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# TAIRS News

*Texas Alliance of Information and Referral Services is the state affiliate of the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS).*

## Meet the new TAIRS President

Debby Thornton is excited to begin her service as the incoming TAIRS president. Debby began her career in I&R with the Community Council of Greater Dallas - and never looked back! She's been with the agency 21 years, serving for many of those with TAIRS beloved founder Clare B. Rothmeyer, the namesake of the Distinguished Service Award.

The Community Council of Greater Dallas has operated an information and referral program for 36 years and changed the phone number to 2-1-1 in 2002 when Texas I&R Network transitioned to the 2-1-1 Texas name.

Since that time, Debby has been hard at work gathering new partnerships, working cooperatively with local agencies, and operating database for Dallas' homeless management information system (HMIS). She received the Clare B. Rothmeyer Distinguished Award in



2007.

Debby has 2 children, 5 grandchildren, and recently married Steve Thornton.

Thanks for all that you do for the I&R field, Debby!

## Call for Presenters - TAIRS 2009

TAIRS is looking for a few great I&R presenters - and you're probably one of them. The enclosed Call for Presenters form needs to be submitted by July 1, 2009.

The tracks include:

- **Disaster Response**
- **I&R Delivery**
- **I&R Management**

- **Personal Enrichment**
- **Resource Management/Database**
- **Specialized/Target Populations**

Let's get those proposals rolling in!

Return forms to:

Jacqui Elmore, Education Co-Chair  
806-322-2627 (phone)

[jacquelineelmore@calfarley.org](mailto:jacquelineelmore@calfarley.org)

### Content Highlights

TAIRS Committees	2
Admin Toolkit	3
Specialist Spotlight	4
Resource Tips	5
TAIRS Board	6

**We're Online!**  
[www.tairs.org](http://www.tairs.org)

### CONTACT TAIRS

c/o La Juan Hollis  
Treasurer

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Bullard, TX 75757

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## TAIRS Committees: Purposes & Membership

TAIRS has a number of committees that meet throughout the year to discuss issues that are relevant to the membership and the function of TAIRS. Many people, however, are unaware of these committees and the purposes they serve.

### Executive Committee:

TAIRS has an executive committee that serves a similar purpose as the executive committees in most non-profits. It is comprised of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and the Immediate Past President (see roster on page 6 for names). Its primary responsibilities are bylaw review/revisions, financial oversight, decision-making and leadership, and coordination of board meetings and strategic planning retreats.

### Membership Committee:

Headed by LaDelle Kay, this committee is responsible for leading the nomination sub-committee. It provides new board members with a resource manual and a board participation acknowledgement letter. One member serves on the AIRS Affiliate council. Finally, it communicates with membership anytime outside the annual conference. Members include Dora Flores, David Jobe (AIRS Affiliate Representative), Telma Longoria, Dawn Sheffield, and Alison Smith.

### Education Committee:

This committee works so hard it needs two

## Accreditation/Reaccreditation Kudos!

AIRS accreditation or reaccreditation is a tremendous accomplishment. Kudos to the following TAIRS members who were recently accredited or reaccredited:

- **Community Council of Greater Dallas (Reaccredited)**
- **Contact 2-1-1 Lubbock (New)**
- **2-1-1 South Texas Region/United Way of Laredo, Inc. (New)**
- **Concho Valley Council of Governments/Area Agency on Aging/2-1-1 of the Concho Valley (New)**

chairs: Jacqueline Elmore and Janna Shoe. All of the great work at the annual TAIRS conferences comes from this committee. In addition, it coordinates and promotes the conference scholarship applications, coordinates and approves AIRS testing sites, and promotes and coordinates the annual service awards and recognition. Other members are Cindy Cornish, Glenda Rogers, Debby Thornton, and Terryca Fuller.

### Public Policy Committee:

Not to be outdone by other committees, La Juan Hollis chairs this hard-working group. It provides legislative outreach to promote the I&R field. It is also responsible for communication and messaging about TAIRS, outreach and marketing to the general public about the I&R field, TAIRS website content management and the membership newsletter. It also coordinates with the membership committee to develop communication materials. Other members are Debby Thornton, Mary Cooksey, Kelly Stephens and Karen Cline.

