



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in BC's
Interior, Lower Mainland, Central
& Northern Vancouver Island

NEWS RELEASE

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Landmarks across BC to light up on February 11 for 211 Day



[Photo of BC Place in Vancouver lit up in red in honour of 211 Day, February 11, 2021]

Central Office, Burnaby, B.C. – This February 11, several notable landmarks across British Columbia will light up in red in honour of 211 Day. An annual day of recognition across North America, 211 Day raises awareness about this free and confidential service which helps people navigate the complex network of social, government, and community services. People simply dial or text 211 to talk with a trained professional who will listen and help them find the right information and supports for their unique situation.

211 British Columbia is operated by United Way British Columbia and is a part of the network of 211 services across North America. This service can be accessed by phone, text, e-mail, web chat, and an [online database of resources](#). Interpretation is available in over 150 languages when calling. 211 provides information and referral to a broad range of resources: basic needs like food and shelter, supports for mental health and addictions, legal and financial assistance, supports for seniors and newcomers, and much more. **Help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a week.**

"There is still a stigma in our society when it comes to asking for help, but the simple truth is that everyone, no matter how strong, experiences ups and downs in life that may need support. We receive over 150 calls every day from people in communities across British Columbia. There is no shame in seeking support, and help starts here. Our 211 Navigators will listen and compassionately connect you to available resources in your community," said Niina Niemi, Director, 211.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to a significant increase in the number of contacts to 211 British Columbia. In 2022, as inflation exacerbates existing economic strain, 211 BC's contact data indicates the changing needs of callers and the current challenges many British Columbians are facing. These trends further demonstrate that the need for 211 is more vital than ever to connect people to the services they need. (See Quick Facts below for related data).

"At United Way BC, we are committed to building healthier, caring and inclusive communities, and 211 is a direct reflection of that commitment. 211 exists as a vital lifeline, available to all British Columbians experiencing challenges and needing support. 211 Day is a very important day in building awareness

about this free and accessible resource, and we are grateful to all the communities who will be lighting up their landmarks in red in support of 211,” said Michael McKnight, President & CEO.

The landmarks that will be showing their support for and raising awareness about 211 by lighting up in red on February 11 include:

City/Town	Landmark
Burnaby	City Hall and BC Parkway
Coquitlam	Lafarge Lake Fountain
Duncan	World's Largest Hockey Stick
Nanaimo	Bastion
Port Coquitlam	City Hall
Port Moody	City Hall
Quesnel	Fraser River Footbridge
Trail	Victoria Street Bridge
Vancouver	Vancouver City Hall & Burrard Street Bridge
Vancouver	BC Place - The Northern Lights Display
Vancouver	Canada Place, Sails of Light
Vancouver	Bloedel Conservatory
Vancouver	Vancouver Convention Centre
Victoria	BC Parliament, Ceremonial Entrance and Fountains
Victoria	Confederation Garden Park Fountain and Waterfall
Whistler	Fitzsimmons Creek Bridge
White Rock	White Rock Pier

We encourage British Columbians to show their support on 211 Day by sharing photos of participating landmarks with the hashtags #211DayCanada and telling family and friends about the 211 service.

Quick Facts

- When comparing province-wide data from 2022 to 2020, 211 BC has seen an increase of:
 - 15% more contacts for housing
 - 22% more for mental health
 - 40% more for legal and public safety, and
 - 49% more for abuse.
- In certain parts of the province, there has been as much as a 31% increase in the number of contacts inquiring about food and meals in 2022 when compared to pre-pandemic 2019 data.
- In 2022, the top five searches on 211 BC’s website (bc.211.ca) in order were:
 - free and low-cost food
 - general counselling
 - finding housing
 - mental health, and
 - emergency shelters.

To learn more about 211 British Columbia: <https://bc.211.ca/>

About 211 British Columbia

211 British Columbia is a free and confidential service that refers people to resources for help. Dial or text 2-1-1, or visit bc.211.ca, 24/7, 365 days a year, to be connected with a Navigator who will help find the right support in your community for your situation, whether it's housing, food, financial aid, counselling, or more. Interpretation is available in 150+ languages. 211 British Columbia is accredited by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS); operated by United Way British Columbia; supported by the Province of British Columbia; and is part of a network of 211 services across North America.

About United Way British Columbia – working with communities in BC's Interior, Lower Mainland and Central & Northern Vancouver Island

United Way supports healthy, caring and inclusive communities by strengthening vital connections that support people in need. Representing the six regions of Central and Northern Vancouver Island, East Kootenay, Lower Mainland, Southern Interior, Thompson Nicola Cariboo, and Trail and District, our organization serves a population of more than 4 million people, with a focus on kids and youth, seniors, poverty, mental health and food security.

www.uwbc.ca

Interviews are available with Niina Niemi, Director, 211.

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