

211 Ambassador Message Guide

The intent of this document is to provide a framework for consistent, targeted and effective messaging of 211 services in Ontario. These key messages, paired with other Ambassador tools (PowerPoint presentations and notes, social media posts, and a variety of print and digital collaterals), can help tell the 211 story and build 211 brand awareness across the province.

Target Audience Assumptions

- 75% of our calls come from women, over 30% of callers are on some form of income support
- Seniors are an ever-growing user of the 211 service, and middle-aged women caring for children and an aging parent (sandwich generation) are another key demographic
- Front-line workers also call 211 to find information for their clients, and close to 40% of callers hear about 211 through a friend or “trusted intermediary”
- Municipalities, physicians, emergency responders, agency leaders and United Ways have existing networks of clients, patients, donors or constituents that could benefit from calling 211 to find resources

Elevator Pitch: What is 211?

You’ve all been asked at one point or another to answer the question “What is 211”? It is a valuable service that is sometimes hard to describe to people succinctly. This is what we have come up with to articulate the key messages about 211 in a quick elevator or water-cooler conversation:

211 is an **award-winning 3-digit phone and online service** helping Ontarians **connect to** the complete range of government and community-based health and social **services available in their communities**. Calls are answered **24 hours per day, 7 days per week, by professional information and referral specialists** who are trained to assess caller needs, and to refer callers to the most appropriate resources.

211’s **resource database** contains more than 60,000 records, making it the **most comprehensive human services database** in the province. Combined with the **demographic and caller needs** information collected through our calls, 211 provides individuals, agencies and planners with **rich data on the supply and demand for human services in Ontario**.

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Vision for 211 in Ontario: a trusted resource

As Ambassadors, we know that you believe in 211 and understand its value – but you also know that people have limited time and energy for learning about new services. When communicating the 211 message (or any message, really), remember that people want to know “What’s in it for me?”

In describing the vision for 211 in Ontario, we have answered that question for a variety of audiences based on our collective experience to date. A comprehensive Stakeholder consultation is planned for 2014, and we will gladly share the results with you so we may continue to fine-tune our language and value proposition.

211 will be the first source of information, and gateway to human services for individuals and planners.

What this means for **individuals** – or their family members, neighbours, friends & colleagues looking for help is that 211 is a number they know and trust to provide the right resources, the first time. 211 will help people connect to their communities and maintain a good quality of life.

For **agencies**, 211 will be a trusted resource to help them find services for their clients, and to receive qualitative caller needs data that provide additional insight about the needs in the community.

For **Emergency responders and Emergency Managers**, 211 will provide a channel for authoritative information to the public regarding non-urgent needs and services, allowing them to focus their resources on their core mandate.

For **government planners and other decision-makers**, 211 will provide rich data about caller/user needs that will help inform their investment and policy decisions regarding social, health and government services. Through the adoption of Open Data principles, 211 will also provide the authoritative source of human services data that can be accessed and leveraged to support community development initiatives at all levels.



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211 Values and Principles: A deeper dive

For those seeking more information about 211 – how it works, how we work with others, what do we mean by standards, what drives our decision-making – our values and principles tell a little bit more of our story.

People are at the core of our work. We strive to ensure that program or policy decisions are based on what is best for those we serve.

Inclusion and diversity are part of our culture. We serve all residents of Ontario and strive to deliver services in the way that people wish to access them. We provide service in both official languages, as well as in more than 150 other languages and TTY.

211 is built from the Community Up. This means that we value and leverage the knowledge and expertise that exists in communities to provide a better service to our stakeholders.

Community data belongs to the community. Resource data and caller needs data is shared openly with governments, planners, agencies and other funders to inform their decisions about human services.

We are a standards-based service. Our Information & Referral Specialists and Resource Specialists are certified by AIRS, and our Regional Service Partner organizations are accredited by AIRS. This means that we adhere to consistent standards that guide the information and referral sector across North America.

211 is Powered by Partnerships. 211 is committed to working in partnership with governments and community organizations to achieve the best outcomes for residents of Ontario.

We are accountable to our stakeholders. 211 relies on public dollars to deliver services to all of Ontario. We are committed to investing those dollars wisely to deliver results at an individual, an organizational, and a community level.

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