More Alaskans are making 211 their first call for help.

211 is the easiest, fastest way for Alaskans to get connected to helpful services. From shelter for the night, health care and legal assistance to food pantries and transportation, we connect people to available nearby resources and services.

For someone under tremendous stress, time saved and frustration avoided can make a huge difference. Healthcare providers, social workers, legislative aides, law enforcement, and school counselors also turn to 211 to access information to help their clients and those they serve.

Ninety percent of our callers in 2023 were connected to solutions that could meet their needs—and we’re proud of that statistic, though we do wish it were 100%. The needs of Alaskans simply outweigh the available resources. Our highly trained, caring Community Resource Specialists dislike telling callers in need that no connections are available.

Fortunately, the data we track from calls is helping Alaska make adjustments and bolster resources to alleviate unmet needs. By sharing real-time trends about callers’ requests, 211 is extending our value. Community planners and organizations can use our data to address fluctuating challenges and allocate important resources.

The brain of 211 is our database. This system is robust and as comprehensive as possible. We protect, respect and refresh its contents. We regularly reach out to organizations that list their services to verify and update their information so we can provide the best referrals. We’re also expanding it by welcoming new partners and amplifying resources.

Whether for emergency response, disaster recovery or government aid, 211’s goal remains the same: provide vetted, current information when it’s needed. Accordingly, we play an essential role in relaying government information. Our capabilities have proven critical during rapidly evolving situations, such as earthquakes or public health emergencies.

Part of United Way of Anchorage’s mission is removing barriers to opportunities and solving tough challenges. 211 stands ready to help, enacting this mission when we take a call. Connecting Alaskans with needed resources gives them tools to help them thrive.

We thank every Alaskan who partners with, contributes to, supports and uses 211. Together, we’re making our communities stronger. These improvements have changed, are changing and will continue to change thousands of lives for the better.
ANSWERING THE CALL

When Jen speaks, her words are clear, and her information is direct. She alternates between intense listening, quick overviews and caring anecdotes. Having worked for Alaska 211 since 2012, Jen has a lot of practice with this approach. It is essential for people who are answering calls requesting help.

Jen serves as Alaska 211’s Call Center Manager. She oversees Community Resource Specialists—the title for people who answer calls. “When we hire, we look for someone who’s motivated to help, displays empathy and demonstrates resilience,” Jen says. They must also keep updated about resources and services and show comfort with databases.

“Alaska 211 cannot fix the world—but we can do our best to make lives better.” Our call center manager notes these positive impacts happen when a Community Resource Specialist connects a person to help.

“We empower Alaskans with information,” says Jen, “and share how they can put that knowledge to use and work towards a possible solution.” To be a Community Resource Specialist, a person must be compassionate and strong. Furthermore, Alaska 211 is designed to be nimble—so employees must be too. “Think about the 2018 earthquake or COVID,” Jen says. “Our system pivoted and functioned each time, despite those events being entirely different types of disasters.”

Alaska 211 adjusts as details emerge—even throughout a day. Sometimes opportunities evolve or cease, and they impact callers’ needs. We remain appraised of these changes.

Even though Alaska 211 is staffed with Community Resource Specialists who care and stay grounded, Jen ensures they can debrief if necessary. “I’m here for anyone who needs to talk something out,” she says. Community Resource Specialists rally around each other too. It’s a perk of working together in-person at our call center.

Alaska 211 offers support for everyone. “We’re here for Alaskans’ physical, emotional and financial wellbeing,” says Jen, “whether they’re callers or colleagues.” People deserve to be heard, have their experiences validated and know their options. Our 211 Community Resource Specialists give and receive these gifts daily.
ALASKA 211 BY THE NUMBERS

31,425 CONNECTIONS MADE

23,401 CALLS ANSWERED

428,676 CALLS ANSWERED SINCE 2007

8,024 SEARCHES MADE BY INDIVIDUALS ON ALASKA211.ORG

616,363 SEARCHES MADE BY INDIVIDUALS ON ALASKA211.ORG SINCE 2007

REQUESTS FOR HELP

- Housing | 9,381
- Income Support/Assistance | 3,661
- Food/Meals | 3,425
- Health Care | 2,930
- Individual, Family & Community Support | 2,363
- Utility Assistance | 2,192
- Legal, Consumer & Public Safety Services | 1,974
- Information Services | 1,204
- Disaster Services | 1,157
- Education | 775
- Mental Health/Addictions | 562
- Transportation | 538
- Military/Veteran Services & Other Government/Economic Services | 389
- Employment | 201
- Volunteers/Donations | 95
- Arts, Culture & Recreation | 58

