

United Way 2-1-1 Mobilization Plan

November 2009

The purpose of this United Way 2-1-1 Mobilization Plan is to guide the development and growth of United Way 2-1-1 for the next two years. We outline the opportunities and challenges for the future of United Way 2-1-1 both in terms of service to Dane County and our assigned regional counties as well as within our role as a member of the 2-1-1 Wisconsin system. The plan identifies our strategies and tactics for 2010 and 2010 and the metrics we'll use to measure our success.

This plan is organized as follows:

- 1. United Way 2-1-1: an overview
- 2. Leveraging impact through our public and private partnerships
- 3. Using 2-1-1 to advance the Agenda for Change
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- 7. Community engagement
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- 9. Next steps
 - a. Guiding strategies
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- 10. Measures and indicators

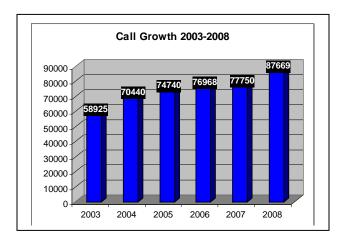
1. United Way 2-1-1: an overview

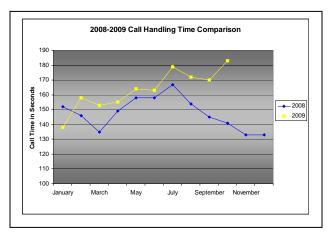
United Way of Dane County has provided information and referral services to Dane County for 26 years. Initially called First Call for Help, we renamed our local provision of services to "United Way 2-1-1" in 2002 to be in alignment with the national 2-1-1 movement to create nationally accredited information and referral services in every community in the country. United Way 2-1-1 assisted 87,669 callers in 2008.

The purpose of United Way 2-1-1 is to help people facing a difficult situation find the resources they need. Often people do not know where to start. Looking in the phone book at agency names can be frustrating; people do not know what agency does which service. In some cases they may not even know that a service or program exists to address the problem they are facing.

Community Resource Specialists provide assistance twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. These Resource Specialists use a database of more than 2,054 programs and services at 1,066 agencies – such as food pantries, health clinics, and assistance with utility bills -- to help callers connect with the help they need. Calls received after hours and weekends are often from people who require supportive listening, calming techniques and crisis intervention. United Way 2-1-1 has staff and volunteers that speak Spanish; when they are not available or a caller speaks another language our Resource Specialists use an interpreter service that provides translation of over 150 languages.

Our service model is unique among 2-1-1 services in that we depend heavily on trained volunteers to cover 2-1-1 shifts. Currently a core group of 15 volunteers supplement four full-time staff. Involving volunteers allows us to stretch our resources. A significant amount of staff time is devoted to volunteer recruitment, training and management.





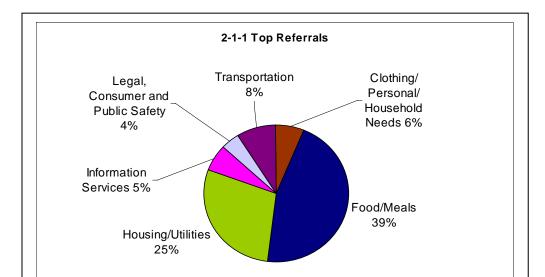
With substantial help from our volunteers, the United Way 2-1-1 budget is only \$295,712. The cost of our operations is entirely borne by UWDC. We are the least expensive provider in our network, with a cost per call of \$3.37.

Starting last year, United Way 2-1-1 has made its resource database available on-line through a program called Resource House. This allows community members and other service providers with internet access to search for resources directly. This also allows 2-1-1 Resources Specialists give their primary attention to people who do not have internet access or who need help determining which resources they need.

United Way is part of the statewide 2-1-1 Wisconsin system as well as a national network. As of April 2009, 2-1-1 nationally provides service coverage to 240 million Americans (more than 80% of the entire population), serving all or part of 46 states (including 33 states with over 90% coverage) as well as Washington, DC and Puerto Rico. Wisconsin is one of the 46 states with 100% coverage. The remaining states are all in various stages of planning and implementation.

