

**211 Notification and Implementation Plan for Saskatchewan**

**November 10, 2017**

United Way Regina  
1440 Scarth Street  
Regina, SK S4R 2E9

Contact:  
Judy Shum  
Strategic Lead, 211 Saskatchewan  
C: 306-281-5179  
E: [jshum@unitedwaysaskatoon.ca](mailto:jshum@unitedwaysaskatoon.ca)

## **Introduction**

This Notification and Implementation Plan is for the use of the 2-1-1 dialing code to access information and referrals for non-emergency community and social services in the province of Saskatchewan.

## **Background**

Effective and timely service navigation and access are critical to people's well-being, as they are key measures that help to prevent challenging life situations from becoming crises. These measures also help to build resilient and strong communities, which is a key focus of United Way's work in Saskatchewan and across Canada. The information and navigational assistance provided by the award winning 2-1-1 telephone helpline improves and saves lives, and 211 services now reach two-thirds of Canadians. In Saskatchewan, United Way initiated, convened and facilitated the process over a decade ago to bring the full 211 service to the province, and has since played the leading role in implementing 211.

Through a formal collaboration between United Way Regina and United Way of Saskatoon and Area, access to information on more than 5,000 community services across Saskatchewan has been provided since the fall of 2013 through the 211 Saskatchewan website – [www.sk.211.ca](http://www.sk.211.ca). The searchable resource database behind the website is consistently verified and kept current and accurate by Certified Resource Specialists on the staff of United Way Regina.

The decision to expand the 211 service in Saskatchewan was made by the two United Way Boards of Directors in early 2017. The expansion will add free, confidential and 24/7/365 information and referral service, to be provided to residents of Saskatchewan through the 2-1-1 telephone helpline.

In August 2001, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) assigned the 2-1-1 telephone number for community information services across Canada. Please visit the following link regarding detailed information on Telecom Decision CRTC 2001-475:  
<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2001/DT2001-475.htm>

United Way Regina has been endorsed by the Government of Saskatchewan as the 211 service provider through two letters of endorsements (see Appendices 1 and 2), one from the former Deputy Minister to the Premier, and the other from the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Social Services.

## **Service Description**

211 is a two-channel information system consisting of a 3-digit (2-1-1) telephone helpline and internet service that provide support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the year.

Once the planned expansion has been launched, the 211 Saskatchewan delivery system will be made up of the existing searchable online database at [www.sk.211.ca](http://www.sk.211.ca), and the new free, confidential information and referral service that will be provided by the 211 British Columbia Services Society ("bc211") through the 2-1-1 telephone helpline. Between the hours of 8:00 am and 11:00 pm PST, people will also have the option of reaching Certified 211 Information and Referral Specialists at bc211 by text, web chat and email.

All aspects related to the delivery of 211 services are strictly guided by standards set by the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS). These standards are the foundation of information and referral (I&R) service delivery and the prime benchmark of quality I&R. Each resource in the online database is thoroughly indexed using the 211 Taxonomy, which enables the Certified Information and Referral Specialists who answer 211 calls to quickly and easily identify appropriate resources for any given issue, then determine which of those may best serve the callers' needs.

### Desired 211 Service Area

211 Saskatchewan, operated by United Way Regina, through a formal Cooperation Agreement with United Way of Saskatoon and Area, covers the entire province of Saskatchewan. The map for the desired 211 Saskatchewan phone service area is shown below:



As indicated earlier under the Background section, United Way Regina has been endorsed by the Government of Saskatchewan as the 211 service provider through two letters of endorsements (see Appendices 1 and 2), one from the former Deputy Minister to the Premier, and the other from the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Social Services.

### **Call Routing Arrangements**

In Saskatchewan, all 211 calls are to be routed to the toll free number 1-833-686-4833 and the Remote Call Forwarding (RCF) number 306-751-0397.

