

CAI&RS

NEWSLETTER

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CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Child Care Resource and Referral Services in California

Child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), funded through the CA Department of Education, Child Development Division, are located in every county in California. Where I&R and 211 agencies provide information and referrals to a wide variety of resources and services, CCR&Rs provide specialized referrals and information in the area of child care and early education.

Over the last thirty years, CCR&R services have evolved from a grassroots effort to help parents find child care to a well-developed system that supports parents, providers and local communities in finding, planning for and providing affordable, quality child care. Local CCR&Rs:

- provide parents of all income levels with free child care referrals and information on choosing and using child care that best meets their family needs.
- maintain comprehensive databases of child care providers in their communities with the most up-to-date information from the Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD) of the CA Department of Social Services. For example, if a family child care provider's license is revoked, CCLD must notify the local CCR&R within two working days.
- track information on providers including languages they speak, age groups they serve, schedules they offer and number of spaces available in centers or family child care homes.
- provide training and technical assistance to child care

providers to improve the quality of child care and to maintain and expand the supply of child care in each county.

- implement the local elements of the TrustLine background check for license-exempt providers (babysitters and nannies).

The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (Network), a membership organization of state-funded CCR&Rs, coordinates services that assist local CCR&R agencies and works closely with elected officials and local, regional and statewide agencies to maintain, increase and improve the supply of child care. The Network also collects, analyzes and publishes statewide and county specific research on the supply, demand and cost of child care services, along with reports on the child care workforce, and economic factors affecting the child care system.

The Governor's May Revise budget proposal threatens to destroy the child care system in California by eliminating all state funding for child care services, including CCR&R and child care subsidies. For more information about CCR&R and the latest update on the budget situation, visit www.rnnetwork.org.

Cindy Mall, Senior Program Manager, CA Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Robin Mohr, Development Director, CA Child Care Resource and Referral Network

-Submitted by Maribel Marin

Letter from the President...

Dear CAIRS members,



As many of us struggle with reduced operating budgets and increasing demand for our services, it becomes even more important to highlight and promote the professional and standards-based nature of information and referral / assistance; not to mention the fact that such services are most heavily utilized by the neediest, hardest to reach population groups. I&R/A is much more than just giving someone a phone number. Our skilled and highly trained specialists help underserved communities navigate complex service networks and assist people in understanding complicated

eligibility and application processes. Seniors, veterans and their families, persons with disabilities, low-income families (especially those with children 5 years and younger) all rely on our services on a daily basis to get connected with resources in their community. I&R/A training focuses on developing the skills needed to help these special needs populations, and CAIRS is committed to ensuring that the proper training opportunities are available to its professional community.

This past May, the CAIRS Board decided to focus exclusively on training that will lead to AIRS certification of I&R/A specialists. We will be working to develop more intensive trainings at our annual conference (targeted for September) that prepare specialists to pass the AIRS certification (CRS/CIRS), and will be scheduling more testing dates at locations throughout the state. Stay tuned for more information on the annual conference and upcoming testing dates by visiting our website at www.CAIRS.org.

At the CAIRS Board retreat we also welcomed new Board member Jonie Branch, 211 Call Center Manager for United Way Fresno. Without skipping a beat, Jonie provided keen insight on the needs and approaches to elevating the training for I&R specialists, lending her extensive experience and background in operating commercial and non-profit call centers. She steps in to fill the vacancy left by outgoing Board member Pat Clary, President of United Way Fresno. Pat's clear thinking and ability to get right to the heart of the matter will be sorely missed!

Amari-Romero Thomas, Sr. Vice President with United Way Silicon Valley also joins the CAIRS board filling the vacancy left by long time Board member Dave Smith, President and CEO of United Way of Ventura County. Dave was instrumental in developing the partnership between CAIRS and the United Ways of California that became 211 CA, serving as a founding co-chair for that organization. His wisdom and wit are greatly missed but we are fortunate that he will continue being a key player in the development and support of 211 services statewide. We are thrilled that Amari is joining the Board. She brings much experience with I&R services and tremendous energy to help us develop a high quality training platform.

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The CAIRS Newsletter is published quarterly by the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services.

The CAIRS newsletter is provided as a benefit to all CAIRS members. Please contact CAIRS if you wish to reprint any part of this newsletter.

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Spotlight on AIRS...

The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) is working on behalf of all members, representing us at a national level on public policy issues affecting the field, developing Best Practice training materials, and working to get more professionals certified. Nancy Findeisen, 211 Sacramento and CAIRS Board Secretary; Georgia Sales, 211 LA County; and Mona Freels, 211 San Diego, are current members of the AIRS Board of Directors from California. Below are a few highlights of AIRS activities during the past year.

