



211 San Diego Highlights its Role as Essential Community Infrastructure During an Uncertain and Shifting Federal Landscape *Launches “San Diegans Helping San Diegans” Awareness Initiative*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN DIEGO (Feb. 18, 2026) — As uncertainty and rapid changes at the federal level threaten access to food, healthcare, and economic supports, 211 San Diego today convened regional leaders to underscore the organization’s role as essential community and public service infrastructure for San Diego County.

During a press conference at the 211 San Diego Connections Center, leaders from government, public safety, healthcare, and the nonprofit sector highlighted how 211 serves as the region’s trusted front door to help, connecting individuals and families to thousands of vetted resources while helping public systems operate more efficiently during times of disruption and crisis.

In 2025 alone, 211 San Diego responded to nearly 400,000 requests for help, providing real-time navigation across food assistance, healthcare, disaster response, housing stability, and economic supports.

“211 San Diego is essential community infrastructure - a bridge that connects people to critical support systems and the backbone that keeps those systems functioning,” said William York, CEO of 211 San Diego. “When federal policy shifts create uncertainty, trusted local guidance becomes crucial, and that’s the role 211 and our partners play every day.”

The event also marked the launch of 211 San Diego’s 2026 public awareness campaign, “*San Diegans Helping San Diegans*,” that highlights four core pillars of the organization’s work: economic supports, access to benefits, disaster response and care coordination.

“Nonprofits are essential partners who deliver services that government cannot deliver alone,” said U.S. Congressman Scott Peters. “211 San Diego plays a unique and irreplaceable role to help people navigate complex systems so public investments like health coverage, food assistance, and tax credits actually reach the families they’re meant to support.”

With healthcare and food costs rising and eligibility rules growing more complex, 211’s role as a connector is increasingly critical.

“Health doesn’t begin or end in a doctor’s office,” said Dr. Rakesh Patel, CEO of Neighborhood Healthcare. “When patients struggle with food, housing, or transportation, their health suffers. 211 helps bridge those gaps, improving outcomes while reducing strain on the healthcare system. The organization’s care coordination and community navigation is the vital connection for San Diegans in need. It’s how we create healthier and prosperous communities. It’s how we can be Better Together.”

“With the federal landscape shifting, the demand for food assistance continues to put immense pressure on the region. 211 San Diego is the essential link that ensures families don’t just know help exists, but can actually navigate the enrollment process for programs like CalFresh and find food pantries in the meantime,” said Casey Castillo, CEO of the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank. “By acting as that central ‘front door,’ 211 helps the Food Bank and our partners serve the community more efficiently, ensuring that no San Diegan falls through the cracks during times of transition.”

Unlike emergency services focused on life-threatening situations, 211 manages non-emergency needs during crises, helping to prevent overload of 9-1-1 systems, public health departments, and county agencies. The organization also supports long-term recovery, assisting residents for months or years after disasters and emergencies.

In addition to direct community support, the data 211 San Diego collects each year provides a real-time pulse on emerging needs, helping policymakers and nonprofit leaders make informed decisions about where resources are most urgently required.

Residents can access 211 San Diego by dialing 211 or visiting 211sandiego.org, 24 hours a day, in more than 200 languages.

About 211 San Diego

211 San Diego is a trusted, community-based nonprofit that connects San Diegans to essential health, social, and disaster-related services. Through live, human support and a robust partner network, 211 helps residents navigate complex systems and access help when it matters most.

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