

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 211

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 12, 2009

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. BURR, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CASEY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. INOUE, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To facilitate nationwide availability of 2–1–1 telephone service for information and referral on human services and 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 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) The Federal Communications Commission
2 has assigned 2–1–1 as the national telephone num-
3 ber for telephone service for information and referral
4 on human services, declaring that 2–1–1 best satis-
5 fies the public interest in allotting the limited re-
6 source of this abbreviated number. The Commission
7 will assess the widespread utilization of the 2–1–1
8 telephone number and evaluate whether to continue
9 the assignment of that telephone number for that
10 service.

11 (2) The number “2–1–1” is an easy-to-remem-
12 ber telephone number that facilitates critical connec-
13 tions between individuals and families seeking serv-
14 ices, volunteer opportunities, or both and appro-
15 priate human services agencies, including commu-
16 nity-based and faith-based organizations and govern-
17 ment agencies.

18 (3) There are approximately 1,500,000 non-
19 profit organizations in the United States. Individuals
20 and families often find it difficult to navigate
21 through a complex and ever-growing maze of human
22 services agencies and programs, spending inordinate
23 amounts of time trying to identify an agency or pro-
24 gram that provides a service that may be imme-
25 diately or urgently required and often abandoning

1 the search from frustration or a lack of quality in-
2 formation.

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

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

21 (6) Many families need information on govern-
22 ment and not-for-profit services that provide high
23 quality child care and early childhood education,
24 such as the Federal Head Start program, after
25 school and summer activities for children, job train-

1 ing and assistance, housing and hunger assistance,
2 elder care, help for victims of domestic violence, dis-
3 aster recovery, and volunteer opportunities.

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

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

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

1 mation about and easy access to available assistance
2 could help survivors in the recovery process”.

3 (10) The 107th Congress recognized the impor-
4 tance of 2–1–1 telephone service in community pre-
5 paredness and response by including use of that tele-
6 phone number for public information as an allowable
7 use of funds under grants for preparedness and re-
8 sponse to bioterrorism and other public health emer-
9 gencies under section 319C–1 of the Public Health
10 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d–3a).

11 (11) While 69 percent of the population has ac-
12 cess to 2–1–1 telephone service from a land line in
13 41 States, inadequate funding prevents access to
14 that telephone service throughout each of the States.
15 2–1–1 telephone service is currently available state-
16 wide only in 18 States.

17 (12) Rapid deployment nationwide of 2–1–1
18 telephone service as a means of access to informa-
19 tion about and referral on human services requires
20 collaboration among State governments, comprehen-
21 sive and specialized information and referral centers,
22 including Child Care Resource and Referral Agen-
23 cies, human services organizations and service pro-
24 viders, emergency management and homeland secu-

1 rity officials, telephone companies, and other rel-
 2 evant entities.

3 (13) 2-1-1 telephone service facilitates the
 4 availability of a single repository where comprehen-
 5 sive data on all community services is collected,
 6 maintained, and updated regularly, reducing costs
 7 and duplication of efforts. The reliable data provided
 8 through 2-1-1 telephone service helps to better as-
 9 sess the needs of our communities and to imme-
 10 diately mobilize resources toward those needs.

11 **SEC. 3. GRANTS TO FACILITATE NATIONWIDE AVAIL-**
 12 **ABILITY OF 2-1-1 SERVICE FOR INFORMA-**
 13 **TION AND REFERRAL ON HUMAN SERVICES.**

14 (a) GRANTS REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Health
 15 and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Sec-
 16 retary for Children and Families (referred to in this Act
 17 as the “Secretary”), shall award a grant to each State
 18 to carry out a program for the purpose of making 2-1-
 19 1 telephone service available to all residents of the State
 20 with phone service for information and referral on human
 21 services. The grant, and the service provided through the
 22 grant, shall not supplant existing funding streams or serv-
 23 ices.

24 (b) GRANT TO BE AVAILABLE FOR EACH STATE.—
 25 In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall

1 develop a formula for allocating grant amounts among the
 2 States so that a grant may be awarded to each State seek-
 3 ing a grant.

4 (c) REQUIREMENT ON SHARE OF ACTIVITIES.—

5 (1) REQUIREMENT.—A State may not be
 6 awarded a grant under this section unless the State
 7 ensures that at least 50 percent of the resources of
 8 the program funded by the grant will be derived
 9 from other sources.

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

13 (d) LEAD ENTITY.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—A State seeking a grant
 15 under this section shall carry out this section
 16 through a lead entity (also known as a “2–1–1 Col-
 17 laborative”) meeting the requirements of this sub-
 18 section.

