



2-1-1: A Valuable Resource for California's State Agencies

The Problem:

State agencies provide many critical services to California residents covering a wide range of areas and needs. Almost all state agencies have a public outreach component and many already fund 800 lines. Despite best efforts, it is often confusing for people to know where to call to access the state program they need. Additionally, agencies sometimes need to refer people to a phone number for more information, but lack the staff capacity to handle a huge increase in call volume. This is where 2-1-1 can help.

2-1-1: The Solution

2-1-1 is a phone number and online database that connects Californians to services, information, and resources in their communities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and in 150 different languages. 2-1-1 information and referral service providers connect the public with highly trained specialists experienced at assessing caller needs and eligibility for available services in a community.

- 2-1-1 call specialists can be trained to handle calls for most government agency referrals including screening and enrollment.
- 2-1-1 has the potential to consolidate the multitude of state 800 lines into one number.
- 2-1-1s track all calls received and are able to provide state agencies with critical information about on-going needs in the state broken down by geography, ethnicity, income and other factors.

2-1-1 Call Centers Are Experienced Handling California State Agency Calls

- **Employment Development Department:** 2-1-1 served as a resource for EDD to refer Californians who were maxing out their unemployment benefits during 2010. 2-1-1 assisted callers by searching for community-based resources, like employment resources, food, utility assistance, and rent assistance, to help offset the further loss of income.
- **Department of Social Services – Cal Fresh:** As part of the state's outreach efforts, 2-1-1 providers screen the public to determine eligibility for food stamps, and in some regions assist with enrollment. *Between October and December 2010, 2-1-1s pre-screened over 39,000 households.*
- **California Emerging Technology Fund:** As part of the *Get Connected* grant, 2-1-1 providers screen 2-1-1 callers to determine if they have computer and/or broadband access in the home, and refer them to resources in their communities that can help them bridge the digital divide. *As of February 2011, 2-1-1 providers have screened 27,591 Californians, and of those, almost 10%, an estimated 2,428, now have access to broadband at home.*

2-1-1s Can Do Even More for Agencies Moving Forward

With the right resources, 2-1-1 has potential to help state agencies in many ways, including:

- **Health insurance referral, eligibility screening and enrollment:** 2-1-1s can play an important role in the new navigator network required under the Affordable Care Act.
- **Pandemic education and assistance:** Nationally, 60% of 2-1-1 statewide associations have contracts with public health departments to help with outbreaks.
- **Veteran and military family assistance:** Half of all 2-1-1 statewide associations in the nation support state programs that help veterans and military families.
- **Addressing recidivism among prisoners:** Many statewide 2-1-1 associations help with programs, such as job training and other social services that assist prisoners re-entering communities.

