

211 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is 2-1-1 Orange County? 2-1-1 Orange County, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, offers a comprehensive information and referral system linking Orange County residents to community health and human services and support. Callers seeking assistance can dial 2-1-1 or **888-600-4357** (toll-free) 24 hours-a-day and be connected to a trained Information and Referral specialists. These I&R specialists have access to a database with information on more than 2,000 government and non-profit agencies representing thousands of specialized services, ranging from food and shelter to job placement and health care programs.

2-1-1 Orange County also serves as a crucial public information system during local crises such as earthquake, fire or other disaster.

2. What kinds of programs does 2-1-1 Orange County refer callers to? 2-1-1 Orange County maintains an up-to-date database with information on thousands of programs. While we do not assist with immediate life and death emergencies – those calls are directed to 9-1-1 – we refer callers to organizations qualified to address their specific need for health and human services, including food, shelter, transportation, prenatal care, substance abuse, child development and elder care.

2-1-1 Orange County refers callers to non-profit and government agencies. These organizations have programs dedicated to a variety of specific needs, including

- Food
- Shelter
- Prenatal care
- Substance abuse
- Government assistance programs
- Workforce development
- Health insurance access programs
- Prevention and safety services
- Child development assessment
- Medical, dental, vision care

3. What kinds of emergencies do you get involved with? What is your relationship with the various emergency-service providers (police, fire, etc.)? 2-1-1 Orange County provides information for all types of emergencies, ranging from homelessness to hunger to child abuse. In addition, during a major disaster, we provide emergency services information such as road closures, emergency shelters and evacuation information.

4. Is there a national 2-1-1? What is your relationship with that organization? What about other local/county/state 2-1-1 organizations? Yes, there is a national 2-1-1; check www.211.org for more information. The 2-1-1 number itself has been mandated by the Federal Communications Commission, and there currently are more than 200 distinct 2-1-1 organizations around the country. While all of these operations are locally organized and funded, they conform to guidelines and standards set by the national organization and regularly share ideas and suggestions amongst themselves. Today, approximately 80 percent of the U.S. population is covered by a 2-1-1 organization; almost 92 percent of the state's population in 27 counties has access to 2-1-1.

5. When was 2-1-1 Orange County established? 2-1-1 Orange County has its roots in a prior organization known as Info Link Orange County, which in turn grew out of an Irvine, California-based group called People for Irvine Community Health, established in 1984. In 2005, the California Public Utilities Commission designated Info Link Orange County as the 2-1-1 service provider for the county, and in 2006 the organization formally changed its name to 2-1-1 Orange County.

6. How does calling 2-1-1 Orange County differ from dialing 4-1-1? A variety of factors distinguish 2-1-1 from 4-1-1. For example, the 2-1-1 call center and referral database is maintained by a non-profit organization, rather than a telecommunications company, and the service is offered to callers at absolutely no charge. Moreover, 2-1-1 Orange County minimizes the use of automation, and we provide much more than mere directory assistance. Rather, we employ trained I&R (Informational and Referral) specialists who ask questions, make assessments and offer assistance navigating potential service providers. The I&R specialists are both caring and empathetic; they are the people to call when you don't know where to turn for help.

7. Can't dial 2-1-1? In July 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reserved the 2-1-1 dialing code for community information and referral services. Please see the following guidelines if you are unable to be connected to 2-1-1 Orange County.

- **Cell Phones** Currently 2-1-1 is accessible for callers with T-Mobile, AT&T, Sprint/Nextel and Verizon cell phone service. However there are other cell phone service providers that have not accommodated the mandated 2-1-1 dialing code. We continue to work with these providers to program access to 2-1-1. If you have difficulty with your service, please call 2-1-1 Orange County toll free at **(888) 600-4357**.

- **2-1-1 calls from Work: Agencies, Government entities and Companies** If you are unable to access 2-1-1 from your work phone, please contact your technical department to request 2-1-1 dialing access. 2-1-1 is a new dialing code so phone systems at agencies, government entities and companies will have to change the permissions in their phone system to allow employees to dial 2-1-1. If you have difficulty with your service, please call 2-1-1 Orange County toll free at **(888) 600-4357**.

- **2-1-1 calls from Home** If you are unable to access 2-1-1 from home you may be experiencing one of the following situations:

- Your telephone service provider has not programmed 2-1-1 as part of their service.

- Access to 2-1-1 has been programmed by the telephone service provider but it is not working properly.

To correct the problem contact your telephone service provider's repair number to report that you are unable to connect to 2-1-1. If you have difficulty with your service, please call 2-1-1 Orange County toll free at **(888) 600-4357**.

- **2-1-1 calls from Payphones** 2-1-1 was previously used by payphone providers as a way for callers to receive a refund for money lost while trying to place a call at a payphone. Some payphone service providers have not programmed calls to route to 2-1-1 Orange County. If you are unable to connect to 2-1-1 using a payphone please contact Consumer Affairs at 800-649-7570 to request a refund. Please call 2-1-1 Orange County toll free at (888) 600-4357 if you need information and referral assistance.

Although neither the Federal Communications Commission nor the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) mandated a price for 2-1-1 calls dialed from payphones, the CPUC did urge all payphone operators to recognize that 2-1-1 calls are, in many cases, an alternative to 9-1-1 calls, and asked that payphone providers refrain from charging callers dialing 2-1-1.

8. Who can use 2-1-1 Orange County? 2-1-1 Orange County is available to every resident and visitor in the county, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

9. How does 2-1-1 Orange County benefit me? There may come a time when you need help, but won't know exactly what kind of assistance is available – let alone how to access it. 2-1-1 Orange County can assist by helping clarify your personal situation and then employing an extensive up-to-date database to determine the best resource(s) for you. 2-1-1 Orange County is where you go when you don't know where to turn for help, acting as a single point of contact to thousands of social service programs.

10. How does an agency/non-profit become included in your program/database? There are a variety of options for bringing one's organization or program to our attention. We are actively involved in the community, so we often hear about programs through word-of-mouth channels. Alternatively, a group can call or send us an email explaining its mission and operations and ask to be included in our database. It is important to note that while 2-1-1 Orange County often conducts informal assessments of organizations, and will under certain circumstances remove an organization from our database, we are not equipped to offer in-depth evaluations of any particular non-profit agency, charity or program. Those organizations interested in being included in our database for the first time or wishing to update their current listing in our database can visit the [For Agencies](#) pages of our website

11. Do you serve specific (e.g., ethnic) communities within Orange County? We serve anyone and everyone in Orange County, CA and therefore do not discriminate on any basis – age, race, gender, income, ethnic background or sexual orientation. We have I&R specialists who speak Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese, as well as English, and utilize a translation service to accommodate more than 150 languages.

12. Who provides funding for 2-1-1 Orange County? We receive funding from a variety of sources, including the County of Orange; The Children and Families Commission of Orange County; the United Way of Orange County; various local cities and grants and donations from foundations, corporations and individuals.

13. Do you take donations? Gratefully. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact Mayra Mejia at (714) 589-2374 or email info@211oc.org or visit our [donate](#) page.

14. Are donations tax-deductible? We are a 501(c)3. Federal Tax ID: 33-0063532. Please check with your tax specialist.

The above information is from the following website and it was printed on 4-18-2016:

<https://www.211oc.org/about-211-oc/faqs.html>

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The above information has been compiled by GWC Student Health Services. We do our best to keep the information updated, but accuracy cannot be guaranteed.