



Pennsylvania 2-1-1

BUSINESS PLAN

November 2007

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CONTACT

Tony Ross
President, United Way of Pennsylvania
17 South Market Square
Harrisburg PA 17101
Phone (717) 238-7365
Email tony@uwp.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is information and referral? Information and Referral (I&R) gives people in need a critical link to information about local resources. I&R is their link to services provided both by government and by nonprofit organizations. From the single mother needing food for her children to the senior citizen looking for in-home care, I&R brings people and community resources together.

What is 2-1-1? “2-1-1” is the three digit dialing code designated in 2000 by the Federal Communications Commission to provide widespread public access to community information and referral services. In response, there has been a national effort to develop statewide “2-1-1 systems” that will ensure that 2-1-1 becomes as easily recognized as 911 and 411. As of June 2007 2-1-1 is serving approximately 198 million Americans, approximately 70% of the U.S. population, through over 200 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 47 states, including 21 states with 100% coverage, plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. By the end of 2008, 80% of the population is expected to have 2-1-1 access.

2-1-1 in Pennsylvania United Way of Pennsylvania (UWP) convened a “2-1-1 Policy Forum” in October 2001 in Harrisburg to begin statewide discussions about 2-1-1. In 2003, UWP and the Pennsylvania Association for Information and Referral (PAIR) created the 2-1-1 Pennsylvania Collaborative under the UWP umbrella to “plan for, implement and oversee a phone-based information and referral system in the Commonwealth through the use of the 2-1-1 dialing code.”

In May 2007, the Collaborative began a formal strategic business planning process to determine how best to ensure full statewide 2-1-1 coverage as soon as possible. The result of that work is this business plan.

Our Plan This plan proposes full build-out and sustained operation of an integrated statewide 2-1-1 system, designed to meet regional priorities within a unifying statewide structure. It will be built on what has been independently assessed nationally as the most cost-efficient and effective model for a statewide system, combining decentralized services with shared system-wide functions.

The result will be a system that is available to every person in Pennsylvania, by phone and an online database, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year – and, a system prepared to support our state’s emergency management system in times of public emergencies.

Based on the experience of 2-1-1 systems nationwide, we believe that by the third full year of operation as a completed system, *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* will be answering almost 1 million calls annually, equivalent to about 8% of our population and some 4.1 million calls over the first five years of full operation.

At the heart of the system will be the most comprehensive database of health and human services in the state, including those provided by nonprofit organizations and by government at all levels. Users will be linked to a regional 2-1-1 center, staffed by trained specialists prepared to help them define their need and connect them with the community resources available to help. The database also will be publicly accessible through the internet.

Regional 2-1-1 Service. The system will be built around seven interconnected regional service systems, each planned by community leaders within the region within guidelines established by *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* that will ensure consistent, high quality service for everyone in the state – and for nonprofit organizations based in those regions. We anticipate that their designs may be very different from region to region, including such

options as:

- A single regional center, housed in an existing information and referral agency, that will combine both direct response to consumers and development and maintenance of the resource database;
- A lead agency sharing responsibility with another agency, with one handling consumer response and the other the database;
- A lead agency working with other existing providers with calls routed to them based on the origin of the call – most likely this would include several relatively small providers that would handle calls from their immediate area, probably for limited hours on weekdays, and a larger provider that would handle the majority of calls for the region and would operate longer hours. Similar partnerships with existing local providers could also be used to collect community data on services and feed it up to the statewide database.

County Liaisons. Regional service will include designated liaisons for 2-1-1 in each county. This could be a nonprofit service provider, a United Way, a local government agency or even an individual who would serve as the “face” of 2-1-1 in the county – assisting in collecting and updating resource data, representing 2-1-1 in the county, promoting 2-1-1, helping disseminate call data on emerging and unmet needs, etc.

Pennsylvania 2-1-1 State Office. Overall leadership, resource development (fund-raising, government relations and business development), marketing, database and web management, system development and technical support will be vested in a central office led by a full-time executive director.

In this design:

- Every major region of the state will have a regional system most appropriate for it that will combine the resource database and call center functions.
- We will limit the number of 2-1-1 centers while bringing the service as “close to home” as realistically feasible.
- The 2-1-1 system will be consistent with our traditional approach in Pennsylvania, paralleling other statewide systems and ensuring coverage in rural areas, balancing sensitivity to local realities with appropriate economies of scale.
- Through a strong leadership organization, we will be able to ensure the highest quality of service throughout the state.

The Demonstrated Value and Impact of 2-1-1 Nationwide

The consistent experience of 2-1-1s throughout the country is that they bring significant public benefits to their communities and states. While the specifics of these benefits may differ from place to place based on the local environment, there generally is demonstrated value in eight distinct areas.

- Improving the way in which people learn about and connect with the services they need.
- Helping to create new efficiencies in delivery of health and human services.
- Providing a new resource for businesses and other employers to help their employees while maintaining their productivity.
- Providing a new way in which government can respond to the expectations and needs of all their constituents.

- Providing an expanded infrastructure for information and referral that can ensure consistent, standards-driven service.
- Serving as a support system for emergency management and playing a role in homeland security.
- Providing new trend data on health and human service needs, met and unmet, for planning and resource allocation.
- Connecting people with opportunities to “give help” through volunteering and contribution of money and in-kind goods.

Why 2-1-1 Is Important to Pennsylvania Now

Why is 2-1-1 critically important to the people of Pennsylvania?

We are living through a period of economic and social transformation that has touched the lives of virtually everyone – as old jobs disappear before new ones are in place, as we seek to maximize the investment we have made in our public sector through “smart government” and as we recognize that we must give increased attention to homeland security and emergency management. As change affects all of us, we must seek new ways to connect with one another and with the resources all of us will need at some point in our lives.

- ***It is a major challenge for people to learn about and connect with services that are available.***

The reality is that, at some time or another, virtually all of us need to reach out for help, whether for ourselves, members of our family, or neighbors. Economic dislocation, aging, unanticipated life changes, illness can affect all of us. But the process through which people get connected to that help can be confusing, frustrating, inefficient, and stressful.

Too often, people looking for help in Pennsylvania do not know where to begin. Locating such basic resources as food, shelter, employment, or health care may mean calling dozens of phone numbers, then struggling through a maze of nonprofit organizations and public agencies, each offering a multitude of services, to make the right connections. These problems are exacerbated by forces that disrupt our connections with our community – unemployment, breakdown of families, our greater mobility, and our increased diversity, all of which increase complexity and erode traditional support systems. One service provider summed up the problem: “Clients have a huge challenge to find the service they need. It’s as if we hide information on purpose.”

In its 2007 “Agenda for Community Solutions,” the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania described the problem this way:

“Every hour of every day, someone in Southeastern Pennsylvania needs essential services, from finding a childcare program to acquiring care for an aging parent. Faced with a dramatic increase in the number of agencies and help-lines, people often don’t know where to turn, and in many cases end up going without these necessary services.”

- ***The growing need of our population for human services increases the need to effectively and efficiently connect people with the broadest possible range of community resources.***
 - While many parts of our state are economically healthy, too many people live in need. For example, in August 2007, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 25% of Philadelphians live in poverty, ninth worst in the nation among cities with 250,000 or more people and the highest poverty rate of the nation’s ten largest cities.

- Problems of poverty are not limited to urban areas. According to the 2000 Census, nearly 380,200 rural Pennsylvania residents lived in households with incomes below the poverty level, or nearly 12 percent of the rural population. More than 30 percent of persons below the poverty level are under 18 years old, and 13 percent are over 65.
- Today, 20% of our residents are age 60 or older. Pennsylvania has the third highest percentage of people over age 60; only four states have a higher number of older residents. By the year 2020, Pennsylvania's 60 and older population is expected to be 25 percent of the total population -- more than 3 million people. The 65 and older population is projected to increase to 2.3 million and the 85 and older population to about 363,000. This will increase demand for support services to help people remain independent and to live with dignity. It will also demand efficient ways for caregivers, often adult children with jobs and families of their own, to find help for seniors.

- ***The greater attention that is being paid to homeland security and emergency management at both the state and local levels.***

The tragedies of September 11 and of Hurricane Katrina brought home to all of us the necessity to be prepared to respond to both natural and man-made disasters. As a result, there has been a determined effort to intensify homeland security measures, to put in place the systems required to respond to future crises, and to prepare our residents. As we have already seen, those crises can range from natural disasters like the flooding from Hurricane Ivan in 2004 to the public concern over West Nile virus and the availability of flu vaccine to the need to help evacuees from other parts of the country. We also know that eastern Pennsylvania is already considered a primary relocation area should people be forced to evacuate New York City and Northern New Jersey and is the location of the "Wall Street West" facility to ensure back-up for the financial system.

With our preparation has come the growing recognition that we also must rationalize the way in which people connect with the information they need to take care of themselves during a crisis and connect with those agencies that can help them during recovery. Attention is being given to ways to relieve the burden of inappropriate and misdirected calls on our 911 systems and to plan in advance how best to mobilize and deploy our neighbors who want to volunteer their time, talent, energy, and material resources in response to disasters.

- ***The reality that surrounding states have implemented 2-1-1, particularly New Jersey where there is a direct impact on the most populous regions of Pennsylvania.***

As of June 2007, 2-1-1 was available to 70% of the nation's population through 2-1-1 systems in 47 states. All of our neighboring states now have active 2-1-1 systems, including New Jersey that offers access to everyone in the state. Yet in Pennsylvania, we do not have a single 2-1-1 in operation. In a time when media markets straddle state boundaries, particularly in Southeastern Pennsylvania, our most populous region, and when people routinely move across state boundaries to live and work, we have fallen behind the rest of the nation in making 2-1-1 available to those who live and work in our state. In comparison, we are under-prepared for an emergency situation that may cross state lines.

- ***The ongoing demand for greater efficiencies in service delivery, both within the public sector and in nonprofit organizations.***

Our elected leaders have committed to building on our state's record of service to

our people, particularly in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable, at-risk children and families, people with disabilities, seniors. Meeting these goals requires government to operate more efficiently and to build strong partnerships with non-government networks. Part of the required efficiency is to improve the ways in which people gain access to the services they need, whether those services are being provided by state government or the nonprofit community.

The Benefits of 2-1-1

2-1-1 will be of immediate added value:

- Providing an easy, visible, timely and non-judgmental universal access point to information and referral from a live referral specialist for people who need to turn outside their families or other networks for help that is available;
- Increasing efficiency by helping callers clearly define their needs and pointing them to the best places to seek help, reducing misdirected calls to agencies, and providing a ready resource for service providers to use in referring their current clients to additional services available from other providers and for human resource professionals to assist their organization's employees;
- Relieving some of the burden of misdirected calls to 911 call centers, particularly after normal business hours, being available as an outlet for statewide dissemination of rumor-control information during emergencies, and helping expand the capacity of emergency management agencies by assisting in handling calls from the public;
- Creating new knowledge about needs and gaps in services that can help elected and appointed policy-makers and public and private funders make better decisions and more effectively plan for the future; and,
- Helping people connect with opportunities to give their time and talent as volunteers to community organizations, helping to build strong, healthy communities.

As a result of 2-1-1:

- Individuals will be better able to manage their own lives because they have access to the information and resources they require to find and make decisions about the support they need;
 - Service providers will have an expanded knowledge of statewide resources to help them better serve their consumers;
 - Policy makers and funders – both public and private – will have more complete information about trends in demand for services and early awareness of emerging needs;
 - Emergency management will have access to a new statewide infrastructure to help disseminate critical information, assist people through disasters and provide long-term connection to relief and recovery services;
 - Businesses will have an additional way to support their employees with their personal needs in an efficient and effective way;
 - Government will have access to a proven, 24/7/365, multilingual infrastructure available to help increase its efficiency and effectiveness; and,
 - Public officials will be assured that their constituents are better able to get connected with the services they need in cost-effective, responsive ways.
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The Partnership with State Government

As in other states with successful 2-1-1 programs, we want to work in close partnership with state government with a shared commitment to serving the people of Pennsylvania while developing a 2-1-1 system that is broadly supported by a wide variety of investors – state, county and local governments, private foundations, businesses, community foundations and United Ways.

By working together, in a public-private partnership, we can ensure that sustaining 2-1-1 minimizes any funding impact on existing human service providers and does not become the exclusive financial responsibility of state government by attracting private sector support for the system.

We are seeking five things from state government:

- Authority for assignment and management of the 2-1-1 dialing code, including the authority to create and enforce quality standards;
- Positioning with state agencies as a “preferred partner/vendor” in providing phone-based information and referral services in support of agencies’ priorities;
- Financial support for development and operation of the 2-1-1 system with specific focus on investment in start-up costs for the system, primary funding for the state office and ongoing investment in operational costs;
- Formal recognition and clarification of 2-1-1’s role with the state in supporting emergency response and recovery activities; and,
- Formal designation as the organization to receive and manage federal funds that may come available for the support of 2-1-1 nationwide.

Roll-Out Strategy

Because we want *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* to be a strong, enduring, statewide presence that provides high-quality comprehensive information and referral services for our residents and that supports policy makers and service providers in the public and private sectors, we have undertaken a systematic long-term approach to planning and implementation.

Our strategy will be executed in seven phases. With completion of this plan, the first two phases will be completed. Full execution of Phase 3 and beyond, the expansion and launch of the full system, beginning in December 2007, is contingent on the availability of new resources from state, county and local government and private philanthropy to supplement existing support for information and referral services and a 2-1-1 state office to coordinate the statewide 2-1-1 system.

With appropriate resources committed for implementation and operation, we are confident that 2-1-1 Pennsylvania can be launched as a public-private partnership by early 2009 with statewide access serving all the people of Pennsylvania by 2010.

Initially, United Way of Pennsylvania will continue its role as incubator of *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*, acting through the current planning team to give leadership to the effort, establishing the organization, securing seed funding and securing assignment of the 2-1-1 dialing code. Ultimately, we believe the best model is for *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* to stand on its own as an incorporate tax exempt nonprofit organization working in close partnership with state government, United Way, service providers statewide and private philanthropy.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The estimated total cost of building and operating *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* over its first five years as a fully integrated statewide system is \$37.2 million – or an average of approximately sixty cents for each person per year in Pennsylvania. Annual operating costs are estimated, beginning in 2010 when full statewide access will be available and moving into the future to average less than \$1 per person per year. This is below the generally accepted rule of thumb for 2-1-1s nationwide of \$1.00 to \$1.50 per person per year.

This reflects the cost savings we anticipate realizing through a carefully planned and managed phased roll-out; development of integrated database and telephony systems from the outset; and, consolidation of “after hours” service into only two call centers to handle the reduced volume of calls that come outside normal business hours.

We have projected that over the first five years, the system will handle some 3 million calls. By year five, the system should be handling approximately 1.2 million calls per year with an annual growth rate of 5%. The call volume will be directly affected by the extent to which 2-1-1 operates in partnership with state government and becomes a primary access point for the public to learn about and connect with state government programs and services.

Our goal is to build sustained, predictable funding for the entire *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* system, enabling it to grow and adapt as demands grow and change. That requires a significant long-term commitment from state government as well as ongoing support from a broad mixture of private sources – United Ways, private foundations and business – and local funding obtained by the regional 2-1-1 call centers from both public and private sources. A coordinated effort of all of the stakeholders, working with the Office of the Governor and the Pennsylvania Legislature can result in the commitment of core funding from state government that will, in turn, leverage private sector support.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Regional 2-1-1 Centers						
Northwest	25,000	110,000	546,641	600,856	680,765	1,963,262
Southwest	200,000	1,081,644	1,224,443	1,373,579	1,429,414	5,309,080
Central	25,000	130,000	680,928	767,103	842,572	2,445,603
Northeast	130,000	670,018	783,828	852,216	880,931	3,316,993
Lehigh Valley	25,000	145,000	751,110	839,323	916,891	2,677,324
South Central	175,000	917,480	1,002,464	1,126,789	1,169,641	4,391,374
Southeast	25,000	270,000	1,425,996	1,656,953	1,917,991	5,295,940
Consolidated “After Hours”	0	250,000	795,294	1,590,586	2,290,860	4,926,740
One Time Transition Costs	384,667	666,168	507,168	343,501	0	1,901,504
Total, Regional Centers	989,667	4,240,310	7,717,872	9,150,906	10,129,065	32,227,820
State Office Operating	330,560	482,149	599,104	612,895	627,101	2,651,809
One Time Transition Costs	98,500	57,250	39,750	21,000	21,000	237,500
Total, State Office	429,060	539,374	638,854	633,895	648,101	2,889,284
Total Operating Costs	1,418,727	4,779,684	8,356,726	9,784,801	10,777,166	35,117,104

Note: Supporting details for these projections will be found in Appendix C.

