Sixteen I&R programs are recognized with an award of AIRS Accreditation at the 2017 Conference
**AIRS ACCREDITATION 2017**

**List of Accredited Agencies**

Sixteen I&R programs received their award of AIRS accreditation or re-accreditation at the AIRS 2017 conference, bringing the total number of those having achieved accreditation to 185. Congratulations!

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**Note:** We made several attempts to contact all agencies asking them to submit their yearbook photos and descriptions. Those that did are featured on the following pages. We apologize for any errors or omissions that may have occurred.
Accreditation Site Reviewers

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TIP Database/Detroit Public Library
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United Way of Greater Toledo
Toledo, OH

MICKI THOMPSON, Executive Director
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ROSA ANN THOMS, Retired
St Catharines, ON, Canada

BRIDGET WOLF, Project Director
ResCare Workforce Services
Columbus, OH

JAN WAWRZYNIAK, Director
United Way 2-1-1/United Way of Northeast Louisiana
Monroe, LA
Canadian Mental Health Association – Edmonton Region (CMHA – Edmonton) is a non-profit organization that envisions mentally healthy people in caring communities. We increase awareness and understanding of mental health, mental illness, recovery, and suicide prevention through education. We support the resilience and recovery of people in distress including those affected by mental illness or suicide by providing crisis intervention; safe, long-term and affordable housing; peer connections, suicide grief and family support; advocacy and wayfinding; and meaningful volunteer opportunities.

In 1918, Dr. Clarence Hincks, who suffered from mental illness most of his life, founded the National Committee for Mental Hygiene in Canada. The goals of the Committee were to fight mental illness and promote mental health. In 1950, the Committee’s name was changed to the Canadian Mental Health Association. In 1954, the Edmonton Mental Health Association – later the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta North Central Region (CMHA – ANCR) – was formed. Its purposes were to provide public education, to act as a clearinghouse for information, to cooperate with the Provincial Department of Health on services for patients discharged from mental hospitals, and to promote research and training in the field of mental health. In 2003, CMHA – ANCR changed its name to CMHA - Edmonton.

In 2015, CMHA – Edmonton integrated the services of The Support Network, including the 211 Information and Referral Line, under the CMHA banner. In 2016, we answered 55,000 calls for 211.

Collaborating with local community partners, our 211 service also operates Edmonton’s Seniors Information Phone Line and 24/7 Crisis Diversion Line. With provincial partners, we operate the Catholic Social Services Employee Assistance Program Line, as well as the Family Violence and Information Line and Bullying HelpLine for the northern half of Alberta.
The mission of United Way of Connecticut 2-1-1 is to help meet the needs of Connecticut and its residents by providing information, education and connection to services. 2-1-1 is a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people to essential health and human services 24 hours a day, seven days a week either online or over the phone. Every day, highly-trained contact specialist help callers find assistance for serious issues such as food insecurity, housing crisis, homelessness, mental health and substance abuse. Contact specialists also connect callers to important services and opportunities including free tax preparation at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, budget and financial literacy coaching and volunteer and donation opportunities. With a database of more than 40,000 programs and services, 2-1-1 is the first place Connecticut residents turn to find resources in their communities.

Connecticut 2-1-1 serves as the central intake for the Department of Children and Families’ Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Service (EMPS) for youth and the point of access for the Department of Housing Coordinated Access Network (CAN) for shelter and housing. 2-1-1 Connecticut has organizational accreditations from the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), and the contact center is certified by the American Association of Suicidology for crisis intervention.

United Way of Connecticut 2-1-1 also operates specialized early childhood and child care services. 2-1-1 Child Care serves as Connecticut’s child care resource and referral agency, maintains current listings of child care providers statewide and provides free resources and training to parents and professionals. 2-1-1 Child Development Infoline is a free, confidential, multilingual resource for child development expertise and the gateway to all Birth to Three services in Connecticut. Finally, Care 4 Kids, the state’s child care subsidy program is operated by United Way of Connecticut 2-1-1.

