

**DRAFT**

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

**Communications Division  
Consumer Programs Branch**

**RESOLUTION T-17393  
June 27, 2013**

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

Resolution T-17393. United Way of Northern California. Request for certification as the 2-1-1 service provider for Tehama County. By Letter to Executive Director filed on March 8, 2013.

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**Summary**

This resolution grants United Way of Northern California hereinafter referred to as United Way, the authority to use the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing code to provide information and referral (I&R) services to all of Tehama County. 2-1-1 Tehama will provide immediate public safety impact during non-emergencies, emergencies and disasters such as providing a web-based and call-in information call center addressing public safety 24 hours/day, 7 days/week and will work closely with the Office of Emergency Services to assure that the partnership of 9-1-1 and 2-1-1 is effective. 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 9-1-1 or 3-1-1 services.

On January 23, 2002, the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) 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, Ordering Paragraph 2, as 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.

United Way filed a complete copy of its application letter<sup>1</sup> requesting certification as the 2-1-1 service provider in Tehama County that was received by the Commission's Executive Director on March 8, 2013. On March 5, 2013, United

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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.

Way sent copies of its application letter to the service list for R.02-01-025. Subsequent to the filing, United Way filed a supplemental letter received by the Commission's Executive Director on May 16, 2013, to include Public Safety matters. On May 16, 2013, United Way sent copies of the supplemental letter to the service list for R.02-01-025.

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**

United Way 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

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 General Order 96-A has since been replaced by General Order 96-B.

Communications Division published notice of United Way's application letter in the Commission Daily Calendar on March 18 through March 22, 2013. In response to United Way application letter, the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services, Inc. (CAIRS) submitted a letter dated April 11, 2013 supporting the request of United Way to use the 2-1-1 dialing code in Tehama County. No other comments were submitted.

### **Discussion**

Tehama Together and 211 Shasta (under the umbrella of the Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency) and the United Way have been working together to bring 2-1-1 to Tehama County for about three years. The three groups have been working closely during the past year to develop a viable plan to launch this effort. The collaborative has raised over \$35,000 from a variety of resources including St. Elizabeth's Hospital/Dignity Health, First 5 Tehama and other County agencies. 2-1-1 Tehama will contract with 2-1-1 Sacramento to provide call services and have collected a variety of directories that identify services available in Tehama County and are beginning the process of entering this information into a data base that meets the Alliance of information and Referral System (AIRS) and the California Alliance of information and Referral Systems (CAIRS) standards.

United Way was chartered in 1953 and currently provides services in the areas of Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity counties. United Way is supported by United Way Worldwide, and is the largest non-profit in the United States and the largest non-government funder of health and human services.

Thirty-four agencies submitted letters in support of United Way as the designated 2-1-1 Service provider in Tehama County.

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.

United Way provided a three-year budget for the Tehama County service as part of their application. United Way apparently has (1) budget and financial statements which indicate a stable and solvent financial position, and (2) 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 United Way's application indicates that it does not and will not receive fees from referred organizations for referrals and no fees or charges levied to providers listed in its database.

Additionally, United Way is contracting with 2-1-1 Sacramento to provide I&R services in English and Spanish and contracts with Language Line Multi-lingual Translation Service with access to more than 150 languages and dialects, and has experience with I&R. TTY/TDY services are already in place. All of these options will be available with the implementation of 2-1-1 in Tehama County.

### **Safety Considerations**

2-1-1 Tehama will provide services that promote and have an immediate public safety impact during emergencies and disasters. The complete, accurate and regularly updated database provides web-based and call-in information about a wide variety of on-going services including those addressing public safety (bicycle helmets, car seats, fingerprint services, etc.). In addition, the database will be augmented during emergencies/disasters to include all temporary services focused on the specific emergency/disaster such as emergency shelters, evacuation area and routes, temporary animal shelters, counseling services, and contact information for local/state/federal resources implemented to deal with the emergency/disaster. The call center is equipped to provide "warm" telephone transfers to enable residents to access necessary services immediately. All call specialists at the call center receive training in working with individuals during emergency/disasters and are sensitive to individual needs and able to engage callers to determine the best options for needed services. In addition, the call center has an emergency/disaster plan that will be implemented as needed to assure that call services are available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week; the call center

recently completed a emergency/disaster drill and services were provided without interruption.

2-1-1 Tehama can also provide services that promote and have public safety impact during non-emergency situations. Again, the complete, accurate and regularly updated database provides web-based and call-in information about on-going services. The database includes contact information to access many local/state and national hotlines including poison control, suicide, teen bullying/cyberbullying and other crises, domestic violence, veterans issues, immediate shelter and food needs and more. All call specialists at the call center receive training in working with individuals, and can respond in over 100 languages. The call specialists treat each call as a “warm” call and are sensitive to individual needs and able to engage callers to determine the best options for a variety of services. The call center is equipped to provide “warm” telephone transfers to enable residents to access necessary services immediately. They are specifically able to refer them to mental health and medical services, domestic violence services, suicide services, poison services and many other local/state/federal hotlines that help address public safety needs.

