



United Ways of Vermont

Dear Vermont House and Senate Legislators,

United Ways are jointly requesting that the legislature sustain level funding for Vermont 211 of \$1.6M in FY27, consistent with FY26. Because we recognize this is a challenging funding cycle, **we are not requesting an increase** and are working hard to identify other funding sources to fill gaps in the budget.

United Ways across Vermont are painfully aware of how challenging the fiscal climate is. Every day, in our respective regions, we collectively serve thousands of Vermonters through a variety of critical programs. We see first hand the strain they are under; rising costs for everyday items and health care, reduced social support networks, increased barriers to services, isolation and loneliness. Because of this, it has never been more important to support 211 services. This is why each United Way in Vermont invests a portion of its revenue to support 211 and why each United Way's executive contributes to the success of Vermont 211 by being on the United Ways of Vermont Board of Directors, which oversees and manages 211.

Vermont 211 provides vital support to Vermonters by reducing barriers to services, providing a warm connection to needed resources, and providing critical data to the public, legislators, and state departments. Through confidential, nonjudgmental phone and online support, Vermont 211 provides accurate, up-to-date information on resources statewide. Vermonters can reach a 211 resource specialist seven days a week (including weekends and holidays) 365 days a year and search the online database 24/7.

The Governor's proposed FY27 budget reduces VT 211's funding by \$332,000. This cut jeopardizes Vermont 211's ability to support the state's emergency housing response, activate during disasters, and respond to anticipated changes to services. It also threatens the ability to maintain adequate staffing levels during the highest call volume times, resulting in longer wait times for Vermonters seeking help.

Call volume continues to rise year over year. In 2025, VT 211 handled more than 61,000 contacts, 5,000 more than in 2024. Peak demand was between 4:00 and 10:00 p.m. Adequate staffing during peak hours is essential. The attached documents demonstrate Vermont 211's impact.

Please support level funding of \$1.6M for VT 211 in FY27. Thank you for your time.

With Gratitude,

Clarissa French, Executive Director, United Way of Lamoille
Helena Van Voorst, Executive Director, United Way Addison County
Jesse Bridges, CEO, United Way Northwest Vermont
Tawnya Kristen, Executive Director, Green Mountain United Way
Rebecca Baruzzi, Executive Director, United Way Windham County