



2025

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Introduction

The Membership Survey is an annual survey designed to collect information about the member experience. It was open to the entire membership in November and December of 2025.

To increase participation, the survey was shortened to 27 questions (down from 67 in 2024). 316 people participated in the survey, and 294 completed it in its entirety.

Several demographic questions were asked to help understand the participants.

- 91% of participants inherit their membership from their organization
- 51% of participants work for a 211 or blended crisis/211
- 32% of participants work for an AAA or ADRC
- 56% of participants who inherit their membership from their organization know the membership level.
 - Of those, 39% were Platinum members.
- 40% of participants were operational, or frontline staff.

Demographics

Relationship with Inform USA

In past surveys, one of the first questions asked participants to identify their membership level. The results showed that many frontline staff did not know their organization's membership level, so this year the first question was adjusted to identify those who inherited their membership from their organization and those who are individual members.

- 89% of participants reported working for an organization that offers Community Navigation, and is a member of Inform USA
- 2% of participants reported working for an organization that offers Community Navigation, but pays for their own individual membership
- 2% of participants reported working for a company that provides services to Community Navigation organizations (i.e. technology provider)
- 4% of participants reported that they are not part of a member organization and pay for their own Individual Inform USA membership

- 4% selected 'Other', and the responses indicate that there is still some uncertainty and confusion about this. Many of the following items would fit into one of the categories above.
 - State Agency that has membership and certified staff
 - I'm not sure
 - I work for [agency]. We offer Information & Referral Services.
 - Volunteer and Pay for my own
 - I am a member
 - I work for an agency as a Certified Community Resource Specialist
 - Work for a community organization that offers community navigation (to seniors) and is a member of Inform Canada
 - My Organization does use AIRS/Inform USA for Certifications, not really sure how to answer this.
 - [agency]
 - I used to be, but dropped out now that im almost retired
 - [agency] and [agency]
 - Unsure
 - You work for a company that outsources Community Navigation services and that is a member of inform usa

Type of Organization

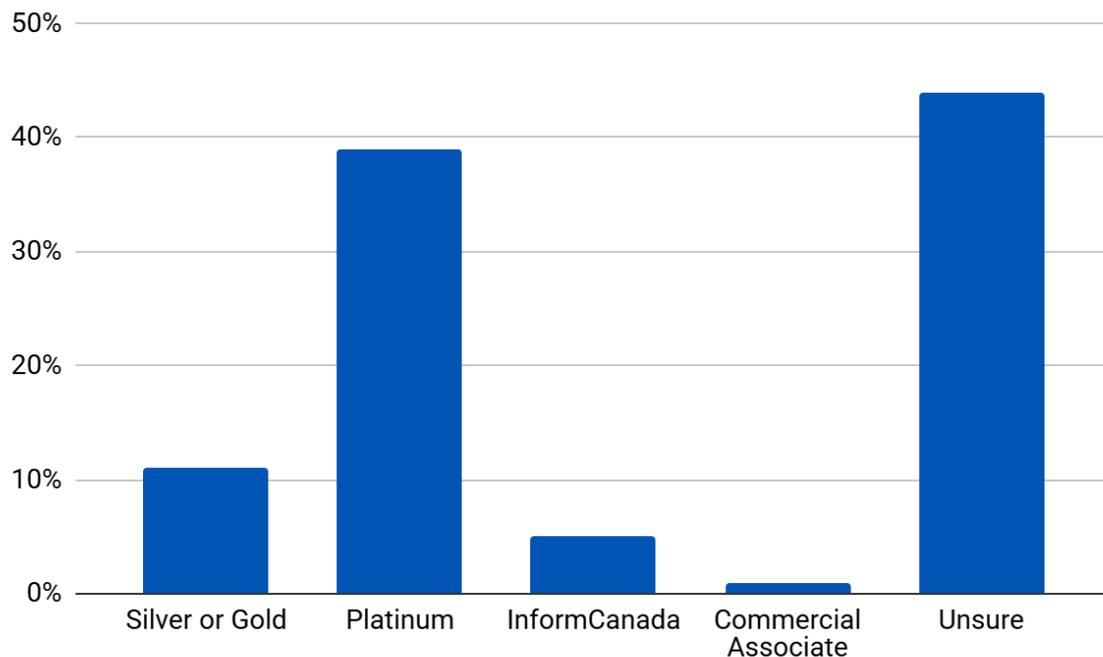
Participants were then asked to select the option that best matched their organization and/or Community Navigation focus. 340 participants answered the question.

- 45% selected 211
- 20% selected Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
- 12% selected Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- 6% selected Blended Crisis/211
- 3% selected United Way
- 3% selected Government Department or entity
- 4% selected Other. The following are the unedited comments.
 - 211/ADRC/Comprehensive Community Navigation/Government Entity
 - 211 and United Way
 - Specialized Community Navigation – Statewide Aging, Disabilities, Veterans, and Caregivers

- Center for independent living
- Specialized Community Navigation - Aging/Disabilities
- Not sure if I should have just chosen blended, but we are 211/988
- 211/ADRC
- Community Action Agency
- Non Profit Agency for Older Adults in Cumberland County, NC
- Specialized Community Navigation - seniors 50+
- Pediatric hospital (I was in disability services)
- 211s and aging and disability resource/ multiple AAAs

Participants who reported working for an organization that is a member of Inform USA were asked to indicate their current membership level. 340 participants answered the question.

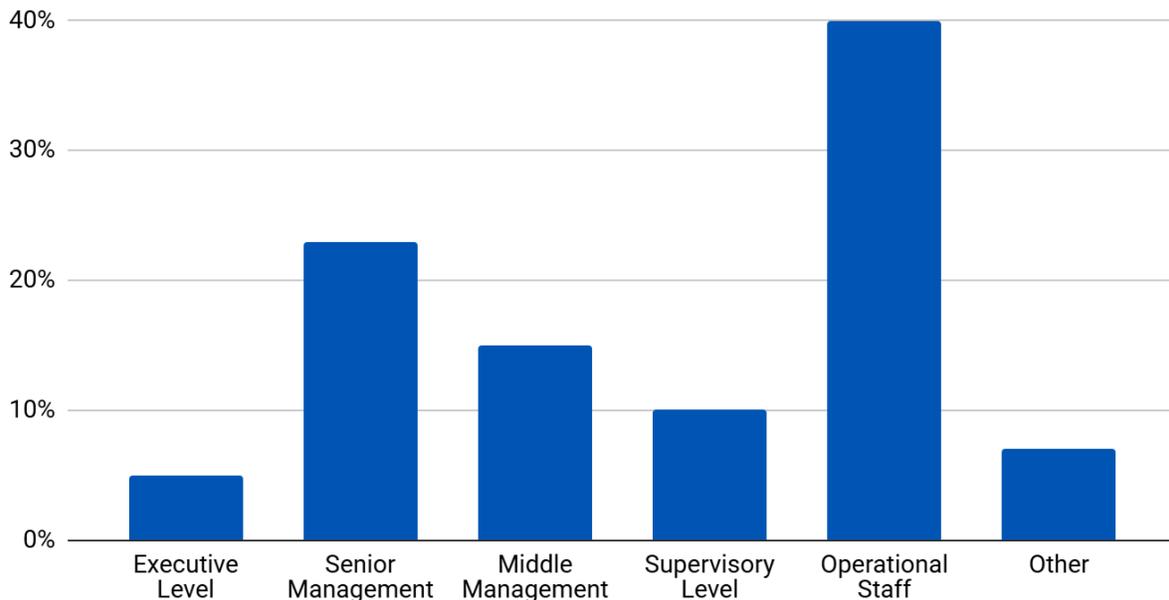
The responses again confirm that most participants do not know which membership level their organization holds.



Position

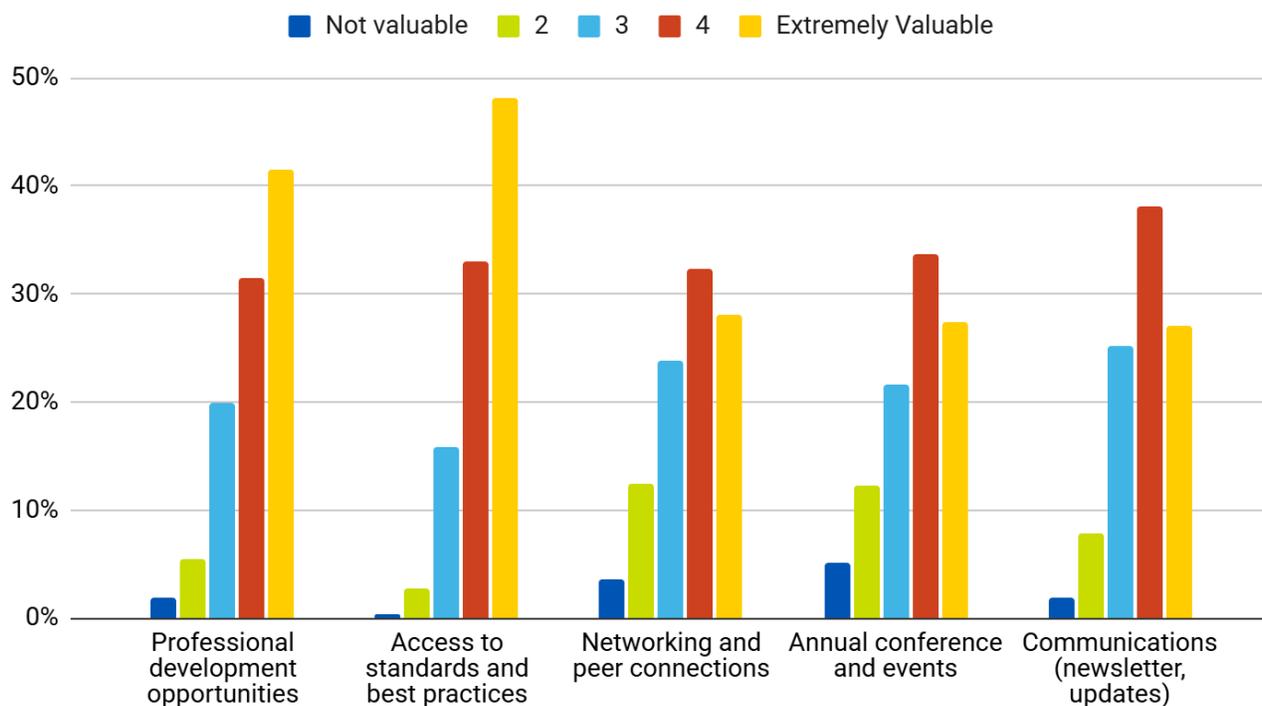
Finally, participants were asked to identify their position within their organization. 336 people answered the question.

