

**2-1-1 Monterey County
Frequently Asked Questions
(1/26/09)**

What is 2-1-1?

2-1-1 is a toll-free three digit telephone number which connects callers with trained information and referral specialists. Callers can find out where to go for community services such as counseling, emergency shelter, parenting classes and legal aid.

How do I use 2-1-1?

If you need to know where to go for help but don't know who to call, start with 2-1-1. Tell the Call Specialist what type of service you are looking for. You will be given referrals (names and phone numbers) of organizations that provide the type of service you are seeking.

How much does it cost to call 2-1-1?

There is no fee for calling 2-1-1 beyond your usual calling plan.

What is 2-1-1 used for?

2-1-1 is a centralized clearinghouse for information on community services. People can find out where to get help and where they can give help or volunteer. 2-1-1 is used for the day to day community service needs and during times of disaster response to help disseminate useful information.

Who runs 2-1-1?

In Monterey County, a collaboration of many organizations, including the county government, local foundations, First 5, United Way, and nonprofit service agencies worked together to develop 2-1-1. United Way Monterey County has been designated the 2-1-1 Service Provider by the California Public Utilities Commission and has staff dedicated to operating 2-1-1.

Who answers the 2-1-1 calls?

United Way Monterey County has contracted with a specialized 2-1-1 call center located in Ventura County. Trained Call Specialists have years of experience answering 2-1-1 calls and will be using information collected and updated by United Way Monterey County staff.

Who pays for 2-1-1?

2-1-1 Monterey County has a broad base of public, nonprofit and private funding. Initial contributors include the County Health Department, County Department of Social and Employment Services, Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Community Foundation for Monterey County, Language Line Services, Driscolls and United Way Monterey County.

Can I use 2-1-1 wherever I go?

2-1-1 is now available to over 77% of the population nationwide. You can access 2-1-1 for local resources in 244 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 47 states plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. Within California, 2-1-1 services are organized at the county level, and have been established in much of the Bay area and Southern California.

What if I don't speak English?

The 2-1-1 service is available in 150 languages at no charge to the calling party. Many of the Call Specialists speak Spanish, and Language Line Interpretation services are available for other languages.

What if I am hearing impaired?

The 2-1-1 service is TTY capable for the hearing impaired.

When did 2-1-1 phone service become available in Monterey County?

2-1-1 Monterey County was launched on February 11, 2009.

How much does it cost to run 2-1-1 Monterey County?

The budget is about \$350,000 per year, less than a dollar per resident.

What if someone calls that is in crisis?

Call Specialists are trained to handle crisis calls and can make direct transfers to crisis lines or the local 9-1-1. These “warm transfers” ensure that the caller is personally connected to the critical help they need.

Can I call 2-1-1 any time?

2-1-1 calls are answered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

What can I expect when I call 2-1-1?

Callers will be greeted with a recording that gives them a choice of English or Spanish. Then a live Call Specialist gets on the line and asks how they can help. To find the best service match, the caller will be asked a few questions about the type of service, their location (by zip code to help find the nearest service), and some demographic information such as age and ethnicity. Callers will be given the names and numbers of up to three organizations that seem to best fit their needs.

What if there are no services for my needs?

When there are no services available matching a caller’s request, the Call Specialists may help problem-solve by discussing other solutions.

Why does the operator ask me questions about who I am?

In order to understand and address community needs, some information is collected on the callers. This information is useful to funders and service providers. Callers will also have the opportunity to leave their name and phone number for an optional follow-up customer satisfaction survey.

How is 2-1-1 used in times of disaster?

2-1-1 is an efficient way to provide two-way communication during times of disaster. 2-1-1 is connected with the County Office of Emergency Services and will have up-to-date information needed in disaster response efforts, such as locations of evacuation shelters, road closure information, insurance claim processes, and volunteer needs.

Why is there a rainbow stripe on the 2-1-1 publicity material?

The diversity band represents the wide variety of people and services brought together by the 2-1-1 system.