SUPPORTING METRO DENVER WITH ACCESS TO VITAL RESOURCES

Mile High United Way’s 2-1-1 Help Center Report

July - September 2019
MILE HIGH UNITED WAY’S 2-1-1 HELP CENTER

Dial three simple numbers – 2-1-1 – and reach Mile High United Way’s 2-1-1 Help Center to both give and get help in your community. Mile High United Way’s 2-1-1 is a confidential and multilingual service that helps callers navigate through their situation by assessing their needs and then matching them with the best and closest resources in their community. 2-1-1 has the largest, most up-to-date database of resources in the Rocky Mountain region for health and human services.

Covering 25 counties in partnership with United Way of Larimer County and United Way of Weld County, we serve the Metro Denver area as well as Northern Colorado - approximately 71 percent of the state’s population.

Help is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Dial 2-1-1, live chat from unitedwaydenver.org/2-1-1, or text your zip code to 898-211 to connect with a trained Community Resource Navigator. You can also access Mile High United Way's online 2-1-1 database at unitedwaydenver.org/2-1-1.

COMMUNITY TRENDS

+ Back to School Resources

2-1-1 experienced an increase in calls related to school supplies and immunizations. Unfortunately, school-related fees can be expensive. According to Communities in School (2017), on average, school supplies and fees can cost between $637-$1,355 per child. Thankfully, many agencies recognize this and offer school supplies for free. One of those organizations is Mile High United Way (MHUW). Before July 27th, 2-1-1 registered 118 families for MHUW’s Back to School Bash, enabling 330 children to receive a backpack filled with supplies for the school year. In total, this saved families over $210,000. Additionally, 2-1-1 has responded to over 75 requests for immunizations this quarter.

+ LEAP Changes

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) recently changed their eligibility requirements from 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) to State Median Income (SMI). LEAP assists low-income individuals and families with heating and fuel assistance, including gas, wood, and coal. As of October 2019, LEAP has already received 3,774 applications for assistance (State of Colorado 2019) (LEAP switched to using SMI because it enables them to serve more applicants). Last year, 2-1-1 provided over 1,300 referrals to heating and fuel assistance such as LEAP.

COUNTY CALLS

Mile High United Way’s 2-1-1 Help Center provides services to counties across Colorado. These counties contacted us most often over the past quarter:

- 31% Denver
- 12% Adams
- 11% Jefferson
- 21% Arapahoe
- 12% Weld
**TOP FIVE NEEDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent Payment Assistance</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Assistance</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelter/Transitional Housing</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**All Client Needs**

- Rent Payment Assistance: 13%
- Housing: 13%
- Utility Assistance: 13%
- Shelter/Transitional Housing: 9%
- Child Care: 7%
- Food/Meals: 6%
- Legal, Consumer, and Public Safety: 6%
- Income Support/Assistance: 5%
- Clothing/Personal/Household Needs: 5%
- Transportation: 4%
- Health Care: 3%
- Individual, Family and Community Support: 3%
- Education: 2%
- Behavioral Health/Substance Use Disorders: 2%
- Employment: 1%
- Volunteer/Donations: <1%
- Medical Clinic: <1%
- Other Government/Economic Services: <1%
- Dental Clinic: <1%
- Arts, Culture, and Recreation: <1%
- Disaster Services: <1%
- Other Information Services: 5%

**FOLLOW-UP RESULTS**

- 83% Of callers followed up on the referrals.
- 40% Of callers who followed up on referrals received the help they needed.
- 4% Of callers had scheduled future appointments.
- 15% Of callers did not receive the help they needed due to the referred agencies’ lack of funds.
- 10% Of callers were awaiting callback from referred agency.
- 31% Who followed up on referrals did not receive help due to other reasons.
- 87% Of the callers would recommend 2-1-1 to a family and friends.

**2-1-1 NEWS**

**+ Technology Upgrades**

Over the past 18 months, Mile High United Way, on behalf of 2-1-1 Colorado, has undertaken an extensive review of 2-1-1’s business processes and its intersection with technology to improve service and operational delivery to better meet the needs of our customers, including those using the 2-1-1 service and those contracting with 2-1-1 for service.

We are pleased to announce that we will move forward with Salesforce Service Cloud. A key factor in shifting to this technology solution was the ability to deploy data exchange service offerings, allowing us to share the comprehensive, personally vetted resource directory of over 8,000 services with other organizations!

We would welcome the opportunity to continue the conversation of how 2-1-1 can serve our community and our community organizations through partnerships and integrations.

**+ Severe Weather**

We recognize the community relies on 2-1-1 rain or shine, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. As we head into winter, 2-1-1 plans to be operational. We’ve rolled out procedures to enable teleworking and been fortunate to have the support of local businesses who have offered use of their facilities in the event our building is inaccessible long-term.
URBAN CAMPING

Walking through the streets of downtown Denver can be a humbling experience. It doesn’t take but walking a few blocks before one is sure to run into a small camp of tents, individuals spread out on the ground or perched on small miscellaneous boxes, passing the time. To many, this sight might feel frustrating. This quarter alone, 2-1-1 received 1,867 calls from families and individuals seeking options for emergency shelter. So why would these individuals choose to sleep on the ground in between a sidewalk and the road, in a small tent, rather than utilize any number of the shelters just a few blocks away?

A few reasons come to mind, but the most common we hear at 2-1-1 are:

1. Family shelter options are far and few between.

2. Shelters designated for singles separate by gender. This makes sense for safety and security but can feel isolating and not always worth the separation for couples.

3. Quite a few shelters operate on a lottery basis. This means, that during designated hours, usually in the morning, families or single individuals call a given shelter’s intake phone line, leave a voicemail with their information (name, gender, age), and then call back at another designated time to find out if they were given a space that night. It is worth noting that many shelters do have emergency overflow facilities for single individuals, but it may not be someone’s choice and they should have a right to choose.

So, what happens to those needing shelter tonight, couples who are scared to separate, or individuals who missed or did not get selected for the lottery? They may choose to camp.

It is undeniable that the shelters are under considerable strain trying to meet demand and provide all the services they hope to for the populations they serve. Those working at our community shelters are tackling tough issues and working tirelessly to better our community every day.

2-1-1 STAFF SPOTLIGHT

In the warmer months, ten to fifty community members sleep in Sonny Lawson Park adjacent to the Mile High United Way (MHUW) building. In September, six 2-1-1 Community Resource Navigators decided to spearhead an initiative to build closer relationships with our neighbors. One morning at 7:00 am, Cindy, GlendaRika, Lauren, Laura, Stacie, and Lindsey served coffee and donuts to community members at the park. 2-1-1 staff asked the community members about their needs and informed them about the 2-1-1 Help Center. Since then, other groups from MHUW have served coffee and breakfast.

Due to overwhelmingly positive responses, 2-1-1 staff decided to make “Neighborhood Coffee Talk” an on-going initiative. From here on out, MHUW staff will bring coffee and breakfast to the park once a month. Each time, 2-1-1 will focus on a type of community resource such as identification vouchers, transitional housing, or food pantries. 2-1-1 hopes this outreach will increase community integration.

SUPPORT 2-1-1

Please donate to help our 2-1-1 Help Center continue working in the community. Visit unitedwaydenver.org/donate to make a gift.

‡Standard message and data rates may apply. Text STOP to opt-out. For end user privacy and terms and conditions of texting with 898-211, go to preventionpaystext.com/policies

Dial 2-1-1, Text 898-211‡, search our database or chat with us at unitedwaydenver.org/211