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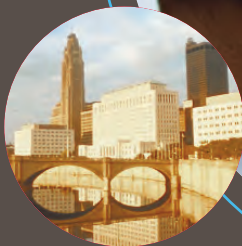
HandsOn
NETWORK

GET HELP
GIVE HELP
TRAINING
VOLUNTEER



Call to **SERVICE**

2009 Annual Report





You **don't need** to be a **community organizer**, or a **senator** — or a **Kennedy** — or even a **president** to **bring change** to people's lives.

Signing the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act in April, President Obama predicted a time when citizens would look back to see that as the moment when citizens came together to confront the challenges of the 21st century. What a bold vision to put before a nation that felt it was unraveling at the seams!

Closer to home, life was equally shaky. In Franklin County over the course of the year, the unemployment rate rose steadily, peaking at over 9 percent. The foreclosure rate followed suit, averaging 774 new filings a month. Government and nonprofit agencies, including FIRSTLINK, saw an unprecedented demand for services even as we, like the community around us, had to tighten our belts again and again and again. At FIRSTLINK we took nearly 400,000 phone calls, many from people who had always given and now found themselves in the unfamiliar position of having to receive. Uncomfortable as it was, it helped us at FIRSTLINK to analyze our business and develop a dynamic strategic plan. The coming year will see us shifting in new directions as we solidify our core competencies.

We will respond to the president's call to service and continue to use our local and national alliances to engage more volunteers in our business and thus in our community. We will teach these citizen volunteers to help build our capacity—and their own—in order to work with fellow citizens whose need is greater now than it's ever been. We will call upon you to help.

"The beauty of service," President Obama said, is that "anyone can do it. You don't need to be a community organizer, or a senator—or a Kennedy—or even a president to bring change to people's lives."

FIRSTLINK is fortunate to have a staff passionately devoted to our mission "to strengthen and enhance the quality of life in our community." We invite you to work beside us as we recognize and develop new community resources. The most valuable resource available is you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marilee". The signature is fluid and cursive. To the right of the signature are three overlapping circles: a large red one, a smaller brown one, and a grey one.

Board President's MESSAGE

Over the past year, as unemployment in Franklin County skyrocketed, FIRSTLINK saw a new cohort emerge: well-educated, highly skilled professionals who suddenly found themselves out of a job. Despite financial strain, many of these professionals sought new outlets to maintain their skills—and to discover untapped talents.

Meanwhile, corporations continued to make painful decisions to keep themselves afloat. Despite losing workers and capacity that they might never get back, corporations looked at how to use their assets to avoid similar situations in the future. They reevaluated their practices and reconsidered their roles in the community.

Here at FIRSTLINK, we are continually inspired by people's determination and optimism in working toward a better future. Like the people and businesses in our community, we look to our core strengths as our foundation.

During the past year, we underwent a lengthy strategic-planning process for continued success and long-term sustainability. We fine-tuned our brand to further weave FIRSTLINK into our community. We tailored our current products to advance our brand. We developed new products to create a more seamless organization. We established a more comprehensive structure for internal volunteer opportunities. Amid all these adjustments, we committed to supporting the capacity and adaptability of our resources and technology, so that we remain among the first responders to crisis. And we committed to continue fostering transparent, positive working relationships with our partners and the public.

Although the economic environment is changing faster than ever, we greet it as an opportunity to evolve FIRSTLINK and the way we approach our mission. We invite businesses and individuals to continue working with us as we reorient ourselves for the future. Through our continued partnerships, we have an opportunity to train our community's future leaders. It's a win-win prospect for the corporate world, the nonprofit world and our little corner of the world.



Kassy Zokem



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Our Core COMPETENCIES

2-1-1

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember number for people to give or get help. It is also a way to navigate the social services system and find the best resources to fit the needs of individual callers.

FIRSTLINK has anticipated and planned for community crises during the past several years, focusing on both major and minor disasters. The 2-1-1 staff and FIRSTLINK disaster response team has actively planned for scenarios from tornados to chemical spills to pandemic illness. While the anticipation of an H1N1 outbreak in the spring demanded that we put some of our planning into practice, the real crisis for the community has been the economy.

In the past year FIRSTLINK saw the greatest increase ever of individuals needing our services. Call Center specialists heard daily stories from individuals accustomed to donating to our community's social services system who now, for the first time, needed the community to help with their needs. FIRSTLINK has partnered with other agencies throughout the community to use 2-1-1 as the access point for those seeking assistance with foreclosure and Medicare. At the same time, FIRSTLINK has faced the loss or reduction of government, private foundation, corporation and individual funding. We continue to work on ways to increase our efficiencies as our budget shrinks.

Training and Volunteer Services

The Training and Volunteer Services department advocates volunteerism by providing training and by connecting groups and individuals seeking ways to give their time and talents with organizations in need of volunteers and volunteer services. The department linked volunteers ranging in age from the middle school students who participated in the Service Above Self Fair to seniors in our RSVP and Foster Grandparent programs.

The past year has brought both economic stress and opportunity to FIRSTLINK. In August, FIRSTLINK was awarded its largest training grant ever to participate in a statewide capacity-building initiative supported by the Governors Office on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. During this 10-month program, FIRSTLINK developed curricula and implemented a regional training program in 22 northwestern Ohio counties.





