

**UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS CONTACT:**

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**Individuals Impacted by the Federal Government Shutdown Can Call United Way's 2-1-1 Helpline for Assistance**

As the government shutdown stretches into its 33rd day, nearly 800,000 federal employees continue to work without pay or remain furloughed across the country.<sup>1</sup> Recognizing the impact that a missed paycheck can have on these individuals, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) is encouraging Omaha-Council Bluffs metro residents who have been affected by the shutdown to call its 2-1-1 Helpline.

About 60% of Americans don't have enough savings to pay for an emergency between \$500 and \$1,000.<sup>2</sup> This means an average federal employee, whose weekly take-home pay is about \$500, may currently be struggling to pay their bills or buy necessities such as food.<sup>3</sup> And because the government shutdown may impact the distribution of March SNAP benefits and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s ability to provide funding for public housing and Housing Choice Vouchers, the number of individuals impacted by the shutdown may continue to increase.

UWM's 2-1-1 Helpline, a free, confidential Information and Referral (I&R) service, can connect Nebraska and Southwest Iowa residents who have been affected by the shutdown to a specialist who will help them find local health and human services, including the following:

- Utility/Rent/Financial Assistance
- Food/Shelter/Clothing
- Abuse Prevention
- Counseling/Mental Health Services
- Support Groups
- Senior Services
- Children/Teen Services

To access Helpline resources, individuals should dial 2-1-1, text their zip code to 898211 or visit <http://ne211.org>. Specialists will be available to assist individuals over the phone or via text between 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday through Friday and between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. After these hours, individuals can leave a message that will be returned. All calls are free and confidential, but standard message and data rates may apply when texting. Assistance is available in over 100 languages using the Tele-interpreter service and bilingual staff.

**About United Way of the Midlands**

Thanks to donors, volunteers and community partners, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) is not only focused on addressing our community's human needs today; it is focused on what can be and what should be. It is building on today's strong partnerships to create even more comprehensive human service efforts tomorrow, so our community can solve some of the root causes of poverty. UWM is community-based, community-focused. Thanks to those who share their strength, UWM is COMMUNITY STRONG. Please visit [UnitedWayMidlands.org](http://UnitedWayMidlands.org) for more information.

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<sup>1,3</sup>Lu, Denise and Anjali Singhvi. "Government Shutdown Timeline: See How the Effects are Piling Up." *The New York Times*. Jan 22, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/01/08/us/politics/government-shutdown-calendar.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Bankrate's Financial Security Index. Jan 3-7, 2018. <https://www.bankrate.com/banking/savings/financial-security-0118/>