



United Way of Columbia County

NEWS RELEASE

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Press Release

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Report to the Community on 2-1-1 for Pennsylvania

2-1-1 is an easy to remember three digit phone number designated by the Federal Communications Commission to provide assistance to consumers on where to call with a question about accessing health and/or human services. For too long, Pennsylvania has been one of three states (the others are Wyoming & Arizona) where the service is unavailable.

Last year, on February 11th the Pennsylvania Utility Commission, at the request of the United Way of Pennsylvania and more than 150 other organizations and legislators, awarded the 211 designation to PA211, the new non-profit established to implement the service for Pennsylvania.

“Having a fully functional 2-1-1 system in Pennsylvania plays an important role in more effectively coordinating our government-related services by providing a single phone number that individuals may call when they are seeking information about assistance in paying their utility bills and weatherization services, as well as information on unemployment compensation, food banks, educational seminars, and other available services,” said Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission Vice Chairman Tyrone J. Christy. “While we have made great strides in the last year to provide our citizens with easier access to information about our many available assistance programs, more work needs to be done. Feb. 11, 2011, is a good day to update our status and recommit everyone to achieving these goals.”

On this special date, PA211 is proud to provide this progress report on the status of its implementation. The most exciting news is that 2-1-1 has begun to roll out across the state and will continue throughout the year beginning with the first region, a limited pilot in the Philadelphia/SE region. This pilot is possible through the efforts of the United Ways in the Greater Philadelphia region and NJ2-1-1 which has been providing service in New Jersey for more than 5 years. 211 SE PA is in the process of finding a local philanthropic champion to support a full public launch later this year.

PA211 has awarded provisional status to an additional five organizations who will serve as regional centers across the state. A seventh, for the northwest region has not yet been awarded. The role of these regional centers is to provide help to families and individuals both online as well as by phone where call specialists can connect PA residents to local health and human

service resources in their community. These centers will ultimately be tied into a statewide coordinated database and call monitoring software system so that 2-1-1 calls can be answered throughout the state from any community on a 24/7 basis. These centers are at various stages of implementation, with several who will receive the “go ahead” from PA211 within the next few months.

As the 211 system expands in Pennsylvania there are several other services, most notably, the ability to partner with 9-1-1 in times of disasters so that 9-1-1 can dedicate itself to “First Responders”, leaving 2-1-1 to provide answers to “urgent” but not “emergency” calls.

PA211 is a nonprofit organization developed through a partnership between the United Way of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Association of Information and Referral Services (PAIRS). A copy of its business plan, board members and regional center information is available at its website PA211.org.

Counties included	Center Director	Title	Agency Name/DBA	Address	City	Zip code	e-mail address	Phone number
Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Potter, Venango, Warren	No center chosen							
Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Green, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer, Washington, Westmoreland	Anne Fogoros	Director, 211 Project	U W of Allegheny County	1250 Penn Avenue	Pittsburgh	15222	afogoros@uwac.org	412-456-6886
Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Columbia , Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Somerset, Union	Bonnie Tatterson	Executive Director	Community Help Centre	141 West Beaver Ave	State College	16801	bonniet@communityhelpcentre.com	814-272-1542
Bradford, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne, Wyoming	Tom Foley	Director	Wilkes-Barre Help Line	31 W. Market St	Wilkes-Barre	18701	tfoley@fsawv.org	570-829-1341
Berks, Carbon, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Northampton, , York	Toni McCuiston	Director, LINC	UW of Lancaster County	630 Janet Avenue	Lancaster	17601	mccuiston@uwlanc.org	717-824-8118
Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Perry	Kelly Gollick	Executive Director	Contact Helpline	PO Box 90035	Harrisburg	17109	kgollick@contacthelpline.org	717-652-4987
Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia	Sara McCullough	Director/211	UW of S E Pennsylvania	7 Benjamin Franklin Parkway	Philadelphia	19103	smccullough@uwsepa.org	215-665-2632