

**NEWS RELEASE**  
For immediate release  
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## **211 launches in Renfrew County**

### **How finding help just got easier**

**PEMBROKE** – Today marks the official launch of 211 in Renfrew County.

211 is the information and referral hotline to local community and social services. It helps residents find the right services to help them cope with life's challenges, from childcare to homecare to emergency shelters. An easy to remember three-digit phone number 2-1-1, it simplifies finding services for Renfrew County's 97,545 residents. Calling 2-1-1 or visiting [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) makes finding resources in Ontario's largest county easier. With the launch in Renfrew County, 211 services are now available to 77 per cent of Ontario's residents.

Local dignitaries, Renfrew County United Way, 211's partners and community members participated in the launch. Renfrew County United Way is the lead agency; the Community Information Centre of Ottawa answers the 211 phones; and the Community Information Centre (Killaloe) Inc. provides the local data and connection to the community.

Funding of 211 in Renfrew is supported by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Province of Ontario. 211 will also be supported by Renfrew County United Way, and discussions now underway with the County of Renfrew and the City of Pembroke will hopefully result in municipal participation.

"Today's launch of 211 in Renfrew County is very exciting," says Renfrew County United Way Chair, Mike Wright. "We are absolutely thrilled with the benefits it will provide to anyone in our community needing information or help connecting to the right agencies and best resources to meet their needs. We thank both senior levels of government for their help in improving communications in Ontario's largest county. We anticipate that the quality of life for our citizens will improve as a consequence."

The path to today's launch of 211 in Renfrew County started several years ago with the development of a database of human services known locally as "County Connections". Funded by the Province of Ontario, the County of Renfrew and Renfrew County United Way, this database speeded up the introduction of 211 to the county. The addition of Renfrew County to the 211 family is part of a province-wide rollout that is expected to reach all Ontarians by 2012.

211 has been available in Canada since June 2002 with the first service being launched in Toronto, Ontario. 211 has expanded across the province and is the first number to call to connect people to the services and help they need, for over a half a million Ontarians every year.

"The expansion of 211 services into Renfrew County will give more Ontarians instant telephone access to local social services information. This service will benefit all Ontarians, especially families in crisis who need to access community services, new Canadians who need information to adapt to a new home, or parents searching for local services for their children," said Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur.

The Ontario government has committed more than \$13-million over four years for the Ontario 211 Services Corporation to expand the 211 hotline province-wide by 2012 with the help of community partners such as the United Way. From 2010 onward, as announced in the December 2008 Poverty Reduction Strategy Report, the government will provide \$4-million annually to maintain the 211 service.

## **211 launches in Renfrew County**

"Whether it's for access to information on affordable housing, support for families in crisis, children's after-school programs, services for seniors, re-training programs, settlement services, or sign language classes, we know that 211 will connect people quickly and easily, and their lives will be changed for the better," says Marie-Andrée Carrière, Executive Director, Community Information Centre of Ottawa.

211 services for Renfrew County are being administered by 211 Eastern Ontario (Community Information Centre of Ottawa) as part of a region that stretches from Trenton to Deux Rivieres, and to Hawkesbury and Cornwall. 211 Eastern Ontario operates one of eight call centres in the province and calls are answered by highly trained Information and Referral Specialists familiar with the human services in Renfrew County.

Calls to 211 are free, confidential and provides information on thousands of organizations serving them. 211 can help callers in over 170 languages and is open seven days a week.

211 services are now available to over 10 million people in Canada. Last year, over 94 per cent of callers to 2-1-1 were very satisfied with the helpful information provided by 211.

Call 2-1-1, or visit [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) to find the right social and community services.

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For more information, please contact:



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## 2-1-1 by the Numbers Nationwide

- Number of people in Canada who had access to 2-1-1 services in 2009: 10,265,706
- Number of calls responded to:
  - 2006: 460,154
  - 2007: 497,084
  - 2008: 538,931
  - **2009: 630,887**
- Number of non-English calls (or non-French in Quebec): 74,395
- Number of languages used: 51
- 26 per cent callers were Male
- 74 per cent callers were Female
- Minimum number of community services calls: 58,489
- Minimum number of government services calls: 72,824
- Top types of calls:
  - Health Services
  - Financial Assistance
  - Community Services
  - Housing Services
  - Basic Needs
  - Consumer Protection
  - Legal Assistance
- Number of visitors to 2-1-1 website: 1,394,900
- Client satisfaction as per surveys: 94 per cent
- **Number of people in Renfrew County who now have access to 2-1-1 services: 97,545**

For more information, please contact:

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