



April 4, 2023

Senate Health and Welfare Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Vermont 211's current funding through the Agency of Human Services and the financial needs of Vermont 211.

Vermont 211 has been "level-funded" for 5 years, despite the continued increase in operating costs. During the last three years, VT 211 has received additional funding due to the pandemic, but AHS has suggested a decrease in funding for VT211 for the FY24 year to the original funding amount of \$532,100. In a board meeting on Wednesday March 22nd to approve the FY24 budget, there was a motion to approve the level funding budget to operate through June 30th 2023. If funding is cut, VT 211 will close July 1st. If funding is level with the current FY23 contract, we will operate Information & Referral (I&R) 9am-3pm only. This motion was approved by members of the board.

I have provided AHS with the figures necessary to continue operation, however if Vermont 211 is offered the same rate of funding we have received since 2018, we will be forced to close operations or bankrupt the organization.

Reducing Hours of operations does not change the need for increased funding, and still creates a negative bottom line with our original funding amount of \$532,100. Below is the annual deficit breakdown at this level funding:

- M-F 9 am – Noon Just Information and Referral (I&R) Contract Needed:  $-\$115,207.96$
- M-F 9 am – 3 pm Just I&R:  $-\$261,648.30$
- M-F 8 am – 4 pm Just I&R:  $-\$358,012.14$
- M-F 8 am – 8 pm I&R + Emergency Housing (EH):  $-\$565,801.81$
- M-F 8 am – 11 pm I&R + EH:  $-\$665,828.02$
- M-F 8 am – 3 am I&R + EH:  $-\$748,760.32$
- M-F 24/5 I&R + EH:  $-\$842,382.99$
- S-S 24/7 I&R + EH:  $-\$872,788.88$  (What VT 211 currently provides to the state)

Vermont 211 is the relied upon service for the state of Vermont that supports some of the most vulnerable in our community. Should Vermont 211 be forced to close on July 1<sup>st</sup>, the following partners and services would be impacted:

- All information and referral and emergency housing calls would have to be answered by someone at AHS.
- VT 211 would no longer be able to support Vermont Emergency Management.
- VT 211 would no longer be the point of contact for Give Way To Freedom / Human Trafficking Hotline.
- We would no longer support local community action agencies with the VITA tax program.
- Database for 988, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline would cease in the State.
- Help Me Grow and the Child Psychiatry Access Program databases would be directly affected.

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**P.O. Box 111 • Essex Junction, Vermont 05453 • Fax: 802-861-2544**  
**Dial 2-1-1 or 1-866-652-4636 • [www.vermont211.org](http://www.vermont211.org)**

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Upon 211's closing, the State of Vermont would have to contract with us to use our current database and put out a new RFP for Information and Referral and Emergency Housing otherwise, staff layoffs will be effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.

I am asking this committee to support an increase in funding to an operational amount. Vermont 211 requests \$1,404,888,88 to continue to provide the crucial services to Vermonters in need and continue to remain an integral part of Vermont's human services.

I appreciate your time and attention to this critical matter and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Gilman

Executive Director  
United Ways of Vermont

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