

UNITED WAY OF CONNECTICUT

2-1-1



**Human Services Committee
Public Hearing – February 26, 2013**

**Testimony Presented by United Way of Connecticut
on Human Services Budget**

My name is Richard Porth. I serve as the CEO of United Way of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Governor Malloy's FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennial Budget.

On February 11th (2/11), we celebrated our 37th year of partnership with the state government which has enabled us to serve together tens of thousands of Connecticut residents each year. Thank you to both the Governor and the legislature for your ongoing support. We work hard to serve state residents from all walks of life and to support the state by streamlining access to numerous services addressing so many aspects of an individual or family's life.

United Way of Connecticut's 2-1-1 service is Connecticut's link for residents to find the help they need and to access community and health and human resources. 2-1-1 is an integral part of the state's safety net and enables Connecticut's service delivery infrastructure to operate more cost-effectively by saving time for people seeking help and for front line service workers. 2-1-1 is free, confidential and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to all state residents, regardless of income, age, or language. In FY 2012, over 412,000 people were helped by dialing 2-1-1 and over 757,000 visits to the 2-1-1 website were registered (www.211ct.org).

2-1-1 has been built up over 35 plus years, adding new components and services such as 2-1-1 Child Care, HUSKY Infoline, and Child Development Infoline. These and other programs under the 2-1-1 umbrella are illustrated in Attachment A. They work together within 2-1-1 so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and so that each new state investment leverages earlier investments by the state and others.

2-1-1 services across the nation have long been involved in emergency preparation, response and recovery work. In 2012, Connecticut's 2-1-1 supported state leaders as they responded to Hurricane Sandy and the Newtown/Sandy Hook tragedy. After major storms, people turn to 2-1-1 to learn about evacuations, storm preparation, mass

shelter, food, power outages, traffic closures, open gas stations and pharmacies, damage reporting, and family reunification. In the process, 2-1-1 takes some of the burden off of municipal and state first responders so that they can concentrate on true public safety emergencies.

In addition, in FY 12, highly trained 2-1-1 call specialists handled more than 33,000 crisis intervention and counseling calls related to suicide prevention, domestic violence, and Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services for youth.

