# AIRS STANDARDS AND QUALITY INDICATORS FOR PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

AIRS™

*Setting the Standards for Information and Referral Services*

**Version 7.0**
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Information & Referral
*connecting people to community services*

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**Alliance of Information and Referral Systems**

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

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# PREFACE

The Standards Committee is pleased to release the 7th edition of the *AIRS Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral.* As the field of information and referral (I&R) has evolved and expanded, the standards have changed to reflect the current realities, practices and needs of the I&R field. The standards serve as an important foundation for both new and existing I&R services and, from the beginning (1973), have formed the basis of two very important credentialing programs: individual certification and agency accreditation.

As with previous editions, these standards further promote the AIRS mission which 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."*

The Standards Committee continued the use of Quality Indicators. The indicators are ideals that add clarity and provide a framework for determining the degree of adherence to the standards and achievement of quality goals. Many of the quality indicators have been adopted as requirements for AIRS Accreditation and, in that context, represent practices that need to be in place to measure the level of quality being achieved by the I&R service.

With a growing number of people in our communities preferring methods of communication that were unavailable a decade ago, technology has become increasingly integral to I&R services and, with that change, the need for new standards. A workgroup was commissioned by the Standards Committee to review the entire Standards document from that perspective. They recommended the addition of a new technology standard to the Organizational Effectiveness section and changes to other areas of the standards impacted by emerging communication options. The Standards, as a whole, now better reflect the tools we use to communicate with and serve our inquirers. The Committee also thoughtfully considered recommendations from the AIRS Accreditation Commission, feedback from AIRS national partners and suggestions by others who read and responded to the final draft.

The Committee has worked to make these standards fair and reasonable, not overly burdensome, clear and easy to understand, non-discriminatory and applicable to multiple models of practice. The committee has also ensured that the standards reflect the growth of the field and stretch us toward meeting the needs of inquirers and our communities. And, very importantly, the process has included many opportunities for review, discussion and input by the field. The standards are based on the Basic Principles of I&R (also known as the I&R Bill of Rights) which states:

An I&R service:

- ✓ Maintains accurate, comprehensive, unbiased information about the health and human services available in their community.
- ✓ Provides confidential and/or anonymous access to information.

- ✓ Provides assessment and assistance based on the inquirer's need(s).
- ✓ Provides barrier-free access to information.
- ✓ Recognizes the inquirer's right to self-determination.
- ✓ Provides an appropriate level of support in obtaining services.
- ✓ Ensures that inquirers are empowered to the extent possible.
- ✓ Ensures that inquirers have the opportunity to access the most appropriate I&R service available in the system.

The AIRS Standards Committee is proud to provide this edition for use by all those individuals and organizations in the field of I&R who seek to ensure that information and referral services are broadly available and effectively delivered.

# INTRODUCTION

Many people experience events in their lives that place them in a position where they need help with emergency food or shelter, legal or financial assistance, affordable health care or other essential services. Whether the individual is well-educated or a high school dropout, financially secure or living in poverty, a long-time resident or a runaway new to a city, a staff person new to human services searching for resources for a client or a seasoned veteran confounded by changes in the service delivery landscape, negotiating the maze of human service providers can be a daunting challenge. Those who are most fortunate find their way to an information and referral (I&R) service and, through that gateway, to the help they need.

I&R programs help individuals, families and communities identify, understand and effectively use the programs that are part of the human service delivery system. At the community level, I&R services facilitate long-range planning by tracking requests for service and identifying gaps and duplications in services. I&R services also work with other human services organizations to make them a more effective resource for their clients. Professional I&R specialists help people better understand their problems and make informed decisions about possible solutions. Specialists may advocate on behalf of those who need special support, and reinforce the individual's capacity for self-reliance and self-determination through education, affirmation, collaborative planning and problem solving. I&R services are a vital link bringing people and services together.

The purpose of the AIRS Standards is to establish reference points that define expected practices within the field and provide guidelines that communities or other jurisdictions can use when they develop an I&R program to meet the needs of their people. The Standards are the foundation for AIRS Accreditation and provide an organizational context for certification of I&R and resource specialists through the AIRS Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS), Certified Resource Specialist (CRS) and Certified Information and Referral Specialist Aging (CIRS-A) programs. They include fundamental requirements for all I&R services that want to be accredited as well as recommendations regarding further enhancements of I&R operations for organizations currently positioned to implement them. Whether the I&R service is national or local in scope, comprehensive or specialized in nature, or offered in nonprofit, for-profit or government settings, these standards serve as indicators of service quality and effectiveness, aid in the development of new I&R services and can be used to upgrade established services.

The Standards address all aspects of an I&R operation. They define the information and referral process in concrete terms; establish criteria for database development; mandate support for community planning activities; incorporate a broad view of collaboration at the local, state or provincial, regional and national levels; include provisions for the socially responsible use of technology; and describe the role of information and referral services in times of disaster.

Of particular importance is the vision of information and referral as a coordinated system of service delivery that encourages cooperation, collaboration and responsible use of limited resources, a trend that began in the 1980s and intensified in the 1990s with the advent of the Internet and the ability to share electronic databases. Section IV of the Standards, "Cooperative Relationships," assigns to each I&R service the further responsibility of building or participating in an existing information and referral system to more effectively serve the community. It also addresses cooperation between and among national, regional, state or provincial and local I&R services; and development of cooperative working relationships within the local service delivery system.

The Standards will be more applicable and relevant if the distinction between an I&R service and an I&R system is understood. An I&R service can be a public or private, for-profit or nonprofit organization. It also can be a clearly identifiable, administratively separate unit within a larger organization. I&R providers include private, nonprofit agencies; United Ways; Voluntary Action Centers; libraries; city, county and state or provincial offices; military Family Service/Support Centers; Area Agencies on Aging; child care resource and referral services; health care institutions and employee assistance programs.

The individual I&R service is the basic unit of the I&R system and each I&R service is part of the system. The system generally serves an area that is considered a logically defined community but may be broader in geographic scope. In a rural area, it may consist of only a few organizations that provide information and referral. In a metropolitan area, it may include a diverse array of organizations, some of which may supply a very specialized type of I&R service (e.g., for people with disabilities or older adults), while others may provide a comprehensive range of assistance. The coordination of all I&R services and programs within a community and beyond constitutes the I&R system.

The Standards, when applied to an I&R system, treat each I&R service as part of the larger system. They outline each of the elements necessary for development of the system with the intent that every service will ensure that each of these elements (a resource database, data collection, data analysis, and provision of I&R services) is available to the community in a coordinated and integrated manner. The individual I&R service, however, may not be responsible for providing all program elements. The requirements in the Standards may be met by the I&R service itself, by its parent if part of a larger organization or, for some functions, by the broader I&R system. For example, one I&R service might maintain the resource database that is used by all of the other I&R programs in the community, while another might provide 24-hour backup coverage for other I&R organizations that provide live answer only during working hours, and yet another might be part of a larger organization that handles finances, personnel matters and emergency procedures for all of its departments and programs.

The overall goal of I&R services and I&R systems is to deliver information that is needed to link inquirers with available and appropriate resources without duplication of effort. This vision of service delivery involves collaboration in maintaining a resource database and a common Taxonomy customization; collecting, analyzing and reporting inquirer data; training I&R staff and others in the community; promoting the I&R system and each individual I&R service that is a part of the system; ensuring broad access to I&R services; providing information and referral to inquirers; providing advocacy, as needed; and following up with inquirers when required.

I&R professionals, paraprofessionals and volunteers are encouraged to refer to this document and identify work roles and responsibilities and quality indicators. Boards and advisory committees are encouraged to develop long-range plans for service operation, promotion and evaluation based on the AIRS Standards. Funding sources may find that the Standards provide valuable background material for making decisions.

An I&R service that operates in accordance with the AIRS Standards ensures that a high quality of service is being provided to their community.

# STANDARDS REVISION PROCESS

**Adopted October 2004**
**Revised March 2013**

AIRS has a process for regularly reviewing and revising the *Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral* including the Standards themselves, associated quality indicators and interpretations of the Standards as reflected in the accreditation process and certification tests.

A full review will be conducted at least every three years. The Standards Committee will convene a review team with representatives from the field with expertise.

There are a number of different types of changes that may be needed. These include:

- ✓ Modifications in the wording of the Standards or associated quality indicators to add clarity. The need for this type of update arises most frequently through difficulties I&R services may have during the Accreditation process.
- ✓ Elaboration on quality indicators already present in the Standards but currently in more general form.
- ✓ Addition of Standards that represent elevation of requirements already present as quality indicators. Sometimes a practice currently only mentioned at the quality indicator level is important enough that it needs to be a Standard in its own right with its own associated quality indicators.
- ✓ Addition of Standards not currently referenced in the document.

It should be recognized that changes to standards, accreditation, and certification each have an impact on the others and should be addressed in regular cycles to ensure that they remain in sync.

The AIRS Standards Committee and the AIRS Accreditation Commission recommend the following review process:

1. The Standards Committee will discuss the proposed addition, modification or deletion and determine whether and how to proceed. Criteria for making additions and changes to the Standards include the following:

    - ✓ Standards should reflect current I&R practices. If a new service delivery standard relating to a particular type of call is being proposed, for example, are these types of calls being handled by a significant number of I&R services?
    - ✓ Standards should be no more burdensome that they need to be in order to ensure the desired outcome. We do not want to set the bar so high that only a few I&R services will be able to implement a Standard when a lesser requirement still constitutes quality service.

- ✓ Standards should improve the quality and consistency of I&R services provided to individuals, families and communities.
- ✓ Standards should support long-term service sustainability through improved governance, community collaborations and operational efficiencies.
- ✓ Standards should embrace all appropriate models of practice rather than limiting compliance to a single model. AIRS must support creative alternatives that achieve the desired outcome of quality performance.
- ✓ Standards should be achievable by all I&R service providers.
- ✓ Standards should be written in a form that is clear and easy to understand.

2. If the decision regarding a proposed modification is to proceed, the Standards Committee will determine whether the change is simple enough to draft without additional input (e.g., a modification in wording) or whether expert advice is needed when developing a draft. If necessary, the Committee will designate a working group to draft the changed/new Standard and associated quality indicators.

3. The Committee will review the draft and suggest changes/additions. If experts were not involved in the drafting process, the Committee may ask for an expert review before finalizing the draft. If the decision is to deny the request, an explanation will be provided to the individual/committee originating the suggestion and a discussion regarding the decision can be held, if necessary.

4. The Committee will share a draft of the Standards with the full Board for comment. An interim review by the Executive Committee may be conducted at their request.

5. If a new Standard or a major change is being considered, the draft will be posted for review by the field. It is important for AIRS to make every possible attempt to get maximum input into the development process. Mechanisms may include:

   - ✓ Distribution via the AIRS Networker.
   - ✓ Distribution via the 2-1-1 Discussion Group.
   - ✓ Distribution to the AIRS Affiliates.
   - ✓ Mailing to members.
   - ✓ Article in the newsletter.
   - ✓ Posting on the AIRS website.
   - ✓ Discussion forums at AIRS and Affiliate conferences.
   - ✓ Consultation with organizational partners.

6. Incorporate feedback, finalize the changed/new Standard and update the Standards document to reflect the new material.

7. Ensure that technical assistance on the competencies or other elements associated with the new requirement is made available to the field in conjunction with the adoption of the new Standard.

8. Provide ample opportunity for implementation by I&R services.

9. The AIRS Accreditation Commission and the AIRS Certification Commission should assess any changes in the Standards for relevance to their credentialing programs. If there has been an implementation period, the new Standard can become a requirement immediately. If not, applicant organizations can initially be required to have a plan in place for implementation. Full implementation can become a requirement further down the road.

# AIRS STANDARDS AND QUALITY INDICATORS

## SERVICE DELIVERY

The Service Delivery standards describe the functions that are essential for providing information and referral and assuring access for all, including an individual assessment of need; clarification of the situation; information and/or referrals, 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 practical 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/chat, responses to voicemails, 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: Assessment and Referral Provision

The I&R service conducts an assessment in which the inquirer has one-to-one interaction with an I&R specialist. The assessment process consists of active listening and effective questioning to determine the needs of the inquirer, clarifying the need, identifying appropriate resources, selecting appropriate delivery mode(s), making referrals to organizations capable of meeting those needs, and providing enough information about each organization 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.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that I&R specialists:

- ✓ 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 jargon-free 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 elicit information necessary for an accurate referral;
- ✓ Explore whether there are specific preferences or requirements such as language needs, evening or weekend hours, low cost services, or disability access;
- ✓ Clarify and confirm the inquirer's need(s) using techniques such as paraphrasing before providing referrals;
- ✓ Present the inquirer with various approaches to addressing the problem that give them a range of options;
- ✓ Explore the inquirer's own resources (e.g., friends, family, faith-based community);
- ✓ Effectively use the 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;
- ✓ Encourage inquirers to call back if the information proves incorrect, inappropriate, or insufficient to link them with the needed service(s); and
- ✓ Accurately record the disposition of the inquiry as well as the problems and needs that were addressed for use in reports.

**2.** The I&R service provides barrier-free access to its services for individuals and groups who have special needs, e.g., access via applicable technology and/or communication methods for people with hearing or speech impairments; language access for inquirers who speak languages other than English; and access for people with disabilities if the I&R service assists inquirers at its facility.

**3.** The I&R service ensures that staffing is structured to meet the needs of callers, i.e., that the optimum number of staff are available at the times most inquiries occur.

**4.** The I&R service makes every effort to ensure that its service is accessible from all telecommunications devices and mechanisms within its coverage area.

**5.** The I&R service provides, or ensures through coordination with other I&R providers, that information and referral through live answer is available to the community 24 hours per day, year round.

**6.** I&R services that have a formal, written agreement with another organization to provide after-hours or overflow coverage ensure that the organization meets all AIRS Service Delivery and Resource Database standards and quality indicators.

**7.** If the I&R service provides access via email, instant messaging (IM), text/SMS messaging, online chat, video relay/chat, responses to voicemail contacts, social media or other alternative access methods, it has defined guidelines regarding the timeliness for response.

**8.** The I&R service is thorough and diligent in providing effective information, assessment and referral to inquirers with a high quality experience as a priority. During each transaction, I&R specialists weigh the time they need to meet each inquirer's needs while conscious of the overall productivity goals for the organization. When handling transactions via IM/chat, text/SMS messaging or other forms of social media that lend themselves to multitasking, they understand the types of situations that require their undivided attention and handle simultaneous contacts (e.g., two live chats) only in appropriate circumstances.

**9.** The I&R service provides its core telephone service at no cost to the inquirer other than through the methods by which normal phone coverage is purchased (e.g., cell phone minutes, landline fees, pay phone charges). Toll-free access is provided to people living within the area served by the I&R.

**10.** The I&R service has a policy to ensure the privacy, confidentiality and security of personal inquirer information; and has agreement forms that staff and others with access to confidential information sign to document their compliance. Identifying information about inquirers, their requests and the information given to them are not communicated to others unless:

- ✓ Release of information is required by law or court order;
- ✓ Careful consideration indicates the presence or risk of serious harm to the inquirer or another person, and then communication may be only to those who must be informed in order to reduce harm or risk; or
- ✓ The inquirer has given explicit permission for the information to be disclosed to another person or agency. The inquirer specifies what information may be given and to whom.

**11.** The I&R service has procedures for managing challenging inquirers that recognize the right of inquirers to access, respect, privacy, confidentiality and treatment that is professional, nonjudgmental and culturally appropriate while protecting the I&R service from an unreasonable level of offensive behavior. The procedures define inquirer behaviors that are potentially offensive; describe acceptable options for managing contacts that are disruptive and criteria for implementation; and mandate review of actions taken regarding specific individuals on a regular basis to determine if a change is required.

**12.** The I&R service has a process to field and resolve complaints about inquirer privacy and confidentiality, provides training and ensures that related policies and procedures are in place.

## Standard 2: Information Provision

The I&R service provides information to an inquirer in response to a direct request for such information. Information can range from a limited response (such as an organization's name, telephone number and address) to a detailed description of community service systems (such as explaining how intake works in a particular discipline such as substance abuse services), agency policies and procedures for application. Active listening is necessary to establish a positive contact with the inquirer, understand context and provide an appropriate response.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service clarifies the inquirer's initial request for information as there may be an underlying or unstated problem.

**2.** Information is accurate and pertinent to the request of the inquirer.

**3.** The I&R service encourages re-contact by the inquirer if the initial information proves to be incorrect, inappropriate or insufficient to link the individual with needed services.

**4.** The I&R service accurately records the nature (disposition) of the inquiry, the problems/needs addressed by the inquiry if confirmed and, if applicable, the organization discussed in the course of the inquiry, for use in reports.

## Standard 3: Methods of Access to Community Resource Information

The I&R service provides community resource information in a variety of ways including supported access through an I&R specialist and independent access which allows end users to conduct their own searches without speaking to an I&R specialist or other professional.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** Supported Access Methods: The I&R service makes its information and/or services available by:

- ✓ Telephone.

In addition, the I&R service may make information and/or services available by:

- ✓ Email, instant messaging (IM), text/SMS messaging, online chat, video relay/chat, voicemail contact responses, social media or other methods of communication.
- ✓ An in-person presence at community facilities.

**2**. Independent Access Methods: The I&R service also makes its information and/or services available by:

- ✓ Making all or a portion of its database available on the Internet at no cost and in a format that allows searching by:
  - Organization and program name.
  - Taxonomy and/or Taxonomy related keywords.
  - Geographic location.

  Service searches are structured to allow the public to use natural language; and options such as user defined categories, hot topics lists and other "user friendly" search strategies are employed, where possible. Database record displays provide all of the contextual information needed for the inquirer to make an informed choice.

In addition, the I&R service may:

- ✓ Compile and distribute a directory of services in print or electronic format.
- ✓ Make copies of its database available to other organizations that provide information and/or referrals.
- ✓ Use social media and other communication tools to inform the public about significant changes to key services and important access issues.
- ✓ Provide menu-driven recorded voice information about key resources and community information.
- ✓ Make its information about community resources available through community-based kiosks or other similar gateways.

**3.** If the I&R service provides mechanisms for independent access, it includes information about how to connect with an I&R specialist if consultation and guidance are required (for example, the ability to press "0" at any time when listening to a recorded message or to engage in instant messaging (IM) when searching for resources on a website).

**4.** 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 "cyberethics".

## Standard 4: Inquirer Advocacy

The I&R service offers advocacy, when necessary, to ensure that people receive the benefits and services for which they are eligible. Inquirer 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.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has an advocacy policy that describes the circumstances under which advocacy should be undertaken, the advocacy mechanisms that are authorized and the conditions under which supervisory staff need to become involved.

**2.** The I&R service intervenes, when necessary, on behalf of individuals to help them establish eligibility for or obtain needed services.

**3.** When warranted, the I&R service makes one or more additional calls or takes other actions on the inquirer's behalf and uses an appropriate advocacy mechanism to make sure inquirers get the information and/or help they need.

