



United Ways of Vermont

VT 211 Testimony: Senate Committee on Transportation

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VT 211's mission is to promote the health and well-being of all Vermonters through a statewide information and referral system that streamlines access to community resources. VT 211 is critical state infrastructure and serves as the front door to Vermont's health and human services system. As a nationally accredited information and referral service, VT 211 provides confidential, nonjudgmental, and barrier-free access to accurate, up-to-date information about essential community resources across the state. Through phone, text, and an online searchable database, VT 211 connects Vermonters to help when they need it most, regardless of income, geography, language, or circumstance.

Vermonters call 211 in times of need, whether threats to SNAP benefits, extreme weather, natural disasters, or policy changes, and demand continues to rise as federal shifts and funding cuts impact our communities. As families, state agencies, and service providers face increasing strain, the state relies on VT 211's critical infrastructure to meet demand and respond quickly. Call volume continues to grow year over year with a 44.5% increase in contacts overall since 2021. In 2025, VT 211 handled more than 61,000 contacts, with peak demand between 4:00 and 10:00 p.m. We operate seven days a week, including weekends and holidays, and with an online database available 24/7.

VT 211 helps people navigate complex systems to find the help they need, at the same time reducing pressure on community organizations, town offices, and emergency services. We are also an integral partner in disaster response and recovery, supporting communities during Tropical Storm Irene, COVID-19, and the flooding events of 2023 and 2024.

Demand for services continues to grow. Since 2021, VT 211 has seen a 44.5% increase in contacts, handling more than 61,000 in 2025 alone. Demand is highest in the evenings, between 4:00 and 10:00 p.m., when many other systems are unavailable. We operate seven days a week, including weekends and holidays, ensuring that Vermonters can access help when they need it most.

From a transportation perspective, VT 211 plays an important role in helping Vermonters access care and services. In 2025, we made 345 referrals for transportation resources, and



we have already made 60 referrals in just the first two months of 2026. The majority of these requests are for non-emergency medical transportation.

At the same time, transportation remains a significant unmet need. In 2025, we documented 139 unmet transportation needs, most commonly related to gas assistance and help with vehicle payments. These are not just transportation issues, they are barriers to accessing healthcare, employment, and basic needs. In a rural state like Vermont, when transportation falls through, everything else can fall through with it.

VT 211 is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit that works in close partnership with the state, working to extend state services, rather than duplicating them. We provide infrastructure that supports health and human services across Vermont, including supporting the emergency housing program, responding during disasters, and adding capacity to the Economic Services Division call center during evenings, weekends, and holidays when the state does not have staffing available.

In this way, nonprofits like VT 211 help the state meet demand without needing to build and sustain that capacity internally. We serve as a flexible, responsive partner that can adapt quickly as needs change.

Today is Common Good VT's Nonprofit Day at the Legislature, an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of Vermont's nonprofit sector. We also want to raise awareness for the need for government grants and contracts that fairly compensate and support nonprofits, especially as uncertainty at the federal level is creating more challenges. Common Good's technical assistance program will provide critical support amid federal changes to ensure that Vermont's nonprofits can coordinate, adapt, and safeguard essential services in partnership with the state.

Finally, it is important to note that a fully funded VT 211 is essential to keeping Vermont's information and referral system strong. The Governor's proposed FY27 budget reduces VT 211 funding, which will impact our core services and greatly limit our ability to respond in a disaster. The House FY 27 Budget restores this essential funding, allowing VT 211 to continue connecting Vermonters to help when it matters most. Please support Common Good VT's appropriations request for the nonprofit technical assistance program, and restored level funding for VT 211 in FY 27.

Thank you for your time today and for your commitment to supporting Vermonters.