

North Country 



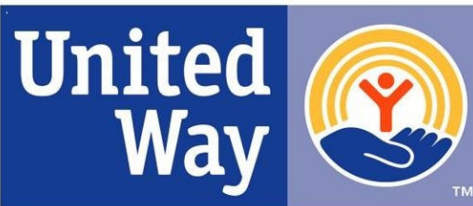
**Get Connected. Get Answers.**

***Clinton, Essex & Franklin Counties***

**Dial 2-1-1 to find Health & Human Services like...**

- Childcare & Activities
- Counseling & Support Groups
- Food, Clothing & Shelter
- Aging Services
- Transportation
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Disabilities & Special Needs
- Veteran's Affairs
- And More....

2-1-1 gives you **FREE** information-over the phone- 8AM to 8PM, 7 days a week.  
If 2-1-1 is temporarily unavailable on your phone, call **1-888-774-0289**.



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **2-1-1 Information and Referral System is Up and Running**

2-1-1 is the number set aside by the FCC in 2000 as a single, memorable means of access to health and human services information and referral. While our region is blessed with a rich infrastructure of public and not for profit services, finding out about those services and linking up with them can sometimes be challenging and overwhelming. 2-1-1 call centers are staffed by well trained information and referral specialists who can provide information and link callers to agencies from a regional database of services and it is free and confidential. For both day to day needs and during times of disaster, 2-1-1 has proven to be a great mechanism to link callers who need help, as well as those who want to help, thus relieving emergency management agencies from calls that may not be appropriate for them.

Planning for 2-1-1 services in the North Country has been spearheaded by the United Way of Clinton and Essex Counties, Inc. A steering committee was formed with representatives from Clinton, Essex and Franklin Counties to explore the need, feasibility and design of a regional 2-1-1 system and to provide ongoing governance. After extensive research and planning, it was determined that contracting for the service would be much more cost effective than building and staffing a call center.

The steering committee conducted a request for proposals (RFP) during the summer of 2008 which was distributed both regionally and state wide. Proposals were sought to develop a comprehensive database and to provide the actual 2-1-1 service. The contract was awarded to 2-1-1 Hudson Valley, which has an operational and fully accredited call center. "These folks are very capable and they have a great track record. They will be able to provide an excellent service to us at a fraction of the cost that it would have been to build and staff a call center. Our local steering committee however, will have total control and oversight of the program", said John Bernardi, Executive Director of the United Way of Clinton and Essex Counties, Inc. State funding, supplemented by regional resources is being utilized to operate the program at an estimated cost of \$87,000 per year. The service is available 7 days a week from the hours of 8am to 8pm by dialing 2-1-1. If 2-1-1 is temporarily unavailable to a caller, they can also access the service by dialing 1-888-774-0289.

2-1-1 information and referral will be a valuable service for the residents of Clinton, Essex and Franklin Counties. In addition to providing accurate and timely health and human service information to people in need, the service will also lessen the burden on a wide variety of public and private agencies that spend resources addressing misguided inquiries. Also, several local information and referral mechanisms will be linked by 2-1-1 and enhanced by their mutual affiliation.