



## Spring 2014

Great Rivers 2-1-1 is a 24-hour information & referral and crisis line service. The service is free and confidential.

For assistance dial 2-1-1 or (800) 362-8255 in WI, MN, IA and throughout the tri-state area. TTY: (866) 884-3620  
Language interpretation available  
Business calls: (608) 775-6339  
Fax number: (608) 775-4766  
www.greatrivers211.org

Great Rivers 2-1-1 is a service of Gundersen Health System and the United Way.

Counties served by Great Rivers 2-1-1

### Wisconsin

Buffalo  
Chippewa  
Crawford  
Dunn  
Eau Claire  
Grant  
Jackson  
La Crosse  
Monroe  
Pepin  
Richland  
Trempealeau  
Vernon

### Minnesota

Fillmore  
Houston  
Winona

### Iowa

Allamakee  
Clayton  
Fayette  
Howard  
Winneshiek

Published semi-annually by Great Rivers 2-1-1 as a tool to assist human service personnel, community planners, elected officials, and other interested people in tracking new resources and in identifying and perhaps responding to unmet needs.

# Tracing Needs

In the tri-state area

## What's New?

**NAMI, Trempealeau County, Whitehall** – support for individuals with mental illness, their families and friends and interested others; also offers a support group for family and friends of individuals dealing with ADHD. Serves Trempealeau County.

**Thrift Store, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Mission, Arcadia** – thrift store offering clothing for infants, children and adults, shoes, household items and seasonal items. Serves Buffalo and Trempealeau Counties and surrounding area.

**Play and Discovery Center, Partners in Excellence Academy, La Crosse** – child care center for children ages 2 to 12 years old including children with special needs including Down syndrome, speech impairments, children with autism and children using wheelchairs. Serves La Crosse County.

**A Hope to Dream, Ashley Furniture, WI** – provides children ages 3 to 16 with a new mattress set given out on a quarterly basis. Serves 13 counties in western Wis. and two counties in SE Minn.

**Educational Services, Domestic Violence Groups for Abusers, Living Faith Church, Viroqua** – 26-week domestic abuse intervention program for men who are abusers. Serves Crawford, Grant, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland and Vernon Counties.

**Woodman Senior Center, Richland Center** – congregate meal- site and offers opportunities to socialize and participate in recreational activities. Serves Richland County.

**Home Care Select, Inc., Cassville** – personal care including chore services, in-home respite and others. Serves Grant County and surrounding areas including Prairie du Chien.

**Cornell Community Closet, Cornell** – free children's clothing program including shoes and outerwear for families in the School District of Cornell.

**Willow Creek Women's Clinic, Eau Claire** – preventive, diagnostic and treatment health services for women.

**Knight Transitional Housing/Choose Aftercare, Eau Claire** – halfway house for individuals after incarceration or other troubled situations, offers access to counseling, job training and transportation.



# Call Statistics - Second Half 2013

## Rent/Housing

Rent payment/deposit assistance.....	674
Homeless shelter .....	345
Homeless motel vouchers .....	203
Low-income, subsidized private housing.....	142
Housing authorities .....	149
Domestic violence shelters .....	86
Public housing.....	84
Transitional housing .....	50
Cold weather shelters/warming centers.....	30

## Food

Food pantries .....	542
Soup kitchens .....	31
Community meals .....	51
Food vouchers.....	26

## Utilities/Heat

Electric service payment assistance.....	654
Heating fuel payment assistance .....	110
Gas service payment assistance.....	40

## Transportation

Gas money.....	140
Medical transportation.....	113
Bus fare assistance .....	47
Disability-related transportation .....	37
511 transportation info/Clearinghouse.....	21

## Legal

General legal aid .....	62
Legal counseling .....	99
Lawyer referral services.....	45
Legal representation .....	45

## Landlord/Tenant

Landlord/tenant dispute resolution.....	10
Landlord/tenant rights info/counseling.....	96

## Additional Categories/Referrals

Homeless financial assistance .....	38
Undesignated financial assistance.....	204
Referrals for in-person crisis intervention.....	348
Individual counseling.....	166
Domestic violence hotline.....	98

