

Northwest Indiana Community Action

Inclusion Criteria for Information & Referral Database

Rational: To provide criteria and guidance in the development and maintenance of a comprehensive human services resource database to meet our community needs. To insure the most complete, accurate and up-to-date information available in an open and fair manner for the Information & Referral Specialists and for the callers they serve. To provide a written process for resolving local disputes regarding database content.

Impact: Information and Referral Department.

Northwest Indiana Community Action Corporation (NWICA) uses the “Alliance of Information & Referral Systems” definition of Human Services adopted for the field of I&R (October 14, 2000), which is as follows:

“Activities that help people to become more self-sufficient, sustain independence, strengthen family relationships, support personal and social development and ensure the well-being of individuals, families, groups and communities. Specific human services include ensuring that people have access to adequate food, shelter, clothing, and transportation; financial resources to meet their needs; consumer educations and decision support; criminal justice or legal services; education and environmental protection; both routinely and in times of disaster or other emergencies. Human services also facilitate the capabilities of people to care for children or other dependents; ensure that protective services are available to those who are vulnerable; provide for the support of older adults and people with disabilities; offer social, faith-based, and leisure time activities; provide for the cultural enrichment of the community; and ensure that people have the information they need to fully participate in community life.”

The NWICA resource file is to catalog community services, maintain accuracy of community information, and provide information to the public at large, and link people with needed services. Additionally, the NWICA file may be used to document services, identify gaps in service and to assist with related community needs assessment activities.

The following guidelines will be used to determining whether an agency or organization is eligible to be listed in NWICA's resource file.

Included:

1. City, county, state, or federal governments that operate health and human service programs in NWICA's six county service area.
2. Nonprofit organizations and community groups that provide direct and /or indirect health and human services to NWICA's service area residents predominantly on a sliding fee scale or do not charge fees for service, and meet IRS criteria for being tax exempt, tax deductible organization (501(c)3). Examples of service area include: health, welfare, support, recreation, education, advocacy, management assistance, media, public policy planning, research, gifts in kind, and volunteer recruitment.
3. Organizations located out of the NWICA service area only when services not available through local vendors.
4. Public and private educational facilities and/or schools providing special services to the public.
5. Libraries.
6. Churches, civic groups, social or fraternal that offer a health and human services for the community-at-large that is not restricted to their members.
7. Self-help support groups offered by a nonprofit agency that do not charge a fee or for which the fee is nominal and is meant to cover refreshments, for example.
8. Hotlines, help lines, information lines, or information and referral lines that provide information on health and human services that are accessible to NWICA's service area residents.
9. Hospitals, inpatient, and outpatient faculties in NWICA's service area providing health and human services to the public on a sliding scale, Medicare or Medicaid, and specialty hospitals outside of the county open to NWICA's service area residents.
10. For profit agencies or businesses offering equipment or services and accept Medicaid, food stamps, or provide a free or low-cost service not provided by any nonprofit or government agencies.
11. Agencies that provide referrals to licensed entities such as therapists, skilled nursing facilities, residential care facilities for the elderly/disabled (assisted living facilities, board and care facilities, etc.), in-home care agencies, childcare centers and in-home childcare.
12. For-profit counseling centers that offer sliding fees, pro bono or accept Medicaid payments.
13. Licensed childcare facilities that offer subsidized childcare (i.e. Head Start).
14. County-approved ambulance services in NWICA's service area.
15. For-profit housing for seniors and people with disabilities.

Excluded:

1. Actual locations of emergency (crisis) shelters in NWICA's service area.
2. Agencies that give information or provide public awareness that is only of a political nature.
3. Agencies or organizations that deny service on the basis of color, race, religion, gender, promote racism or bigotry.
4. Agencies that violate local, state, or federal laws or regulations.
5. Agencies or programs which offer a service to members only, such as churches and social clubs with the exception of hospitals.
6. Agencies that provide information primarily or only of a political or commercial nature.
7. Agencies that provide unlicensed services based out of the provider's home.
8. Agencies where standards of service quality are heavily regulated and for which there exists a governmental entity that adequately provides central referral for the service; for example, nursing facilities, therapists unless the information is provided by the state or licensing agency.
9. For-profit agencies that don't accept Medicaid payment or provide free or low-cost health or human services. Agencies that require a physician referral for service.

Where special circumstances exist which are not effectively addressed by the preceding guidelines, the organization in question will be reviewed, on an individual basis, by the I&R/211 Manager and the Director of Elderly Services and a determination made for inclusion or exclusion. NWICA reserves the right to refuse listing an agency or program if, in its sole opinion, such a listing is deemed inappropriate.

NWICA reserves the right to cancel a listing when an agency no longer meets the required criteria or when the agency does not provide updated information as requested.

Disclaimer:

NWICA does not guarantee client referrals to anyone in the database and provides only limited screening of clients for eligibility of services or programs.

No endorsement or lack of endorsement of any agency/program shall be construed from its inclusion in or omission from the NWICA I&R database.

Information collected by NWICA I&R for inclusion in its database, is provided voluntarily by the organizations that are listed. Staff makes only routine editorial revisions for consistency of style and format and does not evaluate the programs and services.

Any organization that has a service listed in the NWICA I&R database is prohibited from using that fact in any way to promote their service.

Appeal Process:

Organizations that want to appeal a decision regarding their inclusion or exclusion of information in the NWICA I&R database or consumers who wish to make a similar appeal regarding a potential resource will follow these guidelines;

- a. Verbally clarify program services in relations to this policy with the Director of Elderly.
- b. If a resolution is not accomplished by step (a), a written request providing rationale for appeal or concerns must be sent to the Executive Director of NWICA for final decision.