2. Leveraging impact through public-private partnerships

United Way 2-1-1 has many partnerships that allow us to provide both leadership and service in the community to target and streamline services. The three most important of these are with the local food panty network, emergency service and the health department. Until the Spring of 2009, connecting people to food pantries constituted 50% of our work.



As a result of the expanded use of technology (described later), that percentage is going down, but food pantry calls remain a significant part of 2-1-1's work. Work with emergency services and the health department is ongoing, but peaks with exceptional events, such as the H1N1 virus.

Dane County Food Pantry Network (DCFPN)

United Way 2-1-1 has been a partner with the DCFPN for many years, a natural component of Agenda for Change work relating to providing access to food to low-income families. There are currently 54 food pantries in Dane County, many of which are reliable, professional, consistent resources for people in need of food. A few smaller pantries have unplanned staffing issues, food provision problems and ever changing hours. Due to the strong relationship with DCFPN, member pantries are required to notify 2-1-1 of any changes to their availability.

United Way 2-1-1 is publicized as the number to call to get food pantry information and people are encouraged to verify pantry dates, hours and eligibility with 2-1-1 whenever possible. In April this year, 2-1-1 created a daily automatic food pantry message that gives callers all the food pantries available on a given day. This is a very popular option; 20-25% of the callers each day choose the automatic food pantry line. Also, United Way 2-1-1 is an integral part of the annual DCFPN Thanksgiving Program, which registers families to receive a holiday food basket.

Emergency Management

For the past few years, United Way 2-1-1 has worked diligently to create relationships with the Emergency Management Departments in each of the counties we serve. We are part of the Dane County Emergency Management's continuity planning for the community as a targeted way to disseminate public safety information during disasters. United Way 2-1-1 is listed on their press releases for various alerts such as heat, flooding and cold advisories.

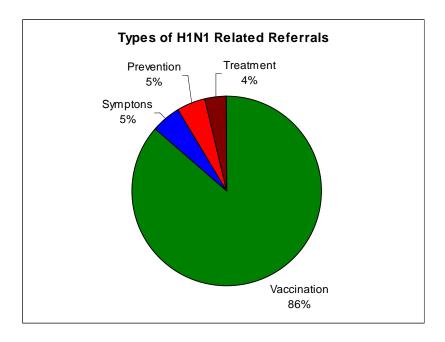
Due to this partnership and budding relationships with emergency management in other counties, United Way 2-1-1 was able to play a key role helping the public during the flood disaster of 2008. Local staff provided 24 hour assistance to the emergency management departments in order to respond quickly to emergency requests for volunteers, such as a need for immediate help sandbagging a house with rapidly rising water. United Way 2-1-1 assisted 1,444 callers during this period with information on safe roads, sand bags, damage reporting, help with prevention of damages, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Public Health Departments

United Way 2-1-1 has recently forged new relationships with county public health departments. These relationships began during the H1N1 outbreak in the spring of 2009 when public health departments across the state were inundated with calls regarding the flu. The WI Department of Health asked 2-1-1 Wisconsin (described later) for assistance. Each 2-1-1 quickly contacted the public health departments of the counties they serve to offer assistance.

United Way 2-1-1 is the number to call for flu information this fall/winter as well. Using information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Health and county specific information from the public health departments, Resource Specialists are able to answer the majority of inquires. In the case of an individual needing a health care professional, the Resource Specialist will offer to transfer the caller to the appropriate provider. This plan to triage callers will allow people with health issues timely access to health care professionals. This work extends the impact of the Healthy for Life Community Solutions Team in the area of improving access to health care and early identification and treatment of health issues.

Since April 2009, United Way 2-1-1 has assisted 461 callers with H1N1 related information (357 requests in October alone).



