



Arranged by

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Illinois

2-1-1 Service Guide

A Guide for Selecting a 2-1-1 Service Partner

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Introduction

This document was developed for community stakeholders like United Way, the Health Department, and Government leaders as a technical assistance and support tool when reviewing, auditing, or selecting 2-1-1 services. Carefully curated for those new or familiar with 2-1-1 services, this guide will help you better understand industry best practices as well as a reservoir of knowledge and a new shared language to communicate better with a contact center.

211 Illinois would like to thank Edward Perry for his leadership and expertise in compiling this document.

Why 2-1-1 is Important

Navigating the maze of 800 numbers of dispersed health and human services organizations challenges people every day. When people are in the middle of a crisis, they often don't know what to do or who to call. They may not often have the capacity to navigate through complex systems of care to find the right resource to help them. There is no longer a need to navigate confusing and complex referral systems. There is a remedy called 2-1-1.

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember three-digit number set aside by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to connect residents to vital health and human service information and referral (I&R) across the United States. 2-1-1 is a live-answer, person-centered service for anyone in need. 2-1-1 listens and responds regardless of the language spoken, the time of day, or where they live. During the conversation, we explore their situation and immediate needs and then connect them with local and state assistance.

2-1-1 is a one-stop resource connector to guide people in need to the best available options for help. With a publicly available online resource directory, 2-1-1 can offer support for a variety of needs.

- employment,
- food,
- financial assistance,
- health care,
- income support,
- mental health supports,
- individual or family counseling,
- shelter,
- Trauma support,
- and much more.



With the addition of 2-1-1 services, we support local communities and systems of care as they transition and evolve. The impact of 2-1-1 is clear, we:

- Reduce non-emergency calls to 9-1-1, high-cost emergency room visits, and a variety of crisis services throughout the state.
- Provide a network to disseminate public information about changes in federal, state, and local government programs.
- Partner on opportunities to disseminate informational alerts during public health and other emergencies.
- Use 2-1-1 Data to report to social service agencies, government agencies, and elected officials timely trending needs and identify gaps in services not currently being met.

Bringing 2-1-1 Services to Your Community

211 Illinois has a goal to reach every county and resident in Illinois by 2026. There remain uncovered counties in Illinois where 2-1-1 services are unavailable. 211 Illinois is here to support local communities in bringing, changing, or evolving 2-1-1 services in your community. We would love to hear from you about how we can support you.

Bringing 2-1-1 services to any community is a journey. When considering adding or changing 2-1-1 services in your community, here are some things to consider.

Buy-in and Community Support

Do you have buy-in from the social service community? What community supports are in place to support database curation, marketing, and outreach efforts?

Local Champions

Do you have any local champions to drive the 2-1-1 service launch, funding conversations, and community support efforts?

Seed Funding, Match, and Sustainability

211 Illinois can provide seed funding to uncovered communities. Local communities will need to match seed funds and develop a long-term strategy for funding the services over three to five years.

Media Support

Local media partners, advertising, and marketing partners should be considered to help drive traffic to 2-1-1. Person-centered media stories help to show 2-1-1 impact and coalesce community support.

Finding a 2-1-1 Service Partner

See the section below for [Tips on Choosing a 211 Service Partner](#).

About 211 Illinois

Created in 2009, 211 Illinois was designated as the lead entity to drive 2-1-1 service expansion across Illinois. Established in Illinois state legislation (2-1-1 Act) in 2010, we provide oversight and technical support to the 211 Illinois Statewide Network and work to sustain and grow 2-1-1 services across Illinois 24 hours a day. Our vision is for a fully integrated, funded, sustainable, and



high-quality 211 Illinois Statewide Network available to everyone in Illinois. This vision cannot be achieved without strong local support and a commitment to fund and market 2-1-1 services.

211 Illinois coordinates, funds, and guides the 211 Illinois Statewide Network toward achieving high-quality service delivery. We invest in training and education for contact centers, support and drive I&R and Contact Center best practices, and invest in the core 2-1-1 services across Illinois. These activities lead to service alignment and continuity of 2-1-1 services statewide. 211 Illinois designates the 2-1-1 number to a provider and works with the Local Exchange Carriers (LEC) to route the 2-1-1 dialing code across Illinois.

