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## People in Need to Receive Additional Support from 2-1-1 Arizona Organizations Unite to Reinstate Live-Answer Service on April 30<sup>th</sup>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tempe, Arizona, [April 29, 2020] – Crisis Response Network announces that a select group of Arizona organizations, including Valley of the Sun United Way, Arizona Public Service, EPCOR, Salt River Project, Southwest Gas, Tucson Electric Power, UniSource Energy Services and Vitalyst Health Foundation, have all contributed to fund the return of live-answer operations to 2-1-1 Arizona’s information and referral service in English and Spanish beginning on Thursday, April 30, 2020. Specialists will be available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days per week.

Due to funding challenges, live-answer service was suspended for 2-1-1 Arizona in July, 2019. Since then, CRN has worked diligently to identify short-term funding partners to restore live-answer service.

2-1-1 Arizona operators will help individuals and families find services and resources that are available locally and provide critical services that can improve – and save – lives, including:

- Supplemental food and nutrition programs
- Shelter and housing options
- Utilities assistance
- Emergency information and disaster relief
- Employment and education opportunities
- Services for veterans
- Health care, vaccination and health epidemic information

- Addiction prevention and rehabilitation programs
- Re-entry help for ex-offenders
- Support groups for individuals with mental illnesses or special needs
- A safe, confidential path out of physical and/or emotional domestic violence

“On behalf of CRN, I want to express our sincere gratitude to these organizations for their generous contributions,” said Justin Chase, President/CEO of Crisis Response Network. “Live-answer service offers the necessary personal connection that people deserve when they are in need. It also allows us to better fulfill our company’s mission of *Inspiring Hope* and our vision of *Empowering transformation from HOPE to HEALTH.*”

While bilingual, live-answer service on 2-1-1 Arizona was activated for a statewide COVID-19 Hotline on March 22, 2020, CRN is in the process of reinstating non-COVID-19-related, live-answer operations for 2-1-1’s normal information and referral service from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days per week, beginning April 30, 2020. These operational hours will mirror those of live-answer service for the COVID-19 Hotline. Upon dialing 2-1-1, callers are prompted, in both English and Spanish, to navigate to the COVID-19 Hotline or the normal 2-1-1 line depending on their needs.

On July 1, 2020, new funding from the Arizona Department of Economic Security will allow 24/7 operation of non-COVID-19-related 2-1-1 Arizona for Fiscal Year 2021. At the same time, remaining contributions from the aforementioned group of funders will be used to support the line through staffing, resources and reporting through June 2021.

“We are a stronger community when 2-1-1 is fully available to Arizonans during their most vulnerable times,” said Carla Vargas Jasa, CEO & President of Valley of the Sun United Way. “United Way is proud to partner with this group of community-minded organizations to ensure parents, seniors and individuals in need have live access to trained specialists who can immediately help them navigate complex systems and connect them with vital services. In a time of personal crisis, nothing compares to a knowledgeable voice on the other end of a call.”

“Crisis Response Network’s mission aligns with our commitment to go beyond providing reliable power to offering options and support to customers and the communities we serve,” said Daniel Froetscher, APS President & Chief Operating Officer. “Year-round 2-1-1 Arizona connects people to a wide range of support, including utility bill assistance programs. At this particularly challenging time, it is especially important to make it easy for people to access resources they need now, possibly more than ever.”

“We’re facing a generational challenge, one that has quickly and dramatically impacted our world,” said Joe Gysel, President of EPCOR USA. “At a time of uncertainty it is more vital than ever that our community – especially those who are most vulnerable – have ready, easy and immediate access to resources they can turn to for support. As an essential services provider, we at EPCOR understand the importance of knowing

resources are there when we need them. The return of live-call 2-1-1 service does exactly that for our community.”

“As a not-for-profit public power utility, helping the community is at the core of everything SRP and its employees do,” said SRP President David Rousseau. “We want to ensure customers have a safe, supportive resource during times of need and through a long-standing, collaborative relationship with the Crisis Response Network, we know this organization truly focuses on meeting the basic human-service needs for our customers and Arizonans.”

