## Standard 4: Inquirer Advocacy

The I&R service offers advocacy, when necessary, to ensure that people receive the benefits and services for which they are eligible. Inquirer advocacy seeks to meet individual needs without attempting to change social institutions and, for purposes of these standards, does not include system advocacy or legislative advocacy (lobbying). All advocacy efforts are consistent with written policies established by the governing body of the I&R service and proceed only with the permission of the inquirer.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has an advocacy policy that describes the circumstances under which advocacy should be undertaken, the advocacy mechanisms that are authorized and the conditions under which supervisory staff need to become involved.

**2.** The I&R service intervenes, when necessary, on behalf of individuals to help them establish eligibility for or obtain needed services.

**3.** When warranted, the I&R service makes one or more additional calls or takes other actions on the inquirer's behalf and uses an appropriate advocacy mechanism to make sure inquirers get the information and/or help they need.

**4.** The I&R service refers to an organization that specializes in providing advocacy in situations where the level of advocacy required by the inquirer exceeds the limits of the I&R service's advocacy policy or an effective use of its own resources.

**5.** The I&R service records the fact that advocacy was conducted for use in reports.

## Standard 5: Crisis Intervention

The I&R service is prepared to assess and meet the immediate, short-term needs of inquirers who are experiencing a crisis and contact the I&R service for assistance. Included is assistance for individuals threatening suicide, homicide or assault; suicide survivors; victims of domestic abuse or other forms of violence, child abuse/neglect or elder/dependent adult abuse/neglect; sexual assault survivors; runaway youth; people experiencing a psychiatric emergency; chemically dependent people in crisis; survivors of a traumatic experience; and others in distress.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has written crisis intervention policies and procedures that provide protocols for specific types of emergencies. Included are lethality assessment procedures, protective measures relating to inquiries from individuals in endangerment situations, protocols that address inquirers who wish to remain anonymous yet require direct intervention and the organization's crisis protocols.

**2.** If the I&R service does not itself provide a formal crisis intervention service, it has a prearranged agreement and documented protocol with an appropriate crisis center that does.

**3.** The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that I&R specialists have the skills to recognize when an inquirer is experiencing a crisis, and that they determine whether the individual is in immediate danger and take steps to ensure that s/he is safe before continuing with an assessment. In assault and sexual assault cases, for example, the specialist ensures that the assailant has left the vicinity and determines whether the individual needs emergency medical treatment. In domestic violence situations, the specialist ensures that the abusive person is not present and threatening the inquirer. The specialist follows the I&R service's protocol to determine when to access 911 or other emergency rescue services.

**4.** The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that I&R specialists have the intervention skills to:

- ✓ De-escalate and stabilize the individual and help him/her remain calm;
- ✓ Help the inquirer talk about and work through his/her feelings as part of the assessment and problem solving stages of the interview; and
- ✓ Keep the inquirer on the telephone pending referral or rescue.

**5.** The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that I&R specialists have the skills to recognize the warning signs of people at imminent risk of suicide, violence or victimization (including signs of abuse/neglect, domestic violence and risk of homicide or self-harm) whether the risk issues are explicitly stated or implicit; and to recognize when an inquirer is in immediate need of intervention (e.g., when a person is in medical crisis due to alcohol or drug intoxication, has taken steps to end his or her life, is experiencing violence or is experiencing a psychiatric emergency). When warranted, staff follow the I&R service's rescue protocol for when to access 911 or other emergency personnel to request that they intervene. In these circumstances, inquirer safety overrides confidentiality concerns.

**6.** In cases of suspected child abuse or elder abuse, the I&R service understands the agency's responsibilities under the prevailing legislation of the jurisdiction regarding mandatory reporting and completes a report when indicated.

7. In situations involving suicide or homicide, the I&R service understands the circumstances under which a lethality risk assessment[1] is required and conducts an appropriate assessment when necessary. Lethality risk assessments are recorded in writing and include a description of specific actions taken in response to the situation.

8. In cases of domestic violence and other endangerment situations, the I&R service takes special precautions to safeguard the inquirer's identity and all aspects of their conversation.

9. The I&R service uses a variety of means to support its ability to connect with rescue services including Caller ID or a call tracing arrangement with the telephone company or the appropriate 911 service. At a minimum, there is a separate telephone or a separate external line that is available for initiating rescue procedures without interrupting the crisis call. The specialist follows the I&R service's protocol for addressing inquirers who wish to remain anonymous yet require rescue.

10. When feasible, the I&R service connects inquirers in crisis situations to a formal crisis intervention service in their community for assistance and support once the inquirer's immediate, short-term needs have been assessed. The connection is made by direct transfer, when possible, and the specialist follows the protocol established by agreement with the crisis center.

11. The I&R service records the fact that crisis intervention was provided for use in reports.

## Standard 6: Follow-Up

The I&R service has a policy that addresses the conditions under which follow-up must be conducted. The policy mandates follow-up, when feasible, with inquirers who are at risk and/or vulnerable and in situations where the specialist believes that inquirers do not have the necessary capacity to follow through and resolve their problems. Additional assistance in locating or accessing services may be necessary.

[1] A lethality risk assessment is an evaluation based on research of how dangerous a situation is and addresses issues such as the person's intention, method, timing and state of mind. Questions include: Has the person already taken steps toward committing suicide by swallowing pills, slashing their wrists? Have there been previous attempts? Does the person have a specific plan? Are the means to carry out the plan readily available? What is the likely timeframe for a life threatening event – the next few minutes or hours or longer? Has the individual had psychiatric help in the past? Are there other risk indicators such depression, hopelessness, feelings of isolation, intoxication, significant recent loss?

### *Quality Indicators*

1. **1.** The primary purpose of follow-up is for the benefit of inquirers to see if their needs were met.

**2.** Follow-up is conducted, when possible, with the permission of the inquirer and never compromises inquirer safety.

**3.** The follow-up policy of the I&R service includes examples of situations in which follow-up might occur if the inquirer is at risk and/or vulnerable. These may include:

- ✓ Vulnerable households that are without heat during the winter.
- ✓ Older adults having difficulty expressing their needs.
- ✓ Families with young children needing food.
- ✓ Individuals with disabilities who have received an eviction order.
- ✓ People with no health insurance who need health care.
- ✓ Individuals needing emergency shelter.
- ✓ Individuals needing detoxification or withdrawal management.

**4.** Follow-up consists of successfully contacting the inquirer to find out if their need was met and if not, why. Follow-up is generally conducted within one to three days of the original inquiry in cases of endangerment and within 7-14 days in other situations.

**5.** If the inquirer has not received services or the need has not been met, the I&R service determines whether there is still a need and makes additional appropriate referrals. The I&R service also determines whether the inquirer has additional, new needs and makes appropriate referrals prior to completing the contact.

**6.** The I&R service documents the follow-up results (whether service was received or there was an unmet need) for use in reports.

**7.** Information gathered during follow-up relating to information in the resource database that may be incorrect is submitted to resource database staff for verification and correction.

**8.** Information gathered during the follow-up process is also used as a further means of evaluating the effectiveness of existing community service providers and for identifying gaps in community services.

## RESOURCE DATABASE

The Resource Database standards require that the I&R service develop, maintain, use and disseminate an accurate, up-to-date resource database that contains information about available community resources including details about the services they provide and the conditions under which services are available. The database includes resources that support the inquirer's right to accurate, consistent, comprehensive and unbiased information and the ability of the I&R service to be a non-partisan, non-ideological and impartial information source for available nonprofit, government and for-profit services that meet the organization's inclusion/exclusion criteria. The database is maintained by trained resource specialists.

### <u>Standard 7: Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria</u>

To ensure that the needs of the community are met, the I&R service develops criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of agencies and programs in the resource database. The criteria are uniformly applied and published so that staff and the public are aware of the scope and limitations of the database.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service has a policy that describes inclusion/exclusion criteria for the resource database.

- ✓ If the I&R service is comprehensive, the inclusion/exclusion criteria address the human services needs of all groups in the community; include government, nonprofit and relevant for-profit organizations; and may include entities such as support groups that are not incorporated as organizations.

- ✓ If the I&R service is specialized, the inclusion/exclusion criteria adequately address the needs of its target population and have referral points for the types of services that are excluded.

- ✓ If the I&R service includes political cause and issue-oriented action groups in its resource database, the policy mandates that it strive for balance, i.e., that it include organizations that represent all sides of the issue.

**2.** The organization's inclusion/exclusion criteria are reviewed and updated on a regular basis (at a minimum, every two years) to ensure that they continue to meet the changing needs of the community.

**3.** If the I&R service charges a fee for the inclusion of organizations in its database, the practice is published as a part of its inclusion/exclusion criteria.

**Standard 8: Data Elements**[2]

The resource database contains standardized information about organizations that meet criteria for inclusion, the services provided by each organization, and the locations (sites) where those services are available. The standardized entry contains all required data elements, where applicable (e.g., a mailing address is included only if one exists). However, the specific data elements that are seen by a particular group of users (e.g., resource specialists, I&R specialists, the general public) may vary.

***Quality Indicators***

**1. AGENCY / MAIN SITE Data Elements**

Required

- ✓ Unique ID Number
- ✓ Record Ownership Code
- ✓ Agency Name
- ✓ AKA (Also Known As) Names
- ✓ Street/Physical Address
- ✓ Mailing Address
- ✓ Website(s)/URL(s)
- ✓ Email Address(es)
- ✓ Phone Number(s) including extensions, Phone Types (e.g., Voice, TTY/TDD), and Phone Functions (Administration, Intake)
- ✓ Name and Title of the Director or Administrator
- ✓ Agency Description, a brief narrative describing the agency's main purpose or role.
- ✓ Main Site Description
- ✓ Administrative Hours/Days of Operation
- ✓ Legal Status
- ✓ Access for People with Disabilities
- ✓ Date of Last Complete Update
- ✓ Date of Last Interim Modification/Partial Update
- ✓ Contact for Updating Purposes

Recommended

- ✓ Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN/FEIN)
- ✓ Year of Incorporation
- ✓ Licenses or Accreditations
- ✓ IRS Status
- ✓ Travel Information
- ✓ Other Addresses

[2] For further information about data elements, please refer to the Glossary of Terms.

- ✓ Social Media URLs, if applicable

## 2. ADDITIONAL SITES (LOCATIONS/BRANCHES) Data Elements

Required
- ✓ Unique ID Number
- ✓ Site Name
- ✓ AKA (Also Known As) Names
- ✓ Street/Physical Address
- ✓ Mailing Address
- ✓ Phone Number(s) including extensions, Phone Types (e.g., Voice, TTY/TDD), and Phone Functions (Administration, Intake)
- ✓ Access for People with Disabilities
- ✓ Site Description

Recommended
- ✓ Travel Information
- ✓ Other Addresses
- ✓ Website(s)/URL(s)
- ✓ Email Address(es)
- ✓ Administrative Hours/Days of Operation
- ✓ Name and Title of the Site Manager

## 3. SERVICE / SERVICE GROUP AND SERVICE SITE Data Elements

NOTE: Many of the data elements below may be applicable to the service group, the service site or both, depending on the structures represented in the software selected and the decisions made by the I&R service. Exceptions are so noted in Glossary definitions.

Required
- ✓ Program Name(s) for the Service Group
- ✓ AKA (Also Known As) Names for Program Names
- ✓ Service Group Name
- ✓ Service Group Description
- ✓ Phone Number(s) including extensions, Phone Types (e.g., Voice, TTY/TDD), and Phone Functions (Administration, Intake) for specific services in the service group
- ✓ Eligibility
- ✓ Target Populations
- ✓ Geographic Area Served
- ✓ Documents Required
- ✓ Application/Intake Process
- ✓ Fee Structure
- ✓ Languages Other than English
- ✓ Hours of Service
- ✓ Taxonomy Term(s)

Recommended
- ✓ Website(s)/URL(s)
- ✓ Email Address(es)
- ✓ Title of the Service Contact Person
- ✓ Service Capacity and Type
- ✓ Method of Payment Accepted

## Standard 9: Classification System/Taxonomy

The I&R service uses the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services (formally titled A *Taxonomy of Human Services: A Conceptual Framework with Standardized Terminology and Definitions for the Field*) to index and facilitate retrieval of resource information, increase the reliability of planning data, make evaluation processes consistent and reliable, and facilitate national aggregations and comparisons of data. Additional classification structures such as keywords may supplement the Taxonomy, but are connected to the Taxonomy rather than functioning as independent indexing systems.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has a current Taxonomy license.

