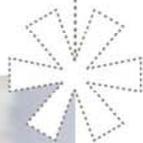




# 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network Action Summary 2009

**January – December 2009**

*Celebrating Five Years of  
Statewide Service*



2-1-1 Texas is a program of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission



## Executive Summary

In 2009, 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network (TIRN) celebrated the fifth anniversary of providing statewide, comprehensive Information & Referral for the State of Texas. Nationwide, the field of Information & Referral is growing. The Health and Human Services Commission's 2-1-1 TIRN has become a national leader in Information & Referral. The international professional organization, Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS) Standards, call center accreditation and staff certification processes are the foundations of the TIRN quality assurance guidelines for the work of the 25 regional Area Information Centers that contract to provide services in their local regions.

In 2005, the initial year of statewide service delivery, 2-1-1 TIRN handled 1,855,979 calls. 2005 was also the year that firmly established the role of 2-1-1 TIRN in Emergency Management as the system handled over 350,000 disaster-related calls in response to Hurricanes, Emily, Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

Today, a Network of twenty-five regional Area Information Centers continue to work collaboratively with coordination from the Health and Human Services Commission to deliver state-of-the-art Information and Referral to the people of Texas. From 2005 through the end of 2009, 2-1-1 TIRN handled a total of 9,596,399 comprehensive information and referral calls statewide. The calls included response to ten named hurricanes, as well as floods, winter storms, fires, tornados, and one national pandemic ( H1N1), while simultaneously handling a wide array of caller needs for things such as utility assistance, food pantries, community clinics, and more.

2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network has produced this document to highlight the statewide accomplishments of 2009 and to reflect the growth at this five-year anniversary.





## Enabling Legislation

In 1997, the 75<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed House Bill 2596 establishing the Texas Information and Referral Network as the single point of coordination for statewide health and human services information and referral in Texas. This legislation charged the Texas Information and Referral network with the development, coordination and implementation of a statewide health and human services information and referral system. That system is the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network (2-1-1 TIRN)

Since the initial legislation in 1997, several additional legislative actions have expanded and refined the 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network scope of work.

- \* Senate Bill 397 (76th Session, 1999) required agencies receiving state funding to provide resource information to 2-1-1.
- \* House Bill 2641 (76th Session, 1999) required transportation information to be included in 2-1-1.
- \* House Resolution (77th Session, 2001) affirmed the importance of the 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network.





## Enabling Legislation Continued

- \* House Bill 2048 (79th Session, 2005) was passed, instructing HHSC to expand the [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org) site to include information about early childhood programs that are overseen by the Texas Education Agency. The legislation also required the development of a process whereby parents and guardians could send an e-mail message directly to request application assistance for early childhood-related programs that require an application process.
- \* RP 57 – (Directive issued by Governor Rick Perry, 2006) relating to implementing recommendations from the Governor’s Task Force on Evacuation, Transportation, and logistics. This document created the system now known as the Transportation Assistance Registry (TAR). The 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network is assigned the role of data entry for the TAR.
- \* Senate Bill 1058 – Senate Bill 1058 (80th Session, 2007) required 2-1-1 to provide referrals for reintegration services to military service members and their families.
- \* House Bill 2558 (81st Session, 2009) required home and community support health care providers to register clients and their families with the emergency Transportation Assistance Registry available by dialing 2-1-1.
- \* House Bill 1831 (81<sup>st</sup> Session, 2009) requires Assistive Living Centers and Nursing Homes to register as entities and to explain to their patients and their guardians the process of registration with the Transportation Assistance Registry.





## Gateway to Services in Texas

Early in 2006, the Health and Human Services Commission recognized the ease of access provided by the three-digit 2-1-1 phone system, and expanded the options available to Texans. All callers are invited to select a language.

The options include:

**Option 1:** for Information and Referral on all health and human services available to the caller. These calls are handled by the HHSC's 2-1-1 Information and Referral Network; 25 contracted Area Information Centers.

**Option 2:** for state benefit programs such as SNAP ( Food Stamps), Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). These calls are handled by a vendor who contracts to provide the services to the HHSC Office of Eligibility Services.

**Option 3:** to report suspected fraud or abuse of state resources. These calls are handled by the Office of the Inspector General.

In 2007, The Governor's Division of Emergency Management (now the Texas Division of Emergency Management) assigned 2-1-1 TIRN to be the entry point for individuals to register with the Transportation Assistance Registry (TAR), a database that allows vulnerable populations to notify their local emergency management offices that they may need assistance evacuating in the event of an emergency event. Thus, **Option 4**, was offered as a direct route for registrants to provide their information.

In 2009, **Option 5** was added for use during emergency events. This option provides a more direct route for callers seeking critical emergency information such as evacuation routes.





## The History of 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network

The Primary purpose of an Information and Referral program is to maintain information about a community's human service resources in order to either supply that information to the people who need it, or to link people directly with appropriate service providers.

Prior to the development of the Texas Information and Referral Network, no coordination existed to provide individuals and families in Texas with information about services. While resources did exist, the quest for the appropriate service to match a health or human service need was often overwhelming for the person or family with that need.

The Texas Legislature established the Texas Information and Referral Network in 1997. The Legislative directive included the establishment of a Task Force to guide the development of the Network.

It is interesting to note that three of the original Task Force members and five of the original organizations are still active in the work of 2-1-1 TIRN. Additionally, nine of the 2001 Task Force members and thirteen of the 2001 organizations are active in 2-1-1 TIRN Area Information Centers today.

