

United Way of Lake County

ANNUAL REPORT

Year One: 9/24/2019–9/30/2020



Call 211



Text your
zip code to
898211



211LakeCounty.org

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

We are proud to celebrate the one-year anniversary of 211 services for Lake County and all the connections 211 is making for our neighbors, including connections to food and domestic violence assistance, help with rent and utility bills, support for mental health and drug counseling, and so much more. Every day, our 211 resource navigators are there to listen, help identify needs and guide people to the best available resources for their situation. Whether by phone or online, 211 is transforming the way individuals, families and providers connect with essential health and human services to improve and save lives. This report summarizes the tremendous impact 211 has already made in our first year of operation.

211 could not have come to Lake County at a better time. We launched 211 on September 24, 2019 and were thrilled with the number of calls and texts the service received in the first six months, proving that the need that we knew was out there truly was there.

We were feeling great about the way we were addressing that need, when suddenly COVID hit. You can imagine the giant pivot necessary! People who never thought they might need help were reaching out in droves. Our human services providers had to transform on a dime to deliver their desperately needed assistance under the most challenging of circumstances. How do you provide shelter for victims of domestic violence who can't be in the same space as other victims because of a virus? Where do you house homeless people who can't be within 6 feet of each other? Who can gather together to distribute food to the newly unemployed? How do you keep the information in the 211 Contact Center up to date when it is changing constantly as COVID invades our county?

It should be of no surprise that our 211 team rose to the occasion. I am so proud of the work they did, and of course the work United Way of Lake County did, to continue to serve in the most difficult of times. Our staff also has provided hundreds of trainings, conducted extensive outreach and created a robust promotional toolkit to help spread awareness.

Since launch, 211 has had contacts from every municipality in the county. Every zip code is represented, as is an amazing variety of demographics. The top needs seen prior to COVID remained consistent and further highlighted the tremendous ongoing needs in our community. While COVID has focused the requests into a few key categories, every area of human services was requested in our first year.

The success of 211 in Lake County has been far reaching already, in large part because of the generous funding 211 received from many, many caring partners. From our largest contributors such as Lake County Government to local townships and companies delivering on their corporate responsibility to our small businesses, community service groups and philanthropic individual donors. It took everyone's time, talent, and treasure to get the system up and running...and perhaps as importantly, to get the word out.

Now our community knows what 211 is. Now they can access the help they need. Now they have hope when times get tough.

We cannot thank our funders, our partners, and our advisory council members enough.

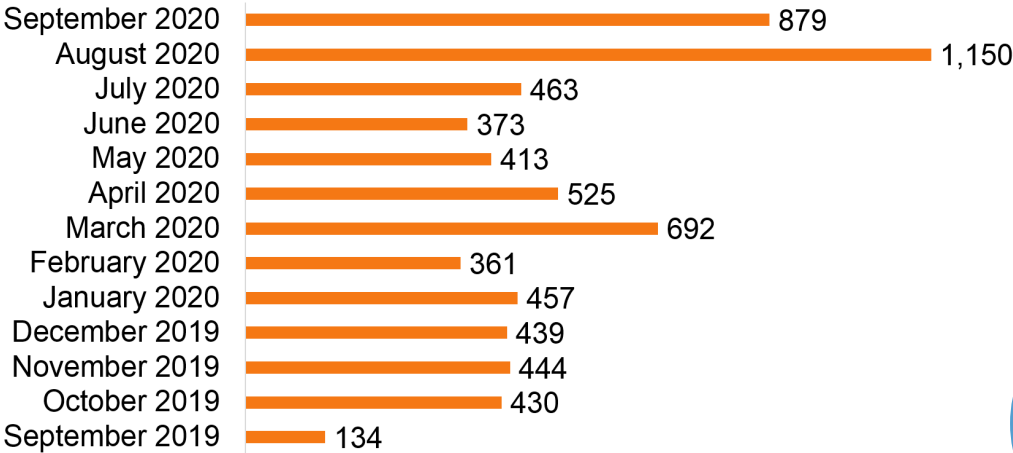


Kristi Long
President & CEO, United Way of Lake County

OUTCOMES | Contacts to 211



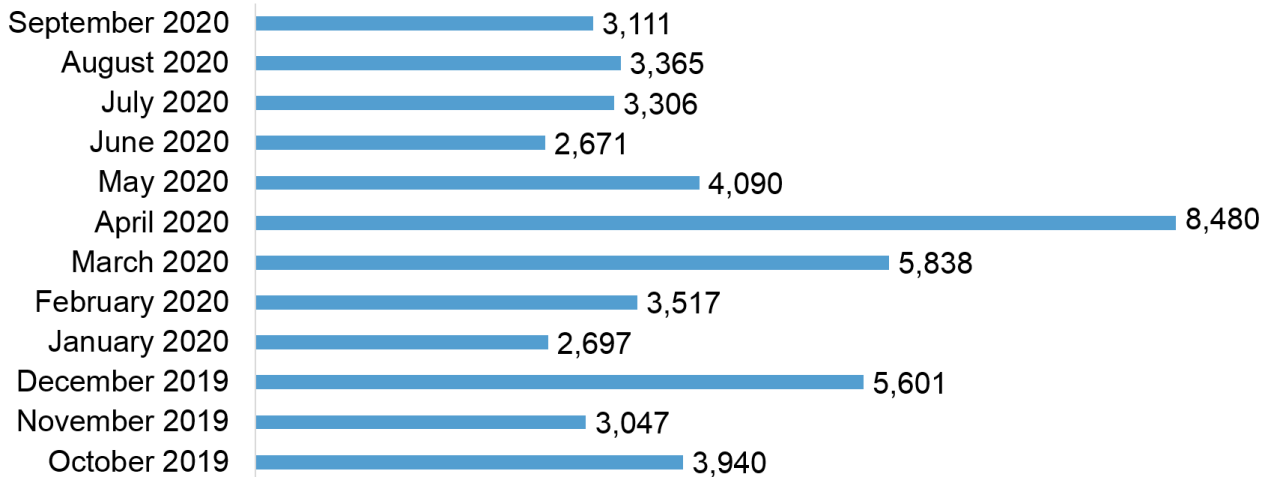
Calls and Texts



53%
of Calls/Texts
related to COVID-19
(Mar - Sep 2020)

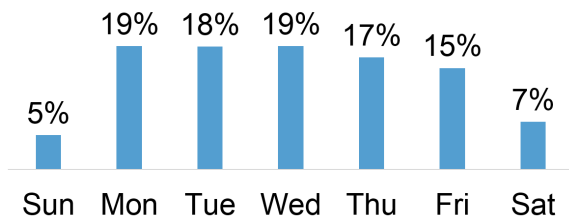
22%
of Contacts
by Text

Website Sessions



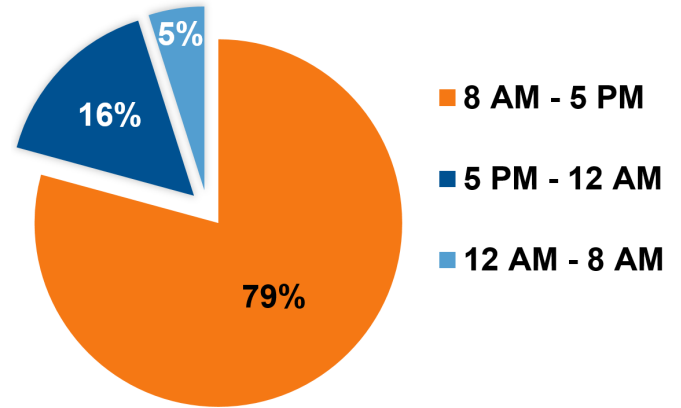
OUTCOMES | When are people calling?

