



2-1-1, Where to turn when connecting people to the right community and social resources in Kosciusko County

Tammy Cotton – Wawasee Chamber of Commerce

Sariah Morgan – KC-Ed

Stacie Light – Warsaw Community Schools – Food Services

Kosciusko Leadership Academy 2013-2014

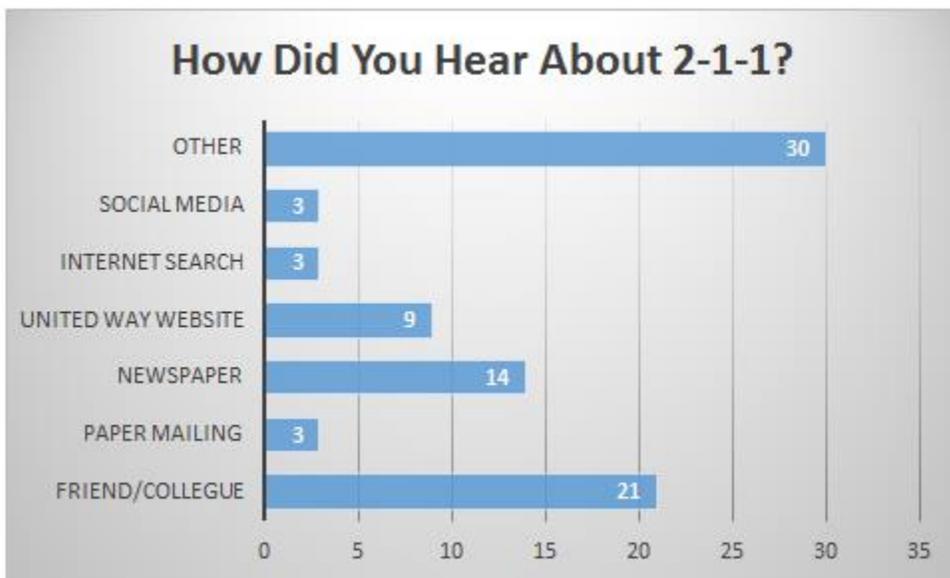
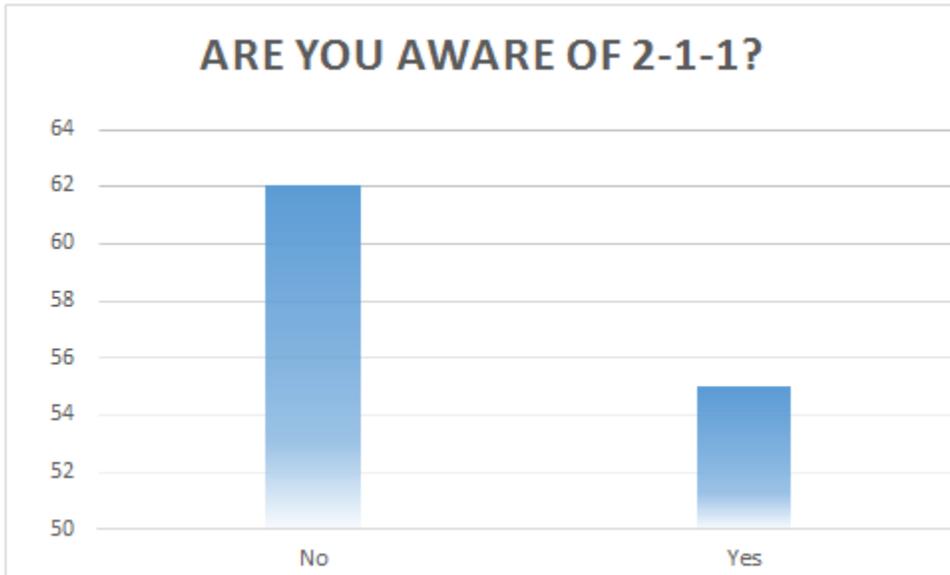
Where do people in Kosciusko County turn to find a connection for community and social resources? This question was posed to our White Paper group. Then, from a KLA presentation one Tuesday morning, our question was answered. United Way of Kosciusko County supports a resource just a phone call away. That resource is easily and readily available by dialing 2-1-1. The call is free, confidential and non-judgmental. This free service is available for anyone. A common misconception about 2-1-1 is that the service is only available for those needing financial assistance. 2-1-1 help is more than financial assistance, it is a resource for anyone looking for community and social services help. 2-1-1 is in place for you!

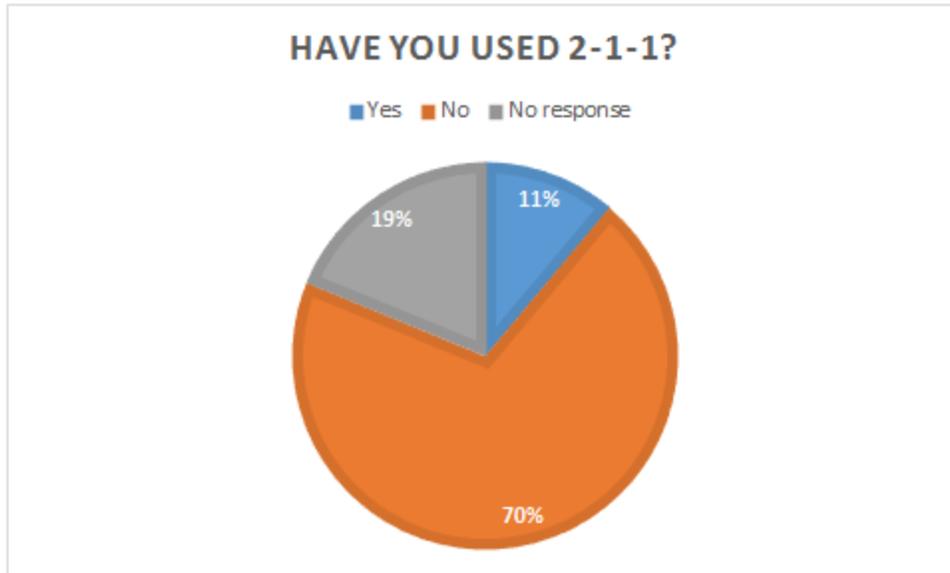
Background:

Our original idea for our whitepaper was based on our view that there is a need for parents to be involved with youth, but there is a lack of parental support and mentoring for these particular parents. We began to talk to adult and parent mentoring groups. We weren't aware of any that existed in Kosciusko County. As we began discussing topics for our White Paper, our group kept returning to the lack of support knowledge by Kosciusko County parents. One member related that when she relocated here with young children, she didn't know who or where to turn to for help with a variety of things from parenting support, rental assistance to childcare resources. After lots of discussion we learned from a KLA Community presentation that 2-1-1 was just a phone call away and could connect us to the answers one may need. As a Chamber Director, Community Non Profit Coordinator and Warsaw Public Schools employee, we wondered if we hadn't heard of 2-1-1, who else should be in the know.

An email and survey was sent to over 800 businesses and community members. We had 117 respondents to the survey. We asked whether they had heard of 2-1-1 or ever used it. Our

results weren't surprising. The majority of our respondents had not heard of this valuable resource.





With the survey results in hand, we met with Brad Leedy, Assistant Director of Kosciusko County United Way and began asking questions. Brad mentioned that recently the county's 2-1-1 operation had merged with the United Way of Allen County. This merger would expand the counties service area. We learned that not only could one call 2-1-1 for answers, but an interactive website is available too. That website is www.myunitedway2-1-1.org. While that website may be hard to remember, if anyone googles 'Warsaw 211' or even 'Indiana 211', information is readily available and the United Way of Kosciusko County does come up on the search page. We also learned that the 2-1-1 call center has bi-lingual persons on staff (Spanish/English) and they have access to a telephone service which will do translating for any other languages. While the majority of calls to 2-1-1 are for persons seeking assistance with housing or utilities, what caught us off guard were the services that 2-1-1 could assist with that

we did not know or even think about. 2-1-1 can help connect a person to various resources such as:

- Education: GED testing sites, Tutoring services, Homeschooling, School readiness programs
- Judicial/Legal Services: Court locations, Victim Services, Self-defense training
- Family Support services: Buddy programs, Child care provider referrals, Care giver training
- Community groups and Service clubs

Solution:

A previous, 2007 KLA White Paper project had launched 2-1-1 to this community, but now we would like to enhance and support the marketing efforts of the 24 hour hotline and website that is supported by United Way funds. We need to continue to spread the word about 2-1-1. While our project was a scope project for this year, we would like to see a future KLA group take our paper and spend time to work with the United Way of Kosciusko County and collaborate on a 2-1-1 PR campaign that reaches all residents. Our suggestions for promotion and raising awareness are:

- County wide promotion of National 2-1-1 day
- Talk about it at United Way giving campaigns at businesses
- Billboards
- Facebook page, Twitter account
- Having a quick link on United Way of Kosciusko County's website
- Development of 2-1-1 App for smart phone

- Flyer distribution for human resources departments, new enrollee handout, and payroll check envelopes
- Bookmark distribution at town & city libraries
- Business card and/or magnet distribution to:
 - Community Centers
 - Emergency Services: Police, Fire, central dispatch, patrol cars
 - Churches
 - Schools
 - Health Safety Days, Community events

Estimated cost for promotional materials as follows:

- Bookmarks (qty 500), \$ 95.00
- Magnetic business cards (qty 500), \$130.00
- Retractable Banner 33” wide, \$250.00
- Vinyl Banner 6’x4’, \$ 80.00
- Business cards (qty 2500), \$225.00
- Free printable publications at www.myunitedway2-1-1.org
These publications could be used in company newsletters, displayed in break rooms, handed out as flyers.
- Radio commercial, \$25.00 for :15-:30 spot played between 6am-7pm
- Movie Theatre advertisement

Conclusion:

There is a gap in connecting people to social services and available resources. 2-1-1 is a valuable resource and tool for individuals looking for a connection to answers they seek.

Spreading the word about 2-1-1 will help bridge that gap. Start today by telling two people about 2-1-1. Take the 2 business cards that you received and give 1 to a family member; give the other 1 to a friend. Let them know that the United Way's 2-1-1 service can point anyone in the right direction for answers they need. Hopefully we can spread the word just like the '80's Faberge Organics shampoo commercial...you tell two friends, they will tell two friends and so on, and so on.



References

Leedy, Brad. Assistant Director. United Way of Kosciusko County.

2-1-1 online services; www.myUW211.org

Engle, Lynn. President/CEO 2-1-1 services of Central Indiana; <http://www.connect2help.org/>