

# United Way of Kentucky

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VIA FAX AND U.S. MAIL

Ms. Beth A. O'Donnell  
Executive Director  
Kentucky Public Service Commission  
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Frankfort, KY 40602-0615

RECEIVED

JUL 31 2006

PUBLIC SERVICE  
COMMISSION

*Case No. 19000343*

RE: Annual Status Report regarding 2-1-1 Implementation

Dear Ms. O'Donnell:

Pursuant to the Commissioner's Order dated August 17, 2004 designating United Way of Kentucky as lead agency for implementation of the 2-1-1 dialing code in Kentucky, enclosed please find our annual report on the progress of the 2-1-1 initiative.

As you may recall, representatives of UWKY met with Commission members and you and your executive staff in April of 2005 regarding the initiative. Since then, not only has the initiative seen great progress, but membership on the Commission has also changed. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and the Commissioners at your convenience to discuss both the progress in 2-1-1 implementation and possible next steps for expansion of the program. I will contact you to see what dates and times might be most convenient for you and the members of the Commission.

If you have any questions about the report, or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Terry S. Tolan  
President

Enclosure

**Status Report to the  
Kentucky Public Service Commission  
from  
United Way of Kentucky  
2-1-1 Statewide Implementation**

**August 1, 2006**

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## Introduction

In July of 2000, the Federal Communications Commission assigned the abbreviated 2-1-1 dialing code nationwide to access health and human service information and referral (I/R) services.

In 2001, following informal meetings held by the Kentucky Public Service Commission to discuss the assignment of 2-1-1 in the Commonwealth, United Way of Kentucky petitioned the Commission to assign the 2-1-1 dialing code to UWKY and its 25 affiliate organizations. UWKY proposed that it be designated as lead agency for the statewide implementation of 2-1-1 in Kentucky. The Commission granted UWKY provisional authority over 2-1-1 for a three-year period to develop a pilot program for the implementation of 2-1-1 in Kentucky, and to report on its progress at the end of that time.

In 2004, UWKY submitted its report to the Commission on the progress of its pilot efforts, including its comprehensive business plan for Kentucky 2-1-1.

On August 17, 2004, the Kentucky Public Service Commission issued an order granting UWKY the permanent designation as the lead agency for the statewide implementation of 2-1-1 in Kentucky. The Commission directed that UWKY make annual reports on the progress of the 2-1-1 initiative. Pursuant to that order, UWKY submits the following status report.

## Kentucky's 2-1-1 Business Plan

UWKY remains committed to implementing the statewide business plan for Kentucky 2-1-1 that was originally presented to the Commission in 2004. That plan, which was developed based on recommendations of a cross section of interested stakeholders known as the Kentucky 2-1-1 Steering Committee, continues to offer the most cost-effective roadmap for implementation of 2-1-1 in Kentucky.<sup>1</sup>

To summarize, the plan envisions four call centers for the state, and one centralized statewide database accessible to all four centers. Three of the centers would be located in Lexington, Louisville and northern Kentucky; together, these metropolitan centers would serve 1.9 million Kentuckians. The fourth call center, currently proposed to be located in southeast Kentucky, would serve the remainder of the state's population – roughly 2.2 million. As lead entity for the administration and operation of 2-1-1 in Kentucky, UWKY would maintain contractual relationships with the call centers and monitor for performance and compliance with all relevant standards. When fully implemented,

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<sup>1</sup> The Committee is comprised of a cross section of interested stakeholders, including representatives from state and local government, nonprofit health and human service organizations, first responders, homeland security, 9-1-1, telecommunications and technology organizations.

citizens would have 24/7 access to the 2-1-1 service through cooperative agreements between the call centers, thus insuring a critical redundancy in the system.

As implementation grows further, the plan will be revisited to make any necessary or desirable adjustments to enhance the strength and functionality of the statewide system. Our 2-1-1 Steering Committee remains ready to assist with any plan revisions.

### **Status of Implementation in Kentucky**

While implementation of 2-1-1 has been slower than originally anticipated due to the lack of available funding to support the project, this year has seen some great strides toward serving larger portions of the Commonwealth. As of UWKY's report to the Commission in August of 2005, 2-1-1 was available to roughly 10% of Kentucky's population. By the fall of 2006, 2-1-1 should be available to more than 42% of Kentuckians.

#### **Northern Kentucky**

2-1-1 has now been available in four northern Kentucky counties – Boone, Kenton, Campbell and Grant – for 3-1/2 years. While landline access has been available to 100% of the region from the outset of the project, cellular access has been more piecemeal. At our last report, 60% of the Cincinnati Bell/Cingular wireless market could dial 2-1-1. UWGC has reached an agreement with an Ohio collaborative to phase in access to other cellular telephone providers. Verizon, T-Mobile and Sprint users are now able to reach 2-1-1, and all cell phones should have 2-1-1 access by the end of the year.

In addition to quantity of coverage, the quality of service is also important. The Alliance of Information and Referral Specialists (AIRS) offers certification not only for individual call center specialists, but also for the entire operation – a much more rigorous and lengthy process. United Way 2-1-1's individual call specialists have always been certified, and we are pleased to report that United Way 2-1-1 has reached the end phase of national AIRS accreditation for the operation as a whole, and all relevant information has been submitted to AIRS for its consideration.

The earned income tax credit (EITC) program continues to be a major success story for United Way 2-1-1. Since 2003, UWGC has partnered with the IRS and numerous other community agencies and businesses, including Northern Kentucky University, the Legal Aid Society, and various financial institutions to help individuals file for and receive this valuable benefit. Through this partnership, 2-1-1 has served as the centralized clearinghouse directing low to moderate income working families to free tax preparation sites. Now into its fourth year of operation, the EITC program has been strengthened in Northern Kentucky, and evolved into a region-wide collaboration in Greater Cincinnati.

The number of EITC calls received in 2006 was over 1,700 -- more than *three times* the calls received by the program in 2005.

United Way 2-1-1's proven track record of helping people both get help and give help led to its recent selection as the "call to action" number for the Greater Cincinnati area's new crime prevention initiative. Spearheaded by Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory, the public awareness campaign -- announced in mid-July of 2006 -- is designed to encourage citizens to be proactive in keeping themselves and others safe from violence. Billboards throughout the Greater Cincinnati area urge residents to "Stop the Violence! Stay out of the Crossfire. Dial United Way 2-1-1 for Information." With its extensive database of resource information on services like neighborhood watch programs, anti-violence programs, alternatives for kids to keep them engaged and off the streets, and specific programs to deal with individual problems, United Way 2-1-1 was a natural choice for this program to foster safe neighborhoods.

Although it is 1000 miles from the Gulf, UWGC and United Way 2-1-1 also played a part in the national assistance effort following Hurricane Katrina. In addition to fielding several hundred calls from both evacuees and from people wanting to give help on its 2-1-1 line, UWGC worked hand-in-glove with the local Red Cross and served as a social service agency convenor to facilitate resource coordination and social service response efforts.

The array of funding sources for United Way 2-1-1 has shrunk in the last year. The original three year corporate sponsorship funded by the Cinergy Foundation expired in February, and the contributions of several other philanthropic organizations have also reached an end. Currently, United Way of Greater Cincinnati shoulders the lion's share of funding for the annual \$668,000 operating budget, with some support from the Council on Aging of Southwest Ohio. UWGC is working diligently to find additional corporate, governmental and philanthropic funds to supplement these sources. United Way 2-1-1 continues to play a critical supporting role in attaining UWGC's community impact goals -- particularly those designed to help families achieve self-sufficiency and to help children grow up safe, healthy and ready to succeed.

### **Lexington**

UWKY reported last year that United Way of the Bluegrass had commenced an ambitious campaign to bring 2-1-1 to its entire nine county service area by the end of 2006. These counties include Anderson, Bourbon, Clark, Fayette, Jessamine, Madison, Montgomery, Scott, and Woodford. UWBG remains on this aggressive track and expects that 2-1-1 will be available throughout its service area by the end of 2006.

