



TO: Chairman Kitchens and the Members of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families

FROM: Representative David Crowley

DATE: January 17, 2018

RE: Written testimony in support of Assembly Bill 779

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 779, which will provide funding to stabilize the 2-1-1 Wisconsin “warm line.” 2-1-1 Wisconsin is a statewide call-in service where individuals can speak with a trained specialist and be directed to appropriate services within their communities. This bill is a part of the Foster Forward legislative package and is designed to help connect families to the services they need before their situation gets to the level of requiring intervention by the child welfare system.

To give you a brief overview, the 2-1-1 Wisconsin human services “warm line” – a non-emergency line as opposed to an emergency “hot line” - has seven call centers around the state and provides 24/7 service in all 72 counties. These services could vary from the location of food pantries and homeless shelters to free diaper services and free legal clinics. In 2016, they received 376,228 calls from Wisconsinites requesting assistance. They also have a user-friendly website where people can receive information without having to make a call. Some other services include employment assistance, tax assistance, health insurance assistance, utility assistance, substance abuse treatment, and mental health treatment – all issues that if left unattended often lead to unsafe homes for children.

2-1-1 Wisconsin is currently funded through federal dollars and private fundraising by United Way. However, their federal funding was recently cut and the program is at risk.

The individuals and families served by 2-1-1 Wisconsin are a population that is often at risk for child abuse and neglect. As members of the Speaker’s Task Force on Foster Care learned throughout the public hearings, prevention efforts like the 2-1-1 warm line are the first step toward intercepting families before situations become critical and helping them ensure their homes remain safe for their children.

This proposal would restore the lost portion of 2-1-1 Wisconsin’s funding with the stipulation that United Way promote the “warm line” to ensure that people are made aware of this incredible resource and the services available to them.



Thank you for taking the time to hear this important bill. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have at this time.

Sincerely,

David C. Crowley
State Assembly Representative
17th Assembly District



JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

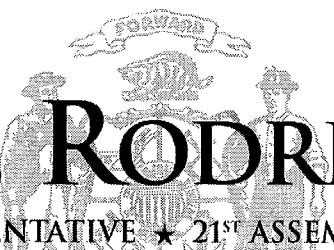
AB 779: Foster Forward: Grants for 2-1-1 Wisconsin to Direct Families to Community Based Services

Testimony of State Representative Jessie Rodriguez Assembly Committee on Children and Families January 17, 2018

Chairman Kitchens, committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Assembly Bill 779, legislation that will make grants available for the Wisconsin human services statewide call-in system that provides referrals to community based services.

Last fall many of us sitting here today, including Representative Crowley and I, worked together on the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care travelling to every corner of the state to learn about Wisconsin's foster care system and the challenges it faces. At each of the six hearings we held, we heard from foster care experts, foster parents, community volunteers and children, sharing knowledge and suggestions on ways to improve the foster care system in Wisconsin. From the hearings we learned that when possible under certain circumstances, an effective solution is to provide opportunities so that children are not forced into the foster care system. When we can identify at-risk families and connect them with services within their communities, we can ensure that those homes remain safe for children and significantly reduce the number of children placed in out-of-home care.

The legislation before you today, works towards reducing the number of children placed in out-of-home care by requiring the Department of Health Services to provide grant funding for the 2-1-1 Wisconsin human services line; a statewide call-in service that connects at-risk families with a trained professional that can direct the family to community based services including food pantries, homeless shelters, and free diaper services among other resources.



JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

2-1-1 Wisconsin has seven call-in centers throughout the state available at all hours, seven days a week and received nearly 400,000 calls requesting service in 2016. The call-in service is currently funded through a combination of federal and charitable dollars from the United Way. However, federal funding has recently been cut.

As we learned throughout this process, there isn't a perfect solution to solve the woes of the foster care system. But we do know the best solution is to keep families together when possible. By providing these resources to at risk families we can significantly reduce the number of children forced into out-of-home care and help foster safe and stable homes for children throughout our state. I appreciate your time and I encourage your support for this legislation.



Luther S. Olsen

State Senator

14th District

TO: Assembly Committee on Children and Families

FROM: Senator Olsen

DATE: January 17th, 2018

SUBJECT: Testimony for Assembly Bill 779

Thank you Chairman Kitchens and members of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families for holding a hearing and allowing me to testify in support of Assembly Bill 779 (AB 779). This legislation is part of the Foster Forward legislative package that was developed by the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care.

Wisconsin currently provides a statewide call-in service called the 2-1-1 "warm line" where individuals can gather information and be directed to services in their community that are needed. These community services that individuals could be directed to things such as homeless shelters or food pantries.

There are 7 call centers state wide that provide service in all 72 counties and received more than 350,000 calls in 2016 from Wisconsin residents in search of assistance. The individuals that are being served by 2-1-1 are often at risk for child abuse and neglect, with this service being the first assistance for families before situations worsen.

2-1-1's current federal funding was recently cut, causing the program to be at risk. AB 779 would require the Department of Health Services to award grants to help restore the lost portion of the federal funding for 2-1-1. For this service to continue for individuals across the state to be directed to needed services in their communities, this funding is needed.

Again, thank you for holding a hearing today on this legislation. I ask for your support on AB 779 and would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.



