



Database Inclusion Policy

Note for new agencies seeking inclusion: If you read these criteria and decide that your program fits our database, go to <https://211virginia.org/agency-resources/update-add-agency-portal/>.

Disclaimers:

- 211 Virginia does not endorse, rate, or recommend particular human services. We endeavor to give our consumers access to updated, accurate information about services but maintain that the consumer is in the best position to evaluate these services.
- 211 Virginia reserves the right to edit both the content and the format of agency information.
- Data collected from agencies will be used for information and referral via multiple communication channels, the 211Virginia.org website, and the National Data Platform (NDP), which may be used by approved third parties, and included in other products.

The following criteria for 211 Virginia follow the standard practices set forth by Inform USA.

Inclusions

The agency/service provider must provide a human service. Human services are defined as: The activities of human services professionals that help people become more self-sufficient, sustain independence, strengthen family relationships, support personal and social development, and ensure the well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities. Specific human services include ensuring that people have access to adequate food, shelter, clothing, and transportation; financial resources to meet their needs; consumer education and decision support; criminal justice or legal services; education and employment; health and mental health care, including substance use services; and environmental protection, both routinely and in times of disaster or other emergencies. Human services also facilitate the capabilities of people to care for children or other dependents; ensure that protective services are available to those who are vulnerable; provide for the support of older adults and people with disabilities; offer social, faith-based, and leisure time activities; provide for the cultural enrichment of the community; and ensure that people have the information they need to fully participate in community life.

NOTE: Inform USA has adapted from the definition of "Social Work" in the Dictionary of Social Work published by the National Association of Social Workers.

1. The agency/service provider must serve the residents of the Commonwealth in at least one Virginia zip code.
2. The agency/service provider must have been in existence for more than six months to indicate a degree of permanence.
This criterion may be suspended when either:
 - The agency/service provider is an affiliate of an established service provider with multiple locations or
 - The agency/service provider is the result of a community or coalition planning process.
3. The agency/service provider may be either government or non-profit. For-profit organizations and unincorporated groups meeting critical human service needs may also be included.
 - In adding agencies/service providers to the database, priority shall be given to scarce, free, or low-cost resources.
 - Services consistently and systematically tracked by another organization that gives referrals to the public may be included or excluded at the option of 211 Virginia (i.e., mental health practitioners in areas with a comprehensive mental health referral service). The referring agency may be included in the 211 Virginia database, whether or not the direct service providers are listed.
 - For-profit healthcare program that accepts Medicaid and Medicare.

Examples of Inclusions:

- Local agencies providing information and referral, including specialized information and referral
- Essential services (food, shelter, etc.)
- Government agencies (local, state, and federal)
- Agencies located in bordering states if they serve the residents of Virginia
- Advocacy organizations
- Self-help support groups (211 Virginia reserves the right to list state, regional or national headquarters, instead of local groups, as a local contact may move, change their telephone number, or drop out of the group)
- State and national parks located in Virginia only.
- For profit agencies that provide a health and human service either free of charge or on a sliding fee basis.
- Private for-profit health and mental health care group practices that accept Medicaid, Medicare or have a discount/sliding scale may be included.
- Child care/pre-school programs that are Virginia Quality Birth to Five, affiliated with a Smart Beginnings Coalition or NAEYC accredited and Head Start programs.

Exclusions

- Organizations which discriminate based on race, religion or similar factors
- Organizations engaged in fraudulent or illegal activities
- Agencies which misrepresent their services in any way, including non-delivery of listed services
- Individual practitioners (i.e. physicians or psychiatrists in a private practice)

- Organizations and/or professionals which are not licensed (in areas where licensing standards exist)
- Political and issue-oriented groups (unless the alternate viewpoint is also represented, such as pro-choice and pro-life; pro-gun and anti-gun control groups)
- Faith community-based programs that provide services only to members of their own congregations
- Organizations that only provide funding for programs but provide no direct services.
- National organizations with local chapters that directly administer services (list local chapters and describe their affiliation with the national organization. However, list the national organization if it also delivers services to the public)
- Organizations that exist solely to serve the clients of another service provider (for example, if a counseling service only serves clients of local departments of social services' Child Protective Services program under a contract, do not include the counseling service in the database. Instead, indicate in the local DSS Child Protective Services program description that counseling can be provided to Child Protective Services clients by a separate counseling service).

To eliminate misunderstandings where exclusion is contested, 211 Virginia shall add a notice on each survey or update form stating that 211 Virginia may exclude or remove an agency for any reason - inclusion is a privilege, not a right.

Review: If a database Curator has reservations about including an agency in the 211 Virginia database, they shall confer with the Database Management Team (Database Curators and the Director of Data Analytics) can be included, if needed, in the decision process.

Denial: If a program is found ineligible for listing in the database, the Director of Data Analytics will inform the service provider of the decision in writing, with a brief statement of the reason for ineligibility and the appeals process, within 30 days from the service provider's submission of program information.

Appeal: Service providers must request an appeal hearing in writing no later than 30 days from the date of denial. A representative of the excluded agency will be allowed to meet with the 211 Leadership Team to present the service provider's case. The Database Management Team may be included in this meeting if needed.

Removal: Agencies and services included in the 211 Virginia database are required to maintain up-to-date listings. Ideally, the service provider will provide updated information in response to an annual update request. If reasonable attempts to contact a service provider prove unsuccessful, the service and/or agency may be removed from the database without further notice.

Review of Criteria: The Database Management Team of 211 Virginia shall review these criteria at a minimum annually.

Approved February 2025