- Executive Level (CEO, President, Executive Director, Founder) - 5%
- Senior Management (Directors, Senior Managers) - 23%
- Middle Management (Managers, Team Leads) - 15%
- Supervisory Level (Supervisors, Coordinators) - 10%
- Operational Staff (Community Resource Specialists, Database Curators, etc) - 40%
- Other (please specify) - 7%

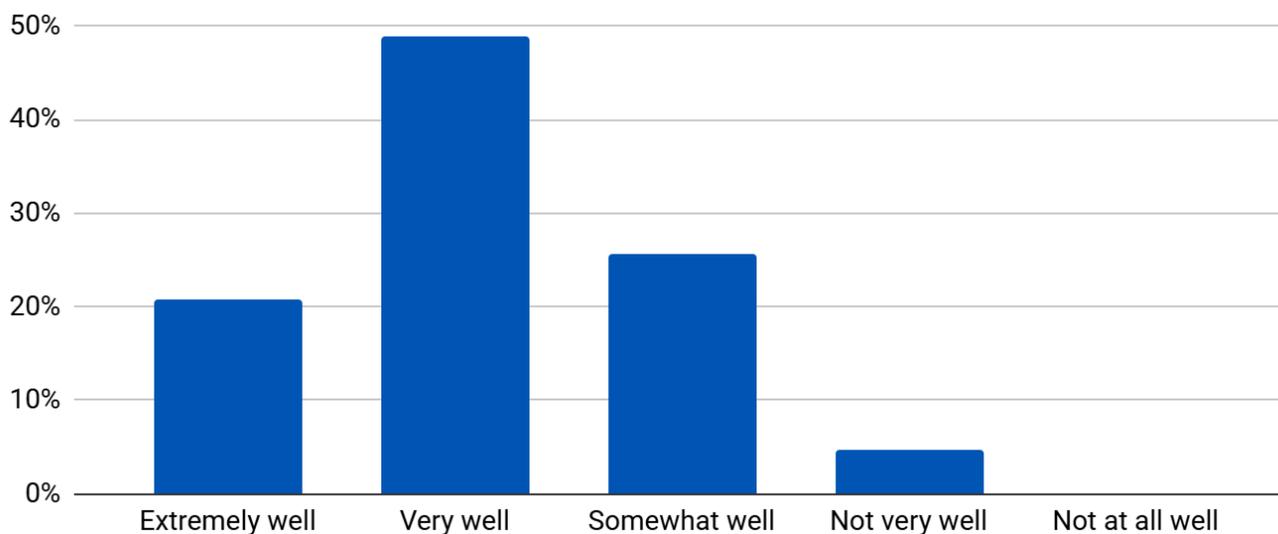


Membership Value

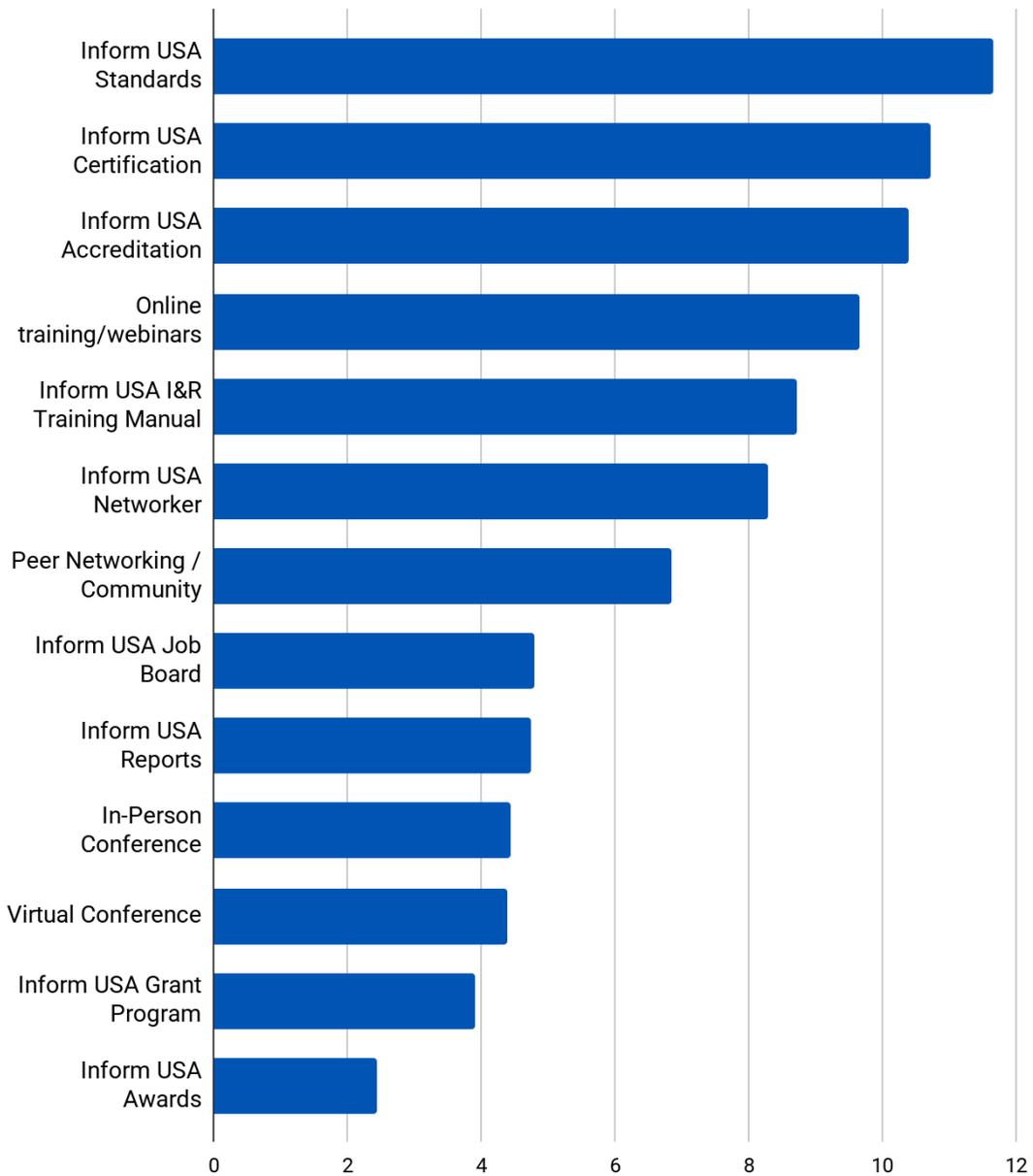
All participants were asked to rate the value of each membership benefit on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being extremely valuable. 336 people provided an answer. Access to Standards, best practices, and professional development opportunities were the most valued benefits.



Participants were then asked how well Inform USA programs and services meet their professional needs. 336 people responded, and 70% indicated that Inform USA’s offerings met their needs very well or extremely well.



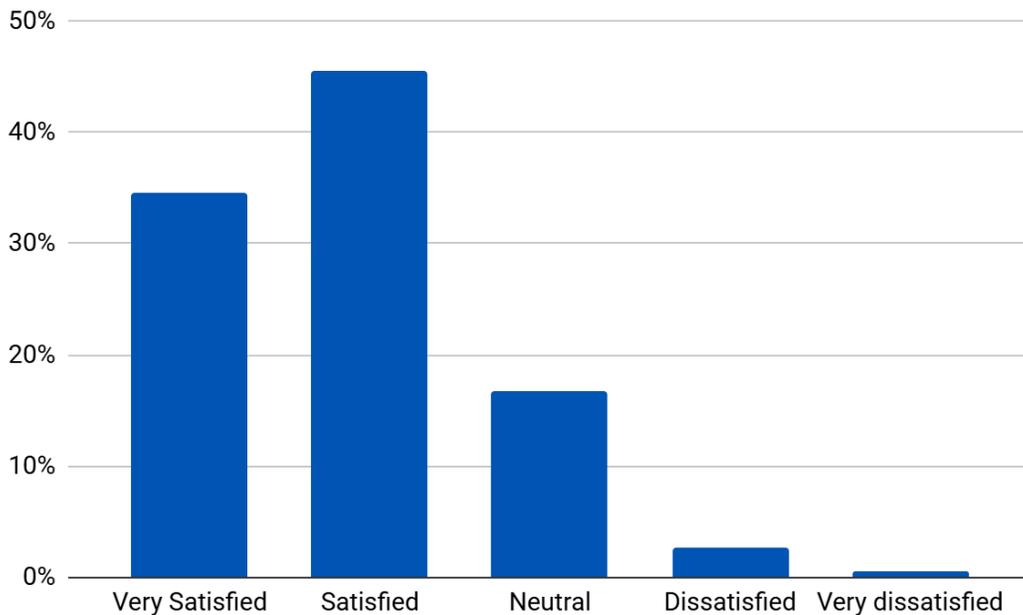
Finally, participants were asked to rank a list of programs/services in order of value.



