



NW-AIRS News

President's 2005 Annual Report to the Membership

The NW-AIRS Board of Directors began this year with the goals of 1) recruiting new Board members, 2) completing our work with AIRS around membership restructuring, and 3) beginning work for the 2006 training conference. Two of these goals will continue into 2006.

We welcomed four new members to the Board of Directors and said goodbye to three long-term Board members. We welcomed Jeri Shumate, Reneé Biles, Gaye Bennett, and Mary Kelly to the board and are excited about the experiences and new perspectives they will bring. We are still recruiting new members to the Board, so if you are willing to serve, please contact me.

We also said goodbye to long time members Terra McCaffree, Liz Bartell, and Bob Quirk. All three have given a tremendous amount of time and support to NW-AIRS. Their efforts have truly resulted in the solid financial status of NW-AIRS today, as well as national recognition for our work with AIRS. We will miss them very much!

It has been exciting for me to represent NW-AIRS at the AIRS Affiliate Council meetings. As you know, the new AIRS membership structure goes into affect in January 2006. This change is being done to strengthen the membership and identity of AIRS on a state and national level. It should improve communication, streamline processes, deliver key services, increase revenue, and advance the capacity of information and referrals providers to better serve their communities. These changes reflect the work of the Affiliate Council representatives during the past 18 months and the work of the Membership Task Force. In a practical sense these changes mean that NW-AIRS will no longer be sending you a membership application. It will come from AIRS and a portion of your dues will come back to NW-AIRS. Our logo has changed as well. The new look reflects our closer involvement with AIRS.

This year the Board decided to bring our 2006 Training Conference back to Boise, Idaho, the site of our successful 2000 conference. Please let one of the Board members know if you have specific suggestions or ideas for conference topics.

I continue to be amazed at how resilient, strong, and inventive the information and referral system is in our country. As we watched the events surrounding the hurricane disaster and the recovery efforts unfold, it is inspiring to realize how many people and communities reached out to help. Some people seem surprised at the amount of confusion there was around the provision of relief services. I doubt that most of us were surprised by the confusion because we deal with individuals every day who don't know where to turn or how to navigate a system that is NOT in crisis. Imagine trying to access services in a system that has been devastated.

Peter Bishop, 2-1-1 Manager for United Way of America, referenced comments from emergency management officials in Louisiana who said "nobody hears about 2-1-1 during non-disaster times, but when you have a disaster, it is a godsend." I believe this statement is true for information and referral in general. We do a phenomenal job for thousands of people with little recognition. Just as 2-1-1 has proven itself in the Gulf Coast as being an invaluable resource, you are making a difference in your program, in your state, and in the lives of people who depend on your service. Be proud; don't forget to breathe; and keep up the good work.

At the close of my second year as President of NW-AIRS, I am amazed at how quickly the year went. We are closing the year in a fiscally sound manner and look forward to continued success in 2006.

—Patricia Williams, *Chair*

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State 2-1-1 Call Centers' Hurricane Response

OREGON RESPONSE: Oregon's 211info responded to United Way of America's call for assistance by sending six staff members over a period of three weeks to the Monroe, Louisiana 2-1-1 center. Because this level of support to Monroe had an impact on local operations, 211info used their on-call staff on a nearly-full-time basis and expanded several part-time staff to full-time. An online Web log was established to provide an insider's glimpse of the activity at the Monroe call center. This log received considerable attention across the region. By the end of the third week, 211info had given almost 900 hours of service to the Monroe call center. Additionally, three other staff members traveled to Jackson, Mississippi to assist with data development work.

Through work with the Oregon State Office of Emergency Management, a system was in place by Sept. 6 whereby Northwest Medical Teams would coordinate donations to support arriving evacuees. Potential donors would be directed to dial 2-1-1 or the toll-free statewide maternal/child health helpline, 1-800-SAFENET, to learn where to take donations (the SafeNet line would serve cell callers and those served by telephone companies not yet offering 2-1-1). Prior to the hurricane disasters, 211info answered 2-1-1 calls only for the urban region surrounding Portland; calls originating from the rest of the state were directed to a dormant line until additional service provision was in place. The statewide line was activated on Sept. 6 to assist with the response, giving people across the state a wider range of telephone options.

