

UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS CONTACT:

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## **United Way's 2-1-1 Helpline Addresses Transportation Needs in the Metro by Partnering with Lyft**

United Way of the Midlands is proud to announce the local launch of Ride United, an initiative that provides free rides and other transportation resources to those in need.

Limited access to safe, reliable transportation is a barrier to health, education, employment, food and other basic needs for people across the country. To address this need, United Way Worldwide developed Ride United in partnership with Lyft, a rideshare company. Through Ride United, individuals in need can secure free rides from Lyft drivers by calling United Way's 2-1-1 Helpline. United Way of the Midlands is one of 25 United Ways across the United States that are participating in the initiative.

Here in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro, Lyft rides will be available for individuals who need assistance getting to and from locations related to health, employment or food access. Not only are rides to medical appointments, job interviews and food some of the most requested, but they also align with United Way of the Midlands' mission to provide basic needs, education and financial stability supports.

"We receive hundreds of calls each year related to transportation needs," said Fratina McCraney, the 2-1-1 Helpline call room supervisor. "By partnering with Lyft, we will be able to meet those needs more seamlessly, and that will have a big impact on the people in this community who need help getting to places like their doctor's office."

To schedule a ride, interested persons should call 2-1-1 or text their zip code to 898211. A caller does not need access to a smartphone or Lyft app to use a free ride. If they have a text-enabled cell phone, callers will receive an SMS text message with information about the ride. If callers cannot receive text messages, the 2-1-1 Helpline Specialist will provide them with information about the ride verbally.

If you are a Lyft customer, you can support Ride United by selecting United Way of the Midlands as your Round Up & Donate partner in the Lyft app. Just visit the Lyft menu and select "Donate." You can also empower United Way of the Midlands to provide basic needs, education and financial stability supports to those who need them most by donating at <https://www.unitedwaymidlands.org/give>.

### **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 92 cents of every donated dollar in our local community. These dollars fund basic needs, education and financial stability programs at local nonprofits, creating a circle of support for people in need. Please visit [unitedwaymidlands.org](http://unitedwaymidlands.org) for more information.

### **About Lyft**

Lyft was founded in June 2012 by Logan Green and John Zimmer to improve people's lives with the world's best transportation. Lyft is the fastest growing rideshare company in the U.S. and is available to 95 percent of the US population as well as in Ontario, Canada. Lyft is preferred by drivers and passengers for its safe and friendly experience, and its commitment to effecting positive change for the future of our cities.