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2-1-1 Alameda County Monthly Narrative Report: March 2011

Noteworthy Updates

2-1-1 Alameda County achieved its highest call volume month ever in March! Resource Specialists handled 9,896 calls and provided 18,129 health, housing and human service referrals. This is a 15% increase in the number of calls handled compared to March 2010. Of the unduplicated callers assisted, 79% were females, 34% were single female headed households with minor children and 35% were disabled. Additional people are also relying on Eden I&R's online health and human services resource directory. During the month of March, the online directory received 888,151 hits from 31,999 visitors.

The number of callers to 2-1-1 for information about The Earned Income Tax Credit Program (EITC) and referrals to the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites increased by 24% during the first three months of the calendar year as compared to callers assisted last year at this time.

At the California Public Utilities Commission hearing, on March 22, Commissioner Michael Peter Florio commended 2-1-1 with the following statement. "Public Safety is a major concern for California ... 2-1-1 is a vital resource for California. During emergencies and disasters, 2-1-1 can play a critical role in alleviating non-emergency call volume on 9-1-1 lines. This extraneous 9-1-1 call volume can hinder the ability for emergency services to respond to real, life-threatening emergencies and can result in unnecessary costs for California. 2-1-1 gives Californians a secondary resource during times of emergency by enabling a critical connection between individuals and families in need and the appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies..."

2-1-1 responded to calls about the disasters in Japan with updated information from the 2-1-1 database about where to refer people with questions about: public health, location of missing victims, and donations.. The Executive Director participated in conference calls with sister 2-1-1 centers across the state to discuss the response to the Japan disasters. 2-1-1 Centers like Santa Cruz received numerous tsunami related calls while more inland centers like Alameda County received relatively few calls. Each center was aware of websites created to monitor the situations both in Japan as well as on the Pacific Coast so that 2-1-1 callers could receive the most up to date information.

Call Information

- ~ A woman in Alameda called to inquire about domestic violence shelters and transitional shelter information. The caller was referred to the Berkeley Food and Housing Project and A Safe Place for domestic violence shelter information; and to the Oakland Elizabeth House, Images on the Rise, and Alpha Omega Foundation for transitional shelter information.
- ~ A woman in Berkeley called to inquire about rental assistance, anger management classes and domestic violence support groups. The caller was referred to the North County Housing Resource Center of the HPRP program for rental assistance; to Allen Temple Baptist Church and Lao Family Community Development for anger management classes; and to La Clinica de la Raza and Centro Legal de la Raza for domestic violence support group information.
- Call Examples
- ~ A woman in Fremont called to inquire about furniture, internet service providers, computer donation, computer training programs, and benefits assistance. The caller was referred to Tri-City Volunteers and Alpha Omega Foundation for free furniture; to DSL Extreme and AT&T for internet service; to the STRIDE Center and Alameda County Computer Resource Center for computer donation information; and to the East Bay Community Law Center, Bay Area Legal Aid, Community Resources for Independent Living, and the Homeless Action Center for benefits assistance.
- ~ A woman in Hayward called to inquire about homeless services and emergency food availability. The caller was referred to Catholic Charities of the East Bay, Horizon Services, East Oakland Community Project, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency, and Second Chance for homeless service information; and to Salvation Army, Hope for the Heart, and La Familia Counseling Service for emergency food programs.
- ~ A woman in Livermore called to inquire about CalFresh, emergency food, and health insurance information. The caller was referred to the City of Livermore Multi-Service Center and Alameda County Social Services Agency Economic Benefits Department for CalFresh information; to Tri-Valley Church of Christ, Children's Emergency Food Council, and Alameda County Community Food Bank for emergency food information; and to California Major Risk Medical Insurance Program, Alameda Alliance for Health, and Alameda County Social Services Agency for health insurance information.

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Call Examples	~ A woman in Newark called to inquire about transitional shelter information, dental care, and eye care. The caller was referred to ABODE services, Alpha Omega Foundation, Oakland Elizabeth House, and Images on the Rise for transitional shelter information; to the California Dental Association and the Alameda County Public Health Department - Family Health Services for dental care; and to West Oakland Health Council and University of California Suitcase Clinic for eye care. ~ A woman in Oakland called to inquire about utility bill payment assistance. The caller was referred to Spectrum Community Services and the Salvation Army. ~ A woman in San Leandro was calling to inquire about maternity home information. The caller was
	referred to Casa Vincentia, Mary's House, and Bethany's House.
Caller Feedback	~ "I just want to say thank you for the help that I received from 2-1-1. I spoke with a [Resource Specialist and she was] very helpful, and every time I call I get the kind of people that are willing to give me the referrals that fit meI just want to say she made my life so much easier today[The Resource Specialists] are really helpful and helped me and my 5 children, I am a single parent I really appreciate 2-1-1 services, what a difference made to my life and my children." ~ "I just talked to [a Resource Specialist]he is very accommodating, very gracious, and gives me a lot of information I just want to say he is very accommodating and listened and went beyond and above the duties of what he has to do. I know that's it isn't easy to listen to people with problems. But I really appreciate his time and his input. He is a very good person and I appreciate what your people have done. Your facility is a beautiful thing and it gives people hope."
	~ "I am legally blind and I just got help from 2-1-1, [it] was the most amazing call for 5 or 10 minutes. [The Resource Specialists] helped me more than I can even say. I've been looking for 2 and half years for information they just gave me in a 10 minute phone call. I just want to say God bless you guys. Thank you so much for all of your help, I really appreciate it. " ~ "I'm partially deaf and [the Resource Specialist] explained the REACH program, and [the Resource Specialist] was really really helpful, very patient and took her time."
Staff Inservice	~ First Place for Youth in-service presentation
Training Sessions	·