## Seasonal

Holiday gifts/toys.....	107
Holiday meals .....	70
Winter clothing .....	35

## Government Programs

Adult protective intervention.....	25
Aging and Disability Resource Center .....	401
Food stamp application .....	211
Medicaid application .....	77
Child abuse reporting .....	73
Social security .....	109
Comprehensive job assistance centers .....	26
Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC) .....	51
Unemployment compensation.....	24
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).....	61

## Other

Mental health hotlines .....	320
Alcohol dependency support groups.....	78
Mental health – related support groups .....	53
Drug dependency support groups.....	31
Community clinics .....	116

## Unmet Needs

The top requests for unmet needs are in the categories of basic needs and holiday assistance. An unmet need may occur even though a service exists in the area; people may be unable to access services, for example, if they have already used the service or are ineligible at this time.

The following are the top unmet needs for the first half of 2013:

Community (homeless) shelters/homeless motel vouchers.....	64
Rent payment assistance .....	13
Gas money.....	14
Electric/heating payment assistance .....	17
Holiday gifts/toys.....	12

## Total Number of Calls – Second Half 2013

Information & Referral/Supportive Listening.....	9965
Information .....	8276
Crisis.....	759
Miscellaneous.....	1134

**Total Calls..... 16,134**



## Annual Call Statistics for 2013 - Total Calls

Great Rivers 211 .....	28,383	Life transition .....	16
After-hour contracts.....	3,709	Mental health emergency.....	384
Subtotal 211 .....	32,092	Other (including vulnerable adult, self-harm).....	288

### Type of Call

Information and Referral/supportive listening.....	61
Information .....	27
Crisis.....	5
Follow-up .....	3
Other/miscellaneous .....	4

### Crisis Calls - Type of Crisis

Child abuse.....	27
Domestic violence.....	54
Drug/alcohol .....	51
Sexual assault .....	10
Suicide .....	141
Basic needs.....	414

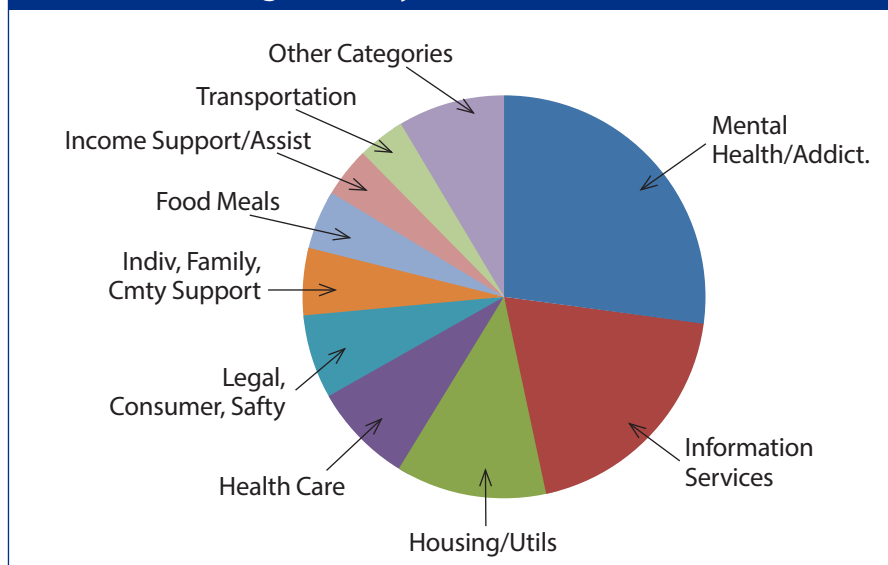
### Seasonal Calls

Tax assistance .....	166
Holiday gifts/toys.....	107
Christmas meals/baskets .....	52
Winter clothing .....	38
Thanksgiving meals/baskets .....	52
School supplies/clothing .....	44

### Website Statistics

greatrivers211.org	
Page views .....	15,044
Total number of visits .....	8,048
Accessed from mobile devices .....	887

211 Calls Categorized by the AIRS Problem Need Areas



## Little Feet: Children and the Path of Economic Hardship

“Do not waste your time on Social Questions. What is the matter with the poor is Poverty . . .”