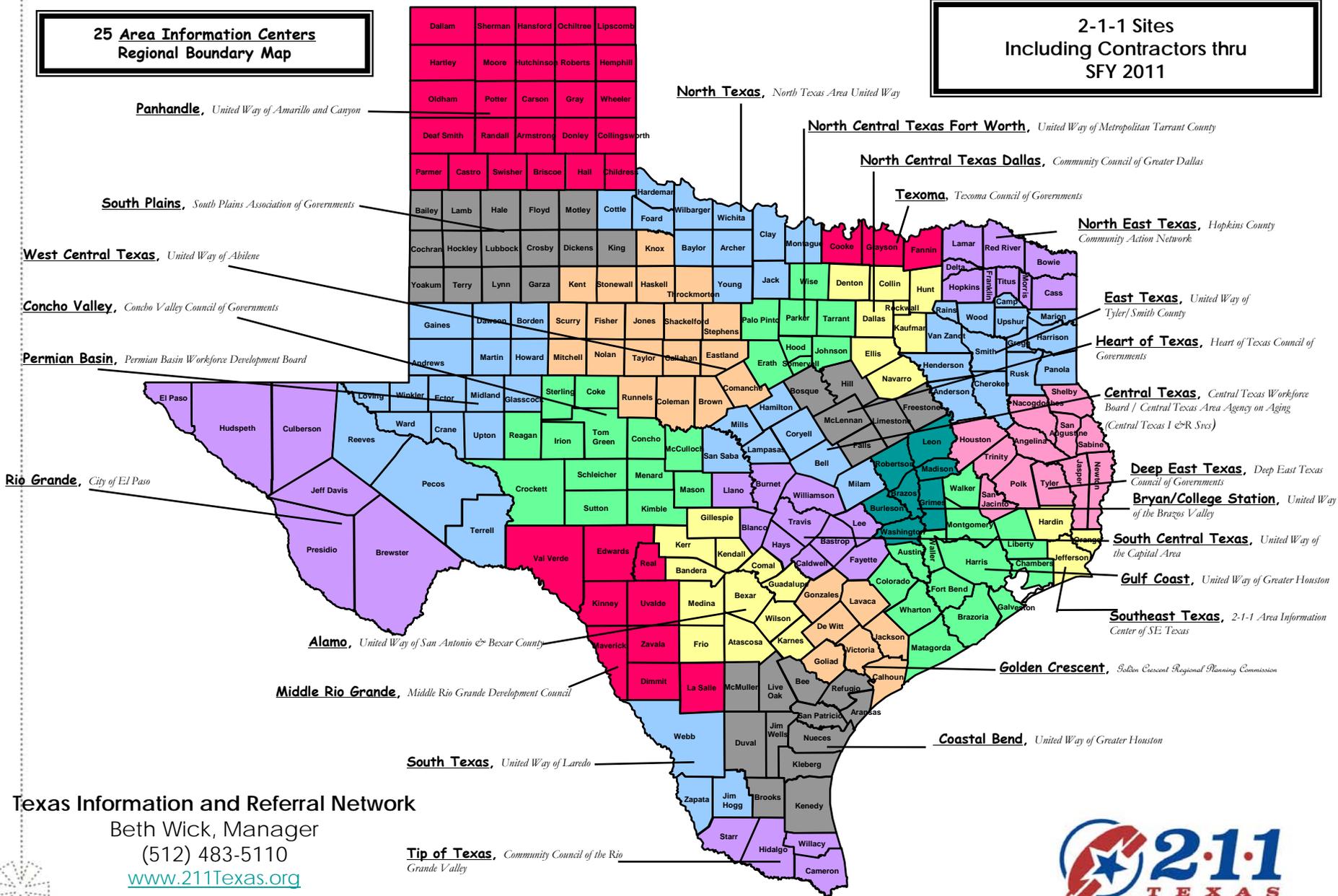
The Task Force recommended that 2-1-1 TIRN should be made up of local regions to maintain local ownership of and involvement in the collection of community resources. Texas includes a variety of cultures and geographies. That variety brings unique resource needs. The local Area Information Region design is intended to promote local community involvement and representation.





**25 Area Information Centers  
Regional Boundary Map**

**2-1-1 Sites  
Including Contractors thru  
SFY 2011**



**Texas Information and Referral Network**  
 Beth Wick, Manager  
 (512) 483-5110  
[www.211Texas.org](http://www.211Texas.org)





## 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network Historical Highlights

- 2000** The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) assigns the 2-1-1 dialing code to be used for access to health and human services information.
- 2001** The Public Utility Commission (PUC) adopts a rule for the implementation of the 2-1-1 dialing code in Texas.
- 2001** Eighty percent (80%) of the Texas population can dial 2-1-1.
- 2004** 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network 24-hour, 7 days a week, comprehensive Information and Referral services are expanded statewide.
- 2004** Texas Workforce Commission enters into an Interagency Agreement with 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network for provision of statewide child care Information & Referral. The agreement remains through to the present.
- 2005** The 2-1-1 TIRN website, *Finding Help in Texas* is re-created as [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org) and the newly completed [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org) website is available to the public.
- 2005** 2-1-1 TIRN is added to the Governor's Division of Emergency Management State Operations Center Council and becomes an integral member in the provision of Emergency Information and Referral as Texas responds to Hurricanes Emily, Katrina and Rita. In response to the exponential call volume growth, 2-1-1 TIRN establishes a temporary call center and relocates 2-1-1 TIRN staff to manage the call center known as the "26<sup>th</sup> AIC".



## 2-1-1 Historical Highlights Continued

- 2005** The 79th Legislature passes House Bill 2048, which instructs HHSC to expand the [www.211texas](http://www.211texas.org) website to include a method to allow the public to access information on, and communicate with public school early education programs, Texas Workforce Commission's child care subsidy programs and Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- 2005** The 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network begins providing referrals to Summer Nutrition Program feeding sites in response to a collaborative agreement with the Summer Nutrition Program. This project later develops into a formal Interagency Agreement when the SNP is moved to the Texas Department of Agriculture.
- 2005** The Health and Human Services Commission expands the 2-1-1 platform to include the Office of Eligibility Services ( Option #2) and the Office of the Inspector General (Option #3).
- 2006** 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network Area Information Centers' designation of the is now accomplished through a formal solicitation, the Invitation for Applications (IFA). Prior to this date, each region of the state worked in collaboration with the Health and Human Services Commission to select the 2-1-1 designee for its service delivery area.
- 2006** The Health and Human Services Commission, Executive Commissioner instructs 2-1-1 TIRN to establish the Enterprise Standing Committee to enhance communication regarding health and human services Enterprise agencies' programs so as to keep [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org) reflective of the full array of programs and services offers within the five HHS agencies.
- 2007** 2-1-1 TIRN responds to Hurricanes Dean, Humberto. TIRN database staff, with help of HHSC Information Technology, developed the Disaster Data Knowledgebase, commonly referred to as the "KB".



## 2-1-1 Historical Highlights Continued

- 2008** Marks the first full year of caller needs data collected and reported.
- 2008** 2-1-1 TIRN responds to four major hurricanes (Dolly, Edouard, Gustav and Ike) within approximately eight weeks.
- 2008** 2-1-1 TIRN received a grant of Texas Resources for Iraq and Afghanistan Deployment (TRIAD) funds through the Permian Basin Foundation to develop a combined outreach and resource development targeting improved access to health and human services for military members and their families. The project is called the Texas Military Family Access Project.
- 2009** 2-1-1 TIRN database and emergency management staff, with help of Information Technology, expands the Knowledgebase (KB) to it's present level.
- 2009** All 25 Area Information Center regions of the state are internationally accredited by the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS).
- 2009** 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network achieves five years of providing comprehensive information and referral services, statewide, 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.
- 2009** The number of 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral call specialists grows to 250 statewide.
- 2009** Over 2,400,000 comprehensive information and referral calls are handled in Texas.





