
Independent Analysis of Pinellas County Information and Referral Services
and Ancillary Services Delivered by
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc.

FINAL REPORT
April 8, 2009

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TO THE HHSCC POLICY BOARD: THE “BOTTOM LINE”

This study focuses on (1) the perceived need for and value of the services provided by 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares (2-1-1 TBC) and expectations for what 2-1-1 TBC should provide, as articulated by funders, human services providers, elected officials and other leaders in the community; (2) an independent analysis of the performance of 2-1-1 TBC; and, (3) an independent analysis of potential alternative futures for 2-1-1 TBC.

As consultants who have worked extensively with statewide and regional 2-1-1 systems and local 2-1-1s throughout the country, we came to this study with a deep appreciation for the potential value of 2-1-1 to communities and with an informed and critical eye on the organization, funding and performance of individual 2-1-1s and 2-1-1 systems.

Primary Conclusions We offer these primary conclusions from our interviews, document review, observation and analysis of 2-1-1 TBC and Pinellas County:

1. 2-1-1 is seen nationwide as a high value strategic asset for communities, counties and states. Millions of dollars have been invested in developing 2-1-1s. Millions more are spent each year ensuring that high quality 2-1-1 services are available to as many people as possible – today, that is roughly 78% of the U.S. population.
2. There is broad, virtually unanimous belief – among elected officials and policy and executive leaders of public agencies, nonprofit organizations and funders – that residents of Pinellas County need high quality comprehensive information and referral services, based in Pinellas County and easily accessible by dialing 2-1-1 and online, that can help them connect with the community, health and human services they need. There also is broad and strong support for 2-1-1 TBC as the organization that should be sustained and strengthened to meet that need and no discernible support for attempting to replace 2-1-1 TBC with a new service or organization or to have it absorbed into an existing agency.
2. In our judgment, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares is a fundamentally sound, better than average 2-1-1 that is well respected by elected officials, funders and human service agencies in Pinellas County and by its peers throughout the State of Florida and nationally. Some of its efforts – particularly its self-initiated quality assurance activities, its increasing use of social networking and its management and integration of TBIN – can be considered “best practices” in the industry.
3. 2-1-1 TBC, like all 2-1-1s, has areas in which it can improve the quality and consistency of its service. All of its problems are eminently fixable. The organization has done a solid job under difficult circumstances in both maintaining the fundamental quality of its service and in responding to its problems within the limits of its resources.
4. Short-term fixes to 2-1-1 TBC’s current problems, ongoing improvement in its performance and expansion of its contribution to Pinellas County can only be

achieved through sustained investment in improved systems, processes and staffing and close mutually beneficial partnerships with Pinellas County government, the Juvenile Welfare Board, the United Way of Tampa Bay and the array of funders and providers of community and human services in the county.

5. There is untapped potential in 2-1-1 TBC – as collector, organizer and sharer of data that funders and agencies need to improve current services and plan for the future; as gateway and potential provider of services to more deeply assist people in navigating the complexity of human service systems; by expanding use of TBIN and Community Voice Mail to more fully support the agencies who serve people living on the margin of the community; and by building on 2-1-1 TBC’s current role as a regional 2-1-1 provider to make 2-1-1 service for the region more accessible and cost efficient.

6. Using industry-accepted norms of 85% of calls answered within one minute and budget assumptions based on and tested by the experience of 2-1-1s nationwide, we believe that the core cost of providing 2-1-1 service in Pinellas County and of ensuring reasonable organizational management capacity is approximately \$1 to \$1.1 million per year or between \$1.10 and \$1.20 per person in Pinellas County per year. This does not include the costs for TBIN or Community Voice Mail which are separately funded, for 2-1-1 service to other communities in the region for which fees are received or for activities outside the normal scope of generally recognized 2-1-1 core functions.

**Primary
Recommendations**

Throughout the body of this report and summarized in the Executive Summary we have made recommendations addressed directly to 2-1-1 TBC and to its primary funders, individually and collectively.

We offer these primary recommendations for consideration by the Policy Board of the Health and Human Services Coordinating Council for Pinellas County.

1. The HHSCC Policy Board should formally endorse the strategic value of 2-1-1 as an essential part of the human services network in Pinellas County.

2. The HHSCC Policy Board should take the leadership to create an environment of support for 2-1-1 TBC in which elected officials, funders, human service agencies and 2-1-1 TBC are working in close, mutually beneficial partnership that ensures that there are clear, mutually agreed expectations for 2-1-1 and that 2-1-1 TBC is strengthened and sustained in a way that enables it to meet those expectations.

3. The HHSCC Policy Board should take affirmative actions to ensure that 2-1-1 TBC is appropriately financed by:

- strongly recommending to the Pinellas County Commissioners and to the Board of Directors of the Juvenile Welfare Board that they jointly make a commitment of at least \$800,000 per year for three years for the core support of 2-1-1 TBC;
- formally and strongly urging each municipality in Pinellas County to fund 2-1-1 TBC at a level equivalent to at least 15 cents per resident per

year;

- urging the regional leadership of the Department of Children and Families to fund 2-1-1 TBC at a level consistent with the support given by DCF to 2-1-1s in other regions of Florida;
- recommending to the Pinellas County Commissioners and to the Board of Directors of JWB that they require 2-1-1 TBC to undertake an aggressive fund-raising effort that, within three years, will cover at least 5% of its budget.
- requesting that the Pinellas County Commissioners and the Board of Directors of the Juvenile Welfare Board task the executive director of JWB and the appropriate assistant county administrator to evaluate how the two bodies might be able to provide significant in-kind support to 2-1-1 TBC (e.g., replacement of current lease with county government space, provision of T1 line, etc.) and to report back to the board no later than its July 2009 meeting.

4. The HHSCC Policy Board should take three actions to ensure that this study and the resulting conclusions and recommendations become the basis for short-term action and longer-term planning by:

- creating a team – consisting of one or two members of the county commission, one or two members of the JWB board, the director of Pinellas County Health and Human Services, the executive director of JWB, the CEO of the United Way of Tampa Bay and the board chair and executive director of 2-1-1 TBC – to engage in a short, focused strategic planning process and to report back to the Board no later than its July 2009 meeting on:
 - a mutually agreed upon vision for the future development of 2-1-1 TBC, a shared set of expectations and common reporting requirements for 2-1-1 TBC; and,
 - their joint response to the findings and specific recommendations in this report and the actions they propose to take in response;
- creating a team – consisting of senior level representation from Pinellas County Health and Human Services, the Juvenile Welfare Board, United Way of Tampa Bay, the Homeless Leadership Network, the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless and 2-1-1 TBC – to review the current level of use of TBIN and Community Voice Mail, to examine how the desirability and feasibility of more fully using their capacity to meet the needs of people who live on the margin of the community and to support the agencies that serve them, and to make specific recommendations to the Policy Board by its September 2009 meeting on how to achieve that expanded use, what it would cost and how it might be financed. Attention should be given to the engagement of grass-roots and faith-based organizations in this discussion.

5. The HHSCC Policy Board should commit HHSCC – and strongly urge Pinellas County government and JWB to formally commit themselves as well – to three broader steps:

- providing leadership for development of a regional 2-1-1 system along the lines outlined in this plan;
- supporting the Federal Calling for 2-1-1 Act which could result in significant new funding for 2-1-1 TBC, to requesting the active support of the Florida Congressional delegation for the Act and to working with the delegation to secure earmarks or other available federal funds to support 2-1-1 in Florida.
- seeking the support of the Governor and the State Legislature for dedicated state government funding for the development and operations of an integrated statewide 2-1-1 system.

6. The HHSCC Policy Board should encourage its staff, the members of the Administrative Forum and the members of its leadership networks to:

- receive training from 2-1-1 TBC on the information resources available through 2-1-1, TBIN and Community Voice Mail to support efforts to secure additional funding to meet existing and emerging community needs.
 - work with 2-1-1 TBC to identify fundable collaborative opportunities that utilize those resources to expand and strengthen services and address unmet needs.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About the Study

This study focuses on (1) the perceived need for and value of the services provided by 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares (2-1-1 TBC) and expectations for what 2-1-1 TBC should provide, as articulated by funders, human services providers, elected officials and other leaders in the community; (2) an analysis of the performance of 2-1-1 TBC; and, (3) an analysis of potential alternative futures for 2-1-1 TBC.

About 2-1-1

“2-1-1” is the three digit dialing code designated in 2000 by the Federal Communications Commission to provide widespread public access to community information and referral services. In response, there has been a national effort to develop statewide “2-1-1 systems” that will ensure that 2-1-1 becomes as easily recognized as 911 and 411. As of March 2009, 2-1-1 was serving over 234 million Americans, more than 78% of the entire population, through 244 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 48 states (including 31 states with 90%+ coverage) plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. In 2008, 2-1-1s responded to over 14 million calls, a more than 40% increase over the previous year that was driven not only by expanded access but by the growing need of Americans to connect with services to help them confront the growing economic crisis.

The Demonstrated Value and Impact of 2-1-1 Nationwide

The consistent experience of 2-1-1s throughout the country is that they bring significant public benefits to their communities and states. While the specifics of these benefits may differ from place to place based on the local environment, there generally is demonstrated value in eight distinct areas.

- Improving the way in which people learn about and connect with the services they need.
- Helping to create new efficiencies in delivery of health and human services.
- Providing a new resource for businesses and other employers to help their employees while maintaining their productivity.
- Providing a new way in which government can respond to the expectations and needs of all their constituents.
- Providing an expanded infrastructure for information and referral that can ensure consistent, standards-driven service.
- Serving as a support system for emergency management and playing a role in homeland security.
- Providing new trend data on health and human service needs, met and unmet, for planning and resource allocation.
- Connecting people with opportunities to “give help” through volunteering and contribution of money and in-kind goods.

About 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc. was founded in 1996 as Pinellas Cares, Inc., a charitable organization with a purpose of providing volunteer opportunities for the community. Helpline (now 2-1-1) began as a program of Family Resources in the mid-1970s. In 1999, following a strategic planning process refocused on

its core mission, Family Resources spun off three programs, Helpline, the Volunteer Action Center, and Community Voice Mail to Pinellas Cares, Inc.

On June 4, 2001, the Helpline officially became 2-1-1, the number to dial "to find help and give help" in Pinellas County. At the same time Pinellas Cares changed its name to 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc., reflecting its dual focus on 2-1-1 and volunteering. It became the eighth 2-1-1 center in the United States and the second in Florida, providing crisis counseling, social services and volunteer referrals 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

2-1-1 TBC became a regional service in 2002 when it became the contractor for 2-1-1 service in Hernando County. This regional role expanded in 2005 when United Way of Citrus County began contracting with 2-1-1 TBC to provide the service to Citrus County residents. 2-1-1 TBC also provides after hours 2-1-1 service in De Soto, Manatee, Pasco, and Sarasota Counties. The call center also answers local calls to the national Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Last year 2-1-1 TBC handled over 97,000 calls. The 2-1-1 database is available to the public in a searchable online format and contains information on approximately 5,200 distinct programs and services. In the first six months of FY 2008-09 call volume is up 11.5% and is on track to reach 109,000 calls for the year.

In the national 2-1-1 world 2-1-1 TBC is an example of a *stand-alone blended service* – in other words it is an independent 501(c)3 dedicated to providing comprehensive information and referral in conjunction with crisis intervention services.

2-1-1 TBC's core program has four components: the 2-1-1 telephone service, the resource database, Community Voice Mail and the Tampa Bay Information Network (TBIN).

2-1-1 TBC has met and maintained the accreditation requirements for both the American Association of Suicidology and national Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, the two primary relevant accrediting bodies. In addition, over 80% of 2-1-1 TBC staff members are AIRS certified, well above the minimum AIRS standard of 25%. 2-1-1 TBC also meets two requirements of the State of Florida – certification as a "211 Network Provider" by the Agency for Health Care Administration and annual certification by the Department and Children and Families for Substance Abuse Prevention – as well as three times achieving the JWB ASSET Certification.

Conclusions about the Community View of 2-1-1 and of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

1. There is broad, virtually unanimous, belief that residents of Pinellas County need an easily accessible, high quality comprehensive information and referral agency that can help them connect with the services they need – this was commonly summarized as some version of , "if 2-1-1 went away we would have to convene a committee to recreate it".
2. There is broad agreement on three expectations for 2-1-1 in Pinellas County:
 - It will be a high quality comprehensive information and referral service.

- It will play a key role in data collection, analysis and sharing in support of the work of human service agencies and funders throughout the county, with particular core focus on demand for services, unmet needs, gaps in services and emerging trends in needs.
- It will play a lead role in preparing for, responding to and recovering from a natural or man-made disaster.

Among homeless service providers there is an additional expectation that the TBIN/HMIS system should serve as the primary repository, consolidator and reporter of information on homelessness in Pinellas County.

3. There is significant disagreement about whether 2-1-1 should provide “navigation” services in addition to or instead of information and referral although there is a belief that they could do it effectively if specifically funded to do so and if it did not take away from its primary role as a high quality comprehensive information and referral service. There are several agencies that have indicated their readiness to work with 2-1-1 TBC to develop a level of enhanced information and assistance for clients short of case management.

4. 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares has a positive reputation in the community and is well respected among elected officials, human service agencies and funders.

5. There are concerns about the performance of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares but most people expressing them also believe that many of their concerns are directly related to the lack of sufficient or stable funding for 2-1-1 TBC. The concerns expressed were:

- Whether 2-1-1 TBC has the capacity to keep its resource database current (16 mentions);
- About informal, anecdotal reports that 2-1-1 had not handled calls in ways that “solved people’s problems” (10 mentions);
- Perceived increased wait times encountered by callers (5 mentions);
- The perceived user unfriendliness of the 2-1-1 TBC online database and its search function (10 mentions); and,
- The need to better promote 2-1-1 (16 mentions).

Conclusions about the Challenges Faced by 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

It is perceived that the environment in Pinellas County is a difficult one for human service providers and particularly challenging for 2-1-1 TBC as what many described as an “infrastructure organization.” Specific aspects of the environment cited were:

- The misperception, primarily by funders but also by some human service agencies, that 2-1-1 should be able to “solve people’s problems” which is based on a misunderstanding of the role of comprehensive information and referral.

- Many agencies are perceived as unwilling – often because they do not have the staff to do it – to regularly update their records in the 2-1-1 TBC database and to provide real-time information on availability of services such as financial assistance, food and shelter beds.
- Licensing costs, discomfort using the TBIN system, and other challenges result in many homeless service providers not updating their information in TBIN on a regular basis, and/or having to duplicate data entry in TBIN and their internal systems.
- There is a lack of commitment by funders to consistently fund the infrastructure that supports human services, opting instead to fund direct services and expressing the belief that someone else, who remains unidentified, should pay for infrastructure.
- There are conflicting expectations among funders, overlapping and/or competitive requirements for reporting, and the belief by each major funder that its requests should be the top priority;
- Requests for data from funders have not been well thought out in advance in terms of why it is being requested or what will be done with it; and, requests are made that seem spontaneous, with short deadlines and the expectation that agencies will drop whatever else they are doing to provide it – all without the understanding that collecting and reporting data has a real cost to agencies.
- There is a belief that 2-1-1 TBC has been asked to take on work beyond its core mission without appropriate additional funding.

Conclusions and Recommendations About the Performance of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

1. There should be a determined effort to recruit several recognized community leaders to join the board.
2. A term limit provision should be added to the 2-1-1 TBC by-laws to ensure an orderly rotation of board members.
3. The board should take the lead to establish an ongoing fund-raising effort that includes:
 - a personal contribution from each board member, at a personally significant level, as demonstration of the board members' commitment;
 - creation of a fund-raising committee that might include people who are not board members;
 - a clear goal to increase funds raised from individuals, businesses, faith communities and civic associations to at least 5% of the total budget.
4. The primary funders – Pinellas County government, JWB and UWTB –

should set a clear expectation that 2-1-1 TBC will undertake a fund-raising program along the lines described above.

5. Those primary funders should give serious consideration to each nominating a representative to the 2-1-1 TBC board.

6. 2-1-1 TBC should continue its use of independent consultants to assess call center and database performance which has resulted in significant performance improvements, at least for one more year.

7. 2-1-1 TBC must continue a focus on training to improve call handling performance.

8. Until database resource specialist staffing can be increased, 2-1-1 TBC should work to recruit community or Americorp volunteers to collect and update basic program data.

9. 2-1-1 TBC and its primary funders should work together to develop and implement a solid strategy for improving the rate of updating of their own records by agencies.

10. We recommend creation of a special, time-limited task force to consider and resolve what the optimal use of TBIN is and to create a plan to achieve that level of use.

11. The performance of TBIN can be improved by better managing licenses, improving communications with users and providing additional training.

12. Community Voice Mail should be marketed to non-profits in need of backup communication services in times of disaster.

13. 2-1-1 TBC must follow-through on the work it has begun to upgrade its web site and to significantly improve user interface with the database search function.

14. 2-1-1 TBC must improve the speed and quality of its internet access by identifying a new internet provider. Its primary funders must recognize that this is a legitimate additional annual cost that cannot be met by reducing staff to pay for it. Pinellas County government and JWB should explore whether either can provide improved internet access to 2-1-1 TBC as an in-kind contribution.

Conclusions and Recommendations about the Future of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

1. A strengthened 2-1-1 TBC should be maintained as an independent nonprofit organization working in close partnership with Pinellas County government, JWB and the human service agencies serving the county.

2-1-1s can make the greatest contributions to their communities when they are recognized as a strategic infrastructure asset that can help improve the delivery of human services and can help government, funders and human service providers achieve their individual and collective missions.

2. The most important single step that can be taken to develop 2-1-1 TBC as the “data central” is for the primary users – Pinellas County government, JWB, the Coalition for the Homeless and UWTB – to agree on their shared priorities for data, to set clear expectations for what data 2-1-1 TBC will be responsible for providing and to ensure that 2-1-1 TBC has the resources it needs to meet those expectations.

3. We recommend that the primary users create, with 2-1-1 TBC’s participation, a small (one person from each organization) working group to review requests for data, vetting to determine the value, intended application and priority of the data requested and the impact of the request on 2-1-1 TBC, thus creating a new level of transparency about the demands placed on 2-1-1 TBC.

4. Consideration should be given to creating a regional 2-1-1 for the Greater Tampa Bay media market that would include these features:

- A single resource database, fed by each of the 2-1-1s, available online to all of the 2-1-1s and to the public;
- A single software package to be used by all 2-1-1s in the region to ensure consistency in formatting of resource data records, collection of call and referral data and reporting.
- A single call routing system, hosted by an external vendor, that would route calls from within the region according to mutually agreed upon protocols. This would allow the current 2-1-1s to vary their hours of operation, back up one another during periods of peak call volume, reroute calls quickly as required and have built in redundancy.
- Primary 24/7 call centers at 2-1-1 TBC and 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) with other 2-1-1s forwarding after hours calls to the 24/7 call center of their choice under a cost structure to be mutually determined by the 2-1-1s.
- Required collaboration in marketing 2-1-1 throughout the region through a unified marketing plan that creates and reinforces a common brand.
- Performance measures that are created through a collaborative effort of the 2-1-1s and funders with reporting to and monitoring by a

representative task force of funders from throughout the region.

Such a regional system should be managed through a collaborative board that is representative of the county governments (both human services and emergency management), the Children’s Services Councils in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, the United Ways throughout the region, other community leaders and the 2-1-1s themselves. It should be complemented by an “operating council” composed of the directors of the 2-1-1s in the region.

Because of its track record of collaboration and partnership building, we believe 2-1-1 TBC should be asked to play a significant leadership role, with appropriate funding to cover its costs of doing so, in bringing such an effort to life.

A possible initial step would be a region-wide “2-1-1 summit” of all of the key stakeholders to launch the effort, organized and hosted by Pinellas County government, JWB and UWTB.

Conclusions and Recommendations about the Cost and Financing of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

It will require approximately \$1.1 million per year to provide high quality 2-1-1 services to Pinellas County and to ensure an appropriate infrastructure for 2-1-1 TBC. This does not include the costs of TBIN and Community Voice Mail which have stable funding sources.

Collaborations Among Funders

1. Priority attention needs to be given to a truly collaborative strategic planning process for 2-1-1 TBC with the principals of its key stakeholders involved.
2. The relationship between the primary funders (Pinellas County government, JWB and UWTB) and 2-1-1 TBC must be redefined as a partnership that recognizes 2-1-1 TBC as a valued part of the infrastructure for human service delivery in the county and that builds mutually beneficial relationships built on trust, transparency and fairness.
3. The primary funders should, jointly, reach an agreement that will ensure 2-1-1 TBC of the core resources it needs to operate at a mutually agreed on level for at least three years, even if this means taking 2-1-1 TBC out of the normal funding review process.
4. The primary funders should agree on what they can do and when and how they will do it, individually and collectively, to influence other public and private funders to support 2-1-1 TBC.
5. The primary funders and 2-1-1 TBC should work together to give visible leadership to efforts to develop a regional 2-1-1 system as described in the previous section of this report and an integrated statewide 2-1-1 system.
6. The primary funders and 2-1-1 TBC should develop and implement a strategy, to be carried out with their peers throughout the state, to secure strong support from Florida’s delegation to Congress for the Calling for 2-1-1 Act and should advocate for earmarks to support the development and operation of 2-1-1

in Florida.

JWB

7. JWB should restore its funding for 2-1-1 TBC at least at its previous level.

Here are six reasons why JWB should restore its funding at least at its previous level:

- As one of the three primary funders in Pinellas County of nonprofit organizations providing human services, JWB must take a share of the responsibility for developing and supporting the infrastructure that supports access to human services.
- 2-1-1 enhances JWB's investment in services for family and children
- 2-1-1 TBC enhances the efficiency and cost effectiveness of JWB-funded agencies.
- JWB's investment in 2-1-1 TBC can be leveraged to enhance its other programs and services.
- 2-1-1 TBC is an important source of data for JWB.
- 2-1-1 TBC has been designated to play a key role in disaster preparation, response and recovery.

8. JWB should designate 2-1-1 TBC as the “partner/vendor of choice” for any of its initiatives that require the support of a call center and should strongly recommend to the agencies it funds that they look first to 2-1-1 TBC to provide services such as after-hours call answering and specialty hotlines.

Pinellas County Government

9. In addition to continuing and increasing the core support for 2-1-1 TBC provided by Health and Human Services, the Pinellas County Commissioners should explore other potential sources of revenue for 2-1-1 TBC within county government, including from the general areas of emergency management, 911 and public safety and, potentially, by transferring responsibility for answering some of the county's public information lines for a fee.

10. The Pinellas County Commission should explore possible ways to create a dedicated and sustained funding source for 2-1-1 TBC.

11. Pinellas County government should explore specific ways in which it can make in-kind contributions to support 2-1-1 TBC.

12. Pinellas County government, JWB , UWTB, and 2-1-1 TBC should collaboratively develop and implement a resource development strategy that will result, within three years, in at least 10% of 2-1-1 TBC's revenue coming from the municipalities within Pinellas County.

United Way of Tampa Bay

13. UWTB must give higher priority to 2-1-1 TBC to ensure that its annual grants do not continue to erode.

14. UWTB should join with Pinellas County government, JWB and 2-1-1 TBC in active advocacy for creation of a regional 2-1-1 as described in the preceding section of this document and for creation of an integrated statewide 2-1-1 system.

2-1-1 TBC

15. 2-1-1 TBC must take advantage of this moment to take control of its own long-term future, seeking new ways to serve the county and to build diversified support.

16. The board of directors of 2-1-1 TBC should put high priority on the development and implementation of a fund-raising strategy, led by members of the board, which can demonstrate their ability to diversify their funding.

17. 2-1-1 TBC must continue to increase its entrepreneurial revenue-generating activities.

18. 2-1-1 should market itself as collaborative partner with other human service providers

IMPORTANT CLARIFYING NOTES

This project is focused on 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, the comprehensive information and referral agency serving Pinellas, Citrus and Hernando counties full-time and providing after-hours telephone service for Pasco, Sarasota, Manatee and De Soto counties.

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares should not be confused with “2-1-1 Tampa Bay” which is a program of the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay which is based in and serves Hillsborough County. Although the program was not originally named “2-1-1 Tampa Bay”, the Crisis Center chose to change to “2-1-1 Tampa Bay” well after “2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares” had been established under its name, despite concerns raised by the latter about the confusion that could result.

We have attempted, wherever the Hillsborough-based “2-1-1 Tampa Bay” is mentioned in this report to call it “2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center)” to minimize confusion.

Throughout this report, we use the following designations for key organizations:

2-1-1 TBC for 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

HHS for Pinellas County Health and Human Services

HHSCC for the Health and Human Services Coordinating Council

JWB for the JWB Children’s Services Council of Pinellas County

UWTB for the United Way of Tampa Bay

I&R is shorthand for “information and referral”, the overarching term used to describe the comprehensive service offered by 2-1-1s and specialized services such as domestic violence hotlines, crisis lines and senior information lines.

ABOUT THE STUDY

Background and Purpose

In June 2008, the JWB voted to eliminate funding for 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc. (henceforth, 2-1-1 TBC) at the conclusion of that fiscal year. Subsequently, it agreed to continue funding 2-1-1 TBC for one additional fiscal year and to co-sponsor, with Pinellas County Health and Human Services (HHS), an “independent analysis” of both the core information and referral services and other services provided by 2-1-1 TBC, “to ensure that Pinellas County residents do not lose needed services” (*Invitation to Bid*). The study was to be undertaken under the aegis of the Health and Human Services Coordinating Council (HHSCC).

The Invitation to Bid stated that “the results of the analysis should be summarized in a report to the HHSCC Policy Board with recommendations for improved efficiencies and funding beyond the 2008-09 fiscal year” (*Invitation to Bid*). The final report was due to the HHSCC Policy Board on April 3, 2009.

In broad terms, the study has three components:

- An analysis of the perception of the need for and value of the services provided by 2-1-1 TBC and the expectations for what 2-1-1 TBC should provide, as articulated by funders, health and social services providers, elected officials and other leaders in the community;
- An analysis of the performance of 2-1-1 TBC and of internal and external factors affecting that performance, including recommendations for improvements that can be made; and,
- An analysis of potential alternative futures for 2-1-1 TBC, including both alternative configurations of services that might be provided and alternative organizational futures, including but not limited to an examination of potential consolidation of services or mergers.

The study was supported by a five-person Project Team: Denise Groesbeck, Executive Director of HHSCC; Joe Baldwin, Senior Researcher/Planner at HHSCC; Eddie Burch, Project Lead for the 2-1-1 Study and Communications Specialist at JWB; Kathy Mitchell, Grants Coordinator at the Pinellas County Health and Human Services; and Micki Thompson, Executive Director of 2-1-1 TBC.

The Consultants

Kenn Allen and Tom Page bring a long and diversified background in nonprofit management, strategic planning and organizational development as well as in strategic planning for and operation of 2-1-1 systems. Details on their backgrounds will be found in Appendix A.

Kenn has designed and facilitated strategic planning process and

written business plans for 13 statewide 2-1-1 systems, including Florida in 2003, and for 2-1-1s in five major metro areas – New York City, Southeast Michigan (Detroit), Seattle, Portland and the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington DC. In 2005, for United Way of America, he researched and wrote a full report on the response of 2-1-1s in Florida to the 2004 hurricanes (available at www.211us.org). In 2006, he was retained by the United Way of Tampa Bay to facilitate collaborative planning discussions between 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares and 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Crisis Center in Hillsborough County.

Tom was founding executive director of Washington Information Network 2-1-1, the statewide 2-1-1 network in the State of Washington and was responsible for the successful implementation of its integrated statewide 2-1-1 system. He has supported strategic business planning in more than ten local and regional 2-1-1s and for five statewide 2-1-1 systems. He has provided resources and assistance for technical systems selection processes in ten states. He is the founding co-chair of both the 2-1-1 State Directors' Association and 2-1-1 Leadership Council/2-1-1 U.S. to facilitate and support 2-1-1 integration in North America.

The Methodology

The methodology for this study consisted of the following:

- **Identification of and interviews with 90 key informants.**

This included elected and appointed government officials; leaders and staff of nonprofit and public sector human service providers; past, present and potential funders of 2-1-1 TBC; 2-1-1s and other organizations that have in the past or currently contract with 2-1-1 TBC to provide them with services; and, members of the board and staff of 2-1-1 TBC.

Key informants were identified by members of the Project Team, by the co-chairs of the Administrative Forum (Gay Lancaster of JWB and Maureen Freaney of HHS), and through an iterative process of identification throughout the interviewing process in which those interviewed were asked to identify others to consider interviewing.

In addition to people in Pinellas County, we interviewed people in Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Sarasota, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Broward counties and in Tallahassee. These included other 2-1-1s, Children's Services Councils and United Ways.