During the grant, 589 individuals participated in training in board development, volunteer management, financial management, grant writing, outcomes measurement, fund development, human resources and starting a nonprofit. Most of the participating agencies were small, grassroots nonprofit organizations and faith-based groups that received 28 hours of service, as well as one-on-one technical assistance. In addition to this new initiative, FIRSTLINK continued to provide educational services through its traditional calendar of events and engaged more than 100 students in the second year of our partnership in the Nonprofit Leadership Certificate Program with the Ohio State University Office of Continuing Education. We enlightened hundreds of community members on the needs and experiences of persons below the poverty line through the Beyond the Freeway Program, which provides insight into the daily struggles of low-income individuals and ways to make a difference as a volunteer.

During the fiscal year, the FIRSTLINK Disaster Preparedness and Response team worked closely with our community partners in government, health and human services to prepare for an H1N1 outbreak. These preparations included developing a plan for responding to community needs utilizing both our 2-1-1 and volunteer engagement resources. Planning assured that mechanisms were in place to provide information to the public through all communication methods including our newly initiated blog, Facebook and Twitter accounts. Beginning in March, the Disaster Preparedness and Response team has daily shared the most up-to-date information on ways to prepare and volunteer.

As a HandsOn Network affiliate, FIRSTLINK has worked very hard this year to engage our corporate partners and community volunteers in meaningful volunteer opportunities.

In April we were proud to host the first-ever Agent of Change Awards. These awards recognized outstanding volunteers in the areas of board service, advocacy, basic needs, neighborhoods and technology. Recipients of the inaugural awards lent their time and talents to the Columbus Zoo, Habitat for Humanity, Goodman Guild and Employment for Seniors. These volunteers contributed unique skills and countless hours to assure that one of the premier zoos in the world had outstanding board leadership, passionately brought the message to hundreds of new volunteers and managed other volunteers in providing shelter to the needy through Habitat for Humanity, brought the gift of learning to Goodman Guild students ages 16-64 who successfully completed their GED and ABLE qualifications, and provided technology to successful Employment for Seniors job seekers affected by the economic recession.

Dental OPTIONS, RSVP and Foster Grandparents continued to increase the number of volunteers in their programs as the needs for their services consistently increased in these difficult economic times.



Program HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2-1-1 Call Center answered 360,688, including 215,347 from individuals seeking food pantry assistance.
- Through the Dental OPTIONS program administered by FIRSTLINK, 257 dentists provided \$263,219 in treatment value to 236 new cases. Dental OPTIONS is supported by a grant from the Ohio Department of Health in conjunction with the Ohio Dental Association.
- The Kinship Care Navigator program, which assists caregivers raising children who are not their own, linked 674 families with 1,160 community resource services.
- 3,979 professionals and volunteers participated in FIRSTLINK trainings in nonprofit and volunteer management presented by the Training and Volunteer Services department.
- FIRSTLINK professionals provided training to their colleagues at a variety of local, national and international conferences including the Medical Reserve Corps Region V Conference, the annual statewide community service conference, Forging New Links and the National Conference for Community Service. Conference presentations focused on capacity-building practices for nonprofit organizations and embracing diversity.
- Through its BOARDLINK program, FIRSTLINK successfully promoted quality service to nonprofit boards by assisting agencies in engaging new board members and providing board training and consultation.
- FIRSTLINK's RSVP program continued to provide opportunities for adults 55 years and older in our community to help others through service projects with an emphasis on encouraging healthier lifestyles, providing support to a wide variety of nonprofit agencies and increasing literacy in Central Ohio. RSVP has more than 1,072 volunteer members at 42 sites. In the past year, these members provided 108,593 hours of volunteer services to our community for a value of \$1,953,588 at the national estimated rate of \$17.99 per hour of volunteering. The services they provided included cooking and delivering meals to the homeless, assisting in security activities at Port Columbus Airport and performing essential services at local senior centers.
- 504 people, including teachers, youth and business leaders, participated in 30 tours through FIRSTLINK's Beyond the Freeway program, which provides a glimpse of what life is like for local residents who live at or below the federal poverty level.
- Our volunteer website (www.firstlink.org) provided 165,977 views of ongoing volunteer activities and 7,231 views of special events opportunities.
- The Service Above Self Fair engaged 1,300 students from 21 Columbus high schools in 14,200 hours of service. The program also drew 500 students from 24 Columbus middle schools.
- More than 100 candidates participated in the Nonprofit Leadership Certificate Program. The 125-hour program is a partnership with Ohio State University.
- In its second year, the Foster Grandparent Program placed 99 volunteers at 40 sites in four counties. The volunteers donated 90,630 hours to mentor children with learning disabilities.

- Membership in RSVP rose 14 percent, to 1,072 volunteers who provided 108,593 of service at 42 sites. Five members received the President's Call to Service award for lifetime service of 4,000 hours.
- The Community Engagement program managed a variety of projects that drew 204 corporate volunteers and 297 community volunteers. Twenty youths learned gardening skills at the East Meets West Community Garden. Together with 41 adult volunteers, they grew enough to donate 97 pounds of fresh produce to St. Stephens Community House.
- Disaster Preparedness and Response managed 2,148 volunteers. The team trained 210 volunteers at 16 orientation sessions and 80 additional volunteers at three Volunteer Reception Center trainings. They also completed business continuity trainings at 27 organizations, training 115 individuals. They participated in three full-scale and two tabletop disaster exercises.





Dr. Jacinto Beard
Dental OPTIONS Volunteer

As the economy has taken a turn for the worse, the number of people lacking medical or dental insurance in Central Ohio has skyrocketed. Over the past 12 years, through Dental OPTIONS, Dr. Jacinto Beard has donated thousands of hours to hundreds of patients in our community, improving their oral health and, in some cases, saving their lives.

