

# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## UWGT's 2-1-1 Operations to Transfer in Coming Months

[TOLEDO, Ohio] – On July 1, 2019, United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) will be transferring its 2-1-1 operations from United Way of Greater Cleveland (UWGC) to “Gryphon Place,” a well-developed and long-established social service resource center in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

In 2016, UWGT relocated its 2-1-1 operations to UWGC, having signed a two-year contract agreement, which has now expired. The predominant factor behind UWGT’s move to Gryphon Place is due to a rise in service costs, increasing from \$450,000 ('16 - '19) to \$654,000 ('19 and beyond) a year.

The decision to relocate UWGT’s 2-1-1 services to Gryphon Place was done so after ongoing meetings with local agencies, hospitals, elected officials, city / county representatives, Fire & Safety, Job & Family Services, and mental health and recovery services, who approved of the transfer.

“It’s incredibly reassuring to hear from our community that 2-1-1 is such a valued and important component in accessing local health and human services,” said Wendy Pestrue, president & CEO of UWGT.

“We also have to understand that this vital service costs nearly half a million dollars to operate. Given our extensive conversations with constituents, I believe we are moving in a very positive direction in garnering more financial support for 2-1-1,” said Pestrue.

Gryphon Place will be hiring a full-time 2-1-1 Director and Coordinated Access Specialist, who will reside in UWGT’s office, overseeing local 2-1-1 functionalities and 2-1-1 outreach and engagement.

“Restoring a degree of local presence for 2-1-1 is very critical to its success. This is the feedback we are hearing the most from community members,” said Jill Bunge, director of Community Impact at UWGT.

Gryphon Place will also be hiring 2-1-1 Navigation Specialists that will telework and answer calls from their home. These individuals will be from, and located in, Northwest Ohio.

The contract with Gryphon Place will cost \$465,000 a year. UWGT will retain online access to the 2-1-1 database for community members, instant online messaging with 2-1-1 Navigation Specialists and coordinated access for direct homeless shelter referral.

With the move, UWGT will gain the ability to text message 2-1-1 Navigation Specialists and remote Navigation Specialists in Northwest Ohio will prioritize Northwest Ohio calls. UWGT will also receive daily quality assurance reports that will be shared with staff, donors and community members.

It is the intent of UWGT and the community members who endorsed this decision to bring 2-1-1 services back to Toledo, if the funds can be raised to support such an infrastructure. Based on a recent estimate, it would cost UWGT \$650,000 - \$700,000 to house 2-1-1 locally again.

United Way 2-1-1 is a free, 24/7, 365-day information and referral service line, available to all residents across Lucas, Wood and Ottawa County.

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