



## Press release

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## Calls to 2-1-1 Reflect Rising Needs in Bay Area

### Calls for Basic Needs Up 55% Over Last Year

SAN FRANCISCO, February 17, 2010 – The 2-1-1 Bay Area providers released call data that shows the region's community information lines handled 206,952 calls in 2009, up 39% compared to 2008 (148,187 calls). At the same time, requests for help with basic needs – such as food, shelter, and clothing – soared 55%. More data about callers' needs is included in the chart at the end of this press release.

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, child care and more. Trained, caring specialists answer calls and conduct a thorough assessment to ensure an accurate referral.

"2-1-1 is serving as an essential guide for Bay Area residents during these tough times," said Anne Wilson, CEO of United Way of the Bay Area, which operates 2-1-1 service in Marin, Napa, San Francisco and Solano Counties. "Our 2-1-1 specialists are answering more calls from people who are asking for help for the first time in their lives, and are not sure where to start. We're happy to reassure them that our 2-1-1 team is here to listen and direct them to community resources that can help."

Barbara Bernstein, Executive Director of Eden I&R, which manages 2-1-1 Alameda County, said, "Here in Alameda County we are handling over 8,000 calls a month! It is not surprising that as the local economic climate continues to get worse, the needs of our residents continue to increase. Our 2-1-1 feedback line contains testimonials from callers who appreciate the ease and comprehensive nature of the 2-1-1 communication system."

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John Bateson, Executive Director of Contra Costa Crisis Center, which operates 2-1-1 in Contra Costa County, said, "In tough economic times, when layoffs and foreclosures are making it harder for people to get by, having a simple, easy-to-remember number to call for help and information can make all the difference. 211 is that number, and more people are discovering it."

Carole Leigh Hutton, CEO of United Way Silicon Valley, which operates 2-1-1 Santa Clara County, said, "The importance of 2-1-1 has been highlighted by the tough economy, but its true value is that it's here through all kinds of times, and for all kinds of needs."

2-1-1 is available in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. San Mateo County residents can reach the 2-1-1 call center by dialing 800-273-6222.

The "basic needs" requests of 2-1-1 Bay Area callers from the nine Bay Area counties listed above are shown in the chart below. Please note that some callers receive assistance for more than one need or issue.

	<b>Clothing &amp; Material Goods</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Housing &amp; Utility Assistance</b>	<b>Income &amp; Employment Services</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>January – December 2008</b>	1,396	8,416	50,168	10,423	1,519	71,922
<b>January – December 2009</b>	3,031	15,791	73,429	16,497	2,788	111,536
<b>% increase</b>	117%	88%	46%	58%	84%	55%

### **About 2-1-1 Bay Area**

Launched throughout the Bay Area in February 2008, 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, toll-free phone number that connects callers with local community services, such as food, shelter, counseling, employment assistance, quality child care and more. During a disaster, 2-1-1 provides critical information about evacuation routes, food and shelter, as well as support with finding new jobs and permanent housing during long-term recovery. 2-1-1 is confidential and available 24 hours a day in more than 150 languages. 2-1-1 Bay Area is operated by United Way of the Bay Area, United Way Silicon Valley, United Way of the Wine Country, Eden I&R, and Contra Costa Crisis Center. 2-1-1 is available in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma Counties. For more information, visit [www.211BayArea.org](http://www.211BayArea.org).

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