

211/LIFE LINE Community Resource Database

Inclusion/Exclusion Policy

Background:

211/LIFE LINE's I&R program exists to help individuals in need access services which can best alleviate or eliminate that need. Community Connectors will assess the needs of the caller and help empower them to make informed decisions about which resources may best meet their needs. Community Connectors may offer follow-up assistance and advocacy to ensure access to services.

While 211/LIFE LINE Community Connectors will try to give the most accurate and appropriate information/referrals possible, 211/LIFE LINE is not responsible for the quality of service delivered by any agency to which callers are referred. Community Connectors offer multiple options for callers, when services are reported by agencies, to consider whenever possible; they do not recommend or endorse agencies.

Inclusion:

“Health and Human Services” are defined as those which provide services that address human needs ranging from basic living needs (food, shelter, and clothing) to life improvement or enhancement services. Health services include both physical and mental health programs.

To be included in the 211/LIFE LINE database, an entity must:

- ◆ Provide health or human services to the residents of our primary 211/LIFE LINE service region of Monroe, Ontario, Wayne, Livingston, Cayuga or Seneca Counties or have a related role (funding, planning, coordinating or monitoring) in the human services network for this region.
- ◆ Provide a specific type of service in our larger service region for various Suicide and Crisis Intervention services and contracts which operate statewide, nationally and internationally depending on the service. These types of listings include those for which there is no other referral source such national/international referrals for crisis hotlines, Comprehensive (non-211) information & referral services in NYS, Mobile Crisis Teams in NYS, and New York State Governmental Agencies (ex. Department of Social Services and Community Mental Health) agencies.

Agencies eligible for inclusion are those that:

- ◆ have been in existence for six months or are affiliated with another organization that has been in existence for at least one year;
- ◆ are designated as or affiliated with;
 - a non-profit according to IRS 501(c)(3) or are
 - government offices or programs providing health and human services or are
 - For-profit organizations that meet a community need where insufficient non-profit or government services exist to meet the need.
 - Unincorporated groups such as support groups
- ◆ have an established service site;
- ◆ have a demonstrated ability to provide the service they say they provide, as indicated by information from clients or affiliated professionals;

- ◆ are health or human services provided by religious organizations if eligibility is not restricted by denomination;
- ◆ are health or human services provided by community organizations if eligibility is not limited to their own members (serve the community at large);
- ◆ engage in consultation with other agencies in the same field;
- ◆ do not have a history of problems with law enforcement or consumer complaint agencies

Exclusion:

- ◆ organizations that offer services only their own members (e.g., counseling or food available only to a church's parishioners);
- ◆ illegal or fraudulent services (this category also includes agencies which deny service on the basis of nationality, religion, color, race, sexual orientation or any other category protected by civil rights laws);
- ◆ private practitioners, though practices providing specialized services, including free or sliding scale may be included.
- ◆ Organizations covered under the services of a local specialized I & R program (i.e. child care, volunteer opportunities etc.)
 - If the organization provides more than one type of service, the agency will be included. The services that meet inclusion criteria will be the only ones indexed, though the excluded services may be mentioned in the program narrative.
- ◆ Organizations that misrepresent their services in any way
- ◆ Organizations that are not licensed in areas where licensing standards exist
 - if licensure does exist, but based on a contract or partnership with a larger project, requires listing, the lack of licensure will be noted in the record
- ◆ Individual organizations may not be listed if they are covered in a vetted specialized I&R service in the area.

211/LIFE LINE reserves the right to exclude from its database any organization that it has adequate reason to believe may spread hatred or have a philosophy that could be hurtful to the wellbeing of individuals, groups or the community as a whole.

Potential grounds for exclusion or removal from the database may include, but is not limited to, service non-delivery, fraud, misrepresentation, discrimination, or proven or alleged criminal activities.

Inclusion of any agency or organization does not imply endorsement by 211/LIFE LINE, nor does omission reflect disapproval.

This policy does not prohibit the inclusion of any programs that target services based on age, gender, health, disability or other characteristics designed to meet the special needs of targeted populations. However, the programs must be open to all people in those targeted populations.