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Testimony of David Lee
IN SUPPORT OF AB 779
Before the Assembly Committee on Children and Families
January 17, 2018

Dear Chairman Kitchens and committee members:

My name is David Lee and I serve as the Executive Director of Feeding Wisconsin, the statewide association of the Feeding America food banks in Wisconsin. Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments in support of AB 779 and how it is critical for the operation of a well-functioning, statewide system of referrals and resource connection for families living with low-incomes.

Feeding Wisconsin is a member-organized and supported association representing the six regional member food banks in the state of Wisconsin. Our mission is help our food banks, partners, and stakeholders fight hunger, improve health and strengthen communities.

Together, with our food banks and their affiliated network of 1,000 local food pantries and meal programs operating in every single county of our state, we are the largest network of hunger relieving organizations providing over 50 million meals to just about 600,000 of our friends and neighbors.

Feeding Wisconsin also coordinates a statewide outreach program that assists people throughout the state with accurate information and high-quality application assistance for the FoodShare program. As many of you know, FoodShare helps almost 700,000 of our friends and neighbors living below or near the poverty line with a small amount of grocery benefits that they can utilize to purchase the food they need to work, learn and build a better life.

In FY 17, our statewide FoodShare outreach program had over 8,000 client contacts helped with over 5,000 people with program "assists." Based on state averages, this is equal to over 3 million meals that we were able to help connect to families, children and individuals.

But there are often times that our outreach specialists encounter cases that fall out of their area of expertise and it's in these instances that having a well-managed, coordinated, up to date, centralized resource like 211 is so vital; it ensures that connections to basic needs resources in local communities is always at the ready to help our friends and neighbors dealing with tough times.

In fact, in FY 17, our network of outreach specialists referred nearly 1,300 people to 211, or about 16% of our total client contacts. These referrals were for utility assistance, job training and employment, housing, mental health services, and even food resources.

It may seem strange that the food bank network refers to 211 for emergency food but this very fact speaks to the value of having a centralized resource, like 211.

While the Feeding Wisconsin network of regional food banks and over 1,000 affiliated, local food pantries represents the largest network of hunger-relieving organizations in Wisconsin, there are a number of independent food banks, community action agencies and other food programs that are outside of our network that operate independently.

Many of them are doing great work in local communities outside of our line of sight. So, while a pantry in our network might only be open on Tuesday, there might be an independent one in the same neighborhood that is open on Thursday. Since these organizations have chosen to not partner with our network, we don't know when they are open, their requirements for service, etc.

As an independent clearinghouse and database, all direct service providers can point to 211 as the single source database to refer clients to for the most up to date and accurate source for help.

Finally, many of our food banks have begun partnering with the healthcare community to incorporate the two-question food insecurity screen in the clinical workflow and the electronic health record. This is an incredibly exciting development as we can begin to move interventions for food insecurity into the clinical setting.

211 has become the main referral option to connect families who screen "positive" for food insecurity because it is the most robust resource option that can handle any number of needs that a family may be encountering.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak in support of AB 779.



GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM®

**Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Children and Families
Assembly Bill 779 – grants for referrals to community-based services**

January 17th, 2018

Testimony Presented by:

Kim Knutson, MS, CIRS

Line Supervisor

Great Rivers 2-1-1

Gundersen Health System

La Crosse, Wisconsin

kdknutso@gundersenhealth.org

Chairman Kitchens and members of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Assembly Bill 779, providing grant funds for non-profit referral services. My name is Kim Knutson, Line Supervisor for Great Rivers 2-1-1, based within Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. On behalf of Gundersen Health System, Great Rivers 2-1-1 and 2-1-1 Wisconsin, I am pleased to strongly support this legislation. Today I am hoping to bring you into the world of Information and Referral by providing an example.

A single mom calls 2-1-1 for help – it's Friday night and her son who is in middle school is extremely angry and intense, because she said no to his request to get picked up by a high school student for a sleep over at another's house. The mother is in tears because she is worried, feels overwhelmed, scared and doesn't know what to do. She is also utterly upset at her son, and this situation has also triggered anger she feels towards her son's father who moved out of town. She states she has lost all patience and energy, and is about to "lose it." An Information & Referral (I&R) Specialist states it is good that she called, then listens to her and asks questions to better understand the situation and assess for risk – is the child violent? Will the mother be able to control her anger? After several minutes of listening to the mother, she calms down. She is empowered because she was able to vent, be heard, and not judged. The I&R Specialist can still hear the boy yelling, but the mom has indicated he is now in his bedroom

and is yelling but not throwing anything and he doesn't have any weapons. The I&R Specialist continues to listen to the mom, which helps her continue to calm down and become less distressed. They talk through options she has to handle the situation. The I&R Specialist hears that it is important to her that her son accepts the rules and is respectful of her, but it's challenging because of the dynamics of being a single mom to a growing young man. Together, they determine some options with input from the caller. These are strengths-based because it helps the mother take more control of the situation. Both the mom and son calm down. He is still upset and she is still overwhelmed, but the situation isn't heightened and the mom has options for the evening if necessary. She also knows she can dial 211 back, either for assistance or support. A Follow Up call is scheduled for the next day, not only to make sure the mother and child are ok, but also to explore resources going forward. Resources for the mom could include parenting education, Respite services, counseling and support groups. The son could seek involvement in community programs include programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys and Girls club, counseling, or getting involved with extracurricular activities at school. In addition to addressing the immediate situation, the Information & Referral Specialist could help determine additional needs – perhaps financial challenges that local resources could assist with, such as food, utility payment assistance, consumer credit counseling, or job search assistance.

