



# PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NJ 211 RESPONDS TO FORECLOSURE WOES BY CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES**

**Housing Related Inquiries Continue to Climb**

**Paramus, NJ May 1, 2008** - The growing need for housing and financial assistance is evident from the calls for help received by 2-1-1. This free and confidential statewide service connects citizens with state and local resources that provide assistance, and by alerting residents to viable solutions through its Web site, [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org) where those who fear foreclosure, will find a wealth of knowledge that may help.

The NJ 211 Web site, [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org), provides visitors with access to a searchable database equipped with instant messaging capabilities that they can use to electronically (and anonymously) communicate questions to call center specialists. In keeping with current needs, an entire page on the Web site provides foreclosure related tips and valuable links that will connect readers to other sites that are devoted to foreclosure remedies and solutions.

“The goal of NJ 211 is to make it easy for people to find the resources that they need,” explains Tom Toronto, chairman of NJ 211. “By connecting people-in-need with existing community programs and services, 2-1-1 supports efficient use of government resources and helps NJ citizens find solutions that promote self-sufficiency.”

2-1-1 call specialists are compassionate listeners who have been trained to navigate the vast and often complicated network of social services provided by the state. They have spoken with enough people to know the hardship and desperation that many in our state live with. It doesn't take more than an unexpected expense to throw one's world out of kilter.

When asked, call center operators can rattle off an array of scenarios that make it easy to understand how individuals living paycheck-to-paycheck could find themselves facing homelessness.

*“A single mother, who is balancing two jobs to make ends meet, loses one of those jobs and, with it, the necessary income to pay the mortgage.”*

*“A father of four who counts on overtime pay to meet his expenses, is told that the company is cutting back, leaving him with a serious shortfall of funds.”*

*“An elderly relative can no longer be left alone during the day and her daughter finds it impossible to maintain the full-time position she had while caring for her aging parent. The result is that her family is put in peril.”*

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“Hard working people are struggling to make ends meet every day. When they dial 2-1-1, we try to put them in touch with local resources that will provide solutions. We try to give them hope and help,” states Barbara Gallagher, director of NJ 211 client services.

2-1-1 strives to go beyond simply providing information – the staff looks for solutions. When someone calls about a housing need, client resource specialists take the opportunity to discuss other cost-saving programs with them. If they are within a certain income, specialists talk with them about food stamps and utility assistance programs. If the caller is a mother of young children, a discussion about the WIC (Women, Infant and Children) program ensues.

With a robust database and knowledge of resources throughout the state, the 2-1-1 staff is equipped to provide information about local resources and in many cases the service can direct people to a community food pantry where they may be able to obtain non-perishable essentials, leaving them to put the saved money towards housing costs.

For residents struggling with foreclosure worries, a call to 2-1-1 or a visit to [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org) may be the first step on the road to finding a realistic solution to their housing woes.

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#### **About NJ 211**

2-1-1 is a system of support, using inbound calls as well as a Web site ([www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org)) with Instant Messaging capability, that is intended to provide free, personal assistance to anyone trying to navigate their way through the vast network of health and human services, government assistance programs and local community resources in New Jersey. 2-1-1 is aimed at lessening the burden of callers by providing understanding and compassion along with the information that is needed to address the caller’s concerns. This confidential service is supported by United Way in partnership with the State of New Jersey – Department of Human Services and the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness.