

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Communications Division
Consumer Programs Branch

RESOLUTION T-17832
September 26, 2024

RESOLUTION

Resolution T-17832 grant of authority to United Way of Northern California to serve as the 2-1-1 service provider for Plumas County.

Summary

This resolution grants United Way of Northern California (UWNC) the authority to use the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing code to provide information and referral (I&R) services to Plumas County.

Background

2 1 1 is the telephone number used to access non-emergency community I&R providers. Upon dialing 2 1 1, a caller in need is routed to a call center, where a referral specialist will refer or connect the caller to the appropriate agencies that will provide the needed social services, such as housing assistance, programs to assist with utility bills, food assistance, elderly or childcare, and other non-emergency information not currently provided by either 9-1-1 or 3-1-1 services.

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

2-1-1 dialing program. The FCC encouraged the states to implement 2-1-1 programs² and directed that "states will be allowed to continue to make local [N11] assignments that do not conflict with [FCC] national assignments."³

¹ Third Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration, FCC 00-256, CC Docket 92-105, released July 31, 2000 ("N11 Third Report and Order").

² N11 Third Report and Order, 21

³ N11 Third Report and Order, 43

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On January 23, 2002, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) instituted Rulemaking (R.) 02-01-025 to implement 2 1 1 dialing in California. In Decision (D.) 03-02-029, the Commission adopted the regulatory policies and procedures for 2 1 1 dialing.⁴ Among other requirements, D.03-02-029 requires I&R service providers seeking authority to provide 2 1 1 service to submit a formal letter to the Executive Director of the Commission for review and certification of the I&R provider(s) and a service rollout plan. The Commission states, “The Commission’s staff will apply the Guidelines for Staff Review included in Appendix A to this Decision and prepare a resolution for the Commission’s consideration to accept, reject, or modify the proposed plan. These letters should be served on the ILECs, as appropriate and on all parties to this proceeding.”⁵ The decision declined to set deadlines for the review of the letters requesting certification of I&R providers and the commencement of 2-1-1 service, favoring instead a combination of milestones and deadlines: “In particular, we expect that the Commission would require approximately six months to review and approve a specific 2-1-1 proposal, including the certification of I&R providers.”⁶

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

UWNC filed a complete copy of its application letter⁸ requesting certification as the 2-1-1 service provider in Plumas County that was received by the Commission’s Executive Director on July 11, 2024. The Commission received no public comments.

Discussion

The UWNC 2-1-1 service application, in collaboration with Connecting Point and Plumas Rural Services, demonstrates a strong organizational structure led by President and Chief Operating Officer Larry Olmstead, a history of providing information services since 1953, and a sound financial plan. The application adheres to terms and conditions, committing to free, 24/7, and accessible services without referral fees. It

⁴ See D.03-02-029, Appendix A. The full text of the decision is available online at: http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/word_pdf/FINAL_DECISION/23645.pdf

⁵ Id. at 32; Conclusion of Law 3; Ordering Paragraph 2.

⁶ Id. at 33.

⁷ See D.11-09-016, September 8, 2011, http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/WORD_PDF/FINAL_DECISION/143224.PDF

⁸ The terms “application letter”, “letter” and “application” used herein mean the package of materials the prospective I&R provider files with the Commission by letter to the Executive Director, as specified in D.03-02-029, and are not a formal application to the Commission as described in the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure.

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aligns with Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS) standards, emphasizing high-quality service delivery, accurate resource database maintenance, and disaster preparedness. Community support is evidenced by endorsements from key service sectors. Overall, the application is comprehensive, meeting crucial criteria for 2-1-1 service designation. Granting UWNC the authority to provide 2-1-1 services will ensure Plumas County residents receive essential support when needed.

United Way of Northern California's Application

The application letter for 2-1-1 service is organized into four sections. UWNC provided information for each of the four sections as discussed below.

Section 1- Organizational Structure, Background and Experience

UWNC was initially incorporated and licensed in 1953 as United Crusade of Shasta County. In 1976, the name was changed to UWNC when additional counties were added to the UWNC service area. 211 Shasta was first established in Shasta County in 2011. Since that time, the database has grown to include many community services resources and partners (collectively, "2-1-1 NorCal"). In 2014, UWNC began a collaboration with Tehama Together to bring 211 services to Tehama County. In March of 2023, UWNC was given authority to operate 211 services in Siskiyou County as well.

UWNC states 211 NorCal also works closely with Help Central, the agency that operates 211 Butte and Glenn on a regional basis to pool knowledge, resources, and expertise and create a more viable 211 program. 211 NorCal is working to bring information and referral services to other unserved counties in the UWNC service region including Trinity, Lassen, and Modoc.

UWNC includes in its application an audited financial statement and a proposed three-year budget to demonstrate that it is a solvent entity with the appropriate budgetary planning to support 2-1-1 service in Plumas County.

UWNC states they will be collaborating with Plumas Rural Service (PRS) to bring 211 Plumas to Plumas County. PRS has provided information and referral services by phone and producing the Plumas County Resource Guide⁹ for many years. PRS is a respected and trusted organization in Plumas County. At this time PRS has not committed to financial support of 211 Plumas.

⁹ <https://plumasruralservices.org/Plumas-County-Resource-Guide>

Section 2 – Terms and Conditions of Service

UWNC states that 211 is a free, confidential referral and information helpline with a website that connects people from all communities and of all ages to the essential health and human services they need, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Callers are never charged a fee for referrals. 211 services are commercial and advertisement free. However, funders may be recognized on marketing collateral as a requirement of funding.

UWNC states that they contract with Connecting Point, which is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year health and human services information and referral line in which individuals can either call and speak to a live specialist, self-search the database or text for information. Connecting Point contracts with Language Line Solutions to provide translation services for more than 240 languages.

