



# Wisconsin's Information Network

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**Summer 2005**

P.O. Box 1946, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201...a state association  
<http://www.wisconsinairs.org>

## **Message from the President**

*By Susan Richards, C.I.R.S., United Way Fox Cities Information and Referral 2-1-1*

### **Areas of Accomplishment**

As the summer comes to a close, I wanted to share a brief update of the accomplishments that the WisconsinAIRS Board has worked so hard on this past year, helping us to fulfill our mission of promoting the profession and providing support to the providers of Information & Referral.

- Collaborative partnership with 2-1-1 Wisconsin, Inc. Board to provide education and training for AIRS Certification and Accreditation and assisting in the development of the statewide database.
- Increased membership through the diligent efforts of the Marketing/Membership committee.
- Creation of a WisconsinAIRS brochure that increased awareness of the benefits of membership in our organization.
- Hosted an exam site for Certification testing in April 2005. Have scheduled two additional testing sites for Certification testing on September 8, 2005 at the 26th WisconsinAIRS annual conference and November 11, 2005 at the Oshkosh Public Library.
- Published an electronic newsletter for membership.
- Approval of the "Draft" WisconsinAIRS Styleguide that meets the AIRS Final Recommendations for XML Data Transfer Standards.

Thank You:

I would like to extend a special thank you to the board of directors, who through their leadership, hard work and extra efforts were instrumental in achieving these accomplishments.

"Learning Locally Preparing Nationally":

I would like to extend a special invitation everyone to attend the 26th Annual WisconsinAIRS Conference to be held at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. You can help us celebrate these accomplishments and learn more about the exciting 2006 AIRS Conference to be held in Milwaukee, WI.

## **Specialized I & R's Are A Valuable Resource**

Specialized information and referral services are often an excellent resource for people calling their comprehensive information and referral office. There are over five hundred local, regional, or statewide organizations that offer specialized information and referral services to people in Wisconsin. Great Rivers 2-1-1 provides three specialized information and referral lines for Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (through a grant awarded to Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center). We also house and maintain the database and provide the after-hours service for three of Wisconsin's Aging and Disability Resource Centers. It has been our experience that the collaboration and cooperation between specialized I & R's and comprehensive I & R's is beneficial in several ways.

Specialized databases often gather and maintain agency information with a level of detail that would be difficult for a comprehensive I & R to maintain. For example, the Minnesota Area Agencies on Aging will collect very detailed information regarding housing for senior citizens including whether the facility has access to a copy machine, an on-site beauty salon, or accepts pets over 30 pounds. This information can be very important to a caller, but is likely more detail than a comprehensive information and referral center can reasonably track.

Specialized I & R's provide the expertise of staff specifically educated/experienced regarding issues facing a specific population. Wisconsin First Step is a statewide information and referral line for parents and providers of children with special needs. The WFS hotline is staffed from 8 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday by Parent Specialists, information and

referral professionals who not only have specific education regarding disability issues but are also parents of children with special needs. Parents of children with disabilities in Wisconsin advocated for this requirement because they understood that the experience of parenting a child with special needs provides unique experience and knowledge that is important to Wisconsin First Step callers.

Staff at specialized information and referral centers are often the providers for their specific populations. For instance, staff at the Aging and Disability Resource Centers are also the providers, experts, and the primary service intake point for older adults and people with disabilities needing assistance. This often makes these agencies the primary, and sometimes the only referral needed for elderly citizens and people with disabilities.

Specialized I & R workers are likely to pursue involvement in collaborations, organizations, and activities with other professionals who work with the same populations. Through these collaborative efforts the agencies/staff remain current with new initiatives, identified gaps of service/areas of concern, legislation which may affect a specific population, and other areas of knowledge that enhance their work with specific callers. For example staff at the Maternal and Child Health Hotline also participate on Wisconsin's MCH Advisory Council and the State's Perinatal Depression Taskforce. Staff at Wisconsin First Step work with the Regional Children With Special Health Care Needs centers and attend conferences, such as Circles of Life, which brings together both providers and parents of children with special needs. These connections enrich their work with callers in a unique and specific manner.

