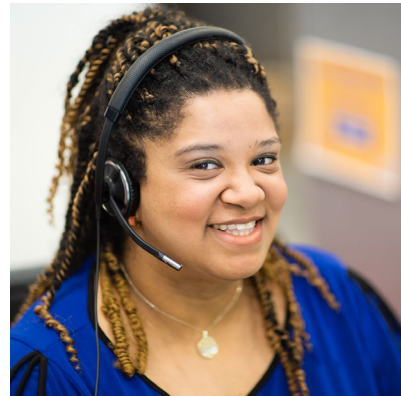


# 2020 Annual Report



*Presented to the membership Thursday, September 17, 2020  
AIRS E-Conference*



- To increase general community awareness of Information and Referral (I&R) services.
- To improve the quality of I&R as a specific service through development and education.
- To foster better communications and relationships among I&R providers.
- To assist members to meet and maintain national I&R standards as set by the **Alliance of Information and Referral System (AIRS)**.

## Michigan 2-1-1 Highlight

During the months of March and April of 2020, 2-1-1 Regional Centers throughout the state became heavily involved with the COVID-19 response. Processes were put in place to support Michigan's communication with key partners in the state including; Governor Whitmer and her administration, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Regional 2-1-1 Centers and Michigan United Ways.

Specific statewide COVID-19 response efforts supported by 2-1-1 include:

- Using our call-handling infrastructure to support the State of Michigan by hosting the COVID-19 state hotline on our inContact telephony platform, as their previous infrastructure was not meeting the volume of demand.
- Working closely with Governor Whitmer's Administration to coordinate the Governor directing Michigan residents to 2-1-1 to register for volunteer opportunities as well as day care needs for essential workers.
- Participating in the system design and process development to monitor availability and assess childcare needs of essential workers in coordination with Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, Great Start Quality Regional Resource Centers and Help Me Grow Michigan.
- Helping residents sign up for COVID-19 testing.
- Providing benefits navigation services to residents who need assistance applying for state benefits and programs.
- Effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, 2-1-1 will be taking over the full operation of the State's COVID-19 hotline, including hosting the infrastructure, answering the hotline calls and maintaining COVID-19 resources.

## Aging Highlight

2020 started off like any other year in the world of Information and Assistance through Michigan's Aging Network, but like all of our partner I&R organizations, we were soon met with the challenge of providing services amidst a pandemic. Community Resource Specialists were quickly set up to work remotely to serve the continuing needs of the community, along with new concerns brought on by COVID-19. Nutrition and social isolation were the first things to be immediately addressed by the Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) through the Department of Health and Human Services. Anyone age 60 or older could sign up on the AASA website to receive home delivered meals and regular check-in calls. These calls often led to further requests for programs and services such as financial assistance, in-home health care services and COVID-19

related items such as masks. Additional food assistance was offered through quarantine shelf-staple food boxes and fruit & vegetable boxes for individuals age 60 or older. This was an essential service for people who could not get out to shop, did not want the risk of going into a grocery store or didn't have the funds to pay for groceries. Along with so many of our community partners, we've come a long way in a short period of time, and we'll continue to tackle whatever lies ahead.

## AIRS Networker

AIRS Networker is available for all AIRS and MI-AIRS members! It provides a wealth of information and knowledge. To access, go to <http://airsnetworker.airs.org/home>, and click Sign-In. New subscribers can click reset password and **enter** your Agency's Billing Contact. Or, if you are a current AIRS Certified Member, you will receive your unique ID and password Bookmark the AIRS Networker to stay up on discussions, network with colleagues, access a library of protocols and MOUs, support work in the field, and more!

## Public Awareness

Information about meetings, trainings, certification exams and contacts are available at the **MI-AIRS WEB PAGE** [www.mi-airs.com](http://www.mi-airs.com). Please check out the **MI-AIRS FACEBOOK** page and "like" us. The Public Awareness Committee is seeking photos of I&R professionals in action to include on the Facebook page and the website. Lets "put a face" as well as a voice on I&R in Michigan

## Certification Exams

As an AIRS affiliate, MI-AIRS coordinates certification exams held in Michigan. The objective of obtaining certification often results in professionals polishing I&R specialists' knowledge and skills. The goal and the result are improved I&R services. Certification tests are provided through a remote proctor via webcam/internet.

### Did You Know?

As of August 2020, Michigan has 118 Certification holders! We have 48 CRS holders, 53 CRS/AD holders and 17 CRS/DC holders!

## AIRS Accreditation

Accreditation assures the highest national standards for I&R are met. Organizations that complete this process undergo an intensive review of their policies and practices, and inevitably grow and develop as a result.

We are proud to recognize nine MI-AIRS member organizations who demonstrate commitment to quality I&R by attaining and maintaining this quality benchmark of organizational accreditation, as listed on the AIRS website [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org).

- ★ United Way 2-1-1/United Way for Southeastern Michigan (2008 & 2014)
- ★ UPCAP Services/UP 2-1-1 (2008 & 2015)
- ★ Heart of West Michigan United Way/United Way's 2-1-1 (2005, 2013, & 2020)
- ★ Central Michigan 2-1-1 (2008 & 2015)
- ★ Gryphon Place/HELP-Line (2006 & 2013)
- ★ 2-1-1 Northeast Michigan (2011 & 2017)
- ★ Community Access Line of the Lakeshore/Call 2-1-1 (2008,2015)
- ★ Resource Center/Area Agency on Aging 1-B (2016)
- ★ The Information Center (2003, 2010, & 2016)

## Recognizing I & R across the state

2020 has been a difficult year, to say the least. Starting the New Year, would we ever have imagined we would be in such unprecedented times. When the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a world-wide pandemic, I thought after a couple of weeks this will be over. Six months later, I do not know if we are in the beginning, middle or end of this crisis. One thing I do know is I & R Centers stepped up during this time of crisis. The demand at I&R centers has increased significantly during this pandemic. We have seen volumes grow by an average of 150% to 200% over the past several months. It is not always easy to locate financial aid, especially when demand is so high. The front-line staff are dealing with a litany of intense, emotional calls while working from home and navigating the pandemic themselves. This year has been the most stressful that many of us have faced since we have provided this service. What I&R has done during this unprecedented time is nothing short of heroic. You are as much pandemic heroes as the front-line healthcare workers and grocery store workers. I have never been prouder to work in the field of I&R.