

NEWS RELEASE

Jan. 30, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

• **Contact:**
• Lucas Camuso-Stall
• *Public Affairs Manager*
• Office: 419-254-4652
• Mobile: 765-977-3712
• lucas.stall@unitedwaytoledo.org



News Conference: **United Way 2-1-1, the “Voice” for Community Needs**

[TOLEDO, Ohio] – On February 11, United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) will be kicking off “2-1-1 Day” celebrations by hosting a news conference, featuring fellow community leaders, to discuss how 2-1-1 is evolving to meet community needs.

United Way 2-1-1 is a free, 24/7, 365-day information and referral service resource available to all residents within Lucas, Wood and Ottawa County. Individuals who are seeking health and human resources, such as shelter, food, clothing and utility assistance, can call or text 2-1-1 and speak with a trained Community Resource Advisor (CRA.) Based on the person’s needs, the CRA will refer them to numerous local programs that can help.

“We have over 1,000 partners and roughly 5,000 programs listed within our 2-1-1 database,” said Wendy Pestrue, UWGT president & CEO.

“Often, we talk about tough problems that families in our community face as one-dimensional,” she said. “If a person is struggling to pay their rent or mortgage, that is not the extent of the issue. That person is financially struggling, which means they are probably struggling to put food on the table, purchase clothes for work and keep the lights on in their home.”

With an extensive 2-1-1 database, UWGT is able to refer individuals to a number of programs that can assist with several needs. Furthermore, 2-1-1 tracks and publicly displays general, non-identity sharing demographic data collected from those reaching out, allowing the program to reflect the needs of residents, their zip codes, ages, etc., in real-time.

Last year, United Way 2-1-1 received more than 60,000 contacts from the community, and in 2020, 2-1-1 is projected to have 70,000 to 75,000 contacts. The top needs across Lucas, Wood and Ottawa County are housing, utility assistance, clothing, food, community support services and legal services.

UWGT’s “2-1-1 Day” news conference will begin at 9:30 a.m. in its first floor lobby, 424 Jackson St., Toledo, OH, 43604. In addition to Pestrue, speaking will be Toledo Fire & Rescue Chief Brian Byrd, Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken, Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz and Sandy Spang, commissioner of small business services at the City of Toledo.

“On 2-1-1 Day, we want to not only educate the community on what 2-1-1 is, but we also want to share how 2-1-1 is changing via new partnerships, investing in infrastructure and increasing visibility,” said Pestrue.

She continued, “We believe that 2-1-1 can begin to position itself as the voice of the community in responding to needs, increasing resources to meet needs and advocating for programs that can address emerging needs.”

###