

NEWS RELEASE

United Way Fox Cities

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February 11: National 2-1-1 Day

(Menasha) February 11, 2-1-1 on the calendar is national 2-1-1 Day. “Just as with 9-1-1 and 4-1-1, 2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number for people to call when they have problems but don’t know where to turn,” said Eric Ostermann, 2-1-1- Wisconsin Executive Director, “this service puts more people in touch with services more easily.”

United Way Fox Cities, which operates and funds 2-1-1, began offering the service in 2005 in Calumet, Outagamie, Northern Winnebago and Waupaca Counties. In 2007 the service area was expanded to include Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Manitowoc, Marquette, Sheboygan, Waushara and Southern Winnebago Counties.

When callers dial 2-1-1 they reach an information referral specialist, who listens to their concerns or questions and then connects them to a social service agency, government office, or provider who can address the question or need. The service is free and confidential and operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

2-1-1 is a barometer of need in our community. In 2013 United Way received more than 12,700 inquiries through the phone line, and 83,975 visits to the web site. 2-1-1 is a point of entry for individuals from all walks of life, ranging from the family that has just lost their income to the person who has substance abuse issues and does not know where to turn. With more than 12,700 calls received in 2013 the need to get connected is more evident than ever.

Major needs requested are for basic needs, which represents 44% of the calls. Basic needs include housing/shelter, food, transportation and materials resources. Other referrals include

resources for health care, legal services, income support and employment, and mental health and substance abuse services. Specialists also educate callers about the services they are being referred to so they are empowered to navigate systems and advocate for services on their own behalf.

end

About United Way Fox Cities

United Way Fox Cities advances the common good, creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on the three key building blocks of education, income and health. United Way creates long lasting community change by addressing the underlying causes of problems. LIVE UNITED is a call to action for everyone to become part of the change.

About United Way 2-1-1

The mission of United Way 2-1-1 is to provide easy, simple access to health and human services, to give callers an opportunity to give or get help, and to serve as a hub for community information in times of disaster.