Notably, there has been a shift in the value over the 2024 results. The Inform USA Standards were ranked as the third most valuable service in 2024, but has taken first place in 2025. Certification remained in second place, and online training moved from first place in 2024 to fourth place in 2025.

Satisfaction

When asked, 81% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with their membership overall.



Those who indicated some dissatisfaction were asked a follow-up question: What could Inform USA do to improve? 10 people provided feedback. The most common theme centred on return on investment for membership fees. Some members believe that at the Platinum level, they should not incur additional training fees.

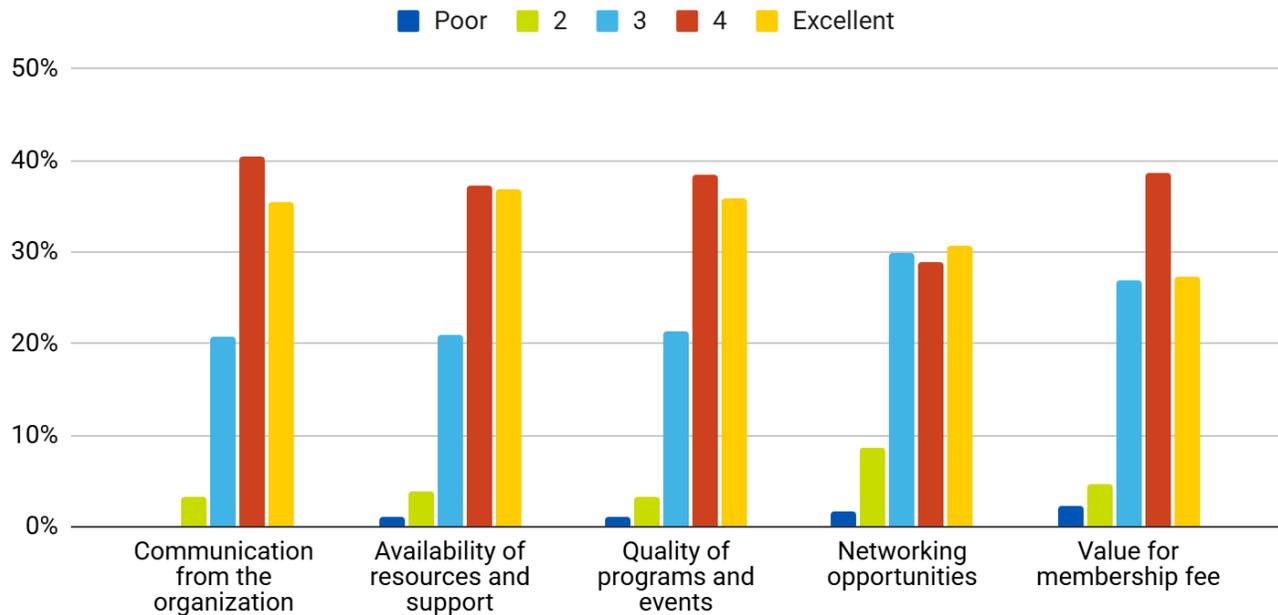
The following are the unedited comments:

- You could start off by not gaslighting your captive members by phasing out features from the membership plans and then trying to upsell them back to your members at a higher rate. Inform USA has a monopoly on 211s (which are primarily small non-profits) for accreditation, training, standards, etc. Then the rebrand has made it an administrative nightmare to assign and track staff/new hires' progress during training. When asked why these features were no longer accessible as an admin, I was told it was a security issue. How is it a security issue to have an admin view the progress of training that the agency is paying for on behalf of the employee? We had

a training document with hyperlinks to each course, however, the rebrand and new website has renamed and relocated the training courses multiple times. When asked about this I was told we could create a custom training package as part of an Enterprise membership at an additional cost of course. What's the point in paying for a membership and accreditation if we're charged for just about everything at every turn?

- The platform is not intuitive and at times clunky to navigate.
- I have only attended a few Inform USA events, and I check the networker chat often. I don't find the information I am looking for often. I would like to learn about technical aspects of providing I&A, such as how to help clients identify alternative (e.g. informal) supports to help meet their needs, how to do online searches that will yield best results, and hear from other I&A professionals about their best practices for various situations.
- It feels very U.S.-centric. It would be helpful to include more content that reflects Canadian perspectives, resources, and best practices to make it more relevant for organizations outside the U.S.
- As a licensed SW, I would appreciate meatier topics...."self-care", dealing with psych patients, unrealistic expectations of what the government is "supposed to pay for."
- Paying for a platinum membership seems pointless. Training and all other services should be made available at no additional cost to members. Our grant funding is very limited, and we can't pay for much-needed training for staff.
- I feel there isn't enough benefit for the cost of the membership at the platinum level; however, maybe I'm not fully aware of all the benefits. I'd like to see more usable information available. Marketing template, cost comparisons, etc.
- Irrelevant to the work I actually do.
- "More professional opportunities in webinars and virtual classes. Less fluff on the networker - staff should be encouraging and engaging in discussions about standards, current event issues, problem-solving, etc.
- Send out "raw data" on surveys like this - AIRS used to share aggregated data as well as free text answers.
- Don't try to rebrand an entire industry with no input from your members. We're not ""Community Navigation,"" we are INFORMATION AND REFERRAL. "
- The ROI for the membership isn't aligned. We pay a membership fee and still have to pay for everything else Inform USA offers. Inform does not do a good job of aligning membership benefits to the value of membership. The Training Manual is not enough.

Despite some of the dissatisfaction noted above, another question asked participants to rate several aspects of their membership on a 1–5 scale, with 5 indicating excellent. Overall, the results rate all listed aspects well, including value for membership.



A later question in the survey asked all participants if there was anything Inform USA could do to improve their membership experience. The following are the unedited responses.

- more AI-specific guidance. re-engaging the Networker / reformatting that space potentially to make the forum emails more easily engaging.
- I realized that the sections: membership, learning course, networking, etc.. requires separate login. It is getting frustrating when I have to log in from membership to learn section and to networking. How can this be easier?
- share talking points and guidance around current events, advocacy, what we can advise clients (when unable to directly advocate/lobby)
- Maybe more in the newsletter about the different opportunities you provide.
- The biggest barrier to taking advantage of all that Inform USA already offers is time. There is seldom time to explore or even to participate in the online discussions.
- More communication of big changes being before they are implemented. For example, the Community Navigation rollout.
- Update the training webinars. Some of them are outdated information and concepts.

