



To: House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Services
From: Matt Newell-Ching, Public Affairs Director
Subject: Support for HB 2650 to expand 211info service to 24/7
Date: March 7, 2019

Every Oregonian facing a crisis or life challenge deserves timely information about resources that can lend a helping hand.

One of Oregon's best resources to provide this information is 211info. It's a trusted, efficient and compassionate source of referrals for Oregonians seeking government and nonprofit services. Consumers turn to 211info for free and confidential help finding food, housing, heat, parenting, health care, legal and educational resources and much more.

Yet more than a third of 211info's contacts are turned away because they dial 211 outside its business hours of 8am-6pm weekdays.

When a family needs food, that need is immediate. Our organization occasionally receives voicemails left after hours or on weekends asking about food assistance. It's frustrating that we cannot refer them to 211info immediately because of limited hours of operation. Imagine needing to know where to get an emergency meal or housing for the night and getting sent to voicemail.

It doesn't have to be this way.

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon supports HB 2650 to serve Oregonians with a 24/7 211info contact center and accelerate its impact with regionally based Community Engagement Coordinators.

Expanded service hours will better meet the needs of working families who can't access information during those traditional business hours. Additionally, this expansion will better serve the state contractors who need 24/7 service for their constituents, enable closer alignment with 911, mental health and domestic violence supports, and provide a framework for coordinated entry programs and other innovations.

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon values the services provided by 211info and strongly support extending its service hours to 24/7 to benefit residents of Oregon's communities.