The full TAIRS membership roster is included on page 6 to help members get in contact with any one of these committee members. They are ready and willing to answer any questions - and if they don't know the answer, they'll find out!

## Upcoming CIRS/CRS Test Dates

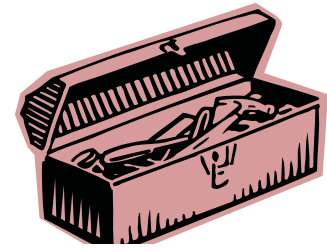
**May 11, 2009**  
**Austin, TX, 1:30 - 3:30pm**

6800 Burleson Rd, Building 310  
Suite 165

Contact: Glenda D. Rogers  
512-916-6053

[grogers@capcog.org](mailto:grogers@capcog.org)

**\$20 administrative fee payable to TAIRS. Submit application to AIRS 30 days before the test date.**



## Job Analysis & Developing New Job Descriptions

As more communities and states develop increased awareness of information and referral, more I&R managers are finding a need to increase staffing and add positions that have previously not existed. Before adding positions, it is

best to undergo a thorough job analysis to determine how the job fits with the organization and the outcomes expected of the employee(s) who will fill it.

The purpose of a job analysis is to identify and determine, in detail, the job duties and requirements. Don't skip over the details - this is where most organizations get themselves into hot water later.

List all of the duties that a person would be expected to perform including whether or not the person would have supervision responsibilities. Rank those duties in terms of importance for the specific position. Can those duties be combined with other employees or must they be split out into a new position?

We're still not the point of writing a job description, though. Take more time to interview other managers, employees who are currently working for the agency, and anyone else would interact with the new position. What are their expectations? How would they envision the new position and what would their expectations be?

Managers who rush to write a job description before investigating all of the interactions the job entails may find that it doesn't meet all of the expectations and requirements later. Revising a job description can be more difficult once it is filled.

List skills and behaviors that the position will need

*The purpose of a job analysis is to identify and determine, in detail, the job duties and requirements.*

and then rate them in order of importance. This is different than ranking the job duties. These are the skills that the interview process would cover when screening for potential candidates.

It's important to decide up front what skills are needed in addition to how those skills meet the job duties. It also saves extensive training time later when an employer realizes that the person they thought they hired didn't have all the skills needed to fill a position.

Decide what are the core competencies that a candidate must possess in advance of coming to a new position. While some skills can be trained or gained through experience, others are necessary to have before coming on board with the agency. Distinguishing these skills and competencies in advance will save a great deal of time during the screening process.

Finally, after all the at work, it's time to develop a job description. Look around at other examples and see what is available in the field so you aren't completely recreating the wheel. The AIRS I&R Toolkit contains some excellent sample job descriptions.

Other agencies find help by asking colleagues through the AIRS Networker or by visiting similar agencies within the community. Fill in the details with your research to make it a work that fits your agency and needs. By the time the job description is finished, everyone who interacts with the position should have a clear idea of the expectations of the position and the person who will be expected to fill it.

## Sun & Fun in Corpus Christi!

The TAIRS 2009 Annual Training Conference will be held in Corpus Christi at the Holiday Inn Emerald Beach Hotel. The conference opens on October 14th and closes on the 16th.

CIRS/CRS testing will be available on Wednesday & Friday.

Hotel rates are coming soon along with a website reservation link.

**Stay posted for more details on this fun, educational opportunity!**



## Angel Food Ministries - Low-Cost Food for Families

What began as a way to help hurting neighbors has spread to a ministry that helps more than 500,000 families each month with low-cost food items. Angel Food Ministries is changing the way that low-income families provide for their family's nutrition needs in a time of rising grocery store prices.

For as little as \$30 families can receive enough food to feed a family of four for one week or a senior citizen for a month.

Comparisons of national grocery store chains illustrate the value of Angel Food ministries – the same food in the grocery store would cost a little over \$65.

*There are no income or other eligibility criteria to follow.* Just locate a program

### **AIRS Announces Revised Standards**

AIRS announced adoption of Version 6.0 of the standards in January 2009. These standards represent the latest revisions and feedback from the I&R field concerning quality for I&R agencies.

