



# MINNESOTA 211 INCLUSION & EXCLUSION POLICY

## Purpose

This Inclusion/Exclusion Policy serves as a comprehensive guide for all Minnesota-serving 211 organizations. It outlines a transparent and consistent set of criteria for determining the inclusion or exclusion of agencies, services, or programs in the statewide resource database managed by Minnesota 211 (MN 211).

## Overview

MN 211 aims to positively impact people's lives by enhancing the accessibility of supportive resources fostering community engagement across Minnesota.

The MN 211 database contains information about service providers that enhance the quality of life for individuals and communities. It focuses on health and human/social services, consumer services, educational and/or recreational programming. Database entries are impartial and non-partisan.

MN 211's inclusion/exclusion criteria are reviewed annually and updated if necessary to address the evolving needs of the community. Additionally, these criteria can be revised throughout the year if agreed upon by MN 211 organizations.

The inclusion/exclusion criteria are approved by the board, governing, or advisory body of each of MN 211's three organizations which provide 211 services across 86<sup>1</sup> of MN's 87 counties.

MN 211 does not charge any fees for the inclusion of any organization in its public resource database.

## Equity

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<sup>1</sup> Clay County, Minnesota is not within Minnesota 211's service area.

MN 211 is committed to including a diverse array of services and programs that cater to a variety of ethnic, cultural and language preferences across Minnesota. Organizations that deny service based on disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, or national origin will not be included in our database.

## Criteria

Organizations must be in existence for at least 3 months before they will be considered for inclusion in the United Way 211 database. Exceptions to this rule are:

- Organizations providing services during a disaster or for a limited time period, such as holiday programs, school supply giveaways, winter coat giveaways, etc. These organizations may be listed immediately based on community needs.
- Organizations offering services in high demand where no other organizations fulfill that need.

### Should include:

Organizations that provide service in the following areas, as defined by 211 Human Services Indexing System (HSIS):

- Health and Human/Social Services
- Disaster Services, Consumer Services
- Educational Services
- Recreational Programming
- Environmental Issues

### And meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Nonprofit organizations addressing basic health and human service needs
- Public/private organizations offering free/low-cost services
- Agencies providing basic needs including food resources, housing/shelter resources, material goods, transportation services and utility payment assistance programs

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- Health system hospitals and clinics; nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- Community clinics and dental providers offering free/low-cost dental and/or medical care
- Government entities and community service organizations providing public health services and programs
- Free/low-cost legal services and advocacy organizations
- Public and private mental health practitioners offering free service, scholarships, reduced fees, sliding fee scale or accepting Medical Assistance as payment. Practitioners need to be licensed or in the process of being licensed. Private practitioners are generally included at the discretion of 211 when a public practitioner is not available in the same geographic area.
- Local, state, and national elected officials and government offices and quasi-public agencies
- Crisis lines, hotlines, help lines, information lines, and specialized information and referral lines
- Clearinghouses providing information about community resources may be included in lieu of listing the resources individually in the database (e.g., childcare, housing, support groups, volunteering, etc.)
- Local, statewide, and national toll-free phone services accessible by Minnesota callers that provide socially beneficial services
- Support groups that charge no fee or a nominal fee, including state, regional, or national headquarters or clearinghouses providing listings of local groups
- Faith-based organizations (churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, etc.) offering basic needs and/or mental health services to the greater community, not confined to their own membership or congregation
- Public educational institutions and school districts
- For-profit organizations providing health and human services unavailable from the nonprofit community in a given service area

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- For-profit organizations offering free services, scholarships, reduced fees, sliding fee scales, or accepting Medical Assistance as payment
- For-profit organizations meeting court diversion requirements as an alternative to the criminal justice system for eligible offenders.
- Organizations under government or nonprofit contracts
- Public and private housing providers offering public housing or low income subsidized rental housing
- Web-only or smartphone app-based entities offering health and human service information and assistance through a website or smartphone app, provided they meet other inclusion criteria
- Disaster Response/Recovery: During a disaster, MN 211 leadership reserves the right to adjust Inclusion/Exclusion criteria based on community needs and scope of the disaster. This might include for-profits that do not meet the above criteria for the duration of the response and recovery.
  - MN 211 will consider including services, donation needs, and volunteer opportunities identified and verified by Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) partners.

#### May include:

At the discretion of the regional 211 operating organization or MN 211, the following services may be included:

- Private educational institutions
- Private medical clinics
- Clubs with an emphasis on health and human services
- National or regional organizations offering socially beneficial services meeting the Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

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- Home-based licensed or unregulated businesses will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Private for-profit organizations at the discretion of MN 211
- Time-limited programs will be considered on a case-by-case basis

#### Note on Cost of Service:

While most government, nonprofit, educational, health and human services are offered to the public for free, or at a low cost, or as payable by a third party (such as Medicare or Medical Assistance), if a service's cost is considered generally prohibitive, the service may not be included in the MN 211 database.

#### Other Factors:

As needs vary, some communities may prioritize the development of resource information based on the most urgent needs of their local population. The following factors may also be considered when evaluating organizations for inclusion in the MN 211 database:

- Degree of demand/need for the services offered in each community, prioritizing basic needs services
- Number of agencies currently included in the database offering a similar service

#### Will exclude:

- This policy does not prohibit the inclusion of any program that targets services based on age, gender identity, health, disability, or other characteristics designed to meet the special needs of targeted populations. However, the program must be open and accessible to all people in those targeted populations.
- Organizations that deny service based on disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, or national origin
- Organizations that violate local, state, or federal laws or regulations

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- Organizations that serve their members only
- Organizations that misrepresent their services in any way
- Organizations that are not licensed in areas where licensing standards exist

## Geography

To be included in MN 211's database, agencies, programs, and services need to be available to residents of any county, or tribal community or reservation in Minnesota except for Clay County<sup>2</sup>.

## Disclaimers:

- Inclusion of an organization in the database does not constitute endorsement by MN 211, and exclusion does not imply disapproval
- MN 211 provides referrals, not recommendations or ratings of potential service providers
- While we strive to maintain accurate information in the database, circumstances can change quickly, and accuracy is not guaranteed
- MN 211 reserves the right to refuse listing an agency if, in its sole opinion, such a listing is deemed inappropriate or underused
- MN 211 does not guarantee client referrals to organizations listed in the database
- Organizations are completely and wholly responsible for screening clients for eligibility of services within their program(s)
- MN 211 reserves the right to cancel a listing for any of the following reasons:
  - Agency no longer meets the required criteria
  - Agency does not respond to MN 211's formal annual request to update in a timely manner

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<sup>2</sup> As mentioned above, Clay County is not within the Minnesota 211 service area.

- Agency has not received a referral in the past 12 months and is not funded by a United Way
- Agency has been the subject of credible/verified reports of misrepresentation of services, mismanagement of funds, or mistreatment of participants.
- MN 211 reserves the right to edit an organization's listing for content and clarity, software, and database formatting requirements, and to align with entry style guidelines.
- MN 211 reserves the right to share an agency's information in community resource directories, publicly searchable online databases, digital and social media platforms, and for community planning and research purposes.

## Appeals Process

The inclusion/exclusion criteria include an appeal process for organizations seeking clarification on either the document itself or the application of the criteria. Written procedures for complaint escalation and processing are available upon request by contacting MN 211 at [211updates@gtcuw.org](mailto:211updates@gtcuw.org) or calling 211.

Reviewed and Approved:

**Name:**

**Date:**

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