



Tip of the Month March 2026

Non-Legal Referral Resources for Clients

by Muria Kruger, Deputy Director

It's not uncommon to meet with a client who expresses a need for something that we're not equipped to provide. When that happens, it's always okay to reach out to VLN staff to ask for a good referral. Additionally, below are three simple but powerful referrals we think every volunteer should be aware of. All of which are just three numbers to dial on a phone.

Dial 211 – Greater Twin Cities United Way

Calling 211 is one of the quickest and easiest ways for clients to learn what social services are available anywhere in Minnesota. Through **Greater Twin Cities United Way**, 211 connects people to a wide range of health and human services, including:

- Emergency shelter
- Food shelves
- Mental health referrals
- Substance use treatment
- Rental and financial assistance programs

The service is available 24/7, free of charge, and completely confidential. Clients can also search for services online at 211unitedway.org if they prefer to browse resources themselves or if you want to browse these resources with your client.

Dial 988 – Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

If someone is experiencing a mental health crisis or contemplating suicide, calling 988 provides immediate support. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7 and is always free and confidential.

In addition to phone calls, 988 offers text and chat options, as well as relay services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Clients who want to understand what to expect can visit 988lifeline.org for a detailed description of how the services work.

Dial 311 – City of Minneapolis Non-Emergency Help Line

Many major cities offer a 311 non-emergency line, and Minneapolis is no exception. The **City of Minneapolis** provides 311 as a way for residents to report non-emergency concerns, such as health violations, abandoned vehicles or ongoing noise complaints. The website, www.minneapolismn.gov/report-an-issue, contains a more complete list of complaints that can be made, but the list is long and comprehensive.

In Minneapolis, 311 can also help residents navigate city processes, including:

- Requesting a rental inspection
- Checking a landlord's license status
- Locating an impounded vehicle
- How to license a pet

To access Minneapolis 311 services, the call must be made from within city limits (or the caller's phone carrier must identify the number as being within the city). The service is available 24/7 and can also be accessed via text or email. More information is available at minneapolismn.gov/contact-us/.

We hope you find these three phone number referrals helpful!