

News Release

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers, Inc.

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**Lifeline, Inc. Celebrates National Information & Referral Services Day
November 14, 2014**

PAINESVILLE, Ohio— Every day, thousands of people find the help they need quickly, conveniently and free of charge because of Information and Referral (I&R) services. To recognize the importance of I&R in our community, Lifeline, Inc. is taking part in National I&R Day on November 16.

Information and Referral is the art, science and practice of bringing people and services together and is an integral component of the health and human services sector. People in search of critical services such as financial assistance, food, shelter, child care, jobs, or mental health support often do not know where to begin to get help, or they get overwhelmed trying to find what they need. Community information and referral providers connect people with resources that can help them with one simple phone call, text message, or website inquiry.

2-1-1 Lake County is a 24/7 information and referral service. Callers can simply dial 2-1-1 anytime of the day or night, any day of the year, and speak to a Certified Information & Referral Specialist to obtain information on a variety of health and human services. With the motto 'Give Help, Get Help,' 2-1-1 can provide information on receiving assistance at local agencies, as well as information on volunteer and donation opportunities throughout Lake County. 2-1-1 Lake County has proven to be a critical asset in providing information and linking callers to services in Lake County, particularly in times of disaster, like during the July 2013 floods.

Lifeline, Inc., Lake County's Community Action Agency, has operated the 2-1-1 Lake County Information & Referral Service since 2011, but the program has connected many Lake County residents with needed services for many years. Since 2006, 2-1-1 Lake County has provided information and referrals to nearly 308,000 callers.

In late 2011, at the request of the Alliance of Information and Referral Services (*AIRS*), the United States Senate passed S.RES.241 designating November 16, 2011 as "National Information and Referral Services Day". *AIRS* is an international nonprofit professional association with more than 5,000 individual, public and private I&R organizational members including Lifeline, Inc. Together, we have decided to continue celebrating National I&R Day each November 16 and to extend it worldwide to raise public awareness and recognize the critical importance of the I&R field.

"2-1-1 Lake County is such a unique and needed service in our community," said Carrie Dotson, Executive Director of Lifeline, Inc. "Our agency's mission is to fight poverty and help low-income people become more self-sufficient. Providing callers with quality information and referrals and connecting them to services is really the very first step in getting them out of poverty. We're excited to share our services with the residents of Lake County."

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers was founded in 1973 with the mission of helping Lake County residents by providing them assistance and life skills programming that is designed to increase self-sufficiency. In 1980 Lifeline became a participating agency of the United Way of Lake County, UWLC, and in 1987 was designated a community action agency by the Ohio Department of Development, ODOD. In 2008, Lifeline was designated as a mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health.

Today Lifeline continues with the same mission of helping Lake County's low-income residents break the cycle of poverty and make the transition from agency-dependency to self-sufficiency. Lifeline's current programming includes services in the healthcare, housing & energy assistance, information & referral services and consumer education & job training areas. Our motto is 'helping people, changing lives.' Lifeline is currently funded by the UWLC and by grants through the ODSA, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Lake County ADAMHS Board, Lake County Department of Job & Family Services, the City of Mentor, the Western Reserve Junior Service League, Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics and through private donors.