**4.** The I&R service refers to an organization that specializes in providing advocacy in situations where the level of advocacy required by the inquirer exceeds the limits of the I&R service's advocacy policy or an effective use of its own resources.

**5.** The I&R service records the fact that advocacy was conducted for use in reports.

## Standard 5: 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; chemically dependent people in crisis; survivors of a traumatic experience; and others in distress.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has written crisis intervention policies and procedures that provide protocols for specific types of emergencies. Included are lethality assessment procedures, protective measures relating to inquiries from individuals in endangerment situations, protocols that address inquirers who wish to remain anonymous yet require direct intervention and the organization's crisis protocols.

**2.** If the I&R service does not itself provide a formal crisis intervention service, it has a prearranged agreement and documented protocol with an appropriate crisis center that does.

**3.** The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that I&R specialists have the skills to recognize when an inquirer is experiencing a crisis, and that they determine whether the individual is in immediate danger and take steps to ensure that s/he is safe before continuing with an assessment. In assault and sexual assault cases, for example, the specialist ensures that the assailant has left the vicinity and determines whether the individual needs emergency medical treatment. In domestic violence situations, the specialist ensures that the abusive person is not present and threatening the inquirer. The specialist follows the I&R service's protocol to determine when to access 911 or other emergency rescue services.

**4.** The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that I&R specialists have the intervention skills to:

- ✓ De-escalate and stabilize the individual and help him/her remain calm;
- ✓ Help the inquirer talk about and work through his/her feelings as part of the assessment and problem solving stages of the interview; and
- ✓ Keep the inquirer on the telephone pending referral or rescue.

**5.** The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that I&R specialists have the skills to recognize the warning signs of people at imminent risk of suicide, violence or victimization (including signs of abuse/neglect, domestic violence and risk of homicide or self-harm) whether the risk issues are explicitly stated or implicit; and to recognize when an inquirer is in immediate need of intervention (e.g., when a person is in medical crisis due to alcohol or drug intoxication, has taken steps to end his or her life, is experiencing violence or is experiencing a psychiatric emergency). When warranted, staff follow the I&R service's rescue protocol for when to access 911 or other emergency personnel to request that they intervene. In these circumstances, inquirer safety overrides confidentiality concerns.

**6.** In cases of suspected child abuse or elder abuse, the I&R service understands the agency's responsibilities under the prevailing legislation of the jurisdiction regarding mandatory reporting and completes a report when indicated.

7. In situations involving suicide or homicide, the I&R service understands the circumstances under which a lethality risk assessment[1] is required and conducts an appropriate assessment when necessary. Lethality risk assessments are recorded in writing and include a description of specific actions taken in response to the situation.

8. In cases of domestic violence and other endangerment situations, the I&R service takes special precautions to safeguard the inquirer's identity and all aspects of their conversation.

9. The I&R service uses a variety of means to support its ability to connect with rescue services including Caller ID or a call tracing arrangement with the telephone company or the appropriate 911 service. At a minimum, there is a separate telephone or a separate external line that is available for initiating rescue procedures without interrupting the crisis call. The specialist follows the I&R service's protocol for addressing inquirers who wish to remain anonymous yet require rescue.

10. When feasible, the I&R service connects inquirers in crisis situations to a formal crisis intervention service in their community for assistance and support once the inquirer's immediate, short-term needs have been assessed. The connection is made by direct transfer, when possible, and the specialist follows the protocol established by agreement with the crisis center.

11. The I&R service records the fact that crisis intervention was provided for use in reports.

## Standard 6: Follow-Up

The I&R service has 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.

[1] A lethality risk assessment is an evaluation based on research of how dangerous a situation is and addresses issues such as the person's intention, method, timing and state of mind. Questions include: Has the person already taken steps toward committing suicide by swallowing pills, slashing their wrists? Have there been previous attempts? Does the person have a specific plan? Are the means to carry out the plan readily available? What is the likely timeframe for a life threatening event – the next few minutes or hours or longer? Has the individual had psychiatric help in the past? Are there other risk indicators such depression, hopelessness, feelings of isolation, intoxication, significant recent loss?

### *Quality Indicators*

1. The primary purpose of follow-up is for the benefit of inquirers to see if their needs were met.

2. Follow-up is conducted, when possible, with the permission of the inquirer and never compromises inquirer safety.

3. The follow-up policy of the I&R service includes examples of situations in which follow-up might occur if the inquirer is at risk and/or vulnerable. These may include:

   - ✓ Vulnerable households that are without heat during the winter.
   - ✓ Older adults having difficulty expressing their needs.
   - ✓ Families with young children needing food.
   - ✓ Individuals with disabilities who have received an eviction order.
   - ✓ People with no health insurance who need health care.
   - ✓ Individuals needing emergency shelter.
   - ✓ Individuals needing detoxification or withdrawal management.

4. Follow-up consists of successfully contacting the inquirer to find out if their need was met and if not, why. Follow-up is generally conducted within one to three days of the original inquiry in cases of endangerment and within 7-14 days in other situations.

5. If the inquirer has not received services or the need has not been met, the I&R service determines whether there is still a need and makes additional appropriate referrals. The I&R service also determines whether the inquirer has additional, new needs and makes appropriate referrals prior to completing the contact.

6. The I&R service documents the follow-up results (whether service was received or there was an unmet need) for use in reports.

7. Information gathered during follow-up relating to information in the resource database that may be incorrect is submitted to resource database staff for verification and correction.

8. Information gathered during the follow-up process is also used as a further means of evaluating the effectiveness of existing community service providers and for identifying gaps in community services.

# RESOURCE DATABASE

The Resource Database standards require that the I&R service 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 includes resources that support 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 maintained by trained resource specialists.

## Standard 7: Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

To ensure that the needs of the community are met, the I&R service develops criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of agencies and programs in the resource database. The criteria are uniformly applied and published so that staff and the public are aware of the scope and limitations of the database.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has a policy that describes inclusion/exclusion criteria for the resource database.

- ✓ If the I&R service is comprehensive, the inclusion/exclusion criteria address the human services needs of all groups in the community; include government, nonprofit and relevant for-profit organizations; and may include entities such as support groups that are not incorporated as organizations.
- ✓ If the I&R service is specialized, the inclusion/exclusion criteria adequately address the needs of its target population and have referral points for the types of services that are excluded.
- ✓ If the I&R service includes political cause and issue-oriented action groups in its resource database, the policy mandates that it strive for balance, i.e., that it include organizations that represent all sides of the issue.

**2.** The organization's inclusion/exclusion criteria are reviewed and updated on a regular basis (at a minimum, every two years) to ensure that they continue to meet the changing needs of the community.

**3.** If the I&R service charges a fee for the inclusion of organizations in its database, the practice is published as a part of its inclusion/exclusion criteria.

**Standard 8: Data Elements**[2]

The resource database contains standardized information about organizations that meet criteria for inclusion, the services provided by each organization, and the locations (sites) where those services are available. The standardized entry 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.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1. AGENCY / MAIN SITE Data Elements**

Required
- ✓ Unique ID Number
- ✓ Record Ownership Code
- ✓ Agency Name
- ✓ AKA (Also Known As) Names
- ✓ Street/Physical Address
- ✓ Mailing Address
- ✓ Website(s)/URL(s)
- ✓ Email Address(es)
- ✓ Phone Number(s) including extensions, Phone Types (e.g., Voice, TTY/TDD), and Phone Functions (Administration, Intake)
- ✓ Name and Title of the Director or Administrator
- ✓ Agency Description, a brief narrative describing the agency's main purpose or role.
- ✓ Main Site Description
- ✓ Administrative Hours/Days of Operation
- ✓ Legal Status
- ✓ Access for People with Disabilities
- ✓ Date of Last Complete Update
- ✓ Date of Last Interim Modification/Partial Update
- ✓ Contact for Updating Purposes

Recommended
- ✓ Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN/FEIN)
- ✓ Year of Incorporation
- ✓ Licenses or Accreditations
- ✓ IRS Status
- ✓ Travel Information
- ✓ Other Addresses

[2] For further information about data elements, please refer to the Glossary of Terms.

- ✓ Social Media URLs, if applicable

## 2. ADDITIONAL SITES (LOCATIONS/BRANCHES) Data Elements

Required
- ✓ Unique ID Number
- ✓ Site Name
- ✓ AKA (Also Known As) Names
- ✓ Street/Physical Address
- ✓ Mailing Address
- ✓ Phone Number(s) including extensions, Phone Types (e.g., Voice, TTY/TDD), and Phone Functions (Administration, Intake)
- ✓ Access for People with Disabilities
- ✓ Site Description

Recommended
- ✓ Travel Information
- ✓ Other Addresses
- ✓ Website(s)/URL(s)
- ✓ Email Address(es)
- ✓ Administrative Hours/Days of Operation
- ✓ Name and Title of the Site Manager

## 3. SERVICE / SERVICE GROUP AND SERVICE SITE Data Elements

NOTE: Many of the data elements below may be applicable to the service group, the service site or both, depending on the structures represented in the software selected and the decisions made by the I&R service. Exceptions are so noted in Glossary definitions.

Required
- ✓ Program Name(s) for the Service Group
- ✓ AKA (Also Known As) Names for Program Names
- ✓ Service Group Name
- ✓ Service Group Description
- ✓ Phone Number(s) including extensions, Phone Types (e.g., Voice, TTY/TDD), and Phone Functions (Administration, Intake) for specific services in the service group
- ✓ Eligibility
- ✓ Target Populations
- ✓ Geographic Area Served
- ✓ Documents Required
- ✓ Application/Intake Process
- ✓ Fee Structure
- ✓ Languages Other than English
- ✓ Hours of Service
- ✓ Taxonomy Term(s)

Recommended

- ✓ Website(s)/URL(s)
- ✓ Email Address(es)
- ✓ Title of the Service Contact Person
- ✓ Service Capacity and Type
- ✓ Method of Payment Accepted

**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 national aggregations and comparisons of data. Additional classification structures such as keywords may supplement the Taxonomy, but are connected to the Taxonomy rather than functioning as independent indexing systems.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service has a current Taxonomy license.

**2.** The I&R service customizes the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy to adapt it to the community's size, nature and organizational needs; and documents the customization rules to ensure ongoing consistency in customization decisions. These adaptations are made using nationally recognized principles for customization so as not to change the basic structure of the Taxonomy or the related service definitions. Customization can be “high tech” (accomplished using a software utility) or “low tech” (e.g., the I&R service develops an abbreviated outline of terms that is used to guide indexing decisions).

**3.** The customization of the Taxonomy is reviewed annually, ideally in conjunction with the review of the inclusion/exclusion criteria, and whenever the Taxonomy is updated.

**4.** Local modifications are reported to the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy editor to consider for inclusion in the master system.

**5.** The structure and contents of the Taxonomy are constantly changing in response to changes in the services it encompasses. The I&R service has procedures in place to update and integrate Taxonomy additions and changes according to a regular schedule, and completely updates their version of the Taxonomy at least once every 12 months.

**6.** The I&R service uses I&R software that supports the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services and the functionality needed for the Taxonomy to meet the needs of I&R staff. This functionality includes incorporating the complete field structure of a Taxonomy record (including definitions, use references, see also references and related concepts), the ability to search and display Taxonomy records in a variety of ways, and the ability to customize the Taxonomy to meet internal needs.[3]

## Standard 10: Content Management and Indexing

The I&R service ensures through training, database management procedures and supervision that resource specialists organize information about organizations into database records that accurately and concisely reflect the agency, its locations and its services/programs; index the services provided by each organization 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.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service uses software that supports the Resource Database standards.

**2.** The I&R service ensures that there are an adequate number of resource specialists to properly maintain the resource database in accordance with local inclusion/exclusion criteria and the AIRS Standards.

**3.** The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that resource specialists understand the human service delivery system including the sectors it comprises; the differences between the public and private sectors; how government, nonprofit and for-profit organizations are organized and funded; the major types of service providers in their community; the broad range of programs and services they provide; and how these organizations and the sectors they represent relate to one another and the people they serve.

**4.** The I&R service develops and uses a style guide that establishes rules for structuring, writing and indexing resource database records; and ensures that information within database records is clear, concise, consistent, relevant and user friendly.

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[3] The AIRS Taxonomy Committee has developed a guide that details the preferred criteria for the operation of the Taxonomy within I&R database software. It is available in the Library section of the **www.211taxonomy.org** website.

**5.** Resource specialists develop clear rules for structuring organization entries into agency, site and service components (or other components permitted by the software) and follow the rules consistently. When dealing with complex or multi-site agencies, they correctly identify the principle unit of the agency and configure the entry or series of entries to accurately reflect the structure of the organization.

**6.** Resource specialists follow the organization's documented practices when structuring agency, program and site names. There are clear rules for government agencies, agencies whose names begin the "The" or "A", and other specifics, and these internal rules are followed.

**7.** Resource specialists identify and accurately enter all known AKA (also known as) names for agencies, sites and programs.

**8.** Resource specialists use program names and service group names properly.

**9.** Resource specialists ensure that address information is entered consistently to facilitate geographic location searches.

**10.** Resource specialists prepare well-written, concise narrative descriptions that reflect the format and writing style defined in the I&R service's style guide. Narrative descriptions:

- ✓ Encompass all relevant services provided by the organization.
- ✓ Support Taxonomy (and other indexing) decisions, i.e., all services and service conditions that are indexed are also described.
- ✓ Clearly and correctly distinguish primary and secondary services and describe the relationship between them.
- ✓ Clearly and correctly distinguish eligibility criteria for services and target populations served.
- ✓ Correctly distinguish between the area in which the agency is located and the area the agency serves, and accurately reflect the geographic area served.
- ✓ Accurately reflect other required information about the agency, its locations and its services.
- ✓ Avoid repeating phone numbers and other numerical data that have their own structured fields.

**11.** Resource specialists develop rules for indexing database records using the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services, and consistently apply the rules when indexing. They:

- ✓ Index all relevant services.
- ✓ Choose Taxonomy terms within their customized list that accurately reflect the type of service.
- ✓ Choose Taxonomy terms within their customized list that accurately reflect targets for service, when applicable.

- ✓ Use target terms to modify service terms, not as stand alone concepts representing a service.
- ✓ Consistently use the same Taxonomy terms to index the same services and the same target populations.
- ✓ Avoid using terms from multiple levels on the same Taxonomy branch.
- ✓ Avoid “double indexing”, i.e., avoid using multiple service terms within the Taxonomy, wherever they are located in the hierarchy, to index the same service offered by a particular agency.
- ✓ Only index primary services.
- ✓ Avoid indexing secondary, ancillary, phantom and indirect services.

**12.** Resource specialists analyze the needs of their community, develop customized filtering capabilities that reflect those needs, establish rules for organizing database records using search keys (such as geographic area served, age, gender and languages) that are used for filtering purposes, and consistently apply the rules when entering database information. They:

- ✓ Understand the structure of geographic search options within their software and accurately reflect the service area for particular services using the software’s geographic system.
- ✓ Choose and consistently use appropriate options for key fields (e.g., legal status, age, gender, languages) that accurately reflect the organization and the conditions under which services are available.

**13.** Resource specialists consistently use data fields the same way. For example, the service description and eligibility requirements/exclusions are always found in the same place.

**14.** Resource specialists thoroughly proofread their work and eliminate spelling and grammatical errors.

## <u>Standard 11: Database Search Methods</u>

Information in the resource database is accessible in ways that support the I&R process including search and retrieval by organization, site and program name and by the type of service available. It is possible to narrow service searches by target population, geographic area served, proximity to the inquirer’s location and other filters such as age, gender or languages that are relevant in a particular community.

### ***Quality Indicators***

**1.** Information in the resource database is retrievable by the following:

- ✓ Organization, site and program name and related AKAs;
- ✓ Services provided (using Taxonomy service terms including use references and see also references);

- ✓ Target population served, where applicable;
- ✓ Area served.

**2.** The I&R service has considered the types of other filters that may be relevant in their community and permits searches using those parameters, e.g., age, gender, languages.

**Standard 12: Database Maintenance**

The I&R service has procedures to ensure that information in the resource database is accurate and complete. At a minimum are an annual survey of all organizations in the database and interim updates of records throughout the year as new information becomes available.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** In order to collect information/data elements uniformly across organizations, the I&R service develops and uses a standardized profile ("survey") for new organizations to be included in the resource database.

**2.** The I&R service has a documented process for updating the resource database either annually or on a continuing basis throughout the year that involves multiple attempts to achieve a 100% update rate within a 12-month cycle. There is a mechanism for tracking the response rate and a way of evaluating the success of the methods used (e.g., mail/electronic survey, fax, telephone, site visits, follow-up correspondence). Information that cannot be verified is considered for removal from the database. The I&R service is able to generate a report that lists resource records according to date.

**3.** Documented procedures are in place for integrating interim information changes (i.e., changes that occur between the annual updates).

**4.** Documented procedures are in place for identifying new resources, acquiring required information about them and, upon inclusion in the database, verification by the organization.

**5.** Resource specialists acquire the information they need to develop new database records or update current ones. They:

- ✓ Conduct an evaluation to determine whether new organizations meet established inclusion criteria, correctly apply the criteria in selecting resources to be included, and follow established notification procedures when an organization that has requested inclusion does not meet the criteria.

- ✓ Appropriately use material submitted by the organization or gathered elsewhere (e.g., website, questionnaire, social media scans, pamphlets, newspaper articles, telephone directories) to develop an understanding of the resource, its locations and its services/programs; document source material that is not in printed form; and verify all information with the organization before incorporating it into an entry.

- ✓ When an interview is required, identify the appropriate contact person in each organization, ask clarifying questions in a concise manner, document the key answers and are courteous and professional throughout the call.

**6.** Update verification procedures to ensure accuracy include the name of the individual authorizing the update and the date of authorization. Changes and additions submitted by staff in the organization being surveyed or by I&R specialists reporting a change identified during original contacts, follow-up contacts or customer satisfaction/quality assurance surveys are reviewed by a resource specialist prior to posting. Update records are retained until a more recent version is received.

**7.** Organizations that do not respond after multiple attempts but cannot be deleted because they offer critical services, are updated via alternative methods (phone, website, or site visits). Provider “sign-off” verifying the final update is not required. However, documentation on how the update was obtained and the reason for the decision not to delete the record are required. If updated by telephone, the name of the person who confirmed the information and the date are recorded. If by Web, information that the update was verified via the Web and the date are included as documentation. If by site visit, the names of the people visited and the date are recorded. Once the I&R service is satisfied that it has obtained the best information possible, and has documented how and when the update was performed as well as the reason for the decision not to delete the record, it is permissible to mark the agency as having had its annual review.

**8.** The resource department provides feedback to staff regarding changes they have made in the database as a result of information staff have supplied.

**9.** The update form or the accompanying cover letter has a statement that the I&R service reserves the right to edit information for brevity, clarity and content; and to publish the information in a variety of media, subject to confidentiality issues.

