



United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

JENNIFER PALMER

What is your name, title, and department?

Jennifer Palmer, CRS-DC, Database Coordinator, PA 211

How did you end up working at United Way?

My dear friend Lee Ann Munger (Women’s Leadership Council Development Officer) suggested that I apply to be a Resource Navigator for 211 during the height of the pandemic lockdown. I applied for that job but ended up being interviewed for the Database Coordinator position as well. I would have been delighted to join the staff in either job, but the database work is really the perfect niche for my skills and background.

Can you tell me about your role at United Way?

My primary responsibility is keeping the database of community resources for PA 211 Southwest up to date with accurate information about programs and services that help people to meet basic needs. I have to be aware of agencies and programs in the 13 counties in the Southwestern PA 211 region and serve as backup for the 12 counties in Northwest and five in Southeast. I also ensure that the listings in the database comply with our statewide style guide and meet the standards for maintaining accreditation through Inform USA. I’ve been a Certified Community Resource Specialist Database Curator (CRS-DC) through Inform USA, the accrediting body for 211s and other similar agencies across the U.S. and Canada since October 2021.

What do you love best about working here?

This job is a miraculous convergence of things that are really important to me. The service that 211 provides to the community is absolutely essential and I’ve always preferred to work in areas that serve people. The fact that the work of database curation is also heavy on the writing and involves tricking Excel into doing what I want it to do... it’s really the perfect combination of my skills and personal need to do meaningful work.

What are your interests outside of work?



I’m a native Pittsburgher who grew up in Edgewood and went to Sacred Heart High School and Chatham College. I live in Millvale with my very badly-behaved kitty, Professor Minerva “Mini Cat” McGonagall. I’m actively working on gathering documents to apply for Croatian citizenship. My great-grandparents were immigrants and as long as I can prove descent, I’m eligible. I love that I’m in touch with my heritage in such strong ways and I’m a member of a couple Croatian clubs. Also, a huge Doctor Who fan!

SPEED ROUND: CHOOSE ONE!

Morning person **or** night owl?

Breakfast **or** dinner?

Jennifer says: *“But I love having breakfast food for dinner...”*

Coffee **or** tea?

Jennifer says: *“It’s coffee in the morning and a PROPER cup of tea (pronounced cuppa) in the afternoon!”*

Beach **or** mountains?

Dog person **or** cat person?

Jennifer says: *“Really, it’s both, but my cat plays ‘fetch,’ so it’s basically like having a dog.”*