Our I&R Specialists work with our County Department of Human Services and law enforcement when situations involving children are assessed as high risk needing intervention.

Anyone can call 2-1-1 – struggling parents, foster parents, Social Workers, CASA volunteers, friends and family on behalf of their loved ones. We are an anonymous service ready and able to help at any time. When someone is struggling and dials 211 for resources, they get so much more than a directory. Any day of the week, any time of day, they are able to speak with a trained, empathetic professional who will listen, ask questions and provide information to assist with any situation. We follow a process which includes building rapport and trust, assessment, clarifying, referral giving, determining additional needs, and offering follow up.

The backbone of 211 Wisconsin is our up-to-date database which provides reliable referral information at our fingertips. All Wisconsin centers update the resource database regularly. Either by calling or searching our online website, anyone has access to community information 24/7.

I shared one example with you today; 2-1-1 has many examples of helping callers with Information and Referral – involving mental health, drug use, basic needs, etc. I urge you to support Assembly Bill 779 – a bill that speaks to the importance of Information and Referral in the lives of Wisconsin residents. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



United Way of Wisconsin

**Testimony of
Charlene Mouille
Executive Director, United Way of Wisconsin and
Executive Director of 2-1-1 Wisconsin**

**Submitted to the
Assembly Committee on Children and Families**

**Public Hearing
January 17, 2018
Madison, WI**

Good morning Chairman Kitchens and members of the Committee. I am Charlene Mouille, Executive Director of United Way of Wisconsin and also serve as Executive Director of 2-1-1 Wisconsin. United Way, along with our business partners, donors and more than 31,500 volunteers statewide fight for the health, education and financial stability of Wisconsinites in all 72 counties.

Together Wisconsin United Ways invest more than \$2 million in 2-1-1 statewide. We invest solidly in 2-1-1 because we believe that 2-1-1 is an efficient, comprehensive tool that benefits all sectors, reduces duplication of efforts and provides a source for determining gaps in community services. We ask for your partnership in providing statewide access through the support of AB 779. I want to give you a brief overview of 2-1-1 before speaking directly about AB 779.

The 2-1-1 dialing code was designated by the Federal Communications Commission for nationwide use as a health and human services information and referral phone line in 2000. The next year service began in 4 WI counties. In 2008 the Wisconsin Public Services Commission granted administrative designation to 2-1-1 Wisconsin. Today, 2-1-1 is available to every citizen in Wisconsin. In Wisconsin 100% coverage would not have been possible without a state investment to leverage the dollars raised in about 30 counties. In recent years PHEP has used carry-over funds to make it possible for us to offer statewide coverage. In July we were notified that due to federal allocations and funding levels that funds could not be committed as planned; seriously jeopardizing our ability to continue to offer services statewide.

2-1-1 is designed to serve three major objectives: 1) connect people in need to health and human service assistance available through government programs, non-profit organizations in their communities; 2) provide assistance to communities in time of disaster, allowing 9-1-1 to work primarily for first responders, and 3) connect volunteers and donors with organizations who can leverage resources to meet the needs of the community.

Through 2-1-1, people connect to a wide range of services from utility assistance to housing needs, health and mental health services, emergency food, job counseling, employment and training programs, addiction and other drug intervention program, financial and tax assistance and many more. The information provided to callers comes from a single comprehensive statewide resource database. In addition we collect caller needs and referral data. You can view the types of calls that come into our system by visiting 211counts.org.

Last year,

Total calls to 2-1-1 contact centers	217,462
Total Requests	296,811
Housing & Shelter	82,673
Food	66,228
Utilities	13,787
Healthcare	22,262
Mental Health & Addictions	22,422
Employment & Income	15,410
Clothing & Household	17,715
Child Care & Parenting	2,051
Legal Services	11,970
Transportation Assistance	5,032
Education	1,219
Disaster	1,345
Other	32,333

In addition to calling 2-1-1 24 hours a day, 365 days a year the public can also search our website. We are still compiling 2017 final results, so I will share 2016 figures. 94,666 unique visitors searched our site more than 268,000 times.

2-1-1 is the single-most comprehensive information & referral system in our State. Currently, there are seven regional 2-1-1 contact centers in Wisconsin. In addition to using a common statewide database; the centers are connected by a sophisticated telephony system. The system allows trained information & service specialists to receive and route calls according to skill and experience; complete warm transfers when necessary to assure that callers receive the assistance they need. We use a professional grade after call survey system to regularly monitor customer service— 98.97% of callers responded that they would recommend 2-1-1 to someone else.

Annually the US Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, its Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention produce The Prevention Resource Guide: Building Community, Building Hope. They speak clearly about the need to connect families who are under stress to community resources. According to the guide: Families whose basic needs (for food, clothing, housing, and transportation) are met have more time and energy to devote to their children's safety and well-being. When parents do not have steady financial resources, lack a stable living situation, lack health insurance, or face a family crisis (such as a natural disaster or the incarceration of a parent), their ability to support their children's healthy development may be at risk. Families whose economic opportunities are more limited may need assistance connecting to social service supports such as housing, alcohol and drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, or public benefits. Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Offering concrete supports also may help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, its Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS

National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention., 2016, p. 19)

The guild suggests several strategies for making these connections. The first strategy listed for numerous years is the recommendation that child welfare workers and others teach families to use 2-1-1 to connect to free or low-cost community resources to meet their needs.