**2.** The I&R service customizes the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy to adapt it to the community's size, nature and organizational needs; and documents the customization rules to ensure ongoing consistency in customization decisions. These adaptations are made using nationally recognized principles for customization so as not to change the basic structure of the Taxonomy or the related service definitions. Customization can be “high tech” (accomplished using a software utility) or “low tech” (e.g., the I&R service develops an abbreviated outline of terms that is used to guide indexing decisions).

**3.** The customization of the Taxonomy is reviewed annually, ideally in conjunction with the review of the inclusion/exclusion criteria, and whenever the Taxonomy is updated.

**4.** Local modifications are reported to the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy editor to consider for inclusion in the master system.

**5.** The structure and contents of the Taxonomy are constantly changing in response to changes in the services it encompasses. The I&R service has procedures in place to update and integrate Taxonomy additions and changes according to a regular schedule, and completely updates their version of the Taxonomy at least once every 12 months.

6. The I&R service uses I&R software that supports the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services and the functionality needed for the Taxonomy to meet the needs of I&R staff. This functionality includes incorporating the complete field structure of a Taxonomy record (including definitions, use references, see also references and related concepts), the ability to search and display Taxonomy records in a variety of ways, and the ability to customize the Taxonomy to meet internal needs.[3]

## Standard 10: Content Management and Indexing

The I&R service ensures through training, database management procedures and supervision that resource specialists organize information about organizations into database records that accurately and concisely reflect the agency, its locations and its services/programs; index the services provided by each organization using the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services in accordance with recognized and consistently applied practices; and assign other search keys in a way that accurately reflects the conditions under which services are available.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. The I&R service uses software that supports the Resource Database standards.

2. The I&R service ensures that there are an adequate number of resource specialists to properly maintain the resource database in accordance with local inclusion/exclusion criteria and the AIRS Standards.

3. The I&R service ensures through training and supervision that resource specialists understand the human service delivery system including the sectors it comprises; the differences between the public and private sectors; how government, nonprofit and for-profit organizations are organized and funded; the major types of service providers in their community; the broad range of programs and services they provide; and how these organizations and the sectors they represent relate to one another and the people they serve.

4. The I&R service develops and uses a style guide that establishes rules for structuring, writing and indexing resource database records; and ensures that information within database records is clear, concise, consistent, relevant and user friendly.

[3] The AIRS Taxonomy Committee has developed a guide that details the preferred criteria for the operation of the Taxonomy within I&R database software. It is available in the Library section of the **www.211taxonomy.org** website.

**5.** Resource specialists develop clear rules for structuring organization entries into agency, site and service components (or other components permitted by the software) and follow the rules consistently. When dealing with complex or multi-site agencies, they correctly identify the principle unit of the agency and configure the entry or series of entries to accurately reflect the structure of the organization.

**6.** Resource specialists follow the organization’s documented practices when structuring agency, program and site names. There are clear rules for government agencies, agencies whose names begin the “The” or “A”, and other specifics, and these internal rules are followed.

**7.** Resource specialists identify and accurately enter all known AKA (also known as) names for agencies, sites and programs.

**8.** Resource specialists use program names and service group names properly.

**9.** Resource specialists ensure that address information is entered consistently to facilitate geographic location searches.

**10.** Resource specialists prepare well-written, concise narrative descriptions that reflect the format and writing style defined in the I&R service’s style guide. Narrative descriptions:

- ✓ Encompass all relevant services provided by the organization.
- ✓ Support Taxonomy (and other indexing) decisions, i.e., all services and service conditions that are indexed are also described.
- ✓ Clearly and correctly distinguish primary and secondary services and describe the relationship between them.
- ✓ Clearly and correctly distinguish eligibility criteria for services and target populations served.
- ✓ Correctly distinguish between the area in which the agency is located and the area the agency serves, and accurately reflect the geographic area served.
- ✓ Accurately reflect other required information about the agency, its locations and its services.
- ✓ Avoid repeating phone numbers and other numerical data that have their own structured fields.

**11.** Resource specialists develop rules for indexing database records using the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services, and consistently apply the rules when indexing. They:

- ✓ Index all relevant services.
- ✓ Choose Taxonomy terms within their customized list that accurately reflect the type of service.
- ✓ Choose Taxonomy terms within their customized list that accurately reflect targets for service, when applicable.

- ✓ Use target terms to modify service terms, not as stand alone concepts representing a service.
- ✓ Consistently use the same Taxonomy terms to index the same services and the same target populations.
- ✓ Avoid using terms from multiple levels on the same Taxonomy branch.
- ✓ Avoid "double indexing", i.e., avoid using multiple service terms within the Taxonomy, wherever they are located in the hierarchy, to index the same service offered by a particular agency.
- ✓ Only index primary services.
- ✓ Avoid indexing secondary, ancillary, phantom and indirect services.

**12.** Resource specialists analyze the needs of their community, develop customized filtering capabilities that reflect those needs, establish rules for organizing database records using search keys (such as geographic area served, age, gender and languages) that are used for filtering purposes, and consistently apply the rules when entering database information. They:

- ✓ Understand the structure of geographic search options within their software and accurately reflect the service area for particular services using the software's geographic system.
- ✓ Choose and consistently use appropriate options for key fields (e.g., legal status, age, gender, languages) that accurately reflect the organization and the conditions under which services are available.

**13.** Resource specialists consistently use data fields the same way. For example, the service description and eligibility requirements/exclusions are always found in the same place.

**14.** Resource specialists thoroughly proofread their work and eliminate spelling and grammatical errors.

## Standard 11: Database Search Methods

Information in the resource database is accessible in ways that support the I&R process including search and retrieval by organization, site and program name and by the type of service available. It is possible to narrow service searches by target population, geographic area served, proximity to the inquirer's location and other filters such as age, gender or languages that are relevant in a particular community.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** Information in the resource database is retrievable by the following:

- ✓ Organization, site and program name and related AKAs;
- ✓ Services provided (using Taxonomy service terms including use references and see also references);

- ✓ Target population served, where applicable;
- ✓ Area served.

**2.** The I&R service has considered the types of other filters that may be relevant in their community and permits searches using those parameters, e.g., age, gender, languages.

**Standard 12: Database Maintenance**

The I&R service has procedures to ensure that information in the resource database is accurate and complete. At a minimum are an annual survey of all organizations in the database and interim updates of records throughout the year as new information becomes available.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** In order to collect information/data elements uniformly across organizations, the I&R service develops and uses a standardized profile (“survey”) for new organizations to be included in the resource database.

