



211 WNY (Western New York): Building Successful Partnerships and Increasing Community Awareness – Join us in these Efforts!



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INTRODUCTION

211 Western New York (WNY) is a 24/7, 365 day a year three-digit phone number and online resource directory that serves 7 counties comprising both urban and rural areas. 211 WNY assists individuals with social care needs by connecting them with resources that can help. Our goal as NYSPHC Fellows is to increase awareness of 211 WNY’s programs and services amongst community-based organizations (CBO’s) and individuals in the community. Additionally, we seek to build sustainability for 211 WNY through revenue-generating partnerships where value-added services supplement our core services.



OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to describe 211 WNY’s purpose and services.
- Participants will be able to recognize 211 WNY as a potential partner in programs and grant opportunities that are mutually beneficial.

MATERIALS & METHODS

To increase awareness of 211 WNY and its services, the Fellows held several informational events. Two programs included:

- Closing the Loop: A Collaborative Event for a Healthier Southern Tier



- ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) workshop (partnering with United Way’s informative program)

A presentation on 211 WNY was provided at each program highlighting core mission and values. Community events attended include:

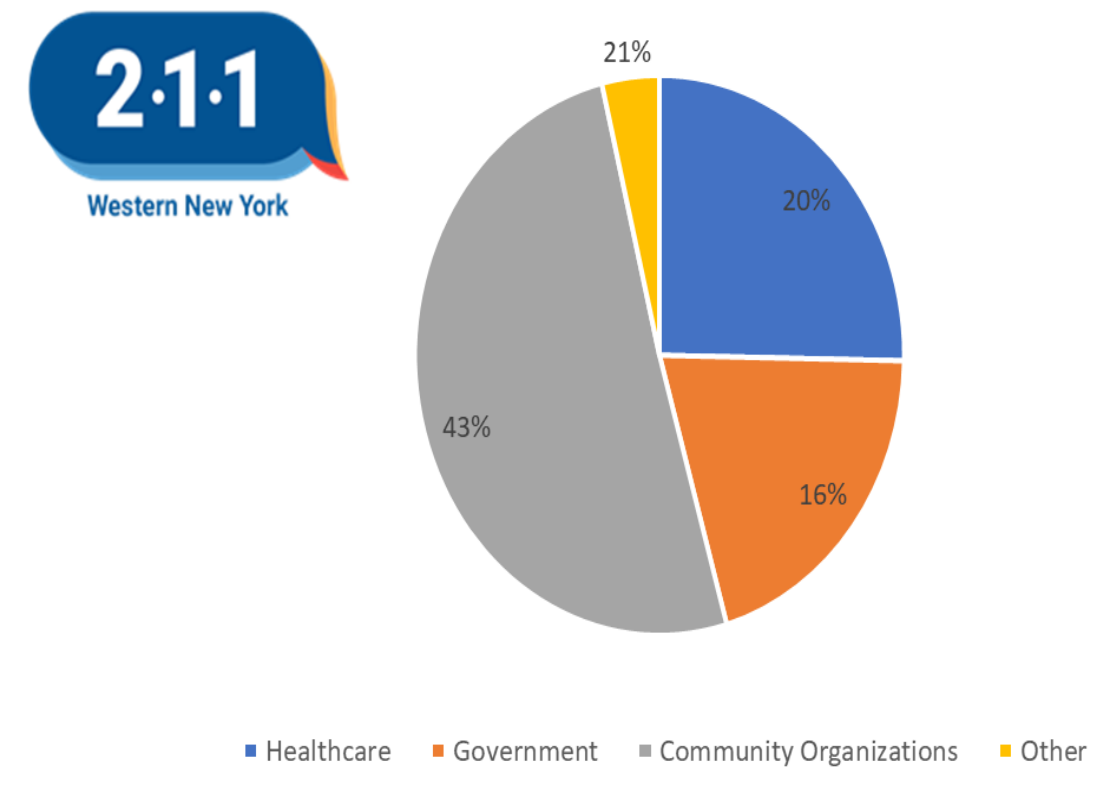
- Project Homeless Connect
- City of Buffalo’s Operation Clean Sweep
- Connecting the Dots on Prenatal-Early Childhood Services

Having a presence at these events has allowed us to spread the word about 211 WNY’s mission as well as network with professionals in government, education, healthcare, and the non-profit sector.

Another task the Fellows have been charged with is securing additional funding for 211 WNY via revenue-generating partnerships, grants, etc. Meetings were held with local politicians and prominent leaders to discuss the work 211 WNY is doing for the community. The financial state of 211 WNY was shared with these individuals with the goal of securing additional needed funding for operation.

RESULTS

"Closing the Loop" Participant Sectors



As a result of our Closing the Loop Event, we connected with a rural health network and designed a social care needs pilot project. It is anticipated the pilot will launch in 2024.

Through our conversations with professionals from various fields, we have begun developing a Menu of Services. The Menu describes our premier service offerings outside of our free core services. Premier services are offered to organizations who find value in specialized services or data that 211 WNY can provide or generate for a fee.

In partnership with United Way, an ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) workshop was held. We engaged with a variety of local organizations to educate them on the challenges faced by the “working poor” as well as how 211 WNY can be an asset to this population. At this event, we connected with a college. We later met with the institution to discuss 211’s ability to link their students with needs to community resources.

RESULTS (CONT'D)

The team secured meetings with political leaders, including the Buffalo Common Council. The Council wrote and endorsed a letter describing 211 WNY and its importance to the area. They requested funds from the NYS Senate and Assembly. 211 WNY will continue advocacy and funding efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

Through our efforts to develop pilot projects and mutually beneficial partnerships we have learned that it takes time to cultivate meaningful relationships. It is essential to determine an organization’s needs, articulate 211 WNY’s value, and create a cost structure which is accessible for agencies and sustainable for 211 WNY. This is a new endeavor for 211 WNY and we are learning from each partnership attempt. These lessons are vital, and we continuously strive to improve our strategies towards sustaining 211 WNY and increasing the community’s access to beneficial resources.

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