the files.)
- PDF documents should be in a "searchable" rather than "image-only" PDF format. (Copiers typically produce image-only PDF files.) The reviewer needs to be able to search your documents as well as use the copy-and-paste function.
- Do not compile all of your material into a single file. The narrative and documentation parts need to be separate files. Also, do not insert any of the documentation into the narrative part.
- Responses and descriptions in the narrative part need to be complete and stand on their own. This is very important! Again, do not insert documentation even if you believe it answers a question, and do not reference other material (for example, "See Personnel Policies, page 12.").
- A convenient way to organize your material is to create six named folders, one for each of the major sections ("1-Service Delivery," etc.), and place the relevant files in them accordingly. Then, in each folder give the files a number and name so they appear in order (001 Service Delivery Responses; 002 MOU for After Hours; 003 Confidentiality Policy; etc.). Give your files names that a reviewer can easily recognize.
- Remember that it is very important for you to carefully organize your submission. This is a big project for you and for the reviewer. Reviewers want to be completely fair, and they will not make guesses about your intent, nor will they spend a lot of time trying to find things that are not where they should be.

General Approach:

A careful balance of narration (explanation), checklist responses, and documentation is needed to establish that you have satisfied a component. It is very important that you give full responses for every component.

Be sure to read the minimum expectations, requests for narrative descriptions and the list of required documentation carefully and provide exactly what is asked for. In most instances, one line narrative responses are not adequate. Make sure your descriptions are concise, informative and complete. This cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Keep in mind that clarity, conciseness and coherence are keys to a successful presentation!

Review:

We recommend that you have at least two people review your material before submitting it. The primary reviewer should be the program manager or responsible contact person. The second reviewer might be someone who is familiar with your I&R processes but not necessarily a manager. Check for thoroughness, clarity, coherence, and readability. Use spell-check. Here's to your successful efforts!

Your Accreditation Liaison is:

Charlene Hipes
charlenehipes@airs.org
503/257-3537
503/251-8383 fax

Mail all accreditation materials to one of the following:

AIRS
PO Box 33095
Portland, OR 97292

OR

AIRS
15590 SE Millmain Dr.
Portland, OR 97233

Alliance of Information and Referral Systems
Annual Accreditation Update

NOTE: AIRS will mail this to you annually.

Accreditation awards are made for a period of five years. You are required to notify AIRS of any changes that negatively affect your compliance with the Accreditation Criteria; and to assure that your I&R Service continues to be in compliance with the Accreditation requirements, your program is required to respond to an annual questionnaire reporting on the status of your organization and its activities.

If you fail to submit your report, following two emails and a reminder letter, your accreditation will be reduced from five years to three. If you continue to be out of compliance in year two, your award of accreditation will be either suspended or rescinded.

1. Agency/Program Name _____

2. Address _____

3. AIRS Membership Number _____

4. Organizational Affiliation (e.g. a part of United Way, Area Agency on Aging, independent non-profit)

5. Please identify changes that have occurred since your accreditation or your last report.

Have there been major changes in staffing levels?	yes	no
Have you changed your service hours?	yes	no
Have there been significant changes in supervisory or senior staff?	yes	no
Have there been unexpected shifts in the program's budget?	yes	no
Has the mission of the agency changed?	yes	no
Has there been any major change in the software used?	yes	no
Have there been major changes in your training program?	yes	no
Were any problems identified in your last financial audit?	yes	no
Is your agency involved in any civil or criminal litigation?	yes	no

If "yes" to any of the above, please provide an explanation. Use attached sheets if necessary.

6. What is the **expiration** date of your Taxonomy subscription? _____
If you don't know, contact taxonomy@211la.org. **You must have a current subscription.**

7. Briefly describe any major community events or conditions that you have been involved in during the last year or two. What was the role of your I&R? (Use attached sheets if needed.)

8. Briefly describe the status of your state or regional I&R association and your relationship to it. Have any funding changes occurred at a state level that impact your program?

9. Besides funding, what is your major challenge as an I&R today?
10. Provide a copy of your most recent Annual Report.
11. Visit the AIRS Accreditation website at <http://www.airs.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3308> and verify if your agency name and link to your agency website is accurate.

Is the information accurate YES _____ NO _____

If no, what corrections need to be made?

Program/Agency Name: _____

Website: _____

Return your response to:

AIRS
 P.O. Box 33095
 Portland, OR 97292.
Or
charlenehipes@airs.org
Or
 Fax 503/251-8383

Name of person to contact if there are questions: _____

Title _____

Phone number _____

Email _____

Affidavit: We certify that the information submitted is true and, to the best of our knowledge, provides an accurate representation of this agency/ program.

 I&R Manager/Coordinator

 Date

 Executive Director

 Date

Sample Press Release
Agency Letterhead

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Agency Secures Prestigious Accreditation

Local Organization Name is among a select group of organizations to be accredited by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), in recognition of the quality of the information and referral service it provides to the (location, sector or target audience) community.

City, State/Province, Date -- **Organization** has demonstrated excellence in the information and referral services field by successfully completing a detailed professional accreditation process administered by *the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS)*.

AIRS is an international non-profit professional association with a membership of more than 1,200 public and private organizations that bring people and services together through information and referral (I&R). I&R organizations create and maintain databases of agencies and programs that offer services, and disseminate that information through a variety of channels to individuals and communities.

The AIRS Accreditation Program is a multi-phase process that assesses more than 200 distinct components of an I&R service's operation and includes an expert review of the agency's resource database, a "secret shopper" monitoring of service delivery, and culminates in a detailed onsite review.

Organization Name provides I&R services to location, sector or target audience through specify main I&R phone number, &/or website.

Organization Name joins more than 140 organizations in the United States and Canada to have successfully attained AIRS Accreditation.

"You should include a quote from a key member of your agency that describes the importance of accreditation or what it means to you" said Jane Doe, CEO of Your Organization. "And then briefly summarize what I&R work you provide in one or two short sentence(s)."

About Your Company:

Include a short backgrounder such as what year your company was founded, main services provided, and key groups or areas that you assist. For example: Since 1985, ABC Agency has provided counselling, job training and short-term housing services to at-risk youth in the Greater Metropolitan City area. An average of 1036 phone calls to our 1-800- KID-HELP crisis line were received monthly in 2011 by a team of dedicated and trained volunteers.

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For more information contact:
Key Contact Person's Name, Job Title
Company
Phone number with area code
Email

www.YourWebAddress.com