AB 779 recognizes the role that 2-1-1 plays in connecting families to community resources that they need.

I would like to thank each of you for the opportunity to speak today about the need for a community services information and referral system and how United Way and 2-1-1 are working to help families throughout the State. I'd like to leave you with these quotes from some of this week's callers:

"The service was great when the guy called me back, he answered all of my questions and he gave me some ideas about what to do for help, and gave me a couple of phone numbers. He was really great. He was awesome." – Dane County contact center

"The specialist was very helpful and great communication skills and phone skills, and I received more information than I thought I would, and I really appreciate the help. It's nice to know that 2-1-1 is available 24/7. I am disabled and wheelchair bound and I really appreciate them. Thank you." – Milwaukee contact center

"We were trying to find the food pantry giveaway site in Sparta Wisconsin... and the information we got from "another agency" showed an address that doesn't exist, but your technician was able to narrow it down to a certain building which was very helpful. I really appreciated that effort." La Crosse call center

"I called to get some resource for my son, I needed to find some resources to help him. She explained to me that you guys don't have a lawyer list, but she did still find me some resources to find that on my own. Very kind caring, good. I'm happy that this exists. Thank you 2-1-1." Marathon call center

"I just wanted to tell you that the service you provide at 2-1-1 is critical and it is just a wonderful thing for our community. I sometimes have patients contact you, today I just needed a phone number. No matter what it is you always help out and always have good attitudes. I just think you guys should get a pat on the back, because what you are doing is critical. Anyways I hope you have a great day. Thanks" La Crosse call center

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

2-1-1 a Community Asset in

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect



All families go through difficult times. 2-1-1 is a community partner available statewide 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to help parents reduce stressors thereby reducing the chances that child abuse and neglect will occur. Last year 2-1-1 answered more than 217,000 calls addressing nearly 297,000 service requests. In addition a resource database of more than 10,000 agencies can be searched online through the public website.

Families whose basic needs (for food, clothing, housing, and transportation) are met have more time and energy to devote to their children's safety and well-being. When parents do not have steady financial resources, lack a stable living situation, lack health insurance, or face a family crisis (such as a natural disaster or the incarceration of a parent), their ability to support their children's healthy development may be at risk. Families whose economic opportunities are more limited may need assistance connecting to social service supports such as housing, alcohol and drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, or public benefits. Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Offering concrete supports also may help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, its Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention., 2016, p. 19)

The 2016/2017 Prevention Resource Guide: Building Community, Building Hope recommends that child welfare workers and others teach families to use 2-1-1 to connect to free or low-cost community resources to meet their needs. 2-1-1 can be accessed for free either by phone, email or online (text is available in some regions of the State).

2-1-1 connects the caller to a specialist who can assess the caller's needs and link the caller to the right solution using a comprehensive database of services – federal, state, and local; government and nonprofit.

2-1-1 can be accessed by phone, chat or web and provides access to information including:

- Supplemental food and nutrition programs
- Shelter and housing options and utilities assistance
- Access to mental health services
- Employment and education opportunities and supports
- Financial and tax assistance
- Health care, vaccination and health epidemic information
- Addiction prevention and rehabilitation programs
- Emergency information and disaster relief
- Volunteer opportunities

2-1-1 Calls and Top Service Requests

Total Contacts	217,462
Total Requests	296,811
Housing & Shelter	82,673
Food	66,228
Utilities	13,787
Healthcare	22,262
Mental Health & Addictions	22,422
Employment & Income	15,410
Clothing & Household	17,715
Child Care & Parenting	2,051
Legal Services	11,970
Transportation Assistance	5,032
Education	1,219
Disaster	1,345
Other	32,333

2-1-1 Web Search Stats January – December 2016

Site Visits	255,638
Site Searches	268,719
Avg Visit Length	29
Unique Visitors	94,666
Avg Visit per user	2.7

Comprehensive Database

Largest database of health and human service resource listings in Wisconsin with more than 10,000 agencies available statewide.

Benefit of 2-1-1 in Wisconsin

All citizens of Wisconsin can access 2-1-1 through one of seven contact centers or by using the public website.

Promote self-reliance in reaching community resources. Simple, quick 24/7/365 connection to the comprehensive ecosystem of private and public agencies, programs and services that support the building blocks of education, financial stability and health. Easy access to these resources strengthens communities and contributes to the economic health of Wisconsin.

Provide real-time information on health and human service needs, met and unmet, county by county. 2-1-1 is a barometer for identifying needs or gaps in service. Visit 211counts.org for Wisconsin data.

Partner in homeland security and emergency management. 2-1-1 is a proven partner to assist with natural and man-made disasters and emergencies by providing easy access to information that needs to be communicated to our residents and ongoing connection to needed services. Within minutes the 2-1-1 system can be activated statewide through our fully optimized system with remote management capability.

Partner with state government. Greater efficiencies can be reached through building upon the statewide database of over 10,000 agencies, and 167,000 program services. 2-1-1 Wisconsin reduces redundancy and the need to maintain independent databases of local, state and national health and human services.

