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During tough economic times, 2-1-1 can help

Richmond, Va. – As more Virginians seek out resources to stay afloat in a murky economy, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) reminds consumers of the ease, importance and usefulness of 2-1-1 VIRGINIA.

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember phone number connecting people with free information on available community services. “Virginians are resourceful people. We want to help ourselves, and many times just need a point in the right direction,” said VDSS Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr. “2-1-1 VIRGINIA can connect people to a myriad of community resources that perhaps they had never needed or considered before.”

Funds from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act are making their way to communities across the commonwealth, and resources are changing daily. Programs that were previously tapped out may be able to help again, so those in need of assistance should continue to call.

2-1-1 VIRGINIA is free and available online or by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays. All calls are confidential. Certified community resource specialists access a database of more than 9,000 service providers and 23,000 programs when working with callers.



- More from Nikki Nicholau with the VDSS Office of Volunteerism and Community Service

In the last nine months, nearly 100,000 referrals have been provided to 2-1-1 VIRGINIA callers, including those for:

- Financial assistance and area resources
- Food banks
- Consumer and credit counseling
- Energy Assistance
- Homeless services
- Legal assistance
- Crisis intervention
- Domestic violence programs
- Education
- Services for seniors and the disabled
- Healthcare and mental health resources
- Child care

- Care for aging relatives

2-1-1 VIRGINIA is administered by the Virginia Department of Social Services. “Our mission is to help people help themselves,” said Conyers. “2-1-1 empowers, because it informs. Especially for those individuals who are unaccustomed to asking for help, there is a tendency to suffer silently, to delay the process of seeking assistance or feel shame in doing so. Please do not. Call 2-1-1 or research online, but find out what’s available. So many times, just talking through your options can help you think clearly about a plan that works for you and your family.”

2-1-1 VIRGINIA is a service of the Virginia Department of Social Services provided in partnership with the Council of Community Services, the Family Resource and Referral Center, CrisisLink, The Planning Council, the United Way of Central Virginia, and the United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg.

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