



Washington

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2020 ANNUAL REPORT
January 2019 - June 2020



TEXT
18772119274



DIAL
211



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www.wa211.org

This year, WA211 implemented long-planned improvements as well as expeditious changes made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The result ably demonstrated the system's ability to be part of a statewide response to a crisis while also serving as a continuing resource for individuals and families in need.

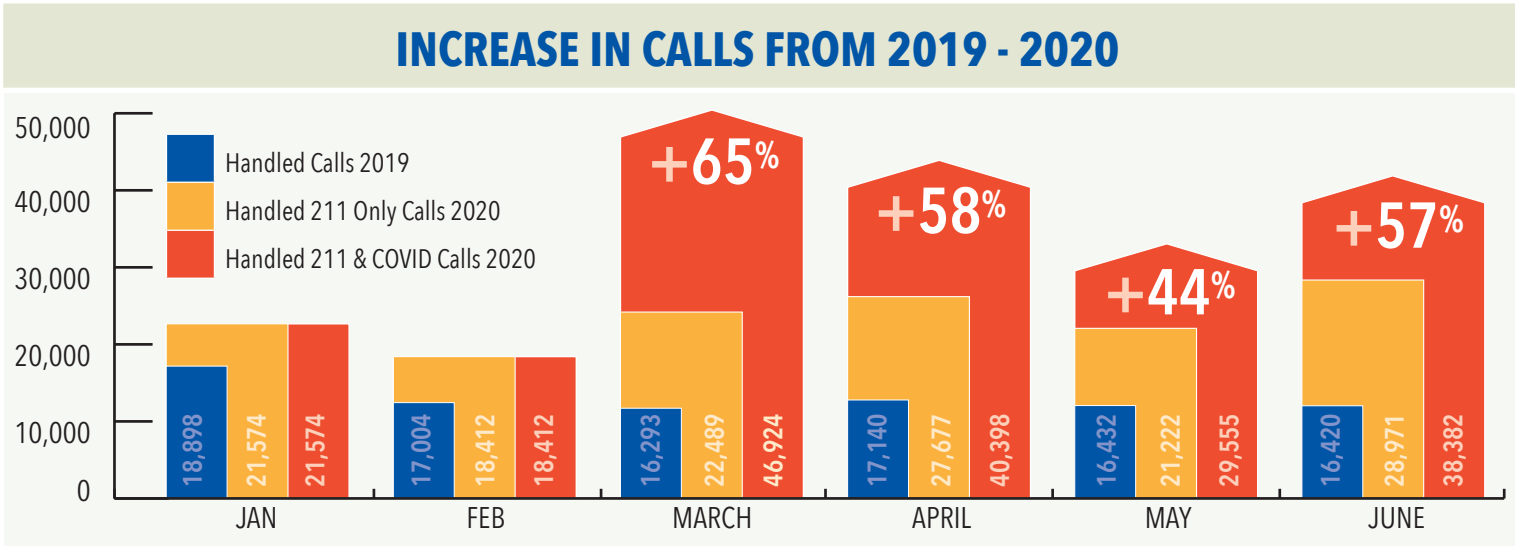
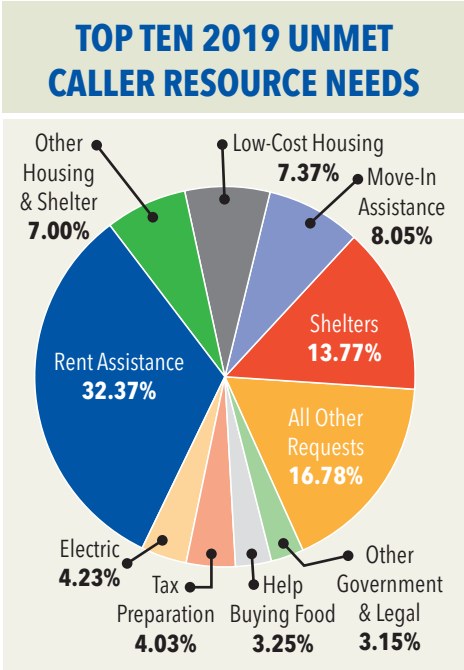
The impact of the COVID-19 crisis has taken a horrific toll on our families, communities, and economy. Earlier strategic planning efforts and recent technology upgrades allowed WA211 to successfully partner with the Washington State Department of Health in handling a surge of calls coming into the state's COVID-19 hotline. In the first six months of 2020, WA211 geared up and handled nearly 195,000 calls -- 90 percent more calls than the same period the year before -- while lowering both the percentage and actual number of abandoned calls. At the same time, calls from state residents needing non-COVID help increased 27%.