Further details on the key informants will be found in the section "The Community View of 2-1-1 and 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares". A complete list will be found in Appendix C.

- **Document review.**

A full review was conducted of an extensive and impressive set of documents provided by HHSCC, JWB, HHS and 2-1-1 TBC detailing

the development of 2-1-1 TBC, its past and current performance, its finances, its relationship with its funders, its national accreditations, contracts, memoranda of understanding and other key organizational materials.

In addition, we reviewed 2-1-1 TBC's audits and the reports of Luther Consulting, an independent evaluator hired by 2-1-1 TBC to assess the quality of its telephone calls and the currency of its database.

- **Surveying.**

Two surveys were conducted. The first was a survey of members of the staff of 2-1-1 TBC concerning their perceptions of and experience in the work environment.

For the second, conducted in early March 2009, an online survey was sent to all registered TBIN user at agencies in Pinellas County who provided an email address when they registered. It looked at the user experience, training, support, communications from 2-1-1 TBC and challenges using the system and asked for feedback on how to enhance the experience for users and improve system performance moving forward. The TBIN survey is found in Appendix F.

- **Independent Assessment**

An independent expert on 2-1-1 database management was retained to do a spot-check of the quality of records in the 2-1-1 TBC database and to validate the results reported by Luther Consulting, the firm retained by 2-1-1 TBC to assist it in quality assurance.

- **Comparison with other 2-1-1s and industry best practices.**

Throughout the study, we compared the totality of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares – the nature of the community and the working environment, funding patterns, expectations, programs and performance – with other communities and with what are regarded by the national Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and respected practitioners as “best practices”.

The Final Report

This report is organized into the following sections in addition to this section:

- **About 2-1-1** – This section provides a context through which to understand the work of 2-1-1 TBC by describing the core business of a 2-1-1, the development and status of 2-1-1 nationally and in Florida, the cost and financing of 2-1-1 nationally and in Florida.
- **The Demonstrated Value and Impact of 2-1-1 Nationwide** – This section summarizes the primary case that is made for 2-1-1 throughout the country, including studies that have been done regarding potential cost savings associated with 2-1-1.

- About 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares – This section presents an overview of 2-1-1 TBC: its history and development, operations, staffing, finances, governance and accreditation.
- The Community View of 2-1-1 and 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares – This section reports the results of the interviews with key informants about the perceived need for and value of 2-1-1 in Pinellas County, expectations of 2-1-1, and concerns about its performance.
- Challenges Faced by 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares – This section addresses the perceived challenges 2-1-1 TBC faces, including concerns about the priorities and behaviors of funders and the expectation that 2-1-1 TBC will take on additional work without adequate additional funding.
- The Performance of 2-1-1 TBC – This section summarizes our analysis of the performance of 2-1-1 TBC in these areas: leadership, adaptability, governance, management, technical systems and operations.
- The Future of 2-1-1 TBC – This section reviews possible alternative futures for 2-1-1 in Pinellas County and for 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares and makes recommendations based on analysis of those alternatives.
- Costs and Financing of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares – This section projects the financial needs of 2-1-1 TBC, analyzes financing options and makes recommendations based on that analysis.

There are nine appendices that provide additional information to support sections of the main text.

ABOUT 2-1-1

Development of 2-1-1 In May 1997, United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta created the concept of using 2-1-1 as the dialing code to access comprehensive information and referral services. There was a significant and sustained growth in call volume based on the visibility given to this easy-to-remember way for people to connect with the services they needed.

Based on the tremendous success of the Atlanta effort, a coalition of national nonprofit organizations, led by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) and United Way of America, petitioned the Federal Communications Commission to set aside 2-1-1 to be used only for access to comprehensive information and referral services.

On July 21, 2000, the FCC designated the 2-1-1 dialing code to be used exclusively to provide public access to information about and referral to health and human services.

Since then, there has been an extensive effort nationwide to make 2-1-1 services available to as many people as possible. The majority of 2-1-1 services have been built on the foundation of existing comprehensive information and referral agencies, local organizations that have for many years provided telephone-based assistance to people seeking help. New local and regional 2-1-1s have emerged in areas where such services have not previously existed. In a number of states, formal statewide 2-1-1 systems have been developed to ensure that everyone in the state has access to consistently high quality 2-1-1 service.

The Core Business of 2-1-1 The FCC intended the 211 dialing code to be an easy-to-remember and universally recognizable number that would enable a critical connection between individuals and families in need and the appropriate faith-, community-based organizations and government agencies.

Thus, **the core business of 2-1-1 is connecting people in need with information about and referral to the programs and services available to meet these needs.** A fully functioning 2-1-1 service is built around four interlocking systems that support this core business:

- a call management system that routes calls and tracks performance data for quality assurance;
- a comprehensive resource database of available programs and services;
- software for tracking requests, referrals and gaps in services; and,
- a website that provides public access to the resource database.

A well-developed 2-1-1 has the technological infrastructure, if not always the organizational capacity or community desire, to assume additional functions such as eligibility screening for specific programs, scheduling appointments with providers, publishing specialized directories, or providing intensive assistance to callers with acute needs (sometimes referred to as a “navigator” function). Some communities also have in place specialized software to support real-time tracking of resources such as shelter beds or food baskets from

pantries.

While it is common and acceptable for 2-1-1s to take on these supplementary roles, it is also necessary to have a clear policy and guidelines for determining what additional activities are taken on by the 2-1-1 provider, in order to assure that adequate resources are available to support an expanded role for 2-1-1 and do not detract from the core business.

**The Status of 2-1-1
Nationally**

As of March 2009 over 234 million Americans, more than 78% of the entire population, have access to 2-1-1 through 244 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 47 states (including 31 states with 90%+ coverage) plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. In addition, as of September 2008, 9,300,000 Canadians, more than 28% of the population, had access to 2-1-1 services.

In January 2009, the 2-1-1s in the U.S. joined in “the Big Count,” a tabulation of calls handled in calendar year 2008. The total – over 14 million calls – represents a 40% increase over 2007, driven not only by expanded access but by the growing need of Americans to connect with services to help them confront the growing economic crisis.

**The Development of
2-1-1 in Florida**

The Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS) was incorporated in 1980 as the primary professional association for information and referral services in Florida. FLAIRS’ goal is to support the coordinated, professional delivery of referral and hotline services in order to promote quality and accessibility. Since 1995, members of FLAIRS have been actively working together to build a collaborative statewide network. Since the designation of 2-1-1 by the Federal Communications Commission, FLAIRS and the United Way of Florida have worked in close partnership to ensure the statewide utilization of 2-1-1 to provide access to both I&R and crisis hotline services.

Because the Florida Public Utility Commission did not feel that it had been delegated authority by the Federal Communications Commission to manage the assignment of 2-1-1 in Florida, it recommended that potential service providers work directly with the telephone companies serving the state to obtain use of the 2-1-1 dialing code. FLAIRS thus became the vehicle through which 2-1-1s came together in the Florida 2-1-1 Network to ensure that access is extended statewide.

During its 2002 session, the Florida state legislature passed the Florida Health and Human Service Access Act (SB 1276) which directed the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to develop a comprehensive health and human service access system and to undertake a pilot project to determine whether 2-1-1 call centers could serve as a mechanism to provide eligibility screening for Medicaid programs.

One of the provisions of Senate Bill 1276 required the Agency for Health Care Administration to develop criteria to which organizations must adhere in order to become certified Florida 2-1-1 Network Providers. Previously, any organization could obtain a 2-1-1 number without meeting specific standards or qualifications. Through certification, the Agency was to ensure that quality, consistent information and services are provided to those seeking health and

human services across the state.

The subsequent development of Florida's certification standards was a coordinated effort and included representation and input from members of the national Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services, (FLAIRS), Florida's Public Service Commission (PSC), the Florida Legislature, the Florida Department of Health, Florida Department of Children and Families, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, and other interested parties.

AHCA was mandated to submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, no later than January 1, 2004, a plan for statewide implementation of the proposed access system and, by extension, of the statewide 2-1-1 network. AHCA invited FLAIRS and the United Way of Florida to assume leadership for development of the 2-1-1 plan in consultation with the Agency.

Although in June 2002, AHCA was directed by the Office of the Governor to cease work on the pilot project component due to lack of available funding for the 2003-2004 fiscal year, it authorized FLAIRS to continue its planning.

A strategic business plan for the development of 2-1-1 in Florida, developed by the then existing 2-1-1s in cooperation with the United Way of Florida, was completed and submitted to ACHA in December 2003.

Although 2-1-1 has continued to grow in Florida, as described below, there has been limited progress on systematic implementation of the 2003 plan. Currently the United Way of Florida is examining the role that United Ways should play to accelerate the development of a statewide 2-1-1 system, either consistent with the 2003 plan or following an alternative developmental model.

The Status of 2-1-1 in Florida

Currently, there are 16 2-1-1s operating in Florida, providing landline access to 49 of the states 67 counties and approximately 88% of the state's population. Through a collaborative call routing system, the 2-1-1s now provide access to all cell phones in the state. According to FLAIRS, using 2006 estimated census population figures, they are:

- 2-1-1 Big Bend in Tallahassee provides access in eight counties to 393,000 people and after hours for the area served by the 2-1-1 in Orlando
- 2-1-1 Brevard in Cocoa, serving one county and 534,000 people and provides after hours service for Volusia and Flagler counties
- 2-1-1 Broward in Ft. Lauderdale, serving one county and 1,788,000 people
- 2-1-1 Charlotte in Punta Gorda, serving one county and 155,000 people
- 2-1-1 Community Resources Heart of Florida United Way in Orlando, serving three counties and 1,694,000 people

- 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast in Lantana, serving five counties and 1,796,000 people
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay, a division of Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, in Tampa, serving one county and 1,158,000 people
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, serving three counties and 1,228,000 people full-time and providing after hours services for four additional counties and 1,168,000 people
- 2-1-1 Volusia-Flagler in Daytona Beach, serving two counties and 580,000 people
- Switchboard of Miami in Miami, serving one county and 2,402,000 people
- United Way 2-1-1 in Ft. Myers, serving three counties and 623,000 people
- United Way 2-1-1 for North Central Florida in Gainesville, serving six counties and 341,000 people with after hours service provided by the Alachua County Crisis Center
- United Way 2-1-1 of Manasota in Sarasota, serving three counties and 718,000 people (after hours calls handled by 2-1-1 TBC)
- United Way 2-1-1 of Pasco County in Port Richey, serving one county and 450,000 people (after hours calls handled by 2-1-1 TBC)
- United Way of Central Florida in Highland City, serving one county and 562,000 people
- United Ways of Northeast Florida 2-1-1 in Jacksonville, serving nine counties and 1,473,000 people

FLAIRS lists as “prospective 2-1-1 providers” the Collier County 2-1-1 Task Force in Fort Myers which would serve one county and 315,000 people and the United Way of Escambia County in Pensacola which would serve one county and 295,000 people.

Models for Statewide Development of 2-1-1

There are three primary models which have been used to develop state 2-1-1 systems:

- *Centralization* in a single 2-1-1 that has responsibility for developing and maintaining the 2-1-1 resource database and operating a 2-1-1 call center that serves the entire population of the state. This model has been applied in geographically small states (Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Hawaii, for example) and states with relatively small populations (Alaska, Idaho, South Dakota and West Virginia, for example). Oregon currently is developing a modified version of this model that would

feature a single call center serving the entire state and regional “resource hubs” with responsibility for building and maintaining a designated share of the statewide resource database and promoting 2-1-1 and use of 2-1-1-generated data in their regions.

- *Planned Regionalization* in which the state is divided into geographic regions with a lead 2-1-1 provider designated for each region. Those lead providers have responsibility for developing a regional resource database, ideally as part of an integrated statewide database, and for operating a regional call center. Typically, after hours calls are consolidated into either one or two call centers to increase cost effectiveness. States which have chosen this model include Texas, Washington, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York.

States adopting this model typically have well integrated statewide systems that have these core characteristics:

- strong collaboration among 2-1-1 providers;
 - a well-defined governance structure that is reflective of a broad range of stakeholders, not just the 2-1-1 providers;
 - a single statewide resource database that is available to the public online;
 - agreement that the system will speak for the 2-1-1 providers in building relationships with state government, including development of contracts to provide services to state agencies;
 - agreement on specific performance measures and on processes to monitor compliance with those measures and with national 2-1-1 standards;
 - statewide marketing;
 - a statewide call routing system;
 - a state office that is appropriately staffed to support the development and operation of the total system.
- *Grassroots Development* is exemplified by two phases. The first in which counties and even communities are both permitted and encouraged to develop and support their own 2-1-1 services. In these states there is superficial collaboration among 2-1-1 service providers, typically around issues that directly affect their operations and that threaten their service areas. At best, these systems could be described as “loosely coupled” with little real accountability at the system level. Typically, states which have followed this model reach a point at which development “stalls out” with service not available to all counties and to all people.

A second phase of the grassroots model appears to be emerging as states that have taken this very decentralized approach begin coming together to plan for extending coverage statewide. Georgia and Ohio are examples of states that have entered phase two of this model.

Such systems are open to the criticism that they are not cost effective because of the large number of 2-1-1s. Inherent in this approach is the

major risk that the relatively larger number of 2-1-1s that develop may not be sustainable over time and may not be able to provide a consistent level of quality service, thus endangering the reputation and stability of the “system.”

Although it has achieved significant access to 2-1-1 over the last five years, Florida has remained committed to the third model. Developments in just the last four to six months suggest that there may be growing interest on the part of the 2-1-1s and United Ways to exploring alternative approaches.

Examples of 2-1-1s Around the Country

We were asked, as part of the study, to describe innovative practices in 2-1-1s around the country. These practices are beyond the core business of 2-1-1 described earlier in this report. The examples below are reflective of such innovative practices emerging in 2-1-1s.

- **Area Specialists:** Also known as “topic experts” or “program navigators”, area specialists have expertise in a specific area of human services and provide more intensive support to clients who need assistance navigating the system to meet their particular needs. These positions are commonly funded by a government agency or a non-profit foundation that wants to ensure additional support for a sub-set of 2-1-1 clients. Examples include Housing Specialists at the Atlanta 2-1-1 and a Long-term Caregiver Specialist funded by the City of Seattle at their local 2-1-1.

In Atlanta, United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta 2-1-1 maintains a full-time Housing Specialist. Working in conjunction with the Regional Commission on Homelessness, this Specialist provides advocacy on behalf of the chronic homeless individuals who call 2-1-1 for help. The Specialist will assist individuals with getting counseling, housing or even reunifying them with family members. The Specialist works with partner agencies such as Gateway Center, Traveler’s Aide and the various transitional shelters in the metro area.

- **Mental Health Care Facility Vacancy Tracking:** San Diego 2-1-1 provides an online system to show available beds at licensed mental health facilities. The same system is used to track availability of homeless shelter beds. (http://informsandiego.com/Client/InformSanDiego/BandC_Main.asp).
 - **Scheduling for Services:** FirstLink in Columbus, Ohio has developed a scheduling system that allows 2-1-1 agents to schedule pick-ups by clients at food pantries. The software provides real-time updates to the pantries and also tracks use of food banks to ration access and prevent double-dipping. The same scheduling software is used during tax season to set appointments for free tax preparation and Earned Income Tax Credit assistance.
 - **Targeted Community Outreach.** The 2-1-1 in Toledo, Ohio has a contract from the county Department of Jobs and Families to conduct “2-1-1 On The Road”, a monthly program in which 2-1-1 information
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specialists go on-site to low-income neighborhoods to qualify families for TANF, to introduce them to 2-1-1 and to make referrals to services they need. One benefit of this program is to make 2-1-1 known and credible to people who otherwise might not feel comfortable using it.

- **Special Promotions:** Metro United Way 2-1-1 in Louisville, Kentucky has worked with local government and media to promote one-time special uses of 2-1-1 in order to address acute community needs. Their first experience with this was in the aftermath of severe windstorms from the tail end of Hurricane Ike in the summer of 2008. “Wind Warriors” was a one-night event during which community members were encouraged to call 2-1-1 to volunteer for clean up duty, while the elderly and disabled could register for clean up assistance. A similar one-night promotion was done in early 2009 to connect people facing foreclosure with counseling and other assistance to help keep them in their homes.
- **Prisoner Re-entry Support:** A number of 2-1-1s around the country, including Cleveland, Ohio and Shreveport, Louisiana work with their local jails and prisons to educate prisoners and probation officers about re-entry services and provide access to services for ex-offenders and their families in an effort to reduce recidivism. An excellent example of a prisoner reentry guide developed by a 2-1-1 can be found at <http://www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf>.
- **Special Services for Corporations.** The corporate Family Assistance Program within the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta 2-1-1 provides callers in its 13-county area with emergency financial support through a network of community-based partner agencies. UW 2-1-1 advocates on the behalf of the individual and partner agencies pay creditors directly. Applicants to the program can be individuals or families who have traditionally been able to manage their resources, but due to extenuating circumstances or other criteria, need emergency financial help to do so. This is a one-time service offered to qualified applicants.

Financing 2-1-1: A National Perspective

A December 2007 survey on the budgets and financing of 2-1-1s, conducted by 2-1-1 U.S., received responses from 196 of the estimated 240 active call centers in the U.S. Budgets for 2-1-1s vary significantly based on a variety of factors: whether 2-1-1 is a stand-alone agency or housed within a larger organization, service area, population, call volume, hours of operation, etc. See Table 1 below.

Of the call centers providing a mix of 2-1-1 and other services in population centers greater than 500,000 people (the profile most closely resembling 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares), over half the agencies have budgets in excess of \$500,000 per year. See Table 2 below.

The survey found that, on average, 2-1-1 programs receive 42% of their funding from United Ways, approximately 40% from various government sources, 10% from other private funders, and about 8% from individuals and other sources (most commonly sales of service directories). See Table 3 below.

This information must be interpreted carefully as financing for 2-1-1 programs varies significantly among individual call centers as Tables 4 and 5 below demonstrate.

Currently the only ongoing federal funding supporting 2-1-1 operations are pass-through grants from CDBG/CSBG and outreach dollars for programs like WIC and TANF. The Omnibus Budget passed by Congress in early March 2009 for FY 2008-09 included six earmarks, totaling nearly \$2 million, for one-time state and local 2-1-1 development.

Ideally 2-1-1 providers have a diversified funding base that limits the negative impact of a sudden reduction in any single source of funding. Many state and local 2-1-1s have identified the goal of developing an “ideal” funding mix composed of approximately one-third local support, one-third state funding and one-third through federal sources, including funding that might be provided through the **Calling For 2-1-1 Act**, S. 211/HR.211, (a copy of the legislation is included as Appendix E) should it ever be enacted and funds appropriated.

As of March 31, 2009 the Act has 35 co-sponsors in the Senate and 106 in the House of Representatives including five representatives from Florida: Rep. Gus M Bilirakis, 9th District (Clearwater); Rep. C.W. Bill Young, 10th District (Pinellas County/St. Petersburg); Rep. Robert Wexler, 19th District (Boca Raton); Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, 21st District (Miami-Dade); and, Rep. Alcee L. Hastings, 23rd District (Palm Beach).

Achieving this mix is predicated on buy-in from state and federal government – until this comes about, 2-1-1 providers will have to rely on local government and private sources to ensure sustainable service.

Table 1. Annual Budget for 2-1-1 Service Delivery (N=177)

Under \$100,000	20.9%
\$100,000 - \$250,0000	27.7%
\$250,001 - \$500,000	23.7%
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	14.1%
\$1,000,001 - \$2,000,000	7.9%
\$2,000,001 - \$5,000,000	4.5%
Over \$5,000,000	1.1%

Table 2. 2-1-1 Budgets for Mixed Services And Over 500K Population

Under \$100,000	2.9%
\$100,000 - \$250,0000	22.9%
\$250,001 - \$500,000	17.1%
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	28.6%
\$1,000,001 - \$2,000,000	17.1%
\$2,000,001 - \$5,000,000	8.6%
Over \$5,000,000	2.9%

Table 3. Average of All Funding Sources for 2-1-1 Services (N=167)

United Way	42.6%
Other private foundation grants (not United Way)	10.2%
Local government (City and County)	13.9%
State government (not including state pass-thru)	18.9%
Federal government (even if as state pass-thru)	6.6%
Individual contributions	3.3%
Other	4.5%

Table 4. Percentage of United Way Funding for 2-1-1 Programs (N=167)

100% UW funding	8.6%
75% - 99% UW funding	23.8%
50% - 74% UW funding	12.6%
25% - 49% UW funding	23.8%
1% - 24% UW funding	30.5%
No UW funding	9.9%

Note: 82% of 2-1-1s that receive more than half their funding from United Ways are actually housed within a United Way.

Table 5. Percentage of all government sources funding 2-1-1 (N=167)

100% government funding	6.6%
75% - 99% government funding	20.5%
50% - 74% government funding	15.9%
25% - 49% government funding	15.9%
1% - 24% government funding	16.6%
No government funding	24.5%

Financing 2-1-1 in Florida – Overview

Data for this section comes from an email survey of 2-1-1s in Florida conducted by the United Way of Florida in November 2008. Responses were received from all operating 2-1-1s.

The total budget for 2-1-1s statewide was \$10,263,400.

While simply dividing that amount by the total number of people being served by 2-1-1s would indicate that it only costs about 65 cents per person per year, we actually do not have sufficient data to make that calculation in a meaningful way. We have no information, for example, on the call volumes handled, on the extent to which service is provided 24/7 or on such measures as the rate of dropped calls or the amount of time callers must wait to speak to a live call specialist. Thus, until such data is analyzed, it is just as fair to believe that 65 cents per person is the cost of inferior or limited service as it is the cost of superior or inclusive service.

Of the total reported budgets:

- \$2,805,135 or 27.3% comes from United Ways
- \$2,668,100 or 26% comes from Children’s Services Councils

- \$1,869,980 or 18.2% comes from county government
- \$828,300 or 8% comes from the Department of Children and Families
- \$431,322 or 4.2% comes from municipal government
- Approximately \$400,000 or 3.9% appears to come from private foundations, individual donations and other fund-raising; all of these fall into the “other” category and were reported in very different ways
- Approximately \$214,000 or 2.1% was explicitly identified as income derived from services provided
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay which is a division of the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and serves Hillsborough County reported income from its “entrepreneurial funds” of \$246,894, which was derived from the ambulance service it operates and which subsidizes 2-1-1 and other of its programs – this accounts for 2.4% of total expenditures for 2-1-1 in the state.

The balance of funding, about \$800,000 or 7.8% was not explicitly attributed and would require further contact with each 2-1-1 to classify appropriately.

The Role of United Ways in Florida

All but one 2-1-1 is funded in part by the United Way and in that county, Pasco, 2-1-1 actually is a program operated by the United Way but is totally funded by county government.

United Ways contribute an average of \$187,000 to each 2-1-1. The highest level of support is for 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast which serves five counties, drawing on the United Ways in each for a total of \$468,683.

The funding for 2-1-1s most comparable with 2-1-1 TBC – that is, those serving over 1 million people – breaks out as shown in Table 6 below.

It is important to note that 2-1-1 TBC receives funding from four United Ways. United Way of Tampa Bay provides \$96,600 or 11.8% of its budget. United Ways in Citrus and Hernando provide \$25,000 and \$21,120 respectively to pay for full 2-1-1 coverage for their counties from 2-1-1 TBC. United Way of Pasco pays \$5,000 per year for after-hours coverage of their calls.

Table 6. United Way Funding of 2-1-1s in Florida

2-1-1	Population	United Way Support	As % of Total 2-1-1 Budget
Switchboard of Miami	2,402,000	\$184,000	12%
2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast	1,796,000	\$468,683	30%
2-1-1 Broward	1,787,000	\$205,000	15.9%
2-1-1 Heart of Florida (Orlando) *	1,694,000	\$334,193	41.1%
UWs of Northeast Florida 2-1-1 *	1,473,000	\$186,500	28.7%
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares	1,227,000	\$147,720	18.1%
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Crisis Center	1,157,000	\$109,725	11.8%

* 2-1-1 Heart of Florida in Orlando and UWs of Northeast Florida 2-1-1 are operated as internal programs of their respective United Ways.

The Role of County and Municipal Government

Only three 2-1-1s – UW of Central Florida 2-1-1 in Highland City; Switchboard of Miami; and United Way 2-1-1 for North Central Florida in Gainesville – report no support from county and municipal government. A fourth, 2-1-1 Volusia-Flagler, reports support from county but not municipal government. Tables 7 and 8 below look again at the 2-1-1s serving over 1 million people.

Three anomalies in the balance of the state need to be noted:

- 2-1-1 Charlotte is part of Charlotte County Department of Human Services and receives virtually all of its budget, \$320,000, from the county.
- United Way of Pasco 2-1-1 is funded totally by its county government, \$150,000 per year.
- 2-1-1 Manasota which serves three counties receives a total of \$125,000 from county government.

Again, additional data collection and analysis will be required to determine the origin and rationale for this funding.

Table 7. County Government Funding of 2-1-1s in Florida

2-1-1	Population	County Government Support	As % of Total 2-1-1 Budget
Switchboard of Miami	2,402,000	-0-	0
2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast	1,796,000	\$235,000	15.2%
2-1-1 Broward	1,787,000	\$293,000	22.8%
2-1-1 Heart of Florida (Orlando)	1,694,000	\$197,100	24.3%
UWs of Northeast Florida 2-1-1	1,473,000	\$3,750	0.5%
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares	1,227,000	\$325,000	39.8%
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Crisis Center	1,157,000	\$8,630	0.9%

Table 8. Municipal Government Funding of 2-1-1s in Florida

2-1-1	Population	Municipal Government Support	As % of Total 2-1-1 Budget
Switchboard of Miami	2,402,000	-0-	0
2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast	1,796,000	\$4,500	0.2%
2-1-1 Broward	1,787,000	\$99,000	7.7%
2-1-1 Heart of Florida (Orlando)	1,694,000	\$79,397	9.8%
UWs of Northeast Florida 2-1-1	1,473,000	\$143,000	22%
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares	1,227,000	\$27,500	3.4%
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Crisis Center	1,157,000	\$44,004	4.8%

The Role of the Department of Children and Families

Seven 2-1-1s received funding from the Department of Children and Families, in 2008:

- 2-1-1 Big Bend (Tallahassee) - \$72,588
- 2-1-1 Brevard - \$105,000
- 2-1-1 Broward – \$129,000
- 2-1-1 Manasota in Sarasota - \$5,000
- UW 2-1-1 of Northeast Florida - \$143,000
- 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast - \$255,260
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Crisis Center - \$118,459

DCF decisions are made at the regional level and the support for 2-1-1 is for varied region-specific reasons.

In 2002-2006, DCF provided the following annual general operating grants to 2-1-1 TBC:

2002	\$42,495
2003	\$24,222
2004	\$25,560
2005	\$22,655
2006	\$ 6,986

These grants were made in response to advocacy on behalf of 2-1-1 TBC by Pinellas County government. During 2-1-1 TBC’s 2006 fiscal year, the regional DCF announced that those funds would be re-directed to adult mental health direct services. 2-1-1 United Way Manasota and 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center), as well as 2-1-1 TBC, lost funding as a result of this decision.

The Role of Children’s Services Councils

As shown in Table 9 below, five 2-1-1s receive funding from their county Children’s Services Councils – 2-1-1 TBC, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) in Hillsborough County, Switchboard of Miami, 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast and 2-1-1 Broward.

Because the impetus for this study was the decision by the Juvenile Welfare Board to end its funding for 2-1-1 TBC, we have sought to understand in greater depth the rationale for CSC funding of the other four communities. In-person or

telephone interviews were conducted with the 2-1-1s and/or CSCs.

2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) – The Children’s Board of Hillsborough County

The Children’s Board of Hillsborough County sees 2-1-1 as a comprehensive Information and Referral Program as well as the single point of entry for children and families seeking services. In many cases, 2-1-1 can refer them directly to services in the community. In the case of those with complex problems and multiple needs, as determined by protocols jointly developed by 2-1-1 and the Children’s Board, 2-1-1 provides a “warm transfer” (an agent-to-agent handoff) of callers to specialist navigators in agencies under contract to the Children’s Board. These specialists are then able to help families define and prioritize their needs and make decisions about their future. 2-1-1 is an important, interrelated piece of the total System of Care that the Children’s Board is seeking to build to serve the children and families of Hillsborough County. (In-person interview with staff of the Children’s Board)

2-1-1 Broward – Children’s Services Council of Broward County

There has been a continual outcry in the county for a centralized point of entry for people seeking services. Because the CSC has a strong belief that efforts should not be duplicated, it was pleased to see 2-1-1 built on the existing First Call for Help and felt that they should help make 2-1-1 a reality. Their general support to 2-1-1 is focused on two purposes: (1) to pay its proportionate share of the 2-1-1 operations; and, (2) to support development of a Community Resource Inventory that builds on the platform of the 2-1-1 database. The purpose of the Community Resource Inventory is to catalog who is funding what and is built on annual input from both funders and agencies. It is used for planning purposes. CSC also considers 2-1-1 call data to be the “cornerstone for a consolidated effort to address the economic crisis in the county.”

