


United Way 

2-1-1™


Get Connected. Get Answers.

www.211iowa.org

Emergency Services Study Committee
November 16, 2006

2-1-1 What is 2-1-1?

- The national hotline number for free access to health and human services information
- A strong emergency preparedness/ recovery partner
- An easy-to-remember, FCC assigned number
- One call connects a person to information about all available human services

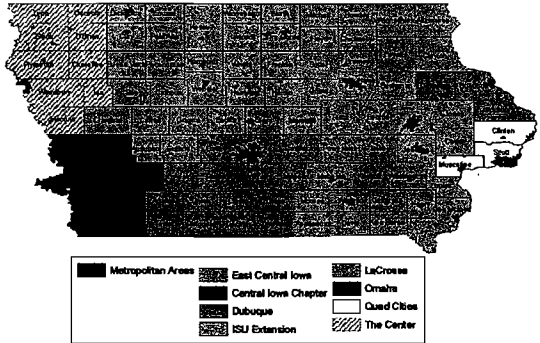


2-1-1 Types of Assistance

- Emergency Preparedness/ Recovery
- Basic Human Needs Resources*
- Physical and Mental Health Resources*
- Employment Supports*
- Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities
- Support for Children, Youth and Families

most frequently requested services

211 CALL CENTER AREAS



211 2-1-1 Call Volume

- 2-1-1 can be accessed by phone or by website.
- Iowa DHS provided start up support for 2-1-1 website

	East Central Iowa	Central Iowa	Sioux	Omaha	LaCrosse	ISU Extran.	Quad Cities	Dubuque	TOTAL
Web Visitors	9,139	22,563	5,261	17,319	N/A	8,210	14,026	4,496	
Call Volume	32,000	39,000	4,000	3,200	1,000	4,300	3,046	1,000	

Emergency Preparedness

- 2-1-1 responds immediately during times of crisis, fielding calls and directing callers to services most appropriate for their needs.
- 2-1-1 serves as volunteer and donation management centers.

Northwest Iowa (900) 211-1111
 Northeast Iowa (900) 211-1111
 Five major disaster (900) 211-1111
 Iowa State University (900) 211-1111

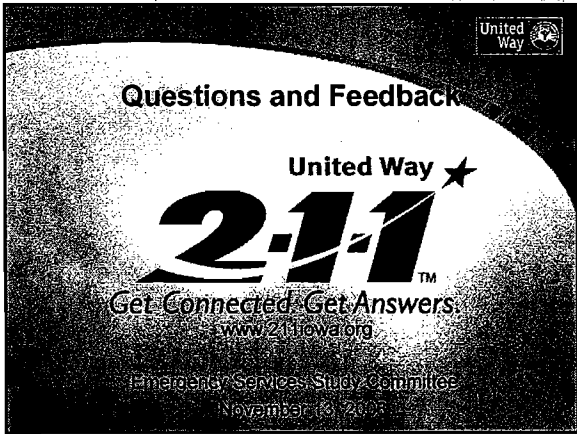
Emergency Preparedness Partnerships			
East Central Iowa	Quad Cities	Polk County	Sioux City
MOU with Linn and Benton County Emergency Services and Duane Arnold Energy Center Johnson County Safety Coalition MOU (in progress)	Central point of contact for Floods of 1993, 2001, and with Katrina Relief VOAD Site Coordinator with Red Cross Salvation Army Churches United and County Emergency Services	Pandemic Flu planning with Polk County Health, EMA, Fire, Police, Metro Star, Red Cross, County Attorney (in progress) MOU with Polk County Emergency Services (in progress)	Plans for 2-1-1 to be housed in new tri-county emergency services center Woodbury County IA, Union County SD, and Dakota County NE EMERGENCY SERVICES

2-1-1 Proven in Emergencies

- 2-1-1 offers one single point of contact
- 2-1-1 is simple to remember
- 2-1-1 calls are answered 24/7
- 2-1-1 call centers have bi-lingual staff
- 2-1-1 website can translate information in 12 languages
- 2-1-1 helps 9-1-1 operators and first responders to focus on emergency calls
- 2-1-1 is operational

2-1-1 Iowa's Potential Unfulfilled

- Iowans need a central, efficient point of contact for non-emergency help.
- Iowa has eight 2-1-1 call centers; each center is the operational base for delivery of information & referral services, resource data coordination, outreach, management of volunteer and donations, and other direct activities.
- Iowa needs a 2-1-1 system that is comprehensive, coordinated, sustainable and integrated with state & local partners



October 1, 2006

New Jersey Acts to Shift Callers in Some Emergencies to 211

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEWARK, Sept. 30 (AP) — New Jersey has adapted its 211 phone line, started last year to connect callers with information on human services, to handle calls from people wondering what to do in an emergency — like a hurricane or a terrorist attack — yet not requiring immediate help.

The next time a natural disaster or another crisis occurs, New Jersey residents can get nonemergency help by dialing 211.

“We are taking an important step toward improving the flow of information during times of emergency or heightened alert,” Gov. Jon S. Corzine said last week. “By expanding the state’s existing 211 telephone system New Jersey’s residents will have an easy-to-remember number to call for information on how to proceed in the face of everything from terrorism threats to natural disasters.”