The pilot project in Clark County has now been operational for over a year. Scott County's 2-1-1 operation came on line in March of 2006, and has been highly successful, resulting in nearly 200 calls for assistance in its first 3 months of operation. 2-1-1 is available 24/7 in both counties from both landlines and all but one cellular telephone

company. 2-1-1 is operational, but not yet publicized, in Fayette County, where residents still reach the call center primarily by dialing the traditional 10-digit I&R number. UWBG expects that both Fayette and Madison Counties – the two most populous in the UWBG service area – will go live with 2-1-1 in the fall of 2006. With the addition of those counties, over 75% of residents in the UWBG service area will have ready access to get help and give help through 2-1-1.

UWBG has publicized 2-1-1 in both Clark and Scott Counties in a bilingual campaign through various media, including public service announcements aired on local AM radio stations. In addition to posters in business establishments, first responders like police, fire and EMS personnel carry “tear sheets” to pass out with information about 2-1-1. UWBG plans to pursue this bilingual publicity campaign as a part of the 2-1-1 roll-out in each county in its service area.

Because so much of the spade work has already been done, the goal of bringing 2-1-1 to the remaining five UWBG counties by year’s end is both realistic and attainable. All landline translations have been completed throughout the service area. Similarly, with the exception of one company, the entire nine county area is ready to provide cellular access to 2-1-1. The largest remaining task is the creation of the database for each of the five counties, but this process is already underway. As it has in other counties, UWBG is working in collaboration with advisory councils comprised of civic leaders in each of these counties to compile and vet the resource information before adding it to the database.

UWBG continues to fund its call center operations – both the 10 digit number and 2-1-1 – solely from the UWBG operating budget, evidencing its strong commitment to 2-1-1 in the Bluegrass. Once 2-1-1 is launched throughout the UWBG service area, it plans to explore other corporate, governmental and philanthropic funding sources to diversify the future funding stream.

### **Louisville**

At this time last year, Metro United Way was set to launch 2-1-1 in the Metro Louisville area, pending the location of funding. The seven county MUW service area includes Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, and Bullitt counties in Kentucky, and Clark, Floyd and Harrison counties in southern Indiana. Because of telephone wire center configurations, in order to get full coverage of the Metro area, the Louisville call center would also provide 2-1-1 service in Trimble, Henry, Carroll, Spencer and Nelson counties in Kentucky. Altogether, MUW’s 2-1-1 service would reach roughly 1 million Kentuckians.

Because the telephone translations were complete, 2-1-1 was technically operational from landlines in the MUW service area. The caller was connected to the call center through which MUW already sponsors I/R with a traditional 10-digit number. However, the number remained unpublicized because MUW had been unable to locate sufficient

funding to increase staff for the projected increase in call volume once 2-1-1 is widely publicized to the area.

We are pleased to report that MUW was successful in obtaining a significant grant from the Metropolitan Sewer District. With this commitment, MUW's board authorized the release of certain reserve funds to enable 2-1-1 to go live in all 12 counties listed above. 2-1-1 is scheduled to go live in the MUW service area on September 1, 2006. WLKY-TV has agreed to serve as the media partner for the 2-1-1 project, greatly increasing the visibility (and, thus, the usefulness) of the service to area residents.

MUW has contracted with the provider of its former 10 digit I/R service to provide 2-1-1 service; because of this agency's existing familiarity with the information database and the general I/R protocols, the transition to 2-1-1 should be relatively seamless. As landline translations have long been complete, the full area will have immediate landline access to 2-1-1 on a 24/7 basis. MUW recently completed negotiations with all but one of the cellular companies serving the 12 county area, and 2-1-1 will be available from all of the supporting wireless providers in the area at the time of the launch. Negotiations to finalize service with the remaining wireless provider are nearing completion, and MUW anticipates that agreement will be finalized before the September launch.