3. Using 2-1-1 to advance the Agenda for Change

The core function of 2-1-1 is connecting community members to the resources they need. Many of these resources are a part of our Agenda for Change work, such as linking callers to food pantries or Play and Learn programs. Below is a sampling of how 2-1-1 ties to the Agenda for Change strategic initiatives:

Seniors and people with disabilities are able to stay in their homes. (Caregiver support)

- 2-1-1 provides information and referral to services for seniors, people with disabilities, and caregivers. We are expecting 2-1-1 to be more actively involved with this initiative when our caregiver web site is launched in the winter.
- In partnership with Falls Prevention Task Force team, 2-1-1 created a model to respond to callers who are concerned about seniors at-risk for falls. The 2-1-1 staff collects the caller's concerns and faxes them to regional case managers working with seniors as well as their physician. Falls are the number one cause of injury-related deaths among older adults. The SRI Community Solutions Team is currently working on strategies to reduce Dane County's high rate of elderly falls.

There is a reduction in violence toward individuals and families.

- When an ex-offender calls 2-1-1 for resources, Resource Specialists encourage them to contact Journey Home to help with reintegration into the community. Madison Area Urban Ministry staff access the database to help Journey Home participants as well as offering 2-1-1 as a resource to call for assistance.
- The Madison Police Department now also uses the on-line database as a referral source from their squad cars.

Achievement Connections

• 2-1-1 is a big part of the parent support component of Achievement Connections. Not only do we encourage parents to call if they need assistance, but we also have encouraged and shown school staff how to access the on-line database to assist parents. Judge Beth Cox

and Judge Marjorie Schuett both use it in Municipal Court when they are working with youth court.

People's health issues are identified and treated early.

- When the Healthcare Access Project was in full swing, 2-1-1 was the only phone number listed in the HAP Enrollment Handbook as the place to call for HAP participants who had general questions about the program. Once they were enrolled and assigned to a specific health provider, participants also had the phone numbers they needed for their health care provider. 2-1-1 provided a centralized point of information and provided a buffer to health providers participating in HAP. Having them take on this role alleviated the providers' concerns that they would be inundated with requests from the public to "join" HAP, which was not how the program was set up.
- To help people who are uninsured have access to health care, 2-1-1 provides referrals to community clinics and dental resources. In 2008, 2-1-1 connected 1,256 callers to health related resources.

There is a reduction in homelessness.

- 2-1-1 informs callers with rent payment problems about the eviction prevention efforts available in Dane County. Recently, 2-1-1 was the informational line for a foreclosure workshop "Fix Your Loan, Keep Your Home." Resource Specialists were able to refer 37 callers to this workshop for mortgage assistance.
- Resource Specialists consistently offer financial literacy resources in Dane County, including Money Smart Week, financial counseling, free tax preparation services and the Earned Income Tax Credit.
- 2-1-1 plays a leadership role encouraging food pantry use when callers are in tight financial straits.

4. Community role of 2-1-1

United Way 2-1-1 is distinct from most other Community Impact work in that the public – mostly low and moderate income residents – call us directly for service. The program started as a way to help community residents find the resources they need. It was launched prior to the internet, when agencies created lists and directories of service for the populations they served and distributed them at suitable locations. United Way 2-1-1 replaced all these lists with a centralized database with up-to-date information that could be accessed by phone. This was a tremendous improvement. Below are some of the ongoing benefits.

United Way 2-1-1 saves our community members time and money finding resources. 2-1-1 eliminates the need for community members to call several agencies in order to find a needed resource. Resource Specialists are empathetic listeners trained to help callers identify specific needs in order to connect them with resources. Resource Specialists will look up specific programs requested then direct callers to resources they may be unaware of. For example, a caller asking for food stamps will also be provided with information about food pantries, FoodShare (formerly Food Stamps), soup kitchens, etc.

