

# 2020- 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

2.1.1

Virginia



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CONNECT TO  
247211



**DIAL**  
211



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[WWW.211VIRGINIA.ORG](http://WWW.211VIRGINIA.ORG)

# ABOUT 211 VIRGINIA

## FREE SERVICE, AVAILABLE 24/7

211 is an easy to remember, 3 digit phone number connecting people with information on community services. 211 Virginia is a free service available **24 hours a day/365 days a year** throughout Virginia.

## TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

When inquirers contact 211 Virginia, they are connected to a trained professional who will listen to their situations and suggest sources of help.

## LARGEST HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DATABASE IN VIRGINIA

211 Virginia maintains a resource database of more than **5,500** agencies, with approximately **19,000** active and seasonal programs, and is constantly adding new agencies and programs.

## LANGUAGE SERVICES

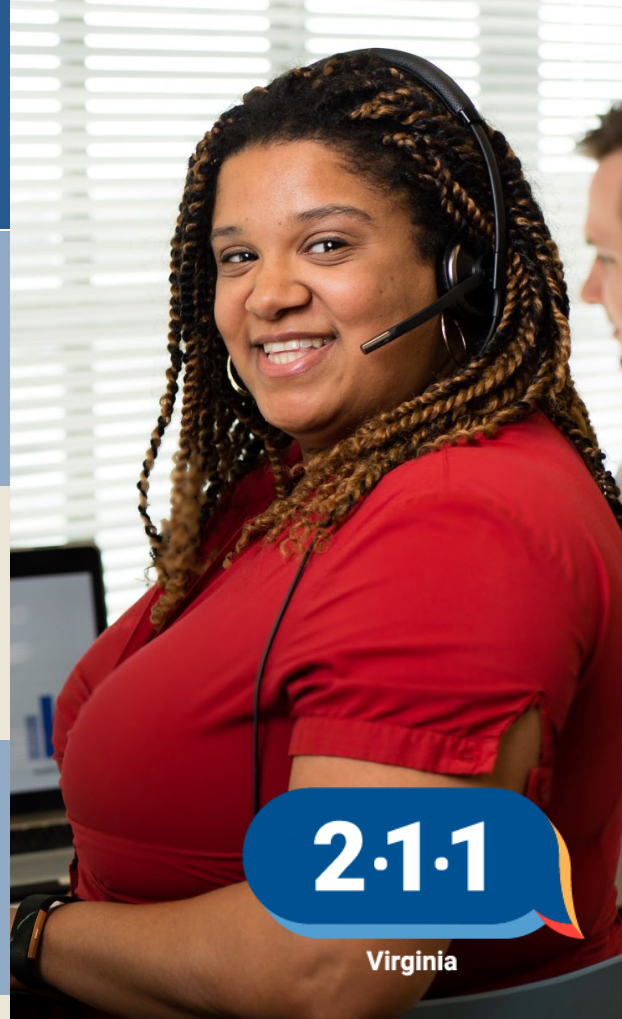
211 Virginia uses a third-party language translation service in over **240** languages, and offers limited live translation for Spanish speaking inquirers.

## ACCREDITED CONTACT CENTERS

211 Virginia operates **2** Alliance of Information & Referral Services (AIRS) accredited contact centers and **1** accredited database center. Trained staff include **12** AIRS Certified Community Resource Specialists, **3** AIRS Certified Resource Specialists - Database Curators, and **1** Resource Center for Customer Service Professionals (RCCSP) Certified Call Center Manager.

## TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

211 Virginia strives to maintain the constant innovation of technologies to meet the needs of all Virginians. 211 Virginia enabled texting services, upgraded the website to include menu icons to enhance search features, and is exploring artificial intelligence.



## Serving the Commonwealth through **PARTNERSHIPS**

- Alliance of Information & Referral Systems
- Virginia Alliance of Information & Referral Systems
- Virginia Department of Aging & Rehabilitative Services
- Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- Virginia Department of Health
- Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association
- Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development \*
- Virginia Department of Small Business & Supplier Diversity \*
- Virginia Information Technology Agency \*
- Virginia Department of Social Services
- Virginia Department of Veteran Services
- Dominion Energy

**3** new ★★★★★  
**partnerships**

## GET CONNECTED. GET HELP.

**DIAL 211**

**Text CONNECT to 247211**

*(message and data rates may apply.)*

**Visit [www.211virginia.org](http://www.211virginia.org)** for live

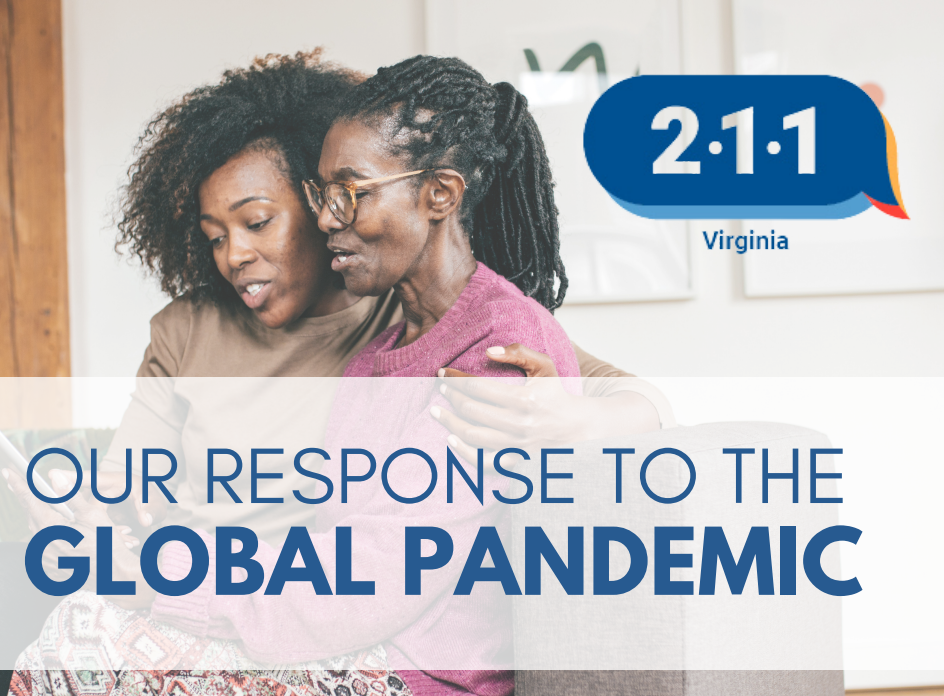
chat, email, or to search our database.

**Hearing-impaired?** Dial 7-1-1 and then  
(800) 230-6977 to reach 211 Virginia.

**Out of State?** Dial (800) 230-6977

**Dashboard:** [www.211Counts.org](http://www.211Counts.org)





# OUR RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

At the onset of the pandemic in 2020, 211 Virginia quickly assumed its place as part of the statewide emergency response team. Though nothing could truly prepare the team for the challenges to come, 211 Virginia's extensive focus and training on emergency preparedness allowed the staff to transition into a sustained posture.

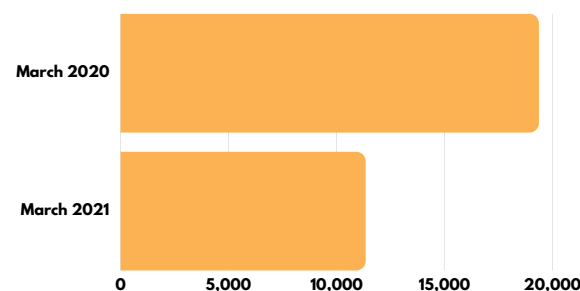
In late January 2020, the leadership staff of 211 Virginia received its first briefing from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) on the emerging threat of COVID-19. As a long-time partner of VDH, 211 has provided ongoing contact center support for the public health inquiry line, ASK-VDH3. Prior to the pandemic, 211 also provided information and referral assistance for other public health threats such as Influenza, Ebola, German Measles, and Zika. The long-established partnership with VDH allowed 211 Virginia to begin answering public inquiries and redirecting those in critical need of medical information early in the pandemic.