Information provided by an agency may be edited for clarity, format and/or space requirements.

There is no charge for inclusion in the 211/LIFE LINE database.

Decision-making Process:

Agencies may be denied inclusion in the database after consideration by 211/LIFE LINE's Resource staff. Such decisions will be sent upon request in written form by the 211/LIFE LINE Resource staff, with approve by the Program Director. An agency denied inclusion may meet with the 211/ LIFE LINE Resource staff to discuss the decision; if unsatisfied, a further meeting with the Program Director can be arranged.

If 211/LIFE LINE receives complaints about an agency to which it is currently making referrals, Resource staff may do one or more of the following:

- ◆ call or visit agency staff to verify complaint information
- ◆ do research necessary to enable Resource staff to make a determination regarding inclusion/exclusion
- ◆ check with service's funding sources
- ◆ Document complaints (if significant in content or quantity, this may be made available to the community's funding/planning bodies at the discretion of the Program Director).

Agencies that do not respond to repeated requests by letter or phone to update their information in the database may be placed on inactive status in the database or removed from the database altogether until such time that the agency responds to requests for updated information.

How We Maintain the Database

Our database is updated every day as we learn about changes. The Resource Department continually checks resources and contacts to verify changes to ensure that our data is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. We encourage you to contact us immediately if you see any information you believe is inaccurate.

How We Collect Information

211/LIFE LINE is committed to maintaining an accurate database. One of our best resources for information is our callers. Because 211/LIFE LINE Community Connectors are using the data every day and giving information to thousands of callers, we often hear about new information as soon as changes occur. We also subscribe to newsletters and mailing lists in order to learn of new or changed information. In addition, several of 211/LIFE LINE's staff attend community meetings and events. All information collected is passed along to the Resource Department, which then processes the information for the database. We also rely on agencies to let us know when they are getting inappropriate referrals or when they have new programs. We send annual validation requests to each agency in our database, showing them the details we have about their services and sites. Agencies can then review their information, and send us back their corrections or verify that their information is still accurate.

How We Index an Agency's Services

211/LIFE LINE uses the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (www.AIRS.org) *Taxonomy of Human Services*, a standard indexing system used by human service information and referral systems throughout the United States. This national taxonomy contains thousands of service terms, organized into ten general categories and many subcategories. 211/LIFE LINE uses about 1500 of these, chosen according to our own information and referral needs. Agencies cannot re-name specific service terms since the terms are part of a national indexing system. However, we invite your comments and suggestions about the service terms we use and we do add terms or make changes to terms when community needs or standards in acceptable terminology advise a change. For more information on the Taxonomy, visit www.211Taxonomy.org.

Inclusion/Exclusion – Additional Guidelines

- If the agency is located outside of our service area but it serves 1 of our 6 primary counties then we will include it
- Include the following for all of NYS;
 - o Community Mental Health Agencies
 - o Department of Social/Human Services
 - o Mobile Crisis Teams
 - o All I&R's
 - o Crisis Lines
 - o Hospitals in Syracuse (since Cayuga County residents might be closer)
- Include specialized crisis lines across the country
- All 211's should be structured as standalone agencies – even if it is a program of United Way, just list the 211 as its own agency so it is easy to find – only list a 211 if they are in NYS;
- United Way's; if a 211 is a program of United Way then list "211" program as a standalone agency and only list/index the I&R (and crisis hotline) services (ex: 211 Northeast Region)
- Mental Health Associations:
 - o Only list MHA's in 6 county coverage area, and then refer all other callers/chat visitors to mental health association in their area using MHANYS website (<http://www.mhanys.org/affiliates/index.php>)
- Rural exceptions:
 - o Agencies and programs are not subject to time constraints in the inclusion portion of this document.
 - o For profit companies like plumbing and veterinary services can be listed if they provide 24 hour services.
 - o provided there is an extenuating circumstance necessitating their immediate inclusion upon incorporation with or ability to do business in the State of New York.