United Way of Connecticut 2-1-1 is constantly striving to better meet the needs of Connecticut and its residents and is able to provide services with support from the State of Connecticut and Connecticut’s local United Ways.
Panhandle 2-1-1 is a program of Chautauqua Healthcare Services in Defuniak Springs, which is in Northwest Florida. Chautauqua Healthcare Services, formerly known as COPE Center, is a mental health and substance abuse facility and has been serving Walton County since 1973. To fill a need in the community, the agency operated a crisis hotline which was answered by on site therapists. In 2012, the crisis hotline officially became Panhandle 2-1-1, the 24 hour information and referral service for Walton County. In 2015, Panhandle 2-1-1 expanded to also include Okaloosa County. While still a hotline for those in crisis, the information and referral service connects residents and visitors to the area with services that are available. The Panhandle 211 program is partially funded by United Way of Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

Panhandle 2-1-1 is now accredited by AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems) and has partnered with the Emergency Services departments in both Walton and Okaloosa County to be available to residents during times of disaster. Future plans include expanding to become a coordinated entry system for homeless services.
Charlotte 2-1-1

Our mission is to exceed expectations in the delivery of public services by improving the health and well-being of Charlotte County residents with comprehensive informational service. To be a resource, an advocate, & raise awareness about Charlotte County's health and human needs.

Charlotte 2-1-1’s database contains over 880 health, human service, & public safety providers, representing local services available throughout Charlotte County. Our goal is to expedite the exchange of information between customer and service providers.

The resource database provides assistance with healthcare, employment, educational, legal, housing, mental health / addiction counseling, transportation needs, local government information, human service, nonprofit and faith-based organizations, disaster relief resources, volunteer opportunities, and much more.

Our vision is to position the Charlotte 2-1-1 system to become proactive in enabling volunteers, agencies, and community groups as well as to raise community needs awareness and become increasingly involved in community resolutions. Charlotte 2-1-1 provides telephone access to trained information and referral specialists, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - providing the right information in the right way at the right time.

Call 2-1-1 to connect to health, human services & public safety information, volunteer and donation opportunities, or information during disaster activation. If you would like to volunteer, contact Dr. Faezeh Andrews at 941.833.5640.
United Way of Northeast Louisiana 2-1-1

Just as you would dial 9-1-1 on your telephone for an emergency, you can now dial 2-1-1 for fast access to information about community services.

Serving Caldwell, Catahoula, Concordia, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, and West Carroll parishes.

Sooner or later, you or someone you know in Northeast Louisiana will need help. When that time comes, United Way of Northeast Louisiana 2-1-1 will be there. When you call, knowledgeable staff members listen to your problem, assess what services you may need, and provide information and referrals for the most appropriate place(s) in the community you can go to get help. All information is free and confidential. All you have to do is call from any landline or mobile phone, a free call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you’d rather talk to someone in person, stop by the United Way office (located at 1201 Hudson Lane in Monroe) and our caring and compassionate staff will be ready to assist you.

Sometimes “help” means information. United Way 2-1-1 is your connection to community-wide information about non-profits, civic organizations, volunteer opportunities and much more.

Another way to access information is through the Directory of Services. United Way 2-1-1 maintains a database of over 1,000 community services in order to provide information about issues such as food, shelter, clothing, abuse/neglect prevention and protection, rent/utility assistance, elderly services, disease support groups, counseling, education, children/youth services, and much more.

For more information, call 2-1-1 or visit unitedwaynela.org.
#DareTo Go the Distance by getting your questions answered and connecting with resources through the Epilepsy and Seizures 24/7 Helpline.

Each year more than 14,000 people contact our Helpline.

The Epilepsy Foundation, a national non-profit with nearly 50 local organizations throughout the United States, has led the fight against seizures since 1968. The Foundation is an unwavering ally for individuals and families impacted by epilepsy and seizures.

