

Dial 211 for Essential Community Services

In many states, dialing “211” provides individuals and families in need with a shortcut through what can be a bewildering maze of health and human service agency phone numbers. By simply dialing 211, those in need of assistance can be referred and sometimes connected to appropriate agencies and community organizations.

Dialing 211 helps direct callers to services for, among others, the elderly, the disabled, those who do not speak English, those having a personal crisis, those with limited reading skills, and those who are new to their communities.

211 is available to approximately 270 million people, or about 90 percent of the total U.S. population. It covers all 50 states (including 41 states with more than 90 percent coverage), the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. To find out whether 211 services are offered in your area and to obtain more information, visit www.211.org.

How 211 Works

211 works a bit like 911. Calls to 211 are routed by the local telephone company to a local or regional calling center. The 211 center’s referral specialists receive requests from callers, access databases of resources available from private and public health and human service agencies, match the callers’ needs to available resources, and link or refer them directly to an agency or organization that can help.

Types of Referrals Offered by 211

- **Basic Human Needs Resources** – including food and clothing banks, shelters, rent assistance, and utility assistance.
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** – including health insurance programs; Medicaid and Medicare; maternal health resources; health insurance programs for children; medical information lines, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, and drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.
- **Work Support** – including financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance and education programs.
- **Access to Services in Non-English Languages** – including language translation and interpretation services to help non-English-speaking people find public resources. (Foreign language services vary by location.)
- **Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities** – including adult day care, community meals, respite care, home health care, transportation and homemaker services.
- **Children, Youth and Family Support** – including child care, after-school programs, educational programs for low-income families, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring and protective services.

- **Suicide Prevention** – referrals to suicide prevention help organizations. Callers can also dial the following National Suicide Prevention Hotline numbers, which are operated by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the US Department of Health and Human Services:
 - 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)
 - 1-888-SUICIDE (1-888-784-2433)
 - 1-877-SUICIDA (1-877-784-2432) (Spanish)

Those who wish to donate time or money to community help organizations can also do so by dialing 211.

Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

Accessible formats

To request this article in an accessible format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

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