

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 211

To facilitate nationwide availability of 2-1-1 telephone service for information and referral on health and human services, including volunteer services, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 2007

Ms. ESHOO (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. UPTON, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. TERRY, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. GORDON of Tennessee, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. HOOLEY, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. ROSS, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. BOSWELL, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS, Ms. LEE, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PLATTS, Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. COOPER, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. DICKS, Mr. HOLDEN, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. WEINER, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. GERLACH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To facilitate nationwide availability of 2-1-1 telephone service for information and referral on health and human services, including volunteer services, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Calling for 2–1–1 Act
5 of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The Federal Communications Commission
9 has assigned 2–1–1 as the national telephone num-
10 ber for telephone service for information and referral
11 on human services, declaring that 2–1–1 best satis-
12 fies the public interest in allotting the limited re-
13 source of this abbreviated number.

14 (2) The number “2–1–1” is an easy-to-remem-
15 ber telephone number that facilitates critical connec-
16 tions between individuals and families seeking serv-
17 ices, volunteer opportunities, or both and appro-
18 priate human service agencies, including community-
19 based and faith-based organizations and government
20 agencies.

21 (3) There are approximately 1,500,000 non-
22 profit organizations in the United States. Individuals
23 and families often find it difficult to navigate
24 through a complex and ever-growing maze of human
25 service agencies and programs, spending inordinate

1 amounts of time trying to identify an agency or pro-
2 gram that provides a service that may be imme-
3 diately or urgently required and often abandoning
4 the search from frustration or a lack of quality in-
5 formation.

6 (4) At the Federal, State, and local levels, gov-
7 ernment funding supports well-intentioned programs
8 that are not fully utilized because of a lack of access
9 to and information on such programs by the public.
10 Program administrators have indicated that there is
11 a need for a simple way to connect those eligible for
12 programs with available program resources. 2-1-1
13 telephone service will reduce the number of inappro-
14 priate calls to government offices by directing con-
15 sumers to the appropriate human services agency,
16 resulting in a more effective use of government serv-
17 ices.

18 (5) A national cost benefit analysis conducted
19 by the University of Texas estimates a net value to
20 society of a national 2-1-1 system approaching
21 \$130,000,000 in the first year alone and a conserv-
22 ative estimate of nearly \$1,100,000,000 over 10
23 years.

24 (6) Many families need information on govern-
25 ment and not-for-profit services that provide high

1 quality health care, public health information related
2 to bioterrorism threats, mental health services, drug
3 treatment, elder care, help for victims of domestic vi-
4 olence, disaster recovery, and volunteer opportuni-
5 ties.

6 (7) Individuals often need support, services, or
7 both when suffering emotional distress, having suici-
8 dal thoughts or behavior, contemplating violence, or
9 using drugs or alcohol.

10 (8) Americans desire to volunteer and become
11 involved in their communities. This desire, together
12 with a desire to donate to organizations which pro-
13 vide human services, are among the reasons to con-
14 tact a center which provides information and referral
15 on volunteer opportunities and human services. A
16 simple call to 2-1-1 will help a citizen find the vol-
17 unteer opportunity they seek.

18 (9) Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist
19 attacks, an estimated 400 telephone hotlines were
20 established in New York, New York, for various
21 funds and services, creating a confusing network for
22 victims and volunteers to navigate. A Comptroller
23 General report on charitable aid following the ter-
24 rorist attacks found that “families of victims gen-
25 erally believed they had to navigate a maze of service

1 providers in the early months” and that “good information
2 about and easy access to available assistance
3 could help survivors in the recovery process”.

4 (10) During the Hurricane Katrina disaster in
5 2005, 2–1–1 served as a crucial backup in areas of
6 the Gulf Coast where 9–1–1 centers went down, pro-
7 viding access to emergency responders as well as
8 serving as a source for information about loved ones,
9 food, shelter, and other vital services.

10 (11) The 107th Congress recognized the impor-
11 tance of 2–1–1 telephone service in community pre-
12 paredness and response by including use of that tele-
13 phone number for public information as an allowable
14 use of funds under grants for preparedness and re-
15 sponse to bioterrorism and other public health emer-
16 gencies under section 319C–1 of the Public Health
17 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d–3a), as added by sec-
18 tion 131 of the Public Health Security and Bioter-
19 rorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002
20 (Public Law 107–188).