Accreditation

AIRS has created an Accreditation Commission separate from the Board of Directors to oversee the accreditation process. There are currently 127 organizations/programs that are accredited. The Commission is working on revising the accreditation process to comply with AIRS Standards, version 6.0.

Certification

In 2009, 2,219 individuals received certification in CIRS, CIRS-A and CRS. AIRS provides some useful training materials on its website for people preparing to take a certification exam. Online training courses have been developed to assist those testing for certification. Of particular interest to those planning to take a certification test, the course entitled, "AIRS: The Information and Referral Process" is considered a primary resource for all CIRS and CIRS-A candidates. CRS candidates should review "AIRS:

Introduction to Taxonomy and Indexing" prior to taking the test. New this year, are the online practice tests for CIRS and CIRS-A.

Training

Partnering with Essential Learning, a well-known online training service, AIRS has published 16 online training courses, ranging from "Introduction to I&R" to "Serving People with Mental Health Issues." AIRS also has reviewed and selected other Essential Learning training modules that are particularly relevant to its members, such as "Valuing Diversity in the Workplace" and "Supervision and Training." In addition there are more than 100 other training modules presented by Essential Learning that AIRS/CAIRS members can access. Fees are modest for the quality of the training provided, and Enhanced and Premium members receive a 10 percent discount. Agencies also have the option of paying a negotiated monthly fee that allows unlimited access to the training materials for all staff.

Public Policy

AIRS worked with United Way Worldwide and 211 US to increase support for 211 legislation to fund states for infrastructure and expansion. Due to the work of many partners, the legislation is now supported by 238 House members and 60 Senators. AIRS also supported President Obama's call for a \$50 million increase in funding for Title III B of the Older Americans Act that provides funding for Information and Assistance.

California's Mental Health Services Act

In 2004, California voters approved Proposition 63, now known as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). It added a 1 percent tax on incomes over \$1 million with the revenues to be used for a variety of mental health services. Today, the tax applies to 28,000 people and generates up to \$1 billion annually. In recent years the governor and state Legislator have tried to divert MHSA funding to backfill some of California's deficit; however, voters have defeated these attempts so far.

There are six funding components to the Mental Health Services Act. Each is administered by the county mental health department with the approval of the state Department of Mental Health.

The first component is Community Program Planning. It establishes the process by which MHSA funds are allocated locally.

The second component is Community Services and Support. It provides intensive, highly-targeted mental health services to children, transitional age youths (age 18-24), adults, and older adults.

The third component is Prevention and Early Intervention. It's for services that prevent mental health problems from developing or escalating with a special emphasis on people who are underserved by the mental health system because of cultural or linguistic barriers.

The fourth component is Workforce Education and Training. It aims to increase the number of trained mental health professionals serving the community.

The fifth component is Innovation. The main purpose of innovation projects is to contribute to mental health learning.

The last component is Capital Facilities/Technological Needs. It's for infrastructure development, primarily of the county-operated mental health system.

Originally, the California Department of Mental Health planned to use a small percentage of MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention funding (\$14 million per year for four years) for statewide programs in three areas: suicide prevention; student mental health; and stigma and discrimination reduction. Today, according to new guidelines issued by the Department, there are three options available to counties to fund these programs.

Option one is for a county to act jointly with one or more other counties to implement a statewide program through CalMHSA, a Joint Powers Authority. Option two is for a county to act jointly with one or more other counties to implement a statewide and/or regional, replicable program through multi-county collaboration. Option three is for a county to assign funds to the state Department of Mental Health for the department to implement a statewide program.

- By John Bateson

California Emerging Technology Fund

211 California has begun to implement its first statewide ARRA grant. As part of a coalition of California nonprofit organizations, led by the CETF, 211 California has received an award of over \$1 million dollars of federal funds under the NTIA's Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) (<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/about.html>).

The purposes of the award are: (1) link low income people to digital literacy and job training resources, and (2) increase awareness, access to, and adoption of broadband high-speed Internet connections by those Californians least likely to connect: low income, rural, Latinos, limited-English speaking, and people with disabilities.

Participating 211 providers will screen callers for purposes of making referrals to programs/services aimed at bridging the digital divide such as low cost computers, computer/internet training, internet access, etc. Funding will be made available to support the review and development of local 211 databases, and reimbursement will be provided to every 211 for successful screenings and referrals. Lilian Coral, 211 California Project Manager, led the delivery of the training webinar on April 28th to orient the twenty-two 211 providers statewide on the initiative and described specific program goals and outcomes.