2-1-1 FOR PENNSYLVANIA

Background

“2-1-1” is the three digit dialing code designated in 2000 by the Federal Communications Commission to provide widespread public access to community information and referral services. In response, there has been a national effort to develop statewide “2-1-1 systems” that will ensure that 2-1-1 becomes as easily recognizable as 911 and 411. Here in Pennsylvania, we have been working in partnership since 2001 to make 2-1-1 available throughout the state. Now, we are prepared to launch a full statewide system to ensure that everyone in Pennsylvania can reach 2-1-1 whenever they need it.

We envision a system that is a:

- **Simple, quick link 24/7/365, around the clock every day**, to connect people, by phone and internet, efficiently and effectively to appropriate services and to opportunities to give help through volunteering. An easy number to remember, 2-1-1 will route people directly to services, helping them to avoid the potentially complex maze of the human service system.
- **Partner with state government** in helping create greater efficiencies in the delivery of health and human services – saving time of service delivery staff by ensuring that more people get to the right place the first time and using data on gaps in services, trends in service requests and emerging needs in planning and resource allocation.
- **Partner in homeland security and emergency management** to assist in response and recovery to natural and man-made disasters and emergencies by providing easy access to information that needs to be communicated to our residents and ongoing connection to needed services.
- **Partner with business** to ensure that working people have efficient and effective access to services that they and their families may need, helping them to remain productive.
- **Community Barometer** for identifying needs, trends or gaps in service and communicating them to public and private decision-makers and funders.

We will build this expanded system on the proven asset of existing information and referral centers throughout the state. We are leveraging that asset to expand to statewide coverage and to introduce new coordination and resource sharing. The result will be a system that is available to every person in Pennsylvania, by phone and internet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year – and, a system prepared to support our state’s emergency management system in times of public emergencies.

Mission, Vision and Values

The **mission** of *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* is to provide all Pennsylvanians with easy and immediate access, 24/7, to high quality, consistent information and referral to health, government, community and human services.

Our **vision** is clear – when fully implemented, Pennsylvania 2-1-1 will be a seamless, coordinated system that will:

- ensure equitable access to accurate and appropriate information concerning health and human services in a responsive, safe, efficient, confidential and respectful manner;
- be trusted to provide current and quality information and referral services and to provide data for resource needs assessment, planning and investment;

- be a resource partner with government in preparing for, preventing and responding to disasters;
- assist people in Pennsylvania to help one another through donations of volunteer time, money and in-kind resources;
- be adaptable to meet changing needs; and
- be accountable for the resources invested in us.

Pennsylvania 2-1-1 will be the most recognized, used, and comprehensive source of essential community-based health and human services resource information in the state, delivering highly efficient, cost-effective access to information using technology-based solutions.

Our **guiding principles** call for our work to be:

- **Client Focused & Confidential** Providing excellence in customer service in a compassionate, safe, non-judgmental, confidential and culturally sensitive manner. All information collected will be held in the strictest confidence except as mandated by applicable laws.
- **Reliable & Accurate.** Offering consistent quality resource information that is reliable, accurate, current and comprehensive.
- **Free & Easy to Access.** Accessing 2-1-1 service will be easy to do at all times for all people, free of charge. Adaptable to expanding and contracting call volumes, emergencies and other community needs.
- **Endorsed by Local Communities.** Offering 2-1-1 service as “close to home” as feasible and being well connected and supported by local community networks, businesses, governments and service agencies.
- **Dedicated to Service Improvement.** Enhancing communities’ ability to focus on service improvement by providing aggregate data analysis about caller needs, unmet needs and services available.
- **Good Stewards of Resources.** Full accountability about effective and efficient use of resources with a systemwide commitment to high standards, organizational improvement, evaluation, and training. .
- **Advocacy & Outreach.** Promoting utilization of community services through education, outreach, individual support and advocacy.

Our Proposed System

Pennsylvania 2-1-1 will be built on what has been independently assessed nationally as the most cost-efficient and effective model for a statewide system, combining decentralized services with shared system-wide functions. It will include:

- regional 2-1-1 centers that will respond to inquiries and contribute local information to an integrated, comprehensive statewide database of community resources;
 - a robust system of interconnected call centers that will provide uninterrupted service to 2-1-1 in support of emergency response in times of disaster;
 - a highly visible web site; and,
 - a state office providing marketing, resource development and management support to the entire system.
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Information and Referral

Comprehensive information and referral services (I&R) consist of four core functions:

- Building a database of current, accurate, and complete information on health and human services and making it accessible to the public and service providers by both phone and the internet;
- Assisting users in defining both their immediate concerns and other life circumstances that may be contributing to those concerns; and,
- Connecting users with the services they need by making referrals to the specific public sector agencies, non-profit organizations, and private providers for those services and, when necessary, acting as an advocate for the caller to ensure an appropriate connection is made.
- Collecting and sharing data on needs, trends or gaps in services and communicating this information to decision-makers and funders in both the public sector and private philanthropy.

The value-added by I&R services for those in need is the interaction between the user and a trained I&R specialist. By asking follow-up questions, the specialists are able to help callers define specific needs and refer them directly to the most appropriate service provider.

These services emerged in the United States in the 1940s and have since grown into a recognized and respected part of the delivery system for health and human services with their own professional association (AIRS – The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems), industry standards and processes for organizational accreditation and individual staff certification.

Today, there are literally thousands of these services throughout the country. Most are “specialized” – that is, they are specifically designed to serve either a defined segment of the population (for example, seniors) or to focus on a specific problem area or issue (for example, finding child care).

“Comprehensive” I&Rs, typically one to a community, have as their goal the capacity to respond to the broadest array of inquiries and needs. Thus, their database is usually the most comprehensive and current compilation of community resources in both nonprofit organizations and the public sector. Although our primary focus is on health and human services, our information specialists are trained to handle everything from routine “directory assistance” inquiries to calls from people in severe emotional crisis.

As Pennsylvania’s 2-1-1 system develops, it will work with community partners and stakeholders to establish clear protocols for collecting and reporting data on the client needs and the uses of 2-1-1 to provide ready access to this information for improved community planning and response.

Why Do People Call?

While information and referral services that are offered via 2-1-1 vary from community to community, 2-1-1 provides callers with information about human services resources for both every day needs and for times of crisis. Many of the services often sought via 2-1-1 include the following assistance areas:

- **Basic Human Needs Resource:** food banks, clothing closets, shelters, rent assistance, utility assistance.
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources:** health insurance programs, Medicaid and Medicare, maternal health, Children's Health Insurance Program, medical information lines, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.

- **Employment Supports:** financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance, education programs.
- **Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities:** adult day care, congregate meals, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, homemaker services.
- **Support for Children, Youth and Families:** child care, after school programs, Head Start, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services.
- **Housing Support:** temporary housing needs, mortgage assistance programs, and various voucher and low income support programs.
- **In Times of Crisis:** current information on preparation for, response to and recovery from natural and man-made disasters, working in partnership with state and country emergency management agencies.

For Pennsylvania's existing comprehensive information and referral agencies, the categories in which the most calls are received are:

- Emergency Financial Assistance, including utilities and rent
- Food
- Housing – both temporary shelter and long-term affordable housing
- Health Care
- Mental Health
- Legal Services
- Substance Abuse
- Transportation

Why do people call? Consider these examples:

- The mother of a 12 year old seeks counseling for her son who is not going to school regularly.
 - A senior in need of help to continue living independently in her own home.
 - A single mother is worried about the gas shut-off notice she just received.
 - A caller is depressed, considering suicide and wants help.
 - A mother calls looking for after school care for her children.
 - A young woman with a disability inquires about available transportation.
 - A caller needs information about applying for food stamps.
 - An adult child calling for help with an aging parent.
 - A guidance counselor is searching for parenting education classes for a teen father.
 - A caller with a gambling problem seeks services.
 - A human resource manager looking for help for an employee
 - A police officer seeking a shelter bed for a homeless person.
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**The Development of
2-1-1 Nationally**

In May 1997, the United Way in Atlanta adopted the 2-1-1 dialing code as the way for people to gain access to their comprehensive information and referral services. When combined with well-conceived marketing, this almost immediately gave I&R the brand clarity and visibility that it had been lacking. The result was a dramatic increase in the volume of calls received and in public acceptance of the service as well as an understanding by state and local government of the value of 2-1-1 as an “early warning system” for emerging issues. 2-1-1 also became the primary way for people in Atlanta to connect with opportunities to volunteer – thus leading to the framing concept of 2-1-1 as a way to both *get help* and *give help*.

The success of 2-1-1 in Atlanta gave rise to a collaborative national effort, led by the United Way of America and the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) to secure 2-1-1 for use exclusively for access to comprehensive I&R services. As a result, in July 2000 the Federal Communications Commission made that designation.

In the seven years since that designation, there has been a rapid development of 2-1-1 systems nationwide. By September 2007, there were over 220 active 2-1-1 systems operating in 47 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, reaching more than 210 million Americans, approximately 70% of the U.S. population.

2-1-1 in Pennsylvania

United Way of Pennsylvania (UWP) convened a “2-1-1 Policy Forum” in October 2001 in Harrisburg to begin statewide discussions about 2-1-1. In 2003, UWP and the Pennsylvania Association for Information and Referral (PAIR) created the 2-1-1 Pennsylvania Collaborative under the UWP umbrella to “plan for, implement and oversee a phone-based information and referral system in the Commonwealth through the use of the 2-1-1 dialing code.”

In May 2007, the Collaborative began a formal strategic business planning process to determine how best to ensure full statewide 2-1-1 coverage as soon as possible. The result of that work is this business plan.

Based on the experience of 2-1-1 systems nationwide, we believe that by the third full year of operation as a completed system, *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* will be answering almost 1 million calls annually and an estimated 4.1 *million* calls over the first five years of full operation.

THE DEMONSTRATED VALUE & IMPACT OF 2-1-1 NATIONWIDE

Why 2-1-1 Is Important The consistent experience of 2-1-1s throughout the country is that they bring significant public benefits to their communities and states. While the specifics of these benefits may differ from place to place based on the local environment, there generally is demonstrated value in eight distinct areas.

- *Improving the way in which people learn about and connect with the services they need.*

2-1-1 benefits people seeking help by providing:

- Access to comprehensive, up-to-date information at any time by phone and online at no cost to the caller;
- Confidential, judgment-free interactions with trained 2-1-1 specialists who are able to help people get to the root of their concerns and who can provide available options for services;
- Referrals that are sensitive to the caller's realities, including the need for geographic proximity, culturally-appropriate services, and services in appropriate languages;
- Information about both public sector and nonprofit services;
- Links to other 2-1-1s and other information and referral resources throughout a state or region and even in other states, thus serving people wherever they and their families live and work;
- Multi-lingual services; and,
- Access for people with sensory impairments.

2-1-1 is a single, easy-to-remember phone number, most often complemented by a similarly branded web site, that provides the information people need to efficiently access the health and human services they require. This means that they need to spend less time in the frustrating search for assistance, do not need to “shop” for services by contacting multiple agencies, and are able to connect as directly as possible with the agencies best prepared to help them.

By creating a brand that becomes synonymous with easy-to-access help, 2-1-1 can make it not only easier but also more acceptable to use human service systems, particularly for those who may be reluctant, because of their age or cultural perspective, or who may find it difficult to seek help.

Due to the often sensitive and complicated issues faced by callers, each 2-1-1 center has staff who are certified to national industry standards by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), the professional association for over 1,000 community I&R providers, to connect callers with the best available services for their unique needs. By asking callers a succession of questions, trained staff can help identify underlying problems that must be dealt with to help people better cope with the expressed symptoms, and develop their own plan for tackling the root cause of the problem.

This ability to help callers clearly define their needs and then to make appropriate referrals means that 2-1-1 can help people address problems as early as possible and to take preventative steps, thus adding to their long-term personal and family stability.

- ***Helping to create new efficiencies in delivery of health and human services.***

There are four significant efficiencies that 2-1-1 helps create when it is fully operational.

First, it saves the time and eases the frustration of people in their search for appropriate services for which they are eligible.

Second, as 2-1-1 becomes more widely known and used, it refers ever more callers to the right places, thus relieving some of the burden on service providers of committing staff time to handling misdirected calls from people who, in the absence of easily accessible information, are “shopping” for the help they need.

Third, it is a resource to service providers to help them do their jobs more easily – as a proven high quality service to which providers can refer consumers with needs they cannot respond to and as an immediately accessible source of information for the providers to use in making their own referrals to and connections with other providers. In Michigan, for example, significant use of 2-1-1 is made by employees of the state’s Department of Human Services who manage large case loads and do not have the time nor the resources to link citizens to the critical services they need.

Fourth, since 2-1-1 by definition must have the single most comprehensive database on health and human services in an area, it can assist other service providers by reducing costly duplication of effort in building and maintaining comprehensive databases.

- ***Providing a new resource for businesses and other employers to help their employees while maintaining their productivity.***

One of the places where increased efficiency in connecting people to services may be most appreciated is in the workplace. 2-1-1 has the potential to save time, support stressed employees, increase employment opportunities, decrease absenteeism and support employee assistance programs. Thus, 2-1-1 draws support from leaders of both business and organized labor.

- ***Providing a new way in which government can respond to the expectations and needs of all their constituents.***

Governments at all levels face remarkable new challenges. More and more of our residents are finding it difficult to make ends meet. A growing number of our residents speak languages other than English and come from different cultures and traditions. A growing number of our residents are seniors; over time, this will bring new demands on our service delivery system. We are faced with the need to do more with less while maintaining our tradition of high quality, responsive service to our people.

2-1-1 builds on the proven concept of comprehensive information and referral, making those services more accessible to the public. As a result, it also becomes a new asset to connect people with available resources that has significant potential to help government at all levels respond to the challenges they face:

- 2-1-1 is a 24/7/365 call center **accessible to everyone** with the staff or the capacity, through contracted services, to communicate with any caller, regardless of language spoken or physical ability.
- It can help **support more effective 911 service delivery** both day-to-day and in times of crisis. It can remove the need for 911 to be what one local 911 coordinator described as “the primary social service responder after hours and on weekends” by providing trained staff prepared to handle not only calls directed to 2-1-1 but also calls transferred from 911. During Hurricane

Charley in 2004, for example, the 911 coordinator in Lee County, Florida, who had contracted in advance with 2-1-1 to handle calls for the county, estimated that in the week of the storm, 2-1-1 took 60,000 calls that otherwise would have gone to his 911 operators. In the five peak days of the October 2007 fires in Southern California, 2-1-1 call centers answered almost 130,000 calls, many of which would have been directed to 911.

- It helps governments **disseminate information and educate the public**. For example, *Michigan 2-1-1* supported a statewide early childhood development education campaign, by designating one of its 2-1-1 call centers to serve as the response point for the media campaign, providing personal phone assistance 24/7/365 for parents and other caregivers. By utilizing a 2-1-1 call center, the campaign's call to action received a high level of service at a minimal incremental cost.
- It supports public officials offering **constituent services** by providing ready access to high quality information on available services, helping relieve staff workloads and providing a proven new resource to help respond to constituent's needs. 2-1-1 can also provide officials and policy makers detailed information on community, regional and statewide needs based on referral data collected in the course of calls to 2-1-1.

