

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**Communications Division  
Consumer Programs Branch**

**RESOLUTION T-17381  
November 29, 2012**

**R E S O L U T I O N**

Resolution T-17381. United Way of the Wine Country. Request for certification as the 2-1-1 service provider for Humboldt County. By Letter to Executive Director filed on October 9, 2012.

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**Summary**

This resolution grants United Way of the Wine Country through the Humboldt Community Switchboard, hereinafter referred to as UWWC, the authority to use the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing code to provide information and referral (I&R) services to all of Humboldt County. This authority is granted for an indefinite term, and is subject to review upon a letter to the Commission showing sufficient grounds to revise or rescind the term.

**Background**

2-1-1 is the national abbreviated dialing code designated by the Federal Communications Commission to be used to phone non-emergency community I&R providers. Upon dialing 2-1-1, a caller will be routed to a referral service and then to an agency that can provide information concerning social services such as housing assistance, programs to assist with utility bills, food assistance and other less urgent situations not currently addressed by either 911 or 311 services. On January 23, 2002, the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission or CPUC) instituted Rulemaking (R.) 02-01-025 into the implementation of 2-1-1

dialing in the State of California. In Decision (D.) 03-02-029, the Commission adopted regulatory policies and procedures to implement 2-1-1 dialing.

Included among these policies were guidelines and procedures whereby the Commission can certify I&R providers as eligible to purchase network telephone service that will enable them to receive calls from those who dial 2-1-1. Most of the procedures for I&R providers to follow in requesting authority to use the 2-1-1 dialing code are contained in D.03-02-029's Ordering Paragraph 2, quoted below:

2. Information and Referral (I&R) providers seeking authority to provide 2-1-1 service or to establish Regional Technical Centers for routing 2-1-1 calls to I&R service providers in California shall submit a letter to the Executive Director of the Commission approximately nine months before they plan to commence service. The letter shall contain the information detailed in the Service Provider Application Package in Appendix A, shall include a service rollout plan, and shall demonstrate compliance with the guidelines contained in Appendix A to this decision, along with letters of endorsement from community groups as described in Appendix A. The I&R providers shall serve this application letter on the parties to this proceeding on the same day as its submission to the Commission. The Commission shall publish a notice of this letter in its Daily Calendar. We establish a milestone of six months from the initial filing of this application letter for action by the Commission via a resolution resolving any issues. This application letter should be served on the appropriate incumbent local exchange carriers and on all parties to this proceeding.

UWWC filed a complete copy of its application letter<sup>1</sup> requesting certification as the 2-1-1 service provider in Humboldt County that was received by the Commission's Executive Director on October 9, 2012. On October 5, 2012 UWWC sent to the service list for R.02-01-025 copies of its application letter.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "application letter", "letter" and "application" used herein mean the package of materials the prospective I&R provider files with the Commission by letter to the Executive Director, as specified in D.03-02-029, and are not a formal application to the Commission as described in the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure.

We remind local exchange carriers of D. 03-02-029, Ordering Paragraph 3, which states “Within four months of the filing of a letter by I&R providers or a regional technical center seeking to initiate 2-1-1 service, the incumbent local exchange carriers serving the territory over which the 2-1-1 service will be offered shall file advice letters to provide the 2-1-1 switch translation services required. Ordering Paragraph 4 states “All other incumbent local carriers serving a territory over which the 2-1-1 service will be offered shall provide the needed switch translation service, but may either concur in the price terms offered by Pacific or Verizon or submit their own cost support information. This filing shall follow that of Pacific or Verizon by no more than 30 days.” Competitive local carriers must comply with Ordering Paragraph 7, which states in part, “Within one month of the filing of an advice letter by incumbent local exchange carriers to offer 2-1-1 switch translation services in a specific area, each competitive local carrier providing services in the affected areas shall submit an advice letter, under General Order 96-A<sup>2</sup>, demonstrating that it will offer 2-1-1 switch translation service at a reasonable rate to I&R providers on a timetable consistent with their rollout plans.”

We remind payphone service providers of the same decision’s Ordering Paragraph 6, stating in part “The providers of payphone services in an area in which 2-1-1 service will be offered shall end all non-conforming uses of 2-1-1 service within six months of their filing.” i.e., within six months of the filing of the application letter by the I&R provider.

### **Notice/Protests**

UWWC states that it mailed a copy of its application letter to SBC Communications now AT&T as well as to the service list for R.02-01-025, which includes the appropriate incumbent local exchange carriers. The Communications Division published notice of UWWC’s application letter in the Commission Daily Calendar on October 26 through 30, 2012. No comments were submitted.

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<sup>2</sup> General Order 96-A has since been replaced by General Order 96-B.