Dr. Beard sees dental care as necessary whether or not someone has insurance. “I hope that the service I provide will make it easier for the uninsured living on limited means to find a dentist in Columbus to ease tooth pain and disease.”

Dr. Beard performs many different procedures for patients referred through Dental OPTIONS including extractions, bridges, root canals and crowns, x-rays, fillings, cleanings, diagnostics and pain control.

“As the economy has gotten worse, the demand for even basic services, like fillings and cleanings has increased.

Unfortunately, in many poor families, dental hygiene—even brushing and flossing of teeth—can fall by the wayside, simply because patients don’t understand the critical importance of preventive dental care, and the link between dental care and serious health concerns,” Dr. Beard says.

Dr. Beard began as a volunteer with Dental OPTIONS—a partnership between the Ohio Dental Association and the Ohio Department of Health—shortly after graduating from dental school. Dentists participating in this statewide program have donated more than \$10 million in services since 1997.



Heidi Fry CERT Volunteer

For four years, Heidi Fry, a Franklin County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer has donated more than 20 hours a month learning how ordinary citizens can be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities. When a disaster occurs, CERT members support first responders by providing immediate assistance to victims and organizing spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site.

Although Heidi became involved as a result of a course at Ohio State University, she was deeply affected by an experience as a child when a tornado tore through her neighborhood. Heidi was 10 years old and her family had recently moved to a suburb of Youngstown. The devastation of the 1974 Xenia tornado was still fresh in many parents' minds and so her mother would often send the family to the basement at the slightest sign of a storm. But her mother wasn't home that afternoon and her father, distracted by a phone call, couldn't see the gathering storm from his basement office.

Heidi was upstairs playing when she felt the first effects of the storm: For a brief moment the air pressure knocked her to the floor and she was unable to move. Then she raced down the stairs toward the basement. As she ran, she looked out a window and saw the garage blow away. Although she was safe, the garage and the roof of the kitchen were ripped away from her home.

As a CERT volunteer, Heidi has been trained to cover disaster preparedness, fire suppression, basic medical operations, light search, and rescue and team operations. CERT members practice skills that they learn to keep fresh on techniques in the case of an emergency.





Linda Stamper
Foster Grandparent at Heinzerling Foundation

Linda Stamper was new to Columbus. She had been living in Florida but wanted to relocate to Ohio to be closer to family. In her retirement years, she found herself a stranger in a new community.

Looking for an opportunity to meet new friends and keep herself active, Linda joined FIRSTLINK's Foster Grandparent Program. She has been a volunteer for nearly four years at the Heinzerling Foundation, which enriches the development, education and quality of life of individuals with severe or profound mental retardation. Linda spends 15-20 hours a week reading, singing songs and playing with eight young Heinzerling residents.

"When a friend mentioned the Foster Grandparent Program to me, I was interested right away, although a little nervous about how difficult it might be to work with the children at the Heinzerling Foundation," Linda says.

But now, after getting to know the children, she can't believe what she gets in return for what she gives. "The chance at a smile, the flash of recognition on a child's face when they hear your voice, the thrill of finding that one thing, whether it is wind chimes or a tambourine, that a child responds to positively, that's why I am there," Linda says.

The Foster Grandparent Program provides an opportunity for persons 55 and older to provide one-on-one mentoring, tutoring and emotional support to children with special and exceptional needs. FGP has more than 40 locations for foster grandparents to improve the lives of children in need.

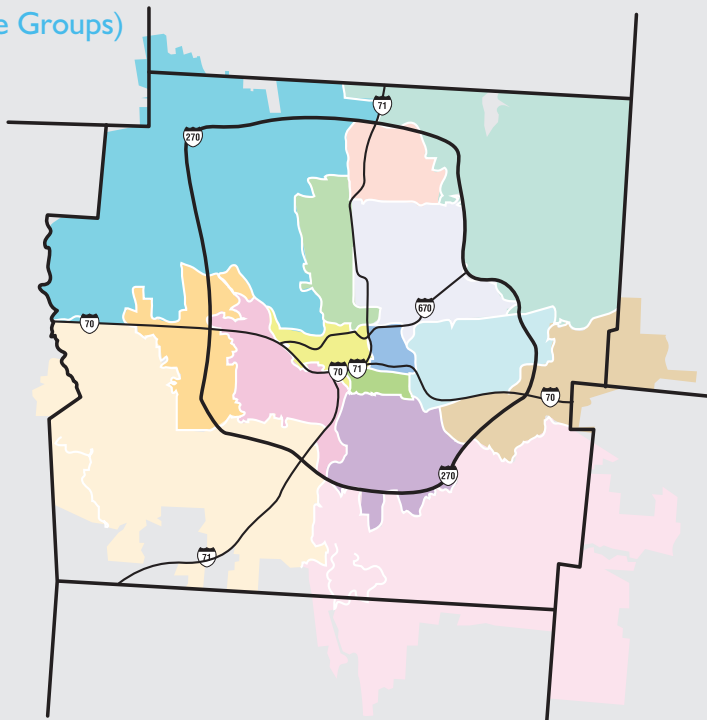


FY 2009 STATISTICS

The following pages show an analysis of who calls FIRSTLINK, where callers live and the needs callers present. People from all areas of Franklin County consider our programs essential to their well-being. As the economic downturn expands to a wider population, we expect the need for basic services to continuously increase.