The 211 calls will then terminate at the 211 British Columbia Services Society (“bc211”) at 604-708-4054. The full mailing address of the bc211 call center is:

211 British Columbia Services Society (“bc211”)  
330-111 W. Hastings Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 1H4

Telecommunications Service Providers (TSPs) are requested to permit callers in Saskatchewan to dial 2-1-1. These calls all route to the terminating number at the bc211 call center via the toll free and RCF numbers already set up with SaskTel. TSPs are also requested to work with the appropriate cellular providers providing service in Saskatchewan, ensuring that the calls are routed correctly.

### **Call Volume Estimates**

According to the 2016 Census, the population of Saskatchewan is 1,098,352. The 2-1-1 phone service is being launched across Saskatchewan, so it will be available to all residents in all communities in the entire province at the same time.

Current 3-year projections of call volume estimates:

- Year 1 - up to 10,000 calls
- Year 2 - up to 20,000 calls
- Year 3 - up to 30,000 calls

### **211 Saskatchewan Service Provider’s Information and Operational Support Systems**

As the 211 Saskatchewan Service Provider, United Way Regina, in formal collaboration with United Way of Saskatoon and Area, has been successfully developing and maintaining the information and operational support systems for the 211 online service. Certified Resource Specialists on staff at United Way Regina ensure the resources provided on the 211 Saskatchewan website are regularly enhanced and verified. They also conduct outreach to service providers across the province, and attend a variety of trade shows to promote 211 services.

bc211 is a natural partner in the expansion of 211 services in Saskatchewan, with a long history of providing information and referral services, a strong track record, the necessary technological base, a professional staff, and an advanced infrastructure to support answering calls, texts, and web chats from another 211. bc211 was the first in Canada to be certified by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) – a rigorous service and operational standard. The I&R staff at bc211 receive

comprehensive training and ongoing coaching to support them. Further, the staff benefit from clinical supervision and other quality assurance measures to ensure that they have appropriate support and guidance to be successful in their roles.

211 Saskatchewan and bc211 both use the iCarol Information Management System to track contact and resource data. bc211 currently uses the Shoretel telephone system with OakSI software, which includes screen and audio capture, and provides reporting and analysis functionality to 211 Saskatchewan. The operational costs of 211 Saskatchewan are shared between United Way Regina and United Way of Saskatoon and Area through our fundraising revenue, including individual and corporate donations.

### **Public Awareness Campaign**

A Marketing and Communications plan will be implemented by United Way Regina and United Way of Saskatoon and Area in order to raise awareness and promote the public launch. The program will include a media relations campaign targeting across all relevant media platforms in the 211 Saskatchewan service area. A formal announcement will be made on the day of the launch and will likely result in a large number of news stories across traditional and new media platforms. We will also engage our donors, stakeholders and other partners to share information about the 2-1-1 telephone helpline services. While the details and components of the Marketing and Communications plan are subject to change, United Way will ensure strong and consistent provincial messaging about the 211 Saskatchewan services.

### **Government Relations**

United Way has been engaging governmental authorities in the 211 Saskatchewan service area on the implementation of the 211 Code, and will continue to work with our federal, provincial and municipal partners to ensure consistent messaging about both the 211 Saskatchewan online resources, and the launch of the 2-1-1 telephone helpline across the province for information and referral services.

### **Telecommunications Service Providers**

In accordance with this 211 Notification and Implementation Plan, all TSPs operating in the 211 Saskatchewan service area are required to implement the network changes necessary to route 211 calls to the appropriate terminating point at bc211 (as outlined above), using standard local and long distance routing and rating methodologies, by February 9, 2018.