Central to this response was WA211's knowledgeable and experienced information and referral specialists and a shared call system which routes COVID-19 calls, regardless of where they originate, to the first available 211 specialist associated with any one of the system's seven regional contact centers. To handle the COVID-19 call surge, the number of incoming ports was increased allowing the system to receive and respond to up to 300 calls at a time, and additional temporary staff and volunteers were brought on to assist.

Direct funding from the Washington State Department of Health allowed for WA211 to expand capacity with additional specialists and expanded service hours -- from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays to 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. This is the first time since state funding was cut in half in 2010 that WA211 had the ability to expand service hours statewide.

WA211 is thankful for a onetime \$200,000 appropriation from the Washington State Legislature this year. This is the first time WA211 has had a major investment in its aging operating infrastructure since becoming a statewide service in 2006. This funding will allow WA211 the capability to provide 211 support remotely, which improves disaster response and creates the opportunity to provide in-person community outreach, assessment and referrals. New scheduling software also made it easier to schedule remote workers to ensure proper coverage levels, especially during expanded hours and weekends. United Way Worldwide also awarded WA211 with a \$75,000 grant from its National COVID-19 Fund which provided additional support to regional contact centers to respond to increased requests for assistance from callers economically impacted by COVID-19 and in need of food and housing assistance.

WA211 demonstrated its ability to be part of a statewide response to a crisis while also serving as a continuing resource for families in need.



**In the Jan-June 2020 period,
WA 211 AGENTS CONNECTED
RESIDENTS TO AREAS OF NEED:**

HEALTHCARE*



52,518

FOOD



5,818

ELECTRIC



6,618

SHELTER**



34,076

TAX PREP



4,361

ALL OTHERS



16,892

* Includes: Other healthcare 9,980; Coronavirus 42,538

** Includes: Rent assistance 15,164; Low-cost housing 9,098; Shelters 6,024; Housing & Shelter 3,79

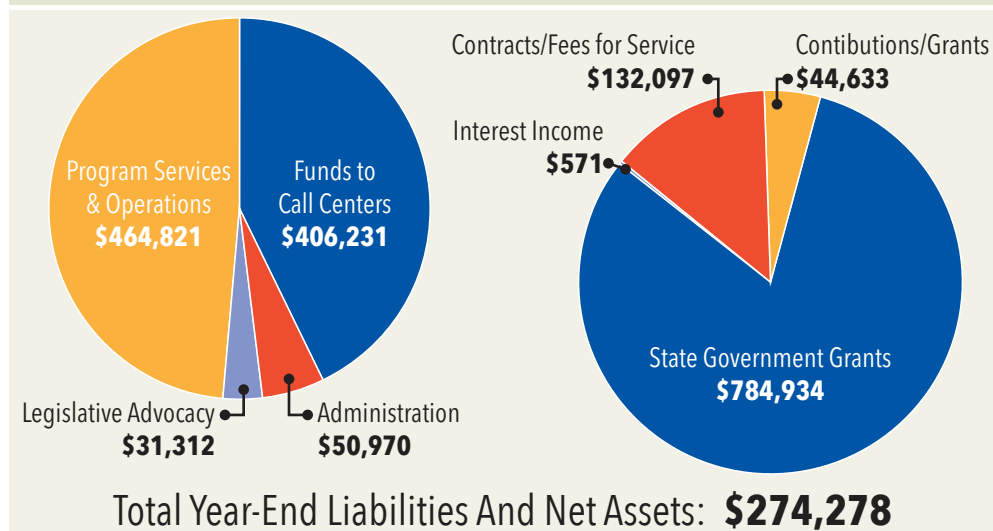
WA211 upgraded its resource database to a cloud-based database last summer, which allows WA211 specialists to share live resource data, facilitate referrals, and make real time updates to resources from anywhere in the state. The database contains over 29,000 resource records which represents a seven percent growth in database records from last year. Thanks to a \$40,000 grant from Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health, design work is being completed on making this database available to the public through the WA211.org website using a redesigned online search tool.

WA211 experimented with other ways to provide direct public access to its resource database such as a free Artificial Intelligence Chat Bot supplied through a partnership with AdmitHub that provided current information and answers to questions during the early stages of the pandemic. A partnership with California 211 resulted in a texting service which supplied helpful links to the national Center for Disease Control as well as state and regional health information. In addition, WA211 enhanced prerecorded phone scripts in collaboration with the Department of Health to answer basic questions so that callers would not have to remain on the line for a specialist.

