

# Eden I&R, Inc.

*"linking people and resources"*



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## Agency Annual Report Fiscal Year 2007 (July 2006 through June 2007)

Eden I&R Inc. has been fulfilling a vital role in Alameda County for over 31 years. Eden I&R's flexibility has allowed the agency to consistently and creatively change as the community's needs change.

This year, Eden I&R (Information & Referral) continued to provide a variety of programs linking at-risk populations with critical social services. The people who benefited from these referrals included: homeless families, vulnerable youth, people living with HIV/AIDS, domestic violence victims, non-English speakers, the elderly, and the disabled.

### Telephone Information and Referral Programs

#### 2-1-1 Information & Referral Service

In November 2006, Eden I&R began providing 2-1-1 services to Alameda County in "test mode." 2-1-1 is a simple telephone dialing code that acts as a Single Point of Access for free health and human services information and referral in multiple languages. It provides service professionals and consumers access, 24 hours a day 7 days a week every day of the year, to the most comprehensive and up-to-date information on health, housing and human services in Alameda County. "Test mode" indicates that the technical infrastructure and the templates needed to track clients and referral information were being tested. Eden I&R is very close to solidifying the public/private leveraged funding needed to raise the \$1.3 million annual dollars necessary to fully launch 2-1-1. From January 2007 through June 2007, 2-1-1 assisted 1,061 callers. A separate 2-1-1 Status Report is available upon request. Below is one example of the types of requests being received through the new 2-1-1 communication phone line:

- A woman called in need of help with her PG&E bill. She had received a 48 hour notice. Eden I&R's Resource Specialist called PG&E on a conference call with the caller to get a two day extension so she could get the necessary papers filed with the Salvation Army who could then call in a payment guarantee. After speaking with three PG&E supervisors the extension was granted and ultimately the bill was paid by Salvation Army (also arranged through the Resource Specialist). This same caller was also behind on her rent for two months. The Resource Specialist called Operation Dignity and they agreed to cover the caller's rent once all the necessary documentation was presented at the appointment the next day (which was also arranged by the Resource Specialist). The caller called back to let the Eden I&R Resource Specialist know that she is now employed by the Salvation Army taking the calls for utility assistance!

#### Community Housing And Information Network (CHAIN) Phone Line

The CHAIN Phone Line offers free, comprehensive and timely information about available low-cost affordable housing, critical social services, and emergency shelter availability. Once 2-1-1 is fully launched, CHAIN calls will be handled via 2-1-1, 24/7. CHAIN Line callers represent Alameda County's neediest populations: approximately 78% are women, 82% are minorities (including monolingual Spanish), 46% have children under 18 living in the household, 25% are disabled, and 28% are homeless at the time they call. During July through June FY07 CHAIN Resource Specialists assisted 5,055 unduplicated callers find critical social services, housing and emergency services by handling 10,672 informational calls. Below is an example of a call handled by CHAIN:

- An Oakland resident called seeking assistance with her mortgage payment. She was 4 months behind and facing foreclosure. She stated she was behind due to her and her husband being laid off within a month of each other. The Resource Specialist asked if she had explored the option of refinancing her property. She stated that they had already refinanced the property with dire results. She located a Broker in a Spanish Speaking local newspaper. She signed all the documents for a refinance and never heard back from the Broker. The broker never provided her with the \$50,000 that she is currently repaying monthly as part of her refi. When confronted later the broker informed her that he too had been ripped off by his business partner. The Resource Specialist referred her to Consumer Credit Counseling of the East Bay for credit

counseling; as well as to Eden Council for Hope and Opportunity (ECHO) and Bay Area Legal Aid for legal advice and to explore other ways to use the remaining equity in her home. She was also given a referral to HomeSavers USA for possible assistance with delinquent mortgage payments.

