AIRS™

Bringing People and Services Together

Accreditation Application

Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, Inc.

National Headquarters

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ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS
ACCREDITATION

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ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS ACCREDITATION

The purpose of the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems Accreditation process is to apply the Standards for Professional Information and Referral to measure the quality of information and referral services.

Accreditation is a cooperative effort between the I&R agency and AIRS to establish a strong foundation on which the agency can build and grow. An agency considering accreditation should assess where it is in its development, its goals and whether it is ready for accreditation. Agencies must meet minimum requirements in order to become accredited.

Accreditation is a two-phase process:

During the **Consultation Phase,** the agency works with an AIRS staff person who acts as a liaison to the agency. If the agency has questions about the process, the accreditation criteria, or the documentation required, the liaison can be contacted for an explanation. Both the liaison and the agency record all questions and contacts. Upon completion of the consultation phase, the contact form is sent to the AIRS office for review. This provides feedback to the Accreditation Committee on:

1. The areas of accreditation that are causing the most misunderstanding, so the accreditation criteria and process can be reviewed and updated; and
2. The responsiveness of the liaison to the agency.

Once the consultation documentation and questionnaires are received and accepted by AIRS, a consultation assessment report is written and sent to the agency. The agency has **ten months** from the date they receive their packet in which to submit its original documentation, six months in which to finalize the documentation and three months in which to arrange its on-site review.

The **On-Site Review** is conducted to enable the review team to see the agency in operation and verify that it is acting in accordance with the accreditation criteria. If the documentation from the consultation phase was thorough, the on-site reviewers should already be familiar with how the agency operates.

The reviewers send a tentative schedule to the agency. The schedule includes the following:

1. A meeting with agency's key staff
2. A tour of the facility
3. Interviews with staff
4. Observation of phone staff
5. Database review
6. Debriefing with the agency's administrative staff

Once the on-site review is completed:

1. The review team completes the on-site assessment report with recommendations and sends it to AIRS staff for review and submission to the Accreditation Committee Chair.
2. The Accreditation Committee Chair reviews the report and finalizes the accreditation decision.
3. The Accreditation Committee Chair notifies AIRS staff of the decision and AIRS sends the agency a letter:

   a. Granting of full accreditation for five years.
   b. Granting accreditation with recommendations. This would occur when an organization is in substantial compliance, but needs to take further action to comply with some criteria.
   c. Deferring accreditation pending the receipt of additional information.
   d. Denying accreditation.

4. The accredited agency is recognized at the next AIRS annual international conference.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All transactions between AIRS (including members of the review team) and the applicant agency, and all materials submitted by the agency, are confidential. The only information that will be shared with other organizations and government agencies making an inquiry is:

- Information on the accredited versus not-accredited status of an applicant organization.
- Information about the meaning of the accreditation status and the standards met to achieve this status.
- Information about the aggregate performance of the field.
- Information that the applicant agency has provided written authorization for AIRS to share.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS

PHASE ONE: CONSULTATION

1. The I&R agency downloads the accreditation application from the AIRS web site at www.airs.org. The agency **MUST** complete and return the application before taking any other steps in the process.

2. The application includes the following items for completion:
   a. Consultation Agreement
   b. Agency Application Form NOTE: Two professional references are requested.

3. The applying agency returns the accreditation application and the designated fee to AIRS. It also supplies two professional references from local I&R programs or the state or regional I&R association that AIRS can contact.

4. The agency's application is reviewed and, upon approval, is assigned to staff. The following are verified: the appropriate fee was paid; the application was completed; and that the agency has been in operation at least one year.

5. Staff follow up with the applying agency if further information is needed for the application and acts as liaison. The liaison assists by answering questions the agency has regarding the Consultation Phase, the Accreditation Criteria and required documentation.

6. AIRS sends an accreditation packet that includes the following:
   a. Board of directors/advisory committee questionnaire packet:
      - A sample cover letter to be printed on the applying agency's stationery and included with the questionnaire. (Please feel free to personalize.)
      - The questionnaire should be copied and distributed to all members of the agency's board of directors/advisory committee. **To satisfactorily complete this process, there must be a fifty-percent return rate.**
      - Mailing labels for return of the questionnaire. The applying agency is responsible for providing the envelopes and postage.
      - An information form to be completed by the applying agency listing the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the persons to whom the questionnaire was distributed.

   b. Community organization questionnaire packet:
      - A sample cover letter to be printed on the applying agency's stationery and included with the questionnaire. (Please feel free to personalize.)
      - The questionnaire should be copied and distributed to a minimum of two-percent of the community organizations listed in your database. These should include agencies that refer to you and that you refer to regularly, funding organizations and organizations with which you have a service agreement or contract. **To satisfactorily complete this process, there must be a fifty-percent return rate. The total number returned should not be less than 25.**
      - Mailing labels for return of the questionnaire. The applying agency is responsible for providing envelopes and postage.
      - An information form to be completed by the applying agency listing the names and addresses of the persons/organizations to whom the questionnaire was distributed.

   c. Applying agency questionnaire packet:
      - Staff questionnaires.
      - Mailing labels for return of the questionnaire. The applying agency is responsible for providing envelopes and postage.
      - These should be distributed to all staff involved in the delivery of I&R services e.g., I&R

specialists, resource staff, supervisors, the executive director, etc.
- Administrative questionnaire.

d. AIRS Accreditation Criteria and list of required documentation.

e. The name, address, and telephone number of the AIRS liaison responsible for answering questions regarding the accreditation process, accreditation criteria and required documentation.

f. The appeals process.

g. The agency is provided an agency/liaison contact and response form to track contacts with the assigned liaison.

h. Guidelines for Submittal of Accreditation Material.

7. Within **10-months** of receiving the Accreditation Packet, the agency:
   a. Distributes questionnaires and confidential envelopes to its board of directors/advisory committee members, selected community organizations and staff.

   b. Fills out information forms and returns them to AIRS.

   c. Reviews the Accreditation Criteria and contacts the liaison with questions as needed.

   d. Compiles and labels documentation for Accreditation Criteria. (**Consecutively number all pages in the notebooks from the beginning to the end of the notebook. Inserted pages can carry the number of the preceding page with an a, b or c, etc. e.g., 12a, 12b, 12c. Do NOT paginate by section.**)

   e. Completes and has the Board President or other Chief Volunteer Officer sign the "Certification of Accreditation Documentation" form and submit it with documentation.

   f. Makes two copies of the materials, placing the **two** copies in two separate three-ring binders. The agency should keep the original for its records.

   g. Sends the **two** binders, the Certification of Accreditation Documentation form and a copy of the Agency/Liaison Contact and Response form to AIRS at the following address:

      AIRS-Portland
      P.O. Box 33095
      Portland, OR 97292
      OR
      AIRS Portland
      15590 SE Millmain
      Portland, OR 97233

   h. All materials must be current at the time of submission.

8. The following steps in the Consultation phase will be completed within six months. NOTE: It is not unusual for the agency to need to submit several sets of additional documentation. The agency should allow for this contingency in its plans.

   a. AIRS staff compiles a summary of the responses to the confidential questionnaires and includes in it the Consultation Report provided to the agency.

b. Staff analyzes the submitted materials and writes a consultation assessment report identifying agency or program strengths, changes necessary to continue the accreditation process, and suggestions for improvement. AIRS will make every effort to respond as quickly as possible.

c. AIRS sends a copy of the consultation assessment report to the applying agency.

d. The agency reviews the consultation assessment report and contacts the AIRS liaison with any questions. The liaison is available to discuss any additional documentation and to assist the agency in making the changes stipulated in the report. Documentation and practices must be complete and acceptable within six months.

NOTE: The **two** copies of additional documentation requested during the Consultation Phase must be submitted.

An agency may choose to stop the accreditation process after the consultation phase. An agency that stops at the end of the consultation phase is not considered accredited. Agencies wanting to reinitiate the accreditation process after stopping must file another application, pay another fee and submit updated documentation. To achieve formal AIRS accreditation, the agency must complete Phase Two: On-Site Review.

PHASE TWO: ON-SITE REVIEW

1. Upon receipt of the final Consultation report the agency contacts AIRS to schedule an on-site review within three months of the date of the final consultation assessment report.

2. While there is no additional fee for the on-site review, all expenses related to travel (air fare, hotel, food, incidentals) by the review team are the responsibility of the applying agency. The total for travel expenses, the schedule and specific arrangements will be discussed prior to scheduling the on-site review.

3. AIRS staff schedules an on-site review with the agency and solicits volunteers for the review team.

4. The review team conducts the on-site review. If there are any outstanding documentation issues, the agency will have updated materials for the team to review.

5. The review team debriefs the agency's administrative team, for example, the executive director, board members, etc.

6. The review team completes the on-site assessment report with recommendations and sends to AIRS.

7. AIRS sends a copy of the on-site assessment report to the Accreditation Committee chair, who reviews the report and finalizes the accreditation decision.

8. AIRS sends the agency a letter:
   a. Granting of full accreditation for five years.
   b. Granting accreditation with recommendations e.g., when an organization is in substantial compliance, but needs to take further action to comply with some criteria;
   c. Deferring accreditation pending the receipt of additional information; or

d. Denying accreditation.

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

Accredited organizations are required to respond to an annual questionnaire reporting on the status of the organization and their activities. Responses will determine if substantial changes have occurred in any of the following areas since the date of accreditation:

- Organizational affiliation (became a free standing program)
- Staffing
- Mission
- Finances
- Service delivery levels

RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

The accreditation award is made for a period of five years. During that time, the agency must:

- Respond to the annual questionnaire regarding the status of the agency.
- Notify AIRS of any change that would affect its accreditation status.

