



Bringing People and Services Together

# Air Waves

Wisconsin's Information Network

Fall 2011



WisconsinAIRS is a statewide, non-profit professional association of Information & Referral (I&R) and Information and Assistance (I&A) organizations and individuals. The association is dedicated to developing and maintaining a high quality, coordinated information and referral network for Wisconsin and is an affiliate of AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems), the national organization.

*Our mission is to promote the information and referral profession and support professionals engaged in Information & Referral and Information & Assistance.*

*Published by  
WisconsinAIRS  
P.O. Box 8082  
Janesville, WI 53547-8082*

[www.wisconsinairs.org](http://www.wisconsinairs.org)

## *Resources, resources, resources ...*

- ➔ Flu facts -- how to avoid the flu, where to get the vaccine
- ➔ Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
- ➔ Upper Midwest Pension Rights Project
- ➔ Farm Bill 2012 -- how nutrition programs are affected
- ➔ Weatherization and Energy Assistance
  - what help is available
  - where to apply
  - tips to winterize a home
- ➔ TWENTY great websites

**Please share this issue with co-workers and agencies that may benefit from this information and/or who may benefit from membership in WisconsinAIRS.**



## Do you or any of your staff want to take the AIRS certification exam in 2012?

### What is AIRS certification?

AIRS Certification is a professional credentialing program for individuals working within the I&R sector of human services. Certification is a measurement of documented knowledge in the field of I&R and I&R/A 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. For more information on certification and

the exams, go to [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org) and click on "AIRS Certification" in the left column.

### Exams will be scheduled at sites in Wisconsin for 2012 if there is enough interest.

WisconsinAIRS schedules and administers the AIRS certification exams in Wisconsin. WisconsinAIRS also sponsors study groups prior to the exams. We would like to know the level of interest around the state before we set up the 2012 schedule.



**Are you interested in taking the certification exam and attending a study group in 2012? Indicate your interest by answering 3 simple questions at:**  
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RHWNJBF>

This survey is for planning purposes. Your response does not guarantee an exam date or site. The 2012 exam and study group schedule will be posted on [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org) and [www.wisconsinairs.org](http://www.wisconsinairs.org).

### ----- Flu facts -----

**Get your vaccine now!**  
(If you haven't already done so.)



#### The Flu I.Q. Quiz --

<http://flu.gov/individualfamily/about/index.html#fluquiz>

10 quick and easy questions -- test your knowledge of influenza.

#### Flu information for:

- Parents (and expecting): <http://flu.gov/individualfamily/parents/index.html>
- Seniors: <http://flu.gov/individualfamily/seniors/index.html>
- People with health conditions: <http://flu.gov/individualfamily/healthconditions/index.html>
- Caregivers: <http://flu.gov/individualfamily/caregivers/index.html>

#### Flu Clinic Finder:

<http://wisconsinfluclinic.info/>

Find where to get flu vaccine in Wisconsin; this Clinic Finder is compiled by 2-1-1 Wisconsin; just enter your zip code

#### Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- **Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.** Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. You can also use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Try to avoid close contact with sick people.**
- **Stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100°F or 37.8°C) or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®).**
- **While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.**

## Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) advocates statewide for the independence and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in Wisconsin.

BPDD is comprised of 25

Governor-appointed members, 60% of which are people with DD and their family members. The Board also has members who represent state and county agencies, and non-profit organizations, too.

We just began a five-year state plan that emphasizes projects, advocacy, and outreach in three primary goal areas: 1) self-direction in the use of natural and paid supports; 2) competitive wage, integrated employment; and 3) effective self-advocacy by individuals with disabilities and their families.