In March of 2020, Northern Virginia emerged as an early COVID-19 hotspot in the United States. Calls about the new and potentially deadly virus began flooding the ASK-VDH3 hotline as worried citizens looked for answers and guidance. General questions were routed directly from the hotline to the 211 Virginia front-line staff.

**The 211 Virginia contact center experienced a dramatic spike in calls as statewide moratoriums, new mandates and additional resources became available.** As information about testing became widely accessible, questions then shifted to the vaccines. With drastic increases in COVID-19 infections during the winter months, 211 again experienced a significant uptick in calls. During this period, 211 Virginia successfully demonstrated its essential value as a key player in the state's emergency response while also remaining an important resource for families in need.

**From July 1, 2020, to January 20, 2021, 211 VIRGINIA provided 10,039 referrals for COVID-19 resources including, testing sites, local health departments, VDH talking points, and other programs.** The close relationship between the staff at 211 Virginia and VDH allowed for a constant flow of information in the rapidly evolving emergency response. This partnership also helped to ensure that every day, the 211 Virginia team received critical updates and accurate information in a timely manner.

## Inbound Calls Comparison



With cloud-based technology already in place to allow remote work, the 211 Virginia team transitioned to a 100% virtual workspace. As many agencies and programs experienced disruptions in service, 211 Virginia never closed and remained fully operational 24/7.

Partnerships with other state agencies and programs have allowed 211 Virginia to remain a critical central access point for those most affected by the economic impact of COVID-19. Community Resource Specialists provided eligibility pre-screening and referrals to the COVID Rent Relief Program administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD.) The program provides financial assistance for rent to those facing eviction related to a loss of income due to COVID-19. **In partnership with DHCD, 211 linked thousands of families to the Virginia Rent Relief Program and other housing-related programs resulting in 15,869 referrals.** With funding support from DHCD, 211 Virginia hired temporary staff to assist with the higher than average volume.

"The partnership between 211 Virginia and DHCD is imperative to help families affected by the pandemic avoid eviction, as well as to keep landlords whole. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have prioritized efforts to keep Virginians safely in their homes, and as additional funding became available 211 Virginia helped connect thousands of individuals to critical resources."

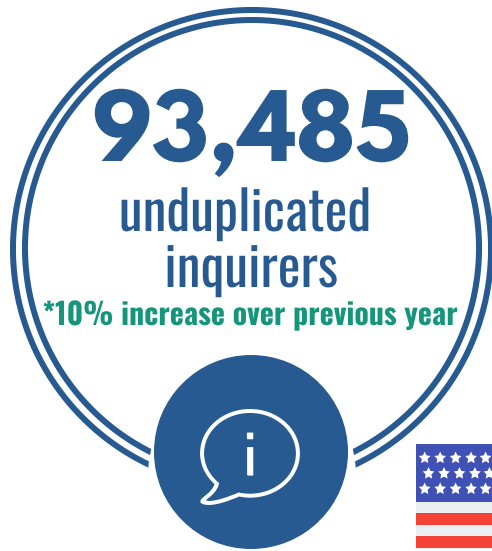
– Pam Kestner, Chief Deputy, Virginia DHCD

211 Virginia also answered calls on behalf of the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity. RebuildVA was launched in the fall of 2020 to support small businesses most affected by temporary business closures. Calls for the RebuildVA program were routed directly from the SBSB to 211 Virginia. **Nearly 500 individual business owners received information and resources for the RebuildVA program.**