There are also benefits to be had in creating formal collaborations between

specialized I & R's and comprehensive I & R's. The collaboration between Great Rivers 2-1-1 and the Aging and Disability Resource Centers in LaCrosse, Trempealeau, and Jackson Counties has been a mutually beneficial enterprise. Four agencies share one database, which eliminates a great deal of the time, effort, and cost that would be involved if each agency were maintaining their own database. Great Rivers 2-1-1 also provides after hours phone coverage for the three ADRC's, allowing them to meet their 24-hour telephone coverage requirement at far less cost than staffing their own phones around the clock. In return Great Rivers 2-1-1 receives some additional income for providing services that are a natural extension of the work they already do.

Specialized I & R's have been valuable resources for a long time. I think as our organizations move into the future seeking opportunities for collaboration between comprehensive I & R's and specialized I & R's will continue to provide benefits for our agencies and the public we serve.

**Teresa Halverson, CRS  
Great Rivers 2-1-1**

## **AIRS Board News**

I am honored to be elected to the AIRS Board of Directors. Serving on the AIRS Board of Directors is an opportunity to help support the growth of the profession and organization. I was nominated to board by Theresa Lambert from the National Association of State Units on Aging, National Information & Referral Support Center.

It is an exciting time in the field of Information and Referral/Assistance. I am

looking forward to the 2006 National AIRS conference that will be held in Milwaukee! It will be a wonderful opportunity to highlight some of the work that is done in the state and welcome those in attendance to Wisconsin.

**Maurine Strickland  
Bureau of Aging & Disability Resources**

## **United Way Fox Cities 2-1-1 News**

United Way Fox Cities 2-1-1 is pleased to announce that Wendy Weyenberg has recently joined the staff as 2-1-1 Specialist. Wendy obtained her Bachelor Degree in Human Services from the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh and was formerly employed as a House Supervisor for the Emergency Shelter of the Fox Valley. Wendy brings to us work experience as an Information and Resource Associate for the Family Resource Center of Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center in Los Angeles, CA. In her spare time, Wendy is an active volunteer for the Fox Valley Sibling Support network and the Emergency Shelter. She enjoys going to movies, meeting new people, traveling and visiting with family and friends.

**Susan Richards  
United Way Fox Cities 2-1-1**

## **Member News – Oshkosh Public Library**

As the only current public library member of WisconsinAIRS, I thought I would share some statistics about the use of our library – I've excluded our Information & Referral Service statistics since we're the only Wisconsin library that does I&R.

The Oshkosh Public Library has a municipal population of about 63,000. Our public service desks received a total of 60,998 reference questions and 6,037 directional questions in 2004. Our questions come in a variety of ways: most of our questions are from people who come to the library, others call or send faxes, letters or emails. We also answer questions interactively in live chat sessions. We had 236,705 visits to our library's websites and 44,008 users on our public Internet access computers. Over 7,500 people (mostly children!) attended various public programs.

**Janice Dibble, CRS  
Oshkosh Public Library**

## **Donation to WisconsinAIRS Library**

Thank you to Julie Grip and the United Way's First Call of Marathon County for the donation of 3 recent print directories:

- *2005-2006 Community Services Directory*
- *2005-2006 Senior Resource Directory*
- *2004-2006 Youth Yellow Pages.*

It's always helpful to see what information is contained in other agencies' publications. As with other items in our member library collection, these can be loaned to you at any time.

Simply contact me: Janice Dibble, Oshkosh Public Library, 920-236-5214 or [dibble@oshkoshpubliclibrary.org](mailto:dibble@oshkoshpubliclibrary.org).

## ***Wanted!***

Hey, all you 'Wannabe' Writers! We know you're out there!

If you are planning to attend the WisconsinAIRS conference on September 8th & 9th, we'd like to invite you to share your experience with others by writing a piece to be included in the next edition of the WisconsinAIRS Newsletter. This can be an article about what you learned in a particular workshop that you attended, your reflections on the conference in general, or a combination of both. There may be many I&R providers throughout the state who would like to attend this year's conference but will not be able to due to budget constraints. So if you'd be willing to share, we would love to hear from you.