## 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network is based on a Foundation of National Standards

The strength and success of the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network comes from its program design. The original Task Force drew on solid, nationally-recognized Information and Referral standards as they developed the original list of Roles and Responsibilities for an Area Information Center. The document, drafted in 2001 is still visible in the current contractual Performance Statement that directs the work of the regional AICs. All AICs comply with the following items. (Note that items with an \* were part of the original list)

- Provide information and referral services according to Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS) Standards. \*
- Respond to 80% of calls within 60 seconds.
- Answer calls 24 hours per day, 7 days per week
- Provide three or more referrals to each caller where possible\*.
- Provide translation services for callers who do not speak English\*
- Handle Crisis Calls appropriately.\*
- Maintain a comprehensive resource database that conforms to Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS) Standards\*
- Maintain relationships with local health and human services providers.\*
- Participate regularly in Texas Information and Referral network (TIRN) meetings
- Document national accreditation.\*
- Engage in continuous improvement activities.
- Document 2-1-1 staff's national certification\*
- Participate regularly in Community Outreach and Education.\*





## 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network is based on a Foundation of National Standards (continued)

The 2-1-1 TIRN system was established as a collaborative project. From the beginning, 2-1-1 Stakeholders have represented a variety of organizations, each with its own information and referral expertise. The leadership may change periodically, but the intentional collaborative design helps to ensure that the program draws qualified professional staff at the state level and at the local AIC regional level.

### **International Standards: The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems guide quality performance**

Lead 2-1-1 Call Specialists are required to become internationally certified through the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). Each Call specialist must meet eligibility requirements that represent a combination of formal education and hands-on experience in information and referral. Once the eligibility requirements are met, the Call Specialist sits for the Certified Information & Referral Specialist (CIRS) exam to demonstrate that he/she has, in fact, mastered the content.

Lead 2-1-1 AIC call center database staff includes an internationally certified CRS – Certified Resource Specialist. The CRS is responsible for maintenance of the resource database and ensures that the data is maintained according to 2-1-1 TIRN and AIRS Standards. This provides a documentable level of quality assurance.

2-1-1 TIRN includes twenty five regions, all of which are accredited through the Alliance of Information and Referral System (AIRS) international accreditation process. AIRS accreditation includes documentation of every policy and procedure that is part of the delivery of information and referral. When the documentation is complete, an AIRS team conducts a detailed site visit to ensure that all information presented in the accreditation portfolio is representative of the work performed by the AIC. The entire process takes approximately eighteen months to complete. AIRS accreditation must be renewed every five years for the life of the organization.





## 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network is based on a Foundation of National Standards (continued)

### 2-1-1 TIRN Standards refine quality

The variety of organizations within the 2-1-1 TIRN Network helps to inform the work and focus of 2-1-1 TIRN. In 2004, 2-1-1 TIRN completed development to become a statewide information and referral network. The participating organizations worked collaboratively with 2-1-1 TIRN/HHSC staff to arrive at an agreed-upon level of service. The current Service Level Agreement maintains that all 2-1-1 AICs will answer at least 80% of offered calls within 60 seconds. The international AIRS Standards, while specific in many areas of information and referral, have not yet specified a service level. Thus the Service Level Agreement developed through the collaborative work of the 2-1-1 network leads the national and international work in this area.

2-1-1 TIRN AIC Directors, Database Managers and Disaster Leadership participate in regular training opportunities to ensure continuous quality improvement. The training provided by TIRN and through participation in the state and national level conferences affiliated with AIRS combines to provide state-of-the-art information for the over 250 person 2-1-1 TIRN system.

A myth of 2-1-1 is that the calls are answered by untrained volunteers. In fact, the 2-1-1 TIRN system boasts not only internationally certified staff, but many of those 250 individuals hold Bachelors, Masters and even Doctorate-level degrees. Some Database Managers have backgrounds in library science. Call center leadership includes individuals with social work, nursing and legal credentials. These special skill groups bring unique quality to the call center experience. This cumulative workforce skill set results in exemplary customer service for Texas.

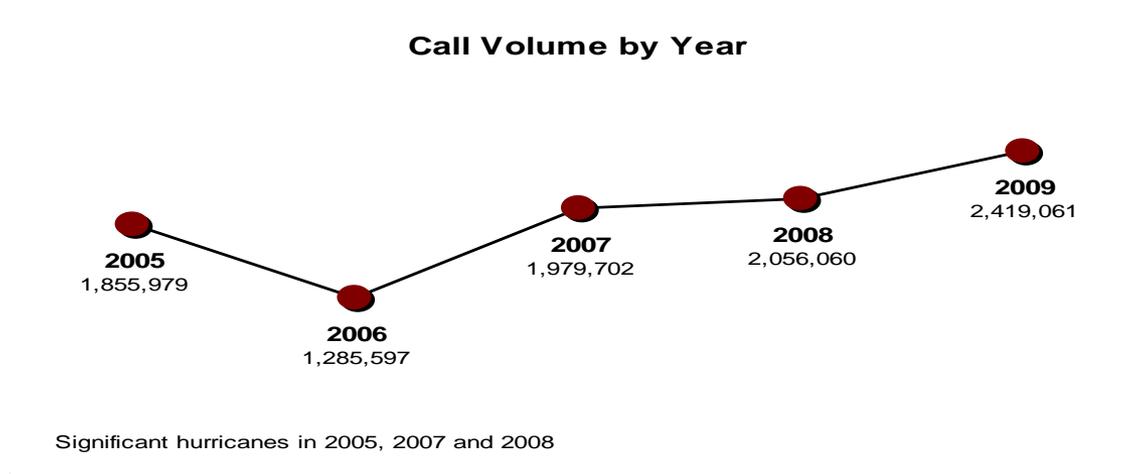


## 2-1-1 Information and Referral Network Caller Data

2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral network is a free, confidential, information and referral line, answered by trained experts 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When callers dial 2-1-1, Option 1, they are connected to the Area Information Center in their region.

