

Communities Thrive When We Put the Pieces Together

Tim didn't expect to lose his job; he had never needed help before. In fact, during the call to Connect2Help 2-1-1, he mentioned that he volunteers at his church's food pantry, but he was too embarrassed to ask them for food for his own family.

We never know when tragedy - economic, emotional, physical - will strike, and outside of our own support system of family and friends, most of us don't know where to turn for help. For many, especially those living in poverty, the support system of family and friends often is too fragile to lend help when it's needed the most.



In the last year, more than **265,000 people called** Connect2Help 2-1-1, and another **92,000 searched** the C2H 2-1-1 online resource database, to find help with over **456,000 needs**. Using a resource database of more than **6,000 services**, Connect2Help 2-1-1 callers and online searchers received nearly **584,000 referrals** to community resources.

Top Needs—FY 2012/2013

Housing—15%	Utilities—13%	Food—11%	Financial—8%	Legal—7%	Health—7%

Despite the existence of thousands of human services, demand for services outweighed supply; **8% of all needs reported by 2-1-1 callers were recorded as "unmet."** The top 2 unmet reasons were "no resource" (29%) and "client not eligible for service" (20%).

Top Unmet Needs—FY 2012/2013

Housing—23%	Utilities—14%	Holiday Help—11%	Goods—7%	Food—7%	Health—5%

Connect2Help 2-1-1 conducted outcome surveys and discovered that **79% of callers contacted at least one of the referrals** provided by 2-1-1. Of those who contacted referral agencies, **77% reported improvement** in their situation. Survey data also revealed that **43% of callers had never called for help before**; this translates into more than 100,000 people who were new to the complex maze of the human services delivery system.

This "maze" is confusing not only to people who **need** help, but also to those who want to **provide** help. Unless someone is directly connected with a specific cause, such as hunger or homelessness, they often don't know whom to contact to offer help. Many people **don't even know** that help is needed. These **untapped resources** could be a game-changer for our community.



Connect2Help 2-1-1 can make the connections—whether someone needs to **get help** OR wants to **give help**.

The service is available with a **live answer—24/7/365**—or via www.Connect2Help.org.

Here are some ways to help those struggling to survive start to thrive.

Volunteer Time—Connect2Help 2-1-1 has a database of literally **thousands of human services**, many of which use volunteers to help offset the cost of providing their services. Obvious choices include helping at a food pantry, a homeless shelter, or during the holidays. However, many other opportunities exist, such as working with animals, tutoring, marketing/event coordination, or providing transportation.

Donate Goods— Goods of all kinds are desperately needed in our community, and **2-1-1 can connect you to the places that need them the most**. Food and clothing usually come to mind first, but other items that are in short supply include school supplies, medical equipment, building materials, and diapers. When natural disasters strike—such as floods or tornados—2-1-1 is in daily contact with service providers such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army to collect information about what the affected community needs and how the rest of the community can help. Centralizing this information via an easy-to-remember number—2-1-1—is an efficient way to coordinate donation and volunteer efforts during a disaster.

Donate Money— Even small amounts can make a huge difference. 2-1-1 makes thousands of referrals to agencies that provide the **last \$25-\$50** of a rent or utility bill. Unfortunately, the need is ALWAYS greater than the supply, but for thousands of people, just \$25-\$50 can keep them in their homes or keep the lights on. Another option—donate to organizations, such as United Way, that maximize donated dollars by strategically funding agencies that have demonstrated an ability to address community needs.

Contact Legislators—Advocate for issues about which you are passionate. 2-1-1 can connect you with your **local, state, and federal representatives** to share your views on issues such as neighborhood safety, beautification, and economic development. Representatives want and **NEED** to know what the community needs to allow ALL of its citizens to thrive.