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MEMA & UNITED WAY PARTNER TO PROVIDE NEW CITIZENS HELPLINE
The Easy to Remember 2-1-1 to Provide Non-Emergency Information

FRAMINGHAM, MA – The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Council of Massachusetts United Ways (COMUW) have agreed to utilize Mass2-1-1 as the Commonwealth's primary telephone information call center during times of emergency. The easy to remember 2-1-1 telephone number will be utilized as a resource for human service and public safety/disaster response and planning agencies. It was designed, in part, to reduce the number of non-emergency calls made to 9-1-1.

“Up until now, MEMA has utilized an ‘800’ number staffed by the Citizen Information Service of the Secretary of State’s Office,” stated MEMA Director Don Boyce. “That particular telephone number was activated only during emergency situations.”

With the change, the Secretary of State’s Citizen Information Service staff will now have the responsibility to serve as liaisons between the Mass2-1-1 staff and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Team (MEMT) when the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Framingham is activated for an emergency situation. Mass2-1-1 will provide the latest emergency information and response to rumors through their call center and website.

This new partnership will offer citizens the opportunity for ‘one-stop-shopping’, with access to vital updated disaster information, numerous post-disaster programs, interpreter services, and call tracking of caller locations. Mass2-1-1 will also have the ability to act as the registration site for spontaneous volunteers and donations from the public during an emergency or crisis.

“The Council of Massachusetts United Ways and Mass2-1-1 are thrilled to be working with our colleagues at MEMA and the Secretary of State’s Citizen Information Service to ensure that the people of the Commonwealth have access to timely and accurate emergency information” said Paul Mina, Executive Director of Mass2-1-1.

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Mass2-1-1 was created by The Council of Massachusetts United Ways on behalf of 22 local United Ways serving every community of the Commonwealth. Seven years ago, COMUW embraced the national 2-1-1 program, as established by the Federal Communications

Commission (FCC) and initiated by the United Way of America. The 2-1-1 phone number was established by the FCC as a nationwide number to call for non-emergency information and referral services. Currently Mass2-1-1 operates its call center Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 8:00pm with the ability to activate 24-7 during times of emergency in the Commonwealth. More information is available at www.mass211.org.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA, go to www.mass.gov/mema.

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