United Way 2-1-1 helps agencies by lessening the number of misdirected calls they receive. Smaller/grassroots services rely on United Way 2-1-1 to convey program changes such as adjusted food pantry requirements, closures due to inclement weather, or changes in program availability. Well known organizations with locations across the United States offer different resources depending on their local focus, such as The Salvation Army or Catholic Charities. By calling 2-1-1 first, individuals can verify if services are available and get an alternative when needed. Organizations are able to focus their efforts on people referred appropriately instead of answering misdirected calls.

United Way 2-1-1 is *responsive to changes in the community.* Notably, as the rate of unemployment has grown to 5.9% in Madison in August (compared to 3.4% in 2008), we have made 156 referrals for unemployment compensation, 388 referrals to Unemployment Appeals Clinic (law students who help people prepare for their unemployment appeal hearing), and 361 referrals to job related resources such as job networking clubs, job search workshops, career advising, skills training and day labor.

To raise awareness of seasonal programs for people with low-incomes, United Way 2-1-1 changes the greeting message to highlight programs such as Thanksgiving and Tax Assistance. In 2008, 2-1-1 made 6,762 referrals for holiday baskets, 457 referrals for school supplies, and 717 referrals to Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites or tax preparation assistance.

United Way 2-1-1 saves revenue for taxpayers and the health care system by referring callers to non-emergency room health and dental resources. In 2008, we made 493 referrals to low cost/free community clinics, 66 referrals to private clinics/urgent care and 763 referrals to dental resources.

Taking advantage of computer technology and the internet, United Way 2-1-1 has been able to make its resource database available on-line through a program called Resource House. This allows community members with internet access to search for resources directly. This also allows 2-1-1 Resources Specialists to give their primary attention to people who do not have internet access or who need help determining which resources they need.

United Way 2-1-1 staff has been training social workers, case managers, health care system employees, school staff and others on how to access United Way 2-1-1 through the web to help their clients and customers. In some ways, we have come full circle – but better. Through web access, agency staffs now have immediate and direct access to a comprehensive, up-to-date database of programs and services for their clients.

5. United Way 2-1-1 in the context of the statewide and national 2-1-1 systems

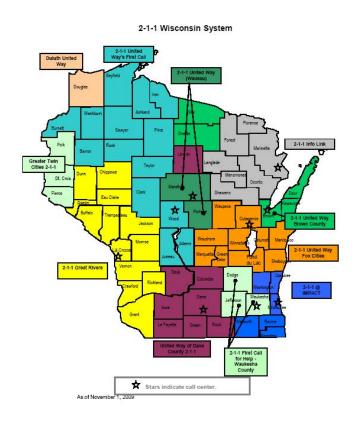
United Way 2-1-1 is part of the statewide system called 2-1-1 Wisconsin. 2-1-1 Wisconsin was originally a networking group of directors of the 2-1-1 centers across the state. Through the years, it has evolved into a professional organization focused on providing quality 2-1-1 services to all the residents of Wisconsin. In the past year, 2-1-1 Wisconsin has hired an executive director, recruited a diverse, influential board of directors and created an operating council (which is made up of the 2-1-1 center directors). 2-1-1 Wisconsin has had important success advancing the goals of 2-1-1 services. Notably, 2-1-1 Wisconsin worked with all the cell phone companies in the state to program the ability to dial 2-1-1 from each customer's phone.

This year has brought an important new development. 2-1-1 Wisconsin secured an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act supplemental Social Services Block Grant for \$2,050,860. The purpose of the block grant is to create statewide 2-1-1 coverage for all Wisconsin counties. Of that total, \$1.5 million will purchase and implement a statewide database and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system and \$540,000 will support local 2-1-1 call center staffing during the 13 month grant period. Our operation will receive \$107,500 from this grant.

The full integration of United Way 2-1-1's telephone and computer database system with the state system is a major structural change for United Way of Dane County and the other 2-1-1 call centers across the state.