### **Rural Kentucky**

Under the current business plan, the remainder of the state would be served by a single call center. However, no project in any portion of rural Kentucky can move forward without adequate funding. Our efforts to pursue governmental funding to commence a small pilot project in rural Kentucky, which seemed promising for several months, unfortunately failed to materialize.

### **Barriers to Implementation**

The single largest barrier to full implementation of statewide 2-1-1 in the Commonwealth remains the availability of adequate funding to develop and maintain the system on an ongoing basis.

We believe that a substantial public sector commitment at both the state and federal level is needed to insure the vitality of 2-1-1 in Kentucky and across the nation. The public dollars would supplement United Way contributions and private funds, giving private donors confidence that their dollars were helping to create a sustainable essential service for the Commonwealth.

While public support is necessary to enhance the 2-1-1 service in metropolitan areas in Kentucky, it is essential to the creation of 2-1-1 outside the "Golden Triangle." Rural

areas, where I/R is virtually non-existent and services are often most needed, lack the corporate resources to develop such a service.

To secure government funding, UWKY continues working closely with United Way of America to secure passage of the Calling for 2-1-1 Act. This bipartisan legislation, which was originally introduced in 2003 and re-introduced in 2005 in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, authorizes funding totaling \$600,000,000 over six years for matching grants to agencies and organizations for the development and operation of 2-1-1 service nationwide.<sup>2</sup> The measure currently has the support of nearly 1/3 of the Senate and 25% of the House, including Representatives Ben Chandler and Ron Lewis. Representative Chandler signed on in 2005, and Representative Lewis agreed to become a co-sponsor this year.

Congress has authorized the use of federal monies for 2-1-1 in connection with bio-terrorism preparedness legislation, making funds available through state Homeland Security offices. The Kentucky Office of Homeland Security requires that these grants be made to governmental and quasi-governmental entities. UWKY continues its efforts to locate a suitable partner for a grant proposal to KOHS

UWKY is also exploring possibilities for separate state funding for a 2-1-1 system from the Kentucky General Assembly. Even if federal funding is obtained to create a statewide network, a sustainable 2-1-1 program needs ongoing state and local support. Indeed, in most states where statewide 2-1-1 is available, the state itself funds a large portion of the cost of the service. We recognize that there are many competing needs for Kentucky's tight revenues. But the evidence shows that funding 2-1-1 is a sound investment.

## Why 2-1-1 is a Sound Investment

### Cost versus benefit

The national cost-benefit analysis of 2-1-1, commissioned by United Way of America and conducted by the University of Texas, estimates a net value to society of a national 2-1-1 system approaching *\$130 million in the first year alone and a conservative estimate of \$1.1 billion over ten years.*<sup>3</sup>

The analysis is based largely on the data of eleven 2-1-1 centers in the following areas: Hawaii; Idaho; Connecticut; Houston, TX; Twin Cities, MN; Salt Lake City, UT; Albuquerque, NM; Grand Rapids, MI; Atlanta, GA; Sioux Falls, SD; and Jacksonville, FL. These 11 centers offer a representative cross section of different configurations of 2-1-1 systems. They include unified statewide systems (like Connecticut); individual centers in a non-unified statewide system (like Houston Texas); individual regional 2-1-1

<sup>2</sup> Bills are currently pending in both the House (HR 896) and the Senate (S 211).

<sup>3</sup> The entire study can be viewed at <http://www.211.org/news.html>.

operations (like Salt Lake City). Each center chosen for the study had been operational for a minimum of two years, and the project also included Atlanta, the oldest 2-1-1 system in the nation.