In addition, the CSC funds a specialized telephone service for families of children with special needs. The service is promoted through doctors and service providers. Calls are routed to a single staff member with specialized expertise and experience who is able to provide more in-depth services to families.

The rationale for funding 2-1-1 is straightforward: “Why fund services if people can’t find them? 2-1-1 is critical infrastructure to help citizens find the services they need.” (Telephone interview with the executive director of the CSC)

Switchboard of Miami – The Children’s Trust

About 88% of the Switchboard’s budget for 2-1-1 or \$1,344,000 comes from the Children’s Trust. There has long been recognition in Miami-Dade county of the difficulty people face in accessing human services due to the size and complexity of the county, inadequate public transportation and lack of information about services. The 2-1-1 service was built on the foundation of a long-standing Helpline. Because there is no other source for comprehensive information and referral services in the county, the Switchboard’s 2-1-1 is seen

as “unique” and as “the primary connection to services for families.”
 (Telephone interview with executive director of the Switchboard of Miami)

2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast – CSCs in Palm Beach, St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee Counties

It receives \$116,000 annually from the CSC in Palm Beach County; \$22,000 from the CSC in St. Lucie County; \$20,000 from the CSC in Martin County; and, \$1,500 from the CSC in Okeechobee County. Funding from the CSC in Palm Beach County has been stable for a number of years and is reflective of the CSC’s view of 2-1-1 as part of the core infrastructure of human service delivery. (Telephone interview with the executive director of 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast)

In Palm Beach county, the five primary funders of the 2-1-1 – the Children’s Services Council, county government, United Way, the Department of Children and Families and a private foundation – are negotiating an agreement that would create a single set of shared expectations for 2-1-1, would designate a single funder to monitor 2-1-1 on behalf of the five and set up a single reporting device that would meet the needs of all of the funders. The rationale: “In a time of tight resources and expectations of greater efficiency, why should 2-1-1 need to have five different contracts and five different monitors? Funders need to have common agreed upon expectations for 2-1-1 and fund it to meet those expectations.” The funders “recognize that as part of the infrastructure for human services, there needs to be simplicity of access to services through an information and referral available to all – and that 2-1-1 is that current vehicle.”

This joint effort does not preclude the possibility that any of the funders may wish to separately contract with 2-1-1 for additional services or specialized programs. Nor does it guarantee any set level of funding for 2-1-1, leaving funders free to make their own funding decisions. (Telephone interview with the executive director of the CSC)

Table 9. Children’s Services Councils Funding of 2-1-1 in Florida

2-1-1	Population	Children’s Services Council Support	As % of Total 2-1-1 Budget	As % of Total CSC Program Expenditures
Switchboard of Miami	2,402,000	\$1,344,000	88%	1.07%
2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast *	1,796,000	\$159,922	10.3%	0.2%
2-1-1 Broward	1,787,000	\$418,100	32.5%	0.7%
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares	1,227,000	\$293,559	36%	0.5%
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Crisis Center	1,157,000	\$249,366	26.9%	0.8%

* Receives funding from the Children’s Services Councils in Palm Beach, St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee counties.

THE DEMONSTRATED VALUE AND IMPACT OF 2-1-1 NATIONWIDE

The Impact of 2-1-1 2-1-1 is an innovative response to the demand for access to critical community information and referral services. It is a groundbreaking, efficient solution that can eliminate the confusing maze of information and services that often overwhelms individuals who need help. It improves upon existing, decentralized services and offers professionals and organizations in health and human services a way to enhance their impact and maximize scarce resources.

As a result of 2-1-1:

- Individuals are better able to manage their own lives because they have access to the information and resources required to make decisions about the support they need;
- Service providers have an expanded knowledge of available resources to help them better serve their consumers;
- Policy makers and funders – both public and private – have more complete information about trends in demand for services and early awareness of emerging needs;
- Emergency management have access to a new statewide infrastructure to help disseminate critical information, assist people through disasters and provide long-term connection to relief and recovery services;
- Businesses have an additional way to support their employees with their personal needs in an efficient and effective way;
- Governments have access to a proven, 24/7/365 infrastructure available to help increase their efficiency and effectiveness; and,
- Public officials are assured that their constituents are better able to get connected with the services they need in cost-effective and responsive ways.

The Value of 2-1-1 The consistent experience of 2-1-1s throughout the country is that they bring significant public benefits to their communities and states. While the specifics of these benefits may differ from place to place based on the local environment, there generally is demonstrated value in eight distinct areas.

- ***Improving the way in which people learn about and connect with the services they need.***

2-1-1 benefits people seeking help by providing:

- Access to comprehensive, up-to-date information at any time by phone and online at no cost to the caller;
- Confidential, judgment-free interactions with trained 2-1-1 specialists who are able to help people get to the root of their concerns and who can provide available options for services;

- Referrals that are sensitive to the caller’s realities, including the need for geographic proximity, culturally-appropriate services, and services in appropriate languages;
- Information about both nonprofit and public sector services;
- Links to other 2-1-1s and other information and referral resources throughout a state or region and even in other states, thus serving people wherever they and their families live and work;
- Direct connections to mental health and other crisis response providers;
- Multi-lingual services; and,
- Access for people with sensory impairments.

2-1-1 is a single, easy-to-remember phone number, most often complemented by a similarly branded web site, that provides the information people need to efficiently access the health and human services they require. This means that they need to spend less time in the frustrating search for assistance, do not need to “shop” for services by contacting multiple agencies, and are able to connect as directly as possible with the agencies best prepared to help them.

By creating a brand that becomes synonymous with easy-to-access help, 2-1-1 can make it not only easier but also more acceptable to use human service systems, particularly for those who may be reluctant, because of their age or cultural perspective, or who may find it difficult to seek help.

Due to the often sensitive and complicated issues faced by callers, 2-1-1s have staff who are certified to national industry standards by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), the professional association for over 1,000 community I&R providers, to connect callers with the best available services for their unique needs. By asking callers a succession of questions, trained staff can help identify underlying problems that must be dealt with to help people better cope with the expressed symptoms, and develop their own plan for tackling the root cause of the problem.

This ability to help callers clearly define their needs and then to make appropriate referrals means that 2-1-1 can help people address problems as early as possible and to take preventative steps, thus adding to their long-term personal and family stability.

- ***Helping to create new efficiencies in delivery of health and human services.***

There are four significant efficiencies that 2-1-1 helps create when it is fully operational.

- First, it **saves the time and eases the frustration** of people in their search for appropriate services for which they are eligible.
- Second, it is a resource to **help service providers do their jobs more**

easily – as a proven high quality service to which providers can refer consumers with needs they cannot respond to and as an immediately accessible source of information for the providers to use in making their own referrals to and connections with other providers. In Michigan, for example, significant use of 2-1-1 is made by employees of the state’s Department of Human Services who manage large case loads and do not have the time or the resources to link citizens to the critical services they need.

- Third, as 2-1-1 becomes more widely known and used, it **refers ever more callers to the right places**, thus relieving some of the burden on service providers of committing staff time to handling misdirected calls from people who, in the absence of easily accessible information, are “shopping” for the help they need. For example, the Snohomish County Health Department in Washington State documented a 65% drop in misdirected calls following local implementation of 2-1-1 service.
- Fourth, since 2-1-1 by definition must have the single most comprehensive database on health and human services in an area, it can **reduce costly duplication of effort** by other service providers in building and maintaining databases.

- ***Providing a new resource for businesses and other employers to help their employees while maintaining their productivity.***

One of the places where increased efficiency in connecting people to services may be most appreciated is in the workplace. 2-1-1 has the potential to save time, support stressed employees, increase employment opportunities, decrease absenteeism and support employee assistance programs. Thus, 2-1-1 draws support from leaders of both business and organized labor.

- ***Providing a new way in which government can respond to the expectations and needs of all their constituents.***

Governments at all levels face remarkable new challenges. More and more people are finding it difficult to make ends meet. A growing number of people speak languages other than English and come from different cultures and traditions. A growing percentage of the population is seniors; over time, this will bring new demands on service delivery system. Government agencies are faced with the need to do more with less while maintaining a commitment to high quality, responsive services.

2-1-1 builds on the proven concept of comprehensive information and referral, making those services more accessible to the public. As a result, it also becomes a new asset, connecting people with available resources, which has significant potential to help government at all levels respond to the challenges they face:

- 2-1-1 is a 24/7/365 call center **accessible to everyone**, able to communicate with any caller, regardless of language spoken or physical

ability through bilingual staff or contracted translation services.

- It can help **support more effective 911 service delivery** both day-to-day and in times of crisis. It lessens the burden on 911 to be what one local 911 coordinator described as “the primary social service responder after hours and on weekends” by providing trained staff prepared to handle not only calls directed to 2-1-1 but also calls transferred from 911. During Hurricane Charley in 2004, for example, the 911 coordinator in Lee County, Florida, who had contracted in advance with 2-1-1 to handle calls for the county, estimated that in the week of the storm, 2-1-1 took 60,000 calls that otherwise would have gone to his 911 operators. In the five peak days of the October 2007 fires in Southern California, 2-1-1 call centers answered almost 130,000 calls, many of which would have otherwise been directed to 911.
- It helps governments **disseminate information and educate the public**. For example, *Michigan 2-1-1* supported a statewide early childhood development education campaign, by designating one of its 2-1-1 call centers to serve as the response point for the media campaign, providing personal phone assistance 24/7/365 for parents and other caregivers. By utilizing a 2-1-1 call center, the campaign’s call to action received a high level of service at a minimal incremental cost. During the 2008 tax season, 2-1-1s in New York State worked in partnership with EITC/VITA/CASH to help disseminate information about stimulus payments and to enable more eligible families to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit.
- It supports the **constituent services** provided by elected officials by giving ready access to high quality information on available services, helping relieve staff workloads and providing a reliable resource to help respond to constituent’s needs.
- It provides officials and policy-makers detailed information on community, regional and statewide needs based on referral data collected in the course of calls to 2-1-1.
- ***Providing an expanded infrastructure for information and referral that can ensure consistent, standards-driven service.***

Everyone can use 2-1-1 to navigate the complex and ever growing maze of health and human service providers, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and community service organizations and their associated programs. By compliance with AIRS national 2-1-1 standards and specific state or local performance measures, 2-1-1 ensures that everyone who calls has the same high-quality experience.

Because it typically becomes synonymous with easy-to-access help, 2-1-1 makes it not only simpler but also more acceptable to use human service systems, particularly for those who may be reluctant, because of their age, previous life experience or cultural perspective, who may find it difficult to seek help.

Over time, 2-1-1 becomes accepted as a “social utility,” always there, ready to respond when needed. This is particularly true as 2-1-1 becomes more visible and user-friendly on the internet.

Working in close cooperation with specialized I&R providers, 2-1-1 can build a more integrated system that will improve public access to services, help them operate more efficiently and over time help improve the overall quality and consistency of I&R services.

- ***Serving as a support system for emergency management and playing a role in homeland security.***

Before, during and immediately after emergencies throughout the country – health crises or blackouts, natural disasters such as tornados or floods or man-made crises – 2-1-1 systems have acted as a complementary support by helping reduce the overwhelming number of phone calls to 911, emergency management and first-response organizations, thus freeing them to focus on their primary work. In some cases, 2-1-1 has served as the memorable, easy-to-access utility for residents of an entire county or state to call for critical information as a result of a crisis.

During recovery periods following a crisis, 2-1-1s have served as a longer-term resource by coordinating information on the status of available health and human services, connecting victims with the help they need and helping disseminate information on the details of local recovery, and informing individuals where to send cash or in-kind donations or to volunteer to help.

2-1-1 has demonstrated its value as an integral part of the overall emergency management system in everything from localized disasters (wild fires, tornados, flooding, chemical spills) to those that have devastated entire states (the 2004 hurricanes in Florida) to those with broad regional and national impact (the tragedy of September 11, 2001 and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita).

During and after the hurricanes of 2004, 2-1-1s in Florida made seven major contributions:

- Expanded the capacity of Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) by providing trained information and referral specialists and by offering the public an alternative access point for information;
- Managed information about availability of services and the status of health and human service organizations and government agencies;
- Identified unmet and emerging needs, helping direct resources to high priority places;
- Provided critically needed telephone reassurance and crisis

support for callers;

- Helped mobilize and manage volunteers and cash and in-kind donations;
- Served as intake points on behalf of government agencies and nonprofit organizations, increasing the efficiency of connecting people with needed help; and,
- Offered a sustained connection to help for people whose lives were dramatically affected by the storms as 2-1-1 became part of the long-term recovery effort.

A detailed analysis of the performance of Florida’s 2-1-1s in 2004, “Trial by Wind and Water” from the United Way of America, can be found at: <http://211us.org/documents/TrialbyWindandWater.pdf>.

- ***Providing new trend data on health and human service needs, met and unmet, for planning and resource allocation.***

2-1-1 has the potential to become a social barometer that provides current information on emerging needs and demands for existing services. 2-1-1 systems generate information that can be used in the development of public policy, in evaluation of services and in support of advocacy efforts. Because the data can be organized in a variety of ways, including geographically, it is particularly helpful in mapping relative locations of high areas of need and locations of resources. As a result, 2-1-1 contributes to better use of scarce resources, including both tax dollars and charitable contributions.

- ***Connecting people with opportunities to “give help” as well as “get help”.***

In many communities, 2-1-1, working in partnership with Volunteer Centers and United Ways, has become a primary path for people to offer assistance to others by connecting with opportunities to volunteer and to make in-kind and cash contributions. This has proven particularly valuable during disasters when emergency management and first response organizations may be overwhelmed by people wanting to help. 2-1-1 can be a vital mechanism for screening, organizing and directing those people.

Potential Cost Savings Due to 2-1-1

In 2004, United Way of America commissioned the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas at Austin to conduct a national cost benefit analysis of 2-1-1. Based on data from eleven 2-1-1s, including the statewide 2-1-1 in Connecticut, the study estimated a net value to society of a national 2-1-1 system to total over \$1 billion over ten years. Researchers identified these examples of “cost savings for taxpayers, employers and government”:

- Reduction in non-emergency calls to 911;
- Reduction in the number of 1-800 numbers funded by government;

- Cost avoidance for state and local government of misdirected calls for services;
- Decreased need for public assistance because of timely connection with appropriate intervening services;
- Enhanced tax assistance and recovery, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit;
- Ability to mobilize and process volunteers in times of crisis;
- Savings for business through reduced absenteeism and increased productivity due to enhanced information on where employees can find services;
- Planning information for cities and counties informed by the data collection of call volume and referrals for a comprehensive array of services;
- A broad communication network for public dissemination of information about changes in federal, state and local programs;
- Ability to disseminate public health and crisis preparedness information;
- Time saved for individuals and families through a one-stop call center to locate a variety of services.

In a 1999 study, the Public Policy Center at the University of Nebraska concluded that a statewide 2-1-1 system could generate cost savings between \$7.6 and \$16.5 million annually from such factors as increased efficiency in getting information to consumers, reducing overlapping information and referral costs and improved community planning through use of call data.

ABOUT 2-1-1 TAMPA BAY CARES

History and Development

Although 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc. has existed as an independent organization for only 13 years, its roots and history date back over three decades.

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc. was founded in 1996 as Pinellas Cares, Inc., a charitable organization with a purpose of providing volunteer opportunities for the community. Helpline (now 2-1-1) began as a program of Family Resources in the mid-1970s. In 1999, following a strategic planning process refocused on its core mission, Family Resources spun off three programs, Helpline, the Volunteer Action Center, and Community Voice Mail to Pinellas Cares, Inc.

On June 4, 2001, the Helpline officially became 2-1-1, the number to dial "to find help and give help" in Pinellas County. At the same time Pinellas Cares changed its name to 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc., reflecting its dual focus on 2-1-1 and volunteering.

It became the eighth 2-1-1 center in the United States and the second in Florida, providing crisis counseling, social services and volunteer referrals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During the ensuing five years, the operating budget for the organization grew from \$400,000 to over \$1.3 million.

A timeline of agency milestones includes:

- 1996 Pinellas Cares, Inc. is founded with a mission of providing hands-on, team-oriented service projects for community volunteers.
 - 1998 Helpline, then a program of Family Resources, Inc., starts Community Voice Mail that provides voice mailboxes for homeless and low-income persons to use without charge.
 - 1999 Helpline makes its community resource database available to the public on the Internet.
 - 2000 Helpline, Community Voice Mail, and the Volunteer Action Center become programs of Pinellas Cares, Inc.
 - 2001 Pinellas Cares receives designation as the 2-1-1 for Pinellas County and becomes the eighth 2-1-1 center in the United States and the second in Florida. The organization's name is changed to 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc.
 - 2002 2-1-1 TBC achieves its first AAS certification and JWB ASSET Certification
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares contracts with Hernando County to provide 2-1-1 call response services for Hernando residents.

2003	Achieves first AIRS accreditation 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares begins the Tampa Bay Information Network (TBIN) providing services for the homeless.
2004	2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares establishes protocols for disaster response in reaction to the 2004 hurricanes in Florida.
2005	Achieves AAS recertification and second JWB ASSET certification 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares contracts with Citrus County and the United Way of Citrus County to provide 2-1-1 call response services for Citrus residents. Staff members volunteer to assist in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and help develop response plan in the aftermath.
2006	2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares becomes the lead agency in disaster response plan for Pinellas County social service agencies.
2007	Pinellas County HealthNet Navigators are absorbed into 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
2008	Achieves third JWB ASSET certification United Way of Tampa Bay assumes responsibility for Volunteer Action Center.
2009	2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares is reaccredited by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems.

Operations

Nationally there is tremendous variation in the organizational structure of individual 2-1-1 providers. In the national 2-1-1 world 2-1-1 TBC is an example of a *stand-alone blended service* – in other words it is an independent 501(c)3 dedicated to providing comprehensive information and referral in conjunction with crisis intervention services. In December 2008 the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) surveyed blended 2-1-1 service providers to better understand their particular circumstances. This survey provides a benchmark for evaluating 2-1-1 TBC’s service delivery model in comparison with similar agencies across the U.S.

The survey results show that 2-1-1 TBC is well within the mainstream of similar agencies. Like 2-1-1 TBC, half of the respondents to the survey (48%) use a mix of professionals and volunteers to take I&R and crisis calls. Staff are cross-trained (79%) to handle both 2-1-1 and crisis calls. One area where 2-1-1 TBC stands out is in the area of accreditation of its programs – 2-1-1 TBC has been independently accredited by both AIRS and the American Association of Suicidology, while only 25% of other blended services have dual accreditation.

2-1-1 TBC’s core program has four components: the 2-1-1 telephone service,

the resource database, Community Voice Mail and the Tampa Bay Information Network (TBIN). Each is described below.

2-1-1 Telephone Service

The 2-1-1 call center is the heart of 2-1-1 TBC. It provides 24/7/365 access to information on over 5,000 human service programs. In 2008 the call center answered 82,654 calls and responded to an additional 14,938 messages for a total of 97,592 calls handled. Because it is staffed around the clock, 2-1-1 TBC provides after hours phone coverage for several community agencies, including CASA, 2-1-1 Pasco and 2-1-1 Manasota. The call center also answers local calls to the national Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

There are 7.72 paid FTE staffing the phone lines. Due to reduced funding, 2-1-1 TBC does not have the resources to fully staff all shifts with paid I&R specialists and recently began engaging volunteers to maintain 24/7 coverage of the phone lines. Both paid staff and volunteers receive extensive training based on the AIRS Standards on providing information and referral and handling crisis calls, as well as on how to use the phone and database systems before they are allowed to begin taking calls. Individual performance is monitored by the call center director who provides additional coaching and assistance as needed.

Continuing education is integrated into the workplace with all call center workers encouraged to devote time each week to enhancing their skills through online training available through AIRS and by completing internally developed training modules. As workers meet eligibility requirements they are encouraged to take the AIRS I&R certification examination. Currently 83% of eligible staff are certified, well in excess of the AIRS Standard of 25%.

Resource Database

The 2-1-1 TBC database of programs and services contains approximately 5,200 records. Each record contains contact information, service hours, and a program description with details of the service(s) provided. Each service is indexed according to the AIRS Taxonomy, a Dewey-decimal system with 9,000 specific definitions covering the full range of human services. A publicly searchable version of the database is available online at <http://cg.servicept.com/tampabay/>. One AIRS-certified Resource Specialist is responsible for maintaining and updating the database.

Community Voice Mail (CVM)

Since 1998, Pinellas Community Voice Mail has provided free voice mail boxes to homeless and low-income individuals to assist them in becoming self-sufficient. As of February 2009 it has the capacity to support up to 1700 active mailboxes in the county. People can sign up for mailboxes at over 55 agencies throughout Pinellas County, including most homeless shelters, Domestic Violence shelters, Social Services, and WorkNet locations.

Tampa Bay Information Network (TBIN)

Tampa Bay Information Network (TBIN) is a centralized web-based database that allows human service providers to enter, manage and share client information in a secure environment. It is designed to improve communication among health and human services providers with the goal of better tracking trends in service delivery, monitoring the use of services by clients, and eliminating duplication of services to individuals. 2-1-1 TBC manages, administers and operates the TBIN/HMIS system through the Pinellas Coalition for the Homeless on behalf of the local Homeless Continuum of Care.

Staffing

2-1-1 TBC has a staff of 16.45 FTEs. In the most recent quarter the agency eliminated a 0.5 FTE management position, consolidated two 0.5 FTE coordinator and administrative positions into a single 0.75 FTE position in order to increase call center staffing by 1.0 FTE.

Only 60% of the staff are employed full-time. This is important to note because only full-time staff are eligible for benefits. By its extensive use of part-time staff, 2-1-1 TBC saves more than \$40,000 per year in direct benefit costs.

The organization also makes extensive use of volunteers to assist with administrative tasks, community outreach and other activities. From 2006 to 2009 the number of active volunteers has doubled. Beginning the last quarter of 2008, 2-1-1 TBC began training volunteers to work in the call center and now has 16 trained individuals to supplement call center staff – by the end of 2009 these volunteers are projected to equal 1.0 FTE. The agency is also in the process of implementing an internship program with Eckerd College which will provide the equivalent of another 0.5- 0.75 FTE.

A critical resource for 2-1-1 TBC during the past two years of decreasing revenue has been the experience of the senior staff. The five members of the management team have an average tenure of more than eight years with the organization. As staffing has been reduced, each of the managers has taken on an increased work load. Interviews with community leaders repeatedly noted the professionalism, creativity and resiliency of the 2-1-1 management team.

A current organization chart appears in Appendix B.

Governance

2-1-1 TBC has a board of directors of 10 people. They come from:

- Business and Professional – 5 members
 - Two corporate
 - One lawyer
 - One not-for-profit health system
 - One independent consultant

 - Human Services and Education – 2 members
 - Pinellas County Schools
 - Retired nonprofit executive
-

- Government – 2 members
 - Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office
 - City of Pinellas Park
- Formerly Homeless Person – 1 member
 - Required by City of St. Petersburg CDBG grant

One board member has served since 1996 and one since 2000. The balance has come on the board since 2003 with one joining in 2007 and three in 2008.

The board meets every other month with meetings of the executive committee, made up of the officers, and finance committee held in between. The audit committee meets as required.

Certification and Accreditation

An important independent assessment of call center performance is provided by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) and the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), the international organizations that are widely recognized for establishing performance standards for mental health crisis response and information and referral – primary services provided by 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares.

2-1-1 TBC has met and maintained the accreditation requirements for both AAS and AIRS. In addition, over 80% of 2-1-1 TBC staff are AIRS certified, well above the minimum AIRS standard of 25%. 2-1-1 TBC also meets two requirements of the State of Florida: certification as a “211 Network Provider” by the Agency for Health Care Administration and annual certification by the Department and Children and Families for Substance Abuse Prevention.

AAS Certification

Nationally there are 125 crisis services certified by AAS. 2-1-1 TBC is one of 11 certified crisis agencies in Florida. The eighth edition of the *AAS Organization Accreditation Standards Manual* (available at www.suicidology.org) provides 90 pages of detailed expectations for agency and staff performance. Recognized benefits of AAS accreditation include:

- AAS accreditation validates service delivery programs that are performing according to nationally recognized standards.
- AAS accreditation examiners offer consultation tailored to the needs of an individual program, its staff and board.
- The increased visibility and credibility of an AAS- accredited program provide opportunities for modeling of program excellence to other agencies and professionals.
- AAS accreditation provides a morale boost for staff working in the field of crisis intervention.
- AAS-accredited programs have additional credibility with funding agencies and insurance companies.
- Programs seeking AAS accreditation have access to criteria for systematic, ongoing self-evaluation.
- People in life-threatening and other crises who obtain service from AAS-accredited programs are assured that staff has seriously examined

their commitment to provide service according to recognized standards.

2-1-1 TBC received its most recent agency certification from AAS in October 2005. The letter awarding certification states that:

“Certification signifies that an organization has been evaluated during a site survey by an AAS examiner, and has met or exceeded specific standards in the following areas: administration, training, general service delivery, services in life-threatening situations, ethical issues, community integration and program evaluation.

Certification takes on added significance as consumers and providers become more aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding crisis services. Certification helps assure citizens in a community that, when in a crisis, they have available properly trained staff providing quality twenty-four hour services.

Executive Director, Micki Thompson, her colleagues, staff, volunteers and others associated with the 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares have reason to feel pride in their accomplishment.”

This AAS endorsement is effective for five years. 2-1-1 TBC will have to be recertified in 2010.

AIRS Accreditation

AIRS is the professional credentialing authority that establishes and enforces standards of performance for individuals and organizations in the field of information and referral (I&R). AIRS published the first *Standards for Professional Information and Referral* in 1973. The 6th edition of the Standards was issued in January 2009. These Standards are recognized by both federal and state governments as defining the key quality performance indicators for the I&R field.

Many states – including Indiana, Michigan, Montana, Tennessee, Texas and Washington – mandate that 2-1-1 service be delivered in accordance with the Standards. The Federal Calling For 2-1-1 Act states that 2-1-1 providers shall, “*to the maximum extent practicable abide by the Key Standards for 2-1-1 Centers as specified in the Standards for Professional Information and Referral Requirements for Alliance of Information Referral Systems (AIRS) Accreditation and Operating 2-1-1 Systems*”.

This means that 2-1-1 providers that are AIRS-accredited are in the strongest position to qualify for federal funding as these monies become available.

There are two levels of credentials offered by AIRS – individual certification and organizational accreditation.

In order to be eligible for AIRS **certification**, individuals must meet a minimum combination of education and professional experience. Eligible candidates must pass an examination that measures the specific competencies, performance criteria, skills and work-related behaviors necessary to perform their work

effectively. **At 2-1-1 TBC 80% of eligible staff are certified, well above the minimum AIRS standards of 25%.**

AIRS also has a rigorous **accreditation** process for I&R agencies to ensure they are delivering 2-1-1 service in accordance with the AIRS Standards. The Standards cover all aspects of agency performance, including service delivery, database management, reporting, cooperative relationships with key community partners, disaster preparedness and organizational effectiveness. The full Standards are available on the AIRS web site at www.airs.org/files/public/AIRS_Standards_6_0Final.pdf.

The accreditation process is demanding and expensive, requiring extensive documentation of agency policies, procedures, training practices, and marketing activities. Accreditation is a multi-phase process that assesses more than 200 distinct operational components. It culminates in a detailed on-site review by an independent assessment team of I&R professionals who look at all aspects of agency and call center performance, observe staff performance and verify the information in the accreditation application and accompanying documentation is accurate and complete.

To date only 96 of 240+ 2-1-1 call centers in the U.S. have successfully completed the full accreditation process. Eleven of those are in Florida.

2-1-1 TBC was first accredited by AIRS in 2003. **In January 2009 2-1-1 TBC was reaccredited by AIRS – making it one of only a dozen 2-1-1 call centers to have twice passed the accreditation process.** The final 2009 accreditation report states, “2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares has clearly met all the AIRS Standards and deserves the award of AIRS Accreditation.”

During the reaccreditation site visit AIRS review team identified two areas for improvement and recognized two best practices.

Recommended Areas for Improvement

- Replace broken TTY/TDD machine as an alternate mode of access for hearing impaired
- Re-implement the follow-up call procedure, despite funding cut for this activity

Best Practices

- The Manager’s Staff Handbook and Volunteer Handbook were recognized as “very good resources and training models”, particularly the sections on ‘How to communicate powerfully by email’ and ‘Constructive feedback-developing your skills’
- AIRS reviewers also noted that 2-1-1 TBC is “very creative in their outreach materials and specialized directories”.

JWB ASSETT Certification

A.S.S.E.T. (Agency Self-Study Efficacy Tool) is the standards-based comprehensive review process developed by JWB to evaluate the performance of the agencies it funds. The goal of A.S.S.E.T. is to encourage quality improvement and public accountability practices in the delivery of results-based outcomes.

In 2008 JWB restructured the A.S.S.E.T. process to incorporate annual contract monitoring into the comprehensive review of agencies' activities and performance. The A.S.S.E.T. component of the review focuses on organizations' administrative capacity while the contract monitoring piece addresses compliance and service delivery.

The A.S.S.E.T. Review is a major undertaking for an agency. As stated in the 2008 A.S.S.E.T. Manual, as part of the process an agency "will conduct a thorough examination of their policies, procedures, and organizational structure. Each agency is required to submit supportive documentation for addressing core administrative functions that include: Governance, Organizational Management, Quality Improvement, Risk Management, Financial Management, and Human Resource Management. In addition, programs should be prepared to demonstrate quality service delivery and compliance with the terms outlined within the JWB contract."

Gathering the required materials and documenting service delivery outcomes and contract compliance is a major undertaking for JWB funded agencies. For example, the A.S.S.E.T. Review completed by 2-1-1 TBC in 2008 was over 700 pages long and filled three large loose-leaf binders. While most of the JWB-funded organizations grumbled about the demands of the A.S.S.E.T. process, they also acknowledged that the intensive review of all aspects of their organization was ultimately useful and did result in improved performance and outcomes.

Once an agency has completed an initial A.S.S.E.T. certification process (required within three years of first receiving funding), JWB provides an option that agencies with other national accreditation in good standing can be exempted from future A.S.S.E.T. reviews, although they are still required to have an annual site visit. JWB recognizes the following national accreditations: Council on Accreditation (COA), Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO), and Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Given that 2-1-1 TBC has completed the A.S.S.E.T. process and received certification on three separate occasions in the past seven years (2002, 2005, 2008) we recommend that JWB recognize either or both the AAS and AIRS accreditations as acceptable alternatives and exempt 2-1-1 TBC from future A.S.S.E.T. certification as long as they continue to meet expectations in the annual site visits.

State of Florida

2-1-1 TBC is a “certified Florida 211 Network Provider” as designated by the Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA), a designation required to use the 2-1-1 dialing code.

2-1-1 TBC also goes through an annual certification and is monitored by the State of Florida Department and Children and Families for Substance Abuse Prevention. As part of this certification, 2-1-1 TBC works with the state auditor to review all substance abuse providers in their database in order to verify these providers continue to meet state requirements.

Finances

This review of 2-1-1 TBC’s finances comes with the caveat that we are not auditors and were totally reliant on 2-1-1 TBC’s audited financial statements and on information provided by 2-1-1 TBC staff.

It is important to note that, like most nonprofit human service organizations, 2-1-1 TBC’s budget is quite complex even though its total is only a little over \$1 million per year. This is due to the multiple sources of funding, both unrestricted and restricted, required to piece together the support needed.

We reviewed the following:

- 2-1-1 TBC budgets for the fiscal years 2002 (ending September 30, 2002) through 2009 (ending September 30, 2009);
- Audit reports for the years ended September 30, 2006, which included comparative data for fiscal year 2005, and September 30, 2007 and data from previous audits provided to us by 2-1-1 TBC staff
- The final audit report for the year ended September 30, 2008.

Over that entire period, 2-1-1 TBC’s budget had four primary categories of expenses: 2-1-1, Tampa Bay Information Network (TBIN), Community Voice Mail (CVM) and Management and General.

In each year through September 30, 2007, 2-1-1 TBC also operated the Volunteer Action Center for Pinellas County. That program was funded primarily by the Juvenile Welfare Board with additional funding from United Way of Tampa Bay. The United Way funding ended in 2005 and the JWB funding ended in 2007. As a result, 2-1-1 TBC closed that program completely.

While we have not included the Volunteer Action Center revenue and expenses in this analysis, it is important to note that there were financial implications for the overall 2-1-1 TBC in closing that program, primarily in the opportunity to recover some direct and indirect operating costs.

Revenue

Revenue for the three programs – 2-1-1, TBIN and CVM – averaged \$1,086,063 over the eight years reviewed. See Table 10 below.

For the sake of clarity, we have considered all revenue that was not specifically for TBIN or CVM to be revenue in support of the core 2-1-1 services. In practice, a portion of this revenue is used to cover general and administrative costs of the organization.

The highest level of support for 2-1-1 was in 2006 and 2007 when 2-1-1 TBC received additional one-time support of \$50,000 from JWB for a redundant telephone system for disaster recovery and special funding from Pinellas County HHS to employ two health navigators for the HealthNet program under 2-1-1.

Over the last two years, funding for 2-1-1 has fallen significantly so that in the current fiscal year it is the lowest it has been since 2005 even though there is clearly a rising level of need for access to human services due to the economic crisis. Should JWB's decision to withdraw funding from 2-1-1 TBC stand, the agency would lose 34.2% of its current year funding for the 2-1-1 services, effectively rendering it unable to provide adequate 2-1-1 services to the county.

2-1-1 TBC's primary sources of revenue for 2-1-1 have been Pinellas County, JWB, United Way of Tampa Bay and its own provision of services for fees to other 2-1-1s and nonprofit organizations. See Table 11 below.

2-1-1 TBC has been able to generate over 10% of its total revenue through a combination of fees for services, sale of directories and miscellaneous program fees. These are explained in greater detail in the notes following Table 11.

Perhaps most striking about the sources of revenue for 2-1-1 over eight years is that less than 3% has come from private philanthropy other than UWTB.

During the same period, funding for TBIN and Community Voice Mail has come from three sources: CDBG funds from the City of St. Petersburg, the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless and federal HUD funds. Taken together, these sources are intended to pay for all of the direct costs of these two programs. Although the HUD grant contributes \$8,000 annually toward overhead costs, the other sources do not contribute to overhead, thus requiring 2-1-1 TBC to cover those costs – in reality a very small incremental amount.

A comparison of Table 10, Revenue, and Table 11, Expenses, for TBIN/CVM seems to suggest that expenses for those programs has exceeded revenue over the last eight years by a total of about \$60,000 or roughly \$7,500 per year. It is beyond the scope of our capacity to precisely reconcile past audits but we believe this is due to differences between reimbursement schedules and ends of fiscal years and to differences in how expenses for those programs were recorded from one bookkeeper to another and one auditor to another. However, we consider this inconsequential as clearly the TBIN and CVM programs have significant value in strengthening the overall scope and value of 2-1-1 TBC.

Table 10. Summary of Total Revenue, FY 2002-2009, by Program

Fiscal Year Ending September 30,	2-1-1	TBIN/CVM	Total
2002	895,796	91,125	986,921
2003	821,333	238,485	1,059,818
2004	827,997	199,561	1,027,558
2005	811,307	184,052	995,359
2006	974,741	201,944	1,176,685
2007	1,013,220	227,425	1,240,645
2008	874,365	235,280	1,109,645
2009 (projected)	848,940	242,933	1,091,873
Total	\$7,067,699	\$1,620,805	\$8,688,504

Table 11. Sources of Revenue for 2-1-1 Services Since 2002

Source	Amount	As % of Total Revenue
Pinellas County	2,350,000	33.25%
JWB	2,343,455	33.15%
UWTB	834,518	11.8%
Fees for Service *	646,859	9.2%
Program Fees & Directories **	149,390	2.1%
City of St. Petersburg	134,272	1.9%
Family Continuity Program	121,563	1.7%
DCF - HHS	114,550	1.6%
DCF - Adult Mental Health	100,048	1.4%
Donations	97,148	1.4%
Foundation Grants – Pinellas Community Foundation	80,000	1.1%
Interest	63,896	0.9%
Foundation Grants - Verizon	32,000	0.5%
Total	\$7,067,699	100%

* Call center services provided under contract with Area Agency on Aging Senior Helpline, Steps for a Healthier Pinellas, Safe Start, United Way of Hernando, United Way of Citrus, United Way of Pasco, United Way 2-1-1 Manasota, Florida Network (statewide runaway and statewide parent hotlines; Operation Family First); and, several smaller miscellaneous contracts. Although individual contracts may not have paid for themselves, overall these contractual services both paid for their costs and contributed to the overall operating cost of 2-1-1 TBC.

** This category includes sales of directories of and guides to services, registration fees for 2-1-1 TBC's training programs and sales of data reports.

Total expenses for 2-1-1 TBC averaged \$1,088,653 for the years reviewed. See Table 12 below.

The projected budget for the current year calls for an 8% decrease in the budget for 2-1-1 services which will have a direct affect on their ability to continue to provide high quality services and a 68.7% decrease in Management and General which potentially will dramatically decrease overall organizational performance and increase expectations and stress for the executive director and other managers.

Table 12. Summary of Operating Expenses, 2002-2009 by Program

Fiscal Year Ending September 30,	2-1-1	TBIN/CVM	Management & General	Total
2002	\$741,004	\$ 81,667	\$82,713	\$905,384
2003	\$756,826	\$261,450	\$94,037	\$1,112,313
2004	\$747,260	\$252,443	\$99,754	\$1,099,457
2005	\$685,101	\$212,961	\$127,343	\$1,025,405
2006	\$827,352	\$197,739	\$101,283	\$1,126,374
2007	\$810,675	\$239,539	\$108,955	\$1,159,169
2008	\$886,123	\$192,381	\$110,747	\$1,189,251
2009	\$814,385	\$242,933	\$34,555	\$1,091,873
Total	\$6,268,726	\$1,681,113	\$759,387	\$8,709,226

Overall Financial Position

As of October 1, 2008, 2-1-1 TBC had on hand approximately \$338,000 in reserve funds, \$138,000 identified as “operating reserve” and \$200,000 identified as “board designated” to be used as an “emergency working capital fund.” These reserves have accumulated since 2-1-1 TBC’s separation from Family Resources and reflect prudent annual management of its funds.

2-1-1 TBC’s primary long-term financial commitment is the lease on its current space which at the end of the current fiscal year, September 30, 2009, will total \$275,660. It expires in May 31, 2012.

Acting on concerns raised by its auditor, Barton, Gonzalez and Myers P.A., concerning internal bookkeeping controls, particularly as related to year-end postings, 2-1-1 TBC contracted with Achieve Management, a nonprofit administrative organization serving nonprofit organizations, for accounting services and with ADP for payroll services.

Sergio Gonzalez of Barton, Gonzalez and Myers P.A. has confirmed in a recent telephone interview that he anticipates that retention of Achieve Management will resolve the bookkeeping problems.

THE COMMUNITY VIEW OF 2-1-1 AND 2-1-1 TAMPA BAY CARES

Overview

A critical component of this study is to understand how leaders in the community perceive the need for and value of 2-1-1, how they perceive the performance of 2-1-1 TBC and what their expectations are for the services 2-1-1 TBC will provide to the county.

We conducted in-person interviews with 90 people between December 8, 2008 and March 30, 2009. A complete list of those interviewed will be found in Appendix C. They included, recognizing the multiple roles played by a number of people:

- Executives of 31 nonprofit service providers;
- Nine of the eleven Directors of the Juvenile Welfare Board;
- Six of the seven members of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners;
- Thirteen of the eighteen members of the Administrative Forum of the Health and Human Services Coordinating Council;
- The eight members of the HHSCC Policy Board;
- Eight of the ten members of the board of 2-1-1 TBC.

Nineteen were elected or appointed officials; 33 were employees of state, county or municipal government or JWB. 28 were from funding agencies; 33 from nonprofit service providers. Twelve were from agencies funded by JWB.

We spoke in person or by telephone with a total of 20 people from Hillsborough, Hernando, Citrus, Pasco, Sarasota, Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties.

Each in-person interview lasted 45-60 minutes; telephone interviews were 30-45 minutes. Interviews were considered to be confidential.

The in-person interviews took the form of wide-ranging conversations organized around a series of relatively open-ended questions and topics. The complete list of questions will be found in Appendix D. As the interviews progressed, we attempted to test impressions gained from earlier interviews.

By definition, qualitative research such as this focuses on identifying common themes, points of agreement and disagreement, etc. among the participants. For purposes of this report, we have given an approximate quantification of the frequency of comments related to a particular point. The limitation is that not everyone responded to everything in the same way. Thus, our “count” is expressed in relation to the people who actually responded to a subject – for

example, “85% of those who had expressed an expectation for 2-1-1 said that...”.

It is critical to note that, except where stated, the areas of agreement cut across the interview categories – elected officials, funders, service providers, etc. – reflecting a general consensus in most areas on which we report below.

The Need for and Value of 2-1-1

There were four specific expectations expressed in the interviews.

The fundamental expectation, repeated over and over in the interviews, is that 2-1-1 will be a high quality comprehensive information and referral service. This is completely consistent with the expressed need for and value of 2-1-1. As an example, a key public sector representative was clear, “We need a well-run 2-1-1 information and referral service.” The executive of a major service provider echoed that view: “We need a strong, objective agency that can do unbiased referral.”

The second expectation for 2-1-1 is that it will play a key role in data collection, organization, analysis and sharing. This is consistent with one of the fundamental roles of 2-1-1 throughout the country, to provide data on emerging and unmet needs for use in community planning. Fully 90% of those expressing clear expectations for 2-1-1 named some version of “data collection, organization, analysis and sharing” as one of their expectations.

However, there were a wide range of specific expectations mentioned beyond data on emerging and unmet needs. Funders saw 2-1-1 as the potential repository on information about funding patterns for human services, as the organization that might track the extent to which people actually are able to access services, and as the keeper of client data through TBIN. One county employee expressed the hope that “2-1-1 could be the common ground for data, a conduit to come up with the outcomes we need.”

Among homeless service providers there is the expectation that the TBIN/HMIS system should serve as the primary repository, consolidator and reporter of information on homelessness in Pinellas County.

A significant potential role, mentioned by some 20 people, is for 2-1-1 to be in a lead role for real-time tracking of critical assets such as availability of beds in shelters, food and even financial assistance. But there is recognition that for it to do so effectively, there would need to be a significant commitment on the part of agencies to provide the information.

It was quite clear, however, that there has not been a coordinated effort among key stakeholders to define what data is needed, to establish a clear and realistic expectation for the role 2-1-1 can play in collecting and sharing that data and to agree on how the cost of such work will be paid for. Indeed, at least 10 people expressed the specific concern that this had not happened and that, as a result, 2-1-1 TBC was unable to meet expectations.

In such coordinated planning, the goal should be to agree on the most important shared data requirements, not to attempt to meet every possible need that can be conceived of. Otherwise, neither 2-1-1 nor any other agency will be able to

meet the expectations.

The third expectation for 2-1-1 is that it will play a lead role in preparing for and responding to a natural or man-made disaster. Some 30% of those with whom we spoke volunteered this as an expectation. When prompted, virtually all of the rest were aware of and acknowledged the important role that 2-1-1 has been given through the planning of the Disaster Recovery Leadership Network – as the conduit for information on the operational status and needs of agencies throughout the county to the emergency management agency, HHS, JWB and United Way.

Sally Bishop, Director of Emergency Management for Pinellas County, who has perhaps the best perspective on this role, said that “there is no other mechanism to do this if 2-1-1 ceases to exist. We don’t see anyone else with the capability, expertise and desire to do it...The collaborative relationship among 2-1-1, HHS, JWB and United Way is a good basis from which to work in a crisis. If it works in the sunshine, it can work well in a disaster.” A lead staff person at a funding agency said simply, “If there is no 2-1-1, then human services coordinated disaster response is lost.”

The fourth expectation for 2-1-1 is for it to provide “navigation” services in addition to or instead of comprehensive information and referral. There was significant disagreement on this expectation.

The basic idea came from a small number of people, three to five, from coordinating bodies and funders. It was not mentioned spontaneously by virtually any other people interviewed. As a result, we regularly tested the idea by raising it as an alternative or additional role for 2-1-1.

Reactions were mixed. Service providers generally felt that 2-1-1 TBC could play this role, if adequately funded to do so. Several pointed to the role that it had played in the HHS-funded trial of medical navigators. One reported that there have been efforts to fund a navigator specifically for homeless families that would be housed at 2-1-1.

But concerns also were expressed, both about whether it is an appropriate role for 2-1-1 and whether funders are either willing or able to make the investment required to make it possible for anyone to effectively perform the role of navigator except in very specific situations. Some 60% of those who expressed a view about this role for 2-1-1 were skeptical of whether funders were prepared to adequately and consistently fund a navigator program of sufficient breadth to have a meaningful impact.

Late in the interview process, following feedback from JWB staff, we began to explore the idea of using existing personnel at partner agencies to staff navigator positions at 2-1-1. Two agency directors said they were open to considering this, but that it would require significant time and negotiation to determine if this concept is truly feasible. Conversely, one agency director said she would like to have a trained 2-1-1 I&R specialist working on site at her agency to assist the large number of clients who have needs beyond those handled by her agency.

It is important to note that there was not clear agreement on what the concept of “navigation” really means in practice. We had the sense that people understood the concept in very different ways. Indeed, the only definition, admittedly vague, that people seemed to generally agree with is that “it is somewhere between information and referral and case management.” Several very experienced service providers in fact described it as case management.

Compliment and Concerns

Over 80% of those interviewed made statements that reflected the positive reputation of 2-1-1 TBC and its staff and the respect people hold for it.

This statement is typical:

2-1-1 staff are professionals who will work with you to get what you need. They are bright folks who will work hard to meet expectations – but as they are seen as more competent, they are being asked to do a lot they aren’t being paid to do.

Even a staff member of a funder that has been critical of 2-1-1 TBC told us, “When there are complaints, 2-1-1 is responsive, follows up, tries to understand, explains the circumstances and solves the problems.”

About half of those we interviewed in Pinellas County cited specific concerns about 2-1-1 TBC. The most often mentioned, by 16 people, was a concern, expressed in different ways, about whether **the 2-1-1 resource data base** is being kept current. At the same time, most of those who expressed this concern also volunteered that they recognized that agencies often are not cooperative in updating their information and that 2-1-1 TBC’s budget has been cut, thus reducing their capacity to proactively reach out to agencies.

There are two significant mitigating factors worth noting. First, 2-1-1 TBC is, at the end of the day, dependent on the willingness of agencies to provide up to date and comprehensive information. For example, one elected official who had used 2-1-1 expressed concern that it did not have available full information on eligibility requirements for access to services but also recognized that agencies had to be willing to share such information.

The second mitigating factor is that without appropriate and sustained funding that it is difficult for any agency but particularly, given its scope, 2-1-1 TBC to maintain the currency of an information and referral database.

About ten people raised concern about **the quality of call handling**. Several of these comments started with, “I have been told that...” and then expressed some version of “2-1-1 didn’t solve my problem.” Again, people expressing this concern generally understood that 2-1-1 is not responsible for whether or not a given agency has a specific service (such as utility assistance or food) available at a specific moment in time.

Five people expressed concern about the amount of time people sometimes have to wait to have their call answered but also volunteered that the ability to handle calls is directly related to the funding available to hire the needed number of call specialists.

Concerns about **the 2-1-1 online database** were expressed by ten people, primarily about the difficulty in using its search engine to identify available services. 2-1-1 TBC has acknowledged the need to improve its online searchable database, but also has indicated that it currently is bound by the capacity of its existing software. It currently is negotiating with its software provider to make changes that will improve its performance. The vendor has committed to having a customizable online search interface available by Summer 2009.

Seventeen people mentioned **the need to better promote 2-1-1**. They felt both that 2-1-1 as a service and 2-1-1 TBC as an organization are not as well known as they should be. They also recognized that increased visibility and public awareness also could lead to increased call volume which potentially would increase wait times, etc.

CHALLENGES FACED BY 2-1-1 TAMPA BAY CARES

Overview

There was an often repeated belief that the environment in which 2-1-1 TBC works is difficult and demanding in three ways – the belief that 2-1-1 should be able to solve people’s problems, the heavy requirements of funders and the unfunded expectations that have been put on 2-1-1 TBC. Over 30% of those we interviewed in Pinellas County, including over 80% of the service providers, commented on one or more of those challenges.

Incorrect Expectations

One agency executive stated it this way:

The problem is that people think 2-1-1 should be able to resolve your problems. That misunderstanding has been a great disservice to 2-1-1. Even funders, especially JWB, believe this.

An elected official echoed that: “Funders expectations are too high. 2-1-1 is information and referral. It is not ‘we’ll solve your problem for you.’”

Others pointed to the unwillingness or lack of ability by agencies – often because they do not task the appropriate staff to do it, ones who are knowledgeable about eligibility requirements, intake procedures, service hours, etc. – to provide real-time information on availability of services such as financial assistance, food and shelter beds. As a result, 2-1-1 may make referrals to agencies that, in fact, do not at that moment have those services immediately available. One large provider, who regularly sends updates to 2-1-1 expressed frustration with agencies that do not: “Timeliness of information is a community problem. People aren’t reporting. I’m proactive working with 211 -- it’s really not that hard to take 5 minutes to fax an update.”

Requirements of Funders

People from all segments of those interviewed – elected officials, funders, service providers, etc. – expressed the belief that funders in Pinellas County have played key roles, both positive and negative, in shaping human service delivery in the county.

Perhaps the best summary of the concerns expressed about funders was this one from the executive of a service provider: “We serve the funders rather than them serving us. A lot of work goes into serving their bureaucracies.” Another agency director noted that, “In 2008 we had 35 audits and site visits – when you add extra requests from funders for special reporting, it’s an enormous burden on agencies.”

This challenge for 2-1-1 is shared by other human service providers in Pinellas County. In one way or another all major funders in the county were seen as contributing to certain aspects of the problem.

Specific concerns were:

- a lack of commitment by some funders to fund the infrastructure that supports human services, opting instead to fund direct services and

expressing the belief that someone else should pay for infrastructure;

- unrealistic expectations of funders about the level of service that can be provided;
- conflicting expectations among funders, overlapping and/or competitive requirements for reporting, the belief by each major funder that its requests should be the top priority;
- requests for data by funders that have not been well thought out in advance in terms of why the data is being requested or what will be done for it and requests that seem spontaneous, with short deadlines and the expectation that agencies will drop whatever else they are doing to provide it – all without the understanding that collecting and reporting data has a real cost to agencies.

**Unfunded
Expectations**

At least a dozen people volunteered the belief that 2-1-1 TBC has been asked to take on work beyond its core mission without appropriate additional funding.

Strongest in their statements about this problem were public officials and the funders themselves. All of the following comments come from board or staff of funders, including JWB, or from elected public officials:

2-1-1 is always brought up as the organization to take on new things. For the Disaster Recovery Leadership Network, 2-1-1 was asked to take on lots of work without any additional funding.

2-1-1 has always been under-funded – it has operated under terrible funding conditions.

All we have done is hand them more to do with no more money.

2-1-1 has never been given the resources to do what they are asked to do.

We've asked them to do ever more, but we don't fund them to do it.

There is a pile on of expectations.

For this study 2-1-1 TBC staff developed a list of unfunded expectations to which it has had to respond. Some came from funders, some from collaborative groups (for example, the Disaster Recovery Leadership Network, Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless, Homeless Leadership Network) and some from other nonprofit organizations.

In some cases, 2-1-1 TBC volunteered to take on a task because not to do so would be inconsistent with its mission and its commitment to responsiveness to the community – and potentially would expose it to negative consequences from its funders. While it may seem fair to suggest that 2-1-1 TBC “just say no”, it is important to remember the nature of the environment in which it is working and what, based on input from a cross-section of key informants, suggests is an

unwillingness of funders to “take no for an answer”.

In other cases, 2-1-1 TBC has been asked to respond with little notice to shifting demands for reports and data and has been expected to make those requests a high priority.

In the future, 2-1-1 TBC needs to be more direct in responding to such requests, setting explicit, reasonable expectations and identifying the costs associated with them – and funders and partner agencies need to understand the constraints under which 2-1-1 TBC may be operating at any given moment, negotiating reasonable expectations and reimbursing costs for “non-standard” requests.

Clearly, no organization can expect to do only and exactly what it is funded to do. Community realities change, new needs emerge, new expectations are set and organizations are expected to squeeze out more effort and more product with the resources they have in hand. That is part of the daily life of a nonprofit human service organization.

But when unfunded expectations become more pervasive and frequent, it can dramatically affect the ability of an organization to achieve its mission, provide its core services with high quality and be financially sustainable.

THE PERFORMANCE OF 2-1-1 TAMPA BAY CARES

Overview

A major component of this project is to provide an independent analysis of the performance of 2-1-1 TBC. We have focused on four broad areas:

- 2-1-1 TBC's local, regional, state and national leadership;
- 2-1-1 TBC's responsiveness and adaptation to changing circumstances;
- 2-1-1 TBC's governance and management; and,
- 2-1-1 TBC's operations.

2-1-1 TBC's Local, Regional, State and National Leadership

The willingness and skill to successfully assume local, state and national leadership roles is a characteristic of a high performing organization. It should be a source of pride to the organization's funders and other stakeholders.

2-1-1 TBC has been and currently is involved in a broad range of local coalitions, work groups, planning teams, advisory councils, etc. It is an active member and leader for the Florida Association of Information and Referral Systems, for the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and for national efforts to develop 2-1-1.

In interviews with people both within and outside Pinellas County, 2-1-1 TBC is seen as highly collaborative, a leader in attempting to build coalitions and coordinated systems and as an excellent partner.

Examples of 2-1-1 TBC's participation in Pinellas County include:

- Hispanic Leadership Council
- Project Homeless Connect
- Pinellas County Medical Home
- EFSP Funding Panel
- Human Services Advisory Committee
- Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless
- Pinellas County Health and Human Services Coalition
- Pinellas County Data Collaborative
- Point In Time Survey (Homelessness One-Night Count)
- Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless Data Management Group
- Disaster Recovery Leadership Network
- Homeless Leadership Network
- Pinellas Disaster Recovery Services Coalition
- JWB ASSET Certification Site Reviewer
- Wealth Building Coalition for Pinellas County
- Health South Advisory Committee Member

Regionally they participate in:

- Regional Resource Department Work Group (2-1-1 TBC, 211 Pasco,

- 211 Manasota, and Crisis Center of Tampa Bay)
- Tri-County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco)
- 211 Citrus Advisory Committee

At the state level:

- Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS) Board of Directors
- For FLAIRS, coordinated a statewide disaster assessment of the State 211 provider network.
- State of Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Steering Committee for Health Care Access
- Whole Child Community Committee of the Governor’s Child Abuse Prevention & Permanency Council (CAPP) regarding the Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency State Plan
- Florida State HMIS Group

At the national level:

- Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) Board of Directors
- National Human Services Data Consortium
- National Lifeline Network
- Bowman Systems ART Development Advisory Committee
- AIRS Accreditation Site Review Team

Participation in these activities keep 2-1-1 TBC aware of emerging best practices, offer excellent professional development opportunities for staff and build knowledge and skills that find their way into staff training programs and into their interactions with human service providers, elected officials and funders in Pinellas County.

**2-1-1 TBC’s
Responsiveness and
Adaptation to
Changing
Circumstances**

2-1-1 TBC has undergone significant change over its lifetime, particularly in the last several years. It is our strong impression that the organization has been extremely responsive and adaptable in dealing with that change. Here are four very recent examples of which we are aware:

- In response to reduced funding, greater attention is being given to recruiting and training volunteers to serve as call specialists. While this is not ideal because of the limited hours each volunteer is willing to work, the challenge of recruiting qualified people and turnover, it is a reasonable interim solution to maintain 24/7 service until there is final resolution on funding for the coming fiscal year.
- 2-1-1 TBC has shifted from having an internal bookkeeper to contracting with Achieve Management to provide bookkeeping services and with ADP to provide payroll services. These steps are improving performance and saving money.
- The 2-1-1 TBC board has recently begun discussions about how it can

improve its own performance and expand its engagement in fund-raising and advocacy for the organization. They are considering a new committee structure, are in the process of recruiting new board members and are working to improve their internal board communication.

- 2-1-1 TBC began contracting in March 2008 with Luther Consulting, an independent assessment service to review audio files of calls and to provide specific critique and recommendations for improvement. Since October 2008, coinciding with the hiring of a new call center manager, Luther has reported improvement in the quality of call handling. The same independent service is contracted to perform data verification on a random sample of database records on a quarterly basis to ascertain information is accurate and up-to-date.

2-1-1 TBC's Governance and Management

Governance

Over the course of this study, we interviewed eight of the ten members of the 2-1-1 TBC board in both a small group setting and in individual meetings. We also reviewed minutes of board meetings and data provided by 2-1-1 TBC on board participation in public representation and advocacy activities by members of the board.

Based on that, we are concerned about the overall strength of the board, the role it plays in fund-raising and the level of its engagement in the current funding crisis the organization faces.

For example, 2-1-1 TBC raises virtually no money from private philanthropy. In many organizations, the board of directors would be playing a leadership role in reaching out to businesses and individual donors. That does not seem to be the case at 2-1-1 TBC. In many organizations, board members would be leading the way by making personal contributions to the organization. But at 2-1-1 TBC, in 2008 only two members of the board made relatively modest financial contributions.

We have received only minimal indication that the board has seriously addressed contingency plans to address the impending financial crisis. While we recognize that as consultants retained by HHSCC with funding from HHS and JWB we might be seen as adversaries of the organization, it seems to us not in the organization's best interests for its board not to be forthcoming about its plans for the future. They appear to have chosen to put themselves in the position of responding to this study rather than pro-actively seeking to influence it.

It is our strong recommendation that:

- **There be a determined effort to recruit several recognized community leaders to join the board;**
- **A term limit provision be added to the 2-1-1 TBC by-laws to ensure an orderly rotation of board members;**

- **The board take the lead to establish an ongoing fund-raising effort that includes:**
 - **a personal contribution from each board member, at a personally significant level, as demonstration of the board members' commitment;**
 - **creation of a fund-raising committee that might include people who are not board members;**
 - **a clear goal to increase funds raised from individuals, businesses, faith communities and civic associations to at least 5% of the total budget.**

We also recommend that:

- **The primary funders – Pinellas County government, JWB and UWTFB – set a clear expectation that 2-1-1 TBC will undertake a fund-raising program along the lines described above; and,**
- **Those funders give serious consideration to each nominating a representative to the 2-1-1 TBC board.**

Regarding the latter recommendation, we recognize that opinion in the nonprofit community is mixed as to the desirability of funders sitting on the board of an organization receiving funds. We also know that such an arrangement can be fraught with difficulties if there are not clear understandings about the confidentiality of information received by such representatives and the role those representatives play as liaison between funder and organization. But, given the close partnership that needs to exist between 2-1-1 TBC and its primary funders, it is worth consideration so long as those safeguards can be established and maintained.

A useful model to examine might be 2-1-1 Broward where their primary funders – the Children's Services Council, the United Way, county government and the Department of Children and Families – are represented on their board and where they appear to have established clear safeguards.

Management

Our primary concern about management is that one of the primary ways in which 2-1-1 TBC is dealing with loss of funding is to reduce expenditures on management staff.

While it is fine to become more efficient in administration – for example, the decision to outsource bookkeeping and payroll services – in the long run reducing management so dramatically will take its toll on the organization.

We have to agree with those people we interviewed who expressed concern that the Executive Director is being unfairly stretched and asked to assume a steadily

increasing workload. Again, over time, this is not in the organization's best interests.

The board of 2-1-1 TBC must assume responsibility for ensuring that an adequate management staff is in place to actually run the organization, maintain required public representation, raise funds, develop and execute contracts and ensure the quality of services provided. This is a fundamental responsibility of the board of a nonprofit organization. It cannot de facto create a situation in which the executive director is expected to reduce management staff below an acceptable level.

Funders also must play a role by expecting that a reasonable percentage of their support will be committed to ensuring adequate organizational management.

2-1-1 TBC's Operations

The following eleven sections provide a comprehensive review and assessment of the operations of 2-1-1 TBC with particular emphasis on description and analysis of their technology systems and on quality assurance efforts. Conclusions and recommendations are grouped at the end of these sections.

The most critical analysis, however, deals with the adequacy of current levels of staffing, both call specialists and resource database specialists.

To determine the actual staffing needs of 2-1-1 TBC, we used staffing and financial projection tools developed by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems. These tools incorporate a mathematical formula called the "Erlang Formula" to determine how many staff are needed to service a given call volume in a set period of time. Call distribution patterns are based on historic studies of 2-1-1 calling patterns in five states with 24/7 access to 2-1-1 service. For the purposes of this study, we used the low-end AIRS service level recommendation that 85% of calls be answered within one minute. To achieve the AIRS 'ideal' of 95% of calls answered within 30 seconds would require an additional staffing increase of approximately 40%.

These staffing tools are widely used by 2-1-1 programs across the country and are an accepted industry standard.

While the use of volunteers and a phone tree that uses recorded messages to answer common questions helps to bridge the gap, inadequate staffing has a negative impact on service levels leading to increased wait time for callers and additional stress on 2-1-1 TBC staff and volunteers.

Staffing to maintain the 2-1-1 database falls far short of the levels AIRS recommendation of 750 records per resource specialist – a level that ensures each record can be fully reviewed and updated at least once per year. This ideal is widely recognized to be a challenge that few call centers achieve. With focused effort and cooperation from agencies to provide regular updates, it is not uncommon for a resource specialist to be responsible for 1000 – 1250 record. To regularly update more than 1500 records is considered impracticable.

2-1-1 TBC is funded for a single resource specialist who has the task of

maintaining up-to-date information on more than 5,000 records in the 2-1-1 database of programs and service, far short of the 3.3 – 6.5 FTEs recommended by AIRS. In order to mitigate the effects of this inadequate staffing, 2-1-1 TBC has worked creatively to keep information in the database as current as possible. As noted in the section on database quality, 2-1-1 TBC has contracted with Luther Consulting Services to do periodic spot checks to verify that information in the database is current and accurate. As part of verification process Luther provides any correction or revisions identified to the Database Resource Coordinator at 2-1-1 TBC for updating.

Based on community and internal reports by 2-1-1 TBC management, current staffing for TBIN and Community Voice Mail programs, as distinct from the 2-1-1 service, are sufficient to meet current community and funder expectations.

Hardware: Network and Workstation Equipment

As with every business, the technology related expenses are a significant portion of 2-1-1 TBC's annual budget. Like many non-profit organizations, 2-1-1 TBC relies upon aging, often out-of-date technology. For example, the agency's training center has twelve stations. Due to hardware failures, they are down to five functioning training stations with using donated laptop computers ranging from 6-9 years old.

In the past year a JWB Technology and Renovation Grant has allowed 2-1-1 TBC to replace half of the call center computers with new laptops. A previous grant also provided two new servers – one for the internal office network and a terminal server to support remote access for home workers and disaster response – along with a system router and switch to manage the internal local network. These upgrades have had a positive impact on productivity for the workers who have access to the new technology, but the remaining half of the call center staff continue to work on seven year-old computers. All 2-1-1 TBC printers are at least 7 years old. Most are still functioning adequately but printing speed is a problem while the expense of ink, and repairs are increasing.

Given this aging infrastructure, technical support is an important factor in keeping the operation running. As a cost-saving measure 2-1-1 TBC has outsourced computer and telephony maintenance to an outside vendor. The vendor is able to remotely monitor phone and computer systems and provide guidance to 2-1-1 TBC management staff for general upkeep. This is sufficient for day-to-day maintenance, but there have been several occasions when 2-1-1 TBC has had to delay work on mission-critical phone and computer systems due to lack of funding to pay for onsite work by the vendor, affecting productivity and service levels.

General Productivity: E-mail, Calendar, Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Intranet

From 2001-07, 2-1-1 TBC managed its office application resources internally. Servers managed e-mail, calendar and Intranet while MS Office suite products were installed on each workstation. This provided 2-1-1 TBC staff the tools needed to meet productivity requirements and coordinate program activities. Over time this became increasingly expensive as Microsoft licensing fees and the need for new productivity tools increased. In 2007, 2-1-1 TBC management reviewed the expenses associated with maintenance of these tools and licensing fees. It was determined there were more cost-efficient ways to provide these

necessary tools to staff.

At that time, 2-1-1 TBC management began decreasing its dependence on Microsoft products by converting to free open-source tools that were becoming available. After testing the new products to ensure they could mimic the full functionality of commonly used Microsoft applications such as Outlook, Excel, Word, PowerPoint, in December 2007, 2-1-1 TBC transitioned from a Microsoft work environment to a web-based set of tools for businesses called Google Apps.

Google Apps is a suite of office productivity applications provided for individuals and businesses. These web-based tools are free for educational institutions and non-profit organizations, including free site maintenance, a place to electronically store files, a collaborative office environment, redundancy, and access to tools at any location with Internet access.

Use of Google Apps has allowed 2-1-1 TBC to:

1. *Provide support to remote workers* – 2-1-1 TBC staff has access to company files and tools while working outside the office as long as they have an Internet connection.
2. *Work collaboratively on a single shared document* – Coworkers can share the same online copy of each document, spreadsheet, or presentation. All revisions are saved and recoverable. Co-workers can also work on the same document at the same time allowing for true collaboration on projects, instead of having to email multiple versions of the same document back and forth.
3. *Present and publish through the web* – Presentations can be delivered to remote audiences, and documents and spreadsheets can be published internally for employees to view or externally for community partners to access online.
4. *Inter-operate with traditional file formats* – Import and export collaboratively and edit or publish from .doc, .xls, .csv, .ppt, .txt, .html, .pdf and other formats.
5. *Be assured secure online hosting* – Google Apps is used by many major universities and international not-for-profit organizations and is known for providing strong security for its systems.

Based on estimations, this move to Google Apps has saved 2-1-1 TBC approximately \$50,000 per year in technology expenses.

Databases

2-1-1 and TBIN use a suite of integrated software products from Bowman Systems to track information on programs, services, resources and clients, and to report on its activities to funders, policy makers and the community at-large:

- CallPoint - call center interface for entering caller data that can be linked with client records in ClientPoint.

- ClientPoint - case management software to enter and manage client information used primarily for TBIN.
- ResourcePoint - agency and program community resource data.
- CommunityPoint – makes information in ResourcePoint available to the public through a searchable on-line database.
- ShelterPoint - housing inventory for emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing beds.
- ActivityPoint - tracks client activities like support groups, chores, etc.
- SkanPoint - creates client ID cards connected to their client data in ClientPoint, supporting rapid check-in of clients at high traffic facilities.
- ART - advanced reporting tool.

The 2-1-1 database and the TBIN system are currently housed on an external server hosted by software vendor Bowman Systems. As more people search the online 2-1-1 database and as the TBIN system becomes more widely used by homeless service providers in Pinellas County, access to information has become slower, compromising the productivity of 2-1-1 call center and TBIN data partners. The vendor strongly recommends transferring the 2-1-1 TBC databases to a dedicated server hosted environment within the software vendor Bowman Systems. This dedicated server coupled with a dedicated T1 Internet connection could significantly increase access speeds, helping address a major frustration expressed by both 2-1-1 database and TBIN users. If funding can be found for the upfront cost of an additional server, it would also save \$1500-\$2000/year to have a dedicated server as opposed to leasing server space from the vendor.

It is worth noting that 2-1-1 TBC is classified by Bowman Systems as a “superuser” – one of the few clients integrating multiple Bowman Systems products within a single installation including the CallPoint information and referral database, web-based access to the 2-1-1 database through CommunityPoint, and ServicePoint - the HMIS/TBIN platform. This integration has allowed 2-1-1 TBC and its community partners to push the limits of the existing software. Due to this, it has also allowed 2-1-1 TBC and its community partners to have considerable influence on I&R and HMIS software development allowing for 2-1-1 TBC and its community partners to identify evolving software functionality and needs, participate in planning groups discussing future enhancements, and testing these new features prior to or as they are introduced into the market.

The full capacity and functionality of the integrated Bowman Systems software is underutilized, particularly in relation to TBIN. The various modules are used largely as stand-alone components, missing the potential they have for supporting coordinated service delivery, real-time tracking of resources, and more sophisticated reporting provider activities and community

needs. Under the description of the individual modules we have made an effort to identify some of the opportunities for taking greater advantage of the capacity of the 2-1-1 and TBIN software. In order to take advantage of these opportunities, funders, policy-makers, partner agencies and 2-1-1 TBC will need to engage in a community dialogue to determine how best to utilize this capacity to appropriately serve the residents of Pinellas County.

CallPoint

Currently, 2-1-1 TBC is one of four 2-1-1 providers in Florida (Pinellas, Jacksonville, Manasota, and Miami) that utilizes a web-based system for their call center. CallPoint allows users to create call records, capture custom assessment information, issue referrals, indicate call status, and flag calls for follow-up. In addition, calls can be catalogued anonymously or they can be associated with cases for providing better assistance to frequent callers. Users can also search the index of call records by caller name, call status, call type, or follow-up status, allowing call center employees to easily return to a call record when necessary. Additionally as an Internet based system, it also allows 2-1-1 TBC staff to work remotely in case of disaster.

CallPoint records can be linked to client records in ClientPoint and could support a virtual in-take system for Pinellas County human service providers. When callers call 2-1-1, the data from 2-1-1 could be linked to or start new client records in ClientPoint. This would allow 2-1-1 to share data with other agencies in Pinellas County. 2-1-1 could aid in streamlining client data collection county-wide by collecting minimum data from clients and linking it with their current client record or start a new client record if they are new to the system. Once the record has been created, 2-1-1 can electronically refer the client to a local program and the system would tell the referring agency that a client is coming to them. This virtual "hand-off" and data sharing of client level data to another non-profit could streamline the processing of clients, creating efficiencies and potentially saving money. Once the client is then seen by the referring agency, the local provider can go back into TBIN and provide follow-up data regarding how the provider met the clients needs. All these activities could be done in real-time.

ResourcePoint

Resource point provides access to agency and program resource data while protecting client records from unauthorized viewers. Agency and program data can be searched by registered agencies using TBIN for case management and identified first responders for disaster. TBIN contains all of 2-1-1 TBC agency and program data of more than 5,182 resources located and providing services in the Pinellas, Citrus, and Hernando Counties.

CommunityPoint (On-line Database)

CommunityPoint provides a web-based portal for the general public to health and human service agency and program information within the 2-1-1 TBC

database. It supports several key functions:

- Find help search to locate programs and services that may fulfill a need.
- Password protected area for agencies to update their own agency and program information.
- Volunteer and Donation opportunities section to aid local non-profits.
- Community Calendar listing special events in the Tampa Bay area.

This database is the same as the one used by the call center when assessing caller needs and providing referrals and information to callers. This portal also allows 2-1-1 TBC staff to make updates in one location and for the information to automatically appear in multiple locations and interfaces.

The 2-1-1 TBC Resource Specialist works with providers to update agency and program information by giving them a user name and password to the on-line database. When providers log-in, they are taken directly to their agency and program information so they can update and submit their changes electronically to 2-1-1 TBC. Currently, there are 351 agencies (about 7%) registered to update their information online.

There are 2 separate links on the on-line database: one for agency wish lists and the other for volunteer opportunities. 2-1-1 TBC encourages local non-profits to list their volunteer and donation information. When they do, this information is presented on the on-line database.

The Community Calendar is a specialty calendar that lists information on special health and human service related events in the Tampa Bay area. 2-1-1 TBC does not list special events in the regular database as they are very resource intensive to manage. However, the Community Calendar does provide a place for these events to be listed. Agencies can submit these requests to 2-1-1 TBC through the Community Calendar. Once received, 2-1-1 TBC staff review and verify the event information and then post it to the calendar.

The Find Help link connects searchers with a method to find programs and services that could potential meet their needs. There are several ways to search for this information:

- Default keyword list search
- User generated search term
- Search by City, County, or Area
- Search by Population or Emergency Support Functions (ESF)

The online database includes a simple pull down box called the Term List that a pre-populated list of search terms for the public to use for simple searches. This list is generated by 2-1-1 TBC staff and can be easily altered as requests for new terms are submitted. Searchers can also enter their own search terms, such as the name of an agency or program or a keyword or phrase.

When a query is submitted, the database searches by agency, program or service name, keywords and related AIRS Taxonomy terms that are part of each resource record. These simultaneous searches bring results of possible matches

for the user. In addition to the above, users can search by a city, county, or area in which they are located or a program or service provides services. This will show a comprehensive list of all providers in an area. Users can combine a geographic searches with a keyword or search term search to focus the results.

2-1-1 TBC acknowledges the search interface in CommunityPoint does not always meet community expectations in terms of user-friendliness. 2-1-1 TBC has communicated this to the vendor on several occasions. 2-1-1 TBC has had no dedicated funding in the past to purchase programming service from the vendor to develop a new search tool. Despite this lack of funding the vendor has committed to launching a new customizable interface by summer 2009. As a super-user of Bowman System products, 2-1-1 TBC will be working with the vendor to improve the user interface and ensure a more user friendly experience.

ClientPoint

Client Point is a case management software used primarily for TBIN. It allows providers to enter and manage their client information. ClientPoint is a full case management system that allows users to:

- Search for clients
- Create new client records
- Collect an array of data on clients using up to 18 different assessments
- Electronically log case notes
- Track services and activities they provide to clients as well as those services that they refer clients out too

Participating TBIN Member Agencies are required to enter a minimum set of data known as Universal Data Elements (UDE) for all clients in the system. These UDEs are required for annual reporting to HUD. Additionally, TBIN Member Agencies who receive HUD funding are required to enter additional data elements for each client called the Program-Specific Data Elements (PSDE). It has been the hope of the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless that all homeless providers will enter both UDE and PSDE data fields regardless of funding source. In the updated HMIS Data and Technical Standards, due to be released within the next year, HUD will be urging all homeless providers to collect both the UDE and PSDE data elements as well as the client Self-Sufficiency data.

ClientPoint has a number of powerful tracking and case management tools that are currently being underutilized by TBIN parters. Providers could log services they provide to clients as well as referrals for services to outside providers. When making an outside referral, the system can send an email to the agency receiving the referral, while also recording the needs the clients is trying to meet. When the client is seen by the referred agency, the agency can enter follow-up data into TBIN regarding how the client's needs were met. All this could be done in real-time. This data would provide agencies, funders, and community planners with valuable data regarding trends, gaps in services, and usage of non-housing services.

In terms of reporting TBIN activities, in addition to the 18 canned assessments

in the system, TBIN staff at 2-1-1 TBC have created customized assessments and reports for many system users including West Care, Pinellas Hope, and Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless Point In Time Annual Count.

ShelterPoint

ShelterPoint is the housing inventory for emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing beds. It is a simple list that mimics the way the provider manages their facility beds. TBIN staff work with each homeless housing provider that is a registered TBIN Member to construct their individual bed lists. Once completed, each homeless housing provider is required to manage their own bed lists by ensuring that clients are added to and/or removed from the lists on a daily basis.

Since the 2-1-1 call center joined TBIN, call center staff have access to the bed usage data through a link in CallPoint. The main challenge with this real-time tracking of shelter bed availability is the willingness of shelter providers to update this information in a timely manner – this is an ongoing challenge.

When providers keep the information updated, this data has helped homeless callers, improved the accuracy of referrals and increased efficiencies for 2-1-1 and service providers. When the information is current a homeless individual and/or family can ask for housing, the call center representative checks bed availability and only make referrals to shelters with available beds.

Additionally, this occupancy data provides the TBIN system and Continuum of Care with an on-going data on the beds available to the homeless in Pinellas County and allows TBIN to report annually on bed usage rates to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through their Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR).

ActivityPoint

ActivityPoint is available for tracking client activities like support groups, chores, and community service. This case management tool is not widely utilized at this time, but could aid providers understanding of how the client is meeting their program goals. For example, if a client in a substance abuse program is required to attend weekly support groups, ActivityPoint could be used to ensure that clients are meeting that goal by tracking their attendance at meetings.

SkansPoint

SkansPoint allows providers to create client ID cards connected to individual client data in ClientPoint. The cards can have a picture, client name, client number, and a bar code linking that card to the clients record in TBIN. They are printed on regular paper with either a black and white or color printer. These cards provide a system-wide ID that flags an individual as being in the Tampa Bay Information Network.

Several providers that serve large volumes of clients, such as emergency shelters, soup kitchens, and/or food pantries, have expressed strong interest in purchasing bar code scanners connected to a computer logged into TBIN – this would allow the provider to quickly find a client record, track and account for the services they provide. The combination of scanner and cards would reduce errors in the system as services are automatically logged and nearly eliminate human "data keying" errors that are common when entering high volumes of client data in a short period, such as meal times.

ART (Advanced Reporting Tool)

TBIN has a set of canned reports, as well as a report generator that can pull only small sets of data. For more complex reporting, ART is an advanced reporting system for the ServicePoint Suite. It allows for the creation of reports with tables, graphs, charts, and custom SQL statements to refine the data presentation. Bowman System has a special business arrangement with Business Objects Software to license and use this tool with ServicePoint. Because it depends on an outside software product to provide more advanced reporting functionality, ART requires an additional licensing fee separate from ServicePoint, 2-1-1 TBC is not able to provide free licenses to registered TBIN users because this was not identified as a need in the original grant award from HUD.

Providers wanting this additional reporting capacity currently have to pay per-user fees of \$85 to \$165 per user per year, depending on the level of reporting desired. Otherwise TBIN System Administrators at 2-1-1 TBC have to create and run any specialized reports for providers – a source of frustration for providers and 2-1-1 TBC staff.

Phone Service

From 2001 to 2006, 2-1-1 TBC used a hosted Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system with Verizon to manage the routing of 2-1-1 calls. In 2005 Verizon ended support for this leased system. In the fall of 2006 2-1-1 TBC moved to an Altigen ACD system. During the transition, 2-1-1 TBC negotiated discounted rates and free phone numbers the new vendor, saving \$1,500 - 3,000 annually over the previous contract.

The Altigen's Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) call center system is a software-based Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) tool that offers call routing options, supervisor capabilities, call recording capabilities, reporting, and real-time agent and call statistics. With implementation of this system in 2006, 2-1-1 TBC began using information boxes to help answer calls for on-going simpler basic needs calls such as rent/mortgage assistance, utility assistance, and food. 2-1-1 TBC was the first in Florida to implement this measure for prioritizing the types and numbers of calls that reach the call center staff. Since then, other 2-1-1 centers have implemented this measure as a means of maintaining service levels with reduced staffing.

It is estimated that the information boxes have saved 2-1-1 TBC \$40,000 per year in salaries for call center representatives. To ensure that a caller does not get "stuck in an endless computerized information box message," 2-1-1 TBC

ends each message box with a message that tells callers who are listening to those boxes that they can press "0" to speak with a call center representative for additional information or if they are needing additional resources. The message also allows for the caller to press "*" to repeat the message.

The Altigen system supports call recording which allows the 2-1-1 Call Center Manager to play back calls with call center representatives for training and quality assurance.

In 2007, 2-1-1 TBC received funding from JWB to purchase a back up phone system to ensure continuity of operations in disaster. 2-1-1 TBC is the only 2-1-1 program in Florida that has its own redundant telephone system housed in a hardened facility. 2-1-1 TBC houses this secondary redundant system with a vendor located in Orlando. This same server facility houses other large corporate systems such as Bank of America and Orlando Time Warner.

2-1-1 TBC planned to ensure that the 2 ACD systems (primary - Pinellas and secondary - Orlando) are redundant in real time. This means that in the event the electricity at the Pinellas facility fails, the Orlando system automatically answers and routes the calls to cell phones that ring in the call center (at the Pinellas facility). These cell phones allow the call center staff to travel from the center and literally answer 2-1-1 calls while walking away from the building, if needed.

The cost of these cell phones and the related on-going expenses covered out of pre-existing operating funds through economizing in other areas. In addition to those cell phones, 2-1-1 TBC management staff personally pay for and use their own cell phones for off-site communications and disaster back up. These personal cell phones are used daily by staff, local funders, and colleagues to reach 2-1-1 TBC management. 2-1-1 TBC is not able to pay for any portion of managers' work-related use of personal cell phones.

The 2-1-1 TBC ACD system meets the basic caller and agency needs. 2-1-1 TBC could improve the system and provide more enhanced features that would improve the quality of service delivery and/or reporting requirements. There are several enhancements to the system identified under the Technology Upgrade Options that could impact service levels and quality assurance. 2-1-1 TBC has written grant proposals for some of these enhancement requests, but to date, they have not been awarded.

The current telephone system lease expires in July 2009. 2-1-1 TBC staff are reviewing options for alternative systems with the goal of maintaining the same functionality as the current system while adding enhancements such as staff scheduling for call center representatives, additional remote work features and/or control, and enhanced reporting features.

**Quality Assurance –
Telephone Service**

Beginning in March 2008, 2-1-1 TBC engaged Luther Consulting Services, a national expert on non-profit performance evaluation with particular experience working with 2-1-1 programs, to provide a monthly independent assessment of its 2-1-1 phone service. Luther uses professional reviewers to score a random sample of calls on quantifiable performance measures based on the AIRS

Standards, beginning with appropriate greetings to the collection of caller demographic information, use of active listening skills, assessment of caller needs and providing complete and appropriate referrals.

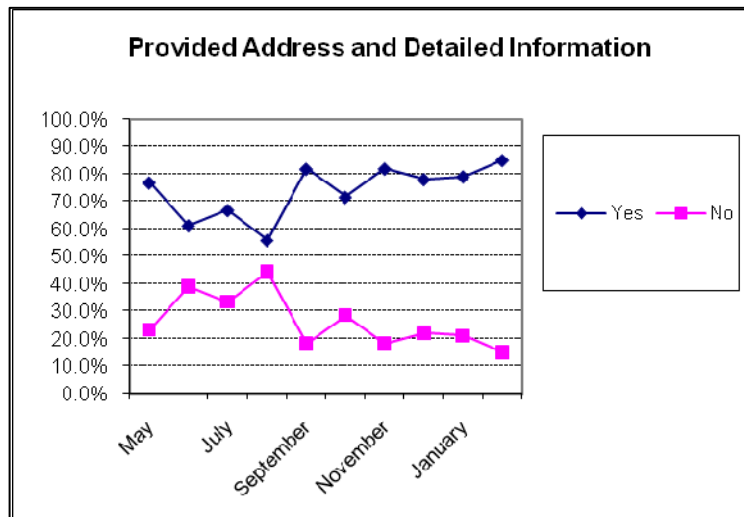
Based on initial reports from this independent assessment, I&R specialists show consistently high scores for active listening skills, acting in a culturally appropriate manner and assessing callers needs. The early reports identify significant room for improvement in the several areas: the use of open-ended questions to elicit useful information from callers; providing a minimum of three referrals or explaining why more options are not available, giving complete information for each referral including contact number, hours of operation and an explanation of the services provided.

With the hiring of a new call center manager in October 2008, 2-1-1 TBC has instituted additional procedures to track key performance indicators on a daily, weekly and monthly basis for individual agents and the call center as a whole. The most recent reports from Luther Consulting’s independent review of agent performance indicates that this intensive focus on agent and call center performance is having a significant positive impact on service levels and work quality.

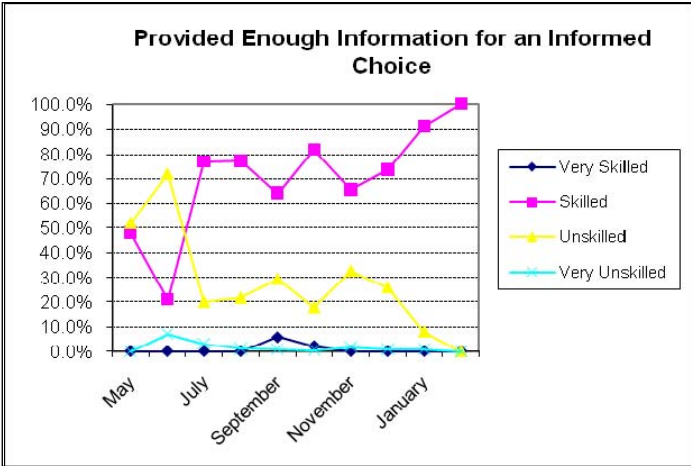
In particular there have been dramatic improvements in providing detailed information for programs and how to contact them.

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Graph1.

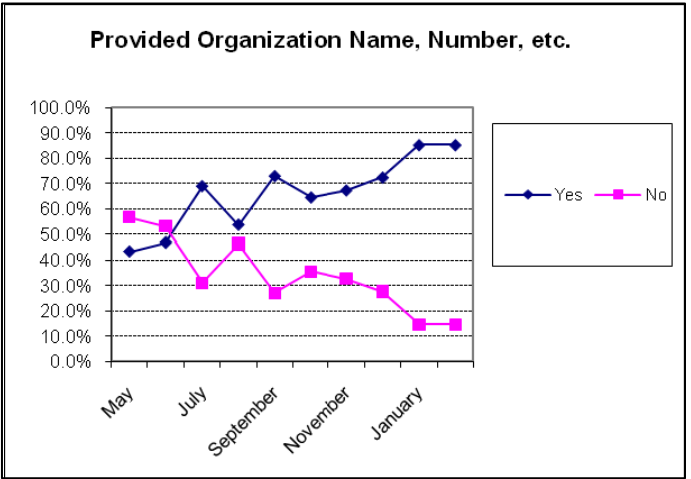


Graph 2.



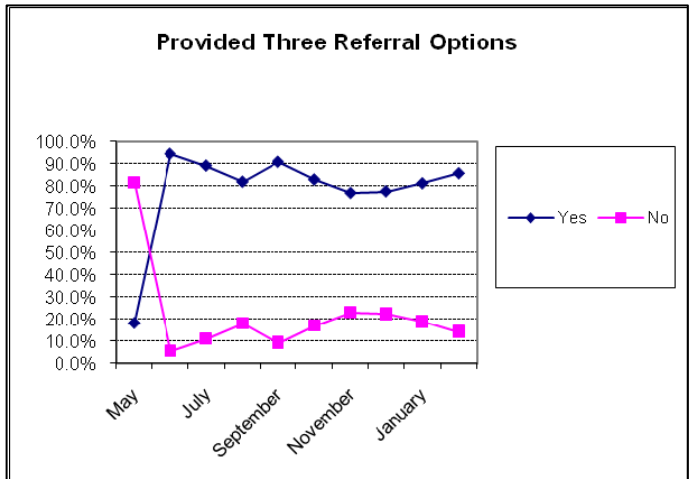
As can be seen in Graphs 1 and 2, the focus by the new call center manager on training to improve basic performance is resulting in measurable improvement in the amount and quality of information provided to callers.

Graph 3.



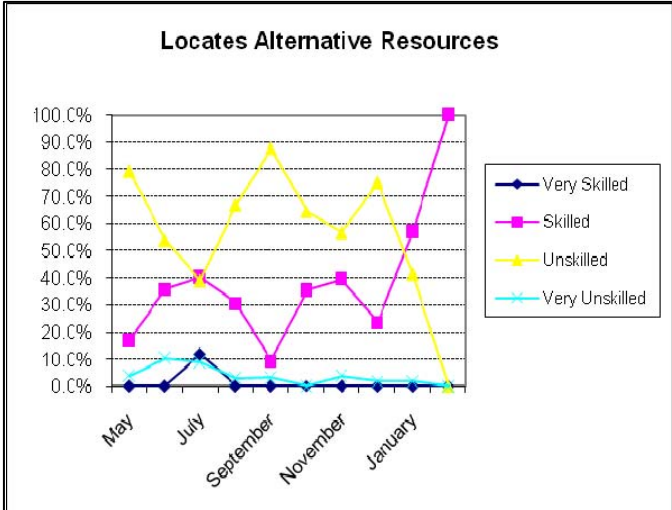
The overall success can be seen in Graph 3 where it is clear that callers are now receiving the full information they need to make an informed decision about which referrals are most appropriate to their particular situation.

Graph 4.



One interesting issue to note is the apparent discrepancy between the decline in the percentage of callers receiving three referrals (Graph 4) as required by the AIRS standards and the sharp increase in the number getting help identifying

Graph 5

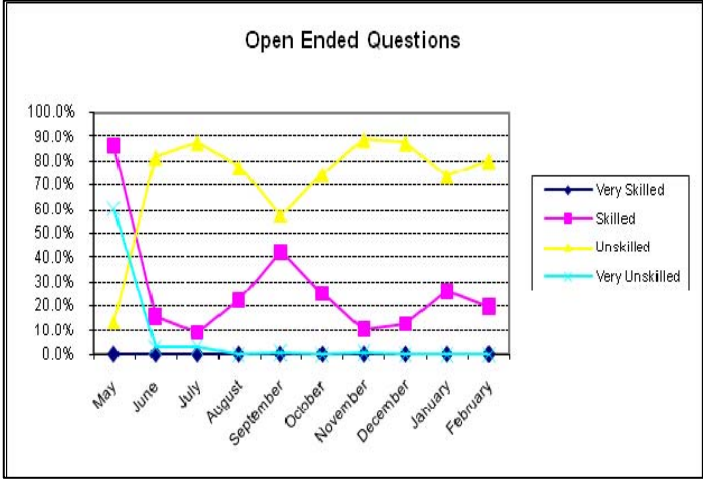


alternate resources (Graph 5). One possible explanation for this difference could be that, as demand for services increases and availability becomes more limited, the call specialists are working more intensively to help callers problem solve and identify their own resources that

are available through family, friends, faith organizations or other personal connections.

While these positive changes indicate solid progress by 2-1-1 TBC toward meeting quality standards, there are still several issues related to call center performance requiring attention. Further training on the use of open-ended questions is clearly called for as indicated by Graph 6.

Graph 6

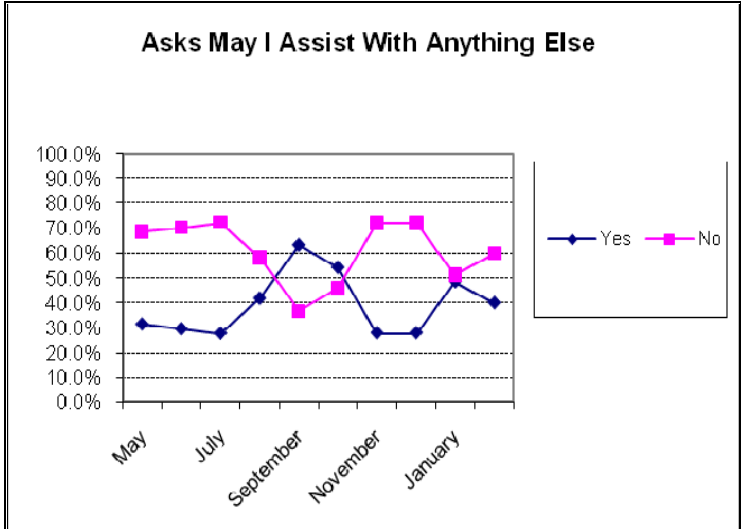


Open-ended questions are a critical tool for understanding the caller’s situation and identifying additional needs. As call specialists develop this skill they will be able to provide the most appropriate referrals to meet their needs.

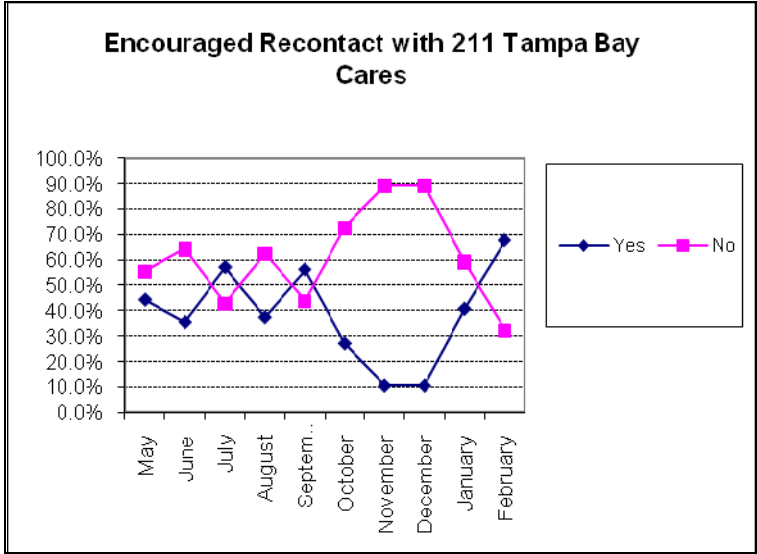
Finally, the call specialists would benefit from additional training in managing the final stage of a call, when there is an opportunity to ask the caller if they need assistance with any other issues and to encourage callers to contact 2-1-1 in the future if they have additional needs. Graphs 7 and 8 indicate there is significant room for improvement on both of these measures.

Both of these activities provide an opening to develop the relationship with the caller and assure them that 2-1-1 continues to be available to assist them as their personal situation evolves.

Graph 7



Graph 8



Quality Assurance for the Resource Database

A well-maintained database with accurate information on programs and services is essential to a high-quality information and referral service, because information is the primary service provided. The AIRS Standards have clear guidelines for content management, indexing of services, accessibility, and data maintenance including annual updating of every record in the database.

The Quality Indicator for resource management in the AIRS Standard

recommends resource specialists each manage 750 records. Due to limited resources, many call centers find it challenging to meet this goal, but it is rare that even a highly trained and experienced resource specialist be expected to manage more than a maximum of 1250 records. With only one certified resource specialist to maintain their 5000 record database, 2-1-1 TBC is significantly understaffed in this area. The Resource Manager estimates that without increased staffing, only 20-25% of the records will be updated annually.

2-1-1 TBC is working to improve this by encouraging providers to register for a logon id in order to directly update their own record, but to date only 328 of 5193 providers have signed up.

In addition to assessing the call center performance, 2-1-1 TBC contracted with Luther Consulting to provide outside verification of the information in its database of programs and services. In July and August 2008, Luther reviewed a total of 3219 organization records. A weighted sample of 334 records giving preference to agencies receiving the largest number of referrals was selected for individual verification.

The full set of records was reviewed on a pass/fail basis to determine that all mandatory data fields had properly formatted information. The sub-sample was verified by directly contacting the agencies to validate if the information recorded was correct.

The review of all records determined that over 99% of the records had properly formatted name, address and phone information. More than 10% of the records were missing days and hours of operation. 97% had service descriptions and 95% were assigned an AIRS Taxonomy code. The biggest concern raised in the initial review was that 52% of the records indicated they had not been updated in the past 12 months. This was identified as a potentially indicating a failure of the database software to properly update this field. As a result the software vendor worked with 2-1-1 TBC to ensure the displayed date indicated the most recent update.

In the data verification phase, Luther noted 38 agencies in the sample (11%) were unreachable, indicating that when agencies closed or stopped offering specific services, they do not share this with 2-1-1. In looking at the individual data fields, Luther found 97% had the correct name, and 85% had correct phone numbers. Among agencies that could be reached, 80% had correct physical addresses, while 70% had correct mailing addresses. Any wrong information – an incorrect zip code, flipped digits in the address – was recorded as a failing to meet standard. All corrections were recorded and updated in the 2-1-1 TBC database.

Specific program information, such as hours of operation, was incorrect in almost 30% of the records. This was identified as needing prompt attention to correct. Finally, service information was found to be correct in just under 95% of records.

As part of this study, Civil Society Consulting Group worked with an independent AIRS-certified Resource Specialist with 15 years experience in

information and referral to validate records for the 50 Pinellas County agencies receiving the most referrals in 2007-2008, plus all JWB-funded agencies in the database. This validation process used the same criteria established by Luther Consulting in the summer of 2008 and provides an indication of 2-1-1 TBC’s performance over the seven month period since the original study was completed. A total of 75 agencies were included in the initial sample. Of these, 10 are no longer in the database (the result of mergers and closures), seven did not respond to repeated efforts to contact them and three provided only partial verification of information.

This leaves 55 agencies with a total of 97 database records (many agencies provide multiple services and have more than one program record in the database). These 97 programs (1.8% all records in the 2-1-1 TBC database) account for nearly 50% of all referrals provided in FY2007-08.

Database error criteria are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13. Database Error Criteria

Data Element	What constitutes an error:	What does NOT constitute an error:
Name of program	Misspellings.	Commonly used abbreviations or spelling out names that are commonly referred to by acronyms
Phone number	Incorrect number of digits in the phone number. Disconnected service. Number does not belong to the correct agency/program.	A phone number for the main switchboard of an agency, rather than the direct line of a program.
Address – Physical	Incomplete address – Must include street address, city, state, and zip. Street Address not listed. Incorrect street number Incorrect suite number Incorrect street name Incorrect building name Incorrect city, state or zip code.	Minor typographical errors in street, city or building name
Address – Mailing	Incomplete address – Must include street address (or PO Box), city, state, and zip. Address not listed. Incorrect street number Incorrect suite number Incorrect street name Incorrect building name Incorrect city, state or zip code.	Minor typographical errors in street, city or building name
Days and Hours of Operation	Days of Operation not listed. Hours of Operation not listed. Variance from the days and hours listed on the data record resulting in	Hours “by appointment.”

	organization NOT being open during the hours listed.	
Core services Provided	No services listed. A listed service that is NOT provided.	Misspellings of service names. Synonyms for similar services.
Taxonomy Codes	A Taxonomy Code is not listed.	
Date last updated	Last official update, added-on date, or last change date exceeding 1 year from the date on which the data sheet was printed.	

Using these criteria the most common error was lack of updates within the past 12 months. A full 25 of 97 records (25.7%) have not been updated in over one year. This is a significant shortcoming for 2-1-1 TBC and is directly attributable to insufficient staffing in this area. Despite falling short of the AIRS Standard for frequency of updates, the subset of most frequently-used database records reviewed in this study appear to be generally accurate and correct with one areas, hours of service, requiring greater attention.

Name of Program

There were no incorrect program names, per se. There were a few issues with the names of a few organizations:

Achieve Tampa Bay is actually a set of programs of United Cerebral Palsy. While this is rather confusing, it is not incorrect, as they answer the phone “Achieve Tampa Bay” unless you get the IVR, in which case the recording says United Cerebral Palsy. The website is www.achievetampabay.org.

Family Service Centers – The “Ways to Work” program is now called “Ways to Work Partners in Self-Sufficiency” following a merger with another organization. This was not counted as an error because the original name is still part of the new name.

Pinellas Association for Retarded Children (PARC) – the agency’s legal name is listed in the database as Pinellas Association for Retarded Children, but they are commonly known in the community as PARC. This was not considered an error because “PARC” is included as an alternative name and is searchable in the database.

Other Errors

Agency contact information was generally accurate with only 2 of 97 records having incorrect phone numbers (97.8% accuracy). The data verification process identified additional direct phone numbers for several programs within agencies but because the original record included a working number for the main switchboard these would not be considered errors. Two agencies had both incorrect physical and mailing addresses, even though both records had been updated within the past three months. One additional agency with multiple group homes was missing the address for one facility leading to an overall accuracy of 96.9% for address information.

The Hours of Service field was the most common source of errors. Eleven records (11.3%) had incorrect or no information. Although callers to 2-1-1 are usually warned to contact agencies before visiting them, this particular kind of error can be quite frustrating for clients, particularly ones who face transportation challenges. 2-1-1 TBC needs to find a way to ensure this information is checked more frequently.

The Luther Consulting report on the 2-1-1 TBC database includes several observations and recommendations:

- It is not realistic to expect agencies to note in the database when a program or agency closes;
- While it is helpful to require the agencies to update their own data to keep the data current, it does not eliminate the need to have the resource specialists verify the database on a routine basis per AIRS standards;
- Given the recent funding changes in the Tampa Bay area, resulting in the discontinuation of many social service programs, Luther strongly recommend increasing the efforts to update the database on a more frequent basis, especially for the organizations to which the majority of referrals are given;
- Consideration should be given to how 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares together with its funding partners can work toward developing a plan for how to motivate agencies to update their agency records.

On a site visit for reaccreditation during the first week of January 2009, the AIRS reviewer noted that 19% of the records in the 2-1-1 database had not been updated in more than one year. As noted above, at least for the most frequently cited programs and services, 26% of 97 records verified were more than 12 months old. In both cases, while still not meeting the recommended AIRS Standard, there appears to be significant improvement from the 52% of records failing to meet the Standard as noted in the Luther Consulting report in August 2008.

One final database-related issue noted in the review is that many program records have multiple AIRS Taxonomy codes assigned. This is a common and accepted practice, as many services span more than a single code. However the reviewer considered some records to have inconsistent or questionable codes. One example of this would be organizations that offer referrals, such as specialized I&R programs (e.g. Senior Services or a domestic violence hotline), being coded as indicating they provide the actual services. In the future as funding and staffing permit, a focused effort to determine the appropriateness and efficacy of the taxonomy codes assigned to individual programs and services could enhance the utility of the database

Local funders, specifically United Way of Tampa Bay, JWB, and HHS can directly contribute to the improved quality of the 2-1-1 database in three ways:

- **by ensuring that they have set the example by maintaining the currency of their own records in the 2-1-1 TBC database;**
- **by enforcing existing contract language requiring human service providers regularly update their information with 2-1-1 based on reports they require 2-1-1 TBC to provide them regarding agency compliance; and,**
- **by modifying future contract language to require agencies register and use the online update system.**

Given the challenges in getting agencies to directly contact 2-1-1 with these updates, an alternative strategy could be to enlist callers' help – for example, asking them to call back to 2-1-1 if they find out hours of service have changed.

Community Voice Mail

2-1-1 TBC has been providing Community Voice Mail (CVM) since 1998 and has helped more than 10,000 people gain self-sufficiency. Pinellas CVM is the largest such program in the southeast. It also provides disaster voice mail boxes to local non-profits for \$50 per year per box. In the event an agency's telephone system loses power or is destroyed in a disaster, CVM can maintain communication with their staff, volunteers, clients and or the media regarding their operations. Agencies can also include their CVM number in business continuity plans and other disaster protocols.

Some clients use CVM to remain in contact with their case workers. Others use it as part of their job search, using it as a call-back number. Having CVM helps take away the stigma of homelessness by allowing people to seek work without revealing that they are homeless. Some victims of domestic violence use it because it traces back to 2-1-1 TBC, not the victim, thus offering them another level of protection. Others use it to get voice mail messages from their children's schools or from their doctors. For case workers, it is a way to schedule appointments with clients, saving the time often spent doing "drive bys" in hopes of visiting clients who don't have a phone.

From 1998 to 2006, Pinellas CVM used the CVM National Office (www.cvm.org) recommended and supported telephony system. This system, now owned by Cisco, was a stand-alone system that was located at the offices of 2-1-1 TBC and managed by the Pinellas CVM staff. In 2005 and 2006, this system began to deteriorate and cause outages that affected the service to more than 1,000 clients being served by Pinellas CVM monthly. At the same time, local funding to support CVM, primarily from the City of St. Petersburg, was cut – a 54% reduction in the past three years.

Lacking funding to cover the \$30,000 annual fee to use the national CVM infrastructure, 2-1-1 TBC was forced to identify a more cost-efficient method to continue the service.

As shown in Table 14 below, 2-1-1 TBC is the leading provider of Community Voice Mail in the Southeast Region.

Table 14.
Community Voice Mail - Southeast Region Providers

State	City	Year launched	# of Cities Served	2008 VM Boxes	2008 Partner Agencies	2008 # helped	2007 # helped	2006 # helped
FL	Pinellas County	1998	24	1,700	49	1,020	913	745
GA	Atlanta	1993	1	450	6	745	769	187
SC	Aiken, SC	2001	7	329	28	687	528	255
NC	Raleigh-Wake County	1994	3	500	20	652	617	324
TN	Memphis-Shelby County	1997	1	400	28	287	260	229
TN	Chattanooga	1998	2	200	20	215	324	379
FL	Central Florida	2004	21	440	2	143	75	198
FL	South Florida	2008	1	500	12	23	0	0

While researching new phone systems in 2006-07 to improve 2-1-1 service delivery and to ensure continuity of operations in times of disaster, 2-1-1 TBC looked for a system that could also support CVM activity. The Altigen phone system selected supports 1,700 voicemail boxes as part of the overall call management system.

The Altigen system meets basic CVM needs -- providing a critical communication link for clients without a phone -- but this cobble-together solution lacks many features, particularly for tracking and reporting. For Pinellas CVM to regain some of the functionality it previously had, 2-1-1 TBC has two options; (1) rejoin the CVM National supported technology; or (2) procure custom programming on the Altigen system that would provide the needed tools.

Rejoining the CVM national system, would entail an annual \$31,500 for voice mail boxes, technical support, training, maintenance, and database support. The alternative is to procure a programmer to customize a solution for the current Altigen system. The estimated cost of this alternative is a one-time expense of \$15,000 to \$20,000 dollars with annual maintenance charges of approximately \$5,000.

Tampa Bay Information Network

Tampa Bay Information Network (TBIN) is the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for Pinellas County. HUD mandates that every county in the U.S. have a centralized database that supports a continuum of care for homeless and at-risk people by providing a mechanism for human service providers to enter, manage and share client information in a secure environment. The goal of TBIN/HMIS is to improve communication and coordination among health and human services providers by tracking trends in

service delivery, monitoring the use of services by clients, and eliminating duplication of services to individuals. 2-1-1 TBC manages, administers and operates the TBIN/HMIS system through the Pinellas Coalition for the Homeless on behalf of the local Homeless Continuum of Care.

In order to function as planned, TBIN depends on each service provider to regularly update information online. This requires both the appropriate hardware (computer, internet access), a set up fee, annual software licensing and training for each individual user at each agency. 2-1-1 TBC has HUD funding to provide free licenses to homeless service providers. There are other programs, like food pantries and financial assistance agencies that would like to use TBIN for client and resource management, but because they do not specifically serve a homeless they are not eligible for the HUD-subsided licenses. There is a set up fee for each of these agencies, plus an annual license costing approximately \$300 per year to provide access to the TBIN system. Because of the significant cost for agencies that want to use TBIN, participation to date has been limited, particularly by small grass-roots and faith-based organizations.

In addition to the usage license, each agency needs a special reporting software license to generate anything beyond a limited number of preformatted reports. Without this extra license they must rely on 2-1-1 TBC staff to create any specialized reports. The need to input data, then develop and provide reports for agencies without TBIN software licenses creates a significant extra workload for 2-1-1 TBC staff for which the agency does not receive compensation. This causes additional stress for staff and diverts them from their core tasks. Note: a list of preformatted reports available to providers is included in Appendix H.

There is an additional challenge for TBIN, identified in the October 2008 report by the University of South Florida, *Pinellas Hope: Reducing Street Homelessness*. The report notes

“Catholic Charities... did not fully utilize TBIN by entering all the optional program specific data elements. Instead, Catholic Charities chose to maintain a separate client data spreadsheet to capture the additional program specific data, thus establishing two distinct data systems.” (p.14).

Without the necessary commitment and appropriate resources to support increased utilization of TBIN by homeless service providers and other providers serving vulnerable populations, Pinellas County will not realize the full benefits of the TBIN system. The County must team up with 2-1-1 TBC to identify strategies to increase utilization, then work collaboratively with 2-1-1 TBC and TBIN users to implement these strategies.

TBIN User Evaluation

In early March 2009 an online survey was sent to all registered TBIN user at agencies in Pinellas County who provided an email address when they

registered. A total of 37 of 92 recipients (40%) answered part or all of the the survey. After collecting basic agency demographic information, the survey looked at the user experience, training, support, communications from 2-1-1 TBC and challenges using the system. Finally, the survey asked for feedback on how to enhance the experience for users and improve system performance moving forward.

The vast majority of respondents (85%) work at agencies that have been registered with TBIN for more than one year, with most (69%) having been registered for two or more years. Most of the agencies are large with 55% having more than 50 full-time employees. Only 14% of the responding agencies have fewer than 10 staff members. The agencies themselves provide a mix of services with an average of 3.3 different services at each agency. See Table 15 for a breakdown of services provided.

The individual users show a distinct split in experience with 47% having used TBIN for more than two years and 33% using it for less than six months. Most full-time paid staff (87%) with the remainder being part-time or volunteers. One respondent is a temporary employee. Essentially all of the respondents work close to the frontlines as either direct service providers or their supervisors (94.3%) with the remainder working as volunteers, presumably in frontline roles. A slim majority (54.3%) work in TBIN at least once per week. See Table 16 below.

Table 15. Services Provided by TBIN Agencies

Emergency shelter for individuals	38.2%
Emergency shelter for families	26.5%
Transitional shelter for individuals	50.0%
Transitional shelter for families	20.6%
Permanent supportive housing	23.5%
Food pantry/food bank	23.5%
Rent/utility assistance	32.4%
Substance abuse treatment	29.4%
Mental health services	44.1%
Physical (medical) health services	29.4%

Table 16. Frequency Using TBIN

More than one time a day	14.3%
One time per day	8.6%
1-4 times per week	31.4%
Less than one time a week, but more than once a month	17.1%
One time a month or less	14.3%
Rarely or never	14.3%

The “user experience” portion of the survey indicates that respondents do not feel particularly favorable about their experience using TBIN with particular concern about the user friendliness of the system and their inability to get reports and information out of TBIN without assistance. System speed, particularly the slow response time, is a major source of frustration. This is clearly stated in many of the comments received:

TBIN is slow and monotonous. Information has to be entered in more than once in certain places and it is not very convenient or user friendly

There is about 90 seconds of data entry per occurrence, and approximately 3 and 1/2 minutes of waiting time to upload the data.

Most requests take several seconds while the system processes the requests and then transmits back data. This is often frustrating and time consuming.

I am unable to write custom reports that will fit my needs and feel that I do have to ask.

I have my own in-house database that I manage as our Agency's client information system and I write my own reports from that system.

Without an upload capacity, staff must double enter the client data, which is time-consuming - especially since the TBIN system is very slow. I work with other web-based client information systems that DO have the capacity to upload information and it is a great help and time-save to our Agency.

The majority of respondents have favorable impressions of the TBIN staff's responsiveness and helpfulness. The training provided to TBIN users is seen as a particular strength, but there is room for improvement, particularly in regard to taking suggestions and feedback. Users also distinguish between their experience working with the TBIN staff and using the TBIN system.

The staff is great and by no means should my comments about the system itself reflect on the staff members. Whenever I have worked with the TBIN staff, they have been informative, helpful and they have provided wonderful training and have assisted us in making sure that we are providing quality data. They are wonderful!

When asked about the best or more useful aspect of TBIN noted many different features:

It connects data together from various organizations

It is a very useful resource for community members to locate individuals receiving services, to see if they have received services in the past and to get a community-wide unduplicated count of homeless individuals and individuals receiving services.

The Shelter Point tab that lists the beds that are filled.

You can track clients to see if they have already been placed in the system.

the logic of the data and the potential of custom reports

and perhaps most succinctly

IT HELPS CLIENTS!

Conversely, when asked about the most frustrating or problematic aspect of TBIN there was strong agreement that slowness of the system and the need to enter duplicate data on TBIN and internal agency systems are the biggest challenges:

TBIN is dreadfully slow. You cannot navigate through modules/assessments easily. The wait time is far too long.

It is soooo SLOW... it is very time consuming to enter clients, especially large families, and this is very inconvenient.

You cannot upload your client data into TBIN.

Time, time, time. Takes too long to input large amounts of data because of the update breaks that do not allow you to continue adding while a particular portion of a sub menu is being updated.

When TBIN needs information from us filled in they notify us about 3 pm and want it the next morning - we do more than enter people in TBIN, more time would be helpful.

TBIN is a good thing but I still have to input everything in TBIN, then put most of the same thing in our ASAP computer client program and on paper in clients files which makes a lot of work. That's fine at times but when you have a real busy week doing all of this can become very frustrating.

See Tables 17-19 below for details on responses.

Tables 17-19. Results of TBIN User Survey

User Experience	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
a. It is easy to use TBIN.	56.2%	12.5%
b. I can enter my client information into TBIN.	72.7%	3.0%
c. The TBIN system is user-friendly.	42.0%	9.7%
d. I can get the reports and information I need from TBIN without assistance.	46.9%	9.4%

e. I feel my client data in TBIN is secure.	68.8%	9.4%
f. I like using TBIN.	56.7%	20.0%
g. I would prefer to upload my client data, rather than entering it into TBIN.	38.7%	13.0%

Support for TBIN Users	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
a. TBIN staff provide the training and support I need to use TBIN effectively.	71.0%	16.1%
b. TBIN staff are available and willing to help when I need it.	63.3%	16.6%
c. TBIN staff respond in a timely manner.	56.7%	13.4%
c. TBIN staff at 2-1-1 TBC are committed to providing high quality services.	66.6%	13.3%
d. TBIN staff at 2-1-1 TBC are easy to work with.	75.9%	13.8%
e. TBIN staff have helped my organization improve the quality of our data in TBIN.	56.7%	16.6%
f. TBIN staff listen to my suggestions and feedback.	51.7%	3.4%
g. TBIN staff and 2-1-1 TBC work collaboratively with other providers.	56.7%	6.6%

TBIN Communications	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
a. TBIN staff provide effective communications about changes and updates to the system.	43.3%	20.0%
b. TBIN staff communicate changes to the system in a timely manner.	46.7%	16.7%
c. I know where to get answers to my questions about TBIN.	67.8%	16.1%
d. I generally feel informed about changes to TBIN that affect me.	48.2%	17.2%

A significant number of users expressed a clear desire for more communication about system changes, in particular more advance notice of upcoming changes.

One user also suggested developing a report to notify users about missing data in order to improve data quality

When asked for suggestions for future directions for TBIN, over 80% of respondents identified four priority items. Three of these had to do with increased training – one-to-one, in groups and online. There is also strong interest in the ability to customize data fields and reports. See Table 20 below for details on responses.

Future Direction for TBIN	Very/ Somewhat useful	Not very useful/ Would not use
Group training on special topics	93.3%	6.7%
One-on-one training	87.8%	12.1%
Ability to create my own reports in TBIN	84.4%	15.6%
Online trainings/tutorials	81.3%	18.8%
Add my own tracking fields to meet my agency's needs	74.2%	25.8%
TBIN-users support group	68.8%	31.3%
Real-time tracking of resources like shelter beds, rent assistance, holiday baskets, etc.	59.4%	40.7%
ID cards for clients in TBIN system	56.3%	43.8%
Electronic updates about clients being referred to my organization	56.2%	43.8%
Client eligibility screening	56.2%	43.8%
TBIN list-serv	54.9%	45.2%
Centralized intake for services through TBIN	51.6%	48.4%
TBIN blog	48.2%	51.7%

Data Warehouse

In 2005, 2-1-1 TBC developed plans to implement a central repository to house: a) 2-1-1 TBC data, b) data of local TBIN/HMIS member agencies, and c) link to local and statewide data system partners. This data warehouse would facilitate sharing, importing, exporting, and storing of large amounts of data related to both 2-1-1 and TBIN, significantly reducing or eliminating duplication of data entry by providers.

2-1-1 TBC has identified this data warehouse as vital to the on-going success of the TBIN system. This would require a server housed at a hardened facility that communicates with the internal systems of different users to consolidate data in a central depository with tracking and reporting tools for partners. Custom programming to establish the warehouse and linkages between TBIN and other systems such as HHS, JWB SAMIS or Florida Mental Health Institute (FMHI) that holds the data for the Pinellas

County Data Collaborative, would also be required.

In March 2009 Operation PAR and Family Resources received a grant from the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for Project U Turn – a program to help children aging out of the foster care system. This grant provides guaranteed funding to Operation PAR, Family Resources, and 2-1-1 TBC until 2014. 2-1-1 TBC portion is for \$35,000 per year for five years to create, implement, and maintain a data warehouse to import data from the Operation PAR and Family Resources legacy data systems into TBIN system.

2-1-1 TBC has outsourced the work on this project and secured the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognized National Data Integration Expert and technical assistance provider to administer this project. 2-1-1 TBC will retain a 15% administrative fee to manage this project with the remaining 85% of the funds to go to creation, development, maintenance, and support of the data warehouse annually.

Once this data warehouse has been established, a constant link to the TBIN system will be available for linkage with other non-profits and data collaborative.

However, since the grant is only for linkages with Operation PAR and Family Resources, in order to expand the data warehouse's capabilities to link with other non-profits or the data collaborative, additional costs would have to be covered through individual user fees or additional investment by community funders to support this additional infrastructure for human services delivery.

**2-1-1 TBC Web-Site and
Web-Based
Communications
(www.211tampbay.org)**

2-1-1 TBC launched its first website in 2000. From 2000 to 2007, 2-1-1 TBC designed and maintained its website internally. In 2007 as part of the 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Regional Marketing Plan, 2-1-1 TBC began outsourcing website development to an external vendor (Suncoast Marketing Partners). At the same time, 2-1-1 TBC improved the look, feel, and functionality of the website. The goal was for the site to be more user-friendly, allow users to find needed information quickly and easily, and clearly communicate the brand of 2-1-1 TBC. The current 2-1-1 TBC website is hosted off-site with a contracted vendor that provides custom web development.

The website is a primary marketing tool for 2-1-1 TBC and the agency has invested significantly in its site and brand over the last 2 years. The searchable 2-1-1 database on the website moderates demand by reducing the volume of calls to the call center. It can also enhance the information provided to the general public regarding local health and human services.

2-1-1 TBC has plans to increase its website presence, using the Internet to further define and enhance its services through blogs, social networking and other tools, as well as marketing the local, state and national 2-1-1 brand.

Social Networking/Media

The influence of social networking in society has grown exponentially in the past few years. These social networking tools provide additional media, fundraising and information delivery methods. In order to take advantage of these emerging technologies, 2-1-1 TBC has recently created pages on several social networking sites to reach out to the general public about their services and programs. These sites include Face Book, My Space, Linked In, Twitter, YouTube and the Do Good Channel. Users of these social networks can view the 2-1-1 TBC pages and choose to join, follow, or become a fan of the organization. Longer term 2-1-1 TBC is developing plans to use these tools to advocate and educate about 2-1-1 TBC programs and for fundraising.

2-1-1 TBC is preparing to launch its own social networking site called 2-1-1 Connects in late spring 2009. 2-1-1 Connects will be a place where the general public, case workers, local businesses, and community planners can go to chat, connect, find information, and help each other through an interactive website. The site, with the 2-1-1 TBC brand, will have information on agency events, fundraisers, access to the other social networking pages, links to the 2-1-1 TBC web site, blogs, and a place for people to share their thoughts and experiences with each other and 2-1-1 TBC staff. 2-1-1 TBC staff and volunteers will monitor site activity, update content, and provide conversation topics to help users maintain their connection with 2-1-1 TBC.

List Serves (E-Pinellas, E-Hernando, E-Citrus, and PCCH News)

2-1-1 TBC created its first list serve E-Pinellas in July 2000. E-Pinellas is an Internet mailing list to help human service providers in Pinellas County, Florida stay connected with one another. Subscribers post topics that communicate community information such as local training opportunities, volunteer management issues, new resources/programs in the community, job opportunities within Pinellas County human service community, potential funding/grant opportunities, coalition meeting announcements, and announcements for fundraising or open house events for local human service agencies. Messages are broadcast to all subscribers of this e-group and must be topic appropriate. E-Pinellas has 782 subscribers – it is viewed as a critical communication tool amongst Pinellas Health and Human Service Providers. 2-1-1 TBC has also created E-Hernando (74 members), E-Citrus (38 members) for the same purpose.

To support the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless, 2-1-1 TBC created and manages PCCH News, now with 141 members, another Internet mailing list for human service providers interested in homeless issues to stay connected. Subscribers post topics such as local training opportunities, new resources/programs in the community, job opportunities within Pinellas County human service community, potential funding/grant opportunities, coalition meeting minutes/announcements, and announcements for fundraising or open house events for local human service agencies.

Blogs

Blogs are becoming more widely used by 2-1-1 programs around the U.S. to communicate with clients, colleagues and community partners. In March 2009, 2-1-1 TBC launched 4 new blogs.

- 2-1-1 Community Connections (2-1-1 blog in English)
- 2-1-1 Conexcion Con La Hispanica (2-1-1 blog in Spanish)
- Pinellas CVM
- TBIN Talk

2-1-1 TBC updates each blog on a weekly basis to communicate information to the general public, agency partners, and local community planners about 2-1-1 services and programs. The 2-1-1 blogs also plan to highlight the work of other non-profit organizations in the Tampa Bay area.

Social networking provide a variety of low-cost/high-impact tools for:

- Communicating information quickly to key constituencies, including partner agencies, clients, funders and supporters;
- Building a sense of community where users of specific programs like TBIN can share best practices, suggestions for system improvements and provide mutual assistance;
- Support coordinated activity among users for advocacy and responding to emerging needs.

Internet and Bandwidth

2-1-1 TBC has always relied on the the Internet and World Wide Web as tools to discover new resources, research emerging technologies, and to convey information about community resources. Over time 2-1-1 TBC has needed increase its Internet capabilities and bandwidth to accommodate the growth of the web, the increased need for use of the Internet as a business tool, and growing community demand. This was particularly apparent when the web-based TBIN system was introduced in April 2005, resulting in a sharp increase in the need for additional bandwidth to ensure that TBIN system and other Internet-dependent programs did not bog down from increased data collection, reporting, and users demands on the network.

With the move to web-based tools – for redundancy, access and as a cost-saving measure – the demand for internet bandwidth by 2-1-1 TBC staff has increased dramatically. Put simply, the pipeline is not large enough to supply the need. This lack of capacity directly impacts productivity by increasing the amount of time it takes for a call specialist to search for a referral or for managers to produce reports from the different web-based systems.

2-1-1 TBC has implemented backup protocols for most of its mission-critical tools with the exception of its Internet connection. These creates a large window of vulnerability for 2-1-1 TBC. If its existing connection is lost, 2-1-1 TBC would have to relocate staff to locations where the Internet

was available to continue working. To prevent this and to create disaster redundancy, 2-1-1 TBC needs to secure a new primary Internet provider to ensure effective performance of staff and continuity of operations at its primary facility during times of disaster or on-going outages.

Currently, 2-1-1 TBC uses a business class connection from Brighthouse, but this basic business connection is not adequate to meet the increased demands of internal and external users. 2-1-1 TBC looked at Verizon Fios (fiber optic) and Brighthouse for increased bandwidth capacity, but moving from the existing configuration to a T1 line while maintaining the existing internet connection as a redundant backup system to ensure continuity of operations would triple the current monthly cost.

**Summary Conclusions
and Operations
Regarding Operations of
2-1-1 TBC**

1. 2-1-1 TBC should continue its use of independent consultants to assess call center and database performance which has resulted in significant performance improvements, at least for one more year.

There have been legitimate concerns about the performance of call specialists as noted by community stakeholders and as documented in the initial findings of the Luther Consulting call study. But, there has been significant improvement in call center performance since a new call center manager was hired in October 2008 and since the 2-1-1 TBC contracted with Luther Consulting to evaluate and make quality improvement recommendations about its call handling.

2. 2-1-1 TBC must continue a focus on training to improve call handling performance.

Priority should be given to the following specific areas:

- Use of open-ended questions
- Identifying and addressing additional problems
- Providing full referral information with name, hours of operation and description of services provided
- Offering three referral options or explaining why there are not additional options
- Responding appropriately to needs of special populations
- Asking if callers needs assistance with any other issues and encouraging them to contact 2-1-1 again

3. Until database resource specialist staffing can be increased, 2-1-1 TBC should work to recruit community or Americorp volunteers to collect and update basic program data.

Short-staffing of the 2-1-1 call center has caused the 2-1-1 database to fall out of compliance with AIRS standards for frequency of updates, particularly affecting frequently changing information like hours of service.

4. 2-1-1 TBC and its primary funders should work together to develop and implement a solid strategy for improving the rate of updating of their own records by agencies.

- Funders must set the example by ensuring the currency of their records in the 2-1-1 TBC database.
- 2-1-1 TBC must provide funders with regular reports on agencies that are not complying with contract requirements to update their information.
- The primary funders must pro-actively enforce contractual requirements that agencies regularly update their information in the 2-1-1 and TBIN database. Future contracts could require agencies to register for and use the online updating system.
- It may be possible to develop incentives, such as access to agency-specific reporting information, for agencies to provide regular updates for their database records.

5. We recommend creation of a special, time-limited task force to consider and resolve what the optimal use of TBIN is and to create a plan to achieve that level of use.

To take full advantage of the potential contribution of TBIN will require the active support of Pinellas County government and the City of St. Petersburg and, as appropriate, JWB and UWTB as well as, perhaps other funders and municipalities. 2-1-1 TBC cannot do this on its own as it cannot compel agencies to participate – for example, by providing real-time updates on the availability of beds or of other services; that can only come from funders. The proposed task force should be composed of the primary funders for and providers of services to people who are homeless and/or are seeking basic services. Included in their work should be agreement on how such expanded use, including procurement of user licenses for smaller grass-roots and faith-based organizations and the cost of linking agencies to the “data warehouse” 2-1-1 TBC is developing, should be paid for.

6. The performance of TBIN can be improved by better managing licenses, improving communications with users and providing additional training.

Specifically:

- 2-1-1 TBC must respond to the concerns of TBIN users by taking pro-active steps to improve communications with them. Short and long-term steps include:
 - Consistently include a reminder in all communications to the TBIN user tools available online at <http://www.211tampabay.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=88>.
 - Send multiple emails to notify users of changes to the system, ideally 7-10 days prior to the change, one day prior, then a

follow up a few days following with additional strategies for dealing with the change.

- Develop a monthly newsletter that provides notification of upcoming system changes, information on available trainings and a one-line summary of TBIN blog entries.
- In response to the suggestions of TBIN users, 2-1-1 TBC must provide additional training to them through such steps as:
 - Polling users to identify top training needs, then use this to develop group trainings and online tutorials.
 - Developing a web-based TBIN-user FAQ with hints and tips
- To ensure effective use of available software licenses the TBIN program should establish a policy that licenses will be subject to reassignment after being unused for 60-90 days. Registered users should be required to provide a working email address
- 2-1-1 TBC should work with TBIN users requiring enhanced reporting capacity and with both 2-1-1 TBC's primary funders and with the users' funders to secure adequate funding for the additional licensing needed for access to advanced reporting features.

7. Community Voice Mail should be marketed to non-profits in need of backup communication services in times of disaster.

8. 2-1-1 TBC must follow-through on the work it has begun to upgrade its web site and to significantly improve user interface with the database search function.

9. 2-1-1 TBC must improve the speed and quality of its internet access by identifying a new internet provider. Its primary funders must recognize that this is a legitimate additional annual cost that cannot be met by reducing staff to pay for it. Pinellas County government and JWB should explore whether either can provide improved internet access to 2-1-1 TBC as an in-kind contribution.

WHAT 2-1-1 TBC MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE

Overview

This section responds to the question, “What might be the appropriate configuration of services at 2-1-1 TBC in the future?” Overall, we believe that it should and will look much the way it does today except that it will:

- Be adequately resourced;
- Be working in an environment where expectations of funders are clearly understood and coordinated;
- Be protected from new expectations that have not been adequately vetted and made transparent by funders;
- Be positioned and supported as the primary “data central” for information on human services in the county;
- Have upgraded technology that keeps it current with the best available in the field.

Information and Referral

There is no disagreement that comprehensive information and referral is the core function of 2-1-1. If nothing else, 2-1-1 must continue to perform this vital, broadly-supported function.

Navigation Services

There was general agreement that comprehensive information and referral is “not enough” to help some people who are in extreme need effectively connect and interact with service providers. The next step beyond comprehensive information and referral seems to be “navigation services”. Shorter than long-term case management, navigation is intended to do an in-depth assessment of need, to help people understand the choices they can make about services, to act as an advocate to successfully connect people with specific services and to follow-up to ensure the connection is made.

There was agreement that 2-1-1 TBC has the skill and experience to provide navigation services and/or to be the “front door” through which people connect to navigation services. But there was strong agreement that such a role cannot be allowed to diminish its fundamental role as a comprehensive information and referral, either by conscious substitution or by asking 2-1-1 TBC to stretch its existing resources to provide navigation as an additional service.

In the future, it is quite feasible for 2-1-1 TBC to be the “front door” and/or to provide navigation service if three conditions are met:

- 2-1-1 TBC has appropriate and sustained financing for its core functions;
- Appropriate and sustained new financing is provided for new roles that it takes on;
- Desired navigation services are carefully described, expectations and

performance measures are agreed on and formal protocols are defined that bind all participants to commonly understood roles.

“Data Central”

2-1-1 TBC is uniquely positioned to be a clearinghouse for human services information in Pinellas County. Although 2-1-1 TBC has the most comprehensive database of program and services in the county, it lacks funding for even the minimum staffing recommendations necessary to meet AIRS Standards. Interviewees report that many agencies continue to maintain internal databases, rather than use 2-1-1.

The most important single step that can be taken to develop 2-1-1 TBC as the “data central” is for the primary users – Pinellas County government, JWB, the Coalition for the Homeless and UWTB – to agree on their shared priorities for data, to set clear expectations for what data 2-1-1 TBC will be responsible for providing and to ensure that 2-1-1 TBC has the resources it needs to meet those expectations.

Those users must ensure that their staffs understand those priorities and are restricted from making other, non-prioritized and “immediate turnaround” requests for data.

We recommend that the primary users create, with 2-1-1 TBC’s participation, a small (one person from each organization) working group to review requests for data, vetting to determine the value, intended application and priority of the data requested and the impact of the request on 2-1-1 TBC, thus creating a new level of transparency about the demands placed on 2-1-1 TBC.

There are several other strategies that 2-1-1 TBC and local funders can pursue to strengthen the community data management role of the agency:

- Funders can help identify agencies that are using outside funding to maintain duplicate internal databases. Redirecting this funding to 2-1-1 TBC, while providing training on the use of the 2-1-1 online directory for agencies needing this information, would reduce duplication of effort and provide better support for a centralized community information resource.
- 2-1-1 TBC can promote wider use of the online database by working with the database vendor to improve the online search interface to make it easier for professional users, community planners and the general public to identify services that can meet individual needs.
- Funders can revise contract language to require human service providers to get a user id and password in order to regularly update their program information through the online data management tool.

Disaster Preparedness and Response

2-1-1 TBC staff members have taken a leadership role in Pinellas County and with the Florida 2-1-1 network to support more effective coordination and planning for disaster. Locally 2-1-1 TBC has been an active member of the Disaster Recovery Leadership Network (DRLN), which identifies several roles

for 2-1-1 in a disaster situation, including :

- A major point of contact for the public immediately following a disaster;
- Primary contact for human service agencies to report their status and capacity to assist with response;
- Ensuring 2-1-1 TBC leadership presence at the Recovery Management Center to maintain and report agency status information;
- Initiating the 2-1-1 TBC Disaster Plan to ensure continued public access to 2-1-1 services.

2-1-1 TBC has the ability, if properly funded to do so, to fulfill additional roles in preparing the community for disaster. Opportunities in this area include:

- Providing tools and training for non-profit agencies to develop Continuity of Operations Plans, particularly those identified in the DRLN Service Matrix as having a role in disaster response;
- Coordinating with Pinellas County Emergency Management to promote disaster preparedness;
- Managing registries of people with special needs who will require specific attention in preparation for a disaster, evacuation, etc.;
- Exploring options with Pinellas County Emergency Management for securing Department of Homeland Security grant funding to support the work of 2-1-1 TBC and other key non-profit organizations in disaster preparedness and response.

TBIN

The vision of TBIN is to create a health and human services management tool to track client use of services and for community needs assessment. Efforts to utilize the full capacity of TBIN are hindered by the relatively small number of agencies that enter information into the system. The cost of the user license and training are clearly identified obstacles to more widespread use of the TBIN system, particularly by smaller community and faith-based organizations. In order for TBIN to succeed, agencies will have to literally “buy-in” to TBIN, at the same time moving away from their existing systems to support a common community management tool.

Options to promote more widespread use of TBIN include:

- Revise contract language with service providers to move from their legacy systems to TBIN;
- Require providers to identify a staff member who will have primary responsibility for ensuring the agency’s data quality and reporting from the TBIN system – this recommendation will align agencies with anticipated regulatory changes from HUD.

- Work with HHSCC to coordinate funding and contract language to support agencies' participation on TBIN. This would also ensure more complete and higher quality data in the TBIN system, which in turn would allow 2-1-1 TBC to provide more constructive reports to inform HHSCC and other community planners' decision-making.

**Upgraded
Technology**

While 2-1-1 TBC has made a significant investment over the last 3 years to develop its technology infrastructure, the following are various technology upgrade options that could further support 2-1-1 TBC efforts.

- **General Technology Support**

- Fund a dedicated Technology Manager position to oversee maintenance and oversight of all technology systems and management of various specialty technology vendors. (\$25,000-\$64,000, 0.5 FTE – 1.0 FTE)
- Provide management staff with iPhones and/or provide reimbursement to 2-1-1 management staff for use of their personal cell phones to ensure effective response and continuity of operations in the event of a disaster and daily operation. iPhones are currently being recommended because the 211 website operates best on an iPhone rather than Blackberries. . (\$1500 + \$350/month)

- **Internet and Bandwidth**

- Upgrade to a dedicated data T1 Internet connection to ensure stable high-speed Internet access for internal use and disaster redundancy. (\$600/month)
- Secure a secondary Internet service provider for disaster redundancy. (\$300/month)

- **Web-based Database – Service Point Suite (Call Point, Resource Point, Community Point, and Client Point)**

- Add a dedicated server to house the 2-1-1 and TBIN databases with the vendor Bowman Systems. (Hosting is already paid annually by 2-1-1 TBC with HUD funding, but the one-time server costs are needed.) (\$15,000)

- **Telephony**

- Reimburse 2-1-1 TBC management for use of personal iPhones for daily business use and emergency response (\$350/month, see above under General Technology Support);
- Explore externally hosted ACD (Automated Call Distribution) system to determine if this would be an alternative cost

effective method of handling calls and increased reporting ability. (Cost varies depending on vendor and system configuration, but a general estimate would be \$10,000 implementation costs, plus \$3,000 per month operating expenses)

- Explore the possibility of hiring a programmer to develop a specialized "dash board" of ACD activity as it relates to the overall call center performance, individual call center representative performance, and individual county 2-1-1 lines and/or contracts for other specialty hotline services. (Cost would depending on vendor and system configuration. There are hosted ACDs that include these functions as a basic feature at no additional cost.)
 - Add at least one video-enabled station in the call center to support sign language-based communication with deaf and hard-of-hearing clients as an alternative to obsolescent TDD/TTY technology. (Note an individual who would have sign-language ability would need to also be hired to be "on-call" when one of these calls would come in.) (Cost TBD)
 - Add an outbound dialer to provide 2-1-1 TBC the ability to auto-follow up with previous callers, to survey them regarding their follow through with the referrals given, as well as their customer satisfaction with 2-1-1 TBC. (This feature could be included with an externally hosted ACD. Again, costs will depend on the vendor and overall system configuration, but estimated cost is \$100-\$500 per month) Add Auto-Data Collection Capacity to collect basic caller demographic information (e.g. gender, zip code, age) on information boxes (i.e. "Press 3 for information on Utility Assistance") and outbound dialer on system. (This feature could also be included with an externally hosted ACD. As with the outbond dialer costs will depend on the vendor and overall system configuration, but estimated cost is no more than \$100-\$200 per month)
 - Video phones to support teleconferencing capabilities for 2-1-1 TBC and other community organizations to reduce mileage expenses and save valuable staff time driving to various meetings around Pinellas. (Cost TBD)
- **2-1-1 TBC Web-Site (www.211tampbay.org)/Social Networking/Media**
- Fund additional staff position to oversee maintenance and growth of web and social networking tools. (0.5 FTE, \$15,000 potentially shared with another agency, but housed at 2-1-1 TBC)
 - Upgrade the face and design of 2-1-1 TBC website 2.0 (\$5,000)

- \$10,000).

- **Network & Workstation Equipment (Servers, Routers, Switches, Hot Bricks, VPNs, SQL Databases, Desktops, Laptops, Printers)**
 - 6 VISTA laptops to replace the remaining call center work stations. (\$12,000)
 - Upgrade the 12 training center laptops to provide appropriate capacity for internal training needs. (Creates revenue-generating opportunity by providing low-cost access to training facilities for other community organizations.) (\$24,000. Cost could be reduced through in-kind donations)
 - Upgrade printers. (\$8,000)

 - **Data Warehouse**
 - Funding for on-going linkages to JWB SAMIS, FMHI, and 2-1-1 Florida Network. (TBD based on needs of individual agencies)
 - Funding to link to other non-profit organizations (Suncoast Center, Directions, Pinellas County HHS, Catholic Charities, etc.) (TBD based on needs of individual agencies)
 - Funding for future development and reporting capabilities. (TBD based on needs of individual agencies)

 - **Community Voice Mail**
 - Add CVM needed enhancements – custom programming to allow for reporting on CVM phone activity and provide a tool for CVM Network Partners to access voice mail factory resetting controls through a web-based tool that interacts with phone system. (\$10-\$15K one time only) vs. annual fee of \$30,000 to join the national CVM Network.

 - **Essential Learning**
 - Purchase E-Learning software tools which are approximately \$3,000. Essential Learning is an online training and continuing education management tool available through AIRS.
-

THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF 2-1-1 IN PINELLAS COUNTY AND OF 2-1-1 TAMPA BAY CARES

Overview

One of the specific requests made by the sponsors of the research was that an examination be made of alternatives for how 2-1-1 in Pinellas County in the future and, specifically, whether there were feasible options for consolidating or merging 2-1-1 TBC into another organization or creating a regional 2-1-1.

We collected data throughout our interviews about the perceived feasibility of a variety of alternatives and also held focused discussions with the primary parties who would be central to each alternative approach.

The Location of the 2-1-1 Serving Pinellas County

Most of the people with whom we discussed this subject believed strongly that Pinellas County needs a 2-1-1 that is physically present in the county. This feeling cut across elected officials, government agencies and human service providers. This opinion was based on the following:

- Pinellas is a large, diverse, densely populated county that is significantly different from those around it.
- Pinellas has a growing level of need – thus more people seeking services – that likely will grow worse as the recession continues.
- Pinellas, through county government and JWB, has made a major investment in high quality human services. It is important that this investment be protected by ensuring that there is a locally-based high quality comprehensive information and referral agency to help people connect with those services.
- Pinellas is vulnerable to hurricanes and tropical storms and must have an appropriate structure in place to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. A locally-based 2-1-1 is seen as an important part of that structure. In addition, county government and JWB have already invested in technology and back-up capacity to ensure local continuity of operations in the event of a disaster.

We know that an argument has been made that the very fact of vulnerability to natural disaster is a rationale for moving 2-1-1 outside the county, thus to protect it during a disaster. One person, significantly involved in disaster preparation and emergency management, responded this way to that argument:

Why would we do that? We aren't moving 911 out of the county. We aren't moving county government and JWB out of the county. We're not moving the human service agencies out of the county. Just the opposite. We need all of them here.

And, we need 2-1-1 here because they are going to help us stay in contact with the agencies, assess what they need to get back into operation and be the conduit between them and the county and JWB.

We need them here because they are going to help the people affected by a disaster get connected with the services that will get them through the recovery period.

This view of the value of 2-1-1's presence in the county during a disaster period is borne out by the experience of 2-1-1s in Florida during the hurricanes of 2004. Even in the counties worst hit, the 2-1-1s continued to play vital roles – helping get information out from the emergency operations center to the public; relaying information on needs back into the EOC; taking the load off 911 operators who were not prepared to deal with people who needed crisis intervention and problem-solving to reduce their immediate anxieties and confusion.

Also, because Pinellas County government has recognized the importance of the role 2-1-1 can play during a disaster, planning is underway to ensure that 2-1-1 staff can move to a hardened facility, if needed, and that some of their staff can actually be based in the EOC. Also, 2-1-1 TBC itself has planned and tested a system that would allow their staff to work from home or other remote locations should the need arise.

**Analysis of
Alternative Futures**

We considered the following structural alternatives for a 2-1-1 serving Pinellas County:

- Maintain 2-1-1 TBC as an independent nonprofit organization;
- Consolidate 2-1-1 TBC into another nonprofit organization;
 - A human service provider
 - UWTB
- Merge 2-1-1 TBC into county government;
- Merge 2-1-1 TBC with 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) in Hillsborough County;
- Create a regional 2-1-1 to serve the Tampa Bay media market

Each of these is analyzed below.

▪ **Consolidate 2-1-1 TBC into another nonprofit organization**

We considered two possible ways this could be done – consolidation into a human services provider and consolidation into United Way Tampa Bay.

Consolidation into a human services provider was rejected by virtually all of the human service providers in Pinellas County with whom we discussed it, including those that might seem, because of the nature of their work, as possible partners in such an effort. Three primary concerns were voiced:

- It might be perceived that the host organization for 2-1-1 was using the 2-1-1 to increase its own business by favoring itself in referrals.

While, in fact, that might not be the case, the mere perception of that was seen as threatening to the credibility of both 2-1-1 and the host organization.

- 2-1-1 might become a marginal part of a larger agency, thus becoming vulnerable should that agency need to reduce its budget, consolidate its operations, etc. 2-1-1 thus might be absorbed and disappear as a viable resource for the community.
- Unless funders made a major commitment to sustain 2-1-1 within a hosting organization, it would do nothing to solve 2-1-1's imminent financial problems – and, if funders were to make such a commitment, why not do it for 2-1-1 TBC rather than force a consolidation. It was not perceived that consolidation would, in fact, save money because 2-1-1 TBC is seen as operating with a very thin management staff, the area where it might be anticipated that savings could be realized.

Consolidation into United Way of Tampa Bay (UWTB) was seen by some as a possibility. But it became increasingly clear during interviews with funders and services providers in Pinellas County that there is a significant level of residual resentment about the merger of United Way in Pinellas County into what is now UWTB that might color support for such a step with 2-1-1 TBC.

In discussions with UWTB we were told that (1) UWTB is facing its own funding problems and is not in position to take on such a major responsibility; (2) UWTB has given no consideration to taking on 2-1-1 TBC and that doing so does not fit with its strategic direction; and, (3) because it is highly unlikely that UWTB also would take on 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) in Hillsborough County, it would mean that it had one 2-1-1 internal to it and one that it was funding outside it.

Also, there was a clear concern that, should 2-1-1 move inside UWTB, other funders, including JWB and Pinellas County government, would feel that they no longer have any responsibility to fund it, resulting in an unsustainable burden on UWTB and, ultimately, the diminution of 2-1-1 service to Pinellas County.