Day of Week



Average Wait Time
2:42

Time of Day

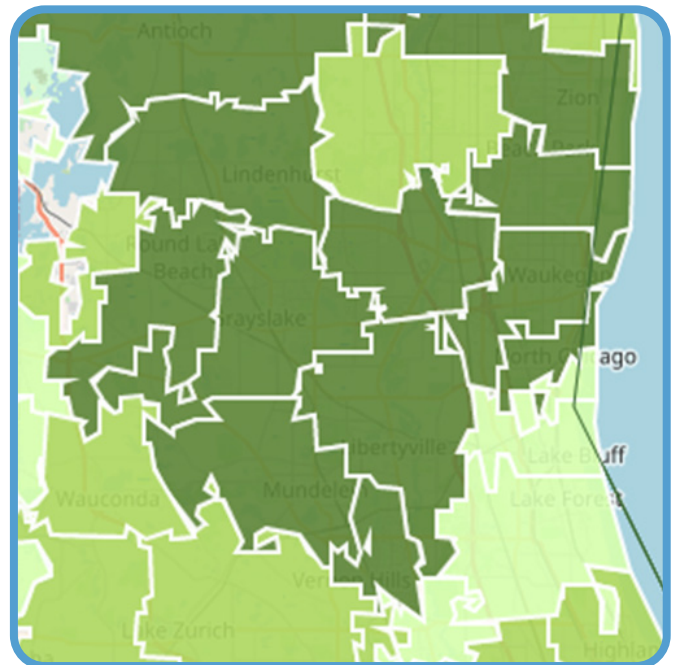


31% of contacts made outside of normal business hours

OUTCOMES | Who's contacting 211?

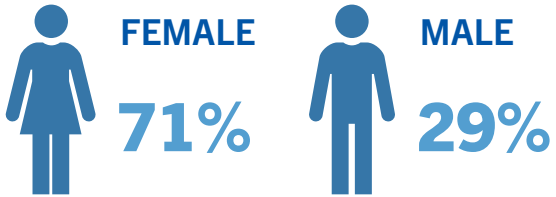
Top 10 Communities

1. Waukegan
2. Zion
3. Round Lake
4. Gurnee
5. Antioch
6. North Chicago
7. Mundelein
8. Grayslake
9. Lake Villa
10. Vernon Hills



OUTCOMES | Who's contacting 211? (cont.)

