



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Announces Funding for 2-1-1 Helpline Network in State Budget

PETE HARCKHAM May 9, 2022

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White Plains, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham announced that the 2-1-1 Helpline New York network will receive \$2.4 million toward its operating costs in the FY2023 State Budget, a \$400,000 increase from the previous year’s funding. Local United Way organizations statewide operate the 2-1-1 Helpline network, which ensures that community resources centers can connect individuals with health and human service needs with the right agencies and programs.

“The 2-1-1 Helpline is the ultimate example of shared services and public-private partnerships,” said Harckham, “It is a good investment of public dollars to make sure that someone is there to assist those in need to find available government services and nonprofit assistance. The Covid-19 pandemic and recent

natural disasters, such as the flooding caused by Hurricane Ida, also showed how important 2-1-1 is to local and state governments for responding to disasters and emergencies.”

The number of inquiries to the statewide 2-1-1 Helpline was up 153% in 2021 over figures from 2019. Harckham, who represents communities in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties, has sponsored the bill for putting the helpline funding into the state budget in recent years. He made his announcement during a recent visit to United Way of Westchester and Putnam, which operates the 2-1-1 Hudson Valley community resource center from its White Plains location.

The increased allocation for the Helpline in the new State Budget will expand 2-1-1’s texting capability statewide, support 2-1-1 activations in areas experiencing a disaster and include 211 in New York State’s emergency plan, which will clarify communications, messaging and activations. The 2-1-1 Helpline New York network matches the legislative appropriation with \$5.3 million in local grants, contracts and fees for services agreements, including \$1.3 million in local United Way investments.

“With \$2.4 million state support, we will be able to be a resource for people in need every day of the year, every hour of the day,” said Hugh Perry, President of the United Way of New York State. “We will also continue our ongoing efforts to make 2-1-1 easy to use and by those seeking help.”

“This funding will help 2-1-1 community resource centers throughout the state meet the demand from those asking for food, mortgage and rent assistance or other basic needs, as the state deals with high inflation, food supply shortages, and eviction crisis,” said Tom Gabriel, President and CEO of United Way of Westchester and Putnam. “We thank Senator Harckham, Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo and Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi for advocating for the funds and the legislative support of all the Senate and Assembly members.”

United Way’s 2-1-1 Helpline has nationally certified community resource specialists trained to answer questions and provide referrals for health and human service needs round-the-clock and 365 days a year in 200 languages. For help in the Hudson Valley, an individual can dial 2-1-1, text their zip code to 898211, or visit 211hudsonvalley.org.