One of the most important benefits of a statewide phone system and database will be the ability for calls to "roll over." If a caller is on hold for more than a certain amount of time, that call will "roll over" to another 2-1-1 center available to take the call. The other call center will have access to the same resources as our call center through the integrated resource database. This will allow 2-1-1 centers the ability to support each other when calls spike unexpectedly. This will also enable the system to have support in place for emergency situations effecting the 2-1-1 center or community wide disasters. (There will be considerable staff time to learn the new database and telephone system as well as to retrain all the volunteers.)

Integration of the system also brings some uncertainty. If United Way 2-1-1 accepts this opportunity to fully integrate our database and telephone system with the state system, decision making regarding these systems will not be made locally but by 2-1-1 Wisconsin. For the duration of the grant, the direct cost of the new voice-over-computer telephone technology and integrated database system and costs associated with transferring our resources to the new integrated database will be borne by the grant. However, the long-term cost structure for shared administrative and systems cost represent an unknown. 2-1-1 Wisconsin is diligently working for sustained funding to cover the ongoing costs for the future, but there is no guaranteed funding in place at this time. Under the current system, United Way of Dane County's 2-1-1 budget is \$295,712.



Over the past years, each 2-1-1 call center has expanded their service area to include additional counties in order to ensure 2-1-1 is available statewide. United Way 2-1-1 currently covers the counties of Dane, Columbia, Green, Iowa, La Fayette, Lincoln, Rock and Sauk. At this time, the resource listings for the counties other than Dane County are limited to emergency numbers

(police, fire, etc), a local human services organization, emergency management and public health.

If United Way 2-1-1 accepts its allotted portion of the statewide grant, it will need to fully commit to the statewide integrated system. The expectation from 2-1-1 Wisconsin and the State of Wisconsin is for United Way 2-1-1 to provide comprehensive service to all the counties in its region.

6. Maximizing cost efficiencies through its operational model

There are many different models and configurations of 2-1-1 nationally and across the state. Our United Way 2-1-1 achieves exceptional cost effectiveness by utilizing well-trained volunteers as Resource Specialists.

An anonymous survey of ten 2-1-1 call centers in the Midwest serving similarly sized communities was conducted in early 2009. On average, the call centers received 80,836 calls in 2008 and had eight staff, averaging one full-time staff member for every 10,000 calls. Our United Way 2-1-1 had 87,335 calls last year, which we handled with four full-time staff and fifteen regular volunteers. Our cost per call is \$3.37, which is the lowest cost in Wisconsin; other state centers range from \$6 to \$15 per call.

What makes it possible to serve this volume of callers is our total integration of volunteers as Resource Specialists. Volunteers have been an integral part of the information and referral service since it United Way of Dane County agreed to take on the service in 1983. Volunteers fully staffed the call center, relying on a Rolodex and the volunteers' memories for community resources. The majority of the calls were for food pantries.

The position of Resource Specialist has changed quite a bit through the years. Callers need much more than food pantry information and call centers are holding themselves to higher quality standards, ranging from training on crisis intervention (what to do with suicidal callers?) to training on cultural sensitive empathetic listening (what to do with an elderly caller with memory loss?). The result is that staff must spend much more time training and supervising volunteers.

An in-house study was revealing. Volunteers serve an average of 48 hours of call shifts per week. To leverage this amount of skilled volunteer time, staff devotes approximately 48 hours to recruiting, training, managing and supervising volunteers each week. Part of the challenge is that as the work becomes more demanding and complex, retention of the newer volunteers is challenging. Of the 21 volunteers recruited over the past two years, only five continue to volunteer on a regularly scheduled basis. Fifteen left after an average of 24 hours of training and an average of three months of service.

Despite the amount of staff time spent training and supervising volunteers compared to the hours of volunteer service, there are many benefits to having volunteers as an integral part of United Way 2-1-1. These include bringing a diversity of perspectives (age, background, economic, cultural); they lessen the stress level of staff by answering calls; the wait time is lessened for callers; they have an enthusiasm for the work; they are great ambassadors of United Way 2-1-1; and they reduce the cost of providing the service.