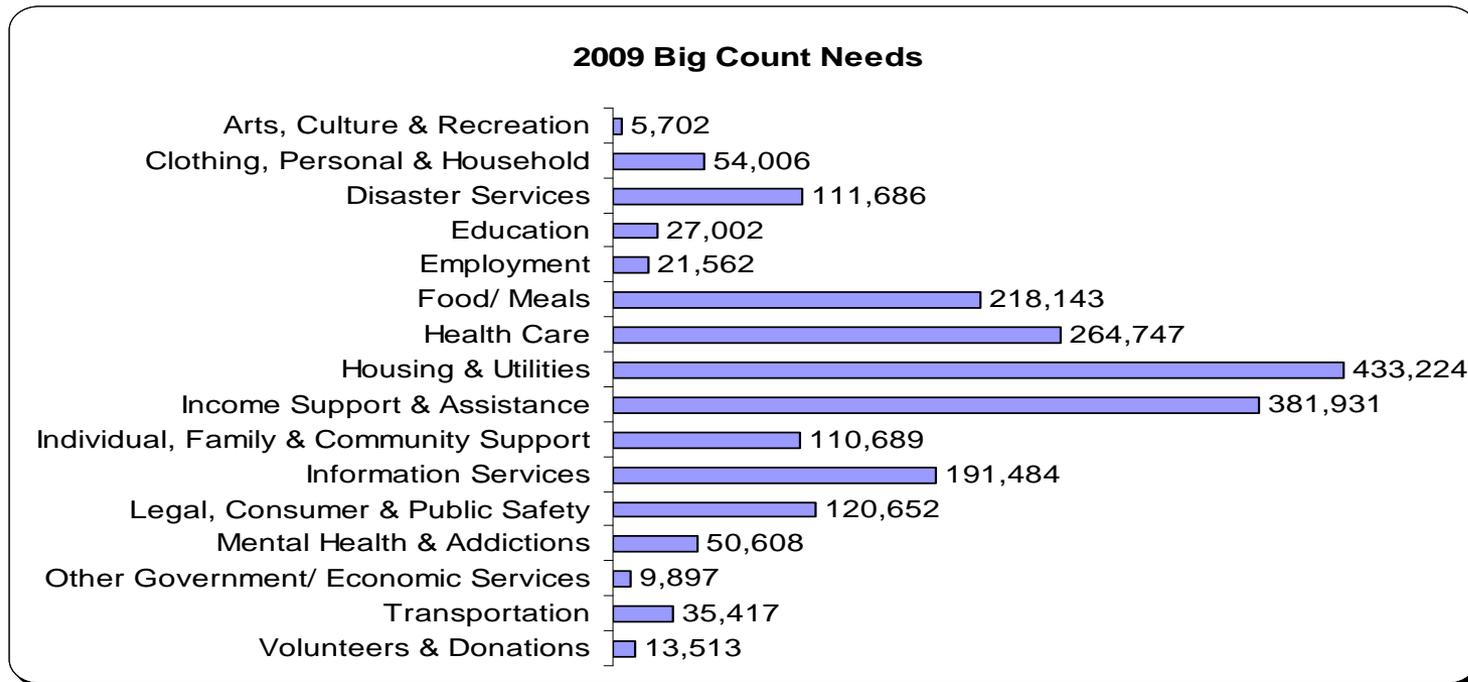
Callers to 2-1-1 find information on services such as utility bill assistance, food, shelter, rent assistance, counseling, clothing, child care, disaster relief and more. During disasters such as hurricanes, floods, wild fires and ice storms, many Texans know to dial 2-1-1, for general disaster information. Dialing 2-1-1 during a disaster connects people with critical safety information such as evacuation routes and shelter information.

The volume of calls handled by 2-1-1 TIRN over the past five years has grown and continues to grow as more individuals, organizations and agencies discover the convenient and accurate information available through 2-1-1.



## Information and Referral Problem/Needs Categories

2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral network has adopted the Problem/Needs Categories used in the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) “Big Count” as a way to organize the wide range of inquiries and to provide for consistent and credible reporting of community needs across jurisdictions. The 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network Area Information Centers recorded 2,050,263 Caller Problem / Needs in 2009. The graph below includes Big Count categories as collected by AIRS. The categories are explained on the following page.





## The Alliance of Information & Referral Systems ( AIRS) “Big Count”

The Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS) is the national professional organization for Information & Referral. AIRS is an international organization that is recognized for establishment of *AIRS Standards for Professional Information & Referral and Quality Indicators*, version 6.0, revised January 2009.

In addition to the Standards, AIRS has developed a taxonomy of health and human services terminology which helps Information & Referral services to ensure that resources are defined and coded in a consistent manner. Annually, AIRS requests data indicating caller needs that are compiled within defined categories. Those categories and information related to this annual data collection can be found at the AIRS website:

[http://www.airs.org/files/public/AIRS\\_ProblemNeeds\\_Final.doc](http://www.airs.org/files/public/AIRS_ProblemNeeds_Final.doc) .

The “Big Count” of Caller Needs is broken into 16 large categories. They include **Arts, Culture & Recreation**, which includes topics related to leisure activities including art, music and other cultural events; **Clothing, Personal & Household**, which relates to basic household goods; **Disaster Services**, which relates to preparation, response and recovery during natural disasters; **Food & Meals** which includes programs that provide access to free or low cost food and meals; **Housing & Utilities** which include programs that meet basic shelter needs along with payment assistance information for electric, gas, and water services; **Income Support & Assistance** which relates to programs that provide financial help; **Individual, Family and Community Support** which includes community-based programs that provide additional support such as help with burial arrangements, pet and service animal programs, parenting support etc.; **Information Services** which provide basic phone numbers or program names when the caller does not require a referral; and **Legal, Consumer & Public Safety, Education, Employment, Health Care, Mental Health & Addictions, Other Government/Economic Services, Transportation, and Volunteers & Donations** which all have titles that are self-explanatory.