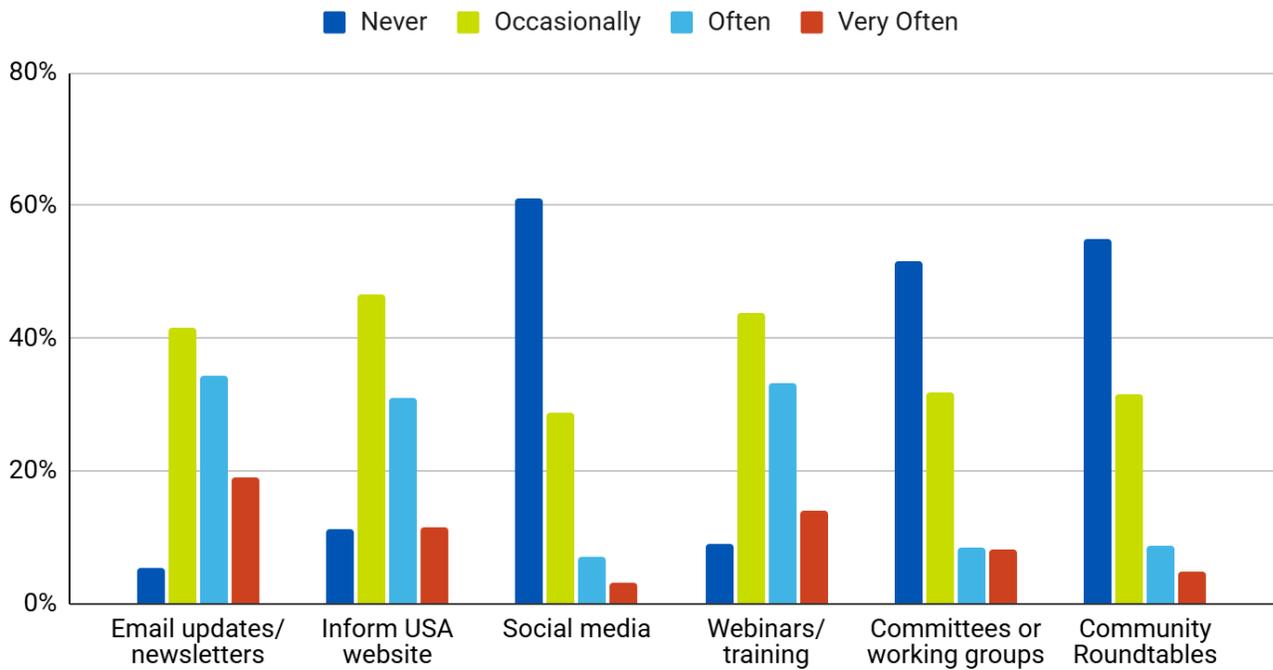
- Maybe initial/limited "free" onboarding training opportunities for new staff within first 90 days.
- training/development
- why is it so expensive to become re-certified as an individual
- Free certification training for CSRs and CSR-DCs.
- all of the previously mentioned.
- Lower the cost of the in person conference.
- Make it easier for those in Canada to be aware and access the same. Make it more cohesive.
- Make training purchases easier to access. As a manager, when I purchase training for staff, there have almost always been issues with the staff accessing the training.
- None. Thank you!
- Our 211 staff are not college graduates. They have imposter syndrome when the highly educated people from well-funded northern Inform USA member orgs host webinars. They are doing great work and they are from the community they are helping. Inform USA seems to default to a sense that we are all college grads with generational wealth and well-padded organizations. We're trying to make every penny work twice here.
- Website could be friendlier
- The process for paying for trainings and webinars has become cumbersome for our business office. It used to be easier when Inform USA was AIRS.
- Video training models for the certification.
- Since the name change to Inform USA from AIRS, I have felt the divide between the American and Canadian users and content has widened. There needs to be a more widely advertised connection between Inform USA and Inform Canada. The relevance of being certified by an American organization is lost on local community agencies. It was less obvious when the certification was through AIRS than Inform USA.
- Offer the I&R Training Manual at a more affordable cost.
- Have more training that includes relevant Canadian examples / not as heavily focused on just USA
- not at this time
- To improve Cumberland County Council on Older Adults membership experience is keeping us inform with taxonyms.
- Use a more accessible virtual conference app

- Also, please maintain inclusive writing style, formatting, and readability for your website; handouts; conference agendas, certification exams, documents (manuals, standards), power point presentations (not as successful). For example this survey provides adequate white space, line spacing, fonts that are easy and large enough to read, etc. I would suggest definitions for jargon/medical terminology etc."
- knowing and understanding the testing results.
- I would just love to checklist. Like what can I do to expand my knowledge and where should I start and go next.
- In person conferences are a great way to meet other agencies, and learn but our agency does not send frontline staff to the in-person conferences.
- cant think of any
- Well, I would appreciate it if I didn't feel forced to renew my personal membership before I'm ready. Some of us are unemployed and will need to probably renew in the new year. I want to keep my membership for the benefits but it would be nice if those who are not affiliated with an organization got some of the same perks. It isn't our fault if we are unemployed or work for an organization that is not in the Inform USA network.
- Perhaps provide more information on mechanisms to regularly connect with other similar agencies nationwide to collaborate on best practices
- If I could suggest less reminders of upcoming virtual conferences. My inbox seemed to be inundated with Inform USA emails for weeks before the Ripple Effect conference. Too many reminders in my opinion. Thanks for listening.
- Discounts for Non Profits
- It would be good to have more opportunities to connect with other non-211 agencies
- Slow down all training webinars. Everyone seems so rushed.
- Offer more free trainings for certification programs.
- unknown
- I would like to be able to access more free continuing education credit trainings and webinars. I would like all website content to be free with paid membership.
- leaner process for reaccreditation, extremely time consuming, resource heavy and costly
- Increase number of free trainings for higher membership levels. Our agency requires a detailed purchasing process and having to do this many times to purchase separate trainings is challenging. Platinum members should have access to all trainings to complete at any time.
- Easier access to continued education

- I feel that Inform USA is increasingly marginalizing Canadians. The name itself leaves us out and training etc often doesn't pertain to us
- That the board be more visible and involved in the community.
- more Canadian content
- You have gotten away from tracks at the conferences. That is fine, but what that does is cause the data/resource sector to get a little lost in the shuffle. The other issue is we continue to see the same 'ol same 'ol presenters at the conferences. We love the old I&R guard but there are new ideas and new theories. We need to involve our younger members, more diverse and open thought. If we continue to keep our training static UWWW is going to over take our standards...
- More options for scholarships
- Provide Training Manual
- I miss the very active Networker of past years. It was FULL of great info daily. Clive was so ACTIVE in these discussions!
- More substantive information from staff; do not try to rebrand the industry. Listen to members who are asking for things you're not offering. Release full data set on surveys like this.
- Stop nickel-and-diming us for everything you offer.
- maybe create an affordable i&r database and have great customer service? or screen networkers for databases they use, their overall satisfaction rating of the product and service, and provide a map or guide of each softwares capabilities...maybe going beyond the database and include other softwares that support IR work.

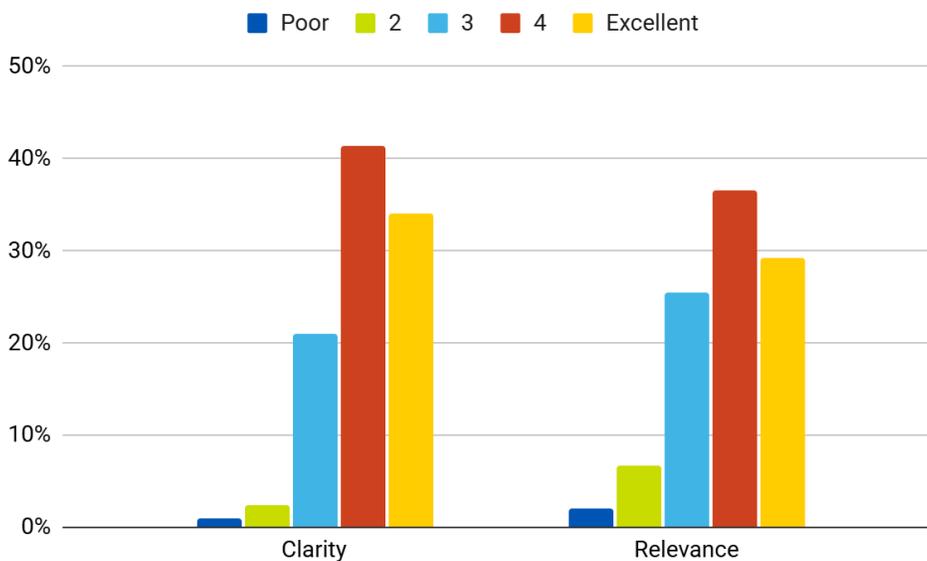
Engagement

Participants were asked to indicate how often they engage with Inform USA through the following channels. The results indicate a relatively low engagement rate among most members. Email communication and the Inform USA website have the highest engagement.

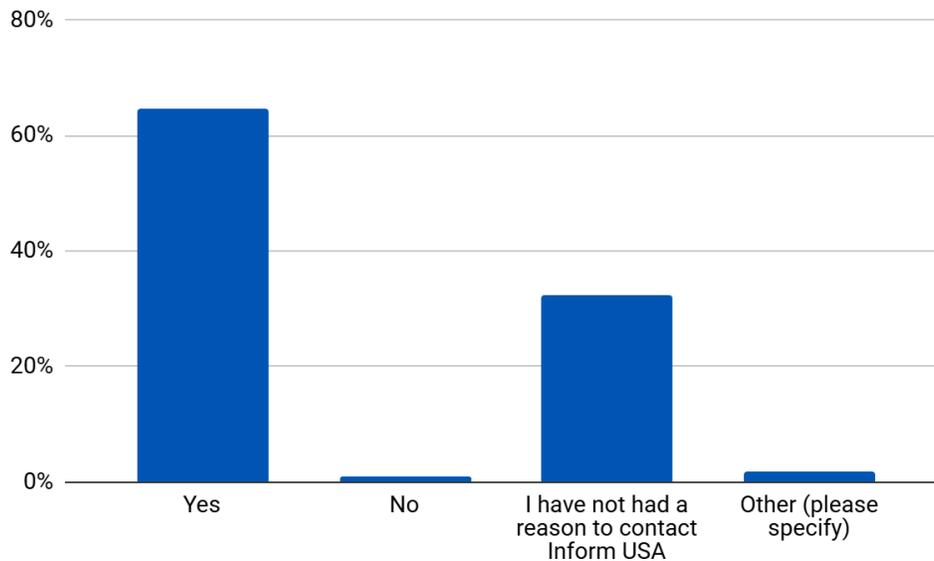


Communication

When asked to rate the clarity and relevance of Inform USA's communications, the majority of participants rated both 4 or 5 (Excellent).



Participants were also asked about the service they received when contacting Inform USA. 65% reported receiving prompt, courteous, and helpful service.

