



HELP STARTS HERE

PA 2-1-1 Southwest 2018-19 Annual Report

Need help? Dial 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898-211. Or contact us via chat on pa211sw.org



DEAR FRIENDS

“2-1-1 never makes me feel ashamed..”

Such a powerful sentiment. Those words from one of our highlighted stories in this 2018-19 annual report echo the motivation behind shifts **2-1-1** has made this year to better support our neighbors.

- Adding a female military Veteran Resource Navigator to expand our capacity to serve military veterans and the family members of active military personnel and to more compassionately support female veterans;
- Fostering collaboration in Mercer County through an agency referral network that provides more robust information and referral by strengthening the database, increasing community outreach, and connecting more people to vital resources sooner;
- Continuing to improve the website to better serve people reaching out for help through self-service options available online – website hits were up more than 18% over the prior year;
- Developing an integrated referral network (IRN) in Allegheny County to support women who are experiencing a crisis for the first time and don't know where to turn for help – by removing the need for them to retell their story over and over and seamlessly connecting them to resources within the IRN; and
- Building partnerships with healthcare institutions, corporations, governmental agencies, and academic institutions by demonstrating the power of **2-1-1** to navigate the human services landscape.

2-1-1 was there for over 118,000 contacts in our region, whether they reached out by phone, text, chat, or through the website. Over 118,000 with the courage to make the first step in reaching out were guided through the next step by the caring support of **2-1-1**. Together we have made a difference in our region. Thank you for your continued support.

We are grateful to support from: Peoples Gas, Duquesne Light Company, IBEW Local No. 5, as well as Buhl Regional Health Foundation, Charles Morris Charitable Trust, Highmark Foundation, PNC Charitable Trust, John E. and Sue M. Jackson Charitable Trust, United Way of Pennsylvania, Rotary International, District 7280, local government partners, other foundations and individual donors that helped **2-1-1** better serve our community.

Angela Reynolds

Senior Director, United for Families and **2-1-1**
United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania



RESULTS START HERE

62,963

Total Contacts

40,185

Basic Needs
Assistance Contacts

28,893

Dual Needs

54,673

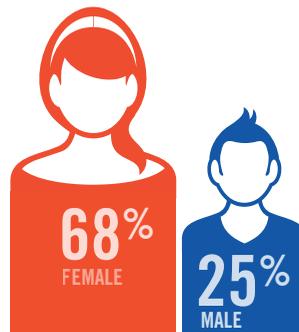
Unique Website Visits

5,118

Military/Veteran
Contacts

2018 -19 At A Glance

Whether you need help finding child care, food assistance, care for an aging parent or utility assistance, **2-1-1** is the number to call. Our expert Resource Navigators are trained and specialize in finding you the help you need, for any of life's tough situations, from our comprehensive (and ever-growing) directory of social services.



Undetermined 7%

Majority of Callers

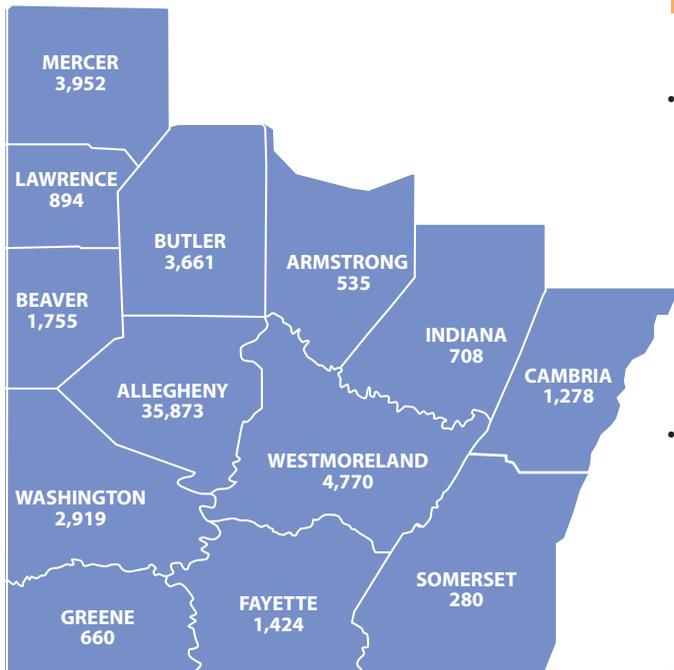
Were between the ages of 55-64
5,350 were first-time callers

Thank you to our corporate and foundation funders!