211info currently operates 7:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays and 8:00 am - 7:00 pm weekends. Hours were extended to 10:00 pm on weekdays in response to the deployment and recruited local volunteers to handle donation calls. Both Oregon State Governor Ted Kulongoski and City of Portland Mayor Tom Potter issued press releases directing the public to call either 2-1-1 or 1-800-SAFENET. Although the formal evacuation to Oregon did not occur, a large number of people self-evacuated to Portland and the Welcome Oregon Center was established by the Red Cross and Multnomah County. 211info provided daily fax and e-mail updates to service providers throughout the region between Sept. 5 and Sept. 23, and donated free print directories for use at the

Welcome Oregon Center. As of Oct. 7, the Center had served 786 self-evacuees. Call tracking was not configured to capture numbers for the first few days following the press releases, but it is estimated that 211info handled approximately 1,000 calls directly relating to local Katrina response.

211info was able to respond at this level due to funding from WIN211, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, United Way of America, FEMA, and the City of Portland, demonstrating the critical need for coordination and on-going support of 2-1-1 services.

IDAHO RESPONSE: In Idaho, the 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine was "Mission Assigned" by the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security for the management of a donated goods and services under a Joint Exercise of Powers entered into on August 4, 2005, by and between the State of Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, United Way of Treasure Valley, and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. As part of the State of Idaho's response plan to assist the victims and evacuees of this disaster, a statewide Donation/Volunteer Management System was established utilizing the 2-1-1 telephone number as the advertised entry point. The Idaho CareLine, part of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, is the designated 2-1-1 call center in Idaho and United Way of Treasure Valley operates the 2-1-1 Volunteer Center matching volunteer opportunities with individuals wishing to volunteer.

The 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine Web site was updated to include information and links to both national and Idaho resources for evacuees, the public wishing to make donations or volunteer, as well as agencies who may be sponsoring the evacuees. To date, around 200 self-deployed Head of Households are registered with FEMA as having relocated to Idaho. The 2-1-1 CareLine has helped over 20 evacuee families access services in Idaho; and has helped another 300 individuals with information on donation/volunteer opportunities. The 2-1-1 Volunteer Center has assisted over 80 individuals or agencies seeking volunteer opportunities or needing volunteers.

—Patricia Williams, 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine

2-1-1 Updates

Oregon:

Legislation was approved that provides a structure for Oregon to receive federal 2-1-1 funding when it becomes available. House Bill 3443 was signed by Governor Ted Kulongoski in July 2005. The act designates Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) as the state agency to oversee the development and implementation of 2-1-1 in Oregon. The act mandates a standards-based statewide database and the designation of call centers based on AIRS standards.

The OR211 Board of Directors is currently reviewing a proposed application to be a 2-1-1 Call Center, the document that identifies the minimum criteria required for a call center to provide 2-1-1 services in Oregon. This tool will serve as the mechanism by which recommendations can be made to OEM for providers to receive designation as an approved 2-1-1 call center. The Board is also pursuing new grant funding to provide technical assistance to sustain statewide implementation.

Work continues in completing negotiations with Oregon state telecommunications providers. Switching has been completed with 15 statewide and local companies including Qwest, Sprint, CenturyTel, Cascade Utilities/TransCascade Utilities, and Comcast. Other telephone companies remain in negotiations.

—Jeri Shumate, *211info*

Idaho:

The Idaho update was included in the hurricane response article.

Washington:

All eight of the 2-1-1 call centers have been designated by the WIN211 Board. The last two, Spokane Mental Health and Behavioral Health Resources, were approved this fall. Each call center submitted a formal application that was reviewed by the Call Center Screening Committee and approved by the Board. Additionally, the Committee developed a set of minimum requirements that all call centers must meet before they even begin to test the 2-1-1 call transfer system. This was done to assure that even during the testing phase all call centers provide excellent customer service. The minimum standards were based directly on AIRS standards.

WIN211 plans to launch 2-1-1 service on Feb. 22, 2006. Initially, coverage is planned for King, Clark and Pierce counties and the North Sound and Central Washington regions. This will provide coverage for half of Washington's population. Other centers will begin service later in 2006. WIN211 is also working to secure \$2.5 million in operating support as a part of the 2006 budget, specifically as a part of the emergency preparedness plans. Each call center has been contacting their legislators to educate them about the benefits of 2-1-1, especially in the relief and recovery phases of a disaster. WIN211 plans a "lobby" day on Jan. 30 to reach even more legislators to gain their support.

The Network of Call Center Directors, which is composed of representatives from each of the call centers, has been meeting regularly to develop a consistent approach to collecting caller and need information, coding the agency resource information and other issues that require broad agreement. Much of their work has focused on making recommendations for upgrades to the Resource House software to assure it is able to meet the needs of all the call centers. WIN211 has also contracted with a consulting firm to assist in working with the various telephone companies to assure the programming will be done for the testing of the 2-1-1 system.

