



Hello,

Welcome to the 42nd edition of our 211 newsletter, where we share information on 211 services and benefits, funding updates, and opportunities for you to become an advocate for 211.

## 211: A Lifeline for Our Community

It's hard to believe that we have entered the third year of the pandemic. We wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on how our 211 team, working together with our amazing 211 partners, advisory council and generous funders, has stepped up to support our community during this challenging time and all the critical connections to services 211 has made for local families and neighbors in need.

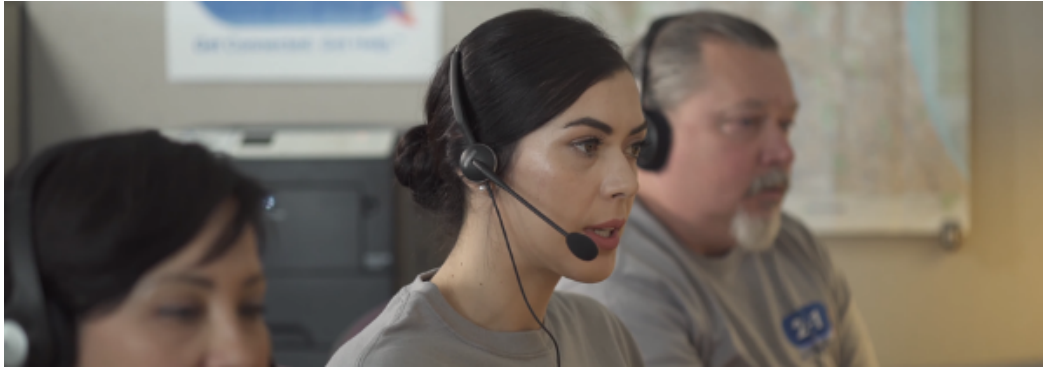
Whether it has been providing reliable information about the pandemic, testing or vaccination sites, or helping people stay in their homes, put food on the table and pay bills, 211 has been a lifeline for tens of thousands of people across the county who have found themselves in crisis including many who never thought they might need help.

**In fact, we recently reached more than 135,000 contacts to 211, or 135,000 connections to critical services and help since we launched 2-1/2 years ago!**

Throughout the pandemic, our 211 team has acted and adapted to overcome evolving challenges and to be there to answer the call. Some highlights:

- Responded to not only an increase in call volume, but also longer call times with more complex situations and needs.
- Kept the 211 Contact Center's comprehensive database current by responding to constantly changing resources and services.
- Teamed up with the Health Department to promote wellness resources throughout the county and provide vaccine promotion, education, and referrals.
- Made it easier for people to connect with rental assistance by creating a centralized screening process through 211.
- Partnered with The Alliance for Human Services early in the pandemic to refer food insecure families unable to leave their home to free food delivery services.

211 continues to make a tremendous impact on the lives of so many in our community, every day. We're still here to help every person in our community, offering the assistance they deserve in their moments of need. Together, we are building a stronger, more equitable Lake County community.



## 211 to Expand Beyond Lake County for All Illinoisans

**We are thrilled to share that the state's FY 2023 budget includes a grant to expand 211 coverage to the rest of Illinois.** Today, 211 serves more than 96% of America's population but less than 36% of the population of Illinois.

The plan is to expand 211 coverage through accredited contact centers to every county across the state so that all Illinoisans have easy access to quality information, resources and assistance. The funding will allow the Illinois 211 Board to plan and prioritize the launch of 211 in uncovered counties, with full state coverage by 2024.

"We are grateful to State Senator Melinda Bush for her tremendous leadership and to all the legislators who have supported a statewide 211 system," said Kristi Long, Chair of the Illinois 211 Board and President & CEO of United Way of Lake County. "Many more lives will be improved and saved through this expansion. Lake County is proud to help lead the way to bring 211 services to all Illinois communities and serve as a model 211 program."

For more information, [click here](#).



## Mental Health and 211: A Network of Comfort, Hope, Solutions

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and an excellent time to recognize the growing number of Americans experiencing mental or behavioral health concerns and to reduce stigma. Here in Lake County, mental health has consistently ranked in the top five requested needs to our 211 helpline.

211 is here for those who are struggling but might not know where to turn. Our resource navigators are caring individuals who are experienced, trained specialists and more than 90% are bilingual. We are here to guide people to appropriate resources and advocate for those who need support.

Whether you are looking for help for yourself or are worried about someone else, we can help you find available mental health resources and services. All calls are completely confidential and can be anonymous. We will listen, judgment-free, and work to find the best solution whether you need counseling and support groups or long-term care. You're not alone. We're here to help you take the first step on your journey.

Call **211** or text your zip code to **898211** to speak with someone who can help. 211 is free and available 24/7 in English, Spanish and 150 other languages. If you prefer to search for resources online, visit [211LakeCounty.org](https://211LakeCounty.org).

Always call 911 first if you or someone you love is experiencing a life-threatening medical emergency or may be a danger to someone else. For immediate mental health assistance, Lake County's Crisis Care Program is available 24/7 at 847-377-8088.



**211 TRAINING**  
for Asian American  
Health & Human Services Staff



## 211 Training for Asian American Health & Human Services Staff

In celebration of May being both Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and Mental Health Awareness Month, we are partnering with Lake County Treasurer Holly Kim to host 211 Training for Asian American health and human services staff. This training also supports our goal to increase awareness of 211 within Lake County's Asian American community.

Register for free to attend the virtual training on May 24, from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

[REGISTER](#)



### Spread Awareness of 211

Help us continue to promote and raise awareness of 211 and the array of services available through the 211 network so that everyone in Lake County gets connected to resources in their moments of need.

Our **211 toolkit** includes a wide selection of bilingual printed and downloadable materials including rack cards, wallet cards, posters, flyers in multiple languages, videos, social graphics, and other materials to help you spread the word to your organization, clients, and community members.

Beginning May 2, our office will be open Monday – Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. to fulfill **print material requests**. To arrange a pick-up time, please contact Sara Martinez at 847-775-1026 or [Sara.Martinez@uwlakeco.org](mailto:Sara.Martinez@uwlakeco.org).

### Attention Service Providers

If you are a 211 health and human services partner offering summer opportunities for community members, please be sure to submit information to 211 by emailing [211LakeCounty@icfs.org](mailto:211LakeCounty@icfs.org) with details.

## Supporter Spotlight

“211 has quickly become a valuable partner in getting information and resources to those in need in our community. We are seeing a significant portion of our clients contacting us because of reaching out to 211 first. This is especially true of those who are new to our area and don’t have the local knowledge that longer-term residents have. We appreciate the ease of use and the informational support that 211 provides for the residents of Benton Township.”

–Larry Booth, Benton Township Supervisor



## Our Community of 211 Donors

Thank you to our community partners and many individuals for their generous financial support to help us sustain 211 for Lake County. [View our list of funding partners here.](#)

## How can you help?

1. Share this email and encourage your network to [opt-in to 211 communications](#).
2. [Help sustain 211 with an online donation](#).
3. Follow United Way of Lake County on social media to receive more timely 211 updates.



Best regards,

**Deanna Olmem**

Manager, 211 and Safe & Stable Families