Resource Information And Technology Updates		
Services Database	~ Thirty six (36) new agencies were added in the services database this month.	
	~ The services database contains 1,114 agencies and 2,778 programs.	
	~ The process of updating the 416 Non-Directory agencies continues, so far 201 agencies have been	
	updated.	
Housing Database	~ The Housing database contains 74,395 total housing units.	
	~ 544 new units were added to the Housing database this month.	
	~ Housing Subscriptions (mail, PDF & OHIP) with the inventory of available units in Alameda County were sent to Community Based Organizations in Alameda County and San Francisco County.	
Online Services Website	~ Eden I&R's health and human services data is provided free through the agency's public accessible websites at www.edenir.org, www.211alamedacounty.org, www.alamedaco.info as well as through www.networkofcare.org/aging/resource/find.cfm. This month 888,151 hits were received by 31,899 visitors.	
Technology	~ Modifications were begun on the Client and Services database as part of a new project funded by Kaiser Permanente to provide referrals for health education classes to residents of the Greater Southern Alameda County Area.	
	~ Staff continued working with Alameda County Public Health Department on the development of a Medical and Health Resource Directory connected to Eden I&R's health and human services database. Eden I&R staff are working with Alameda County Public Health Department staff to provide a separate list of emergency contacts to be managed and accessed by the Public Health Department.	
	~ Eden I&R staff continued to work with staff at Bonita House, Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services and The Support Group on the CHOICES housing project. An additional database has been created and connected to Eden I&R's main Housing Database System. That system is automatically synchronized with the availability information in the main Housing Database and will provide data to the CHOICES Housing website once it is completed.	

Outreach/Public Information Activities

- ~ The Executive Director, along with representatives from Sacramento 2-1-1 and 2-1-1 California, participated in a California Public Utilities Commission hearing focused on statewide 2-1-1 coverage during a disaster. The primary goal is to get the CPUC to rule that during and immediately after a disaster existing 2-1-1 Centers can be activated as 2-1-1 service providers for the uncovered statewide counties (mostly rural areas). This would provide statewide 2-1-1 coverage when it is needed most, even if a county cannot afford to have a 2-1-1 Center on a regular basis. The phone companies were extremely supportive of this petition, due to the alliances that have been developed over the past few years. The CPUC Judge did not indicate when she would announce her ruling but it appeared that she was in favor of the petition's goals.
- ~ The Executive Director wrote a letter to the CPUC in favor of expanding the Basic Phone Services as part of the LifeLine Program. This expansion would allow low income people to get reduced rates on not only their landline phones but also their cell phones. This is extremely important since thousands of 2-1-1 callers only have cell phones.
- ~ Staff participated in a teleconference with other California 2-1-1's to discuss challenges and best practices regarding the CalFresh Outreach Program.
- ~ The 2-1-1 Community Program Manager attended an Implementation and Learning Community meeting as part of the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing program (HPRP). At the meeting HPRP staff discussed challenges and achievements in the program thus far.
- ~ The Executive Director met with the co-directors of the county's Social Services Agency in order to discuss ways in which Eden I&R, primarily 2-1-1, could assist in additional client services efficiencies (i.e., using 2-1-1 to determine basic eligibilities for potential clients before they are referred to SSA programs).
- ~ The 2-1-1 Community Program Manager attended the Eastern Alameda Human Needs Steering Committee meeting in Dublin. The meeting identified solutions to improve the lives of vulnerable Eastern Alameda County community members.
- ~ The Executive Director, as part of the Senior Safety Net partnership, met with San Leandro's Mayor to discuss the findings of the focus groups held recently. A report was submitted and the Mayor was open to the information related to the needs of local seniors as well as possible solutions to those needs. All were mindful that additional government funding cuts are looming and these will further escalate the current needs.
- ~ Staff participated in the Bank On Oakland All-Partners meeting that discussed the project's community outreach activities to enroll individuals in financial literacy workshops and assist individuals in opening first time bank accounts.
- ~ The Executive Director attended one of Nadia Lockyer's coffee house meetings in Hayward. As a new member of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors she is reaching out to the public in her area to find out more about the needs and services, as well as distributing information about meetings that are helpful for those in attendance. There was a lot of networking and follow up appointments made by most in attendance.
- ~ The 2-1-1 Community Programs Manager and the NUMMI Resource Specialist met with the Community/Labor Liaison for the NUMMI Re-employment Center to discuss possible outreach efforts. Later in the month the 2-1-1 Community Programs Manager and NUMMI Resource Specialist also conducted a presentation on 2-1-1 to the NUMMI Peer Specialists Team.
- ~ The Executive Director met with the Director of Oakland's Health and Human Services department to update her about the status of 2-1-1 as well as discuss the possibility of using 2-1-1 to assist in the efficiencies of her department given that additional reduced funding will probably be a reality beginning in Fiscal Year 2012.
- ~ Staff participated in the Healthy City Advanced Training Webinar to learn how advocates, funders, policy makers, grant writers, and social service providers can use the information Eden I&R provided about resources in Alameda County to fuel social change and improve the community.
- ~ The Executive Director attended the monthly 2-1-1 Bay Area Partnership meeting that included a focus on the Japan disasters and the ways in which 2-1-1 would handle such a disaster in the Bay Area and across the state (i.e., back-up procedures between 2-1-1 centers).
- ~ Staff conducted a presentation about 2-1-1 for domestic violence counselors at SAVE and distributed 2-1-1 materials for residents.

