

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Communications Division
Consumer Programs Branch

RESOLUTION T-17834
October 17, 2024

R E S O L U T I O N

Resolution T-17834 Grant of Authority to Nevada-Sierra Connecting Point Public Authority as the 2-1-1 service provider for Yuba County.

Summary

This resolution grants Nevada-Sierra Connecting Point Public Authority (Nevada-Sierra) the authority to use the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing code to provide information and referral (I&R) services to all of Yuba County.

Background

For individuals seeking non-emergency community information and support, the 2-1-1 telephone number serves as a crucial lifeline. Callers may call the 2-1-1 telephone number to access non-emergency community information and referral (I&R) providers. When dialing 2-1-1, callers are connected to a call center referral specialist who links them to the appropriate public agencies or organizations that can offer the needed social services, including housing, utility bill aid, food assistance, elder care, childcare, and other non-emergency information, currently not provided through 9-1-1 or 3-1-1 services.

On July 31, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued its *N11 Third Report and Order* assigning the 2-1-1 code as the national abbreviated dialing code for information and referral services.¹ The FCC concluded the assignment is in the public interest, recognizing that the public need for social service could be met through the implementation of a 2-1-1 dialing program. The FCC encouraged the states to implement

¹ *Third Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration*, FCC 00-256, CC Docket 92-105, issued July 31, 2000 (“*N11 Third Report and Order*”).

2-1-1 programs² and directed that “states will be allowed to continue to make local [N11] assignments that do not conflict with [FCC] national assignments.”³

On January 23, 2002, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) initiated Rulemaking (R.) 02-01-025 to establish the framework for 2-1-1 dialing implementation in California. The Commission's Decision (D.) 03-02-029 outlined the policies for 2-1-1 dialing.⁴ This decision mandated that Information and Referral (I&R) service providers seeking authorization for 2-1-1 services must submit a formal letter to the Commission's Executive Director.⁵ These letters were subject to review and certification, along with a service rollout plan. According to the decision, the Commission's staff would evaluate the proposals using the guidelines outlined in Appendix A and prepare a resolution for the Commission's consideration. The decision did not specify fixed deadlines for reviewing certification requests but indicated an approximate six-month timeframe for the Commission to approve a specific 2-1-1 proposal, encompassing I&R provider certification and service commencement.⁶

On June 3, 2010, the Commission instituted R.10-06-002 to authorize disaster-only 2-1-1 service in counties unserved by full-service 2-1-1 (unserved counties). In D.11-09-016, the Commission adopted the regulatory policies and procedures needed to implement disaster-only 2-1-1 dialing.⁷

In 2016, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 1212 into law. The legislation authorizes the Commission to spend \$1.5 million from the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee Fund to implement disaster-only 2-1-1 service in the unserved counties in California. This authority expired on January 1, 2023.⁸

On November 12, 2019, the Commission adopted Resolution (Res.) T-17679, granting Interface Children and Family Services (Interface) the authority to use the 2-1-1 dialing code to provide disaster-only 2-1-1 service to twelve unserved counties,⁹ and authorizing

² *N11 Third Report and Order*, ¶ 21.

³ *N11 Third Report and Order*, ¶ 43.

⁴ *See*, D.03-02-029, dated February 18, 2023, Appendix A.

⁵ *Id.*, at 32; Conclusion of Law (COL) 3; Ordering Paragraph (OP) 2.

⁶ *Id.*, at 82; COL 18, 25; OP 2.

⁷ *See*, D.11-09-016, September 8, 2011

⁸ Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 280(g).

⁹ Alpine, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, Inyo, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Mono, Siskiyou, Sutter, and Trinity counties

the expenditure of funds for the implementation of disaster-only 2-1-1 service in the unserved counties in accordance with SB 1212.¹⁰

On May 15, 2024, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) received via email the application letter¹¹ submitted by Nevada-Sierra requesting certification as the 2-1-1 service provider in Yuba County. Further, the Communications Division (CD or staff) published a notice of the application in the Commission Daily Calendar for five business days on September 15 to September 25, 2024.

Discussion

Yuba County Health and Human Services (Yuba County HHS) contracted with Nevada-Sierra Connecting Point Public Authority to provide 2-1-1 services. Located in Grass Valley, California, Nevada-Sierra is currently the 2-1-1 service provider for Placer and Nevada Counties, in addition to being contracted with United Ways of Northern California to provide 2-1-1 contact center services to Shasta, Siskiyou and Tehama counties. Nevada-Sierra also provides homeless services for Nevada and Placer counties, including shelter referrals, as well as vulnerability assessments for people at risk of, or currently experiencing, homelessness.