Analysis Areas (Zip Code Groups)

Area
Percentage of All
Zip Codes
Places



Linden/East Columbus

12.7%
43211, 219, 224
South Linden, North Linden,
Easton, Airport

Hilltop

12.3%
43204, 223
Hilltop (E. of Wilson)

Near East

10.7%
43203, 205
Olde Town East, King-Lincoln

Southland

8.8%
43207
Southside, Merion Village

Bexley/Whitehall

7.9%
43209, 213, 227
Bexley, Whitehall

Eastland/Reynoldsburg 6.5%

43068, 232
Eastland, Reynoldsburg

Near South

6.0%
43206
German Village, Model Zone (S.
of Livingston)

Westland

4.6%
43228
Westland

Downtown/Franklinton

4.3%
43215, 222
Downtown, Franklinton

Northland

3.8%
43229, 231
Northland, Minerva Park

SW

2.8%
43119, 123
Grove City

NW

2.6%
43016, 017, 026, 085, 212, 220,
221, 235
Dublin, Hilliard, Worthington,
UA, Grandview

NE

2.6%
43004, 054, 081, 230
Gahanna, Westerville, New
Albany

High St Corridor

2.3%
43201, 202, 210, 214
Short North, Milo Grogan, OSU
area, Clintonville

SE

1.3%
43109, 110, 125, 137, 217
Canal Winchester, Groveport

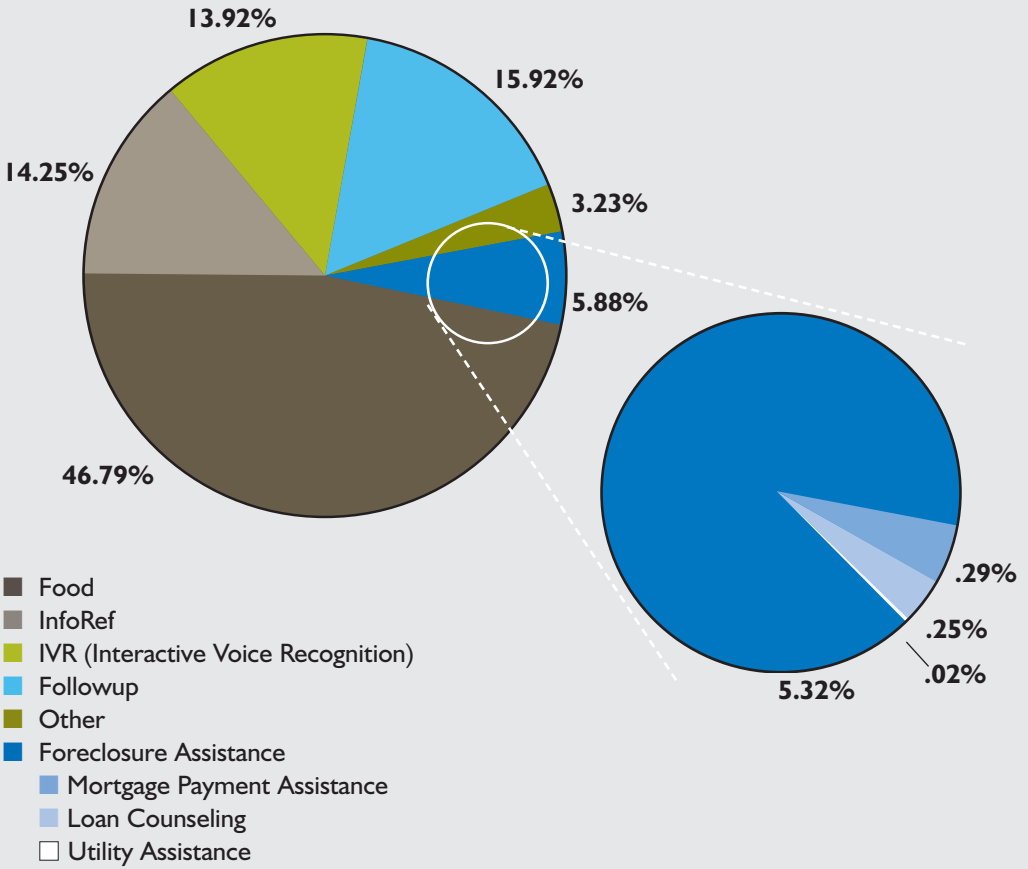
Outside Franklin Co.

