

# 2.1.1 Northwest

information & referral

the  
community  
connection

## REASONS TO DIAL 211

- ◆ Find or donate school supplies
- ◆ Schedule eye exams
- ◆ Enroll your child in a Head Start Program
- ◆ Find out about obtaining your GED
- ◆ Learn about reduced lunch programs
- ◆ Find out about after school meal programs
- ◆ Find a public health clinic
- ◆ Get an immunization
- ◆ Take a parenting class
- ◆ Donate eye glasses
- ◆ Find a speech & audiology clinic
- ◆ Weatherize your home
- ◆ Find or donate warm weather clothes
- ◆ Volunteer!

## What Is 2-1-1?

Fall 2009

2-1-1 is the national abbreviated dialing code for free access to health and human services information and referral (I&R). 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember and universally recognizable number that makes a critical connection between individuals and families in need and the appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies. 2-1-1 makes it possible for people in need to navigate the complex and ever-growing maze of human services' agencies and programs. By making services easier to access, 2-1-1 encourages prevention and fosters self-sufficiency.

## Why 2-1-1?

Access to emergency police and fire services through the "9-1-1" telephone number is nearly universal and an indispensable service. Telephone directory assistance available by dialing "4-1-1", is another service we have come to depend upon. However, thousands of individuals and families search every day for emergency financial assistance, food or shelter. Looking for help means finding dozens of phone numbers and then searching through a confusing maze of agencies and services. For those who want to give back to the community through volunteerism, donations or civic involvement, the situation is only marginally better. Information and referral services have known for years that a similar universal number, that all I&R services could use would mitigate this problem.

## Benefits of Having a 2-1-1 System in Your State

- Streamlined access to existing services by eliminating confusing and frustrating searches.
- An efficient and accurate database and referral system for existing services.
- Helping vulnerable people (those who are elderly, disabled, non-English speaking, incapacitated by crisis, illiterate, new to their communities, etc.) to help themselves.
- Expanded civic involvement by matching volunteers and donors with programs and services.
- Improved information for community planning.

## Dental Care For Kids

Dental Outreach Clinics *for kids* is providing an essential service to children ages 2 to 12 served by Minnesota Care and Medical Assistance. These services include check-ups, cleaning and follow-up. Education in care of teeth is important at a young age to avoid problems later on. Good dental care comes from learning proper dental hygiene and making it a habit. To find a location and dates for these clinics call us at 211 from a landline or (800)543-7709 from a cell phone.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends a child's first dental visit should be when the first tooth comes in (6-12 months of age). Once a child's teeth begin erupting, you can begin cleaning them by wiping them with a clean, moist washcloth. As more teeth come in, switch to a soft child's toothbrush. Use a pea-size amount of *fluoride* toothpaste until the child is able to spit. This is important as too much fluoride can stain teeth.

Preventing and looking for problems is the purpose for early dental visits. The dentist can help educate parents about their child's oral health and proper hygiene. Pediatricians should begin health evaluations by 6 months of age. This is especially important for high risk children.

High risk behaviors include:

Sleeping with a bottle or cup

Walking around with juice

Special health needs

Children of low economic status

Later order offspring

Persistent habits: thumb sucking or pacifier use

## Free Mammograms.....

According to the Minnesota Department of Health approximately 3,500 Minnesota women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, and approximately 650 women will die from the disease.

Sage has a network of more than 400 local health care providers state-wide, and has served nearly 114,000 women since 1991. Approximately 1,400 have been diagnosed and treated for breast and cervical cancer through the Sage program.

If you want to learn more about the Sage program through the Minnesota Department of Health, call us at 211 Northwest, or go to [www.mnsage.com](http://www.mnsage.com) or call 888-6-HEALTH (888-643-2584).

## IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH

In August, parents are enrolling children in school. Older students are entering college and adults and the health care community are preparing for the upcoming flu season. This is a good time to focus on the value of immunization. Vaccine-preventable diseases cause more than 46,000 adult deaths each year in the United States. Individuals can protect themselves, their families, friends, and their communities by staying up to date on the recommended vaccines.

For adolescents (ages 11-18) the Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended and available. Also, for this age group Tetanus Diphtheria, Pertussis or TDP, Meningococcal, Human Papilloma virus, and a Chicken Pox booster.

