



## Press Release

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### **2-1-1 Community Information Line Launches throughout Bay Area on “2-1-1 Day” 2-1-1 Bay Area network now serves seven Bay Area Counties**

SAN FRANCISCO, February 11, 2008 – Finding help in the Bay Area is easier than ever before: on February 11 – “2-1-1 Day” – United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA), United Way Silicon Valley, Contra Costa Crisis Center and Eden I&R announced the region-wide launch of 2-1-1 Bay Area phone service.

By simply dialing 2-1-1, Bay Area residents can reach a caring, trained specialist, who will match their needs with local community services, such as flu-shot information, senior services, employment assistance, summer camps, and so much more. Available 24 hours a day, in more than 150 languages, 2-1-1 is also an integral component of the Bay Area’s disaster-response infrastructure.

Nationally, 2-1-1 serves 75 percent of the American public. In the Bay Area, 2-1-1 was introduced in San Francisco County in early 2006, in Santa Clara County in early 2007, and in Alameda County in mid 2007. Today’s announcement celebrates the region-wide launch of the 2-1-1 Bay Area network, marked by the expansion of 2-1-1 service throughout Contra Costa, Napa, Marin and Solano Counties. Plans to bring 2-1-1 to Sonoma and San Mateo Counties in 2008 are currently underway.

Over the last three decades, five organizations have provided Information & Referral (I&R) service in the Bay Area: Eden I&R for Alameda County; Contra Costa Crisis Center; United Way Silicon Valley for Santa Clara County; the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County; and UWBA for Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. These designated 2-1-1 providers are building on their long history to build an integrated 2-1-1 Bay Area system that ensures the most effective and efficient delivery of community information. Collectively, they focus on streamlining data sharing and collection, utilizing common protocols for calls, developing joint disaster-action plans, and implementing mutually supportive marketing and public-education strategies.

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Anne Wilson, chief executive officer of UWBA, said, “Finding help in the Bay Area is now easier than ever before: by simply dialing 2-1-1, residents can quickly connect with local community services that meet their needs.” She noted that without 2-1-1, people often make up to 10 phone calls before finding the correct service, while many give up before getting the help they need.

Eden I&R Executive Director Barbara Bernstein said, “Alameda County is proud to be a model 2-1-1 service area that is financially supported by *all* 14 cities, as well as the county and the private sector. This leveraged public-private partnership is based on the knowledge that 2-1-1 is a vital public communication vehicle through which individuals, families and whole communities gain access to comprehensive and up-to-date health, housing and human service information.”

Contra Costa Crisis Center Executive Director John Bateson said, “2-1-1 is simple, easy-to-remember, toll-free, and 24-7. Both on a daily basis and in times of disaster, 2-1-1 is the one number people need to know to get help and information.”

**Note for TV:** B-roll video footage of the 2-1-1 call center is available in English, Spanish and Cantonese upon request.

#### **About United Way of the Bay Area**

United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to community impact. UWBA serves Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. Our mission is to be the catalyst that enables people to strengthen their communities by investing in one another. Through the Bay Area Community Fund, United Way supports more than 250 local programs that fight poverty and create opportunities for children, youth, families and neighborhoods to thrive. United Way also operates 2-1-1 phone service in several Bay Area Counties. 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember phone number that connects people in need — as well as individuals seeking to give — with community services. For more information, visit [www.uwba.org](http://www.uwba.org).

#### **About United Way Silicon Valley**

Since February 11, 2007, United Way Silicon Valley has provided 2-1-1 service in Santa Clara County. 2-1-1 provides the critical foundation for UWSV to fulfill its mission of improving lives and mobilizing the caring power of the community by providing information and referrals, 24/7, in over 140 languages. In addition to serving residents through a call center, 2-1-1 Santa Clara County has a website, [211scc.org](http://211scc.org), to allow individuals to do their own searches for health and human services.

#### **About Eden I&R**

For over 32 years, Eden I&R, Inc. has been fulfilling its non-profit mission of “linking people and resources” by providing a variety of services and products that benefit at-risk populations. Information from Eden I&R’s unique social service and housing databases can be accessed, for free, over a variety of phone based programs including 2-1-1; AIDS Housing and Information Project (AHIP); and YouthLink. Roving Housing Resource Programs provide direct access to Eden I&R resources at emergency shelters, transitional housing sites and community organizations. The agency also provides after-hour phone services for Alameda County’s Child and Adult Protective Services, Foster Care Placement, and the Public Guardian’s Office. Eden I&R’s *The Big Blue Book: Directory of Human Services for Alameda County* is the only directory of its kind in Alameda County, available in print and online at [www.alamedaco.info](http://www.alamedaco.info). For more information about Eden I&R, or 2-1-1, call Barbara Bernstein, Executive Director, at (510) 537-2710 ext. 8 and/or visit the agency’s website at [www.edenir.org](http://www.edenir.org).

