

# Frequently Asked Questions about Telephones and 2-1-1

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

The 3-digits of "2-1-1" are "translated" by each telephone company and the IN211 network identifies the area code and prefix of the originating call and routes it to the appropriate IN211 Center. This is transparent to the caller. The 2-1-1 call is answered by a trained I&R Specialist.

## *Will I have to punch a lot of numbers or get lost in a phone tree?*

No. You may be asked to "press 1 for English" or "press 2 for Spanish" or to "press any key to continue." IN211 and its Centers value easy access to services.

## *Is 2-1-1 available 24 hours a day?*

- In Indiana, 2-1-1 service is currently provided 24 hours a day/365 days a year.
- The national standards for 2-1-1 require 24-hour access. Yet, due to funding limitations, some 2-1-1 Centers across the country do not yet provide 2-1-1 service around the clock. They may offer extended hours, rather than the full 168 hours each week. If ongoing funding is not secured, Indiana's 2-1-1 system may face this same reality in the future.

## *Can I use my cell phone to call 2-1-1?*

- Yes, with most wireless carriers. IN211 is working to ensure complete access.
- Because most cellular plans charge customers based on usage, the 2-1-1 caller on a cell phone will be charged normal minutes, fees and taxes.

## *What will a call to 2-1-1 cost me?*

- Indiana 211 Partnership (IN211) is working to ensure that calls to 2-1-1 will be free. This is the case for most landline phones.
- Because most cellular plans charge customers based on usage, the 2-1-1 caller on a cell phone will be charged normal minutes, fees and taxes for usage.

## *Can I call 2-1-1 from a pay telephone?*

Generally, yes. Note that some payphone customers in Ft. Wayne, Indianapolis and the Evansville area may be required to deposit coins to complete the 2-1-1 call. All other payphone calls to 2-1-1 should be free to the caller.

## *Why won't 2-1-1 work from my office?*

Generally, if your office has "phone extensions" or a private branch exchange (PBX), your telephone system will require programming for 2-1-1 access. Have your telephone system administrator contact IN211 for instructions.

## *Are there other telephones that cannot access 2-1-1?*

2-1-1 is generally an excluded service from hospitals, hotels, colleges, jails and any telephone where there is a separate charge for making a call.

## *Can I use my TTY (telephone typewriter)/TDD (telephone device for the deaf) to call 2-1-1?*

- Many IN211 Centers utilize Indiana Relay (711) and/or a TTY/TTD to respond to deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired currently. IN211 Centers seek to serve callers with no barriers.
- ACDs (automatic call distribution systems) usually are not equipped to handle TTY callers, so IN211 is working to ensure that TTY users may receive I&R services either through using Indiana Relay (7-1-1) or by calling directly.

## *Why am I getting a busy signal when I dial 2-1-1?*

Telephones that are not yet programmed for 2-1-1 will produce either a "busy" or a "not in service" recording. If you hear either of these and are calling from an "active" 2-1-1 area, report the issue to IN211. Do NOT call your local telecommunications provider.

## *How do I report trouble accessing 2-1-1?*

If your county is listed as "active" and you are still not able to access 2-1-1, contact Lucinda Nord, (317) 921-7527 complete the "technical issues" form at <http://www.in211.org/techform.html>. Please record the date and time of call, the telephone provider used to make the call and the location from which the call was made. Experience from 2-1-1 Centers around the country demonstrates that it will take many years to ensure 2-1-1 access for all citizens from all types of telephones.

## *Is 2-1-1 available in my area?*

- Most telephone companies that provide service in Indiana have completed "translation" work. It depends upon the location where the call is made and the telephone provider used to make the call.
- 2-1-1 service evolves daily; check back for updates. The experience from other 2-1-1 Centers shows that it will take time and experience to ensure 2-1-1 access for all citizens from all types of telephones.
- Generally, callers from telephones not yet programmed for 2-1-1 hear either a "busy" or a "not in service" recording. If you hear either and are calling from an area or provider listed here as an "active" 2-1-1 area, report the issue to IN211. Do NOT call your local telephone company.

**For more info, see FAQs at [www.in211.org](http://www.in211.org).**