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## NJ 2-1-1 Partnership

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
February 9, 2014

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### **2-1-1 Day on February 11 Celebrates Human Service Number Over 420,000 Served in New Jersey in Past Year**

**East Hanover, NJ** -- February 11 is 2-1-1 Day, in recognition of the free, user-friendly phone number that serves 90% of America's population. Last year in our state, NJ 2-1-1 assisted over 420,000 people who dialed 211 or visited [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org) in search of existing programs and services created to help people-in-need.

NJ 2-1-1 assists individuals with ongoing needs by connecting them with health and human service providers who can help with concerns related to affordable housing, heating assistance, temporary financial assistance, disaster services, mental health services, nutrition and food assistance, to name a few.

When a person dials 211 (for free) from anywhere in the state, the call is routed to NJ 2-1-1. It's answered by a trained information and referral specialist, who discerns the need, then searches a comprehensive database of over 4,000 health and human service providers, who collectively offer nearly 15,000 programs and services at more than 12,000 locations in the state. The 2-1-1 specialist discusses appropriate services with the caller and then provides the contact information they will need to take the next step.

The NJ 2-1-1 website [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org) provides visitors with full access to the very same NJ 2-1-1 resource database and also offers a wealth of knowledge on its other content pages. Visitors will find comprehensive information about programs like SNAP, LIHEAP, EITC and many others along with application links, application agency locations, eligibility guidelines and critical dates, etc. Special sections of the site are devoted to such topics as Emergency Preparedness, Family Services, Utility Assistance, and Resources for the Unemployed among others.

Information available through NJ 2-1-1 is culled from all over the state with the organization anticipating seasonal needs as it updates and provides resources for its users. Whether it is finding the closest food bank in their area; the nearest code blue shelter during the winter or

nearest tax assistance location during the tax preparatory season, NJ 2-1-1 gives its callers and those accessing its website the full spectrum of available resources to meet any human service need.

“What we are able to provide both here in New Jersey and through the national 2-1-1 network is a compassionate way for people-in-need to find the essential services that will positively impact their lives,” said Tom Mergola, NJ 2-1-1 director of operations.

NJ 2-1-1 was launched by the United Ways of New Jersey ten years ago as a free way for individuals to connect to essential resources. Nationally, 2-1-1 serves more than 283 million Americans-- more than 90% of our population -- in all 50 states, plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. In 2012 (most recent data available,) almost 16 million people called 2-1-1 in the U.S. about job training, employment, food pantries, help for an aging parent, addiction prevention programs, affordable housing options, support groups and volunteer opportunities. After a disaster, when many land lines aren't working, people call 2-1-1 to search out water, food, shelter, and disaster aid.

United Ways have been long-standing supporters and the national leader of the 2-1-1 movement in Partnership with AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Services). As the largest private funder of the 2-1-1 network, the United Ways of New Jersey, in partnership with the State of NJ continue to strengthen and support 2-1-1 as another way to build stronger communities in our state and to create opportunities for all.

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*Tours of New Jersey's 2-1-1 Center in East Hanover is available upon request. For additional reports about calls handled by 2-1-1 contact Tom Mergola at 973-929-3705 or visit [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org).*