BPDD encourages your network to get involved in our efforts and to publicize our opportunities to people with disabilities and their families with whom you work. Some of our current opportunities include:

- ◆ Join the DAWN network! (<http://www.dawninfo.org/ea/dawnform.cfm>) DAWN is a 1200-member statewide grassroots advocacy group that keeps members updated on public policy issues related to disability (e.g. Family Care caps, education, opportunity to provide public input and join councils/workgroups). Members receive email alerts on time-sensitive issues and information on how to take action.
- ◆ “Like” the BPDD on Facebook! (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Wisconsin-Board-for-People-with-Developmental-Disabilities/231731545443>) to learn the latest about disability issues and Board activities.
- ◆ Promote and attend our annual Self-Determination Conference (<http://www.wi-bpdd.org/sdc/>) in Wisconsin Dells each November. This year’s conference focused on employment, supported living, hiring staff, planning for the future, becoming involved in community life, transitioning from high school to adulthood, and

more. The conference includes more than 50 presenters, many of whom are self-advocates telling their own success stories. Check out the video of this year’s conference (<http://youtu.be/MNVTfTE1DKc>).



◆ Encourage self-advocates who are interested in leadership to join our Partners in Policymaking Program (<http://www.wi-bpdd.org/projects/partnersinpolicymaking/>) to

learn the skills and make the connections to effectively advocate on behalf of programs and supports that improve the lives of people with disabilities.

- ◆ Visit our website ([www.wi-bpdd.org](http://www.wi-bpdd.org)) frequently for updates on events, trainings, and to download free publications on a variety of topics that include legislative advocacy, community inclusion and organizing, aging and disability, disability data, benefits counseling, and much more.
- ◆ Let’s Get to Work youth employment grant (<http://www.dawninfo.org/news4/post.cfm/let-s-get-to-work-rfp>). BPDD has received one of six Projects of National Significance to improve employment outcomes for youth with developmental disabilities in transition. We currently are recruiting four schools statewide to be part of our pilot, which would provide training, consultation, and a \$20,000 grant to improve employment outcomes for students while still in high school. Please disseminate this opportunity widely to high schools in which you may have contacts, and also pass it on to families.
- ◆ Each year, BPDD provides SPARKS mini-grants focused on improving competitive-wage employment, self-advocacy, and community organizing of people with disabilities. The next round of mini-grants, which offer up to \$3,000 each, will be available in June. For more information, go to [http://www.wi-bpdd.org/grantscontracts/sparks\\_grants.cfm](http://www.wi-bpdd.org/grantscontracts/sparks_grants.cfm)

## Upper Midwest Pension Rights Project

The Upper Midwest Pension Rights Project (“UMPRP”) is a no-cost program designed to assist workers, retirees, beneficiaries, and their families in understanding and enforcing their pension benefit rights. The Project is funded by a grant from the Health and Human Services Agency, supervised by the Agency on Aging. The UMPRP delivers legal counseling to those seeking assistance with a pension claim. The Project evaluates and determines claim viability, and assists individuals in making claims and filing appeals, as well as obtaining pension plan documents and assistance in determining correct benefit calculations. The primary types of assistance include:

1. Obtaining pension plan documents to review the individual’s rights under the plan;
2. Determining compliance with the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA);
3. Locating “lost” pension plans;
4. Assisting employees with claims to the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC) for plans that have been terminated;
5. Making claims for benefits and filing appeals upon denial;
6. Assisting survivors with spousal and beneficiary rights under the plan;
7. Assisting with spousal rights under Qualified Domestic Relations Orders (QDRO’s);
8. Assisting employees with claims arising from incorrect calculations or incorrect interpretations of plans.

Project attorneys have specialized training in employee benefits law pertaining to single and multi-employer plans, retirement plans maintained by federal, state, and local government plans, railroad plans, and church plans. Project staff provide advocacy through administrative claims and appeals,

and prepare the administrative record should the case require litigation. The Project also consults with a panel of expert ERISA attorney litigators for possible referrals for litigation.

The UMPRP serves the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota. There is a part-time attorney in Iowa to handle Iowa clients, sponsored by *Iowa Legal Aid*. The Project is sponsored in Wisconsin by the *Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups* who makes referrals to the UMPRP and

assist with outreach and dissemination of Program materials throughout Wisconsin. There are no age or income eligibility requirements in order to be served by the UMPRP.

The UMPRP also conducts extensive outreach through a network of various labor unions, senior citizen and elderly advocacy groups, the AARP, Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC’s), elected officials (federal, state, county, and local), legal services providers, and social

security offices throughout the five-state region served by the UMPRP.