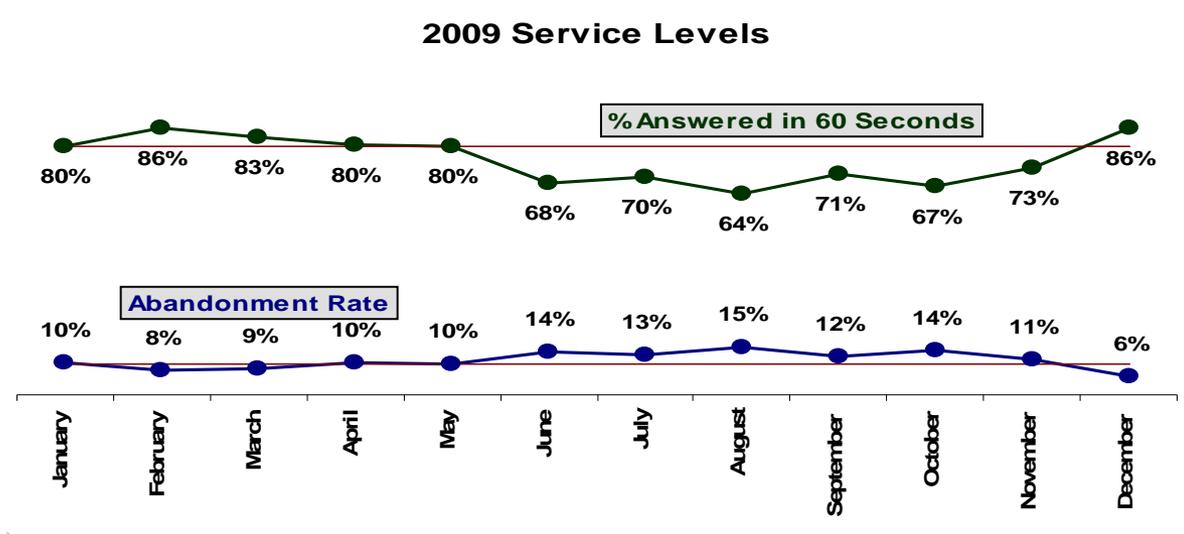




## 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Telecommunications

The Texas Information and Referral Network uses telecommunications hardware and software that allows the program to deliver best-in-class solutions. The 2-1-1 telecommunications system runs on a scalable Internet Services Gateway network. The network is built for handling large call volumes, offers greater functionality and provides geographic redundancy and system resiliency.

In partnership with the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR), Texas Information and Referral Network is able to coordinate with Area Information Centers to assure that most calls are answered within one minute.



## Top 10 Caller Needs

2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network captures and reports data including caller needs. The needs to the right represent the top 10 caller needs statewide.

**Utilities** includes payment assistance and deposit payment assistance for electric, gas and water service.

**Food** includes all types of access to free or low cost food and meals.

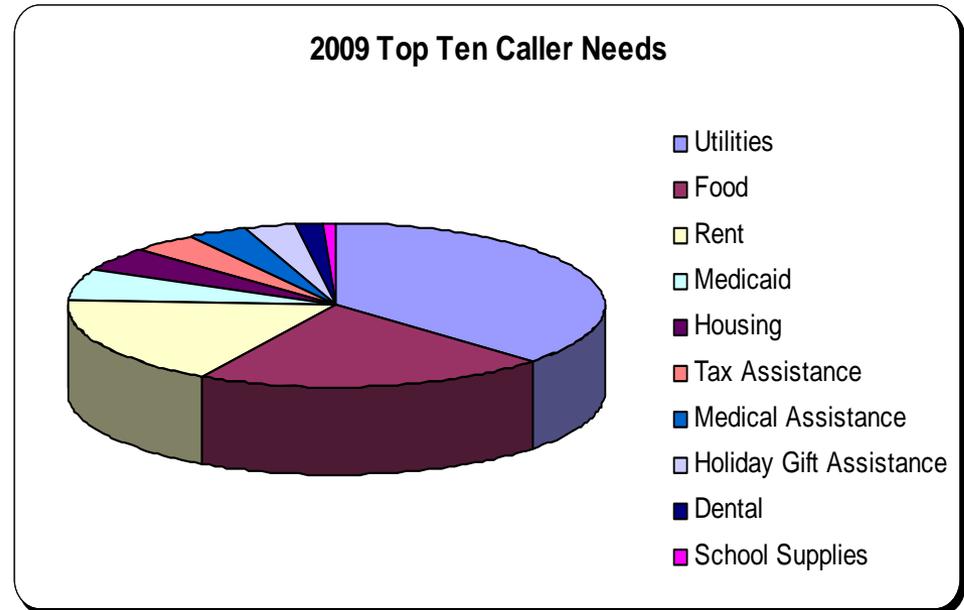
**Rent** refers to programs that provide rent payment assistance

**Medicaid** is used to represent calls for all Medicaid-related programs

**Housing** refers to Section 8 and homeless shelters

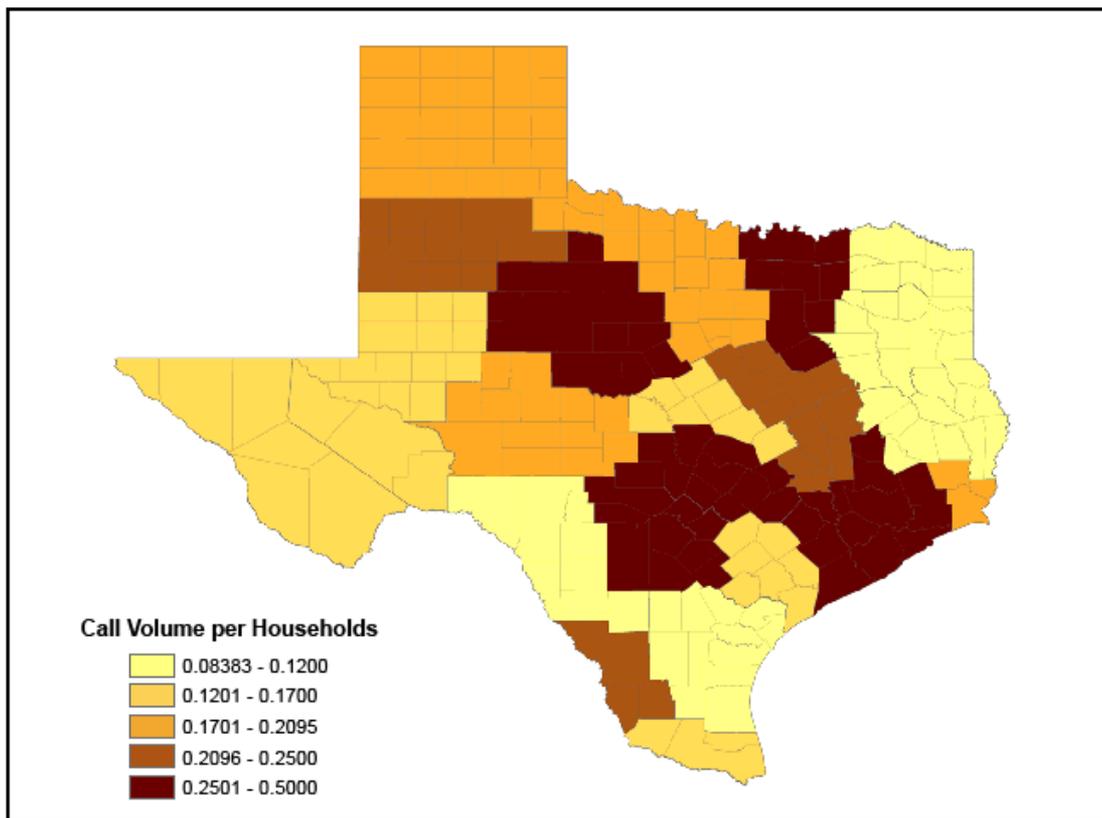
**Holiday/ Gift Assistance** refers to programs that provide gifts and food during the winter holidays.

