



# ***NYS AIRS NOTES***

*New York State Alliance of Information and Referral Systems  
"Bringing People and Services Together"*

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**February 2010**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Good day all,

We have reached the end of another year. 2009 was a year of challenge for us and those we serve. While it was not easy, we met the challenges of the economic climate, disaster, and the changing needs of our consumers. On behalf of the NYS AIRS Board I would like to congratulate each of you for a job well done.

Now we look forward to 2010 realizing that it will present its own challenges. The NYS AIRS Board has been working to position itself as an entity that can help you to meet those challenges and add value to your AIRS membership. In November we met for two days in Fayetteville, NY to look at NYS AIRS as it is and what it can be. Part of that introspection was a survey that we asked you, our members, to respond to. At the end of two days of productive and, at times grueling, discussion we developed a plan to restructure NYS AIRS in a way that will allow us to better serve the needs of our membership. This is an endeavor which will take time and work. At this time I am inviting you to help us with this task. Over the next few weeks the chairs of the various NYS AIRS committees will be asking our members to join a committee. We realize that you represent a large pool of talent and expertise that we can leverage to position NYS AIRS as preeminent representative of the I&R community in New York and invite you to work with us to better serve you and our communities.

In conjunction with this project we are also looking to add new members to the Board. We will be asking for nominations in the month of January and hope to assemble a slate of candidates that represents the diversity of our membership. I would like each of you to consider becoming a NYS AIRS Board member. Yes, it is more work added to your already busy day but the satisfaction of knowing that you will be part of an organization representing the I&R field more than offsets that cost.

2010 is important to NYS AIRS in another way. In May the AIRS Annual Training and Education Conference, In Focus: I&R Excellence will be coming to Rochester, New York. The dates for the conference are May 23-26, 2010. This is exciting for us as it we will be serving as the hosts for over 600 I&R professionals from around the world. However, making the conference a success is going to require many helping hands. We need people to help with the conference tote bags, work the registration desk, serve as people movers, and do any of the other tasks that help to make any conference a success. Basically we need "NYS AIRS Ambassadors"...a lot of them. I am asking you to consider volunteering to help us put our best foot forward and show the attendees that New York can host the best conference ever. And, if being the best is not enough to make you excited about attending, NYS AIRS members will receive a special discount on the conference registration.

In conjunction with the national conference coming to New York the Board has decided to make 2 scholarships available to the members of NYS AIRS. This is our way of not only recognizing the professionalism of the scholarship winners but a way of saying thank-you to you, our members. Details will be forthcoming in January 2010.

So that is it. 2010 should be an exciting time for us. It will also require quite a bit of work. I am looking forward to working with you as we share the load of bringing I&R Excellence to New York State. I know we can count on you. In addition don't forget to renew your AIRS membership for 2010.

It is my hope that you use this season to enjoy yourselves and those you love. Also, take a moment to give yourselves a pat on the back for the good work you have done in the past year and will accomplish in the next because you deserve it.

**John Plonski**  
NYS AIRS President

## 2010 AIRS NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN ROCHESTER



New York State welcomes the 32nd AIRS I&R Training and Education Conference May 23-26, 2010. As the host affiliate, NYS AIRS is available to assist the AIRS staff with a variety of logistics, staffing tables, meeting/greeting guests and generally making your AIRS colleagues

feel welcome. So put on your **I ♥ NY**® hat and plan to lend a hand. Information will be emailed to members in the coming weeks.

Conference registration is now open on the AIRS website [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org). The host affiliate receives discounts on the registration fees – this is your one chance to attend the national conference at a super special rate:

### **Early Bird Register by March 31**

AIRS Members Basic Level \$425

**\*\* NYS AIRS member \$361; NYS AIRS Member Single Day: \$240**

### **Register between March 31 - thru May 13**

AIRS Members Basic Level \$525

**\*\* NYS AIRS Member: \$461; NYS AIRS Member Single Day: \$280**

### **Register between May 14 - onsite**

AIRS Members Basic Level \$625

**\*\* NYS AIRS Member \$561; NYS AIRS Member Single Day: \$380**

As a partner in the national conference, NYS AIRS will not be holding its traditional October conference. Therefore, **NYS AIRS will be offering 2 scholarships** to the national conference covering the full conference fee and 3 hotel nights. A scholarship application accompanies this newsletter and will also be posted on the NYS AIRS website [www.nysairs.org](http://www.nysairs.org).