The activities of the UMPRP interrelate with many other legal aid groups and matters handled by other agencies. Clients assisted by the UMPRP often have issues related to workers' rights, SSDI, family law, elder law, housing, as well as other claims for government aid. The UMPRP tries to facilitate with other legal aid groups as much as possible to make sure clients’ needs are met.

For many of our clients the correct payment of their pensions makes all the difference in the world for meeting their economic needs. Some clients face recoupments that could cause them to be in need of welfare from the state. Other clients face possible pension reductions that could mean they cannot afford their rent, utilities or food. For many others, the UMPRP's services provide simple peace of mind that



they are getting a fair deal and that someone is monitoring this process. Without the UMPRP, clients are alone in attempting to understand the complicated pension process and have to rely on pension plan

administrators and companies to administer things fairly.

For assistance or more information, please contact the UMPRP at 1-866-783-5021.

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## **Farm Bill 2012: The Current State of Play**

*By David Lee*

The Farm Bill is the legislation that supports U.S. agricultural and food priorities, funding commodity crops and subsidies, nutrition, conservation, agricultural research, rural development, and other related programs.

In many ways, the name “Farm Bill” has become sort of a misnomer. Over two-thirds of the spending in the Farm Bill is dedicated to nutrition programs, most notably the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides money for about 48 million low-income families to buy food. (Wisconsin’s name for this federal nutrition assistance program is FoodShare, formerly known as Food Stamps.) Other food programs in the Farm Bill include The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which provides high quality commodity food to food banks to distribute, and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which provides a monthly box of food to low-income seniors.

The current Farm Bill is set to expire September 30, 2012 and in our nation besieged by the politics of deficit reduction, new dynamics and a continually fluid state of play has emerged in the Farm Bill’s reauthorization.

Over the summer, a Congressional Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction was created as part of a deal to raise the nation’s debt ceiling. This “Super Congress,” made up of six Republicans and six Democrats, was tasked to find \$1.5 trillion in deficit reduction or risk \$1.2 trillion in automatic cuts, including \$600 billion in defense, over ten years if an agreement was not reached by the end of the year. In this latter scenario, also known as “sequestration,” some nutrition programs like SNAP and TEFAP would be exempted from cuts.

As these cuts would cover ten years, any final recommendation would create the spending framework for a Farm Bill. The Agriculture committees in the House and Senate, who are responsible for the legislation, saw an opportunity to head off deeper cuts to their programs and worked to develop bipartisan, bicameral recommendations to the Super Committee on the assumption that they would be folded into the final proposal.

However, the Super Committee failed to meet its November 23<sup>rd</sup> deadline to propose legislation to Congress and now, all bets are off. While sequestration protects some nutrition programs, others like the WIC program are not protected. The automatic cuts also don’t begin until 2013, so members of Congress will have all of 2012 to legislate a different course.

All of this makes for an uncertain Farm Bill process. A number of proposals have surfaced that would find savings in SNAP by making the Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program’s “Heat and Eat” policy more restrictive or by changing categorical eligibility. You can expect that proposals like these, which would either lead to a significant, immediate decrease in monthly SNAP benefits or make it more difficult for people to apply for the SNAP, to continue to crop up over the next year.

No matter what happens in the next weeks and months, it is absolutely vital that our members of Congress know how important nutrition programs are in the Farm Bill and that in the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression, it is imperative that programs like SNAP, TEFAP, and CSFP are not only protected, but enhanced.

As the nation slowly recovers from the Great Recession, we should be working to strengthen the nutrition safety net in order to ensure that the millions of struggling Americans do not fall too far behind and are ready to take advantage of the opportunities when the economy recovers.

Please visit [www.hungeractioncenter.org](http://www.hungeractioncenter.org) and sign up to receive action alerts. You can also visit [www.feedingamericachampions.org](http://www.feedingamericachampions.org) for tools to help you engage in the fight against hunger.



