

MISSION & VISION

Washington Information Network 2-1-1's (WIN211) mission and vision is to answer the call to get help into people's hands statewide. WIN211 exists to make people's lives better, to enhance community resiliency, to identify and break cycles of need and to help organizations, foundations, businesses, individuals and government more efficiently distribute resources.

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2-1-1: NOW MORE THAN EVER

A Message from the Board of Directors

In local government the single most important service we provide is the call taker and dispatcher at the 9-1-1 Center. Someone guaranteed to answer your call for help, knowledgeable and caring and able to send help. It all starts with the phone call.

Programs designed to help people with physical, emotional, or financial distress are being severely curtailed or eliminated as legislators face the daunting task of stretching too few tax dollars to cover too much need. As a result this puts even more burden on the customer of that program to find help. "Sorry, we're only open ½ the usual hours now. Sorry, you'll have to call back later. Sorry, there's a new 800 number to call for that service; but don't mix it up with the other 800 numbers that can't help you with what you need. Sorry, you've reached a disconnected number."

In these difficult times, 2-1-1 plays an equally vital role as 9-1-1; a voice on the line to help get you to where services still exist. (And a 24/7 available web page.) People who need help with housing, food, and other basic necessities should not have to hunt for help. It should be, AND IS, as easy as calling 2-1-1, no matter where you live in Washington, no matter what the problem is.

There are ongoing costs to this service (like the state-wide phone bill, resource database with more than 16,000 service providers, and administration of the system), but the good news is that the system has been fine-tuned and overseen by a very professional all-volunteer Board of Directors dedicated to state-wide coverage, interoperability, service quality, auditable management practices, and oversight. And the service is delivered by some of the most intelligent, compassionate and committed professionals any call center has ever seen.

2-1-1 in Washington State is a public private partnership, although the public part of the partnership has been tenuous. State dollars are matched by local and charitable contributions five times over. Please urge your legislator to commit \$2M in the 2011-2013 biennial budget from the Washington Telephone Assistance Program to maintain this lifeline – this

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SUCCESS STORY

A success story for an elderly couple in Auburn was revealed during another call to 2-1-1 in the first quarter.

When asked how they had heard about 2-1-1, the caller said that she called us last year for minor home repairs and our referrals resulted in:

1) A new porch and stairs on her mobile home (it had been very dangerous for her and her husband, who walks with a cane) ,

2) A new water heater, and

3) Some new flooring.

She was absolutely gleeful about her “beautiful brand new porch.”

calls for zero general fund dollars. More than 80% of the referrals from 2-1-1 are made to non-governmental agencies for assistance. This is especially important since agencies such as Department of Social & Health Services, Department of Health and even legislative staff are referring people to 2-1-1 with increasing frequency – even at a time when the state’s share of our costs has been shrinking.

The number of people in need is growing in our state. The scope of their need is increasing. The human service program landscape is shifting with tectonic magnitude. There has never been a more important time to maintain the lifeline that is 2-1-1. It all starts with a phone call – now more than ever.

MOST REQUESTED COMMUNITY RESOURCES

JANUARY-MARCH 2011	NUMBER OF REQUESTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL REQUESTS
Utilities *	11,830	14%
Rent/Mortgage Asst./Move-In Costs Asst.*	10,473	13%
Free Tax (Free Tax Preparation/EITC)	6,162	7%
Legal	5,260	6%
Emergency Shelter	3,866	5%
Housing/Low-Cost Housing	3,147	4%
Food/Food Banks	2,475	3%
Household, Clothing, and Personal Goods	1,961	2%
Transportation/Travel	1,925	2%
Undesignated Financial Assistance	1,903	2%

CALLER COMMENTS:

A single mother of two children called 2-1-1 and had multiple needs. The caller expressed her appreciation at the end of the lengthy call: "I am so happy that there is a 2-1-1, because I would have never been able to come up with resources like these, especially without access to the Internet. Thank you so much for being so nice and helping me. I did not expect there to be so much information available. I can't wait to start calling some of these agencies and seeing what opportunities are currently available so I can finally begin rebuilding."

A caller who was provided with legal referrals, commented: "Wow! Thank you. I'm really impressed. I don't think I've ever talked with anyone before who had so much information at their fingertips."

UNMET NEEDS

* The following chart provides a list of caller needs where resources were not available. Rent and Utility Assistance are always among the top five caller needs. Unfortunately, they are also at the top of the unmet needs list since requests exceed the available resources.

