



An initiative of  United Way

MEDIA RELEASE

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Connecting people across the province - 211 Saskatchewan phone, text and online chat service expansion

Saskatchewan – United Way of Saskatoon and Area and United Way Regina are proud to announce the service expansion of 211 Saskatchewan through the support of the Community Initiatives Fund and CanPacific Potash.

Saskatchewan's two largest United Ways; United Way of Saskatoon and Area and United Way of Regina are traveling across the province between June 13-20, 2018: Saskatoon, La Ronge, Prince Albert, Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Estevan and Regina during a "211 Saskatchewan Roadshow." The goal of the roadshow is to officially launch the 211 service expansion and inform each community of the usability that 211 Saskatchewan offers through the new phone, text and web chat services.

Robyn Edwards-Bentz, United Way Regina, Chief Executive Officer sees the relief the service offers to individuals and families, not only in larger centers but in remote areas of the province. *"There are many people who need a little assistance to help find the right service at the right time for their children, their aging parents or themselves. United Way is proud to offer 211 Saskatchewan - a single point of access to nearly 5,000 government, community and social programs and services. Thanks to the generous support from Community Initiatives Fund and CanPacific Potash, United Way can expand its reach to improve lives and strengthen communities across the province."*

A significant barrier for individuals and families to accessing the services they need is the complexity of finding the information they are looking for. Whether it is finding assistance with basic needs such as food, shelter and employment, looking for support for an aging parent, or trying to find childcare, navigating through all of the information out there can be overwhelming, confusing and ultimately a roadblock to finding support.

United Way is dedicated to helping individuals and families access the supports they need easily and without barriers. 211 Saskatchewan has been in service as a database website since the fall of 2013, but the service now grants the ability for individuals to call 2-1-1, text 2-1-1 or go online to chat with trained professionals to help people in Saskatchewan find and navigate services. This access to community, health and government services is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year in over 100 languages.

Shaun Dyer, United Way of Saskatoon and Area Chief Executive Officer says, *“For years, 211 has been linking people to the services and supports they need and removing barriers for kids, their families, and people from all different life experiences. Today, with the introduction of phone, text and chat capabilities, 211 Saskatchewan becomes a truly pan-provincial service. The 211 Saskatchewan expansion is a snapshot of everything United Way works to activate here in Saskatoon, in Regina, and all across our great province.”*

In 2017, 110,000 people used the 211 Saskatchewan website. A recent survey indicated that 86% of those surveyed found the site useful and 48% learned about a new service they did not know existed. It also showed that 15% of the website users were from outside of the province. The top three topic searches made on sk.211.ca were Mental Health, Shelter/Homelessness/Housing and Food Security

211 phone, text and chat will connect the citizens of Saskatchewan to the resources closest to them more easily than ever before. When individuals and families can access supports and services that they need to better equip them to thrive, they become strong and healthy and our entire community prospers.

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