Approximately 1 year prior to the expiration of the accreditation award, the AIRS office will notify the agency of the need for another review. The process for renewal of accreditation is the same as outlined above.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Accredited organizations that fail to maintain compliance with the *Standards for Professional Information and Referral* may receive a written warning or letters of concern and could lead to revocation of accreditation status.

REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION

Immediate revocation of accreditation status will occur if the agency:

- Intentionally misrepresents itself in submitted documentation.
- Fails to respond to the annual questionnaire.
- Fails to remain a member of AIRS.
- Fails to continue to meet the Accreditation Criteria.
- Substantiated unethical conduct.

AGENCY APPLICATION

The Application fee is non-refundable, **$3,000** for AIRS members or **$4,500** for nonmembers, which may be paid in two installments.

Amount Enclosed: ____________ Date of Application __________

Agency Name: ____

Program Name: ____

Mailing Address: ____

____

Phone Number: ____

Fax Number: ____

Web Site: ____

TDD Number: ____

Contact Person: ____

Contact Person Email ____

Population in Geographic Area Served: ____

Geographic Area Served: (city, state, county, multi-county ____________________________

Agency/Program is primarily: I&R: __________ Crisis Intervention: ___________

Other, please specify: ____

Walk-in services: Yes No

What I&R Software do you use for your Database? __________________________________

Number of records in Database ______________________________

Is this the number of organizations or programs? ________________

Total annual I&R inquiries/contacts for the most recent year: ________________________________

Parent Organization: If you are part of a larger organization, e.g., United Way, Area Agency on Aging, Community Council, etc., provide an explanation of your relationship to that organization, e.g., employees of, funded by, provides governance, etc.

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Services Provided: On an attached sheet, please state clearly and concisely the services provided by your agency/program and identify with a "yes" or "no" the ones you are applying to have accredited. **(Application will not be processed without this information.)**

Date agency/program established: ________ AIRS membership number: __________

Non-profit: ___________ For Profit: __________ Government: ___________

Hours of Operation:

Days of week: ____

Hours: ____

Provisions for after hour services? Yes No

If yes, explain: ____

____

Staff: (a staff list may be attached)

	# Full-time	# Part-time	# Volunteers
Position: __________________	___________	___________	_______________
__________________	___________	___________	_______________
__________________	___________	___________	_______________
__________________	___________	___________	_______________
__________________	___________	___________	_______________
__________________	___________	___________	_______________

Total FTEs: _______________

Board/Advisory Committee:

Do you have a: Board of Directors or Advisory Committee

How many members? __________ On an average how many attend meetings? ______

Budget:

Annual I&R operating budget: ____

Annual agency budget (If different from above): ___________________________

Date of last audit: ____

Funding Sources: Percentage of Income:

Funding Sources	Percentage of Income
______________________________	________________
______________________________	________________
______________________________	________________
______________________________	________________

2-1-1 Organization/Program:
Applicant organization/program is/will be a lead agency taking 2-1-1 calls and elects to be evaluated for the additional requirement of being responsible for ensuring that I&R services are available on a 24-hour basis year-around.

_________ YES _____________NO

Community Partnerships and/or Projects: On an attached sheet, describe the community partnerships and/or projects that the agency is involved in. Include the names of the organizations involved, the type of service provided, purpose, and source of funding, if any. **(Application will not be processed without this information.)**

Please provide **two professional references** from local I&R programs or the state/province or regional I&R association that AIRS can contact.

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Please return the completed Agency Application Form, Consultation Agreement and fee to:

AIRS National Headquarters
11240 Waples Mill Road, Suite 200
Fairfax, VA 22030

ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS, INC
CONSULTATION AGREEMENT

The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) Accreditation is a two-phase process: (1) Consultation and (2) On-Site Review. For the consultation phase, AIRS provides the following: consultation materials, a Liaison to answer any questions, and a consultation assessment report. **All transactions between AIRS (including members of the review team) and the applicant agency, and all materials submitted by the agency, are confidential.**

The nonrefundable consultation fee of $3000.00 for members or $4,500 for nonmembers is remitted with the initial application. **(Fees may be split into two payments, half at the time the application is submitted and the remainder prior to or at the time of the site visit.)**

In submitting the application to the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, Inc. (AIRS), the applying agency hereby agrees to the following conditions:

1. The agency has been in operation at least one year.
2. The agency agrees to prepare and provide all requested documentation.
3. The agency agrees to notify the AIRS accreditation review team of any changes in its program that may affect the accreditation of the agency.
4. The agency agrees that participation in the AIRS consultation phase is a voluntary one, and participation in this phase is not a guarantee of accreditation.
5. The agency agrees that AIRS, its officers, or other persons involved in the consultation phase shall not be held liable for any applicant's failure to achieve accreditation.
6. The agency agrees that it has in place a statement approved by the organization's governing body prohibiting discrimination in all forms and documenting its intention to comply with all laws, orders and regulations addressing this issue and has a process for registering and resolving complaints from inquirers, staff members and the community involving discrimination.

____
Agency/Program Name

____________________________ ____________
Board President/Advisory Committee Chair Date

____________________________ ____________
Executive Director Date

____________________________ ____________
I&R Program Manager/Coordinator Date

ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND DOCUMENTATION SUMMARY

The Alliance of Information and Referral System Accreditation process has been designed to reduce lengthy explanations of the applying agency's services by requiring documentation to support the Standards.

The Standards are divided into the following six (6) areas

Area I:	Service Delivery
Area II:	Resource Database
Area III:	Reports and Measures
Area IV:	Cooperative Relationship
Area V:	Organizational Requirements
Area VI:	Disaster Services

Within each **area**, there are **components**, and for each component, there is a corresponding Standard. Areas are referenced by Roman numerals and components by alphabetic designation. All components have **Subcomponents**, each of which contains a **requirement(s)** section**,** a **questions** section (eliminated in this summary), an **explanation/comments** section (eliminated in this summary), and a **documentation** section. If the requirement for Accreditation purposes for a particular component is not clear, a **minimum expectation** statement may be added. An Arabic number designates Subcomponents. For example, **I.B.2** refers to *Area I: Service Delivery, B: Referral Provision, Subcomponent 2: Hours of Coverage and Backup.*

All applicable Requirements are mandatory.

Completion of the Explanation/Comments section is *required* only if the Required Documentation section states that a written description is required. However, this space can be used if further explanation is needed to satisfy the criteria or to explain the documentation or lack thereof. If more room is required, an addendum may be attached.

In some components, the required documentation may be the same as the documentation required for another component. In these cases, once documentation has been provided, it need not be duplicated. For example, if all of your policies and procedures are in a single policies and procedures manual, they do not have to be duplicated for each component requiring a policy and procedure. However, reference should be made to where the required documentation can be found.

The documentation for the AIRS accreditation criteria should be collected in three-ring binders. Section dividers should separate the documentation for the five areas, and the dividers should be respectively labeled. The numeric and alphabetic reference for the area, component, and Subcomponent should be indicated in the upper, right-hand corner of each page of the submitted documentation (e.g., IV.A.1 designates Area IV, Component A, Subcomponent 1) and all pages should be numbered sequentially from the beginning to the end of the notebook. Inserted pages can carry the number of the preceding page with an a, b, c, etc. e.g., 12a, 12b, 12c. The original should be retained by the agency[1] for reference purposes.
Remember, AIRS is here to assist you. You do ***not*** *need to have everything in place to start the process,*

[1] "Agency" refers to the agency or program within the agency participating in the accreditation process.

that' is why it is called the Consultation Phase of the Accreditation Process. If you have any questions concerning the Standards or the formatting, please contact Charlene Hipes at 50/257-3537 or charlenehipes@airs.org.

AREA I: SERVICE DELIVERY

The standards in Area I describe the service delivery functions essential for providing information and referral and assuring access for all, including a brief individual assessment of need; a blend of information, referral and advocacy in order to link the person to the appropriate service; crisis intervention, when warranted; and follow-up, as required.

COMPONENT A: INFORMATION PROVISION

Standard 1: The I&R service shall provide 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 detailed data about community service systems (such as explaining how a group intake system works for a particular agency), agency policies, and procedures for application.

Sub-Component 1: Information Provision Per Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall provide information to an inquirer[2] in response to a direct request for such information.

Documentation: To substantiate the % of information inquiries, submit inquirer intake sheets/log sheets or other forms where the action taken is recorded and a report of I&R activity that shows total number of inquiries and percentage of those for information. To substantiate responses to quality issues, submit a sample of the tools that supervisors use to verify that I&R specialists provide quality services (per the Standards). Provide a reference to the component of your training in which information provision is distinguished from referral provision.

COMPONENT B: REFERRAL PROVISION

Standard 2: The I&R service shall provide information and referral services in which the inquirer has one-to-one, human contact with an I&R specialist (paid or volunteer). The referral process consists of assessing the needs of the inquirer, identifying appropriate resources, assessing appropriate response modes, indicating organizations capable of meeting those needs, providing enough information about each organization to help inquirers make an informed choice, helping inquirers for whom services are unavailable by locating alternative resources, and, when necessary, actively participating in linking the inquirer to needed services.

Sub-Component 1: Referral Provision Per Standard

Requirement: There are a number of requirements related to referral provision including the following:

- The I&R service shall provide referral services in which the inquirer has one-to-one, human contact with an I&R specialist who does an assessment of the individual's need and refers him or her to one or more organizations that provide the required services. In contrast to information giving, the definitive element distinguishing a referral is that the inquirer is aware of the 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); and/or in addressing additional problems which may be brought to light through the assessment process.

