



NJ 2-1-1 Partnership

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CONTACT: Lori Price Abrams, MWW (609.503.8043)
Sue Ross, NJ 2-1-1 (973.929.3747)

NJ 2-1-1 – Offering Help in Times of Need: See Something, Say Something, Giving Programs, Warming Up & More

East Hanover, NJ – As we near the holiday season, our tumultuous world keeps our thoughts spinning around more than just sugar plums and fairies. Each encounter with world news carries a reminder that people are suffering from explosions brought on by never-ending war. America is feeling the unrest of citizens who are frightened by the looming prospect of changing policies and what that might mean for their freedom and well-being. It has become normal to assume the worst when one hears a broadcast reporting an explosion in a home in downtown Philadelphia that includes reference to a “suspicious package.”

For this reason, NJ 2-1-1 in partnership with the NJ Office of Homeland Security created easy access to the See Something Say Something hotline which facilitates a resident’s ability to reach authorities when they see something suspicious. Simply by dialing 211, a caller can be immediately connected with NJ Office of Homeland Security to follow-up on the matter. This three-digit dialing code is all one has to remember.

Explaining its creation, Gina Plotino, NJ 2-1-1 board president says, “It’s hard to feel safe sometimes, but I find it helps to remind myself of the safety measures that are in place and that we each, as individuals, have the power to help one another through difficult times.” NJ 2-1-1, an organization that puts people in need of assistance, in-touch with those who can help, is one of those safety measures. It was started in 2002 by the United Ways of NJ to close the gap between those who need assistance and existing community resources that can fill that need. In the past ten months over 300,000 have turned to 2-1-1 for this and other kinds of help.

Ms. Plotino explains, “Very often, it is a neighbor, a family member or a friend who calls us, looking for resources for someone they know who is suffering. We are here to answer that call at any time of the day or night.” Free, confidential and multi-lingual, NJ 2-1-1 maintains a database of over 10,000 services including community programs that provide assistance with mental health, food, clothing, housing, legal matters, utilities, childcare and more.

The organization also focuses on building resource lists to help with seasonal needs. A compilation of Giving Programs including resources to turn to for holiday meals and gifts is available on their website <https://www.nj211.org/holiday-giving-programs> now. When the weather turns bitter cold or blistering

hot, NJ 2-1-1 can be counted on to provide information about where you can go to get out of the elements. And, in January, they will provide a comprehensive listing of tax assistance sites in every county.

“It’s important to remind ourselves when we are feeling most vulnerable, that we are not alone,” Ms. Plotino insists. “NJ 2-1-1 is here to connect people with programs and services that can and want to help.”

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About NJ 2-1-1

The statewide information and referral service began in 2002 when the United Ways of New Jersey spearheaded efforts to give people-in-need an easy way to find health and human services by encouraging the Board of Public Utilities to designate the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership as the sole administrator of the three digit dialing code. Statewide coverage began in 2005. **In 2015 alone, the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership provided resource assistance to over 372,000 people who called 2-1-1 or visited our website.** With roughly 3,000 agencies in the organization’s resource database and over 10,000 programs and services listed, NJ 2-1-1 provides the public with front door access to non-profit, government and faith-based services, as well as disaster response information. Follow us on Twitter @NJ211 and FB <https://www.facebook.com/nj211partnership/>.