

COMMUNITY BENEFIT TEAM OPERATING PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Central Michigan 2-1-1 - Exclusion/Inclusion Criteria

GOVERNING AGENCY POLICY: Public Relations and Customer Services - #01-04

PURPOSE: The 2-1-1 Resource File ("database") contains information about service providers that enhance the quality of individual and community life. 2-1-1 does not endorse, rate, recommend, or evaluate resources, programs or providers and therefore, does not assume, warrant, or guarantee quality of services. Any information provided about a service listed in the database has been provided solely by that agency. Inclusion of an agency or organization does not imply endorsement by 2-1-1 or LifeWays. Inclusion in the 2-1-1 database is provided free of charge to all organizations.

2-1-1 reserves the right to remove or exclude any organization from its database for any reason. Inclusion is a privilege rather than a right, and agencies will be considered for inclusion based on the following criteria:

Criteria for Inclusion:

1. Services are available and accessible to residents who cannot afford private sector services.
2. Non-profit organizations providing health, education, social service, recreation, legal or consumer protection services may be included.
3. Government agencies (federal, state, county, city), which provide services in the area of health, welfare, recreation, or education, may be included. No attempt will be made to list all governmental agencies or departments.
4. Inclusion of services available only to a limited target population will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
5. Organizations (such as churches, social clubs) which offer a service to the community at large, not just to their own members may be included.
6. Private (For-Profit) agencies or individuals (such as physicians and psychologists) that provide a community service either free or with a sliding fee scale may be included. Services for which a fee is charged may not be listed in the directory unless it meets criteria #7 (see below).
7. Private (For-Profit) agencies that provide services/goods not readily available through public or non-profit agencies may be included. Inclusion is based upon uniqueness of service, lack of comparable services available through not-for-profit agencies or groups, and degree of need for the service.
8. Professional societies and registries that can refer individuals to their members in good standing may be included.

9. Organizations offering services parallel to a non-profit service to which clients are referred and fees paid by a governmental agency. (i.e. offering homemaking services to qualified clients, and are paid by social service agencies) may be included.

10. Self-help support groups may be included.

11. Advocacy groups may be included.

12. Elected representatives (federal, state or local) may be included.

13. Organizations outside of our geographic parameters that provide a service not available locally may be included.

14. Agencies that have been in operation less than 6 months may be included on a trial basis, with ongoing monitoring, to ensure accuracy of service information provided.

15. Toll free lines operated by government or non-profit organizations may be included.

Agencies or organizations that have been in existence or listed with 2-1-1 for a minimum of one year and are expected to continue operation may be considered for the Directory of Community Resources.

2-1-1 and LifeWays reserve the right to refuse or discontinue listings for organizations that have had serious complaints filed against them by any of the following: any regulatory body, other organizations in the database providing similar services, or with 2-1-1 itself.

2-1-1 and LifeWays reserve the right to exclude from its database any organization that it has adequate reason to believe may spread hatred or have a philosophy that could be hurtful to the well-being of individuals, groups or the community as a whole. Potential grounds for exclusion or removal from the database may include, but is not limited to, service non-delivery, fraud, misrepresentation, discrimination, or criminal activities.

Organizations that operate without a formal office (i.e. clubs and support groups) must also supply information on their state, regional or national headquarters for inclusion in the database.

Exclusionary Criteria:

1. Commercial business or for-profit agencies not described above.

2. Agencies that violate federal, state or local laws or regulations.

3. Agencies promoting or permitting discrimination based on protected classes of citizens.

4. Organizations (e.g. churches, social clubs) which only offer services to their own members.

5. For-profit medical facilities.

6. Agencies that deny service on the basis of race, sexual orientation, religious belief, national origin or other inherent characteristic that violates federal, state or local laws and regulations.

Quality of the Referral

2-1-1 and LifeWays do not evaluate the quality of services provided by organizations in the database. 2-1-1 staff assist callers select an appropriate agency or agencies by offering relevant information about fees, location, and services provided, etc.

If callers make complaints about an organization, 2-1-1 informs callers of the appropriate agency to handle the complaint, and offer information and referral with an alternative agency.

2-1-1 discontinues referrals to a program until a determination has been made by the agency handling the complaint.

If a significant number of similar and serious complaints are received about an organization, 2-1-1 may remove the agency from the database.

Controversial Activities

Some organizations provide services or advocate on issues that may be controversial in nature. Information about an organization's policies, views or issues which will assist potential consumers in selecting a resource should be included in that agency's record. This may include, for example, religious observances which are required in order to obtain services, or the organization's point of view on issues. Whenever possible, the database includes organizations which represent a variety of points of view on any given issue in order to provide callers with a choice of options.

Organizations Which Engage in Fraudulent or Questionable Practices

Organizations, which may be defrauding the public, violating laws or engaging in questionable fundraising or administrative practices, may not be listed in the database. If there is any question of the legitimacy of any organization, 2-1-1 will base its decision regarding inclusion/exclusion on information obtained from the following sources:

The Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services,
Better Business Bureau,
Licensing bodies, or
Other organizations in the database which provide similar services.

*LifeWays staff are required to report to protective agencies any suspicions of abuse/neglect violations.

Complaint Handling Procedures

2-1-1 staff may receive complaints about agencies and organizations which have been included in their database or which have been excluded from it. All complaints are confidential, and are acknowledged and investigated.

1. The 2-1-1 staff member takes the information from the complainant and forwards documentation to 2-1-1 Manager.
2. The 2-1-1 Advisory Board investigates the complaint and makes a decision using the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Feedback is given to the complainant.
3. The complainant may appeal the ruling in writing to the 2-1-1 Advisory Board.

Effective Date: July 1, 2004
Revised Date: November 30, 2004
Revised Date: December 21, 2005
Revised Date: August 16, 2006
Revised Date: December 14, 2006