*David Lee is the Director of Government Relations and Advocacy at Feeding America, the nation's largest anti-hunger charity. You can contact him at [dlee@feedingamerica.org](mailto:dlee@feedingamerica.org).*



**National Information and Referral Services Day**  
*The U.S. Senate honors I&R / I&A professionals*



**By the United States Senate -- S. RES. 241**

*Whereas* information and referral services link the consumer who has a need or problem with the most appropriate service to address that need or solve that problem;

*Whereas* quality information and referral services are the keystone point of entry to the entire human services structure delivery system;

*Whereas* information and referral services have been recognized in Federal legislation for more than 35 years since the 1973 reauthorization of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.), and the subsequent establishment of the national Eldercare Locator and the development of Aging and Disability Resource Centers;

*Whereas*, as of the date of agreement to this resolution, the United States is served by information and referral through 2-1-1 programs, aging information and referral services, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, child care resource and referral services, military family centers, and other specialty information and referral services;

*Whereas* individuals who understand the variety of services available are better equipped to make decisions;

*Whereas*, in 1997, the national 2-1-1 initiative began with the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta creating the first 24-hour telephone information and referral service using the easy-to-remember 2-1-1 dialing code for access;

*Whereas*, in 2000, the Federal Communications Commission reserved the 2-1-1 dialing code for community information and referral services, intended as an easy-to-remember and universally recognizable number that would serve as a vital connection between individuals and families in need, and appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies, on a regular basis and in times of disaster;

*Whereas* the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems has been providing professional standards and credentialing programs for those operating information and referral services;

*Whereas* expanding access to information about, and referrals to, services provides individuals with lower cost and safer options for managing their needs, and is likely to reduce confusion, frustration, and inaccessibility to services; and

*Whereas* requests for assistance through information and referral services and 2-1-1 have increased across the United States due to the economic crisis:

*Now, therefore*, be it *Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) expresses support for the designation of November 16, 2011, as National Information and Referral Services Day—

(A) to raise public awareness about the existence and importance of information and referral services available to all people in the United States; and

(B) to more effectively target those services to reach individuals most in need;

(2) encourages activities in communities across the United States involving schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and other entities to ensure information and referral services are part of everyday life in addition to emergency preparedness programs; and

(3) reaffirms the importance of clear and consistent professional standards to govern every aspect of quality information and referral services.

## Winterize Your Home

from USA.gov

(note: each phrase in blue text is an active web link)

Follow these [low-cost and no-cost tips](#) to keep your [home heating costs](#) as low as possible:

- Open curtains on south-facing windows during the day to let the sun heat your home.
- Cover drafty windows from the inside with clear plastic sheeting or film.
- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable when you are home and awake. When you're asleep or out of the house, turn it back 10°–15°. A [programmable thermostat](#) makes it easy.
- Find [air leaks](#) around your home and [seal them](#).
- [Schedule service for your heating system](#). If you have a furnace, replace the filter once a month or as needed.



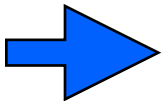
- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is going. When you use the fireplace, open dampers in the bottom of the firebox or open the nearest window about 1 inch and close doors leading into the room. If you never use your fireplace, plug and seal the chimney flue.
- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F).
- Learn more on [lowering your energy costs](#), including energy audits, long-term investments and financial assistance.

Related publication:

[Energy Savers: Tips on Saving Energy and Money at Home](#)

Publicaciones relevantes:

[Ahorro de Energía: Consejos para ahorrar energía y dinero en su hogar](#) (PDF)



### Where to apply in Wisconsin for Energy Assistance and Weatherization --

<http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov/section.asp?linkid=119&locid=25>

*An interactive state map.*



<http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov/>

Phone: 866-HEATWIS

**The Wisconsin Division of Energy Services provides services to Wisconsin qualified residential households with energy assistance and weatherization needs. For more information call 1- 866-HEATWIS (432-8947).**

The **Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP)** administers the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Public Benefits Energy Assistance Program. LIHEAP and its related services help approximately 230,000 Wisconsin households annually. In addition to regular heating and electric assistance, specialized services include:

- Emergency fuel assistance,
- Counseling for energy conservation and energy budgets,

- Pro-active co payment plans,
- Targeted outreach services,
- Emergency furnace repair and replacement.

Services are provided locally through:

- County social services offices,
- Tribal governments,
- Private non-profit or other government agencies.

For more information on WHEAP, call 1-866-HEATWIS (432-8947).

The **Wisconsin Weatherization Assistance Program (WisWAP)** uses energy conservation techniques to reduce the cost of home energy. Correcting health and safety hazards and potentially life-threatening conditions is the first consideration in WAP activities.



## Websites for you to:

- Expand your knowledge base
- Pass on to your clients for their use and information
- And ... a few just for fun!

### *Talking to older drivers about safe driving --*

<http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/CAMPAIGNS/Older+Drivers>

Getting older does not mean a person's driving days are over. But it is important to plan ahead and take steps to ensure the safety of your loved ones on the road. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers free materials to help you learn more about how to recognize and discuss changes in your older loved one's driving.

### *Safe driving - Self-assessment checklist --*

<http://www.nationaltriad.org/docs/OlderDriver/Self-Assessment.pdf>

Page 1 is a 15-question list; page 2 has the answers and interpretation of the score.

### *Safe Driving for Older Adults -- an online checklist --*

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/olddrive/OlderAdultswebsite/index.html>

This checklist addresses physical changes that affect driving (eyesight, physical fitness, and reflexes).

### *Connecting the Disability Community to information and opportunities --*

<https://www.disability.gov/>

Find a job, apply for scholarships, start a small business, find housing, learn about disability benefits, find government grants, links to technology resources, health news, preparing for an emergency ... and more.

### *Polypharmacy in older adults --*

<http://prescriptions.uchicago.edu/Polypharmacy/>  
Polypharmacy means "many drugs" and refers to problems that can occur when a patient is taking more medications than are actually needed. It is a particular concern for older adults, who make up 13% of the population but account for almost 30% of all prescribed drugs. Info on symptoms, OTC products, specific drugs, patient guides, and more.

### *Protect your school-age kids from identity theft --*

<http://ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt056.shtm>

Identity thieves don't target only those with incomes or credit cards. Kids can be victims, and when they are, they may not find out until they grow up and apply for a job, a student loan or a car loan, or try to rent an apartment. But parents can take measures to protect their children's personal information, including the information they provide on school forms and in school records and directories

### *GERD or Acid Reflux Disease -- treatment options*

<http://tinyurl.com/Girdinfo>

This summary describes GERD and explains research about types of treatment. It also talks about what research has found about the benefits and risks of each treatment. It can help you talk with your doctor about GERD.

### *Winter Fires -- safety tips for the home*

<http://publications.usa.gov/USAPubs.php?PubID=287>

A download publication with tips for use of kerosene heaters, wood stoves and fireplaces, furnace heating ... and other safety tips for the winter.

### *The Special Needs Store --*

<http://thespecialneedsstore.com/cart/>

Making the lives of parents, therapists, and educators of children with special needs and developmental delays easier by enabling them to find a wide variety of resources and products in one location!

### *Hoarding --*

<http://www.ocfoundation.org/hoarding/>

The Obsessive Compulsive Foundation website on hoarding. Info on hoarding (diagnosing, types, tests, causes); help (support, therapy, meds, treatment providers); community services.

### ***Publications USA --***

<http://publications.usa.gov/USAPubs.pdf>

USA.gov's new publications web site. You may have visited [Pueblo.GSA.gov](http://Pueblo.GSA.gov) in the past to order free government consumer-related publications from our Pueblo, CO facility. Same folks ... but changed website to make it more memorable and easier to use. Publications from across government, on topics including: Cars, Consumer Protection, Education, Employment, Federal Programs, Food, Health, Housing, Money. Find hundreds of free publications to read online, download in PDF format, or order in print. Also offers a small but growing number of e-books to download to your e-reader, tablet, or smart phone. Many publications are offered in both Spanish and English.

### ***12 Days -- Holiday Tips***

<http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/12-Holiday-Tips-USAgov.pdf>

Buying, safe toys, eating, travel .. and lots more.