**2.** The I&R service has a documented process for updating the resource database either annually or on a continuing basis throughout the year that involves multiple attempts to achieve a 100% update rate within a 12-month cycle. There is a mechanism for tracking the response rate and a way of evaluating the success of the methods used (e.g., mail/electronic survey, fax, telephone, site visits, follow-up correspondence). Information that cannot be verified is considered for removal from the database. The I&R service is able to generate a report that lists resource records according to date.

**3.** Documented procedures are in place for integrating interim information changes (i.e., changes that occur between the annual updates).

**4.** Documented procedures are in place for identifying new resources, acquiring required information about them and, upon inclusion in the database, verification by the organization.

**5.** Resource specialists acquire the information they need to develop new database records or update current ones. They:

- ✓ Conduct an evaluation to determine whether new organizations meet established inclusion criteria, correctly apply the criteria in selecting resources to be included, and follow established notification procedures when an organization that has requested inclusion does not meet the criteria.

- ✓ Appropriately use material submitted by the organization or gathered elsewhere (e.g., website, questionnaire, social media scans, pamphlets, newspaper articles, telephone directories) to develop an understanding of the resource, its locations and its services/programs; document source material that is not in printed form; and verify all information with the organization before incorporating it into an entry.

- ✓ When an interview is required, identify the appropriate contact person in each organization, ask clarifying questions in a concise manner, document the key answers and are courteous and professional throughout the call.

**6.** Update verification procedures to ensure accuracy include the name of the individual authorizing the update and the date of authorization. Changes and additions submitted by staff in the organization being surveyed or by I&R specialists reporting a change identified during original contacts, follow-up contacts or customer satisfaction/quality assurance surveys are reviewed by a resource specialist prior to posting. Update records are retained until a more recent version is received.

**7.** Organizations that do not respond after multiple attempts but cannot be deleted because they offer critical services, are updated via alternative methods (phone, website, or site visits). Provider “sign-off” verifying the final update is not required. However, documentation on how the update was obtained and the reason for the decision not to delete the record are required. If updated by telephone, the name of the person who confirmed the information and the date are recorded. If by Web, information that the update was verified via the Web and the date are included as documentation. If by site visit, the names of the people visited and the date are recorded. Once the I&R service is satisfied that it has obtained the best information possible, and has documented how and when the update was performed as well as the reason for the decision not to delete the record, it is permissible to mark the agency as having had its annual review.

**8.** The resource department provides feedback to staff regarding changes they have made in the database as a result of information staff have supplied.

**9.** The update form or the accompanying cover letter has a statement that the I&R service reserves the right to edit information for brevity, clarity and content; and to publish the information in a variety of media, subject to confidentiality issues.

## REPORTS AND MEASURES

The delivery of I&R services generates valuable information about the problems/needs of a community and the availability of resources to meet those needs. The Reports and Measures standards describe requirements for the collection of inquirer data, the analysis of the data and its dissemination within the community.

### Standard 13: Inquirer Data Collection

The I&R service establishes and uses a secure, computerized system for collecting and organizing inquirer data that facilitates appropriate referrals and provides a basis for describing requests for service and unmet needs, identifying service gaps and overlaps, assisting with needs assessments, supporting the development of products, identifying issues for staff training and facilitating the expansion of the resource database. Inquirer data includes information gathered during follow-up and customer satisfaction/quality assurance calls as well as data acquired during the original contact. The primary goal of data collection is to garner enough information about inquirers to help them address and/or resolve their problems. Inquirer data is always made available in aggregate form to protect the confidentiality of individual inquirers.

***Quality Indicators***

**1**. The I&R service maintains documentation on all inquiries, has a defined set of inquirer data elements that are used for reporting purposes and recognizes that inquirers have the right to withhold information.

**2.** Data collected for I&R service analysis and reporting purposes are based on I&R agency policy and local, state/provincial and/or national requirements.

**3.** Inquirer data collection and reporting activities facilitate the analyses needed to support:

- ✓ The human service needs of inquirers.
- ✓ Community needs assessment.
- ✓ Community planning.
- ✓ Allocation of funding.
- ✓ Research.

**4.** The data collected provide enough information about inquirer needs to identify:

- ✓ Service requests.
- ✓ Met and unmet needs (gathered through the original contact, follow-up and customer satisfaction/quality assurance surveys).
- ✓ Trends in community service provision and/or gaps in service.

- ✓ Demographic data.
- ✓ Profiles of inquirers served (aggregate data only).

**5.** Data collected for reporting purposes may include:

- ✓ Total number of incoming contacts/inquiries by phone (incoming calls) recorded by the phone system and answered by the I&R specialist. These can be transaction calls (calls in which problems are addressed and for each problem, the type of service provided by the specialist: information, assessment and referral, advocacy, crisis intervention); or non-transaction calls (calls answered by the I&R specialist that are hang-ups, wrong numbers, incoming administrative or personal calls or other situations where there is no productive conversation between the I&R specialist and the inquirer and no assistance provided).

- ✓ Total number of I&R contacts/inquiries from calls and other sources (generally recorded in the I&R software) in which inquirer problems or needs are addressed. Included are:

  - Transaction calls.
  - Face-to-face contacts (walk-ins or I&R interactions in other settings such as community facilities).
  - Email contacts.
  - Voicemail contact responses.
  - Instant message (IM) contacts.
  - Text/SMS messaging contacts.
  - Online chat contacts.
  - Video relay/chat contacts.
  - Regular mail contacts.

- ✓ The total number and types of problems/needs presented by inquirers. Some organizations also distinguish the number of individuals represented within each inquiry and the problems/needs presented by each.

- ✓ Geographic and demographic profiles of inquirers (i.e., who is calling and where they are calling from).

- ✓ The organizations discussed during the course of an inquiry or to which referrals were made.

**6.** The I&R service may also collect information about other types of I&R activities, in addition to I&R inquiries, but those figures should not be added to the contact/inquiry total. Included are:

- ✓ Website visitor activity (e.g., total visits, unique visitors, individual page visits).
- ✓ People accessing recorded information.
- ✓ Social media postings.