We also work collaboratively statewide with our United Way, Health Department, and Government partners to advocate, market, promote, and outreach to the local community around 2-1-1 services. We provide technical assistance and guidance to local, state, and federal partners to educate them about the impact of the 211 Illinois Statewide Network on Illinois residents. This includes education and advocacy for 2-1-1 services and the 211 Illinois Statewide Network.

211 Illinois Technical Support and Guidance

211 Illinois would like to be a strong community partner to local community leaders. While 211 Illinois designates the 2-1-1 number assignment, the choice of 2-1-1 Service providers should be a local decision. We want to support local communities in their decision-making journey, provide seed funding to support launch efforts and work collaboratively to ensure high-quality 2-1-1 services.

211 Illinois takes a technical support and guidance approach to community work and 2-1-1 oversight and growth. We foster healthy relationships to ensure increased knowledge and support for 2-1-1 in Illinois. We are open to exploring, deepening, and cultivating partnerships that help drive community impact. 211 Illinois lends our expertise to community conversations to help mature partnerships, innovation, and planning.

If you are interested in technical support or guidance from 211 Illinois, please email info@211illinois.org.

Tips for Choosing a 2-1-1 Service Partner

Choosing a 2-1-1 Service Provider is an important decision. Finding a long-term partner with the same community vision and approach to community service delivery takes time. Interviewing potential 2-1-1 service providers is a great way to learn about their operations and community impact. 211 Illinois has put together a long list of items to consider when choosing a 2-1-1 Service Provider.

Accreditation and Certification

Each 211 Illinois Contact Center should have two main organizational goals in mind. First, to achieve Inform USA Accreditation and maintain it. Second, employ nationally certified information and referral and call center industry staff. 211 Illinois is committed to supporting each center's efforts toward national organizational accreditation and individual staff certification.

Why is this important?

Accreditation. 211 Illinois Contact Centers should strive for continued operational excellence. A successful Inform USA Accreditation Award is a milestone showing your local community and your organization's commitment to quality and excellence. This will improve your organizational credibility and display to your community a marker of excellence.



Certification. For individuals, there is no higher honor in the I&R field than achieving individual certification. There are several certifications available for staff, supervisors, and directors from Inform USA, The Resource Center for Customer Service Professionals, and the Internal Call Management Institute. Employing nationally certified staff brings credibility, expertise, and excellence to your organization. This is a beacon to all staff that your organization values high-quality service delivery.



FOR YOUR AGENCY

- Role definition and professionalism
- Potential increase in funding
- Quality Assurance



FOR YOU

- Professional recognition
- Increase skills, knowledge, and confidence
- Increased competitiveness as a job candidate



FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

- Improved customer service.
- Commitment to best practices for information & referral
- Leadership of community change and development

This document will be focused on developing and implementing a comprehensive training curriculum that prepares staff for certification through Inform USA.

A Collaborative Partner

The 211 Illinois Statewide Network is a collaborative network of 211 service providers across Illinois. The vision is to build a fully integrated, funded, sustainable, and high-quality network. Each 211 contact center is dedicated and contributes to achieving this vision.

In selecting a 2-1-1 Service Partner, evaluate the collaborative partnerships that exist in their local community and the efforts to participate within the 211 Illinois Statewide Network. These collaborations can take the form of data-sharing partnerships, innovation or best practice

collective impact partnerships, system of care (homeless, mental health, healthcare, tax, etc.) partnerships, and disaster support collaboratives, to name a few. How the 211 center collaborates, communicates, and participates could be an indicator of your future partnership.

Fiscal Sustainability

When reviewing your 2-1-1 service partner, you will want to review their form 990 and last audit to determine their financial sustainability. You will want to know the fiscal solvency of the 211 parent organization or service. This could have an impact on your multi-year budgeting and marketing efforts.

Service Delivery

Determining the right 2-1-1 service provider to partner with your community should be based on the quality of services and experience you want your consumers to have. 211 Illinois recommends asking and reviewing the areas below to determine your priorities and needs for a 2-1-1 service provider.

Customer Service Approach

Consumers expect to be heard and respected and to share their stories for as much time as they can. Often, consumers express that 2-1-1 is the only service provider that listens to their needs and stories. This is why a person-centered customer service experience is important.

Understanding the approach or philosophy of the 2-1-1 service providers' approach to customer service is valuable information. Seek the partner with the closest match to your community's approach and support needs. How can you better understand their approach? Ask some strategic questions about their conversation handling. Here are some questions to consider.