### ***12 Days -- Holiday Tips FOR KIDS***

<http://www.kids.gov/12days.pdf>

Giving, donating, eat healthy, traditions, pets, travel ... and more!



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## ***And ... a few just for fun!***

### ***Internet Slang Dictionary & Translator --***

<http://www.noslang.com/>

Enter text slang, internet slang, or IM acronyms such as idk, aft, blog, or lol and this dictionary will translate the netspeak. Also, take a slang quiz!

### ***Happy News --***

<http://happynews.com/>

Up-to-date good things, good news, happy news! Real stories, always positive. "We believe virtue, goodwill and heroism are hot news. That's why we bring you up-to-the-minute news, geared to lift spirits and inspire lives. Add in a diverse team of Citizen Journalists reporting positive stories from around the world, and you've got one happy place for news."

### ***Today's Front Pages --***

<http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/>

Front page of 869 newspapers from 85 countries. Includes several from Wisconsin.

### ***Moviefone --***

<http://www.moviefone.com/>

Find showtimes, reviews, movie news, trailers

### ***Hanukkah games***

<http://primarygames.com/holidays/hanukkah/games.htm>

### ***Christmas games --***

<http://akidsheart.com/holidays/christms/chgames.htm>

### ***Track Santa!!!!***

<http://www.noradsanta.org/en/>

A perennially favorite website! Countdown by the second; Santa trip video, Kid's Countdown Village games, and a Santa's trip app.



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Sure the world is full of trouble, but as long as we have people undoing trouble, we have a pretty good world.

-- Helen Keller

# The “New” AIRS Networker FAQ

## (Nearly everything you need to know about the new AIRS Networker)

*This document was created to answer many of the questions you might have about the transition to the new version of the AIRS Networker.*

[Last Updated: September 2011]

### Q: What is the “New” AIRS Networker?

The new AIRS Networker at <http://airsnetworker.airs.org> is a Web 2.0 application that allows AIRS members to work together in all manner of online communities and collaborations. It is a professional social networking application and you are free to harness its power in any way that helps yourself and your organization.

At its core is a web-based mailing list (called the Open Forum) that operates in basically the same way as the current AIRS I&R Networker. But although it has similar core functionality, overall the new Networker has a multiplicity of advantages over the previous system, including the ability to create and expand searchable resource libraries, public and private discussion groups, blogs, searchable directories and private online communities.

### Q: Is the “New” AIRS Networker really all that “new”?

The New AIRS Networker is the latest online tool created to assist with what I&R folks have been doing for many years – supporting one another. The history of the AIRS Networker goes back to a joint project of the Texas Information and Referral Network and the Texas Assistive Technology Program who started the I&R Networker in May 1997. For most of these years, it has been a Listserv via Yahoo Groups facilitated by the volunteer support of David Smith of the United Way of Greater Houston and Tino Paz of the United Way Worldwide (both of whom have agreed to maintain their administrative role).

The AIRS Networker exists to help I&R and I&R/A providers find ideas and resources, ask questions related to their operations, and exchange information about improving their direct service and overall operations.

### Q: What are some its primary advantages?

- Ability to set parameters for how to receive postings according to your preferences (e.g. from a daily digest to real time)
- Ability to find colleagues and build contacts by searching either by first name, last name, city, organization, etc.

- The ability to create private communities (e.g. everyone dealing with telephone technology or all 211 providers in Ohio, or all members of Virginia AIRS, or all ADRCs in Wisconsin, etc.)
- A Glossary containing definitions of over 500 I&R-related terms (e.g. “what is a “call”?). If you don’t agree with a definition, you can post a clarification
- Private communities with a controlled membership and a resource library that is only accessible to members
- Resources are searchable. You can conduct a general search of a concept (e.g. phantom calls) and you can find out if there are documents, blogs, discussion threads or other materials relevant to your inquiry
- Rather than send someone a document, you can place that document in a resource library (for example, the Open Forum library) and it is there for others ... for now and in the future
- It’s kinda cool

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**AIRS Networker is a professional social networking application to help you and your organization**

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### Q: How much does it cost?

It is free, but you or your organization must be a member of AIRS.