Contact: Diane Allgood  
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715-361-2890  
[dallgoo@shsmh.org](mailto:dallgoo@shsmh.org)

Here's your chance to shine and help with the newsletter at the same time. ~

## **AIRS and WisconsinAIRS New Membership Structure Implemented January 1, 2006**

### ***AIRS Approves New Membership Structure – We're Excited!***

A new AIRS membership structure proposal was presented and approved at the national AIRS conference in June. The four-tiered structure gives members the option to choose the level of service that best meets their needs based on the products and services available from AIRS. Members will also receive WisconsinAIRS Affiliate benefits. The model has been in discussion for the past 18 months. Members can sign up for the new plan that will be implemented in January 2006. *AIRS will be mailing you a membership notice in late October 2005.*

### ***Important Points -***

- ✓ AIRS will have a single membership structure for both AIRS and the Affiliate, whereby an individual, agency or organization will join both at a level that best meets their individual needs.
- ✓ Tiered structure – members can move up or down on the tiers as their needs change.
- ✓ Every agency that joins an Affiliate (WisconsinAIRS) is automatically a member of AIRS and vice versa.
- ✓ Membership dues will be collected by AIRS and distributed to WisconsinAIRS, the State Affiliate.
- ✓ Individuals, agencies or organizations will not need to, *nor be able* to, join a state or regional Affiliate only; i.e. each individual, agency or organization is a member of AIRS.
- ✓ Both AIRS and the Affiliates will be involved in membership recruitment using the approved membership structure.
- ✓ Affiliates will no longer pay dues to AIRS and can purchase products at cost.
- ✓ National non-profits can join at the level that meets their needs. Their dues will be split among the Affiliates.
- ✓ For profits (including vendors) can contribute to AIRS as a "supporting partner" for \$500 annually; all money will go to the national AIRS organization.

## **FOUR MEMBERSHIP PLANS**

### **BASIC: \$50**

#### ***Membership Benefits***

- Voting Privileges
- AIRS Newsletter
- Affiliate Membership Benefits\*

### **STANDARD: \$250 - Agencies < \$75,000; \$350 - Agencies > \$75,000**

#### ***Membership Benefits***

- Voting Privileges
- AIRS Newsletter
- Affiliate membership Benefits\*
- AIRS Journal
- I&R Toolkit
- 5% Discount on Products

### **ENHANCED: \$500**

#### ***Membership Benefits***

- Voting Privileges
- AIRS Newsletter
- Affiliate Membership Benefits\*
- AIRS Journal
- I&R Toolkit
- ABCs of I&R
- 10% Discount on Products

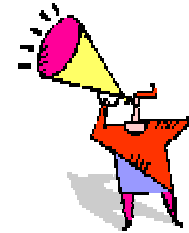
### **PREMIUM: \$750**

#### ***Membership Benefits***

- Voting Privileges
- AIRS Newsletter
- Affiliate Membership Benefits\*
- AIRS Journal
- I&R Toolkit
- ABCs of I&R
- 15% Discount on Products

### **\*WisconsinAIRS Affiliate Membership Benefits**

- Opportunities for AIRS certification exams
- WisconsinAIRS Newsletter
- Networking Opportunities
- Consultation and Technical Assistance
- WisconsinAIRS Website with links for your agency
- WisconsinAIRS Email List Serve
- Provide direct input in the development of 2-1-1 in the State of Wisconsin
- Promotes adherence to AIRS standard for delivery of I&R services



## **WisconsinAIRS 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference!**

The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual WisconsinAIRS conference will be held on September 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Highlights from this year's conference include:

- Lucinda Nord, 211 Indiana will be the keynote presenter
- I&R/A Software vendor fair & workshops
- Opportunity to take AIRS exams
- Idea Exchanges
- Breakout sessions on a variety of topics including caregivers, taxonomy, ethics, 211, Medicare and more!

Conference registration forms are available online at the WisconsinAIRS website [www.wisconsinairs.org](http://www.wisconsinairs.org)

**Register by August 8<sup>th</sup> and receive the "Early Bird" discount!**