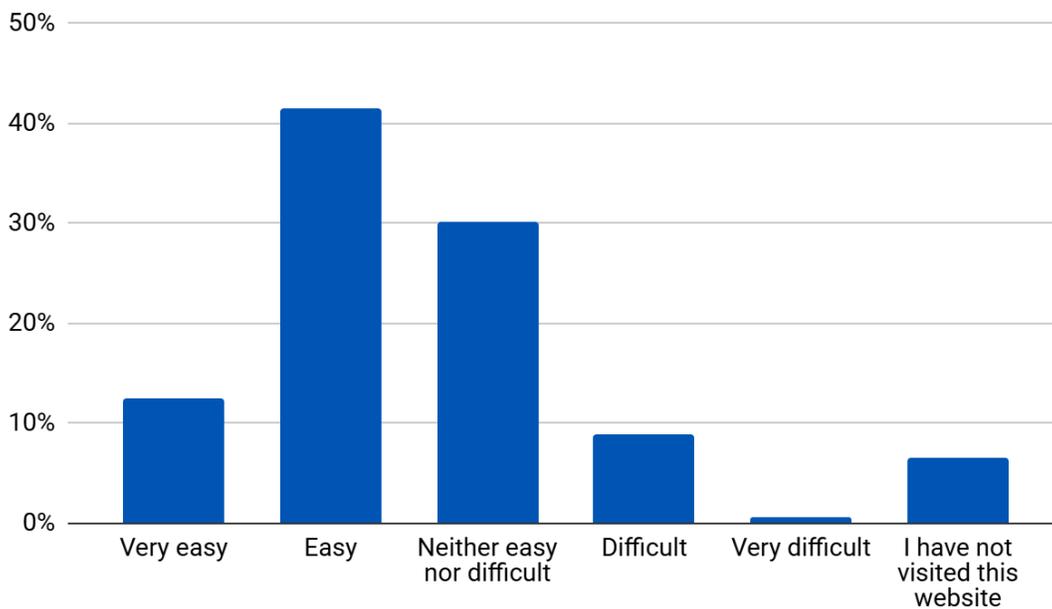


Those who selected 'other' provided the following unedited feedback:

- I need to write policies & procedures on Information and Referral Services and need help.
- I have not contacted them
- Depends on the type of communication. Sometimes the communication isn't always prompt
- waited over a week for a simple response
- No direct calls, only emails
- Slightly

Website Navigation

Another section of the survey asked for feedback about the website. 306 participants answered the question. Only 9% reported difficulty finding what they were looking for on the Inform USA website.



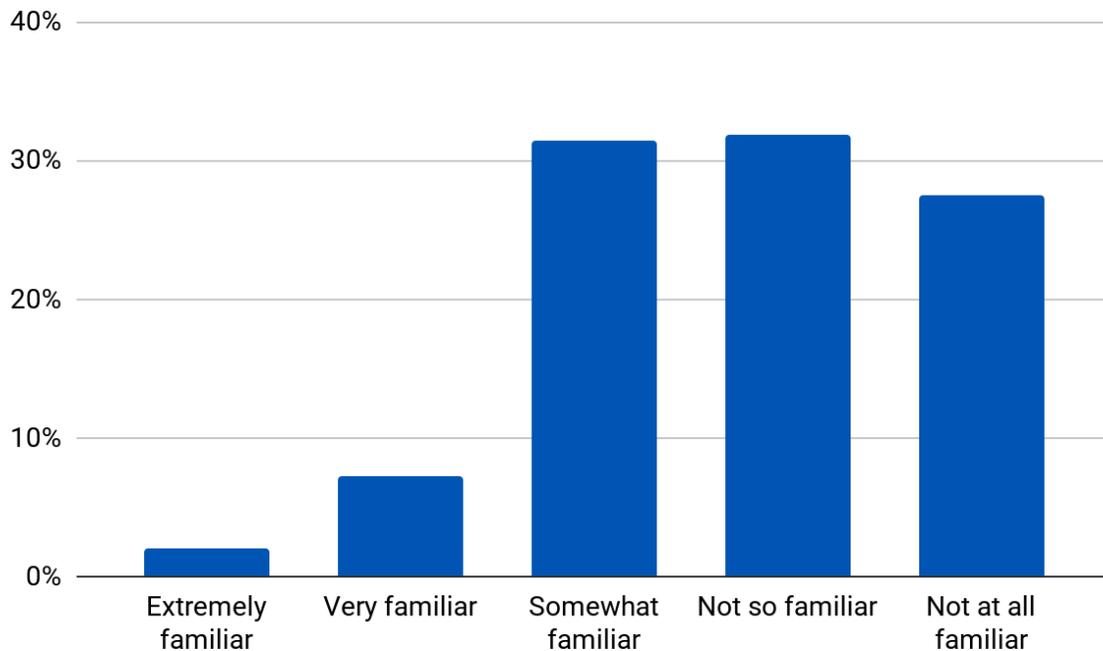
A follow-up question asked for feedback about what they were looking for that was hard to find. Many responses focus on the difficulty of locating certification and training materials. The following are the unedited responses.

- It was challenging to find the practice test.
- to find what modes i have to do
- I am still not sure all of the benefits of the Inform USA organization and if we are making use of all the benefits available
- Information about certifications. I found it eventually but did not think it would have been under "Programming". Not sure if it should be on the navigation bar on its own.
- I need policies and procedures on Information & Referral Services.
- I have had difficulty finding training courses, webinars, and other materials from the catalog after the rebrand, and many courses were renamed and/or moved
- Training materials
- How to recertify for your rectification
- training topics
- Micro Certification
- My recertification certificate.
- Very difficult to find anything. Search field does not help to find specific webinars that I know are in the InformUSA platform.
- The online practice exam that I purchased.
- the way the system makes you log on 2 times to access certain information.

- I am often looking for technical resources that I can share with those in my state network, information on best practices for providing I&A, such as what resources are the best, where to look for additional supports to help individuals who don't qualify for formal programs, and how to handle clients who appear to be having a mental health issue.
- connecting to promoted article
- Roundtables
- Continuing education links
- The resources library and navigating the LMS for webinars is not that user friendly. I don't know there is a resource library any longer.
- It's frustrating to use the Magic link then not knowing where to find information between the member site and website. It's probably just me.
- I am in communications and it's hard for me to find relevant info and the search function isn't great. That is all public web access level. When I log in to the member benefits, it's even more difficult. Just feels dated and overly complicated
- trying to get to various articles mentioned in the Networker; also trying to access Networker via mobile phone. Looking for information on webinars / trainings
- finding trainings with specific keywords or focus is not intuitive

Inform USA Awards

A new set of questions was added this year in response to a several-year decline in award nominations. The first question asked about their familiarity with the awards program. Results indicate a need for more communication about the awards, with over 50% of participants unfamiliar with the program.



When asked if anyone at their organization had ever submitted a nomination for an Inform USA Award, only 11% said yes. 42% said no, and 47% were unsure.

Participants were then asked if there was a reason they hadn't participated. The following are the unedited responses.

- We're slammed with calls and lost all our management
- Better left to those who are outgoing! I'm not.
- work for state agency and do not want to appear biased by nominating specific agencies/individuals
- We are usually late in thinking about it
- Our team has not been able to go to the conference every year
- Not at leadership level
- It's nonsense
- I don't understand this question.
- My agency does not utilize my expertise in information and referral
- I think that knowing the why behind the testing results is more important.
- Retired
- Canadian

Finally, participants were asked what types of recognition would make the awards more meaningful. The responses highlight the lack of awareness about the awards and the need for better communication. Information about the Inform USA Awards Program is available [here](#).

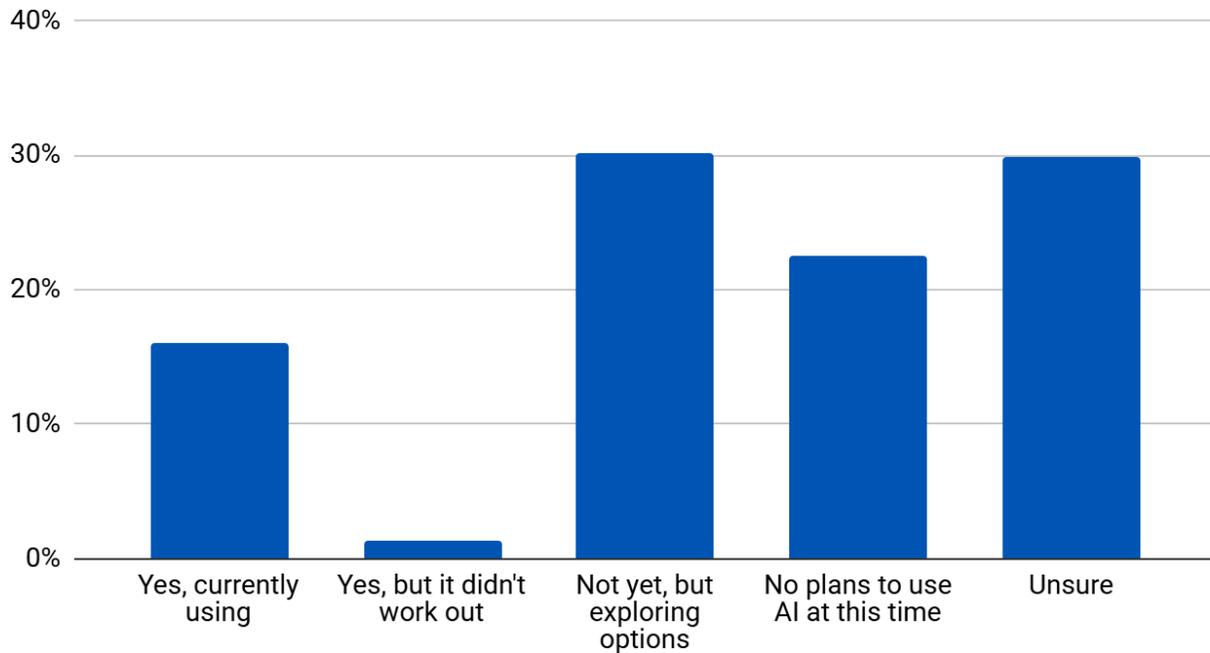
The following are the unedited responses.

