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**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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United Way of Northwest Arkansas Fears Shut Down of Statewide 2-1-1 Phone Service

Lowell, ARK – United Way of Northwest Arkansas was disappointed to learn today that 2-1-1, the free phone service that connects people in need to the those who can help, will not receive funding from the state despite signed legislation approving a \$1.9 million subsidy.

For two years the service was funded through private foundations and support from United Ways in Arkansas, with a large portion of funding coming from the Northwest Arkansas area. As part of the long-term strategic roll-out of the service, it was always anticipated that state money would be needed to help subsidize the service.

Unfortunately, even with signed legislation approving the subsidy, money will not be appropriated to the service. Unless other funding can be secured in three weeks, the service runs the risk of shutting down.

If the service shuts down, Arkansas will be the only state without some form of coverage for those who need information and referral services through 2-1-1. (Please see the attached map for detailed coverage information).

Last year, in the first six months of service, the 2-1-1 information and referral line received more than 34,000 calls statewide. These are calls from individuals who are in the direst need of service, and 2-1-1 is the best resource to utilize especially in times of crisis.

Arkansas 2-1-1 was also promoted during the recent tornado in Mena for residents to get information on services that were available. It was a service that the Governor and other officials could point to as the one place to get information in this time of extreme personal crisis for so many. If 2-1-1 were to shut down, this would be a resource no longer available in times of crisis.

The service was launched statewide in April 2008, and requires \$1 million per year to operate. United Way of Northwest Arkansas encourages people to contact the Governor's office in support of using his discretionary fund by calling Constituent Services at 501.682.3687 or going online to www.arkansas.gov to send an e-mail to the Governor or your local representative.

For more information, please contact Nathan Cook, Arkansas 2-1-1 Executive Director at 870.543.4954 or nathan.cook@arkansas211.org, or Perry Johnson, Arkansas 2-1-1 Board Member for the Northwest Arkansas area at 479.273.4037 or 479.685.3426.

About United Way of Northwest Arkansas

United Way is dedicated to helping advance the good of all in our community through focusing on key issue areas such as education, income and health to create lasting changes in our community. By engaging individuals and companies around giving, advocating and volunteering for these types of issues we can all work to Live United in Northwest Arkansas. For more information about how to Live United, please visit our website at www.unitedwaynwa.org.

United Way of Northwest Arkansas
serving Benton, Madison, McDonald and Washington Counties



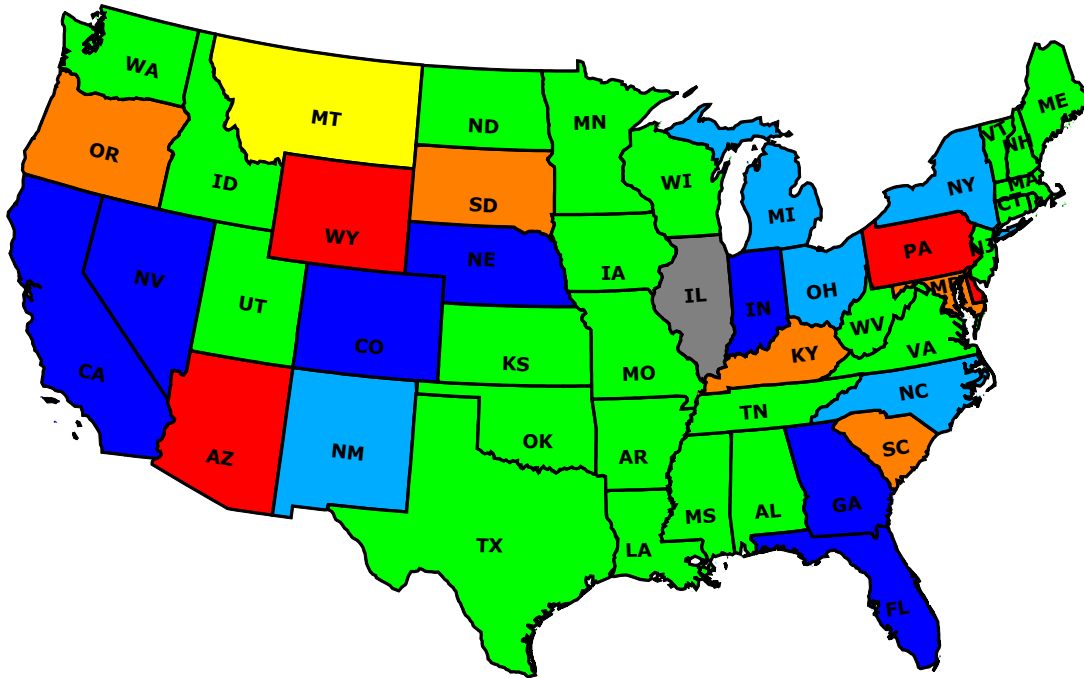
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About Arkansas 2-1-1