### **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Phone Line**

From January 2007 through April 2007, Eden I&R Resource Specialists (speaking multiple languages) assisted low-income families who called the Alameda County and Contra Costa County EITC program by explaining EITC eligibility guidelines, and by referring callers to their most convenient Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. In Alameda County this year we referred 1,277 callers to 28 VITA sites. In Contra Costa County we referred 742 callers to 15 VITA sites. We also handled 565 EITC callers from other counties. A total of 3,624 referrals were given to callers regardless of their native language (i.e., 320 Spanish speaking callers; 47 Cantonese; and 9 Mandarin).

### **AIDS Housing Information Project (AHIP)**

This project includes a specialized phone line that provides assessment information on, and referral to, housing and human services designed for people living with HIV/AIDS in Alameda County. The project also includes an AHIP Rover who brings a laptop computer onsite to various AIDS service organizations and meets with clients living with HIV/AIDS who are in need of customized housing and social service referral information. This past year, the AHIP phone line served 266 unduplicated clients and the Rover served 191 clients. An example of an AHIP Roving client includes:

- Richard is an HIV positive man who has been homeless “by choice” for over 5 years. The Eden I&R Rover met him at Vital Life in Oakland. Richard, who has a history of crack cocaine abuse, told the Rover that he wanted to quit using drugs and find housing. At the time he was sleeping under a bridge in Oakland. Richard was given referrals to the Harrison Hotel (a subsidized housing complex) and other low-income housing programs. He was also connected with an agency that could fill out a Shelter Plus Care housing subsidy application for him. After working with Richard for over three months he now makes a point of being at Vital Life when the Rover is scheduled to be there. Although simple tasks, meeting on a regular basis with the Roving Resource Specialist and following through with the housing application process, represent significant accomplishments for a person who has been homeless and battling addiction for years. They are small steps that will ultimately lead Richard to being placed in stable housing and receiving the support services needed to address systemic problems. The Rover will continue to meet with him, assist with housing applications, provide service referrals and give him the encouragement needed to end the cycle of homelessness and substance abuse.

### **YouthLink**

This referral phone line operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is dedicated to the health and well-being of at risk youth and wards of the court, ages 12-17, as well as their parents, youth advocates and law enforcement officials. Youthlink provides referrals to services for youth and during the period of July through June FY07; YouthLink received a total of 337 calls.

## **Translation and Social Services After Hours Services**

### **Multilingual Capabilities**

In response to the documented need, Eden I&R is highly committed to providing bilingual services to the community. Eden I&R literature and brochures are produced in both Spanish and English so additional at-risk Alameda County residents can access the vital information and resources provided by the agency’s programs. The agency has staff members who speak various languages including Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Mandarin. For additional languages the agency contracts with Tele-Interpreters.

### **After Hours Emergency Phone Services**

Eden I&R handles the after-hours emergency calls for the Alameda County Children's Protective Services, the Foster Care Placement Line, Adult Protective Services and the Alameda County Public Guardian's Office. During FY 2007 Eden I&R handled 11,052 Child Protective Services calls, 510 Foster Care Placement calls, 1,706 Adult Protective Services calls, and 244 Public Guardian calls.

### **AT&T's Emergency Cantonese Language Assistance Bureau**

Eden I&R provides 24-hour translation services in the Bay Area to assist SBC/AT&T operators when Cantonese-speaking individuals dial "0". In Fiscal Year 2007, Eden I&R translators assisted 492 Cantonese speaking callers.

## **Roving, Community Building, and Disaster Preparedness**

### **Roving Housing Resource Project**

The Roving Housing Resource Project (RHRP) includes a variety of programs in which the agency's Roving Housing Resource Specialists conduct outreach workshops at other community based organizations. Each Specialist travels with a laptop computer with our housing and social services database and meets one on one with clients to provide them referrals. The program also provides on site the Housing Academy which is an intensive, skill-building program for homeless and low income families who need affordable housing. During FY07, Housing Academy workshops were provided to 32 attendees, housing case management services were provided to 101 clients and 781 housing referrals were given. Below is an example of a recent client in RHRP:

- Patricia, a single mother of three children was a resident of WINGS, a transitional housing program for women escaping domestic violence. She was in training for a banking position. After leaving WINGS and entering the Linkages program, which subsidized her rent for several months, the Eden I&R Roving Specialist was able to assist her in securing a rental deposit. The Roving Specialist then procured a lead for a subsidized unit in Hayward which would give her a Section 8 voucher. She applied and was accepted just as her Linkages program expired. She then moved to San Ramon, which was close to her work as a bank manager. She now pays 30% of her income towards rent, is stably housed, and within reach of self-sufficiency.

