PENNSYLVANIA 2-1-1 EAST
2015 ANNUAL REPORT
BERKS • LANCASTER • LEHIGH • NORTHAMPTON • SCHUYLKILL
What is 2-1-1?

2-1-1 is a free, confidential referral and information helpline and website that connects people from all communities and of all ages to the essential health and human services they need, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

2-1-1 can be accessed by phone or computer. A toll-free call to 2-1-1 connects you to a community resource specialist in your area who can put you in touch with local organizations that provide critical services that can improve—and save—lives. You’ll find information about:

• Supplemental food and nutrition programs
• Shelter and housing options and utilities assistance
• Emergency information and disaster relief
• Employment and education opportunities
• Services for veterans
• Health care, vaccination and health epidemic information
• Addiction prevention and rehabilitation programs
• Reentry help for ex-offenders
• Support groups for individuals with mental illnesses or special needs
• A safe, confidential path out of physical and/or emotional domestic abuse

Whether in times of natural disaster or personal crisis, 2-1-1 is committed to being the first, most essential resource to anyone who needs help.

About United Way Worldwide

United Way Worldwide, the leadership and support organization for the network of nearly 1,800 community-based United Ways, serves as a pillar of support for 2-1-1. United Way Worldwide envisions a world where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability, and healthy lives, and 2-1-1 provides the connection to local, on-the-ground services that help achieve that goal.

As of February 2015, 92.6% of the United States population is covered by 2-1-1.
Pennsylvania 2-1-1 East is one of seven regions within the Pennsylvania 2-1-1 statewide system. The regions were strategically created along natural boundaries and population totals and assigned responsibility for specific counties. All regions use the same web-based software populated with thousands of resources, including local, state, and national programs to help Pennsylvania residents.

2-1-1 specialists are trained to follow National AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems) Standards to insure that customers have a consistent, professional experience no matter which center answers their call for help. In addition, to increase efficiency, some centers have opted to "roll their calls" to another region for overnight and weekend hours. In an effort to capture the total usage of 2-1-1 service from our region for this Report, we have included the total call volume for our specific counties no matter where the call originated.

Pennsylvania 2-1-1 East is proud to present our 2015 Annual Report. This report includes contact volumes, reasons why individuals called 2-1-1, top agency referrals, and more. The report covers our service area which currently includes Berks, Lancaster, Lehigh, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties.

Pennsylvania 2-1-1 East is one of seven regions within the Pennsylvania 2-1-1 statewide system. The regions were strategically created along natural boundaries and population totals and assigned responsibility for specific counties. All regions use the same web-based software populated with thousands of resources, including local, state, and national programs to help Pennsylvania residents.

2-1-1 specialists are trained to follow National AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems) Standards to insure that customers have a consistent, professional experience no matter which center answers their call for help. In addition, to increase efficiency, some centers have opted to "roll their calls" to another region for overnight and weekend hours. In an effort to capture the total usage of 2-1-1 service from our region for this Report, we have included the total call volume for our specific counties no matter where the call originated.
Across the country, 2-1-1 centers are seeing a decrease in call volume, but an increase in users of the service navigating the web to locate resources. Pennsylvania 2-1-1 East is no different. We saw a 9.6% decrease in calls this year, compared to 2014.

In response to this we expanded our website to include a “Guided Search.” The Guided Search is structured to facilitate the ease of identifying resources under certain topics areas. This enables us to better track the visits to our website for community resources. These E-Contacts are a tangible way to count the number of users who may never pick up a telephone and call 2-1-1. We began tracking our website searches in June and will continue to include them in our monthly/yearly contact totals.

We appreciate United Way’s in Berks, Lancaster, Lehigh Valley and Schuylkill counties who are committed to promoting 2-1-1 and helping create a greater awareness of the service.

In addition, special projects such as appointment scheduling for United Way of Lancaster County’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and the continuation of a centralized intake system for housing and homelessness services in Lancaster County called CHART (Community Homeless Assessment and Referral Team) has helped our friends and neighbors to know that they can call 2-1-1 during their time of need.

“I am so glad that 2-1-1 exists. You have given me a resource that I never knew existed. You are great!”