- Small-budget-maximum-impact, innovation, collaboration (effective partnerships to improve service), up and coming/turnaround award
- Not sure exactly, but I would like to see the winners submit proposals for in person or virtual conference so we can all learn
- I need to look at the awards offered to better understand what might make the awards more meaningful to participants.
- I would like to see a poster session of award nominees &/or other info sharing.
- no changes
- Every member organization should be asked to submit a nomination for someone within their team.
- I'm not sure, because I'm not sure what awards are given now.
- certs
- I feel the recognition provided is very meaningful already.
- something to add to their resume/email signature, post on social media/website/networker
- number of consumer helped?
- Longevity, performance
- Acknowledgment throughout site.
- highlights on what organizations are doing well for example database or call handling and why
- Getting the information across the board and making us aware of its presence.
- Unfortunately, there is no value of recognition within the department I work for.
- Consistent Service, Number of Certified members in the organization
- certificates
- Keep them all for front line telephonic workers
- Doing the most with the least.
- Individual awards for call specialists
- certification mailed to our home.
- Navigator and Resource Curator of the year, Community Organizer of the year

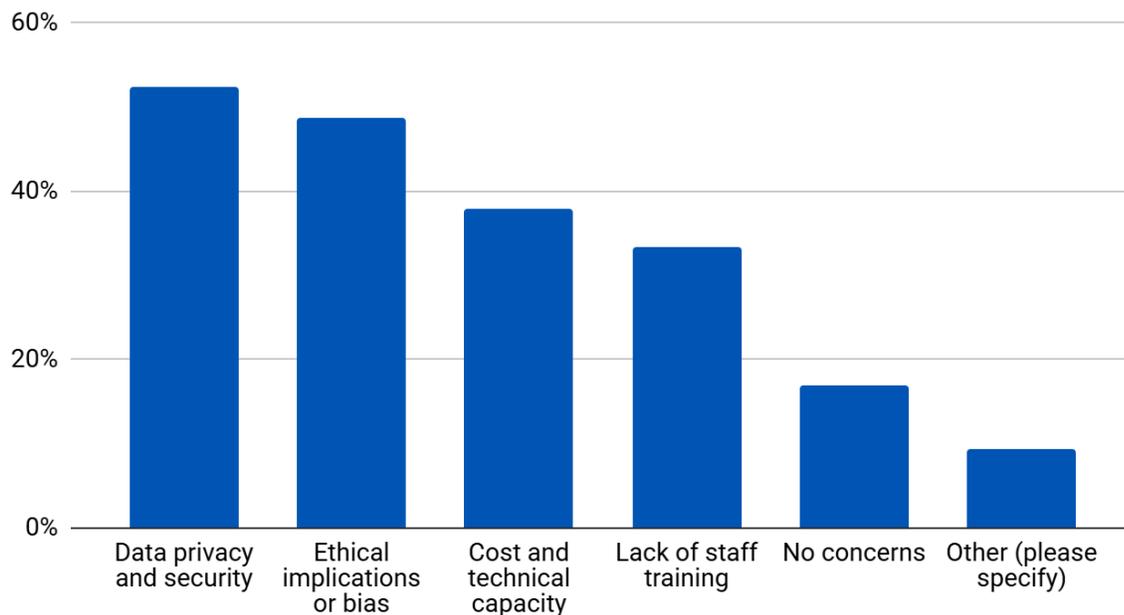
- It seems like recognition is only granted to leadership and operational levels. Unless a front line person is actively using the webinars for training, the only value they get out of membership is a credential.
- Not sure, just haven't explored it yet.
- I would cut them out. Bigger 211's are who wins them because they have the votes. I have never known any of the people nominated.
- I think its great how it is currently
- I am not sure if there is a financial bonus to receiving an award? I.e. next re-certification fees covered?
- Just keeping the participants informed of awards.
- The value of knowing what was learned and needed to be worked on when testing.
- Recognition of front line staff, they are the ones doing all the work.
- Ask agencies what awards they have handed out and do a bio of the person getting the award and put these out to the group to decide top 5.
- Tenure
- Balanced representation from different areas of the country.
- regional recognition awards
- I think recognizing organizations outside of 211 would be beneficial. It happens, but not enough.
- including Canadian Organizations/Individuals
- It would be more meaningful if the outcomes were better explained.
- Awards that are based on outcomes...not outputs. Reward those who are moving the needle on important issues or gaps through innovation and advocacy.
- An Innovation Award would be nice
- to have their picture included in the newsletter
- Can't think of anything
- I am personally not a fan of awards, although I realize I may be the odd person out on this one. I really cannot answer this question.
- Not sure
- Clear criteria for nominations and award selection.
- regional or state versus national

AI in Community Navigation

A few additional questions were also added regarding members' use of AI. The first question asked if their organization uses any AI tools (e.g. chatbots, predictive analytics, data matching, automated data cleaning). 298 people answered the question. 40% reported using an AI-powered tool, while 30% are exploring options. 22% have no plans to use it, and 30% were unsure.



Participants were also asked about any concerns or barriers to adopting AI. 288 people reported Data privacy (52%) and ethical considerations (59%) as the top concerns.

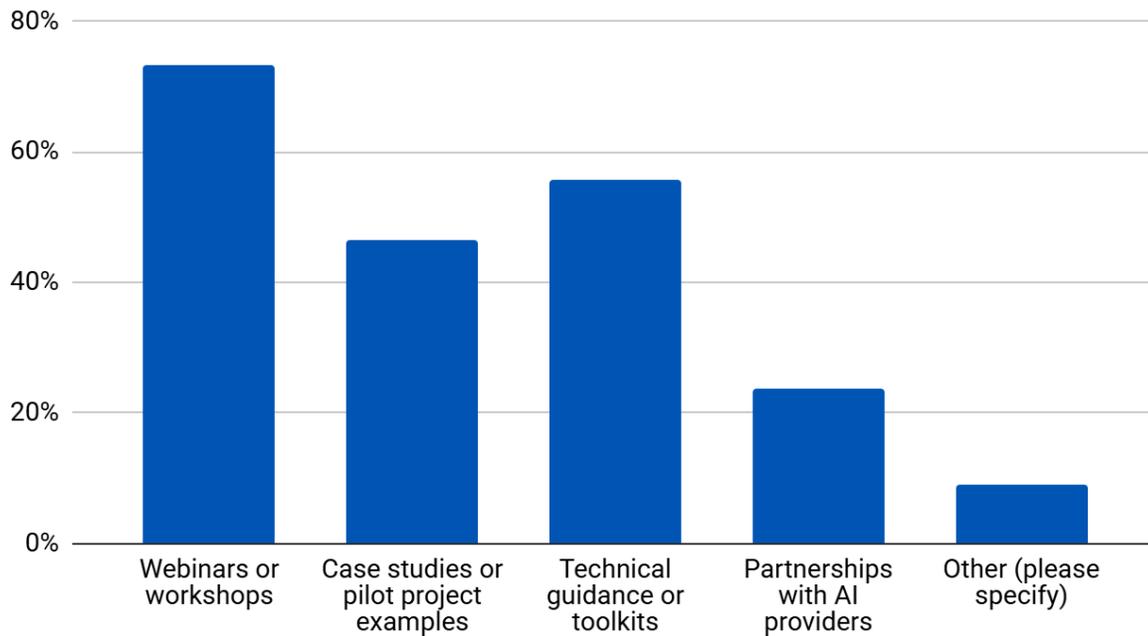


Those who selected 'other' were asked to provide a response. The following are the unedited responses.

