

ONTARIO 211 SERVICE NOW AVAILABLE IN OTTAWA*McGuinty Government Investing In Improved Access To Community Services***NEWS**

September 19, 2008

Ontario is delivering better customer service and improved access to community and social services by expanding 211 information services to the Ottawa area.

[Ontario 211](#) is a free, confidential and easy-to-use website and hotline that connects Ontarians with reliable information on local community and social services in more than 150 languages. By dialling 2-1-1, callers reach a certified information and referral specialist who provides accurate information to help connect people to services and a wide variety of local support programs.

For example, families in crisis will be able to access community services, new Canadians will be able to learn more about re-training programs, and parents of young children will be able to find local child care centres in their community easily by connecting to 211.

Enhancing families' access to local community and social services is an important part of the government's plan to develop a poverty reduction strategy that enables more Ontarians to work, build and contribute to a stronger economy.

The 211 hotline currently exists in various communities across the province, including Toronto, Thunder Bay and Windsor-Essex.

QUOTES

"With 211, we're making it easier for people in Ottawa to reach the services they need," said Minister of Community and Social Services Madeleine Meilleur. "Whether it is access to affordable housing, re-training programs for new Canadians, or support for families in crisis, 211 will connect people to local services quickly and easily."

"United Way/Centraide Ottawa has been committed to the development of 211 for close to a decade, and we're thrilled to have played a key role in bringing this service to our community," said Michael Allen, President and CEO of United Way/Centraide Ottawa. "In addition, the call data collected will help to identify trends and service gaps, and guide future service investment decisions."

QUICK FACTS

- A recent survey conducted by the United Way reported nearly 100 per cent satisfaction with 211 services in communities where it currently exists.
- The Ontario government has committed more than \$13 million over four years to expand the 211 hotline province-wide by 2011 with the help of community partners such as the United Way.
- More than 50 per cent of Ontarians now have access to 211 services.
- Users can speak with operators in more than 150 languages, including nearly every Ontario aboriginal language and dialect.

LEARN MORE

Watch a video about the [211 initiative in Ottawa](#).

Find out more about [211 in your community](#).

Learn about some of the services funded by the [Ministry of Community and Social Services](#).

Julia Sakas, Minister's Office, 416-325-5219
Erika Botond, Communications Branch, 416-325-5760

ontario.ca/community-news
Disponible en français

Visit www.ontario.ca/MCSSmedia for resources designed specifically for the media.