- Trained I&R specialists shall provide the I&R service.
- Professional staff shall seek Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS) status through the AIRS Certification Program when eligible to do so or, if applicable in a particular field, certification through another program recognized at the state/provincial, regional or national level. <u>Minimum Expectation</u>: For Accreditation purposes, 25% of eligible staff

[2] "Inquirer" refers to the entity being served. Inquirers may be individuals or agencies.

(including part-time staff and volunteers) must be certified within one year of becoming eligible. The 25% refers to FTE, full time equivalency staff hours.

Documentation: To substantiate the % of referral inquiries, submit inquirer intake sheets/log sheets or other forms where the action taken is recorded and a report of I&R activity that shows total number of inquiries and percentage of those for referrals. To substantiate responses to quality issues, submit a sample of the tools that supervisors use to verify that I&R specialists provide quality services (per the Standards). Provide a reference to the component of your training in which referral provision is distinguished from information provision. Describe what the I&R service has done to encourage I&R specialists to seek CIRS status or certification through another, recognized program. Provide proof of certification of 25% of qualified staff. Include an explanation if some of your staff are not yet eligible for certification.

Sub-Component 2: Hours of Coverage and Backup

Requirement: In the case of I&R services other than lead agencies taking 2-1-1 calls, hours of service shall be appropriate to community needs. At a minimum, the I&R service shall be available during normal business hours. If the I&R service is not available on a 24-hour basis, it shall provide an answering system when staff are not present that gives inquirers the number and office hours of an organization that will offer service in an emergency. If the I&R service has an arrangement with another agency to provide 24-hour coverage, that arrangement shall be documented in a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU), memorandum of agreement (MOA) or service level agreement (SLA). National I&R services not available on a 24-hour basis shall address the issue of people calling from other time zones. <u>NOTE</u>: The lead agency taking 2-1-1 calls is responsible for ensuring that I&R services are available on a 24-hour basis, year round. If the I&R service does not itself provide service 24 hours and has an arrangement with another agency to provide after-hours coverage, that organization must meet all Service Delivery and Resource Database standards. <u>Minimum Expectation</u>: If the I&R service is not 24-hour, it must have back-up arrangements and an MOU, MOA or SLA with the agency providing coverage.

Documentation: Provide an explanation of arrangements for coverage if not a 24-hour I&R service and an MOU, MOA or SLA with agency providing coverage. If a national I&R service, provide an explanation of arrangements for providing coverage to inquirers in other time zones. If the lead agency in a local 2-1-1 system and you are not available on a 24-hour basis, describe the arrangements you have with another agency that is, provide copies of the relevant agreement and describe the steps you have taken to ensure that they meet Service Delivery and Resource Database Standards. The other organization, for example, may use your database.

Sub-Component 3: Timely Access to I&R Services

Requirement: During hours of operation, the I&R service shall provide timely access to an I&R specialist and shall have a written policy regarding acceptable waiting times and abandoned call rates.

Documentation: Provide a copy of the policy addressing acceptable wait times and abandoned call rates, and an explanation of steps to reduce wait time.

Sub-Component 4: Cost of I&R Services

Requirement: The I&R service shall provide its core telephone service at no cost to the inquirer. The I&R service shall not charge inquirers for the service it provides (via a 900 number, for example). The I&R service is not required to provide toll free access to its service via an 800 number.

Documentation: None.

Sub-Component 5: Ability of Staff to Assist Inquirers Who Are Difficult to Serve

Requirement: The I&R specialist shall have the skills to meet the needs of people who are angry and hostile, are manipulative, call frequently with the same problem or are otherwise difficult to serve.

Documentation: Provide a reference to the component of your training that addresses managing these inquirers.

Sub-Component 6: Ability of Staff to Assist Special Populations

Requirement: The I&R specialist (paid and volunteer) shall have the skills to meet the needs of special populations (e.g., older adults, people with disabilities, sexual minorities).

Documentation: Provide a reference to the component of your training that addresses serving special populations.

Sub-Component 7: Inquirer Confidentiality

Requirement: The I&R service shall have a written policy which ensures that the confidentiality of inquirers is preserved and shall have agreement forms that staff and others with access to confidential information sign to document their intent to comply. The identity of inquirers, their requests and the information given to them shall not be communicated to others unless:

- Release of information is required by law (e.g., child abuse reporting);
- 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 should specify what information may be given and to whom.

If permission is required, the agency shall have a policy in place regarding when such permission needs to be in writing and when it can be verbal.

In cases of domestic violence and other endangerment situations, the I&R specialist shall take special precautions to safeguard the inquirer's identity and all aspects of the interview.

Documentation: Submit a copy of your Confidentiality Policy as well as a sample copy of the agreement form that is signed by staff and others with access to confidential information. Do NOT send all of the forms your staff have signed!

Sub-Component 8: Barrier-Free Access to Service

Requirement: The I&R service shall provide barrier-free access to its services for individuals and groups who have special needs, e.g., TDD/TTY access for people with hearing impairments; language access for inquirers who speak languages other than English; and physical access for people with disabilities if the I&R service assists inquirers at its facility. Minimum Expectation: The agency must have a TDD/TTY, provide access to interpreters that speak all languages appropriate to the community, and have accessible facilities.

Documentation: Provide a description of languages other than English in which the I&R service is available and the type of availability for each [e.g., I&R specialist(s) speak the language; use of interpreter service]. Submit a facility accessibility report, if available. Otherwise, provide a description of how your facility is accessible to inquirers with physical disabilities.

Sub-Component 9: Technology Requirements

Requirement: There are a number of requirements related to technology including the following:

- The I&R service shall utilize technology that improves access to service and enhances its ability to serve inquirers efficiently and effectively while preserving the level and quality of its core services. "Technology" includes telephone systems, telephony, telecommunications, I&R software packages, directories on diskette and self-service mechanisms such as automated attendants/interactive voice response systems, fax-on-demand, community kiosks and searchable I&R databases on the Internet.
- When the I&R service provides indirect access to its database via its Web site, an automated attendant (menu-driven telephone system), a directory, a community-based kiosk or other gateway, it shall include either e-mail access to an I&R specialist or a telephone number for such access.
- If the I&R service uses telephone technology that allows for the collection of identifying information about an inquirer without his or her explicit permission, it shall develop 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.
- The I&R service shall develop strategies and procedures to ensure that all inquirers receive comparable benefit, either directly or indirectly, from the use of technology. It shall evaluate the pros and cons of a particular piece of technology prior to implementation to assure that one group of inquirers does not benefit while the needs of other groups are ignored.
- The I&R service shall have access to the Internet for locating information helpful to inquirers and a policy for staff use of the Internet.

Documentation: Provide a description of the other mechanisms through which inquirers can access your resource database or your I&R service and the type of access to an I&R specialist you have provided for each; a copy of the written strategy/procedure or explanation of how technology provides the broadest possible access to your I&R service; policies and/or procedures which ensure that information obtained without the explicit permission of the inquirer is appropriately used; a description of Internet access for staff; and a copy of your policy regarding staff use of the Internet.

COMPONENT C: ADVOCACY/INTERVENTION

Standard 3: The I&R service shall offer advocacy, when necessary, to ensure that people receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled and that organizations within the established service delivery system meet the collective needs of the community. For purposes of these standards, "advocacy" does not include legislative advocacy (lobbying). All advocacy efforts shall be consistent with written policies established by the governing body of the I&R service and shall proceed only with the permission of the inquirer.

Sub-Component 1: Individual Advocacy Provision Per Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall intervene on behalf of individuals to help them establish eligibility for or obtain needed services when they have been denied benefits or services to which they are entitled, when they need assistance to communicate their needs to a service provider or otherwise effectively represent themselves, or when they have a complaint about a service. Individual advocacy efforts seek to meet individual needs without attempting to change social institutions.

Documentation: To substantiate the % of advocacy inquiries, submit inquirer intake sheets/log sheets or other forms where the action taken is recorded and a report of I&R activity that shows total number of inquiries and percentage of those involving advocacy. Submit a copy of the policy that establishes the conditions under which individual advocacy and empowerment must be done; and a description of how the I&R service verifies that I&R specialists are conducting advocacy in an appropriate way, e.g., observation sheets or other supervisory tools and/or case records. Provide a reference to the component of your training that addresses advocacy and empowerment.

Sub-Component 2: System Advocacy Provision Per Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall advocate for 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. Such advocacy may include the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on human service needs.

Documentation: Provide a sample system advocacy report, if available, and a description of the results. If a formal report is not available, provide a description of the system advocacy in which you were involved and the results.

COMPONENT D: CRISIS INTERVENTION[3]

[3] "Crisis intervention" is defined in the *Standards* as "a service which 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

Standard 4: Although most I&R services do not promote themselves as formal crisis intervention centers, most receive occasional requests for assistance from people in crisis and must therefore equip their staff to handle them appropriately. The I&R service shall be 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 death; and others in distress.

Sub-Component 1: Crisis Intervention Skills

Requirement: The I&R specialist shall have the skills to recognize when an inquirer is experiencing a crisis and shall determine whether the individual is in immediate danger and take steps to ensure that s/he is safe before continuing with the interview. In assault and sexual assault cases, for example, the specialist shall ensure that the assailant is not still in the vicinity and that the individual does not need emergency medical treatment. In domestic violence situations, the specialist shall determine that the abusive person is not present and threatening the inquirer. The specialist shall follow the I&R service's protocol for when to access 911 or other emergency rescue services.

