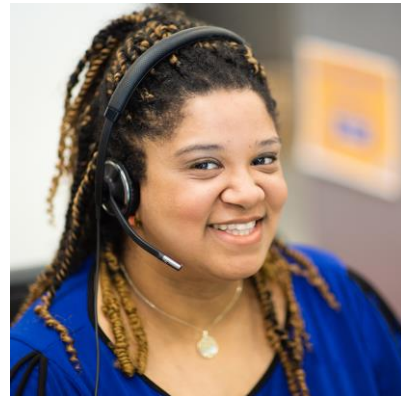


# 2021 Annual Report



*Presented to the membership Wednesday October 13  
AIRS E-Conference*



## **Our purpose:**

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

## **Aging Highlight**

2021 has been another busy year in Information and Assistance across Michigan's Aging Network. Requests increased for programs such as Telephone Reassurance calls, Home Delivered Meals and other food requests such as food distributions, food pantries and grocery delivery. There was a greater demand for Project Fresh Coupons, and these were distributed to eligible individuals along with education about the Double Up Food Bucks program for those with a Bridge Card. Masks were distributed and mailed upon request. Robotic Pets were introduced in one region as a means of combatting social isolation and providing comfort to individuals with dementia. Virtual outreach became more prominent to provide continued programs, services and information to older adults, individuals with disabilities and caregivers.

The MDHHS Aging & Adult Services Agency partnered with GetSetUP to provide free online classes to Michigan residents aged 60 and older. Last but not least, the Area Agencies on Aging, just as our other community partners saw an increased call volume with requests for COVID testing sites, COVID vaccination sites and homebound vaccination options. Keeping track of new and existing opportunities for the vaccine through health departments and in individual communities became vital to providing the most updated information to our callers.

Currently, the Area Agencies on Aging and some of the Centers for Independent Living are involved in an outreach to Homes for the Aged and Adult Foster Care Homes. Area Agencies on Aging are providing Information about the COVID vaccine and upcoming boosters, and offering them options such as transportation to a site or arranging a homebound visit. Our goal as with any type of information and assistance is to break down the barriers to provide pertinent information and referrals to ensure that needs are met.

## **Michigan 2-1-1 Highlight**

While Michigan 211 has performed admirably in connecting community members across the state with social resources to improve their circumstances, both prior to and during the pandemic, we recognize that connecting social service agencies, state and local programs, health systems, health insurers and other stakeholders through the innovative use of technology and community relationships can exponentially improve how needs are

identified, agencies are recommended, services are delivered and interventions are documented.

Over the last year, we have continued to support the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' COVID-19 response by managing both the COVID-19 hotline and the COVID-19 vaccine hotline. Over the last year, we've brought on nearly 200 staff to handle nearly 250,000 calls for both hotlines.

Additionally, in addition to supporting multiple disaster response efforts, including power outages, several floods, a major dam break, and an EEE spraying program, we formalized our agreement with Heart of Florida United Way 2-1-1 for mutual disaster response support.

With regard to enhancing our ability to coordinate and integrate with partners, 211 has developed a collection of current and future capabilities to bring our CIE vision to fruition. The interest on the part of new 2-1-1 partners has solidified a long-held belief that there is substantive value to the 2-1-1 database, and that if effectively maintained and promoted, the potential is endless. This support will allow the 2-1-1 system to be at the ready, now and into the future, as we face ever new needs in times of disaster/emergency when serving the mission of 2-1-1 "to connect people with the information and resources they need to build healthy, safe communities."

## 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

## AIRS Certification

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 July 2021, Michigan has 128 Certification holders! We have 55 CRS holders, 56 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 eight 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, 2021)
- ★ 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, 2021)
- ★ Gryphon Place/2-1-1 (2006, 2013, 2020)
- ★ 2-1-1 Northeast Michigan (2011, 2017)
- ★ Community Access Line of the Lakeshore/Call 2-1-1 (2008, 2015, 2021)
- ★ The Information Center (2003, 2010, 2016, 2021)

## Recognizing I & R across the state

As 2020 came to an end, we were hopeful we'd start to see a return to "normalcy", whatever that might be. However, 2021 has proven to be more challenging than 2020. COVID-19 vaccines became available, the Delta Variant surged, and many staff at I&R programs and service providers are still working remotely.

Front line staff continue to field calls from people who are dealing with COVID fatigue, in addition to needing help with health and human service needs. Many callers express their stress and frustrations to our staff. There seems to be no end in sight.

However, the I&R field is resilient. It is amazing to reflect on what we've become over the last 19 months. We have been called upon to deal with record call volumes and situations we would have never dreamed of. Each of you have handled it with compassion and patience.

We do not know what the next year is going to bring to the field of I&R. Whatever it may be, we know we will do it with fortitude. Last year many said they've never been prouder to be in the I&R field and that holds true this year as well. Thank you for all you are doing to keep our residents and communities safe!