0.7%
*All zip codes located primarily out-
side Franklin County*

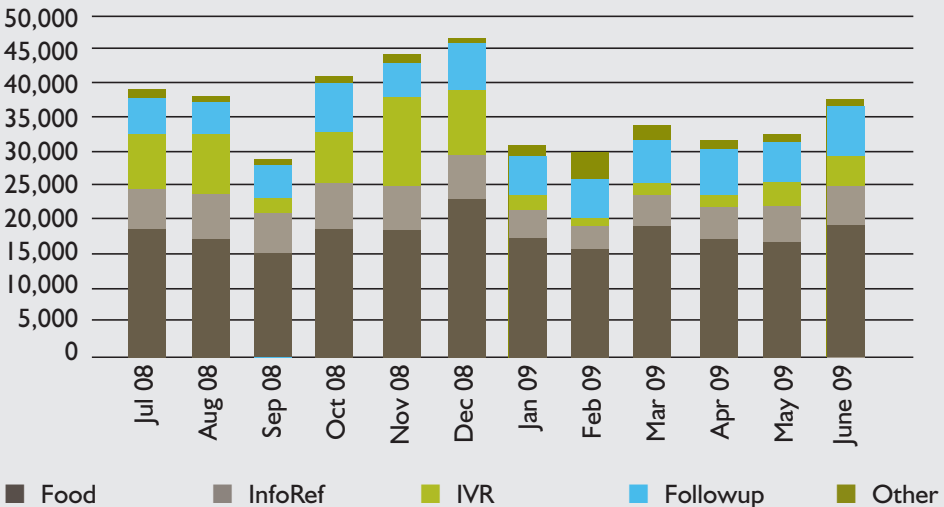
NA

10.3%

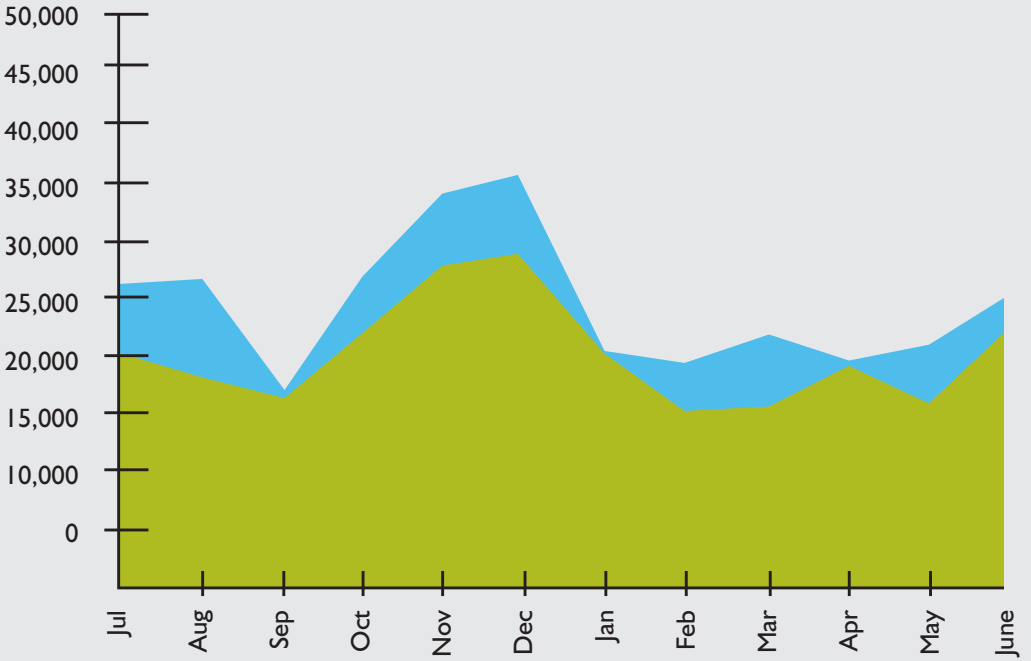
Distribution of Calls Answered by Type, FY 2009



