



South Carolina 2-1-1 Fact Sheet

2-1-1 is an easy to remember phone number that connects people with resources in their community.

With approximately 20,000 nonprofit agencies in South Carolina, and scores of government agencies, finding help can be confusing and intimidating. Even professionals have a difficult time navigating the system.

2-1-1 centers are staffed by trained specialists who quickly assess the callers' needs and refer them to the help they seek. It's simple to remember, accessible to anyone at no cost, and available 24/7 with multilingual capabilities.

2-1-1 enables people to get help or give help.

2-1-1 offers information on a broad range of services, including rent assistance, food banks, affordable housing, health resources, child care, after-school programs, elderly care, financial literacy, and job training programs. Specialists at 2-1-1 centers facilitate thousands of volunteer hours and direct donors to locations where their gifts may be most needed and appropriate. One call center's referrals facilitated nearly 65,000 volunteer staff hours worth over \$1 million.

A statewide 2-1-1 benefits all of South Carolina.

The human services system in South Carolina is not only inefficient and costly, but is confusing and time consuming for consumers seeking to give or get help. It doesn't have to be this way. A statewide 2-1-1 system will produce cost savings for tax payers, employers and government by reducing the need for State operated agency call centers and reducing high-cost non-emergency calls to 9-1-1, 2-1-1 saves time and connects people to services efficiently.

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2-1-1 is locally designed by community members, who are aware of their local and state needs and resources. 2-1-1 is part of the community fabric, employs local citizens, and serves the local community. Businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government officials support 2-1-1 as a way to improve the lives of the residents in their communities. As of September 2009, 2-1-1 is only available in 18* of South Carolina's counties, covering approximately 60% of the population. But that leaves huge swaths of our state stuck in the past and unprepared for disaster.

2-1-1 enhances crisis preparedness, homeland security and crisis recovery efforts.

From hurricanes and floods to bio-terrorism, 2-1-1 call centers that already exist in communities, operating 24/7, are the logical platform for building emergency response communication capacity. In the wake of natural disasters, 2-1-1 helps direct callers to shelter, transportation, medical, food and water, construction materials, mental health, and questions about the availability of and application process for federal, state, and nonprofit assistance. 9-1-1 refers non-emergency calls to 2-1-1, freeing up 9-1-1 operators for life and-death situations.

2-1-1 is a private-public partnership.

In the counties where 2-1-1 exists, it is funded through local United Ways, foundations, corporate donors, and local governments. But the patchwork of funding is not sufficient to finish building out the system to bring 2-1-1 to every citizen in South Carolina. We believe that, South Carolina needs to invest in 2-1-1 statewide. It's a time of scarcity. Let's stop wasting resources.

**Aiken, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Clarendon, Dorchester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Greenville, Lancaster, Lee, Lexington, Newberry, Oconee, Orangeburg, Pickens, Richland, Sumter, York*