Meetings

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- ~ The Executive Director and staff participated in the Regional Donations Management Group meetings which are in the process of writing an updated disaster plan related to goods and services being brought into the area after a disaster. 2-1-1 would be the number to call to donate goods, and these goods would be matched with the agency/area in need of those goods.
- ~ Staff met with Bonita House and Behavioral Health staff to discuss housing options for the mentally disabled and integration of this information into the Housing Database.
- ~ The Executive Director participated in an Alameda County Public Health Department's Expanding and Enhancing Communication conference call whose goal is to solidify swift and accurate information flow processes between the health department and other agencies before, during and after a disaster.
- ~ The 2-1-1 Community Program Manager met with EITC and VITA site staff to discuss the progress of the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Program.

Meetings

- ~ The Executive Director, as a new member of the 2-1-1 California Emergency Operations Committee, participated in a statewide conference call which focused on the standardization of the 2-1-1 Centers' Disaster Response Plans.
- ~ The Housing Outreach Coordinator is working in collaboration with the Oakland Housing Authority to do outreach to Rental Property Owners, on a monthly basis, to inform them of the opportunities with OHA and Eden I&R. Through this outreach property owners throughout the County are able to list their properties with 2-1-1.
- ~ The Executive Director presented an update on 2-1-1 services to the Livermore Human Service Commission. The feedback was very positive about the breadth and depth of the 2-1-1 services provided to Livermore residents.
- ~ The Executive Director met with a representative from AT&T who was a member of the original Alameda County 2-1-1 Advisory Board. After a tour of the agency, the representative was extremely impressed by the growth of the 2-1-1 system and will pursue the possibility of direct financial support.
- ~ Staff continued to participate in Affordable Housing Week planning activities with the Oakland Housing Authority and East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO).
- ~ Staff attended Project Homeless Connect at the City of Oakland Winter Shelter and provided housing resources to shelter residents.
- ~ The NUMMI Resource Specialist attended the Alameda County Workforce Investment Board's Countywide Employer Forum. At this event the NUMMI Resource Specialist disseminated 2-1-1 information.
- ~ The Housing Outreach Coordinator attended the American Red Crosses CPR Saturday and facilitated 3 preparedness classes. She explained 2-1-1's role in a disaster in each class.
- ~ 2-1-1 ads were posted on the following city Patch websites: Alameda, Albany, Castro Valley, Dublin, Livermore, Newark, Piedmont, Pleasanton, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, and Union City. Patch is an online community-specific news and information platform that provides local coverage for individual towns and communities.

Fairs/Events/ and Outreach

- ~ As the statewide editor of the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS) Newsletter, the Executive Director produced the Winter edition of the newsletter which focused on the 2-1-1 Day celebrations throughout California on February 11, 2011, as well as the launch of San Mateo's 2-1-1 service. The entire Bay Area now has live 24/7, multilingual 2-1-1 phone line services!
- ~ Staff and a volunteer hosted booths at three events to inform and remind the community about the 2-1-1 service: Pleasanton Transit Fair, 11th Annual Latino Education Summit at Chabot College, and the Workforce Investment Board's countywide Employer Information Forum in Union City.
- ~ The Executive Director attended the city of Alameda's Rotary Club meeting in order to further promote the marketing of 2-1-1 services as well as pursue additional funding possibilities.
- ~ 2-1-1 was advertised as the number to call for EITC and tax preparation information: Senator Loni Hancock and Assembly member Nancy Skinner both sent an email regarding Free Tax Preparation Service; and UWBA and the City of Oakland posted a billboard for the public to call 211 for free tax help.
- ~ Eden I&R's Executive Director was interviewed for a segment on KCBS about 2-1-1's sharp increase in call volume.
- ~ The City of Albany included information about 2-1-1 in their "City Info" section of their 2011 Winter/Spring Activity Guide.
- ~ 2-1-1 materials were made available at Destiny Art's art and violence performances, CPR Saturday in Oakland, and Hayward's Farmers' Market.