- ✓ Outreach presentations.
- ✓ Brochures and/or other publications distributed.
- ✓ Outgoing advocacy calls.
- ✓ Outgoing customer satisfaction/quality assurance calls.
- ✓ Outgoing follow-up calls.
- ✓ Outgoing calls to verify resource information.
- ✓ Community problems/needs reporting.

## Standard 14: Inquirer Data Analysis and Reporting

The I&R service has a reporting tool and uses inquirer data and/or data from the resource database to support community planning activities (or planning at other levels).

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service creates reports that display aggregated inquiry information in ways that are useful to themselves and community partners.

**2.** The reports include the following:

- ✓ Total number of inquiries.
- ✓ Total number and types of problems/needs presented by inquirers.
- ✓ The number and/or percentage of inquiries by call type including:
  - Assessment and referral.
  - Information.
  - Crisis intervention.
  - Advocacy.
- ✓ Disposition of the inquiry. Dispositions for assessment and referral inquiries are:
  - Met needs, i.e., services are available and referral(s) are provided or assistance without referrals is made available.
  - Unmet needs, i.e., situations where no services are available. A pattern of individual unmet needs may lead to identification of service gaps at the service delivery system level.

  Dispositions for information inquiries are:
  - Met needs, i.e., information is made available (assistance without referrals).
  - Unmet needs, i.e., information cannot be located and provided.
- ✓ The organizations discussed during the course of an inquiry or to which referrals were made.
- ✓ Follow-up results.
- ✓ Trends in community service provision/gaps in service.
- ✓ Geographic and other demographic information about inquirers in aggregate form (i.e., who people are and where they are calling from).
- ✓ Cross tabulations of types of problems/needs by geographic location and/or geographic location and the problems/needs within them.

## COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

An I&R service must work in a collaborative fashion with other I&R services at local, regional, state/provincial and national levels while also participating in the broader service delivery system in their community. The Cooperative Relationships standards focus on the responsibilities of the I&R service to establish and maintain meaningful cooperative relationships at all relevant levels.

### Standard 15: Cooperative Relationships Within the I&R System

In communities that have comprehensive and specialized I&R providers, the I&R service develops cooperative and respectful working relationships to build a coordinated I&R system that ensures broad access to information and referral services, maximizes the utilization of existing I&R resources, avoids duplication of effort and encourages seamless access to community resource information. I&R services with broader geographic reach (e.g., statewide, province-wide, regional or national level programs) strive to develop similar working relationships within the area they serve.

***Quality Indicators***

**1.** The I&R service participates in ongoing cooperative program planning and development activities that take into consideration community needs, existing resources and the activities of other I&R services. Each I&R service:

- ✓ Participates in efforts to identify community I&R needs.
- ✓ Maintains current information about other I&R services and their activities.
- ✓ Develops priorities for I&R program development.
- ✓ Participates in existing cooperative I&R efforts.
- ✓ Becomes a catalyst for new cooperative service arrangements.
- ✓ Participates in decision making that addresses community-wide I&R issues.

**2.** The I&R service encourages and participates in cooperative planning, implementation of shared policies and advocacy for sustained funding for I&R.

**3.** The I&R service coordinates its service delivery to avoid duplication of effort, encourage service integration and ensure that information and referral is broadly available to all inquirers.

- ✓ Comprehensive and specialized I&R services develop and define their working relationships and document them in written form. At a minimum, I&R services have written agreements, where applicable, with the local comprehensive I&R service, the child care resource and referral agency, the aging I&R/A agency, aging and disability resource centers (ADRCs), the military family service/support center, the crisis intervention service,

911 and 311 services, agencies that provide for volunteer and donation management and other organizations with clearinghouse functions.
- ✓ The I&R service encourages cooperative service arrangements such as after-hours coverage, linked telephone systems and linked websites.
- ✓ The I&R service explores innovative methods of delivering I&R services.

**4.** The I&R service participates in database collaboratives or other data partnerships as a means of avoiding duplication of database maintenance activities and achieving broader and more in depth coverage of different types of community resources. When an I&R service has an agreement with organizations using its data, it includes conditions, e.g., a limited use clause specifying a time limit on the use of data, a statement that data cannot be repurposed without permission and a description of the updating responsibilities of all parties and associated time frames.

**5.** The I&R service works cooperatively to identify changing community needs and to respond to those needs in a timely and appropriate fashion. Cooperation is regular and frequent to ensure that there is an immediate and effective response to:

- ✓ Sudden changes in community conditions (e.g., layoffs in a particular industry or a community-wide disaster) that may require special outreach efforts or other forms of collaborative response.
- ✓ Changes in legislation.
- ✓ New information relative to the area served that needs to be incorporated.

**6.** The I&R service participates in community-wide data collection, analysis and reporting activities. A comprehensive I&R service, for example, can combine its inquirer data with that collected by specialized I&R programs to provide a more comprehensive picture of service requests throughout the system; or a comprehensive, specialized or 2-1-1 service may contribute its data for inclusion in a statewide/province-wide data report.

**7.** The I&R service strives to maximize the resources available to the I&R system as a whole by coordinating supportive functions such as public relations, marketing and staff training; and by implementing cooperative administrative procedures where possible.

**8.** The I&R service communicates with other I&R services concerning promotional, marketing or communication efforts that might affect other I&R services either within the same media market or adjoining media markets if there is a reasonable assumption that the public might inadvertently be confused.

### Standard 16: Cooperative Relationships With Service Providers

The I&R service develops cooperative working relationships with local human service providers (e.g., food pantries and local homeless shelters) and larger service systems (e.g., those serving populations with mental health and substance abuse issues) to build an integrated service delivery system that ensures broad access to community services, maximizes the use of existing resources and facilitates the ability of people who need services to easily find the most appropriate provider. I&R services with broader geographic reach (e.g., statewide, province-wide, regional or national level programs) strive to develop similar working relationships within the area they serve.

***Quality Indicators***

1. The I&R service explores opportunities for joint service delivery with service providers, e.g., participation in case management collaboratives.

2. The I&R service works cooperatively with service providers to address issues that have a critical impact on the community as a whole such as disaster relief and recovery, homelessness, health care service delivery and one-stop co-located human services.

