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### **2-1-1 Suncoast receives grants from Sarasota County government and two United Way agencies**

2-1-1 Suncoast is pleased to announce receipt of several important grants.

2-1-1 recently received two grants totaling \$152,000 from Sarasota County Government, a \$61,000 grant from United Way Suncoast and a \$7,000 grant from United Way of South Sarasota County.

The numbers explain the need. 2-1-1 Suncoast received more than 78,000 telephone calls for assistance from residents of Sarasota, Manatee and DeSoto counties during 2016.

People call 9-1-1 when they have a medical emergency. They call 2-1-1 for help meeting a variety of other needs that, while not life threatening, impair their ability to lead normal lives. When clients call 2-1-1, their needs are assessed professionally and confidentially and they are told where to call or go locally to get the help they need.

The bulk of the Sarasota County funding – \$97,000 – will be used to pay salaries of 2-1-1 Suncoast staff members who answer 2-1-1 calls and ask clients questions. 2-1-1 Suncoast's will be able to update and make their website user friendly with a one-time \$5,000 grant. The site is a popular place for people to find free, update health and human services in their geographic area in the Tri-County area.

The goal for United Way Suncoast's \$61,000 grant is for 2-1-1 Suncoast to provide services that help adults and families achieve long-lasting financial stability. United Way of South Sarasota County's recently announced \$7,000 grant is for pre-screening and referral

services.

Examples of available services clients can read about on the 2-1-1 Suncoast website and receive through calls to 2-1-1 include:

- ⑩ Payment assistance for late rent/mortgage payments, utility shutoffs and daycare fees
- ⑩ Locations for food, such as pantries and programs that feed seniors and children
- ⑩ Health care providers who specialize in mental health and substance abuse
- ⑩ Help locating employment and housing opportunities
- ⑩ Post-disaster assistance

2-1-1 Suncoast specialists provide empathetic individualized assessments of needs with each inquirer, collect information for community needs, send clients to the appropriate available resources and forward each client's information confidentially through a secure system to the referred to organization, so the referral agency can focus on the client, not on paperwork. All of 2-1-1 Suncoast's services are free to residents of Sarasota, Manatee and DeSoto counties.

"Donated funds not only support our core mission of providing residents 24/7 information, referrals and comprehensive pre-screening for health and human services," executive director Carmen Rojas-Rafter said "but they also exponentially impact the work of 120 other agencies to serve more than 50,000 individuals per year."

The recent awards reflect the continuation of partnerships 2-1-1 Suncoast enjoys with county governments and United Way agencies in the area. In November, Sarasota County announced the award of \$50,000 to 2-1-1 Suncoast for intake and case management to help homeless clients obtain services at the Family Haven emergency shelter in Sarasota County. Within the past year, United Way Manatee granted 2-1-1 Suncoast \$47,000 and Manatee County Government granted 2-1-1 Suncoast \$35,765.

For more information about 2-1-1 Suncoast, call Rojas-Rafter at 941-256-0865. ###