- ***Providing an expanded infrastructure for information and referral that can ensure consistent, standards-driven service.***

Everyone can use 2-1-1 to navigate the complex and ever growing maze of health and human service providers, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and community service organizations and their associated programs. By compliance with national 2-1-1 standards and specific state or local performance measures, 2-1-1 ensures that everyone who calls has the same high-quality experience.

Because it typically becomes synonymous with easy-to-access help, 2-1-1 makes it not only easier but also more acceptable to use human service systems, particularly for those who may be reluctant, because of their age or cultural perspective, who may find it difficult to seek help.

Over time, 2-1-1 becomes accepted as a "social utility," always there, ready to respond when needed. This is particularly true as 2-1-1 becomes more visible and user-friendly on the internet.

Working in close cooperation with specialized I&R providers, 2-1-1 can build a more integrated system that will improve public access to services, help them operate more efficiently and over time help improve the overall quality and consistency of I&R services.

- ***Serving as a support system for emergency management and playing a role in homeland security.***

During and immediately after emergencies throughout the country – health crises or blackouts, natural disasters such as tornados or floods or man-made crises – 2-1-1 systems have acted as a complementary support by helping reduce the overwhelming number of phone calls to 911, emergency management and first-response organizations, thus freeing them to focus on their primary work. In some cases, 2-1-1 has served as the memorable, easy-to-access utility for residents of an entire county or state to call for critical information as a result of a crisis.

During recovery periods following a crisis, 2-1-1s have served as a longer-term resource by coordinating information on the status of available health and human services, connecting victims with the help they need and helping disseminate

information on the details of local recovery, and informing individuals where to send cash or in-kind donations or to volunteer to help.

Here are three examples of how I&R services in Pennsylvania responded to local and national disasters:

- In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, over 100 residents of the affected area relocated temporarily to the Lehigh Valley. In her testimony before the Consumer Affairs Committee the State Legislature on November 1, 2007, Cordelia Miller, Director of Emergency Services at the American Red Cross of the Greater Lehigh Valley, described how the Valley Wide Help I&R line, operated by the Red Cross “created a directory of resources directly obtained from its database of nearly 2,000 human service agencies. This directory was distributed to ...these ‘new’ residents who had absolutely no idea of where to seek services.”
- At the same time, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services asked the United Way of Allegheny County Help Line to return calls to all potential volunteers who responded to the Katrina Disaster Hotline. Help Line also compiled a list of local health care clinics to assist the Pittsburgh Project caseworkers in meeting the ongoing health care needs of the families relocated due to Katrina.
- In September 2004, when parts of Clearfield County were declared a major disaster area due to flooding, staff from INFO-LINK helped staff the FEMA Disaster Response Center. They took the INFO-LINK database on a laptop to the center both to respond to public inquiries and to provide information to other agencies assisting at the center.

Looking forward, we know that Eastern Pennsylvania is a likely primary destination for people forced to evacuate from New York City and Northern New Jersey. Plans developed post-9/11 identify the Lehigh Valley as the relocation site for ensuring continuity of operations for our nation’s financial center. Based on experience following 9/11 and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, 2-1-1 could play a critical support role for the people who will relocate to “Wall Street West”.

The February 2007 snow and ice storm which paralyzed Northeastern and Eastern Pennsylvania was an excellent example of how 2-1-1 might help. During that period, a state agency press release provided this direction to the public: “Individuals who need help should call their local city or county emergency management office, phone numbers for which are in the ‘Blue Pages’ of the phone book. In the event of an emergency, people should call 911 or their local police or fire departments.” But in states from Florida to California to Connecticut, the advice in similar situations is “call 2-1-1,” dramatically increasing the ability of people to access non-emergency help during a disaster.

- ***Providing new trend data on health and human service needs, met and unmet, for planning and resource allocation.***

2-1-1 has the potential to become a social barometer that provides current information on emerging needs and on demand for existing services. A sentinel in the community, 2-1-1 systems generate information that can be used in the development of public policy, in evaluation of services and in support of advocacy efforts. Because the data can be organized in a variety of ways, including geographically, it is particularly helpful in mapping relative locations of high areas of need and locations of resources. As a result, 2-1-1 contributes to better use of scarce resources, including both tax dollars and charitable contributions.

- ***Connecting people with opportunities to “give help” as well as “get help”.***

In many communities, 2-1-1, working in partnership with Volunteer Centers and United Ways, has become a primary way in which people offer assistance to others by connecting with opportunities to volunteer and to make in-kind and cash contributions. This has proven particularly valuable during disasters when emergency management and first response organizations may be overwhelmed by people wanting to help. 2-1-1 can be a vital mechanism for screening, organizing and directing those people.

In his testimony to the Consumer Affairs Committee on November 1, 2007, Michael Bannon, Executive Director of Consumer Protection, Weights and Measures for the County of Bucks, described the frustration encountered by the hundreds of people and organizations who wanted to help in the wake of floods along the Delaware River. He said, “After it was all over, there were scores of unutilized volunteers who called an [organization] unaware of the broad range of opportunities available. Amid shifting needs and priorities, 2-1-1 could be a vital resource to link the public to the most pressing donation needs. As information changes, as it usually does in a crisis response, 2-1-1 changes in real time, giving the most up to date information on how to give or get help.”

2-1-1 in Partnership with Government in Other States

The Connecticut Partnership. Connecticut provides an excellent example of how 2-1-1 can be a multi-purpose asset for state government. There, 2-1-1 InfoLine, operated by United Way of Connecticut, has become a cost-effective, flexible service partner of government in two distinct ways.

First, 2-1-1 InfoLine expands the Connecticut state government’s capacity to deliver effective services, providing:

- around-the-clock response by state social workers – police and other mandated reporters call 2-1-1 after hours – for the Protective Services for the Elderly Program;
- a call point for a new consumer office in the Office of Managed Care Ombudsman;
- an I&R call center – and care coordination – for HUSKY Plan (Healthcare for Uninsured Kids & Youth), 1-877-CT-HUSKY;
- post-welfare service outreach and service referral to families after 60-month federal (and 21-month state) cutoff in Temporary Family Assistance;
- a statewide database of community resources, and reports to government agencies on customer service barriers and human service needs; and,
- multi-year aggregated data on caller needs such as housing and substance abuse treatment to support informed decision-making by policy makers and funders.

Second, 2-1-1 InfoLine helps Connecticut state government communicate by serving as an easy-to-remember response point, staffed by highly-trained, specialized call specialists with a passion for phone customer service, for government media campaigns, news releases, service changes:

- Department of Social Services used 2-1-1 as access point for publicity about winter heating assistance, ‘summer cooling’ program, changes to children’s health insurance;
- Department of Public Health used 2-1-1 as response point for media campaigns for breast cancer early detection, youth violence prevention,

and teen pregnancy prevention; and,

- Department of Children & Families used 2-1-1 as response point for media campaigns promoting healthy parenting practices.

In one example of increased cost efficiency, their existing infrastructure of call specialists meant that InfoLine was able to staff the state's tobacco cessation hotline, QuitLine, with only one additional staff person versus the five to seven people that the state estimated it would need to put in place.

In Response to Disaster. Perhaps the best example of how 2-1-1s can support disaster response and recovery was during the 2004 hurricane emergency in Florida. There, 2-1-1s conclusively demonstrated the value they can add to emergency management and disaster relief. Leaders in municipal, county and state governments, in private philanthropy, and in the first-responder community agreed that 2-1-1s there:

- expanded the capacity of Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) by providing trained information and referral specialists and by offering the public an alternative access point for information;
- became critically needed clearinghouses of information about availability of services and the status of health and human service organizations and government agencies;
- were able to spot unmet and emerging needs, helping direct resources to high priority places;
- provided critically needed phone crisis support for callers, complementing the work of the EOCs;
- helped mobilize and manage volunteers and cash and in-kind donations;
- served as intake points on behalf of government agencies and nonprofit organizations, increasing the efficiency of connecting people with needed help;
- have continued to be a critical part of recovery efforts, providing a connection to help for people whose lives have been dramatically affected by the storm.

United Way's 2-1-1 InfoLine in Connecticut was widely recognized for the role it played on September 11, 2001 and in the days following, providing a key link to information for people throughout the state and beyond, helping manage everything from blood donations to support groups.

A study by the Brookings Institution of the impact of the events of September 11 on hotel and restaurant workers in Washington DC concluded that one of the greatest challenges they faced was in connecting with the services that could help them remain economically stable. The study concluded that 2-1-1 would have been a critically beneficial resource for them had it existed in the Washington metropolitan area at that time.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, 2-1-1 systems throughout the country were mobilized to provide back-up support for overwhelmed 2-1-1s in the impacted area and to be the point of contact for evacuees seeking help after being resettled.

The Earned Income Tax Credit. In many states 2-1-1 has been used to promote free tax preparation services to help low-income families secure Earned Income Tax Credit refunds. In Washington State in 2007, 2-1-1 was marketed as the primary place to turn for free tax preparation information, resulting in over \$4.4 million in additional EITC refunds, as well as saving low-income families at least

\$800,000 in tax preparation costs in the one county reporting full results as of November 2007. This is a significant source of support for vulnerable families and also generated additional new sales tax revenue for state and local government.

The Potential in Pennsylvania. While the specifics will differ, we believe that *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* can grow into an equally important resource for our jurisdictions and for state government. Once its infrastructure is in place, 2-1-1 will be a way to:

- make services more accessible to our people by providing a single, easy-to-remember number, available 24/7/365 that can triage their call and direct them to the right place; and,
- increase efficiency by combining small program-specific call centers that take advantage of the trained call specialists that are already prepared to respond to people seeking help.

Cost Savings

In 2004, United Way of America commissioned the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas at Austin to conduct a national cost benefit analysis of 2-1-1. Based on data from eleven 2-1-1s, including the statewide 2-1-1 in Connecticut, the study estimated a net value to society of a national 2-1-1 system to total over \$1 billion over ten years. Researchers identified these examples of “cost savings for taxpayers, employers and government”:

- Reduction in non-emergency calls to 911;
- Reduction in the number of 1-800 numbers funded by government;
- Cost avoidance for state and local government of misdirected calls for services;
- Decreased need for public assistance because of timely connection with appropriate intervening services;
- Enhanced tax assistance and recovery, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit;
- Ability to mobilize and process volunteers in times of crisis;
- Savings for business through reduced absenteeism and increased productivity due to enhanced information on where employees can find services;
- Planning information for cities and counties informed by the data collection of call volume and referrals for a comprehensive array of services;
- A broad communication network for public dissemination of information about changes in federal, state and local programs;
- Ability to disseminate public health and crisis preparedness information;
- Time saved for individuals and families through a one-stop call center to locate a variety of services.

In an earlier study, in 1999, the Public Policy Center at the University of Nebraska concluded that a statewide 2-1-1 system could generate cost savings between \$7.6 and \$16.5 million annually from such factors as increased efficiency in getting information to consumers, reducing overlapping information and referral costs and improved community planning through use of call data.

Results

2-1-1 is an innovative response to the demand for access to critical community information and referral services. It is a groundbreaking, efficient solution that can eliminate the confusing maze of information and services that often overwhelms individuals who need help. It improves upon existing, decentralized services and offers professionals and organizations in health and human services a way to enhance their impact and maximize scarce resources.

As a result of 2-1-1:

- Individuals are better able to manage their own lives because they have access to the information and resources they require to find and make decisions about the support they need;
 - Service providers have an expanded knowledge of available resources to help them better serve their consumers;
 - Policy makers and funders – both public and private – have more complete information about trends in demand for services and early awareness of emerging needs;
 - Emergency management have access to a new statewide infrastructure to help disseminate critical information, assist people through disasters and provide long-term connection to relief and recovery services;
 - Businesses have an additional way to support their employees with their personal needs in an efficient and effective way;
 - Governments have access to a proven, 24/7/365 infrastructure available to help increase their efficiency and effectiveness; and,
 - Public officials are assured that their constituents are better able to get connected with the services they need in cost-effective and responsive ways.
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THE NEED FOR 2-1-1 IN PENNSYLVANIA

Why is 2-1-1 critically important to the people of Pennsylvania? We are living through a period of economic and social transformation that has touched the lives of virtually everyone – as old jobs disappear before new ones are in place, as we seek to maximize the investment we have made in our public sector through “smart government” as we recognize that we must give increased attention to homeland security and emergency management. As change affects all of us, we must seek new ways to connect with one another and with the resources all of us will need at some point in our lives.

- ***It is a major challenge for people to learn about and connect with services that are available.***

The reality is that, at some time or another, virtually all of us need to reach out for help, whether for ourselves, members of our family, or neighbors. Economic dislocation, aging, unanticipated life changes, illness can affect all of us. But the process through which people get connected to that help can be confusing, frustrating, inefficient, and stressful.

Too often, people looking for help in Pennsylvania do not know where to begin. Locating such basic resources as food, shelter, employment, or health care may mean calling dozens of phone numbers, then struggling through a maze of nonprofit organizations and public agencies, each offering a multitude of services, to make the right connections. These problems are exacerbated by forces that disrupt our connections with our community – unemployment, breakdown of families, our greater mobility, and our increased diversity, all of which increase complexity and erode traditional support systems. One service provider summed up the problem: “Clients have a huge challenge to find the service they need. It’s as if we hide information on purpose.”

In its 2007 “Agenda for Community Solutions,” the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania described the problem this way:

“Every hour of every day, someone in Southeastern Pennsylvania needs essential services, from finding a childcare program to acquiring care for an aging parent. Faced with a dramatic increase in the number of agencies and help-lines, people often don’t know where to turn, and in many cases end up going without these necessary services.

“Despite, or perhaps because of, the breadth of available resources, many individuals as well as social service professionals are routinely frustrated in their attempts to identify an agency or service that offers the most appropriate help in meeting their needs, in a location that is convenient for them to access. Social workers and case managers with large caseloads, from neighborhoods throughout the region, with multiple and diverse needs, have even more difficulty. It is simply not possible without an organized system to know enough about all of the services and providers available throughout the region to make referrals that not only meet the unique needs of each client but are also conveniently located for that individual, let alone keep up with the constant changes in contact information, eligibility requirements, and service locations that are common in the health and human services network.”

That report also comments on the needs of the growing numbers of seniors in the population:

“A common thread in senior needs is that seniors are increasingly at risk in their own homes. The confluence of policy trends in publicly-financed assistance,

increased longevity, reduced prevalence of trans-generational households and the living preferences of seniors themselves has left more and more seniors stranded in their own homes – disconnected from the services that they need to remain safe and healthy. These needs will be exacerbated in the coming years as the ‘baby boom’ population bulge joins the ranks of the senior population.”

Members of the Protect Our Children committee have expressed concern that “parents/caregivers are disconnected from the resources, both general information and crisis related, necessary to provide children with opportunities and connect parents with community-based services that can improve the likelihood they will have the confidence and competency to parent their child.”

- ***The growing need of our population for human services increases the need to effectively connect people with the broadest possible range of community resources.***

While many parts of our state are economically healthy, too many people live in need. For example, in August 2007, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 25% of Philadelphians live in poverty, ninth worst in the nation among cities with 250,000 or more people and the highest poverty rate of the nation’s ten largest cities.

Problems of poverty are not limited to urban areas. According to the 2000 Census, nearly 380,200 rural residents lived in households with incomes below the poverty level, or nearly 12 percent of the rural population. More than 30 percent of persons below the poverty level are under 18 years old, and 13 percent are over 65.

As a result of federal and state welfare reform, there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of people receiving public assistance and an increase in the number of former recipients who have entered the paid workforce. Yet that often is not enough for families to succeed. On August 29, 2007, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* quoted John Wilson, executive director of the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania. He said, “Sadly, far too many working families are strangled by a web of bills, struggling to pay their mortgages, health insurance, child care, food costs and rising utility and gas prices.”