**Tax Assistance, Dental Care and School Supplies** refer to those exact things.





## Call Volume Per Texas Household



This graph represents the percentage of households that have called 2-1-1 in 2009.



## Top 10 Unmet Caller Needs

**A call is considered unmet when the call specialist is unable to locate a resource to meet the caller's needs**

2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network captures and reports unmet caller needs. The needs to the right represent the top 10 unmet caller needs statewide. Many of the caller needs have been identified in earlier portions of this document.

**Flu-related Information** appeared as an unmet need during the early days of the H1N1 Flu pandemic. 2-1-1 TIRN and the Department of State Health Services responded by establishing a temporary call center staffed by medical experts and the flu-related information ceased to be an unmet need.

**Gas Money** is a growing trend in the unmet needs category as increasing numbers of callers find themselves in need of financial assistance to fuel their vehicles. Currently, no resource has been established in the state to meet this need.

2009 Top 10 Unmet Caller Needs



- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Utility Bill Payment Assistance | Holiday Gifts/Toys              |
| Rent Payment Assistance         | Gas Money                       |
| School Supplies                 | Furniture                       |
| Flu-related Information         | General Dental Care             |
| Community Clinics               | Prescription Payment Assistance |





# 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network on the Web

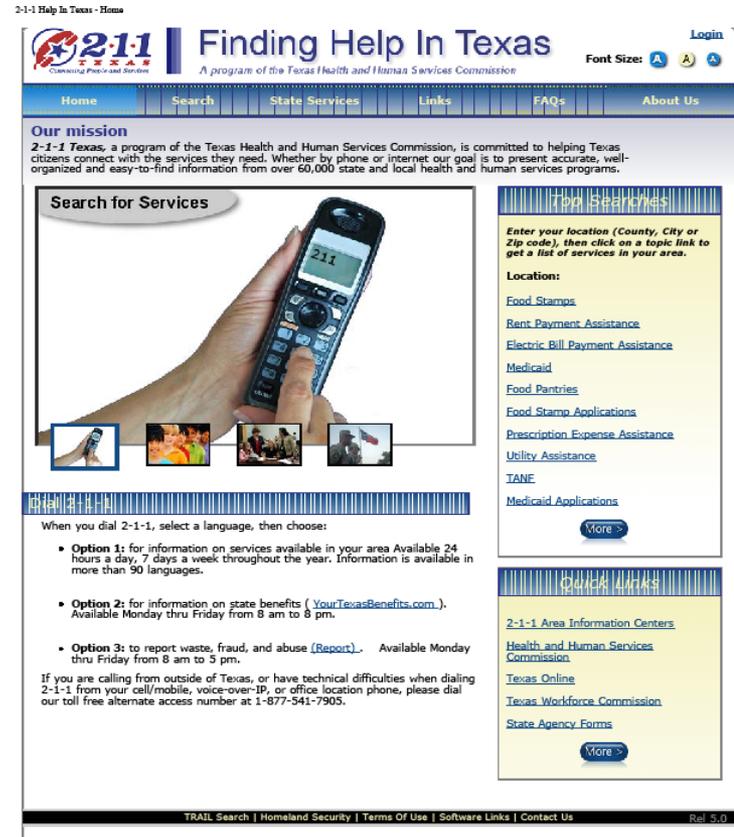
## [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org)

The 2-1-1 Texas website combines the databases of local Area Information Centers and provides people the ability to search for information on health and human services.

**Total website visits in 2009: 690,331**

### Features of the 211texas.org website

- \* Search for health and human services programs based on the service needed or the program name by ZIP code, city or county.
- \* Search for child care services based on the different kinds of child care. Web visitors can also have email messages sent directly to Pre-Kindergarten, head Start and other early childhood education programs.
- \* Search for other services for children such as WIC, medical care, and therapy.
- \* Search for disability services. All state agencies and non-profit organizations that offer disability services or programs within Texas are included.
- \* Search for Veteran's services. The Veterans' page on the website lists state and national programs and web links, as well as Hotline and Crisis numbers.



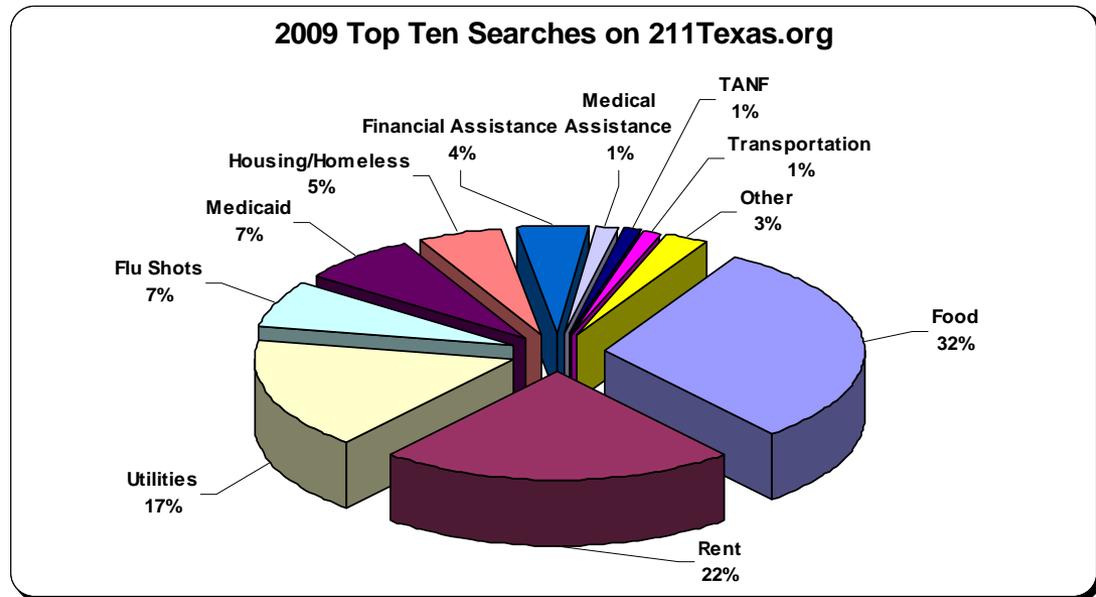
[https://www.211texas.org/211/home.do?viewSearch=true&selectedMenuId=homeMenuId\[16/2010.2:58:36 PM\]](https://www.211texas.org/211/home.do?viewSearch=true&selectedMenuId=homeMenuId[16/2010.2:58:36 PM])



## 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network on the Web [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org)

Web search topics follow the same definitions as caller needs. A comparison of the Web search topics and the caller needs shows a very similar trend in needs.

