



Dutchess • Orange • Putnam  
Rockland • Sullivan • Ulster • Westchester



## 2-1-1 Fact Sheet

### WHAT IS 2-1-1?

2-1-1 is the abbreviated dialing code for free access to health and human services information and referral (I &R). 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember and universally recognizable number that makes a critical connection between individuals and families seeking services or volunteer opportunities and the appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies. United Way of America has been working in partnership with the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) since the late 1990s to advance the nationwide rollout of 2-1-1.

### WHY IS 2-1-1 SO IMPORTANT?

Every hour of every day, hundreds of people in the Hudson Valley and thousands of people in the United States need essential human care services -- from substance abuse assistance to adequate care for a child or an aging parent and people often don't know where to turn. In many cases, people end up going without these necessary and readily available services because they do not know where to start. 2-1-1 makes it possible for people to more successfully navigate the complex and ever-growing maze of human service agencies and programs. By making services easier to access, 2-1-1 helps people to get assistance when a problem first develops – rather than allowing a problem to grow.

2-1-1 provides callers with information about, and referrals to, health and human services for every day needs, and in times of crisis. For example, 2-1-1 can offer access to a range of services that address various types of needs:

**Basic Human Needs:** food, clothing, shelter, rent assistance, utility assistance, financial assistance.

**Physical and Mental Health Challenges:** health insurance programs, Medicaid and Medicare, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.

**Employment Issues:** job training, job placement, transportation assistance, education opportunities.

**Challenges Facing Older Adults and People with Disabilities:** adult day care, congregate meals, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, homemaker services.

**Needs of Children, Youth and Families:** child care, after school programs, Head Start, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services, legal services, counseling.

**Desire to Help:** volunteer opportunities and ways to donate.

#### **WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE BENEFITS OF 2-1-1 FOR THE CALLERS?**

One call gives the caller access to resources across the community. 2-1-1 is efficient, fast and easy to use.

No more wrong numbers; no more wasted time trying to find the right resource(s).

2-1-1 is a confidential call.

24-hour/7 days a week availability; 2-1-1 is always there for those needing help.

#### **HOW DOES 2-1-1 BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY?**

2-1-1 strengthens the community by uniting the people who want to help with those who need help.

2-1-1 is a useful planning tool. Based on aggregate data about the types of calls that 2-1-1 receives, communities are in a better position to anticipate demand for services and mobilize resources to meet changing needs.

2-1-1 helps support the integrity of 9-1-1 systems, saving that vital community resource for life-threatening emergencies.

#### **WHAT ROLE CAN 2-1-1 PLAY IN A TIME OF CRISIS?**

2-1-1 is a critical information system, which is necessary prior to, during and after a community crisis such as a flood, fire, or other local or national tragedy.

2-1-1 responds immediately during times of crisis to field calls regarding the crisis, and to direct callers to services most appropriate for their needs, again, taking the burden off frontline response agencies where people frequently call when they don't know where else to turn.

**2-1-1 maintains a permanent presence in the community. As a result, people can find the help they need, whether their needs arise a week after the crisis event or several years later.**

#### **IS 2-1-1 AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY?**

**Over 55% of the people in our country now have access to 2-1-1, with 75% of the country anticipated to have access by the end of 2006. The 2-1-1 Hudson Valley Region is the second and largest region in New York State to begin operation. See [www.211ny.org](http://www.211ny.org) for an update on New York State.**

#### **WHO ESTABLISHED 2-1-1 IN THE HUDSON VALLEY?**

**The United Ways serving Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties began meeting in 1999 to discuss the establishment of a regional 2-1-1 call service in the Hudson Valley. A feasibility study was conducted and initial funding for the planning phase was provided by several of the United Ways. In 2002, the Dyson Foundation provided \$221,000 as a challenge grant – matching every \$3 raised by the regional United Way effort with \$1. This provided the impetus to secure over \$1 million thus far to cover initial capital as well as first year operating expenses.**

#### **HOW IS THE 2-1-1 HUDSON VALLEY REGION ORGANIZED AND GOVERNED?**

**In 2004, the 2-1-1 New York State Collaborative, within the authority vested in it by the Public Service Commission, designated the 2-1-1 Hudson Valley Region Collaborative as the operating entity for 2-1-1 in the seven county area, with United Way of Westchester and Putnam serving as fiscal agent. A Regional 2-1-1 Policy Board was established in 2003; each county has three representatives, who are nominated by the respective United Ways, on the Regional Board.**

#### **HOW IS 2-1-1 HUDSON VALLEY REGION BEING FUNDED?**

**Financial and in-kind support to sustain this regional service has come from three major sources: the participating United Ways, county and state government, individual donors and foundations. Funding for the initial year is largely in hand, thanks to the vision and generosity of leaders in county and state governments, businesses and the collaborating United Ways. The “Calling for 2-1-1 Act” has been introduced in Congress by U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (NY) and Elizabeth Dole (NC) and supported by a growing number of members of Congress. A state bill that will provide additional support has just been passed. To donate to this important project, call 914-993-3711.**