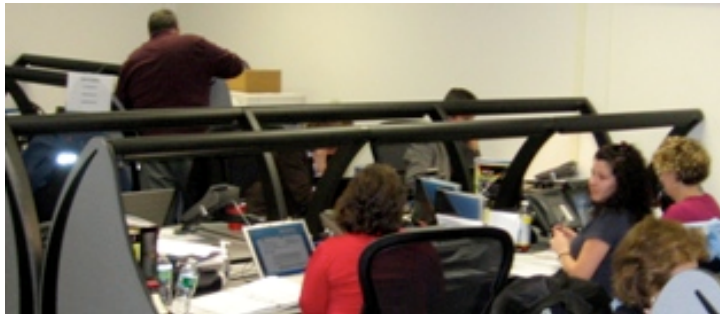


2-1-1 never missed a beat during the worst flooding in 200 years

When severe storms in Rhode Island caused massive flooding near and around United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI), the tumultuous weather and rising river may have caused the electricity to go off inside the UWRI's building but the telephone lines at *United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island* and ADRC/THE POINT never went off.



The 2-1-1 Information Referral Specialists continued to answer calls and refer Rhode Islanders in need to vital services throughout a seamless transition from the call center at UWRI to a makeshift call center inside National Guard headquarters in Cranston, R.I. The 24/7 helpline, 2-1-1, which is administered by Family

Service of R.I., immediately teamed up with R.I.'s Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) to help assess the damage from flooding, and refer those affected by the storms to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to register for aid.

During the worst of the flooding, which were about 2.5 days long, UWRI and 2-1-1 staff, who work for Family Service of R.I., fielded more than 5,700 calls. (Usually in one week, the 24/7 helpline receives about 2,200 calls.)



Information referral specialists heard heartbreaking tales of basements being flooded, sewers backing up, hot water and heating systems no longer working, and pleas for shelter and food. They connected individuals with cleaning and pumping services and basic needs.



By Day 3, the calls were still arriving at a fast pace. Specialists also were making follow-up calls and encouraging callers to check in every day so 2-1-1 can check on the clean-up progress and connect those in need to additional resources.

Photos by Stephen Hug, Family Service of R.I