- myth of inefficiency: auto-generating actually meaning more correcting/editing later on for staff. implementation: moving too quickly without thinking of consequences for org providing service or community receiving service.
- Loss of human connection
- Lack of human interaction
- If it is necessary to check the work done by AI, will it actually have added to the time required to complete the task.
- Accuracy
- The ease of replacing people and jobs
- Vendors determining all AI options and having too much influence on how we conceive of AI opportunities and challenges.
- not sure if the organization is using it.
- Lack of human connection with those in need/crisis. Lack of empathy by AI
- Human empathy is needed for telephonic work
- I am not a program manager nor supervisor so no concerns
- need to learn more about AI
- Retired
- Taking over other people's jobs, lack of empathy

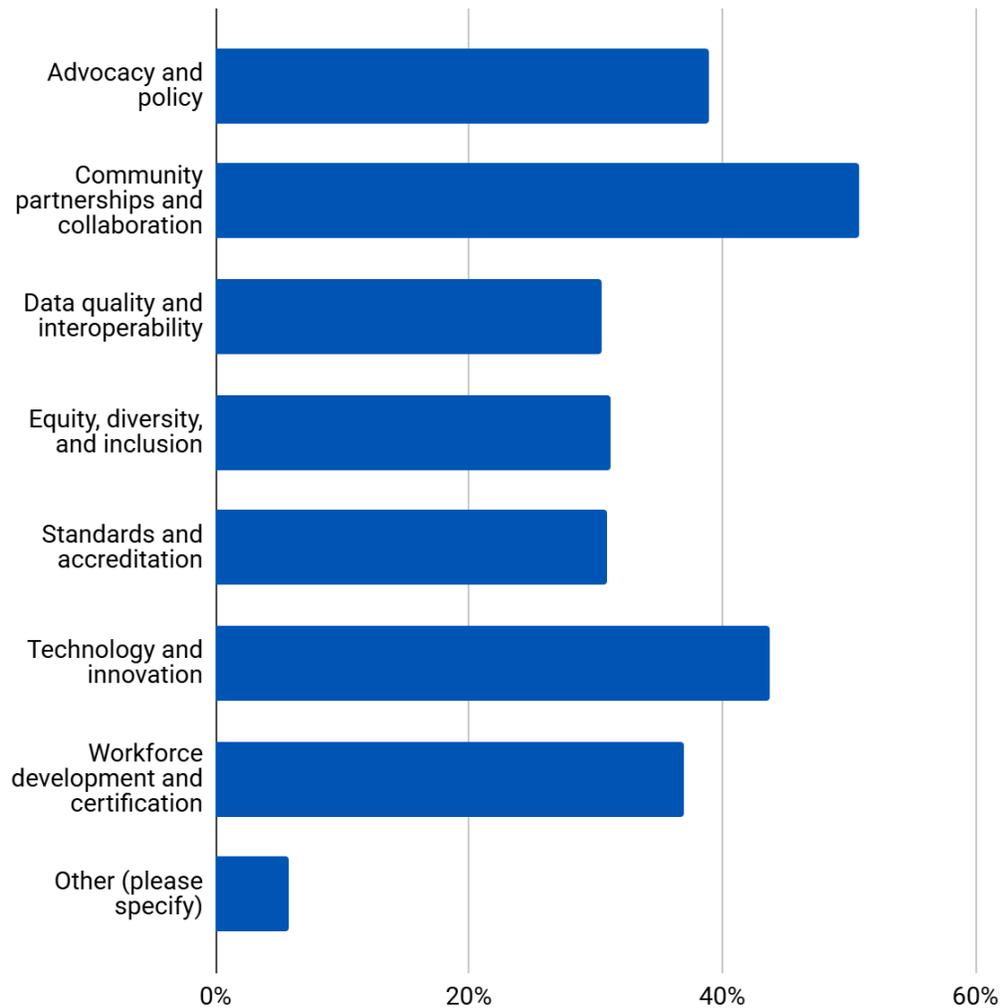
- AI is environmentally draining on resources as it requires a lot of water and energy resources to house and power it, leading to additional strains on humanity. Many errors and hallucinations are discovered that lead to needing more oversight on AI instead of people. Still unknown of the actual limitations/regulations/control over AI as it has already begun writing it's own code and showing signs of self-preservation abilities. Training a system that may lead to the creation of AI replacement business models who use all of the information it's been fed by 211.
- People we serve prefer to speak with a live person.
- If AI is being used in a way that would be based on client contact (through chat or anything) I think many of our clients would hesitate to use it/not know how to use it at all or how to use it safely.
- Unsure
- lack of cultural appropriateness
- Human element
- Contracts disallowance of AI
- County will not allow it
- brain atrophy as we rely on the computers to perform active thinking tasks. Also worried about it replacing a lot of jobs.
- Huge concern for I&R as a sector
- the nuances needed sometimes when working with the data
- More time is needed to see how it all pans out with regard to who owns the information ultimately, if one were to sever ties with an AI provider.
- AI does not understand subtext or context, makes many errors, and can;t handle complex human situations yet.

Participants were also asked what types of support or training would help their organization explore AI safely and effectively. 278 participants reported that webinars and workshops, technical guidance, or toolkits would be the most helpful. No one who selected 'other' provided any additional feedback.



Future Topics

The final section of the survey asked for feedback on what direction Inform USA should take in the coming year. Participants could select up to 3 options or provide additional suggestions. 295 people responded and indicated that community partnerships and collaboration, along with technology and innovation, were of great importance.



The following is the unedited feedback from those who selected 'other'.

- Call center standards focused on KPI's like wait times.
- More webinars on specialized topics
- service navigation as it relates to I & R
- we need more community resources
- Funding and navigation of current landscape
- I don't use it much
- Overall Standards AND Standards, Indexing, and training around Community Navigation involving Informal services or services provided by volunteers as opposed to organizations or organized groups like CityServeX
- Outreach and communications

- clarification results from testing
- Disability-related issues and accessible Inform USA products
- Resiliency for Helpline Counselors over years of service without opportunity for growth/promotion
- Training for curators, specifically taxonomy training
- Free study guides for I&R
- Workforce Operations involved with real-time management, Forecasting, scheduling
- Canadian content
- Some great stuff coming out of your rebrand and marketing research. I would like more of it publically (I&R Day 2025 felt like a huge flop on how this was used - seemed missed entirely) and a real push for helping I&R organization to start using this type of language and get behind being vocal about it. The time is now to save the sector and explain WHY it's so beneficial. Tech will rn us over and leave us in the dust if we don't make this a focus

Membership Benefits

The following are the unedited comments from participants who were asked what new benefits or resources they would like to see offered.

- deepening AI research and use cases started by task force. building funding relationships as a historically underfunded 211. providing community navigation best practices in challenging times, especially in states with slower social change who are blocking funding to more community resources and fearmongering certain social issues.
- more training on taking the certification exams
- After shelling amount of dollars to be a member, we learn that we have to pay for certain onboarding resources. It would be great if it is included in the membership for free.
- office hours/open spaces outside of roundtables. *This is already starting with new ED meet and greets
- A good introduction to what Inform USA and how it would benefit the agency/worker. Why should I join and how will that help my agency?
- New training on Database curating.
- Raffle for additional discount for in person conference attendance.
- Training on why Inform USA is needed/used

- Insurance
- To channel the organizations together – transparency between like-minded/goals organizations
- Stronger connections with 211's and ARDC's.
- What benefits are and where to find them.
- No suggestions.
- More online training for standards
- Easier training guide for new workers
- More Canada-specific training and webinar offerings
- One technology suite that most if not all of us use to track a client across services referred to and their progress in overcoming their personal barriers to success. We just want to do that, and do it well, and know that if we invest in THAT technology, it will be worth the expense.
- webinars that all staff can attend not only the resource specialist (ADRC certified)
- We would like to see webinars and trainings NOT bundled together. This change has been challenging for our staff and agency and limits our ability to pick relevant trainings for new and current staff.
- More collaboration, or networking opportunities.
- More innovative use case sharing among the 211's nationwide
- I am a new member just looking around. I still need a deeper understanding of all available benefits.
- how to go out to get more dollars for resources needed like to obtain more overnight shelters for the homeless
- I really can't say
- Nothing new at this time.
- Onboarding webinars for new members -- provide an overview of the InformUSA website and Learn LMS to help them navigate and understand what resources/services are offered.
- More free study materials
- Better prices for staff and volunteers [member organizations] who want to do both CRS and CRS-DC certification. Re: the certification training webinars/packages overlap greatly between CRS and CRS-DC.
- Check list of what we should do next after certification. Knowledge is key. But sometimes I have no idea where to start
- It be nice to be able to afford two certifications. It is difficult to keep up with the expense, getting certified, CE's, ect

- We need strategic planning resources that focus on how best to retain our best employees beyond 2-3 years
- employment opportunities posted by other sites in US.
- Just more breakdowns on the CRS testing for better practicing tools.
- More test modules instead of only one exam per level"
- Grants that may be available to 211s from organizations and governments. Also any partnerships with 211 nationwide and the federal government
- Canadian-Specific Resource Library that could include a templates for provincial compliance (privacy, employment standards);
- Training & Professional Development with webinars focused on Canadian legislation and funding models - certification programs tailored to Canadian service delivery"
- Discounted Certification Opportunities
- More printable training materials with no cost. Some centers are very small and funding is limited.
- Free study guide for I&R
- leaner process for reaccreditation, extremely time consuming, resource heavy and costly
- Several sample certification tests offered; boundary / ethics trainings to help staff; training and guidance for sharing client information (verbal vs written consent) with community partners for referrals
- Workforce operations management
- Maybe a blurb in a newsletter highlight member organizations. A "Meet XYZ Organization and here's what they do" type of thing.
- Leadership classes
- Canadian content
- I would like to see new training offerings. We need to develop staff skills and there isn't enough "new" content.
- A shared library of different resources at the management level. Marketing, budget template, staffing charts, etc.
- I am interesting in virtual groups/gatherings with marketing/comms who are in I&R agencies. I am NOT interested in interacting with any vendors/tech providers. I've attended a couple things that felt like a sales pitch. I do not care what a single vendor has to say. I care about what my cohorts are dealing with directly.
- more learning courses that are free
- Training Manual should come free with platinum membership

- Not sure why you're so into AI when you don't have anyone who can assist with it... also please stop pandering to vendors who don't know anything about our industry and are just overcharging for things CEOs don't understand
- Conference discounts, training discounts, and more free resources (think like AARP).
- No preference

Testimonials

Participants were asked if they would like to provide a testimonial about their membership experience. The following are the unedited comments.

