

# CAIRS

## NEWSLETTER

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CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

## 2-1-1 Legislation Stalled in Congress

For a few days in late September, hope appeared on the horizon for the federal “Calling for 2-1-1 Act.” But hope fizzled, and when Congress recessed on September 29 – so that members could head home and gear up for the November 7 election – the federal legislation remained in a stalled mode.

Prior to the recess, the Senate appeared on the verge of passing compromise legislation that would have resulted in a number of significant changes in the earlier version of the “Calling for 2-1-1 Act.” Those changes included:

- Funding authorization levels would have been changed from \$150 million each in years one and two, and \$100 million each for three following years, to \$50 million in year one, and \$50 million or less in subsequent years.
- The state funding match would have started at 50 percent in year one and would have increased in subsequent years by an amount to be determined.
- While every state would be eligible for some funding, states with no 2-1-1 service would be the priority, followed by states with some coverage, and culminating with states with statewide coverage.
- And, federal funds would not be available for maintenance of effort purposes. Funds would only be used for infrastructure/element/services not already in existence.

Basically, the intent of the compromise legislation would have been to bring 2-1-1 to areas that do not currently have the service, and to address quality gaps in areas that already benefit from 2-1-1 coverage. That statement is significant when one considers where 2-1-1 service currently stands. According to latest United Way of America and AIRS information, 2-1-1 is currently serving approximately 190 million Americans – over 65 percent of the U. S. population – with 206 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 41 states (including 17 states with 100 percent coverage) plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

While some have expressed concern over the Senate’s watered-down language, United Ways of California and CAIRS pointed to the late-in-the-session activity in the Senate as a positive sign of encouragement, particularly when the Senate further

revised its language to state that, “Nothing . . . shall be construed to prohibit the Secretary from awarding a grant to a state that has 2-1-1 call centers to enable the state to achieve additional and strengthened 2-1-1 coverage.”

“Clearly this legislation would be an important door-opener for all of us involved in the 2-1-1 movement,” said Mark Walker, president of United Ways of California and president and chief executive officer of United Way of the Silicon Valley. “We applaud the Senate for taking steps that could make the ‘Calling for 2-1-1 Act’ a reality.”

However, Walker and Sara Matta, outgoing CAIRS president and president of 2-1-1/San Diego, pointed out that progress in the Senate could still be overshadowed by philosophical issues that continue to be the point of contention in the House, where the main discussion has continued to center around socially sensitive requests and referrals and how they should be handled by 2-1-1 call centers.

“We believe this type of information speaks to one of the core values and strengths of 2-1-1,” said Matta. “If 2-1-1 is going to be truly comprehensive in nature, all citizens, regardless of their social connections, interests and needs should receive whatever critical health and human service information is needed.”

While United Way of America is continuing to work during the recess with congressional staff members on “Calling for 2-1-1 Act” language, no additional official activity will be considered until a lame-duck Congress resumes discussions on Nov. 13.

– David M. Smith, CEO, United Way of Ventura County

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## Letter from the President . . .

Dear CAIRS Members,

How quickly a year goes by! Many of us celebrated the first anniversary of introducing 2-1-1 service and now can welcome our eighth county to the fold – San Bernardino County – where United Way of the Inland Empire launched the 2-1-1 service on September 20. Congratulations, San Bernardino! Our overall experience has been that calls increase dramatically immediately after the launch of 2-1-1. Let's see what year two brings!



A total of ninety people attended the Annual CAIRS Conference held on September 29 at the Clarion Hotel, San Francisco Airport. Sixteen workshops, many of them focused on health care issues for I&R and a truly dynamic Keynote Speaker, Dick Levy, of Varian Medical Systems, made this a very successful day. Our thanks to all the presenters and attendees for "Helping California Thrive."

At our September Board meeting we received the results of the latest Board elections and welcome two new Board members, who will start their terms at our December Retreat. See the article on the election. We look forward to you joining us, Mary and Marta. We also elected our officers for next year, again transitioning at the December Retreat. Maribel Marin will take over as CAIRS President, and the other officers are noted on this page.

