

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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**HelpLine Recognizes Ohio 2-1-1 Day and
Encourages Use during Tax Season**

Delaware, OH – On the heels of Governor Strickland’s proclamation of a state-wide 2-1-1 day in Ohio on 2/11/08, HelpLine supports the measure by encouraging Delaware County residents to maximize the tax referral service through 2-1-1.

The 2-1-1 System connects people with vital human services through an easy to remember three-digit phone number, the web and a variety of community interactions. 2-1-1 utilizes specially trained information and referral specialists who work with the individual to analyze what services are needed and available to them and provide a direct connection to those services.

“Tax preparation and filing often poses many financial challenges to elderly and low-to-moderate income individuals and families,” said Mary Damico, Information and Referral (I&R) & 2-1-1 Director at HelpLine of Delaware and Morrow Counties, Inc. “Through 2-1-1, tax filers within this income level can be linked with free, local tax preparation services which can ease the burden during this season.”

As of today, HelpLine has linked more than 194 callers in Delaware County with free tax preparation programs such as Volunteer Information Tax Assistance (VITA) – a tax assistance program that uses certified volunteers to help those earning less than \$40,000 per year. VITA provides help for those wanting to claim tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which can be worth up to \$4,700 per family and is credited directly to tax payers even if they owe no tax or the Child Care Tax Credit, which entitles families with children or dependents ages 13 and younger with a credit of up to 35% of annual expenses.

According to Damico, the United Way sponsored 2-1-1 service has connected 3,000 working families to free tax preparation that brought over \$7 million back to the Ohio economy.

As the first agency in the State of Ohio to launch the 2-1-1 service, HelpLine remains committed and continues to support the program because of its impact on thousands of Delaware County residents. Damico said that HelpLine has made more than 19,000 referrals to community, government and human service. Additionally, HelpLine assisted 1,800 households prevent utility shuts offs, eviction or mortgage foreclosure.

“For many, the help received through 2-1-1 has helped to thwart a full-blown crisis and been a critical resource during disaster preparedness and recovery,” said Damico. “As one of nineteen 2-1-1 call centers in Ohio, 2-1-1 provides an invaluable resource to residents in the communities we serve and throughout the state.”

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For more information about the tax information and referral, or health and human services offered through 2-1-1, contact HelpLine at 2-1-1 or 1.800.684.2324.

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About 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free, confidential and 24-hour multilingual service. Information provided through 2-1-1 includes such services as:

- **Basic human needs resources** (food banks, clothing, shelters, rent assistance, utility assistance, foreclosure assistance);
- **Physical and mental health resources** (health insurance programs, Medicaid, Medicare, maternal health, children's health insurance programs, medical information lines, crisis intervention, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation);
- **Work support** (EITC & tax preparing assistance, financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance, education programs);
- **Supports for older Americans and persons with disabilities** (adult day care, congregate meals, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, homemaker services);
- **Children, youth and family supports**(childcare, after school programs, Head Start, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services).
- **Volunteer Opportunities and Donations**

About HelpLine

HelpLine of Delaware and Morrow Counties, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization that provides a 24-hour crisis support hotline, information and referral to direct services and advocacy, and serves as the area's only volunteer center. HelpLine is a contract provider of the Delaware-Morrow Mental Health & Recovery Services Board and partially funded by the Council for Older Adults. A United Way Agency, HelpLine is accredited by the American Association of Suicidology, National Alliance of Information & Referral Systems and certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health. For more information, please visit: www.HelpLinedelmor.org.

Contacts:

Sue Hanson, Executive Director

740.363.1835, ext. 107

E-mail: shanson@helplinedelmor.org

Tamika Vinson, Outreach Coordinator

740.363.1835, ext. 112

E-mail: tvinson@helplinedelmor.org