## REPORTS AND MEASURES

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 Reports and Measures standards describe requirements for the collection of inquirer data, the analysis of the data and its dissemination within the community.

### Standard 13: Inquirer Data Collection

The I&R service establishes and uses a secure, computerized system for collecting and organizing inquirer data that facilitates appropriate referrals and provides a basis for describing requests for service and unmet needs, identifying service gaps and overlaps, assisting with needs assessments, supporting the development of products, identifying issues for staff training and facilitating the expansion 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 primary goal of data collection is to garner enough information about inquirers to help them address and/or resolve their problems. Inquirer data is always made available in aggregate form to protect the confidentiality of individual inquirers.

***Quality Indicators***

**1**. The I&R service maintains documentation on all inquiries, has a defined set of inquirer data elements that are used for reporting purposes and recognizes that inquirers have the right to withhold information.

**2.** Data collected for I&R service analysis and reporting purposes are based on I&R agency policy and local, state/provincial and/or national requirements.

**3.** Inquirer data collection and reporting activities facilitate the analyses needed to support:

- ✓ The human service needs of inquirers.
- ✓ Community needs assessment.
- ✓ Community planning.
- ✓ Allocation of funding.
- ✓ Research.

**4.** The data collected provide enough information about inquirer needs to identify:

- ✓ Service requests.
- ✓ Met and unmet needs (gathered through the original contact, follow-up and customer satisfaction/quality assurance surveys).
- ✓ Trends in community service provision and/or gaps in service.

- ✓ Demographic data.
- ✓ Profiles of inquirers served (aggregate data only).

**5.** Data collected for reporting purposes may include:

- ✓ Total number of incoming contacts/inquiries by phone (incoming calls) recorded by the phone system and answered by the I&R specialist. These can be transaction calls (calls in which problems are addressed and for each problem, the type of service provided by the specialist: information, assessment and referral, advocacy, crisis intervention); or non-transaction calls (calls answered by the I&R specialist that are hang-ups, wrong numbers, incoming administrative or personal calls or other situations where there is no productive conversation between the I&R specialist and the inquirer and no assistance provided).

- ✓ Total number of I&R contacts/inquiries from calls and other sources (generally recorded in the I&R software) in which inquirer problems or needs are addressed. Included are:

    - Transaction calls.
    - Face-to-face contacts (walk-ins or I&R interactions in other settings such as community facilities).
    - Email contacts.
    - Voicemail contact responses.
    - Instant message (IM) contacts.
    - Text/SMS messaging contacts.
    - Online chat contacts.
    - Video relay/chat contacts.
    - Regular mail contacts.

- ✓ The total number and types of problems/needs presented by inquirers. Some organizations also distinguish the number of individuals represented within each inquiry and the problems/needs presented by each.

- ✓ Geographic and demographic profiles of inquirers (i.e., who is calling and where they are calling from).

- ✓ The organizations discussed during the course of an inquiry or to which referrals were made.

**6.** The I&R service may also collect information about other types of I&R activities, in addition to I&R inquiries, but those figures should not be added to the contact/inquiry total. Included are:

- ✓ Website visitor activity (e.g., total visits, unique visitors, individual page visits).
- ✓ People accessing recorded information.
- ✓ Social media postings.

- ✓ Outreach presentations.
- ✓ Brochures and/or other publications distributed.
- ✓ Outgoing advocacy calls.
- ✓ Outgoing customer satisfaction/quality assurance calls.
- ✓ Outgoing follow-up calls.
- ✓ Outgoing calls to verify resource information.
- ✓ Community problems/needs reporting.

**<u>Standard 14: Inquirer Data Analysis and Reporting</u>**

The I&R service has a reporting tool and uses inquirer data and/or data from the resource database to support community planning activities (or planning at other levels).

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service creates reports that display aggregated inquiry information in ways that are useful to themselves and community partners.

**2.** The reports include the following:

- ✓ Total number of inquiries.
- ✓ Total number and types of problems/needs presented by inquirers.
- ✓ The number and/or percentage of inquiries by call type including:
  - Assessment and referral.
  - Information.
  - Crisis intervention.
  - Advocacy.
- ✓ Disposition of the inquiry. Dispositions for assessment and referral inquiries are:
  - Met needs, i.e., services are available and referral(s) are provided or assistance without referrals is made available.
  - Unmet needs, i.e., situations where no services are available. A pattern of individual unmet needs may lead to identification of service gaps at the service delivery system level.

  Dispositions for information inquiries are:
  - Met needs, i.e., information is made available (assistance without referrals).
  - Unmet needs, i.e., information cannot be located and provided.
- ✓ The organizations discussed during the course of an inquiry or to which referrals were made.
- ✓ Follow-up results.
- ✓ Trends in community service provision/gaps in service.
- ✓ Geographic and other demographic information about inquirers in aggregate form (i.e., who people are and where they are calling from).
- ✓ Cross tabulations of types of problems/needs by geographic location and/or geographic location and the problems/needs within them.

## COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

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 15: 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.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service participates in ongoing cooperative program planning and development activities that take into consideration community needs, existing resources and the activities of other I&R services. Each I&R service:

- ✓ Participates in efforts to identify community I&R needs.
- ✓ Maintains current information about other I&R services and their activities.
- ✓ Develops priorities for I&R program development.
- ✓ Participates in existing cooperative I&R efforts.
- ✓ Becomes a catalyst for new cooperative service arrangements.
- ✓ Participates in decision making that addresses community-wide I&R issues.

**2.** The I&R service encourages and participates in cooperative planning, implementation of shared policies and advocacy for sustained funding for I&R.

**3.** The I&R service coordinates its service delivery to avoid duplication of effort, encourage service integration and ensure that information and referral is broadly available to all inquirers.

- ✓ Comprehensive and specialized I&R services develop and define their working relationships and document them in written form. At a minimum, I&R services have written agreements, where applicable, with the local comprehensive I&R service, the child care resource and referral agency, the aging I&R/A agency, aging and disability resource centers (ADRCs), the military family service/support center, the crisis intervention service, 911 and 311 services, agencies that provide for volunteer and donation management and other organizations with clearinghouse functions.

- ✓ The I&R service encourages cooperative service arrangements such as after-hours coverage, linked telephone systems and linked websites.
- ✓ The I&R service explores innovative methods of delivering I&R services.

**4.** The I&R service participates in database collaboratives or other data partnerships as a means of avoiding duplication of database maintenance activities and achieving broader and more in depth coverage of different types of community resources. When an I&R service has an agreement with organizations using its data, it includes conditions, e.g., a limited use clause specifying a time limit on the use of data, a statement that data cannot be repurposed without permission and a description of the updating responsibilities of all parties and associated time frames.

**5.** The I&R service works cooperatively to identify changing community needs and to respond to those needs in a timely and appropriate fashion. Cooperation is regular and frequent to ensure that there is an immediate and effective response to:

- ✓ Sudden changes in community conditions (e.g., layoffs in a particular industry or a community-wide disaster) that may require special outreach efforts or other forms of collaborative response.
- ✓ Changes in legislation.
- ✓ New information relative to the area served that needs to be incorporated.

**6.** The I&R service participates in community-wide data collection, analysis and reporting activities. A comprehensive I&R service, for example, can combine its inquirer data with that collected by specialized I&R programs to provide a more comprehensive picture of service requests throughout the system; or a comprehensive, specialized or 2-1-1 service may contribute its data for inclusion in a statewide/province-wide data report.

**7.** The I&R service strives to maximize the resources available to the I&R system as a whole by coordinating supportive functions such as public relations, marketing and staff training; and by implementing cooperative administrative procedures where possible.

**8.** The I&R service communicates with other I&R services concerning promotional, marketing or communication efforts that might affect other I&R services either within the same media market or adjoining media markets if there is a reasonable assumption that the public might inadvertently be confused.

**Standard 16: 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 abuse 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.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service explores opportunities for joint service delivery with service providers, e.g., participation in case management collaboratives.

**2.** The I&R service works cooperatively with service providers to address issues that have a critical impact on the community as a whole such as disaster relief and recovery, homelessness, health care service delivery and one-stop co-located human services.

**3.** The I&R service encourages collaborating service providers to participate in community-wide data collection, analysis and reporting activities.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS[4]

The Disaster Preparedness standards describe the requirements an I&R service must meet in order to connect people to critical resources in times of 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 building is damaged or destroyed; and to support its ability to effectively accumulate, validate and disseminate accurate disaster-related information, provide information and referral assistance for individuals impacted by a disaster and provide community reports regarding inquirer needs and referrals.

[4] "Disaster" is defined as a large-scale emergency that disrupts the normal functioning of a community.

## Standard 17: Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan

The I&R service has a written disaster plan that specifically addresses incidents 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.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has policies and procedures to ensure that the organization's mission-essential functions are continued in the event that the area in which the program is located is threatened or incapacitated and relocation of these functions is required. Included are policies and procedures that relate to:

- ✓ Personnel coordination:
  - Designation of key staff.
  - Delegations of authority.
  - Order of succession.
  - Notification of personnel during duty and non-duty hours.
- ✓ Designation of mission-essential functions.
- ✓ Designation of alternative facilities.
- ✓ Continuity of communications among staff before, during and after a disaster.
- ✓ Securing vital records and databases.
- ✓ Plans for reconstitution and termination of the plan.

**2.** The I&R service has written procedures that address specific types of emergencies including power outages, fires, medical emergencies, bomb threats, radiological threats, workplace violence and other incidents that may require different forms of response, e.g., duck, cover and hold during an earthquake or sheltering in place during a radiological emergency. Procedures for contacting emergency personnel are included.

**3.** The I&R service has written procedures for emergency evacuation of the facility following a disaster that impacts the immediate area surrounding the facility and potentially threatens staff safety. The evacuation procedure designates exits, specifies an assembly area, includes provisions for ensuring that everyone has left the building, provides for damage assessment and includes instructions for shutting off gas, electricity and water when necessary. Special arrangements for helping staff or visitors with a disability exit the building are also addressed.

4. The I&R service develops and documents a designated leadership description that outlines the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff before, during and in the aftermath of an incident.

5. The I&R service has procedures for maintaining service delivery (i.e., answering inquiries and continuing to update community resources) during and after an emergency including relocation or alternative modes of service delivery, e.g., through an MOU with an I&R service outside the area. If the I&R service plans to relocate in the event of loss of facilities, it has identified alternative sites.

6. The I&R service maintains critical contact and infrastructure information (e.g., telephone service provider and building management).

7. The I&R service ensures that its 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. Areas of concern include 24-hour environmental controls, cleanliness and sanitation, parking and security, and the ability to meet enhanced building codes in areas with significant earthquake, tornado or hurricane hazards.

8. The I&R service has periodic drills, at a minimum annually, that allow staff to practice emergency procedures outlined in the plan.

9. The I&R service supports and encourages all staff to develop emergency plans for their own homes and families that allow them to better fulfill their agency roles in an emergency, secure in the knowledge that their families are properly prepared.

## Standard 18: Formal Relationships with Government and Private Sector Emergency Operations and Relief Agencies

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.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. The I&R service understands the command and control structure within their jurisdiction (i.e., the responsibilities and authority of officials at city, county, state/provincial and federal levels) and their own role and that of other organizations in the response, relief and recovery phases of a disaster. Obtaining NIMS (National Incident Management System) certification for management staff might be a good way to acquire competency in this area.

2. The I&R service has formal agreements with appropriate government and private sector emergency operations and relief agencies such as local offices of emergency services, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) and the Red Cross. The agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

3. The I&R service actively participates in community meetings that address plans for disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, relief and recovery.

**Standard 19: 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.

***Quality Indicators***

1. The I&R service's resource database includes information about permanent local, state/provincial and federal disaster-related resources, i.e., organizations with a formal role in emergency response, a clearly defined disaster mission and/or a history of providing services during previous incidents.

2. The I&R service adds information about organizations that have no formal role in emergency response but emerge in the context of a particular disaster, specific relief and recovery services that come to life in response to the specific needs of the community, and information about specific services (and their locations) offered by organizations with a permanent record in the database (such as Red Cross Service Centers). The I&R service also monitors social media and mass media to keep abreast of information about new resources and changing situations.

3. The I&R service enables staff from other agencies to use the resource database to provide service delivery or resource database maintenance support by using the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services to index disaster-related services. Additional

classification structures such as keywords may supplement the Taxonomy, but must be connected to the Taxonomy rather than functioning as independent indexing systems.

4. The I&R service updates disaster resources annually, immediately prior to an anticipated disaster and throughout the response, relief and recovery periods.

5. During a disaster, the I&R service verifies all information before sharing it with others. A streamlined verification process must still provide a sufficient level of data validation to ensure accuracy.

6. The I&R service disseminates disaster-related information per pre-existing agreements with other organizations in the community.

## Standard 20: Disaster-Related I&R Service Delivery

The I&R service provides information and referral services to the community during (when appropriate) and following a disaster or other emergency. This service may be provided under circumstances that are more challenging and stressful than normal operations; and includes assessing the needs of the inquirer, evaluating appropriate resources, indicating organizations capable of meeting those needs, helping inquirers for whom services are unavailable by locating alternative resources and actively participating in linking inquirers to needed services or volunteer opportunities.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. The I&R service ensures adequate staff to meet potential increases in inquirer needs.

2. The I&R service has mutual assistance agreements with other I&R services that include provisions for relocation of staff and/or redirection of calls.

3. The I&R service has a written protocol for staff who are assigned to provide information and referral at local assistance centers (LACs) or other off-site locations.

4. I&R specialists have the skills to respond effectively to people in crisis, work cooperatively with other organizations, remain flexible in a rapidly changing environment, are willing to work under adverse conditions (e.g., long hours, uncomfortable surroundings), are aware of their own stress level and coping mechanisms, respond appropriately in face-to-face communications and work within the boundaries of their I&R role.

5. I&R specialists understand the government emergency response service delivery system, the types of services people typically need following a disaster, the organizations that generally provide them, the types of

organizations that may be closed or otherwise unable to deliver services due to the emergency (e.g., government offices, the courts), atypical services people may need to access (e.g., open hardware stores, functioning ATM machines), and the structure and contents of the disaster database and/or other approved sources of disaster-related information.

**6.** The I&R service has a written plan for providing disaster stress debriefing for all staff.

**Standard 21: Disaster-Related Inquirer Data Collection/Reports**

The I&R service tracks inquirer requests for service and referrals, collects demographic information from inquirers and is prepared to produce reports regarding requests for disaster-related services and referral activity.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service collects and organizes inquirer data that facilitates appropriate referrals and provides a basis for describing requests for disaster-related services and identifying gaps and overlaps in service.

**2.** The I&R service produces timely reports to the community regarding disaster-related referrals, access to services, service availability and unmet needs.

**3.** Following all emergencies that necessitate implementation of the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness standards, the I&R service produces an after action report that documents the special activities of the agency with a focus on what worked well and what needs to be improved through revisions of the agency’s disaster plan and/or additional training for staff.

**Standard 22: Disaster-Related Technology Requirements**

The I&R service has technology in place that facilitates the ability of the organization to maintain service delivery during times of disaster or a localized emergency.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service has regular and emergency methods of electronic communication between staff and management for use internally during calls, for after hours contacts and when necessary for pre and post disaster communication via email, instant messaging, text/SMS messaging, satellite phones or mobile devices.

2. The I&R service has taken the necessary steps to establish a relationship with their telephone service provider, Internet Service Provider (ISP), Web service hosting vendor and I&R software vendor to ensure that the organization is given high priority for continued service in times of disaster.

3. The I&R service has the ability to reroute calls to another location (e.g., to cell phones, to I&R specialists answering calls from their homes, or to another local agency or an I&R service out of the region with which the I&R service has an MOU) if their own business site or the Internet is not accessible.

4. The I&R service has the ability to access the resource database (e.g., via the Internet, a stand-alone single user copy of the database on a laptop, a directory or other print version) if their own business site is not accessible.

5. The I&R service has conducted an assessment of its facility and developed a risk management plan that identifies equipment, connections and other resources that may be vulnerable under emergency conditions and has taken steps to mitigate the situation, e.g., moved computers and telephones that are located on the floor to safer locations.

6. The I&R service has an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) on all critical systems for short-term recovery in the case of a power failure.

7. The I&R service has an emergency generator or other power back-up that allows them to continue operations on a longer term basis during a power failure. The I&R service has determined the length of time the back-up power supply will operate and has provided staff with information about the components of the organization's operations (e.g., which computers, telephones, etc.) it will power.

8. The I&R service provides an alternative way for staff to contact the agency in case of an emergency that makes the regular phone lines inaccessible.

9. The I&R service has back-up systems for their telephones (such as one or more analog lines, cell phones with charged and spare batteries or two-way battery operated radios) to ensure ongoing access in situations where there is no local electricity. Private Branch Exchange/Automatic Call Distribution systems (PBX/ACD systems) rely on a central computer that will fail when local electrical power to the system is cut off. High-capacity Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) and emergency power generators connected to the PBX/ACD telephone system can also meet this requirement.

10. The I&R service has the ability to reprogram its phone lines and data network remotely.

11. The I&R service has T1 lines from multiple central offices, where possible.

## Standard 23: 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 thereafter. The I&R service actively participates in community disaster exercises to test the organization's emergency operations plan.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service provides general training for staff that addresses the specific types of disasters common to the area; the organization's role and mission in times of disaster; the phases of disaster; federal, state/provincial and local response plans and resources; and other topics that will help prepare staff for an emergency and ensure that they understand their organization's commitments to the community/government.

**2.** The I&R service provides training on the organization's in-house disaster preparedness procedures and protocols for all staff.

**3.** The I&R service provides training for I&R staff that addresses the attitudes, skills and information they require to meet the needs of people in crisis during a disaster. The training helps participants understand how disasters affect individuals and communities and addresses the specific requirements of people with special needs, e.g., individuals with disabilities, language barriers, cultural differences or other relevant characteristics. It also prepares I&R staff for the likelihood of providing service delivery under altered and frequently adverse conditions that may include working longer hours than normal, off-site or under the direction of another organization.

**4.** The I&R services has a "volunteer surge" plan that outlines how training for volunteers will be handled so that volunteers can begin answering phones or processing resource requests as quickly as possible.

**5.** The I&R service provides training for resource specialists that addresses the types of pre-disaster resources that need to be included in the database and those that need to be added following the occurrence of an emergency; use of the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services as a classification structure; and procedures for the collection, validation, maintenance and dissemination of disaster-related information.

**6.** The I&R service actively participates in community disaster exercises, and also monitors statewide/province-wide, multi-state/multi-province and/or national disaster exercises as appropriate.

## ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Organizational Effectiveness standards describe the governance and administrative structure an I&R service needs in order to carry out its mission. Included are establishing itself as 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 for 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 24: Governance

The auspices under which the I&R service operates ensures the achievement of the agency mission and I&R goals.

