



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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United Way of Pennsylvania Advocates for Critical 211 Funding
Advocates call on Legislators to fund vital resource for all Pennsylvanians

Harrisburg, PA - Yesterday, the United Way of Pennsylvania (UWPA) and its affiliate members, alongside PA 211 volunteers and front-line workers, convened a press conference and advocacy effort to underscore the importance of support for PA 211 - a critical service for Pennsylvanians ahead of the passage of the state budget in June.

PA 211 is a free, confidential service that connects Pennsylvanians with all the health and human services in their area that are available to help. In 2023 alone, the service fielded over 1.2 million calls, texts, and clicks, with housing and shelter services ranking as the most requested service, underscoring the indispensability of 2-1-1, which remains accessible to 100% of Pennsylvanians 24/7/365.

During the press conference, United Way of Pennsylvania, President Kristen Rotz outlined the organization's strategic vision for expanding assistance and detailed the United Way's efforts to support more households in 2025. "We want to help to get the word out that PA 211 is available," Rotz said. "We bring together the best of technology and people to help Pennsylvanians meet their basic needs and advance on a path towards financial stability."

Due to a generous initial \$4 million investment received from the Commonwealth in the 2022-23 budget, the team at 211 was able to enhance all resources and expended funds to improve agency response times and numerous services that are available to all Pennsylvanians, but now the organization is asking to raise its \$750,000 appropriation to \$2 million to adequately fund the service.

In addition to funding for 211, UWPA is also advocating for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to help working families. This solution will be immensely helpful to ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families. Though wages for the lowest paid jobs have risen across the country at the fastest rate in four decades, the number of households struggling to get by in Pennsylvania grew by more than 106,000, from 2021 to 2022.

Since 2010, the number of working Pennsylvania households that were struggling to afford a basic needs budget increased by a net of about 270,000 households. Data from 2022 depicts the highest number of households struggling to make ends meet, a total of more than 2.1 million households or 41%, according to a new update from United Way of Pennsylvania and its research partner United For ALICE. HB 1272 (Rep. Christina Sappey) and SB 848 (Senator Lynda Culver) are pending in the state legislature to provide an earned income tax credit to working families.

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About PA 211

PA 211 is a statewide telephone, text, chat and self-serve web search for health and human services resources that is available 24/7/365. No other program has its “finger on the pulse” of Pennsylvania’s greatest needs in real-time. It’s a vital part of United Way’s efforts to build stronger communities and fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community. A guided search for community resources, and a chat feature with translation capabilities for more than 70 different languages, is also available at www.pa211.org. To reach a PA 211 resource navigator, text your zip code to 898-211 or dial 211 from your phone.

About United Way of Pennsylvania (UWP)

United Way of Pennsylvania is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to champion United Way as a leader and partner in building more financially resilient families and thriving communities throughout Pennsylvania. United Way of Pennsylvania envisions an inclusive, impactful, and collaborative network of United Ways working with business, community, faith, and government leaders to advance equitable access to health, education and financial stability for all Pennsylvanians.

United Way is committed to raising charitable dollars that are invested in community impact work which addresses needs specific to the local community. In many cases, these funds support public-private partnerships that further leverage state taxpayer dollars.

United Way also commits to advocate for policy change which will help more Pennsylvania families and communities achieve the basic building blocks of a good quality of life in Pennsylvania. UWP is a membership organization which serves as the voice for 41-member United Ways and 1 United Fund across the Commonwealth.

As the largest private funder of the 211 network in Pennsylvania, United Ways continue to strengthen and support 211 as another way to build stronger communities and create opportunities for all.

Note: Media has permission to use the following web sites for additional community-level data and visual assets:

PA 211 Counts Community needs data, updated daily, can be sorted by county, zip code and legislative district <https://pa.211counts.org/> (Note that this dashboard reporting only includes phone, text and some chat interactions statewide)

PA 211 Web site, including public guided search for community resources and chat: www.pa211.org