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## **211 LA County Announces Vet2Text at Mayor Eric Garcetti's "Veterans Career Summit"**

*Nation's leading information and referral agency now providing 24-hour text-to-chat feature to better access available services*

July 14, 2015 (LOS ANGELES) – 211 LA County, the official information source for Los Angeles County's 10 million residents, announced today it has launched Vet2Text, a 24-hour text-to-chat feature staffed by veterans for veterans. Vet2Text was announced at Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's "Veterans Career Summit," taking place at Los Angeles Trade Technical College and Patriotic Hall, both in downtown Los Angeles. To connect with the service, veterans text "veteran" to LA211 (52211).

"Vet2Text provides another avenue for veterans to access the many resources available throughout Los Angeles County," said Maribel Marin, executive director of 211 LA County. "Vet2Text is being staffed by veterans for veterans, and is just another way that 211 LA County is making sure that those who served our nation and protected our freedoms are getting the services they need."

"Every veteran in my city should feel supported and equipped to navigate educational opportunities, job openings, and healthcare options--at any hour," said Mayor Garcetti. "This text-to-chat option provides a convenient, direct line for Angeleno veterans to communicate with peers who understand the complications of transitioning back to civilian life. Day or night, these highly trained veterans will be on call to walk texters through their options and get them the help they need. This personalized assistance could make the difference between a new job and collecting another unemployment check."

By using Vet2Text, veterans, by texting "veteran" to "LA 211" ("52211"), can connect with a peer veteran community resource advisor to guide them to the following:

- Get an overview of what is available with for returning veterans
- How to connect with other veterans
- Learn about services and resources available to the families of veterans
- Connect to education and employment resources
- Understand the special resources available to female veterans

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- Learn about and connect to medical care and financial assistance programs available to validated
- Connect to legal resources, mental health services, housing and shelter, and other veterans benefits

Vet2Text is available 24-hours a day/7 days a week. It is a six-month feasibility project funded in part through USC Center for Innovation (CIR) and Research for Veterans and Military Families and the Blue Shield Foundation. Last fall, USC CIR's Los Angeles County Veterans study found significant barriers to care, including more than 50 percent of post-9/11 veterans reporting not knowing where to go to get help. As a response, 211 LA County developed a Vet2Text platform that would provide a simple and accessible way for Veterans to reach out for help

In addition to using Vet2Text, any veteran can call 2-1-1 to get access to the same information and resources. Also, 211 LA County maintains and updates a "veteran's resource Portal" on its website, located at <https://www.211la.org/lacommunityveteransportal/>

211 LA County's experts help veterans navigate the complex social service system and get them connected to benefits and services in their community.

"211 LA County is very pleased to work with Mayor Garcetti to spread the word about the many resources that are available to veterans," noted Marin. "We encourage every veteran to text "veteran" to LA 211 (52211), call 2-1-1 or visit our website right away and learn what is available."

Other employment resources available to veterans through 211 LA County include access to worksorce centers, veterans' employment programs, vocational rehab, job fairs, and help with filing for unemployment.

#### **About 211 LA County**

211 LA provides easy-to-use, caring, professional guidance, advocacy, and 24/7 access to a comprehensive range of human services and resources to more than half a million people annually. It serves a key disaster relief role as the County's official public information source. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, 211 LA operates primarily through fee for service contracts and public sector grants. Created in 1981 through a joint effort of the County of Los Angeles and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, 211 LA is an internationally recognized leader in the field of Information and Referral.