“During these uncertain times, knowing where to turn for help is imperative, now more than ever,” said Justin Brown, Southwest Gas Senior Vice President and General Counsel. “For that reason, we are pleased to support the Crisis Response Network in their efforts to return live-answer operations to 2-1-1 Arizona. As we face this unprecedented time together, Southwest Gas is committed to supporting our local nonprofit organizations, and will continue to provide affordable, safe and reliable natural gas throughout our service territory.”

“We’re proud to extend additional support to a service that helps connect our customers across Arizona to critical services,” said Joe Salkowski, Director of Communications and Public Affairs for Tucson Electric Power and UniSource Energy Services.

“Support of 2-1-1 is essential to connecting our communities with the resources they need to lead healthier lives,” said Suzanne Pfister, President and CEO of Vitalyst Health Foundation.

2-1-1 Arizona’s information and referral services also can be accessed through its website, [www.211arizona.org](http://www.211arizona.org), mobile app and – during non-live-answer hours – via an automated phone system.

In 2018, 2-1-1s across the United States made more than 12.8 million connections to assistance and, as of 2019, 2-1-1 is available to 94.6 percent of the U.S. population. In 2018, 2-1-1 Arizona provided more than 950,000 referrals for health and human services to Arizona residents.

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*2-1-1 Arizona, originally known as Community Information and Referral Services, was founded in 1964 and incorporated as a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in 1979. In 2017, Crisis Response Network, Inc. acquired the program, which transforms lives by linking individuals and families to vital services throughout Arizona.*  
[www.211arizona.org](http://www.211arizona.org)

*Crisis Response Network is a Tempe-based non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals by Inspiring Hope and Empowering Transformation from HOPE to HEALTH through a continuum of health care services.*  
[www.CrisisNetwork.org](http://www.CrisisNetwork.org)

*Established in 1925, Valley of the Sun United Way is celebrating 95 years of meeting the most pressing needs of Maricopa County. United Way unifies diverse partners, donors, business supporters, nonprofits, government and faith based communities to build a stronger Valley for us all. United Way and its 90,000 donors, 400 business supporters*

and 5,000 volunteers fight to break the cycle of poverty by ensuring children and youth succeed, ending hunger and homelessness, and increasing the financial stability of families. Join the fight, visit [vsuw.org](http://vsuw.org).

APS serves nearly 1.3 million homes and businesses in 11 of Arizona's 15 counties, and is a leader in delivering affordable, clean and reliable energy in the Southwest. The company is committed to serving customers with 100% clean power by 2050. As owner and operator of Palo Verde Generating Station, the nation's largest producer of carbon-free electricity, and with one of the country's most substantial renewable energy portfolios, APS' current energy mix is 50% clean. With headquarters in Phoenix, APS is the principal subsidiary of [Pinnacle West Capital Corp.](http://Pinnacle West Capital Corp) (NYSE: PNW).

Headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, EPCOR USA's wholly owned subsidiaries build, own and operate water and wastewater and natural gas facilities and infrastructure in the southwestern United States. EPCOR USA provides water, wastewater and natural gas service to approximately 665,000 people across 44 communities and 15 counties in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. [epcor.com](http://epcor.com)

SRP is a community-based, not-for-profit public power utility and the largest provider of electricity in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area, serving more than 1 million customers. SRP is also the metropolitan area's largest supplier of water, delivering about 750,000 acre-feet annually to municipal, urban and agricultural water users. For more information, visit [www.srpnet.com](http://www.srpnet.com).

Southwest Gas Corporation provides natural gas service to more than two million customers in Arizona, California and Nevada. For more information about Southwest Gas, please visit [swgas.com](http://swgas.com).

Tucson Electric Power provides safe, reliable electric service to approximately 429,000 customers in Southern Arizona. For more information, visit [tep.com](http://tep.com).

UniSource Energy Services provides electric service to approximately 97,000 customers in Mohave and Santa Cruz Counties. The company also provides natural gas to approximately 160,000 customers in Northern and Southern Arizona. For more information, visit [uesaz.com](http://uesaz.com).

Vitalyst Health Foundation is on a mission to inform, connect and support efforts to improve the health of individuals and communities in Arizona. Over its history, the foundation has invested more than \$100 million and established itself as a key thought leader, convener and catalyst of key initiatives – ranging from statewide health policy and systems to development of local community gardens. More information is available at [vitalysthealth.org](http://vitalysthealth.org).