



## NJ 2-1-1 Partnership

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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# Homeless in New Jersey

## *NJ 2-1-1 Assists in Point-in-Time Count and Offers Resources that may Help*

East Hanover, NJ (Jan. 22, 2016) - On any given day NJ 2-1-1, the state's information and referral service for those in search of health and human services, receives calls for help in finding affordable housing. In 2015 the organization received 20,893 such calls. The top need consistently expressed by callers however, is for temporary financial assistance. NJ 2-1-1 received calls from 94,675 people in 2015 searching for solutions to financial distress.

As agencies, organizations and volunteers prepare for the statewide Point-in-Time (PIT) Count that is scheduled to take place on January 27, the need for affordable housing and relief from financial distress support the real story of the day - the state of homelessness in New Jersey and throughout the country. People involved in the count will tally the homeless populations in all of the shelters throughout the state, but will also take to the streets to be sure that those living outside of shelters are included. NJ 2-1-1 serves as the Homeless Hotline for the counties of Morris, Middlesex and Passaic and will therefore be actively involved in the PIT Count as well.

On this and every other day, when those in need of assistance dial 211, their call is answered by a compassionate call specialist who knows community resources. Every call begins with an inquiry of "How can I help you today?" and is followed by empathetic listening. "Our staff is trained to hear the needs expressed by our callers as well as to listen for other ways they can be of assistance," explains Call Center Director, Janice Kaniewski. "We have thousands of resources in our database and information on many assistance programs," she continues. "If a caller is not eligible for assistance in one area, they may be able to get help in another. Our call specialists know that and do all they can to connect callers with agencies and organizations that have programs created to provide the very assistance that is needed."

The very same resource database that call specialists use is available to the public on the organization's website ([www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org).) Searches can be based on a need (like "shelter") or an agency's name, and results can be limited by county or zip code to find nearby resources. The site also offers pages that have been written to provide the public with information about programs and services in the state. A search for "affordable housing" results in a broad sub-list to choose from, including such topics as Housing/Shelter, Housing Counseling, Low Cost Home Rental Listings, Veteran Homes, Low Income Home Loans, and much more. To the right of that listing is a listing of related web pages and PDFs that often provides snap-shot information on federal, state and local programs, eligibility requirements, application links and contact numbers. Amongst the suggested pages for this particular search, is a page entitled *Homeless in New Jersey* with specific information on how to find help.

"The staff here at NJ 2-1-1 Partnership is committed to the PIT assessment of homelessness in this state, Executive Director Joe Geleta says, "Whether you're homeless or in need of health or human service resources, call 2-1-1. Our call specialists are ready to help you."

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