—George Bernard Shaw

More than 22 percent of U.S. children live in poverty and this extends across urban, rural and suburban landscapes. As the numbers have increased so has the concern from many spheres and recently the American Academy of Pediatrics identified poverty and its impact on children’s health as their leading priority. Poverty is a critical determinant of children’s health considered in its broadest sense, not only physical but also social, emotional, and educational. And the impact plays out beyond the child’s first years as early health issues are too often the beginning of long-term problems in adults.

One of the measures of economic hardship, a low income, is defined as having income between 100 and 200 percent of Federal Poverty Levels. Over 16 million of the nation’s children live in families with low incomes. The current Federal Poverty Level, which is the amount considered to be necessary for families to meet their basic needs, is \$23,500 (gross income) for a family of four. Yet research consistently shows that, on average, families need an income of almost twice the federal poverty level to meet their most basic needs. Families who are between 100 and 200 percent are not classified as poor.



Poverty both causes and exacerbates poor physical health for children in the U.S. and can impede children's cognitive development and their ability to learn as well as contributing to behavioral problems. Children of all ages living in poorer communities often have other deprivations, in addition to economic, and are at increased risk for low birth weight, poor nutrition, chronic conditions such as asthma and anemia and are at greater risk of exposure to environmental contaminants. The children at greatest risk are those who experience severe and chronic economic hardship and the young are particularly at risk because the low income rates for families with young children are especially high. Families with low-wage work are vulnerable and children whose families are buffeted by fluctuating or deteriorating financial circumstances face recurring instability. The uncertainty that accompanies living in a low income household is often its most defining feature.

Income inequality and lack of upward mobility are significant features of families coping with economic hardship. Not so surprising, perhaps, is that low levels of parental education are a primary risk factor for being low-income but the actual numbers are revealing. Eighty-three percent of children whose parents have less than a high school diploma live in low income families and over half of children whose parents have only a high school degree are low income as well. Workers with only a high school degree have seen their wages stagnate or decline in recent decades while the income gap between those who have a college degree and those who do not has doubled. Yet only 27 percent of workers in the U.S. have a college degree. As far as family structure, it may come as a surprise that research suggests marriage does not necessarily guarantee protection from economic insecurity: more than 1 in 5 children with married parents live in a low income family. In rural and suburban areas, the majority of low income children have married parents and most individuals who experience poverty as adults grew up in married-parent households.



Many groups and organizations working on the issue of poverty, children's rights, and related social and economic policies have a long history of advocating for children. When discussing possible solutions to this crisis, many point to the necessity of a "sustained, multi-disciplinary public-private effort" to achieve truly effective and lasting progress. It has been done before: focused effort in the past dramatically reduced poverty among senior citizens to less than 9 percent and significantly improved the quality of their lives. A study on poverty and families undertaken by the state of Connecticut found that a package of policies that included child care subsidies and job education initiatives could cut poverty by 55 percent. Lively discussion on issues such as a livable wage, for instance, and responsibility of the private sector and government's role in making up the difference, promises stimulating exchanges with, hopefully, meaningful change.

Clearing the path for the young continues to be critical because of poverty's profound effect on children's lives, their development, their prospects for the future and consequently on the nation as a whole.

## The following are a few of the many resources that Great Rivers 211 can offer for counties we serve:

- E.I.T.C. (Earned Income and Child Tax Credits)
- Children's Defense Fund
- National Center for Children in Poverty
- Institute for Poverty, University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
- Nine to Five Association of Working Women
- Community Action Programs in Wis., Minn. and Iowa
- ABC (Advocacy and Benefits Counseling) for Health
- Legal Aid for Wis., Minn. and Iowa
- Food Pantries and Banks
- Employment and Training Centers
- Neighborhood and Community Centers
- Child Care Subsidies
- Family Resource Centers
- CYSHCN (Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs) for Wis., Minn. and Iowa
- Home Energy Assistance Programs
- Eviction Prevention Programs
- Emergency and Transitional Housing
- Subsidized Housing
- Habitat for Humanity
- Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

