



April 2, 2025

The Honorable, Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island Statehouse  
Providence, 02903

**RE: Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 5076 - Governor's FY25 Budget  
Article 10 - Dept. of Human Services - \$200,000 Appropriation for United Way 211**

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we write in strong support of the Governor's proposed FY25 budget, specifically the \$200,000 appropriation included in the Department of Human Services chapter of House Bill No. 5076 to sustain and strengthen United Way's 211 system—Rhode Island's 24/7, multilingual, and confidential information and referral helpline.

211 is a critical piece of the state's health and human services infrastructure, connecting residents to thousands of programs that support housing stability, mental health, food security, elder care, and crisis intervention. In 2023 alone, United Way 211 responded to nearly **213,000 calls, texts, emails, and in-person inquiries**—each representing a Rhode Islander or a Rhode Island family seeking urgent help and guidance.

This investment comes at a pivotal moment. As federal safety net programs face potential cuts, more individuals are turning to 211 to navigate increasingly complex systems of care. The helpline not only supports individuals and families—it supports the systems that serve them. For every **\$1 the state invests in 211**, Rhode Island has a **\$7.50 return on investment** through reduced emergency service utilization, faster access to benefits, and better long-term outcomes for those in crisis. The proposed \$200,000 appropriation supports essential operations and ensures continuity of services that reach every corner of the state. It also helps sustain key initiatives such as the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and the United Way 211 Outreach RV, which bring vital resources and information directly into every Rhode Island community

[Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.](#)

We are grateful for your continued leadership and respectfully urge your support of this strategic investment. A strong 211 system ensures that every Rhode Islander—no matter their zip code—has access to the help they need, when they need it most. Thank you for your commitment to the well-being of our communities.

Sincerely,

**Elijah McLean**

Manager, Government Relations & Policy

United Way Rhode Island

Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.