***Quality Indicators***

1. **Governing Body:** The I&R service has (or is part of an organization that has) a governing body (e.g., Board of Directors) that is constituted according to the laws of its state or province, adequately represents the diverse interests of the community and oversees implementation of program goals and objectives to ensure quality of service. If the nature of the organization operating the I&R service is such that it does not have a community-based Board of Directors or if that Board is remote from the oversight of the I&R service, then it must have an advisory committee of local stakeholders to provide 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. The governing body ensures the sustainability of a quality I&R service and, at a minimum:

   - ✓ Ensures that the I&R service has an adequate number of staff.
   - ✓ Assists in procuring financial and technical assistance to sustain the I&R service.
   - ✓ Is responsible for contracting, adopting an annual budget, maintaining financial records and providing an annual audit by an independent certified public accountant.
   - ✓ Promotes the I&R system throughout the community ensuring appropriate publicity, public relations and outreach.
   - ✓ Meets at least quarterly as a general body.
   - ✓ Maintains minutes of all official proceedings that any interested party can inspect.
   - ✓ Promotes accountability, transparency and business continuity of the I&R operation.

2. **Mission Statement:** The organization/I&R service has a Mission Statement that is compatible with the purpose and philosophy of I&R.

3. **Organizational Policies:** The organization/I&R service has formally adopted, regularly reviewed, dated and formatted written policies that clearly articulate the general principles by which the I&R service is managed. Organizational policies are available to all employees.

4. **Public Policy:** The organization/I&R service participates in public policy activities within its own 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.

5. **System Advocacy**: The I&R service creates reports that can be used for system advocacy, i.e., support for changes in community conditions, structures or institutions when modifications in the service delivery system are required to ensure the adequate availability of essential community services. System advocacy mechanisms include:

   - ✓ Letter writing campaigns.
   - ✓ Visits to political representatives.
   - ✓ Testimony at public hearings.
   - ✓ Mobilizing concerned members of the public.
   - ✓ Working through coalitions or associations to advance a cause.
   - ✓ Holding press conferences.
   - ✓ Writing and disseminating issue-oriented social media content.
   - ✓ Writing articles or letters to local newspapers.
   - ✓ Offering interviews to local radio and television stations.
   - ✓ Offering services as a knowledgeable public speaker.

6. **Complaints Process:** The organization/I&R service has a formal process for registering and resolving complaints from inquirers, staff members and the community.

7. **Code of Ethics:** The organization/I&R service has a Code of Ethics that establishes fundamental values and professional standards of conduct for staff in their relationships with their colleagues, their employers, the people they serve, the human service professionals with whom they interact and the community as a whole. The Code of Ethics is approved by the governing body of the organization and included in written policies that all staff receive, understand and agree to follow.

8. **Nondiscrimination Statement:** The organization/I&R service has a statement approved by the organization's governing body prohibiting discrimination in all of its forms and documenting its intention to comply with all laws, orders and regulations addressing this issue.

9. **Insurance Coverage:** The organization/I&R service has sufficient insurance coverage for personal and property liability that protects employees and volunteers.

10. **Finance:** Financing is sufficient to enable the I&R service to provide adequate service and maintain these standards.

    - ✓ The I&R service operates on a sound financial basis and exercises appropriate financial controls according to acceptable accounting practices and any other applicable standards.
    - ✓ The administrator, with the support of the Board and/or advisory committee, maintains proper financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, draws up an annual budget, projects future needs, explores and encourages financial development and support for continuance of the program, and participates in saving resources to avoid duplication and to control costs.

11. **Facilities:** The I&R service provides adequate, accessible space and equipment, including sufficient space to ensure confidential interviewing, to ensure that staff can effectively perform their duties.

## Standard 25: 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, 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.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. The I&R service evaluates new methods of access and technical advances and the pros and cons of particular pieces of technology prior to implementation to ensure that access to information and assistance for inquirers is enhanced.

2. The I&R service reviews how different demographic groups in the community access information and creates technology goals for the organization that reflect changing inquirer needs.

3. If the I&R service uses technology that allows for the collection of identifying information about an inquirer without his or her explicit permission, it has policies and procedures that protect the inquirer's right to privacy and anonymity while preserving the I&R specialist's ability to provide for the individual's safety should personal identification become necessary.

4. The I&R service has backup policies and practices that safeguard critical data and systems. The policies include provisions for the storage, retrieval, use and ultimate disposition of all records; and address security arrangements for inquirer data, the resource database and critical operational records such as payroll, personnel, reports, legal documents and email. If the backup solution for records is cloud-based, the I&R service has more than one way of accessing the cloud in emergencies. If another type of archival system is used, backups are kept in a secure, off-site location where they will be protected from destruction or theft. As a final insurance for resource database records, the I&R service has a recent version of its resource data available either on an internal computer, a data storage device or in a printed format.

5. The I&R service conducts at least one annual exercise that tests data and system restoration protocols.

6. The I&R service has access to professional technical expertise to ensure that technology is appropriately maintained, and provisions are in place to ensure a priority response to any breakdowns in key infrastructure.

7. The I&R service ensures that the governing body has approved a plan to regularly update the technology of the organization based on the anticipated lifecycle of all systems that support effective service delivery.

## Standard 26: Personnel Administration

The I&R service provides a framework and mechanisms for program and personnel management and administration that guarantee the continuity and consistency required for effective service delivery.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. **Staff:** The I&R service recruits and hires service and administrative staff who are competent, ethical, qualified and sufficient in number to implement service policies. The I&R service strives to have employees and volunteers who reflect the community they serve.

2. **Organization Chart:** The I&R service has a current organization chart defining levels of authority. If the agency is part of a larger organization, it has a functional organization chart for the I&R service.

3. **Job Descriptions:** The I&R service has written, up-to-date job descriptions for all employees and volunteers outlining responsibilities, essential job functions and lines of accountability. The job descriptions are dated within the last three years.

4. **Hiring:** The I&R service makes sure that listings for both employee and volunteer positions are posted as broadly as possible to ensure that qualified candidates throughout the community are aware of employment opportunities; objectively measures each candidate's application against the position's requirements using a standardized form and screening procedure; interviews candidates using written questions that are specific to the position for which they are applying; and has an objective rating form and process for evaluating responses.

5. **Succession Planning[5]:** The I&R service has a process for systematically and deliberately preparing for future changes of leadership in key positions within the organization. The process may identify potential replacements and provide strategies for developing and/or hiring individuals to meet future needs. Succession planning is designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization by making provision for the development and replacement of key people over time.

6. **Program Development and Administration:** The I&R service has qualified staff who are responsible for implementing and maintaining policies of the governing body, accountable to the governing body and responsible for program management and service delivery.

7. **Staff Supervision:** The I&R service provides for the ongoing supervision and annual evaluation of employees and volunteers by qualified I&R managers. The organization has a written supervision plan for staff and uses standardized observation and performance appraisal forms. When performance problems are identified, they are documented and addressed in an individual performance improvement plan. Staff evaluations address specific responsibilities and job functions outlined in individual job descriptions.

   Quality indicators for I&R specialists may include:

   - ✓ **Call Monitoring/Remote Listening:** Live or recorded calls that are randomly selected for review and feedback on a regular basis.

[5] Source: "Technical Terms: Succession Planning", The PEW Center on the States, http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/template_page.aspx?id=35364

- ✓ **Mentoring/Coaching:** The use of individual sessions, team discussions, role playing and other techniques to mentor and coach I&R specialists to ensure quality service delivery.

- ✓ **Call Management System Reports, Measures and Metrics**: The call management component of the telephone system produces weekly and monthly reports that provide the following figures which may be analyzed to assess individual and departmental efficiency and productivity:

  - Calls received.
  - Calls answered.
  - Calls abandoned.
  - Service level.
  - Average speed of answer.
  - Average abandonment time.
  - Average call handling time.
  - Occupancy rates.

- ✓ **Schedule Adherence:** The percentage of time I&R specialists follow their assigned work schedules. Work schedules specify the times specialists are expected to be on the phones versus engaging in other identified activities such as taking breaks, going to lunch, attending meetings or participating in training/coaching sessions. Specialists are expected to begin and end scheduled activities on time a targeted percentage of the time.

- ✓ **Case Examples:** Examples of calls submitted monthly by an I&R specialist that illustrate their call handling techniques.

- ✓ **Complaints and Commendations:** The complaints and commendations a particular I&R specialist has received.

<u>Quality indicators for resource specialists may include</u>:

- ✓ **Resource Department Metrics:** Productivity measures for individual resource specialists may include:

  - Annual surveys processed.
  - Interim modifications/partial changes processed.
  - New entries prepared.
  - Number of site visits, where applicable.

- ✓ **Database Review:** Review of a specified number of database records for:

  - Compliance with the I&R service's inclusion/exclusion criteria.
  - Accuracy, currency and consistency.
  - Appropriate Taxonomy indexing.

- Appropriate geographic classification.
- Appropriate assignment of search keys/filters.
- Adherence to the style guide.
- Writing and editing competencies.

✓ **I&R Specialist Feedback**: There is a feedback mechanism to ensure that the resource database meets the needs of I&R specialists.

**8. Off-Site Staff:** Technology is readily available to support the ability of I&R specialists, resource specialists and administrative staff to do all or part of their work off-site. For the most part, this innovation provides flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of individual staff. However, in the case of I&R specialists who may be directly serving the public from an off-site location, procedures must be in place to ensure that regardless of where an I&R inquiry is handled, all service delivery standards still apply.

In order to ensure that the public experiences no discernible difference in the quality of service, special requirements for off-site I&R service delivery are in place including provisions for specialists to:

✓ Make three-way calls to connect the inquirer to external services including language translation services.
✓ Contact emergency services while maintaining a connection with the inquirer.
✓ Work in a distraction-free environment.
✓ Access supervisory assistance, when required, and for supervisors to exercise quality assurance measures.
✓ Have personnel policies and training opportunities that reflect off-site circumstances.

## Standard 27: Staff Training

The I&R service makes training available to employees and volunteers.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service provides training for employees and volunteers that is based on pre-determined written training goals with written curriculum objectives defining behavioral outcomes for each module.

**2.** The I&R service provides an orientation for new employees and volunteers that addresses the role, mission and function of the I&R service; the role of the governing body; federal, state/provincial and local laws affecting service delivery (e.g., abuse reporting); and the administrative structure, policies and procedures of the organization.

**3.** Training for I&R specialists includes:

- ✓ Pre-service training appropriate to the knowledge and skills of new staff to ensure that they meet organizational expectations.
- ✓ On-the-job training that involves increasing levels of responsibility in handling inquiries (beginning with observation and ending with full responsibility for handling inquirers).
- ✓ In-service training that focuses on refining and updating the staff's information and referral skills. The I&R service may also provide tuition assistance to enable staff to pursue continuing education opportunities outside the organization.

**4.** Training for resource staff includes an overview of the local community service delivery system, inclusion/exclusion criteria for the resource database, data elements, Taxonomy indexing, database maintenance procedures, use of the I&R service's software, development and distribution of database products and, when appropriate, training in the area of specialization of the I&R service (e.g., disability issues, aging issues). The I&R service may also provide tuition assistance to enable staff to pursue continuing education opportunities outside the organization.

**5.** The content of the staff training program is consistent with the *ABCs of I&R* published by AIRS. It is recommended that the competencies from the AIRS Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS), Certified Information and Referral Specialist – Aging (CIRS-A) and Certified Resource Specialist (CRS) certification programs be used as training objectives.

**6.** The staff training program is responsive to the diverse learning styles of staff including visual learners, auditory learners and kinesthetic learners.

**7.** Trainees (employees and volunteers) are evaluated using objective (e.g., written tests) and subjective (e.g., observation) measures and demonstrate a minimum level of competency before assuming duties. Procedures are in place for handling trainees who do not demonstrate competency at the required level.

**8.** The I&R service systematically evaluates the effectiveness of its training program and the performance of its trainers; and modifies the training based on evaluation results.

**9.** I&R specialists and resource specialists seek professional certification through recognized programs at the state/provincial, regional or national level.

## Standard 28: 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.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. The I&R service has a written outreach plan that employs a systematic methodology for publicizing the organization's services to its targeted population and to other community resources (e.g., other agencies, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, schools). The I&R service uses a variety of methods including social media to publicize information and referral. The methods are tailored to meet the needs of diverse populations.

2. The I&R service identifies available resources for handling any resulting increase in volume before implementing its outreach plan.

3. An I&R service operating as part of a larger organization coordinates its publicity and public relations activities with those of its sponsor and takes steps to ensure that all staff within the larger agency are aware of the scope and objectives of the I&R service.

4. The I&R service publicizes its services to special need groups in the community, such as minorities, people who speak languages other than English, people with disabilities, and rural and other isolated, underserved or vulnerable populations.

5. The I&R service encourages other community services to promote and use I&R resources.

6. The I&R service evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of its outreach plan(s) through a variety of means including examination of inquirer demographic information and tabulation of referral source data.

7. The I&R service serves as a resource to other organizations and offers consultation, technical assistance and training on available community resources.

8. Employees and volunteers improve public relations by communicating regularly with community service providers, government officials and planning bodies; and by participating in various community activities, e.g., community resource fairs.

## Standard 29:  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.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has a process for examining its viability as an organization, the effectiveness of its services, its appropriate involvement in the community and its overall impact on the people it serves.

**2.** To support management information needs, the I&R service has a method for tracking call volume, average speed of answer, abandoned calls, average call handling time and incoming call patterns.

**3.** The I&R service creates internal reports to assess operational effectiveness, enhance decision making, improve accountability, set meaningful goals and strategic objectives and articulate outcomes in key areas of its operation. Standardized measurements are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the organization's planning efforts, target the allocation of staff and other resources, improve performance against operational targets and take other steps to achieve success in the areas of service delivery, resource database management, inquirer data collection and community reporting, cooperative relationships, disaster preparedness and other aspects of its operation.

**4.** The I&R service conducts an annual evaluation of I&R activities (including the maintenance of its resource database and the utilization of its website) that involves inquirers, service providers, organizations included in the resource database (for feedback on the updating process) and other community representatives.  Steps in the evaluation process include:

- ✓ Formulating annual service goals, objectives and work plans that reflect priorities for service and desired outcomes.
- ✓ Reviewing accomplishments and actual outcomes relative to goals and objectives throughout the year, adjusting service priorities, as needed.
- ✓ Conducting, on an annual basis, a structured evaluation to measure the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of its I&R service(s) and their impact on the people it serves (outcomes).

**5.** The I&R service conducts regular customer satisfaction/quality assurance surveys with a specified percentage of inquirers to assess overall service performance and I&R service outcomes. The surveys may occur during the original contact with an inquirer (if done for customer satisfaction purposes only), in conjunction with follow-up (after determining whether the inquirer's needs have been met or in a separate call made for quality assurance purposes).

Survey questions typically encompass the following:

Customer Satisfaction Questions

- ✓ Was the I&R service polite and helpful?
- ✓ Did inquirers feel like they were listened to?
- ✓ Did inquirers receive a choice of referrals where appropriate?
- ✓ Would the inquirer contact the I&R service again?
- ✓ Would the inquirer recommend the I&R service to family and friends?

Service Outcome Questions

- ✓ Did inquirers follow through and contact the referrals provided?
- ✓ Was the information about those referrals accurate?
- ✓ As a result of the referrals, did inquirers get the help they needed?
- ✓ If not, why not? Reasons include: the referral was inaccurate, there wasn't enough information for a proper eligibility assessment, the waiting list was too lengthy, the service was too expensive, there were transportation issues, etc.

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, procedures are in place to provide additional information, referrals or advocacy.

Information regarding service outcomes obtained during the course of customer satisfaction/quality assurance surveys is included in reports of follow-up activity.

**6.** The I&R service involves inquirers, service providers and other representatives of the community in the evaluation process; and modifies the program in response to evaluation outcomes. Methods may include:

- ✓ Mailed or online surveys with community agencies and/or the general public.
- ✓ Focus groups.
- ✓ Open community meetings.
- ✓ Third party research and reports.

**7.** The I&R service strives to become accredited by a nationally recognized body and maintains its standing when renewal is required.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The Glossary of Terms contains definitions for terminology that appears in the *Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral*, many of which have been edited for brevity.  If you would like a more detailed definition or cannot find the term you are looking for here, a comprehensive list of more than 900 terms is available via the AIRS Networker's Glossary at **http://airsnetworker.airs.org**.

Please note that terms for individual data elements and their definitions are located in an indented section under "Data Elements" rather than distributed throughout the Glossary.

**AAR:**  see After Action Report.

**Abandoned Calls:**  Incoming calls that are terminated by the inquirer while in queue, before the call is answered by an I&R specialist.  See also Abandonment Rate, Calls, Average Abandonment Time, Hang Ups.

**Abandonment Rate:** The percentage of offered calls that are terminated by inquirers before being answered.  See also Abandoned Calls, Average Abandonment Time.

**ABCs of I&R**:  A comprehensive manual developed and published by AIRS that provides an introduction to the practice of information and referral. It is primarily intended as a guide for new staff and the foundation for the initial orientation and/or training programs of information and referral (I&R) providers, but can also be used as a reference tool and refresher for more experienced staff. It is especially relevant to I&R practitioners who are preparing to obtain their AIRS Certification as either an information and referral specialist (CIRS), an information and referral specialist in aging (CIRS-A) or a resource specialist (CRS) and who want to re-acquaint themselves with some aspects of the formal language/structure of I&R that they might encounter in a certification examination.

**Accessible:**  Without physical, cultural, financial or psychological barriers to service. Alternatively, having the legally required features and/or qualities that ensure entrance, participation and usability of places, programs, services and activities by individuals with a wide variety of disabilities.

**Accountability**: The responsibility of program staff to provide evidence to stakeholders and sponsors that a program is effective and in conformity with its coverage, service, legal and fiscal requirements.[6]

**ACD:** see Automatic Call Distribution (ACD).

**Active Listening Skills:** A set of skills that helps people become more sensitive, compassionate and objective listeners. Central concepts include listening to the emotional as well as the factual content of what someone is saying, providing a fresh perspective on a problem or issue by giving feedback, being non-judgmental, and developing empathy, i.e., an active understanding of another person's situation and feelings coupled with a strong concern.

**ACW:** see After Call Work (ACW).

**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 helps to ensure that the agency maintains effective connections with the people it serves.

**Advocacy:** Programs that intercede on behalf of individuals and/or groups to ensure that they receive the benefits and services for which they are eligible and that organizations within the established service delivery system meet the collective needs of the community. See also Inquirer Advocacy, Self Advocacy, System Advocacy**.**

**After Action Report (AAR)**: A focused, post-incident or post-exercise review whose purpose is to capture observations related to disaster response system performance, both positive and negative, and to document recommendations for future improvements in a report that identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties and establishes targets for their completion.[7]

**After Call Work (ACW):** A component of Total Call Handling Time that occurs after Talk Time has ended (i.e. when the call is disconnected) and is used by the I&R specialist to complete required documentation related to the call. See also Total Call Handling Time.