HOPE STARTS HERE

Total Contacts by County for 2018-19



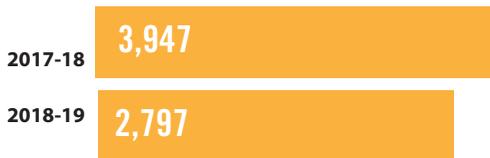
Impact of 2-1-1

- **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** scheduled 18,158 free tax preparation appointments, which allowed low-income working families in five counties to receive free tax assistance in order to keep more of what they earned. This is nearly a 27% increase over 2017-2018. **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** also assisted an additional 2,392 individuals with tax questions.
- Cambria and Somerset Counties joined the **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** region. 1,558 individuals from these counties were connected to **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** to receive critical program and agency referrals.
- **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** connected 152 people to vital services to rebuild their lives following a disaster, including the mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue.
- **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** helped families in need to:
 - Enjoy a Thanksgiving meal. In partnership with the Urban League, **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** connected 234 families to a Thanksgiving meal that they otherwise could not afford.
 - **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** connected 227 women struggling for the first time due to a health diagnosis, divorce, loss of a spouse, job loss or other crisis to **United for Women**, which provides one-time immediate support in order to avoid more serious crises such as homelessness or long-term poverty.
- In partnership with the United Way of Greene County, **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** scheduled over 130 families for Stuff the Bus.
- **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** helped 63 senior citizens connect to food through the Just Harvest Senior Food program.

Incoming Chats



Incoming Texts





LOYALTY STARTS HERE

“In the military, your team can save your life. I’m glad **2-1-1**’s on my team back here at home.”

Help For Those Who Served

Ashley, a Veteran, recently returned to work from maternity leave. It was hard to leave her baby, but she needed a steady income again. She was newly single with three small children and had fallen behind on her bills. She’d catch up as soon as she got paid, but her gas service would be shut off by then. She called **PA 2-1-1 Southwest**.

The Resource Navigator told Ashley about six programs that provide emergency utility assistance and checked with her a few days later to see if she’d received the help she needed. **2-1-1**’s encouragement made the difference. Ashley was thankful when one of the referrals, a local Veteran-serving agency, agreed to pay her gas and water bills. She relied on her unit to keep her going when she was in the service. Now she can rely on **2-1-1**.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

“United Way’s **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** connects us to where the needs are and gives us an idea of what people in our community need help with most.”

- Greg Crossely, volunteer chairman for the Fayette VOAD
vice chair for the Western PA VOAD.

VOAD

When a disaster strikes, oftentimes families are left in unthinkable situations – their homes destroyed, basements flooded, finances go into a downward spiral, and the list goes on. The Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) in Fayette County and across Western PA helps pool resources from voluntary organizations to help people recover after a disaster occurs.

“We are basically a coordinating agency or umbrella for the entities who provide long-term recovery,” said Greg Crossely, volunteer chairman for the Fayette VOAD and vice chair for the Western PA VOAD. The VOAD’s partners assist with countless services, such as cleaning up basements, removing contaminated content, remediating mold, installing new walls and floors, providing emotional support, shelter, food and more.

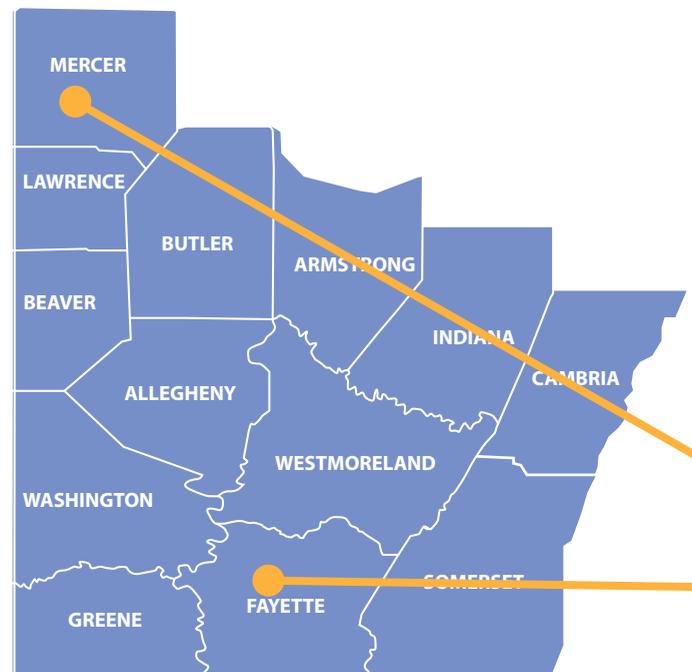
“People impacted by a disaster who already have disadvantages in their lives suffer the worst,” explained Greg. The VOAD partners with **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** to reach more people impacted by a disaster to get them the help they need as quickly as possible.