The application adheres to terms and conditions, committing to free, 24/7, and accessible services without referral fees.

Nevada-Sierra's Application

The application letter for the 2-1-1 service comprises of four sections. Nevada-Sierra provided information for each of the four sections as follows.

Section 1- Organizational Structure, Background, and Experience

Yuba County HHS contracted with Nevada-Sierra Connecting Point Public Authority (Nevada-Sierra) to provide 2-1-1 services. Yuba County does not have a full-service 2-1-1 and only has a disaster-only 2-1-1 service.

¹⁰ See, Res. T-17679, dated November 12, 2019.

<https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M319/K519/319519393.PDF>

¹¹ The terms “application letter,” “letter,” and “application” used herein mean the package of materials the prospective I&R provider submits to 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.

Nevada-Sierra began business in 2003 as The Nevada-Sierra Regional IHSS Public Authority. In 2018, it changed its name to Nevada-Sierra Connecting Point Public Authority. Since 2003, Nevada-Sierra¹² has been connecting people to In-Home-Support-Services in Nevada, Sierra, and Plumas Counties. In 2011, the organization adopted operations of Nevada County's 2-1-1 program and now manages a comprehensive centralized database of regional health and human services programs for both Nevada and Placer counties. In tandem with its 2-1-1 call center, the organization is able to provide 24/7 access to regional resources, information, assistance, disaster information and program enrollment. Nevada-Sierra has a collective 13 years of experience in providing 2-1-1 service. The organization's 2-1-1 services is predicated on the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), the national standards setting organization for information.

In 2014, Nevada-Sierra expanded to provide employment services, training, financial assistance, and job placement for parents participating in Nevada County's CalWORKs program.

Nevada-Sierra is a public agency, funded with county, state, and federal dollars and directed by an 11-member Governing Board. Nine of its board members represent Nevada County and two represent Sierra County. Governing Board members are appointed by the county Board of Supervisors and serve two-year or three-year terms. The current Executive Director is Timothy Guiliani, who has been with the organization for 16 years. The Executive Director is a former governing board and advisory board member of the Area 4 Agency on Aging (serving Sacramento, Sierra, Nevada, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba, and Colusa counties) and former Secretary for the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services Governing Board. He managed and serviced a multi-year grant with Nevada County to provide enrollment and outreach for Medi-Cal services through its 2-1-1 Program. Other key members of the organization include Charisse Jones and Lindsay Gordon, who collectively have been with the organization for 15 years and bring experience and familiarity with the organization's mission and operations.

Regarding its financial condition, Nevada-Sierra is currently undergoing the fiscal audit for its most recent fiscal year. The organization estimates the audit to be completed by June 2024. Nevada-Sierra Connecting Point Public Authority provided financial supporting documents showing they have sufficient funding to cover the costs of full service 2-1-1 in Yuba County. Nevada-Sierra is currently working with Yuba County

¹² [About Us | Connecting Point](#)

HHS to secure funding to support a full 2-1-1 program. The current fiscal year 2023 ending in June has a total budget of \$6.3 million which includes \$1.1 million for the 2-1-1 program. Nevada-Sierra forecasts approximately \$220 thousand for full service 2-1-1 for Yuba County.¹³

Section 2 – Terms and Conditions of Service

This section outlines the terms and conditions that 2-1-1 service providers, specifically the Nevada-Sierra Connecting Point Public Authority, must adhere to obtain and maintain their designation. Key points include the following:

- *Geographic Service Area*¹⁴: Nevada-Sierra is applying to provide 2-1-1 services for the entirety of Yuba County, California;
- *Referral Fees*¹⁵: Nevada-Sierra will not charge or accept fees for referrals;
- *Free and Commercial-Free Service*¹⁶: Nevada-Sierra does not utilize commercials or advertising for those accessing 2-1-1 services. The 2-1-1 short code is free and additionally, the organization has toll free destination numbers that can be used to access our services for free from outside the county (1-833-342-5211);
- *24/7 Live Call Handling*¹⁷: Nevada-Sierra has a call center staffed by live Call Specialists that is available 24/7/365;
- *After-Hours Service and Service Delivery Standards*¹⁸: Nevada-Sierra will provide after-hour services with its own call center and Call Specialists;
- *Language Accessibility*: Nevada-Sierra will provide for multiple language coverage capabilities by way of live bilingual staff speaking English and Spanish to support 2-1-1 contact center services. For other languages required by callers, Nevada-Sierra shall use Language Line Solutions as a telephone language interpretation service. Over 240 languages are provided through Language Line Solutions.