**Agency:** An organization that delivers services. An agency can be incorporated, a division of government, or an unincorporated group that offers, for example, a food

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[6] "Program Evaluation Glossary", U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website, **http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/glossary/a-esd.htm**

[7] "Glossary", Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, **http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/emischool/EL361Toolkit/glossary.htm**
"After-Action Review Law and Legal Definition", U.S. Legal Definitions, **http://definitions.uslegal.com/a/after-action-review/**
"ICDRM/GWU Emergency Management Glossary of Terms", February 19, 2006, Institute for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., **http://www.gwu.edu/~icdrm/publications/PDF/GLOSSARY%2002-19-2007.pdf**

pantry or support group. The agency is the main location of the resource where the administrative functions occur, where the organization's director is generally housed and where it is licensed for business. An agency may or may not deliver direct services from this location. See also Agency Description and Agency Name under Data Elements.

**AIRS Accreditation:** The professional credential that is awarded internationally by AIRS to I&R services that apply as formal recognition that they are operating in accordance with the *Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral*.

**AIRS Certification:** The professional credential that is awarded internationally by AIRS to individuals who successfully complete the applicable certification program for I&R practitioners: the AIRS Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS), Certified Resource Specialist (CRS) and Certified Information and Referral Specialist Aging (CIRS-A) programs. Certification is a measurement of documented ability in the field of I&R reflecting specific competencies and related performance criteria, which describe the knowledge, skills, attitudes and work-related behaviors needed by I&R practitioners to successfully execute their duties. See also CIRS, CIRS-A, CRS.

**AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services:** The classification system maintained by 211 LA County and endorsed by AIRS as a common language for the field of information and referral. The Taxonomy is used to index and facilitate retrieval of resource information, increase the reliability of planning data, make evaluation processes consistent and reliable, and facilitate national comparisons of data. It can be accessed at www.211taxonomy.org. See also Classification System.

**Ancillary I&R Activities:** Information the I&R service may also collect in addition to I&R inquiries, but whose numbers should not be added to the contact/inquiry total unless the figures are recorded individually and can be separated out. Included are:

- Website visitor activity.
- People accessing recorded information.
- Outreach presentations.
- Brochures and/or other publications distributed.
- Outgoing advocacy calls.
- Outgoing customer satisfaction/quality assurance calls.
- Outgoing follow-up calls.
- Outgoing calls to verify resource information.
- Community problems/needs reporting.

**Ancillary Services:** Agency activities that are not core services and are not worth spending the time and effort to index, e.g., an agency newsletter.

**Answered Calls:** See Calls Answered.

**Application Procedures:** See Application/Intake Process under Data Elements.

**ASA:** see Average Speed of Answer (ASA).

**Assessment:** The process of helping an inquirer identify, analyze and prioritize his or her needs. See also Assessment and Referral.

**Assessment and Referral:** The assessment and referral process consists of active listening and effective questioning to determine the needs of the inquirer, clarifying the need, identifying appropriate resources, selecting appropriate delivery modes, making referrals to organizations capable of meeting those needs, and providing enough information about each organization 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. See also Assessment, Referrals.

**Assistance Without Referrals:** The disposition or outcome of an inquiry in which the I&R specialist provides requested information, e.g., a phone number, or other types of assistance but no referrals; or, following assessment, helps the inquirer identify alternative sources of support, e.g., a family member or their church. See also Met Needs, Referrals.

**Automated Attendant:** A menu-driven system accessible by telephone that allows inquirers to select and listen to prerecorded information about specific types of services. See also Interactive Voice Response Systems (IVRs).

**Automatic Call Distribution (ACD):** A programmable component of a telephone system that automatically distributes calls to one or more groups of I&R specialists based on criteria specified by the I&R service. ACD systems generally process incoming calls on a first in/first answered basis, but can also manage routing based on the characteristics of the call.

**Average Abandonment Time:** The average time that callers wait in queue before abandoning. See also Abandoned Calls, Abandonment Rate.

**Average Call Handling Time:** The average time it takes to handle a call including Talk Time, Hold Time and After Call Work. This metric can be calculated for individual I&R specialists or for the whole service.

**Average Speed of Answer (ASA):** The average time it takes an I&R service to answer a call once it has been placed in queue.

**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.

**Broadband**: A communications network in which the bandwidth is greater than 3MHz narrowband frequencies and can be divided and shared by multiple simultaneous signals (as for voice or data or video). The term is often used to describe the speed of an Internet connection.[8]

**Call Disposition:** see Inquiry Disposition.

**Call Monitoring:** The process of listening to the calls of an I&R specialist for the purpose of assuring that a quality service is being delivered. It involves an experienced supervisor/mentor listening to both sides of the call and providing detailed feedback and support.

**Call Monitoring Policy:** A formal policy that outlines the process by which employees will be notified of the call monitoring guidelines, both during the hiring process as well as on an ongoing basis, the tools and instruments to be used and how reviews/scores of calls will be communicated to the staff.[9] See also Call Monitoring, Call Recording and Review.

**Call Processing Time:** see After Call Work (ACW).

**Call Recording and Review**: Remote monitoring of calls that is accomplished through a call recording system which can be programmed to record all calls or to take a random sampling of calls handled by each specialist at different times of the day and week.[10] See also Call Monitoring, Call Monitoring Policy

**Call Type**: The nature of the service that I&R specialists provide for inquirers. Call types include:

- Assessment and Referral
- Information
- Crisis Intervention
- Advocacy

**Callers:** see Inquirers.

**Calls:** A connection over a telephone network between the calling party and the called party. Included are both incoming calls (calls initiated by inquirers) and outgoing calls (calls initiated by I&R specialists). When inquirers make incoming calls, they can be routed directly to an I&R specialist, placed in a queue to await the next available I&R specialist, be invited to listen to a recorded message about available services, be

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[8] "Broadband", Phone Scoop website, **http://www.phonescoop.com/glossary/term.php?gid=21**
"Simple Internet Glossary", **http://www.2graphic.co.uk/web-help/internet-glossary.htm**
[9] "Call Center Metrics: Best Practices in Performance Measurement and Management to Maximize Quitline Efficiency and Quality", NAQC Issue Paper, **http://www.naquitline.org/resource/resmgr/issue_papers/callcentermetricspaperbestpr.pdf**
[10] "Call Center Metrics: Best Practices in Performance Measurement and Management to Maximize Quitline Efficiency and Quality", NAQC Issue Paper, **http://www.naquitline.org/resource/resmgr/issue_papers/callcentermetricspaperbestpr.pdf**

offered the option to leave a message for a callback or, if there is no space in queue, get a busy signal and be forced to call back. See also Abandoned Calls, Non-Transaction Calls, Transaction Calls.

**Calls Answered:** Calls that are routed to an ACD queue and answered by an I&R specialist. Calls Answered may be either Transactions that involve an I&R activity (information provision, assessment and referral, advocacy, crisis intervention), or Non-Transactions (e.g., abandoned calls, wrong numbers, phantom calls, admin calls, personal calls, calls transferred to other programs).

**Calls Handled:** see Calls Answered.

**Calls Offered**: Calls Received that are placed in queue by the ACD and presented to I&R specialists who are in available mode. An offered call will be either answered or abandoned in queue. Once answered, it will either be a Transaction Call or a Non-Transaction Call. (Calls Offered = Calls Answered + Calls Abandoned)

**Calls Presented:** see Calls Offered.

**Calls Received:** Calls coming into the I&R service that are connected to an ACD. Depending on the options provided by the phone system, the calls may be disconnected for unknown reasons without being abandoned, forwarded to other programs (if a particular option is selected by the inquirer from an IVR menu) or entered into a queue where they are offered to an available I&R specialist.

**Calls Transacted:** see Transaction Calls

**Case Management:** A service that develops plans for the evaluation, treatment and/or care of individuals who, because of age, illness, disability or other difficulties, need assistance in planning and arranging for services; assesses the individual's needs; coordinates the delivery of needed services; ensures that services are obtained in accordance with the plan; and follows up and monitors progress to ensure that services are having a beneficial impact on the individual.

**CIRS:** Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS) is a professional credential awarded internationally by AIRS to individuals who have demonstrated through the program that they have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and work-related behaviors required by I&R specialists to successfully execute their I&R service delivery duties. See also AIRS Certification.

**CIRS-A:** Certified Information and Referral Specialist Aging (CIRS-A) is a professional credential awarded internationally by AIRS to individuals who have demonstrated through the program that they have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and work-related behaviors required by I&R specialists working in the aging area to successfully execute their duties. See also AIRS Certification.

**Classification System:** A structure for categorizing available information within a particular area of knowledge in a systematic, unambiguous way. A good classification system enables people searching for information to locate the materials they need quickly and easily. The *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services* has been accepted as the common language for human services in the field of information and referral, and its use by I&R services seeking AIRS Accreditation is required. See also AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services.

**Client Advocacy:** see Inquirer Advocacy.

**Clients:** see Inquirers.

**Cloud Computing**: The delivery of computing as a service rather than a product, whereby shared resources, software and information are provided to computers and other devices as a utility (like the electricity grid) over a network (typically the Internet). Cloud computing provides computation, software, data access and storage services that do not require end-user knowledge of the physical location and configuration of the system that delivers the services. Users can access their data from anywhere rather than being tied to a particular machine.[11]

**Coaching**: A learning approach that involves the use of positive feedback, active listening, questioning and problem-solving skills to ensure a positive learning climate.[12] See also Mentoring.

**Coalition**: A temporary alliance of distinct parties who have come together for joint action or to work together for a common goal.[13] See also Collaboration, Cooperation, Coordination, Partnership.

**Code of Ethics**: A document that establishes fundamental values and professional standards of conduct for staff in their relationships with their colleagues, their employers, the people they serve, the human service professionals with whom they interact and the community as a whole.

**Cold Transfer:** A call transfer situation in which the I&R specialist dials an external number (to transfer to an agency or organization that provides services that can meet the individual's assessed needs) and hangs up, allowing the inquirer to access the other individual directly or be placed in a queue. See also Transfers, Warm Transfer.

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[11] "Cloud Computing", Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_computing**
"Social Media Glossary", SocialBrite website, **http://www.socialbrite.org/sharing-center/glossary/**
[12] *JHPIEGO Glossary of Training and Learning Terms*, **http://www.reproline.jhu.edu/english/6read/6gloss/glosstrn.htm**
[13] "Mergers, Partnerships, and Collaboration: Opportunities to Thrive", John A. Yankey, Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations, OANO Nonprofit Management & Leadership Conference, May 10, 2002

**Collaboration:** An informal arrangement under which two or more individuals with complementary skills work together to achieve a common goal.[14] See also Coalition, Cooperation, Coordination, Database Collaborative, Partnership.

**Community**: A specific group of people living in the same locality who may share a common culture, values and norms. Communities can also be defined by race, religion, ethnicity, age, occupation, political status, tribal affiliation, interest in particular problems or outcomes, or other common bonds.[15]

**Competency**: A knowledge, skill, ability or trait that is needed to succeed at a particular task or job.[16]

**Comprehensive I&R Service:** I&R programs that maintain information about the full range of human services and which function as the primary source of information about and linkage with human services providers in their community. See also I&R Service, Specialized I&R Service.

**Computer Telephony Integration (CTI)**: The software, hardware and programming necessary to integrate telephone and computer networks in order to provide a more efficient and seamless customer interaction and reporting mechanism.[17]

**Confidentiality:** The requirement that the I&R service disclose identifying information about inquirers, their requests and the resources given to them only under specified circumstances. Information about an inquirer must not be shared with others unless disclosure is required by law or court order, explicit permission has been secured from the person to do so and documented, or the person is in danger of harming him or herself or another. See also Identifying Information.

**Cooperation**: An informal arrangement under which organizations agree to avoid working at cross-purposes and assist one another on an ad hoc basis as opportunities arise with the objective of assuring that the needs of both are met. Unlike collaboration which involves the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together, cooperative work is generally accomplished by the division of labor among participants where each person is responsible for a portion of the problem solving.[18] See also Coalition, Collaboration, Coordination, Partnership.

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[14] "Collaboration vs. C-Three (Cooperation, Coordination, and Communication) by Leo Denise, "Innovating Reprint, Volume 7, No. 3, The Rensselaerville Institute, **http://www.ride.ri.gov/adulteducation/Documents/Tri%20part%201/Collaboration%20vs.%20the%203c%27s.pdf**

[15] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**

[16] "Glossary of Training Terms", by Carol P. McCoy, **http://hrpeople.monster.com/training/articles/170-glossary-of-training-terms-**

[17] "Terminology", E Communication Advantage website, **http://www.eca.com/about-us/terminology.html**

[18] "Collaboration vs Cooperation", Pierre Dillenbourg, Michael Baker, Agnes Blaye & Claire O'Malley (1995), "The Evolution of Research on Collaborative Learning". P. Reimann & H. Spada (Eds). Learning in humans and machines. Towards an interdisciplinary learning science, 189- 211. London: Pergamon.

**Coordination**: An arrangement under which multiple organizations in the same sector (e.g., I&R services) offering complementary services (or other benefits) modify their activities in some way, e.g., synchronizing their schedules, so that together, they provide better, more accessible services to their constituents. Coordination helps to fill in gaps, prevent service duplication and eliminate unnecessary barriers giving people in the community a better chance to get the services they need. Coordination is about efficiency and access.[19] See also Coalition, Collaboration, Cooperation, Partnership.

**Creative Problem Solving:** The process of exploring alternative solutions with an inquirer when no referrals are available and, in some cases, trying to overcome resistance to options, such as a reluctance to ask for assistance from family members or friends.

**Credentialing:** A generic term that encompasses licensing, certification, accreditation and other standards-based processes that recognize competence on the part of individuals in a particular profession or occupation or organizations in a particular area or field of interest. Certification and accreditation programs are voluntary, private initiatives whereas licensure is generally a government regulatory requirement which mandates that individuals or organizations be licensed in order to conduct their business.[20]

**Crisis:** A state of acute emotional distress in which an individual experiences a temporary inability to cope with a situation by means of their usual problem-solving behaviors. People in crisis include individuals threatening suicide, homicide or assault; victims of domestic abuse or other forms of violence, child abuse/neglect or elder abuse/neglect; sexual assault survivors; runaway youth; people experiencing a psychiatric emergency; chemically dependent people in crisis; and others in distress. See also Crisis Intervention.

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**http://performancepyramid.muohio.edu:8081/pyramid/shared-best-practices/Collaberation-Strategies/mainColumnParagraphs/0/document/Collaboration%20Strategies.pdf**
"The Difference Between Cooperation and Coordination", Posted by Shawn Callahan – 4/27/08, Filed in "Collaboration". **http://www.anecdote.com.au/archives/2008/04/the_difference_2.html**

[19] "A Search For Models: From Collaboration To Co-Option, Partnership Experiences in Settlement and Human Services for Newcomers"**,** A literature review by Jojo Geronimo, On behalf of The GTA Consortium on the Coordination of Settlement Services: The Community and Social Planning Council of Toronto; The Access Action Council; The Centre for Urban and Community Studies at the University of Toronto; The Social Planning Council of Peel, April 2000.
**http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/Search_For_Models.pdf**
"Collaboration vs. C-Three (Cooperation, Coordination, and Communication) by Leo Denise, "Innovating Reprint, Volume 7, No. 3, The Rensselaerville Institute,
**http://www.ride.ri.gov/adulteducation/Documents/Tri%20part%201/Collaboration%20vs.%20the%203c%27s.pdf**
"Promoting Coordination, Cooperative Agreements, and Collaborative Agreements Among Agencies", The Community Toolbox, http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1229.aspx
"The Difference Between Cooperation and Coordination", Posted by Shawn Callahan – 4/27/08, Filed in "Collaboration". **http://www.anecdote.com.au/archives/2008/04/the_difference_2.html**

[20] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TP-1850.

**Crisis Intervention:** A service that provides immediate assistance to people who are in acute emotional distress; who are or perceive themselves to be in life-threatening situations; who are a danger to themselves or to others; or who are hysterical, frightened or otherwise unable to cope with a problem that requires immediate action. The objective of crisis intervention is to defuse the critical nature of the situation, ensure the person's safety, and return the individual to a state of equilibrium in which s/he is capable of identifying and seeking solutions to the problem. See also Crisis.

**Criteria**: Systematically developed, objective and quantifiable statements that are used to assess the appropriateness of specific decisions, services and outcomes.[21]

**CRS:** Certified Resource Specialist (CRS) is a professional credential awarded internationally by AIRS to individuals who have demonstrated through the program that they have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and work-related behaviors required by resource specialists to successfully execute their resource database duties. See also AIRS Certification.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** An awareness of one's own cultural assumptions, behaviors, beliefs and unconscious biases that brings an ability to interact with and understand people from other cultures without imposing one's own cultural values. See also Culturally Appropriate, Discrimination, Diversity, Racism.

**Culturally Appropriate:** The ability to provide assistance in ways that are helpful, effective and strengthening to those served through understanding of and respect for diverse cultures. See also Cultural Sensitivity, Discrimination, Diversity, Racism.

**Customer Satisfaction Survey**: A survey process that allows organizations to measure customer or client satisfaction with their products and services, identify emerging or unmet needs, identify and prioritize needed changes and track the effectiveness of changes with the objective of maximizing customer retention, improving customer loyalty and better positioning themselves among prospective clients.[22] See also Focus Group.

**CTI:** see Computer Telephony Integration (CTI).

**Cyberethics**: An umbrella term that covers a variety of topics including privacy and security, copyright and intellectual property rights, access, usability and appropriate uses of technology. Cyberethics encompasses user behavior and what networked computers are programmed to do, and how this affects individuals and society. Examples of cyberethical questions include: "Is it OK to display personal information about others on the Internet (such as their online status or their present location via GPS)?", "Should users be protected from false information?", "Who owns digital data

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[21] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**
[22] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TP-6500.1900-150.
"Creating Successful Customer Satisfaction Surveys", Web Surveyor,
**http://www.websurveyor.com/resources/online-survey-best-practices.asp**

(such as music, movies, books, Web pages, etc.) and what should users be allowed to do with it?", "How much access should there be to gambling and porn online?", "Can all audiences access the information?", and "Are websites tested on all modern browsers?"[23]

**D&O (Directors' and Officers') Insurance:** Insurance that protects board members and top staff personnel from liability created by board decisions or actions.[24] See also Indemnification.

**Data Collection Policies:** see Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria.

**Data Elements:** Distinguishable, defined units of information that are contained somewhere within a resource database. A Data Field, by contrast, refers to the specific place ("container") in which that information is stored. The Data Element Standards address Data Elements and identify those that are required and recommended, but do not specify how that information must be structured or stored in the resource database – those decisions are left to the individual I&R service. See also Data Structure, Resource Database and Resource Profile.