—Kathleen Southwick, *Crisis Clinic*



Taking Time for Yourself

Self-Care is the kindest and most necessary act for social service workers during the holiday season and over the coming year.

Taking time to focus on self-care may be the most valuable thing you do over the holiday season and all year long. For information and referral and crisis line workers, the holiday season – which kicks off with Thanksgiving and spans the New Year – can be anything but blissful. Callers who are homeless, without income or support, experiencing serious health and mental health crises or grieving, touch our hearts any time of year. But helping takes a higher toll on emotions this time of year. Financial and basic needs programs and services, which are always limited, experience high demand over the holidays. When messages of joy and giving are in the air, it is difficult to be in the position of turning away people who are in need.

In addition to the stresses of home and family life during this season, it is not uncommon for those in frontline helping professions to experience extra-high levels of stress, including compassion fatigue, as the capacity to give gets stretched to the limit.

For these reasons, it's important to put yourself at the top of the list during the holidays, and to make self-care a resolution in 2006.

Here are some ideas for good self-care practice in the coming year:

- Be gentle with yourself. Give yourself permission to slow down, take frequent breaks, and simplify your day.
- Remember that you are a helper, not a magician who can heal all the worlds' pain.
- Express your support and gratitude to colleagues; be willing to accept their support and thanks in return.
- Find a hermit spot at work and use it as a retreat as often as you can.
- Remember that in light of all the suffering we see, we are bound to feel helpless at times. Acknowledge it without shame.
- Learn to recognize the difference between debriefing that relieves stress, and complaining that intensifies stress.
- Be resourceful. Be creative. Try new approaches.
- Use a coworker or supervisor regularly for support and wellness check-ins.
- On the way home, try to focus on the positive events from the day. Practice gratitude at work and at home.

Add one or two healthy self-care practices to your daily routine and see what happens. Even small actions bear fruit when followed regularly.

Compiled by Julie Johnson, *Northwest Regional Council*



2006 AIRS & NW-AIRS Membership

AIRS and NW-AIRS are your organizations, designed to help you succeed both professionally and personally. AIRS has changed its dues structure for 2006 to strengthen the membership and identity of AIRS on a state and national level. Key changes include:

- AIRS now has a single membership structure for both AIRS and the Affiliate, whereby an individual, agency or organization will join both associations at a level that best meets their individual needs.
- Individuals, agencies or organizations will not need to, nor be able to, join an individual state affiliate only; i.e. each individual, agency or organization is also a member of AIRS. The single membership includes membership in your state or regional Affiliate.
- The new tiered membership structure is based on the valuable products you use from AIRS, including the annual training conference and your local affiliate training. Think about all of the products and services that AIRS offers that are important to your I&R as you select your membership level.

AIRS products and services have never been more essential or more valuable. For more information on the dues structure or to download the AIRS Membership Application Form go to www.airs.org or contact membership manager Debra Fernandez by E-mail at debrafernandez@airs.org or phone, (703) 218-AIRS (2477) x106.

	2005 Budget	As of 12-20-05	2006 Budget
Revenue			
Memberships	1,600	1,085	1,500
Grants	0	0	0
Conference	0	225	9,250
Misc.	0	0	0
From Reserves	1,140	0	
Total	2,740	1,310	10,750
Expenses			
AIRS Dues	150	150	150
Incorp/govt Fees	100	50	50
Board Meetings	500	138	200
Postage/Mailings	50	100	
Supplies	100		
Telephone	300		
Website Hosting	190	163	160
Website Transfer	180		
Website Redesign	900		
Travel-Board Mtgs	541	1,000	
Travel-Affiliates Mtg	1,000	500	1,000
Certification/Trainings	200		
Bank Fees	80		
Misc.	200	43	
Operating Subtotal	4,020		
Conference-Hotel costs	0	5,200	
Conference -Travel	350		
Conference- Speakers	0	219	750
Conference-Supplies	150	150	
Conference-Printing/Copy	50		
Conference Other	200		
Conference Subtotal	6,700		
Total	2,740	1,804	10,720
Net	0	-493	30
Bank Balance of 12-20-05		\$19,688	

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NW-AIRS is a non-profit organization registered in the state of Oregon. Our purpose is to promote excellence of the information and referral profession in the northwest.

