



POTENTIAL COST-SAVINGS TO STATE GOVERNMENT BY IMPLEMENTING 2-1-1

1. **Better Use of Local and Faith-Based Services.** 2-1-1 directly links those in need to local, non-profit and faith-based services, potentially reducing the need to rely on state services in some cases. For example, a family in which both parents have been recently laid-off uses 2-1-1 to connect to a non-profit job training program and gets the new skills to be able to get jobs, without having to rely on TANF.
2. **Earlier Diagnosis of Problems and Access to Support.** Studies show that most individuals average 14 calls in search of help, if they don't give up. 2-1-1 operators can use the statewide database to immediately connect callers with appropriate services, earlier in their search for help. Cost savings to the state include: Getting individuals and families help before they reach crisis with a higher need to depend upon the state, and more quickly helping them if they are in crisis, which can shorten their length on public assistance. For example, a family may have a child with a mental health problem, without recognizing it as the cause of behavioral disruption. Immediate referral to an agency that provides mental health assessment helps get the child appropriate counseling and medication, allowing that child to be a success in school and in life, rather than dropping out and potentially engaging in destructive behavior costly to the taxpayer.
3. **Better Use of Volunteers.** 2-1-1 directly links those wanting to volunteer in the community to agencies that can best use their skills. Many of these volunteers work directly with at risk children and adults. The volunteer's involvement has the potential to reduce the at-risk person's need to rely on state services. For example, a local senior citizen is matched with a young, single mother in need of respite support. With this parenting support, the mother is able to study for her degree and become a nurse, increasing her income and ability to support her children without state assistance.
4. **Increase Effectiveness of Public Education/Information Campaigns.** The state can use 2-1-1 as a response information line for public information campaigns, such as changes in state program benefits eligibility or health interventions, without needing to expend valuable staff time. For example, Connecticut has used 2-1-1 as the information line for state-sponsored campaigns to end teen violence and raise breast cancer awareness.
5. **Frees Up State Agency Resources to Focus on Core Mission.** State agencies would need to respond to and refer fewer callers who are calling for services not offered by that agency. State agencies that dedicate staff resources to properly routing calls (within and between agencies) could re-focus these efforts to directly serving their core clients.

6. **Disaster Relief More Effective and Efficient.** 2-1-1 as a secondary response line to a terrorist attack or natural disaster allows quicker, non-emergency relief for victims and communities, including connecting people to food, shelter, volunteer and community-based relief. Getting people, and the economy, on their feet more quickly ultimately saves the state from having to provide as much financial assistance.
7. **Getting People “Out of the System”.** 2-1-1’s database of services will be available to all 2-1-1 operators, state agency personnel, and the public via the internet. Many people on state support cycle in and out of the state’s safety net. People with access to a whole spectrum of services, not just those that the state provides, are more likely to be successful and eventually self-sufficient.
8. **Legislators Better Serve Their Constituency.** Constituent services is a key part of every legislator’s job. Access to the 2-1-1 database and operators will allow legislative staff to more quickly respond to constituent needs, increasing constituent satisfaction. For example, a small business owner wants to “give back” to the community by helping recent immigrants study for their citizenship exam. He seeks help from his state legislator, who in turn uses 2-1-1 to connect him to non-profit program where he becomes a volunteer.
9. **Decreased Crime and Incarceration Rates.** Those leaving state prisons must find their ways back into productive lives as contributing members of society and the economy. However, for ex-prisoners, this can be an almost insurmountable challenge if they have lost family, friends and jobs. Failure to get a job and find housing or counseling increases the likelihood of re-offending, with costs to society from the crime as well as additional jail time. The Department of Corrections tries to assist people with information about available services upon release, which is not its core function. Thus, Employment Security created a sizeable program to collect and publish local health and human service information statewide. 2-1-1 can provide this service immediately and at less cost to state employees and ex-convicts, which also ensures that people are successful in remaining crime-free, showing how a single statewide database could be effective for many state departments.

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, universally recognizable number that makes it possible for people in need to navigate the complex and ever-growing maze of human services. It provides quick access to health and human services, encourages prevention and fosters self-sufficiency.

WIN 2-1-1 and United Way of King County believe that these are only a few of the cost-savings that will accrue to state government. Funding is in place to study the benefits once 2-1-1 is turned on, so that Washington will be the first state in country with a baseline study measuring the effectiveness of 2-1-1.

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