21 (12) While 69 percent of the population has ac-
22 cess to 2–1–1 telephone service in 41 States, inad-
23 equate funding prevents access to that telephone
24 service throughout each of the States. 2–1–1 tele-

1 phone service is currently available statewide in only
2 17 States.

3 (13) Rapid deployment nationwide of 2-1-1
4 telephone service as a means of access to informa-
5 tion about and referral on human services requires
6 collaboration among State governments, compre-
7 hensive and specialized information and referral centers,
8 including Child Care Resource and Referral Agen-
9 cies, human service organizations and service pro-
10 viders, emergency management and homeland secu-
11 rity officials, telephone companies, and other rel-
12 evant entities.

13 (14) 2-1-1 telephone service facilitates the
14 availability of a single repository where compre-
15 hensive data on all community services is collected,
16 maintained, and updated regularly, reducing costs
17 and duplication of efforts. The reliable data provided
18 through 2-1-1 telephone service helps to better as-
19 sess the needs of our communities and to imme-
20 diately mobilize resources toward those needs.

21 **SEC. 3. GRANTS TO FACILITATE NATIONWIDE AVAIL-
22 ABILITY OF 2-1-1 SERVICE FOR INFORMA-
23 TION AND REFERRAL ON HUMAN SERVICES.**

24 (a) GRANTS REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Health
25 and Human Services shall award a grant to each State

1 to carry out a program for the purpose of making 2–1–
2 1 telephone service available to all citizens in the State
3 for information and referral on health and human services,
4 including volunteer services. These grant dollars shall not
5 supplant existing funding streams or services.

6 (b) GRANT TO BE AVAILABLE FOR EACH STATE.—
7 In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall
8 develop a formula for allocating grant amounts among the
9 States so that a grant may be awarded to each State seek-
10 ing a grant.

11 (c) REQUIREMENT ON SHARE OF ACTIVITIES.—

12 (1) REQUIREMENT.—A State may not be
13 awarded a grant under this section unless the State
14 ensures that at least 50 percent of the resources of
15 the program funded by the grant will be derived
16 from other sources.

17 (2) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—The require-
18 ment in paragraph (1) may be satisfied by in-kind
19 contributions of goods or services.

20 (d) LEAD ENTITY.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—A State seeking a grant
22 under this section shall carry out this section
23 through a lead entity meeting the requirements of
24 this subsection.

4 (A) exists for such purpose under State
5 law;

(C) is a collaborative entity established by the State for such purpose from among representatives of—

11 (i) an informal existing 2-1-1 state-
12 wide collaborative, if any, in the State;

13 (ii) State agencies;

14 (iii) community-based organizations;

15 (iv) faith-based organizations;

16 (v) not-for-profit organizations;

17 (vi) comprehensive and specialized in-
18 formation and referral providers, including
19 current 2-1-1 call centers;

20 (vii) foundations; and

21 (viii) businesses.

22 (3) REQUIREMENTS FOR PREEXISTING LEAD
23 ENTITIES.—An entity described by subparagraph
24 (A) or (B) of paragraph (2) may be treated as a
25 lead entity under this subsection only if such entity

1 collaborates, to the extent practicable, with the orga-
2 nizations and entities listed in subparagraph (C) of
3 that paragraph.

4 (e) APPLICATION.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The lead entity on behalf of
6 each State seeking a grant under this section shall
7 submit to the Secretary an application therefore in
8 such form as the Secretary shall require.

9 (2) INFORMATION.—An application on behalf of
10 a State under this subsection shall contain informa-
11 tion as follows:

12 (A) Information on the program to be car-
13 ried out by the lead entity of the State so that
14 every citizen with phone service may dial the 2–
15 1–1 telephone service in order to plan to make
16 available throughout the State 2–1–1 telephone
17 service for information and referral on human
18 services, including information on the manner
19 in which the lead entity will develop, sustain,
20 and evaluate the program.

21 (B) Information on the sources of re-
22 sources for the program for purposes of meet-
23 ing the requirement in subsection (c).