The plan was designed to ease the burden on operators for 911 and on local police dispatchers, who would already be swamped with calls directly related to the emergency.

The 211 line is being geared toward getting out information like storm evacuation routes or advice on where to find food and shelter if the emergency causes damage.

The system still has some bugs to be worked out, however.

During a chemical emergency in Elizabeth on Tuesday afternoon, in which more than 50 people were sickened by a noxious cloud and a wide area was cordoned off, a 211 operator had no information available.

Later, the state’s Homeland Security Department gave operators information on the situation in Elizabeth, a spokesman said.

“That is exactly the type of situation we had in mind for 211,” said Richard Canas, New Jersey’s homeland security director. “Traffic was tied up in knots, and if people called 211, they could have found out what was going on and what they should do.”

People needing immediate emergency help should still call 911, officials said, and the 211 line will continue to offer information on services like food banks, shelters, housing, crisis lines, counseling, health care programs and job training.

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2005

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After Hurricanes, Support Grows for 211 Call Service

By STEPHANIE STROM

There is 911 for emergencies and 411 for telephone numbers, and in New York City, residents dial 311 to complain about municipal services.

Now support is mounting for a nationwide rollout of 211, a telephone referral service created by United Way of America and its local affiliates that links callers to social services and volunteer opportunities in their communities.

Such systems were used in Louisiana and Texas after Hurricane Katrina, and were widely praised for their ability to assist victims and those helping them find resources and services.

"It was one of the few bright spots of that period," said George Penick, president of the Foundation of the Mid South, a community foundation in Jackson, Miss.

The success of the system attracted more attention to a push begun in 2003 by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Democrat of New York, and Senator Elizabeth Dole, Republican of North Carolina, to establish 211 systems nationally.

The system was started by United Way in Atlanta in 1997 and has spread to all or part of 32 states and Washington, D.C., reaching almost half the nation's population. It was designed to help people navigate the thicket of charities that have sprung up over the last two decades and find the best programs for their needs.

After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Congress saw the potential for the system in emergencies, and in 2002, it granted states permission to use federal money intended to prepare for potential bioterrorism attacks for 211 systems.

But under that law, the system competes with 17 other options the states have for that money, and Senators Dole and Clinton believe that the system needs a larger, dedicated source of financing. Their bill seeks

\$550 million over the next five years to build and support 211 systems and requires states to put in another \$300 million.

Last summer, United Way led a lobbying push for the bill that increased the number of senators and representatives supporting it by 49 and was stunned when, with no wooing, 27 more members signed on after Hurricane Katrina. So far, 168 members have signed on to the bill.

That 211 worked so well in the hurricane crisis also came as a surprise. It was used during the hurricanes that struck last year, but United Way officials said those storms did not challenge it the way Hurricane Katrina did.

"The calls coming in weren't your typical 211 calls," said Peter Bishop, the 211 manager for United Way of America. "We don't usually deal with someone who's in their attic with water rising all around them and 911 broken down."

Ordinarily, 211 operators help find after-school programs, rent assistance, job training, medical support and other services using databases built over months and years.

"You can pretty much chuck that database out of the window during a disaster, particularly this one," Mr. Bishop said, referring to Hurricane Katrina. "None of the organizations listed in it could operate in and around New Orleans. Their phone lines were down, and the phone numbers people wanted and needed anyway were totally new."

With the 211 system in New Orleans knocked out, Monroe, La., population 53,000, became home to the 211 system for the state. The call center in the local United Way office went to 50 seats from 4 seats over three days.

Six volunteers were assigned to do nothing but seek phone numbers and information to add to the new data-

base, and operators took calls from people who could not get through to the state's emergency services. Mr. Bishop estimated that 80 percent of calls were answered within 30 seconds, the standard that United Way has set for the system.

"It did not work perfectly," he said. "Sometimes we gave out wrong information, and I'm sure not everyone could get through. But I am so proud of the 211 system."

Mississippi did not have a 211 system when Hurricane Katrina hit, although United Way of the Capital Area in Jackson was planning one.

"Can you imagine how many 800 numbers people had to try to remember during this crisis and how much easier it would have been to remember 211?" said Carol J. Burger, president and chief executive of the Jackson United Way. "It would have been so much more manageable here if one phone call was all that was needed to send people to the right place with the right information. Instead, it was chaos."

The Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service quickly created a hot line that helped storm victims and coordinated delivery of relief supplies and volunteer services.

"We had 41 lines going 16 hours a day," said Marsha Meeks Kelly, executive director of the commission. "The volume of calls is going down, but it takes the individuals answering the phone calls two or three days to follow up because the needs are more complicated at this point in the recovery."

Ms. Burger said she hoped to have the state's 211 system in operation in January, provided that state regulators approved it.

"I visited Monroe," she said. "It was amazing to sit there and see how well it operated, how they could get people going in the right direction — and wish we had the same thing."

A system built for social services could play a crucial role during emergencies.

What's the 211?

There's 911 for emergencies and 411 for phone information. In New York, 311 offers help with city services. Now, support is mounting for a nationwide rollout of 211, a service that links callers to social services and volunteer opportunities.

Teaser on front page