- How does the 2-1-1 service provider prioritize training and quality assurance monitoring around conversation engagement with a person-centered approach?
- Are consumers feeling heard and respected by the staff and not rushed off the phone?
- Is the conversation focused more on data collection than the consumer?
- Does the conversation explore only the presenting needs or the root causes of their current situation?

Customer Experience





Another great way is to tour the 2-1-1 service provider contact center. When setting up a tour, ask to listen to a 2-1-1 call that exemplifies their customer service approach. After listening, ask how they reinforce and reward staff for high-quality conversation.

Service Channels (Multi-Channel Coverage)

As generations and technology change, so should a contact center's channels of service. Multi-channel coverage (phone, chat, text, email) for answering incoming conversations is a customer service approach to meeting consumers where they are. In order to meet consumers where they are, you must provide the channels of service being demanded by the public. Only by opening and marketing the channels of service can you understand service demand in a new way.



Understanding how the 2-1-1 service provider manages and prioritizes its service channel answering and how they staff for each channel.

Database Curation Practices

In addition to Contact Center services, the 211 core services include resource directory curation. This is the 2-1-1 service provider's time in gathering, managing, and updating the referral information given to consumers. Consider this your community asset inventory of health and service providers. They may be government, nonprofit, or for-profit vendors that provide free services to the general public. This is a community collaborative project to gather and annually update this information. Your community stakeholders can play an active role in keeping the resource directory current and updated for your community.

A 2-1-1 service provider should be able to detail their resource directory maintenance approach to gathering, managing, and updating your community asset inventory. Since this is a community collaborative project, a 2-1-1 service provider should be a collaborative partner in this effort and work directly with your local stakeholders year-round to achieve annual updates. Asking about their collaborative experience and referencing might be helpful when making your decision.

Hours of Operation

The national accreditation body for the I&R industry is called Inform USA. Inform USA publishes standards that are the basis for organization accreditation and individual certification. Regarding hours of operations, version 9 of the standards states:

“All I&Rs should offer some extended hours in consideration of inquirers who need service outside of Monday-to-Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. The preferred option is for the I&R service to provide access to information and referral 24 hours a day, year-round.”

A 2-1-1 service provider should be proposing services for answering 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Online Resource Directory

A 2-1-1 service provider should have a publicly accessible and searchable online resource database or mobile app that is accessible to all individuals, including people with disabilities. They may propose access to their current portal or provide a separate portal for your community. This detail should be outlined in your proposal. Where missing, ask for clarity to see if this matches your community's needs.

Continuity of Operations Planning

Each 2-1-1 service provider should have a written continuity of operations and emergency operations plan per Inform USA standards. This document should be shared with local funding partners and be considered in any proposal. Asking about their disaster experience and ensuring plans are updated might be helpful when making your decision. Knowing your partner is prepared to respond during a community disaster and exercises their plan should bring some piece of mind to your community.

Staffing Levels

Adequate staffing levels are an important ingredient in the recipe for a complete 2-1-1 service provider. Without adequate staffing, a 2-1-1 service provider will not meet community expectations. It is important for a community to clearly define 211 expectations and for the 2-1-1 service provider to have time to meet those expectations. If the 2-1-1 service provider doesn't meet your expectations, what support will your community provide to help the 2-1-1 service provider increase expectations?

Contact Center Staffing

Any contract center should have a staffing plan or use workforce management tools to determine staffing levels based on incoming volume demand. Understanding how the 2-1-1 service provider will staff to ensure your community contacts are answered based on your expectations is vital information. If they don't meet your expectations, how will you support the 2-1-1 service provider?

Supervision Ratios

Any contact center should be able and willing to share their supervisor-to-staff ratio. This is an important metric to determine quality assurance practices and capacity. An appropriate ratio shows a company's commitment to service quality. Contact center industry best practices out the supervisor ratio between 8 – 12 staff per supervisor. Depending on the size of the contact center and efficiency, the max may be as high as 15 to 1. Exceeding the minimum leads to micromanagement, and the maximum leads to a decrease in quality services.

