

## October 2022 Community Report



### In the News:

#### I&R DAY



Information & Referral

**NOVEMBER 16**

#### Information and Referral: Connecting Services to People

*By Bob Blancato, Contributor*

TODAY, November 16, marks the celebration known as National Information and Referral (I&R) Day.

It is an opportunity for us to acknowledge and appreciate the work done daily by thousands of professionals and volunteers who link services to people through information and referral programs.

#### How many people seek information?

It is estimated by the I&R specialists' national association, the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), that in the past year alone, 24 million calls were answered, while texts to I&R specialists are increasing 300%

each year. There were another 40 million website visits to the online resource databases of I&R and public websites.

These databases are the key to services, containing vital information on community, health and government programs and are kept current by trained Resource specialists who serve as community curators and navigators. The specialists also serve as advocates on behalf of those who need additional support. It is important to note that the services are free, convenient and confidential.

According to AIRS, the highest ranked need registered in contacts with I&R specialists is housing. Sometimes the call is from a new person arriving in a community in search of housing. It can also be a contact made during times of disaster when housing can be impacted. Or, it can be a case of access to safe and appropriate housing. For example, Marie, a 71-year-old widow from Indiana, needed help to heat her house because she was poor but did not qualify for federal energy assistance. The I&R specialist who answered her call connected her to a state winter assistance fund which kept her gas connected.

### **How does it work?**

The I&R profession operates through 211 programs, crisis centers, Area Agencies on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and Military Family Support Centers, and provide specialized and comprehensive I&R services every day. These programs can be found in libraries, independent community non-profits, faith-based organizations, and government agencies at every level.

The 211 access to human services system helps people connect to the I&R services in their communities. The most recent data shows that 211 serves more than 92 percent of the US population in all 50 states as well as Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico. In 2016, almost 13 million calls were handled by 211.

### **What else does I&R do?**

I&R specialists proudly serve veterans who may come on tough times such as Jim, age 66, who called 211 for help with food after not eating for five days, living in a motel and having his car stolen. 211 connected him with a community center who agreed not only to deliver him food but also to help him access other services in the center.

I&R specialists also help with issues like suicide prevention, sexual assault resources, and guiding victims of domestic violence to key resources such as safe havens.

Another compelling value of I&R comes during times of disaster which our nation has endured on too many occasions in 2017. The ability of these specialists to aid individuals and families simply by providing information in a time of dire need makes an enormous difference.

One recent disaster example occurred during Hurricane Harvey in Texas. From August 22-30, 2017, the 211 Texas network responded to almost 80,000 calls. Before landfall, calls were about evacuation and transportation options; after landfall, there were high-water rescue calls. The 211 specialist played the key human role of offering a calming voice and further assistance through 911.

Further, we observe National I&R Day during National Preparedness Month; I&R and 211 in some communities are now focused on providing disaster preparedness educational programs to address a growing need, especially among older adults.

### **What challenges does I&R face?**

The top concern I&R specialists have is funding. According to the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD), the Older Americans Act, which is a key federal funder of I&R, has endured a 64 percent reduction in funding since 1980 while the population of older adults has grown

by 86 percent—and older adults are only one group served by I&R. Other challenges include limited community resources, major changes to the long-term services and supports network, and maintaining staffing.

We celebrate I&R Day on the eve of the holiday season—a time when human challenges for help and assistance can grow. We must recognize the value and relevance of I&R in America. It can and does make a difference in the lives of those who I&R specialists and volunteers support each day.

Today, call 211 or a local I&R office just to say thanks for the work they do every day. They may be unsung heroes but they don't have to be.

[www.huffpost.com](http://www.huffpost.com)

### Knox and Licking County Call Totals for the Past 12 Months

	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22
<b>Total Calls w/Follow Ups</b>	1066	1009	1038	1253	1106	960	987	1009	980	1060	1019	1248
<b>Knox</b>	275	233	227	246	298	203	199	233	231	282	273	270
<b>Licking</b>	791	776	811	1007	808	757	788	813	749	778	746	978

#### October Unmet Needs from Call Statistics

##### *Licking County*

Birth Certificate Fee Payment Assistance  
 Burial/Cremation Expense Assistance  
 Gas Money

##### *Knox County*

Diapers  
 Low Cost Home Rental Listings



The 211 Community Monthly Report provides statistics regarding calls received and data on unmet needs in Licking and Knox Counties. New or important agency information and/or highlights of special programs and services available in Licking and Knox Counties are included.

If you have questions about this report or would like to suggest

a program for us to highlight, please contact Lyn Romano at  
lromano@pathwaysco.org or 740-345-6166 x200.

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There are 3 ways to contact us for free, confidential assistance:

CALL 211, 345-HELP, 1-800-544-1601

TEXT your zip code to 898211

VISIT [211pathways.org](http://211pathways.org)



211/Crisis Hotline  
Program Director, Amy  
Henning, is available to  
answer questions and  
provide public awareness  
to your organization  
about the 211/Crisis  
Hotline and the services  
provided.

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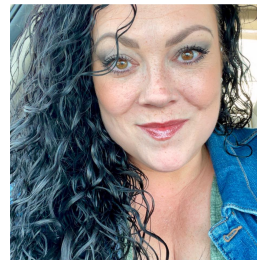
Amy Henning, MSSA, LSW  
740-345-6166 ext. 229  
[ahenning@pathwaysco.org](mailto:ahenning@pathwaysco.org)



211/Crisis Hotline  
Certified Resource  
Database Curator, Lyn  
Romano, can assist  
agencies with questions  
about service/program  
listings in the Resource  
Database. Call or email  
her when you need  
assistance.

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Lyn Romano, CRS-DC  
740-345-6166 ext. 200  
[lromano@pathwaysco.org](mailto:lromano@pathwaysco.org)



211/Crisis Hotline  
Resource Database  
Assistant, Andrea Rudin,  
works alongside our  
Database Curator to keep  
the service/program  
listings updated in the  
Resource Database. Email  
her when you need  
assistance.

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Andrea Rudin, Resource  
Database Assistant  
[arudin@pathwaysco.org](mailto:arudin@pathwaysco.org)





United Way of  
Licking County



United Way  
of Knox County



Pathways of Central Ohio | 1627 Bryn Mawr Drive, Newark, OH 43055

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