

PA 2-1-1 Informational Newsletter Article

The PA 2-1-1 system is a free, confidential dialing code to help connect Pennsylvanians to health and human service needs. Through 2-1-1 people connect to a wide range of services from disaster relief to utility assistance, senior citizen programs, emergency food, job counseling, youth programs and much more. It is the one-stop-shop for services available in communities across Pennsylvania.

2-1-1 is like 4-1-1, but for health, human services and disaster relief. 2-1-1 was designated for nationwide use as an information and referral phone line by the Federal Communications Commission in 2000. Since then, Pennsylvania has joined with the rest of the nation to provide this service to our communities, and have expanded 2-1-1 connectivity through text and chat availability. 2-1-1 is designed to serve three major objectives:

1. Connect people in need to health and human service assistance available through government programs and private nonprofit organizations in their communities;
2. Provide assistance to communities in time of disaster, allowing 9-1-1 to work primarily with first responders; and
3. Connect volunteers and donors with organizations who can leverage these resources to meet the needs of the community.

Currently, the PA 2-1-1 system is funded by a combination of United Way support, grants and private contributions, and contracts. The United Way of Pennsylvania and the nonprofit, PA 2-1-1, are partners and leaders in supporting this community-strengthening service. Presently, there are seven regions throughout the Commonwealth providing the 2-1-1 service and through six call centers, with most counties able to connect to 2-1-1. Most of the regions offer 24/7 phone coverage, as well as texting during some or all hours of the day. To text 2-1-1, simply enter TXT211. These features provide easy-access to services for varying needs and at times convenient for those looking for information.

To learn more about the PA 2-1-1 system, please visit <http://www.uwp.org/what-2-1-1>.