### **How 2-1-1 creates savings**

The study documented savings to employers, government, and taxpayers in a wide range of categories, including:

- Time saved for individuals and families through a one-stop call center for a variety of services
- Decreased need for public assistance because of timely connection with appropriate intervening services
- Reduction in non-emergency calls to 9-1-1
- Reduction in the number of 1-800 numbers funded by government
- Enhanced tax assistance and recovery, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit
- Volunteer recruitment for non-profits and ability for government to mobilize 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
- Cost avoidance for state and local government of misdirected calls for services
- 24 hour a day, 7 days a week service
- Ability to disseminate public health and crisis preparedness information

The study found that the benefits of 2-1-1 systems increase over time, as new, innovative uses are employed for the number. For example, Connecticut's statewide 2-1-1 system manages the State of Connecticut's QuitLine, a tobacco use cessation hotline. To implement the service, Connecticut 2-1-1 hired one program manager and trained 2-1-1 call specialists on how to handle QuitLine-specific calls. It is estimated that without the 2-1-1 partnership, the state would have needed to establish a call center and hire five to seven people to handle the calls.

Many of these areas of savings are readily apparent for a Kentucky system as well. As noted above, 2-1-1 in northern Kentucky is already enjoying great success with its EITC program. Also, several Kentucky laws mandate 24 toll free information lines, requiring additional state resources to set up and staff. Often, these lines are accessible only from 8a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Outsourcing this task to 2-1-1 call specialists, already trained in I/R, would provide a cost-effective way for the state to eliminate these 800 numbers and provide information around the clock.

### **The unique role of 2-1-1 in disaster preparedness and homeland security**

While 2-1-1 is a valuable tool on an ongoing basis, it offers unique value and opportunity in times of crisis and disaster of any magnitude – whether natural or man-made. It can serve as the clearinghouse for coordinating and mobilizing the massive needs and available resources.

The Gulf Coast states will uniformly testify to the power of 2-1-1. That service helped facilitate the movement of people, resources, and information during the horror that was Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. And 2-1-1 is equally, if not more, important in the aftermath of the storms as people return to the area, and try to rebuild their homes and lives.

Another example closer to home is the response to a recent chemical spill in Graniteville South Carolina. On January 6, 2005, at 2:45 in the morning, two trains collided in Aiken County, South Carolina, releasing a 90,000 pound cloud of highly toxic chlorine gas. The cloud left nine people dead and more than 500 requiring medical attention. Nearly 6,000 people were evacuated from their homes for a week and in some cases, two weeks.

Immediately, calls started pouring in to 911. Most of the calls were not life threatening in nature but simply seeking information. Emergency services quickly asked the media to publicize 2-1-1 as the number to call for information and referral assistance. During the two week disaster period:

- Aiken 2-1-1 fielded more than 2,700 disaster calls and 374 non-disaster calls.
- The average daily call volume at Aiken 2-1-1 increased from 26 to 195 calls per day – 172 disaster-related and 23 non-disaster calls.
- Aiken 2-1-1 provided information not only to area residents, but also to other states and Canada, to national media outlets, and to state and federal governmental agencies.

Kentucky is home to stockpiles of chemical weapons. If a leak were to occur, 2-1-1 would serve a vital role in managing this biohazardous event, coordinating and disseminating critical information and leaving 911 free to handle true life-threatening emergencies.

### **National View**

While Kentucky's coverage is now at 35%, 2-1-1 service is currently available to over 57% of the population of the United States, with 192 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or

part of 39 states. Currently 16 states offer statewide 2-1-1 coverage.<sup>4</sup> As is true in Kentucky, the areas nationally with the least access to 2-1-1 services tend to be the more rural areas.<sup>5</sup>

### Summary

Despite the lack of sustainable funding, Kentucky 2-1-1 has made substantial progress over the last year. 2-1-1 service continues to expand in central Kentucky, and will be live in the metro Louisville area in September. By fall of this year, 2-1-1 will be available to over 42% of all Kentuckians.

The Commission has been an invaluable partner and resource to UWKY in our implementation process. We appreciate the Commission's interest in the 2-1-1 initiative and its designation of UWKY as the lead agency for statewide implementation.

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<sup>4</sup> They are: Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Dakota, New Jersey, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin and West Virginia. Additionally, both Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico offer complete 2-1-1 coverage in their respective jurisdictions.

<sup>5</sup> Further detail regarding the national status of 2-1-1 can be found at the website: [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)