



Please Support SB21-239
(Senators Kolker and Zenzinger and Reps Amabile and Van Beber)
Expand 2-1-1 Colorado for Referral to Behavioral Health Services

What does SB21-239 do?

SB21-239 will help connect unemployed Coloradans across the state to behavioral health services and other vital resources needed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. State funds will support the operation and management of the 2-1-1 program along with supporting collaboration with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health and the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. 2-1-1 will collaborate with these State departments to target marketing and outreach to the traditionally underserved communities, such as immigrant, low-income, and communities of color, and to those who are unemployed, regardless of whether they receive benefits, who may need referrals for behavioral health services and other vital services and supports.

What is 2-1-1 Colorado?

2-1-1 Colorado is a confidential and multilingual service that helps people navigate over 7,500 health and human service resources. 2-1-1 Colorado is operated by a collaborative of seven organizations that host four 2-1-1 call centers across the state. They work in tandem to provide border-to-border coverage in Colorado:

- Hilltop Community Resources (*Grand Junction*)
- Mile High United Way (*Denver*)
- Pikes Peak United Way (*Colorado Springs*)
- Senior Resource Development Agency (*Pueblo*)
- United Way of Larimer County (*Fort Collins*)
- United Way of Southwest Colorado (*Durango*)
- United Way of Weld County (*Greeley*)

What does 2-1-1 Colorado do?

2-1-1 Colorado is a help line, providing one central location where people can get connected to the resources they need. With a database that is updated daily, 2-1-1 Colorado can connect Coloradans to critical resources by dialing an easy to remember, three-digit number, 2-1-1, texting one's zip code to 898-211, or by live chat or searching an organized resource directory for services online at 211Colorado.org.

Examples of referral resources include:

- Housing, rent and utility assistance, shelters and transitional housing services (top need)
- Behavioral health services, to include substance use supports
- Income support/assistance
- Childcare
- Food/meals
- Individual, family and community support
- Transportation
- Clothing/personal/household needs
- Health care, medical and dental clinics

For more information, contact Diana Protopapa, 303.810.3708 or Emily Hanson at 720-660-8408.

- Employment
- Education
- Other government/economic services

It's often a combination of public and non-profit services that help meet the needs of individuals. 2-1-1 is uniquely positioned to provide that combination of resources.

Having 2-1-1 available reduces the burden on our 9-1-1 emergency system and our local and state staff, particularly with misdirected calls, leading to cost avoidance.

Numbers

In 2020, 2-1-1 Colorado centers received over 182,000 contacts (including calls, chats, texts and emails) and nearly 457,000 online database searches.

Recent data shows that 85% of the 2-1-1 clients surveyed followed up on the referrals they were provided and 51% reported receiving the help they needed. Additionally, 95% of the clients surveyed would recommend 2-1-1 to a friend or family member.

Why should I support SB21-239

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen, and continue to see, many changes occur in our lives. According to the Colorado Health Foundation, 1 in 2 Coloradans have experienced mental health strain because of the coronavirus. The Colorado Crisis Line has seen a more than 30 percent increase in volume. Numerous studies show that unemployment adversely impacts mental health. We need to assure 2-1-1 remains available to Coloradoans to problem-solve and connect to important services, particularly services depended upon by many low-moderate income Coloradoans to meet basics, such as housing, food, safety and health needs, along with services to support their mental well-being. We are still in the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic and we know recovery will be a long journey for so many. Maintaining and expanding Colorado's first call for help, 2-1-1, is critical.