Member Services

AIRS is the only organization serving all Information & Referral (I&R) professionals.
Annual AIRS I&R Training and Education Conference

Pre-COVID-19, this event was held in a different city each year, and featured more than 80 workshops and sessions covering a wide range of I&R topics and service areas. More than 600 people attended every year. We expect this to return in 2022.

In September 2020, AIRS held its first online conference under the theme of “Virtually Yours”. More than 1,600 people attended. In 2021, we are planning two virtual conferences. One in the early summer of 2021, and a second event - more frontline in focus in the fall of 2021.

https://learn.airs.org

Webinars
AIRS offers 15+ webinars to our members every year

Online Training
AIRS Online Training allows staff to take courses at their own pace and at the times most convenient to agency workload. Our courses can be accessed via http://learn.airs.org/ and includes:

• Introduction to I&R Confidentiality
• Database Maintenance
• Empowerment and Advocacy
• Information and Referral Process
• Inclusions and Exclusions
• I&R Chat and Text
• I&R Crisis Intervention
• I&R Customer Service
• Serving Military Personnel and their Families
• Serving People with Mental Health Issues
• An Overview for Resource Specialists
• Introduction to Taxonomy and Indexing
• Resource Database Style
• Serving Young People
• Working with Challenging Clients

Our Mission:

“To provide leadership and support to our members and Affiliates to advance the capacity of a Standards-driven Information and Referral industry that brings people and services together.”

AIRS is ...

• a professional membership association made up of individuals and organizations, supporting state and regional affiliates, all engaged in improving access to human services
• the international voice of Information and Referral (I&R)
• the driving force behind the development of clear and consistent professional Standards and Quality Indicators
• the administer of professional credentials for individual I&R practitioners and the accreditation of I&R programs
• a provider of quality training, support and technical assistance
• a national leader in human services that works in partnerships with complementary organizations.

EDUCATION & TRAINING
Standards
The AIRS Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral binds together every aspect of I&R including service delivery, resource database, collaboration, disaster preparation and organizational effectiveness. It is the foundation of quality I&R in every sector and at every level. The 9th edition is available free to those interested in providing quality I&R services - www.airs.org/standards.

“We need Standards to define what is and isn’t acceptable in the field and practice of I&R. The Standards allow for a shared frame of reference and provide a reliable benchmark against which performance can be judged. Adherence to the Standards means credibility and accountability.”

- Faed Hendry, Manager Training and Outreach Findhelp Information Services

“During a disaster, should our center be closed, we are confident that our sister 211 call centers can back us up because we use the same standardized procedures...The shared best practices alone are worth the annual AIRS dues!”

- Barbara Bernstein, former Executive Director Eden I&R/211 Alameda County
AIRS I&R Training Manual
This comprehensive publication is the complete training resource for new Community Resource Specialists and Resource Database Curators, and also serves as a reference tool and refresher for experienced staff. It is especially helpful when preparing for AIRS Certification testing. It is available in hardcopy and electronic versions and is accompanied by a slide-deck that can be used for training. The Training Manual is revised annually and is included as part of the Platinum level benefits. The publication can be purchased by other members for $450 for the complete set or $350 for the Community Resource Specialist edition and $150 for the Resource Database Curators edition.

AIRS Networker
Our members-only professional networking site is the place to access the latest information, ask for I&R advice from your peers, share news, find helpful resources, post job openings, and connect with other AIRS members. Separate communities can be set up for your organization, region or interests, and members can collaborate on projects.

http://airsnetworker.airs.org/home

I believe it’s important to be AIRS certified because it shows that you have been tested on your working knowledge of information referral. It made me think outside of the box and caused me to think in different way – to become better. For example, there were a lot of questions about the specialist withholding personal judgments/opinions while providing information referral. When an agency provides good information and referral to community supports/individuals, it gives credibility to the agency.

- Olivia M. Harvey, CRS - A/D, Options Counselor, Junction Center for Independent Living
AIRS Accreditation

Whether an I&R program is national or local in scope, comprehensive or specialized in nature, AIRS Accreditation is the best way to demonstrate the overall quality and effectiveness of an I&R service. AIRS Accreditation is the primary assurance mechanism for affirming I&R excellence and demonstrates full compliance with the AIRS Standards. Its importance is endorsed by national and state/regional entities as a benchmark for all I&R providers and many require it for funding. More than 150 organizations have successfully attained AIRS Accreditation.

For details visit www.airs.org/accreditation.

“While those who are unaccredited may already be providing a valuable service, we would encourage them to pursue accreditation because of the benefits it provides to service users as well as to the organization... Accreditation brings the ‘seal of approval’ that offers a competitive edge when seeking funding and opportunities for community collaborations.”

- Maria Gansel
211 Director, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County

Working on Behalf of Our Members

Public Policy - AIRS works on the development of an AIRS legislative and regulatory agenda; to monitor relevant legislation; and identify potential funding streams.

AIRS Board of Directors – These folks work hard on your behalf and represent a range of I&R/A services in the US and Canada. Board members serve four-year terms, may be elected twice, and receive no compensation or reimbursement. For a full list of current board members and contact information, visit www.airs.org/board.

AIRS Committees – Most of the work of AIRS is conducted through its various committees consisting of a mixture of AIRS Board members, Affiliate members and other people drawn from across the field of I&R. There are always a variety of opportunities to get involved with AIRS and to use your special skills to enhance the field of I&R. Contact info@airs.org for more information.
Affiliates (Chapters)
AIRS Affiliates (or chapters) act as the face and voice of the national organization in a local region. Operating as independent membership organizations, they bring together individuals and agencies working in I&R in a defined geographic area for networking, training, promotion, leadership development, advocacy on public policy and issues, and more.

If there is an existing AIRS Affiliate (Chapter) in your state/region, you will automatically become a member when you join AIRS. We encourage you to join them and get involved! There are no additional membership dues as your AIRS membership covers both organizations.

California AIRS (CAIRS)
Florida AIRS (FLAIRS)
Georgia AIRS (GAIRS)
Illinois AIRS (ILAIRS)
AIRS Indiana
Iowa/Nebraska AIRS
Maryland AIRS
Michigan AIRS
Missouri, Arkansas & Kansas (MAK-AIRS)

New York State AIRS (NYS AIRS)
Northwest AIRS (NW-AIRS)
Ohio AIRS (OHAIRS)
Oklahoma AIRS (OKAIRS)
Tennessee AIRS
Texas AIRS (TAIRS)
Virginia AIRS (VAIRS)
WisconsinAIRS

National Partners:
- InformCanada
- National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
- ADvancing States

AIRS Certification
This professional credentialing program measures demonstrated ability in the field of I&R reflecting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and work-related behaviors needed to successfully execute responsibilities. As an important achievement, certification often leads to increased salary and career advancement.

Computer-based exams are held throughout the US and Canada. Individuals may also arrange to take the exam at their office or home using an online proctor service. Recertification is required every two years. More than 4,400 individuals currently hold one of three available designations:
- Certified Information and Referral Specialist
- Certified Community Referral Specialist (CRS)
- Certified Community Referral Specialist - Aging/Disabilities (CRS-A/D)
- Certified Community Referral Specialist -- Database Curators (CRS-D/C)

For full details including eligibility, fees, application, and upcoming test dates visit www.airs.org/certification.
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