## **Discussion**

The 2-1-1 application process prescribed by D.03-02-029 for potential I&R providers is divided into four major sections. The first section elicits information on the I&R provider's organization, structure, background, and experience.

UWWC is a non-profit corporation in the State of California. The documents included to support this categorization are its articles of incorporation, including by-laws, and letters from the Internal Revenue Service. The UWWC office submitting this application is the Humboldt/Del Norte Region and the Humboldt Community Switchboard located at 718 Third Street, Eureka, CA 95501. The contact person is Gabrielle Parkinson, at (707) 443-8637 and email at [Gabrielle@unitedwaywinecountry.org](mailto:Gabrielle@unitedwaywinecountry.org).

The Humboldt Community Switchboard has nearly twenty years of history, growing and changing over that time to meet Humboldt County's information and referral needs in human services. The Switchboard was conceived in the early 1990's stemming from the Humboldt Juvenile Justice Commission's work examining ways to prevent juvenile delinquency by better supporting families and providing easy access to support resources.

Under the fiscal sponsorship of the Humboldt Child Care Council (now Changing Tides Family Services), the Switchboard was established in 1992 as a cooperative effort among agencies comprising an advisory committee of 45 to 50 members. Out of this effort the initial database of available community services was created. A professional Switchboard Coordinator was hired in 1996 with continued fiscal support of the Humboldt Child Care Council.

In 1998, a grant from the Blue Cross Healthcare Foundation, allowed the Switchboard to expand and operate within the North Coast Clinics Network. A training and operations manual was developed and implemented. The Humboldt Community Switchboard incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation in 1999. A web based information and referral database was created that allowed local resource providers to update their own listings. That database has been used by Switchboard call center specialists since 2001 for making referrals and logging calls. The database is publicly available and searchable at <http://theswitchboard.org>.

In 2005, the Switchboard became a program of United Way of Humboldt. In 2009, United Way of Humboldt merged with United Way of the Wine Country and became the Humboldt/Del Norte Regional Office of UWWC. United Way continued to manage the Humboldt Community Switchboard.

In 2009, a broad based 2-1-1 advisory committee was formed to plan the transition to becoming a 2-1-1 provider. The Switchboard augmented its local resource database with collaborative relationships with local agencies to provide specialized pre-screening and referrals for housing, food assistance (CalFresh), tax assistance through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, and assistance for families and young children.

The Humboldt/Del Norte Region of UWWC has taken on a leadership role with the county's Volunteer Organizations Assisting in Disaster (VOAD) group, working closely with the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services and the Humboldt Chapter of the American Red Cross. United Way and VOAD have certified six disaster service workers and are working with the Regional Training Institute for Disaster Preparedness through Humboldt State University. UWWC Humboldt/Del Norte Regional Office also administers the Emergency Food & Shelter Program federal grant, which provides supplemental grant dollars from United Way Worldwide to thirteen non-profits offering food and shelter services in Humboldt County.

UWWC has supported the creation of two other 2-1-1 programs, in Sonoma (2009) and Mendocino (2010) Counties. Currently, the Humboldt Community Switchboard is approximately fifty percent funded from community donations. Funding for the preparation of the 2-1-1 application was supported by grants from Pacific Gas & Electric and the Mel and Grace McLean Foundation.

UWWC will be providing local live answers during weekday working hours and contracting with Inland Empire United Way for after hours and holiday services. Inland Empire United Way has the internal protocols to ensure calls are handled consistent with guidelines developed by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems including call handling, database development and maintenance and disaster response and preparedness.

UWWC provided a three year budget for the Humboldt County service as part of their application. UWWC budget and financial statements indicate a stable and

solvent financial position. It appears that UWWC has appropriate budgetary planning procedures to support 2-1-1 service at current call volumes.

The second section of the prescribed application sets forth the required service conditions that a 2-1-1 service provider must meet. Section 2 of UWWC's application indicates that it does not and will not receive fees from referred organizations for referrals and no fees or charges are levied to providers listed in its database.

The Humboldt Community Switchboard offers limited services in Spanish directly from the local call center and contracts with Language Line Services for telephone multi-lingual translation service with access to more than 150 languages and dialects and has experience with I&R. TTY/TDY services are in place. All of these options will be available with the implementation of 2-1-1 in Humboldt County.

In the third section of the prescribed application, the applicant must demonstrate its understanding of and must agree to adhere to the standards for delivery of I&R services as established by the Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS). 2-1-1 Humboldt's Information and Referral program will adhere to AIRS guidelines. AIRS' guidelines are the basis for the service delivery standards associated with use of the 2-1-1 dialing code as specified by the CPUC Decision 03-02-029. UWWC's application included descriptions of the Humboldt Community Switchboard's policies in the areas of call assessment and follow-up, confidentiality, database standards, disaster readiness, reports and measures, cooperative relationships, training, marketing, and program evaluation. These policies appear to meet the standards established by AIRS.