Statewide, the anticipated sustained growth in the number of seniors plus increased longevity will increase the need for services. Twenty percent, or one out of every five people in the Commonwealth, is age 60 or older. Pennsylvania has the third highest percentage of people over age 60. Only Florida and West Virginia have higher percentages of 60 plus. Only four states have a higher number of older residents than Pennsylvania: California, Florida, New York and Texas. By the year 2020, Pennsylvania’s 60 and older population is expected to be 25 percent of the total population -- more than 3 million people. Most of the “baby boomers” will be over age 60 by that time. The 65 and older population is projected to increase to 2.3 million and the 85 and older population to about 363,000.

In order to attain self-sufficiency, individuals and their families need additional support through health and human services provided both by government and nonprofit organizations. One of the greatest barriers to receiving this help is the complexity of the service delivery systems. 2-1-1 helps people cut through this complexity – first by helping callers define their needs; and, second, by connecting them with the agencies best equipped to respond to those needs.

- ***The greater attention that is being paid to homeland security and emergency management at both the state and local levels.***

The tragedies of September 11 and of Hurricane Katrina brought home to all of us the necessity to be prepared to respond to both natural and man-made disasters. As

a result, there has been a determined effort to intensify homeland security measures, to put in place the systems required to respond to future crises, and to prepare our residents. As we have already seen, those crises can range from natural disasters like the flooding in 2004 following Hurricane Ivan to the public concern over West Nile virus and the availability of flu vaccine to the need to help evacuees from other parts of the country. We also know that eastern Pennsylvania is already considered a primary relocation area should people be forced to evacuate New York City and Northern New Jersey and is the location of the “Wall Street West” facility to ensure back-up for the financial system.

With our preparation has come the growing recognition that we also must rationalize the way in which people connect with the information they need to take care of themselves during a crisis and connect with those agencies that can help them during recovery. Attention is being given to ways to relieve the burden of inappropriate and misdirected calls on our 911 systems and to plan in advance how best to mobilize and deploy our neighbors who want to volunteer their time, talent, energy, and material resources in response to disasters.

- ***The reality that surrounding states have implemented 2-1-1, particularly New Jersey where there is a direct impact on the most populous regions of Pennsylvania.***

As of June 2007, 2-1-1 was available to 70% of the nation’s population through 2-1-1 systems in 47 states. All of our neighboring states – New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio – now have active 2-1-1 systems, including New Jersey that offers access to everyone in the state. Yet in Pennsylvania, we do not have a single 2-1-1 in operation. In a time when media markets straddle state boundaries, particularly in Southeastern Pennsylvania, our most populous region, and when people routinely move across state boundaries to live and work, we have fallen behind the rest of the nation in making 2-1-1 available to those who live and work in our state.

- ***The ongoing demand for greater efficiencies in service delivery, both within the public sector and in nonprofit organizations.***

Our elected leaders have committed to building on our state’s record of service to our people, particularly in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable, at-risk children and families, people with disabilities, seniors. Meeting these goals requires government to operate more efficiently and to build strong partnerships with non-government networks. Part of the required efficiency is to improve the ways in which people gain access to the services they need, whether those services are being provided by state government or the nonprofit community.

Implications

Taken together, these realities paint a picture of increasing demand for help and information, at the same time that both public and nonprofit service providers are facing the necessity of achieving greater efficiency in the delivery of services. As a result, people in need are confronted by changing availability and eligibility requirements for services and providers that are over-extended and unable to meet demand or even to maintain current information on what help may be available from other sources.

It is in precisely this kind of environment that 2-1-1 can:

- Provide an easy, visible, and non-judgmental entry point for people who want and need help;
- Increase efficiency by helping callers clearly define their needs and pointing them to the most appropriate places to seek help;
- Relieve some of the burden on service providers by reducing the number of

calls from people who either are not eligible for their services or who are seeking services they do not provide and provide a ready resource for service providers to use in referring their current clients to other services;

- Become an integral part of disaster response and recovery, complementing public emergency management systems, linking people to help and supporting the mobilization of volunteers;
 - Create new knowledge about needs and gaps in services that can help policy-makers and funders make better decisions and more effectively plan for the future.
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THE VALUE OF 2-1-1 IN PENNSYLVANIA

Overview

We believe that 2-1-1 has the potential, over time, to provide significant benefits to a variety of stakeholder groups, saving time, money and community resources as we more efficiently and effectively connect people with the services they need.

Pennsylvania’s elected leaders have consistently pledged their support for increasing access to services for people statewide with particular attention on children and families, seniors and people with disabilities. Full implementation of 2-1-1 will do that while at the same time helping increase overall efficiency and providing needed data to help policy-makers determine how best to invest limited resources to the greatest benefit of Pennsylvanians.

Benefits to Specific Stakeholders

Benefit of 2-1-1 to the Public

For the community as a whole, 2-1-1 will become a “public utility” that is always available to help people connect with the information they need to lead healthier, more productive, and more independent lives. When fully implemented, 2-1-1:

- is available 24/7/365 at no cost to callers, providing consistent, uniform service to everyone, no matter from where they are calling;
- helps reduce people’s stress and frustration levels which has a ripple impact on families and workplaces;
- helps people become more self-sufficient; and,
- helps connect people with opportunities to serve both every day and in times of crisis, strengthening ties to community and neighbors.

Benefit of 2-1-1 to Elected and Appointed Officials

For elected and appointed officials, 2-1-1 offers the opportunity to provide better service for their constituents while helping increase the overall efficiency of the service delivery system and strengthening emergency management systems. For them, 2-1-1:

- provides better statewide service for constituents;
- helps reinforce a statewide approach while supporting regional prerogatives and priorities;
- has the potential to bring new revenue, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, into the state by providing better access to entitlement programs;
- creates a cost-efficient, nonprofit-based statewide communications vehicle to support and provide a response mechanism for state government education campaigns;
- is available to assist them in responding to requests for assistance from their constituents;
- helps reduce call load on 911 and supports emergency management;
- provides current trend data for planning and resource allocation;
- introduces efficiencies throughout the health and human services system;
- increases ability of people to become self-sufficient; and,
- aligns Pennsylvania with 2-1-1 development in the rest of the nation.

Benefit of 2-1-1 to State Government

For state agencies, *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* can be an active partner in increasing the efficiency of service delivery while ensuring sustained quality of service. For them, 2-1-1:

- will be a stable statewide infrastructure that can be used in a broad variety of ways to support the work of state government;
- provides access to the most comprehensive statewide database of health and human services resource information drawn from government agencies at all levels and from nonprofit service providers in every county;
- can ease the burden on state employees by helping reduce the number of misdirected calls and making sure people are getting to the right place for what they need;
- can become a primary response mechanism for state public education media campaigns, reducing the need to establish or staff 1-800 phone lines;
- provides an efficient channel for communication to the public on public health and other issues of broad public concern; and,
- provides trend data on new and emerging needs and on gaps in services to assist in planning.

Benefit of 2-1-1 to Emergency Management, 911 and First Responders

For our emergency management, 911 systems and first responders, 2-1-1 is an important new asset, able to relieve day-to-day burden while being prepared to move into active, complementary support in a crisis. For them, 2-1-1:

- can reduce call load on 911 by reducing the need for it to be a social services contact after hours;
- can expand capacity of Emergency Operations Centers during emergencies – trained people, expanded call center, ability to handle calls from people in emotional distress, information management;
- is a potential conduit for information dissemination to and from the public and responders during emergencies;
- can play a major role in assisting local organizations in managing the spontaneous outpouring of volunteers and in-kind donations, removing that task from first responder organizations;
- can be the clearinghouse for rapidly-changing immediate information that needs to be available to the public; and,
- remains in place long after the immediate crisis ends to assist people with their long-term needs.

Benefit to Businesses, Other Employers and Employees

For employers, 2-1-1 offers a way to help workers find the services they and their families may need, providing an important benefit while increasing their on-the-job productivity and helping them remain at work. For them, 2-1-1:

- contributes to making Pennsylvania a good place to do business and to work;
- complements existing employee assistance programs or provides an alternative service where EAPs do not exist;

- reduces the time workers must spend on the phone seeking services;
- is available to people who have lost employment, including displaced workers, to help them connect with the support they need; and,
- increases the ability of people to become self-sufficient.

Benefit of 2-1-1 to Government Agencies

For government agencies, 2-1-1 is a way to relieve the load of general information and referral calls, allowing highly-skilled professionals to focus on priority needs while creating a new resource for their staffs to help clients better connect with the broadest array of services. For them, 2-1-1:

- improves customer service statewide, 24/7/365;
- takes a load off of existing systems, allowing them to focus on priority calls and needs;
- builds greater efficiency by reducing inappropriate requests for services and better directing calls;
- is a new resource to help clients, particularly non-English speakers;
- provides current trend data for planning and resource allocation; and,
- has the potential to serve as access point or intake for services.

Benefit of 2-1-1 to Nonprofit Service Providers and Community and Faith-based Organizations

For these organizations, 2-1-1 is a way to provide better service and to reduce the need to provide informal I&R services to clients. For them, 2-1-1:

- reduces number of misdirected calls and inappropriate requests for service, allowing the organization to focus on what it does best;
 - reduces the need to provide “informal I&R”, freeing staff to focus on their core services;
 - is available by phone and internet to provide information to staff who are working directly with clients, increasing their efficiency in identifying other service providers; and,
 - provides trend data on emerging needs and gaps between demand and available resources, assisting them in their future planning.
-

DESIGN OF THE *PENNSYLVANIA 2-1-1* SYSTEM

Overview

2-1-1 is a service for individuals at all stages of life, across all socio-economic groups, who need to connect with human and community services. Others will call to offer their help as volunteers or through in-kind or other donations. In addition, many 2-1-1 calls are from service providers looking for information for their clients, from human resource professionals seeking help for employees and from public officials seeking information to respond to inquiries from constituents. 2-1-1 also will be there to help people prepare for and recover from natural and man-made disasters.

In order to best serve this diverse audience, 2-1-1 services will be delivered to the public via the phone and through the internet. Supporting those services will be the most comprehensive database on health and human services in the state. We are committed to the highest level of quality assurance and to collecting and reporting data that will be helpful to policy-makers, funders and the public in understanding the needs of our state, met and unmet.

In designing the service delivery model for 2-1-1 in Pennsylvania, we were guided by our goal of ensuring that every person in the state can have access to 2-1-1 around the clock, every day of the year by both phone and online. To achieve that, we needed to keep in mind four core values:

- *information is best collected and updated on a timely basis by those who are most familiar with local resources;*
- *consumers must feel comfortable with the sensitivity of 2-1-1 to local realities and to a diversity of cultural values;*
- *it is important to honor and leverage the investment that has already been made in developing comprehensive I&R throughout the state;*
- *the system must be financially viable, designed to operate as efficiently as possible, balanced with the demands of the other values.*

The system design also must respond to the demographic realities of our state – high population density in Southeast and Southwest Pennsylvania (roughly 50% of the population is in the cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and the ten counties contiguous to them); smaller but equally dynamic regional population centers that serve as the economic and services hubs for surrounding counties; and, rural counties with small populations spread over larger geographic areas.

Functions of a 2-1-1 System

There are four primary functions to be performed in a 2-1-1 system:

Regional Centers. A 2-1-1 regional center is the public’s primary interface with 2-1-1. Trained, professionally certified information specialists, based in Pennsylvania, respond to phone and online inquiries, assisting users to define their needs and either making appropriate referrals to existing services or helping them identify alternative courses of action to pursue. Regional centers also document users’ needs and the referrals made in order to identify changes in the pattern of services sought, unmet needs and new, emerging needs.

Web-Enabled Resource Database. This is the knowledge base which will be available online to the public for self-directed searches and on which the information specialists draw to make referrals. Its value is directly proportional to how comprehensive and how current it is. Trained and certified resource specialists are responsible for building and maintaining the resource database, working in close collaboration with contacts in each county in the region. It also is the heart of the online interface with 2-1-1 that will be

available to the public and to human service providers.

Representation. This is the public “face” of 2-1-1 for purposes of promotion, partnership development with funders, government agencies and nonprofit service providers and use of data to assist policymakers and the community in understanding and responding to unmet and emerging needs.

System Development. This encompasses the broad range of activities that are most appropriately undertaken at the system level, creating cost efficiencies to serve the entire system. These are detailed below in the discussion of the proposed state office.

**The Pennsylvania
2-1-1 Model**

In order to fulfill these functions as effectively and cost efficiently as possible, we have designed a system that has these primary components:

- retention of control of assignment of the 2-1-1 dialing code by *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*;
- up to seven geographic regions within which there will be collaborative planning to determine the most appropriate and effective way to provide 2-1-1 service;
- a framework of expectations that must be met in order for *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* to assign the 2-1-1 dialing code to a regional entity;
- development of a network of “contact points” in each county to assist in building local understanding of use of 2-1-1 and in developing and sustaining the resource database;
- maximized pooling, through coordinated planning, of after-hours calls to increase cost effectiveness;
- a *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* state office responsible for building and supporting the total system;
- an integrated statewide database accessible by all 2-1-1 centers as well as by government agencies at all levels and nonprofit service providers;
- a strong online presence that allows public search of the database;
- a coordinated call management system to support coordinated service delivery among call centers.

The model we are proposing:

- Is consistent with our tradition of local control and localized service delivery;
- Is the best way to ensure statewide coverage, thus enhancing value for the public and for governments at all levels;
- Creates a unified effort, tied together by a shared mission and common values, that ensures a strategic, phased and coordinated roll-out, acts as a control mechanism to maximize consistency and quality, supports a coordinated response in times of disaster and establishes a single entity to work in partnership with state government;
- Maximizes the potential for financial support from municipal and county governments and local private philanthropy;
- Builds on and leverages existing investments in information and referral services;
- Provides for a strong online presence that can expand the audience for

2-1-1 while increasing cost effectiveness;

- Ensures full redundancy in the system to guarantee continuous service in times of emergency or disaster, making us ready to work in partnership with our state and county emergency management agencies;
- Meets the expectations of state government for a system that is prepared to work in partnership to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of human service delivery throughout the state; and,
- Recognizes that, realistically, there are limits on the number of 2-1-1 centers that can be supported at a level that allows them to sustain the highest quality service.

Designing the System

The most critical question we confronted was how to establish the regions that are at the heart of our proposed system – how many should there be and where should they be. In making those decisions, we took two significant steps:

- Learning from the experience of other states; and,
- Establishing criteria to guide our final decision.

Each of these steps is described below.

Learning from Other States

As part of the process of designing our system, we looked at the experience of other states throughout the country. They fall into three broad categories:

- States that are geographically small (Connecticut, Rhode Island, Hawaii) or with small populations spread over relatively large geographic areas (Nebraska, South Dakota) that have opted for a single 2-1-1 center for the entire state;
- States that currently have “loosely-affiliated” state systems (Florida, Ohio, California);
- States that are building integrated statewide systems (Texas, Michigan, Washington, Maryland, Virginia, Minnesota, Indiana and New York).

There is no evidence from any state that a single 2-1-1 center is an appropriate model for a large population state. It does not provide for essential redundancy and means that services invariably are provided at distance from the majority of the state’s population.

However, as reflected in the charts below, it is clear that determination of the number of call centers established to serve a state reflects a variety of factors – the extent of comprehensive I&Rs in the state and/or of existing 2-1-1s when a system is developed and the culture, geography and politics of the state.

The “loosely affiliated” systems are characterized by a relatively large number of existing or planned 2-1-1 centers that may collaborate in the development of shared standards and operating systems but have not created a formal structure that ensures statewide coverage for 2-1-1. For example:

State	Population	Number of Current or Planned 2-1-1 Centers	% of State Population with Access to 2-1-1
California	36,450,000	6 currently operating 4 more authorized 10 additional anticipated*	55% 13% will be added 32% would be added
Florida	18,000,000	16**	85%
Ohio	11,500,000	20***	75%

* The California model calls for there to be approximately 20 local call centers that

provided normal business hours service to one or more counties and an additional five to seven “enhanced call centers” that have “robust capacity to serve multiple counties with complete 24/7/365 services, back-up capacity and redundancy. There is no formal plan at this time for a statewide database or a call management system to link the call centers together for coordinated response in disaster.