Database Curation Staffing

When determining the management capacity of the resource directory, 2-1-1 service providers should consider the complexity of resource records. Many I&R software have complexity reports that scan the database to identify the effort needed to keep the database updated. This report will outline the appropriate number of full-time equivalent staff needed to appropriately update the resource directory annually. A 2-1-1 service provider should ensure that as they evolve the resource directory and add your community, they adjust database staffing to meet the demand and your community expectations. If they don't meet your expectations, how will you support the 2-1-1 service provider?

Quality Practices

As community systems of care evolve, the 2-1-1 service provider must change. Change happens in many ways, but detailed changes happen with a robust quality assurance process. Learning about the 2-1-1 service provider quality assurance practices is a mirror that reflects the organization's commitment to quality and an improvement culture.

Conversation Monitoring

Quality assurance practices will include some form of conversation monitoring. Regardless of the practice, monitoring should include choosing random conversations from all channels, reviewing the conversation in detail, and scoring it against a preset matrix of criteria. These criteria should be clearly outlined for staff, and staff should be trained on the process before implementation. Contact Center staff should have performance standards based on conversation monitoring to show improvements in skill over time in order to improve overall service quality.



Understanding the 2-1-1 service provider quality improvement process can help you understand their efforts toward improving their quality of service. This is important when community complaints arise. The 2-1-1 service provider should learn from that conversation and incorporate the lessons into their quality assurance process changes.

1-on-1 Coaching

A companion to conversation monitoring is sharing the results one-on-one with staff and coaching them through possible quality improvement. These coaching sessions are part of a performance monitoring and metrics process. The goal is for the coach (supervisor) to help staff

identify success and areas of improvement to focus their skill improvement. The coach is there to help them be the most successful.



Understanding the 2-1-1 service provider coaching opportunities and frequency helps you to understand their quality improvement process better.

Scoring Calibration

Another best practice is conversation scoring calibrations. This is when the contact center's quality assurance team gathers the score, the same conversation, and reviews how everyone arrived at the score. This highlights changes in the definition of categories, in scoring, and changes in the process. This makes the quality assurance process a living and evolving process. The goal of this exercise is to lessen the deviation in scoring over time. The more everyone scores alike, the fairer and more equitable the process is for the staff. This also breeds consistency in operations.



Understanding the 2-1-1 service provider calibration process helps you to understand their quality improvement process better.

Database Auditing

A quality assurance practice that is part of the Inform USA accreditation process is database auditing. Review randomly chosen resource directory listings to review their accuracy, completeness, indexing, and readability and check for grammar and spelling. Database audits improve data standardization and quality improvements across the database as well as provide training opportunities for resource directory data curator staff.



As a 2-1-1 service provider consistently incorporates database auditing practices, your community will better plan for community providers' training to help improve the resource directory listings.

Database Complexity Monitoring

As previously discussed, database complexity monitoring is a valuable tool. This report outlines the appropriate number of full-time equivalent staff needed to appropriately update the resource directly annually. A 2-1-1 service provider should ensure that, as they evolve the resource directory and add to your community, they adjust database staffing to meet the demand and your community expectations. If they don't meet your expectations, what support can your community provide to help the 2-1-1 service provider meet your expectations?

Performance Metrics

Contact Center industry metrics do not exist. 211 industry metrics do not exist. As an industry that constantly changes based on need, contact centers can rely on some best-practice theories to

guide their practices. It is the responsibility of contract centers to have goals and metrics they are working towards to help drive their quality programs. Reports provided by your 2-1-1 service provider should include the metrics listed below and the goal to be achieved. Your community should work collaboratively with the 2-1-1 service provider to establish realistic goals.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction rate (CSR) is a survey that is conducted immediately following the conversation and assessed by the consumer about the conversation interaction. This is automatically sent via phone systems, texting tools, or other evaluation tools. This survey gives the consumer the ability to assess the agent's interaction skills. This data can be broken down by staff and rolled up to a center average. Ratings are given on a scale of zero to one hundred. If Net Promoter scores are used, the scale is from one to ten. The higher the number, the better the satisfaction. Over time, this will decrease and increase as this is a barometer of operational, staffing, training, and quality changes and their impact on consumers.



CSR Metric: 2-1-1 service providers should strive for an average between ninety percent (90%) and ninety-five percent (95%) consistently.

Wait Times

Wait times are the average number of seconds and minutes a consumer waits before reaching a live person. The lower the number, the better the client experience. Over time, this will decrease and increase as this is a barometer of volume and staffing trend changes and their impact on consumers.