Distribution of Calls by Month, FY 2009

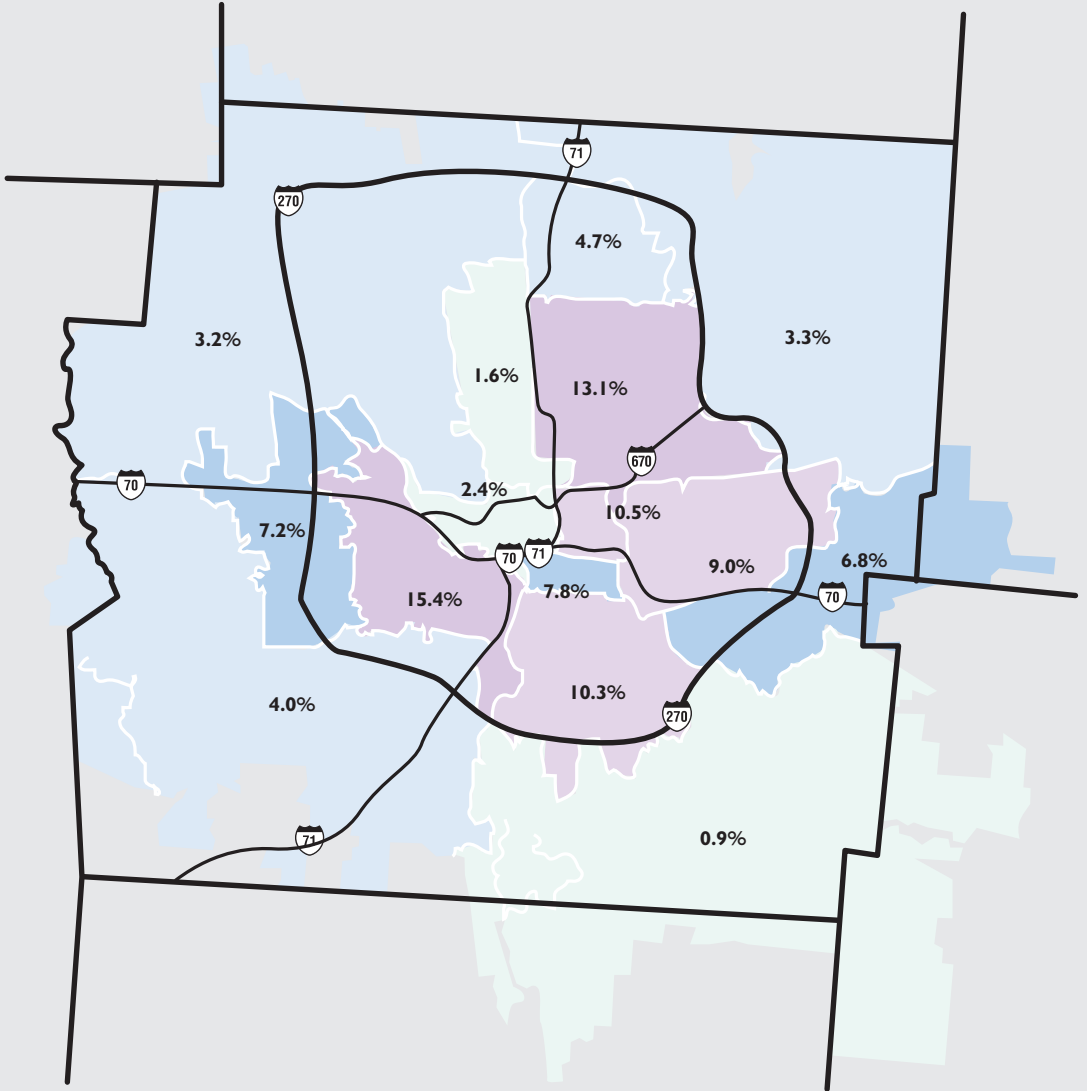


Calls Answered per Month, FY 2008 & FY 2009
 excluding VITA calls

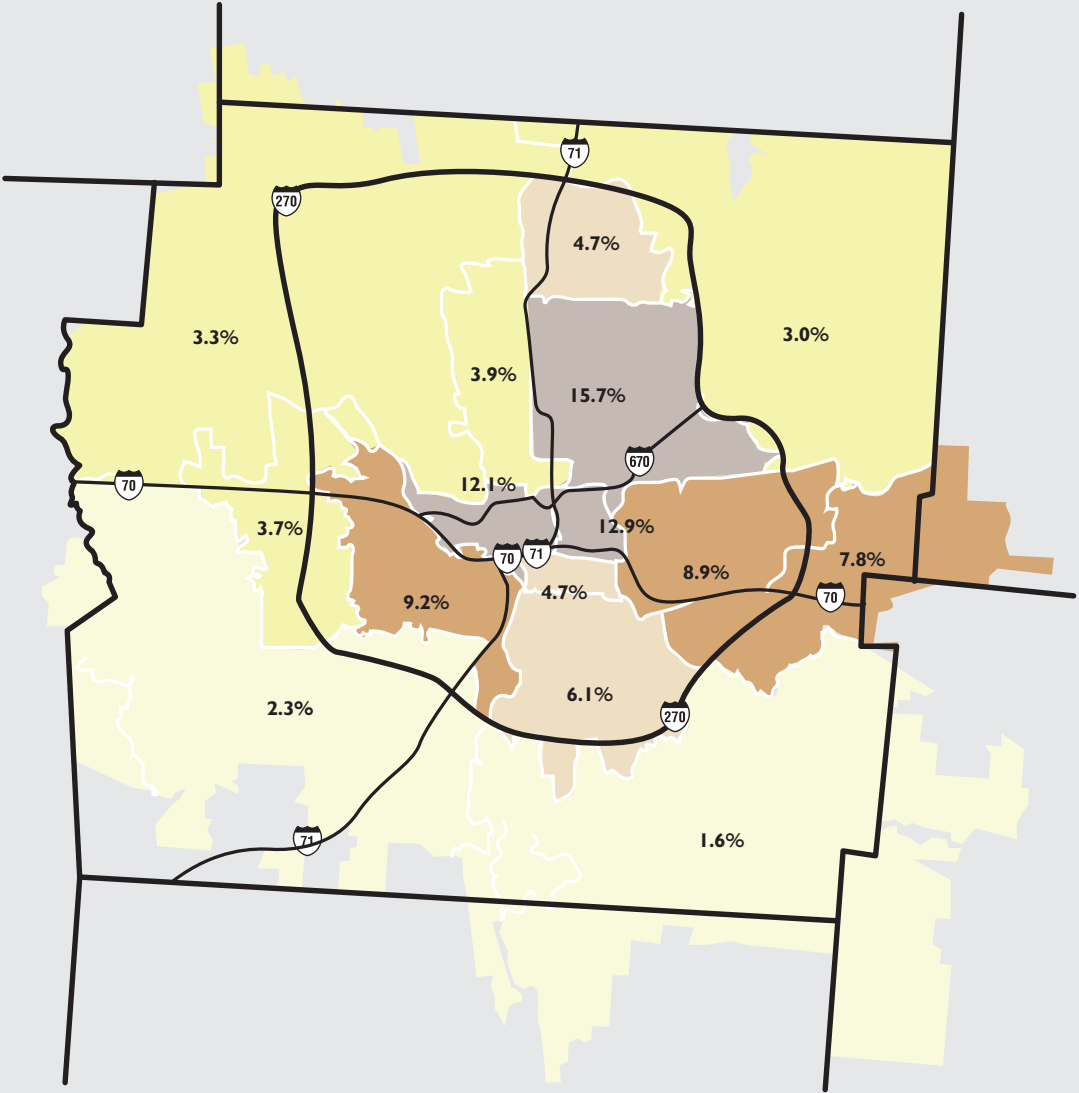


| MONTH | FY 2009 | FY 2008 |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Jul | 32,731 | 25,599 |
| Aug | 32,978 | 23,475 |
| Sept | 23,769 | 22,533 |
| Oct | 33,749 | 27,439 |
| Nov | 38,889 | 33,091 |
| Dec | 40,195 | 34,758 |
| Jan | 25,472 | 25,038 |
| Feb | 24,171 | 20,241 |
| Mar | 27,521 | 20,618 |
| Apr | 24,990 | 24,047 |
| May | 26,197 | 20,961 |
| June | 30,026 | 27,033 |
| TOTAL | 360,688 | 304,833 |