We had to say a fond farewell to Angela Steidley this past month. She and her husband moved to Waynesville, Missouri. Angela was a willing and conscientious Board member for CAIRS, and a terrific liaison with the Army and the rest of the military. We will miss you greatly, Angela, and wish you all the very best in your new life.

— Sara Matta, CAIRS President

### CAIRS Calendar 2006-2007

Nov. 29- Dec. 1	CAIRS Board Meeting/Retreat - Asilomar
Feb. 1	CAIRS Board Meeting - Ontario
Feb. 2	So. California CAIRS Training - Ontario
May 3	CAIRS Board Meeting - Davis
May 4	No. California CAIRS Training - Davis
Sept. 27	CAIRS Board Meeting - So. California - TBD
Sept. 28	CAIRS Annual Conference - So. California - TBD

Visit [www.cairs.org/conferences.htm](http://www.cairs.org/conferences.htm) for more information

Dates and locations subject to change

### Reach a Statewide Audience with CAIRS

Have a conference, service or product you want to promote statewide? Consider purchasing ads in the CAIRS Newsletter. The current circulation is over 200, with membership in CAIRS continuing to grow. We are offering very low introductory advertising rates:

**For-Profit rate = \$400 for 4 quarter page ads (\$100 per ad)**

**Non-Profit rate = \$200 for 4 quarter page ads (\$50 per ad)**

If you are interested contact Barbara Bernstein at (510) 537-2710, ext. 8; or by email: [bbernstein@edenir.org](mailto:bbernstein@edenir.org)

### CAIRS Officers

*Sara Matta*  
President

*Maribel Marin*  
Incoming President

*Angie Baur*  
Vice President/Operations

*Tara Sullivan-Hames*  
Vice President/Membership

*Allan Friedman*  
Secretary

*Brandon O'Brien*  
Treasurer

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If you would like to submit an article to the CAIRS Newsletter, Please contact:

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## 2-1-1 San Bernardino County Goes Live

2-1-1 San Bernardino County is the 8th county in the state to go live with 2-1-1. Inland Empire United Way had operated a limited call center for about 12 years. After a series of stakeholder meetings, a director was hired in February of 2005 who immediately hired and trained two resource specialists and one call specialist. The team began making the connections to build the database while building support from elected officials and service providers.

The 2-1-1 staff worked through several challenges. San Bernardino is the largest county in the continental United States, geographic differences and growth patterns create a disconnect; there has never been a comprehensive information and referral service in this county. The Inland Empire (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties) has more than 10 percent of the state's populations, but only receives one percent of foundation dollars. Yet, the need is great.

Ultimately, the County of San Bernardino funded 2-1-1 for one million dollars spread out over four years. First Five San Bernardino is funding \$250,000 this year, and other local organizations and corporations are investing of financial resources and in-kind support.

With the support of the local community, 2-1-1 San Bernardino County was launched on September 20, 2006 and is now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The local county

supervisor made the first official phone call on a Sprint cell phone on speaker phone so all could hear (see below).

211 San Bernardino's call volume is currently on a pace for about 35,000 calls annually and increasing. This tremendous response for such a young service is verification of the great need in the area. The goal for this fiscal year is 40,000 calls.

"We have yet to begin to tap our greatest gold mine, the statistics provided by our callers," said Gary Madden, 2-1-1 San Bernardino County Director. "I see a great power in our collective data – can you imagine all the 2-1-1 centers in Southern California pooling our data? This could be a tremendous resource for community planning, resource mapping and demonstrating need in a comprehensive way to attract larger funding sources for greater sustainability."

211 San Bernardino is located about 1 mile north of the Ontario Airport. Visitors and questions are welcome. Contact Gary Madden at (909) 980-2857 ext. 211 or gmadden@ieuw.org.

### Did you know?

**In September of 2006, there were 192 San Bernardino calls to 2-1-1 for shelter. 101 of these 192 calls (or 52%) were from people with children. The total number of children in these families looking for shelter was 221.**

## San Bernardino Supervisor Makes First 2-1-1 Call

Second District Supervisor Paul Biane from the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors made the first official phone call on the 2-1-1 San Bernardino County system. Biane attended the 2-1-1 launch and open house September 20, 2006 at the Inland Empire United Way.

