

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **2-1-1 Information and Referral Reaches Milestone: 100,000<sup>th</sup> Phone Call Received Today**

**SALT LAKE CITY** – Today, 2-1-1 Information and Referral received its 100,000<sup>th</sup> phone call in Fiscal Year 2009, a significant milestone illustrating the service’s growing awareness and crucial role in the community. The referral line provides information on a variety of health and human services on a free, confidential basis.

2-1-1’s 100,000<sup>th</sup> call came from a man in area code 84111 who was seeking information regarding housing and rent assistance as well as insurance information. The man explained that he was approaching the end of his unemployment benefits and needed help in order to make ends meet. He has been on the waiting list for the Salt Lake City Housing Authority since last July and said it was “getting old staying with a friend.”

The call specialist assisting the caller provided referrals to the following programs:

- Utah Affordable Housing Database – provides rental listings that match a searcher’s specific needs, income and location
- Salt Lake Community Action Program – provides rental listings and rent assistance
- Department of Workforce Services – provides Medicaid applications (the caller had already worked with this organization for unemployment benefits and job assistance and did not qualify for food stamps)

Those are just a sampling of the 1,500 agencies and over 600 programs that are currently listed in the Utah 2-1-1 resource database. 2-1-1 provides information and referrals for those seeking assistance with basic human needs, support for seniors and people with disabilities, support for children, youth and families, physical and mental health resources, employment supports, and volunteer opportunities.

“Reaching our 100,000<sup>th</sup> call is a milestone for Utah’s 2-1-1 Information and Referral in a few ways,” Lorna Koci, 2-1-1 Director said. “It indicates that more people know about 2-1-1 and are using this service to find places to get help. Also, due to the large number of calls taken, it allows us to afford the systems needed to run an efficient and quality oriented call center and outreach team. Better systems and better quality mean better service for our community.”

Last year, 2-1-1 received 87,072 phone calls during the 2007-2008 fiscal year and is currently experiencing a 16 percent increase in the number of calls over the 2007-2008 fiscal year. A 30 percent increase in calls was experienced in May 2009 compared to May

2008 and projections show that June 2009 will see a 40 percent increase compared to June 2008.

2-1-1 Information and Referral is a statewide program of Utah Food Bank Services. The easy-to-remember telephone number connects people with important health and human services programs throughout the communities of Utah. 2-1-1 call specialists are available from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Voice mail is available after hours and on the weekends.

A Human Service Directory is also produced by 2-1-1 every two years and contains detailed information about agencies in respective areas. In 2008, the Human Service Directory covered organizations serving Salt Lake, Summit, Tooele and Davis Counties and Weber, Morgan and Davis Counties.

***NOTE: Attached is a photo of 2-1-1 Call Specialist Hillary Sorensen receiving the 100,000<sup>th</sup> phone call.***

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#### **About Utah Food Bank Services**

Utah Food Bank Services provides food to a statewide network of over 125 agencies and community centers. Last fiscal year, Utah Food Bank Services distributed 19.1 million pounds of food – the equivalent of over 9.5 million meals for emergency food assistance from families and individuals in need. Utah Food Bank Services also operates 19 Kids Cafe sites, 2-1-1 Information & Referral and Services for Seniors. For more information about Utah Food Bank Services call us at (801) 978-2452 or visit [www.utahfoodbank.org](http://www.utahfoodbank.org).