

**UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS CONTACT:**

Brayton Hagge (bhagge@uwmidlands.org)  
Office: 402.522.7963 | Mobile: 605.661.2137

Jill Samuelson (jsamuelson@uwmidlands.org)  
Office: 402.522.7922 | Mobile: 402.319.8213

*For Immediate Release: **May 31, 2019***

**LB641 Bill to Provide State Funding to United Way's 2-1-1 Helpline Signed into Law**

On May 29, Gov. Pete Ricketts signed LB641 into law, ensuring United Way's 2-1-1 Helpline will receive \$300,000 in state funding each year for the next two years. The bill was approved by the legislature on May 23 with a vote of 41-0.

The 2-1-1 Helpline is a free, comprehensive information and referral system linking Nebraska residents to health and human services, community and disaster response and government programs. The 2-1-1 Helpline provides support statewide, serving people from every legislative district in Nebraska. Through a designation by the Nebraska Public Service Commission, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) has operated the helpline for 15 years and has served the entire state since 2010.

The newly granted state funding will allow the 2-1-1 Helpline to reinstate 24/7 service, positioning it to assist in any emergency or disaster response efforts across the state. State funds will also bolster awareness and outreach efforts that encourage people and agencies to utilize this vital resource.

"We are honored to receive support for 2-1-1 from the state," said Shawna Forsberg, United Way of the Midlands' president and CEO. "These funds will help us promote this vital resource and ensure it remains available to all Nebraskans."

UWM credits the bill's success to the support and advocacy of its board members; corporate and nonprofit partners; and the Nebraska United Ways who will work closely with UWM to implement outreach efforts. Senator Mike McDonnell, who first introduced the bill into the legislature, was also instrumental to its approval.

"I was proud to make the 2-1-1 Helpline legislation, LB641, my personal priority bill," said McDonnell. "Working on LB641 through the drafting, introduction, committee and floor debate process has been work that was well worth it and will impact the entire state. The public-private partnership that LB641 creates will ensure that those seeking help all across our great state will be connected with non-profits and agencies wanting to help them with private dollars, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

Those in need of counseling, utility assistance, food pantries or other human services are invited to contact the 2-1-1 Helpline by dialing 2-1-1 or texting their zip code to 898211. They can also browse available services by visiting the Helpline's accurate and comprehensive database at [ne211.org](http://ne211.org).

**About United Way of the Midlands**

United Way of the Midlands (UWM) has served the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro for more than 95 years. Guided by best practices and community input, it approaches poverty in a specific way – a "united" way. With the support of volunteers, community partners and donors, UWM invests more than 92 cents of every donated dollar in our local community. These dollars fund 110 nonprofit programs that create a circle of support for people in need. When our neighbors have access to basic needs, education and financial stability supports, they can start down the path to independence and success. Please visit [unitedwaymidlands.org](http://unitedwaymidlands.org) for more information.