



Media Release

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John Krom, executive director, IN211

317.921-7527, cell 317-496-2076, or jkrom@in211.org

Economic Crisis and 2-1-1 Response

The economic crisis is the major factor why calls to 2-1-1 have skyrocketed in the past year across the nation. Here in Indiana, calls have increased 39% from 2007 to 2008 with similar increases being realized already in the first quarter of 2009. Connect2Help, the 2-1-1 Center that serves Marion and the surrounding seven counties, has seen an even greater increase in calls. Calls spiked 81% for the period from 12/10/07-2/17/08 to 12/10/08-2/17/09, mainly due to public reaction to the establishment of the Community Economic Relief Fund. The top four requests were for information and referral to help pay a gas or electric bill, find emergency food or make a rent payment. Compared to the same time period last year, these needs increased by 257%, 348%, 93% and 211%, respectively.

To meet this increased need, Connect2Help has scheduled a remodeling of their existing facilities to increase the number of telephone/computer workstations and adopt a more efficient use of space without increasing rental costs. The renovation is scheduled to begin March 30 and will last approximately four weeks. During this time, Connect2Help will operate from a temporary site with a reduced number of workstations and will not have the capacity to handle their normal volume of 2-1-1 calls. To continue 2-1-1 service, the remaining fourteen Indiana 211 Centers across the state have volunteered to answer the excess calls to Connect2Help. Because all Indiana's 2-1-1 Centers are experiencing increased calls in their areas, it is expected that hold times will increase for callers and

service may be different from what callers and the community have come to rely upon. Indiana 211 Partnership requests the patience of all callers and community organizations during this temporary period that will help sustain 2-1-1 to meet the ongoing economic crisis.

What is Indiana 211?

2-1-1 is the three-digit dialing code for accessing health and human service information and referral. Indiana 211 Partnership, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization which has been authorized by the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission to administer and oversee the development of 2-1-1 for Hoosiers. Indiana's fifteen 2-1-1 Centers provide information and referral to:

- Resources to meet basic human needs (e.g. food, housing, safety, etc.)
- Resources for physical and mental health
- Resources for finding and maintaining employment
- Specialized resources for children, youth, family, the elderly, persons with disabilities and persons living on the margins of the community
- Connections with opportunities for Hoosiers to give time, talent, energy and material resources to help meet community needs.

Indiana 211 Partnership also provides support during community emergencies such as the natural disasters of 2008 and provides data to policy makers about available community resources, needs, trends and gaps in services.



MEDIA Tours of local 2-1-1 Centers are available upon request. Or visit www.in211.org to learn more.