19 (2) 2–1–1 COLLABORATIVE.—An entity shall be
 20 treated as the 2–1–1 Collaborative for a State under
 21 this subsection if the entity—

22 (A) exists for such purpose under State
 23 law;

24 (B) exists for such purpose by order of the
 25 State public utility commission; or

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

(i) an informal existing 2–1–1 statewide collaborative, if any, in the State;

(ii) State agencies;

(iii) community-based organizations;

(iv) faith-based organizations;

(v) not-for-profit organizations;

(vi) comprehensive and specialized information and referral providers, including current 2–1–1 call centers;

(vii) foundations; and

(viii) businesses.

(3) REQUIREMENTS FOR PREEXISTING LEAD ENTITIES.—An entity described by subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (2) may be treated as a lead entity under this subsection only if such entity collaborates, to the extent practicable, with the organizations and entities listed in subparagraph (C) of that paragraph.

(e) APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The lead entity on behalf of each State seeking a grant under this section shall

1 submit to the Secretary an application in such form
2 as the Secretary shall require.

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

6 (A) Information, on the program to be car-
7 ried out by the lead entity of the State so that
8 every resident of the State with phone service
9 may dial the 2–1–1 telephone service at no
10 charge to the caller, describing how the lead en-
11 tity plans to make available throughout the
12 State 2–1–1 telephone service for information
13 and referral on human services, including infor-
14 mation on the manner in which the lead entity
15 will develop, sustain, and evaluate the program.

16 (B) Information on the sources of re-
17 sources for the program for purposes of meet-
18 ing the requirement in subsection (c).

19 (C) Information describing how the entity
20 shall provide, to the extent practicable, a state-
21 wide database available to all residents of the
22 State as well as all human services programs,
23 through the Internet, that will allow them to
24 search for programs or services that are avail-

1 able according to the data gathered by the
2 human services programs in the State.

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

6 (f) SUBGRANTS.—

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

14 (A) for the provision of 2–1–1 telephone
15 service;

16 (B) for the operation and maintenance of
17 2–1–1 call centers; and

18 (C) for the collection and display of infor-
19 mation for the statewide database.

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

22 (A) the ability of the person or entity seek-
23 ing the subgrant to carry out activities or pro-
24 vide services consistent with the program;

1 (B) the extent to which the award of the
 2 subgrant will facilitate equitable geographic dis-
 3 tribution of subgrants under this section to en-
 4 sure that rural communities have access to 2-
 5 1-1 telephone service; and

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

12 (g) USE OF GRANT AND SUBGRANT AMOUNTS.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts awarded as grants
 14 or subgrants under this section shall be used solely
 15 to make available 2-1-1 telephone service to all resi-
 16 dents of a State with phone access, for community
 17 information and referral on human services, includ-
 18 ing telephone connections between families and indi-
 19 viduals seeking such services and the providers of
 20 such services.

21 (2) PARTICULAR MATTERS.—In making 2-1-1
 22 telephone service available, the recipient of a grant
 23 or subgrant shall, to the maximum extent prac-
 24 ticable—

1 (A) abide by the Key Standards for 2-1-
 2 1 Centers as specified in the Standards for Pro-
 3 fessional Information and Referral Require-
 4 ments for Alliance of Information Referral Sys-
 5 tems (AIRS) Accreditation and Operating 2-1-
 6 1 Systems; and

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

12 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts of a subgrant
 13 under subsection (f) may be used by subgrant recipi-
 14 ents for statewide and regional planning, start-up
 15 costs (including costs of software and hardware up-
 16 grades and telecommunications costs), training, ac-
 17 creditation, public awareness, evaluation of activities,
 18 Internet hosting and site development and mainte-
 19 nance for a statewide database, database integration
 20 projects that incorporate data from different 2-1-1
 21 programs into a single statewide database, and the
 22 provision of 2-1-1 telephone service.

23 (h) REQUIREMENT ON ALLOCATION OF GRANT
 24 AMOUNTS.—Of the amounts awarded under this section,
 25 an aggregate of not more than 15 percent shall be allo-

1 cated for evaluation, training, and technical assistance,
 2 and for management and administration of subgrants
 3 awarded under this section.

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

9 (1) describe the program funded by the grant;

10 (2) assess the effectiveness of the program in
 11 making available, to all residents of the State with
 12 phone service, 2–1–1 telephone service for informa-
 13 tion and referral on human services in accordance
 14 with the provisions of this section; and

15 (3) assess the effectiveness of collaboration with
 16 human services resource and referral entities and
 17 service providers.

18 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

21 (A) Services that assist individuals in be-
 22 coming more self-sufficient, in preventing de-
 23 pendency, and in strengthening family relation-
 24 ships.

1 (B) Services that support personal and so-
 2 cial development.

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

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

9 (A) maintains a database of providers of
 10 human services in a State or locality;

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

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

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

23 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
 25 priated to carry out this Act, for fiscal years 2010 and

1 2011, \$150,000,000, and for each of fiscal years 2012
2 through 2015, \$100,000,000.

3 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant
4 to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (a)
5 shall remain available until expended.

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