



## Talking Points Regarding NC 2-1-1's Role During the COVID-19 Crisis

- On March 18<sup>th</sup>, Governor Roy Cooper announced that the State of North Carolina would begin to use United Way's NC 2-1-1 information and referral service as a resource for people to call for assistance related to the COVID-19 coronavirus.
- NC 2-1-1 is an information and referral service administered by United Way of North Carolina with support and funding from local United Ways all across North Carolina. NC 2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year by simply dialing 2-1-1. NC 2-1-1 is also available by dialing 888-892-1162 and online at [www.nc211.org](http://www.nc211.org). The service is free, confidential and available in most languages.
- NC 2-1-1 also has a text platform that sends alerts with current information related to the COVID-19 response in North Carolina. To sign up to receive these alerts, simply text COVIDNC to 898-211.
- The NC 2-1-1 database includes a robust set of more than 13000 health and human services resources representing all 100 counties in North Carolina. There is a dedicated team of professionals who research and verify resource information to ensure that NC 2-1-1 call center staff have accurate and current information to provide to callers. 75% of all resources have been updated in the past 12 months.
- During a disaster situation, such as the COVID-19 response happening now, the Resource Team at NC 2-1-1 continues to work hard to gather and confirm the rapidly changing information such as where food is being distributed, financial assistance information, changes in State and local government policies and processes, mental health services, and more.
- It's important to understand that NC 2-1-1 is an information and referral service, not a direct service provider. When someone calls NC 2-1-1, the call specialist will provide them with the best resource(s) possible based on the need(s) the caller presents and their location in North Carolina. NC 2-1-1 does not have information on the current capacity levels of individual agencies and it's important to keep in mind that during a disaster situation, agencies may be overwhelmed by increased capacity.
- NC 2-1-1 cannot provide direct medical services, and COVID-19 can only be diagnosed by a health care professional. If a person suspects they or someone they care for may have symptoms or have been exposed to the virus, they should contact your health care provider. If a person does not have a provider, they should call their local health department or a Federally Qualified Health Clinic (FQHC) for guidance or call 2-1-1 if they need the number for their local health department or FQHC.
- To gain a better understanding of the needs of callers to NC 2-1-1, visit <https://nc.211counts.org/>. 211Counts is an on-line dashboard that updates overnight, every night. Caller need data is available and can be searched by need type, geographic area, and date range.
- For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 in North Carolina, go to [ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus](http://ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus).
- NC 2-1-1 has increased staffing and is doing everything possible to keep up with call volume. However, due to the fact that this is a statewide event, it is possible that callers may experience wait times. We ask that everyone be patient or if possible, call back during hours when we may have less call volume such as earlier in the morning or later in the evening.

- Some callers have reported receiving a quick busy signal or a message that a call cannot be completed when trying to call 2-1-1. This is not an issue with the NC 2-1-1 phone system, but instead is an issue with local telephone providers working to keep up with demand. Please hang up and try again until your call can go through.