The I&R specialist shall 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;
- Endeavor to keep the inquirer on the telephone pending referral or rescue.

The I&R specialist shall have the skills to recognize the warning signs of persons 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.

The I&R specialist shall have the skills 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) and shall follow the I&R service's rescue protocol for when to access 911 or other emergency personnel to intervene and save the individual's life.

Documentation: Provide a copy of your agency's 911/rescue services protocol. Provide a reference to the component of your training that addresses recognizing a crisis situation, recognizing the warning signs of suicide, violence or victimization, recognizing when a person is in need of intervention, using appropriate intervention skills and following the 911/rescue services protocol, when required.

Sub-Component 2: Mandatory Reporting

Requirement: In cases of suspected child abuse or elder abuse, the I&R specialist shall be familiar with his/her responsibilities under the prevailing legislation of the jurisdiction regarding mandatory reporting and shall file a report when indicated.

Documentation: Provide information about what the mandatory reporting requirements are within your jurisdiction and a reference to the component of your crisis intervention training that deals with mandatory reporting, and a copy of your policy regarding mandatory reporting.

Sub-Component 3: Lethality Assessment[4]

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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 he or she is capable of identifying and seeking solutions to the problem."

[4] A lethality 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

Requirement: In situations involving suicide or homicide, the specialist shall understand the circumstances under which a lethality assessment is required and shall conduct an appropriate assessment when necessary. Lethality assessments shall be recorded in writing and shall include a description of specific actions taken in response to the situation.

Documentation: Please provide a copy of the form that is used to record lethality assessment information and a copy of the policy or protocol that references when and how the form should be used. Please reference the component in your crisis intervention training that deals with written lethality assessments.

Sub-Component 4: Ability to Conduct Rescue Services

Requirement: The I&R service may utilize a variety of means to support their ability to conduct rescue services including Caller ID or a call tracing arrangement with the telephone company or the appropriate 911 service. At a minimum, there must be a separate telephone or a separate external line that is available for initiating rescue procedures without interrupting the crisis call. The specialist shall follow the I&R service's protocol for addressing callers who wish to remain anonymous yet require rescue.

Documentation: Describe the mechanisms your I&R service has in place to support the ability of your I&R service to initiate rescue services when required. (Use the Explanation/Comments section.) Provide a copy of the protocol for addressing callers who wish to remain anonymous and yet require rescue. Reference the component of your training that addresses the rescue protocol. Provide a copy of your policy that defines when and how rescues services are conducted.

Sub-Component 5: Relationship with Formal Crisis Intervention Service

Requirement: If the I&R service does not itself provide a formal crisis intervention service, it shall have prearranged protocols with an appropriate crisis center that does. The arrangements shall be documented in a written MOU, MOA or SLA.

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

Documentation: Provide a copy of the MOU, MOA or SLA with the crisis intervention service.

COMPONENT E: FOLLOW-UP

Standard 5: The I&R service shall have a written policy which addresses the conditions under which follow-up must be conducted. The policy shall mandate follow-up with inquirers in endangerment situations and in situations where the specialist believes that inquirers do not have the necessary capacity to follow through and resolve their problems. The policy must also specify a percentage of other inquiries for which follow-up is required in order to assess overall service performance. Additional assistance in locating or using services may be necessary.

Sub-component 1: Conducts Follow-Up Per Standard

Requirement: The I&R service has a written policy that addresses the conditions under which follow-up must be conducted. The agency conducts follow-up with inquirers in endangerment situations and in situations where the specialist believes that the inquirer does not have the necessary capacity to follow through and resolve his or her problem. The follow-up policy specifies a percentage of other inquiries for which follow-up is required.

Documentation: Submit a copy of your follow-up policy; inquirer intake sheets/log sheets or other forms where follow-up is recorded; and a sample report of I&R activity that shows total number of inquiries, the percentage of those involving follow-up and follow-up results. In addition, provide a description of how the I&R service verifies that I&R specialists conduct follow-up as required, e.g., observation sheets or other supervisory tools and/or case records. Provide a reference to the component of your training that addresses follow-up.

– the next few minutes or hours or longer? Has the individual had psychiatric help in the past and how do they feel about it? Are there other risk indicators such depression, hopelessness, feelings of isolation, intoxication, significant recent loss?

AREA II: RESOURCE DATABASE

The standards in Area II describe the requirement that the I&R service shall develop, maintain, and/or use an accurate, up-to-date computerized resource database that contains information about available community resources including detailed data on the services they provide and the conditions under which services are available. If the I&R service maintains a resource database of Web sites on the Internet, Resource Database Standards 6 through 10 still apply.

COMPONENT A: INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Standard 6: The I&R service shall develop criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of agencies and programs in the resource database. These criteria shall be uniformly applied and published so that staff and the public will be aware of the scope and limitations of the database.

Sub-component 1: Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria Per the Standard

Requirement: There are a number of requirements related to Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria including the following:

- The I&R service shall have a written policy that describes inclusion/exclusion criteria for the resource database. The I&R service shall review the inclusion/exclusion criteria on a regular basis (at a minimum, every three years) to ensure that they continue to meet the changing needs of the community.
- These criteria shall be published so that staff and the public will be aware of the scope and limitations of the database.
- These criteria shall be uniformly applied.
- If the I&R service is comprehensive, the inclusion/exclusion criteria shall address the needs of all groups in the community; shall include government, nonprofit and critical for-profit organizations; and may include other for-profit organizations and entities such as support groups that are not incorporated as organizations.
- If the I&R service is specialized, the inclusion/exclusion criteria shall adequately address the needs of its target population and shall have referral points for types of services that are excluded.
- If the I&R service charges a fee for the inclusion of organizations in its database, that practice shall be published as a part of its inclusion/exclusion criteria.

Documentation: Provide a copy of your inclusion/exclusion criteria policy that has been reviewed and dated within the last three years. Provide a written statement confirming availability of the inclusion/exclusion policy to staff and the public and a description of how they are published. Provide an explanation of how uniform application of inclusion/exclusion criteria is verified. Indicate where your inclusion/exclusion criteria policy references government, nonprofit and critical for-profit organizations. If a specialized I&R, indicate where your inclusion/exclusion criteria policy addresses the needs of your target population and mandates referral points for types of services that are excluded. If relevant, indicate where your inclusion/exclusion criteria policy references the conditions under which fees are charged. Inclusion/exclusion criteria policy references the conditions under which fees are charged.

COMPONENT B: DATA ELEMENTS

Standard 7: A standardized profile shall be developed for each organization that is part of the local community service delivery system or other geographic area or service sector covered by the I&R service.

Sub-component 1: Subcomponent 1: Standardized Profile/Mandatory Data Elements

Requirement: A standardized profile shall be developed for each organization in the database. The agency profile shall include (but not be limited to) the mandatory data referenced in the *Standards*, that the I&R service shall collect when appropriate.

Documentation: Submit a sample of the form you use to gather information for your database and five sample database entries showing all of the above elements.

COMPONENT D: CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM/TAXONOMY:

Standard 8: The I&R service shall use a standard service classification system to facilitate retrieval of community resource information, to increase the reliability of planning data, to make evaluation processes consistent and reliable, and to facilitate national comparisons of data. Additional classification structures such as keywords may supplement the Taxonomy.

Sub-component 1: Subcomponent 1: AIRS/INFO LINE Taxonomy

Requirement: There are several requirements related to the AIRS/INFO LINE Taxonomy including the following:

- I&R services in the United States shall use the AIRS/INFO LINE Taxonomy of Human Services (formally titled A *Taxonomy of Human Services: A Conceptual Framework with Standardized Terminology and Definitions for the Field*) or have a clearly written plan for implementation.
- In other countries, the standard shall either be a nationally adopted classification system or the AIRS/INFO LINE Taxonomy.
- Local modifications shall be reported to the Taxonomy system administrator for consideration for inclusion in the master system.
- The I&R service shall have procedures in place to integrate Taxonomy updates. All appropriate Taxonomy codes in updates shall be integrated within 6 months of issuance.

Documentation: If an I&R service in the United States, provide a written statement confirming use of AIRS/INFO Line *Taxonomy of Human Services*, or written plan for implementation and a reasonable projected date when the conversion will be complete. If an I&R service outside the United States, provide a written statement-confirming use of nationally adopted classification system, the AIRS/INFO Line *Taxonomy of Human Services*, or a written plan for implementation of one of the above and a reasonable projected date when the conversion will be complete. Provide proof of current subscription status or a timetable for obtaining a subscription. If relevant, provide examples of modifications (new terms/changes) that have been made and submitted. Provide a description of your updating procedure for the Taxonomy and a written statement confirming inclusion of updates per the Standard.

COMPONENT C: INDEXING THE RESOURCE DATABASE/SEARCH METHODS

Standard 9: Information in the resource database shall be indexed and accessible in ways that support the I&R process.

Sub-component 1: Mandatory Search Methods

Requirement: Information in the resource database shall be retrievable by a variety of search methods including the following:

- Alphabetically by organization name (including related acronyms or abbreviations);
- Type of service provided with extensive cross-references (see also's, synonyms);
- Specific target population served, where applicable;
- Geographic area or political subdivision served; and
- Geographic location.

Documentation: Provide sample match lists for each of search criteria available to the organization's I&R specialists. Match lists are lists of the organizations that are selected in a particular search. They can usually be printed using a "print screen" function.

COMPONENT E: DATABASE MAINTENANCE

Standard 10: The resource database shall be computerized, maintained by trained resource staff and updated through continual revision at intervals sufficiently frequent to ensure accuracy of information and comprehensiveness of its contents.

