



NJ 2-1-1 Partnership

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New Executive Team to Lead NJ 2-1-1

Veteran Staff Melissa Acree and Janice Kaniewski Move Organization Forward

East Hanover, NJ – The NJ 2-1-1 Board of Directors is proud to announce that it has named Melissa Acree as the organization’s new executive director and Janice Kaniewski to the position of chief operating officer. Both individuals have been with the organization since 2013, bring a multitude of critical professional and personal skills and a shared sense of mission to their new positions. Board president, Gina Plotino, a non-profit consultant, who has served on a temporary basis as the organization’s interim executive director, is pleased to have cultivated and promoted talent from within the organization, declaring “I have great confidence in the leadership capacity of these professionals to take the vision and mission of NJ 2-1-1 forward with strength and purpose.”

Ms. Acree is an accomplished professional with a rich and diverse background. Her career began in the public school system as a special education teacher and soon transitioned to training and development in private industry. Her business exposure spans corporations, healthcare, accounting and retail organizations. When she joined NJ 2-1-1 it was to fill a newly created position where she was responsible for the training and development of the staff and the documenting of protocols and procedures. She was promoted in July 2016 to director of business development and training and was charged with strengthening the organization’s relationships with state government and United Way partners. Her role as executive director will continue the work of building relationships with existing and future stakeholders. “I’m a collaborator by nature,” Ms. Acree concedes. “NJ 2-1-1 is built upon the fundamental principal that connecting with community resources is essential to making help happen when it is most needed.”

Ms. Kaniewski is equally qualified for her position as chief operating officer. She joined the organization with a strong work portfolio in private industry that included high-level management experience in process development, customer service, human resources, collections, budget and analyses. As the organization’s call center director, she has built a talented pool of community resource specialists who are known for their ability to provide hope and help to New Jersey citizens who are searching for solutions to life challenges. She also supported special initiatives and worked closely with community partners to ensure that those in-need could access programs for which they were eligible. As COO, Ms. Kaniewski will continue to oversee call center operations and the implementation of these specialized programs, among other responsibilities.

NJ 2-1-1 began answering calls for help in 2005. In 2016 it added online chat services and now residents can also text their zip-code to 898-211 to reach out for help, making NJ 2-1-1 more accessible than ever. Regardless of how people contact the organization, resource specialists pull from a database of approximately 3,000 agencies and over 10,000 programs and services in an effort to find the help that is needed. With over 20 special initiatives in place, NJ 2-1-1 goes beyond basic information and referral services, often connecting people with such vital and specialized programs as diabetes management and

prevention, Home Energy Assistance, Kinship Navigator and, most recently, ReachNJ, the state's Addiction Helpline. The new executive team along with veteran support staff and an ever-growing list of non-profit, government and corporate partnerships are collectively committed to the NJ 2-1-1 mission of connecting people in need of help with existing resources that can make all the difference. Services are free, confidential, multi-lingual and available 24/7/365.

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About NJ 2-1-1

The statewide information and referral service began in 2002 when the United Ways of New Jersey spearheaded efforts to give people-in-need a central location to call when looking for health and human services. The Board of Public Utilities designated the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership as the sole administrator of the three digit dialing code. Statewide coverage began in 2005. **In 2016 alone, the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership provided resource assistance to over 363,000 people who called 2-1-1 or visited our website.** With roughly 3,000 agencies in the organization's resource database and over 10,000 programs and services listed, NJ 2-1-1 provides the public with front door access to non-profit, government and faith-based services, as well as disaster response information. Follow us on Twitter @NJ211 and FB <https://www.facebook.com/nj211partnership/>.