

# 211 RESPONDS TO URGENT NEEDS



**211 assists in times of  
disaster and widespread  
need**

## FACT

**211 partnered with local VOAD and emergency management agencies to respond to highly localized flash flooding and other natural disasters in Pennsylvania.**

During highly localized, but damaging flash flooding in the fall of 2018, PA 211 partnered with PEMA and local VOADs to gather damage assessment information needed to make the case for assistance and registered 69 callers into Crisis Cleanup. When the history-making snowstorm hit Erie in December 2017, PA 211 responded to 1,264 requests for help and were able to screen callers for eligibility for Team Rubicon snow shoveling services.<sup>1</sup>

## FACT

**211 stood up a statewide text response to support employees impacted by the partial federal government shutdown who did not know when they would receive their next paycheck.**

In January 2019, 187 individuals subscribed to text resource alerts which were pushed out by PA 211 daily to help connect people to help and identify their options to balance household needs. 237 people who identified themselves as impacted by the shutdown contacted 211 directly for assistance with food, utilities, housing payments, child care or transportation. United Way and 211 worked together to assemble a list of resources on a mobile-responsive web page, and more than 1,000 unique users accessed it.<sup>1</sup>

## FACT

**PA 211 is part of a national network of contact centers who we can call upon to help Pennsylvania respond to large-scale regional or statewide disasters.**

Pennsylvania 211 contact centers have come to the aid of other 211s in locations such as Florida to help in times of high need such as hurricane response through both phone and text support. During Hurricane Irma, several PA 211 centers were activated to help Floridians. 211s in the United States regularly provide assistance across state lines to respond to flooding, wildfires, hurricanes, and even man-made disasters such as the September 11 attack.

**PLEASE VOTE TO INCLUDE FUNDING FOR PENNSYLVANIA'S 211 SYSTEM IN THE STATE BUDGET TO  
SUPPORT 211'S CAPACITY TO HELP OUR COMMUNITIES IN TIMES OF DISASTER OR GREAT NEED.**

# WHAT IS 211?

Every hour of every day, people need essential human services. Through 211 people connect to a wide range of services from disaster relief to utility assistance, senior citizen programs, emergency food, job counseling, youth programs and much more. The information provided comes from the 211 statewide resource database. The common software also records information about consumer contacts and needs. PA 211 is the single-most comprehensive source of assistance and volunteer information covering all sectors of service both private and public.

## 211 IN PENNSYLVANIA

211 is a health and human services referral line that has been established nationwide for the past 20 years. Last year, more than 200,000 Pennsylvanians contacted PA 211 for help on a range of issues. These are veterans, victims of drug and alcohol addiction, seniors, and job seekers, among many others. Currently, PA 211 receives a majority of its funding from the Pennsylvania United Way network, but also receives investments from state government and private entities.

**211 strives to be a public-private partnership for information and referral via all communication channels.**

For the past two fiscal years, Pennsylvania committed \$750,000 to 211. We urge the state to continue to partner with United Way to grow the 211 service. We are asking for a \$1.5 million annual investment to build the 211 network and increase the consistency of services across the state. With this continued investment, PA 211 can enhance its current capacity to help more residents on their path to self-sufficiency, and provide data to drive human service planning and policy improvements.

United Way and PA 211 hope to increase efficiency and effectiveness by partnering to eliminate silos for state information and referral functions, currently housed in multiple state agencies. PA 211 has partnered with state government on a couple initiatives, but plan to continue to build our partnership to provide information and referral services, as well as to provide data to all community based organizations, health care providers and others who have an interest in addressing social determinants of health. PA 211 has also been activated during disaster response to help with public information, rumor control, volunteer and donation coordination as well as non-emergency contacts. We can continue to build capacity within the 211 system to further our partnership with PEMA and FEMA to have a disaster relief strategy in place, so 211 can be used as an information line and leave 911 open for emergencies.

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**To find out more about how you can help:**

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