Note: The data on this page reflects statistics compiled from the Lancaster County based call center only. Statistics on the following pages are from the statewide Pennsylvania 2-1-1 system.
Pennsylvania 2-1-1’s total contact volume for Berks County was 3,915 (2,813 traditional contacts and 1,102 e-contacts). We sincerely thank United Way of Berks County for their financial support and promotion of 2-1-1.

Impact

A caller from Berks County reached out to 2-1-1 after their landlord suggested they call us. Distraught and crying, the caller shared that they had run into money problems, taking out personal loans and getting into credit card debt. Some automatic payment withdrawals led to their rent check bouncing.

The caller was referred to a variety of services for rental assistance including Berks Community Action Program (BCAP), Catholic Charities, and Department of Human Services’ Emergency Shelter Allowance Program. The 2-1-1 specialist, recognizing that there were underlying causes, explored additional community resources.

Concerned about the caller’s ability to continue to pay their bills, the specialist brainstormed some ideas with the caller. A referral to BCAP’s Credit Counseling program and suggesting they call their bank to see if the bank would be willing to negotiate some of the bounced check fees were some of the solutions offered.

The caller thanked the specialist profusely and agreed to immediately begin calling the resources provided.

At 2-1-1 we pride ourselves in listening to each caller, and providing the best possible resources. This is just one example of the caring power of 2-1-1.

“You have given me so much help and your kindness has overwhelmed me!”
The Pennsylvania 2-1-1 database currently lists 631 services in Berks County through a multitude of agencies. In addition to these local services, 2-1-1 lists state and national services that are available to all. The data populated was coordinated through our data partner, Berks Talkline.

The Top 5 requests displayed represents 28.7% of our total service requests reported (3,738)

- Rent Payment Assistance: 377
- Electric Payment Assistance: 243
- Community Shelters: 182
- Food Pantries: 163
- Gas Payment Assistance: 110

The Top 5 requests displayed represents 28.7% of our total service requests reported (3,738)

**SERVICE REQUESTS**

- Basic Needs: 60%
- Support Services: 11%
- Legal/Consumer/Public Safety: 7%
- Health Care: 6%
- Information Services: 4%
- Mental Health/Substance Use: 3%
- All Other Needs: 9%

**UNMET SERVICE REQUESTS**

- Income Support and Employment: 26
- Community Shelters: 14
- Holiday Gifts/Toys: 12
- Rent Payment Assistance: 11
- Undesignated Financial Assistance: 9

Reasons often include that the program is at capacity or the caller is ineligible/already used available resources.

**TOP AGENCY REFERRALS**

- Catholic Charities: 574
- Opportunity House: 565
- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: 381
- City of Reading: 363
- Berks Community Action Program, Inc.: 327

“Thank you for helping me, I called the number you gave me and they were very helpful, I really appreciate it!”
Pennsylvania 2-1-1’s total contact volume for Lancaster County was 33,435 (31,073 traditional contacts and 2,362 e-contacts). We sincerely thank United Way of Lancaster County for their financial support and promotion of 2-1-1.

A local company that runs a campaign for United Way of Lancaster County referred one of their employees to 2-1-1. The caller was in need of resources for mortgage assistance after losing an income source unexpectedly. While it was determined that the caller would not qualify for mortgage assistance since they were not yet behind in payments, the caller was encouraged to reach out to Tabor Community Service’s Mortgage and Foreclosure Counseling program for information about their program should they fall behind.

Recognizing that a loss of income impacts other areas of the household, the 2-1-1 specialist explored a variety of assistance programs that may be of assistance including utility assistance through PPL’s OnTrack or Operation Help program.

Upon learning that a mental health disability may have been the root cause of the income loss, the specialist recommended that the caller reach out to Mental Health America for additional referrals as well as Catholic Charities and Pressley Ridge for counseling services.

The caller was thanked for reaching out and advised that 2-1-1 was available 24 hours a day should they need to reach out again.

United Way of Lancaster County is extremely thankful for the companies that not only support us, but know that during their employees time of need, we can be of assistance.