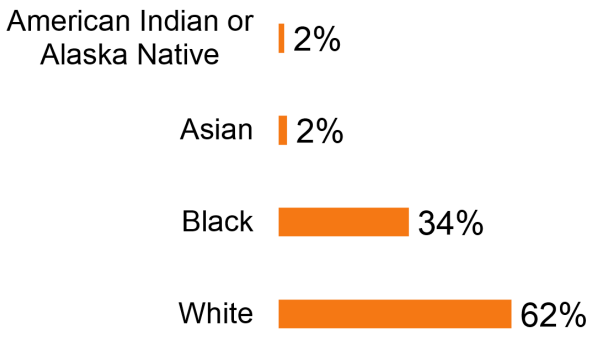
Gender



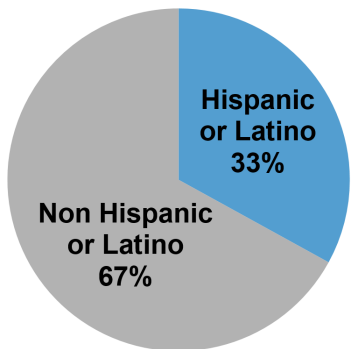
Age



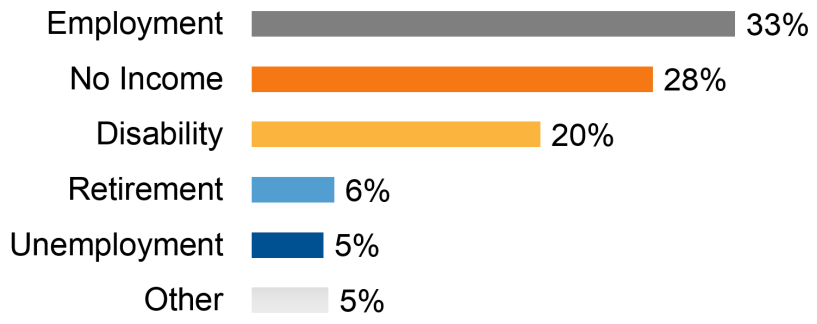
Race



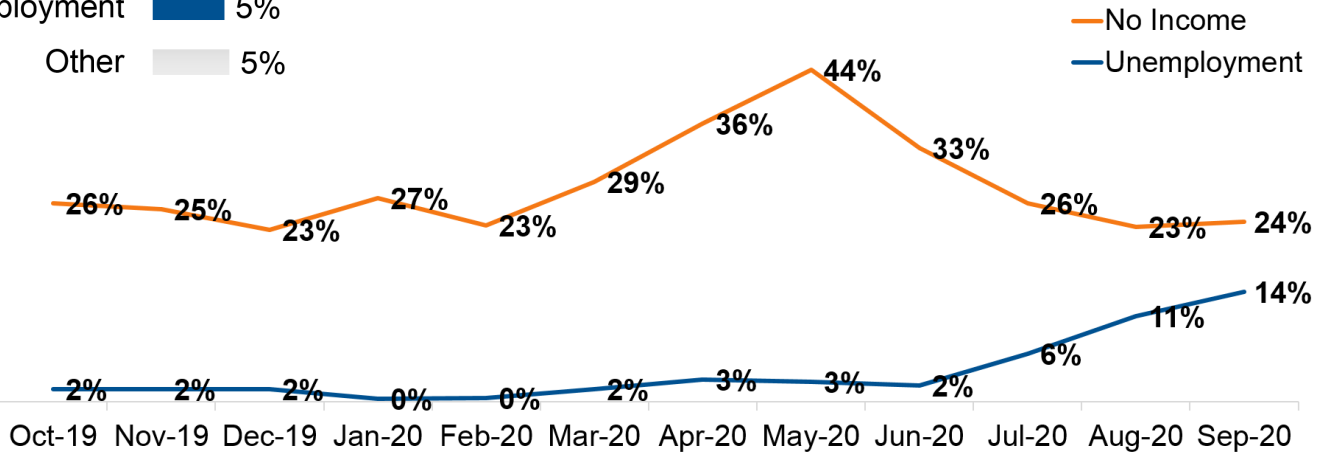
Ethnicity



Primary Source of Income



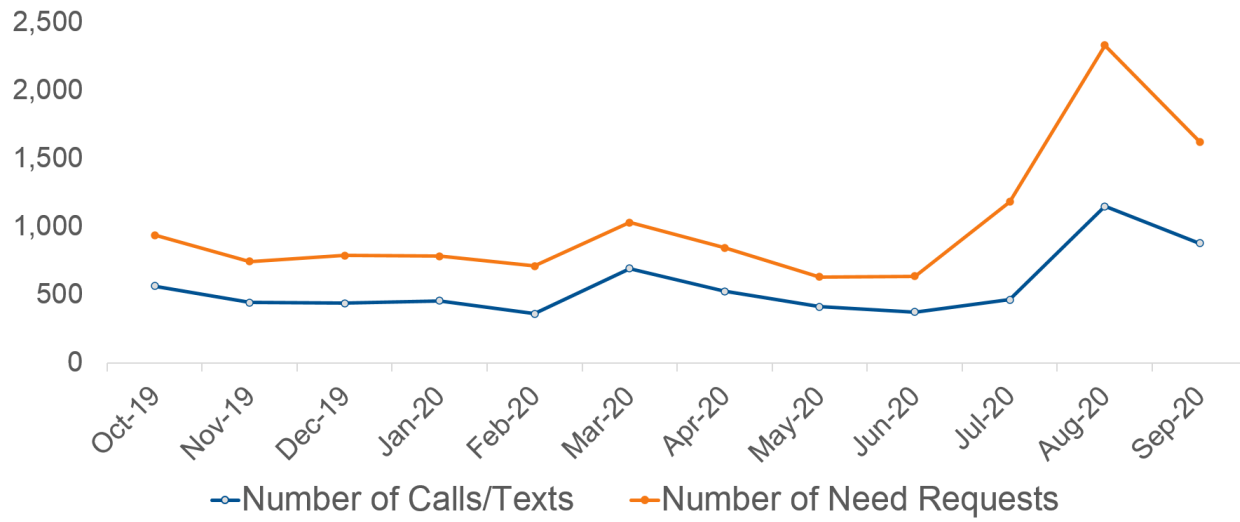
Employment Income Trends



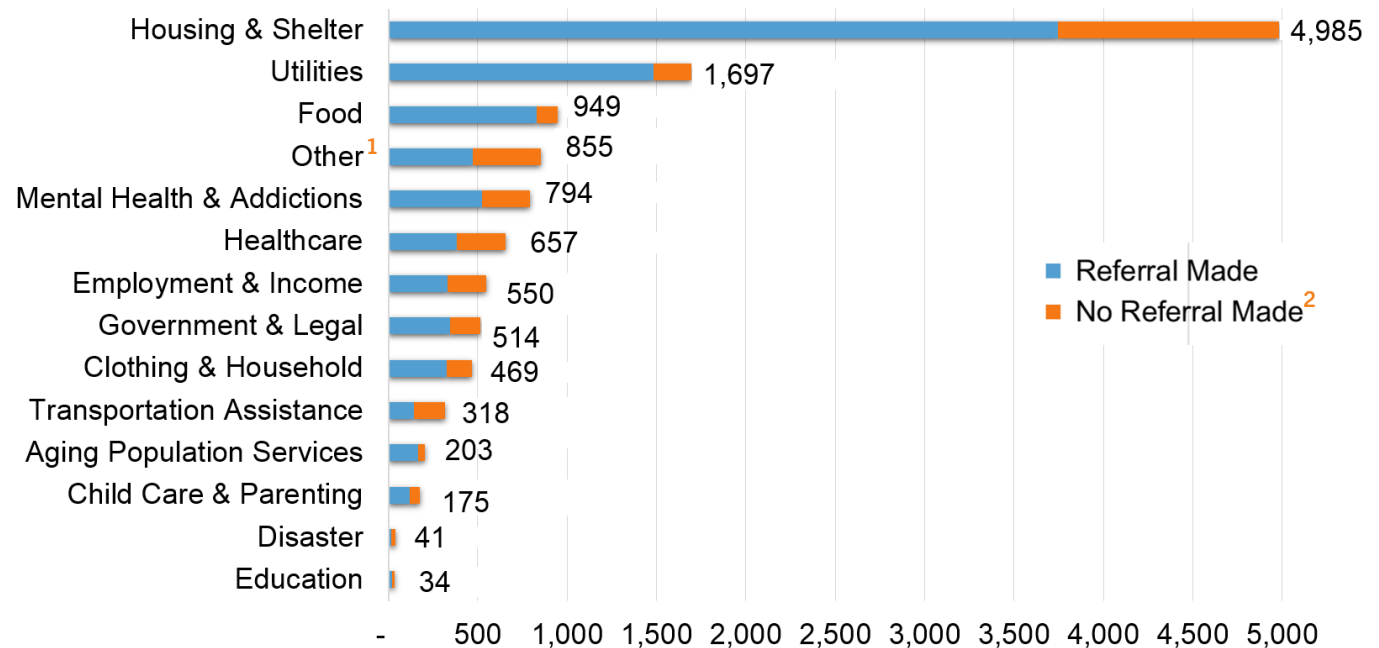
OUTCOMES | Why are people contacting 211?

Needs Presented to 211

