

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Where can Ohioans call for answers to complex questions?**

For more than twenty-five years, Information and Referral (I&R) services have helped people find answers. These services have the potential for increasing, by thousands, the number of people helped, but one major obstacle exists. Many people are unaware I&R services are available and therefore struggle to find answers to their questions about community resources. What a difference it would make if these citizens could simply **dial 2-1-1** and talk to a trained and knowledgeable person with access to accurate information!

### **What is Information & Referral?**

Information and Referral (I&R) services are the link between people and community organizations. With more than 26,600 nonprofit organizations in Ohio and scores of government agencies, many people find it challenging to navigate the maze of community resources. I&R specialists assess callers' needs and determine the best service provider. I&R services maintain comprehensive databases of resources, including federal, state and local government agencies, community-based organizations, and private nonprofit organizations. Currently, Americans make approximately 50 million calls every year to I&R services. In Ohio, I&R services responded to at least 800,000 calls per year. ***The Crisis/Hotline and Information Center of Pathways responded to over 22,000 calls from Licking and Knox Counties during the last year.***

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

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember and universally recognizable telephone number that makes a critical connection between individuals and families in need and the appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies.

On July 21, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ruled that the telephone number 2-1-1 be designated nationwide as the number to call for access to community information and referral services. The FCC stated that there is "sufficient public benefit to justify the use of this scarce public resource."

At the end of 2007, 2-1-1 serves over 219 million Americans – over 72% of the entire population – through 238 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 43 states (including 26 states with 90%+ coverage) plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. Every few weeks, those numbers increase. In Canada, 2-1-1 currently covers more than 20% of the population.

### **What about 2-1-1 in Knox & Licking Counties?**

The PUCO designated Pathways as the 2-1-1 provider for Licking County in January 2007 and Knox County in January 2008. Pathways began providing Licking County 2-1-1 services in October 2007 and Knox County in June 2008.

### **What will happen to the Crisis/Hotline and Information Center of Pathways?**

The Crisis/Hotline and Information Center of Pathways will continue to provide the same quality services it always has over the last 40 years, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365



days a year. The only thing that will change is that you will also be able to call the Center by dialing 2-1-1. Anyone may dial 1-800-544-1601 to reach the Crisis/Hotline if 2-1-1 is not available with your carrier. And, in Licking County, you will still be able to call 740-345-HELP (4357).

### **Can I call 2-1-1 from a phone where I work?**

Usually. Some companies block 3-digit calls from business phones because of fees that can be associated with those calls. If that's the case at your company, we hope you'll ask that 2-1-1 be "unblocked." Your employer will not incur any fees for 2-1-1 calls made by employees.

### **What about emergencies?**

2-1-1 is not an emergency line. Call 9-1-1 if you're facing a situation that requires help from police, fire or medical resources.

### **When can I call 2-1-1?**

2-1-1 is available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call anytime you need help.

### **How is 2-1-1 funded? How can I donate?**

2-1-1 is a service of Pathways of Central Ohio. In Licking County this program is funded in part by the Community Mental Health & Recovery Board of Licking and Knox Counties, Licking County United Way, Licking County Foundation, City of Newark, Licking County Department of Job & Family Services, Energy Cooperative Operation Round Up Foundation and Home Depot. In Knox County this program is funded in part by the Community Mental Health & Recovery Board of Licking and Knox Counties, United Way of Knox County, Knox County Commissioners, City of Mount Vernon and the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon & Knox County.

For information on how your organization can participate in the 211 Community Stewardship Program, log on to [www.211Pathways.com](http://www.211Pathways.com).

### **Who can call?**

Anyone living, working or visiting within Knox and Licking Counties who has the ability to access 2-1-1 via a land line or cell phone. If you cannot access 2-1-1, please call 1-800-544-1601 or, in Licking County, 740-345-HELP (4357).

### **Can persons under 18 years of age call 2-1-1?**

Yes

### **If I call 2-1-1, what can I expect?**

When you call 2-1-1 from this area, you will be connected to 2-1-1 of Knox & Licking Counties. You will receive the assistance of a trained professional in helping you to determine what referrals and what plan will meet your specific need.

## **What types of information do you give out?**

2-1-1 provides information on about 700 agencies and 1800 programs that serve Licking and Knox counties who can provide assistance for a variety of needs. Examples include referrals for emergency shelter, rent or utility assistance, substance abuse, elder services, relationships, food, depression, employment, health care, abuse, parenting, crisis intervention, suicide prevention and disaster recovery.

## **What if I need services from a county or area outside of Licking and Knox counties?**

2-1-1 will connect you with an information and referral source in your area.

## **What type of place is this? Do you have money to help me?**

This is an information and referral center and a crisis/hotline that you can reach by dialing 2-1-1. 2-1-1 is a simple to remember number that connects with a trained professional who can assist you in defining the problems you are experiencing and providing resources that can help you address the issues you are experiencing. 2-1-1 in Knox and Licking Counties does not provide direct financial assistance but can provide you with referrals to programs that can provide financial assistance.

## **What exactly do you do? Do you provide counseling?**

2-1-1 of Pathways of Central Ohio is a blended center. It not only provides information and referral, it also provides crisis management and suicide prevention. While we do not provide counseling, we do help you problem solve and help you to determine what referrals and what plan will meet your specific need. The 2-1-1 crisis response specialists received 50 hours of training before they even begin answering the phone. New staff is required to have at minimum an associate's degree in a helping profession. With sufficient training and experience, crisis response specialists can take part in testing to become Certified Information and Referral Specialists.

## **Where are you located? Can I come in and talk?**

Your calls go to a location that is confidential. 2-1-1 does not provide face-to-face service so you can only speak with a staff person by telephone.

## **Can you look things up for me on the Internet?**

We can assist you with finding ways to access the Internet in the community. We will use the Internet occasionally to help find resources.

## **Can I just talk about stuff or do I have to have a crisis?**

The 2-1-1 service was set up to assist people who are having difficulties to address the issues.

## **How long can I talk? How many people are there?**

As long as you are working to develop a plan to address your needs, 2-1-1 staff will work with you. At times, problems can be overwhelming and require more than one phone call. Staff will invite you to call again at your convenience. There are two staff on shift at all times.



**Where can I get help with paying my electric bill/ gas/ rent?  
Who can help me?**

Dial 2-1-1 to be connected with programs that provide utility and rental assistance in the Knox and Licking Counties area.

**I need a ride to my doctor is there anyone who can transport me?**

Dial 2-1-1 to be connected with transportation services in the Licking/Knox area.

**I am depressed where can I get counseling?**

Dial 2-1-1 to be connected with programs that provide counseling, mental health or substance abuse services in the Licking/Knox area.

**I need medication and have no money. Who can help?**

Dial 2-1-1 to be connected with programs that provide prescription expense assistance in the Licking/Knox area.

**Will 2-1-1 work from my cell/mobile phone?**

2-1-1 will work with most cell phones that originate service in Knox or Licking Counties. If you are unable to use 2-1-1 from your cell phone, please contact your provider. You can also reach 2-1-1 by dialing (800) 544-1601 and in Licking County you can also dial (740) 345-HELP (4357). As with any other call you make on your cell phone, you will be charged for airtime.

If your cell phone originates from a county other than Knox or Licking, you may be connected to a 2-1-1 service in that county.