



Marlene Perez would like to offer verbal testimony on #7693

211 at United Way of Rhode Island: Connecting People to Help

211 is a vital resource provided by United Way of Rhode Island, serving as a beacon of hope and assistance for residents across the state. It is a comprehensive and confidential helpline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The primary mission of 211 is to connect individuals, families, and caregivers with the support and resources they need to navigate life's challenges and achieve stability.

Key Features and Services:

1. **Free and Confidential:** 211 is a toll-free, confidential service that anyone can access. Callers can speak with trained professionals who are skilled in understanding diverse needs and providing compassionate assistance.
2. **Resource Navigation:** Whether it's access to housing, food, healthcare, education, or other essential services, 211 specialists are experts at guiding callers to the right resources within their communities.
3. **Crisis Support:** 211 is there for individuals and families facing crises, providing immediate support and referrals during emergencies, natural disasters, or personal hardships.
4. **Language Access:** Recognizing the diverse demographics of Rhode Island, 211 offers translation services in many languages, ensuring that language barriers do not hinder access to assistance.
5. **COVID-19 Information:** During the pandemic, 211 played a crucial role in disseminating information about COVID-19, including testing locations, vaccine distribution, and pandemic-related resources.
6. **Advocacy and Support:** 211 is a trusted advocate, helping individuals understand their rights and options, and empowering them to make informed decisions.

The 211 program offers additional features and benefits that enhance its effectiveness in serving the community:

1. **RIDE United Grant with CCRI:** 211 is in the process of applying for a RIDE United grant in partnership with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) to support students in accessing reliable transportation to and from training and job interviews. This initiative addresses a critical need for students participating in programs partnered with Polaris.





2. **Fast Track to CNC Manufacturing Program:** This flagship program, developed in collaboration with CCRI, provides pipeline job seekers with essential hard skills in manual machining, digital design, industry-specific hand tools, and remedial math. Participants have the opportunity to earn industry credentials, college credit, and receive assistance with barrier reduction, all aimed at enhancing their employability.
3. **Fast Track @ The DOC:** An extension of the Fast Track program, Fast Track @ The DOC operates within the Department of Corrections, offering currently incarcerated individuals access to critical skills training. The program, initially implemented in the women's wing, is expanding to include facilities for men, providing valuable opportunities for skill development and reintegration into the workforce.
4. **Implementation of Chatbot Feature:** 211 is preparing to roll out a chatbot feature from LiveChat Inc in the next fiscal year. This innovative tool will enhance user experience and accessibility by providing an additional channel for individuals to access information and assistance.
5. **Introduction of AI Features:** ResourceConnect (RC), the platform used for 211 programs, is introducing new AI features to further enhance efficiency and effectiveness in information and referral services. These advancements aim to streamline processes and improve the overall user experience.
6. **Yanzio's AI Software:** Neil McKenchie, former CTO of iCarol, is spearheading a new company called Yanzio, which specializes in building AI software specifically tailored for 211 and information and referral centers. This development represents a significant advancement in leveraging technology to enhance the capabilities of 211 programs, offering promising opportunities for improved service delivery.

These additional features and partnerships demonstrate 211's commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in meeting the diverse needs of the community.





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The Point at United Way of Rhode Island: Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

The Point is another valuable resource offered by United Way of Rhode Island, specifically designed to cater to the needs of Rhode Island's aging population and individuals living with disabilities. As part of the state's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), The Point serves as a centralized hub for information, support, and assistance for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers.

Key Features and Services:

1. **Resource Coordination:** The Point is staffed with knowledgeable specialists who assist individuals aged 55 and older, adults living with disabilities, and caregivers in identifying their unique needs and connecting them to relevant resources and services.
2. **Memory and Cognitive Care Planning:** The Point offers guidance and support for planning and managing care for individuals dealing with memory and cognitive challenges.
3. **Public Assistance Programs:** Specialists help individuals navigate public assistance programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and heating and utility assistance.
4. **COVID-19 Support:** The Point provides information about COVID-19, including vaccination programs, testing locations, and access to pandemic-related services.
5. **Advocacy and Empowerment:** The Point empowers individuals and their caregivers to advocate for their needs and rights, ensuring they receive the support they require.

Both 211 and The Point exemplify United Way of Rhode Island's commitment to supporting and improving the lives of Rhode Islanders by providing essential resources, advocacy, and compassionate guidance. They are essential pillars of the organization's efforts to create a more equitable and inclusive Rhode Island for all its residents.

