



United Way
Central Alberta

Help Starts Here: 211 helps Alberta residents navigate complex services: financial and housing supports

Red Deer, February 10, 2017 –

211 Alberta, the province’s go-to number to connect to community, social and government services, has released its 2016 caller statistics. The numbers show that more than 88,000 calls for non-emergency help were answered by 211 across the province last year.

Income & social assistance, housing supports, transportation and public service information represented 52% of all calls to 211 last year in Alberta. 211’s data provides a view to the mostly invisible social service needs in the province.

“Financial and housing challenges were the top two reasons people called 211 Alberta in 2016. Our community, social and government services are plentiful, but complex to navigate, and many Alberta residents find it difficult to know where to begin,” said Robert Mitchell, Co-Chair 211 Alberta Steering Committee. “On average, a person will make 7 calls before finding the help they need. We will raise awareness about 211 on February 11th to help people find the support they need, and to reduce inappropriate calls to other services, such as 911 or 811.”

Top five calls, number of referrals and examples of types of referrals in the category:

Financial Needs (e.g. government financial assistance, temporary emergency assistance, credit counselling and budgeting)	12,430 calls
Shelter/Housing (e.g. low income/subsidized rental accommodation, housing search assistance, homeless shelters, transitional housing)	15,294 calls
Transportation (e.g. public transit information, seniors assisted transportation, free or low cost transit passes)	9,253 calls
Public Services Information (municipal, provincial, and federal services)	8,927 calls
Tax Services (e.g. tax preparation assistance, tax information services)	5,048 calls

Residents should always call 9-1-1 for a life-threatening emergency, when a property is in danger or a crime is in progress that requires the police, fire or paramedic services. For health advice and information residents can call HealthLink at 811.

Calling 2-1-1 is the easy way to access financial, emotional and other supports in Alberta communities this winter.

About 211 Alberta

211 is a three-digit number that helps Alberta residents navigate the complex network of human services quickly and easily, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in over 170 languages. For information on communities served, please visit ab.211.ca.

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