After a short proclamation from Assemblywoman Gloria Negrete McLeod from the 61st Assembly District, Biane dialed 2-1-1 from a cell phone and connected with a 2-1-1 call specialist in the new 2-1-1 call center. The 2-1-1 launch and open house also featured tours of the new 2-1-1 call center and other Inland Empire United Way initiatives.

– Gary Madden



Assemblywoman McLeod, Director Madden and Supervisor Biane

### Participate in the New CAIRS Listserv

**WHO:** Current CAIRS/AIRS members are encouraged to visit the new Listserv and post new messages at any time.

**WHAT:** Listservs allow a group of people to share communications by e-mail. The new Listserv for CAIRS provides an ongoing opportunity for members to exchange ideas, ask questions, discuss solutions, promote communication, analyze issues, and give input to the CAIRS Board. The CAIRS Board uses the Listserv to conduct surveys, post timely information and updates, and participate in discussions with the membership.

**WHERE:** [CAIRS@atnet.org](mailto:CAIRS@atnet.org) is the address.

**HOW:** All current CAIRS/AIRS members have been added to the listserv. If you're a new member you will receive an introductory e-mail message that will include an **unsubscribe** link if you do not want to participate as well as a **subscribe** link if you would like to add additional agency staff to the listserv.

**CONTACT:** Tara Sullivan-Hames, CAIRS Membership Vice President, [tsullivanhames@ncen.org](mailto:tsullivanhames@ncen.org) -- 530-879-2455 voice or 530-895-4010 fax





# Homeless Assistance Program

The Homeless Assistance Program provides once-in-a-lifetime (*see exceptions below*) temporary shelter and/or permanent housing assistance to homeless families eligible for CalWORKS.

There are two types of Homeless Assistance Housing Programs, and you have the option of applying for either, or both *Note: To receive both homeless assistance programs, you need to apply within the same period of homelessness.*

1. **Temporary Shelter Money:** You can get money for up to 16 days [*with a possible extra 14 days*] to stay in a hotel or a shelter that charges rent; and/or
2. **Permanent Housing:** You can get money to cover the actual cost of security deposits, "last month's rent" deposit, and gas, electricity and water deposits

To apply for either program you must:

1. Be homeless;
2. Be receiving, or eligible for CALWORKS; AND
3. Cannot have \$100 or more in nonexempt liquid resources.

Usually, families can receive this assistance only once in a lifetime. However, a family can qualify for one of the following exceptions *once every 12 months period*. Each exception requires you to provide third-party verification. For example, a police report or a note from a doctor.

1. Homelessness was caused by domestic violence by a spouse, partner or roommate
2. Homelessness resulted from a medically verified physical or mental illness. *Note: can not be substance abuse related to alcoholism.*
3. Homelessness is a result of a fire, natural disaster, or your home being condemned or by any other sudden or unusual circumstance beyond the family's control.

***As of July 2006, the following improvements were added to the Homeless Assistance Program:***

- The definition of homeless has been expanded to include a family who has been given a "Notice to Quit" [notice that precedes eviction notice] and whose financial hardship is beyond their control.
- Payments have been increased for temporary shelter from \$40 a day for a family of four to \$65 a day with increases in \$15 increments for each additional family member up to a maximum of \$125 a day.
- Payments have been increased for permanent shelter from 80% of the family grant to 80% of the family income.
- Permanent shelter assistance has been extended to include up to two months of back rent.

Applicants should contact their local DPSS office.

*– Jim Province, 2-1-1 LA's Resource Department*



Mark Walker, Pres. & CEO  
United Way Silicon Valley



Mary M. Clark, CORD Manager,  
Health Care Access for Seniors Seminar



Clarion Hotel,  
Mexican Luncheon Buffet



Betty Creary,  
United Way of Bay Area, I&R Workshops;  
Taxonomy

## CONFERENCE PICTURES

## CAIRS San Francisco Conference: I&R and Healthcare

Almost ninety attendees enjoyed a day of training and networking at the CAIRS Annual Conference held on Friday, September 29, 2006 at the Clarion Hotel near San Francisco Airport. The last time CAIRS was at this location was two years ago for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference and Celebration.