Sub-component 1: Database Maintenance Per the Standard

Requirement: There are a number of requirements related to database maintenance including the following:

- The resource database shall be computerized or the I&R service shall have a clearly written plan for computerization.
- The resource database shall be maintained by trained resource specialists (paid and/or volunteer). Resource staff shall seek Certified Resource Specialist (CRS) status through the AIRS Certification Program when eligible to do so or, if applicable in a particular field, certification through another program recognized at the state/provincial, regional or national level. Minimum Expectations: For Accreditation purposes, 25% of eligible staff (including part-time staff and volunteers) must be certified as resource specialists. The 25% refers to FTE, full time equivalency staff hours.
- The resource database shall be totally updated, at least annually, by surveys[5], telephone contact or on-site visits to organizations listed in the database. Records in the database shall include the date of last update.
- Procedures shall be in place for integrating interim information changes.
- Procedures shall be in place for identifying new agencies, acquiring required information about them and including them in the database.
- Update verification procedures shall be in place to ensure accuracy. The I&R service may, for example, request a signature on the update form.
- The I&R service shall safeguard its resource database through duplication or computerized back-up. The back-up database shall be kept in a secure location where it will be protected from destruction or theft.

Documentation: Provide a statement verifying that your resource database is computerized or a copy of your plan for computerization and a reasonable projected date for completion. Provide policies and/or procedures for annual updating and maintenance of the resource database, integration of interim changes and new agencies in the resource database; update verification and back-up of the database; and a copy of the updating schedule (or a description of the schedule). Describe what the I&R service has done to encourage resource specialists to seek CRS status or certification through another, recognized program. Provide proof of certification of 25% of qualified staff. Include an explanation of some if your staff are not yet eligible for certification.

[5] Surveys may be conducted by any number of mechanisms including the Internet, regular mail, e-mail or fax.

AREA III: REPORTS AND MEASURES

The standards in Area III describe the inquirer data collection, analysis and reporting functions of the I&R service.

COMPONENT A: INQUIRER DATA COLLECTION

Standard 11: The I&R service shall establish and use a computerized system for collecting and organizing inquirer data that facilitates appropriate referrals and provides a basis for describing requests for service, identifying service gaps and overlaps, assisting with needs assessments, supporting the development of products, identifying issues for staff training and facilitating the development of the resource information system. Inquirer data includes information gathered during follow-up as well as that acquired during the original contact.

Sub-component 1: Inquirer Data Collection Per Standard

Requirement: The agency has a computerized, systematic method for recording inquirer data for each contact. For purposes of accreditation, a contact is defined as an incoming call or other mechanism by which an inquiry is initiated. The I&R service shall have in place a written policy describing security precautions which protect and keep confidential data collection forms and inquirer information. The security system shall conform to all applicable statutes and shall include provisions for the storage, retrieval, use and ultimate disposition of records. Unless the I&R service is involved in a cooperative service delivery arrangement in which client records are shared, those outside the I&R service shall see only aggregate data. To support management information needs, the I&R service shall have a method for tracking call volume, number of abandoned calls, average speed of answering and average call length.

Documentation: Provide a statement verifying that your client data collection, analysis and reporting system is computerized or a copy of your plan for computerization and a reasonable projected date for completion. Submit a sample of the inquirer data collection form(s) which support the ability of your agency to collect information for use per the above and your client record security policy and procedures. Provide a copy of phone reports documenting call volume, number of abandoned calls, average speed of answering and average call length or an explanation of how these figures are calculated.

COMPONENT B: DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Standard 12: The I&R service shall develop reports using inquirer data and/or data from the resource database to support community planning activities (or planning at other levels), internal analysis and advocacy.

Sub-component 1: Data Analysis and Reporting Per the Standard

Requirement: At a minimum, the reports shall have the ability to provide statistics regarding types of calls (information, referral, crisis and advocacy), follow-up results, inquirer characteristics, service requests, service use, unmet needs, community assets and gaps and duplications in services. The reports shall also provide data to measure the effectiveness of the I&R service and service outcomes. Information gathered during the follow-up process shall be used as a further means of evaluating the effectiveness of existing community service providers and for identifying gaps and overlaps in community services[6].

Documentation: Provide a copy of current reports (including sample cross-tabulations) and a sample of those compiled during the year of the most recent audit. Provide finished, formatted reports, not raw data. Also submit a list of agencies/organizations to which the reports were provided. Include an example of the explanation of the meaning of the report you provide for those on your distribution list.

[6] In the *Standards*, his requirement appears in Area I, Component D, Follow-up.

AREA IV: COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The standards in Area IV focus on the responsibilities of the I&R service to the local I&R system, the local community service delivery system, and state or provincial, regional, national and international I&R networks.

COMPONENT A: COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE LOCAL I&R SYSTEM

Standard 13: In communities which have a multiplicity of comprehensive and specialized I&R providers, the I&R service shall develop cooperative working relationships to build a coordinated I&R system which 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 within the system may choose to be "full service" programs performing all necessary I&R functions within their designated service area; or may prefer to partner with one or more I&R services to share those functions (e.g., one I&R service might build and maintain the resource database and another might assume responsibility for service delivery).

Sub-component 1: I&R Service Delivery Coordination

Requirement: I&R services within the system shall coordinate their service delivery to avoid duplication of effort and encourage service integration. Local I&R service systems shall work cooperatively with those in neighboring regions to ensure that all areas within a region, state or province have access to I&R services, particularly when 2-1-1 is implemented within the area. Comprehensive and specialized I&R services that are part of the system shall develop and define their working relationships and formalize them through a MOU or MOA. At a minimum, comprehensive I&R services shall have written agreements with the local child care resource and referral agency, the senior I&R/A agency, the crisis intervention service, 911 and 311[7] services, agencies that provide for volunteer and donation management, other organizations with clearinghouse functions and, where applicable, the military family service/support center. Specialized I&R services must have an MOU with the comprehensive I&R service unless they are also the comprehensive I&R.

Documentation: Submit copies of the MOUs, MOAs or SLAs with other I&R services as required above and a description of coordination among I&R services within the system to eliminate duplication of effort and encourage service integration. Provide a description of efforts to ensure that all geographic areas have access to I&R services.

Sub-component 2: Participates in Local Database Collaboratives/Use of Taxonomy

Requirement: I&R services within the system shall endeavor to participate in local database collaboratives as a means of avoiding duplication of database maintenance activities and achieving broader coverage of different types of community resources. I&R services within the system shall encourage the community-wide use of a standard classification system to ensure the effective utilization of community resource information and increase the reliability of local planning data. In the United States, I&R services within the system shall use the AIRS/INFO LINE Taxonomy of Human Services. In other countries, the standard for I&R services within the system shall either be the AIRS/INFO LINE Taxonomy of Human Services or the nationally adopted classification system for their area. Minimum Expectation: If a local database collaborative exists, the I&R service must participate. If none exists, the I&R service should be working proactively to create one if there are other I&R services maintaining resource information. If there is an established database collaborative or one is being discussed, the I&R service needs to have raised the issue of using the Taxonomy as a common classification system.

Documentation: Provide a list of agencies with whom resource database information is exchanged and a copy of data sharing agreement(s) which include a schedule for resource data exchange. If in discussions, describe efforts to begin a collaborative and the role of the Taxonomy in discussions, if any. Sales of directories or other database products does not fulfill this requirement.

Sub-component 3: Community-Wide Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting

[7] 311 is a three digit dialing code for non-emergency police call and other government services.

Requirement: I&R services within the system shall participate in community-wide data collection, analysis and reporting activities. Minimum Expectations: The I&R service needs to be pursuing the possibility of pooling statistics regarding total number of inquiries and types of needs with the I&R services with which it has an MOU. It is expected that in most communities the comprehensive I&R service will take the lead in these discussions. Specialized I&R services are expected to participate once discussions are underway.

Documentation: Provide a description of efforts to promote pooling of inquirer data within the system and production of community-wide reports. Example: a comprehensive I&R service could combine their inquirer data with that collected by specialized I&R programs to provide a more comprehensive picture of service requests throughout the system.

Sub-component 4: Other Cooperative Activities Within the I&R System

Requirement: There are a number of requirements related to other cooperative activities within the I&R system including the following:

- I&R services within the system shall participate in ongoing cooperative program planning and development activities that take into consideration community needs, existing resources, and the activities of other I&R services.
- I&R services within the system shall encourage and participate in cooperative planning, implementation of policies, and advocacy for sustained funding for I&R.
- I&R services within the system shall work cooperatively to identify changing community needs and to respond to those needs in a timely and appropriate fashion. These include:
    1. 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;
    2. Changes in legislation; and
    3. New information relative to the area served that needs to be incorporated.
- I&R services within the system shall strive 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.

Minimum Expectation: It is expected that the I&R service will engage in other cooperative planning and decision making activities with other I&R services as a part of building an I&R system. For accreditation purposes, the I&R service should be engaging in at least some of the types of activities outlined in the Questions section of the full manual.

Documentation: Submit a description of cooperative program planning and development activities which demonstrate collaboration with other local I&R services and good faith efforts to develop an I&R system.

COMPONENT B: COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Standard 14: The I&R service shall strive to develop cooperative working relationships with local service providers to build an integrated service delivery system which ensures broad access to community services, maximizes the utilization of existing resources, avoids duplication of effort and gaps in services and facilitates the ability of people who need services to easily find the most appropriate provider.

