

UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS CONTACT:

Rachel Cordwin (rcordwin@uwmidlands.org)
Office: 402.522.7933 | Mobile: 402.319.8266

Jill Samuelson (jsamuelson@uwmidlands.org)
Office: 402.522.7922 | Mobile: 402.319.8213

*For Immediate Release: **February 8, 2018***

2-1-1 Helpline Celebrates 15 Years of Service to Nebraska and Southwest Iowa

Every day hundreds of people in our community turn to 2-1-1 for information and support - whether financial, domestic or health related. The 2-1-1 helpline, managed by United Way of the Midlands, is a free, confidential Information and Referral (*I&R*) service that connects people of all ages in the state of Nebraska and Southwest Iowa to a specialist who will help them find local health and human services.

The helpline's mission is to connect people in need to those that can help. 2-1-1 is committed to being the first, most essential resource available. Through this vital service, United Way of the Midlands identifies our community's ongoing and urgent needs. In the last five years, the center answered nearly 300,000 calls including 62,059 calls in 2017.¹ From the calls in 2017:

- 35% of calls were related to utility needs
- 26% of calls were related to housing needs
- 7% of calls were related to food needs
- 93% of callers would recommend 2-1-1 to a family member or friend

People in the metro area can call, text or search online to receive information about available services and resources such as food and nutrition programs, shelter and housing options, utilities assistance, health care and employment and education opportunities. Users can connect to an information specialist by dialing 2-1-1 or texting their zip code to 898211. Through the new, more user-friendly website, ne211.org, people can now access 2-1-1 Counts by selecting either the Nebraska or Iowa dashboard to see an overview of what the needs and requests are in their own zip code, city and county. Assistance is available in over 100 languages using the Tele-interpreter service and bi-lingual staff. Standard message and data rates may apply when texting.

United Way of the Midlands' 2-1-1 successfully attained AIRS Accreditation to demonstrate the overall quality and effectiveness of the I&R service. AIRS Accreditation assesses the ability of an I&R program to demonstrate full compliance with the AIRS Standards for Professional Information and Referral. It includes a comprehensive review of the agency's resource database and is the primary quality assurance mechanism for affirming I&R excellence.²

To promote 2-1-1 in our community and further connect to members, the helpline partners with local organizations and programs including American Red Cross, Commonfund, Douglas County Emergency Management Services, Goodfellows, Nebraska Public Power District's Pennies for Power and Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium. 2-1-1 is generously supported through a grant awarded by Cox Communications.

About the United Way of the Midlands

Thanks to donors, volunteers and community partners, United Way of the Midlands is not only focused on addressing our community's human needs today; it is focused on what can be, and what should be. It is building on today's strong partnerships to create even more comprehensive human service efforts tomorrow, so our community can solve some of the root causes of poverty. United Way is community-based, community-focused. Thanks to those who share their strength, United Way is COMMUNITY STRONG. We invite you to visit UnitedWayMidlands.org for more information.

###

¹ This number includes calls from Southeast Iowa.

² www.airs.org