ADVOCACY: 211

Connecting Community to Resources

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember telephone number that connects people to essential community information and referral services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Vision

A committed partnership with federal, state and local governments that provides funding to sustain and grow 211 in Santa Clara County and throughout the state and nation.

Problem

211 information and referral services in Santa Clara County and throughout the country are entirely dependent on annual fundraising that is subject to economic challenges, donor desires and changes in foundation and local government priorities. For sustainability and expansion of this vital public service, 211 needs a long-term funding commitment from government at all levels.

Advocacy Actions

United Way Silicon Valley leads the local effort to address 211's sustainability in Silicon Valley by advocating for:

- Two federal bills (H.R. 211/S. 211) in the 111th Congress that fund the planning and implementation of a nationwide 211 system
- Statewide 211 expansion and infrastructure strengthening
- Preservation and expansion of 211 funding from county and city governments

Benefit to the Community

If 211 legislation passes at the state and federal levels, all Silicon Valley residents will have:

- Ongoing access to this vital lifeline for connecting to resources for everyday needs
- Reduced taxpayer costs because non-emergency calls will be directed away from the more expensive 9-1-1 emergency service
- Up-to-the-minute, county-verified information during public emergencies (e.g, earthquakes, H1N1)

TO GET INVOLVED OR LEARN MORE

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ADVANCING THE COMMON GOOD THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY

Advocacy is one strategy United Way uses to advance its goals. United Way also changes community conditions by:

- Delivering United Way Silicon Valley programs
- Investing strategically in agency-run programs
- Leading and partnering in coalitions
- Mobilizing volunteers

Why United Way Silicon Valley Advocates

Money alone cannot solve Silicon Valley's most pressing community needs. Public policy can be a significant catalyst for change and that is why advocacy is one strategy that United Way Silicon Valley employs in its ongoing efforts to improve the lives of local people. United Way's advocacy work is focused on **improving the systems that shape community conditions** to help individuals and families achieve financial stability and independence.

How United Way Silicon Valley Advocates

United Way is non-partisan in its advocacy and knows that systemic change requires partnership among non-profit organizations, government, business, labor, faith-based groups, and community members.

Working in partnership, United Way Silicon Valley takes the following approach in using public policy advocacy to advance the common good:

- Educate community members on the policy issues
- Connect advocates with elected officials and media outlets to champion causes
- Engage policymakers in solutions that meet community needs

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