

Let's Talk in Over 200 Languages: Let's Talk 211

If you're travelling to an international destination for a vacation or business, you can generally get by with a mini travel guide that will suggest where to eat and stay, and give you a few key words in the local language. That's usually all you need to enjoy a week or two of foreign living.

But what if you suddenly moved to Canada as an immigrant or refugee and could speak only a little or no English or French? How would you find the help you need? As a resident, there is a lot more to know than the location of restaurants and tourist sites. You need real information on serious topics.

On May 8th, United Way Central Alberta unveiled its new 211 banner at the City of Red Deer's Let's Talk event at Parkland Mall. The [banner](#) reads "211 – Connecting you to the help you need," in English, Spanish, Ukrainian, Farsi, Arabic, and Russian.

The different scripts on the banner caught the eye of passers-by, and encouraged them to learn more about 211. We spoke to many immigrants whose faces lit up when they learned they could get pointed to the help they needed in their own language. Our 211 call centre has access to translators in over 200 languages, and counting!

In the end, we were able to get the 211 message out to more long-time residents and newcomers. The fridge magnets we created to match the languages translated were a great hit – especially with the kids. One young boy asked to take several Arabic magnets to give to his friends and family, and that made our day!



Many thanks to Gloriel and the teaching team at the Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E.) for helping us identify the most spoken languages in Red Deer, and for translating the 211 message for us. We'd also like to thank the City of Red Deer for including us in their Let's Talk event this year.

If you would like more information about 211, you can contact us by [email](#) or visit the [online database](#). (Note the handy new chat function added to online services.) And don't forget, you can simply call 211 directly and ask them a few questions. There's no better way to find out what services they offer.

211 – Help is just a phone call away.