3. The I&R service encourages collaborating service providers to participate in community-wide data collection, analysis and reporting activities.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS[4]

The Disaster Preparedness standards describe the requirements an I&R service must meet in order to connect people to critical resources in times of disaster. The I&R service is prepared to assess and provide referrals for inquirers who are experiencing a crisis due to a disaster of natural or human origin, or who want to offer assistance and contact the I&R service for a means to do so. Preparation includes development of an emergency operations and business contingency plan that enables the I&R service to continue to provide services if its building is damaged or destroyed; and to support its ability to effectively accumulate, validate and disseminate accurate disaster-related information, provide information and referral assistance for individuals impacted by a disaster and provide community reports regarding inquirer needs and referrals.

[4] "Disaster" is defined as a large-scale emergency that disrupts the normal functioning of a community.

## Standard 17: Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan

The I&R service has a written disaster plan that specifically addresses incidents common to the area, but one that also prepares for emergencies in general. The plan has two components:

a) An emergency operations component that defines what constitutes a disaster as well as the organization's disaster response expectations, both internally and from the perspective of external stakeholders; and describes the steps the organization needs to take to meet the needs of the community in the aftermath of an event.

b) A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) component that references emergency preparedness and mitigation activities such as structural alterations and changes in business operations; and delineates the steps to be taken before, during and after an emergency to prevent or minimize interruptions in business operations and ensure long-term recovery.

Some organizations have two separate plans to meet this requirement.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has policies and procedures to ensure that the organization's mission-essential functions are continued in the event that the area in which the program is located is threatened or incapacitated and relocation of these functions is required. Included are policies and procedures that relate to:

- ✓ Personnel coordination:
    - Designation of key staff.
    - Delegations of authority.
    - Order of succession.
    - Notification of personnel during duty and non-duty hours.
- ✓ Designation of mission-essential functions.
- ✓ Designation of alternative facilities.
- ✓ Continuity of communications among staff before, during and after a disaster.
- ✓ Securing vital records and databases.
- ✓ Plans for reconstitution and termination of the plan.

**2.** The I&R service has written procedures that address specific types of emergencies including power outages, fires, medical emergencies, bomb threats, radiological threats, workplace violence and other incidents that may require different forms of response, e.g., duck, cover and hold during an earthquake or sheltering in place during a radiological emergency. Procedures for contacting emergency personnel are included.

**3.** The I&R service has written procedures for emergency evacuation of the facility following a disaster that impacts the immediate area surrounding the facility and potentially threatens staff safety. The evacuation procedure designates exits, specifies an assembly area, includes provisions for ensuring that everyone has left the building, provides for damage assessment and includes instructions for shutting off gas, electricity and water when necessary. Special arrangements for helping staff or visitors with a disability exit the building are also addressed.

4. The I&R service develops and documents a designated leadership description that outlines the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff before, during and in the aftermath of an incident.

5. The I&R service has procedures for maintaining service delivery (i.e., answering inquiries and continuing to update community resources) during and after an emergency including relocation or alternative modes of service delivery, e.g., through an MOU with an I&R service outside the area. If the I&R service plans to relocate in the event of loss of facilities, it has identified alternative sites.

6. The I&R service maintains critical contact and infrastructure information (e.g., telephone service provider and building management).

7. The I&R service ensures that its facility is capable of handling and/or adapting to increased needs during a disaster, particularly in situations where a large number of volunteers will be working at the facility. Areas of concern include 24-hour environmental controls, cleanliness and sanitation, parking and security, and the ability to meet enhanced building codes in areas with significant earthquake, tornado or hurricane hazards.

8. The I&R service has periodic drills, at a minimum annually, that allow staff to practice emergency procedures outlined in the plan.

9. The I&R service supports and encourages all staff to develop emergency plans for their own homes and families that allow them to better fulfill their agency roles in an emergency, secure in the knowledge that their families are properly prepared.

## Standard 18: Formal Relationships with Government and Private Sector Emergency Operations and Relief Agencies

The I&R service participates in ongoing cooperative disaster response planning in the community and establishes relationships, as necessary, to become recognized as an integral part of the community's emergency preparedness and response network.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service understands the command and control structure within their jurisdiction (i.e., the responsibilities and authority of officials at city, county, state/provincial and federal levels) and their own role and that of other organizations in the response, relief and recovery phases of a disaster. Obtaining NIMS (National Incident Management System) certification for management staff might be a good way to acquire competency in this area.

**2.** The I&R service has formal agreements with appropriate government and private sector emergency operations and relief agencies such as local offices of emergency services, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) and the Red Cross. The agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

**3.** The I&R service actively participates in community meetings that address plans for disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, relief and recovery.

## <u>Standard 19: Disaster Resources</u>

The I&R service develops, maintains and/or uses an accurate, up-to-date computerized resource database that contains information about available community resources that provide services in times of disaster. Database records include descriptions of the services organizations provide and the conditions under which services are available; and are indexed and accessed using the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service's resource database includes information about permanent local, state/provincial and federal disaster-related resources, i.e., organizations with a formal role in emergency response, a clearly defined disaster mission and/or a history of providing services during previous incidents.

**2.** The I&R service adds information about organizations that have no formal role in emergency response but emerge in the context of a particular disaster, specific relief and recovery services that come to life in response to the specific needs of the community, and information about specific services (and their locations) offered by organizations with a permanent record in the database (such as Red Cross Service Centers). The I&R service also monitors social media and mass media to keep abreast of information about new resources and changing situations.

**3.** The I&R service enables staff from other agencies to use the resource database to provide service delivery or resource database maintenance support by using the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services to index disaster-related services. Additional classification structures such as keywords may supplement the Taxonomy, but must be connected to the Taxonomy rather than functioning as independent indexing systems.

**4.** The I&R service updates disaster resources annually, immediately prior to an anticipated disaster and throughout the response, relief and recovery periods.

**5.** During a disaster, the I&R service verifies all information before sharing it with others. A streamlined verification process must still provide a sufficient level of data validation to ensure accuracy.

**6.** The I&R service disseminates disaster-related information per pre-existing agreements with other organizations in the community.

## Standard 20:  Disaster-Related I&R Service Delivery

The I&R service provides information and referral services to the community during (when appropriate) and following a disaster or other emergency. This service may be provided under circumstances that are more challenging and stressful than normal operations; and includes assessing the needs of the inquirer, evaluating appropriate resources, indicating organizations capable of meeting those needs, helping inquirers for whom services are unavailable by locating alternative resources and actively participating in linking inquirers to needed services or volunteer opportunities.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service ensures adequate staff to meet potential increases in inquirer needs.

