

## WHAT IS INFORMATION AND REFERRAL (I & R)?

A unique system of information-giving that enables people to make informed decisions about accessing community resources. I & R programs maintain comprehensive databases of social, community, and government services within the community. These services may include housing assistance, food pantries, child care, hurricane supplies, counseling, health services and senior programs.

## THE FLORIDA 2-1-1 NETWORK

The Florida 2-1-1 Network, when fully developed, will be a statewide network of regional hotlines providing 2-1-1 coverage for 100 percent of the state. The Network is built on a system of collaborative relationships between many 2-1-1 centers, specialized information and referral providers and other human service organizations.

## VISION

The vision for the Network is to provide easy access to health and human service information for all people in the State of Florida. The Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS) will provide leadership and a governance structure for the Network ensuring that both policy direction and operational responsibility remains with the local providers of 2-1-1.

THE FLORIDA 2-1-1 NETWORK IS A UNIQUE COST EFFECTIVE SYSTEM THAT JOINS THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TOGETHER IN A PRODUCTIVE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP.

THIS SYNERGISTIC RELATIONSHIP BRINGS MULTIPLE SYSTEMS TOGETHER TO PROVIDE EACH FAMILY EQUAL ACCESS TO A VARIETY OF HEALTH, SUPPORT AND HUMAN SERVICES. THE NETWORK ALLOWS LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO LEVERAGE AND STRETCH RESOURCES FOR THE GOOD OF EACH AND EVERY FLORIDIAN.

An advocacy effort is underway by FLAIRS

## ADVOCACY

and the United Way of Florida to ask the Florida Legislature for \$5 million in support of the full implementation of a statewide 2-1-1 system and to enhance existing 2-1-1 services.

### PLEASE CALL your Legislators, their aides and community leaders to stress:

- How important 2-1-1 was to your community and hurricane emergency relief/response efforts.....or....how important it could be
- That 2-1-1 is a critical piece of the relief/response system, both for short term relief and long term recovery
- That it is particularly important to address 2-1-1 during the upcoming session so Florida can have a statewide 2-1-1 system in place in time for the 2005 hurricane season.

### For more information contact:

Ted Granger, President  
United Way of Florida  
(850) 488-8276

# FLORIDA 2-1-1 NETWORK

**2-1-1** <sup>TM</sup>  
Get Connected. Get Answers.



[www.flairs.org](http://www.flairs.org)

## WHAT IS 2-1-1?

- 2-1-1 is the health and human service equivalent of 9-1-1. The three digit 2-1-1 number accesses community information and referral resources for families who call.
- 2-1-1, an easy-to-remember three digit number, is a lifeline during times of crisis. When the tumult surrounding natural disasters leads to confusion, chaos, and a shattered human service system, people needing access to such information skyrockets. The importance of providing them with the information they need on a timely basis becomes essential.
- 2-1-1 is not just another telephone service or directory assistance number. Calling 2-1-1 connects people with trained professionals who identify needs and help navigate the confusing maze of health and human services.
- 2-1-1 service is efficient and cost effective. Providing a caller with the right information at the right time allows them to access services sooner and usually at a lower cost, many times preventing a more serious and costly crisis. Resources invested in nonprofit programs or government services can go further and serve more people.

## WHO IS THE FLORIDA 2-1-1 NETWORK?

- Florida 2-1-1 Network was created by authorization of the Florida Legislature in 2002. 2-1-1 providers are certified and regulated by the Agency for Health Care Administration. (F.S.408.918)
- 2-1-1 is available to 34 Florida counties representing 78 percent of Florida's population (2004).
- 2-1-1 Network members and their Florida hotline partners answered more than three million telephone inquiries regarding human services last year.
- 2-1-1 Network members meet nationally recognized standards for 2-1-1 centers.
- 2-1-1 local community organizations manage and coordinate human service resource information. They can quickly identify community needs and gaps for planning and response.
- 2-1-1 system has broad financial support from Florida's United Ways, local governments, corporate partners, law enforcement agencies, and others. These partners currently invest more than \$7 million in 2-1-1 systems each year.

## WHY IS THE FLORIDA 2-1-1 NETWORK NEEDED?

- 2-1-1 call centers provided direct assistance during the hurricanes of 2004, helping more than 100,000 Floridians. The importance of, and need for, a fully functional, statewide Florida 2-1-1 Network has been magnified by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne.
- 2-1-1 services were found to be of inestimable value during immediate hurricane relief efforts by the Emergency Operations Centers, county governments, volunteer centers and many others.
- 2-1-1 services promote the self-sufficiency of families. At the very core of information and referral services is the belief that, given the right information, people can be empowered to solve their own problems.
- 2-1-1 continues to provide critical linkages between people and the services, and provides a conduit through which people can contribute goods and services to the recovery efforts as hurricane recovery continues.
- 2-1-1 service reduces government bureaucracy. 2-1-1 offers an avenue for accessing social services that reduces the burden on government.