



Press release

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Calls to 2-1-1 Reflect Rising Needs in Bay Area Calls for Basic Needs up 33% Since Last Year

SAN FRANCISCO, September 15, 2009 -- The 2-1-1 Bay Area providers released call data, which shows the region’s community information line handled 74,646 calls in the first half of 2009, up 35% from the same period in 2008. At the same time, requests for help with basic needs – such as food, shelter, and clothing – soared 33%, compared to the first half of 2008.

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, toll-free phone number that connects Bay Area residents with local community services, such as food, shelter, counseling, employment assistance, child care and more. Trained, caring specialists answer calls and conduct a thorough assessment to ensure an accurate referral.

The basic needs requests of 2-1-1 Bay Area callers are shown below. Please note that some callers receive assistance for more than one need or issue.

	Clothing & Material Goods	Food	Housing & Utility Assistance	Income & Employment Services	Transportation	Total
January – June 2008	695	3,429	23,794	7,561	785	36,264
January – June 2009	848	5,392	30,176	10,804	890	48,110
% increase	22%	57%	27%	43%	13%	47%

“2-1-1 is serving as an essential guide for Bay Area residents during these tough times,” said Anne Wilson, CEO of United Way of the Bay Area, which operates 2-1-1 service in Marin, Napa, San Francisco and Solano Counties. “Our 2-1-1 specialists are answering more calls

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from people who are asking for help for the first time in their lives, and are not sure where to start. We're happy to reassure them that our 2-1-1 team is here to listen and direct them to community resources that can help."

Barbara Bernstein, Executive Director of Eden I&R, which manages 2-1-1 Alameda County, said, "Here in Alameda County we are handling over 400 calls a day! It is not surprising that as the local economic climate continues to get worse, the needs of our residents continue to increase. Our 2-1-1 feedback line contains testimonials from callers who appreciate the ease and comprehensive nature of the 2-1-1 communication system."

John Bateson, Executive Director of Contra Costa Crisis Center, which operates 2-1-1 in Contra Costa County, said, "In tough economic times, when layoffs and foreclosures are making it harder for people to get by, having a simple, easy-to-remember number to call for help and information can make all the difference. 211 is that number, and more people are discovering it."

2-1-1 Bay Area became available to most of the region in February 2008. It is now available in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. San Mateo County residents can reach the 2-1-1 call center by dialing 800-273-6222.

About 2-1-1 Bay Area

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, toll-free phone number that connects callers with local community services, such as food, shelter, counseling, employment assistance, quality child care and more. During a disaster, 2-1-1 provides critical information about evacuation routes, food and shelter, as well as support with finding new jobs and permanent housing during long-term recovery. 2-1-1 is confidential and available 24 hours a day in more than 150 languages. 2-1-1 Bay Area is operated by United Way, Eden I&R, and Contra Costa Crisis Center. For more information, visit www.211BayArea.org.

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