

2-1-1 hotline can help find solutions for homeowners

As the unemployment rates rise and an additional 27,000 people in our state are added to the number of those currently looking for work this month, **NJ 2-1-1** answers the call for help.

The organization has dedicated an entire section of its Web site at www.nj211.org to addressing the needs of the community, including help with utility costs.

Help in Hard Times (<http://nj211.org/hardtimes08.cfm>) includes in-depth information on: Avoiding Foreclosure; Food and Nutrition Programs; Utility Assistance; and Living Through a Layoff.

New sections will be added each month to include information about Health Insurance Needs and Living on a Limited Budget.

These pages are filled with information about state and community resources with details including how a program works, specific eligibility requirements and full contact information.

Also available at the Web site is a 36-page Utility Assistance Guide that can be downloaded at the site.

Sussex County residents can apply through NORWESCAP for Universal Service Fund assistance. The program provides funds to assist eligible households to lower the amount that they have to pay for their gas and electric bills. Eligible applicants must apply for LIHEAP to receive consideration for USF.

Energy assistance for oil recipients started on Nov. 1. Emergency assistance for electric and gas recipients will be available March 16 through April 30, unless the state extends the date. NORWESCAP's Home Energy Assistance Program can be reached at (973) 209-7549 or (973) 383-6020.

Residents who need help in understanding and finding programs and services throughout the state can call "2-1-1" 24 hours a day, seven days a week by Language translation and TTY services are offered to any caller. United Way of Sussex County pro-

vided funding in 2008 for 211 services as well as emergency utility assistance that is being processed through NORWESCAP's Home Energy Assistance Program.

