A free, confidential helpline operated by United Way of Greater Houston, 24 hours a day, seven days a week in many languages, the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE continued to break records in 2019, connecting 1.3 million people with help. The 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE is the largest helpline of its kind in the country and one of our community’s most valuable resources.

With dedicated seniors, veterans, and financial stability specialists on staff, the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE connects families and veterans with resources to meet their unique needs. And, the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE is also the information resource before, during, and after disasters, whether a storm or a pandemic, connecting people in need with up-to-the-minute information and critical services.

**211: Our community’s go-to resource in times of disaster**

As the COVID-19 outbreak spread across communities, the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE geared up to connect our neighbors with critical information and resources, answering more than 160,000 calls from individuals seeking assistance in the first six months alone. The governor of Texas named 211 the number to call for COVID-19 related needs, including COVID-19 information and testing, basic needs assistance, and assistance related to furloughs, layoffs, and stay-at-home orders.

**Top COVID-19-related needs include:**
- Rent assistance, electric service payment assistance, COVID-19 testing, food pantries, and COVID-19 information.
- 211 also facilitates STEAR, the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry, which provides local officials with critical information about those who may need assistance in case of a mandatory evacuation. Last year, 211 helped 14,580 individuals register for STEAR.

**Serving those who serve through Mission United**

In 2019, 211 connected 22,000 veterans, servicemen and women, and their family members with tailored resources.

The Greater Houston area is home to more than 300,000 veterans, the second largest veteran population in the United States.

With United Way’s Mission United, all it takes is one call for veterans, active duty military members, and their families to be connected with a dedicated case coordinator who will guide them from beginning to end, helping them find and access resources to meet their unique needs, including employment assistance, food, housing, health care, financial services, and legal assistance.

United Way of Greater Houston regularly brings together organizations that serve veterans to exchange information, collaborate, and solve issues facing veterans. And, Mission United awards grants to organizations that provide specific services to veterans.

**Ride United: Last Mile Delivery**

In response to the COVID-19 crisis and the increased need for food assistance, United Way Worldwide expanded Ride United, a partnership with Lyft that allows 211 to connect veterans and people with specific health care, employment, and disaster relief needs to critical transportation, to include a home delivery program that brings food and supplies to vulnerable populations via DoorDash.

This partnership leverages DoorDash’s platform to power deliveries from local food banks, food pantries, and other distribution points to senior citizens, low-income families, and those who can't leave home, providing meals to those in need and flexible earning opportunities to Dashers in these unprecedented times. In our community, the program is facilitated by the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE working with local community partners, like Target Hunger and Catholic Charities. The program launched in the Greater Houston Area in mid-June and is providing 250 – 1,000 food deliveries per week.