** An agreement was recently reached for existing call centers to provide 100% cell phone coverage, but planning is still underway to assure landline access for remaining 15% of state. As with California, there are no plans at this time for a statewide database.

*** 20 providers have been approved to serve 35 of 89 counties in Ohio. It is unclear whether or not more call centers will be developed to provide statewide coverage.

The states building integrated statewide systems have opted for some form of regionalization with 2-1-1 centers serving mutually agreed upon regions of the state with the shared goal of achieving statewide coverage. Determination of the number of 2-1-1 centers is generally made based on existing centers at the time the system is being created; natural geographic, cultural or political divisions within the state; willingness and ability of centers to serve regions larger than their immediate natural service area. For example:

State	Population	Number of Current or Planned 2-1-1 Centers
Texas	23,500,000	25
New York	19,200,000	8*
Michigan	10,000,000	7
Virginia	7,650,000	6
Indiana	6,300,000	12 **
Washington	6,400,000	8 ***
Maryland	5,600,000	6 ****
Wisconsin	5,500,000	9

* One call center will handle New York City which has 40%+ of state’s population; 7 centers for approximately 11,000,000 people.

** Three additional call centers have been approved and two more are in development for a potential total of 17.

*** Includes one call center based in Portland, OR that provides 2-1-1 service to a five county region in SW Washington.

****Includes the National Capital Region call center based in Washington, DC which serves portions of Maryland.

By comparison, the 2006 population estimate for Pennsylvania is 12,400,000 people.

2-1-1s in these states are funded in a variety of ways. In Texas, for example, state government provides the primary funding for the full system. In Michigan, 2-1-1 providers, United Ways and state government are working together to achieve a balanced 50-50 funding for the full system by state government and private philanthropy. In most states, funding comes from a broad mix of sources – state, county and local government; businesses, United Ways and other private philanthropy.

In 2004, United Way of America commissioned the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin to conduct a cost-benefit study of various models for 2-1-1 systems. The model they found to be the most cost-efficient was what they termed a “hybrid” – that is, it combined regional 2-1-1 centers (which included both the call center and the resource database function) with centralized systemwide functions. Their conclusion reinforces

our belief that we have put together not only the model that can best serve the people of Pennsylvania but also the one that is the most cost efficient.

Our Criteria

We established these criteria to evaluate alternative designs for the system:

- Must ensure statewide phone and web access to 2-1-1;
 - Must keep development and management of the resource database as “close to home” as possible;
 - Must keep service delivery (the regional centers) as “close to home” as possible;
 - Must be sensitive to regional idiosyncrasies while still achieving cost efficiency;
 - Must recognize and respect the investment that has been made by communities that currently have comprehensive information and referral services while ensuring consistent, standards-driven services statewide;
 - Must ensure appropriate redundancy throughout the system; and,
 - Must maximize the likelihood that financial support can be obtained from private philanthropy and county and municipal governments throughout the state as well as from state government.
-

Conclusion and Rationale

We concluded that the system design as outlined in this plan would be the most feasible. As described above, that design includes regional systems that combine the 2-1-1 call center and resource database functions and county liaisons. We will further increase efficiency during periods of the week when call volume is much lower by consolidating calls into no more than two centers, ensuring 24/7 access while managing costs.

We believe that the proposed system design ensures that:

- We are well-positioned, assuming additional resources become available, to ensure full accessibility to 2-1-1 throughout the state within two years;
- We will build on the strengths of existing comprehensive I&R services;
- We will maintain the local community connections that will be required to build and sustain financial support from private philanthropy and local governments throughout the state;
- An appropriate balance will be achieved between cost efficiency and quality based on proximity to the community, redundancy and overall system-wide capacity; and,
- Sufficient redundancy will be built into the system to ensure that it can continue to operate during emergencies or periods of extremely high call volumes in one or more regions.

In this design:

- We will achieve statewide coverage with every major region of the state having a regional system most appropriate for it that will combine the resource database and call center functions.
 - We will limit the number of 2-1-1 centers while bringing the service as “close to home” as realistically feasible.
 - The 2-1-1 system will parallel other statewide systems, ensuring coverage in rural areas, balancing sensitivity to local realities with appropriate economies of scale.
-

The Regional Design

We believe it is critical that each region determine for itself the best way to ensure that 2-1-1 is available to all residents, within guidelines and a clearly stated application process established by *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*.

The Planning Process. We have designated a “lead convener” for each of the proposed regions.

It will be the responsibility of these organizations to identify and draw together interested stakeholders from throughout the region in a transparent, inclusive and participatory planning process to determine how best to provide 2-1-1 in the region.

An important first step in this process was completed in September 2007 when initial regional meetings were held to explain and gain input to the statewide planning process. Feedback from some 300 participants clearly reflected support for our regional approach.

The benefit of regionalized planning is that leaders within each region will be able to decide how best to provide 2-1-1. We anticipate that their designs may be very different from region to region, including such options as:

- A single regional center, housed in an existing information and referral agency, that will combine both direct response to consumers and development and maintenance of the resource database;
- A lead agency sharing responsibility with another agency, with one handling consumer response and the other the database;
- A lead agency working with other existing providers with calls routed to them based on the origin of the call – most likely this would include several relatively small providers that would handle calls from their immediate area, probably for limited hours on weekdays, and a larger provider that would handle the majority of calls for the region and would operate longer hours. Similar partnerships with existing local providers could also be used to collect community data on services and feed it up to the statewide database.

The benefit of doing this planning within a framework of requirements established by *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* is that all regions will be required to meet the same quality standards and expectations for service. For example, all will:

- be required to have a clearly designated “lead partner” that will have overall responsibility for implementation and management of 2-1-1 in the region in a manner that balances local needs with those of the statewide system;
- be required, as funding becomes available, to use the same resource database platform, ensuring consistency of the data, enabling it to be available to all regional centers and increasing efficiency by eliminating duplicative data collection and updating;
- use the same protocol to record data from consumers, thus allowing for efficient sharing and aggregation of data.
- be expected to meet the same performance standards – percentage of calls actually answered, length of wait time, etc.
- be required to become accredited by the national Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) and all information specialists and resource database specialists will be required to become certified by AIRS.
- be required to ensure that 2-1-1 is available 24/7.

This approach allows us to assure state government and other investors that there is a true

statewide system in place, prepared and able to handle statewide responsibilities, while still honoring regional control and encouraging regional financial support.

County Liaisons. To help bring 2-1-1 as close as possible to each community, we will require that the regional plans provide for identification of a primary contact point for 2-1-1 identified in each county in which there is no other component of the system. This could be a nonprofit service provider, a United Way, a local government agency or even an individual who would work under the general supervision of the regional center to serve as the “face” of 2-1-1 in the county – assisting in collecting and updating resource data, representing 2-1-1 in the county, promoting 2-1-1, helping disseminate call data on emerging and unmet needs, etc.

The Pennsylvania 2-1-1 State Office

A small central office for the system, headed by an executive director and working under the policy direction of the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* board of directors, will be responsible for these system-wide responsibilities:

- Developing and executing the formal relationships needed to establish and implement the network of regional centers;
- Developing and managing the formal relationships with other statewide organizations needed to establish and implement the statewide 2-1-1 system, for example, domestic violence and crisis mental health services;
- Overseeing development and implementation of the statewide resource database;
- Managing and overseeing use of the 2-1-1 number and its designation;
- Developing and managing the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* website, including making the statewide database directly available to the public;
- Coordinating with and supporting the efforts of the Regional Centers to obtain the public and private resources required to build the proposed system and to ensure ongoing operations;
- Working closely with the Governor and State Legislature to ensure that any available federal and state funds designated to support 2-1-1 are distributed equitably through *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* to assure effective statewide access to 2-1-1 services;
- Developing partnerships, consistent with 2-1-1’s mission and phased in over time, through which the assets of the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* system can support emergency management and other public services;
- Ensuring appropriate management of the 2-1-1 brand, including negotiating formal agreements on who may use the 2-1-1 brand in what ways, and the development and coordination of a statewide marketing campaign;
- Coordinating the collection, analysis, and use of call data to identify emerging needs and assist policy-makers and public and private funders in ensuring that the right services are available in the right places;
- Working with regional centers to develop standards for the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* system to ensure consistency in information sets and caller experience; and,
- Developing and overseeing program evaluation and continuous quality improvement within the statewide system.

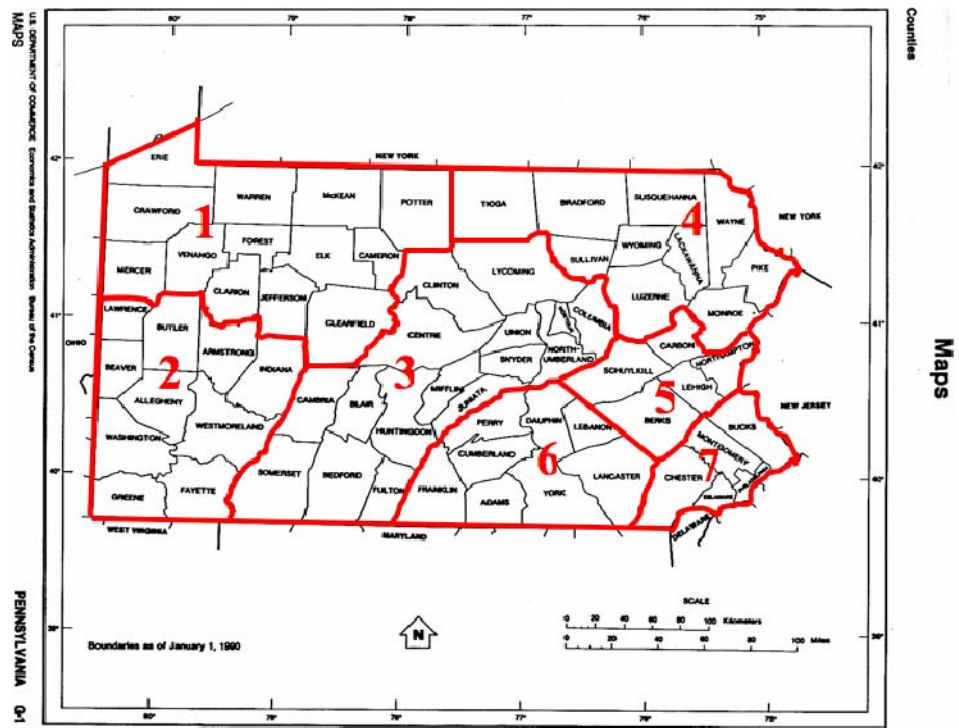
Fulfilling these system-wide responsibilities will require a small, well-organized staff at the state level. We are projecting a phased development of that staff consistent with the

availability of resources. At the outset, the staff’s focus will be on building strong, mutually beneficial relationships with state government, on fund-raising to support full development of the system and on technical assistance for the planning and launching of regional centers.

The Regional System

In order to provide a framework within which planning can take place, we have defined initial regions. We recognize that regional boundaries may change slightly during planning as counties follow traditional connections with one another.

For purposes of this plan, however, we believe that the map and table which follows provide a reasonable illustration of how the system will evolve. It is not a final determination. Indeed, we recognize that as circumstances change, we must remain flexible and responsive to keep the system as strong as possible. Rather, it is a demonstration of how *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* can be built out as a system to serve the entire state while achieving reasonable cost efficiency.



Region	Designated Lead Convener
<p>Region One – Northwest Pennsylvania Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango and Warren counties – population 790,000</p>	<p>Clearfield County Area Agency on Aging</p>
<p>Region Two – Southwest Pennsylvania Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, Westmoreland counties – population 2,650,000</p>	<p>United Way of Westmoreland County</p>

<p>Region Three – Central Pennsylvania Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Somerset, Union – population 1,200,000</p>	<p>Community Help Center</p>
<p>Region Four – Northeast Pennsylvania Bradford, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne, Wyoming counties – population 950,000</p>	<p>United Way of Wyoming Valley</p>
<p>Region Five – Lehigh Valley Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Schuylkill counties – population 1,160,000</p>	<p>United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley</p>
<p>Region Six – South Central Area Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York counties – population 1,700,000</p>	<p>United Way of the Capital Region</p>
<p>Region Seven – Southeast Pennsylvania Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties – population 3,850,000</p>	<p>United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania</p>

THE PENNSYLVANIA 2-1-1 PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Overview

2-1-1 is a unique asset that will serve everyone in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. But for it to succeed, it must be characterized by:

- Strong, stable system-wide management;
- Sustained, predictable and sufficient funding;
- A strong mutually beneficial relationship between the 2-1-1 system and state government; and,
- Ongoing support from local communities including from county and local government and private philanthropy.

Our goal is to build an integrated, efficient statewide system designed to provide seamless access to trained information specialists 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – providing the right information in the right way at the right time.

We believe that the best way to achieve this is to establish *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* as an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that will work in close partnership with state government, United Ways, regional coalitions and other stakeholders.

Initially, United Way of Pennsylvania will continue its role as incubator of *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*, acting through the current planning team to give leadership to the effort, establishing the organization, securing seed funding and securing assignment of the 2-1-1 dialing code.

The Leadership Role of *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*

Acting as the parent body of the statewide system, the functions of *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* are:

- Development of the statewide 2-1-1 system through leadership, coordinated planning, technical assistance and consultation support to regions;
- Relationship with state government, including contract negotiation;
- Fundraising and resource development to support a statewide 2-1-1 system;
- Assigning the 2-1-1 dialing code;
- Setting and monitoring expectations, quality standards, etc.;
- Development and implementation of statewide marketing.

Establishing *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* as an independently incorporated 501(c)3 nonprofit organization will:

- Offer maximum independence, accountability and flexibility;
- Encourage collaboration rather than regulation;
- Increase the potential for shared branding;
- Allow for greater cost efficiencies; and,
- Open the possibility of a more diverse mix of funding to support both the regional service providers and the system as a whole.

The Governance Structure

The Board of Directors. Primary responsibility for the development, operation and oversight of 2-1-1 in Pennsylvania will rest with the board of directors. There will be

12-15 members who reflect the geographic diversity of the state. It will include:

- Representation from state government from both the policy and operating levels to the extent allowed by state law or state government policy;
- A representative from 2-1-1 providers via the 2-1-1 Operating Council;
- Representation from United Way of Pennsylvania;
- Representation from the Pennsylvania Association for Information and Referral (PAIR); and,
- Board members from throughout the state drawn from the broader leadership of the community – for example, from business, private philanthropy, county and local government, specialized I&Rs, Volunteer Centers, etc. – to maximize local investment in 2-1-1.

The board will be responsible for:

- establishing the policies which guide the work of *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*;
- Securing the assignment, then managing and overseeing use of the 2-1-1 designation;
- securing and equitably distributing the resources required to complement regional investment to ensure full implementation and sustenance of the proposed system;
- building strong partnerships with both executive and legislative branches of state government;
- hiring and providing policy direction to the executive director; and,
- ensuring quality service by establishing and monitoring performance against standards for regional 2-1-1 centers.

The 2-1-1 Operating Council. The board will be complemented by an Operating Council – composed of Regional 2-1-1 Center directors, organized and led by the state executive director – that will advise the executive director on those shared functions that link the regional centers with one another, that provide consistency of operations, and that ensure uniform quality throughout the system. They will recommend both policies and operating protocols to the board of directors.

On an ongoing basis, that Council will identify and resolve system-wide operational issues, define needs and priorities for capacity building within the system, and assist in the planning and implementation of statewide marketing activities. Working individually and collectively, the members will also be responsible for building the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* network so that it includes both specialized I&R agencies and the service providers themselves as active partners.

The Council also will develop a working group of regional resource database managers who will share responsibility for the collaborative development and maintenance of the statewide database.

The Partnership with State Government

As in other states with successful 2-1-1 programs we want to work in close partnership with state government with a shared commitment to serving the people of Pennsylvania while developing a 2-1-1 system that is broadly supported by a wide variety of investors – state, county and local governments, private foundations, businesses, community foundations and United Ways.

