



NJ 2-1-1 Partnership

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NJ 2-1-1 Offers Statewide Listing of School Supply Drives Providing All with Opportunity to Make a Difference in Children's Lives and Cooling Site Listing Offers Relief in Dog Days of Summer

(Whippany, NJ) "I just don't know how I will afford school supplies this year, with all of the other expenses we have," a caller to NJ 2-1-1 confessed. For some families, buying school supplies each August is a struggle that can be managed. For many families in NJ, it may just be impossible.

United Ways and other non-profits throughout the state work with individuals and businesses every summer in an effort to address this issue head-on. **School supply drives** go by many names like Stuff the Bus, Tools for Schools, and Backpacks 4 Kids, but all are organized with one goal in mind – to get school supplies into the hands of students in need. As a result of their efforts, people join together to either run a school supply drive of their own or donate to the cause. This burst of collaboration each summer brings significant benefit to some of New Jersey's youngest citizens. This year nearly 10,000 students who might otherwise have done without, will begin the school year with the tools that encourage success in learning and support self-confidence.

NJ 2-1-1, a free and confidential information and referral service for health and human services, does its best to spread the word about school drives occurring in every county of the state. "Each summer," board president Gina Plotino explains, "we reach out to organizations throughout the state and publicize details about these school supply drives in an effort to draw as much participation as possible to the local events." The [school supply drives list](#) changes as events become known to the organization. **From now until the end of August** visitors can access it from the organization's home page or by dialing 211 from any phone in New Jersey.

Building lists of this kind has become second nature to NJ 2-1-1. Throughout the summer months, residents looking for relief from the heat will find an ever-changing **list of local cooling sites** by visiting <https://www.nj211.org/nj-cooling-centers>. In winter months, when temperatures are frigid, web visitors will find a statewide listing of warming centers. Come tax season a listing of VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) sites is easily accessible. "Our mission is to connect people with existing resources in our state that will provide them the help they need," says Janice Kaniewski, NJ 2-1-1 call center director. She continues, "Those who find it easier to call our center or chat online with one of our referral specialists are provided with the information as well."

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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 an easy way to find health and human services, and 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 2015 alone, the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership provided resource assistance to over 372,000 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/>.