**2.** The I&R service has mutual assistance agreements with other I&R services that include provisions for relocation of staff and/or redirection of calls.

**3.** The I&R service has a written protocol for staff who are assigned to provide information and referral at local assistance centers (LACs) or other off-site locations.

**4.** I&R specialists have the skills to respond effectively to people in crisis, work cooperatively with other organizations, remain flexible in a rapidly changing environment, are willing to work under adverse conditions (e.g., long hours, uncomfortable surroundings), are aware of their own stress level and coping mechanisms, respond appropriately in face-to-face communications and work within the boundaries of their I&R role.

**5.** I&R specialists understand the government emergency response service delivery system, the types of services people typically need following a disaster, the organizations that generally provide them, the types of organizations that may be closed or otherwise unable to deliver services due to the emergency (e.g., government offices, the courts), atypical services people may need to access (e.g., open hardware stores, functioning ATM machines), and the structure and contents of the disaster database and/or other approved sources of disaster-related information.

**6.** The I&R service has a written plan for providing disaster stress debriefing for all staff.

## Standard 21: Disaster-Related Inquirer Data Collection/Reports

The I&R service tracks inquirer requests for service and referrals, collects demographic information from inquirers and is prepared to produce reports regarding requests for disaster-related services and referral activity.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service collects and organizes inquirer data that facilitates appropriate referrals and provides a basis for describing requests for disaster-related services and identifying gaps and overlaps in service.

**2.** The I&R service produces timely reports to the community regarding disaster-related referrals, access to services, service availability and unmet needs.

**3.** Following all emergencies that necessitate implementation of the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness standards, the I&R service produces an after action report that documents the special activities of the agency with a focus on what worked well and what needs to be improved through revisions of the agency's disaster plan and/or additional training for staff.

## Standard 22: Disaster-Related Technology Requirements

The I&R service has technology in place that facilitates the ability of the organization to maintain service delivery during times of disaster or a localized emergency.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service has regular and emergency methods of electronic communication between staff and management for use internally during calls, for after hours contacts and when necessary for pre and post disaster communication via email, instant messaging, text/SMS messaging, satellite phones or mobile devices.

**2.** The I&R service has taken the necessary steps to establish a relationship with their telephone service provider, Internet Service Provider (ISP), Web service hosting vendor and I&R software vendor to ensure that the organization is given high priority for continued service in times of disaster.

**3.** The I&R service has the ability to reroute calls to another location (e.g., to cell phones, to I&R specialists answering calls from their homes, or to another local agency or an I&R service out of the region with which the I&R service has an MOU) if their own business site or the Internet is not accessible.

**4.** The I&R service has the ability to access the resource database (e.g., via the Internet, a stand-alone single user copy of the database on a laptop, a directory or other print version) if their own business site is not accessible.

**5.** The I&R service has conducted an assessment of its facility and developed a risk management plan that identifies equipment, connections and other resources that may be vulnerable under emergency conditions and has taken steps to mitigate the situation, e.g., moved computers and telephones that are located on the floor to safer locations.

**6.** The I&R service has an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) on all critical systems for short-term recovery in the case of a power failure.

**7.** The I&R service has an emergency generator or other power back-up that allows them to continue operations on a longer term basis during a power failure. The I&R service has determined the length of time the back-up power supply will operate and has provided staff with information about the components of the organization's operations (e.g., which computers, telephones, etc.) it will power.

**8.** The I&R service provides an alternative way for staff to contact the agency in case of an emergency that makes the regular phone lines inaccessible.

**9.** The I&R service has back-up systems for their telephones (such as one or more analog lines, cell phones with charged and spare batteries or two-way battery operated radios) to ensure ongoing access in situations where there is no local electricity. Private Branch Exchange/Automatic Call Distribution systems (PBX/ACD systems) rely on a central computer that will fail when local electrical power to the system is cut off. High-capacity Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) and emergency power generators connected to the PBX/ACD telephone system can also meet this requirement.

**10.** The I&R service has the ability to reprogram its phone lines and data network remotely.

**11.** The I&R service has T1 lines from multiple central offices, where possible.

## Standard 23:  Disaster Training and Exercise

The I&R service trains staff on emergency operations and business expectations upon hiring and provides ongoing training at least annually thereafter. The I&R service actively participates in community disaster exercises to test the organization's emergency operations plan.

### *Quality Indicators*

**1.** The I&R service provides general training for staff that addresses the specific types of disasters common to the area; the organization's role and mission in times of disaster; the phases of disaster; federal, state/provincial and local response plans and resources; and other topics that will help prepare staff for an emergency and ensure that they understand their organization's commitments to the community/government.

**2.** The I&R service provides training on the organization's in-house disaster preparedness procedures and protocols for all staff.

**3.** The I&R service provides training for I&R staff that addresses the attitudes, skills and information they require to meet the needs of people in crisis during a disaster. The training helps participants understand how disasters affect individuals and communities and addresses the specific requirements of people with special needs, e.g., individuals with disabilities, language barriers, cultural differences or other relevant characteristics. It also prepares I&R staff for the likelihood of providing service delivery under altered and frequently adverse conditions that may include working longer hours than normal, off-site or under the direction of another organization.

**4.** The I&R services has a "volunteer surge" plan that outlines how training for volunteers will be handled so that volunteers can begin answering phones or processing resource requests as quickly as possible.

**5.** The I&R service provides training for resource specialists that addresses the types of pre-disaster resources that need to be included in the database and those that need to be added following the occurrence of an emergency; use of the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/211 LA County Taxonomy of Human Services as a classification structure; and procedures for the collection, validation, maintenance and dissemination of disaster-related information.

**6.** The I&R service actively participates in community disaster exercises, and also monitors statewide/province-wide, multi-state/multi-province and/or national disaster exercises as appropriate.

# ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Organizational Effectiveness standards describe the governance and administrative structure an I&R service needs in order to carry out its mission. Included are establishing itself as a legal entity, developing policies and procedures that guide the organization, developing an organizational code of ethics, establishing sound fiscal practices, providing a conducive physical environment, managing personnel, providing for staff training, increasing public awareness regarding the availability of information and referral services and their value to the community, and providing for ongoing program evaluation and quality assurance.