Visitors to the [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org) website can search from any location and do not require any type of log-in procedure.



## 2-1-1 Texas on the Web

[www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org)

The Texas Information and Referral Network *Database Inclusion Criteria* is based on the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems Standards for Professional Information and Referral. Accordingly, the information maintained by the Texas Information and Referral Network and its community partners should include any governmental, nonprofit or critical for-profit agency that provides a health or human service required to address the needs of all groups in that service area/region.

Visitors to the 2-1-1 website search for a wide range of services. The website keeps a running log of the top ten most frequent search topics. That list is dynamic and reflects the searches within the previous 24 hour period. Some search terms include, but are not limited to:

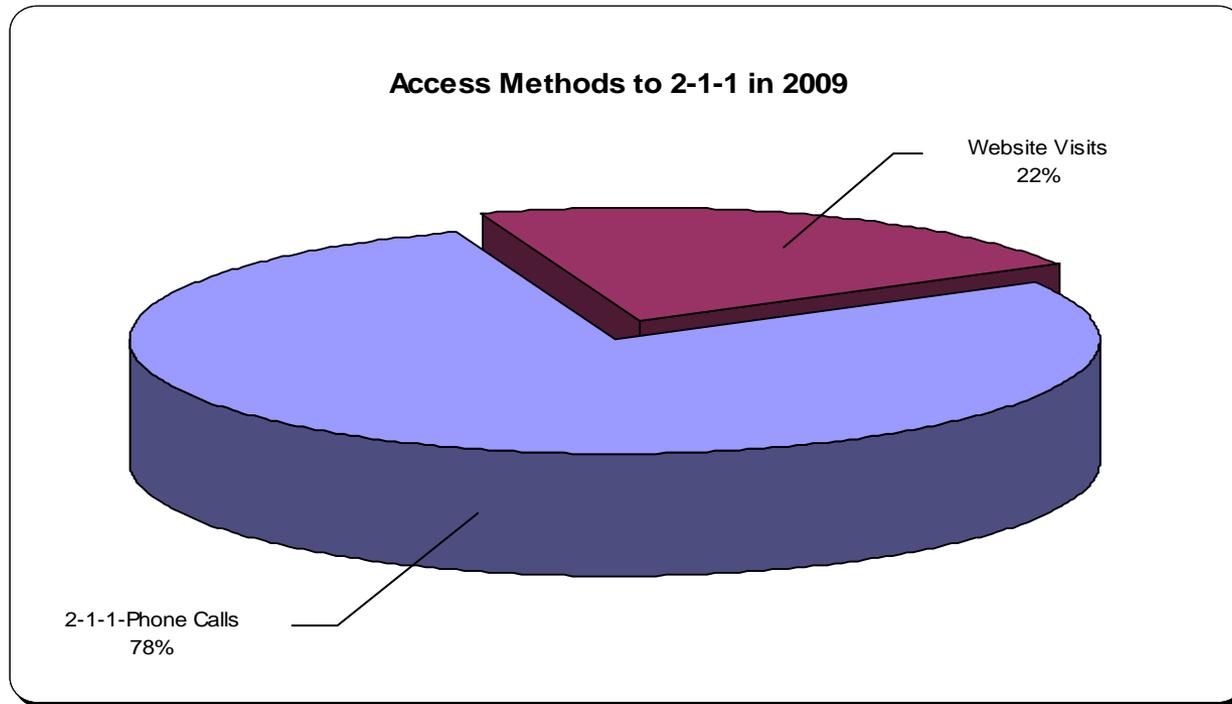
Air Conditioners	American Red Cross	Animal Control
Assisted Living Facilities	Assistive Living Technology	Baby Clothing
Boarding Houses	Burial Services	Bus Fare
Car Repair	Child Custody	Child Support
Diapers	Disease Screening	Education
English as Second Language	Eye Glasses	Flu Shots
Furniture	GED Instruction	Hearing Aids
Job Training	Legal Aid	Money Management
Respite Care	School Supplies	Shopping Assistance



## 2-1-1 Texas on the Web

### [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org)

The two main ways that people access 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network services are by telephone and by visiting [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org). In the last year, the web visit share of total contacts has grown by 4%.



## Partnering State Agencies

The 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network has a finger on the pulse of the state. Data on caller needs, met and unmet, demographic information and web search information combine to create a unique collection of data that can help many state agencies and other organizations to plan ways to improve services to their program consumers.

### Helping Texas Children and Families

The **Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)** was one of the first state agencies to recognize the value of 2-1-1 Information and Referral. Since 2004, TWC has contracted with the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network for the provision of child care information and referral services. The primary purpose of the contract is to ensure that all people in Texas have access to child care information by phone and/or through the internet any time of the day or night. In 2004, when the contract began, 2-1-1 handled 7,314 child care information & referral calls. In 2009, 2-1-1 handled 34,647 child care calls.

A secondary use of the data is to track unmet child care needs in order to plan for possible development of additional resources. The most frequent cause of unmet need is the cost of child care.

In 2009, the Texas Information and Referral Network performed child care-related outreach activities in every one of Texas' 254 counties. Outreach activities vary according to population. Some areas have health fairs, some have television and radio outreach, and some outreach is conducted through other media efforts.





## Partnering State Agencies Continued

### Helping Texas Children and Families

In 2005, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 2048, which expanded the function of the [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org) website to include a comprehensive list of all public Pre-K programs and all locations providing child care subsidies. **Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)** provided funding to expand the [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org) website.

Families searching for Pre-K programs or assistance with child care costs can submit application requests via an online form on [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org). More than 55,458 website visitors sought child care and Pre-K information in 2009.

### Easy Access to Health Information

2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network continues to provide Maternal and Child Health Services call data to **Department of State Health Services.(DSHS)** The data assists Department of State health Services with meeting the reporting requirements of the Title V Block Grant. The data is also used in development of the Title V 5-Year Needs Assessment.

During the 2009 state fiscal year (September 1, 2008, to August 31, 2009), Texas Information and Referral Network reported making 138,059 referrals to Maternal and Child Health Services. It should be noted that as call specialists offer referrals to Maternal and Child Health Services, they employ a Best Practice of Information & Referral known as asking the second question. That means that the call specialist notes the types of services the caller is requesting and offers referrals for additional services that are of a similar nature, thus ensuring that the caller is made aware of the full range of services available including and expanding upon the original requested information.





## Partnering State Agencies Continued

### Easy Access to Health Information continued

The **Department of State Health Services (DSHS)** piloted an innovative program with Texas Information and Referral Network. The Novel H1N1 Flu pandemic brought a need for specialized medical information to be made available to the public, so Texas Information and Referral Network partnered with Department of State Health Services to provide Texans with easy access to H1N1 Flu information. A temporary call center, staffed by medical professionals, joined the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network to provide guidance and referrals in response to callers' flu needs. From September 25, through December 31, over 50638 H1N1 calls were handled statewide.