Cost-effective systems. Through United Way Worldwide buying power we have been able to reduce infrastructure costs by 30%. The sophisticated telephone system can effectively route calls to and from multiple points of contact; handle numerous 10-digit assistance or help numbers; and automate customer service surveys.

Agents are trained to quickly assess caller needs, provide relevant resources and transfer calls when warranted. Translation services are available 24/7 at all centers.

Partner with business to ensure that employees have efficient and effective access to services that they or family members need, helping them to remain productive and reduce time away from work. 2-1-1 can serve as a partner with Human Resource Department employee assistance programs.

Curate resources that are reliable. Unlike a simple google search that can lead to false-positive results or return outdated links, 2-1-1 resource specialists curate each record that is added to the database. Meticulous indexing against an accredited taxonomy system is central to the 2-1-1 system.

The entire system is coordinated by 2-1-1 Wisconsin which is managed by United Way of Wisconsin. Statewide funding supports 1 state staff person, all telephone minutes and software, the statewide database tool, website and required business expenses.

State funding would continue service statewide. Operational funding is provided in large part by private donations with more than \$2,000,000 invested by United Ways in Wisconsin annually.

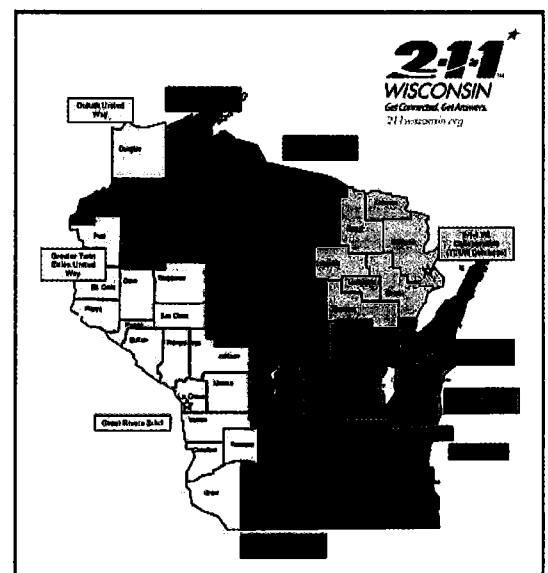
Wisconsin Contact Centers

- Brown County United Way
- Great Rivers 2-1-1
- Impact 2-1-1
- United Way Fox Cities
- United Way of Dane County
- United Way of Inner Wisconsin
- United Way of Marathon County

For more information contact:

Charlene Mouille
Executive Director

United Way of Wisconsin and 2-1-1 Wisconsin
(608) 246-8272



IMPROVE CARE COORDINATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT

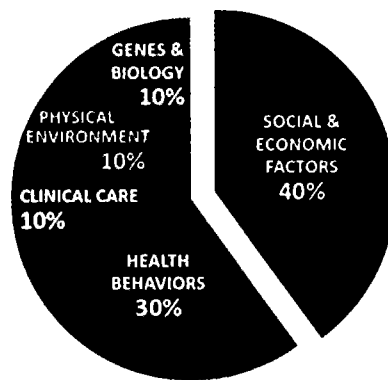
Wisconsin's seven 2-1-1 centers maintain information on more than 10,000 agencies with low and no-cost services statewide. Certified 2-1-1 professionals index, manage, and update these community resource directories using AIRS I&R Standards.

The result: 24 hour access to the most current, reliable, comprehensive, and searchable community resource data available.

INCREASE CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

The conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age impact every element of public health. Inaccurate community service data (wrong hours, location, population served, etc.) produces frustration instead of value.

Easy access to the best data lets care coordinators address the social determinants of health to impact client health outcomes and quality of life.



DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

“Public health and patient-community factors make up two-thirds of the factors that influence recurrent hospital visits.”

—American Journal of Medical Quality

Features

Comprehensive

- More than 10,000 agencies with low and no-cost services statewide
- Regional segments of services
- Easily add your own resources
- Flexibility to scale public views and comprehensive internal views

Professionally Maintained

- Accurate
- Reliable
- Continually Updated
- Sanctioned by the Public Service Commission
- The only Statewide Accredited and Certified comprehensive community resource directory in Wisconsin

User-Friendly

- Supports existing case and care systems
- Filter services by Geographic Distance, Hours of Operation, etc.
- Supports Case Manager Programs
- Supports Client Self-Service Programs
- Supports Custom Contracts

Resource Directory Content

Descriptions & Summaries

- Agency and Site Name Description
- Service Name, Service ID, Service Summary
- Keywords, Aliases, Intentional Misspellings
- Detailed Service Descriptions
- Geographic Area Served
- Mapped Locations
- Territory & Geo Coding
- See Also & Linked Terms

Intake & Eligibility

- Intake Procedures, Intake Requirements, Additional Requirements
- Eligibility, Required Documents, Helpful tips for Access
- Target Populations, Income Requirements
- Insurance, Fees and Sliding Scale
- Household/Client Management

Contact Information

- Agency, Program, Service, Site Contact Information
- Contact Name, Position, Email, Fax, Chat, Text
- Main Phone, Alternate Phone, Other Contact Channels
- Physical & Mailing Address
- Web Site & Social Media Links
- TDD, Hotline, Emergency Phone
- Ability to Hide Confidential Details