This time the theme of the conference was “Helping California Thrive — the Role of I&R in Health Care Access.” The day-long conference included sixteen workshops, six of which had specific health related content, and a fascinating keynote Speaker at lunch. Dick Levy, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of United Way Silicon Valley talked about the Challenge of Improving Access to a Troubled Health Care System. As someone who has spent his career in Health Care (Mr. Levy is Chairman of the Board and retired CEO of Varian Medical Systems, the world’s leading supplier of radiotherapy machines, hardware accessories and software for treating cancer) — he made no bones about how bad our health care system is: “Worse than all of Western Europe.”

**“\$1.7 trillion is spent on health care each year in the US. \$500 billion is wasted. ... 54.9% of procedures are unnecessary or ineffective....”**

Mr. Levy is personally very committed to 2-1-1 and emphasized the importance of I&R as a barometer measuring those

areas where the health care system is failing our populations. 2-1-1 is also an important source of information for those developments that are good innovations and hopeful signs that things can improve, such as health patient education aids and new-age health centers.

Overall, the evaluations of the Conference were extremely positive. 100% of the evaluations rated the quality of the presenters Good or Excellent. So that’s the standard we need to keep to next year in Southern California. Special thanks to Elaine Martinez Curry as Chair of the Conference Committee and her Ventura team, and a huge thank you to Betty Creary and the San Francisco team for all the on site arrangements.

— Sara Matta



Featured Speaker  
Dick Levy

## The Case for Open Source Software

With Microsoft’s continuous steamroll towards subscription based software, more and more companies are looking to an alternative to meet their business needs, and mitigate IT costs. In addition to inflating costs of software there are other hidden costs that come with the new MS Vista scheduled for release this year. The recommended system requirements for Vista is 1 gb of RAM, and 10 gb of hard drive space. The increase in size will most definitely make your existing workstations look somewhat like a pig in a playpen.

The cost increase of an operating system, and increases to infrastructure is pushing the world of information systems management to seek alternatives to the industry standard. This is most pertinent to the non-profit industry which, for the most of us, involves keeping our network infrastructure held together by shoe strings and bubble gum, or more like with a wing and a prayer. With little money allocated to IT development the increase of costs in the Microsoft family are simply impractical.

So where do we go from here? The answer may be in the myriad of Open Source software that has been quietly being developed throughout the years. The Open Source movement is not by any means a recent development — it is in IT terms as old as the hills. Open Source software is by design free to the public. It allows the user access to the software code to allow for customization. Through its development over the years, with the help of thousands of programmers throughout the world, some Open Source software is better, if not as good as any Microsoft product.

The most noted Open Source product today is Mozilla’s Firefox, a free web browser that has been gaining ground on MS IE for quite some time. Firefox has capabilities such as tabbed browsing which enables you to keep multiple Web pages open in the same window. Firefox is less vulnerable to malicious attacks by hackers, due in part to its robust security features, and also because hackers are more focused on picking on the big bully in the playground.

The most promising of all applications to non-profit and small business is the field of office applications. OpenOffice products — openoffice.org is a product of Sun-Microsystems who have dedicated their lives to creating an alternative to Microsoft, whom they affectionately refer to as the “evil empire.” OpenOffice, reported by techweb.com, competes strongly feature-for-feature with Microsoft Office. The application has some additional features such as the ability to save in a pdf format. However, OpenOffice does lack one MS Office feature, a grammar checker...doesn’t everyone hate those anyway?

The list of available Open Source applications that provide an alternative to Microsoft is enormous and growing. From Linux to application development environments, to fundraising software, a viable alternative exists. It is, however, up to the individual organization to make a leap to an Open Source process. With increasing quality and compatibility of Open Source products, and increasing costs of Microsoft environments the leap may be only a quick jump.

*Tes Ayenew, Director 2-1-1 Riverside County*

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### **What do you like?**

What do you like about the CAIRS newsletter?

What do you think is missing from the newsletter?

The CAIRS communications committee always seeks to make the newsletter interesting and informative. But, your feedback can help make the newsletter even better.

