

## OC'S 211RIDE provides mobility for seniors, veterans and those with disabilities



Amy Davis-Pacheco, left, with the non-profit 211OC, chats with Mitzi Granados, 30, during the “Point-in-Time” homeless count and survey in Anaheim on Saturday, January 28, 2017. (Photo by Mindy Schauer, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By [Karen B Williams](#) |

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A key part of solving homelessness is underway in Orange County, with new emergency shelters in place and the engagement of landlords and the community at large. One obstacle facing both those housed and unhoused is how to get from point A to point B in Orange County without a car.

As 211RIDE program manager, 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC), has brought together the OC Transit Authority, 2-1-1 Los Angeles, 2-1-1 San Bernardino and 2-1-1 Riverside to provide a comprehensive, four-county solution.

211RIDE restores mobility to those who can't afford a vehicle or just can't drive. 211RIDE especially helps the elderly, the disabled and our brave veterans adjusting back into civilian society. One of the beauties of the system is it connects to neighboring counties — giving veterans, for example, rides to the VA Long Beach Health Care System.

Where 211RIDE excels is matching needs to trip planning. Factors include age, physical mobility, veteran status, time, vehicle configuration and destination. Journeys go to a doctor, job interview or social services consultation — including return trips. Rides include a taxi, Lyft, train, bus, paratransit (for

people with disabilities), carpools/vanpools, private services and volunteer agencies. Orange County's volunteer community is ready and willing to drive.

In 2018, 211OC responded to over 84,000 calls from people looking for help, and provided over 4,300 referrals to transportation programs.

According to the Orange County Transportation Authority's 2015 Coordinated Plan, about 7 percent of our population has disabilities, totaling over 210,000. Of those, about 32 percent are 65 years of age or older. The population of OC veterans is over 200,000, with unemployment higher than the general population, meaning greater needs.

For those who can go online, the [www.211RIDE.org](http://www.211RIDE.org) app makes getting a lift even easier. You just input the starting point, destination and departure time, then push the Search button. Users can choose from search results, including walking, bus, train or a service like GoGoGrandparent Ride Service Agents.

Customizations include needing a vehicle with space for a folding or motorized wheelchair, a wheelchair lift, or assistance from a home door to a car, which can be activated as filters to display the most appropriate ride options.

For those who need it, 211RIDE also provides connections to agencies that provide gas money, bus passes, non-emergency medical flight assistance, car repair expense assistance and information on low-cost car insurance. Related services include non-emergency medical appointments transportation, senior ride programs, disability transportation and ride-sharing programs.

211RIDE is part of the overall 211OC programs, which in recent years have helped 60,443 people with housing problems, 19,753 with getting food, 18,703 with mental health and 12,947 with utilities.

I believe public-private-charitable partnerships such as 211RIDE bring us together to solve homelessness and other problems. From my background in the business world, I know the private sector is eager to help find solutions to these problems striking our communities. Charities and churches are here to organize. And government provides funding and numerous services.

For example, we received funding from both OCTA and Pacific Life to support the development and continuation of the program.

A collaborative solution like 211RIDE provides the human and transportation infrastructure that ties it all together. As much as possible, it allows further independence using these new technologies.

211RIDE specifically embodies the overall 2-1-1 Orange County vision: Connecting the Unconnected.

*Karen B. Williams is president and CEO of 2-1-1 OC.*

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