Yet there are a few drawbacks to relying heavily on volunteer staffing. These include: the level of obligation to the scheduled call shift is less than a staff person; many volunteers are retired and have the ability to take lengthy trips, therefore leaving a gap in coverage while they are

away; the level of quality varies per volunteer; and continuous recruitment, training and support is required to ensure a standard of quality

7. Community engagement–Board of Directors Discussion on October 27, 2009

At the Board of Directors meeting in October, we requested guidance to help us plan for future growth and integration into the statewide system. Highlights from that discussion include:

- Affirmation of the importance of United Way 2-1-1 to the Agenda for Change, the campaign, and the community at large.
- United Way 2-1-1 is seen as a major benefit which garners much support through our campaign.
- Regarding total integration into the statewide system:
 - Ensure Dane County residents will continue to receive the same high quality of service in the future
 - The success of the 2-1-1 service is driven by the quality of community resources used to assist callers.
 - We should convene a small group of 2-1-1 centers to set interagency guidelines on service provision, resource management and website controls.
 - Setting standard operating principles is feasible since all 2-1-1 centers in the state are either supported by or internal to a United Way.
 - It is imperative that we have the ability to align with the Agenda for Change
 - o Working together as a statewide system is a good business practice.
 - Our work with other counties in our region must not dilute support for Dane County nor create a negative impact on our campaign.
 - We need to seek new, sustainable funding to support 2-1-1, especially as part of a statewide system.
 - We might consider offering our ability to expand to other areas of the state, if needed, as long as we could maintain our quality and cost effectiveness.
 - We should seek other resources through our region's counties to ensure we have the resources needed to continue and grow

8. Goal

United Way 2-1-1 is recognized as a critical information and referral resource that enhances the Agenda for Change and has the capacity to create solutions for our community. We will ensure United Way 2-1-1 is accountable and provides solutions within the Agenda for Change, provides high-quality service to its local and regional clients, participates as a member of the 2-1-1 Wisconsin system, and manages itself efficiently.

9. The Mobilization Plan

United Way 2-1-1 will focus on six strategies over the next two years (2010 and 2011) to ensure it is positioned to provide resources for the Agenda for Change, ensure retention of our current quality of service, and embrace new options for growth.

A. **Guiding strategies.** United Way 2-1-1 will:

- 1. Enhance our involvement with the Agenda for Change by finding new ways to use the 2-1-1 system to engage the community in current initiatives.
- 2. Create an inclusive and robust database of resources to support all counties in our region, taking care to protect the integrity of our service to Dane County residents.

- 3. Work with 2-1-1 Wisconsin to provide a high quality standard of service to all Wisconsin residents and enhance our own benchmarks of quality for Dane County residents.
- Continue to focus on volunteer supported information and referral provision, maintaining the balance of quality service with the low cost and benefits of a volunteer focused program.
- 5. Continue efforts to streamline service provision by offering alternative modes of access to community resources.
- 6. Seek sustainable new funding from the counties in which we provide service as well as private sector grants.

