



What is 211 Day?

- February 11th , (2/11) is 211 Day across North America!
- On 211 Day, United Way Centraide, 211 service providers and their supporters use the opportunity to raise awareness of this valuable service in the community.

What is 211?

- When you need non-emergency support dial 2-1-1 or visit bc211.ca
- 211 is a free, confidential, nationwide service that connects people to critical social and community supports
- 211 acts as the front door to support, helping people navigate the complex network of government and community programs and services quickly to find what they need for their unique situation
- 211 service is accessible 24 hours a day and in over 150 languages.
- When you dial 2-1-1 you are connected to a trained professional who will listen to you and help you find the right information and supports
- In BC, 211 call service expanded across the province in 2020. All BC residents are encouraged to visit BC211 online at bc211.ca. This enables users to search for local programs and social services 24/7, 7 days a week.

What role did 211 play in supporting communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Federal funding allowed United Way Centraide Canada to increase capacity across provinces where 211 already existed, and expand the service into parts of the country that weren't already covered. 211 service is now accessible in all provinces and territories.
- In BC, the provincial government partnered with United Way Lower Mainland and BC211 to expand 211 telephone service across the province, in part to support the Safe Seniors, Strong Communities program. This enabled seniors to register for volunteer support and be connected with local volunteers for grocery and other essential service deliveries.
- Calls began almost immediately and continue to increase, demonstrating the need for a service like 211.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of 211. With government programs changing regularly, and community-based programs and services having to adjust how they serve clients under always evolving public health guidelines, 211 helps people navigate the complex network of support.
- The pandemic has also put many people in the position of needing support for the first time in their lives.
- People like the fact that they can dial 2-1-1 and talk to somebody who can help them sort through the maze of information to figure out what will work for their unique situation.



How 211 helps decision makers:

- 211 is a confidential service. Unidentifying data is recorded including the needs identified and whether or not those needs could be met.
- This information helps decision makers figure out where more supports are needed.
- 211 is also sometimes called upon by different levels of governments and organizations to help register people for new programs or supports.

Additional information and acknowledgements:

- In 2020, United Way Centraide Canada announced the expansion of 211 across the country through an investment from the Emergency Community Support Fund by the Government of Canada.
- The investment has enabled United Way Centraide Canada, through its network of 211 partners, to increase the capacity of existing 211 services and make 211 fully available nationwide.
- United Way Centraide Canada thanks the Government of Canada for its investment in 211 at this critical time.
- In BC, we thank local government and other partners for the recent BC211 expansion to telephone service and supporting the Safe Seniors, Strong Communities initiative.

Quick facts

- **2001** - In response to the application submitted by United Way Centraide Canada and its partners, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) assigned 2-1-1 as the toll-free helpline for information about community, social, health and government services.
- **2002** - The first 211 service opened in Toronto.
- **2004** - 211 launched in Edmonton by United Way of the Alberta Capital Region and the Support Network.
- **2005** - 211 launched in Calgary by United Way of Calgary and the Distress Centre Calgary.
- **2012** - Over 750,000 people called 211.
- **2013** - 211 launched for residents of Nova Scotia (February).
- **March 2020** – Safe Seniors, Strong Communities initiative launched and 211 service expanded across the province.
- **By summer 2020**, 211 service was available in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and most of Quebec with partial online service in Manitoba.
- **Dec 2020** - 211 achieved full service across all of Canada