“Thank you so much, I really appreciate you for going that extra mile to help me.”
LANCASTER COUNTY: SERVICE DATA

The Pennsylvania 2-1-1 database currently lists 1,337 services in Lancaster County through a multitude of agencies. In addition to these local services, 2-1-1 lists state and national services that are available to all. The data populated is coordinated by our in-house database manager.

The Top 5 requests displayed represents 44.6% of our total service requests reported (34,281)

- **7,544** VITA/Tax Preparation Assistance
- **3,290** Community/Transitional Shelters
- **2,800** Rent Payment Assistance
- **1,077** Home Rental Listings
- **606** Electric Payment Assistance

**SERVICE REQUESTS**

- Basic Needs: 38%
- Support Services: 45%
- Health Care: 3%
- Information Services: 3%
- Legal/Consumer/Public Safety: 5%
- Mental Health/Substance Use: 2%
- All Other Needs: 4%

**VITA/TAX PREPARATION**

- 2-1-1 schedules appointments for United Way’s VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program.
  - **8,099** Tax Related Calls in 2015
  - **5,737** Appointments Scheduled for VITA, January-April
  - **6,073** Tax Returns Prepared by VITA
  - **$7,754,911** In Tax Refunds

“Thank you. You made the VITA appointment process so easy for me.”

**UNMET SERVICE REQUESTS**

- Electric Service Payment: 66
- Holiday Gifts/Toys: 62
- Water Service Payment: 35
- Thanksgiving Baskets: 32
- Heating Fuel Payment: 26

Reasons often include that the program is at capacity or the caller is ineligible/already used available resources.
The art, science and practice of bringing people and services together, information & referral (I&R) is an integral part of the overall human services sector. -AIRS, Alliance of Information and Referral Systems

**TOP PUBLICATIONS DISTRIBUTED**

2-1-1’s publications/materials are available to the public at no cost. The amounts listed below include web and/or print distributions.

- **5,761**
  - Where To Call Guide

- **3,101**
  - 2-1-1 Magnets

- **690**
  - Food Resources (English)

- **530**
  - 2-1-1 Rack Cards

- **479**
  - 2-1-1 Brochure

- **247**
  - Self-Sufficiency Reference Guide

- **178**
  - Navigating Hard Times Booklet

- **88**
  - Support Groups List

**HOLIDAY GIVING GUIDE**

Throughout the holiday season 2-1-1 receives numerous calls from individuals looking to help during the holidays, and from people looking to receive help. In response to this, 2-1-1 compiles a Holiday Giving Guide, which consists of nonprofit agency wish lists including adopt-a-family, volunteer opportunities and other needs. In addition, 2-1-1 captures resource information including free holiday meals and holiday gift/toy programs.

The data below includes calls to 2-1-1 to give or get help during the holidays and the number of hits to the holiday giving guide website.

**DONATION STATION**

Donation Station, is our material goods donation matching service. We match donors whom have items they no longer need or use that are in good working condition with local non-profits and the clients they serve.

- **327** Items Donated
- **184** Items Claimed
- **37** Agencies Benefited
Pennsylvania 2-1-1 East received **7,286** housing related requests this year. Those who reached out to 2-1-1 for affordable housing, eviction prevention, or emergency shelter services were referred to resources in the community, when available.

**COORDINATED ASSESSMENT**

2-1-1 continued to be the coordinated assessment pre-screeners for Lancaster County’s CHART (Community Homeless Assessment and Referral Team) program. CHART connects people who are homeless, or at-risk for homelessness, with agencies that can provide the resources they need. Anyone can connect to CHART by calling 2-1-1 or in-person at Tabor Community Services. After completing an assessment with a trained specialist, CHART matches the person with available resources based on near real-time information.

The following is key data for this year:

- **7,286** Total Housing Related Calls in 2015
- **5,343** Callers Reported they were Homeless or at-risk for Homelessness
- **1,512** Callers Referred to CHART

**Veterans Referred to Supportive Services for Veteran Families for Rapid Re-Housing/Homeless Prevention Services**

“You guys have been amazing! I was homeless and now I have an apartment. I couldn’t have gotten on my feet without the resource help from 2-1-1.”
Pennsylvania 2-1-1’s total contact volume for Lehigh County was **2,271** (1,675 traditional contacts and 596 e-contacts). We sincerely thank United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley for their financial support and promotion of 2-1-1.