We are seeking five things from state government:

- Authority for assignment and management of the 2-1-1 dialing code, including

the authority to create and enforce quality standards;

- Positioning with state agencies as a “preferred partner/vendor” in providing phone-based information and referral services in support of agencies’ priorities;
 - Financial support for development and operation of the 2-1-1 system with specific focus on investment in start-up costs for the system, primary funding for the state office and ongoing investment in operational costs;
 - Formal recognition and clarification of 2-1-1’s role with the state in supporting emergency response and recovery activities; and,
 - Formal designation as the organization to receive and manage federal funds that may come available for the support of 2-1-1 nationwide.
-

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

2-1-1 Pennsylvania will be built around four interlocking systems – our phone system, our resource database, our software for tracking requests, referrals and gaps in services and our website. Our goal is to ensure that we move to and sustain ourselves at “state-of-the-art” levels in all four because doing so will continuously improve both the quality and the cost-effectiveness of our services for the people of Pennsylvania. As new technologies emerge, such as instant messaging, 2-1-1 will actively work to incorporate these technologies to assure all members of the community are able to access information comfortably and efficiently on a day-to-day basis and in times of disaster.

Our Phone System

At the core of any 2-1-1 is the 24/7/365 call center where trained information and referral specialists help callers articulate their needs and refer them to the services they require.

Our goal is to move as quickly as possible to an integrated statewide system that will serve all of the call centers, providing a seamless environment that allows for full back-up, system-wide communication, and seamless transfer of calls throughout the system. Experience in other states demonstrates that, with appropriate resources, 2-1-1 Pennsylvania can implement an integrated call management system from the beginning, adding individual call centers as each region launches its local service.

The system we envision will support an **integrated service model** to link Pennsylvania call centers on a shared call management system that will include the following general features:

- Access for all users at no additional cost;
- Call routing technology that will appropriately direct calls to individual call centers based on time of day, day of week, location of caller and call volume;
- Function as an overlay with existing phone technology to minimize implementation costs to call centers;
- Central routing for cellular calls;
- Capacity to handle traditional landline, cellular and internet-based calls;
- Redundant systems that allow calls to be quickly rerouted by local agencies or at the state level in the event of an emergency;
- Rapidly scalable to increase the number of available specialists in the event of high demand or to support effective disaster response;
- Remote access to allow agents to work from outside the call centers;
- Capability to easily transfer calls between call centers and, when required, to service providers;
- Support conference calling with up to five parties;
- Call tracking and reporting capacity to assure compliance with AIRS Standards for 2-1-1 service delivery;
- Assure sustainable operational cost.

Ideally, we would work in close partnership with the appropriate agencies in state government and stakeholders with telephony expertise on the design of the system and on decisions related to the vendors to be used to provide needed hardware and ongoing service. We will examine a range of options for the system, including VoIP (Voice Over

Internet Protocol) using either a premise-based, hosted, or a mixed solution. A summary of the technology selection process and a draft RFP with criteria for the statewide call management system can be found in Appendix D.

Our Resource Database

The knowledge base that makes 2-1-1 work is its database of community resources. The *2-1-1 Pennsylvania* database will be the single most comprehensive one in the state. As such, it will become the “go-to” asset for state government, nonprofit service providers, business, and the public as well as being the lifeblood of our regional call centers. It will cover the breadth of health and human services available from government, nonprofit organizations and faith-based groups and community-based associations.

Currently, each potential 2-1-1 provider maintains its own resource database. As part of the implementation of the statewide 2-1-1 system, it will be necessary for participating call centers and data collection partners to join together in a Resource Managers Workgroup to promote cooperation and to establish protocols for data collection and maintenance to assure there is consistent quality in the database information, a standardized approach to organizing the information and protocols for sharing information statewide.

Our intention is to create an integrated statewide database that is defined by:

- Localized and decentralized collection of data in the framework of standardized protocols;
- Full accessibility by all 2-1-1 call centers;
- Complete redundancy to ensure continuity in emergencies; and,
- Compatibility, as much as is possible, with other statewide resource data systems, such as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs).

We expect that over time the Resource Managers Workgroup will evolve into a strong Statewide Database Committee – including representatives of all regional call centers and resource hubs and other key stakeholders such as state government – to oversee the ongoing development and management of the integrated database, including defined quality assurance criteria practices. It will report to the 2-1-1 Operating Council.

Our Software

In order to meet the national 2-1-1 standards established by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) and for Pennsylvania’s call centers to qualify for the required AIRS accreditation, the software supporting our system must meet or surpass accepted industry standards.

As we evolve into a statewide system, we will promote a recommended statewide software package that supports an integrated statewide resource database, that can be used by the call centers to track referrals and that enables collection and analysis of referral data.

There are a variety of software packages that have been specifically designed for information and referral and for 2-1-1 services. We plan to conduct an inclusive public process to identify the software platform that can most effectively support coordinated statewide 2-1-1 service delivery. This will include an independent review and assessment of currently available software packages and an open RFP competition among vendors.

Web Site

Recognizing the increasing public comfort with searching for information on the internet, it is our intent that *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* be a leader in using the internet to make information available in a user-friendly online environment. We want our web site to be as visible, accessible, and user friendly as 2-1-1 is by phone. Our intent is that users will

be able to get the same resource information from our web site as they could obtain by calling 2-1-1, as well as general information about *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* and the collaborative partnerships supporting the service. As technology and our resources allow, we will explore ways to make the site increasingly interactive, enabling users to efficiently define their needs and locate the appropriate resources, for example through online chat or text messaging. Responsibility for development and management of the website will rest with the state office staff.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Ensuring Quality Service

Our reputation for quality service and accountability are our most important assets as a system. We are committed to ensuring that each request for information is handled in the same high quality manner, no matter where it originates, where it is received. Our database must always be as current and comprehensive as possible. Online referrals must be as user-friendly as possible, providing resource information of the same quality as available by phone. We also must be prepared to continue to operate during times of emergency, ensuring that we are available to support emergency response agencies and those who are affected.

To achieve our desired level of quality, we are committed to taking these steps:

- Creating a baseline by building the system in full compliance with the National 2-1-1 Standards developed by AIRS, our national professional association;
- As resources allow, hiring a state Quality Assurance & Training Manager who will work with a Quality Assurance Committee. Together they will be responsible for recommending and monitoring the implementation of our policies and practices of quality assurance and ongoing improvements to service delivery.
- Requiring each call center to be based in Pennsylvania with live information and referral specialists and to achieve full AIRS accreditation as agreed when they were designated. As a system we will work together to support one another in achieving this goal, sharing training and best practices and going through the process together so that we can learn from one another.
- Developing our own performance standards for *2-1-1 Pennsylvania* and establishing the specific measurements we will use to determine that we are meeting those and the national standards, developing a collaborative approach to continually assessing and improving the quality of the services we are providing through silent monitoring, callers satisfaction data collection and common performance indicators.
- Requiring call centers to meet the AIRS Standards for Professional Information and Referral for certification of I&R and Resource Specialists. As a system, we will provide the training required to help staff meet this requirement.
- Executing a pro-active, sustained program to ensure that call centers have the cultural competence to handle calls from people from different cultures, including working closely with grassroots groups to ensure that databases are reflective of culturally-appropriate resources and ongoing training is provided to call center staff.

Business Continuity

2-1-1s in other states have repeatedly demonstrated their value in times of natural and man-made disasters or other emergencies. The first step in providing that value is to ensure that our own operations will continue during such times. We will do this in seven ways:

- Having full redundancy in our system so that there always is a back-up plan to handle calls coming in, even if one or more of the regional call centers have been rendered inoperable;
-

- Building into our new phone system the capability to create “virtual call centers” through which call specialists and resource specialists can work from home and or other remote access sites;
- Taking all industry-standard steps to ensure the safety of our database, including daily back-ups, redundancy in our servers, and off-site archiving;
- Requiring each of our call centers to develop their own emergency plans for relocation, emergency power, relationship with emergency planning system at the county and local level; and,
- Building an emergency communications structure within the system to ensure that hubs always can communicate with one another.
- Establishing mutual aid agreements with 2-1-1 programs in adjacent states to assure sharing of resources and coordinated response in an emergency.
- Working with PEMA and local emergency management offices, once statewide 2-1-1 access is completed, to fully clearly define the role and expectations for 2-1-1 as an integrated part of Pennsylvania’s emergency response plans at the state and county levels.

Public Education and Marketing

For 2-1-1 to make the maximum contribution to the people of Pennsylvania, we must have a well-defined brand that is effectively managed and a sustained marketing effort that ultimately will reach everyone in the state in ways that will encourage their use of the system when they need it. The *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* board of directors will establish and manage 2-1-1 brand standards.

Our desired brand identity is clear – *2-1-1 is the way to get help and give help in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The 2-1-1 system is accessible and prepared to respond effectively to peoples from all parts of the state at all times. Identification as a regional 2-1-1 center is a reflection of assured quality and responsiveness.*

Our marketing plan will have six critical components.

Clear brand identity. We will be branded as *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* statewide with a single core logo to which regions can attach their own geographic designations –for example, “Serving Southeastern Pennsylvania” or “In the Lehigh Valley with approval of the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* board of directors.”

Mass media campaign. Because 2-1-1 will emerge region-by-region, we will be hampered in our ability to launch a true statewide media campaign until there is a significant portion of the state with access to 2-1-1. In the interim, we will develop the framework for such a campaign, providing standard public service campaign materials for use with television, radio, print and other media (online, transit cards, billboards, etc.). We anticipate that they will be designed, produced and distributed in partnership with leading advertising agencies in the state. As more regions gain access, we will expand the campaign to include them, culminating in a major statewide “re-launch” when we achieve statewide accessibility. Following that, we will ratchet the campaign down to a sustainable level, refreshing it regularly to maintain its visibility. This will include both statewide media and ongoing media promotion by regional call centers and resource hubs.

Grassroots marketing and advocacy. While use of mass media is an obvious statewide approach to marketing, we know that word-of-mouth efforts, seeded among target populations, is an equally effective way to build confidence and understanding. We will incorporate natural community leaders, grassroots and faith-based groups, schools, community associations, and service providers and their staffs to develop an

ongoing grassroots campaign to promote 2-1-1 in an effective and culturally appropriate way. This is a low-cost, high impact way to sustain promotion of 2-1-1 over time, a critical element with our increasingly mobile and diverse population. It will be led by the regional call centers and resource hubs and the county liaisons within the framework created by a statewide strategy.

Leveraging our partners' networks. We will take full advantage of our partnership with the state's United Ways, working through them to reach their existing networks, particularly in the business community. We also will work closely with state agencies to develop specific ways to promote 2-1-1 to their consumers.

Building low-cost, easy to use promotional tools. We will put together a "2-1-1 Tool Kit" of information and resources that will assist regional centers, county contacts and other partners to market 2-1-1 in the absence of a significant mass media budget. It might include talking points; overview of 2-1-1 services; templates for press releases, media advisories, internal and external articles, newsletters, ads and flyers; 2-1-1 logos and graphics; and, outreach ideas.

Identifying promotional opportunities. We will build relationships with businesses to promote 2-1-1. In some states, for example, 2-1-1 is included on utility bills or as envelope stuffers. We will turn to health care and mental health providers, pharmacies, and other consumer-based businesses to help promote 2-1-1. We also will reach out to major employers in all sectors and to employee assistance programs to inform their employees of 2-1-1 and to ensure that their PBX phone systems do not automatically block calls to 2-1-1.

Roll-Out Strategy

Because we want *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* to be a strong, enduring, statewide presence that provides high-quality comprehensive information and referral services for our residents and that supports policy makers and service providers in the public and private sectors, we have undertaken a systematic long-term approach to planning and implementation. After initial attempts to implement 2-1-1 service met with a lack of support, a coalition of United Ways and information and referral providers regrouped in order to develop a comprehensive plan for building a Pennsylvania 2-1-1 system. Now, we are prepared to move forward aggressively to fully bring 2-1-1 to every area of the commonwealth by the end of 2009.

Our strategy will be executed in seven phases. With completion of this plan, the first two phases will be completed. Full execution of Phase 3 and beyond, the expansion and launch of the full system, beginning in December 2007, is contingent on the availability of new resources from state, county and local government and private philanthropy to supplement existing support for information and referral services and a 2-1-1 state office to coordinate the statewide 2-1-1 system. Thus, dates for those phases appear in brackets to reflect that contingency.

With appropriate resources committed for implementation and operation, we are confident that 2-1-1 Pennsylvania can be launched as a public-private partnership by early 2009 with statewide access serving all the people of Pennsylvania by 2010.

- **Phase 1 / Laying the Groundwork / 2001 through October 2006**
 - United Way of Pennsylvania convenes a "2-1-1 Policy Forum" in October 2001 in Harrisburg to begin statewide discussions about 2-1-1.
 - 2-1-1 United Way Work Group meets to review research products and develop strategic direction for engaging state government in the 2-1-1 initiative.
 - Site visits to 2-1-1 projects in Connecticut and Atlanta, Georgia.

- Briefings held for state officials, including the Governor's staff, agency heads and PEMA (2003-04)
 - PA House unanimously passes HR 72, a resolution urging the Federal Communications Commission to provide clear direction to state public utilities commissions about their role in state 2-1-1 development.
 - **Phase 2 / Planning the 2-1-1 System/ November 2006 – November 2007**
 - New 2-1-1 Pennsylvania Collaborative convenes with joint leadership from Pennsylvania Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (PAIRS) and United Way of Pennsylvania.
 - United Way of Pennsylvania secures funding for statewide 2-1-1 business planning process.
 - RFP is issued to seek strategic business planning consultant. (April 2007)
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Collaborative hires national 2-1-1 planning consultants and convenes representative team of information and referral providers, United Ways, human service providers, state agencies and community stakeholders to develop *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Business Plan.
 - Technical criteria established for statewide database software platform and call management systems to support integrated 2-1-1 service.
 - Fourteen 2-1-1 summits held across Commonwealth to promote 2-1-1 and test assumptions of the state business plan.
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* State Business Plan presented to and affirmed by the PAIR and United Way of Pennsylvania boards of directors.
 - **Phase 3 / Expanded Statewide Development & Planning / [December 2007 through June 2008]**
 - United Way of Pennsylvania secures interim designation from Public Utility Commission to oversee use of the 2-1-1 number in Pennsylvania.
 - United Way of Pennsylvania begins implementation of transition plan by incorporating *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* as 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation to lead and support statewide development of 2-1-1 system.
 - Begin transition of the board of directors with recruitment of new chairman of the board.
 - Present business plan and request for support and resources including funding to the Office of the Governor, the Department of Administration and the Department of Public Welfare.
 - Present business plan and request for support and resources including funding to United Ways and other private funders.
 - Secure funding to hire initial staff and/or consulting services for *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*.
 - Create Statewide Database Committee to oversee process to select the preferred statewide software platform for the 2-1-1 database.
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- Finalize and distribute RFP for statewide software platform.
 - Complete analysis of software options for statewide database and reach final decision.
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* finalizes application and process for designation of regional 2-1-1 service providers.
 - Minimum of three regions initiate local 2-1-1 business planning process.
 - **Phase 4 / Preparing to Build the System / [July 2008 through December 2008]**
 - Hire executive director and establish 2-1-1 Pennsylvania office.
 - Develop *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* web site
 - Develop *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* list-serv of supporters and stakeholders
 - Hire lobbyist to focus on securing initial state funding and enabling legislation to support implementation of 2-1-1 service.
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Board reviews and approves recommended software platform for integrated statewide 2-1-1 database.
 - Secure funding to support Regional Centers conversion to recommended statewide software and to expand their operations to build out databases for their regions.
 - Create Resources Managers Workgroup with representatives from prospective 2-1-1 providers and data collection partners to establish shared protocols for data collection and maintenance.
 - Create *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Telephony Committee to oversee process to select the statewide call management system for connecting .
 - Finalize and distribute RFP for statewide call management solution.
 - Complete analysis of options and make recommendation for statewide telephony and call management solution.
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Board reviews and approves recommended solution for connecting regional call centers through a statewide call management system.
 - Database Committee develops protocols and policies for the 2-1-1 Pennsylvania database.
 - Transfer long-term designation of 2-1-1 number from United Way of Pennsylvania to *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* to oversee use of the 2-1-1 number in Pennsylvania.
 - Regions with completed business/implementation plans and an identified lead agency apply to *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* for designation as regional 2-1-1 providers.
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* board of directors review and approve designation for initial 2-1-1 regions.
 - Remaining regions initiate local 2-1-1 business planning process.

