

The Value of Accreditation: Strategic ROI for Decision-Makers

An executive brief for funders, state agencies, and community navigation partners.

Inform USA Accreditation is the national quality credential for Community Navigation programs (Information & Referral/Assessment). It gives funders and agency leaders independent, third-party verification that their investment delivers measurable impact, operational efficiency, and trustworthy human-service navigation.



01

Risk Mitigation & Fiscal Accountability

- Independent, third-party validation of operational stability and ethical standards.
- Directs taxpayer and philanthropic dollars towards proven, high-performing infrastructure.



02

High-Quality Data for Policy & Planning

- Systematically verified standardized resource databases funders can rely on.
- Reliable data on service gaps and utilization for evidence-based decisions.



03

Emergency Preparedness & Resilience

- Accredited programs serve as central hubs during crises and disasters.
- Required continuity-of-operations plans keep services running uninterrupted.



04

Cross-System Efficiency

- Breaks down silos across non-profits, governments, and healthcare programs.
- Routes clients accurately, easing pressure on ERs and 911 lines.

IMPACT ACROSS KEY STAKEHOLDERS



State & Municipal Leaders

Disaster-ready hubs and trusted community data.



Funders & Grantmakers

Objective assurance of grantee performance.



Community Non-Profits

Verified referral networks, less admin burden.



Community Members

Dignified, rapid access to trusted services.

Accreditation is more than a badge – it is a strategic investment in community infrastructure, public trust, and long-term operational excellence.

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

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The Value of Inform USA Accreditation: Executive Brief for Funders and Decision-Makers

Executive Summary

Inform USA Accreditation is the premier national quality assurance credential specifically designed for Community Navigation programs (also known as Information & Referral (I&R) or Information and Assistance (I&A)). Through a rigorous, multi-phase third-party evaluation process, Inform USA Accreditation validates that an organization adheres to the highest national standards for service delivery, resource database management, and operational governance.

For state officials, agency executives, grantmakers, and corporate funders, supporting or requiring Inform USA Accreditation offers independent verification that funding delivers measurable community impact, operational efficiency, and trusted human service navigation.

Strategic Value & Return on Investment (ROI) for High-Level Decision-Makers

1. Risk Mitigation and Fiscal Accountability

- **Third-Party Validation:** Funding decisions carry inherent risks. Inform USA Accreditation provides independent, objective verification of an organization's operational stability, ethical standards, and service consistency.
- **Proven Best Practices:** Accredited organizations undergo rigorous compliance checks against national standards, ensuring taxpayer and philanthropic dollars are directed toward high-performing, reliable infrastructure.

2. High-Quality Data for System Planning and Policy

- **Vetted Resource Infrastructure:** Community Navigation organizations maintain dynamic, standardized resource databases detailing available human services. Accreditation ensures these databases are systematically updated and verified.
- **Community Needs & Gap Analysis:** Decision-makers at state and local levels gain access to reliable data on service utilization and unmet community needs, enabling smarter resource allocation and evidence-based policymaking.

3. Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Resilience

- **Streamlined Disaster Response:** In times of crisis or natural disaster, accredited programs serve as central communication hubs, routing critical public service information and facilitating rapid relief coordination.
- **Resilient Infrastructure:** Accreditation mandates disaster preparedness and continuity-of-operations plans, ensuring service is uninterrupted during emergencies.

4. Maximizing Cross-System Efficiency and Reducing Duplication

- **Elimination of Silos:** Accredited entities foster cooperative relationships across non-profits, government bodies, and healthcare sectors, preventing duplicated efforts and fragmented service delivery.
- **Optimized Client Pathways:** Individuals are connected swiftly and accurately to appropriate resources, reducing inappropriate emergency room visits, non-emergency 911 calls, or administrative overload on other public services.

Key Pillars of Inform USA Accreditation

Inform USA Accreditation evaluates community navigation programs' alignment with industry standards (Inform USA Standards) across five comprehensive core phases:

1. **Call Review Phase:** Independent evaluation of contact handling, specialist empathy and resource provision; quality benchmarks must be reached across access channels (phone, chat, text, etc.).
2. **Resource Database Review:** In-depth assessment of indexing, categorization (Taxonomy), verification protocols, and database maintenance standards.
3. **Community Survey Phase:** Direct feedback collected from community partners and service providers represented within the database to ensure network trust and alignment.
4. **Consultative Review:** Comprehensive audit of organizational governance, administrative policies, security/confidentiality protocols, staff training, and fiscal management.
5. **Virtual Site Visit:** Final interactive review with lead evaluators to verify implementation and institutional culture.

Flexible Accreditation Models

Inform USA offers tailored accreditation pathways matching diverse organizational structures:

- **Full/Traditional Accreditation:** Designed for organizations providing both direct contact center service delivery and comprehensive resource database management.
- **Partnership Accreditation:** Designed for modern collaborative delivery models, offering specific tracks for Contact Center Partnerships and Resource Database Partnerships to ensure quality across joint initiatives.

Impact Across Key Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder Group	Primary Strategic Benefit
State & Municipal Leaders	Reliable public information infrastructure, robust disaster communication hubs, and actionable community needs data.
Funders & Grantmakers	Objective quality assurance, measurable service performance, and confidence in grantee operational capacity.
Community Non-profits	Centralized, verified referral networks that reduce administrative burden and expand outreach.
Community Members	Dignified, rapid, and accurate access to essential social, health, and crisis services delivered by certified specialists.

Conclusion & Actionable Recommendation

Inform USA Accreditation is far more than a recognition badge—it is a strategic investment in community infrastructure. For state agencies and funding leaders looking to maximize the reach, reliability, and rigor of human service navigation, supporting or funding Inform USA Accreditation ensures long-term operational excellence, public trust, and high-impact stewardship of community resources.

For More Information

Contact accreditation@informusa.org or visit <https://www.informusa.org/accreditation-information>