Telecommunications Service Providers operating in Saskatchewan include:

- SaskTel
- Shaw
- Rogers/Fido
- Bell Mobility
- Access Communications
- TELUS/Koodo
- MTS Allstream

## Test Plan

As per the Implementation Schedule (see below), all TSPs are expected to formulate a system test plan and make modifications to their networks, as necessary, in preparation for the start of testing. Soft launch/testing is to occur from February 9 to March 23, 2018, in anticipation of the expected 'go-live' date of March 26, 2018. Should any problems occur during this time that may impact the March 26, 2018 deadline for implementation, please notify United Way at the following:

### Primary Contact

Judy Shum  
Strategic Lead, 211 Saskatchewan  
C: 306-281-5179  
E: [jshum@unitedwaysaskatoon.ca](mailto:jshum@unitedwaysaskatoon.ca)

### Alternative Contact

Robyn Edwards-Bentz  
CEO, United Way Regina  
W: 306-751-4750 ext. 754  
E: [redwardsbentz@unitedwayregina.ca](mailto:redwardsbentz@unitedwayregina.ca)

## Implementation Schedule

The major implementation activities, deliverables and associated dates are as follows:

### November 1, 2017

- the formal Cooperation Agreement between United Way Regina and United Way of Saskatoon and Area begins for the implementation of the expansion of 211 Saskatchewan
- the service contract provided by United Way Regina to bc211 begins
- the above agreement and contract establish the information and operational support systems for 211 Saskatchewan

### November 9, 2017

- this Notification and Implementation Plan is provided to Telecommunications Service Providers for the 2-1-1 code dialing capability in all TSPs' networks to be activated by February 9, 2018

### November 24, 2017

- first conference call (to be scheduled for 11:00 am Saskatchewan time) with Telecommunications Service Providers to answer questions and provide further information as needed

### December 2017 to February 2018

- check-in conference calls with Telecommunications Service Providers (tentative dates: December 15, 2017, January 12, 2018 and February 2, 2018)

### February 9, 2018

- soft launch start date of the 2-1-1 telephone helpline service in Saskatchewan

### February 9 to March 23, 2018

- system testing period prior to the public launch
- consumer awareness program to be implemented by United Way begins

### March 26, 2018

- 'go live' date for the 2-1-1 telephone helpline

### Week of April 9, 2018

- public launch (media events) of the 2-1-1 telephone helpline service in Saskatchewan, specific date to be determined



Government of  
Saskatchewan

Deputy Minister  
to the Premier

Room 135, Legislative Building  
2405 Legislative Drive  
Regina, Canada  
S4S 0B3

Email: [dmo@gov.sk.ca](mailto:dmo@gov.sk.ca)

June 23, 2017

Robyn Edwards-Bentz  
Chief Executive Officer  
United Way Regina  
1440 Scarth Street  
REGINA, SK S4R 2E9

Dear Ms. Edwards-Bentz,

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I am pleased to provide support for the United Way to expand the 211 Saskatchewan service from a web-based resource to a multi-lingual 24/7 telephone service available to all citizens.

The Government of Saskatchewan's Commitment to Excellence includes serving citizens using innovative, collaborative solutions. The United Way's 211 service is very client-focussed in its balanced use of technology and trained, supportive Community Navigators, and would be complimentary to the supportive services already available in our province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alanna Koch'.

Alanna Koch



June 29, 2017

Ms. Robyn Edwards-Bentz, CEO  
United Way Regina  
1440 Scarth Street  
REGINA SK S4R 2E9

Dear Ms. Edwards-Bentz:

Thank you for your recent email in which you requested support to expand 211 services in Saskatchewan.

The Ministry has worked alongside United Way of Saskatoon and Area and United Way Regina to help bring the 211 service to Saskatchewan. This service continues to help Saskatchewan people find the assistance they need without having to navigate through a large number of programs and services. By providing a “one-stop shop” for social, health, community and government services, 211 also reduces the number of non-urgent calls that come into the Ministry, allowing us to help more people with urgent needs.

I fully support United Way’s efforts to expand 211 services by creating a 24-7 telephone system. It is an efficient and cost-effective way to help more Saskatchewan people get the help they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Greg Miller".

J. Greg Miller

cc: Alanna Koch, Deputy Minister to the Premier and Cabinet Secretary