



Butler County United Way

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HELPLINK 2-1-1 COLLABORATIVE FORMED

With the anticipation of providing better and more wide-spread social service assistance to the counties of Butler, Clinton, Greene, Montgomery, Preble, and Warren, a collaborative between the United Way organizations in those counties has been formed. Butler County United Way, United Way of Clinton County, United Way of the Greater Dayton Area, United Way of Oxford, Ohio & Vicinity, and United Way of Warren County have all joined together to provide **HelpLink 2-1-1**.

Every day, thousands of people across North America simply phone the 2-1-1 service for information and support, whether financial, domestic, health- or disaster-related issues. Staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, professionally trained operators are available to provide free, confidential information and referrals to the most appropriate social service agency. For those with pre-paid cell phones or non local area codes, 855.405.7629 is the number to call; the TDD phone number is 937.910.6040. Online access is available at www.referweb.net/day.

“This collaboration hits all the right notes”, stated Mag Baker, President and CEO of Butler County United Way. “We were able to come together to provide a broader 211 service area, with a more robust service, at a lesser cost to the collaborative. **HelpLink 2-1-1** is an incredible resource and we

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are pleased to be able to provide it primarily through the donations received from the communities we serve.”

HelpLink 2-1-1 is provided through a division of United Way of the Greater Dayton Area, who is not only a member organization but acts as the vendor to the collaborative. Thomas Maultsby, President and CEO of United Way of the Greater Dayton Area comments, “Being able to provide a ready resource to people in need accelerates the process of recovery. The number of lives we can now touch and improve throughout this region is impressive.” United Way of the Greater Dayton Area has been operating an accredited information and referral call center of this type since 1963. In 2003, the FCC officially designated the 211 dialing code to only be used for free information and referral services nationwide, which improved the ease of using the service substantially. As part of the HelpLink 211 service, “SilverLink”, a directory dedicated to elderly services is readily available, as well as “BabyLink”, a directory for prenatal and early childhood care. Plans are to begin offering added directories in the near future, including “VetsLink”, a directory for military veterans.

Warren County was previously the largest county in Ohio to not offer 211 services. “While we each operate as a separate United Way entity, coming together to deliver a service to better the lives of those who live in our region makes total sense,” stated Aaron Reid, President and CEO of United Way of Warren County. “We were pleased to join the collaborative when asked; pooling resources to provide such an important tool to individuals allows us to maintain our organization’s focus on the broader needs of our county. It’s a win-win situation.”

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United Way of Clinton County serves all of Clinton County and a small portion of Highland County as well. “We are so excited to again be able to provide this service to the communities we serve; being part of this collaborative has made it possible,” added Amanda Harrison, President and CEO of United Way of Clinton County. “Asking for help is sometimes hard and 211 provides an easy method for people to take that first step.”

Ohio United Way, the state association, was able to provide an additional \$10,000 in funding for the launch of this service through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. With the addition of Warren and Clinton counties, Ohio now has 94% of its population with access to 211, serving nearly 10.9 million people in 70 counties within Ohio. Over one million phone calls plus an additional 400,000 online views were made to 2-1-1 in 2016, with over 21 percent of the requests focused on housing or utilities assistance, 16% health/mental health, and 16% food needs.

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