- Create the 2-1-1 Operating Council policy advisory body as complement to the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* board of directors.
- **Phase 5 / Initial Statewide Implementation / [January 2009 through August 2009]**
 - Complete transition to new board of directors.
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* board of directors reviews and approves designation for 2-1-1 pilot sites.
 - Remaining regions complete business/implementation plans and determining lead agency to apply for designation as regional 2-1-1 providers.
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* initiates negotiations with landline and wireless telephone service providers to begin programming to support 2-1-1 service.
 - As required and as funding is available, phase-in staffing for *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*.
 - Develop formal agreement with PEMA on role of 2-1-1 in support of disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
 - Develop formal agreements with 2-1-1 programs in adjacent states on coordinated action by 2-1-1s to support disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
 - Create Quality Assurance Committee.
 - Adopt performance standards as developed by Quality Assurance Committee.
 - Design and implement system for collecting and acting on feedback from clients and community stakeholders.
 - Secure funding to make the transition to new software to support statewide database and call center operations.
 - Initial sites complete transition to new software.
 - Initial sites begin testing of call management system to assure interoperability.
 - Initial sites begin 2-1-1 operations in “stealth” mode to assure all systems functions properly.
 - Initial sites launch public 2-1-1 phone service.
 - *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* board of directors reviews and approves designation for remaining 2-1-1 regions.
- **Phase 6 / Completing the Build-out of the System / [September 2009 through June 2010]**
 - All call centers complete transition to statewide database platform.
 - Remaining sites begin testing of call management system to assure interoperability.
 - Remaining sites begin 2-1-1 operations in “stealth” mode to assure all systems functions properly.
 - Remaining sites launch public 2-1-1 phone service.

- Secure funding required for Regional Centers that are expanding to begin “stealth” operations in new areas.
 - Begin ongoing system-wide training for staff in Regional Centers.
 - Launch statewide marketing and public education campaign by mid-2010.
 - **Phase 7 / Sustaining the System and Adding Value / [July 2010 – ongoing]**
 - Develop enhanced *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* website that makes essential information in database accessible and searchable in user-friendly way by the public.
 - Identify and develop appropriate partnerships and contracts with state and local agencies to assure a diversified and sustainable funding stream for 2-1-1 in Pennsylvania.
 - Collect and publish consolidated call data from the system with particular attention to emerging and unmet needs.
 - Complete national accreditation for all Regional Centers.
 - Maintain ongoing training for staff of Regional Centers and resource hubs.
 - Maintain ongoing system-wide marketing and communications.
 - Monitor ongoing performance against established performance measures and, as required, improve performance.
 - Develop and implement plan for testing emergency response capacity of 2-1-1 system.
 - Coordinate cross-border marketing and 2-1-1 service delivery with adjacent states.
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STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

Key to our success will be our ability to develop strong strategic relationships with an array of partners. Each set of relationships will have its own set of challenges and requirements.

State Government. Our long-term success is heavily dependent on our ability to build strong partnerships throughout state government. We must work closely, to our mutual benefit, with the Office of the Governor, the state departments and the State Legislature, to minimize any impact on existing funding for service delivery while demonstrating that 2-1-1 can add value to their efforts to simplify government and improve services to its customers.

Our key goals with state government are:

- to build a sustained, mutually beneficial partnership in which *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* becomes a “partner of choice” to help state government serve the people of Pennsylvania; and,
- to secure the sustained commitment of state government to help us ensure that the 2-1-1 system remains stable and operational over time.
- to clearly define the role for 2-1-1 in disaster to ensure coordinated emergency response with both the state and local emergency operations.

We will be seeking a bi-partisan approach to ensuring that the system is put in place and is sustained. This includes formal validation of *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*’s leadership role in providing ongoing 2-1-1 services for the people of the state, support in positioning us to serve as the conduit for any federal funds that may become available to support 2-1-1 and sustained financial support to put in place and maintain the 2-1-1 infrastructure.

County and Local Governments. We also will need the active support of county and local governments throughout the state to ensure that 2-1-1 is available for their residents. By supporting our regional approach to providing 2-1-1 statewide, they will be able to bring this benefit to their residents in the most cost efficient manner possible, leveraging the existing infrastructure to provide services for them and avoiding the need to make costly investments in their own I&R infrastructure. At the regional level, 2-1-1 will also work with local jurisdictions to define the role of 2-1-1 and its partnership with county and local emergency response systems. We anticipate that county and local governments will be strong allies in helping us develop our relationship with state government.

Local United Ways and the United Way of Pennsylvania. United Way of Pennsylvania (UWP) and local United Ways have been champions for 2-1-1 since the earliest discussion of how to bring the service to our state. UWP has made a formal commitment as a founding partner of the 2-1-1 Pennsylvania Collaborative; local United Ways have provided the leadership in their regions to build interest in and support for 2-1-1. As we move forward, we anticipate that in most regions they will play the key leadership role of convening and managing the regional planning process. Over the long-term, they can provide sustained funding as well as help build 2-1-1’s local visibility and impact. They will play a key role in putting 2-1-1 call data to work identifying unmet needs and gaps in services and stimulating community response. At the state level, UWP will continue to play an important leadership role in building the support we will need in both the public and the private sectors.

PAIR and Its Members. The Pennsylvania Association for Information and Referral has been a lead partner in the development of 2-1-1 since the earliest discussions of how

to bring the service to our state and, with UWP, is the founding partner of the 2-1-1 Pennsylvania Collaborative. PAIR will provide essential input into the development of performance standards and quality assurance criteria and will play a lead role in preparing regional centers for national accreditation and their staff members for national certification. Most regional services likely will be built on the existing work of PAIR members. All PAIR members, both comprehensive and specialized I&R providers, will be part of the larger 2-1-1 system that will evolve in regions over time.

Private philanthropy. To fully implement and sustain the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* system, we will need the active support of the business community and of private foundations and individual donors. Our major challenge is to draw all three into active participation. To do this, we must be open to presenting 2-1-1 as a new opportunity for corporate sponsorship, to finding new ways for I&R to serve the people and issues of greatest concern to private philanthropy, and to leveraging the networks of our United Way partners.

Businesses. 2-1-1 is an important complement to employee assistance programs, helping working people connect quickly and efficiently with the local services they and their families may need, reducing the time required for them to search for help. This has a direct benefit to employers, positioning *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* as a valuable partner. We will seek to build relationships with business that result in their support for the system through sponsorships and grants.

Volunteer Centers. To fulfill our commitment to make 2-1-1 a tool for civic engagement, we must continue to build a strong working relationship with the Volunteer Centers throughout Pennsylvania to ensure that 2-1-1 is playing the most appropriate role in helping people identify and connect with opportunities to volunteer.

Other nonprofit organizations and emergency responders. To ensure effective interactions with specialized I&Rs (for example, senior information and assistance, domestic violence, crisis mental health), major human service agencies, including those with formal responsibility for disaster response (for example, Red Cross and Salvation Army) *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* and local 2-1-1 providers will develop memoranda of understanding to clearly spell out the mutual expectations and respective roles of 2-1-1 providers and these key partners.

KEY CHALLENGES TO SUCCESS

It is important for us to understand and prepare for major challenges we will confront as we build *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*. These may include:

Establishing Pennsylvania 2-1-1 as an organization. A critical step is to incorporate *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*, to create the initial board of directors and to secure initial seed funding to enable us to hire initial staff. As the leadership organization for the system, we must energize the overall process, build interest and momentum and aggressively reach out to build support among our three most important stakeholders – state government, United Ways and members of PAIR. That will require visible and sustained leadership from our board and staff and from leaders of UWP and PAIR.

Securing responsibility for the 2-1-1 dialing code. We will move quickly into discussions with the Public Utility Commission to obtain an interim designation of *United Way of Pennsylvania* as the organization with authority to assign the 2-1-1 dialing code to regional providers, with the goal of assigning permanent control of the 2-1-1 number to *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* to establish and manage performance standards and quality assurance processes.

Building the partnership with state government. Experience in other states clearly demonstrates that 2-1-1 has high potential value to state government. We must articulate our case and our business plan to the Governor, to members of the legislature and to leaders of state departments. We will invite the Governor to assist us in launching *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* as the leadership organization for the system through his personal engagement and his designation of representatives of state government to our board of directors. We will work at the regional level to educate legislators and to build their support for state funding to assist in building and maintaining the system. We also will work closely with other statewide associations and organizations to build a coalition that supports development of 2-1-1.

Planning and formalizing the regional systems. Leadership for the overall process of regional planning must come from *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* through a clearly articulated set of requirements and ongoing technical assistance and support. Within regions, lead conveners, most often United Ways, must ensure open, transparent and participatory processes that result in proposed approaches that best fit the needs, resources and realities of their regions. Local investment will be required to help those processes move forward.

Building a sustained and diverse funding base. The *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* system will require multiple sources of funding. A core of support must come from within the regions – from United Ways, municipal and county governments and private philanthropy. That must be supplemented by resources secured at the state level – from state government contracts and grants and from private philanthropy – that will directly support regional operations. We also need new resources to put into place the integrated database, a shared software package and, over time, a shared phone system as well as to sustain our marketing efforts. This will require a sustained collaborative effort led by our board of directors and staff in close partnership with the United Way of Pennsylvania and both the executive and legislative branches of state government.

APPENDIX A: LEADERSHIP FOR *PENNSYLVANIA 2-1-1*

Pennsylvania 2-1-1
Planning Team

Anne Fogoros
United Way of Allegheny County
Pittsburgh

Tom Foley
HelpLine
Wilkes-Barre

Tammy Gentzel
Community Help Center
State College

Phil Hayne
United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley
Bethlehem

Rick Hicks
Stevens & Lee
Harrisburg

Vicki Klinedinst
United Way of York County
York

Nancy Kukovich
United Way of Westmoreland
Greensburg

Debbie Liadis
INFO-LINK, Clearfield County Area Agency on Aging
Clearfield

Sara McCollough
United Ways of the Delaware Valley
Philadelphia

Joe Quattrocchi
United Way of Lancaster County
Lancaster

Tony Ross
United Way of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

Bill Schofield
United Way of Bucks County
Fairless Hills

Karen Snider
Susquehanna Consulting & Financial Group
Harrisburg

Jim Tinney
Pugliese Associates
Harrisburg

Tim Whelan
United Way of the Capital Region
Enola

**The United Way of
Pennsylvania**

Robert Woods, Chair
United Way of York County

Joseph Capita, Vice Chair
United Way of the Capital Region

Edward J. Sheehan, Jr., Chair Emeritus
Concurrent Technologies

Richard Bloomingdale, Treasurer
PA AFL-CIO

Gayle Young, Assistant Treasurer
United Way of Lawrence County

Anthony Ross, Secretary
United Way of Pennsylvania

Gene Barr
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business & Industry

Ellie Beaver
Centre County United Way

Michael Breslin
Northwestern Human Services

Philip Calhoun
Ferree Foundation

Jeff Conway
United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County

Gary Drapek
United Way of Lackawanna County

David Fillman
AFSCME Council 13, AFL-CIO

Charlene A. Friedman
Friedman Real Estate Group

Donna Gority
Commissioner of Blair County

Bob Haigh
Partnership for Quality Pre-Kindergarten

Rick Hicks
Stevens & Lee

Kathy Jellison
SEIU/PSSU Local 668

Frank A. Kincel
Briggs Corporation

A. Jane Klinger
United Way of Venango County

Frank Lynch
Comcast

Louis Mahlman
United Way of Southeastern Delaware Co.

Ruth Fister Mathews
United Community Services for Working Families

Marie Mulvihill
United Way of Mifflin-Juniata

Leslie Osche
United Way of Butler County

Brian Rider
Pennsylvania Retailers Association

Sheila M. Ross
SMR Associates

Sandra L. Rossi
United Way of Western Crawford Co., Inc.

Hon. Mario Scavello
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Marcus Schlegel
United Way of Erie County

Patricia Simmons
United Way of Indiana County

Carolyne Smith
PPO&S

William Sprandel
Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers

James H. Tinney
Pugliese Associates, Inc.

**The Pennsylvania
Association for
Information and
Referral**

Anne Walsh Fogoros, President
United Way of Allegheny County

Debbie Liadis, Vice President
INFO-LINK of Clearfield County Area Agency on Aging

Carol Smith Lewis, Treasurer
Valley Wide Help/American Red Cross of the Greater Lehigh Valley

Karen Harper, Recording Secretary
FIRST, Scranton

Toni McCuiston, Financial Secretary
United Way LINC of Lancaster

Shelley Crichlow
United Way of Monroe County

Tom Foley
Help Line of Wilkes-Barre

Christopher Gallagher
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Kelly Gollick
CONTACT Helpline Inc. of Harrisburg

Joyce Mull
Information & Referral of South Central Counties

Tammy Young
Union-Snyder Office of Human Services

APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF N-1-1 NUMBERS

N-1-1 dialing codes, are three-digit numbers of which the first digit can be any digit other than one or zero, and the last two digits are both one. N-1-1 codes “0-1-1” and “1-1-1” are unavailable because “0” and “1” are used for switching and routing purposes. Hence, there are only eight possible N-1-1 codes, making N-1-1 codes among the scarcest of telephone numbering resources.

The following chart outlines the existing N-1-1 code assignments:

<i>N-1-1 Code</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
2-1-1	Assigned for community information and referral services.
3-1-1	Assigned nationwide for non-emergency police and other government services.
4-1-1	Unassigned, but used nationwide for directory assistance.
5-1-1	Assigned for traffic and transportation information.
6-1-1	Unassigned, but used broadly by carriers for repair service.
7-1-1	Assigned nationwide for access to Telecommunications Relay Services (a service for the hearing and speech impaired).
8-1-1	Assigned as universal number for “call before you dig” location services for public utilities.
9-1-1	Unassigned, but used nationwide for emergency services.

APPENDIX C: DETAILED FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Overview

A three-step process was used in developing the financial projections for *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*.

Step One was to develop the framework within which projections for the costs of regional 2-1-1 systems could be made. We agreed that because regional planning has not yet begun, we have no way of knowing how the regional systems ultimately will be structured. For purposes of this plan, then, we agreed to project as though each region has a single regional center that had responsibility for all aspects of 2-1-1 operations in the region, including both development and maintenance of the database and operation of a call center.

We then began with standardized projections based on the experience of mature 2-1-1s throughout the country as reflected in the 2-1-1 Financial Planning Tool developed by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). Working in consultation with representatives from each region who serve on the planning team, we adapted those assumptions to fit their realities.

Step Two was to develop two sets of projections for the regional centers. The first assumed that each regional center would operate 24/7; the second assumed that the regional centers would only operate 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday with “after hours” calls consolidated into two of the regional centers which would remain open 24/7.

Step Three focused on the systemwide costs for start-up and for ongoing operations.

Comparative Costs for 24/7 Access

By developing two projections of costs for the regional centers, we were able to compare the costs associated with providing 24/7 service in two different models.

The first model assumed that all regional centers operated 24/7 handling all calls originating in its region.

The second model assumed that five of the centers would operate normal business hours of 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday, and that only two of the centers would operate 24/7. This builds on the experience of other 2-1-1s that call volumes drop after normal business hours and that it is more cost effective to consolidate after hours calls into fewer centers.

Because the planning team could not possibly determine which regions might ultimately play that 24/7 role, we:

- Projected all centers as operating 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday; and,
- Extrapolated the cost of handling after hours calls and added that total amount into the operational costs for each year.