What would you like to see? More best practice stories? More CAIRS people stories? More information about I&R providers in our state? You tell us and we will continue to work hard to make the CAIRS newsletter the very best it can be.

Please e-mail your thoughts and suggestions to newsletter editor Barbara Bernstein — [BBernstein@edenir.org](mailto:BBernstein@edenir.org)



### Vision Statement

A strong network of organizations that ensures everyone can easily access high quality information and referral for health and human services.

### Mission Statement

To enhance the effectiveness of Information and Referral services through leadership, education and support.

### Goals

In order to achieve the Mission and Vision, the following Goals have been established:

To *provide* training and support to enhance professional skills;

To *facilitate* the exchange of information among the membership and others within the helping professions;

To *promote* awareness of Information and Referral services;

To *advocate* for the interests of the profession and the public it serves.

## Annual CAIRS/AIRS Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your CAIRS/AIRS Membership for 2007 and we hope you will consider upgrading your membership level to take advantage of some new cost saving benefits.

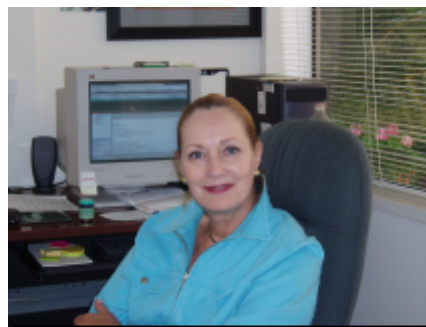
In addition to the same benefits you received last year, the big news this year for all renewing CAIRS/AIRS members is the introduction of online training.

Online training allows staff to take courses at their own pace – and at the times most convenient to agency workload. The first AIRS online courses (slated for January 2007) will include a Resource Specialist Overview, The I&R Process, Handling Difficult Callers, Introduction to I&R for New Staff, Introduction to Taxonomy. Online training will be available to all CAIRS/AIRS members with Enhanced and Premium Members receiving a 10% discount.

Another major benefit is a free update of the *The ABC's of I&R* for all CAIRS/AIRS members at the Enhanced and Premium Levels. This includes revisions to the existing material, as well as additional test questions on all subject areas and new sections on I&R in disasters. *The ABC's of I&R* will be released free as a download to CAIRS/AIRS Enhanced and Premium members in mid-January. The price for CAIRS/AIRS members at the Basic and Standard Levels will be \$450.

For 2007, there are again four membership levels – Basic (\$50), Standard (\$250 for agencies < \$75,000; \$350 for agencies > \$75,000), Enhanced (\$500) and Premium (\$750). If you want to determine the most cost-effective level for your agency, [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org) links to a worksheet that will help you calculate the membership level that provides the optimal cost-benefit for your organization.

For a full detailed description of CAIRS and AIRS membership benefits at each level, please visit the CAIRS website at [www.cairs.org](http://www.cairs.org). If you did not receive a membership renewal form, you can download the application from [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org).



New Board Member Marta Flores



New Board Member Mary Adams

## New Board Member Highlights

**Mary L. Adams**, President and CEO of United Way Monterey County, is one of two newly-elected members to the CAIRS Board of Directors. Early in her career, Mary coordinated an information and referral (I&R) program in Monterey County, and now as head of the Monterey County United Way, she is leading a collaboration of public and nonprofit organizations working to develop and support information and referral services in Monterey and surrounding counties. Mary also serves on the Board of Directors of United Ways of California, which is working to ensure a comprehensive approach to I&R services across the state. Mary sought a position on the CAIRS Board to facilitate communication between CAIRS and United Ways in order to foster the development of a state-wide comprehensive, cost-effective and reliable information and referral

system that serves all communities before, during and after emergencies.

The other newly-elected CAIRS Board member, **Marta Florez**, is a housing and information and referral specialist with the Center for Independence of the Disabled in Belmont, California. Marta has over five years of experience in assisting disabled individuals find the services they need. Her responsibilities include connecting individuals with services and advocating for people who are experiencing problems accessing services. A primary reason Marta wanted to join the CAIRS Board was to use her experience and understanding of the importance of information and referral for the consumer in order to increase public support for, and use of, information and referral services.