



NJ 2-1-1 Partnership

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**CONTACT: Tom Cosentino, MWW
609-396-0067**

NJ 2-1-1 LAUNCHES ENHANCED WEBSITE; TOUTS SERVICES PROVIDED TO NEARLY 500,000 RESIDENTS OF NEW JERSEY IN PAST YEAR

East Hanover, NJ - (November 5, 2015) – NJ 2-1-1, which assisted nearly 500,000 people in the state to access vital social services in the last year through its call center and website, has launched a newly-remodeled and enhanced website www.nj211.org. The user-friendly site is designed to provide those in need with quick access to the agencies, information and comprehensive information they need. NJ 2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week all year long and provides services in multiple languages and serves the hearing impaired through its TTY services.

NJ 2-1-1 helps individuals and families find solutions to personal needs by informing them of resources in their community like day care facilities, shelters, affordable housing units, social services, employment training programs, senior services, medical insurance, and more.

"We are very excited to launch our newly-enhanced website," said Joseph Geleta, Executive Director of the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership. "The most important part of our mission is to steer those in need to the services they are seeking, and we feel the enhancements we have made will make finding information quicker and easier for those seeking assistance."

The newly-designed website can be translated into multiple languages and provides suggested searches and a "latest news" section, which makes it easier for users to find the pertinent information they are seeking. The enhanced website also provides visitors with user-friendly navigation to its resource database of over 10,000 programs and services.

IGM Creative Group of Lincoln Park, NJ handled the redesign of the website.

"I'm very proud of what we've accomplished with the new web site. Our talented 2-1-1- staff and the support of our many health and human services partners, has created a responsive information and referral platform that is easy to use for people who need help. Just one click -

and there's a wealth of information at your fingertips," said Gina M. Plotino, President Board of Trustees, NJ 2-1-1 Partnership.

A live chat session feature will also be rolled out in the future that will immediately connect a web visitor to a NJ 2-1-1 call center operator.

"Many people use mobile platforms to access information and our live chat feature and new menu-driven site will simplify and make their searches more direct, said Geleta."

Repeatedly, 2-1-1 demonstrates its value during times of crisis. The NJ 2-1-1 staff works closely with government officials, voluntary organizations throughout the state, and 2-1-1 centers in other areas. In times of disaster, NJ 2-1-1 plays a critical role in bringing information to the people most affected by the event and relaying the needs of callers back to government officials and first responders who are in a position to help.

"Our NJ 2-1-1 centralized system and knowledgeable, compassionate staff make finding established resources in New Jersey easier for individuals, helping professionals, and government employees," said Geleta. "Additionally, NJ 2-1-1 call staff keeps track of the needs callers communicate. By doing so, the system generates real time data on requests, complaints, and services. Over time, NJ 2-1-1 data can improve the quality of programs and services by making it possible to harvest essential information on resource allocation and use it for policy decision-making and budgeting."

While the nation observed National Preparedness Month in September, NJ 2-1-1 works year-round with the Office of Emergency Management in New Jersey to ensure that important emergency preparedness information from municipal and state officials is readily available to state residents.

"As the State Director of the Office of Emergency Management we rely on our partners during all phases of disasters. The NJ 2-1-1 Partnership has been a valued partner of ours in providing critical information and referral services when disasters strike," said Colonel Rick Fuentes, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police.

After living through 9-11, Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy, New Jersey residents know that being prepared for storms and unforeseen emergencies is essential. From November 1 through December 1, 2012 after Superstorm Sandy, the NJ 2-1-1 call center handled 6,400 calls and 80,000 web visitors went to the NJ 2-1-1 website to access the hurricane recovery pages.

The enhanced NJ 2-1-1 website offers New Jersey residents preparedness tips for meeting the challenge of future storms that may hit the state, especially now that we are in the height of hurricane season. Visitors to the NJ 2-1-1 website can learn what emergency systems are in place in New Jersey and nationally <http://nj211.org/homelandsecurity.cfm> and learn how to create their own emergency preparedness plan for themselves, families and pets.

NJ 2-1-1 also guides those with access and functional needs (or caregivers on their behalf) to register electronically with [New Jersey's Special Needs Registry for Disasters](http://www.registerready.nj.gov) www.registerready.nj.gov. This service gives these individuals an opportunity to provide information to emergency response agencies, so emergency responders can better plan to serve them in a disaster or other emergency. Alternatively, they can also dial 2-1-1 and call specialists will assist with the registration process.

In addition to emergency preparedness information, the NJ 2-1-1 website www.nj211.org provides visitors with full access to the 2-1-1 resource database of over 10,000 programs and services and is organized to allow users to "self-serve" by providing comprehensive information like application links, application agency locations, eligibility guidelines and critical dates, among others. Special sections of the site are devoted to such topics as Emergency Preparedness, Family Services, Home Energy Assistance, Utility Assistance, and Resources for the Unemployed among others.

In New Jersey the 2-1-1 system is managed by the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership, a subsidiary of the United Ways of New Jersey which, in 2002, was designated by the Board of Public Utilities as sole administrator of that number. The NJ 2-1-1 Partnership is a non-profit organization committed to connecting individuals in search of health or human service needs and referring them to those local organizations and agencies to assist them in their time of need. The United Ways of New Jersey work to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities. By affording the leadership to make 2-1-1 available to New Jersey residents, they are making an impact on lives every day.

2-1-1 is the free, user-friendly phone number that serves 90% of America's population, and connects some 16 million people a year to critical resources, information and services. In New Jersey, nearly 500,000 people turned to NJ 2-1-1 for help last year.

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For additional reports about calls handled by 2-1-1 contact Executive Director Joe Geleta at 973-929-3704 or visit www.nj211.org.

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