

news release

Area 9 In-Home & Community Services

Agency

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LOCAL 2-1-1 CALL CENTER CELEBRATES TWO YEARS

Our local 2-1-1 Call Center will be celebrating its second anniversary during December. The 2-1-1 Call Center continues to serve families and individuals in Fayette, Franklin, Rush, Union and Wayne Counties by connecting them to human service agencies in their area. Simply dialing 2-1-1, night or day, will allow individuals to speak with a qualified staff member. Each 2-1-1 representative is trained to assist callers with not only basic information, but with understanding the options available through local agencies, community services, and governmental programs. The 2-1-1 call is at no cost to the caller and supported through independent funding.

"It's hard to believe that the 2-1-1 system has been in operation and helping folks in the Whitewater Valley for two years now," said Rachael Hughes, Chair of the 2-1-1 Advisory Board. "As the database of available services has grown, we have been able to provide better, more timely information that is of great value to our community. I'd like to extend a special thanks to those who have helped to fund this initiative and encourage anyone with health and human service needs to call the office for assistance."

As our local economy continues to struggle, calls to 2-1-1 have risen dramatically. During the past year, a total of 3,109 calls were received, over 20% increase, from the following areas: Fayette County – 491, Rush County – 236, Franklin County – 114, Union County – 56, Wayne County – 2,269. The top 10 caller requests by percentage were:

Financial Assistance – 43%	Housing – 4%
Food – 17%	Legal – 4%
Utility Assistance – 11%	Transportation – 4%
Health/Medical – 8%	Employment – 3%
Government/Taxes – 5%	Homeless Shelters – 1%

David Free, 2-1-1 Coordinator, stated, "As we all look to the financial horizon, searching for a break in the economic storm in which we now find ourselves, it is a relief to know that there are organizations ready to assist us in our hour of need. However, many do not know what organizations exist or how to access the resources that might be available to them. That is the role of 2-1-1. From basic needs to complex problems, 2-1-1 is here to connect those in need with agencies and organizations that can meet their needs, resolve their crisis and improve their quality of living."

"Not only is the 2-1-1 Call Center providing help to local residents who need community services, the service is also an important and essential aspect of economic development for this region of Indiana," states board member Tony Shepherd whose Area 9 Agency houses the 2-1-1 Call Center. Shepherd further states, "Recent events with the local economy have made it more difficult to create and maintain a good worker environment at a time when many of us are juggling jobs, children, family and our own emergencies. Balancing these challenges and solving crises often cannot be accomplished on our own. We may need basic services such as food, shelter and clothing or we may need a good childcare provider, afterschool service or assistance for a live-in relative. 2-1-1 is able to help with these challenges and thus strengthen the quality of families and quality of workers to help our local businesses succeed."

Over 1,000 community services are now included in the database. For information or assistance, simply dial the three digit number: 2-1-1.