Wait Time Metric: 2-1-1 service provider wait time average should not exceed ninety (90) seconds and an excellent metric is thirty (30) seconds or less consistently.

Abandonment Rates

Abandonment rate is the percentage of consumers who hang up or abandon holding while waiting to talk to a live person. This metric alone should not be used to evaluate a service. It should be used in conjunction with the other metrics presented. This metric is about the patience consumers have with waiting.

The trend nationally is rapidly decreasing. Your community should establish a realistic benchmark for the abandonment rate. I would compare this data with a duplicate number report from the phone system to show the frequency of callbacks. This might be more of a reflection of changes within a system of care than the 2-1-1 service.



Abandonment Rate Metric: The 2-1-1 service provider wait time average should not exceed fifteen percent (15%), and an excellent metric should be five percent (5%) or less consistently.

Average Talk Time

Managing consumer talk time is a challenge for 2-1-1 service providers while balancing dramatic seasonal volume changes. Keeping a watchful eye on the average talk time and coaching to this metric is important. Average talk time (ATT) is the average time all consumers help during a time period.



ATT Metric: 2-1-1 service provider average talk time should not exceed nine (9) minutes or be less than five (5) minutes.

Other Metrics

While other metrics can inform the 2-1-1 service provider of their progress, not all metrics are under the control of the 2-1-1 service provider. For example, the answer rate or percentage of contacts answered has a direct impact on the seasonal volume, talk time, and staffing availability. Therefore, other metrics like incoming volume and answer rates should be included in reports, but the metric alone is not an indicator of performance. These should not be a metric held to a punitive measure for 2-1-1 service providers.

Disaster Support

Disasters can happen at any time and without warning. A 2-1-1 service provider should be prepared at any time to react and respond to any incident that occurs in your community. An organization should have both the Business Continuity and Emergency Operations Manual to drive their disaster planning, preparations, and response.

As a community partner, a 2-1-1 service provider is going to rely on your local leadership to communicate disaster service changes, connect them with your local emergency management personnel, and connect them to Volunteer Organizations Active During a Disaster (VOAD). An effective 2-1-1 service provider has immediate up-to-minute disaster recovery information and is a valuable partner with your emergency response.

Disaster Experience

Your community will rely on a 2-1-2 service provider experience and support when your community is at its most vulnerable. It is important to discuss the 2-1-1 service provider's disaster experience and your communities' expectations for support. What type of disaster have they responded to?



It is not unreasonable to ask to read both the Business Continuity and Emergency Operations Manual.

Surge Capacity and Planning

Every community service and technology have a capacity or limit. In a disaster, these systems can get overrun quickly. Understand your community's capacity to serve consumers simultaneously and the 211 technology volume capacity before busy signals or tools are unavailable.

Conversations and plans with vendor and community partners around maxing capacity are important preparation steps.

During disaster recovery and response efforts, what happens when the incoming volume exceeds the 211 service providers' capacity to respond? What happens when the community service capacity is maxed? The more you can prepare, the more you can mitigate service interruption and response limitations.



The 2-1-1 service provider should have a plan for disaster surge staffing. They should also understand their technology capacity after conversations with their vendors. A framework should be documented in the 2-1-1 service provider emergency operations plan.

Disaster Redundancy

Once you understand capacity and surge limits, you can work on redundancy options. A 2-1-1 service provider should have plans in place to continue operations 24 hours a day. Here are some things to consider.

- What redundancy is in place for the technology and utilities so they can continue to operate?
- Do they have mutual agreements in place for surge staffing pre-disaster?
- Have they exercised with their redundancy or mutual agreement partner volume surge plan annually?
- How will they rally or use volunteers from other human service organizations or funding partners to help with the volume surge?

These details should be documented in the 2-1-1 service provider emergency operations plan.

Disaster Training

In their disaster plans, 2-1-1 service providers should reference disaster training and exercises. How do they educate themselves about disasters they have not yet experienced? As a community partner, can they be part of your community disaster exercises? Understand how they exercise and practice for disaster response annually.

Budgeting for 2-1-1 Services

Crafting a budget for your 2-1-1 program varies based on your community's needs. It is important to develop the true costs for 2-1-1 services in your community. Based on those figures, you can then determine the level of services you are seeking and can afford.

When building your budget, you will want to develop a multi-year budget for sustainability and future partnerships. Your needs, budget, and service requirements today will change and evolve. The decisions you make today are not permanent and may change. Be open to your community's evolution.