34,322 REFERRALS GIVEN

546,800 REFERRALS GIVEN SINCE 2007

8,024 REFERRALS GIVEN

616,363 REFERRALS GIVEN SINCE 2007

8,024 SEARCHES MADE BY INDIVIDUALS ON ALASKA211.ORG

616,363 SEARCHES MADE BY INDIVIDUALS ON ALASKA211.ORG SINCE 2007
Along with tracking referrals that we make, Alaska 211 also tracks unmet needs. A need is recorded as “unmet” if we cannot connect the caller to a resource or service. The reasons may include factors like eligibility criteria being inapplicable, temporary relief programs ending and demand outpacing referral availability.

211 data on unmet needs can be an especially useful decision-making tool. Organizations and communities rely on it for planning, allocating resources, identifying problems and finding solutions.

Consider this example. Our data showed utility service payment assistance to be one of the top two unmet needs in Anchorage. This information inspired United Way to plan and continue hosting Walk for Warmth. This event brings attention to and raises funds for households living on the edge financially—some of which must make difficult decisions between heating their homes and buying groceries.

For more community-specific information, please contact Sue Brogan at sbrogan@ak.org.
PROVIDING CONNECTIONS ACROSS ALASKA

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

1. Nome, North Slope & Northwest Arctic Boroughs
   146 Calls
   Top Referral Categories:
   - Food/Meals
   - Legal, Consumer & Public Safety Services
   - Utility Assistance
   173 Referrals
   Top Unmet Needs Categories:
   - Food Pantries
   - Rent Payment Assistance
   - Utility Services Payment Assistance

2. Interior Alaska
   1,101 Calls
   Top Referral Categories:
   - Housing
   - Income Support Assistance
   - Food/Meals
   1,637 Referrals
   Top Unmet Needs Categories:
   - Tax Preparation Assistance
   - Rent Payment Assistance
   - Food/Meals

3. Matanuska - Susitna Borough
   2,271 Calls
   Top Referral Categories:
   - Housing
   - Income Support Assistance
   - Utility Assistance
   3,872 Referrals
   Top Unmet Needs Categories:
   - Gas Money
   - Rent Payment Assistance
   - Mortgage Payment Assistance

4. Municipality of Anchorage
   18,102 Calls
   Top Referral Categories:
   - Housing
   - Food/Meals
   - Income Support Assistance
   26,575 Referrals
   Top Unmet Needs Categories:
   - Rent Payment Assistance
   - Utility Services Payment Assistance
   - Rental Deposit Assistance

5. Kenai Peninsula Borough
   393 Calls
   Top Referral Categories:
   - Housing
   - Health Care
   - Legal, Consumer & Public Safety Services
   577 Referrals
   Top Unmet Needs Categories:
   - Gas Money
   - Mortgage Payment Assistance
   - Bus Fare

6. Southeast
   433 Calls
   Top Referral Categories:
   - Housing
   - Food/Meals
   - Health Care
   683 Referrals
   Top Unmet Needs Categories:
   - Rent Payment Assistance
   - Community Shelters
   - Utility Services Payment Assistance

7. Southwest
   385 Calls
   Top Referral Categories:
   - Food/Meals
   - Legal, Consumer & Public Safety Services
   - Housing
   486 Referrals
   Top Unmet Needs Categories:
   - Food Pantries
   - Summer Food Programs
   - Formula/Baby Food
211 connected 526 homeless students and their families directly with their School District Homeless Liaison to ensure needed resources are made available so that each student has a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.

**PARTNER:** Alaska’s Department of Education and Early Development

Careline, Alaska’s suicide prevention hotline and 24/7 crisis call center, provides immediate care for mental health emergencies. Our partnership provides Careline crisis counselors with direct access to our statewide database of resources when it’s needed most.

**PARTNER:** Careline Alaska

Alaskans from all walks of life are caring for older parents, spouses and loved ones. Serving as an unpaid family caregiver is a challenging role. We are identifying unpaid caregivers and providing them with referrals to resources for themselves, specific to their needs as a caregiver.

**PARTNER:** AARP Alaska

Anchorage winters can be brutal. Imagine sleeping in your car or a tent during the coldest months. Now imagine you’re seven years old. A single call to Alaska 211 connects an Anchorage family experiencing homelessness with Emergency Cold Weather Shelter, bringing safety and warmth.

**PARTNER:** Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness
HELP STARTS HERE.