#### **About Contra Costa Crisis Center**

The Contra Costa Crisis Center operates Contra Costa County's 24-hour crisis, suicide, child abuse, elder abuse, grief, youth crisis, and homeless hotlines. The agency also operates one of the largest grief counseling programs in California, provides youth violence prevention services, and manages and maintains Contra Costa CORD (County Online Resource Database).



## 2-1-1 Bay Area Fact Sheet

February 2008

### **What is 2-1-1?**

For every day needs and in times of disaster, 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, toll-free phone number that connects Bay Area residents with local community services, such as food, shelter, counseling, employment assistance, quality child care and more. 2-1-1 is confidential and available 24 hours a day in more than 150 languages. 2-1-1 also serves as a vital link for individuals seeking to volunteer and provide resources to nonprofit organizations.

### **2-1-1 Bay Area online:**

[www.211BayArea.org](http://www.211BayArea.org) (includes searchable database)

### **Bay Area Information & Referral (I&R) call volume:**

42,035 calls in nine counties from July to December 2007

### **Number of health and human service agencies in 2-1-1 Bay Area databases:**

34,967

### **2-1-1's role in disaster response and recovery**

- **2007 Southern California Wildfires:** The importance of 2-1-1 during disaster was underscored during the October 2007 wildfires in Southern California, where 2-1-1 San Diego call volume peaked at 30,000 calls a day – up from 800 daily – as residents sought information about evacuation sites, road closures, shelters, medical assistance, pet and large-animal care, and more.
- **2005 Hurricane Katrina:** Calls to Texas' statewide 2-1-1 system increased from 2,500 to more than 10,000 a day after the storm as people sought food, shelter and other assistance. Three weeks after Katrina, more than 170,000 Texas callers had received 2-1-1 assistance.
- **In the Bay Area:** When a major disaster strikes the Bay Area, 2-1-1 will provide residents with critical information about evacuation routes, food and shelter, as well as support with finding new jobs and permanent housing during long-term recovery.

### **History of 2-1-1**

- **In the U.S.:** Started in Atlanta in 1997, 2-1-1 currently reaches approximately 198 million people through 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 41 states. In 2000, responding to advocacy by the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS) and United Way of America, the Federal Communications Commission agreed to designate 2-1-1 as the nationwide three-digit community services telephone number. In January 2007, both houses of Congress re-introduced the Calling for 2-1-1 Act, which, if passed, will authorize \$250 million to state entities to help implement and sustain 2-1-1.

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**History of 2-1-1 (continued)**

- **In California:** The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) ruled in 2003 that 2-1-1 service would be established on a county-by-county basis, as opposed to deploying a statewide system. California's first 2-1-1 service launched on February 11, 2005 in Ventura County. In Southern California, 2-1-1 is available in Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Santa Barbara, San Diego, and San Bernardino Counties.
- **In the Bay Area:**

<b>County</b>	<b>2-1-1 Provider</b>	<b>Contact information</b>
Alameda Launched 2-1-1 in July 2007	Eden I&R <a href="http://www.edenir.org">www.edenir.org</a>	Executive Director Barbara Bernstein, 510-537-2710, x8, <a href="mailto:bbernstein@edenir.org">bbernstein@edenir.org</a>
Contra Costa Introduced 2-1-1 in test mode in February 2006, launched in February 2008	Contra Costa Crisis Center <a href="http://www.crisis-center.org">www.crisis-center.org</a>	Executive Director John Bateson, 925-939-1916 x107, <a href="mailto:johnb@crisis-center.org">johnb@crisis-center.org</a>
San Francisco Launched 2-1-1 in March 2006 Solano Introduced 2-1-1 pilot in November 2007, launched in February 2008 Marin, Napa Launched 2-1-1 in February 2008 San Mateo – Planning underway	United Way of the Bay Area's HELPLINK <a href="http://www.uwba.org">www.uwba.org</a>	2-1-1 Executive Director Ed Schoenberger, 415-808-4304, <a href="mailto:eschoenberger@uwba.org">eschoenberger@uwba.org</a>
Santa Clara Launched 2-1-1 in February 2007	United Way Silicon Valley <a href="http://www.uwsv.org">www.uwsv.org</a>	Lisa Sorge, Director of Marketing & Communications, 408-345-4326, <a href="mailto:lisa.sorge@uwsv.org">lisa.sorge@uwsv.org</a>
Sonoma – Planning underway	Volunteer Center of Sonoma County/United Way of Sonoma-Mendocino-Lake <a href="http://www.volunteernow.org">www.volunteernow.org</a>	2-1-1 Project Manager Renee Tolliver, 707-573-3399, x130, <a href="mailto:rtolliver@volunteernow.org">rtolliver@volunteernow.org</a>

**What's the difference between 2-1-1, 3-1-1, 9-1-1, etc.?**

- 2-1-1: Community services  
3-1-1: Non-emergency government services  
4-1-1: Directory assistance  
5-1-1: Traffic and transit  
6-1-1: AT&T repair service  
7-1-1: California relay for hearing impaired  
8-1-1: "Call before you dig" for locating underground utility lines  
9-1-1: Life-threatening emergency services

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