

111TH 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 6, 2009

Ms. ESHOO 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 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.

7 (2) The number “2-1-1” is an easy-to-remem-
8 ber telephone number that facilitates critical connec-
9 tions between individuals and families seeking serv-
10 ices, volunteer opportunities, or both and appro-
11 priate human service agencies, including community-
12 based and faith-based organizations and government
13 agencies.

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

24 (4) At the Federal, State, and local levels, gov-
25 ernment funding supports well-intentioned programs

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

11 (5) A national cost benefit analysis conducted
12 by the University of Texas estimates a net value to
13 society of a national 2-1-1 system approaching
14 \$130,000,000 in the first year alone and a conserv-
15 ative estimate of nearly \$1,100,000,000 over 10
16 years.

17 (6) Many families need information on govern-
18 ment and not-for-profit services that provide high
19 quality health care, public health information related
20 to bioterrorism threats, mental health services, drug
21 treatment, elder care, help for victims of domestic vi-
22 olence, disaster recovery, and volunteer opportuni-
23 ties.

24 (7) Individuals often need support, services, or
25 both when suffering emotional distress, having suici-

1 dal thoughts or behavior, contemplating violence, or
2 using drugs or alcohol.

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

11 (9) Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist
12 attacks, an estimated 400 telephone hotlines were
13 established in New York, New York, for various
14 funds and services, creating a confusing network for
15 victims and volunteers to navigate. A Comptroller
16 General report on charitable aid following the ter-
17 rorist attacks found that “families of victims gen-
18 erally believed they had to navigate a maze of service
19 providers in the early months” and that “good infor-
20 mation about and easy access to available assistance
21 could help survivors in the recovery process”.

22 (10) During the Hurricane Katrina disaster in
23 2005, 2-1-1 served as a crucial backup in areas of
24 the Gulf Coast where 9-1-1 centers went down, pro-
25 viding access to emergency responders as well as

1 serving as a source for information about loved ones,
2 food, shelter, and other vital services.

3 (11) 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), as added by sec-
11 tion 131 of the Public Health Security and Bioter-
12 rorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002
13 (Public Law 107–188).

14 (12) While 69 percent of the population has ac-
15 cess to 2–1–1 telephone service in 41 States, inad-
16 equate funding prevents access to that telephone
17 service throughout each of the States. 2–1–1 tele-
18 phone service is currently available statewide in only
19 17 States.

20 (13) Rapid deployment nationwide of 2–1–1
21 telephone service as a means of access to informa-
22 tion about and referral on human services requires
23 collaboration among State governments, comprehen-
24 sive and specialized information and referral centers,
25 including Child Care Resource and Referral Agen-

1 cies, human service organizations and service pro-
2 viders, emergency management and homeland secu-
3 rity officials, telephone companies, and other rel-
4 evant entities.

5 (14) 2-1-1 telephone service facilitates the
6 availability of a single repository where comprehen-
7 sive data on all community services is collected,
8 maintained, and updated regularly, reducing costs
9 and duplication of efforts. The reliable data provided
10 through 2-1-1 telephone service helps to better as-
11 sess the needs of our communities and to imme-
12 diately mobilize resources toward those needs.

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

16 (a) GRANTS REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Health
17 and Human Services 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 citizens in the State
20 for information and referral on health and human services,
21 including volunteer services. These grant dollars shall not
22 supplant existing funding streams or services.

23 (b) GRANT TO BE AVAILABLE FOR EACH STATE.—
24 In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall
25 develop a formula for allocating grant amounts among the

1 States so that a grant may be awarded to each State seek-
2 ing a grant.

3 (c) REQUIREMENT ON SHARE OF ACTIVITIES.—

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

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

12 (d) LEAD ENTITY.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—A State seeking a grant
14 under this section shall carry out this section
15 through a lead entity meeting the requirements of
16 this subsection.

17 (2) 2-1-1 COLLABORATIVE.—An entity shall be
18 treated as the 2-1-1 Collaborative for a State under
19 this subsection if the entity—

20 (A) exists for such purpose under State
21 law;

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

1 (C) is a collaborative entity established by
2 the State for such purpose from among rep-
3 resentatives of—

4 (i) an informal existing 2–1–1 state-
5 wide collaborative, if any, in the State;

6 (ii) State agencies;

7 (iii) community-based organizations;

8 (iv) faith-based organizations;

9 (v) not-for-profit organizations;

10 (vi) comprehensive and specialized in-
11 formation and referral providers, including
12 current 2–1–1 call centers;

13 (vii) foundations; and

14 (viii) businesses.

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

22 (e) APPLICATION.—

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

1 submit to the Secretary an application therefore in
2 such form 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 citizen with phone service may dial the 2-
9 1-1 telephone service in order to plan to make
10 available throughout the State 2-1-1 telephone
11 service for information and referral on human
12 services, including information on the manner
13 in which the lead entity will develop, sustain,
14 and evaluate the program.

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

18 (C) There should be a statewide database
19 available to all citizens as well as all human
20 service programs, through the Internet, that
21 will allow them to search for programs or serv-
22 ices that are available according to the data
23 gathered by the 2-1-1 programs in the State.

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

4 (f) SUBGRANTS.—

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

12 (A) for the provision of 2–1–1 telephone
13 service;

14 (B) for the operation and maintenance of
15 2–1–1 call centers; and

16 (C) for the collection and display of infor-
17 mation for the statewide database.

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

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

23 (B) the extent to which the award of the
24 subgrant will facilitate equitable geographic dis-
25 tribution of subgrants under this section to en-

1 sure that rural communities have access to 2-
2 1-1 telephone service; and

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

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

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

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

22 (A) abide by the Key Standards for 2-1-
23 1 Centers as specified in the Standards for Pro-
24 fessional Information and Referral Require-
25 ments for Alliance of Information Referral Sys-

1 tems (AIRS) Accreditation and Operating 2–1–
2 1 Systems; and

3 (B) collaborate with human service organi-
4 zations, whether public or private, to provide an
5 exhaustive database of services with which to
6 provide information or referral to individuals
7 utilizing 2–1–1 telephone service.

8 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts of a subgrant
9 under subsection (f) may be used by grantees for
10 Statewide and regional planning, start-up costs (in-
11 cluding costs of software and hardware upgrades
12 and telecommunications costs), training, accredita-
13 tion, public awareness, evaluation of activities, Inter-
14 net hosting and site development and maintenance
15 for a statewide database, database integration
16 projects that incorporate data from different 2–1–1
17 programs to a single statewide database, and the
18 provision of 2–1–1 telephone service.

19 (h) REQUIREMENT ON ALLOCATION OF GRANT
20 AMOUNTS.—Of the amounts awarded under this section,
21 an aggregate of not more than 15 percent shall be allo-
22 cated for evaluation, training, and technical assistance,
23 and for management and administration of subgrants
24 awarded under this section.

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

6 (1) describe the program funding by the grant;

7 (2) assess the effectiveness of the program in
8 making available to all citizens with phone service
9 State 2–1–1 telephone service for information and
10 referral on human services in accordance with the
11 provisions of this section; and

12 (3) assess the effectiveness of collaboration with
13 human service resource and referral entities and
14 service providers.

15 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

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

22 (B) Services that support personal and so-
23 cial development.

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

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

7 (A) maintains a database of providers of
8 human services in a State or locality;

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

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

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

21 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
23 priated to carry out this Act, for each of fiscal years 2009
24 and 2010, \$150,000,000, and for each of fiscal years 2011
25 through 2014, \$100,000,000.

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

○