Even though the new standards are now in place, it will take some time to get accreditation criteria in place to measure those standards. *Agencies that will undergo accreditation between now & mid-2010 (projected) will be accredited using version 5.2 of the Standards.*



(it's growing rapidly across the nation) on the Angel Food ([www.angelfoodministries.org](http://www.angelfoodministries.org)) and contact them for ordering details. Families can even use food stamps to pay for their purchases to help stretch their food dollars even more. There are no limits to the number of boxes that a family can purchase, and there are additional food boxes with primarily meat products that can be purchased as well.

Angel Food Ministries publishes a menu on their web site and the menu can vary from one state to another. Food is ordered by the host site and then delivered

approximately two weeks later. Any food that is not picked up on the delivery date is donated to a needy family of which the host site is aware.

### **TXU Continues its Commitment to I&R Excellence**

TXU's ongoing partnership with TAIRS ensures that I&R providers throughout the state have access to quality training and education.

For the last four years, TXU's support has allowed quality, professional training at the annual conference. TXU's service to the I&R

community ensures that all Texans have access to professional I&R.

Visit the TXU booth at the 2009 TAIRS conference in Corpus Christi and show your appreciation for all they are doing to enrich the lives of vulnerable Texas citizens.

**RESOURCE TIPS**

## Developing Database Cooperatives

When new initiatives hit a community, one of the first instincts of well-meaning community planners is to develop a directory of services in order to inform citizens of the services that are available. While the directory may be a needed service, it often is a duplication of service that a general or specialized I&R service is already providing. A publication like this can lead to even more consumer confusion than already exists around a particular issue.

Instead of complaining about the latest duplication, take action! Pull together I&R providers in the community - general and specialty alike. Everyone has a stake in a database cooperative. Most I&R agencies are reluctant to talk about database sharing and cooperatives, primarily due to the fact that it takes time, energy, and most of all money, to keep a quality database.

This issue shouldn't stop I&R providers from meeting on a regular basis to discuss issues that are critical to the community. Specialized I&R programs have the difficult job of serving specific vulnerable populations while comprehensive I&R programs

hear from all sides.

Meeting on a regular basis will help iron out some of the referral protocols and help keep everyone updated about new programs and initiatives.

Forming a database cooperative goes beyond sharing data. It may not even involve sharing data, but rather talking more about how agencies include and/or exclude service providers from the database. The cooperative can also describe methods of access in the community and help define new opportunities for the community to reach I&R providers during times of need.

The result can be seamless access for the consumer and less confusion in the I&R field about who does what and for what population. This approach ensures that the next time a new issue takes root in the community, the agencies are better prepared to respond with requests for a specialized publication or outreach material to the community that describes how agencies are addressing the issue.

## AIRS XSD Data Standards Version 3.0

AIRS introduced the Version 3.0 of the XSD data standards in June 2008. AIRS has developed a style guide (not mandatory - only suggestions) to help I&R agencies who are exploring ways to use the XSD and be compliant. There is also an XSD web site that will help vendors validate XML exports. If vendors aren't sure that their software meets the standard, the web site help them with their efforts.

The standard continues using the XML (eXtensible Markup Language) technology that allows data to be shared between I&R providers and others who are working on methods to share data in their community.

The AIRS Technology Committee regularly updates the XSD schema to ensure that it meets the needs of I&R providers and the community it serves.

## Spring Conferences

**2009 Texas Conference on Aging - April 26th - 28th**

Sheraton Arlington Hotel, Arlington, TX  
[www.dads.state.tx.us/tcoa/2009-registration.pdf](http://www.dads.state.tx.us/tcoa/2009-registration.pdf)

**National Hurricane Conference - April 6 - 10th**

Austin Convention Center, Austin, TX  
 Register Online: [www.hurricanemeeting.org](http://www.hurricanemeeting.org)

**42nd American Association of Suicidology Annual Conference - April 15 - 18, 2009**

Westin ST. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, CA  
 register online: [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

