

Help for any problem is now just a call or click away: Letter



By [South Jersey Times Letters](#)

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To the Editor:

If you needed emergency housing, food, job training or family counseling, would you know where to turn? Every hour of every day, someone in our region needs essential health and human services, regardless of their income, but it can be daunting to navigate the landscape of available nonprofit and government services if you are unsure where to start.

2-1-1 is the right place to start. Powered by [United Way](#) and the State of New Jersey, 2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number that connects you with a trained call specialist who can help you find the right resources and support in your local community.

With National 2-1-1 Awareness Day to be marked today, Feb. 11, we are proud to report that 2-1-1 call specialists have provided assistance to more than 70,000 callers – nearly 50,000 of which dialed in from South Jersey– across our region over the last year, connecting them to the right local organization that specializes in services such as basic needs, physical and mental health resources, employment supports and programs for older adults, children, youth and families. More than 5,500 calls originated from Cumberland County, with most callers seeking help with rent or utilities and affordable housing.

In addition to providing information and referrals to community members in times of crisis and in everyday situations, 2-1-1 takes the pulse of our region. The data collected by local 2-1-1 systems helps us identify prevalent or emerging community needs to facilitate informed responses. This type of coordinated effort can also be used to assess the region's ability to address large-scale issues and identify gaps in service to help meet critical or growing needs.

Locally, as our families continue to face significant challenges as a result of casino closings and job loss in our region, it is especially important to remember that help can be just a call or click away. Together, we can ensure that our neighbors receive support when they need it most. To find help in your local community, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.nj211.org.

JIM CAWLEY

President and CEO

United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey