



King County

Community Services Division

**Department of
Community and Human Services**

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2012-2017 Veterans and Human Services Levy

Activity 4.5.A Information and Referral: King County 2-1-1 Community Information Line

1. Goal

The primary goal of this activity is to: Increase self-sufficiency of veterans and vulnerable populations.

2. Strategy

The Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plan (SIP) set a goal of Strengthening Families at Risk.

3. Activity 4.5: Information and Referral

Activity 4.5 Information and Referral includes more than one activity. This implementation plan describes Activity 4.5.A, King County 2-1-1.

4. Service Needs and Populations to be Served

a) Service Needs

The King County 2-1-1 provides comprehensive information and referrals to community services. It has been a major source of information and assistance to King County residents since 1973. The agency maintains a comprehensive database of available housing and human services, assisting people by providing information and referrals to a variety of services they may need.

At the beginning of the recession in 2008, the 2-1-1 Community Information Line experienced a jump in the number of incoming calls from 128,000 annually to about 185,000 calls annually. The agency was able to assist 120,000 callers in 2009, but the agency experienced a loss of funding resulting in a loss of staff available to assist callers. In 2010, the agency was only able to assist 110,000 callers and in 2011, it is anticipated 2-1-1 may only be able to respond to 85,000 calls. Funding continues to be a significant problem in meeting the community demand for service.

In addition, because of the recession, the needs of callers are more complex and they are in greater distress. Staff spends more time assisting each caller. For example, the average length of call went from 3.42 minutes in 2006 to over 8 minutes on 2011 due to

additional time needed to assess caller's needs and assure the referrals being made are appropriate to meet their needs.

b) Populations to be Served

King County 2-1-1 service is available to provide information and referrals to anyone in King County who needs housing or other human services. In reality, they serve the most vulnerable members of our county, with 98 percent of callers having incomes below poverty.

Human services professionals also use 2-1-1, calling to secure service information for their clients. Professionals and members of the general public also use Community Resources Online, which has the most up-to-date and comprehensive listing of health and human services in King County and is available free to anyone searching for services. With more than 5,000 services listed, it is the most effective way to find assistance with such needs as rent/mortgage payments, in-home care services, low-cost mental health or chemical dependency counseling, or legal aid.

c) Promotion of Equity and Social Justice

i) Will your activity have an impact on equity?

This activity will have a positive impact on equity. The King County Equity Impact Review Tool available online at:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/equity/toolsandresources.aspx> provides a list of the determinants of equity that may be affected by the activity. Of the determinants listed on page 4 of the tool, the determinant most likely to be affected by this activity is, "Health and human services that are high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate and support the optimal well-being of all people". "Housing for all people that is safe, affordable, high quality and healthy"; is another determinant that may also be affected by this activity.

ii) What population groups are likely to be affected by the proposal? How will communities of color, low-income communities or limited English proficiency communities be impacted?

King County 2-1-1 has demonstrated its effectiveness in serving communities of color, low-income communities and limited English proficiencies. In 2010, 53 percent of the help sought was for financial assistance or basic needs. Data gathered on the over 110,000 individuals who called 2-1-1 in 2010 indicated the following,

- 97 percent had poverty-level incomes
- 68 percent were persons of color
- 50 percent were families with children
- 31 percent were disabled
- 14 percent were homeless
- 5 percent spoke English as a second language

King County 2-1-1 also provides Tele-Interpreters Language Service for callers who need language assistance. They have access to interpreters speaking more than 150 languages. They also have bilingual English/Spanish Specialists.

- iii) What actions will be taken to enhance likely positive impacts on these communities and mitigate possible negative impacts?

King County 2-1-1 provides referrals based on the callers specific needs and explains how social systems work, coaching callers on presenting their situation in the manner that will best assure they can access service. Callers are also engaged in creative problem solving if no resources are available.

King County 2-1-1 measures outcomes including the percent that found the information they received and the staff helpful. They also follow up with a percentage of callers to see if they were able to secure help from the agencies they were referred to.

5. Activity Description

King County 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, universally recognizable number that makes it possible for people in need to navigate the complex maze of human services. The King County 2-1-1 provides comprehensive information and referrals to community services including such things as the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter and Low Income Housing • Utility Assistance • Financial Assistance • Food and Clothing/ Baby Supplies • Health and Dental Services • Support groups • Mental Health and Counseling Service • Youth or Senior Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care • Legal and Consumer Advice and Assistance • Special Assistance for Caregivers • Disability Services • Transportation Assistance • Employment and Training • Volunteering • Government Programs
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2-1-1 is an important entry point for screening people for housing and rental assistance, civil legal assistance. Information specialists assess the individual's needs, coaching them to make sure they can be effective in requesting services when they call the agencies they are referred to. Information on services available in King County can also be searched online at www.WIN211.org. The King County 2-1-1 phone line operates 8 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday.

6. Funds Available

The 2012 Service Improvement Plan identified the following allocations for this activity.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Veterans Levy	-	-	-	-	-	-
Human Services Levy	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Total	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000

A total of \$ 50,000 is available in 2012 to implement this activity. Additional funds will be available annually through 2017 based on the activity's performance and the annual budget review process.

7. Evidence-based or Promising Practices

In 2000, the Federal Communications Commission found that 2-1-1 was a valuable resource for connecting people to local community resources and designated the dialing code, 2-1-1, to be made exclusively available to organizations providing comprehensive information and referrals services. Today, more than 260 million American, 87 percent of the U.S. population has access to 2-1-1 service.

King County 2-1-1 is accredited by the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS), which defines best practices for the information and referral industry. In addition, the University of Texas Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources conducted a cost benefit analysis on 2-1-1 (<http://www.211us.org/faq.htm#cost>) and concluded the following:

- When an individual seeks information or referral services for which they have little or no prior knowledge or experience, dialing 2-1-1 is much simpler than other options.
- General information systems, such as 4-1-1, provide information that is too general in nature to be very useful and may charge a fee.
- As a one-stop shop for social services, 2-1-1 would ultimately save Americans millions of dollars in taxpayer money.
- A national service of this type is estimated to provide \$1.1 billion in net value to society over the next 10 years.

Other cost benefit analyses have been completed on the 2-1-1 call center service model and are available for viewing online at: <http://211us.org/benefits.htm> .

8. Service Partnerships

King County's 2-1-1 is operated by Crisis Clinic. Financial support is provided by United Way of King County, the City of Seattle, King County and the cities of Bellevue, Burien, Covington, Des Moines, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton, SeaTac, Shoreline, Tukwila and Woodinville. They also have contracts with other providers. King County 2-1-1 is a member of the Washington Information Network 2-1-1 (WIN 211), the organization responsible for implementing the 2-1-1 system in the state.

King County 2-1-1 also works with virtually all human service and governmental providers to make information about over 5,000 services available to the public. Staff is in frequent contact with these providers to ensure 2-1-1 has the most current information available to share with callers or those viewing information online.

9. Performance Measures

The following performance measures were identified by the Levy’s Evaluation Team. While the King County 211 anticipates receiving about 90,000 calls in 2012, the Human Services Levy represents only about 3.3 percent of their operating budget. The targets provided below reflect the portion of services estimated to be purchased with Levy funding.

Objectives	Service Outputs/ Measures	Most Recent Performance	2012 Target(s)	Data Source
Outreach Assessment and Engagement	Number of calls	No Levy funding prior to 2012	3,000	Report Card-Services
	Percent that receive new referral information		90 percent	Report Card-Services
	Percent that contacted or intend to contact agency(ies) referred to		90 percent	Report Card-Services
	Percent contacted who report being satisfied with information and services provided.		90 percent	Report Card-Outcomes

In addition, King County 2-1-1 will provide on a semi-annual basis a report on demographic and service need information. The agency will also respond to special requests for additional data as needed.