Data Management & Updates

- Staff Notes, Edit Notes, Create and Edit Dates
- Last Update/Review Dates, Confidential Controls
- Data Source, Data Provided By, Update Contact(s)
- Certified AIRS Taxonomy for Enhanced Searching & Reporting
- Coded to Social Determinants of Health Primary and Secondary Categories (coming soon)
- Visibility Controls
- Start & End Display Dates
- Public & Private Data Settings
- AIRS Standards Compliant

Custom Fields

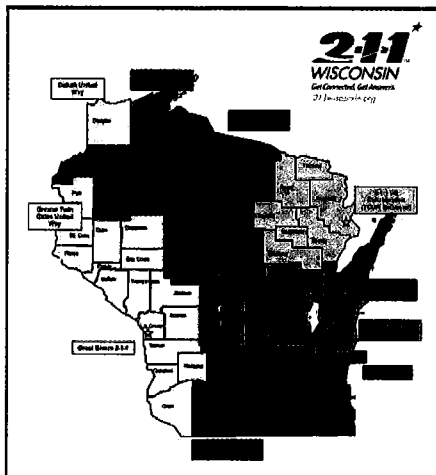
The platform supports comprehensive array of configurable data architectures, relationships, business processes, workflows, permissions, roles, conditions, filters, forms, tabs, fields and more – in real time.

Data Exchange

One-time, ongoing, standardized, or custom data exchanges with API builders, allow integration with your existing software solutions(s). Or customize HealthLink211s full platform to assess client social and community needs, make and track referrals, manage cases, measure outcomes and impact, and produce data for community assessments.

2-1-1 Wisconsin Contact Centers

- Brown County United Way
- Great Rivers 2-1-1
- Impact 2-1-1
- United Way Fox Cities
- United Way of Dane County
- United Way of Inner Wisconsin
- United Way of Marathon County



For more information contact:

Charlene Mouille
Executive Director

Burlie Williams
Statewide Operations Manager

United Way of Wisconsin and 2-1-1 Wisconsin
(608) 246-8272 or
211wi-manager@unitedwaywi.org



Good morning. My name is Jeff Sargent. I am the Executive Director & CEO of United Way of Marathon County. United Way of Marathon County works with individuals and businesses to address our community's most challenging needs. These areas of focus include health, education and financial stability.

I am happy to be here today to support your efforts to support families, to reduce contact with the child welfare system and to prevent the removal of children from their homes. I also applaud your efforts to improve the child welfare system, including support for child welfare agencies, caseworkers, and foster parents. I also am excited about aspects of the proposed legislation to connect children to services and resources who are placed in out-of-home care, both during placement and after placement (for children who age-out of the system).

I am a Social Worker by trade. I attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison and have a Master Degree in Social Work. One of my first jobs out of school was to work as a treatment foster care worker for a child welfare agency. We licensed foster homes, we placed children into those homes, we worked with the foster parents, the biological families, counselors, therapists, service providers and many others to address the needs of the children and their families that were placed in our homes. I did this type of work for about 15 years. It was challenging work and there were many needs that these children and their families had but the system seemed ill equipped to address them. The system seemed fractured. There were various rules that got in the way of serving these families. There were obstacles to service. There was a lack of a comprehensive guide for services and resources. Families did not have an easy way to be connected to services. As a worker, the cases were complex, the rules that we had to operate by were challenging, the system seemed disjointed and communication was difficult. We had trouble getting the information we needed. When parents were disconnected, our hands were tied. It was tough to get kids into schools and served adequately and have schools be connected in a meaningful way. Foster parents needed more training than the system could provide. Termination of parental rights in certain cases was very lengthy, CASA programs were limited or non-existent...the list went on and on.

So today, I am so pleased to be here to support all of the bills introduced in this legislation. As I have moved on in my career from a direct service social worker, working with children in foster care now to Executive Director of United Way of Marathon County, it is with high hopes for having a better system to address the needs of children and their families.

Now, many years later working for United Way and our United Way operating a 2-1-1 call center, I am thrilled to see our work in information and referral cross paths and intersect with the foster care system. There is no question in my mind that information is power. Having the information you need, when you need it, can make all the difference in the world. Having that information be accurate and available with the click of a button, the dialing of three numbers (2-1-1) or by texting, we have the ability to change lives.

The 2-1-1 call center in Marathon County serves Portage, Marathon, Lincoln, Oneida, Vilas, Brown, Door and Kewaunee Counties. We serve all of the population in this region and have information available for them when they need it. Included in that population are parents. If you are a parent, you know that there is no instruction guide for parenting. If only there was one! Parenting is probably the toughest job there is out there. I remember the first time my wife went out with some friends after we had our first child. Up to that point, everything we had done was together. I was off work, she was off work, and we were trying to be great parents, right? Finally, my wife was invited to go out and have a good time. I said, "Go ahead, I got this!" I had the main instructions from my

wife and from reading books. Once he starts crying: first-hold him; second-rock him; third-feed him; fourth-change his diaper; fifth-lay him down in his crib.

Well, about 2 minutes after my wife left he started crying. Ok, I am ready for this! What do I do? Hold him! Ok. No...not working. Rock him! No...not working. I had several bottles available but he had been breast-feeding but I had breast milk from her pumping so I'm good. Feed him!...Not working. He didn't really want the bottle. Okay, let's hold and rock him again. Crying, crying, crying. Oh, I forgot, change his diaper!! Okay, I did that but he is still crying and I am starting to get frustrated. This was 26 years ago. No cell phones, no texting, no help from my wife. We lived in La Crosse but all of our family lived out of town so no one could come over and help. No Grandma or Grandpa.