- ✓ **Access for People with Disabilities:** The structural features of the facility that either support or hinder access to the site/location for people with physical disabilities.

- ✓ **Administrative Hours/Days of Operation**: The office hours/days or general hours/days of operation for the administrative component of the agency or one of its sites. This may or may not reflect the hours during which services of the agency are delivered.

- ✓ **Agency Description:** A brief narrative describing the agency's main purpose or role. See also Agency.

- ✓ **Agency Name:** The full legal name of the organization. In certain cases, rather than the full legal name, a decision can be made to use the name under which the organization is more commonly known or is "doing business as" (e.g., using YWCA instead of Young Women's Christian Association). See also Agency.

- ✓ **AKA (Also Known As) Names**: Names other than the legal name by which an organization is known. Included are AKAs (or aliases) for the agency name, site name or program name, or names that are acronyms, former names, popular names or other alternative names.

- ✓ **Application/Intake Process:** The steps an individual must take to register for service with a service provider. In the resource database, a narrative that

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[23] "Cyberethics", Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyberethics**
[24] "Board Glossary", BoardSource, **http://www.boardsource.org/Knowledge.asp?ID=1.1016**

describes the process by which people access the service(s) included in the service group, including the hours for intake.

- ✓ **Contact for Updating Purposes:** The name and title of the person at the agency/organization who is responsible for verifying the accuracy of information in the database record.

- ✓ **Date of Last Interim Modification/Partial Update:** The most recent date any piece of agency information was changed and verified by the agency.

- ✓ **Date of Last Complete Update**: The most recent date the agency was contacted and all agency information verified, usually the date of the annual survey.

- ✓ **Documents Required:** A narrative list of the documents that are necessary to enroll in/apply for a service. Examples: Photo ID, postmarked piece of mail to verify residency, birth certificate, police report.

- ✓ **Eligibility:** The guidelines a service provider uses to determine who is qualified to receive services. Eligibility can be stated in terms of requirements, e.g., "The individual must be a single parent" or exclusions, e.g., "We do not serve people who are homeless". In the resource database, a description of specific conditions that must be met in order to qualify for a particular service or group of services, or specific conditions that exclude certain people. If there are no eligibility requirements/exclusions, the text should read "No restrictions". If eligibility is not a separate field in the database, eligibility information is typically found in the service group description.

- ✓ **Email Address(es):** An electronic mail address for the organization or one of its sites that the public can use to direct online/electronic correspondence. Whenever possible, the agency email should be the official email address for the agency or site rather than for a specific person within the organization.

- ✓ **Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN/FEIN)**: A unique, nine digit number (XX-XXXXXXX) that the IRS (United States Internal Revenue Service) assigns to all organizations in the U.S. that are required to file a business tax return, regardless of whether they have employees. The EIN can be used to facilitate record matching to eliminate duplicates when records maintained by different local I&R services are combined in statewide I&R databases, or to link I&R records with those in databases maintained by organizations outside the I&R field.

- ✓ **Fee Structure:** A description of the fees an organization charges for its services. Typical phrases include "sliding scale" and "no charge" or "fixed fee." Specific dollar amounts are generally omitted. See also Sliding Scale.

- ✓ **Geographic Area Served:** The primary geographic unit(s) an organization is responsible for serving. In the resource database, the physical area ("service area") covered by a specific service/service group and/or service site. Only those who reside in the area may be served. A Geographic Area Served may represent one ZIP/postal code, a city, a town or other geographic area such as a congressional district, a state/province or a region including several counties.

- ✓ **Hours of Service:** The days and times during which a particular service is offered which may or may not be the same as the hours for intake.

- ✓ **IRS Status**: The particular section of the Internal Revenue Code under which an organization is recognized by the IRS as exempt from the payment of federal income tax.

- ✓ **Languages Other than English:** The specific languages, other than English, in which the service is delivered. In order to facilitate searching by language availability, some I&R services structure language information in a format that supports the ability to filter data.

- ✓ **Legal Status:** A designation indicating the type of organization or conditions under which the organization is operating, i.e., a private, nonprofit corporation, a for-profit (commercial, proprietary) organization, a government (public) organization, or a grass roots entity such as a support group that is not incorporated and has no formal status as an organization.

- ✓ **Licenses or Accreditations:** The names of licenses or accreditations secured through a recognized external credentialing entity.

- ✓ **Mailing Address**: The address at which the agency or one of its sites receives mailed correspondence if different than the street address.

- ✓ **Main Site Description:** A brief narrative describing the services and other activities at the agency's main site.

- ✓ **Method of Payment Accepted:** The type of payment that is accepted for a particular service or service group at the service site.

- ✓ **Name and Title of Director or Administrator:** The top administrator for the organization; the person who is responsible for the overall operation of the organization (as distinguished from the top volunteer administrator such as a board president).

- ✓ **Name and Title of Site Manager:** The top administrator for the site/location; the person who is responsible for the overall operation of the site/location.

- ✓ **Other Addresses:** Addresses other than the official mailing or street address for the site, e.g., an address to which update correspondence for the agency should be directed (such as the home address of a support group leader).

- ✓ **Phone Number(s):** The phone number(s) through which a particular agency, site or service can be reached. Phone data include phone numbers, extensions, phone types (e.g., Voice, TTY/TDD), and phone functions (e.g., administration, intake).

- ✓ **Program Name(s) for the Service Group:** A proper name for a service or group of services that is specified by the agency, rather than created by the I&R service. In many cases, there is no specific program name for the service/service group. Examples: Toys for Tots, Tough Love. See also Program.

- ✓ **Record Ownership Code**: A code that identifies the organization responsible for maintaining the record. It is used to facilitate combination, in a single consolidated database, of records maintained by different organizations. In some resource databases, the record ownership code may be combined with the Unique ID Number to create one distinct code identifying both the agency and its record owner.

- ✓ **Service Capacity and Type:** The number of people a program can serve, e.g., the number of beds in a facility, the maximum number of individuals permitted in a parenting class, the number of available job training slots.

- ✓ **Service Group Description:** A description of the services represented within the service group (e.g., "a 3-5 day supply of food", "a professionally facilitated support group for people with cancer"). The description should distinguish between the primary and secondary services, if secondary services are offered; and should be written in specific enough terms to enable I&R specialists and other users to determine whether this resource is an appropriate referral to meet the assessed needs of a particular inquirer. The description must reference and describe all of the services indexed using the Taxonomy. See also Service Group.

- ✓ **Service Group Name:** A generic name for a service/group of services created by the I&R service rather than by the agency. It is used as a label which encompasses all services contained within the service group. See also Service Group.

- ✓ **Site Description:** A brief narrative in a site record describing the services and other activities at the site.

- ✓ **Site Name:** The name by which a site/location is known. If an agency has only a single location, then to all intents and purposes, the agency name **is** the site name. In some instances, the site name has a distinct alternative title. In others, the site name is drawn from the function that it provides for the agency or its location.

- ✓ **Social Media URL:** The Web address that people can use to access a social media application maintained by the organization (e.g., a Facebook or Twitter page) that contains information that is appropriately formatted for that medium.

See also Website(s)/URL(s).

- ✓ **Street/Physical Address:** The main address from which the agency and/or site(s) operate. While main sites may or may not be locations where services are delivered, additional sites or branch offices are almost always service provision locations. The physical address may have several components including multiple address lines, city, state/province and ZIP/postal codes.

- ✓ **Target Populations:** The individuals for whom a particular service or group of services is intended. Target populations are generally described in narrative form (e.g. "Targeted, but not restricted to, Native Americans"), in the eligibility or description fields. Target populations can also be pinpointed when indexing by choosing a Target Population term from the Taxonomy to append to the selected service term(s).

- ✓ **Taxonomy Term(s):** The Taxonomy term (or combination of terms) that are selected to represent the service(s) in the service group. A separate term or linked set of terms should be chosen for each service in the service group.

- ✓ **Title of the Service Contact Person:** The job title of the person or type of person the public should contact to access the service(s) in the service group. Examples: Intake Coordinator, Project Manager.

- ✓ **Travel Information:** A narrative describing major cross streets, landmarks, bus routes or other information to facilitate travel to the location.

- ✓ **Unique ID Number:** A distinct code (alpha and/or numeric) that is used to identify each agency, site, service group and service site.

- ✓ **Website(s)/URL(s):** A URL (Universal or Uniform Resource Locator) is a way of specifying the location of a file or resource on the Internet. Also commonly known as a Web site or Web address. In the resource database, the agency URL should be the official, main Web site for the agency or site. See also Social Media URL.

- ✓ **Year of Incorporation:** The year the organization officially registered with the appropriate government authority according to the legal status under which it operates.

**Data Structure**: The way data elements are organized and stored in a database. Data Structure = Data Elements + Their Arrangement. See also Data Elements.

**Database Collaborative:** A group of I&R services that agree to share responsibility for maintaining information about local community resources as a means of avoiding duplication of database maintenance activities and achieving broader and deeper coverage of different types of community resources. See also Collaboration.

**Disability Access:** See Access for People with Disabilities under Data Elements.

**Disaster:** A large-scale emergency that disrupts the normal functioning of a community.

**Disaster Preparedness**: Activities, programs and systems developed prior to an emergency that support community readiness and resiliency assessment; development and testing of disaster plans; training of staff in plan implementation; establishment of collaborative arrangements with other service providers; provision of suitable warning systems; identification, procurement and/or collection of the facilities, equipment, supplies and trained personnel that will be necessary for responding to an emergency; and development and dissemination of information and/or training about how individuals and organizations can prepare for a major disaster or large-scale emergency that disrupts the normal functioning of a community.[25]

**Disaster Recovery**: Longer-term assistance for people who have suffered injuries or incurred losses due to an incident with the objective of facilitating the return of the community to its pre-disaster condition and/or rebuilding the community in a way that makes it less vulnerable in the future.[26]

**Disaster Relief**: Services that facilitate the exchange of information and/or provide short-term assistance, usually in the form of food, clothing, blankets, temporary shelter, furnishings, small appliances or temporary financial aid, for people who have suffered injuries or incurred losses due to a major disaster or large-scale emergency that disrupts the normal functioning of a community. The objective of disaster relief is to help individuals sustain their lives during the immediate aftermath of the event.[27]

**Disaster Response**: Actions taken before, during and after the onset of a major disaster or large-scale emergency to end the emergency, preserve lives, limit damage, ensure the availability of critical services and reduce the probability of secondary effects.[28]

**Disaster Services**: Emergency planning, preparedness, mitigation, response, relief and/or recovery services prior to, during and after a major fire, flood, hurricane, earthquake, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, drought, famine, explosion or nuclear accident, the outbreak of civil unrest, or other large-scale emergency of natural or human origin that disrupts the normal functioning of a community; or a localized incident such as a house fire which has made residents homeless. There are four recognized phases of disaster work: preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.[29]

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[25] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TH-1700.
[26] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TH-2900.
"Glossary/Acronyms", National Response Framework (NRF) Resource Center, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, **http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/glossary.htm**
[27] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TH-2600.
[28] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TH-2300.
[29] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TH.

**Discrimination:** The conscious or unconscious act of dealing with people on the basis of prejudicial and predisposed attitudes rather than individual merit. The denial of equal treatment with respect to issues such as public accommodation, education, employment and housing is a crime. See also Cultural Sensitivity, Culturally Appropriate, Diversity, Racism.

**Diversity:** The recognition and acknowledgement of individual differences, and all the ways that we are unique and different from each other. Diversity recognizes differences, respects differences and strives to celebrate them. See also Cultural Sensitivity, Culturally Appropriate, Discrimination, Racism.

**Double Indexing:** The practice of using two or more service terms from either the same branch of the Taxonomy ("vertical" or "intrabranch" double-indexing) or from different areas of the Taxonomy ("horizontal" or "interbranch" double-indexing) to index the same activity.

**E-Support:** see Live Chat/Support.

**Emergency Management Exercise**: A simulated emergency in which staff of various agencies perform the tasks that would be expected of them in a real emergency.[30]

**Employer Identification Number (EIN Number)**: See Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN/FEIN) under Data Elements.

**Empowerment:** The process of helping individuals, families, groups or communities to increase their personal, interpersonal, political, social and/or economic strength or position and to develop influence that may impact their circumstances. In an I&R context, the process of helping inquirers understand their own situation and the steps that need to be taken to obtain needed services so that they can follow through on their own behalf. Empowering individuals also gives them the tools to handle similar situations or other issues that might arise in the future without assistance.[31] See also Self Advocacy.

**Endangerment Situations:** Situations in which an individual's safety or well-being may be at risk.

**Evaluation (Program):** The systematic process of reviewing services provided by an organization in relation to its objectives and standards to assess how well the program is working, and to identify ways to improve overall operation of the individual I&R

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[30] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TH-1700.1930.
"Disaster Exercise Manual: Guide for Exercising Emergency Operations Plans", EMD PUB -702 January, 2004, produced by the Training and Exercise Section of the Emergency Management Division, Michigan Department of State Police, **http://www.michigan.gov/documents/pub702-Disaster_Exercise_Manual1-14-04_83182_7.pdf**
[31] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**

service and/or the I&R system as a whole.[32] See also Quality Assurance.

**Evaluation (Staff):** The systematic process of reviewing the work of individual employees and volunteers in accordance with their job descriptions to provide feedback on performance and to maintain a high level of quality in service delivery, database maintenance and other I&R functions.

**Explicit Permission:** see Informed Consent.

**Faith Based Organizations**: Religious congregations, religion-based social service organizations (e.g., Catholic Charities or the Salvation Army) and other types of organizations that might have a religious affiliation or identity.[33]

**Filters/Search Keys:** Filters are search keys that are applied to service searches and narrow the selection of records that are displayed on a match list. Customized filters/search keys include such things as language, hours, fee structure.

**Financial Audit:** A formal periodic examination of the accounts and financial records of an organization or program, generally performed for the purpose of verifying that funds were used as they were intended and in accordance with standard financial management practices.[34]

**Financial Management:** The process of implementing and managing financial control systems, collecting financial data, analyzing financial reports and making sound financial decisions based on the analyses.[35]

**Focus Group:** Meetings, generally one to two hours in length, during which eight to 12 people are interviewed as a group to test a new idea or evaluate a product or service.[36] See also Customer Satisfaction Survey.

**Follow-Up:** The process of contacting inquirers to determine whether their needs were met and if not, why. The term "follow-up" is used in two contexts within I&R. There is "follow-up" that is driven by the situation of the individual inquirer to make sure that a vulnerable person with an essential need gets the help they require. There is also

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[32] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TP-6500.1800-700.
"Basic Guide to Program Evaluation", Written by Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD, **http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm**
[33] "Policy Jargon Decoder", The Urban Institute, **http://www.urban.org/toolkit/PolicyDecoderF.cfm**
[34] "Building a Common Vocabulary: A Glossary of Management Terms", **http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=2.2.3h.htm&module=gmt&language=English**
[35] "Building a Common Vocabulary: A Glossary of Management Terms", **http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=2.2.3h.htm&module=gmt&language=English**
[36] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TP-6500.1900-230.
"Basics of Conducting Focus Groups", Written by Carter McNamara, PhD, **http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/focusgrp.htm**
"Focus Groups", by Anita Gibbs, Social Research Update No. 19, Department of Sociology, University of Surrey, Winter, 1997, **http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU19.html**

"follow-up" that is conducted with a larger and more random sample of inquirers and is driven by the need to better understand overall I&R service outcomes and the effectiveness of the I&R service being provided. One is an integral part of service delivery; the other is an aspect of program evaluation and quality assurance. In both cases, additional assistance to the inquirer in locating or using needed services may be required.

**GAAP:** see Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
**Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP):** The set of norms and standards of nonprofit accounting practices established by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) in the U.S. to help ensure the accuracy and consistency of financial records and reports.[37]

**Governance**: The legal authority of a board to establish policies that will affect the life and work of the organization while holding the board accountable for the outcome of such decisions. More broadly, governance deals with the processes and systems by which an organization or society operates. It embraces both the institutions of the state and their inter-relationships as well as the habits, cultures and norms that inhabit those institutions.[38]

**Hang Ups:** Calls that are terminated by an inquirer or an I&R specialist while they are in the process of talking to one another. Hang ups are distinguished from abandoned calls in that they occur after a connection has been established between the inquirer and an I&R specialist, whereas an abandoned call occurs while the inquirer is still in queue. See also Abandoned Calls.

**Human Services:** The activities of human services professionals that help people become more self-sufficient, prevent dependency, strengthen family relationships, support personal and social development and ensure the well-being of individuals, families, groups and communities. Specific human services include ensuring that people have access to adequate food, shelter, clothing and transportation; financial resources to meet their needs; consumer advice and education; criminal justice or legal services; education and employment; health and mental health care including substance abuse services; and environmental protection; both routinely and in times of disaster or other emergencies. Human services also facilitate the capabilities of people to care for children or other dependents; ensure that protective services are available to those who are vulnerable; provide for the support of older adults and people with disabilities; offer social, religious, and leisure time activities; provide for the cultural enrichment of the community; and ensure that people have the information they need to fully participate in community life.[39]

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[37] "Glossary of Financial Terms", Nonprofit Assistance Fund, **http://www.nonprofitsassistancefund.org/index.php?src=gendocs&link=Glossary**
[38] "Board Glossary", Board Source, **http://www.boardsource.org/Knowledge.asp?ID=1.1016**
"Glossary-Glossary", the Freedom of Expression Project, **http://www.freedomofexpression.org.uk/glossary**
[39] Adapted from the definition of "Social Work" in *the Dictionary of Social Work* published by the National Association of Social Workers.

**I&A:** see Information and Assistance.

**I&R Bill of Rights:** see the Basic Principles of I&R in the Preface to the *Standards*.

**I&R Inquiry:** Any mediated/facilitated interaction with an I&R specialist related to the provision of information and/or referrals. That interaction can be via a spectrum of access methods including telephone calls, face-to-face (walk-ins and service in other settings), instant messaging (IM), text/SMS messaging, online chat, video relay/chat and regular mail.

**I&R Process:** The I&R process can be seen as having many stages and elements depending on the complexity of a particular situation. However, at its simplest, it can be divided into five basic stages:

- Opening the call ("contact") and establishing rapport (a "connection").
- Assessment of the situation.
- Clarification to ensure an understanding of the situation.
- Providing appropriate information and/or referrals.
- Closing the call.

**I&R Service:** An organization (or program within a larger organization) whose primary function is to link people in need of human services with appropriate service providers who can meet their needs. I&R services may be comprehensive covering the whole range of human services or may specialize in resources for a particular population, e.g., people who are homeless, people with disabilities, older adults, people with AIDS. The Taxonomy definition for "Information and Referral" is as follows: "Programs whose primary purpose is to maintain information about human service resources in the community and to link people who need assistance with appropriate service providers and/or to supply descriptive information about the agencies or organizations which offer services. The information and referral process involves establishing contact with the individual, assessing the individual's long and short-term needs, identifying resources to meet those needs, providing a referral to identified resources, and, where appropriate, following up to ensure that the individual's needs have been met."[40] Also known as Information and Assistance Provider (in the aging network) and Resource and Referral Agency (in the child care arena). See also Comprehensive I&R Service, Specialized I&R Service.