If the COVID-19 experience demonstrated anything, it has been the importance of having trained 211 specialists give assurance and provide answers and direction to callers with questions about virus exposure, symptoms and testing, business closures and how to best protect themselves. Our 211 specialists take the time to listen and link people up to necessary resources and help people wade through the incredible amount of virus noise and misinformation to get their questions answered, person to person.


In the process, WA211 is providing insight into current and emerging needs in communities across the state by collecting and analyzing caller data. In June 2019, WA211 began a partnership with 2-1-1 Counts, which provides an online interactive dashboard of 211 caller statistics. Using 2-1-1 Counts, you'll find community-specific needs and gaps in services that can be displayed at the state and county level as well as by congressional, legislative and school district level enabling anyone in Washington State the ability to easily check trends, make comparisons and share information. Current 2-1-1 Counts data shows WA211 experienced a 30 percent increase in housing and shelter assistance calls the first six months of 2020 as compared to the first six months of 2019.

WA211 2019 FINANCIALS





WA 211 meets unique needs for families and communities.


TOP FIVE SPECIALIZED SERVICES:

 **Provides Earned Income Tax Credit outreach and free tax site info**

 **Supports the Basic Food Program:** Pre-screens for eligibility and assists callers with completing applications

 **Delivers eviction prevention/ move-in assistance:** Assists eligible callers with completing applications for rental assistance, deposits and move-in costs

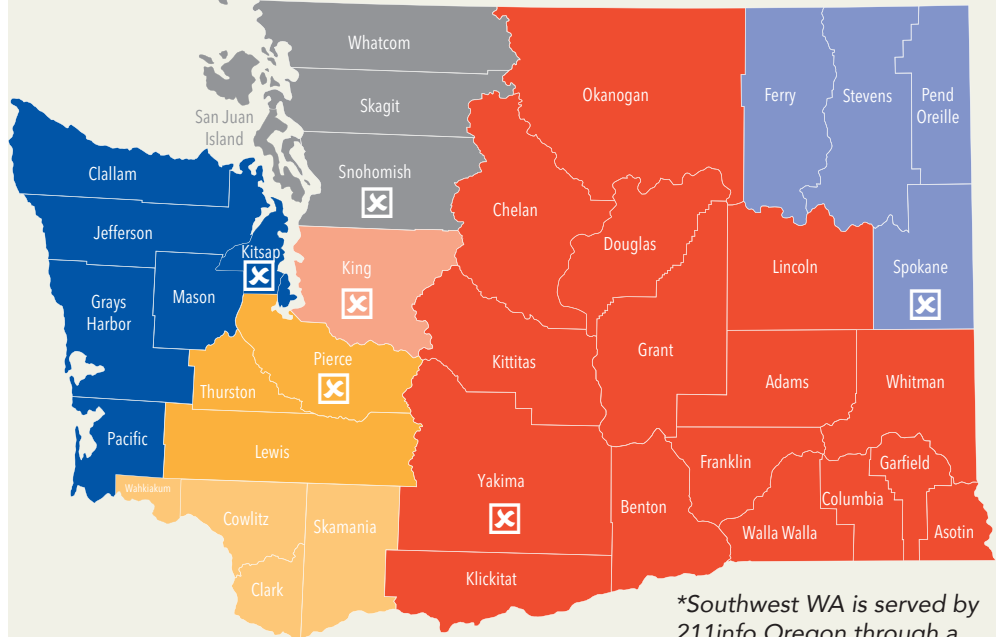
 **Navigates regional Coordinated Entry:** Serves as central access point for homeless and housing services

 **Enables mobility management:** Provides transportation navigation services for the elderly and disabled

What's Next for WA211?

Building on the invaluable resource WA211 provided the state and its residents over the past year, the 211 network partners are developing strategies that will help maintain its expanded days and hours of operation, sustain its role in the COVID-19 response, while also increasing access to all 211 services.

REGIONAL SERVICE AREAS



**Southwest WA is served by 211info Oregon through a special operation agreement*

WA211 REGIONAL CONTACT CENTERS

- Eastern 211 Region – Frontier Behavioral Health
- Greater Columbia 211 Region – People for People
- King County 211 Region – Crisis Connections
- North Sound 211 Region – Volunteers of America
- Peninsulas 211 Region – United Way of Kitsap Co.
- South Sound 211 Region – United Way of Pierce Co.
- Southwest 211 Region – 211info



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