



United Way
of Northeast Louisiana

United Way NELA 211 Fields Record Number of Calls During Pandemic to Provide Support to Those in Need

Monroe, La, July 27, 2021 – The 211 Impact Survey Results reveal that in 2020 alone, the 211-network made 27.8 million connections across America to critical services and help. This an increase of nearly 100% from the 14 million connections in 2019. Locally, United Way of Northeast Louisiana 211 responded to nearly 21,000 calls to 211 over the past year, a 50% increase over the year before. The most notable increase for 2020 is a 150% increase in connections to food programs. This increase in calls to 211 for help highlights the magnitude of the need for human services as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted millions of lives in 2020.

211 is a free and confidential service that helps people across North America find local resources when they are in crisis. United Way of Northeast Louisiana operates 211, providing information on more than 987 agencies and 1506 services across a variety of human services, including: food assistance, COVID-19 info, and mental health resources. With a presence in more than 96% of U.S. communities, 211 is the most comprehensive source of information about local resources and services in the country. Each trained specialist is local to his/her community and is equipped to identify the appropriate resources and advocate for those who need support.

To help more people learn about the 211 resource, the Ad Council, United Way Worldwide and the Rockefeller Foundation announced a new partnership and campaign to launch a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) titled Guiding Light. The Guiding Light campaign aims to encourage those who may still be feeling the economic, social and other impacts in the wake of the pandemic to call 211 or visit unitedwaynela.org/211 for support and resources.

“Here in Northeast Louisiana, the problems of COVID-19 aren’t over and are disproportionately impacting people of color. Unfortunately, there are many people who don’t know how to access local resources to help them navigate challenges they may be facing,” said Janet Durden, President of United Way of Northeast Louisiana. “211 is the go-to resource, but more people need to know about it, and I am grateful that the Guiding Light PSA will help more people in our region get access to the services that could help them on the path to recovery.”

The Guiding Light campaign includes online video, broadcast, radio spots, digital media and outdoor advertising in both English and Spanish, illustrating 211 as the guiding light for families who are struggling financially or emotionally. From food assistance and help paying bills to health care answers and mental health resources, 211 can be the guiding light when times get dark.

Watch the PSA: <https://unwnela.com/guidinglight>

“211 specialists throughout the U.S. and Canada have addressed front line needs this year, more than ever,” said Suzanne McCormick, U.S. President, United Way Worldwide. “This new partnership will help increase awareness of 211 and the array of services available through the



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211 network to help those in need. As a result of this partnership, we hope that even more people will get access to resources and supports that will help communities continue to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

To learn more about 211 and ways it can help, visit unitedwaynela.org/211. If you are seeking assistance, you can call 211 to speak to a specialist directly about accessing public and private resources.

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United Way of Northeast Louisiana works with volunteers, donors, and other organizations locally to create lasting community change in the areas of Education, Income, and Health—the building blocks for a good quality of life. For more information about United Way of Northeast Louisiana, visit unitedwaynela.org, dial 211 on any landline or mobile phone, a free call 24/7, or text your zip code to 898-211.

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