Sub-component 1: Cooperative Relationships Per the Standard

Requirement: There are a number of requirements that relate to this standard including the following:

- The I&R service shall work with local service providers to assess the viability of using its call center capacity as the first point of contact for calls into the system and attempt to persuade the city, county or other local authority to avoid proliferation of separate hotlines. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service should take advantage of opportunities to use its I&R number as a point of contact for calls into the service delivery system, e.g., job training opportunities, disaster services, shelter beds; and should attempt to persuade the city, county or other authority to avoid setting up separate hotlines. For accreditation purposes, the I&R service needs to describe situations where this objective has been achieved and be in discussions or develop a plan for where this type of arrangement may be possible. The requirement deals with the I&R system being the first point of contact, not any particular I&R service within the system. This requirement cannot be met by providing a rationale for the value of information and referral in general.

- The I&R service shall develop cooperative working relationships that assure utilization of its resource database by other service providers in the system. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service is sharing information in its database with local service providers in the form of a print or electronic directory, a searchable database on its Internet Web page, a copy of its database and search software or other similar mechanisms.
- The I&R service shall work cooperatively with local service providers to address issues that have a critical impact on the community as a whole such as disaster relief and recovery, homelessness, welfare reform, managed health care and one-stop co-located human services. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service should be participating in community meetings where these types of issues are being discussed. If meetings are not taking place, the I&R service should initiate them.
- The I&R service shall explore opportunities for joint service delivery with local service providers, e.g., participation in local case management collaboratives, encourage collaborating service providers to participate in community-wide data collection, analysis and reporting activities, where appropriate, or engage in other activities that improve the ability of the service delivery system to respond to the needs of inquirers. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service can describe other activities of this nature that are appropriate for their community.

Documentation: Provide a list of organizations using your I&R service's database and a description of efforts to share your database with local service providers. Submit a description of your arrangements and, where relevant, copies of letters of agreement, MOUs, MOAs, SLAs with local service providers relative to the following:

- Arrangements to serve as a call center for local service providers, efforts to develop arrangements, or a plan for how such arrangements might work.
- Situations in which you have worked with local service providers on community issues or efforts to develop these relationships.
- Joint service delivery arrangements, where they exist. If you are not currently involved in this type of relationship, submit a description of what may be possible in your community.

COMPONENT C: COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG LOCAL, STATE OR PROVINCIAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL I&R PROVIDERS

Standard 15: Comprehensive and specialized I&R services at all geographic levels (local, state/provincial, regional, national and international) shall strive to develop formal and informal working relationships with the objective of broadening the availability of information and referral to all inquirers, facilitating access to appropriate resources regardless of their origin and/or location, avoiding duplication of effort and funding, expanding the effectiveness of social analysis with more global information about needs and services, and augmenting the impact of advocacy efforts through coordination, where possible.

Sub-Component 1: Requirements for Local I&R Services

Requirement: Local I&R services shall identify and develop cooperative working relationships with key state/provincial, national and international I&R providers. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service can demonstrate awareness of important I&R services at other levels (e.g., national runaway hotlines, Eldercare Locator) by, for example, providing a sampling of those in its database. This requirement does NOT reference I&R associations such as AIRS and its affiliates.

Documentation: Submit letters of agreement, MOUs, MOAs, SLAs. with state/provincial, national and international I&R services; a list of participating organizations and a description of efforts to identify and list key I&R services at these levels.

Sub-Component 2: Requirements for I&R Services Other Than Locals

Requirement: National I&R services shall identify and develop cooperative working relationships with key state and local I&R programs. National and international I&R services shall identify and develop cooperative working relationships with other key national/international I&R services.

Documentation: Submit letters of agreement, MOUs, MOAs, SLAs with state and local I&R services, a list of participating organizations and a description of efforts to identify key I&R services at these levels as well as those delineating agreements with other key national I&R services, a list of participating organizations and a description of efforts to identify other key national I&R services.

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COMPONENT D: PARTICIPATION IN STATE OR PROVINCIAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL I&R ASSOCIATIONS

Standard 16: The I&R service shall strive to strengthen state or provincial, regional, national and international I&R networks by becoming active in planning, program development, advocacy, training and other efforts at these levels.

Sub-component 1: Participation Per the Standard

Requirement: There are three requirements related to this Standard including the following:

- The I&R service shall strive to participate in the activities of its state/provincial or regional I&R association and/or the international I&R association (AIRS, InformCanada). Minimum Expectation: The I&R service shall participate in the activities of its state/provincial or regional I&R association and/or those of AIRS, InformCanada.
- The I&R service shall participate in statewide or province-wide database efforts where they exist. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service must participate if there is a statewide or province-wide database effort.
- The I&R service shall participate in data collection efforts at the state or provincial, regional, national and international levels. Minimum Expectation: If there are data collection efforts at these levels, the I&R service must contribute.

Documentation: Submit a description of activities in support of each association, e.g., attending conferences, being Board members, presenting workshops, etc. Provide a copy of your data sharing agreement and a written statement confirming participation in statewide/province-wide database efforts. Provide written statements confirming participation in statewide/province-wide inquirer data collection.

AREA V: ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The standards in Area V 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, providing for ongoing program evaluation, developing policies and procedures which guide the organization, developing an organizational code of ethics, establishing sound fiscal practices, providing a conducive physical environment, managing personnel, providing for staff training, and increasing public awareness regarding the availability of information and referral services and their value to the community.

COMPONENT A: GOVERNANCE

Standard 17: The auspices under which the I&R service operates shall ensure the achievement of I&R goals and meet the stated goals of funders.

Sub-component 1: Governing Body, Constitution (Articles of Incorporation) or Bylaws

Requirement: The I&R service shall have (or be 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, that adequately represents the diverse interests of the community and that oversees implementation of program goals and objectives to assure quality of service.[8] If the organization/I&R service is incorporated as a nonprofit, it shall have a constitution or bylaws that meet the appropriate legal requirements. If the agency is part of a military installation, a letter from headquarters stating responsibility for the agency's program may be substituted. If the I&R service is part of a government entity, a statement describing the authority establishing its mandate may be substituted.

Documentation: Submit a list of your Board of Directors, if relevant, and copy of the bylaws, charter/articles of incorporation or authorizing statutes that created the agency/program. If your agency is part of a military installation, submit a letter from headquarters stating responsibility for the agency's program. If the I&R service is part of a government entity, submit a statement describing the authority establishing its mandate.

Sub-component 2: Advisory Committee

Requirement: If the organization/I&R service has a governing body that is not local or does not adequately represent the community it serves (e.g., an I&R service that is part of a United Way, Community Council or government agency), it shall have an advisory committee to assure sufficient local input and oversight.

Documentation: Provide a list of advisory committee members and describe their community affiliations.

Sub-component 3: Mission Statement

Requirement: The organization/I&R service shall have a Mission Statement that is compatible with the purpose and philosophy of I&R.

Documentation: Organization/program mission statement. NOTE: If the applicant for accreditation is a program within a larger organization, include both agency and program mission statements if different.

Sub-component 4: Community I&R Needs

Requirement: The I&R service shall keep abreast of the issues and needs of the population it serves.

Documentation: Describe what you have done to keep abreast of the needs of your community.

Sub-component 5: I&R Program Evaluation

Requirement: The organization/I&R service shall have a process in place for examining its liability as an organization, the effectiveness of its services, its appropriate involvement in the community and its overall impact on the people it serves. The I&R service shall:

- Formulate annual goals, objectives and work plans which reflect priorities for service and desired outcomes;

[8] Government I&R services including the military are exempt from this requirement. (See the Documentation section.)

- Review accomplishments and actual outcomes relative to goals and objectives throughout the year and adjust service priorities, as needed; and
- On an annual basis, conduct 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). The I&R service shall involve inquirers, service providers and other representatives of the community in the evaluation process; and shall modify the program in response to evaluation outcomes.

Documentation: Survey forms and compilation of data will be reviewed during the On-Site Review. Provide the following:

- Written goals and objectives for the current year;
- An explanation of how the review of accomplishments relative to the previous year's goals and objectives is used to adjust service priorities;
- Your evaluation report and an explanation of how extracted and compiled inquirer data are used to evaluate service delivery;
- An explanation related to cost per inquiry and back-up documentation;
- An explanation of how follow-up data are used to evaluate service delivery, and
- A description of other means of involving service providers and other representatives of the community in the evaluation process.

Subcomponent 6: Organizational Policies

Requirement: The organization/I&R service shall have formally adopted, regularly reviewed, dated and formatted written policies which clearly articulate the general principles by which it manages the I&R service. Organizational policies shall be available to all employees who shall sign a compliance form.

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

Documentation: Submit your I&R service's policies and procedures manual, employee handbook and/or operations manual and sample compliance forms signed by employees. Do NOT send all of the forms your staff have signed! The manuals you submit should contain written policies and procedures that have been formally adopted, formatted and organized for staff and administration access.

Sub-component 7: Code of Ethics

Requirement: The organization/I&R service shall have 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 shall be approved by the governing body of the organization and included in written policies that all staff receive and agree to follow.

Documentation: Submit a copy of your agency's Code of Ethics, an explanation of the procedure for obtaining approval of governing body, and ample agreement forms or other mechanisms for obtaining agreement by all staff to follow. Do NOT send all of the forms your staff have signed!

Subcomponent 8: Nondiscrimination Statement:

Requirement: The I&R service shall have in place 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. The I&R service shall also have a process for registering and resolving complaints from inquirers, staff members and the community involving discrimination.

Documentation: Submit a copy of your nondiscrimination statement and your complaint policy.

Sub-component 9: Insurance Coverage

Requirement: The organization/I&R service shall have sufficient insurance coverage for personal and property liability that protects both paid employees and volunteers.