**I&R Software:** A computer application developed for sale to information and referral/assistance organizations that automates the process of linking people in need of human services with appropriate providers who can meet their needs, and of maintaining community resource information to support the service delivery process. Features generally include resource database maintenance, call transaction processing, database searching, geo-mapping, directory production, survey management, taxonomy/database table maintenance, report generation and other similar functions.

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[40] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TJ-3000.

**I&R Specialist:** An employee or volunteer staff person who is trained to assess inquirer needs, provide information about or linkage with appropriate service providers, offer advocacy assistance when required, and follow-up, when necessary, to ensure that the individual's needs were met.

**I&R System:** A collaborative group of comprehensive and specialized I&R services that have agreed to coordinate their resource maintenance, service delivery, publicity and other functions to avoid duplication of effort, encourage service integration and provide seamless access to information about community resources for people who need it.

**I&R/A:** see Information and Assistance.

**Identifying Information:** Information about inquirers (e.g., name, address, telephone number, Social Security Number/Social Insurance Number) that makes personal identification possible. See also Confidentiality.

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:** The guidelines an I&R service uses to determine the scope and content of its resource database. Inclusion criteria specify the types of organizations that are priorities for inclusion and, if exhaustive, list the only types of organizations the resource database will contain. Exclusion criteria specify the types of organizations whose inclusion is prohibited.

**Incoming Calls:** see Calls Received.

**Indemnification**: Protection for the directors, officers, board members, personnel and volunteers of an organization against any civil or criminal action, suit, or proceeding resulting from their activities with the organization.[41] See also D&O (Directors' and Officers') Insurance.

**Independent Access to Resource Information:** Gateways to community resource information that allow end users to conduct their own searches without speaking with an I&R specialist or other professional. Included are print and electronic directories, public access copies of the resource database and access to the database via an Internet Web page maintained by the I&R service.

**Indexing:** The process of assigning to records in the resource database descriptors and/or codes that can be used as search keys. Examples include service and target population terms/codes from the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services, geographic codes/descriptors for the area served and language codes.

**Indirect Services:** Services to which an agency may facilitate access, but not a service that the agency provides itself.

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[41] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**

**Individual Advocacy:** see Inquirer Advocacy.

**Information and Assistance:** Originally defined within the Older Americans Act as a service for older individuals that:

- Provides the individuals with current information about opportunities and services available in their communities including information relating to assistive technology.
- Assesses the problems and capacities of the individuals.
- Links the individuals to available opportunities and services.
- Establishes follow-up procedures to ensure that the individuals receive the services they need, and are aware of the opportunities available to them.
- Serves the entire community, particularly older individuals with the greatest social need, older individuals with the greatest economic need and older individuals at risk for institutional placement.

In practice, I&A is not population specific, expanding to serve all people who require assistance in accessing services, and their caregivers. I&A (or I&R/A) involves an in-depth process and enhanced service that includes individualized access assistance, extensive follow-up, and individual advocacy, if necessary and requested (e.g., assistance in completing and submitting an application, or providing a warm transfer for a consumer who needs supportive assistance to connect to a resource). I&A is also associated with self-direction and the flexibility to provide I&A in a variety of settings using a choice of communication avenues based on consumer preference (e.g., at home, via email/e-chat or video conferencing using Skype).[42] See also I&R Service, Specialized I&R Service.

**Information and Referral Service:** see I&R Service.

**Information and Referral Specialist:** see I&R Specialist.

**Information and Referral System:** see I&R System.

**Information and Referral/Assistance**: see Information and Assistance.

**Information Provision:** The process of providing descriptive information about a service provider to the inquirer in response to a direct request for such information. Information can range from a limited response (such as an organization's name, telephone number, and address) to detailed data about community service systems (such as explaining how intake works for a particular agency), agency policies and procedures for application.

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[42] "The Older Americans Act as Emended in 2006" (Public Law 109-365), AoA website, **http://www.aoa.gov/AoA_programs/OAA/oaa_full.asp**

**Informed Consent**: The explicit granting of permission by an individual or his/her legal guardian to an I&R service (or other service provider) to take a specific action, e.g., release personal information to another or engage in advocacy on the person's behalf. The consent is predicated on full disclosure of the facts enabling the individual to make a decision based on knowledge of the risks and alternatives.[43]

**Inquirer Advocacy:** Intervention by the I&R service on behalf of individuals to ensure that they receive the benefits and services for which they are eligible. Inquirer advocacy efforts seek 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). Forms of inquirer advocacy include:

- ✓ Making the initial contact with a service provider to verify eligibility or service availability, notify them of the inquirer's forthcoming contact or schedule an appointment.
- ✓ Initiating a warm transfer, i.e., using 3-way calling technology to contact an agency and introduce the inquirer and his or her situation before ending their participation in the call.
- ✓ With the organization'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 when s/he is unable to state his or her own case when, for example, the individual faces barriers to successfully accessing services (e.g., language, age, physical or developmental disabilities, communication impairments, emotional situations, mental health issues or poverty).
- ✓ Negotiating on behalf of the inquirer when a request for service has been denied in situations where it appears there are facts unknown to the agency or that the agency has acted in violation of its own policies or the law.
- ✓ Escalating the intervention by speaking with a senior manager regarding the inquirer's situation.

See also Advocacy, Self Advocacy, System Advocacy.

**Inquirer Data Collection:** The systematic process of recording and organizing essential information about inquirers, their needs, the referral(s) made on their behalf and follow-up results, when available.

**Inquirers:** Individuals and organizations seeking information about or linkage with community service providers through the I&R service.

**Inquiry:** Occasions on which individuals and organizations seeking information about or linkage with community service providers contact an I&R service for assistance.

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[43] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**

**Inquiry Disposition**: A set of codes and statistics that characterize the outcome of I&R contacts with inquirers such as what happened on the calls, and if and how the inquirer's needs were resolved. Was assessment and referral provided? Was information provided? And if so, were the person's needs met?

Dispositions for Assessment and Referral Provision include:

- Met needs, i.e., services are available and referral(s) are provided or assistance without referrals is made available.
- Unmet needs, i.e., situations where no services are available. A pattern of individual unmet needs may lead to identification of service gaps at the service delivery system level.

Dispositions for Information Provision include:

- Met needs, i.e., information is made available (assistance without referrals).
- Unmet needs, i.e., information cannot be located and provided.

**In-Service Training:** Educational programs provided by an organization to help personnel become more knowledgeable, skilled and effective in accomplishing specific tasks or meeting the overall objectives of the organization. Such training often occurs on the job and for short time periods.[44]

**Instant Messaging (IM)**: A program that allows two or more people to communicate with one another over the Internet in real time. While most IM exchanges are in text, some IM programs also offer streaming audio-visual conferencing and voice. IM can also refer to messages sent by instant messaging, or to the act of sending an instant message.[45]

**Intake Procedures:** see Application/Intake Process under Data Elements.

**Intake Process:** see Application/Intake Process under Data Elements.

**Integrated Service Delivery System:** The organized, coordinated, collaborative network that is established when a group of local service providers agrees to deliver their services in a coordinated way to ensure broad access to community services, maximize the utilization of existing resources, avoid duplication of effort and gaps in services and facilitate the ability of people who need services to easily find the most appropriate provider.

**Interactive Voice Response Systems (IVRs):** An automated telephony system that interacts with inquirers, gathers information and either sends it to the ACD which routes calls to an appropriate I&R specialist or provides access to information selected from a

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[44] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**
[45] "IM", Phone Scoop website, **http://www.phonescoop.com/glossary/term.php?gid=229**
"Symantic Glossary", Earthlink Security Center, **http://www.earthlinksecurity.com/glossary/index.html**

pre-recorded menu. An IVR system accepts a combination of voice telephone input and touch-tone keypad selection and provides appropriate responses in the form of voice, fax callback, email and perhaps other media.[46] See also Automated Attendant.

**IVRs:** see Interactive Voice Response Systems (IVRs).

**Keyword Index:** A keyword index is a separate classification structure that is generally organized alphabetically and requires its own field. The resource specialist chooses one or more keywords in addition to Taxonomy terms. I&R specialists can conduct searches of the keyword index as an additional option. Use of keywords is acceptable according to the AIRS standards, but only if they are connected to the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services and do not function as a separate, stand-alone classification structure.

**Keyword Taxonomy Search:** A keyword search of the Taxonomy itself (sometimes called a word search or a word/phrase search) allows the user to enter a word or phrase and retrieve all Taxonomy terms that contain it. Ideally, this type of search also retrieves use references containing the word/phrase.

**Kiosk:** A free-standing structure, often located in malls or other public places, that houses community resource information that people can access without assistance.

**Landline**: A conventional (non-wireless) telephone connection.

**Learning Objectives:** A statement that identifies what learners need to learn, i.e., know and do (abilities, skills, behaviors) as a result of a learning intervention. Generally, learning objectives are phrased in this format: "As a result of completing X training, participants will be able to…."[47]

**Learning Style:** A composite of cognitive, affective and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with and responds to the learning environment. Included in this definition are perceptual modalities, information processing styles and personality patterns.[48] See also Learning Styles Analysis.

**Learning Styles Analysis**: Training that helps participants identify their own learning style (i.e., their preferred method of receiving and processing information) and improve their ability to learn by using the method(s) that are most comfortable and natural to them.[49] See also Learning Style.

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[46] "Interactive Voice Response (IVR)", **http://searchcrm.techtarget.com/definition/Interactive-Voice-Response**
[47] "Glossary of Training Terms", by Carol P. McCoy, **http://hrpeople.monster.com/training/articles/170-glossary-of-training-terms-**
[48] "Learning and Performance Glossary", Big Dog and Little Dog's Performance Juxtaposition, **http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/glossary/t.html**
[49] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TP-6550.4000.

**Legislative Advocacy:** Attempts to influence the introduction or review of pending bills, ordinances or administrative rulings with the objective of having an impact on the passage or defeat of such legislation or its content.

**Lethality Risk Assessment:** An evaluation based on research of how dangerous a situation is that addresses issues such as the person's intention, method, timing and state of mind. Questions include:

- ✓ Has the person already taken steps toward committing suicide by swallowing pills, slashing their wrists?
- ✓ Have there been previous attempts?
- ✓ Does the person have a specific plan?
- ✓ Are the means to carry out the plan readily available? What is the likely timeframe for a life threatening event – the next few minutes or hours or longer?
- ✓ Has the individual had psychiatric help in the past?
- ✓ Are there other risk indicators such as depression, hopelessness, feelings of isolation, intoxication, significant recent loss?

**Live Chat/Support**: A Web service that allows organizations to communicate or "chat" in real time with visitors to their website. Also sometimes called "live support", these applications are commonly used to provide immediate customer support and information to clients and customers. Exact features and functions of live support are application specific, however common features include real time visitor monitoring, custom chat windows, invisible traffic analysis, website integration and secure administration controls.[50]

**Live Support:** see Live Chat/Support.

**Lobbying:** see Legislative Advocacy.

**Mandatory Reporting:** The legal obligation to report specific forms of child abuse, elder abuse and other endangerment situations to a government authority when a person suspects that a reportable incident has occurred. State laws in the U.S. outline specific reporting requirements for professionals if they have information related to public or private safety issues. For example, certain professionals are required to report to state authorities if they see evidence of child abuse or neglect or elder abuse or have knowledge that someone is likely to be dangerous to themselves or others.[51]

**Marketing**: The process of conducting market research studies to identify an organization's customer base, analyzing the competition, designing and pricing products and services so that they are bought or used by the public, informing the public of the

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"Learning Styles", Performance Learning Strategies, **http://www.adultlearn.com/learningstyles.html**
NOTE: this document is no longer available.
[50] "Live Support", Webopedia, **http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/L/live_support.html**
[51] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**
Revised.

available products and services and their prices, and promoting their value for the purpose of generating demand.[52]

**Media**: Channels for the communication of information including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, mobile phones and the Internet.[53]

**Media Market**: An area sharing common local television programming or local newspaper circulation (often including regions that are adjacent or reasonably close). They are most commonly associated with one or more cities and can span multiple states.[54]

**Mediated Access:** see Supported Access to Information/Services.

**Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA):** see Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU).

**Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU)**: A written agreement that clarifies the nature and extent of the working relationship between different organizations, groups or departments.[55] Also known as Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA).

**Mentoring:** A developmental partnership through which one person shares knowledge, skills, information and perspective to foster the personal and professional growth of someone else.[56] See also Coaching.

**Met Needs:** Services are available and referral(s) are provided or assistance without referrals is made available to an inquirer in response to a statement of a problem/need or a request for information. See also Assistance Without Referrals, Referrals.

**Metrics:** Quantitative measures of performance or production. In a call center context, "metrics" generally refers to statistics generated by the ACD.

**Mitigation**: Activities undertaken in preparation for a disaster or large-scale emergency that will prevent or reduce loss of life, personal injury and destruction of or damage to property when an incident actually occurs. Mitigation includes any activities that prevent or reduce the chance of an emergency occurring or lessen the damaging effects of unavoidable emergencies; and seeks to fix the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction and repeated damage.[57]

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[52] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TP-5000.
"Building a Common Vocabulary: A Glossary of Management Terms", **http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=2.2.3h.htm&module=gmt&language=English**
[53] "Media", Chazbrooks Communications, **http://www.chazb.com/pr_glossary.php**
[54] "DKE/SSP *Living Glossary*", Daily KOS website, **http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/05/04/972944/-DKE-SSP-Living-Glossary**
[55] "Nonprofit and Philanthropy Good Practice Guide Glossary", Johnson Center at Grand Valley State University, **http://www.npgoodpractice.org/glossary/1/lettern**
[56] "PACE Glossary A-Z", Participation and Community Engagement (PACE), Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, **http://www.pace.mq.edu.au/glossary.html**
[57] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TH-1800.

**MMS:** see Text Messaging

**MOA:** see Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU).

**MOU:** see Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU).

**Multimedia Message Service:** see Text Messaging

**Mutual Aid Agreement:** see Mutual Assistance Agreement.

**Mutual Aid Agreement for Assistance:** see Mutual Assistance Agreement.

**Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement:** see Mutual Assistance Agreement.

**Mutual Assistance Agreement**: A standing agreement between organizations with different service areas but similar missions, e.g., information and referral programs or fire departments in different counties, to provide resources (facilities, personnel, equipment and expertise) to one another in cases where a disaster overwhelms the resources of one of the partners. The primary objective of Mutual Assistance Agreements is to facilitate rapid, short-term deployment of emergency support prior to, during and/or after an incident. The agreements need to be in place prior to a declared disaster so resources can be available if needed and to make it easier to obtain FEMA or state reimbursement. An agreement must also be in place between the local I&R and the emergency management agency, and assistance must be formally requested per that agreement.[58]

**National Incident Management System (NIMS):** A comprehensive, nationwide systematic approach to incident management that supports the ability of government agencies at all levels, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations to work seamlessly to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location or complexity in order to reduce the loss of life or property and harm to the environment. NIMS provides a scalable and flexible framework with universal applicability that promotes all-hazards preparedness and enables a wide variety of organizations to participate effectively in emergency management/incident response.[59]

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"Glossary/Acronyms", National Response Framework (NRF) Resource Center, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, **http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/glossary.htm**

[58] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TH-1700.1900-520.
"ICDRM/GWU Emergency Management Glossary of Terms", February 19, 2006, Institute for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., **http://www.gwu.edu/~icdrm/publications/PDF/GLOSSARY%2002-19-2007.pdf**
"Glossary/Acronyms", National Response Framework (NRF) Resource Center, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, **http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/glossary.htm**

[59] "National Incident Management System (NIMS) Fact Sheet", U.S. Department of Homeland Security, **http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMSFactSheet.pdf**

**National VOAD:** see National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD).

**National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD):** A consortium of more than 30 recognized national organizations active in disaster relief. Their organizations provide capabilities to incident management and response efforts at all levels.[60]

**Needs Assessment**: An initial survey undertaken to determine the special service needs of a defined population.[61]

**NIMS**: see National Incident Management System (NIMS).

**Nondiscrimination Statement**: A statement approved by an organization's Board/Advisory Committee that prohibits discrimination in all of its forms, and documents the intention to comply with all laws, orders and regulations addressing this issue.

**Non-Productive Calls**: see Non-Transaction Calls.

**Non-Transaction Calls:** Incoming calls answered by an I&R specialist that do not involve an I&R activity (information, assessment and referral, advocacy or crisis intervention). Examples of non-transaction calls include hang ups, wrong numbers, incoming administrative or personal calls, or other similar situations. See also Calls, Transaction Calls.

**Occupancy Rate:** The percentage of logged in and available time that an I&R specialist spends handling calls versus waiting for calls to arrive.

**Offered Calls:** see Calls Offered.

**Organization Chart**: A graphic representation of the management structure of an organization that shows the responsibilities of each department, the relationships of the departments to one another and the positions or jobs within them.[62]

**Outcome Measurement:** The process of assessing the benefits or changes for individuals or populations as a result of participating in program activities. Outcomes may relate to knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, behavior, condition or status.[63]

**Outreach:** Generally, the systematic effort to provide services beyond conventional

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[60] "Glossary/Acronyms", National Response Framework (NRF) Resource Center, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, **http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/glossary.htm**
[61] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**
[62] "Organization Chart", the Free Dictionary by Farlex, **http://www.thefreedictionary.com/organization+chart**
[63] "Outcome Measurement: What and Why?", Outcome Measurement Resource Network, United Way of America, **http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/resources/What/intro.cfm**

limits as to a particular segment of the population. In an I&R context, special activities undertaken by the I&R service to ensure that specific target populations and/or community organizations are aware of the services that are available through the I&R service and system and/or the broader community service delivery system.[64]

**Partnership:** An arrangement under which all involved parties proportionately share power, commitment, risk, profit and benefit with a written agreement or contract defining the scope of the partnership. In business, a partnership is a legal relationship between two or more individuals contractually associated as joint principals in a business.[65] See also Coalition, Collaboration, Cooperation, Coordination.

**Performance Appraisal:** see Evaluation (Staff).

**Policies and Procedures**: Policies are principles, rules and guidelines formulated or adopted by an organization to reach its long-term goals. They are designed to influence and determine all major decisions and actions, and all activities take place within the boundaries set by them. Procedures are the specific methods employed to express policies in action in day-to-day operations. Together, policies and procedures ensure that a point of view held by the governing body of the organization is translated into steps that result in an outcome compatible with that view.[66] See also Policy.

**Policy:** A written document formally adopted by an organization's governing body that guides decisions and actions; a high-level statement by management specifying an objective that requires mandatory compliance by all persons within the organization.[67] See also Policies and Procedures.