Based on 6,760 calls and texts, a total of **12,241** needs were presented to 211.



Top Needs Presented to 211



¹ Other – Miscellaneous needs requested, including general information and referral, donations, volunteering, animal control, etc.

² No Referral Made – Reasons include caller does not meet eligibility guidelines for program, service is unavailable, or service referral is refused.

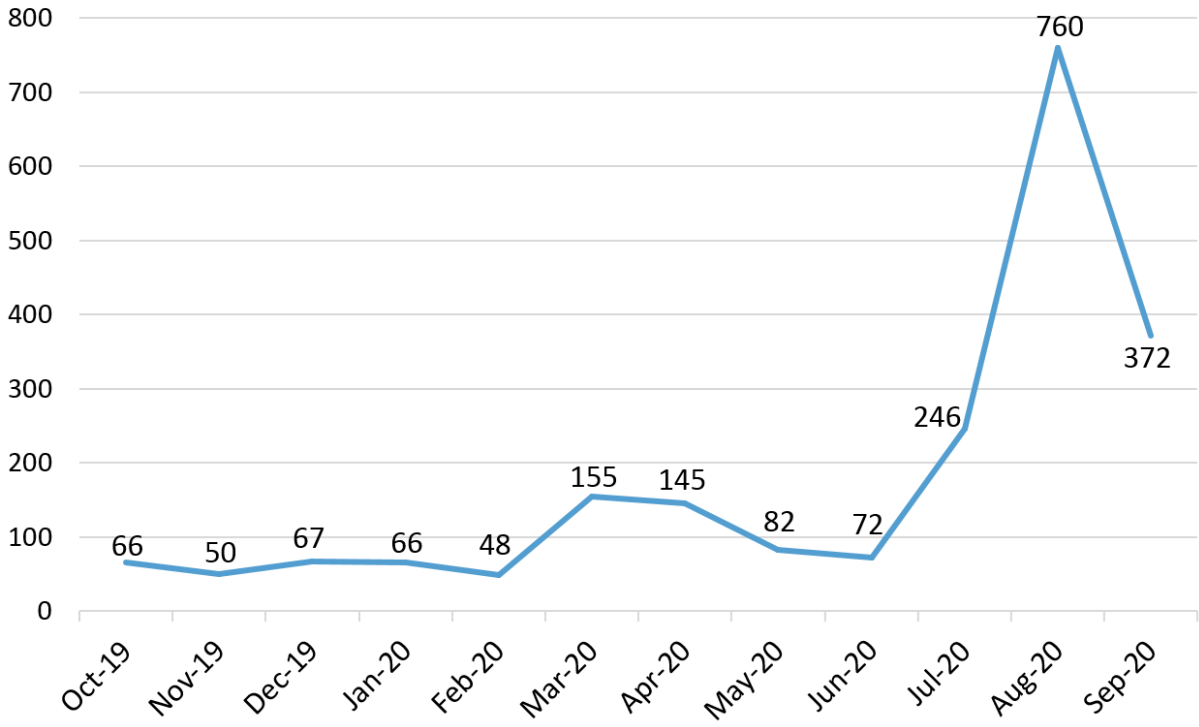
OUTCOMES | Why are people contacting 211? (cont.)

