



## **2-1-1 and Business Telephones**

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

*Think 911 for human services.* 2-1-1 will become a universally recognizable three-digit phone number that simplifies and speeds access to health and human services to meet a caller's needs, encourages prevention and fosters self-sufficiency.

### ***Where is 2-1-1 available?***

As of February 2008, 2-1-1 will be available in 67 Indiana counties, providing access to most Hoosiers. 2-1-1 is available to approximately nearly 70% of the U.S. population. View the map at [www.in211.org](http://www.in211.org).

### ***How does 2-1-1 work?***

2-1-1 does not require as much technology as emergency 911. Telecommunications providers program their equipment to "translate" the 2-1-1 number to the IN211 network, which routes based on area code, prefix and time of day—all seamless to the caller. Trained Information & Referral (I&R) Specialists answer the 2-1-1 calls, assess needs, and offer referrals to human service programs.

### ***What is a typical call to 2-1-1?***

Indiana's 2-1-1 Centers respond to all kinds of human service needs. The most frequent needs include food, financial assistance with rent or utility, and housing. Callers may also learn where to donate goods, find counseling or support groups, seek employment assistance, legal aid or parenting classes, among other needs. I&R Specialists also are trained in crisis intervention such as family violence, suicide, etc.

### ***Can my company use 2-1-1?***

Yes. Employers can give employees one simple number to call for information or support with a personal or family matter, helping employees address such problems before they grow into a crisis that distracts them or takes them away from work. Employers (often HR managers) call 2-1-1 directly, as well.

### ***What if 2-1-1 doesn't work from my telephone?***

There are many reasons 2-1-1 may not work—most with a quick fix. Sometimes it is that the 2-1-1 number is blocked internally and other times it is because the telecommunications provider has not enabled 2-1-1. **Do not call your telephone company.** Follow the steps at the bottom of this page.

### ***Our company has blocks on 411 because of cost. Will there be a cost for making 2-1-1 calls?***

2-1-1 calls are considered "local" calls. There is no additional charge for making a 2-1-1 call. However, because most cellular plans charge customers based on usage, the 2-1-1 caller on a cell phone would be charged normal minutes, fees and taxes for usage. Similarly, a 2-1-1 call would be considered as any other local call if the caller is using a "pay-as-you-go" or "pay-per-local-call" service plan.

### ***What are the considerations for business phones that need to provide access to 2-1-1?***

- Offices that have "phone extensions" may already have the three digits "2-1-1" assigned to an extension. This three-digit number needs to be re-programmed so that callers may access 2-1-1.
- If employees need to dial "9" or a special access code for an outside line, then 2-1-1 may require it, too.
- If the company owns a private branch exchange (PBX), its telephone system may require programming for 2-1-1 access. The company's telephone system administrator contact IN211 for instructions.
- Contact [jkrom@in211.org](mailto:jkrom@in211.org) or 317-921-7527 for instructions or more information.