## TAIRS Board Members

<p>Debby Thornton (through 12/2010) President Community Council of Greater Dallas 214-954-4222 <a href="mailto:dthornton@ccgd.org">dthornton@ccgd.org</a></p>	<p>Cindy Cornish (through 12/2009) Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission 361-578-1587 <a href="mailto:cindyco@gcrpc.org">cindyco@gcrpc.org</a></p>	<p>Karen Cline (through 12/2009) East Texas Council of Governments 903-984-8641 x 220 <a href="mailto:Karen.Cline@etcog.org">Karen.Cline@etcog.org</a></p>
<p>Mary Cooksey (through 12/2009) Vice-President United Way of Abilene 325-676-7065 <a href="mailto:mary@unitedwayabilene.org">mary@unitedwayabilene.org</a></p>	<p>Jacqui Elmore (through 12/2011) Cal Farley's 800-657-7124 x 2627 <a href="mailto:jacquelineelmore@calfarley.org">jacquelineelmore@calfarley.org</a></p>	<p>Glenda Rogers (through 12/2011) Capital Area Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging 512-916-6053 <a href="mailto:grogers@capcog.org">grogers@capcog.org</a></p>
<p>David Jobe (through 12/ 2011) Immediate Past President United Way of Greater Houston (713) 685-2309 <a href="mailto:djobe@unitedwayhouston.org">djobe@unitedwayhouston.org</a></p>	<p>LaDelle Kay (through 12/2011) INFOline of Gregg County Greater Longview United Way 903-236-9211 <a href="mailto:lkay@longviewunitedway.com">lkay@longviewunitedway.com</a></p>	<p>Terryca Fuller (through 12/2010) Lackland AFB 210-671-3722 <a href="mailto:terryca.fuller@lackland.af.mil">terryca.fuller@lackland.af.mil</a></p>
<p>La Juan Hollis (through 12/2012) Treasurer <a href="mailto:ljhollis@embarqumail.com">ljhollis@embarqumail.com</a></p>	<p>Telma Longoria (through 12/2009) Community Council of the Rio Grande Valley 956-648-3515 <a href="mailto:crrgv@ccrgv.org">crrgv@ccrgv.org</a></p>	<p>Dora Flores (12/2011) City of El Paso Department of Public Health 915-771-5857 <a href="mailto:Dora.A.Flores@elpasotexas.gov">Dora.A.Flores@elpasotexas.gov</a></p>
<p>Janna Shoe (through 12/2010) Secretary United Way of Greater Houston 361-742-5891 <a href="mailto:jshoe@unitedwayhouston.org">jshoe@unitedwayhouston.org</a></p>	<p>Dawn Sheffield (through 12/2011) Hopkins County Community Action Network, CANhelp 903-885-9797 <a href="mailto:dawn@canhelponline.org">dawn@canhelponline.org</a></p>	<p>Alison Smith (through 12/2011) United Way of the Brazos Valley 979-676-4483 x 113 <a href="mailto:asmith@uwbv.org">asmith@uwbv.org</a></p>
		<p>Kelly Stephens (through 12/2009) United Way of Amarillo &amp; Canyon 806-373-2662 <a href="mailto:kelly@unitedwayama.org">kelly@unitedwayama.org</a></p>

## AIRS Conference in Reno - May 31 - June 3rd

Registration for the AIRS training conference in Reno is now underway. Early registration ends March 31st.

This year's hotel rates at the Silver Legacy Resort & Casino Hotel are the lowest in years - \$101 for a single/double room!

Intensives start on Sunday, May 31st and include:

- [The ABC's of I&R](#)
- [The I&R Supervisor's Toolkit](#)
- [The Resource Specialist 101](#)

All intensives are limited to 60 attendees - so register early!

This year's workshop lineups include topics on Aging & Disability, I&R Service Delivery, Crisis,

Disaster Response & Planning, Management, Military, Resource Management, Technology, and a 2-1-1 Track.

AIRS CIRS/CRS testing is available on Sunday May 31st and Tuesday June 2nd. Applications must be received at the national office by May 2, 2009 and can be found at the AIRS web site ([www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org)) under the certification tab.

If the networking sessions and educational sessions aren't enough for you, then come out for "An Evening at the National Automobile Museum" on June 1st for the AIRS off site event.

**Are you packed yet!?!?**