The Foundation works to prevent, control, and cure epilepsy through community services; public education; federal and local advocacy; and supporting research into new treatments and therapies. The Foundation works to ensure that people with seizures have the opportunity to live their lives to their fullest potential.
Nova Scotia's 211 Information and Referral Services Association

Nova Scotia's 211 Information and Referral Services Association (211 Nova Scotia) launched on February 11th, 2013 (211 Day). The organization is committed to providing quality information and referral services to over 900,000 Nova Scotians across the province.

Since launch, 211 Nova Scotia has answered more than 100,000 information and referral calls. Last year, over 35,000 calls for help were received and more than 180,000 visits were made to the 211 website and online database.

In the fall of 2015, Nova Scotia opened its doors to hundreds of Syrian Refugees. Prior to their arrival, the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia contacted 211 to inquire about using 211 as the central repository for offers of assistance. 211 agreed without hesitation, knowing the value in having an easy number for Nova Scotians to call to give their support. In 49 days, 211 staff responded to more than 2,800 contacts and documented over 3,500 offers of assistance in the form of material goods, volunteerism and financial support. The contribution made by 211 Nova Scotia was recognized in a resolution to Legislature by the Minister of Immigration.

During that same time period, the Provincial Government launched a “Make the Right Call” campaign, which guided Nova Scotians on the effective and appropriate use of 911, 811, and 211. Early in 2016, 211 followed up with a similar campaign, partnering with Housing Nova Scotia and the Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton to distribute 25,000 door hangers to housing units throughout the province. The distribution was so successful with property owners throughout the province, that an additional 5,000 door hangers were ordered bringing the total number distributed to 30,000 homes province-wide.

In 2016, 211 piloted a 211 Ambassador Program with the Halifax Regional Police (HRP). Community Response Officers attended training at the 211 centre to become 211 Ambassadors and take the information back to their colleagues. Since HRP completed the training, two other police services have joined the program. In the fall of 2016, the Department of Community Services also trained approximately 1500 staff across the province about 211 in a webinar developed in partnership with 211.

211 Nova Scotia offers service in English and French and interpretation services in over 140 languages. A variety of communication channels, including email, text and chat services, ensures Nova Scotians can receive help when and how they need it.
Ashtabula County Community Action Agency (ACCAA) serves Ashtabula County in Ohio. The Agency strives to help people achieve self-sufficiency and rise above issues of poverty. In this mission, ACCAA operates several programs and service with the express purpose of empowering people living in poverty to move to the next level through combating the causes of poverty directly.

The first 2-1-1 service to come online in the state of Ohio, ACCAA launched 2-1-1 Ashtabula County in 2003 to provide people with an easy to use means of figuring out how and where to get the assistance that could help them in battling the effects of poverty. Since that time, 2-1-1 Ashtabula County has handled more than 200,000 inquiries.

2-1-1 Ashtabula County is a member of AIRS and Ohio AIRS. ACCAA staff have contributed to Ohio AIRS in a number of leadership roles.
The Aiken County Help Line, Inc. has been in existence as an Information, Referral and Crisis Intervention Agency for 40 years, serving Aiken County, South Carolina. The agency has proudly served in a 24/7 capacity, all 40 of those years.

In 2004, the agency became a 2-1-1 Call Center, expanding its footprint within South Carolina. While the smaller of the two 2-1-1 centers in the state; our focus is on providing high quality service to those we serve; by creating a supportive, working environment for our employees, who are the backbone of what we do and who we are. “People come to work for the Help Line; they love the work and they never leave. On average, employees have been with the agency from 3-10 years.”

