

Eden I&R, Inc.

"linking people and resources"



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2020 has exemplified, more than ever, the critical role that the 211 service—the 24/7 multilingual phone number that connects people to health, housing and human service—plays in Alameda County. In the first four weeks after Alameda County issued its Shelter in Place Order, **211 answered 7,245 calls and texts, a 52% increase over the previous four-week period.** Since that time, 211 continues to receive higher than usual call volume, nearly 25% more than the same timeframe last year. The past several months have proven to be somewhat of a perfect storm for 211 as we respond to both increased call volume and the additional work needed to maintain accurate, up-to-date information on the rapidly changing resources resulting from shelter in place and the pandemic. In order to protect the safety of our own staff, we took the unprecedented step of setting up all employees, including the call center, to work from home in just over a week after the shelter in place order. We also responded by:

- Deploying our Disaster Preparedness Coordinator to the County's Office of Emergency Services since it has been activated
- Launching an informational text campaign of "COVID19" to 211211 for valuable information
- Creating a Covid-19 resource page to our online resource directory, www.211alamedacounty.org
- Answering Covid-19 calls for the Alameda County Public Health Department and the State of California
- Scheduling Covid-19 tests in multiple languages at the County-operated test sites
- Having agency representation on a number of different groups and meetings that have started as a result of the pandemic, including the weekly Shelter Providers call hosted by Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless and a biweekly call of community-based organizations serving District 2 (including Union City) hosted by Supervisor Richard Valle

For **Union City** specifically, **last fiscal year (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020) 211 handled a total of 1,017 calls and two-way text conversations from Union City residents and provided 1,332 total referrals.** Of those calls and texts, **285 identified as being homeless or in a housing crisis, 54 of whom were screened and deemed eligible for the county's Coordinated Entry System** and transferred to the south county Housing Resource Center.

The top 10 highest number of referrals provided were as follows:

- Coordinated Entry System and homeless resources
- Utility assistance
- Housing expense assistance
- Rental deposit assistance
- Emergency financial assistance
- Assistive technology equipment (mobility aids)
- Mortgage payment assistance
- Emergency shelter
- Covid-19 questions
- Local transportation/local bus service

In the timeframe between the **Shelter in Place order (March 16, 2020) and October 15, 2020, 211 has handled 627 calls and two-way texts from Union City and provided 775 referrals.** Of those calls and texts, **124 identified as being homeless or in a housing crisis, 24 of whom were screened and deemed eligible for the county's Coordinated Entry System** and transferred to the south county Housing Resource Center.

The top 10 highest number of referrals provided were as follows:

- Covid-19 questions
- Rental payment assistance
- Utility assistance
- Rental deposit assistance
- Emergency financial assistance
- Coordinated Entry System and homeless resources
- Assistive technology equipment (mobility aids)
- Mortgage payment assistance
- Food banks/emergency food distribution
- Emergency shelter

Additionally, over the past several weeks, from its designated seat in the county's Emergency Operations Center, 211 has been staying on top of information as it's vetted related to the period of civil unrest, various wildfires around the region and state, air quality/cooling center availability, and the PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoffs so that our staff always has the most up to date information for our callers. Finally, 211 is also part of a countywide committee recently convened to focus on voter information, particularly for those living in homelessness. 211 is tracking information about voting including voter registration, accessible voting locations, ballot drop-off location, conditional voting, etc. and is being advertised as the number to call in Alameda County to obtain this information.

"Our 211 system is an incredible system in the state of California that connects people to real services, in real time. So if a loved one or a neighbor or a stranger is in need and they need something more than just nice words and just a check-in, but needs specific services, we partner now with 211 to provide those services at the local level all throughout the state of California."

-California Governor Gavin Newsom, April 2020