Top 5 Housing Needs

- 1. Rent Payment (2,129)*
- 2. Homeless Shelter (451)
- 3. Low Income Housing (324)
- 4. Mortgage Payment (262)
- 5. Transitional Shelter (153)

**552 COVID Housing Relief Program Assessments Completed Aug & Sep*

Rent Payment Assistance



HIGHLIGHTS | Housing



Since launching 211, rent payment assistance has consistently been the **#1** need requested each month. When the pandemic began, 211 saw a significant increase in the number of people calling or texting for rent payment assistance.

While the county has increased funding for rental assistance through the COVID Housing Relief Program (CHRP), these funds can be hard to reach. Working closely with Lake County Government, United Way of Lake County has responded by coordinating a centralized and streamlined rental assistance fund screening process utilizing 211. The fund also helps individuals and families access rent payment assistance which is 211's **#2** need requested. Now, individuals and families facing financial hardship can simply contact 211 and an expert navigator will conduct an initial intake and eligibility assessment. Eligible applicants will be guided to organizations that can best meet their needs. This new centralized process prevents duplication of services, drives efficiencies, and makes it easier for people to connect with available and appropriate resources.

Since we began conducting intakes in August:

- **552** contacts were screened
- **529** contacts were connected to a CHRP provider

HIGHLIGHTS | Food



Each month, food is the **#3** requested need. Since the pandemic began, there has been a **395%** increase in food requests with a total of **678** referrals to food pantries.

HIGHLIGHTS | Mental Health & Addiction



During the pandemic, there have been increased needs for emotional support, as well as increased levels of suicidality and substance abuse. 211 provides an easy-to-remember number for people to call and receive help. This is the **#4** need requested.

HIGHLIGHTS | COVID-19

On average, from March through September **53%** of the calls and texts to 211 were related to COVID-19, with August being **70%** of calls and texts.