2-1-1 service proposals are similar to other vendor proposals. You get what you pay for. Budget should not be your sole or primary consideration when choosing a 2-1-1 service provider. Finding the right partner should focus on service delivery and the right partner for your community. Budget is important, but proposals and services can be negotiated.

Below are items to be considered when building your 211 budget.

2-1-1 Services

- *Contact Center 24-hour access* – Budget-appropriate contact center staffing for 24 hours a day based on conversation volume. If you are not budgeting for 24-hour coverage, you must have a plan for paying for after-hours coverage by another Inform USA accredited 2-1-1 service provider. The preference for 211 Illinois is one 2-1-1 service provider for 24-hour coverage.
- *Resource Directory Data Curation Services* - Budget appropriately data curation staffing based on the amount of data you will add and maintain in your database. Data curation affects your contact center referrals and online resource directory. Being appropriately staffed and having supervisors or managers to monitor quality is important.
- *Public Online Resource Directory* – Add the best estimate for technology costs, including the phone system, CRM, quality management tools, online resource directory, and API data exports from your CRM. 211 Illinois will require the data to be shared with the National Database Repository (NDP) and the 211 Illinois Statewide Resource Directory.
- *Monthly, Quarterly, and Annual Reporting* - Budget appropriate data quality and reporting staffing to ensure compliance with reporting from all funding sources.
- I&R national standards outline that 211 core services should be available 24 hours a day. Any proposal for 2-1-1 services should include contact center services to answer your community inquiries 24 hours a day. The proposal should cover multi-channel coverage (phone, chat, text, email) for answering incoming conversations. You will want to clarify in your proposal the channels you want answered and what channels the provider is able to answer.

A proposal for 211 core services does not include enhanced 2-1-1 services like follow-up, care coordination, case management, centralized intake, community information exchange, closed-loop referrals, etc. Proposals requesting these enhanced services would come with an extra cost by the provider.

There should be a cost for data curation efforts to gather, publish, and maintain the I&R database. This data should be available to the contact center when answering conversations and to the public through an online resource directory for your community. Based on the amount of data, there are formulas for the center to understand how many people it will take to gather, publish, and maintain your community asset inventory. This inventory is a partnership with your local stakeholders to collaboratively work with your 2-1-1 service providers to keep this data up to date. A partnership flourishes when everyone takes ownership of updating the database alongside the 2-1-1 service provider.

In any 2-1-1 service proposal, you should have access to basic reporting. 211 metric reporting should also include items like the incoming volume, volume answered, average speed to answer, average handle time, average talk time, abandonment rate, and customer satisfaction rate. 211 needs reporting would include the top needs and referrals made based on conversations answered. 211 database reporting should include stats to help you understand your community's usage. Helpful stats might include the total number of database records, total online database visitors, and percentage of the database updated. All these reports should be available to you monthly, quarterly, and annually.

2-1-1 Marketing and Outreach

- *Collateral Material Printing* – The National 211 Toolkit has pre-developed assets any 211 can use free of charge. Budget appropriately for printing costs for these assets for gorilla marketing and outreach. If you want your own specialty campaign, budget appropriately for the costs to create those assets.
- *Advertising purchases* – 211 Illinois coordinates some statewide marketing. We can collaborate on advertising to share costs, where appropriate. Advertise in destinations for your core audience.
- *Staff costs to manage campaigns* - Budget appropriate marketing staffing to ensure effective campaign, marketing, and outreach rollout. This could be a combination of internal marketing and outreach staff or outsourced marketing and internal outreach.
- 2-1-1 is often the best-kept secret in town. In many communities, 2-1-1 may be the only online 24-hour service available. We certainly do not want to keep a valuable service available 24 hours a day a secret. Therefore, you want to have a marketing and outreach plan and budget.

The National 211 Office within the United Way Worldwide has developed marketing collateral material that can be freely downloaded and customized for your 211 marketing and outreach needs. You will want to budget for printing costs, purchase other collateral material, and

staffing to manage outreach. You should engage with local media outlets for free PSA space. You will find free PSA videos, scripts, and other ideas available for these free spots. Consider working with your local utility companies to get free 211 information in each bill posted online or mailed to homes. Consider advertising purchases for local transit, billboards, in-home mailings, or social media ads.