Section 3 – Alliance of Information and Referral Services Standards

UWNC is contracting with Connecting Point to provide I&R services in English and Spanish and contracts with Language Line multi-lingual translation service with access to more than 240 languages and dialects and has experience with I&R. TTY/TDY services are in place. All these options will be available with the implementation of 2-1-1 in Plumas County.

UWNC states There are a variety of search methods available to those in need. 211 is available to people of all income levels, languages and cultural backgrounds and is accessible via call, 2- way text, or by online search. If a person calls or texts for information, Connecting Point call specialists can quickly access the needed information for the caller/texter using the comprehensive 211 database. Connecting Point has a proven structured approach to managing customer hand-offs. Call center staff understand that the hand-off approach is critical to ensure that the right information is transferred about the call as the caller is being handed over from one agency representative to another. If the caller is in crisis mode and needs assistance immediately but is unable to contact emergency services themselves, the Connecting Point call specialist will connect the caller to the appropriate crisis service. Connecting Point maintains a threat assessment protocol and staff are trained to appropriately route crisis calls as the need arises.

Section 4 – Documentation of Community Support

UWNC received thirteen endorsement letters: seven from local government agencies and six from local community organizations in the fields of health and human services¹⁰.

UWNC also received a letter from the Plumas County Board of Supervisors noting support for UWNC as the 2-1-1 provider for Plumas County. These endorsements indicate support from the community and local governments for UWNC as the local 2-1-1 service provider.

Safety Considerations

UWNC states that safety was evaluated from the beginning of this project development. The need for 211 Plumas, centers around the rural mountain communities' isolation and vulnerable infrastructure. To ensure service continuity, UWNC is partnering with a Local CBO, Plumas Rural Services, that will provide robust community insight and relationships. We are utilizing an out of area call center. In the event a local emergency occurs, this decision should allow for uninterrupted service related to the incident. Lastly, we are mindful of personal, physical, mental and emotional help of those providing and receiving 211 calls and texts. UWNC values the whole person's wellbeing and will manage 211 services with trauma informed practices, assessment for further crisis support, and support for incident needs during and after high stress times.

Comments

In compliance with Public Utilities Code Section 311(g), a notice letter was emailed on August 21, 2024 informing all parties on the CASF Distribution List of the availability of the draft of this Resolution for public comments at the Commission's documents website at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/documents/>. This letter also informed parties that the final conformed Resolution adopted by the Commission will be posted and available on the same website. The Commission received no public comments.

¹⁰ UWNC received endorsement letters from the following local government agencies and local community organizations: Plumas County Social Services, Plumas County Behavioral health, Plumas County Public Health, Feather River College, Plumas County Sheriff Department, Plumas County District Attorney, Central Plumas Recreation & Parks District, First 5 Plumas, Dixies Fire Collaborative, Eastern Plumas Health Care, Plumas Crisis Intervention Center, Plumas County Office of Emergency Services, and Plumas County Veterans Services.

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Findings

1. UWNC sent its application letter for certification as the 2-1-1 service provider for Plumas County to the Commission on May 22, 2024.
2. UWNC's application provides sufficient information to meet the four major sections of the 2-1-1 application process required by D. 03-02-039.
3. Dwight Ceresola, Chair District 1 of the Plumas County Board of Supervisors sent a letter to the Commission on May 22, 2024 endorsing United Way's application to serve as the 2-1-1 provider for Plumas County.
4. CD concludes that the UWNC application meets the requirements established by D. 03-02-029 to use the 2-1-1 dialing code.
5. UWNC's 2-1-1 services will include no fees for referrals and is committed to free and accessible 24/7 services.
6. UWNC's partnership with Connecting Point for 24/7 live call handling ensures service continuity and accessibility for diverse language needs.
7. UWNC's 2-1-1 service application demonstrates a comprehensive, well-supported proposal that fulfills crucial criteria for designation.
8. The Commission received no public comments.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

1. UWNC is granted the authority to use the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing code to provide I&R services to all of Plumas County.
2. This authority is granted for an indefinite term and is subject to review upon showing sufficient grounds to revise or rescind the term. Any process to contest, revise, or rescind this authority shall provide notice to all affected parties and an opportunity to be heard.
3. If UWNC cannot implement 2-1-1 dialing within a year after the Commission's approval of UWNC's application for provision of 2-1-1 service in Plumas County and the needed tariffs of the telecommunications service providers ordered in Ordering Paragraphs 3, 4, and 7 of D.03-02-029, then, barring further Commission

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action, the certification of UWNC shall lapse so that another I&R provider may apply to offer service in a service territory containing Plumas County.

4. UWNC shall notify the Director of the Communications Division in writing of the date 2-1-1 service is first rendered to the public, within five business days after service begins.
5. The County of Plumas shall, for the duration of its provision of service, report to the Director of Communications Division via email at CDcompliance@cpuc.ca.gov by March 1 of each calendar year with the following information:
 - (a) Name of the organization providing 2-1-1 service to Plumas County and contact information (include person to contact);
 - (b) Geographic area(s) served;
 - (c) Name of the vendor providing 2-1-1 call center services and contact information;
 - (d) Name of the vendor providing resource database services and contact information;
 - (e) Name of the vendor providing after-hour service and contact information;
 - (f) Summary (not to exceed one page) of the 2-1-1 services provided during the calendar year, with specific mentions of all declared and non-declared disasters and emergencies during which 2-1-1 was activated.

This Resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted at a conference of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California held on September 26, 2024, the following Commissioners voting favorable thereon:

/s/ RACHEL PETERSON

Rachel Peterson
Executive Director

ALICE REYNOLDS
President

DARCIE L. HOUCK
JOHN REYNOLDS
KAREN DOUGLAS
MATTHEW BAKER
Commissioner