Change his diaper! He was wet but not horribly. But the crying continued.

Now remember, I have a Master's Degree in Social Worker. I am a trained social worker. I work with foster parents and kids in foster care every day. I read books, I took paternity leave when my son was born because I wanted to be the best dad I could be. And here I am...

At home, alone, with a screaming baby, not just crying but screaming and I am about ready to lose it.

I can remember having judgements about parents who abused their kids, even as a social worker, there was judgement there and here I am with son. For the first time I realized how easy it would be to abuse a child. JUST! STOP! CRYING! You can almost feel the shaking of a baby in those words. (Just! Stop! Crying!).

Oh yeah. The fifth step. Do you remember the fifth step?

Lay him down! A child cannot be injured by laying them in a crib. I laid him down in the crib. You maybe are wondering, did that finally stop the crying? Did it help? No...it did not stop the crying but it helped...ME!

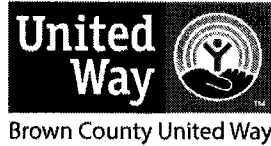
So why did I share this story? Well, there are times where we all need help. Sometimes we need help when we least expect it and it is catastrophic. Like March 22 in Wausau when there was a shooting spree and four people were killed and numerous people witnessed those shootings. They needed help and they called 2-1-1 to be connected to trauma care services and counseling. Like this past summer in Portage County where severe winds took out power and people needed services to help them and they called 2-1-1.

Or like the father who is at home with his son, who is crying and he doesn't know what to do. He can call 2-1-1 to talk with someone who can help him and be connected to services. In Marathon County, we have a relationship with our county health department that provides primary child abuse prevention programming to parents. If we get phone calls with stressed parents, we can do a "warm transfer" and connect people directly to services that will help them without hanging up.

Why wait for something to happen to get connected. Let's get people connected right away. Let's provide the information they need, when they need it. This can help in times of crisis and it times of need. 2-1-1 is 24/7/365. It is a tool. I always say, "We need to have the tools in the toolbox." 2-1-1 is a tool. It is a tool for parents, foster parents, social workers, counselors, schools, legislators, everybody.

2-1-1 is statewide. Every person in this state has access to 2-1-1 and can talk to someone right now. If you needed help you could call right now. We want that for everyone but we especially want it for families who are struggling, for families that need services that can help them, to prevent abuse and neglect, to catch something before it happens so we can reduce the numbers of contacts with protective services and to kids out of foster care if possible.

As a social worker, as a United Way director, as a parent, I want everyone to have access to services when they need them. You never know when you will need it. To have 2-1-1 connected to this bill is a tremendous thing for all families who might need it someday.



**Testimony Submitted to the Assembly Committee on Children and Families
In Favor of Assembly Bill 779
January 17, 2018**

Honorable Members of the Committee on Children and Families,

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to register our strong support in favor of Assembly Bill 779 which would provide funding for the 2-1-1 Wisconsin System. 2-1-1 provides help when people need it, every day, across 72 counties to 100% of the population, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Since 2007, Brown County United Way has operated a full service 2-1-1 Contact Center serving Brown, Door, and Kewaunee Counties. We maintain a collaborative, comprehensive, local database of human services resources and partner with 2-1-1 Marathon County to service our callers. Our center is one in a network of seven regional centers which serve the entire state of Wisconsin. From parenting and housing support to food distribution sites, support groups and more, anyone can call 2-1-1 any time of day or night for information linking them to local social service resources. Our center provides approximately 7,000 human service referrals for nearly 5,000 callers annually.

Today many households are struggling to afford the basic necessities of housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation. In 2017, a majority of requests received by 2-1-1 Brown County were from persons with basic needs, with housing/utility assistance being the top request (36%), followed by food (9%) and health/medical inquiries (17%).

The 2-1-1 resource network serves as the backbone of help to struggling families who, when faced with an unexpected burden on their limited budget, can find themselves on the precipice of slipping to poverty. Without 2-1-1, at-risk families will be left without timely connections to safety-net resources. Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may also help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment or the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.

2-1-1's purpose is to make community connections to services that meet people's needs, so that people can survive, thrive, and be empowered, no matter their situation or background. Our residents need to know that they have a central place to turn for critical information and resources. 2-1-1 will continue to be that resource, if Wisconsin invests in its sustainable future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of Assembly Bill 779. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Robyn Y. Davis, J.D.
President & CEO
Brown County United Way
robyn@browncountyunitedway.org; (920) 593-4777



"Building a community that values, empowers and supports seniors, adults with disabilities and their caregivers"

**Testimony Submitted to the Assembly Committee on Children and Families
In Favor of Assembly Bill 779
January 17, 2018**

Honorable Members of Assembly Committee on Children and Families,

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony supporting Assembly Bill 779, relating to providing referrals to community-based services. If passed, AB 779 would provide vital grant funding to support Wisconsin's 2-1-1 network.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center is the "one stop shop" for older adults and adults with disabilities. Adults 60 years and older, adults with physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, mental health and alcohol and drug use issues are the target populations served. In a community of 250,000 people, the need for information and assistance is immense as individuals struggle to navigate a complex service network that is not intuitive or easily accessible.