Adults should be vaccinated for Pneumonia and DPT Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis. Individuals 60 years of age or older should receive a Shingles vaccine. A Pneumonia vaccine should be taken by anyone with certain medical conditions or is 65 years or older, one time only.

A Tetanus/Diphtheria booster is recommended every ten years throughout a person's life.

Immunizations are a part of heading back to school and infants and young children are kept up to date at their wellness exams. Adults should review their immunizations at this time of year, as well.

### AGENCIES – SPREAD THE WORD!

Updates for agencies in the 2-1-1 Northwest database are done annually. Counties done so far in 2009 include: Polk, Mahnomon, Grand Forks (ND), Grant, Clay, and Cass (ND). We seem to have a return of around 50%, which is good compared to numbers from the previous year, but there is definitely room for improvement. Agencies that have a contact email address listed with us have a better return ratio and I encourage all agencies that still receive a paper copy of the update through the mail to include an email address when returning your update. This would not only save time and money on materials and postage, but it is also much easier to see how your agency is entered in our database. I would especially like to thank all those agencies who have done such a wonderful job getting back with those updates. I cannot stress enough just how important it is to keep us up to date. This ensures that when the people in your community need the services that your agency provides the correct information is given to them.

### VOLUNTEERISM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

211 Northwest partners with a variety of nonprofit groups to connect people with an opportunity to volunteer in any aspect they like. Our database includes over 2,000 volunteer jobs. A volunteer can select a position according to what best fits their schedule, and their interests. Volunteering on any level can have a huge impact on a community.

211 Northwest would like to list any agencies looking to provide volunteer opportunities for individuals or groups. They can be a one time or ongoing project.

If you are an agency and would like to list your volunteer opportunities give us a call. If you are an individual or group seeking volunteer opportunities give us a call. Simply call 211 from any landline, or (800)543-7709 from any cell phone.

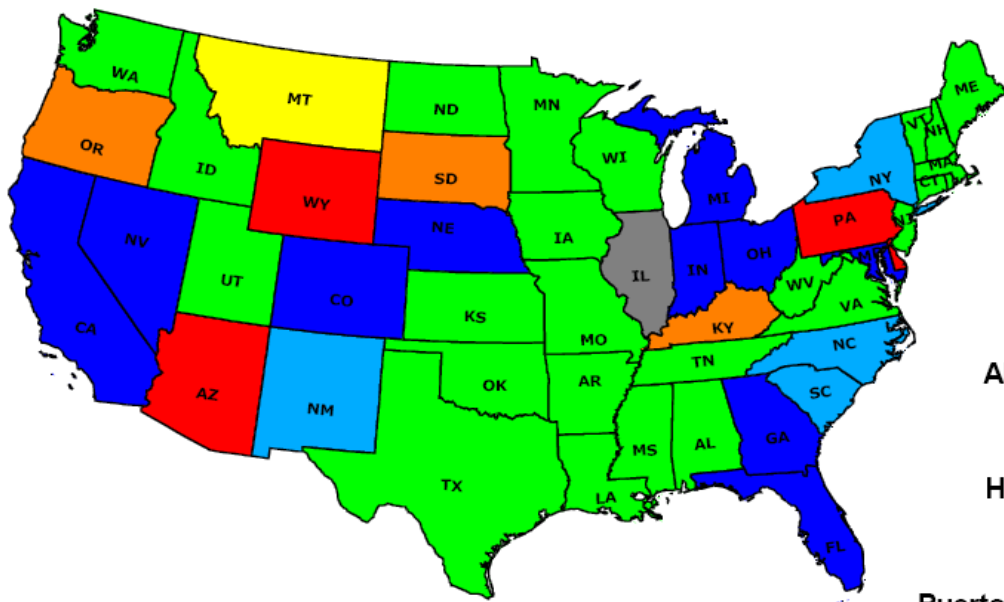


# 211 Northwest

120 East Washington  
Fergus Falls MN 56537

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## % of Population Covered\* by 2-1-1 in each State



**80% Landline Coverage**

**% 2-1-1 Coverage By State Group**

- 1) 100% Coverage
- 2) More than 80% Coverage
- 3) More than 60% Coverage
- 4) More than 40% Coverage
- 5) More than 20% Coverage
- 6) Less than 20% Coverage
- 7) 2-1-1 in Development

0 200 400 600 Miles

\* Includes DC & Puerto Rico

