



CIF FEATURE STORY:

211 Saskatchewan, United Way Regina and United Way of Saskatoon & Area

Call or text 2-1-1

October 2018

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, in over 100 languages (including 17 Indigenous languages), 211 provides quick and easy access to those requiring assistance. Calls to 211 are answered by certified information and referral specialists, who assess the needs of each caller and link them to the best available information and services by consulting a comprehensive, searchable database of over 5,000 government, and community based health and social services. Examples of service categories include Refugees and Immigrants, Mental Health and Addictions, Employment/Training, Families and Children and many others. Whether it is finding assistance with basic needs such as food, shelter and employment, looking for support for an aging parent, or trying to find child care, 211 is available to help anyone find support.

211 is now more accessible for everyone in our province and offers phone, text, online web chat and email services to help people in Saskatchewan find and navigate services. The Community Initiatives Fund is thrilled to support the 211 Saskatchewan Expansion Project. One of CIF's key mandates is to reduce or eliminate barriers to access and participation in programs and services for people across Saskatchewan. CIF recognizes that timely access to programs and services improves quality of life and the expanded 211 Saskatchewan service ensures better access to people to connect to the services they need, when they need them. Furthermore, as a funder, the data identifying community needs and gaps in services is very important for CIF to evaluate how its

funding is supporting community needs. The 211 service in Saskatchewan is an important asset for strengthening the human service sector as a whole, as well. 211 data can be used to help communities identify gaps in services in specific geographic areas, and make decisions based on unmet needs.

211 also helps first responders, social workers, police, and other service providers find accurate information to direct people to the right resources, and relieves pressure on 911 by providing a more appropriate option in non-emergency situations. 211 also offers many benefits to community service providers across the province. Service providers are often the first point of contact and can be inundated by calls and inquires from those looking for help. 211 can help reduce the time spent fielding inappropriate inquires and can be an easy way to ensure that a misdirected caller can still get the information they need. Front-line staff may appreciate spending less time looking for resources, increase accuracy of information that is verified annually and learn about new services or program closures.

Over the next several months, 211 SK can offer a unique opportunity to help coordinate work, boost collaboration, avoid duplication of services and result in stronger community networks across the province. United Way will be conducting outreach with urban, rural and northern communities. Let your voice be heard – share your ideas on the best way to make maximize the potential of this award-winning service in your community!

When 'Julie,' a single mother of three children, came home from work she discovered that her utilities were disconnected. Panicked by her situation, Julie called 211 where she spoke with a highly trained specialist who was able to help direct her to the right place to get her power restored that same day. Through 211, United Way's 24/7/365 information and referral helpline, Julie received the assistance she needed for the health and well-being of her entire family.



211 Saskatchewan expansion announcements took place throughout the province in June 2018, including Swift Current. L to R: United Way CEO - Robyn Edwards-Bentz, United Way Swift Current Executive Director - Stacey Schwartz, United Way of Saskatoon & Area CEO - Shaun Dyer.

CIF Executive Director, Tracey Mann, helps announce the 211 Saskatchewan expansion in Regina on June 20, 2018. L to R: United Way CEO - Robyn Edwards-Bentz, United Way of Saskatoon & Area CEO - Shaun Dyer, CIF Executive Director - Tracey Mann.