In Brown County we have a collaborative relationship with 2-1-1, Crisis Center of Northeast Wisconsin, and the ADRC to provide an integrated database and call network. There is no duplication. A priceless partnership has been established between three primary agencies that now collaborate on unmet needs, communicating to the community and being a voice for consumers and agencies. Together we receive and manage over 71,000 calls annually.

2-1-1 provides much needed connection for youth and family that the ADRC is unable to serve. Prior to 2-1-1's presence in our community, there was a large gap in services for youth and families. This collaboration is best practice in the industry. The lack of funding for 2-1-1 has put this valuable service at risk in recent years.

Collectively, 2-1-1, Crisis Center, and the ADRC have found a pattern of service gaps throughout the Brown County community. People living in poverty, without financial or informal supports, struggle to access formal services provided by our many community agencies to meet their basic needs. There is an expectation that they demonstrate a plan for self-sufficiency and need connection to those agencies that can assist with employment services and basic needs like food, housing and transportation. Families living in poverty are much more likely to have struggles resulting in out of home placement for children. This begins a cycle of continued poverty and a future life where attaining goals is greatly diminished.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Devon Christianson

Director

Aging & Disability Resource Center of Brown County
300 S. Adams Street, Green Bay, WI 54301

Direct: 920.448.4331 **Agency:** 920.448-4300 **Fax:** 920.448-4306

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**Testimony Submitted to the Assembly Committee on Children and Families
In Favor of Assembly Bill 779
January 17, 2018**

Honorable Members of Assembly Committee on Children and Families,

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony supporting Assembly Bill 779, relating to providing referrals to community-based services. If passed, AB 779 would provide vital grant funding to support Wisconsin's 2-1-1 network.

The Brown County United Way 2-1-1: Get Connected, Get Answers service is an easy-to-remember and universally recognizable number that makes a critical connection between individuals and families seeking services and those available in our community. Locally, 2-1-1 makes it possible for people to navigate the complex and ever-growing maze of more than 2,000 health and human services resources through three options: The call center, website and 2-1-1 PLUS sites (a physical place to access 2-1-1), available throughout Brown County.

For over 10 years the local 2-1-1, Crisis Center of Family Services, and the local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) have participated in a database collaboration in order to most efficiently support one community database for Brown County. This one database is housed on the United Way and ADRC websites and is available to the community at large. 2-1-1 is a critical partner in this database creation and maintenance. Together, we have created a single database with consistent resource information allowing for increased efficiency and effectiveness for the entire community.

Additionally, our agencies have been collecting combined data for the past 9 years and reporting call volume, caller information, top requests for information, top referrals made, and common identified unmet needs. 211's ability to tell the local story of unmet need is critical in our local resource development to meet the most urgent needs of our community.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tara Koss', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Tara Koss, MSW, CAPSW

Division Director

Family Services

300 Crooks Street Green Bay WI 54301

(920) 436-4360 ext. 1252

tkoss@familyservicesnew.org



January 16, 2018

Honorable Members of the Committee on Children and Families,

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony supporting Assembly Bill 779, relating to providing referrals to community-based services.

As a skills instructor for the Wisconsin Works Program (W2) and for the Food Share Employment and Training Program (FSET), we have seen 2-1-1 make remarkable differences for our customers and within our community.

We have seen many newcomers to our community seeking a better life and new opportunities. Many are refugees, new to our culture and community, while others are from surrounding states dealing with unique challenges. It's difficult enough to start over and even harder if you know of very little resources that can help you succeed. 2-1-1 consistently combats this challenge by being available 24/7 to easily access every resource and service our community has to offer. This has helped many find food, shelter, housing, assistance, childcare, mental health resources and other critical services. 2-1-1 is also a tool that many of our community service providers use to understand and find available assistance services.

Our programs at Forward Services encourage our trainees to use 2-1-1 as a resource to get quick and accurate help to meet their immediate needs. Our goal is to remove barriers to help more in our community become independent and self-sufficient. Our partnership with 2-1-1 has been beneficial in meeting our program's goals and providing our customers and the community with a place to turn when they need answers to life challenges, both big and small.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Korissa Diehl
Skills Instructor
Forward Service Corporation
701 Cherry Street
Green Bay, WI 54302



Honorable Members of the Committee on Children and Families,

I am writing in support of the 211 system and its value to families and singles in our community as a means to get connected with valuable resources.

At The Salvation Army we work with many households who are struggling to meet their basic needs as well as with seniors and those who are just above the poverty level. In many situations the individuals or families come to us as they are not sure where to turn for help. We are not always able to provide the tangible assistance they are requesting, but we do utilize the 2-1-1 system with or for them to help them get connected with a resource in our community. When we call 2-1-1 we are able to speak with someone who can navigate the system quickly and efficiently and offer options. This allows the individual to have some guidance on what they can do next. We also teach the individuals how to use the system so that if they have questions in the future, they know they can call 2-1-1 on their own.

We feel strongly that the 2-1-1 system is a unified way collect and share community information. It is kept up to date so that when we call we know we are getting accurate, local information to assist us in helping clients. The 2-1-1 system serves all people in the community-low income, middle income and upper income. It is a vast database of community information.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Nan Pahl
Director of Social Services
The Salvation Army of Greater Green Bay
Green Bay Corps Community Center
626 Union Court, Green Bay, WI 54303
w: 920 593.2378 | f: 920 497 1006