- As a new team member to 211, going to InformUSA's annual in-person conference was invaluable in the way of a national network of peer relationships that I have been able to continue interacting with in community roundtables and other conferences, creating innovation opportunities through collaboration, and a jumping off point to adapt and implement new community navigation ideas in my home state.
- Lots of great training and discussions to help with resource management.
- Don't have one.
- We appreciate having access to best practices in the work we do, both through the Inform USA Standards and through networking with others. We are all better because of it!
- The Certification is of value to our counselors and is part of our employee evaluation process.
- The majority of people who work in social/human services do not go into it for the recognition; however this is a hard job. Inform USA is the only organization that is deeply committed to the Information and Referral, now Community Navigation Sector providers and provides that support and recognition for the invaluable work.
- Our community navigators see the certificate as a recognition of their work and an affirmation of their professional status.
- Having agreed upon standards nationally for call handling, for taxonomy, and for all the elements of resource navigation and provision is so critically important. When I moved to a 211 call center in another state, it was seamless to assist my callers. The skills I had honed were just what I needed to hit the ground running. Inform USA has provided the structure and the rigorous training to build a successful career in this profession.

- Fees are excessive.
- Excellent organization that makes possible for small agencies to be accredited and ensure that standards are met.
- I would say the consideration, everyone was considered with the creation of Inform USA. There's few organizations and systems that are created with equity and equality for everyone.
- As a new member to the organization, or a new employee to the IR&A field, this tool is very helpful in serving individuals with the recourses to fulfill their unmet needs.
- We just completed the Accreditation process. It was smooth. We felt like they were rooting for us.
- Greatly appreciate the certification programs that helps us refresh the knowledge acquired and to gain new knowledge.
- Excellent training
- Inform USA is a beacon of information & resources for the community navigation network and beyond. Being a member, attending the conferences both in person and virtual is a great return on investment. Access to a professional network, marketing and branding opportunities, and advocacy for the community navigation sector helps the network feel supported.
- There are so many benefits to being a member including being up to date on changes in the sector.
- Good experience
- The certification process for our phone workers provides them with a deeper understanding of key points and best practices for providing information and resources to callers. We notice improved performance though empathy and attention to detail.
- As a new member of Inform USA and attending my first in-person conference, I was very impressed with the content of the sessions and how much I learned about the overall process of I & R. The Inform USA staff were very friendly and helpful with whatever questions I had. After having such a positive experience at the conference, it made me want to attend all future in-person conferences! Being a member of Inform USA has so many benefits and gives you all the tools you need to excel in your field!
- We have only been members for a few months. However, we have had nothing but positive experiences with everyone we have worked with regarding our membership.
- Our InformUSA membership has been invaluable to 211 Orange County. The standards and guidelines have strengthened our onboarding process and deepened

our team's understanding of essential information and referral concepts. Both the national conferences and online community are consistently informative, offering a space to learn from peers across the country and stay connected to innovative practices in the field. InformUSA truly helps us elevate the quality of service we provide to our community.

- As an Area Agency on Aging, we pride ourselves and our network of I&A providers on providing quality I&A, Options Counseling and Benefits Access services. Inform USA (previously AIRS) has been the guidepost that we have come to rely on to provide trainings, tools, and standards to ensure that we and our network of I&A partners are offering quality community navigation services and supports.
- Great information and training
- This is an important process for any organization, certification identifies the high quality.
- The training for Certified Community Resource Specialist gives us the opportunity to connect with the caller regarding resources that will address their need (s) by listening to their concerns and with a caring spirit and addressing the unmet needs.
- It was good to meet others in person at the conference in California and someone from my area I had not previously met.
- Inform USA is a quality organization that is the leader in the Community Navigation field for developing standards and providing support to implement and meet them. They are our company's "go-to" for excellence in this important field.
- Membership is like a gym: the more you show up, the more you benefit. If you just sit on the bench, don't expect six-pack results! Jump into a committee—not just the one that feels comfy like your favorite slippers, but one that stretches you toward your future goals. Because what you're doing now isn't just work—it's your purpose in action
- With promotions being on hold and opportunities for staff development extremely limited in the current climate, being able to give some counselors the opportunity to obtain their CRS Specialist Certifications has been helpful to relieve the overall sense of stagnation in the agency.
- I think something Inform USA does very well is offer education to its members. There is a wide variety of methods (live and recorded webinars, the virtual conference, the in-person conference) that make it easy for many people to access the information. I think the educational offerings are typically very topical and appropriate to what is going on in the country and in the field of I&R. I also really like that a lot of the educational offerings rely on Inform USA members to speak on their personal

experience working in the field. It makes it very easy to relate to the person providing the training and it gives the presenter a very strong understanding of what the participants in the training need to know as well as the issues they run into. Not only is it good ongoing training for existing I&R frontline providers, it is very helpful when training individuals that are new to I&R. It provides helpful information and I think shows that there is large, strong community of support for people working in this field.

- Matthew Hundley has provided great assistance in grasping all the training details for the CRS exam. I am very thankful for his support and advice, which have motivated me to strive for success and ultimately pass the CRS exam.
- The Inform USA standards are extremely helpful in preparing for the certification exam and in the workplace every day.
- We are happy with our membership with Inform USA and hope that Inform USA and its members can grow and adapt to a changing world.
- I like the training modules, they are well done and easy to follow.
- The networking opportunities and connections from attending conference are always fruitful.
- Going through accreditation helped our resource team keep our database organized and uniform.
- My initial membership was great. My job shifted so I am more disconnected from this work than I have been in the past.
- The certification preparation package consistently provides an excellent study tool to gain mastery of current standards. Obtaining the certification provides skills and confidence to deliver excellent service to all who need.
- Inform USA gives my team the tools to serve our community well. I can be assured new staff receive excellent training and are able to attain a respected credential to advance their careers.
- The training opportunities are excellent. Good speakers, great topics.
- I am glad that Inform USA exists because I can point to the organization and say that they are the ones that gave me my credentials when people ask. And I am able to explain that Inform USA has standards that the sector follows.
- great agency to be affiliated with to have this information to help our teams grow and flourish

Final Comments

Participants were invited to share any final thoughts or comments with the Inform USA Board or Staff. The following are the unedited comments.

- I love the community navigation rebrand, and I appreciated the space to offer feedback with the new Executive Director in a way that was regional. I do love national interactive spaces because of the infusion and intermingling of ideas, but regional was a neat change of pace.
- I would like to work with you in providing training, resources, and awareness to the professionals about deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind. Thank you for making my onboarding experience great. Glad to be a part of this!
- keep up the good work
- Thank you for all you offer!
- When I needed staff to help me with a log in issue of my own making for the last virtual conference, they were absolutely great! I also had an issue with my transcript for my recertification due to the same issue of my own making and the staff were great at helping me get my transcript information attached to my correct email. Virtual conferences are amazing!
- Being new to Inform, not sure what is expected or what tools Inform offers.
- As a professional with over 40 years in the field, Inform USA formerly known as AIRS, was a great resource for in career as I transitioned to Area Agency on Aging over 11 years ago. Thank you for the direction and assistance in becoming proficient in this field.
- You're doing a good job!
- Keep up the good job and promote more transparency among all likeminded organizations for the welfare and success of the quality of life for the aging and the disabled.
- Thank you for selecting a new Executive Director who inclusive, open minded, and driven to grow the network in a open and meaningful way. This is the beginning of a new era for our work, for future partnerships, for making a place in the history of community navigation across different fields and across the world.
- Some of the messaging should be consistent across Inform Canada as well. For example, the idea of the sector new name etc should also be posted at the same time with Inform Canada.
- Thank you all for all you do to make Inform USA a positive aspect to the I & R industry! You are truly appreciated!

- We want to invest in our 211 staff. We want to revamp our 211 helpline to be a wraparound service for people with complicated problems. We want to track the people we help and see that their lives have improved because of our work. What technology platform will help us do that? And how do we afford it?
- Webinars are informative. Presenters knowledgeable and enthusiastic.
- We are very excited about the rebranding of I&R to community navigation as we believe it is more encompassing of the work that we and our partners do and our communities will hopefully have a better understanding of that work and how it can help them.
- No thank you!
- I would appreciate an increased collaboration with InformCanada as well as including more content relevant to Canadian staff.
- Thank You and Happy Holidays.
- Micro-certifications have proven to be an excellent initiative. It might be valuable to introduce a micro-certification track for Community Resource Specialists, allowing them to demonstrate expertise in specific areas such as Veterans, Homeless Services, or Gender-related resources.”
- I would like to see more inclusivity, accessibility, and more webinars focused toward those who work in disability services.
- Any time I've reached out to Inform USA staff with questions, I've always gotten very quick, helpful responses and I just wanted to share that it is very much appreciated!
- I enjoy partnering with you!
- This organization is my "go to" for resources - very comprehensive. Love the trainings!
- I appreciate the professional staff thank for all your hard work, time and energy.
- I would like you to do a major rethink about being more inclusive to Canadians and their experiences
- As a Canadian member, it has become challenging to talk about the standards organization called Inform USA. It is a very important talking point that we use with partners and funders - would be great if the name of the organization (and thus the standards) were referred to as INFORM (not Inform USA). Food for thought!
- Have a great holiday season