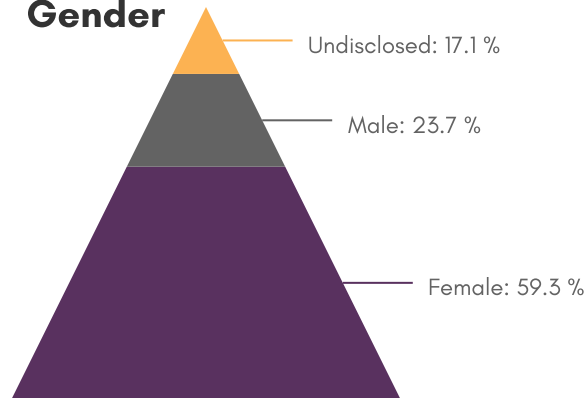
# 211 VIRGINIA ANSWERS THE CALL

2020 - 2021 by the numbers

## WHO IS LOOKING FOR RESOURCES?



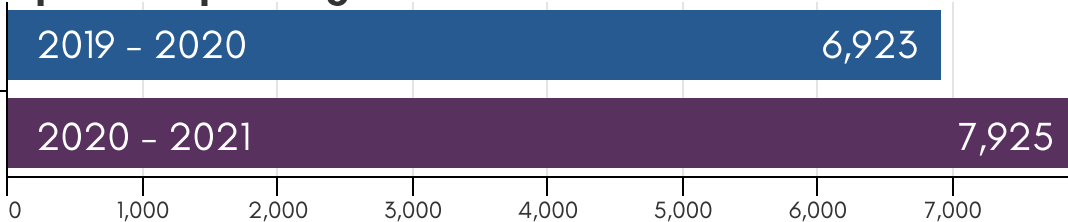
### Gender



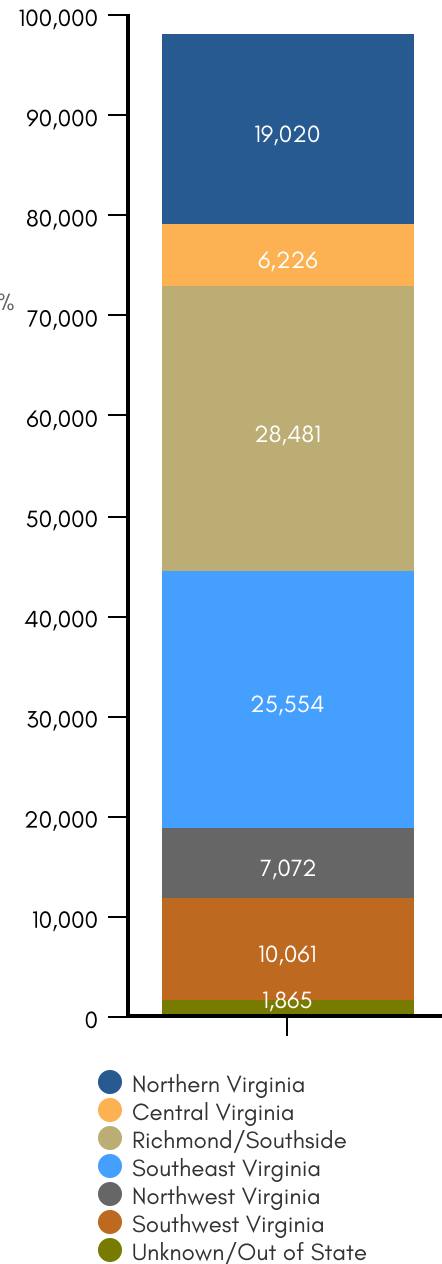
4,755 Veterans Served



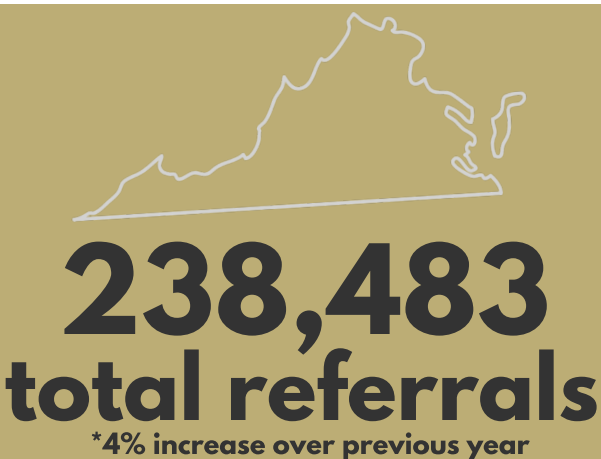
### Spanish-Speaking Contacts



## Regions



## HELP STARTS HERE.



### Contact Methods



Phone  
165,548



In-person  
34



Mail  
335



Email  
679



Chat  
2,962



Text  
579

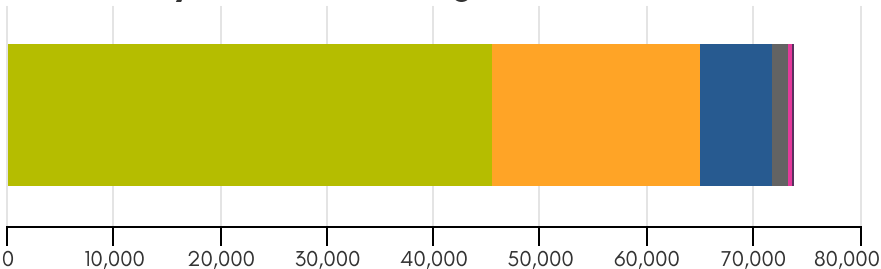
\*Text feature launched June, 2021

# 211 VIRGINIA ANSWERS THE CALL

## 2020 - 2021 by the numbers

### WHAT HELP IS NEEDED?

#### Utility Assistance Program Referrals



- General Utility Referrals: Gas, Oil, Water, Electric (45,556)
- EnergyShare (Dominion Energy) (19,603)
- Energy Assistance (VDSS LIHEAP) (6,856)
- Neighbor to Neighbor (AEP) (1,410)
- Washington Area Fuel Fund (Washington Gas) (332)
- HeatShare (Columbia Gas) (167)
- SVEC Energy Assistance (Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative) (79)

#### Statewide Outreach to Organizations



- Poverty, including food insecurity (1139)
- Other (934)
- Disaster Preparedness/Response (647)
- Homeless, including at risk (221)
- Substance Use (113)
- Veterans (60)

**5,047** STATE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE CALLS  
\*from March - June 2021

**16,297**  
CALLS FOR COVID RENT/MORTGAGE RELIEF PROGRAMS

**30,060**  
REFERRALS TO RENT/MORTGAGE RELIEF PROGRAMS

### Top 5 Requests for Help



Housing

2019-2020

2020-2021

45,407

36,986



Utility Assistance

32,202

25,535



Healthcare

29,109

19,238



Individual, Family,  
& Community Support

13,421

9,624



Food/Meals

11,332

6,314

### Did you know?

211 Virginia maintains the most robust database of human services in the Commonwealth - **19,000+ programs in over 5,500+ agencies!**

**211 Virginia is a free service that helps Virginia citizens access the local resources they need.**



For more information, please visit: <https://www.211virginia.org/>



# 22%

*of Community Resource Specialists*  