### **CalWORKS and Social Services Agency Services**

For decades Eden I & R has partnered with the Alameda County Social Services Agency to provide a variety of targeted services for at-risk populations, most recently CalWORKS participants. During FY07 one of the services provided to CalWORKS' participants was information and assistance for their successful involvement in employment activities. 255 CalWORKS participants were contacted and assisted in determining and resolving their barriers to participation in the CalWORKS employment program. This program is a collaboration between Eden I&R, the East Bay Community Law Center and Bay Area Legal Aid. Eden I & R also provided extensive information, advice and guidance on steps to protect against personal identity theft and fraud. Along with the Social Services Agency two community information meetings were conducted related to placing a fraud alert and/or a security freeze, and as a result, 42 individuals were provided ongoing individual assistance.

### **Disaster Recovery Services**

As a result of Eden I&R's disaster recovery roles in the aftermath of the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, the 1991 Berkley/Oakland Hills firestorm, and the 2005 Gulf Region Hurricanes, the agency has become a link between disaster victims and recovery services, as well as a leader in disaster planning alliances, locally and state wide. Eden I&R is committed to disaster preparedness -- internally, locally, regionally and statewide -- and continues its active role as a member of the Alameda County Emergency Manager's Association and Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disaster (CARD). Eden I&R staff attend monthly Emergency Managers Association meetings and participate in county and state disaster drills. Agency staff are also members of the Northern California Voluntary Agencies Active in Disasters and Bay Area Emergency Public Information Network (BAEPIN).

Eden I&R continued to play a leading role in aiding the Hurricane Katrina evacuees who are now residing in Northern California. Agency staff are members of the Katrina Long Term Recovery Committee and the American Red Cross Means to Recovery Committee. To this day the agency continues to help individuals and families from the Gulf Region deal with such issues as: post traumatic syndrome; physical health problems; the desire to return to New Orleans with limited financial resources; and the need for local long-term affordable housing and employment.

During FY2007 Eden I&R entered a collaborative contract with the Alameda County Office of Emergency Services (plus representatives from the county's cities and the Red Cross) and developed a specialized county-wide disaster phone bank to register, link and coordinate spontaneous volunteers in the event of a disaster. The agency has also begun purchasing equipment and revising response plans to improve its ability to respond to a local and/or regional emergency. The focus of these efforts has been on increasing the mobility of the technology through the purchase of laptops that can be pre-loaded with software and regularly updated from the agency's primary database systems.

### **Community Education and Leadership**

During FY07, Eden I&R has been an active member of numerous community planning and collaboration activities. For example, Eden I&R is a member of the following service delivery collaboratives: the Oakland Housing Collaborative and the Alameda Point Collaborative. For Bay Area service coordination of 2-1-1, we are part of a region wide initiative to assure mutual support and data sharing among the nine Bay Area county 2-1-1 providers. Eden I&R staff are also members of the EveryOne Home Ending Homelessness in Alameda County Program and Data and Evaluations Committees; the Oakland LGBT Task Force; the Homeless Count 2007; the Alameda County Housing Authority Program Coordinating Committee; and the Alameda County Senior Services Coalition. All of these partnership efforts contribute knowledge and expertise toward planning and improving services in Alameda County. In addition, Eden I&R actively educated the community about the myriad of the agency's services during this past year by distributing information at 13 community fairs, providing testimony at numerous public meetings, and presenting 4 community workshops.

Eden I&R's Executive Director is an active Board member of the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS), the statewide professional organization which represents locally-based information and referral agencies. As the CAIRS Board Public Relations Chair, Eden I&R's Executive Director is responsible for producing a quarterly statewide newsletter that keeps the public abreast of the I&R developments – especially in relation to 2-1-1 – throughout California.