¹³ Data Request Email Response, June 18, 2024.

¹⁴ The 2-1-1 service must cover at least one county.

¹⁵ 2-1-1 service providers cannot accept fees from organizations in return for referrals.

¹⁶ 2-1-1 services must be provided free of charge and without commercials or advertising. Recognition of supporters is allowed on printed materials.

¹⁷ 2-1-1 service must be provided by live call takers 24/7.

¹⁸ After-hours 2-1-1 services may be provided by another organization, but service delivery standards must be maintained.

In summary, staff finds that Nevada-Sierra commits to providing accessible, free, and 24/7 2-1-1 services, adhering to specific language and disability inclusivity standards.

Section 3 – Alliance of Information and Referral Services Standards (AIRS)

AIRS,¹⁹ the national professional membership organization for information and referral service providers, has instituted standards governing the delivery of information and referral services. This section delineates the specific standards set by Inform USA concerning the provision of information and referral services within the framework of 2-1-1 services. The ensuing narrative is expected to articulate how the applicant intends to meet and uphold these standards. The key points include:

Information and Referral Service Delivery Standards:

- 2-1-1 services provided by Nevada-Sierra are aligned with AIRS standards. Nevada-Sierra is an active participant in California’s 2-1-1 community and promotes practices that advance the AIRS standards. Nevada-Sierra’s 2-1-1 Management Team is AIRS certified, as well as several AIRS Certified Call Specialists and an AIRS Certified Database Curator;
- Nevada-Sierra’s 2-1-1 staff administer relevant assessments through discussion. Trained 2-1-1 call specialists use active listening techniques to assess a client’s needs and help them locate service providers to address those very needs. Call specialists locate services and make referrals using the 2-1-1 resource database. Callers are provided with 3 referrals for each need;
- For emergencies or immediate need for care, callers are transferred directly to crisis services like 9-1-1, or the local crisis or suicide prevention hotline. Nevada-Sierra maintains a threat assessment protocol and staff is trained to identify and route crisis calls;
- Referrals are made from the 2-1-1 Yuba County resource database, which is made available to the public by calling, texting or searching online. Services and supports included in the resource database will be maintained based on AIRS standards;
- Nevada-Sierra’s 2-1-1 staff maintain client confidentiality and the contact center is located in a secure location. The 2-1-1 resource database has several layers of security and password protection. Moreover, client records are not shared outside of the agency;

¹⁹ AIRS’ guidelines are the basis for the service delivery standards associated with the use of the 2-1-1 dialing code as specified by D.03-02-029. *See*, D.03-02-029, p. 13. AIRS is now Inform USA [About the Alliance of Information & Referral Services - Inform USA \(formerly AIRS, the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems\)](#)

- Client confidentiality is part of the initial and ongoing training for all Nevada-Sierra staff and all agency staff are required to sign a confidentiality agreement at the time of their employment.

Information and Referral Resource File Standards:

- Nevada-Sierra has written criteria for inclusion/exclusion in the 2-1-1 resource database based on the AIRS standards and is made available on the organization's website;
- Nevada-Sierra's uses a standardized profile and resource collection tool (iCarol) to collect data regarding all agencies and programs that qualify for inclusion in the resource database;
- Resource database is updated annually and at 99% compliance rate in terms of resources verified within the last year, well within Inform USA standards, which require 85%-95% compliance;
- Resource database indexes services & resources using the AIRS taxonomy, specifically using the Los Angeles Taxonomy of Human Services.

Information and Referral Disaster Standards:

- 2-1-1 Yuba services will be available in the event of a local disaster—flood, fire, earthquake, hazardous materials spill or infectious disease outbreak, or other community emergency;
- Staff at Nevada-Sierra have the necessary equipment to maintain operations during disasters in their immediate area, and/or have the option of utilizing alternate work sites.
- Nevada-Sierra has an Emergency Action Plan that is constantly reviewed and updated to ensure the most accurate and proficient procedures and policies are in place
- Nevada-Sierra has a resource database for those counties they provide full scope 2-1-1 services, as well as access to the 211 California Shared Database within iCarol.

Reports and Measures Standards:

- Database to comprehensively store data (with various methods) and generate reports through iCarol;
- Reports can be multi-faceted and include client demographic data, referrals provided, caller needs (and unmet needs), volume of information and referrals

calls, and more, ensuring ability to provide necessary information to various stakeholders;

- Data can be aggregated on a periodic basis (e.g., quarterly) and as needed to address community concerns so local government and community leaders have access to key information for community planning purposes.

