



Creating a statewide information and referral system to connect Hoosiers with needs to human services dial 2-1-1

# Media Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **IN211 Celebrates Five Year Anniversary with Call for 2-1-1 Service Nationwide--**

**Indianapolis, Indiana (July 28, 2005)** – This month Indiana 211 Partnership, Inc. (IN211) is celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) assignment of the phone number 2-1-1 for the purpose of providing community, volunteer, and human service information and referral. Along with communities nationwide, Indiana 211 Partnership, Inc. is encouraging stronger efforts and Federal funding to make 2-1-1 service available to all Hoosiers and all Americans.

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember three-digit dialing system (similar to 9-1-1 and 4-1-1) that makes a simple but critical connection between individuals and families seeking services and the appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies. It is a cost-effective answer to help Indiana residents navigate the complex and ever-changing maze of human services. It provides quick access to health and human services, encourages prevention and fosters self-sufficiency.

2-1-1 was first launched by United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta in 1997, and in only five years since the FCC designation has grown to serve nearly 139 million Americans – over 47 percent of the U.S. population spread among 32 states and the District of Columbia. Today **52% of Hoosiers** can access human services information by calling 2-1-1 to find answers. The 2-1-1 service will eventually be available statewide, but is now operational in eight centers serving 39 counties. (See [www.in211.org](http://www.in211.org) for map of coverage.)

### **Congressional Support for 2-1-1 Expansion**

Senators Richard Lugar (R) and Evan Bayh (D) and Representatives Mark Souder (R-Ft. Wayne) and Julie Carson (D-Indianapolis) are co-sponsors of bipartisan legislation named *The Calling for 2-1-1 Act* (S. 211/H.R. 896). Currently pending in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, the *Calling for 2-1-1 Act* would provide federal funding for 2-1-1 and encourage support for it nationwide. IN211 and its Centers have already secured the required 50% match through philanthropic sources.

The **Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission** (IURC) recognized the Indiana 211 Partnership as the proper administrator for the 2-1-1 dialing code on February 20, 2002, and issued a final order on June 17, 2004. The **Indiana General Assembly** passed legislation supporting 2-1-1 that became effective July 1, 2004 (I.C. 8-1-19.5).

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Indiana 211 Partnership, Inc. (IN211) is supported by Cinergy Foundation, United Ways and other grants and contributions. IN211 has representation from the human service information field throughout the state. These include the Indiana Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral, Indiana Association of United Ways, Indiana Information and Referral Association, Indiana Family Social Services Administration, Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor, Indiana State Library, Indiana State Department of Health and many others.

Indiana's first eight 2-1-1 Centers are described below. :

- **First Call For Help/United Way of Allen County** provides 2-1-1 access to include Allen, Adams, DeKalb, Huntington, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Wells and Whitley counties. First Call For Help has provided information and referral services since 1983 and served over 20,000 callers last year. Callers that do not have access to 2-1-1 may reach the 2-1-1/I&R service through the local number at (260) 744-0700.
- **First Call For Help/United Way of Bartholomew County** has served Bartholomew County since 1984 and announced new 2-1-1 access to residents of Brown, Decatur and Scott counties earlier this year. First Call For Help served over 8,000 callers last year. Callers that do not have access to 2-1-1 may reach the service through the local number at (812) 376-6666.
- **First Call For Help/United Way of Southwestern Indiana** provides 2-1-1 access for residents of Vanderburgh, Spencer and Warrick counties. First Call For Help served over 22,000 callers last year and currently serves many southwestern Indiana counties through 1-800-639-9271.
- United Way has supported telephone information and referral services in Indianapolis since 1946. **Information & Referral Network** served over 67,000 callers last year and provides 2-1-1 access to residents of Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion, Morgan and Shelby counties. Callers that do not have access to 2-1-1 may reach the 2-1-1/I&R service through the local number at (317) 926-4357.
- **Lafayette Crisis Center** provides 2-1-1 service for residents of Benton, Tippecanoe and White counties. Lafayette Crisis Center has provided crisis services since 1971 and served over 8,000 callers last year through both crisis and I&R. Callers that do not have access to 2-1-1 may reach the 2-1-1/I&R service through the local number at (765) 423-2255.
- **LifeTime Resources, Inc.** provides services for Dearborn, Jefferson, Ohio, Ripley and Switzerland counties and the Batesville exchange of Franklin County. *LifeTime* has served its community since 1975 and served approximately 3,000 callers in 2004. Callers that do not have access to 2-1-1 may reach the 2-1-1/I&R service through the local number at (800) 742-5001.
- **United Way of Howard County Information & Referral** has been providing information and referral services to Howard County since 1980 and served nearly 7,000 callers last year. United Way I&R is working to expand 2-1-1 service for contiguous counties. Callers that do not have access to 2-1-1 may reach the 2-1-1/I&R service through the local number at (765) 457-4357.
- **Vigo County Lifeline** has provided 24-hour crisis and information and referral services to Clay, Parke, Sullivan, Vermillion and Vigo counties through (812) 235-8333 and was introduced as a 2-1-1 Center earlier this year.

Additionally, Indiana 211 Partnership is working with other information and referral providers throughout the state to create a statewide 2-1-1 system of linked Centers. It will take many years to ensure that all Hoosiers have 2-1-1 access through all types of telephones (residential, business, pay phones, wireless/cellular). Further, detailed information about Indiana's initiative may be found at <http://www.in211.org> or about the national 211 initiative may be found at <http://www.211.org>

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Editors please note: Media tours of the 2-1-1 Centers are available on upon request. Tour participants will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, as all 2-1-1 calls are private and confidential.