Calls Annually for Food



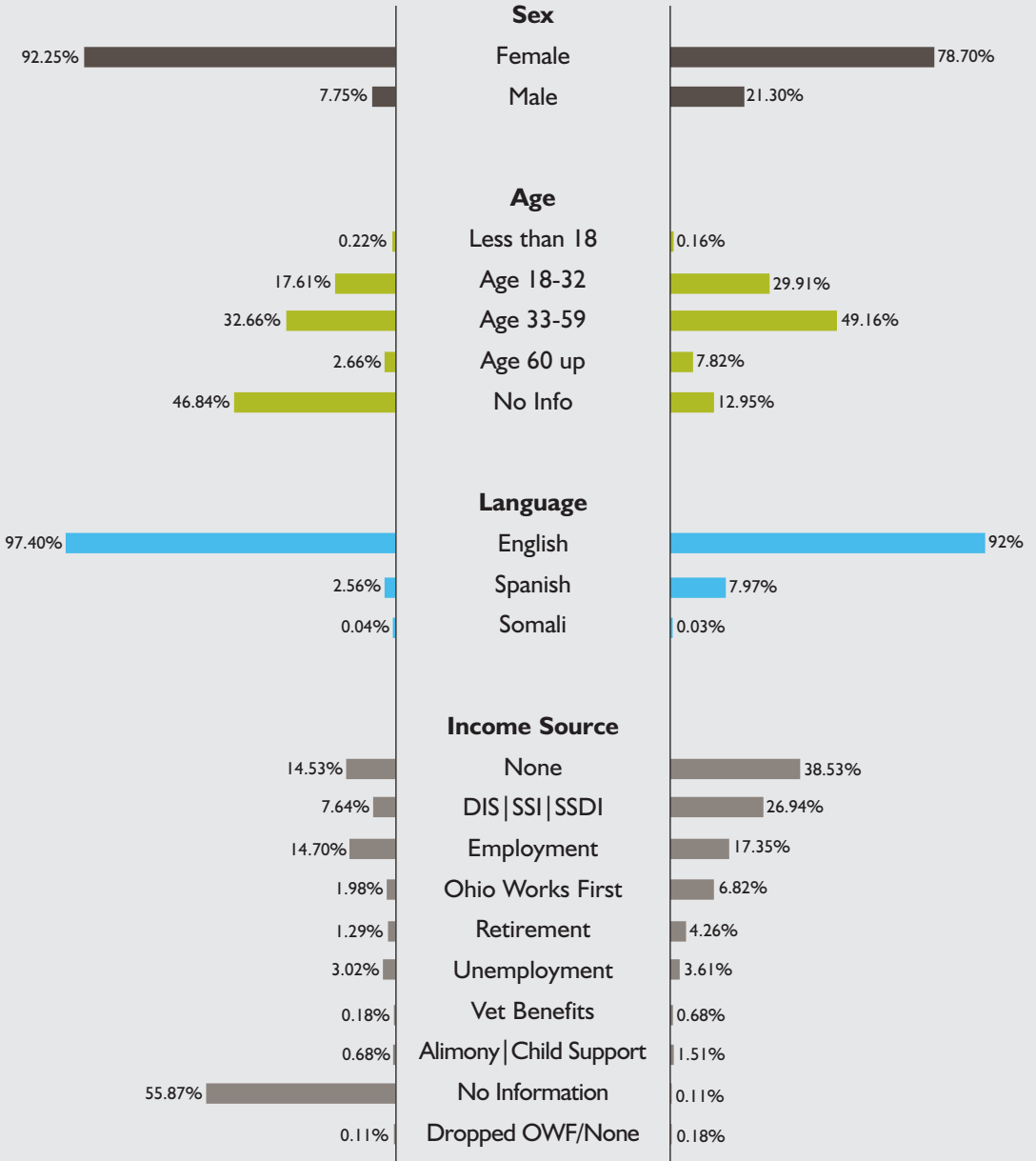
Calls Annually for Information and Referral



Characteristics of Callers, FY 2009

Info/Ref Callers

Food Callers



Financial SUMMARY

Year Incorporated 1984

REVENUE

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Government Contributions | 2,136,953 |
| United Way Contributions | 244,800 |
| In-Kind Contributions | 161,167 |
| Directory sales, fees, workshops and consultations | 39,935 |
| | 79,931 |

TOTAL **2,662,786**

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Information Services | 1,482,293 |
| Volunteer Training and Consultation | 559,999 |
| RSVP | 126,845 |
| Foster Grandparent Program | 505,279 |

Supporting Services

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Management and General Development | 206,644 |
| | 3,755 |

TOTAL **2,884,815**

NON-OPERATING REVENUE (EXPENSE)

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Interest Income | 5,704 |
| Other Income | 11,493 |
| Interest Expense | (1,972) |