NYS AIRS Board members will be leading two of the Pre-Conference Intensives:

- Shye Louis -- **The ABC's of I&R**, designed to assist new I&R Specialists more fully understand the theory and practice that leads to I&R.
- John Plonski -- **Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention for the I&R Professional**, exploring the skills needed to recognize and handle crisis calls within an I&R setting.

AIRS is still welcoming proposals for workshops -- interesting angles on the issues that face us all in areas such as I&R Management, Service Delivery, Disaster, Resource Database, 2-1-1, Military and anything else that is relevant. The workshop application form is at [http://www.airs.org/files/public/AIRS\\_Conference\\_callforpresenters2010.doc](http://www.airs.org/files/public/AIRS_Conference_callforpresenters2010.doc)

Check [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org) for a full Conference schedule. Registration is open now. Conference early bird discounts available through March 31 and hotel discounts available through April 26.

### 2-1-1 NY UPDATE

2-1-1 New York has added another region with the launch of 2-1-1 Long Island on January 15 covering Nassau and Suffolk Counties. 2-1-1 Long Island is a partnership with United Way of Long Island administering the project, the Middle Country Public Library managing the database/website and 2-1-1 Hudson Valley providing the call center. The 2-1-1 Long Island Call Center operates 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days a week, and is reached locally by calling 2-1-1 or 1-888-774-7633 and the website is [www.211longisland.org](http://www.211longisland.org). With the launch of 2-1-1 Long Island, 93% of New York State's population now has access to 2-1-1 comprehensive information and referral services.

### AIRS MEMBERSHIP—TIME TO RENEW

AIRS membership renewal is currently underway. Did you know that the 62-member NYS AIRS Chapter is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest AIRS affiliate in the country? With the dual membership process, you join both national AIRS and state affiliate NYS AIRS through one easy payment. Membership in NYS AIRS supports the professional development of our field and provides tremendous opportunities to network with I&R peers across the country via the NYS AIRS and AIRS listservs. Members also receive discounts on training, certification testing and publications – especially valuable since the national training & education conference will be held in Rochester, NY this coming May.

There are four membership levels – Premium (\$750), Enhanced (\$500), Standard (\$250/350) and Basic (\$50). The AIRS website [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org) offers a worksheet to help you calculate your overall cost savings at each membership level. These are exciting times for the information and referral field in New York State, so don't miss out on the opportunity to partner with NYS AIRS. We welcome your membership and the opportunity to serve your needs.

### SEARCH NEW YORK STATE COMPTROLLER'S WEBSITE FOR UNCLAIMED FUNDS

The State of New York is currently holding billions of dollars in unclaimed funds and some of this money may belong to **non-profit organizations**. State law requires banks, insurance companies, utilities, and other businesses to turn dormant savings accounts, unclaimed insurance and stock dividends, and other inactive holdings over to the State. If there has been no activity in the account for a set period of time, usually between two and five years, your money is considered unclaimed or abandoned. To search the list of unclaimed funds, visit <http://www.osc.state.ny.us> and click the link "Search Unclaimed Funds". If you find a match you will be instructed on how to file a claim. If you have questions or concerns about any listing you may find, check the website's Frequently Asked Questions page. If you are unable to find the answer to your questions, you may email the Office of Unclaimed Funds at

[NYSOUF@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:NYSOUF@osc.state.ny.us) or call 1-800-221-9311 (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm).

## H1N1 RESOURCE

Visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) for information on H1N1 Flu –

- a flu shot locator where shots are available by address or zip code
- answers to over 500 frequently asked questions
- on-line submission of questions
- Myths & Facts fact sheet

and much more. An additional resource is the CDC hotline, **1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)**, which offers services in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## GEARING UP FOR TAX SEASON

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low to moderate income working individuals and families. Congress originally approved the tax credit legislation in 1975 in part to offset the burden of social security taxes and to provide an incentive to work. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit. To qualify, taxpayers must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if they did not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return. The Internal Revenue Service website allows people to find out if they are eligible for EITC by answering some questions and providing basic income information. The on-line program also assists in determining correct filing status, determining whether child(ren) meet the tests for a qualifying child, and estimating the amount of credit the person may receive. Visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and type “earned income tax credit” in the search box. In addition, New York State offers a similar credit on the state income tax return. Eligible residents complete **Form IT-215, Claim for Earned Income Credit** and file it with their New York State personal income tax return. Visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) for information on the Earned Income Tax Credit

## FREE TAX PREPARATION AND VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA) SITES

VITA is a *free*, IRS-sponsored program to help low- and middle-income workers have their taxes prepared and filed electronically at no cost. VITA also ensures that workers receive all the tax credits to which they are entitled. The NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance has posted the listing of VITA sites across the state – including sites which offer free e-filing of federal and state returns – so not only can clients receive assistance in completing their returns with trained volunteers, but can also e-file for free. Every county in the State has at least one VITA site. The list is available at: <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/reform/VITAsites.pdf>

## NYS SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM SEEKS SITES

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) ensures that all children 18 years and under (21 years for children with disabilities) have access to free nutritious meals throughout the summer months. Unfortunately, in New York State less than 30% of children enrolled in the free/reduced-price school lunch program eat SFSP lunch during the summer. Non-profit organizations can become a SFSP site to serve meals in a local neighborhood location. SFSP is an ideal way to augment an existing summer youth program or summer camp. Since meals are primarily federally funded, agencies may use SFSP reimbursement to pay for meals instead of agency funding. For information on becoming a Summer Food Service Program sponsor or a site, locating sites in your neighborhood or to request support on ways to better your existing SFSP site, contact Rachel Rupright at the Nutrition Consortium of New York State 518.436.8757 ext. 21 or [rachel.rupright@nutritionconsortium.org](mailto:rachel.rupright@nutritionconsortium.org).

## UPCOMING CERTIFICATION TESTING DATES

The AIRS certification tests will be administered at the Annual Conference in Rochester, New York scheduled for May 23-26. A NYS AIRS-sponsored certification test being planned for July 16, 2010 at the NYS AIRS Annual Meeting, which will be held in the Binghamton area. Check [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org) for dates and times.

**Registration must be arranged directly with AIRS at least 30 days prior to the test (see below).**

Certified Resource Specialist (CRS), Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS), Certified Information and Referral Specialist - Aging (CIRS-A) are professional credentials awarded internationally by AIRS to individuals who complete the certification program and pass the examination for Information & Referral Specialists. It is an acknowledgment of demonstrated competence in the field of Information & Referral.

Costs:

- The basic cost of a Certification application for AIRS members is \$75 at the basic level, \$72 for standard level members, \$68 for enhanced members and \$65 for premium members OR \$225 for non-members.
- An examination re-take is \$40 for AIRS members and \$75 for non-members. And recertification is \$40 for AIRS members and \$175 for non-members.

The Certification Application Form is for all applicants whether they are new, retaking the exam or recertifying and is available at [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org). Completed applications, supporting documentation and payment **must arrive at the AIRS office at least 30 days prior to the test date.**

## EVENTS

### SAVE THE DATE 2010 AIRS NATIONAL CONFERENCE “In Focus – I&R Excellence”

New York State welcomes the 32nd I&R Training and Education Conference May 23-26, 2010. This annual AIRS Conference is a must-attend event for I&R professionals, new and old hands alike. Check [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org) for a full Conference schedule. Early bird registration begins in February 2010.

### NYS AIRS BOARD MEETING

NYS AIRS Annual Meeting & Election

July 16, 2010

Family Enrichment Network, Inc.

24 Cherry Street

Johnson City, New York 13790

All NYS AIRS members welcome to participate.

**NYS AIRS NOTES** is issued in April, August and December. To submit articles or events for consideration, contact [eeberhardt@unitedwayli.org](mailto:eeberhardt@unitedwayli.org). For current news and events between issues, please check the NYS AIRS website at [www.nysairs.org](http://www.nysairs.org).

NYS AIRS Notes is best viewed in "print layout" format. Please note: Only the primary contact person listed on the NYS AIRS membership application will receive this newsletter. If you are an agency member, please feel free to distribute copies to your coworkers

NYS AIRS Communications Committee:

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