Lastly, consider some gorilla marketing efforts and blanket flyers or posters in your local supermarket, restaurants, libraries, hair salons, barber shops, and bars. Seek out any social gathering places – you never know when someone will need help.

Administrative Costs

- Admin rate – The coordinating body managing planning and deliverables of the 2-1-1 service contract would need operating funds. In many communities, it may be the local United Way, Health Department, or County Government. At the State level, this is 211 Illinois. Budget appropriately to support their work.
- Staff costs to manage contracts and data – The coordinating body may need someone to manage contract deliverables and gather data. Budget appropriately contract management staffing to ensure compliance with deliverables and staff who will gather data for reporting to 211 Illinois and all funding sources.



If a coordinating body at the local level exists to monitor 2-1-1 Services, community needs, marketing, and outreach, consider the costs associated with managing the contract and gathering the data. Add these costs to your budget.

211 Map

A map of 2-1-1 service areas and provides can be found on the 211 Illinois website at www.211illinois.org.

211 Contact Center Profiles

211 Illinois has gathered some information about each contact center and outlined them into profiles. These profiles are a quick introduction to each center and include contact information for further exploration.

211 DuPage

Parent Organization:	DuPage County Government	211 Launch Date:	November 2022	Operating Years:	1 year
Contact Person:	Gina Stafford gina.strafford@dupageco.org 630-407-6444	Website:	https://211dupage.gov/		
Inform USA Accredited:	No	Interested in Expansion:	Yes (Limited)	On Corrective Action:	No
Counties Served:	DuPage				
About Service:	211 DuPage is a free confidential information and referral service that provides a central access point to local health and human services 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. 211DuPage is an important resource for the citizens of DuPage County because it's the number to call when you don't know who to call. Trained Information and Referral Specialists will help residents assess their needs and provide the resources to address those needs all in a one-stop access point. Streamlining the process of seeking help for the residents of DuPage County.				
Center Agent Full-time Equivalent Count:	5	Center Agents Inform USA Certified:	20%	Customer Satisfaction Rate in the last year:	NA
Database Curator Full-time Equivalent Count:	1.5	Database Curator Inform USA Certified:	100%	Percentage of Database Updated in last year:	93%

211 Lake County

Parent Organization:	United Way of Lake County	211 Launch Date:	September 2019	Operating Years:	4 years
Contact Person:	Kristi Long Kristi.long@uwlakeco.org 847-775-1019	Website:	https://211lakecounty.org/		
Inform USA Accredited:	Yes	Interested in Expansion:	Yes	On Corrective Action:	No
Counties Served:	Lake				
About Service:	<p>United Way of Lake County unites leadership and resources to create lasting change that will improve and save lives in Lake County, Illinois. 211 is Lake County’s One-stop-shop for help! Lake County residents can connect with a wide arrange of service by phone or text, and an expert navigator will guide them to the help they need, regardless of the time of day, the language they speak, or where they live. 211 is transforming the way the United Way of Lake County helps thousands of our residents connect with essential health and human services to improve and save lives.</p>				
Center Agent Full-time Equivalent Count:	NA	Center Agents Inform USA Certified:	NA	Customer Satisfaction Rate in the last year:	NA
Database Curator Full-time Equivalent Count:	NA	Database Curator Inform USA Certified:	NA	Percentage of Database Updated in last year:	NA

211 Metro Chicago

Parent Organization:	United Way of Metro Chicago	211 Launch Date:	January 2023	Operating Years:	1 year
Contact Person:	Richard LaPratt Richard.LaPratt@211metrochicago.org 803-319-6919	Website:	https://211metrochicago.org/		
Inform USA Accredited:	No	Interested in Expansion:	Yes	On Corrective Action:	No
Counties Served:	Chicago and Cook County				
About Service:	<p>211 Metro Chicago provides information and referral services to the citizens of Cook County, a population of approximately 5,150,000. With more than 30 Resource Navigators and 4 designated Resource Database Staff, 211 Metro Chicago has handled more than 100,000 contacts since opening earlier this year. Additionally, our resource database is comprised of more than 3,200 Agencies and more than 16,000 programs, helping individuals and families be directed to basic human services in their community at large. As a funded partner of the City and County, we will be slowly integrated into other community programs to further assist individuals and families in need over next five years.</p>				
Center Agent Full-time Equivalent Count:	32	Center Agents Inform USA Certified:	55%	Customer Satisfaction Rate in the last year:	91%
Database Curator Full-time Equivalent Count:	4	Database Curator Inform USA Certified:	80%	Percentage of Database Updated in last year:	93%

