



SB56, 2-1-1 INFORMATION AND REFERRAL NETWORK DEVELOPING A STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

Senator Weiler’s bill, SB56, develops a standard of excellence by creating a **public-private partnership** that includes funds from the state and continued private funding through United Way. **This partnership will ensure this free, statewide service can provide quality, up-to-date information to Utahns in need and those seeking opportunities to volunteer.**

2-1-1 HELPS HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE EVERYDAY

Below are real calls that United Way 2-1-1 information specialists have received over the past year.

“Thank you 2-1-1, I didn’t know where to turn for help”

United Way 2-1-1 received a call from a woman who said she was calling on behalf of her neighbor. She began the call by asking for utilities assistance. She then requested food assistance information. She seemed nervous and anxious. When the question came up about applying for food stamps, she became very quiet. She then tearfully admitted that she was going through a divorce and didn’t know where to turn for help. We explained that the design of basic needs programs was to assist people in getting back on their feet. She seemed comforted by that information and accepted referrals for food stamps and also some affordable counseling options. She ended the call by saying, “It is so wonderful that there are places like 211 where people care. Please tell everyone that helps make it happen, thank you from me.”

“Thanks to 2-1-1, my daughter won’t go hungry”

A young mother dialed 2-1-1 looking for food assistance. She said that she wanted to make sure that her school-age daughter had food over the weekend. She said that thankfully her daughter received free school lunch, but that weekends were always a time when the two of them were hungry. A United Way 2-1-1 information specialist was able to connect her to multiple food pantries, and provided additional information about utilities and prescription assistance. The young mother was also given referrals to a nonprofit agency that assists women in advancing job skills.

“2-1-1 was my last hope”

A woman dialed 2-1-1 to thank us for assisting with connecting her to utility payment assistance. When she was attempting to sign a lease on a new rental home, she discovered that she had an \$800 past due utility bill from a house she rented years ago. She was unaware of the unpaid amount, and the utility company indicated that payment was necessary before she was able to receive assistance at her new location. She had never experience this issue before and didn’t know what to do. A friend told her to dial 2-1-1. She made the call, and was connected to the HEAT program which assisted her in paying the entire bill. She had been facing possible homelessness, and was incredibly grateful for the assistance.

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“Thank you for your kindness and empowering me with information”

A woman dialed 2-1-1 requesting help for her neighbor who had been hesitant to dial 2-1-1, not being familiar with our services. The man was going through an extremely difficult time and felt nervous about reaching out for help. She passed the phone to him and he immediately began sobbing as he told his heartbreaking story of loss of employment, destructive financial decisions, and the demise of his marriage. The man was clearly in a very dark place and did not know where else to turn. Bills were piling up, creditors were after him, he was losing his home and he was running low on food. His wife’s recent departure from his life had put him over the edge. The information specialist was able to talk him down by empowering him with information regarding legal assistance for divorce and bankruptcy, financial and foreclosure counseling, food assistance, utilities assistance, and employment search assistance. At the end of the call, our information specialist also let him know that there are places to go for low-cost personal or marital counseling and made sure that he understood that he could call 2-1-1 anytime free of charge. In a much calmer state, the caller expressed gratitude for the human kindness and the comprehensive information provided by 2-1-1 and assured our information specialist that he would call again if needed.

“If it were not for 2-1-1, I might be dead”

A caller dialed 2-1-1 to thank the information specialists for doing such a nice job. She told the specialist that if it were not for 2-1-1, she thinks she might be dead. She had dialed 2-1-1 seeking a clinic that could help her with a pressing health issue even though she was not insured. She received multiple referrals for low-cost clinics as well as information regarding open enrollment with the Primary Care Network (PCN). She was able to receive immediate health care and now has insurance to assist with her long-term health care needs.

“I need a miracle, please be it!”

Recently, a resident of Salt Lake County contacted United Way 2-1-1 with a request for information via email. She had been laid off and was not finding success securing another job. “I don’t know who to talk to or what to do, but me and my kids are in serious need. ... Everything that could go wrong for us has. I really believe that I am a good single mother to three wonderful boys, ages 13, 10 and 7, and they deserve some help.” She went on to say that they would soon be homeless and ended by saying, “Please help me! I don’t know what to do. I need a miracle. Please be it.” United Way 2-1-1 was able to connect her to several resources including: two locations that assist with rent, a program that assists near-homeless single mothers with housing and job search assistance, local food pantries and a utilities-assistance program. She became connected to resources well beyond her original question.