## **Information Management Products and Services**

### **Social Services Information**

The Information Management department manages over 1,350 records of human service agencies. By maintaining the only such database in the county, Eden I&R is Alameda County's comprehensive information resource hub and plays an important role in reducing unnecessary duplication of services. The entire database is updated annually by confirming information directly with the agencies (individual records are updated as needed).

### **The Big Blue Book: The Directory of Human Services for Alameda County**

Eden I&R publishes the countywide resource guide, *The Big Blue Book*, on an annual basis. As the only such guide in the county, the Directory lists comprehensive information on over 830 human service agencies in Alameda County. Thousands of people utilize the Directory every day at hundreds of locations including libraries, social service agencies, hospitals, and schools. In addition to the printed directory we also offered a Directory on Diskette in a user-friendly electronic format.

### **Online Social Services Directory**

In response to the community's request for online access to our social service database, Eden I&R developed a free online directory website at [www.alamedaco.info](http://www.alamedaco.info). The online directory includes customizable features that allow registered users to save favorite agencies and personal notes. During July through June FY07 the website received over 633,460 hits from over 59,770 visitors.

### **Social Service Data on other Websites**

During FY07, Eden I&R's social service database remained incorporated in the **East Bay Works** Web Page at [www.eastbayworks.org](http://www.eastbayworks.org) as well as the statewide **Network of Care** website at [www.networkofcare.org](http://www.networkofcare.org). East Bay Works is a project of the various Private Industry Councils in the East Bay and is geared toward serving low-income people seeking employment and training. The Network of Care website is focused on senior issues and resources. The Eden I&R social services database was also included on the Bay Area Regional 2-1-1 website ([www.211bayarea.org](http://www.211bayarea.org)) which is a collaboration of information and referral agencies in the region to coordinate 2-1-1 services.

### **Housing Database**

During FY07, Eden I&R provided free access to over 56,300 housing units through the agency's phone lines and roving programs. Additionally, the agency sold housing database subscriptions to community based organizations and government departments, on a sliding scale fee basis. Organizations received updated housing information in printed or electronic formats twice monthly, as well as an onsite workshop on how best to use the database. The agency staff actively participated in community housing advocacy in part by being members of the Program Committee of the Alameda County Housing Authority, the Tri-Valley Housing Scholarship Program, and the East Bay Housing Organizations. Eden I&R continues to be the only agency that calls 18 Alameda County emergency

shelters two times a day to check on bed availability for the homeless and battered women. In addition Eden I&R provides the City of Oakland Mayors Office a daily report on the number of homeless and domestic violence beds available at shelters in Alameda County.

## Volunteers, Interns and Funders

### Volunteers and Interns

Volunteers and Interns are a critical resource for Eden I&R. After comprehensive training, volunteers and interns provide direct services by: answering CHAIN Line calls, updating housing and social services database records, providing technical support, and serving as Agency Board Members. During FY07 the agency had volunteers and interns from Spectrum, CalWORKS, and Cal-State University of the East Bay. From July 2006 through June 2007, Eden I&R's volunteers and interns contributed over 2,105 hours of dedicated service.

### Funders

Eden I&R has traditionally relied upon a private/public partnership in funding the breadth of services and products provided to the community. FY07 was no exception. On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and clients this past year, the agency wishes to thank the following financial supporters without whom Eden I&R could not have provided services to thousands of individuals and families:

Alameda County Area Agency on Aging  
 Alameda County Social Services Agency  
 Alameda County Office of Emergency Services  
 Alameda County Office of Housing and Community Development  
 Alameda County Probation Department  
 Alameda County Workforce Investment Board  
 Alameda Point Collaborative  
 Associated Community Action Program (ACAP)  
 Oakland Community and Economic Development  
 Hayward Community and Economic Development

#### AT&T

Eden Area Foundation  
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 The San Francisco Foundation  
 The United Way of the Bay Area  
 Walter & Elise Haas Fund  
 Wells Fargo  
 Y&H Soda Foundation

A special thank you is extended to our individual donors whose contributions meant so very much to the organization.

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