JANUARY-MARCH 2011
Rent/Mortgage Asst/Move-In Costs Asst. *
Utilities *
Undesignated Temporary Financial Aid
Transportation/Travel
Emergency Shelter
Free Tax (Free Tax Preparation/EITC)
Legal
Household, Clothing, and Personal Goods
Mental Health/Behavioral Health
Housing/Low-Cost Housing

CALL VOLUMES AND REFERRALS

JANUARY-MARCH 2011	CALLS ANSWERED	REFERRALS PROVIDED
North Sound	14,156	24,492
Peninsulas	5,206	6,769
Southwest Washington	2,529	2,799
South Sound	16,650	26,827
King County	20,833	63,113
Greater Columbia	12,298	11,726
Eastern Washington	4,166	6,065
TOTAL	75,838	141,791

HOW 2-1-1 HELPS EVERY DAY

A Seattle caller, who had been unemployed for some time, was referred to 2-1-1 by DSHS. The caller mentioned that they had been really down on their luck and was very embarrassed at the fact they had to call and request assistance. By the end of the phone call, the caller commented: "You know just having a kind voice at the other end of the phone helped me out immensely. I really appreciate your help and kindness. Thank you!"

A 2-1-1 caller from Renton who received referrals for energy assistance commented: "You are a GODSEND. I've referred you to all of my friends and family, and you've helped all of them. I'm okay with waiting on hold, I just hope your service doesn't disappear! Please tell your agency and your coworkers that you are so wonderful and we're all very thankful for the information and the friendly and professional demeanor that you offer."

AS THE STATE REDUCES STAFF & SERVICES, STATE DEPARTMENTS AND OTHERS TURN TO 2-1-1 FOR HELP

By Bill Brackin, North Sound 2-1-1

The State of Washington has been reducing departmental budgets, which has resulted in less staff and the creation of more automated ways to access services that the State provides. Also, as many supportive programs such as TANF and Disability Lifeline have been reduced or eliminated, citizens have been looking for more ways to access alternative services and support. Referrals to 2-1-1 by State programs have increased, and the affected citizens have started to call 2-1-1.

During the first quarter of 2011, 2-1-1 answered the following number of calls where the caller mentioned having lost or reduced benefits:

Many State web pages are now linked to the WIN211 website or to our searchable online resource database. This is evidenced in referred website users, which includes:

State Unemployment Insurance and the new Washington Connection website also have links to the WIN211 website.

Information & Referral Specialists ask callers how they were referred to 2-1-1. For the last three months referrals from state, county and city agencies have soared. During the first quarter of 2011, callers were referred to 2-1-1 by the following:

Utility providers are also referring to 2-1-1 more often. During the first quarter they referred 1,417 callers, or over 3.1% of our new callers.

HOW 2-1-1 HELPS EVERY DAY

A caller from Kent, who was referred by her utility company, expressed her feelings to the Information & Referral Specialist: "I just want you to know I appreciate all of your helpfulness. You have communicated very clearly. The quality of the call was amazing. It's such a cold world out there and it feels so great to speak to someone who sounds like they actually care. You have given me so much hope and numbers to call for help. Thank you so, so, so very much!"

A caller in Shoreline, who had no food in the home, received multiple referrals. Hopelink in Shoreline was able to provide all the food needed. When asked about 2-1-1 staff and services, the caller said: "She was really nice and your services are really good."

2-1-1 REFERRALS, SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES AND CALLER COMMENTS

A caller in Seattle received referrals for employment, food and financial assistance for their power bill. The caller is now in a program for those who want to start their own business and unemployment benefits have started. The caller has an appointment at CAMP to be screened for the Low-Income Heat & Energy Assistance Program and was able to prevent shut-off of the electricity through assistance provided by St. Vincent de Paul and a local church. During a follow-up call, comments about 2-1-1 and the Information & Referral Specialist who assisted included: "Extremely thorough – she gave me even more than I asked for, and I appreciate that. She was kind and she was patient, so I appreciated that also."

A caller in Kirkland needed financial assistance for the rent and power bill. The caller received \$175, the full amount needed, from Catholic Community Services of East King County. When asked about the service provided by 2-1-1, the caller said: "Everyone I talk to there is always helpful. 2-1-1 is such a blessing."