**ARE BILINGUAL.**

## CREATING EQUITABLE PATHWAYS TO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Latinx community has been especially hard hit by COVID-19. Temporary closures in the food and service industries created an increased need for support for those working in these sectors. As a result, 211 Virginia experienced a nearly **15% increase in calls from Spanish-speaking individuals.**

Calls increased across nearly all needs categories, but requests for utility assistance and housing assistance more than doubled. This prompted several actions to improve 211 Virginia's accessibility to the Latinx Community.

211 Virginia offers language translation services in more than 240 languages. However, the ability to pair a bilingual Community Resource Specialist with a Spanish-speaking caller helps remove language barriers and results in a more in-depth assessment. This allows for more effective problem-solving and less time working through a third-party translation service.

**Growing needs in the Latinx community quickly highlighted the urgency for more bilingual staff. Through the use of a staffing agency, one full-time bilingual specialist grew to five full-time specialists. As a result of this change, the number of Spanish calls handled directly by a bilingual specialist increased by 281%.** The team has played an integral role in identifying barriers to services and providing key insights into the complex challenges this community continues to face.

With CARES Act funding, the 211 Virginia database was upgraded and now includes the ability to collect race and ethnicity data separately. These changes help ensure that 211 Virginia continues to reach people of all races and ethnicities in a supportive and inclusive approach to service.

**"211 Virginia provides a network of support that is vital to helping Virginians efficiently find the help they need. From everyday community needs to devastating disasters, 211 Virginia is a lifeline to communities across the Commonwealth."**

- Duke Storen, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services



211 Virginia is a public/private partnership between the Virginia Department of Social Services & the Council of Community Services provided in collaboration with:  
The Planning Council of Norfolk, United Way of Central Virginia, and United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg.



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