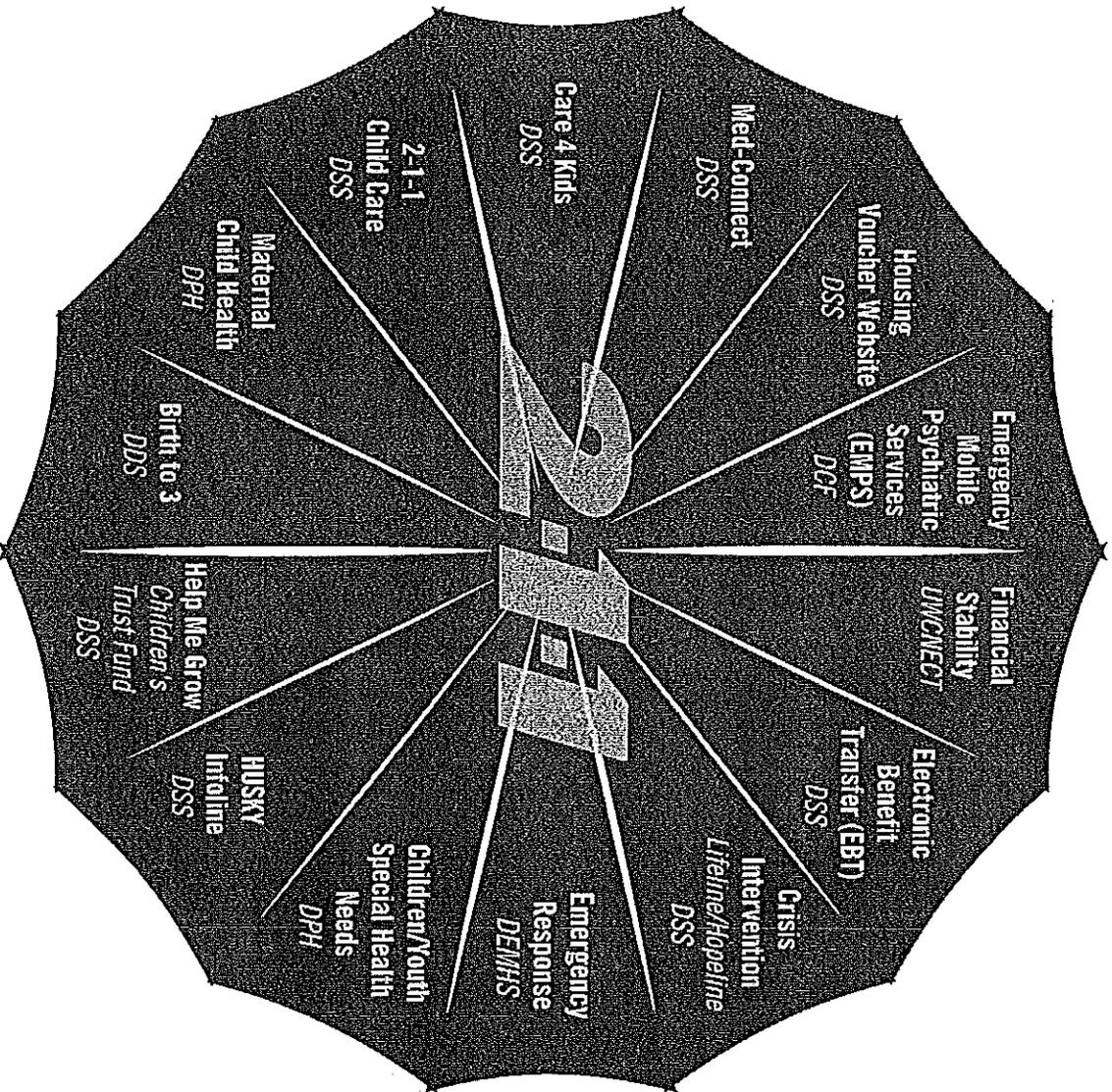
2-1-1 has increasingly served as a statewide gateway for accessing key services, including the Birth to Three Program, Help Me Grow, and the Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Service. 2-1-1 supports many different state agencies, but our core funding is provided through the Department of Social Services. Our work with multiple state agencies enables 2-1-1 to cross agency boundaries and to help integrate and facilitate services provided by multiple agencies to individual clients and families.

The state's support coupled with local United Way support has also enabled 2-1-1 to build up and maintain the most comprehensive, up-to-date, health and human services database in Connecticut, including both government and nonprofit services for residents seeking help.

We are proud of our partnership with the state. And, we continue to work hard to employ state funding prudently and to the best effect for the state and Connecticut residents. Looking forward, the state can leverage its earlier investments in 2-1-1 by utilizing 2-1-1 as part of the solution in its renewed efforts to simplify and streamline access to services and supports, thus enhancing outcomes for a range of healthcare and human services provided in Connecticut.

2-1-1

PARTNERSHIP WITH STATE GOVERNMENT



2-1-1 is a service of the State of Connecticut and local United Ways.

BUILDING BLOCKS

- 30+ years partnership with State of Connecticut and United Way system
- Nimble, innovative response to state agency needs
- Connecticut's most comprehensive, up-to-date health and human services database
- Cross-cutting connections that can help integrate services provided by multiple state agencies
- 2-1-1: Ultimate statewide access point for information about health and human services
- Strong IT and telecommunications capacity

WORKING FEATURES

- Simple, easy to remember access: Dial 2-1-1
- 24 hours/365 days
- Multi-lingual, degreed call specialists
- Available to everyone in Connecticut
- Encouraging self-help
- Gateway to programs and services
- 2-1-1 Navigator benefits screener

SPECIAL SERVICES

- Client outreach/information dissemination
- Agency after hours call handling
- Response point for public awareness campaigns
- Custom databases/directories
- 2-1-1 research and reports/needs assessments

2-1-1'S IMPACT

- All 2-1-1 call centers received over 412,000 calls in 2011 originating in every city and town in the state.
- 2-1-1 maintains a comprehensive database of approximately 4,500 health and human service providers offering approximately 48,000 services and 4,800 licensed and licensed-exempt child care facilities.
- 2-1-1's database of resources is available and searchable online at www.211ct.org. In 2011, there were over 757,000 visits to the 211ct.org site.