**CONTACT VOLUME BY MONTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Traditional Contacts (Phone)</th>
<th>E-Contacts (Web Search)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M182</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1,366</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J162</td>
<td>1,609</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J209</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A220</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S208</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O196</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N210</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D173</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Testing New Website

**TOP ZIP CODES (and number received)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Number Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18102</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18103</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18109</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18101</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18104</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18052</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18018</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18032</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18080</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18015</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18036</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18049</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18062</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18037</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18031</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18034</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18106</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18105</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEHIGH COUNTY: IMPACT**

A caller from Lehigh County was referred to 2-1-1 by their supervisor. The client was experiencing a temporary hardship because their fiancé was without work for some time. The fiancé was back to work, but the bills piled up while there was only one income. In addition, due to the fiancé working they were no longer eligible for SNAP/Food Stamp benefits, leaving them unexpectedly with very little food. Realizing that food was likely not the only concern, the 2-1-1 specialist asked if there were other concerns the household had. The caller shared that their mortgage was behind and that they had no fuel oil.

The specialist referred the client to Community Action Committee of Lehigh Valley for help with the Homeowner’s Emergency Assistance Program. While the caller was aware of heating assistance through LIHEAP, they did not know that as a PPL customer they could apply for Operation Help and if eligible, could request that the grant be credited to their heating source, which in this case was oil. The specialist reviewed other utility programs since the caller was a UGI customer as well. Food pantries including Mosser Village Family Center, PA Avenue Interfaith, Salvation Army, and Everlasting Life Ministries were shared.

In closing the call, the specialist noted that 2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for any further assistance that may be needed. In addition, since the caller had access to the internet, they were instructed on how to use our online Guided Search for resources at PA211East.org.

“Oh my, thank you so much, these numbers have just brightened my day! I feel so much better that I have a place to start!”
The Pennsylvania 2-1-1 database currently lists 547 services in Lehigh County through a multitude of agencies. In addition to these local services, 2-1-1 lists state and national services that are available to all. The data populated is coordinated by our in-house database manager.

The Top 5 requests displayed represents 32.4% of our total service requests reported (2,501)

**SERVICE REQUESTS**

- Rent Payment Assistance: 257 requests
- Electric Payment Assistance: 236 requests
- Gas Payment Assistance: 122 requests
- Community Shelters: 120 requests
- Food Pantries: 77 requests

**TOP AGENCY REFERRALS**

- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: 326 requests
- Catholic Charities - Lehigh/Northampton: 229 requests
- Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley: 217 requests
- Hispanic American Organization: 193 requests
- Salvation Army - Lehigh Valley Area Services: 190 requests

**UNMET SERVICE REQUESTS**

- Community Shelters: 22 requests
- Income Support and Employment: 19 requests
- Electric Service Payment Assistance: 19 requests
- Heating Fuel Payment Assistance: 18 requests
- Gas Service Payment Assistance: 14 requests

Reasons often include that the program is at capacity or the caller is ineligible/already used available resources.

“You’ve been the most help I’ve ever had in my life, and over the phone!”
Pennsylvania 2-1-1’s total contact volume for Northampton County was 1,629 (1,353 traditional contacts and 276 e-contacts). We sincerely thank United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley and County of Northampton for their financial support and promotion of 2-1-1.

A parent whose adult child resides in Northampton County reached out to 2-1-1 for substance abuse treatment services. The parent really needed guidance on where to turn after a long-term treatment facility did not work for the young adult.

The 2-1-1 specialist searched the resource database for detoxification and in-patient services and referred the parent to Livengrin Foundation, Penn Foundation, Caron Treatment Centers, Eagleville Hospital, and the Lehigh County Center for Recovery.

During the course of the conversation, the 2-1-1 specialist could sense the desperation of the parent wanting to help their child. Because of this, information about Nar-Anon, a support group for families and friends of substance abuse users was also provided.

The parent, while thanking the specialist for their assistance, expressed their uncertainty of where they went wrong. The specialist reaffirmed to the parent that they were doing everything right by caring enough to reach out and find help.

The specialist closed the call by thanking the parent for contacting 2-1-1, and encouraged them to reach out to 2-1-1 again if they need further assistance.

