

Certification for Community Resource Specialists—Aging/Disabilities (CRS-A/D)

What is AIRS Certification?

The AIRS Certification Program awards professional credentials through the identification of specific competencies and related performance criteria, which describe the knowledge, skills, attitudes and work-related behaviors needed by I&R practitioners to successfully execute their duties.

Certification improves the professionalism of the field and the quality of service provided to the public. AIRS Certification benefits I&R specialists, the agencies where they work, and the communities they serve. Certification validates I&R skills and knowledge, provides a transferable qualification, and recognizes the professionalism of I&R practice.

Is there a Certification for I&R Specialists working in aging/disabilities?

AIRS offers a Community Resource Specialist—Aging/Disabilities (CRS-A/D) certification that is supported by both ADvancing States and USAging. Prior to January 1, 2019, this credential was known as Certified Information and Referral Specialist—Aging/Disabilities (CIRS-A/D). A new credential name was developed following an extensive consultative process with AIRS members and certification holders and is intended to raise the status of the profession among funders and stakeholders. This CRS-A/D credential is designed for practitioners who work directly with clients and caregivers within the aging and/or disabilities area. It includes the same basic range of skills and tasks as the comprehensive Community Resource Specialist certification while also acknowledging specialized experience and knowledge in aging and disability services.

Who can become AIRS Certified?

Candidates may apply to take the certification examination once they are eligible. Eligibility is based on I&R and equivalent experience combined with educational background. I&R practitioners are eligible for certification only for the work they actually perform and/or directly supervise and must be currently engaged in CRS-A/D work. A certification candidate does not have to be an individual member of AIRS or an employee of a member organization. However, AIRS members can apply for reduced rates as a benefit of membership. Visit www.airs.org/certification for further information on eligibility.



How do I apply for Certification?

Complete the [Certification Application Form](#) (printable and online applications are available). The application must be submitted directly to AIRS, along with payment and supporting documentation, at least 30 days prior to taking the exam. Proctored certification exams are offered year-round at sites across North America. Please refer to the website for [a complete list of test dates and locations](#) to find one near you. For a small additional fee (\$30), exams can also be taken at work or at home via computer with webcam through Examity, an online proctoring option. This allows for reduced travel and more flexibility in scheduling (to use this option, complete the certification application for remote online proctoring via Examity).

The basic cost of a Certification application is:

- \$95 for AIRS members (depending on your level of membership, you may qualify for additional discounts—see application form for details)
- \$250 for non-members

Fees for exam retakes and recertification are listed on the website.

The CRS-A/D exam is comprised of 100 four-part, multiple-choice questions. Candidates have two hours and 10 minutes to complete the exam. While exam questions are mainly scenario-based, it is recommended that all candidates review the most current versions of the [AIRS I&R Training Manual](#) and the [AIRS Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral](#). Additionally, both AIRS and ADvancing States offer online training courses through [AIRS Learn](#) and [ADvancing States IQ](#) (ADvancing

States' Learning Center). Examination study suggestions are also available on the AIRS website at www.airs.org/studysuggestions.

If you pass your certification exam, you will receive access to a digital badge and certificate from AIRS to recognize your achievement, and you may use CRS-A/D after your name.

How do I maintain my CRS-A/D Certification?

Certification is valid for 2 years from the time you pass the examination. You must apply for recertification and submit documentation that you have completed at least 10 hours of I&R training over that 2 year period, but you do not need to retake the exam unless you allow your certification to lapse. Your 10 hours of training may include a range of training options such as online training, conference workshops, and in-house training (CEUs may be accepted but are not required).

What are the benefits of certification?

The AIRS certification program provides a shared base of knowledge among all I&R professionals in the field. Certification adds professional recognition to the work of I&R specialists, and provides a transferable qualification. Many agencies require or encourage their I&R specialists to become CRS-A/D certified. Certification is important because it:

- Demonstrates knowledge, skill, and technical proficiency
- Enhances the quality of services
- Shows commitment to the profession
- Validates professional development
- Engenders respect outside the field
- Confirms progression, growth, and leadership



What roles do national partners play in supporting CRS-A/D Certification?

AIRS, ADvancing States, and USAging are long-time partners in supporting certification within the aging and disabilities sector of the I&R field. AIRS administers the Certification Program, so it is important that application materials and other documentation relating to individual CRS-A/D certification or recertification are submitted to AIRS. The National Information & Referral Support Center, administered by ADvancing States through a grant from the Administration for Community Living, provides training—including CRS-A/D exam preparation training—and technical assistance to aging and disability information and referral/assistance (I&R/A) programs and specialists. The Support Center’s training and educational webinars, along with online courses available through [ADvancing States IQ](#), provide opportunities for I&R/A specialists to prepare for and maintain CRS-A/D certification. For more information, visit [I&R/A Training](#). USAging partners to promote the aging and disability online training courses and the AIRS certification exam for I&R Specialists throughout the aging and disability service provider networks. USAging also administers two national I&R call centers which are funded by the Administration for Community Living and require CRS-A/D certification for I&R Specialists. USAging’s [Eldercare Locator](#) call center focuses on consumers seeking assistance across the spectrum of issues affecting older adults and their caregivers; and the [Disability Information and Assistance Line \(DIAL\)](#) focuses on assisting people with disabilities access COVID-19 vaccine and resources, and other community resources that support independent living.



The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS at www.airs.org) is a nonprofit professional membership association of Information & Referral (I&R) providers and a national partner of both ADvancing States and USAging. AIRS is responsible for national I&R standards and for the administration of a certification program for individual I&R/I&A practitioners and accreditation for I&R programs, along with training, networking and support.



ADvancing States (www.advancingstates.org) represents the nation’s 56 state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities and supports visionary state leadership, the advancement of state systems innovation and the articulation of national policies that support home and community-based services for older adults and individuals with disabilities. For over 30 years, ADvancing States has administered the National I&R Support Center to build capacity and promote continuing development of aging and disability information and referral services nationwide.



USAging (www.usaging.org) represents and supports the national network of Area Agencies on Aging and advocates for the Title VI Native American aging organizations that help older adults and people with disabilities live with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities.