B. Tactics and timeline for each strategy (2010-2011)

- 1. Enhance our involvement with the Agenda for Change by finding new ways to use the 2-1-1 system to engage the community in current initiatives.
 - a. 2010 Audit Mobilization Plans and engage the Community Solutions Teams and Impact directors to develop overt strategies for United Way 2-1-1 to be a key player in supporting solutions through the Agenda for Change.
 - b. 2010/2011 Consider options with the United Way of Dane County's website and the new 2-1-1 telephone technology (automated messaging) to guide the community to specifically enhanced resources within our Agenda for Change work.
- 2. Create an inclusive and robust database of resources to support all counties in our region, taking care to protect the integrity of our service to Dane County residents.
 - a. 2010 Using grant monies through 2-1-1 Wisconsin, begin building relationships with key stakeholders in each county.
 - b. 2010/2011 Research and reach out to various agencies, government and other organizations to gather community resources.
- 3. Work with 2-1-1 Wisconsin to provide a high quality standard of service to all WI residents and enhance our own benchmarks of quality for Dane County residents.
 - a. 2010 Develop statewide standards of excellence with other 2-1-1 centers in WI.
 - b. 2010 Implement the new statewide telephone system.
 - c. 2010 Complete conversion of resources and staff to statewide database.
 - d. 2010 Create web access to statewide database.
 - e. 2010/2011 Apply for AIRS accreditation (national standards of excellence for information and referral).
- 4. Continue to focus on volunteer supported information and referral provision, maintaining the balance of quality service with the low cost and benefits of a volunteer focused program.
 - a. 2010 Create a plan for targeted volunteer recruitment, volunteer development protocol and retention tools for new and seasoned volunteers.
 - b. 2010 Enhance staff job descriptions recognizing their roles in 2-1-1 volunteer education and management.
 - c. 2010 -- Implement volunteer management indicators.
- 5. Continue efforts to streamline service provision by offering alternative modes of access to community resources.

- a. 2010/2011 Investigate ways in which the new telephone system can offer callers the ability to choose automated responses to simple inquires such as daily soup kitchen availability and seasonal resources
- b. 2010 Expand outreach into the community through United Way 2-1-1 Plus sites at various agencies in Dane County
- 6. Seek sustainable new funding from the counties in which we provide service as well as private sector grants.
 - a. 2010 Investigate strategies to develop sustainable funding for 2-1-1 services in each county
 - b. 2010/2011 Explore possible, long term funding through county public health departments, human services and United Ways

10. Measures and indicators

We will be monitoring the following measures and indicators:

- A. Agenda for Change
 - a. Referrals by Agenda
 - b. Data-base resources by Agenda
- B. Service quality
 - a. Length of call
 - b. Speed of answer (wait/hold time)
 - c. Location of callers
 - d. Quality assurance assessments such as call monitoring and follow up with callers
 - e. Overall number of resources, resources by county
- C. Volunteer management
 - a. Quality assurance assessments
 - b. Length of volunteer service
 - c. Monitoring of best practices in volunteer management
- D. Operations management
 - a. Number of calls
 - b. Types of calls

Highlights of Board Discussion from October 2009 meeting

At the Board of Directors meeting in October, we requested guidance to help us plan for future growth and integration into the statewide system. Here are the notes from that discussion:

| Board comments | Our Response |
|--|--|
| Local market and campaign issues UW and the community would lose a great deal if we no longer had a 211 A local 2-1-1 is important to many people who donate. Coverage of other counties may dilute support for UWDC, could negatively impact on campaign | Yes, we understand many in Dane County see information and referral services as critical, and some refer to 2-1-1 as the most important impact work we do. We would work to make this seamless. |
| How do we maintain the quality we now have Concern about working with other 2-1-1 centers could dilute our quality of service and quality of info in database Suggestion: Convene small group including other centers to set interagency guidelines, intra-web and resourcing | Quality is driven by resources in database, and the training of our staff and volunteers. We also have several metrics we monitor that are indicators of good quality. All Wisconsin 2-1-1 providers have similar indicators, though we have not yet come together to agree on specific indicators, or more importantly, standards of doing business. Good suggestion, and must be done in 2010. Fact that most are UW centers, standard operating principles should be easier to set up |
| We may wish to consider taking on other regions given our quality and cost effectiveness, and the ability to garner resources from those regions Diluting Dane County support with other countiescould be a backlash in Dane County Future resources What about future funding to support 211, especially as part of a statewide system Concern about resources needed to continue and grow What about long term future funding | At this time, 2-1-1 Wisconsin does not have a track record of obtaining sustainable funding. While this is the new 2-1-1 Wi Board's intent, we recognize that UWDC's board commitment is our long-term funding. |
| Are we going to talk about this again in November? | Yes, we will seek the board's approval for our next steps. |