

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Keep United Way's 211 Going Strong in Manitowoc County

Manitowoc, Wisconsin (February 17, 2026) United Way is urging community members to consider making a gift in support of 211, United Way's free, confidential helpline that connects individuals and families to essential resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As more people face financial instability, mental health challenges, housing insecurity, and unexpected crises, 211 has become a lifeline. Last year alone, the helpline fielded over 1,500 calls from residents seeking help with everything from rent and utility assistance to food, childcare, and mental health support.

"Behind every 211 call is a real person facing a real challenge," said Ashley Bender, Executive Director at United Way Manitowoc County. "Whether it's a senior who can't afford prescriptions, a family searching for emergency shelter, or someone in emotional distress who simply needs to know they're not alone—211 is there. But this vital work is only possible through the generosity of our community."

What Does Your Gift Do?

- \$10 connects a caller to urgent local resources.
- \$25 supports follow-up calls for people in crisis.
- \$50 helps keep 211 available 24/7 for our entire county.

A Growing Need

Over the past year, calls to 211 related to housing, mental health, and basic needs have surged. Rising living costs and ongoing community challenges mean more residents are turning to United Way for guidance and support. Your gift directly supports real people in our community:

- Seniors living alone
- Parents juggling impossible choices
- Teens struggling with mental health
- People facing unexpected crisis

"A gift to 211 is a gift of hope," added Ben Peters, Director of Impact Strategies at United Way Manitowoc County. "It ensures that when someone in our community reaches out in their most vulnerable moment, someone is there to answer."

How to Help

Your tax deductible gift to sustain and strengthen the 211 Helpline can be made online here:

<https://bit.ly/40gIP1E>. A check can also be made out and mailed or dropped off at United Way Manitowoc County's office at 33 E. Waldo Blvd., Manitowoc. This campaign takes place through the end of February.

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About 211

211 is a nationwide service that connects millions of people each year with the help they need—when they need it. Help can be accessed by dialing 2-1-1 (24/7); texting your zip code to 898211 (M-F 8:00am-5:00pm); accessing the chat link (M-F 8:00-am-5:00pm); or by searching the online directory (24/7) at 211now.org. Learn more by visiting unitedwaymanitowocounty.org and clicking on the 211 logo at the top of the screen.