## Standard 24: Governance

The auspices under which the I&R service operates ensures the achievement of the agency mission and I&R goals.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. **Governing Body:** The I&R service has (or is part of an organization that has) a governing body (e.g., Board of Directors) that is constituted according to the laws of its state or province, adequately represents the diverse interests of the community and oversees implementation of program goals and objectives to ensure quality of service. If the nature of the organization operating the I&R service is such that it does not have a community-based Board of Directors or if that Board is remote from the oversight of the I&R service, then it must have an advisory committee of local stakeholders to provide information about community needs and issues, recommendations regarding program planning and development activities and other forms of support that help to ensure that the agency maintains effective connections with the people it serves. The governing body ensures the sustainability of a quality I&R service and, at a minimum:

   - ✓ Ensures that the I&R service has an adequate number of staff.
   - ✓ Assists in procuring financial and technical assistance to sustain the I&R service.
   - ✓ Is responsible for contracting, adopting an annual budget, maintaining financial records and providing an annual audit by an independent certified public accountant.
   - ✓ Promotes the I&R system throughout the community ensuring appropriate publicity, public relations and outreach.
   - ✓ Meets at least quarterly as a general body.
   - ✓ Maintains minutes of all official proceedings that any interested party can inspect.
   - ✓ Promotes accountability, transparency and business continuity of the I&R operation.

2. **Mission Statement:** The organization/I&R service has a Mission Statement that is compatible with the purpose and philosophy of I&R.

3. **Organizational Policies:** The organization/I&R service has formally adopted, regularly reviewed, dated and formatted written policies that clearly articulate the general principles by which the I&R service is managed. Organizational policies are available to all employees.

4. **Public Policy:** The organization/I&R service participates in public policy activities within its own community and in response to requests from state/provincial and national I&R organizations that seek to further the overall goals of the I&R movement.

5. **System Advocacy**: The I&R service creates reports that can be used for system advocacy, i.e., support for changes in community conditions, structures or institutions when modifications in the service delivery system are required to ensure the adequate availability of essential community services. System advocacy mechanisms include:

   - ✓ Letter writing campaigns.
   - ✓ Visits to political representatives.
   - ✓ Testimony at public hearings.
   - ✓ Mobilizing concerned members of the public.
   - ✓ Working through coalitions or associations to advance a cause.
   - ✓ Holding press conferences.
   - ✓ Writing and disseminating issue-oriented social media content.
   - ✓ Writing articles or letters to local newspapers.
   - ✓ Offering interviews to local radio and television stations.
   - ✓ Offering services as a knowledgeable public speaker.

6. **Complaints Process:** The organization/I&R service has a formal process for registering and resolving complaints from inquirers, staff members and the community.

7. **Code of Ethics:** The organization/I&R service has a Code of Ethics that establishes fundamental values and professional standards of conduct for staff in their relationships with their colleagues, their employers, the people they serve, the human service professionals with whom they interact and the community as a whole. The Code of Ethics is approved by the governing body of the organization and included in written policies that all staff receive, understand and agree to follow.

8. **Nondiscrimination Statement:** The organization/I&R service has a statement approved by the organization's governing body prohibiting discrimination in all of its forms and documenting its intention to comply with all laws, orders and regulations addressing this issue.

9. **Insurance Coverage:** The organization/I&R service has sufficient insurance coverage for personal and property liability that protects employees and volunteers.

10. **Finance:** Financing is sufficient to enable the I&R service to provide adequate service and maintain these standards.

    - ✓ The I&R service operates on a sound financial basis and exercises appropriate financial controls according to acceptable accounting practices and any other applicable standards.
    - ✓ The administrator, with the support of the Board and/or advisory committee, maintains proper financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, draws up an annual budget, projects future needs, explores and encourages financial development and support for continuance of the program, and participates in saving resources to avoid duplication and to control costs.

11. **Facilities:** The I&R service provides adequate, accessible space and equipment, including sufficient space to ensure confidential interviewing, to ensure that staff can effectively perform their duties.

## Standard 25: Technology

The I&R service uses technology that improves access to information and enhances its ability to serve inquirers efficiently and effectively. The main role of technology is to enhance and strengthen information sharing while accommodating people's communication preferences. "Technology" includes telephone systems, telecommunications, computer systems and applications, instant messaging (IM), text/SMS messaging, online chat, video relay/chat, social media I&R software platforms, electronic directories and self-service mechanisms such as automated attendants/interactive voice response systems, video relay services, community kiosks and searchable I&R databases on the Internet.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. The I&R service evaluates new methods of access and technical advances and the pros and cons of particular pieces of technology prior to implementation to ensure that access to information and assistance for inquirers is enhanced.

2. The I&R service reviews how different demographic groups in the community access information and creates technology goals for the organization that reflect changing inquirer needs.

3. If the I&R service uses technology that allows for the collection of identifying information about an inquirer without his or her explicit permission, it has policies and procedures that protect the inquirer's right to privacy and anonymity while preserving the I&R specialist's ability to provide for the individual's safety should personal identification become necessary.

4. The I&R service has backup policies and practices that safeguard critical data and systems. The policies include provisions for the storage, retrieval, use and ultimate disposition of all records; and address security arrangements for inquirer data, the resource database and critical operational records such as payroll, personnel, reports, legal documents and email. If the backup solution for records is cloud-based, the I&R service has more than one way of accessing the cloud in emergencies. If another type of archival system is used, backups are kept in a secure, off-site location where they will be protected from destruction or theft. As a final insurance for resource database records, the I&R service has a recent version of its resource data available either on an internal computer, a data storage device or in a printed format.

5. The I&R service conducts at least one annual exercise that tests data and system restoration protocols.

6. The I&R service has access to professional technical expertise to ensure that technology is appropriately maintained, and provisions are in place to ensure a priority response to any breakdowns in key infrastructure.

7. The I&R service ensures that the governing body has approved a plan to regularly update the technology of the organization based on the anticipated lifecycle of all systems that support effective service delivery.

## Standard 26: Personnel Administration

The I&R service provides a framework and mechanisms for program and personnel management and administration that guarantee the continuity and consistency required for effective service delivery.

### *Quality Indicators*

1. **Staff:** The I&R service recruits and hires service and administrative staff who are competent, ethical, qualified and sufficient in number to implement service policies. The I&R service strives to have employees and volunteers who reflect the community they serve.

2. **Organization Chart:** The I&R service has a current organization chart defining levels of authority. If the agency is part of a larger organization, it has a functional organization chart for the I&R service.