

Headlines

2-1-1 Free Information Hotline Still Available for Cayuga County Residents

On February 11, 2009, United Way's 2-1-1 Free Information Hotline marked the one-year anniversary of its official launch in Cayuga County. This information hotline has consistently answered an average of 21 calls per month for the past year. 2-1-1 is an initiative of the United Way of Cayuga County, which offers the community a free, confidential, multilingual service that helps individuals manage a range of typical life obstacles. With the current economy, more people may be in need of assistance and do not know where to turn. The 2-1-1 hotline operates 24 hours a day and provides referral to health and human service agencies for basic needs and crisis intervention and assistance. "It is critical that the residents of Cayuga County know where to turn if they find themselves in need of assistance. During these economic times, there may be individuals that are in need of help for the first time in their lives and are unaware of the services offered in our community. 2-1-1 will answer their questions and connect them to the right agencies," states Daniel P. Larson, Board President of the United Way of Cayuga County. For example, 2-1-1 can connect individuals with the following services:

- Resources for basic needs: food pantries, clothes, shelters and rent assistance
- Resources for mental and physical health: health insurance programs, prenatal health, support groups, counseling, intervention and rehabilitation for alcohol and drugs
- Information on employment programs
- Information for older adults
- Information for children, youth and their families

The 2-1-1 Information and Referral (I&R) Specialists evaluate the needs of the individual calling and determine what the most appropriate referral is. The I&R specialists are also trained to determine if the caller may be eligible for other programs through the use of a database that contains information about non-profit organizations as well as government programs. "Much like 9-1-1, we hope the 2-1-1 Information Hotline is known throughout every household and that individuals and families take advantage of its services".