-By Lilian Coral

H.R. 211

United Way Worldwide has been doing some very targeted activity to get S.211/H.R.211 moving. As of the end of May, there were 239 House and 60 Senate co-sponsors. The goal is to have the bills be put on a Suspension Calendar, so that they go directly to the House floor for a vote, and bypass committee hearings. A 2/3rds vote in the House is needed, so much work is being done to ask any remaining, undecided Congressmembers to sign on.

Additionally, a multi-pronged strategy is in effect to pressure specific members of congress, do general member outreach, mobilize partners, and ensure that 211s have the tools needed to respond to inquiries from media and congress, as well as begin planning for passage.

Right now the focus is primarily on reaching out to key members. Judy Darnell, Public Policy Director for United Ways of California, has been working with local 211s in targeted areas. United Way Worldwide is also working to develop communications tools that can be utilized in the coming months.

-By Lilian Coral

CAIRS Annual Board Retreat

The California Alliance of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS) board of directors had its annual retreat in Asilomar May 2nd through May 4th. Many urgent issues were discussed but some of the primary topics included: the further development of 211 California including the recommendation of a slate of nominees for the first Board of Directors who would set policy and procedures for the statewide 211 centers; continued discussions about statewide back-up procedures during and after disasters that would include ongoing ways of sharing data and phone calls; updates about the rural counties and how to assist them in gaining 211 coverage; updates on lobbying efforts aimed toward the passage of The Calling for 211 Act so that 211 centers nationwide could receive some much-needed federal funding; shared information about earmarked funding that might be accessible to 211 centers; the importance of ongoing training and AIRS certification of 211 staff; and plans for a statewide conference and 211 summit in Sacramento in the fall.



CAIRS Board members during May 2010 Board Retreat at Asilomar



CAIRS Board hard at work at beautiful Asilomar



Ed Schoenberger and Lilian Coral take charge of the white boards, helping the Board make tough decisions

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 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

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New CAIRS Board Members



Jonie Branch
CAIRS Board of Director
211 Program Director & Call
Center Manager
United Way of Fresno
County

On May 3, 2010 Board President Maribel Marin announced the selection of Jonie Branch as the newest member of the California Alliance of Information Referral Systems (CAIRS) board of directors. Branch is the Program Director and Call Center Manager for the Fresno County 211 system operated by United Way of Fresno County (UWFC). UWFC became the 211 service provider for Fresno County in November 2007 and facilitates consumer access to health and human services throughout the county. During Branch's tenure call center volume tripled with estimated calls in 2010 to be 15,000.

Branch began her professional career in the Call Center at Pacific Bell/SBC/AT&T in San Diego and transferred to Fresno in 1995. Branch held various management positions in the company's Call Center and Marketing departments until her retirement in 2008 when she joined the staff of United Way of Fresno County as Program Director and Call Center Manager for the local United Way 211 program. Branch is a graduate of the University of Redlands with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management.

Branch grew up in a military family and married a career military man. She has lived and traveled throughout the country. "Living in many different communities and navigating within each gives me a great appreciation for what 211 provides for residents who are unsure of how to access the resources they are seeking," Branch said. When asked why 211 is important, Branch replied, "I believe 211 just makes sense. It is an efficient and convenient system for those in need of assistance and those providing the assistance to connect with one another."

Branch has a son and a daughter and 7 grandchildren, who she claims have become her "hobbies".



Amari Romero-Thomas is Senior Vice President for Community Building and Impact for the United Way of Silicon Valley. Amari has a diverse background of talent and knowledge in both the nonprofit and private sectors. Prior to joining UWSV in 2005, Amari was the Executive Director for

Sacred Heart Community Service and a Senior Consultant for Compass Point Nonprofit Services. Her private sector experience includes over 20 years in Organizational Development, Sales and Consulting. Amari holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Arizona State University with a special emphasis in International Relations. She is a Senior Fellow of the American Leadership Forum and a member of the San Jose Downtown Rotary Club. In addition, she is bilingual and bicultural in Spanish, having been born in Santiago, Chile.

Become a California Leader in the Information and Referral Field. Explore Joining the CAIRS Board!

CAIRS is looking for new leadership, new ideas and fresh energy on the Board.

Like any other professional association CAIRS does not run itself. It takes the leadership, hard work and cooperation of its members to simply survive, much less flourish, prosper and succeed. Because we do not have paid staff, it has taken the participation, planning and implementation efforts of Board members and other individual CAIRS members for our conferences, training, newsletters and advocacy to succeed.

Right now, making 211 a reality in every California community is our priority! This is a remarkable opportunity and challenge to us as the premier Information and Referral organization in the State. This is the moment for increased involvement from more of you in the field.