211 PATH

Parent Organization:	PATH Crisis	211 Launch Date:	February 2009	Operating Years:	15 years
Contact Person:	Adam Carter acarter@pathcrisis.org 309-718-1209	Website:	https://www.navigateresources.net/path/		
Inform USA Accredited:	Yes	Interested in Expansion:	Yes	On Corrective Action:	Yes
Counties Served:	Alexander, Carrol, Champaign, Clark, Crawford, DeKalb, De Witt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Franklin, Gallatin, Grundy, Hamilton, Hardin, Iroquois, Jackson, Jefferson, Jo Davies, Johnson, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Knox, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Marion, Massac, McHenry, McLean, Menard, Moultrie, Ogle, Perry, Piatt, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Sangamon, Shelby, Stephenson, Union, Vermillion, Washington, Wayne, White, Whiteside, Will, Williams, and Winnebago.				
About Service:	PATH has been providing some form of telephone based crisis and information and referral assistance since 1971, so the nature of handling 211 calls is deeply embedded in our organization’s foundation. With a mix of volunteer and funded positions, we provide primary 24-hour call support to upwards of 80% of Illinois and backup support for additional counties. We also answer after-hours calls for several McLean County based organizations (Stepping Stones, Project Oz, et al). Supporting this (and our 988 call center) is one of the largest and most robust accredited crisis databases in the country.				
Center Agent Full-time Equivalent Count:	2.5	Center Agents Inform USA Certified:	0%	Customer Satisfaction Rate in the last year:	NA
Database Curator Full-time Equivalent Count:	5	Database Curator Inform USA Certified:	40%	Percentage of Database Updated in last year:	NA

211 Peoria

Parent Organization:	Heart of Illinois	211 Launch Date:	May 2013	Operating Years:	10 years
Contact Person:	Nicole Wilson nicole.wilson@local.unitedway.org 309-361-4629	Website:	https://www.hoiunitedway.org/heart-of-illinois-united-way-2-1-1		
Inform USA Accredited:	No	Interested in Expansion:	No	On Corrective Action:	No
Counties Served:	Fulton, Marshall, Peoria, Putnam, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford.				
About Service:	Every day, individuals go without essential services while help is readily available. The Heart of Illinois United Way and Advanced Medical Transport of Central Illinois partner to provide Heart of Illinois 2-1-1, a comprehensive information and referral line to connect callers to critical health and human care programs. Contact 211 or 309-999-4029 - 211 is free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.				
Center Agent Full-time Equivalent Count:	3	Center Agents Inform USA Certified:	0%	Customer Satisfaction Rate in the last year:	NA
Database Curator Full-time Equivalent Count:	3	Database Curator Inform USA Certified:	0%	Percentage of Database Updated in last year:	100%

211 Southwestern Illinois

Parent Organization:	United Way of Greater St. Louis	211 Launch Date:	February 2007	Operating Years:	16 years
Contact Person:	Robin Pokojski robin.pokojski@stl.unitedway.org 314-242-1884	Website:	https://www.211helps.org		
Inform USA Accredited:	Yes	Interested in Expansion:	Yes	On Corrective Action:	No
Counties Served:	Calhoun, Clinton, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair.				
About Service:	211 Southwestern Illinois is a multi-channel contact center, providing diverse and accessible community connections and health and human service resources 24 hours a day via open and closed loop platforms. As our region's front door to more than 25,000 programs and services, we provide critical connections, locally and statewide, across 99 counties in Missouri and 9 counties in Illinois, working in partnership with more than 5000 agencies. As the state's designated emergency response call center, we work in partnership with state and local emergency management agencies and COADs to support disaster response events and subsequent needs. In addition, 211 provides critical infrastructure to support regional projects and initiatives in support of homeless prevention/diversion, energy assistance programs, medical hardships and more.				
Center Agent Full-time Equivalent Count:	5	Center Agents Inform USA Certified:	57%	Customer Satisfaction Rate in the last year:	93%
Database Curator Full-time Equivalent Count:	4	Database Curator Inform USA Certified:	100%	Percentage of Database Updated in last year:	98%