



211 Message Architecture | May 2019 (v1.0)

We know 211 is an unmatched critical service in communities across the U.S., but how should we talk about 211 to build even more awareness and support?

**Well-constructed messages that are consistently used across all 211s
- speaking with *One Voice* -
will help drive awareness and support,
and will amplify the impact and value of the 211 brand.**

How do we know we are conveying the right messages in ways that are meaningful to key audiences, messages that inspire them to heed to a specific call to action? Without marketing research, we don't know for sure.

That's why United Way Worldwide (UWW) tested the following messages across core target audiences - United Way donors and current/prospective 211 clients – to enable us to deliver messages that are emotionally resonant and impactful. Messages that inspire these audiences to engage in key “action intent” as a result, such as learning more about 211, contacting/referring someone to 211, or donating to United Way to support 211.

In addition to new messaging, we also have a new consumer-tested tagline - **“Get Connected. Get Help.”** - that testing shows resonated more strongly with key audiences, is more active and more results oriented than the previous tagline, “Get Connected. Get Answers.”

Also, in attempt to be more intentional with our voice, and in alignment with 211's expanding digital strategy, the term “2-1-1” - often associated with a phone number - **will now be expressed in written form as “211” only**. This will help to reinforce to current/potential clients that 211 is accessible in more ways than by phone (i.e., digital/online/text.) This approach is also consistent with how the other N11 services (e.g., 311, 411, 511 and 911) are promoted.

The following consumer-tested messages should align at the national, regional and local levels, irrespective of local governance.

Whether a 211 is operated by a local United Way or independently operated, every 211 is part of a single, unified 211 network United in our passion to help as many people as possible.

KEY MESSAGES

Blue: top performing key messages across all audiences (United Way donors, current/prospective clients, United Way/211 staff) in UWW message testing research (April 2019)

- **211 provides unmatched, critical services** -- 211 is a vital service leveraged by millions of people across North America. Every day, clients contact 211 to access free and confidential crisis and emergency counseling, disaster assistance, food, health care and insurance assistance, stable housing and utilities payment assistance, employment services, veteran services and childcare and family services.
- **211 provides expert, caring help** -- No matter the situation, the specialists at 211 listen, identify underlying problems, and connect people in need with resources and services in their community that improve their lives.
- **211 meets real needs in real time** -- In 2018 alone, 211s in the US answered more than 11 million calls and almost 1 million texts, chats and emails, helping millions with life-changing support. There is no other network in the country that has a similar pulse on America's needs.
- **211 tackles underlying root causes** – 211 does more than “patch people through” to agencies. Instead, 211 specialists are trained to identify and address root causes of a client's problem – and connect them with a wide range of available resources that meet all the underlying needs, not just the one that prompted the call, text or email.
- **211 exemplifies United Way's fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community.**
- **211 makes the social services ecosystem/network more efficient** by ensuring people in need are connected to agencies that can help them.
- **Through 211, America's needs are brought into focus.**
- **By supporting 211, companies and individuals can be part of solving community problems and helping individuals.**

PRIMARY MESSAGES (The Basics)

What is 211?

211 is a vital service leveraged by millions of people across North America. Every day, clients contact 211 to access free and confidential crisis and emergency counseling, disaster assistance, food, health care and insurance assistance, stable housing and utilities payment assistance, employment services, veteran services and childcare and family services.

What Does 211 Do?

No matter the situation, the specialists at 211 listen, identify underlying problems, and connect people in need with resources and services in their community that improve their lives. In 2018 alone, 211s in the US answered almost 11 million calls and almost 1 million texts, chats and emails, helping millions of people with life-changing support.

Why Does 211 Matter?

211 does more than “patch people through” to agencies. Instead, 211 specialists are trained to identify root causes of a client’s problem – and connect them with a wide range of available resources that meet all the underlying needs, not just the one that prompted the call, text or email.

No other program has its “finger on the pulse” of America’s greatest needs. It’s a vital part of United Way’s efforts to build stronger communities and fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community. 211 makes the social services ecosystem/network more efficient by ensuring people in need are connected to agencies that can help them.