“Sometimes people come into your life for a reason. I don’t know what made me reach out today, but I am glad I did.”
The Pennsylvania 2-1-1 database currently lists 471 services in Northampton County through a multitude of agencies. In addition to these local services, 2-1-1 lists state and national services that are available to all. The data populated is coordinated by our in-house database manager.

The Top 5 requests displayed represents 36.1% of our total service requests reported (2,011)

**SERVICE REQUESTS**
- Basic Needs: 62%
- Support Services: 12%
- Health Care: 5%
- Mental Health/Substance Use: 7%
- Legal/Consumer/Public Safety: 6%
- Information Services: 5%
- All Other Needs: 3%

**UNMET SERVICE REQUESTS**
- Community Shelters: 21
- Income Support and Employment: 16
- Rent Payment Assistance: 14
- Undesignated Financial Assistance: 10
- Electric Service Payment Assistance: 9

Reasons often include that the program is at capacity or the caller is ineligible/already used available resources.

**TOP AGENCY REFERRALS**
- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: 257
- Catholic Charities - Lehigh/Northampton: 224
- Salvation Army - Lehigh Valley Area Services: 202
- Hispanic American Organization: 182
- Easton Area Neighborhood Centers: 165

“I never knew there were so many resources out there! You have no idea how thankful I am.”
Pennsylvania 2-1-1’s total contact volume for Schuylkill County (which 2-1-1 began officially serving in late 2015) was 459 (263 traditional contacts and 176 e-contacts). We sincerely thank Schuylkill United Way for their financial support and promotion of 2-1-1.

A veteran from Schuylkill County reached out to 2-1-1 in need of rental assistance. In searching the resource database the 2-1-1 specialist was able to refer to Opportunity House’s Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program which is focused on keeping veterans stable in their home environments. The caller was already in touch with other community resources for rental assistance but had not yet heard about the SSVF program or benefits it could provide to those who had served our country and were at-risk of homelessness.

Not wanting to end the conversation there, the specialist asked the caller how they were handling their utilities and food. The caller stated that utilities were included in their rent and that family have been helping with food. The specialist referred the client to the Department of Human Services-Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP. Explaining that because they were paying for heat as part of their rent, they could apply for the one-time grant. If eligible, the grant could be used to help pay the rent arrearage.

The specialist asked the caller if they would consider applying for SNAP/Food Stamps and/or go to a food pantry. The caller indicated that they would, so a referral was made to COMPASS, the online application for SNAP/Food Stamps, and a referral to New Life in Christ Food Pantry was made.

The call was closed with the specialist sharing that 2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day and if we could be of any further assistance to not hesitate to reach out again.

“Thank you, I feel better already talking to you.”
The Pennsylvania 2-1-1 database currently lists 257 services in Schuylkill County through a multitude of agencies. In addition to these local services, 2-1-1 lists state and national services that are available to all. The data populated is coordinated through our data partner, Schuylkill United Way.

The Top 5 requests displayed represents 37.9% of our total service requests reported (364).

- Crisis Intervention (39)
- Community Shelters/Homeless Services (34)
- Rent Payment Assistance (33)
- Electric Payment Assistance (20)
- Undesignated Financial Assistance (12)

The Top 5 service requests represent 37.9% of our total service requests reported (364).

**SERVICE REQUESTS**

- Basic Needs: 48%
- Mental Health/Substance Use: 18%
- Support Services: 11%
- Information Services: 7%
- Health Care: 4%
- Legal/Consumer/Public Safety: 8%
- All Other Needs: 4%

**UNMET SERVICE REQUESTS**

- Community Shelters: 6
- Rent Payment Assistance: 4
- Electric Service Payment Assistance: 2
- Undesignated Financial Assistance: 1
- Water Service Payment Assistance: 1

Reasons often include that the program is at capacity or the caller is ineligible/already used available resources.

**TOP AGENCY REFERRALS**

- 35 Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
- 34 Schuylkill Community Action Program
- 24 Salvation Army Pottsville Corps
- 18 Catholic Charities
- 6 Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency

“You have been very insightful and very good to talk to, I appreciate it, thank you!”