### Feeding Texas Children

The **Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)** contracts with Texas Information and Referral network to provide referrals to summer feeding sites as part of the Summer Nutrition Program. Just as with other special programs, the 2-1-1 call specialists track unmet needs for the Summer Nutrition Program so that new feeding sites can be developed in the areas that report unmet needs. The data from the program helps to assure that the maximum number of Texas children have access to nutritious meals year-round. 2-1-1 has provided this service to the Texas Department of Agriculture since TDA assumed responsibility for the program in 2007. In 2009, 2-1-1 TIRN handled 6,602 calls for the Summer Nutrition Program.



## Partnering State Agencies Continued

### Services to Military Service Members and their Families

Since 2008, the 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network has participated in the **Partners Across Texas** initiative to enhance support for **Texas Army and Air National Guard Service** and family members.

In response to House Bill 1058, 2-1-1 TIRN developed a training component to ensure that all call specialists were fully prepared to assist callers with military relationships.

Additionally, seven regions of the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network were recipients of funding through a **Texas Resources for Iraq and Afghanistan Deployment (TRIAD)** grant made to the Health and Human Services Commission from the **Permian Basin Foundation**. Each region performed extensive outreach to military members and their families throughout the Permian Basin Foundation's service region.

2-1-1 TIRN enhanced the [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org) website to improve accessibility for military service members and their families.

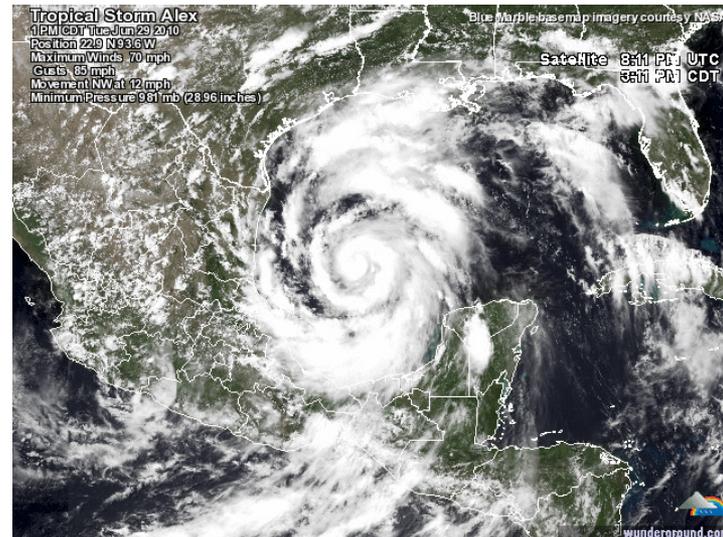


# Partnering State Agencies

Assisting Texans Before, During, and After Emergency Events

2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network is an active state agency participant in the **State Operations Center** directed by **Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Division of Emergency Management** during events that require statewide emergency response. The 25 regional 2-1-1 Area Information Centers provide safety information to callers and report trends and local community observations as calls are logged by 2-1-1.

Since 2007, 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network has registered the information of callers in Texas who feel that they may be unable to evacuate their homes in time of disaster. The Transportation Assistance Registry information is housed in a database owned by the **University of Texas Center for Space Research** and is made available to local emergency management officials on a real-time basis to assist them with locating and planning to assist their vulnerable citizens.





## Looking Forward

2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network services continue to grow in call volume and in flexibility. It seems that each week brings new contacts and uses for 2-1-1.

The 2-1-1 call data is a snapshot of the state of Texans' day to day challenges. State agencies can use 2-1-1 data to plan allocation of their program resources. Elected officials can use 2-1-1 data to track trends in community needs. Local programs can use 2-1-1 data to show the effectiveness of their programs and to plan future enhancements to existing programs. The staff of 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network know that as each agency or organization begins to feel ownership of the program, another step is taken toward complete, statewide community awareness of the value added by 2-1-1 Information & Referral Network.

Today, 2-1-1 Texas Information & referral Network continues to provide round-the-clock comprehensive information and referral services with a goal of consistently responding to 80 percent of callers within 60 seconds. It is anticipated that the total call volume in 2010 will exceed 3,000,000.

The staff of 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network and the 25 regional Area Information Centers welcome the chance to assist more Texans to find the help they need.





## 2010 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network Area Information Center Directors

- \* Alamo – Jeff Vance
- \* Bryan/College Station – Kay Parker
- \* Central Texas – Wanda Williams
- \* Coastal Bend – Janna Shoe
- \* Concho Valley – Toni P. Gutierrez
- \* Deep East Texas – Donna Sprouse
- \* East Texas – Karen Boehm
- \* Golden Crescent – Geneva Bortel
- \* Gulf Coast – David Jobe
- \* Heart of Texas – Steve Graham
- \* Middle Rio Grande – Conrado Longoria
- \* North Central Dallas – Debby Thornton
- \* North Central Fort Worth – Vicki Mize\*\*
- \* North East Texas – Dawn Sheffield
- \* North Texas – Matt Yell
- \* Panhandle – Kelly Stephens
- \* Permian Basin – Juanita Castilleja
- \* Rio Grande – Angela Mora
- \* South Central – Kay Euresti-Garza
- \* South Plains – Aida Martinez
- \* South Texas – Peggy Duncan
- \* Southeast Texas – Colleen Halliburton
- \* Texoma – Judy Fullylove
- \* Tip of Texas – Telma Longoria
- \* West Central – Mary Cooksey

Note: this list represents the Area Information Directors as of October 1, 2010.

\*\* Member of original Task Force





## 2010 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network HHSC Staff

Tom Suehs – Executive Commissioner

Stephanie Muth – Chief of Staff

Liz Garbutt – Director – Office of Community Access

Beth Wick – Program Manager

Roger Adams – Operations Manager

Jennifer Mathys – Program Initiatives Manager

\* Anne Hotze – Resource Manager

\* Deborah Ballard – Program Liaison

\* Allen Irby – Service Manager

\* Carol Marshall – Special Projects Coordinator

\* Henry Thomas – Fiscal Coordinator

\* Mary Mays – Emergency Management  
Coordinator

\* Veronica Villanueva – Contract Manager

For additional information regarding the 2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network, please contact: Beth Wick, Program Manager, at

(512) 483-5110 or [beth.wick@hpsc.state.tx.us](mailto:beth.wick@hpsc.state.tx.us).

Note: This staff organization chart became effective October 1, 2010