The website associated with 2-1-1 Tehama will provide a searchable database for county residents during both emergency/disaster periods and generally provide for public safety. During emergency/disasters the website can provide alerts about how to take care of self/family by providing information supplied by emergency services, for example, what mask to wear to prevent smoke inhalation, which areas are being evacuated and what routes to use, telephone numbers to reach emergency services that are immediately needed. During non-emergency/disaster periods, information is available that addresses local public safety needs such as referrals for counseling services, parenting services, domestic violence services and more. Individuals are able to search the website for appropriate services and to print out complete information about the service including address, telephone, access, transportation to and from, documents necessary for application for services and more. Instructions will be provided on the website to assure that users are able to search effectively and callers who are not able to find services will be referred to the telephone number 2-1-1.

2-1-1 Tehama will work closely with the Office of Emergency Services to assure that the partnership of 9-1-1 and 2-1-1 is effective. 2-1-1 will transfer calls appropriately directed to 9-1-1 during a crisis situation, and 9-1-1 is prepared to refer callers to 2-1-1 when their situation is not an emergency.

Implementation of 2-1-1 Information and Referral services will be a significant enhancement to the safety of residents of Tehama County. 2-1-1 is the interface to suicide hotlines and facilitates access to other mental and social health preventative services for residents of the affected county. 2-1-1 services have evolved beyond being a single, easily remembered hotline number to being a source of vital safety information source during periods of emergency, such as up-to-the-minute fire and disaster relief information and connection with temporary housing and medical assistance.

During the 2007 Southern California firestorms, 2-1-1 service providers experienced an 800% increase from prior weeks' call levels. The Commission, in its firestorm report, commended 2-1-1 service providers in the firestorm areas for providing information to county officials and the public. 2-1-1 service providers also functioned as an interactive communications asset with personnel gathering information from the Joint Information Center, WebEOC, private sector corporations and other resources and providing that information to callers. Along with reverse 911, AlertSan Diego, 2-1-1 San Diego allowed the county to quickly notify affected residents of the need to evacuate and other emergency information. 2-1-1 services in emergency periods are complimentary to first responder and other emergency services. In addition, 2-1-1 activities generally consist of acquiring or verifying information essential to affected residents and the public. Information developed during emergencies includes, but is not limited to:

- Shelters (human and animal)
- Feeding and food distribution
- Evacuations
- Road closures/transportation issues
- Utility outages and reconnections
- Health alerts and warnings
- School closures and reopenings

- Facilitating family member contacts
- Assistance
- Mitigation and repairs such as sand bags, tarps, available volunteers to assist in repairs.
- Governmental Assistance
- Emergency Alerts such as curfews, riot/looting
- Confirmed and suspected rumors

United Way will be positioned to provide a similar functionality to Tehama County when 2-1-1 is activated.

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). United Way's Information and Referral program has internal protocols to ensure calls are handled consistent with guidelines developed by AIRS. AIRS' guidelines are the basis for the service delivery standards associated with use of the 2-1-1 dialing code as specified by D. 03-02-029. United Way's application included descriptions of its 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. United Way included in its application letters of endorsement from nineteen different organizations and agencies in a broad range of health and human service fields throughout Tehama County. Four additional endorsements were pending at the time the application was filed. These endorsements demonstrate broad community support.

In processing United Way's 2-1-1 application, the Communications Division considered the input of the Tehama 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 Tehama 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 January 29, 2013, the Chairman of the Tehama County Board of Supervisors, Dennis Garton, sent a letter to the Commission endorsing United Way's application to serve as the 2-1-1 provider of Tehama County residents and employees. The Commission values the input of the Tehama 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 should be made. 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 Tehama 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 Tehama County should be rescinded, reassigned, or modified. Further, 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 United Way 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 Northern California, hereinafter referred to as United Way sent its application letter for certification as the 2-1-1 service provider for Tehama County to the Commission on March 8, 2013.
2. United Way filed a supplemental letter to include Public Safety matter to the Commission on May 16, 2013.
3. United Way will provide immediate public safety impact during non-emergencies, emergencies and disasters such as providing a web-based and call-in information call center addressing public safety 24 hours/day, 7 days/week and will work closely with the Office of Emergency Services to assure that the partnership of 9-1-1 and 2-1-1 is effective.
4. CAIRS submitted written comments in support of United Way's application for provision of 2-1-1 services in Tehama County on April 11, 2013. No other comments were submitted.
5. United Way's application provides sufficient information to meet the four major sections of the 2-1-1 application process required by D. 03-02-039.
6. Dennis Garton, Chairman of the Tehama County Board of Supervisors, sent a letter to the Commission on January 29, 2013, endorsing United Way's application to serve as the 2-1-1 provider for Tehama County.
7. The Communications Division concludes that United Way'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 Northern California is granted the authority to use the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing code to provide information and referral (I&R) services to all of Tehama 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 Northern California cannot implement 2-1-1 dialing within a year after the Commission's approval of United Way of Northern California's application for provision of 2-1-1 service in Tehama 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 Northern California shall lapse so that another I&R provider may apply to offer service in a service territory containing Tehama County.
4. United Way of Northern California 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 June 27, 2013, adopted this Resolution. The following Commissioners approved it:

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PAUL CLANON  
Executive Director