“**PA 2-1-1 Southwest** has been extremely helpful. Many people are unaware of what VOAD is or how to reach us. **2-1-1** is that central point that we can share information and get the word out through various sources for people to call that number and find us and other resources for help,” said Greg.

For the VOAD, when a disaster hits, partnership with **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** is vital. Directing individuals to dial **2-1-1**, rather than the VOAD itself, supports the all-volunteer staff at the VOAD and helps them ensure people are getting the help they need as quickly as they can.

On any given day, disaster or no disaster, the VOAD teams up with **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** and other local agencies to share resources, information, and contacts, helping everyone work more efficiently.

For more information on VOAD, visit fayettecountypa.org/728/VOAD



AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

“We have a wonderful partnership with United Way’s **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** that allows us to assist more people.”

- April Brown, emergency services coordinator

Prince of Peace

In Mercer County, many individuals struggle to meet their basic needs, such as transportation, housing, putting food on the table, and more. For more than 36 years, Prince of Peace Center has supported the community and helped families achieve self-sufficiency through economic, emotional and spiritual support services.

“We provide emergency services for people in our community, and we try to step in wherever it is possible for us to help,” said April Brown, emergency services coordinator.

We highlight VOAD in Fayette County and Prince of Peace in Mercer County as partners of **PA 2-1-1 Southwest**

A small but mighty organization, Prince of Peace offers a variety of services, including emergency assistance for utilities and rent, family support, food, professional development and clothing, and a thrift store. For individuals ready to take the next step to self-sufficiency, Prince of Peace hosts AWESOME (Assistance with Employment Shelter Organization Money Management Education), a class that covers topics such as proper nutrition, informed decision-making and financial planning.

“Our little building is very busy!” April exclaimed. Prince of Peace serves more than 700 individuals every year with monetary supports through Emergency Services, and more than 2,000 families per year with food, mission thrift store items, soup kitchen meals, advocacy support, and more.

Prince of Peace partners with **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** to better connect all of these critical services to the community. “When someone calls **2-1-1** and is referred to our organization, we try to assist them in whatever way we can,” April explained.

Most recently, in order to be more efficient in serving community members, Prince of Peace, along with other agencies in Mercer County, teamed up with **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** on the ‘Mercer County Closed Loop Project.’ After **2-1-1** connects with someone in need, they do an assessment, then share the information with Prince of Peace. Once Prince of Peace staff have a grasp on the person’s situation, they will ‘loop’ back with **2-1-1** and other partner agencies in Mercer County, so everyone can quickly work together to make sure the individual’s needs are met.

“This has been a really collaborative effort for the community’s social services agencies, and it is great to see everyone coming together to make a difference for people in Mercer County,” April said.

To learn more about Prince of Peace, visit www.princeofpeacecenter.org.

FEATURED CALLS

“2-1-1 has really become the starting point for connections to human services in this region. Any nonprofit entity will redirect clients to us. And when we make a referral, the agency knows we’ve done an intake and have sent the person to the right place.”

PA 2-1-1 Southwest Resource Navigator



“PA 2-1-1 never makes me feel ashamed because I’m having problems.”

Sandra, 52, is a Veteran who lives alone on a small fixed income. She has bipolar disorder and often feels like she can’t think straight. She called **PA 2-1-1 Southwest** last month after she received a shut-off notice from her electric utility. The Resource Navigator referred Sandra to several Veteran-serving agencies for advocacy and emergency utility assistance. Thanks to that intervention, Sandra’s utility agreed to enroll her in the CAP program and roll over her past due balance. But Sandra couldn’t afford the \$150 deposit, so she called **2-1-1** again. The Veteran Resource Navigator told Sandra about two United Way partner agencies that could help, and about United Way’s VETNET transportation program. Sandra was grateful when one of the agencies provided the funds she needed. Sometimes her life feels like an overwhelming puzzle. She’s grateful that **2-1-1** is there to help her fit the pieces together.

FEATURED CALLS

“I know what it’s like to fall on hard times, and what a challenge it is to come back. I wish I’d known about **2-1-1** then.”

PA 2-1-1 Southwest Resource Navigator



“PA 2-1-1 Southwest stepped in when I was alone, needed help, and didn’t know what to do.”

Lora, 78, pays on her electric bill every month but can’t always afford the full amount. She doesn’t understand the notices her electric utility sends or how to apply for assistance. She called **2-1-1** when her power was shut off. Her phone battery was so low that the call kept dropping. The Resource Navigator escalated Lora’s case to **2-1-1** staff, who advocated on her behalf to several emergency utility assistance programs; asked Adult Protective Services to check on Lora, to make sure she was okay; and told Lora to walk across the street to her church, which operates an emergency assistance program, for help with her utility bill. Now Lora’s power is restored and she’s working on ways to stay ahead of her scheduled CAP payments. Help was there all the time; she just needed **2-1-1** to connect her to it.



