DEAR FRIENDS

Did you or your neighbor dial “2-1-1” this year? When crises strike—storms, lay-offs, or even a government furlough—we are reminded just how vulnerable hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians really are and how important it is for our community to have a simple way to connect to help. Throughout Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties, 2-1-1 SEPA is ready and equipped to help our neighbors meet immediate needs before they turn into long-term struggles.

This annual report provides a snapshot of 2-1-1 SEPA’s past year’s outcomes and shares stories from our call center. Thanks to the outreach efforts of our team, business partners, and community networks, 2-1-1 SEPA has become a more widely-recognized front door to services – so it was little surprise to us to see that calls to 2-1-1 SEPA this year increased by more than 27% and overall contacts (chats, emails, texts, and phone calls) increased by more than 40%. At the same time, we have begun a massive effort to update the entire health and human services database, which we expect to complete in early 2020.

These parallel efforts—expanding awareness of 2-1-1 SEPA and improving its quality—are essential and significant investments. We are grateful to our donors and corporate partners who have made these improvements and growth possible. To our nonprofit partners, we recognize and appreciate the efforts you’ve made this year to make 2-1-1 SEPA accurate and reliable. Whether you are a donor, nonprofit, or neighbor offering help, every contribution to 2-1-1 SEPA helps someone find the assistance they need.

Thank you.

Kate Houstoun
Managing Director, Capacity Building
United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey
Whether you need help finding child care, food assistance, care for an aging parent, or utility assistance, 2-1-1 is where to turn. Our trained resource navigators specialize in finding you the help you need, for any of life's tough situations, from our comprehensive (and ever-growing) database of social services.

2018-19 At A Glance

30,539 Total Contacts

1,773 Text and Chat Contacts

28,507 Basic Needs Assistance Contacts

13,510 Dual Needs

15,686 Unique Website Visits

71% FEMALE

23% MALE

Undetermined: 6%
Help For Those Who Served

Debra, 62, has a 100% service-connected disability and can usually manage on her modest Veteran’s benefit. But she’d had open heart surgery recently, and her medical expenses were unusually high. She’d returned home from the hospital to find a shut-off notice from her electric utility; the next day, her hot water tank burst. Debra couldn’t afford to take care of either problem, so she called 2-1-1 SEPA. The Resource Navigator told Debra about seven agencies that could help. A week later, Debra happily reported that one Veteran-serving agency had arranged for installation of a new hot water tank, and another had agreed to cover her electric bill. She’ll contact the other referrals for assistance with her less-pressing needs when she’s fully recovered. She’s so grateful to have access to such a range of supports. With 2-1-1 SEPA backing her up, she feels better already.

“2-1-1 SEPA helped me when I couldn’t pay my bills and my copays, too.”
"When we had funding for Furlough Workers that were affected by the government shutdown, **PA 2-1-1 SEPA** helped us reach participants that we would not have known about and get them help."

- John Rowe, executive director, UESF

**Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF)**

A 39-year-old single mom of two, Ms. Adams, called **2-1-1** when her job at the IRS was put on hold due to the government shutdown. With no paycheck coming in, this hardship severely affected her finances. In order to get Ms. Adams through this challenging situation, **2-1-1 SEPA** referred her to Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF), who answered the call.

We highlight **Utility Emergency Services Fund** as a partner of **2-1-1 SEPA**

“One of our family advocates called Ms. Adams regarding our Furlough program, and she was ecstatic about the news. We were able to help her get a month’s rent paid. She also received LIHEAP Cash and Crisis for $800 and worked with us to develop a budget. Additionally, she was referred to our ‘How to Save Money on Utility Bills’ workshop for further housing stabilization,” said John Rowe, executive director, UESF. “She wouldn’t have known these services were available without **2-1-1 SEPA**.”

Ms. Adams is now caught up on her bills and very grateful for the assistance she received through UESF and **2-1-1 SEPA**.

UESF exists to support vulnerable individuals, like Ms. Adams, impacted by a housing crisis. The organization not only offers immediate assistance, but they work to stabilize households by providing financial assistance and resources to pave the way for future self-sufficiency.

“Many of our families are often forced to make a choice between paying rent and paying utility bills due to limited income compounded by other challenges,” said John. “Our programs empower families to increase their short and long-term income through a combination of direct housing assistance, access and acquisition of benefits, workforce development and life skills education.”

UESF serves more than 7,000 participants within the Philadelphia area across all their programs.

“**2-1-1 SEPA** helps us reach people that might not know we exist, or maybe we don’t know they need the help,” Rowe explained.

Once someone calls **2-1-1 SEPA**, the two agencies work together to get the individual connected to the various resources available at UESF, following up to make sure that family is on track for future self-sufficiency and success.

To learn more about UESF, visit [https://uesfacts.org/](https://uesfacts.org/).
“I know what it’s like to leave the military and end up homeless and hungry. I think Veterans find it easier to talk to me because I can put myself in their shoes.”

2-1-1 SEPA Resource Navigator

Gary, 58, was given a 70% disability rating for PTSD after his military service. He couldn’t control his emotions or hold down a job; eventually, he dropped out of therapy and retreated into alcohol abuse. He called 2-1-1 SEPA one morning when he woke up in a doorway hungry, hungover, and homeless. The Resource Navigator told Gary about several programs for homeless and disabled Veterans. She also told him how to get to the Veteran’s Multi-Service Center, which connected him to a transitional housing and supportive services program offered in collaboration with the VA Medical Center. Gary can live there for up to two years while he gets treatment and other stabilizing services. “People talk about dodging a bullet without understanding what that means,” he says, “but I sure do. I don’t know where I’d be now if I hadn’t called 2-1-1.”

Top Five Needs in 2018-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electric Service</td>
<td>8,671</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Related</td>
<td>2,507</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinated Entry</td>
<td>2,360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent Assistance</td>
<td>1,205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Pantries</td>
<td>987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Shelter</td>
<td>987</td>
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</tbody>
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“It’s hard to confront the level of need in our communities. People are suffering. More people than ever are calling 2-1-1 for the first time.”

2-1-1 SEPA Resource Navigator

“2-1-1 SEPA helped me get my heat restored during a deadly cold spell.”

Brenda, 79, has lived alone since she was widowed. She gets by on a small fixed income and is housebound with a physical disability. Her furnace stopped working during the severe cold wave last January; she’d turned on her oven and a tiny heater, but her house was still freezing. She called 2-1-1 SEPA and was referred to the Heater Hotline. Brenda was pleased when a technician arrived to fix the furnace, and then distraught when it broke right after he left. So many people needed help because of the cold that she couldn’t get through to report that her furnace still needed repairs. When she called 2-1-1 SEPA again, in tears, 2-1-1 SEPA staff reached out to the Basic Systems Repair Program, advocating on her behalf. Soon a supervisor from the Heater Hotline arrived and replaced the faulty wiring in her furnace. Brenda often feels alone and marginalized. She’s so grateful to 2-1-1 SEPA for giving her a voice.