

# PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## Capital Area United Way Launches Ride United Vaccine Access Program

**Baton Rouge, La. (April 28, 2021)** – Today, Capital Area United Way announced the launch of the Ride United Vaccine Access Campaign. This program gives residents who have transportation challenges free rides to COVID-19 vaccination sites in the Capital area with Lyft. Residents can access this transportation assistance or learn more by dialing 211. This effort is made possible through a grant from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation in partnership with United Way Worldwide and the Louisiana Association of United Ways.

As parish, state and federal officials continue scaling up the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, the Ride United Vaccine Access Campaign will help more eligible people get immunized to protect their health and the health of the community. Rides are provided through Lyft ride credits, which you can activate on a Lyft smart phone app. Or, you can call 211 to schedule a ride, subject to Lyft availability.

“Now that the COVID-19 vaccines are available to everyone 16 and older in Louisiana, we want to help as many people as possible get their shot,” said Michael Tipton, President of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation. “Unfortunately, lack of transportation prevents many people who would otherwise sign up from getting the COVID-19 vaccine. That’s why we’re proud to support the Ride United Vaccine Access Campaign and make free rides available to and from vaccine appointments for those who need them. Vaccination not only improves health and lives, it’s how we can get back to the things and the people we love.”

United Way 211/CAUW helps individuals dialing 2-1-1 from the surrounding 10-Parish service area and works as part of the Louisiana 211 Statewide Network. 211 call specialists are trained to address the root causes of a caller’s problem by locating available help in their communities – whether it’s transportation, food, disaster assistance, crisis counseling, health care or housing. Since the COVID-19 response effort began in March 2020, Louisiana 211 has partnered with the Louisiana Department of Health to serve the state’s hotline for general COVID-19 questions, which has so far helped more than 165,000 Louisianans get COVID-19 specific information and assistance for their needs.

“Capital Area United Way is honored to be part of the Ride United for Vaccine Access Campaign and provide rides to members of our community in need of this special help,” said George Bell, President and CEO of Capital Area United Way. “A simple call to 211 is all that is needed to take the first step. You can also text a ZIP code to 898-211 to reach United Way 211/CAUW via mobile text. We look forward to helping members of our community access this critical service.”

The program is now underway in all of the Capital area, including the following parishes: Ascension; Assumption; East Baton Rouge; East Feliciana; Iberville; Livingston; Pointe Coupee; St. Helena; St. James; West Baton Rouge; and West Feliciana. Those who need a ride to get their vaccine should visit [lyft.com/vaccine-access](https://lyft.com/vaccine-access) and click “get a ride” to see if there are eligible services in the area.

“Time and again, we at LA 211 have worked to give personalized attention to the elderly and vulnerable populations, ensuring that they have information to take effective steps to stay well as we navigate COVID-19,” says Sarah Berthelot, President and CEO of the Louisiana Association of United Ways. Now in the Capital area, United Way

211/CAUW is able to provide transportation help through the Ride United Vaccine Access effort to provide equitable access for best health.

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### **Capital Area United Way**

For more than 96 years, Capital Area United Way has touched thousands of lives in our 10-parish area. We envision a community where everyone is empowered to reach their full potential. Our mission is to solve our community's toughest challenges by leveraging partnerships to advance the common good in education, income stability, and healthy living. United Way 211/CAUW provides free and confidential information and referral services to all living within the 10-Parish service area, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Services can be accessed by dialing 211 or texting a zip code to 898-211. To learn more visit [www.cauw.org](http://www.cauw.org).

### **About the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation**

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation works each day to improve the health and lives of Louisianans by empowering everyday people to do extraordinary good. By building and funding coalitions of friends, families and neighbors, the Foundation hopes to build a healthier Louisiana, particularly for its children. The foundation is funded solely by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, but is a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity. In 2020, Blue Cross and the Blue Cross Foundation invested more than \$14 million in Louisiana's communities and nonprofits with programs and services reaching 6.4 million people.

### **About Lyft**

Lyft was founded in 2012 and is one of the largest transportation networks in the United States and Canada. As the world shifts away from car ownership to transportation-as-a-service, Lyft is at the forefront of this massive societal change. Our transportation network brings together rideshare, bikes, scooters, car rentals and transit all in one app. We are singularly driven by our mission: to improve people's lives with the world's best transportation.