In the fourth section of the prescribed application, the applicant demonstrates its level of community support by including letters of endorsement from organizations and agencies that are stakeholders in the health and human services network in its community. UWWC included in its application letters of endorsement from twenty-three different organizations and agencies in a broad range of health and human service fields throughout Humboldt County. These endorsements demonstrate broad community support.

In processing UWWC's 2-1-1 application, the Communications Division considered the input of the Humboldt County government because it oversees

the operations of county hospitals, a county welfare department, and numerous other agencies and programs in the fields of health and human services, and is best equipped to evaluate whether an I&R provider is well suited to provide comprehensive I&R service in Humboldt County. California's size and diversity, in geography, politics, and many other categories, argue against a statewide "one size fits-all" approach to evaluating and choosing comprehensive I&R providers. County governments can best apply local standards and local knowledge to this difficult but important task. On February 28, 2012, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, Virginia Bass, Chair, signed an endorsement of UWWC's application to serve as the 2-1-1 provider of Humboldt County residents and employees. The Commission values the input of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors on this matter, and takes official notice of its action.

D.03-02-029 did not specifically address the length of time for which the Commission's grant of authority to use the 2-1-1 dialing code for the county. Utilities and other frequent participants in Commission proceedings generally know that most Commission decisions, resolutions, and actions can be later modified or rescinded if a showing of sufficient grounds to do so is made in a filing before the Commission. However, most I&R providers and county governments are not frequent participants in Commission proceedings, and may benefit from some clarification of this point. The grant of authority to use the 2-1-1 dialing code in a county or group of counties is for an indefinite term and may be revised or rescinded if a showing of sufficient grounds to do so is made to the Commission. For the reasons cited in the previous paragraph, the Commission should consider a resolution by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors as a crucial part of any showing that the authority to use the 2-1-1 dialing code for comprehensive I&R service for Humboldt County should be rescinded, reassigned, or modified. A letter to the Commission's Executive Director could serve to initiate such a process. Any such process should provide notice to all affected parties and an opportunity to be heard.

The Communications Division concludes that the application letter filed by UWWC meets the requirements set forth in the Commission's order and recommends that the Commission approve this filing. Commission approval is based on the specifics of the application letter, and does not establish a precedent for the contents of future filings or for Commission approval of similar requests.

This is an uncontested matter in which the resolution grants the relief requested. Accordingly, pursuant to P.U.Code Section 311 (g) (2) and Rule 14.6(c) (2) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, the otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comment is being waived.

### **Findings**

1. United Way of the Wine Country, hereinafter referred to as UWWC sent its application letter for certification as the 2-1-1 service provider for Humboldt County to the Commission on October 9, 2012.
2. CAIRS endorsed UWWC's application for provision of 2-1-1 services in Humboldt County through the Humboldt Community Switchboard on September 24, 2012. The CAIRS support letter was forwarded directly to the Communications Division and also included in UWWC's application. No other comments were submitted.
3. UWWC's application provides sufficient information to meet the four major sections of the 2-1-1 application process required by D. 03-02-039.
4. Virginia Bass, Chair of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors signed an endorsement on February 28, 2012, endorsing UWWC's application to serve as the 2-1-1 provider for Humboldt County.
5. The Communications Division concludes that UWWC's application meets the requirements established by D. 03-02-029 to use the 2-1-1 dialing code.

### **THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:**

1. United Way of the Wine Country through the Humboldt Community Switchboard is granted the authority to use the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing code to provide information and referral (I&R) services to all of Humboldt County.
2. This authority is granted for an indefinite term, and is subject to review upon showing sufficient grounds to revise or rescind the term. Any process to contest, revise, or rescind this authority shall provide notice to all affected parties and an opportunity to be heard.

3. If United Way of the Wine Country cannot implement 2-1-1 dialing within a year after the Commission's approval of United Way of the Wine Country's application for provision of 2-1-1 service in Humboldt County and the needed tariffs of the telecommunications service providers ordered in Ordering Paragraphs 3, 4, and 7 of D.03-02-029, then, barring further Commission action, the certification of United Way of the Wine Country shall lapse so that another I&R provider may apply to offer service in a service territory containing Humboldt County.
4. United Way of the Wine Country shall notify the Director of the Communications Division in writing of the date 2-1-1 service is first rendered to the public, within five business days after service begins.

This Resolution is effective today.

I hereby certify that the Public Utilities Commission at its regular meeting on November 29, 2012 adopted this Resolution. The following Commissioners approved it:

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PAUL CLANON  
Executive Director