LIVING STARTS HERE

40,185

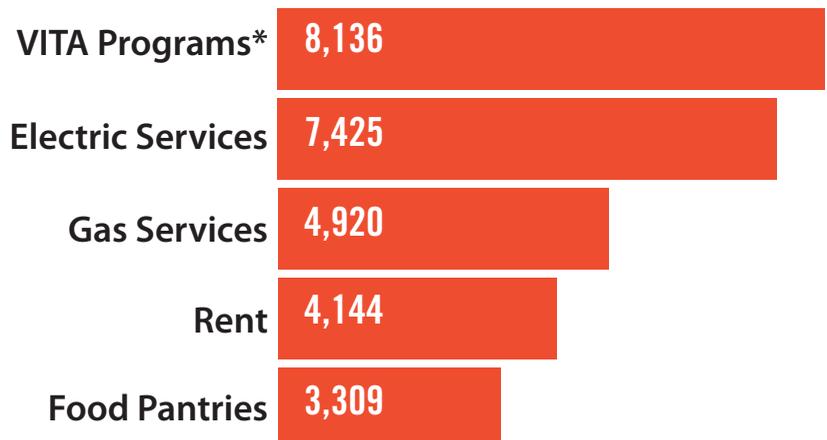
Basic Needs
Assistance Contacts

*“PA 2-1-1 Southwest helped me recover after people I trusted took financial advantage of me.”
- Julia*

Help for Basic Needs

The volume of basic needs assistance calls shows that many people still need help to feed, clothe, and provide shelter for their families. Help is available for people like Julia, who lost her home after a trusted family member stole from her.

Top Five Basic Needs in 2018-19



*Volunteer Income Tax Service



PARTNERSHIP STARTS HERE

2-1-1 is here for you.

AGENCY?
Visit pa211sw.org/service-providers to:



Update the services you provide



Register as a Service Provider



See how many referrals 2-1-1 makes to your agency

NEED HELP?
There are many ways to get in touch:



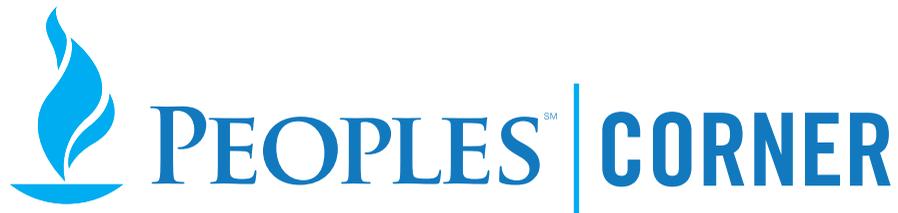
Text your zip code to 898-211



Chat online or sign-up for text alerts at pa211sw.org



Call 2-1-1



PEOPLES IS DEDICATED TO HELPING FAMILIES

It might not seem like it, but colder weather will be on its way before you know it. At Peoples, we want to make sure all of our customers are prepared for chillier temperatures so you can stay safe and warm at home. By taking steps to get your home ready for fall and winter, you can see a significant impact on your energy usage and your savings. We call this process “weatherization.”

Contrary to what you might think, there are many small weatherization changes you can make that can result in significant savings:

1. Seal ductwork: Make sure that all ductwork is sealed at joints with foil-backed tape or silicone caulking.
2. Install weather-stripping: Use caulking or weather-stripping along windows and doors, exhaust fans, and any other places where wires or pipes pass through walls.
3. Add insulation: Insulate the first 3-6 feet of cold and hot water pipes near the water heater, wrap the hot water heater with an insulation blanket, and add insulation to the attic.

4. Change furnace filter: Furnace filters are a common reason for furnace breakdowns. Have a professional check, clean, and tune up your furnace once a year, and replace your filter three times during heating season, or as recommended by the manufacturer.

For Peoples customers in Pennsylvania, we also offer our Usage Reduction Program (formerly our Low-Income Usage Reduction Program or “LIURP”). This program helps customers to weatherize their homes in order to reduce energy costs. We help with things like attic and wall caulking, insulation, weather-stripping, and even heating system improvements. These weatherization measures make our customers’ homes more efficient, which helps them save money on heating—and cooling!

We also encourage our customers to call **2-1-1** for customized health, housing, and human services information. During the colder months, our partners at **2-1-1** are an excellent resource for our customers in need.

For more information on Peoples’ Usage Reduction Program, visit www.peoples-gas.com/help-pa.