2026 Public Policy & State Budget Priorities

211 New York, Inc. would like to begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to the New York State Legislature and the Executive for their continued commitment to strengthening statewide emergency preparedness and community support systems. The investment in the New York State Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the annual funding provided for 2-1-1 New York, Inc. (211 NY) directly supports our shared mission of ensuring that every New Yorker has access to timely, accurate, and life-sustaining information during both everyday hardships and large-scale emergencies. This support has allowed 211 NY to remain a stable, responsive, and essential resource across all regions of the state.

As we look ahead, we respectfully request the continuation of critical state investments in 211 New York, Inc. and the New York State Office of Emergency Management. Sustained funding for 211 is vital for maintaining seamless service delivery, enhancing statewide emergency response coordination, and ensuring that our infrastructure, staffing, and technology remain equipped to meet the rising needs of New Yorkers. As reported in our 2025 ALICE Report, there is a strong need for long-term funding stability- as the 48% of New Yorkers living below the Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) threshold and we want to ensure that 211 NY remains accessible 24/7 as a trusted partner to state agencies, community organizations, and residents.

211 is a statewide free and confidential health and human service referral hotline that is administered by 2-1-1 New York, Inc., a subsidiary of the United Way of New York State. 211 is accessible 24 hours a day/365 day of the year, and enables residents to connect with trained community resource specialists who evaluate the callers' needs, research options in 211's comprehensive, hyperlocal database of health and human services offered, and refers them to the programs and services offered by community-based organization and government agencies that meet those needs.

211's database contains detailed information on the support and services of non-profit organizations and government agencies in the fields of social services, public health, law enforcement, homeland security and emergency services, legal assistance, corrections, temporary and disability services, and more. The database is also used by other health and human service organizations, not just 211. A publicly accessible utility, 211's freely accessible online database is used by professionals in health care, human services, and education to connect patients, clients, and students to assistance for needs beyond their scope.

New Yorkers are using 211 every day. In 2024 there were 2,045,000 million phone calls made to 211NY statewide and in 2025 call volume is on track to exceed that number between the various difficulties that occurred in 2025.

2026 Public Policy & State Budget Priorities
2-1-1 New York, Inc.

211 is more than a telephone number. Over its 20+ year history, the 211 system has created local partnerships, as well as partnerships with the State, to leverage the system and ensure that New Yorkers have access to the information and referrals when they need it most. For example:

- **211 Contributes to Disaster Planning, Relief and Recovery Efforts.** During Hurricane Sandy, Tropical Storm Lee, the Oneida/Herkimer County flooding, Western New York snowstorms, the most recent tornados last summer in Oneida and Madison County, flooding in Steuben County, and other disasters, 211 provided access to reliable, up-to-date, relevant information for those impacted, first responders, and long-term recovery groups.
- **211 Helps our Fiscally Strapped Counties.** Local Depts of Social Service use 211 as the primary referral for additional concrete support like food, housing, utility assistance, etc. when the community members' needs exceed the supports government can offer. This was emphasized during the recent federal government shutdown**.**

As a public-private partnership, it is critical for State support to be maintained. Without State support, the partnership and opportunities that have been created with the State, local counties and residents will be in jeopardy.

Request: $2.8 million in the FY 26-27 budget to maintain and make necessary investments to 211.

Unfortunately, despite the continued essential services provided by 211 NY, the 211 networks do not have a reliable state funding source, as it has yet to appear in the Governor's Executive Budget even though 2-1-1 New York, Inc. was granted the 211 assignment by the New York State Public Service Commission over 15 years ago in 2010. This financial instability creates uncertainty for the network and makes long-term planning and operations difficult. As such, this legislative session we are requesting the 211 Essential Community Services hotline be codified, with state agency oversight, which will designate it as an essential State service. Codifying 2-1-1 as an Essential Community service will allow 211 NY to continue to support millions of New Yorkers each year.

Request: Enact A.7381 (Lupardo)/S.6931 (Harckham), which establishes the 2-1-1 Essential Community Services Hotline System, providing the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) with oversight authority, specifying the information and referral services that must be provided by trained community resource specialists, and establishes annual reporting requirements for OCFS based on data provided by 211 NY.

Any questions please contact President & CEO Therese Daly at dalyt@uwnys.org
OR Janet Silver Esq. at jsilver@hinmanstraub.com