### Q: How many staff from my organization can participate?

There are no limits, as many as you feel will benefit. You can even use the system as a private Intranet for your agency/program.

### Q: When will the “old” AIRS Networker Listserv close?

No new members will be accepted after January 1, 2012. The ability to post new messages will be removed on February

1st 2012. The archived postings will still be available – at <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/airsnetworker/> – but only for searching previous postings.

### Q: Can the Yahoo Groups version remain open?

That option was discussed and the conclusion reached that two Listservs is twice the work with half the advantages. The value of the exchanges also diminishes for everyone if some folks are on the old Listserv and some on the New Networker. The archived postings will still be available – at <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/airsnetworker/> – but only for searching previous postings.

**Q: How do I join the AIRS Networker?**

You need your own individual account. If you are the billing contact for your agency, then you have an account. Or if you have ever applied for a certification exam, then you have an individual account, but are probably unaware of it. Go to <http://airsnetworker.airs.org> and click "Login to see members only content" located on the top right hand side. Then click "Forgot your login information?" ... and if you are on the system, you will be emailed your unique ID and password.

**Q: What if that doesn't work?**

If you do not have an individual account, you will need to ask the billing contact for your organization (the person who receives emails from AIRS on membership renewals) to create one for you. Ask him or her to use [this document](#). If you are not the billing contact, refer to [this document](#). This [Intro to the new AIRS Networker webinar recording will play on Windows Media](#) and covers login, getting started on the new AIRS Networker and how to clean up your organizational record. (Seems to work best via Internet Explorer).

**Q: I have tried all the above but I am still experiencing problems (of whatever nature), what should I do?**

Email Clive Jones of AIRS at [clivemjones@gmail.com](mailto:clivemjones@gmail.com)

**Q: What do I do when I login for the first time?**

Look for the box marked "Getting Started" on the right hand side of the new Networker itself and go through the steps outlined. Finally, there is a video called "Settling In" which is embedded in the "Getting Started" box that helps you through the next level of awareness.

**Q: How could I organize an online training program for my group?**

Email Clive Jones of AIRS at [clivemjones@gmail.com](mailto:clivemjones@gmail.com) to schedule a webinar. Clive is also available to provide

regional workshop webinars on the features and benefits of the new AIRS Networker.

**Q: Any rules to participation?**

Each online community develops its own set of cultural guidelines on how to interact with its members. Here is the social 'netiquette' that we have evolved from the old AIRS Networker:

- When replying to a message, delete non-relevant parts
- Completing your profile makes it easier for other people to find you and contact you directly should the need arise
- You can reply to an individual directly or to the entire online community. As a rule of thumb, ask yourself whether your message is something the whole list would be interested in, or is your message something only the individual recipient will care about. Please avoid "me to" type responses.
- If you are asking a question, such as "Does anyone have a ...", try looking through the records of previous threads and resources first. Someone may already have posted exactly what you need
- These guidelines are meant to reduce moments of frustration, not create new ones. Don't be afraid to speak up or speak out about an issue. The AIRS Networker is and should be a fun and breezy way to learn about the I&R profession around the world.



*Thank you!*

Thanks to everyone who attended the WisconsinAIRS 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells in mid-October . There were positive comments about the keynote topic ("Social Media"), the workshops, the location, and the opportunity to network with other professionals. Watch for the details of our 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference ... coming in Fall 2012!

*Thanks again,  
The Wisconsin-AIRS Board of Directors*

## WisconsinAIRS Board of Directors, 2011-2012

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"Air Waves" is published quarterly  
by WisconsinAIRS  
P.O. Box 8082, Janesville, WI 53547-8082.  
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Editor reserves the right to edit  
for content and space.



### Thank you ... but not good-bye!

Many thank yous to Jayne Mullins, Steve Peterson, and Rose O'Hara for their years of positive contributions to the WisconsinAIRS Board. Jayne and Steve reached term limits. Rose moved on to changes in her work load.

Looking to the future, WisconsinAIRS will be in good hands with new board members Marie Lehman, Jim Pritzkow, and Byron Rachel. Welcome aboard and thanks for stepping up to the challenges and rewards of board membership.