**Post Call Processing Time:** see After Call Work (ACW).

**Practices:** Established actions or ways of proceeding in the regular performance of organizational duties. Policies and procedures often guide practice.[68]

**Presented Calls:** see Calls Offered.

**Primary/Secondary Services:** Primary services are the entry point services that an individual can obtain without being required to enroll in other services, whereas secondary services are those available only to individuals already receiving primary

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[64] "*AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TJ-6500.6300.
[65] "A Search For Models: From Collaboration To Co-Option, Partnership Experiences in Settlement and Human Services for Newcomers", A literature review by Jojo Geronimo, On behalf of The GTA Consortium on the Coordination of Settlement Services: The Community and Social Planning Council of Toronto; The Access Action Council; The Centre for Urban and Community Studies at the University of Toronto; The Social Planning Council of Peel, April 2000. **http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/Search_For_Models.pdf**
[66] Source: "Policies and Procedures", BusinessDictionary.com website, **http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/policies-and-procedures.html#ixzz10NVa01Mg**
[67] "Policy". Policy Auditors LLC website, **http://www.projectauditors.com/Auditor_Dictionary/P.html**
[68] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php**

services. A job training program may, for example, also offer vocational assessment to help people determine the type of employment for which they are suited and job placement assistance following training in addition to the training itself. Unless people who are not receiving job training can access them, the vocational assessment and job placement are secondary services. The only primary service is job training.

**Principle:** A fundamental law or rule that serves as a guide for reasoning or conduct.

**Procedure:** A specified series of actions or operations that have to be executed in the same manner in order to obtain the same result under the same circumstances (for example, emergency procedures).

**Productive Calls:** see Transaction Calls.

**Program:** Sometimes agencies provide a group of services (some primary and some secondary) and organize them as a program. One organization's job training program may, for example, also offer vocational assessment to help people determine the type of employment they are suited for and job placement assistance following training in addition to the training itself. This is a richer program than one that simply involves training. Another example is a domestic violence shelter. One shelter may only provide a safe place to stay for residents. Another may have counseling, assistance in obtaining a temporary restraining order (TRO), a program for the woman's children, etc. While services are essentially the same across organizations, the definitions of programs may differ significantly. see also Program Name(s) for the Service Group under Data Elements.

**Protocol:** Internal operational documents that provide standardized, step-by-step instructions for carrying out a particular action. Protocols explain what will be done, when, how and why; and while they are generally disseminated in written form to staff, they are not necessarily formally adopted by the organization’s governing body.

**Public Policy**: A course of action advocated by a group of individuals and/or organizations that proposes changes in specific laws, regulatory measures, actions or funding priorities supported by a public agency.[69]

**Public Relations**: Promotional activities intended to create a positive image and goodwill for an individual or organization among service recipients and customers, donors and grant makers, government offices, the media, special target audiences and/or the community at large.[70]

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[69] “Definitions of Public Policy and the Law”, Contributed by Dean G. Kilpatrick, Ph.D., National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center, Medical University of South Carolina, **http://www.musc.edu/vawprevention/policy/definition.shtml**

[70] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TP-6700.
“Nonprofit Good Practice Guide: Glossary of Terms”, Provided by the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership, Grand Valley State University, **http://www.npgoodpractice.org/glossary/1/letterp**
”Communications: PR and Marketing: Public Relations”, Media Miser: Turning News Into Knowledge,

**Publicity**:  Information about an organization, issue, event or cause that earns space and/or time in the media without specific payment to that media. As a public relations strategy or tactic, "publicity" can be defined as the dissemination of purposefully planned and executed messages to selected media to further the interests of the organization.[71]

**Quality**:  The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.[72]  See also Quality Assurance, Quality Indicator.

**Quality Assurance:**  A system of procedures, checks, audits and corrective actions that are undertaken to ensure that an organization's products and services meet the expectations and needs of the people they serve. For information and referral programs, quality assurance relates to service delivery, the resource database, reports and measures, disaster preparedness, cooperative relationships and organizational effectiveness.  See also Evaluation (Program), Quality, Quality Indicator.

**Quality Indicator:**  An agreed-upon process or outcome measure that is used to determine the level of quality achieved. A measurable variable (or characteristic) that can be used to determine the degree of adherence to a standard or achievement of quality goals.[73]  See also Quality, Quality Assurance.

**Queue**:  The component of the telephone system that holds callers until an I&R specialist becomes available. Callers who have waited the longest are generally the ones who get their calls answered first. The queue can be adjusted to meet community needs or program priorities.

**Racism:**  A set of attitudes that defines people based purely on their race, color, religion, origin or ancestry and contends the supposed superiority of one race above another. Discrimination, on the other hand, relates to an act that usually stems from racist outlooks.  See also Cultural Sensitivity, Culturally Appropriate, Discrimination, Diversity.

**Rapport**:  An intuitive bond that is based on the presence of trust, harmony and mutual respect in a relationship and a sense that the parties understand and share one another's concerns.

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**http://www.mediamiser.com/resources/prglossary/communications_prmarketing.html**

[71] "Publicity", Publicity, News and News Terms, Media Miser:  Turning News Into Knowledge, **http://www.mediamiser.com/resources/prglossary/publicitynewsandnewsterms.html**

[72] *The Fundamentals of Accreditation*, Michael S. Hamm, copyright © 1997, American Society of Association Executives (asae), Washington, DC.
"Quality", Quality Assurance Glossary, **http://archive.chesapeakebay.net/info/qa_glossary.cfm**

[73] Source:  "Methods & Tools, QA Resources:  A Glossary of Useful Terms", Health and Workforce Improvement Quality Assurance Project Web site, http://www.qaproject.org/methods/resglossary.html

**Received Calls:** see Calls Received.

**Referrals:** Organizations identified by I&R specialists that meet the assessed needs of the inquirer and provided to the inquirer at the conclusion of the inquiry. The definitive element distinguishing a referral is that the inquirer is aware of a problem, but requires assistance in determining the specific nature of his/her need and specific solution options that may be available to resolve it (as stated or redefined). See also Assessment and Referral, Assistance Without Referrals.

**Rescue Services:** Active intervention to save an individual's life when a lethality assessment reveals that life threatening acts have already been set in motion, particularly in situations where the individual is unable or unwilling to provide a telephone number or address to make rescue possible. Strategies may include using caller ID to locate the inquirer, calling a third party if appropriate, or sending the police or a mobile outreach team.[74]

**Resource and Referral Agency:** see I&R Service.

**Resource Database:** A computerized body of information about community resources maintained by the I&R service that can be accessed in a variety of ways including alphabetically by organization name, by type of service provided, by target population served, by geographical area served and by other filters. Information in the database is structured into records (one or more for each service provider) with fields that reflect data element information gathered using a standardized resource profile. The resource database supports the I&R process but also serves as an inventory of human services for the community. See also Data Elements, Resource Profile, Resource Information System.

**Resource File:** see Resource Database.

**Resource Information System:** The full set of resource tools maintained by the I&R service and used by I&R specialists to identify services and programs available to the public. In addition to the resource database, the resource information system may include telephone books, a pamphlet file, a small reference library, and a collection of useful Web sites or other electronic resources. See also Resource Database.

**Resource Profile:** A standardized set of information that is gathered about each service provider in the resource database. Included are data elements that describe the organization itself (e.g., legal status, licensing/accreditation information), the services it provides, the targets for service, the conditions under which services are available (e.g., eligibility criteria, application procedures, hours, fees) and the locations at which services are delivered. See also Data Elements, Resource Database.

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[74] "Organization Accreditation Standards Manual", 9th Edition, January, 2010, Copyright © American Association of Suicidology, AAS Web site, **http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/certification-programs/crisis-centers**

**Resource Specialist:** An employee or volunteer who is trained to maintain the resource database.

**Resource Writer:** see Resource Specialist.

**Risk Management**: The process of identifying, assessing, monitoring and managing material risk that can cause harm to the financial well-being, property and volunteers of an organization.[75]

**Schedule Adherence:** The percentage of time I&R specialists follow their assigned work schedules. Work schedules specify the times specialists are expected to be on the phones versus engaging in other identified activities such as taking breaks, attending meetings or participating in training/coaching sessions.

**Schedule Compliance:** see Schedule Adherence.

**Self Advocacy:** Actions taken by an inquirer to obtain the information, opportunities, respect and recognition to which they are entitled and the services for which they are eligible without the active intervention of an I&R specialist. See also Advocacy, Empowerment, Inquirer Advocacy.

**Self Determination:** The right of inquirers to make their own choices and decisions at each step in the I&R process.

**Self Service Systems:** see Independent Access to Resource Information.

**Service Area:** see Geographic Area Served under Data Elements.

**Service Classification System:** see Classification System.

**Service Gaps:** Services needed by people in the community that are not adequately provided by organizations that are part of the local service delivery system. Services may be unavailable altogether or they may available but on an inadequate basis, e.g., they may be too expensive, not available in the needed language(s), not available during non-working or other convenient hours or have eligibility criteria that exclude the inquirer. Service gaps are usually identified when there is a pattern over time of individual unmet needs. See also Unmet Needs.

**Service Group:** I&R services often group similar agency services into a "Service Group" for ease of data entry, management and display; and assign a name (Service Group Name) to the services represented in the cluster. Service group names should be indicative of all of the services within the cluster, should be "user friendly" (i.e., avoid jargon or terminology not easily understood by the general public), should be unique within the agency entry and should not duplicate the program name if one exists. See

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[75] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: NS-7000.1400.

also Service Group Description and Service Group Name under Data Elements.

**Service Level:** The percentage of calls that are answered within a specified threshold, for example, “Our service level last month was 80% of calls being answered within 48 seconds in comparison to our goal of 80% being answered in 40 seconds”. Service Levels are often expressed in an abbreviated form – e.g., “80/40” or “80/50”. There is no established standard for commercial or government call centers; it all depends on the nature of their business.

**Service Site:** A mechanism within a software package for representing one specific service provided at a specific location (site). Service sites are the most discrete level of the resource database structure. Data collected at this level allows for very specific information about one service (home delivered meals) at a specific site (Salvation Army’s West Side Office) to be retrieved and displayed. A service site may contain, for example, phone numbers specific to that one service at the one site. See also Sites.

**Services:** The discrete types of assistance an agency delivers to its clientele. Operationally, services are specific activities that can be classified using Taxonomy terms. Specific types of services are essentially the same no matter what organization is providing them.

**Short Message Service:** see Text Messaging

**Sites:** The physical locations at which clients access services provided by an agency. All agencies have a main site; many have additional site locations or branch offices. See also Service Sites.

**Sliding Scale:** A practice in which an organization’s fees for service are based on the individual’s ability to pay rather than being a fixed cost for everyone who receives the service. See also Fee Structure under Data Elements.

**SMS:** see Text Messaging

**Social Media**: Online technology tools broadly known as "social media" that enable people to create and share content which may include text, images, video, audio and multimedia communications. Social media enable shared community experiences, both online and in person; and allow people with basic computer skills to tell their stories using publishing tools such as blogs, video logs (vlogs), photo sharing, podcasting (audio stories broadcast from the Web or downloaded to a computer or portable media players) and wikis (collaboratively edited Web pages). They can also help to filter and organize the overwhelming amount of information on the Web.[76]

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[76] *AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy* term: TJ-1800.3300-600.
"A Definition of Social Media", Technology in Translation™,
**http://walksquawk.blogs.com/technologyintranslation/2007/04/a_social_media_.html**
"Social Media", Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media**

**Specialized I&R Service:** Programs that maintain information about community resources that are appropriate for a specific target population and which link individuals who are in need of specialized services with appropriate resources, and/or provide information about agencies and organizations that offer specialized services. See also Comprehensive I&R Service, I&R Service.

**Staff:** The employees and volunteers who are responsible for the delivery, management, or support of information and referral services or for database management. See also Employees, Volunteers.

**Stakeholder**: Any individual, group or organization that has a vested interest in an organization and/or the products and services provided by the organization. Examples include clients, consumers, personnel, funding organizations, referral organizations, vendors and governmental bodies.[77]

**Standards:** Reference points that define expected practices within a field and can be used to measure the extent to which individual organizations are in compliance with those requirements.

**Statewide/Province-Wide Database:** A collection of local I&R databases maintained in a standard format that have been consolidated into a larger database with statewide or province-wide geographic coverage.

**Style Guide:** A manual that establishes rules for structuring, writing and indexing resource database records; and helps to ensure that information within database records is clear, concise, consistent and relevant.

**Succession Planning:** A process for systematically and deliberately preparing for future changes of leadership in key positions within the organization. The process may identify potential replacements and provide strategies for developing and/or hiring individuals to meet future needs.[78]

**Supported Access to Information/Services:** Situations in which inquirers receive assistance and support from an I&R specialist, case manager or other professional who makes an assessment of their situation, identifies appropriate resources to meet their needs, contacts those resources, and/or arranges for them to receive services.

**Sustainability:** The ability of a program to provide quality services to its clients, expand its scope of services and client base, increase or maintain demand for services,

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"Social Media - Social Media Definition", By Alison Doyle, About.com, **http://jobsearch.about.com/od/networking/g/socialmedia.htm**

[77] "Glossary", Council on Accreditation (COA) website, **http://www.coastandards.org/glossary.php** Revised.

[78] "Technical Terms: Succession Planning", The PEW Center on the States, **http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/template_page.aspx?id=35364**

and generate income from the program and through local funding mechanisms while decreasing its dependence on funds derived from external donors.[79]

**System Advocacy:** Actions taken by the I&R service to seek changes in community conditions, structures or institutions when modifications in the service delivery system as a whole are required to ensure the adequate availability of essential community services, to contribute to human growth and development and to prevent unwitting support of conditions which are injurious to individuals and families who are residents. The objective of system advocacy is to make changes that are required to benefit the community rather than focusing on the needs of a particular individual, family or group of residents. See also Advocacy, Inquirer Advocacy.

**T1 Lines**: A high-speed digital connection that transmits data at 1.5 million bits per second through the telephone-switching network. T1 lines are a popular leased line option for businesses connecting to the Internet and for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) connecting to the Internet backbone.

**Talk Time:** The time an I&R specialist spends with a caller from the second the call is picked up to the second it is disconnected less Hold Time. Note that some ACD systems include Hold Time as part of the overall Talk Time figure and differentiate between Active Talk Time (not including time on hold) and Regular Talk Time (including time on hold). See also Total Call Handling Time.

**Taxonomy:** see AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services, Classification System.

**Taxonomy Customization:** The act of choosing which Taxonomy terms should remain active for indexing and searching purposes and which should be deactivated making them invisible to resource specialists doing data entry, I&R specialists and other end users.

**TDD Equipment:** see TTY/TDD Equipment.

**Technology:** In an I&R context, telephone systems, telephony, telecommunications, email, instant messaging (IM), text/SMS messaging, online chat, video relay/chat, voicemail, social media, I&R software packages, electronic directories and self-service mechanisms such as automated attendants/interactive voice response systems, fax-on-demand, video relay services, community kiosks and searchable I&R databases on the Internet.

**Telecommuting**: A work arrangement that allows at least a portion of scheduled work hours to be completed from a location other than the standard place of work (office) with work at home generally available as one of the options.

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[79] "Building a Common Vocabulary: A Glossary of Management Terms", **http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=2.2.3h.htm&module=gmt&language=English**

**Text Messaging**: The transmission of brief written text messages to a device such as a mobile/cellular telephone, pager or personal digital assistant (PDA) using SMS (Short Message Service) or MMS (Multimedia Message Service).[80]

**Texting:** see Text Messaging

**Total Call Handling Time:** Talk Time + Hold Time + After Call Work Time. See also After Call Work (ACW), Talk Time.

**Training Objectives:** see Learning Objectives.

**Transaction Calls:** Calls answered by an I&R specialist that involve an I&R activity (information provision, assessment and referral, advocacy, crisis intervention). Transaction calls are characterized by direct contact between the I&R specialist and the inquirer concerning a problem/need of either the inquirer or a third party during which one or more of the stages of the I&R process are completed (e.g. Rapport, Assessment, Clarification, Information and/or Referral Provision, Closure). Basically, calls in which I&R takes place. See also Calls, Non-Transaction Calls.

**Transfers:** Situations in which inquirers are transferred internally to another I&R specialist or externally to an agency or organization that provides services that can meet the individual's assessed needs. Included are cold or "blind" transfers in which the I&R specialist dials the internal extension or external number and hangs up allowing the inquirer to access the other individual directly or be placed in a queue; and warm transfers in which the I&R specialist stays on the line until the other individual comes on the line, introduces the inquirer and either conferences the call to continue a three-way discussion or drops off the line allowing the inquirer to discuss his or her situation with the other individual. See also Cold Transfer, Warm Transfer.

**TTY/TDD Equipment:** Equipment (variously known as TTYs, text telephones, TDDs and telecommunication devices for the deaf) or other specialized telecommunications devices such as voice carry-over telephones, amplified telephones, voice-activated telephones, sip-n-puff telephones, telebraillers or large visual displays that are used at home or in the office by people who are deaf or hearing impaired, have speech disabilities or limitations, or need to communicate with a person with a hearing impairment or speech disability.

**Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS):** A bank of batteries and an electronic module that can be used to protect computer system components in case of a power failure.

**Units of Service:** The ways in which a program's productivity is measured, e.g., the number of counseling sessions conducted, the number of advocacy materials

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[80] "Cell Phone Glossary", Mobiledia, **http://www.mobiledia.com/glossary/page2.html**
"SMS", Phone Scoop website, **http://www.phonescoop.com/glossary/term.php?gid=86**
"Text Messaging", Phone Scoop website, **http://www.phonescoop.com/glossary/term.php?gid=387**

distributed, the number of meals served, the number of participants assisted, the number of beds filled.

**Unmet Needs:** Individual instances where no resources are available to meet an inquirer's assessed needs and no referrals can be made. A pattern of individual unmet needs may lead to identification of service gaps at the service delivery system level. See also Service Gaps.

**Update Verification Procedures:** Procedures that can be used to validate the accuracy of suggested changes in an agency record e.g., obtaining a signature on an agency update form.

**UPS:** see Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS).

**Use Reference:** Synonyms for preferred terms that allow users to easily find a type of service without knowing the exact wording used in the Taxonomy; or to find the preferred term using their own terminology.

**Volunteers:** Individuals who offer their services and work on a full or part-time basis without remuneration.

**Waiting List:** In situations where an organization's program is currently full, the list of individuals who will be admitted next when space becomes available.

**Warm Consultative Transfer:** see Warm Transfer.

**Warm Transfer:** A call transfer situation in which the I&R specialist stays on the line until the other individual picks up, introduces the inquirer and either conferences the call to continue a three-way discussion or drops off the line allowing the inquirer to discuss his or her situation privately with the other individual. See also Cold Transfer,Transfers.

**Wrap Time:** see After Call Work (ACW).

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