The Aiken County Help Line was one of the first 2-1-1’s to be utilized during a major disaster. In January 2005, a train derailed in Aiken County, releasing deadly chlorine gas; forcing nearly 3,000 citizens to be evacuated in the early morning hours. Nine people lost their lives during the event, which spanned a 2-3 week period. During all 4 stages of this disaster, the Aiken County Help Line worked diligently with County Emergency Managers, directing all non-life threatening calls to the 2-1-1 number. What stood out the most to everyone, was how appreciative callers were to have a real person to speak to, to cry to, and to be heard during their time of need. This also cemented our relationship with our county Emergency Management Department, where we continue to collaborate on trainings, drills and disasters.

The Aiken County Help Line obtained AIRS Accreditation in 2011; and received reaccredited in March 2017.

In 2015, the agency became a Suicide Prevention Lifeline, and in 2016, Janice Hoffman, Executive Director, and Crystal Renew, Resource Manager; became nationally certified to teach the Assisted Suicide Intervention Skill Training (ASIST). All staff are trained in ASIST and all eligible staff are certified as Information, Referral Specialists (CIRS).

The Aiken County Help Line 2-1-1 is the little agency, with a big heart.
The Helpline Center has been making lives better by giving support, offering hope and creating connections for over 40 years.

The Helpline Center, formerly known as the Volunteer & Information Center, began serving the Sioux Empire community in 1974. At that time, phones were answered by volunteers. Through the years, the agency was formalized with staff, grew to 24 hours/7 days a week service, and was the first location west of the Mississippi River to begin 211 service.

The Helpline Center serves thousands of people every year by connecting individuals to resources and support, providing child care referrals, providing local agencies volunteers, offering hope to individuals with thoughts of suicide, and supporting families that have lost loved ones to suicide.

Our core services include the 211 Helpline, Volunteer Connections and Suicide & Crisis Support.
Proudly AIRS Accredited since 2007, A Call for Help is passionate about operating with the guidance and support of the AIRS Standards. The Standards and Accreditation process provides the best means for the continuous improvement of our daily operations.

Originally a project of the Junior League of Abilene, A Call for Help has been a City of Abilene information and referral service since 1976. In 2001, the program management of A Call for Help moved to the United Way of Abilene with continuing financial support of the City of Abilene. In 2004, A Call for Help first earned the 2-1-1 Area Information Center designation for West Central Texas by the Texas Information and Referral Network. The funding collaborative grew to include United Way of Abilene, City of Abilene, Workforce Solutions Board, and Texas Health & Human Services Commission. The United Way of Abilene serves as managing partner of the collaborative. During times of disaster, 2-1-1 plays a key role, working in coordination with local and state emergency operations. In 2005, A Call for Help was designated as a 2-1-1 Texas Warm Center for rapid response to statewide disasters. As one of three Warm Centers in Texas, A Call for Help was again selected for continued service in this role in 2015.

We manage our resource database and 2-1-1 information and referral services for the 19-county West Central Texas region. The region is West of Dallas/Ft Worth, South of Lubbock, North of San Angelo, East of Midland/Odessa. Through the following cooperative relationships, A Call for Help strives to support an integrated service delivery system for our region of Texas: Basic Needs Network, Big Country VOAD, Military Partnership of West Central Texas, United Way Community Impact, West Texas Homeless Network, and WrapAround.

Our number one commitment at A Call for Help is to answer 2-1-1 calls providing the best connection to local helping agencies for all callers. We continuously improve the skills of Call Specialists to address complex caller needs and annually perform a formal review of our entire resource database which covers health and community services provided by non-profit, critical for-profit, and government organizations in the 19-counties of West Central Texas.
2-1-1 Texas North Central Fort Worth is one of 25 Area Information Centers that make up the 2-1-1 Texas Network and is a program of the United Way of Tarrant County in partnership with the Texas Health and Human Service Commission.

2-1-1 Texas North Central Fort Worth got its start in 1973, when United Way of Tarrant County officially organized its information and referral service called First Call for Help. Membership was immediately established with the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, Inc. The benefits of being an AIRS member have proven invaluable as we developed operating procedures, training and a robust resource database, all in accordance with the AIRS Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral.