24 (C) There should be a statewide database
25 available to all citizens as well as all human

1 service programs, through the Internet, that
2 will allow them to search for programs or serv-
3 ices that are available according to the data
4 gathered by the 2-1-1 programs in the State.

5 (D) Any additional information that the
6 Secretary may require for purposes of this sec-
7 tion.

8 (f) SUBGRANTS.—

9 (1) AUTHORITY.—In carrying out a program to
10 make 2-1-1 telephone service available throughout a
11 State at no charge to the caller, the lead entity of
12 the State may make subgrants to such persons or
13 entities as the lead entity considers appropriate for
14 purposes of the program, including subgrants to pro-
15 vide funds—

16 (A) for the provision of 2-1-1 telephone
17 service;

18 (B) for the operation and maintenance of
19 2-1-1 call centers; and

20 (C) for the collection and display of infor-
21 mation for the statewide database.

22 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In awarding a subgrant
23 under this subsection, a lead entity shall consider—

(A) the ability of the person or entity seeking the subgrant to carry out activities or provide services consistent with the program;

(B) the extent to which the award of the subgrant will facilitate equitable geographic distribution of subgrants under this section to ensure that rural communities have access to 2-1-1 telephone service; and

(C) the extent to which the recipient of the subgrant will establish and maintain cooperative relationships with specialized information and referral centers, including Child Care Resource Referral Agencies, crisis centers, 9-1-1 call centers, and 3-1-1 call centers, if applicable.

(g) USE OF GRANT AND SUBGRANT AMOUNTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts awarded as grants or subgrants under this section shall be used solely to make available 2-1-1 telephone service for community information and referral on human services to all citizens of the State with phone access, including telephone connections between families and individuals seeking such services and the providers of such services.

(2) PARTICULAR MATTERS.—In making 2-1-1 telephone service available, the recipient of a grant

1 or subgrant shall, to the maximum extent practicable—
2

9 (B) collaborate with human service organi-
10 zations, whether public or private, to provide an
11 exhaustive database of services with which to
12 provide information or referral to individuals
13 utilizing 2-1-1 telephone service.

1 (h) REQUIREMENT ON ALLOCATION OF GRANT
2 AMOUNTS.—Of the amounts awarded under this section,
3 an aggregate of not more than 15 percent shall be allo-
4 cated for evaluation, training, and technical assistance,
5 and for management and administration of subgrants
6 awarded under this section.

7 (i) REPORTS.—The lead entity of each State awarded
8 a grant under this section for a fiscal year shall submit
9 to the Secretary, not later than 60 days after the end of
10 such fiscal year, a report on the program funded by the
11 grant. Each report shall—

12 (1) describe the program funding by the grant;
13 (2) assess the effectiveness of the program in
14 making available to all citizens with phone service
15 State 2–1–1 telephone service for information and
16 referral on human services in accordance with the
17 provisions of this section; and
18 (3) assess the effectiveness of collaboration with
19 human service resource and referral entities and
20 service providers.

21 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) HUMAN SERVICES.—The term “human
23 services” means services as follows:

24 (A) Services that assist individuals in be-
25 coming more self-sufficient, in preventing de-

1 pendency, and in strengthening family relation-
2 ships.

3 (B) Services that support personal and so-
4 cial development.

5 (C) Services that help ensure the health
6 and well-being of individuals, families, and com-
7 munities.

8 (2) INFORMATION AND REFERRAL CENTER.—
9 The term “information and referral center” means
10 a center that—

11 (A) maintains a database of providers of
12 human services in a State or locality;

13 (B) assists individuals, families, and com-
14 munities in identifying, understanding, and ac-
15 cessing the providers of human services and the
16 human services offered by the providers of such
17 services; and

18 (C) tracks types of calls referred and re-
19 ceived to document the demands for services.

20 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means the sev-
21 eral States, the District of Columbia, the Common-
22 wealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam,
23 American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the
24 Northern Mariana Islands.

1 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act, for each of fiscal years 2008
3 and 2009, \$150,000,000, and for each of fiscal years 2010
4 through 2013, \$100,000,000.

6 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant
7 to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (a)
8 shall remain available until expended.

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