TOTAL **(206,804)**



Special GIFTS

ADAMH Board of Franklin
County
John M. and Janet H.
Adams
Laura Aeh
African American
Alzheimer's and Wellness
Association
The Allstate Foundation
Almost Family
Holly A. Antos
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Paul Bittner
Pamella J. Blalock
Domenic Y. Bradley
Paul Breen
The Brookdale Foundation
Group
Dionne L. Brown
Kathleen Bryant
Beth Christine Bushey
William Carter
Jeffrey R. Cawley
Central Ohio Area Agency
on Aging
ChaseTek
Marilee Chinnici-Zuercher
City of Columbus
Cindi Clark-Gillotte
Clinton Carvell Inc.
Cohen Community
Foundation
Gale T. Cole
Columbus City Schools
Columbus Clippers
Columbus Dental Society
The Columbus Foundation
Columbus Literacy Council
Columbus Rotary
Columbus State
Community College

Columbus Urban Area
Initiative for Homeland
Security
Corporation for National
Service
Elizabeth B. Crane
Crystal Classics
Alison L. Davis
Victoria Dean
Monique Dickerson
Kathleen Direnna
Dublin Cleaners
Dublin Dance Centre &
Gymnastics
Eastland Career Center
Alice and Robert Eck
Employment for Seniors
Carrie M. Feltman
Mabel Freeman
Sheila Finch
Robert C. Finney II
Pamela R. Fisher
Franklin County Children
Services
Franklin County
Commissioners
Franklin County Emergency
Management Agency
Franklin County Job and
Family Services
Franklin County Office on
Aging
Franklin County Treasurer
Evelyn Fronczak
Gayle Holton Design
Gethel Z. Jones
Entertainment
Giant Eagle
Jim and Ida Copenhaver
Ginter Fund
Dee Dee and Herb
Glimcher

Charles Michael Godsey
Donald M. Goldbaum
Good Source
Governor's Office of Faith-
Based and Community
Initiatives
Sandra L. Grant
Brian R. Graves
Greater Horizons Public
Giving Fund
Habilitation Services
Dian Hackett
Karen J. Hairston
Steve Haman
Ashlee M. Hamilton
Jonda Hamilton
Vincent and Donna
Hamparian
HandsOn Network
Harmony Ball Company
Phil Hartmann
Heart of Gold Foundation
Frances Helton
Mary Henry
Aimee Hilligoss
Home Depot
Tara L. Hower
Beth Hubbard
Fern Hunt
Mary Menkedick Ionno
Linda R. Jackson
Marguerethe A. Jaede
Frank E. Jakob
D.A. James
Deborah S. James
Jeff Realty
Lawrence Kaye, DDS
Sharon R. Keaney
Karen Kelly
Leon and Susan Kessel
Leah Michelle Kinney
Billie Sue Kyger, DDS

Sandra K. LaFollette
Amy Leibrand
LifeCare Alliance
The Limited
Lutheran Social Services
Mack Mattress Outlet
Tani Mann
Betty Martz
A.E. Wallace Maurer
Judith Wright McDonald
Laura McDowell
Joseph and Johanna Meara
Nathan Ralph Meeker
Mentoring Center
Bernadette Miller
Terry and Martha Miller
Craig H. Mosier II
NACCHO
Nationwide
Nationwide Children's
Hospital
Duncan Nesbitt
Tracia A. Newman
Karen Nokes
Elizabeth J. Nolan
Ohio Association of County
Behavior Health
Associations
Ohio Association of Second
Harvest Foodbanks
Ohio Attorney General
Richard Cordray

Ohio Community Service
Council
Ohio Department of
Health
Ohio Department of Job
and Family Services
Ohio Office on Aging
Debbie S. Ore
Robyn-Christy Parris
Lynn Pease
Dr. William Pease
Points of Light Foundation
Anne Powell Fund
Prime Homecare
Shaneice Rash
Brenda Reed
Susan Reid
Lili Reitz
Georgeanne and Michael
Reuter
Lucinda Reynolds
Jeannette Ross
Lori J. Rutledge
Nicole and Deron Seals
Onder Secen
Gregory J. Sech
Michael Sexton
Felicia Shanklin
Jane Smirniotopoulos

Emily A. Smith
Faith Snow
Rita Soronen
Linda and James Staley
Sarah Elizabeth Starr
Kevin Christopher Steward
Sylvan R. Steward
Target
Time Warner Cable
Barbara L. Turner
Lisa R. Tuvelle, DDS
United Way of Central
Ohio
Visiting Nurses of LifeCare
Kevin E. Walker
WellPoint Associate Giving
Jennifer L. Whipple
Angela White
Richard Wilcox
Margaret Wildi
James Wilmers
Bridget M. Wolf
Brian L. Young
Frederick W. Ziegler
John and Linda Ziegler



FIRSTLINK 2009 Board of Directors

Kathy Loken, President
Mary Menkedick, Vice President
Roy Lydic, Treasurer
Laura Aeh, Secretary

Mary Jo Gerlach, Marcie Granson, Philip K. Hartmann, Daniel Hurley,
Leon David Kessel, Nicole Seals, Anthony Sharet, Mary Slane, Ken
Wallace, Jenny Whipple, Carol Zimmerman

FIRSTLINK PRESIDENT/CEO

Marilee Chinnici-Zuercher

MISSION

FIRSTLINK's mission is to strengthen and enhance the quality of life in our community by mobilizing volunteers and connecting people to critical community resources.

FIRSTLINK

195 North Grant Avenue, Columbus, OH 43215

(614) 221-6766

24-hour information: (614) 221-2255

Fax: (614) 224-6866

www.firstlink.org

SUPPORTED BY

United Way of Central Ohio • ADAMH Board of Franklin County • Franklin County Commissioners • City of Columbus • Corporation for National & Community Service • Points of Light Institute & HandsOn Network • Alliance of Information & Referral Systems



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Columbus, OH 43215

Nonprofit
Organization
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