In 2001, First Call for Help was selected by the community for its proven ability to professionally and effectively navigate callers in need through the complex health and human services system. By 2003, First Call for Help became 2-1-1 Texas North Central Fort Worth and successfully completed accreditation that same year. We were re-accredited in 2010 and again in 2016.

2-1-1 Texas North Central Fort Worth has a long track record of collaborating in times of disaster serving in leadership positions on the local VOAD and Long Term Recovery Committee ensuring accurate information is available during and after disasters. Providing quality information and referral during disasters is both humbling and rewarding.
The Deep East Texas Council of Government's (DETCOG) Area Agency on Aging has been providing Information and Referral services for senior citizens in the Deep East Texas region since 1985, compiling resource information for the twelve counties, publishing a Human Services Directory, and maintaining a toll-free number that persons could call to get information and appropriate referrals to services they needed. In 1999, the DETCOG Area Agency on Aging formed the Area Information Center of Deep East Texas (AIC-DET) to provide expanded Information and Referral services to persons of all ages seeking information and referrals to services available to them throughout the Deep East Texas region, as well as the State of Texas. With the addition of 2-1-1 dialing capabilities, the 2-1-1/AIC-DET became part of a statewide network of Information and Referral professionals dedicated to providing accurate information and appropriate referrals to persons needing health and human service assistance. This statewide network provided essential non-emergency information support for the State and Local Emergency Operations Centers during the hurricane disaster events related to Katrina, Rita, and Ike.

The 2-1-1 AIC-DET has met the accreditation criteria as set by the Alliance of Information and Referral Specialists and received its Certification of Accreditation in April 2009. This accreditation reflects the professionalism and training standards achieved by the employees of the 2-1-1/AIC-DET as well as their desire to provide high-quality services to persons contacting the call center.
The South Plains Association of Governments (SPAG) is a Council of Governments that serves a fifteen county region in North West Texas. SPAG is the only organization representing all general purpose governments, both cities and counties, in the region.

SPAG was created in 1967 when local officials recognized that the South Plains is a unique region whose identity is defined by common interests, geography, climate, and economy. In essence, SPAG, is a service organization, created by its local government members to enhance their individual capacities.

SPAG is a voluntary association created by the local governments within state planning region two. Authorized by state law, SPAG is an independent political subdivision of the state and is an instrument of local governments. It is one of 24 such organizations in Texas.

The SPAG planning region, delineated by the Governor, encompasses 15 counties covering 13,737 square miles. Approximately 60% of the region’s population is located in Lubbock County, which is geographically centered in the region. The economy is dominated by agriculture, agribusiness, and service industries.

Any local government in the 15-county area is eligible for membership in the association. All 15 counties, 46 cities, and 9 special purpose districts are participating members of SPAG.

Recognizing that more can be accomplished by acting together rather than alone, local governments created their association as a service organization for themselves. SPAG is charged with representing the interests of local governments of the region and facilitating orderly development of the economic, social, and physical environment. Acting through SPAG, local governments create opportunities based upon local needs and preferences.
AIRS Accreditation is the primary quality assurance mechanism for affirming I&R excellence. It assesses the ability of an Information and Referral program to demonstrate full compliance with AIRS Standards.

Accreditation is a multi-phase process that assesses more than 200 distinct components of an I&R services operation and culminates in a detailed onsite review.

AIRS Accreditation is endorsed by national, state and provincial entities as a benchmark for all I&R providers. For 2-1-1 services in particular, it has been designated as a requirement for funding in most states.

Agencies that have been accredited feel that it is well worth the time and cost involved as it allows for review of current I&R center operations and gives them the opportunity to make improvements that benefit both the organization and those it serves.

More than 180 organizations in the United States and Canada have successfully attained AIRS Accreditation and yours can too. It is suitable for organizations of all sizes - some accredited agencies have less than 5 full-time staff.

