

# 2-1-1/LIFE LINE Community Resource Database Inclusion/Exclusion Policy

## **Background:**

2-1-1/LIFE LINE's I&R program exists to help individuals in need access services which can best alleviate or eliminate that need. Telecounselors will assess the needs of the caller and help empower them to make informed decisions about which resources may best meet their needs. Telecounselors may offer follow-up assistance and advocacy to ensure access to services.

While 2-1-1/LIFE LINE telecounselors will try to give the most accurate and appropriate information/referrals possible, 2-1-1/LIFE LINE is not responsible for the quality of service delivered by any agency to which callers are referred. Telecounselors offer multiple options for callers to consider whenever possible; they do not recommend or endorse agencies.

## **Inclusion:**

"Health and Human Services" are defined as those which provide services that address human needs ranging from basic living needs (food, shelter, and clothing) to life improvement or enhancement services. Health services include both physical and mental health programs.

To be included in the 2-1-1/LIFE LINE database, an entity must:

- ◆ Provide health and human services to the residents of our primary 2-1-1/LIFE LINE service region of Monroe, Ontario, Wayne, Livingston, Cayuga and Seneca Counties or have a related role (funding, planning, coordinating or monitoring) in the human services network for this region.
- ◆ Provide a specific type of service in our larger service region for various Suicide and Crisis Intervention services and contracts which operate statewide, nationally and internationally depending on the service. These types of listings include those for which there is no other referral source such national/international referrals for crisis hotlines, Comprehensive (non-2-1-1) information & referral services in NYS, Mobile Crisis Teams in NYS, and New York State Governmental Agencies (Department of Social Services and Community Mental Health) agencies.

Agencies eligible for inclusion are those that:

- ◆ have been in existence for six months or are affiliated with another organization that has been in existence for at least one year;
- ◆ are designated as or affiliated with;
  - a non-profit according to IRS 501(c)(3) or are
  - government offices or programs providing health and human services or are
  - For-profit organizations that meet a community need where insufficient non-profit or government services exist to meet the need.
- ◆ have an established service site;
- ◆ have a demonstrated ability to provide the service they say they provide, as indicated by information from clients or affiliated professionals;
- ◆ are health or human services provided by religious organizations if eligibility is not restricted by denomination;

- ◆ are health or human services provided by community organizations if eligibility is not limited to their own members (serve the community at large);
- ◆ engage in consultation with other agencies in the same field;
- ◆ do not have a history of problems with law enforcement or consumer complaint agencies

**Exclusion:**

- ◆ organizations that offer services only their own members (e.g., counseling or food available only to a church's parishioners);
- ◆ illegal services (this category could also include agencies which deny service on the basis of nationality, religion, color, race, sexual orientation or any other category protected by civil rights laws);
- ◆ private practitioners
- ◆ organizations covered under the services of a local specialized I & R program (i.e. child care, volunteer opportunities etc.)
  - If the organization provides more than one type of service, the agency will be included. The services that meet inclusion criteria will be the only ones indexed, though the excluded services may be mentioned in the program narrative.

Inclusion of any agency or organization does not imply endorsement by 2-1-1/LIFE LINE, nor does omission reflect disapproval.

This policy does not prohibit the inclusion of any programs that target services based on age, gender, health, disability or other characteristics designed to meet the special needs of targeted populations. However, the programs must be open to all people in those targeted populations.

Information provided by an agency may be edited for clarity, format and/or space requirements.

There is no charge for inclusion in the 2-1-1/LIFE LINE database.

**Decision-making Process:**

Agencies may be denied inclusion in the database after consideration by 2-1-1/LIFE LINE's Resource staff. Such decisions will be sent upon request in written form by the 2-1-1/LIFE LINE Manager to the agency in question. An agency denied inclusion may meet with the 2-1-1/ LIFE LINE Manager to discuss the decision; if unsatisfied, a further meeting with the Program Director can be arranged.

If 2-1-1/LIFE LINE receives complaints about an agency to which it is currently making referrals, Resource staff may do one or more of the following:

- ◆ call or visit agency staff to verify complaint information
- ◆ do research necessary to enable Resource staff to make a determination regarding inclusion/exclusion
- ◆ check with service's funding sources
- ◆ document complaints (if significant in content or quantity, this may be made available to the community's funding/planning bodies at the discretion of the Program Director).

Agencies that do not respond to repeated requests by letter or phone to update their information in the database may be placed on inactive status in the database or removed from the database altogether until such time that the agency responds to requests for updated information.

### **How We Maintain the Database**

Our database is updated every day as we learn about changes. The Resource Department continually checks resources and contacts to verify changes to ensure that our data is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. We encourage you to contact us immediately if you see any information you believe is inaccurate.

### **How We Collect Information**

2-1-1/LIFE LINE is committed to maintaining an accurate database. One of our best resources for information is our callers. Because 2-1-1/LIFE LINE telecounselors are using the data every day and giving information to thousands of callers, we often hear about new information as soon as changes occur. We also subscribe to newsletters and mailing lists in order to learn of new or changed information. In addition, several of 2-1-1/LIFE LINE's staff attend community meetings and events. All information collected is passed along to the Resource Department, which then processes the information for the database. We also rely on agencies to let us know when they are getting inappropriate referrals or when they have new programs. We send annual printouts to each agency in our database, showing them the details we have about their services and sites. Agencies can then review their information, and send us back their corrections or verify that their information is still accurate.

### **How We Index an Agency's Services**

2-1-1/LIFE LINE uses the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems ([www.AIRS.org](http://www.AIRS.org)) *Taxonomy of Human Services*, a standard indexing system used by human service information and referral systems throughout the United States. This national taxonomy contains thousands of service terms, organized into ten general categories and many subcategories. 2-1-1/LIFE LINE uses about 1300 of these, chosen according to our own information and referral needs. Agencies cannot re-name specific service terms since the terms are part of a national indexing system. However, we invite your comments and suggestions about the service terms we use and we do add terms or make changes to terms when community needs or standards in acceptable terminology advise a change. For more information on the Taxonomy, visit [www.211Taxonomy.org](http://www.211Taxonomy.org).