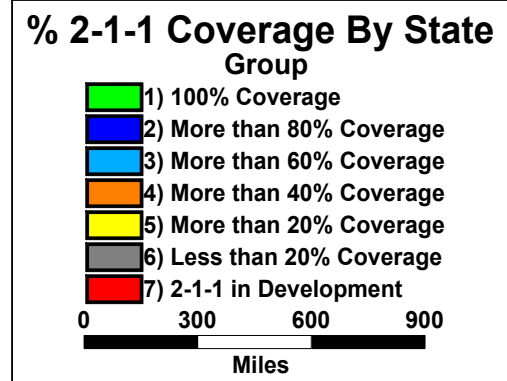
Arkansas 2-1-1 is a three-digit, easy-to-remember number that is the direct link between people in need and those who can give help. 2-1-1 provides information services such as food banks; shelters; health insurance programs; employment support; support services for the children and elderly; and volunteer opportunities. For more information, visit www.arkansas211.org.

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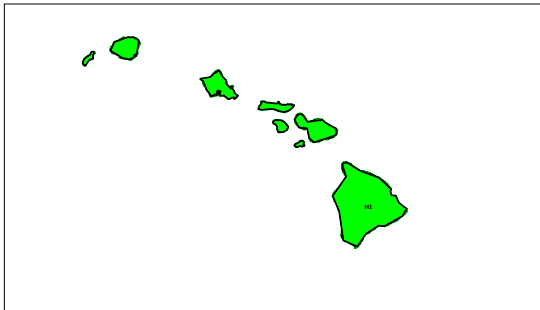
% of Population Covered* by 2-1-1 in each State



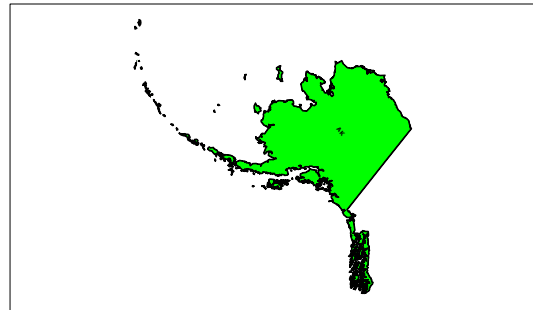
78% Overall Coverage



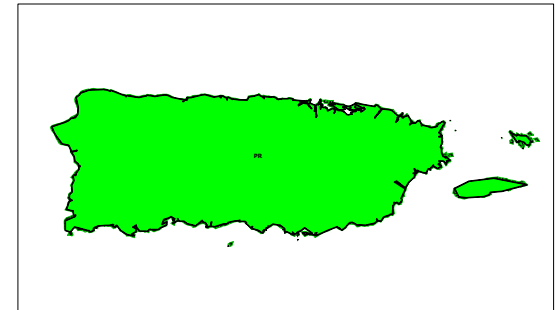
* Includes DC & Puerto Rico



Hawaii



Alaska



Puerto Rico