Whether an I&R program is national or local in scope, comprehensive or specialized in nature, or offered in a nonprofit or government setting, AIRS Accreditation is the best way to demonstrate the overall quality and effectiveness of an I&R service.

AIRS Accreditation benefits the organization, the public, and the human services sector.

For the agency:

- Builds staff confidence because their skills have been validated by an external body.
- Enhances quality assurance and consistency of service levels within your own I&R.
- Helps stakeholders understand and appreciate the professionalism required for I&R.
- Serves as an important criterion in securing and maintaining funding.
- Enables people to reflect on and understand their I&R role and skills during the study process.
- Encourages alignment of staff training resources with the AIRS Standards and Certification process to provide continual service enhancement.

For the public & human services sector:

- Enhances agency quality assurance and service consistency between different I&Rs.
- Improves customer service with increases to staff knowledge and skills.
Need more reasons why your agency should be AIRS Accredited?

AIRS Accreditation provides:

- Objective evidence of achievement in the areas of service quality and effectiveness, community involvement and organizational stability.
- Demonstrated commitment on the part of your leadership to meeting the highest standards in the field.
- Enhanced credibility in the eyes of the public and your other stakeholders.
- A stronger position in what is emerging as a competitive field. Some funders are requiring national accreditation.
- Expanded access to new markets, government funding and foundation grants.
- Improved protection against legal challenges.
- International recognition by your peers in the I&R sector.
- The AIRS Accreditation Program is operated in alignment with the standards developed by the Institute of Credentialing Excellence.

AIRS Accreditation involves a three-phase process:

- A Remote Database Review to ensure that the resource database meets minimum requirements.
- A Consultation Phase during which the I&R service completes and submits required documentation in consultation with a liaison assigned by AIRS.
- An On-Site Review during which a review team assesses the agency in operation and verify that its practices are consistent with the accreditation criteria. At a minimum, the site visit includes a tour of the facility, a meeting with the agency’s volunteer leadership, secret shopper phone calls, and interviews with key I&R staff.
- Following the site visit, a report with a recommendation from the review team is completed and submitted to the chair of the AIRS Accreditation Program for approval and a letter is sent to notify the agency of the results.

Go to [www.airs.org/accreditation](http://www.airs.org/accreditation) to get started.

It is important that you first review your operation against the AIRS Standards and make sure that you have a majority of components already in place because an organization has 10 months from the date of their application to submit their initial documentation. The cost of accreditation is a non-refundable fee of $6,000 USD for AIRS members or $9,000 USD for non-members. These fees include all of the costs of a site visit and may be paid in 2 installments.

But don’t just take our word for it!

Here’s what others are saying:

Being an accredited I&R has been a tremendous selling point in many presentations and outreach efforts, including those for fundraising purposes. It has put us in the spotlight positively from local board level on up to state level. I highly encourage accreditation. - Jan Wawrzyniak, United Way 2-1-1 Director, Monroe, LA

Just DO IT! The benefits far outweigh the time invested. Having all required elements in place offers ease in training new staff. In addition it is a great opportunity to engage I&R staff, board/advisory and the community in what we do and how others view us. - Vicki Mize, United Way of Tarrant County, Arlington, TX

This process required staff to make quality assurance a priority, which is essential to our growth as a 2-1-1 center and as professionals as well. We are a higher quality service because of our participation in the accreditation process. - Burlie Williams, Asst. Director, United Way 2-1-1 & Volunteer Center, United Way of Dane County, Madison, WI

AIRS Accreditation gave our staff and board of directors a feeling of pride and accomplishment and the process resulted in better services for the community we serve. - Karen Zangerle, Exec. Director, PATH Inc., Bloomington, IL

The process allows I&R organizations a systematic way of analyzing and evaluating their operations in ways that they have not previously thought of. - Faed Hendry, Manager of Training & Outreach, Findhelp Information Services, Toronto, ON