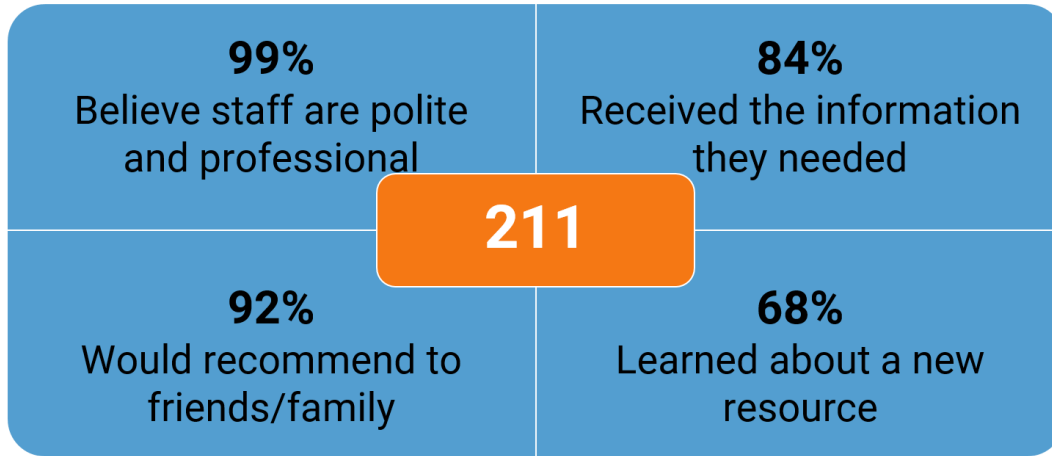
- 211 experienced a **92%** increase in calls from February to March when the pandemic began, followed by a **141%** increase in website visits from February to April.
- After the initial \$600 federal supplemental unemployment benefit ended in July, 211 saw a significant increase in contacts in August and September.
- In response to the increased volume, our 211 Contact Center increased staffing and trained over 100 trained volunteers to help answer the call.
- In addition, we added COVID-19 information, community resources, and volunteer opportunities to our 211 website, and implemented a health and resource campaign through text and our interactive voice response system.
- Community services and hours of operation have rapidly changed in response to COVID-19. Our 211 resource database team conducted three separate COVID-19 specific resource updates, working with hundreds of health and human services providers across the county to ensure that 211 reflected the most up-to-date information possible for our community.

HIGHLIGHTS | Census Project

211 helped support the 2020 Census in Lake County.

- 211 encouraged hard-to-count community members to complete the 2020 Census.
- Information and resources to complete the census were made available on the 211 website.
- Callers to 211 heard recorded census educational messages before being transferred to a 211 specialist.
- 211 specialists screened more than **1,428** callers for census completion, as well as provided census education as wanted, texted out links to online census forms and resources, referred community members to trusted in-person assistance centers, and made warm transfers to the census hotline.
- United Way of Lake County conducted a comprehensive 2020 Census advertising campaign with more than **2.5M** impressions encouraging people to complete the census and to call 211 for help.

What contacts say about 211



Real Caller Story

Jane is a single mother of two children who recently moved to Lake County. Due to the pandemic, Jane became unemployed. This limited her income and her ability to maintain household expenses. She sold her car to pay rent but the money was quickly running out. Jane was admitted to the hospital because she is diabetic and had not been using her insulin regularly. She could no longer afford the medication and lacked reliable transportation to go to the pharmacy and doctor.

With limited English skills being yet another barrier, Jane was unsure of where to go for help. Jane was lost, overwhelmed, and in need of various services to assist her with multiple needs. A hospital social worker informed her about 211 and together they called to begin her search for services. The following day, during the social worker's rounds, the patient looked in much better spirits and informed the social worker that she was referred to Catholic Charities for their Emergency Assistance Program, where she would be receiving financial assistance; the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, which is a supportive case management program for single parents; and a Behavioral Health Program, where she would begin telehealth counseling to help with processing all she is going through.

Jane reported how helpful it was for her to have one number she could call or text that can lead her to the many services available in Lake County without having to worry about language barriers, transportation issues, and not having to go to multiple agencies.

211 FUNDING PARTNERS

Contributing \$50,000+

United Way of Lake County
Lake County Government
Baxter International Foundation
North Shore Gas Community Fund
Metra

211 Partners

Contributing \$10,000 - \$49,999

AbbVie
AdvocateAurora Health
The Buchanan Family Foundation
Libertyville Township
Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital
Trustmark
Vernon Township
Andrew and Karen Warrington

211 Sponsors

Contributing \$5,000 - \$9,999

Kristine and Brian Blaser
BMO Harris Bank
First Midwest Bank
Healthcare Foundation of Northern
Lake County
NorthShore University HealthSystem
Highland Park Hospital
Wauconda Township

211 Community Supporters

Contributing \$1,000 - \$4,999

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AT&T
Avon Township
Chuck and Teresa Bartels
Benton Township
Judy and Larry Berliant
Monica Burmeister
Nancy Coolley
Michelle Mittler Crombie
Irene Hrusovsky
Mark and Sarah Schweitzer
Village of Libertyville
Waukegan Township
Melinda and Steve Whittington
Mike Zafirovski
Zion Township

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Darren Boundy – *ComEd, An Exelon Company*

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