

## **How 2-1-1s May Contribute to Community-change Strategies**

Whether 2-1-1 is operated within your local United Way or by another strategic not-for-profit organization in your community, its personnel and the services they provide can add value to your community impact work in a variety of ways in addition to its primary role of linking members of the population of concern with resources and opportunities generated by the strategy:

- ❖ 2-1-1 provides an early detection function as it catalogs growing needs and changing conditions in a community. Essential demographic and problem data captured during calls provides a picture of what people are experiencing. Micro-trend reporting about the declining economic conditions in Cleveland and Detroit, for example moved 2-1-1s to address the foreclosure issue more than a year before the situation made national headlines.
- ❖ In public hearings, 2-1-1 may provide objective testimony in support of a public policy strategy based on trends in problems or gaps in services.
- ❖ 2-1-1 may highlight volunteer activities that are needed to support change activities.
- ❖ 2-1-1 may map demographic and resource information to provide a graphic picture of where inquirers live in contrast to where services are located.
- ❖ 2-1-1 may survey others in the 2-1-1 U.S. network to acquire comparative data for other cities, states or regions.
- ❖ 2-1-1 may provide outreach to special populations through the 2-1-1 website, a local United Way website or a specialized portal dedicated to the special population.
- ❖ 2-1-1 may follow up with callers to assess their experiences with accessing services and to support their self-determination and involvement in the community.