Cooperative Relationship Standards:

- Nevada-Sierra has an extensive network of partner organizations that serve Yuba County – including FREED Center for Independent Living, Agency on Aging Area 4, FTA/Caltrans District 3, Yuba Health and Human Services and Yuba OES (Office of Emergency Services). This will ensure the organization can effectively provide 2-1-1 services and develop relationships with additional resources/service providers;
- Extensive network enables callers with seamless access to community services information and referrals, including during disasters.

Other Organizational Standards:

- All Nevada-Sierra staff are properly trained on standards suitable to deliver 2-1-1 services. All staff are trained on the Inform USA (formerly AIRS) curriculum that is used for initial and ongoing training and includes best practices in call handling, using the resource database, risk assessment, handling challenging calls, and triaging crisis calls.
- Nevada-Sierra resource team is trained in how to create and maintain a high-quality resource entry, using AIRS standards and following the iCarol style guide.

In summary, Nevada-Sierra demonstrates a commitment to meeting the AIRS standards for the delivery of 2-1-1 services, including disaster preparedness, data collection, cooperative relationships, and public awareness efforts.

Section 4 – Documentation of Community Support

Nevada-Sierra obtained endorsements from various sectors, including Yuba Health and Human Services, Yuba County Supervisor (4th District) and Yuba County Office of Emergency Services. These endorsements demonstrate strong community backing for the 2-1-1 service provider application.

COMMENTS

In compliance with Public Utilities Code Section 311(g), a notice letter was emailed on September 12, 2024 informing all parties on the CASF Distribution List of the availability of the draft of this Resolution for public comments at the Commission's documents website at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/documents/>. This letter also informed parties that the final conformed Resolution adopted by the Commission will be posted and available on the same website.

FINDINGS

1. Nevada-Sierra is an experienced organization with a history of providing 2-1-1 services. The organization is led by Timothy Guiliani and is supported by a team with at least 15 years of collective experience with the organization.
2. Nevada-Sierra has been providing 2-1-1 services since 2011.
3. Nevada-Sierra holds accreditation from the Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS) and is aligned with AIRS Standards.
4. Nevada-Sierra is currently completing the financial audit of its most recent fiscal year. It is seeking funding with Yuba County to support the full-service 2-1-1 program.
5. Nevada-Sierra's 2-1-1 services will include no fees for referrals and a commitment to free, commercial-free, and accessible 24/7 services.
6. Nevada-Sierra operates its own call center that provides 24/7/365 live call handling to ensure service continuity and accessibility for diverse language needs.
7. Nevada-Sierra utilizes a comprehensive database system called iCarol that enables comprehensive resource file standards, disaster preparedness, and robust reporting measures demonstrate commitment to meeting the AIRS standards for the delivery of 2-1-1 services.
8. Nevada-Sierra has a network of cooperative relationships with local organizations, including training and public awareness.
9. Nevada-Sierra's application includes strong endorsements from various sectors, including Yuba County Health and Human Services, Yuba County Supervisor

(4th District) and Yuba County Office of Emergency Services. This demonstrates strong community backing for the 2-1-1 service provider application.

10. Nevada-Sierra's service application demonstrates a comprehensive, well-supported proposal that fulfills crucial criteria for designation.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Nevada Sierra, on behalf of Yuba County, is granted the authority to use the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing code to provide information and referral services to Yuba County.
2. Nevada-Sierra implement 2-1-1 service in Yuba County within one year of the date of this resolution pursuant to Decision 03-02-029.
3. Yuba County HHS shall notify the Director of Communications Division in writing within five business days of the date 2-1-1 service is first rendered to the public.
4. Yuba County HHS shall not transfer the authority granted except upon Commission approval.
5. Yuba County HHS shall notify the Commission via a letter to the Director of Communications Division 30 days in advance of any changes to the geographic area served, a vendor for call center and/or database management services, or the ability to continue as a 2-1-1 service provider in Yuba County.
6. Yuba County HHS shall, for the duration of its provision of service, report to the Director of Communications Division via email at CDcompliance@cpuc.ca.gov by March 1 of each calendar year with the following information:
 - (a) Name of the organization providing 2-1-1 service to Yuba County and contact information (include person to contact);
 - (b) Geographic area(s) served;
 - (c) Name of the vendor providing 2-1-1 call center services and contact information;
 - (d) Name of the vendor providing resource database services and contact information;

- (e) Name of the vendor providing after-hour service and contact information;
- (f) Summary (not to exceed one page) of the 2-1-1 services provided during the calendar year, with specific mentions of all declared and non-declared disasters and emergencies during which 2-1-1 was activated.

This Resolution is effective today.

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

Rachel Peterson
Executive Director