



## NEWS RELEASE

For more information:  
Hank Sennott  
United Way of RI  
401-444-0644  
508-274-4317 (cell)

### **2-1-1 Answers More Than 100,000 Calls During First Year of Operation**

*Nearly half involve concerns about shelter and housing*

**Providence, RI** (June 17, 2008) – United Way of Rhode Island’s 2-1-1 hotline has responded to over 100,000 calls from residents with questions and concerns about shelter and housing, financial and personal matters and other issues since beginning operation on June 1, 2007.

“We estimated that in our first year we would receive about 90,000 calls,” said Cristina Amedeo, Director of United Way 2-1-1. “We actually received 106,746 calls. In addition, our website received nearly 26,000 inquiries.”

UWRI 2-1-1 operates around the clock and is staffed by Information Referral professionals. Its data base of available services is constantly updated. Staff also meets on a regular basis with agencies and organizations to learn more about how they can help people who need assistance.

In its first year of operation, nearly half of the calls to UWRI 2-1-1 have been about shelter and housing (51,909) reflecting the State’s continuing housing problem and the mortgage crisis, according to United Way President and CEO Anthony Maione.

Other calls involved general family and personal concerns (44,996) and financial assistance (32,686).

“The number and type of calls 2-1-1 receives is a barometer on the state of our community,” Maione said. “We’re seeing the impact that the general economy, state and federal budget cuts, the housing crisis and the high cost of fuel is having on Rhode Islanders, particularly those who work very hard just to get by.”

UWRI 2-1-1 is backed by a \$500,000 yearly commitment from United Way and is being supported by a \$360,000 grant from the Hasbro Children’s Fund. The project has also received a grant from the TriMix Foundation and funding from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

229 Waterman Street  
Providence, RI 02906-5297  
phone 401.444.0600  
fax 401.444.0635  
[www.uwri.org](http://www.uwri.org)



United Way 2-1-1 is currently housed at Crossroads, but will move to United Way's new headquarters on Valley Street in Providence in August 2008.

The 2-1-1 figures were released as part of the local United Way's "Week of Action" leading up to United Way of America's national Day of Action this coming Saturday, June 21, and the dedication of UWRI's new building in Olneyville.

Tomorrow (June 18) United Way staffers and volunteers will be conducting mock employment interviews for soon to be graduates of the Year Up job training program.

Saturday's Block Party is scheduled from 10:30am to 3:00pm. The event features family activities, music and food from local vendors. The formal dedication ceremony is scheduled for 11:30am.

United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) has been working to improve the quality of life in Rhode Island's communities for over 80 years. UWRI's mission is to mobilize the caring power of the community to improve the lives of people in need and address the issues Rhode Islanders care most about. Its goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place. UWRI believes that all Rhode Islanders deserve the opportunity to have a better life, as when any one of us succeeds, we all succeed. It's what United Way refers to as advancing the common good. For more information, visit [www.uwri.org](http://www.uwri.org)

08 releases/ 2-1-1 Year 1