A caller in SeaTac whose water was shut-off received referrals for financial assistance to pay their utility bill. Salvation Army in White Center provided \$150, which was the amount necessary to have the water turned back on again. The caller was also able to receive \$200 toward the gas/heat bill from Catholic Community Services of South King County. The caller expressed appreciation for the Information & Referral Specialist who helped her during the initial call: "She was very helpful. She was very proficient; she did her job well."

A caller in Auburn received referrals for financial assistance because their electricity was shut off. St. Vincent de Paul pledged \$141, which was amount necessary to have the power restored. During a follow-up call, the comment about the Information & Referral Specialist was: "She did a great job and I appreciate it. She told me where I needed to go."

A Seattle caller received referrals for furniture and household items. Pink Pantry – Tiny Diamond Earrings provided towels, cleaning supplies and other household furnishings, St. Vincent de Paul provided a couch and bed. The caller shared her feelings about the Information & Referral Specialist who assisted her: "She was wonderful. She helped me out. I took the information she gave me; I used the referrals and I got the help I needed. I appreciate her help."

WASHINGTON INFORMATION NETWORK 2-1-1

Contact WIN211 with questions or comments: info@win211.org

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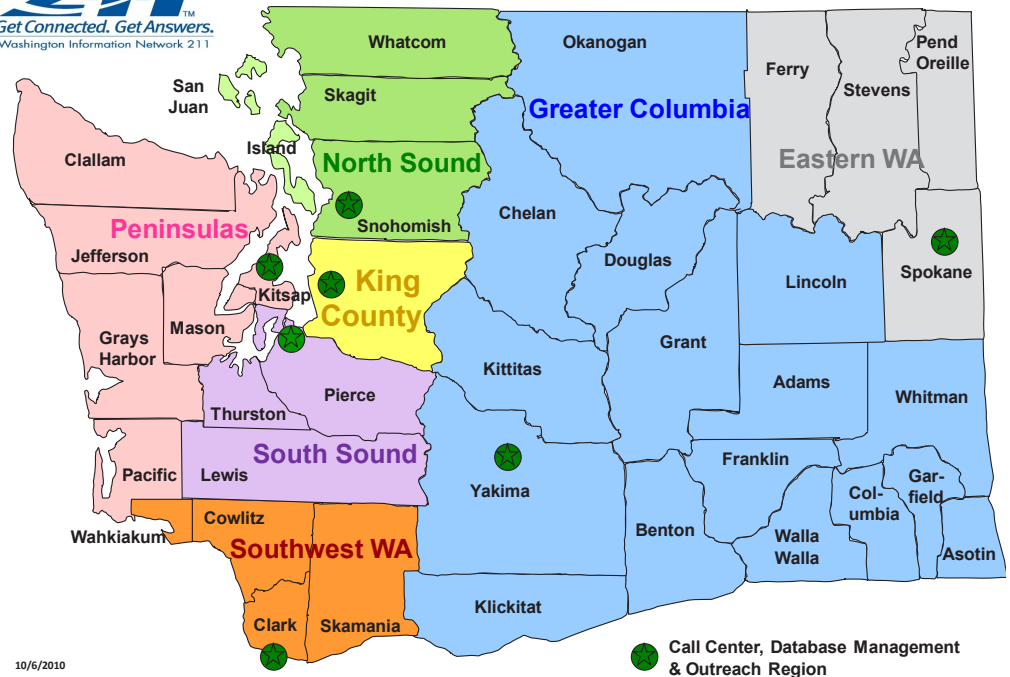
ATTENTION SERVICE PROVIDERS

If the information for your agency or service has changed, contact 2-1-1 so we can update our community resources database.

Thank you to United Ways of Washington for their continued support of WIN211



Washington State 2-1-1 Call Center Service Areas



REGIONAL 2-1-1 CONTACTS

2-1-1 REGION	CONTACT INFORMATION & PARENT AGENCIES
North Sound 2-1-1	Bill Brackin, bbrackin@voaww.org Volunteers of America Western Washington
Peninsulas 2-1-1	Kelly Schwab, kellys@kmhs.org Kitsap Mental Health
Southwest WA 2-1-1	Liesl Wendt, liesl@211info.org 2-1-1 Info
South Sound 2-1-1	Shawn Parkhurst, shawnp@uwpc.org United Way of Pierce County
King County 2-1-1	Susan Gemmel, sgemmel@crisisclinic.org Crisis Clinic
Greater Columbia 2-1-1	Amy Peters, apeters@pfp.org People for People
Eastern WA 2-1-1	Jan Dobbs, jdobbs@smhca.org Spokane Mental Health