Documentation: Submit proof of agency insurance.

Sub-component 10: Finance

Requirement: Financing shall be sufficient to enable the I&R service to provide adequate service and maintain these standards.

- The I&R service shall operate on a sound financial basis and exercise 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, shall maintain proper financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, draw up an annual budget, project future needs, explore and encourage financial development and support for continuance of the program, and participate in saving resources to avoid duplication and to cut costs.

Documentation: Submit copies of your most recent: annual budget for I&R, financial statement for I&R, annual budget for the agency (if part of a larger organization), annual fiscal audit, and annual board report.

Sub-component 11: Facilities

Requirement: The I&R service shall provide adequate accessible space and equipment to ensure that staff can effectively perform their duties.

Documentation: Provide a sketch of your agency's physical layout, including staff and equipment and a list of equipment/reports used to enhance service delivery capabilities (e.g., Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) service reports, American's with Disability Act (ADA) Compliance Reports, etc.). Provide a statement regarding accessibility to public transportation, if relevant.

COMPONENT B: PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Standard 18: The I&R service shall provide a framework and mechanisms for program and personnel management and administration that guarantee the continuity and consistency required for effective service delivery.

Sub-component 1: Personnel Administration per the Standards

Requirement: There are a number of requirements related to personnel administration including the following:

- The I&R service shall have a current organization chart defining levels of authority. If the agency is part of a larger organization, it shall have a functional organization chart for the I&R service.
- The I&R service shall have written, dated job descriptions for all staff and volunteers outlining responsibilities, essential job functions and lines of accountability.
- The I&R service shall ensure that listings for both paid and volunteer positions are posted as broadly as possible to ensure that qualified candidates throughout the community are aware of employment opportunities.
- The I&R service shall objectively measure each candidate's application for both paid and volunteer positions against the position's requirements using a standardized form and screening procedure.
- The I&R service shall interview paid and volunteer candidates using written questions that are specific to the position for which they are applying and shall have an objective rating form and process for evaluating responses.
- The I&R service shall have 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.
- The I&R service shall provide for the ongoing supervision and annual evaluation of paid employees and volunteers by qualified I&R managers. The organization shall have a written supervision plan for staff and shall develop and use standardized observation and performance appraisal forms. When performance problems are identified, they shall be documented and addressed in an individual performance imp rovement plan. Staff evaluations shall address specific responsibilities and job functions outlined in the individuals' job descriptions.

Documentation: Submit a current organization chart reflecting the organization's structure and all positions within the I&R service. If the agency is a part of a larger organization, submit a functional organization chart for the I&R service. Submit current paid and volunteer staff's job descriptions for all I&R positions. Submit your job application form, job posting and form for objectively measuring applicant qualifications. Provide a description of your recruitment and screening procedures. Submit a copy of your employment interview questions for EACH OF your I&R positions and your rating form. Submit copies of your supervision plan; your I&R specialist observation/evaluation form; your performance appraisal forms for administrative staff, service delivery staff, other staff and volunteers; and resumes/vitas for supervisory staff.

COMPONENT C: STAFF TRAINING

Standard 19: The I&R service shall have a training policy and make training available to paid and volunteer staff.

Sub-component 1: Training Structure

Requirement: The I&R service shall provide training for paid employees and volunteers which is based on pre-determined written training goals with written curriculum objectives defining behavioral outcomes for each module. The staff training program shall be responsive to the diverse learning styles of personnel including visual learners, auditory learners, and kinesthetic learners.

Documentation: Submit a copy of your written training goals and training curriculum and either reference the page number in the training manual where metholology is noted or provide a copy of your methodology outline.

Sub-component 2: I&R Training Content

Requirement: The I&R service shall provide 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 and local laws affecting service delivery (e.g., abuse reporting); and the administrative structure, policies, and procedures of the organization.

Training for the I&R specialists shall include:

- Pre-service training appropriate to the skills of new staff so that they meet expectations in interviewing techniques and attitudes; listening skills; communication; proper telephone usage; assessment techniques; information giving and referral procedures; follow-up; data recording; maintenance of inquirer records; organization of the Taxonomy; use of the resource database; job-related equipment and tools including database software and the organization's telephone system; working with multicultural/ethnic inquirers, older adults, people with disabilities, sexual minorities, and other special populations; and techniques for handling calls from lonely, suicidal, despondent, or angry inquirers or those in crisis.

- On-the-job training that requires a sequential program of increasing levels of responsibility in handling inquiries (beginning with observation and ending with full responsibility for handling inquirers).

Training for resource staff shall include an overview of the local community service delivery system, inclusion/exclusion criteria for the resource database, data elements, Taxonomy indexing, database maintenance procedures, computerization, the 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).

Documentation: The I&R service shall have written crisis intervention policies and procedures that provide call handling protocols for specific types of emergencies. Included shall be lethality assessment procedures, protective measures relating to inquiries from individuals in endangerment situations, protocols that address inquirers who wish to remain anonymous yet require rescue and the organization's rescue protocols.

Subcomponent 3: Crisis Intervention Training

Requirement: Pre-service training shall include a module that prepares I&R specialists to deliver effective crisis intervention services related to a broad range of problem areas including assistance for individuals threatening suicide, homicide or assault; suicide survivors; victims of domestic violence, child abuse or elder/dependent adult abuse; sexual assault survivors; runaway youth; people experiencing a psychiatric emergency; chemically dependent people in crisis; survivors of a traumatic death; and others in distress. The curriculum shall include attitudinal, knowledge and skill outcomes.

<u>Attitudinal outcomes</u> include:

- Ability to provide a non-judgmental response to sensitive issues (e.g., not discussing suicidal ideation with a client in terms of moral rightness or wrongness).
- A balanced and realistic attitude toward oneself in a helper role (e.g., not expecting to "save" all potential suicides by one's own single effort, or to solve all of the problems of the distressed person).
- A realistic and humane approach to death, dying, self-destructive behavior and other human issues.
- Coming to terms with one's own feelings about death and dying insofar as these feelings might deter one from helping others.

Knowledge outcomes include:

- Crisis theory and the principles of crisis management.
- Basic suicidology including suicide/lethality assessment, use of assessment tools and related legal issues.
- Victimology including assessing the risk of an individual assaulting others or being assaulted.
- Community resources.
- The consultation process (who to contact and the conditions under which contact should be made).
- Voluntary and involuntary hospitalization criteria and procedures.
- Organizational policies and procedures related to crisis intervention.
- Warning signs or risk indicators for various issues.

Skill outcomes include:

- Assessment techniques in life-threatening situations including risk of suicide or homicide.
- Crisis management techniques including strategies for keeping inquirers on the line while a rescue or transfer is being made.
- Efficient and effective mobilization of community resources.
- Effective use of the consultative process.

Documentation: If separate from your regular training manual, submit a copy of your crisis intervention training for I&R specialists and include in the training binder referenced as an appendix above. It is not necessary to duplicate already submitted materials.

Sub-component 4: Training Evaluation

Requirement: Trainees (paid employees and volunteers) shall be evaluated using objective (e.g., written tests) and subjective (e.g., observation) measures and shall demonstrate a minimum level of competency before assuming their duties. Procedures shall be in place for handling trainees who do not demonstrate competency at the required level. The I&R service shall systematically evaluate the effectiveness of its training program and the performance of its trainers and shall modify the training based on evaluation results.

Documentation: Submit a description of the minimum level of competency that a trainee must achieve and procedures for handling trainees that do not demonstrate competency at that level. Provide examples of subjective and/or objective evaluation tools used for measuring a trainee's level of competency. Provide a copy of your training evaluation form and an explanation of how the results are used to modify the training program. Also provide a copy of the form you use to evaluate your training personnel or explanation of your evaluation methods.

Sub-component 5: Professional Development

Requirement: The I&R service shall provide in-service training focusing on refining and updating the staff's information and referral skills. Topics shall include in-house operating procedures, areas of interest in the human service field, significant changes in laws affecting the local service delivery system or requirements for the I&R service, community services, personal skill development, assistance in maintaining objective attitudes toward the inquirer's needs, and use of services or technology. In service-training shall also be available to resource specialists and management staff.

Documentation: Provide a list of dates, number of hours, and subjects of last years' in-service trainings or continuing education programs per staff person and an explanation of the process used to determine who attends training and how information obtained at the training is shared with other staff. Describe other professional development activities available to staff, e.g., conferences, workshops, tuition assistance.

COMPONENT D: PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

Standard 20: The I&R service shall establish and maintain an ongoing program which increases public awareness of the availability of I&R services, their objectives and their value to the community.

Sub-component 1: Promotion and Outreach Per the Standard

Requirement: There are a number of requirements related to promotion and outreach including the following:

- The I&R service shall develop a written marketing plan which employs a systematic methodology for publicizing the agency's services to its targeted population and to other community resources (e.g., other agencies, religious organizations, police, schools). The I&R service shall use various methods to publicize information and referral. These methods shall be tailored to meet the needs of diverse populations.
- The I&R service shall publicize 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 or underserved populations.
- The I&R service shall encourage other community services to promote and use I&R resources.
- The I&R service shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of its marketing plan(s) through a variety of means including examination of inquirer demographic information and tabulation of referral source data.
- The I&R service shall act as a resource and offer to other organizations consultation, technical assistance, and training on available community resources.
- Staff (paid and volunteer) shall 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.
- The I&R service shall maintain professional relationships with local, state/provincial, regional and national organizations which provide related services.

Documentation: Submit your I&R service marketing plan and/or community education plan. If the I&R service is a program of a larger agency and the marketing plan for the larger organization does not address I&R, please submit a marketing plan specific to the I&R service. A list of information that is disseminated can serve as documentation. Provide a description of how the pieces were modified to tailor them to the needs of the population served. Provide a description of marketing evaluation plan and marketing reports. Provide a description of the consultation, technical assistance or training you have provided regarding community resources. Provide a list of the community resource fairs, meetings with community agencies or other similar activities in which you have participated. Provide a list of the professional organizations with which you have relationships.

AREA VI: DISASTER SERVICES

The Standards in Area VI describe the requirements an I&R service must meet in order to best position itself to connect people to critical resources in times of disaster. Although most I&R services do not promote themselves as disaster service agencies, in the past decade I&Rs have been identified as natural community partners for the dissemination of information about community based disaster-related services. In the wake of September 11th and the institutionalization of 2-1-1, it has become prudent business practice for I&R services to be prepared for disaster response and equip staff to handle disaster-related inquiries appropriately. The I&R service shall be 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 a plan for the I&R to continue to provide services if its building is damaged or destroyed; and the ability to effectively accumulate and disseminate accurate disaster-related information, provide information and referral assistance for individuals impacted by a disaster and provide community reports on inquirer needs and referrals.

NOTE: While it is desirable for I&R services to be prepared to provide services during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, only the ability to provide service in the relief and recovery stages of a disaster is a requirement for accreditation.

COMPONENT A: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS AND BUSINESS CONTINGENCY PLAN

Standard 21: The I&R service shall have a written emergency operations and business contingency plan that specifically addresses disasters common to the area, but one that also prepares for emergencies in general. The plan shall reference emergency preparedness and mitigation activities such as structural alternations and changes in business operations; and shall address the steps to be taken before, during and after an emergency to prevent or minimize interruptions in business operations and assure long-term recovery.

Sub-Component 1: Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan Per the Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall have written procedures that address specific types of emergencies including power outages, fires, medical emergencies, bomb threats, radiological threats, workplace violence and other incidents which may require different forms of response, e.g., duck, cover and hold during an earthquake or sheltering in place during a radiological emergency. Included shall be procedures for contacting the police/paramedics.

The I&R service shall have written procedures for emergency evacuation of the facility following a disaster that impacts the immediate area surrounding the facility and may have made continued occupancy unsafe. The evacuation procedure shall designate exits, specify an assembly area, include provisions for ensuring that everyone has left the building, provide for damage assessment, and include instructions for shutting off gas, electricity and water when necessary. Special arrangements for helping staff or visitors with a disability exit the building shall also be addressed.

The I&R service shall develop and document a designated leadership description which outlines the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff before, during and in the aftermath of an incident.

The I&R service shall have periodic drills that allow staff to practice emergency procedures outlined in the plan.

Documentation: Provide a copy of the procedures that address specific types of emergencies, your written emergency evacuation plan and your designated leadership description in times of disaster. Provide a description of the emergency procedures drills your I&R service schedules. Include a reference to the activities, their frequency and the debriefing with managers and staff following the drill.

COMPONENT B: FORMAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR EMERGENCY OPERATIONS AND RELIEF AGENCIES

Standard 22: The I&R service shall participate in ongoing cooperative disaster response planning in the community and shall take all steps that are necessary to become recognized as an integral part of the community's emergency preparedness and response network..

Sub-Component 1: Formal Relationships Per the Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall understand the command and control structure within their jurisdiction and their own role and that of other organizations in the response, relief and recovery phases of a disaster.

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

Documentation: Please provide a description your I&R service's role in times of disaster in your community. Describe the community meetings your I&R service attends regarding plans for disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, relief and recovery; or document the efforts you have made to become involved disaster services in your community (e.g., copies of letters or emails to officials, references to phone calls).

COMPONENT C: PRE- AND POST-DISASTER DATABASE

Standard 23: The I&R service shall develop, maintain, and/or use an accurate, up-to-date computerized resource database that contains information about available community resources that provide services in times of disaster. Database records shall include detailed descriptions of the services organizations provide and the conditions under which services are available; and shall be indexed and accessed using the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/INFO LINE Taxonomy of Human Services.

Sub-Component 1: Pre- and Post-Disaster Database Per the Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall include in their resource database information about permanent local, state 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 a previous incident.

The I&R service shall add 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 agencies in the standing disaster database (such as Red Cross Service Centers).

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

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

The I&R service shall have an alternative means for allowing staff to access disaster resources in the event that computerized access is unavailable.

Documentation: Please provide a copy of your disaster database procedures, which describes the types of permanent disaster resources in your database, the types of resources you plan to add as they emerge in the wake of an event, and the process for verification of these resources. Please provide a copy of disaster-related information distribution agreements that you have with organizations in the community. Please describe the arrangements you have made for your staff to access disaster resources if computerized access to your database were to become unavailable.

COMPONENT D: DISASTER-RELATED I&R SERVICE DELIVERY

Standard 24: The I&R service shall provide information and referral services to the community during (when appropriate) and following a disaster or other emergency. This service shall include 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.

Sub-Component 1: Disaster-Related I&R Service Delivery Per the Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall have in place mutual aid agreements with other I&R services which include provisions for relocation of staff and/or redirection of calls.

I&R specialists shall have the skills to respond effectively to people in crisis, work cooperatively with other organizations, remain flexible in a rapidly changing environment, be willing to work under adverse conditions (e.g., long hours, uncomfortable surroundings), be 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.

I&R specialists shall 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.

The I&R service shall have a written plan for providing disaster stress debriefing for all staff.

Documentation: Please provide a copy of the MOU you have with other I&R services for mutual assistance in times of disaster. Please describe any special training your I&R service has provided for staff to prepare them for types of calls they may receive and the altered work environment they may encounter following a disaster (or reference the component of your training module that addresses these issues). Please submit a copy of your plan for disaster stress debriefing for staff.

COMPONENT E: DISASTER-RELATED INQUIRER DATA COLLECTION/REPORTS

Standard 25: The I&R service shall track inquirer requests for service, referrals and when appropriate, demographic information about the inquirer; and shall be prepared to produce reports regarding requests for disaster-related services and referral activity.

Sub-Component 1: Disaster Related Inquirer Data Collection/Reports Per the Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall collect and organize inquirer data that facilitates appropriate referrals and provides a basis for describing requests for disaster-related service and identifying gaps and overlaps in service.

The I&R service shall be prepared to produce regular reports to the community regarding referrals, access to services, service availability and unmet needs.

When appropriate, the I&R shall participate in shared client tracking efforts.

Following all emergencies that necessitate implementation of the provisions of the Disaster

Preparedness standards, the I&R service shall produce an after action report which documents the special actions 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.

Documentation: Please submit a description of any special types of client information that you collect in times of disaster. Please submit a copy of a report that you developed for sharing with the community regarding the activities of your I&R service during a disaster (or submit a description of what such a report will contain). If you participate in shared client tracking efforts in times of disaster, please describe your activities (or provide a copy of the MOU or other written agreement). Provide a copy of an after-action report and describe any revisions in your I&R service's disaster plan or training that were made as a result (or describe your organization's plan for an after-action report and how you plan to make necessary modifications in your disaster plan or training).

COMPONENT F: DISASTER-RELATED TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Standard 26: The I&R service shall have technology in place that facilitates the ability of the organization to maintain service delivery during times of disaster or a localized emergency.

Sub-Component 1: Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan Per the Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall take whatever steps are necessary to establish a relationship with their telephone service provider that will ensure that the organization is given high priority for continued phone service in times of disaster. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service will explore and attempt to implement this requirement, if feasible.

The I&R service shall have the ability to reroute calls to another site (e.g., to cell phones, to people's homes, to another local agency or out of the region) if their business site is not accessible. Minimum Expectation: The I&R service is only required to have the ability to reroute calls if they have an MOU with another organization to do so.

The I&R service shall have 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 business site is not accessible.

The I&R service shall conduct an assessment of its facility to identify equipment, connections and other resources that may be vulnerable under emergency conditions and take steps to mitigate the situation, e.g., move computers and telephones that are located on the floor to safer locations.

The I&R service shall have power supplies (UPSs) on all critical systems for short-term recovery in the case of a power failure.

Documentation: Please describe the arrangement you have with your telephone company that gives your I&R service high priority for continued phone service in times of disaster. If you have a written MOU or other agreement, please submit a copy. If you have an MOU with other I&R services to reroute calls, please describe the type of technology that allows you to do so. Please describe the arrangements you have made for staff to access the resource database if the business site is unavailable. Please describe the assessment of your facility to identify vulnerabilities and the actions you took to remedy problems you identified.

COMPONENT G: E DISASTER TRAINING AND EXERCISE

Standard 27: The I&R service shall train staff on emergency operations and business expectations upon hiring and shall provide ongoing training at least annually thereafter. The I&R service shall actively participate in community disaster exercises to test the organization's emergency operations plan.

Sub-Component 1: Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan Per the Standard

Requirement: The I&R service shall provide 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 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.

The I&R service shall provide training on the organization's in-house disaster preparedness procedures and protocols.

The I&R service shall provide 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 shall help participants understanding how disasters affect individuals and communities and shall address the specific requirements of people with special needs, e.g., individuals with disabilities, language barriers, cultural differences or other relevant characteristics. It shall also prepare I&R staff for the likelihood of providing service delivery under altered and frequently adverse conditions which may include working long hours, off-site or under the direction of another organization.

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

Documentation: Please provide a reference to the component of your training manual that addressed general disaster-related training and specialized training for I&R and resource staff.