Based on this approach, we estimate that the system will save, at a minimum, between \$500,000 and \$600,000 per year by consolidating after hours calls into two regional centers.

Start-Up Schedule and Costs

Our model is built on the belief that each region should have the opportunity to plan the approach to providing 2-1-1 services that works best for it within the framework of requirements and standards established by the state organization. That means that there must be time available for that planning to take place. Based on the assessment by our national planning consultants of the readiness of our regions, we have projected this schedule for planning and implementation:

- By the end of 2008 – planning completed and start-up underway in Southwest, Northeast and South Central Regions with full operation in 2009 – for these regions, we have projected that in 2008 they will require 15-20% of their projected first year operating costs to complete planning, to put staff in place and to begin building their

system plus an additional amount for one-time costs.

- By the end of 2009 – planning completed and start-up underway in Northwest, Central, Lehigh Valley and Southeast Regions with full operation in 2010 – for these regions, we projected \$25,000 each in 2008 for planning and then the same ramp-up costs in 2009 as projected for the other regions in 2008.

One-Time Costs in Regions

We have projected a total of just over \$2 million in one-time start-up costs in the regions. Of this, \$100,000 is set aside for first year planning in the four regions that will not be operational until late 2009.

The bulk of the one-time costs are for the following:

- **Office Expansion (\$793,500)** – Renovation of existing or development of new office space to meet increased staffing requirements for 2-1-1 service delivery, including purchase of office equipment and other basic infrastructure needs such as emergency power back-up, also includes creation of statewide 2-1-1 coordinating office;
- **Referral Database and Related Technology (\$612,500)**– Purchase, implementation and conversion to a common software platform and necessary computer hardware and development of a statewide web site to ensure interoperability among call centers and ready access by the public to online information about programs and services;
- **Capacity Building and Partnership Development (\$417,500)**- Regional business planning, support for coordination of activities, including development of written memoranda of understanding with leading service providers and other key partners such as 9-1-1 and Red Cross;
- **Training, accreditation and certification (\$172,000)** – Training, testing and review for accreditation of all call centers and I&R staff to meet AIRS Standards for 2-1-1 service delivery and to assure full eligibility for federal funding;
- **Telecommunications (\$120,000)** – Purchase and installation of up-to-date phone equipment at call centers and a statewide call management system;
- **Marketing (\$65,000)** – Coordinated marketing and promotion of 2-1-1.

Regional Operating Projections

The following is a summary of the projected **operating** costs for each region during their first five years of **full** operations.

Northwest	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
211 Service	422,620	462,681	528,051	530,986	552,171	2,496,510
Telecommunications	31,882	43,527	54,447	56,022	57,659	243,538
Regional Marketing	18,950	18,950	18,950	18,950	18,950	94,750
Administrative	73,189	75,698	79,318	79,882	81,284	389,371
Total	546,641	600,856	680,765	685,841	710,064	3,224,168
Southwest						
211 Service	808,607	910,981	1,018,731	1,066,166	1,103,209	4,907,695
Telecommunications	58,573	92,595	127,407	132,623	138,098	549,296
Regional Marketing	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	190,000
Administrative	176,464	182,867	189,442	192,625	195,356	936,754
Total	1,081,645	1,224,444	1,373,579	1,429,414	1,474,664	6,583,745

Central						
211 Service	518,094	583,596	640,904	659,169	690,321	3,092,085
Telecommunications	37,905	54,646	69,351	71,677	74,118	307,696
Regional Marketing	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	140,000
Administrative	96,930	100,861	104,318	105,729	107,730	515,568
Total	680,929	767,104	842,573	864,575	900,170	4,055,349
Northeast						
211 Service	524,311	619,359	671,905	697,081	723,187	3,235,844
Telecommunications	34,209	47,871	60,499	62,304	64,174	269,056
Regional Marketing	20,500	20,500	20,500	20,500	20,500	102,500
Administrative	90,997	96,098	99,313	101,047	102,832	490,287
Total	670,018	783,828	852,216	880,931	910,693	4,097,687
Lehigh Valley						
211 Service	581,294	648,668	707,904	728,155	761,353	3,427,375
Telecommunications	37,905	54,646	69,351	71,677	74,118	307,696
Regional Marketing	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	140,000
Administrative	103,912	108,009	111,636	113,224	115,406	552,186
Total	751,110	839,323	916,891	941,055	978,877	4,427,258
South Central						
211 Service	699,407	764,623	870,241	907,288	933,456	4,175,015
Telecommunications	59,924	75,552	88,723	92,015	95,470	411,683
Regional Marketing	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	125,000
Administrative	133,149	137,289	142,824	145,339	147,382	705,983
Total	917,480	1,002,464	1,126,789	1,169,641	1,201,308	5,417,682
Southeast						
211 Service	1,082,379	1,268,783	1,483,410	1,589,808	1,659,459	7,083,839
Telecommunications	70,020	105,499	141,754	147,186	152,887	617,345
Regional Marketing	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	225,000
Administrative	228,597	237,672	247,828	253,317	257,239	1,224,653
Total	1,425,997	1,656,954	1,917,991	2,035,311	2,114,585	9,150,836

Step Three. Projecting 2-1-1 State Office Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
State Office Costs						
Staffing						
Executive Director	100,000	103,000	106,090	109,273	112,551	530,914
Capacity Building/Quality Assurance Director	-	-	61,800	63,654	65,564	191,018
Resource Database Director	-	77,250	79,568	81,955	84,413	323,186
Administrative Assistant	20,000	41,200	42,436	43,709	45,020	192,365
Total Salaries	120,000	221,450	289,894	298,591	307,548	1,237,483
Fringe Benefits @35%	42,000	77,508	101,463	104,507	107,642	433,120
Contract Lobbyist	48,000	48,000	48,000	48,000	48,000	240,000
Contract Bookkeeper	12,000	12,360	25,462	26,225	27,012	103,059
Total Staff Costs	222,000	359,318	464,819	477,323	490,202	2,013,662

Marketing	39,877	40,214	40,544	40,596	40,651	201,882
General and Administrative	68,683	82,592	93,741	94,976	96,248	436,230
State Office One-Time Costs	98,500	57,250	39,750	21,000	21,000	237,500
Total State Office Costs	429,060	539,374	638,854	633,895	648,101	2,889,273

APPENDIX D: TECHNOLOGY SELECTION & MODEL RFP

***Pennsylvania 2-1-1*
Technology Selection
Overview**

Appropriate and effective technology is critical to 2-1-1 service delivery. Key technology decisions include design of the data collection and reporting systems, selection of information and referral database software, phone system design and selection of phone system and call management technology. Experience from dozens of 2-1-1 programs has demonstrated that the best outcomes result from an open process that defines the technology need and goals upfront, establishes agreed upon criteria for the solution, allows input from key stakeholders, and incorporates several stages of independent review and evaluation of proposed solutions from a variety of vendors.

Based on the mission and vision statements developed by the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* planning team, business plan will need to define how technology decisions will be made. Specific issues to address include determining who will oversee and run technology selection activities, who will be involved in the review of options, and the process for recommending and affirming a recommendation, then overseeing its implementation.

**Proposed Technology
Selection Process**

1. Define technology need and envision ideal solution
2. Criteria development
3. Develop evaluation tools for scoring proposed solutions based on criteria
4. Develop and distribute Request For Proposals (RFP) to vendors
5. Vendor responses and initial assessment by independent review team
6. Site visits and/or vendor presentations
7. Final review and recommendation
8. Approval of recommendation
9. Oversight of implementation

**Model Request for
Proposal**

The draft RFP below will serve as the model as we move forward to choose the most appropriate technology to support the statewide system,

***Pennsylvania 2-1-1*
Request for Proposal
Telco System Provider
January 2008**

The Pennsylvania 2-1-1 (*Pennsylvania 2-1-1*) is a is an association of information and referral providers, United Ways and other stakeholders that are working cooperatively to develop and implement a 2-1-1 information and referral system in Pennsylvania. This Request for Proposal will determine a Statewide Telco System Provider to serve the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* phone system for seven proposed call centers. The *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Technology Committee will make a recommendation on the selection of a Telephony System Provider to the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* planning team at their **TBD** meeting.

OVERVIEW OF PHONE COMMUNICATIONS FOR 2-1-1

Pennsylvania 2-1-1 is committed to providing support to up to seven designated 2-1-1 Call Centers in Pennsylvania by identifying and coordinating state-wide phone system issues in the following categories: Call Distribution, Call

Transfers between 2-1-1 Call Centers; Wireless services; Internet-based phone services; Payphone providers

The benefits of a state-wide communication coordination include:

- 24/7 coverage for the entire state by simplifying voice communication access required for the designated 2-1-1 call centers,.
- Complete system-wide redundancy in case of natural disaster or emergency, allowing a center to accept and handle calls from any other, potentially important should one or more centers be forced to close;
- A more efficient way to maintain the quality of service for the lines – by consolidating each type of communication to a single vendor.

All communication systems will be maintained in accordance with the National 2-1-1 Standards (available at <http://www.airs.org/documents/StandardsFifthEdition.pdf>) and any appropriate additional state-level operational standards established by the Network of Call Center Directors. This will ensure maximum consistency and quality in the service.

I. SERVICES REQUESTED

A. The Contractor will provide Phone System Services according to the following guidelines:

Requirements:

1. Multiple networked call centers (See attached map for proposed service regions)
Minimum hardware requirements for integrated system
2. Ability to route calls between call centers
 - a. Based on location of calling party
 - b. Overflow routing
 - c. Originating ANI is maintained in transfer
 - d. Functional redundancy - In case of limited service outage, automatic routing to geographically closest call center based on dialed number (DNIS)
 - e. Based on dialed number (DNIS)
 - f. Other features as available to support 2-1-1 service. Please note whether feature is included or optional and related pricing
3. Ability to interface with EMD & WA 911
 - a. Transfer originating ANI to E911
 - b. Define functional interface(s)
 - c. Other features as available to support 2-1-1 service. Please note whether feature is included or optional and related pricing
4. Interactive Voice Response Unit (IVR)
 - a. To front-end wireless 211 calls
 - b. To front-end calls that will route directly to a call center
 - c. Deploys voice recognition
 - d. Other features as available to support 2-1-1 service. Please note whether feature is included or optional and related pricing
5. Hours of operation
 - a. 211 service will be available to callers 24x7
 - b. Two or three call centers, at full deployment, will be 24x7
 - c. Remaining call centers will redirect calls after hours and weekends
 - d. Other features as available to support 2-1-1 service. Please note whether feature is included or optional and related pricing

6. Routing characteristics
 - a. 211 calls to toll free number(s) will route by ANI to the most local 211 call center or remote agent first
 - b. All calls routed or transferred will carry originating ANI to the terminating ACD (and agent)
 - c. The system will be capable of statewide call distribution
 - d. Agents must be able to distinguish an incoming 211 call from other incoming calls (i.e. Agents handle multiple call queue's with different DNIS #'s)
 - e. Other features as available to support 2-1-1 service. Please note whether feature is included or optional and related pricing

 7. Call Traffic Volume
 - a. Approximately 960,000 calls per year, statewide, at full operational capacity (8% of population), anticipated call volume Statewide 2008 – 2011
 - b. 2008 - TBD calls
2009 – TBD calls
2010 – TBD calls
2011 – TBD calls
 - c. Network requirements for carrying traffic

 8. Call Accounting
 - a. System capable of providing information at statewide level
 - b. System capable of providing information at local level (call center with multilevel all detail)
 - c. Other features as available to support 2-1-1 service. Please note whether feature is included or optional and related pricing.

 9. Standards
 - a. System and procedures must be compliant with AIRS National 2-1-1 standards (www.airs.org)

 10. ACD
 - a. System capable of providing adjustable wrap-time delay, including wrap override, after end of call before Agent become available (allows Agent to complete paperwork)
 - b. Capable of simultaneously registering Agents from different locations within the state and having them function as a virtual call center, including agents working from home.
 - c. Supervisor monitoring and barge-in capabilities
 - d. Process multi-media queue's (e.g. Fax, E-mail, Chat)
 - e. Describe call distribution schemes (e.g. longest idle, top down, etc.)
 - f. Other features as available to support 2-1-1 service. Please note whether feature is included or optional and related pricing.

 11. Conference calling
 - a. Six-way conference capability
 - b. Capable of supervisor monitoring a multi-party conference call

 12. Voicemail
 - a. Capable of integration with email (Unified Messaging)

 13. Statewide System Maintenance & Support
 - a. Statewide system SLA is 99.99% availability
 - b. 2 hour service restoration in the event of service outage
 - i. Automatically reroute calls to available call centers in outage
 - ii. Otherwise automatically reroute calls to cell phones in outage
 - c. System, Hardware & Software
 - d. Project implementation management costs
 - e. User training requirements and costs
 - f. Post-implementation system maintenance costs

 14. System Power
-

- a. Provide power requirements and Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) for all phone equipment (minimum 8 hour UPS)
15. Phone System(s)
- a. Scalable (down to 8 ports)
 - b. Adaptable to emerging technologies
 - c. If proposed solution requires that 2-1-1 providers replace existing phone systems, please include replacement requirements and projected costs.
16. Develop integrated schedule of technical activities to support operational milestones
- a. Define operational milestones

II. Qualifications of the contractor

The contractor will provide a information on company financials, a resume of qualifications for staff assigned to the project, and contacts for three references from previous or current clients. Contractor will be willing and able to demonstrate proposed solution in use at actual customer site if selected as a finalist. (See III e. below)

III. Proposal Procedures

- A. Deadline for Submittal** - To be considered, proposals must be received no later than 12:00 pm EST on **DATE TBD** at the address shown below:

Executive Director
Pennsylvania 2-1-1
Address
e-mail

Vendors are welcome to submit questions until DATE TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO SUBMISSION DEADLINE regarding this RFP in writing to CONTACT EMAIL. Questions must be submitted no later than 3:00 pm EST.

- B. Period of Performance** - The period of performance for services solicited under this request for proposal is for the period beginning DATE OF TESTING FOR FIRST CALL CENTER LAUNCH.
- C. Copies of Proposal** - Proposers must submit one electronic copy and one hard copy of their complete proposal. Proposals and other materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* and will not be returned. It is understood and agreed that Proposers claim no proprietary rights to the ideas or approaches contained in the proposals. All representations verbal and written are to become part of the agreement between *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* and selector Proposer. All costs associated with preparing proposals and presentations are the responsibility of the Proposer.
- D. Right to Reject, Negotiate and/or Cancel** – *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if such a rejection is in the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*'s best interest. This RFP is a solicitation for offers and is not to be construed as an offer, guarantee or a promise that the solicited services will be purchased by the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1*. *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* may withdraw this request for proposals at any time and for any reason without liability for damages, including, but not limited to, bid preparation costs.
- E. Evaluation Process** – The *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Technology Committee will first independently evaluate and rate each proposal. They will then convene on DATE SIX WEEKS AFTER RFPs

DUE for review and recommendation to the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Planning Team for selection of the successful proposal.

Site Visit – The finalist(s) in this RFP will host two members of the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Technology Committee to make an on-site visit to a customer that operates a similar hardware/software configuration as proposed prior to the *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Planning Team meeting.

Selection Process – The *Pennsylvania 2-1-1* Planning Team will make the final selection by DATE TBD.

IV. **Proposal Requirements**

- A. **Proposal Content** - Proposals must be typewritten, font no less than 10 characters per inch, using white, 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Please do not submit any two-sided copies. Each page of the proposal must be numbered.
- B. **Company Profile**
- C. **Hardware Specifications Proposed, including network costs and transition costs**
- D. **Diagram of proposed Statewide Network**
- E. **Budget Proposal** – To include the following components
 - a. Hardware – one-time costs, system upgrades and service maintenance
 - b. Software – licensing costs, support, upgrades, service contract
 - c. Training costs
 - d. Project management costs
 - e. Any additional costs for implementation and maintenance not otherwise addressed in the budget.