If you are interested in being on the Board or would like to nominate someone, please send the appropriate information to Ed Schoenberger, Nominations Committee, CAIRS at eschoenberger@uwba.org. Write CAIRS BOARD in the subject line.

—Ed Schoenberger

CAIRS Board Nominates 211 CA Board Slate

At its May retreat, the CAIRS Board selected a slate of candidates for consideration by the 211 provider network to represent them on the 211 CA governance Board. Based on the agreements made by the 211 California Network at its December 1, 2009 211 Summit and the March 26, 2010 joint collaborative meeting, CAIRS, as a major founder and partner of 211 CA, was granted a majority representation on the inaugural Board of 211 California. United Way representatives and other stakeholders will constitute the remaining seats.

Selection Process

At the 211 Summit and joint collaborative meetings, 211 providers and United Way representatives identified the following criteria for the selection of 11-17 individuals to serve on the 211 CA Board:

- At least 51% 211 Operators
- At least 24% United Way Representatives
- As close to 25% as possible – Other Stakeholders

Further direction was provided to ensure that the selection of Board members takes into account a desired mix in geographic diversity as well as center size and capacity. A key decision was to allow two selection groups, CAIRS and United Way of California (UWCA), the flexibility to choose members using internal processes to select the best candidates.

As the professional industry association for 211 providers, CAIRS was charged with identifying a slate of seven (7) 211 providers, and the United Ways of California with selecting three (3) UWCA appointees. Once elected and seated, the CAIRS and UWCA members are to jointly select three (3) other stakeholders to serve on the Board. Once the entire Board is selected, the Board will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.

Consideration of Board membership should include the following:

- Willingness to serve
- Demonstrated commitment to 211
- For 211 providers, they must be a signatory to the Memorandum of Agreement and 211 California Emergency Operations Plan
- Dues payer to 211 California
- Current CAIRS membership

Look for CAIRS to circulate a ballot to the 211 provider network during the third week in June. Though the CAIRS board believes that they have identified a strongly qualified and dedicated slate of candidates, additional nominations can still be submitted for inclusion on the ballot. Submit nominations through the www.CAIRS.org website or directly to me at mmarin@211la.org.

CAIRS PROPOSED SLATE FOR 211 CA BOARD

Maribel Marin, 211 LA County – Executive Director, CAIRS Board President and current 211 CA co-chair

Nancy Findeisen, 211 Sacramento – Executive Director, CAIRS Board Secretary and 211 CA Leadership Team

Erik Sternad, 211 Ventura County – Executive Director and CAIRS Board Treasurer

Gary Madden, 211 San Bernardino – 211 Director and CAIRS Board member

John Ohanian, 211 San Diego – Executive Director, CAIRS Board member and 211 CA Leadership Team

Mary Adams, 211 Monterey/UW Monterey County – CEO, CAIRS Board member and 211 CA Leadership Team

Ed Schoenberger, 211 San Francisco – Executive Director, CAIRS 211 Committee Chair and 211 CA Leadership Team

211 California Board Tasks and Responsibilities:

- Adoption and management of budget and development of work plan for statewide operations
- Fund development for statewide operations and initiatives and fund distribution
- Community engagement in statewide issues
- Development of strategies or proposals that do not change, modify or otherwise impede local contract compliance or other service obligations
- Development of strategic communications such as messaging, collateral materials, media placement, etc.
- Vision, mission and strategic planning
- Development of annual goals and work plan
- Operational oversight
- Development of network best practices, training protocols, and systems improvements
- Convening, collaboration and facilitation with statewide stakeholders
- Public policy related to the statewide system
- Single point of contact for statewide system
- Recruitment and management of staff
- Liaison with CPUC and other officials
- System-wide accountability, evaluation and monitoring
- Statewide leadership and support for the network
- Assurance of transparency in decision-making and operations
- Development of plans for the statewide system related to coordinated activities
- Ensure engagement of 211 providers in significant issues and decisions affecting the network

Benefits of Membership in AIRS and CAIRS

Renewing a joint membership in CAIRS and AIRS has many benefits, including reduced prices for on-line training and AIRS training products, reduced fees for conferences, and, at the Enhanced and Premium levels, The ABC's of I&R (updated for 2010) at no cost. Your membership also entitles you to a reduced cost Member Rate when registering for the Annual CAIRS Conference coming this Fall.

To join or renew a membership, download the application from www.airs.org. For a full detailed description of CAIRS and AIRS membership benefits at each level, please visit the CAIRS website at www.cairs.org.

Letters to the Editor

As always, the Board of Directors is looking for your input. You can provide feedback and comments by contacting the Editor, Barbara Bernstein at bbernstein@edenir.org or (510) 537-2710x8.

