

A photograph of three call center agents wearing headsets, working in a bright office environment. The agents are focused on their work, with one woman in the foreground looking slightly to the side.

# **EMERGENCY SERVICES**



***Building Resilient Communities Together***

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE WITH 211**

211 serves communities during and after events such as inclement weather, mass shootings, wildfires and floods.

We reinforce the messages emergency officials need to communicate to the public, such as the location of evacuation centers, road closures, safety instructions, social services to assist disaster victims, and more.

In preparation for future emergencies, we are actively building relationships with emergency services officials to encourage the inclusion of 211 in local emergency response plans.

## **HOW 211 CAN HELP**

- 211 provides an easily-accessible channel for delivering information to the public regarding an emergency or disaster.
- 211 refers callers to authoritative information about the emergency, including the location of emergency shelters, where to get basic supplies, information about locating loved ones, and how to donate goods or volunteer.
- 211 helps to alleviate the number of non-emergency calls made to 911 and other municipal phone lines.
- In addition to its public inquiry role, 211 also has an extensive database of resources that includes emergency and every day programs and services that support residents during the event, and long into the recovery process. The database is quickly expandable to include disaster resources and emerging information as required.
- 211 collects information about callers and their needs, including service gaps that exist, or that emerge during an event. This information can be shared in real time with emergency officials to support their work on the ground.

## **VALUE OF A 211 COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**

Emergency Information Officers are the key providers of information, therefore having effective lines of communication with 211 is important. A formal protocol between local response efforts and 211 can be valuable for the following reasons:

- Mutual notification information;
- Agreed upon activation procedures;
- Ongoing two-way communication processes (i.e. local emergency response officials sharing media releases and other information with 211 as the situation changes and directing the public to call 211 for non-emergency information).

## SAMPLE COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

OES provides situation, and basic disaster response information to 211 staff  
(evacuation, shelter, public health, other services information)

211 staff participate in EOC to receive real time updates  
211 staff enters official information into iCarol database

OES promotes 211 through PIO channels as resource to county residents  
for non-emergency disaster information

211 receives calls and texts with requests for information  
and tracks calls and request type

211 continues to provide disaster response information and begins to transition to  
disaster recovery with Local Assistance Center, volunteer and donation information

## LOCAL PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

### Whole Community Crisis Communication Annex – Kickoff Event

In April 2019, 211 Bay Area participated in the Whole Community Crisis Communication Annex kickoff event, which was hosted by Santa Clara County Office of Emergency Services.

Because disasters have a disproportionate impact on persons with access and functional needs, older people, young children and persons who speak a language other than English. We've seen these impacts in disasters across the state including Santa Barbara, Ventura, Sonoma Counties and most recently in Butte County during the Camp Fire. These disasters have negatively impacted many of our region's most vulnerable communities, some of whom may never fully recover.

Santa Clara Office of Emergency Services kicked off a planning and listening process leading to development of a countywide Crisis Communication Annex that strives to be inclusive of the Whole Community. The annex (plan) will guide their emergency communications efforts during times of disaster to reach the Whole Community – and particularly those who are most at risk and vulnerable.

211 Bay Area seeks to continually improve its ability to serve as a public inquiry line during times of disaster through internal capacity building, external partnership development and participation in emergency preparedness activities such as the Whole Community Crisis Communication Annex.