▪ **Merge 2-1-1 TBC into Pinellas County government**

Elected officials and county department executives were unanimous in their belief that this would not be feasible given the re-invention of county government that is underway. There was great sentiment for strengthening and sustaining county government's support for and partnership with 2-1-1 TBC – including increased financial and in-kind support – but no interest at all in taking it into county government. Also, there was a clear concern that, should 2-1-1 move inside county government, other funders would feel they no longer have any responsibility to fund it, resulting in an unsustainable burden on county government.

▪ **Merge 2-1-1 TBC with 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) in Hillsborough County**

There was no significant level of support for merging 2-1-1 TBC with 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) in Hillsborough County. The primary concerns with such a proposal are:

- There are perceived to be significant cultural differences between the two organizations that would prevent them from working together. 2-1-1 is described by 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) as the “front-door” of its agency for the public. While not necessarily inappropriate, it is a much different positioning of 2-1-1 vis-a-vis its relationship with the community it serves.
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) is not seen as a collaborative organization that would be willing to enter into true partnership to accommodate the needs of Pinellas County. Some agencies that do business in both Pinellas and Hillsborough counties observed that they find it easier to make contact and work with 2-1-1 TBC.

Also, it is important to note that 2-1-1 TBC is the choice of the United Ways in Hernando and Citrus counties to provide full-time 2-1-1 service to their residents. It also is the choice of the United Way 2-1-1 in Pasco and United Way Manasota 2-1-1 to provide after-hours service for their residents. 2-1-1 TBC was uniformly described as a “partner” rather than “vendor” that is very responsive to requests and any concerns that arise. In Hernando and Citrus, there is the feeling that 2-1-1 TBC makes special effort to learn their counties and know their agencies.

In discussions with 2-1-1 Tampa Bay it appeared that their interest in either consolidation or regionalization was based on the assumption that they would be the surviving entity. Again, given the nature of the role 2-1-1 plays for the Crisis Center, it is hard to see how it could be otherwise. But if that is the assumption, then it is difficult to see how they could openly participate in the strategic planning that would be required as it might threaten their position.

- It was not clear that, in the current economic environment, it would be likely that Pinellas County government and JWB would be willing to send significant money outside the county essentially to purchase 2-1-1 services from 2-1-1 Tampa Bay.

▪ **Create a regional 2-1-1 to serve the Greater Tampa Bay media market**

The Tampa Bay media market was described to us as including Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Sarasota, DeSoto and Manatee counties and, perhaps, Polk, Hardee and Highlands counties.

The generally positive experience in other states in which 2-1-1 has been developed as a regionalized service raises the question of whether it naturally

could be done in this media market as well.

These factors immediately raise barriers to regionalization of 2-1-1:

- There are five 2-1-1s currently serving this area: 2-1-1 TBC, United Way 2-1-1 of Pasco County, United Way 2-1-1 Manasota, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) that serves Hillsborough County and the United Way of Central Florida 2-1-1 that serves Polk County. While the mere existence of these organizations does not mean it is impossible, it does suggest that it will take time and careful planning to pull them together.
- 2-1-1 TBC is, in fact, already a regional 2-1-1, providing services to seven of the eleven counties identified as potential partners in a regional collaborative: serving Pinellas, Hernando and Citrus counties 24/7 and answering after hours calls, roughly 128 hours a week, from Pasco, Manatee, DeSoto and Sarasota counties.
- The arguments made above about the likely difficulties in consolidating 2-1-1 TBC and 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) remain valid in this scenario.
- Regionalization will require funds to move from one jurisdiction to another. While not impossible, even in the current economic and political climate, it again seems like something that would require time to accomplish through careful planning and cultivation of support, not something that can be imposed on the region.

There is, however, a potential regionalization model that might be considered. It is described in the Recommendations below.

- **Maintain 2-1-1 TBC as an independent nonprofit organization**

The advantages to this approach would seem obvious:

- 2-1-1 TBC is an established organization with a track record of success, respected by elected officials, funders and human service agencies.
- The weaknesses of 2-1-1 TBC are very fixable, particularly if funders can agree on their expectations and can ensure stable and sustained financial support.
- 2-1-1 TBC is not only in the county, it has long-established strategic and operational relationships throughout the county; its employees are, almost entirely, residents of the county with “home grown” knowledge; and, it works comfortably in partnership with county government.
- 2-1-1 TBC also has a clear record of collaboration, receives high marks from other counties for its work as a “partner” as opposed to

“vendor” in providing 2-1-1 service to them and has been one of the leading 2-1-1s in Florida advocating for development of a more integrated statewide 2-1-1 system.

But, wouldn't it save money to consolidate it into or merge it with another nonprofit organization? We do not believe so.

First, there often is an assumption made that merging nonprofit organizations is easy and will result in immediate cost-savings. In practice, neither necessarily happens. Nonprofit organizations are like any others – they come with their own agendas, their own cultures, their own priorities and their own realities. Bringing them together can be a time consuming and expensive process, even at the local level.

Second, there are no obvious significant cost savings from merging 2-1-1 TBC with another organization.

- 2-1-1 TBC has a single organization-wide manager, the executive director. All other members of the management team have specific programmatic responsibilities that would need to be maintained no matter the organizational framework within which they reside.
- 2-1-1 TBC is locked into its lease for two more years. Conceivably it could merge with an organization that was prepared to move into some portion of that space or that was able to absorb the cost. Neither seems likely.
- All other costs associated with provision of the 2-1-1 service, TBIN and Community Voice Mail are costs that must be incurred to sustain the programs.

In short, any cost savings are likely to be relatively minor.

Recommendations

1. A strengthened 2-1-1 TBC should be maintained as an independent nonprofit organization working in close partnership with Pinellas County government, JWB and the human service agencies serving the county.

2-1-1s can make the greatest contributions to their communities when they are recognized as a strategic infrastructure asset that can help improve the delivery of human services and can help government, funders and human service providers achieve their individual and collective missions.

Here are some examples of how such recognition might play out in Pinellas County.

- Pinellas County government, JWB and UWTB make a firm collaborative multi-year commitment of adequate funding to enable 2-1-1 to operate at full strength.
- Those core funders and other key stakeholders – such as the Homeless Leadership Network – work together with 2-1-1 TBC to define their

shared needs for data and to specific, reasonable expectations that establish clear priorities that can be sustained over time. There is an assessment of the potential impact on performance and the cost implications of collecting and reporting the desired data. Funders commit to providing additional resources when new requirements for data collection and reporting are identified.

- 2-1-1 TBC is seen by the core funders as the “partner of choice” when new opportunities and needs for telephone-based information and referral and related services arise thus leveraging the investment already made to build and sustain 2-1-1 TBC as an infrastructure organization. For example:
 - JWB should encourage, or perhaps even require, that when it or its funded agencies initiate new programs or public education campaigns that require call center support, that 2-1-1 TBC be given first consideration as the vendor of choice.
 - County government should look first to 2-1-1 TBC to serve as the telephone “front door” for public education and information campaigns and, as it reduces its own operational footprint, to 2-1-1 TBC to assume responsibility for some of its continuing or yet to be created telephone information lines related to health, human services and emergency management.

In short, core funding for 2-1-1 TBC should be seen as an investment in an infrastructure that can serve the county in many ways.

At the same time, there must be acceptance of the fact that as additional responsibilities are given to 2-1-1 TBC, they must carry with them the additional resources required to successfully carry out the required work. The cost savings should not come from “piling on” more demands but from not having to recreate elsewhere the infrastructure that 2-1-1 TBC provides.

- The board of 2-1-1 TBC needs to be strengthened with new members to enable it to effectively advocate on behalf of the organization and to lead a sustained effort to develop private sector funding to supplement that provided by the county, JWB and UWTB.

2. Consideration should be given to creating a regional 2-1-1 for the Greater Tampa Bay media market that would include these features:

- A single resource database, fed by each of the 2-1-1s, available online to all of the 2-1-1s and to the public;
- A single software package to be used by all 2-1-1s in the region to ensure consistency in formatting of resource data records, collection of call and referral data and reporting.
- A single call routing system, hosted by an external vendor, that would

route calls from within the region according to mutually agreed upon protocols. This would allow the current 2-1-1s to vary their hours of operation, back up one another during periods of peak call volume, reroute calls quickly as required and have built in redundancy.

- Primary 24/7 call centers at 2-1-1 TBC and 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) with other 2-1-1s forwarding after hours calls to the 24/7 call center of their choice under a cost structure to be mutually determined by the 2-1-1s.
- Required collaboration in marketing 2-1-1 throughout the region through a unified marketing plan that creates and reinforces a common brand.
- Performance measures that are created through a collaborative effort of the 2-1-1s and funders with reporting to and monitoring by a representative task force of funders from throughout the region.

This approach has these advantages:

- It builds on 2-1-1 TBC's established role as the leader for regional collaboration as it provides some level of 2-1-1 service to seven counties.
- It creates the opportunity to benefit from any savings that can be realized through increased volume and planned collaboration.
- It establishes a regional identity for 2-1-1, thus allowing for more aggressive region-wide marketing.
- It sets clear performance measures that allows for transparent monitoring of the performance of 2-1-1s.
- It increases efficiency by creating a single database accessible to all 2-1-1s and to the public, addressing the reality that people seek services both where they live and where they work and, in some cases, where members of their families may reside.
- By using shared call routing, it allows each 2-1-1 to determine its hours of operation, to set its own protocols for call handling and to know that it has back-up available at any time – and, at the same time, maintain their independence.
- By setting a fixed price for after-hours service, it eliminates potentially harmful underbidding that could threaten the quality of the service provided.
- There is potential for some of the other counties to join the TBIN system, opening the possibility of a more regional approach to tracking information on needs and use of services by people in need.

- It can expand access to Community Voice Mail to people who are homeless and to nonprofit organizations throughout the Greater Tampa Bay Region.
- It can serve as a model for similar regional collaboration throughout the state.

Such a regional system should be managed through a collaborative board that is representative of the county governments (both human services and emergency management), the Children’s Services Councils in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, the United Ways throughout the region, other community leaders and the 2-1-1s themselves. It should be complemented by an “operating council” composed of the directors of the 2-1-1s in the region.

Such a regional structure ideally could be created relatively quickly, within 12-18 months, if 2-1-1s and funders are willing to undertake a mutual strategic planning effort.

Because of its track record of collaboration and partnership building, we believe 2-1-1 TBC should be asked to play a significant leadership role, with appropriate funding to cover its costs of doing so, in bringing such an effort to life.

In addition, it should be clear that 2-1-1 TBC is not presently staffed to manage or deliver the kind of regional network described above and would need additional, sustained funding should it be given responsibility to do so.

A possible initial step would be a region-wide “2-1-1 summit” of all of the key stakeholders to launch the effort, organized and hosted by Pinellas County government, JWB and UWTB.

COSTS AND FINANCING OF 2-1-1 TAMPA BAY CARES

Cost Projections

Five-year cost projections for 2-1-1 TBC were done using the AIRS 2-1-1 Financial Projection Tool. It is understood and accepted as the only research-based, reliable tool for 2-1-1s to use in projecting their expenses. The assumptions in it are based on data provided by leading 2-1-1s based on their experience at the time of its development.

The most important element of the tool is its use of the Erlang Formula to project the number of call specialists required to meet selected conditions. Erlang is one of the commonly used telecommunications traffic models in many different kinds of call centers.

A breakdown of projected costs and complete details on the assumptions used in developing the projections will be found in Appendix E. The most important are these:

- Current call volume from Pinellas County is 75,000 calls per year or the equivalent of about 8.2% of the county's population. We have projected that in Year 3, with appropriate marketing and natural growth, the volume will be 10% or just under 92,000 calls per year.
- We have used the current average call length of 4.2 minutes.
- We have allocated sufficient staff, according to the formula, to answer 85% of calls received. In reality, because the formula cannot be absolutely precise, particularly as the spread of calls across the week changes, it should provide for a slightly higher response rate.
- We assume that a resource database specialist can manage 1,300 records per year. This is slightly higher than the top of the normally accepted range but, assuming that with the help of funders, more agencies agree to update their own records online, it should be sufficient.
- We have added two additional contract positions to round out the staff: the equivalent of a half time fund-raiser and the equivalent of a half-time technical systems manager.
- Because we do not know what will happen when the current lease expires, we have used the current rent for all five years. It is possible that 2-1-1 TBC, with the support of its primary funders could negotiate a release from its current lease if it proves advantageous to do so.

The most important variables in projecting costs for a 2-1-1 service are call volume and the percentage of those calls that will be answered. The expressed national "ideal" is to answer 95% of calls. In reality, an answer rate of 85% is a more realistic goal.

For comparative purposes, we ran parallel five-year cost projections, using identical variables other than the percentage of calls answered. The results:

	85% Answered	95% Answered
Year One	\$1,144,000	\$1,307,500
Year Two	1,228,600	1,339,700
Year Three	1,255,000	1,369,500
Year Four	1,288,000	1,410,300
Year Five	1,321,300	1,445,500
Total	\$6,236,900	\$6,872,500
Average Annual Cost	\$1,247,380	\$1,374,500

We do not believe that the significant additional investment required, an average of over \$125,000 per year, is justified to increase from the capacity to answer 85% of calls to 95%.

Is it possible to reduce these costs and not endanger the quality of 2-1-1 TBC’s performance? Yes. Certainly there are cost savings that can be made, particularly in the out years. As described elsewhere, if it were possible for 2-1-1 TBC to negotiate out of its current lease and move into space provided by county government, it would save over \$100,000 per year. Continued appropriate use of part-time staff would reduce the admittedly generous projection for fringe benefits.

But our conclusion is clear: it requires at least \$1.1 million per year to successfully provide 2-1-1 services for Pinellas County.

These projections are for the core functions of 2-1-1 TBC as a comprehensive information and referral agency and as manager of TBIN. This assumes collecting and providing data and participating in disaster preparation at a level consistent with other 2-1-1s. Significant additional responsibilities for data collection and sharing, provision of navigation services or extraordinary disaster preparation would add to the cost.

**Financing
Recommendations**

For 2-1-1 TBC to succeed – to provide consistently high quality comprehensive information and referral, to effectively manage TBIN and to participate as a trusted partner in coalitions, task forces, committees and special activities – requires appropriate and sustained funding.

To achieve that, we believe, will require concerted effort by 2-1-1 TBC’s current primary funders – Pinellas County government, JWB and the United Way of Tampa Bay – by other public and private potential funders and by 2-1-1 TBC itself. Therefore, we make the following recommendations.

Collaborations Among Funders

1. Priority attention needs to be given to a truly collaborative strategic planning process for 2-1-1 TBC with the principals of its key stakeholders involved.

It is no longer enough for each primary funder – the county, JWB and United

Way – each to have its own set of expectations, potentially conflicting, for 2-1-1 TBC. In the current environment – characterized by growing need, shrinking resources and likely cutbacks in services – fundamental decisions need to be made about whether 2-1-1 TBC is to be considered a vital part of the infrastructure of human services, what its functions should be and how it is to be funded in a way that allows it a sustained flow of the appropriate resources to do a high quality job. Each of the primary funders espouses its belief in collaboration. This is the time to model that in coming together to ensure the success of 2-1-1 TBC.

2. The relationship between the primary funders and 2-1-1 TBC must be redefined as a partnership that recognizes 2-1-1 TBC as a valued part of the infrastructure for human service delivery in the county and that builds mutually beneficial relationships built on trust, transparency and fairness.

There is ample evidence from the interviews conducted, documents reviewed and our own observation that the environment for human service agencies in Pinellas County is demanding, particularly as related to the expectations and requirements of the primary funders. High expectations and heavy requirements that are truly in the service of accountability and quality performance are absolutely appropriate. When they go to an extreme, there is the risk of creating adversarial relationships that, over time, erode the sense of partnership required.

3. The primary funders should, jointly, reach an agreement that will ensure 2-1-1 TBC of the core resources it needs to operate at a mutually agreed on level for at least three years, even if this means taking 2-1-1 TBC out of the normal funding review process.

There is already an example of this kind of collaboration in Broward County in which the Children’s Services Council, county government, United Way and the Department of Children and Families agreed to jointly guarantee 2-1-1 Broward its core budget for three years to enable it to have a stable operation, to strengthen its services and to develop additional funding sources. In Palm Beach County, the five primary funders of 2-1-1 have come together to create a single set of expectations, a single reporting process and a single monitor that represents all five.

Such an agreement should set out specific expectations of actions that 2-1-1 TBC must take and benchmarks it must meet to diversify its funding base.

4. The primary funders should agree on what they can do and when and how they will do it, individually and collectively, to influence other public and private funders to support 2-1-1 TBC.

This should include reaching out directly to elected and appointed officials in municipal government within the county, to executive leaders of private foundations and major businesses and to officials in state government, particularly in the Department of Children and Families.

5. The primary funders and 2-1-1 TBC should work together to give visible leadership to efforts to develop a regional 2-1-1 system as described in the

previous section of this report and an integrated statewide 2-1-1 system.

Creation of a regional 2-1-1 has the potential to improve services and increase cost effectiveness while establishing a collaborative model for the balance of the state. Creation of an integrated statewide 2-1-1 system ensures that Florida will be eligible to receive federal funding for 2-1-1 when it becomes available.

6. The primary funders and 2-1-1 TBC should develop and implement a strategy, to be carried out with their peers throughout the state, to secure strong support from Florida’s delegation to Congress for the Calling for 2-1-1 Act and should advocate for earmarks to support the development and operation of 2-1-1 in Florida.

Any realistic financing strategy for 2-1-1 over the long term must include federal dollars. It is critical that Florida’s Congressional delegation understands the importance of and supports passage of the Calling for 2-1-1 Act that could, in its first year, provide Florida’s 2-1-1s with some \$8 million.

In the recently passed budget bill, there were six earmarks for 2-1-1s, totaling about \$2 million. Despite the controversy over earmarks, they are a reality and are a reasonable way for Florida’s Congressional delegation to improve access to services for residents of the state.

JWB

7. JWB should restore its funding for 2-1-1 TBC at least at its previous level.

The hard reality is that if JWB sticks to its decision to end funding to 2-1-1 TBC then there will be no credible 2-1-1 service in the county because, especially in the current economy, it is virtually impossible for 2-1-1 TBC to replace the money that will be lost.

Here are six reasons why JWB should restore its funding at least at its previous level:

- As one of the three primary funders in Pinellas County of nonprofit organizations providing human services, JWB must take a share of the responsibility for developing and supporting the infrastructure that supports access to human services.

As reported earlier in this report, the executive director of the Children’s Services Council in Broward County said of their commitment to ongoing funding for 2-1-1 Broward: “The rationale for funding 2-1-1 is straightforward: ‘Why fund services if people can’t find them?’ 2-1-1 is critical infrastructure to help citizens find the services they need.”

JWB’s current allocation to 2-1-1 TBC is just over \$293,000 or almost exactly one half of one percent of its total grants. This is slightly lower than that provided to 2-1-1s by three of the four major Children’s Services Councils funding 2-1-1s:

Children’s Trust of Miami	1.07%
Children’s Board of Hillsborough	.8%
CSC of Broward County	.7%
CSC of Palm Beach County	.2%

- 2-1-1 enhances JWB’s investment in services for family and children

Members of the JWB board opposed to funding 2-1-1 TBC sought to make the case that JWB was paying more than its “fair share” of the cost of 2-1-1. In fact, 2-1-1 TBC has reported that roughly 25-30% of its calls, depending on the time of the year, come from people with children, the primary population served by JWB. This estimate was based, in large part, on questions asked by call specialists to determine whether the caller had minor children in the home.

In a report to JWB on June 30, 2008, 2-1-1 TBC reported that in the preceding nine months, that 10,628 of the total 44,118 calls answered had benefited children. The majority of those calls were for basic needs such as emergency shelter, financial assistance for rent and utilities, and food.

Also, although it is not possible to track precise numbers, it is anecdotally known that JWB funded agencies regularly refer their clients too 2-1-1 TBC when they require services not provided by those agencies.

With rare exception, it is fair to believe that connection of people with families to the services they need either directly or indirectly benefit the children in the family.

30% of the current year budget for just for the 2-1-1 service would be \$228,000; 30% of the previous year budget would have been about \$270,000; 30% of the projected needed budget for 2-1-1 would be in excess of \$350,000 – an average of \$283,000. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a “fair share” of the cost of 2-1-1 for JWB to bear.

- 2-1-1 TBC enhances the efficiency and cost effectiveness of JWB-funded agencies.

The evidence, summarized earlier in the “Community View” section, is clear. Human service agencies believe that the presence of a comprehensive information and referral agency helps them to do their jobs better, allows their staff to focus on their expertise and saves them money by relieving the need to provide their own information and referral services.

It is impossible to quantify the value of this increased efficiency and cost effectiveness. But, the alternative to 2-1-1 TBC clearly will cost something because:

- Agencies will begin to commit staff time to providing informal information and referral services to clients they cannot fully serve;
- To provide this service they will begin to develop their own resource databases, even if that is just a file folder with notes stuck

in it;

- Agencies will take an increased number of calls from people who, in their desperation, are “shopping for services” by calling every agency they can find;
- Eventually, funders will recognize the folly of such an inefficient system and will begin investing staff time and money in trying to decide how to create a new centralized information and referral service which, ultimately, will become a new incarnation of 2-1-1 TBC.

- JWB’s investment in 2-1-1 TBC can be leveraged to enhance its other programs and services.

While it was beyond the scope of this study, it is not unlikely that, should it examine its own programs and those of the agencies it funds, JWB would discover examples of how it could take advantage of the infrastructure it has helped to build at 2-1-1 TBC to cost-effectively enhance and support those efforts.

- 2-1-1 TBC is an important source of data for JWB.

Again, this has been discussed extensively earlier in the report. 2-1-1 TBC already provides valuable data to JWB as well as to HHS, the Coalition for the Homeless, UWTB and other agencies. The potential for 2-1-1 TBC to become the “data central” for human services in Pinellas County has been described by elected officials, funders and agency executives. It will be less expensive, both initially and in the long-run, to increase 2-1-1 TBC’s capacity rather than to create new capacity elsewhere.

- 2-1-1 TBC has been designated to play a key role in disaster preparation, response and recovery.

While not sufficient, in and of itself, to justify funding by JWB, it is an integral part of the total rationale for that funding.

8. JWB should designate 2-1-1 TBC as the “partner/vendor of choice” for any of its initiatives that require the support of a call center and should strongly recommend to the agencies it funds that they look first to 2-1-1 TBC to provide services such as after-hours call answering and specialty hotlines.

This is a clear way for JWB to leverage its investment in 2-1-1 TBC in a way that enhances its own programs and supports the agencies it funds.

As an example of this, the Children’s Board in Hillsborough County leveraged its investment in 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) by establishing it as the entry point for the navigation services it is providing for families with complex needs and developing specific protocols to be used to screen families.

Pinellas County Government

9. In addition to continuing and increasing the core support for 2-1-1 TBC provided by Health and Human Services, the Pinellas County Commissioners should explore other potential sources of revenue for 2-1-1 TBC within county government, including from the general areas of emergency management, 911 and public safety and, potentially, by transferring responsibility for answering some of the county's public information lines for a fee.

It would be appropriate to commit some funds, perhaps \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year to 2-1-1 TBC from a combination of emergency management, 911 and public safety for two reasons. First, it would help 2-1-1 TBC sustain the capacity it needs to meet expectations for its role in disaster preparation, prevention, response and recovery. Second, it would recognize its role as a complement to 911, helping reduce call volume by handling calls referred by 911 or calls taken that otherwise would come to 911.

County government also should examine whether it is feasible and desirable to transfer to 2-1-1 TBC responsibility for answering any of its existing public information lines, particularly those related to health and human services, and should establish a policy requiring that 2-1-1 TBC be considered as the possible provider before any new public information lines and hotlines are established.

While there may be incremental new costs at 2-1-1 TBC that the county must cover, it still is likely to be less than if county government provides the service itself. This is an excellent way to leverage the county's investment in the core operations of 2-1-1 TBC.

10. The Pinellas County Commission should explore possible ways to create a dedicated and sustained funding source for 2-1-1 TBC.

One possibility might be some form of surcharge on all telephones – including cell phones and voice-over IP – in Pinellas County. In 2000, there were roughly 415,000 households in the county. If, on average, each had one telephone then a surcharge of 16.5 cents per month or \$2.00 per year on each telephone would yield 50-60% of the annual projected cost of 2-1-1 TBC.

Another possibility might be to use a portion of the mostly unused .5 millage available to the Pinellas County Health Trust Fund to totally fund 2-1-1.

11. Pinellas County government should explore specific ways in which it can make in-kind contributions to support 2-1-1 TBC.

An obvious long-term contribution would be to provide office space in an appropriate county-owned facility. This could be done in the short-term if it proved possible to renegotiate 2-1-1 TBC's lease; certainly, it could be planned for the end of the lease in 2012. Another possibility would be to provide access to the county's T1 lines.

There may be other significant in-kind assistance the county might consider

offering. But it must be of a nature and quality that does not, in the long-run, cost 2-1-1 TBC more in management time than it is worth or that undercuts the quality of 2-1-1 TBC's work.

12. Pinellas County government, JWB , UWTB, and 2-1-1 TBC should collaboratively develop and implement a resource development strategy that will result, within three years, in at least 10% of 2-1-1 TBC's revenue coming from the municipalities within Pinellas County.

Using population and call volume data, municipalities should be asked to contribute their "fair share" to support 2-1-1 TBC as an infrastructure service to their residents.

Approximately 637,000 residents live in the 24 incorporated municipalities. For these municipalities to provide 10% of the overall budget for 2-1-1 would be equivalent to approximately 19 cents per resident per year. In exchange these local governments could expect to receive regular reports on the human service needs both of their residents and of the county as a whole.

United Way of Tampa Bay

13. UWTB must give higher priority to 2-1-1 TBC to ensure that its annual grants do not continue to erode.

Although 2-1-1 is a national United Way priority, it is not clear that it has the same priority at UWTB as the local support has declined 17% over the past three years, from \$117,576 in 2006 to \$96,600 this year. Another cut of at least 10% has been announced for the coming year, reducing their contribution to around \$87,000. While it is true that United Way's income has declined, it must ensure that the infrastructure of human service delivery, particularly as related to access to services, remains strong.

14. UWTB should join with Pinellas County government, JWB and 2-1-1 TBC in active advocacy for creation of a regional 2-1-1 as described in the preceding section of this document and for creation of an integrated statewide 2-1-1 system.

One specific step UWTB can take is to ensure the participation of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Crisis Center) in a regional 2-1-1 by making their annual grant contingent on collaborative participation in building a regional database and implementing a regional call routing system.

2-1-1 TBC

15. 2-1-1 TBC must take advantage of this moment to take control of its own long-term future, seeking new ways to serve the county and to build diversified support.

An executive at a private foundation put it this way:

Why can't 2-1-1 TBC be about more than human services? How else

can they add value to the community and gain support? Maybe they can become the primary source of information about arts, culture, recreation and broader community services.

They need to figure out how to be as independent as possible, how to pursue their own mission, not to have others define their work.

This isn't just about JWB. This needs to be a wake-up call for 2-1-1 TBC to make themselves indispensable to nonprofit organizations in the county.

16. The board of directors of 2-1-1 TBC should put high priority on the development and implementation of a fund-raising strategy, led by members of the board, who can demonstrate their ability to diversify their funding.

Elements of such a plan might include:

- A direct solicitation of individuals who are known to be supportive of 2-1-1 TBC and, through them, of other individuals;
- A comprehensive assessment of the business community in Pinellas and a systematic solicitation of major employers, developing understanding of 2-1-1 TBC as a service to their employees;
- A targeted effort, in collaboration with Pinellas County government and JWB, to secure support from the municipalities in the county (see #9);
- A campaign to obtain support from faith communities, civic associations, schools and neighborhood associations, beginning with a modest request (perhaps \$211 as one 2-1-1 in another part of the country once did), using the campaign to educate the community and build long-term support.

Such an effort must have clear goals, must be a priority of the board of directors and must have adequate staff support. Most important, it must be clearly designed to ensure that 2-1-1 TBC can obtain a meaningful portion of its budget from sources other than county government, JWB and UWTB.

17. 2-1-1 TBC must continue to increase its entrepreneurial revenue-generating activities.

2-1-1 TBC has done a good job seeking out opportunities to use their core capacity as a generator of revenue. They provide full 2-1-1 services to Hernando and Citrus counties and after-hours service for Pasco and Manasota 2-1-1s. They currently are providing support services for a project run by Operation PAR. They provide after-hours and spot time call answering for CASA. They have recently begun to solicit additional after-hours call answering business from other nonprofit organizations.

These efforts need to be sustained and systematically expanded but can never be

allowed to take away from the quality of the core 2-1-1 service.

18. 2-1-1 should market itself as collaborative partner with other human service providers

2-1-1 is a rich source of information for public agencies and non-profit organizations that must document community needs when working to secure grant funding. 2-1-1 TBC could build upon this role by proactively tracking emerging needs, finding partners to work with to tackle the problem and, together, seeking new grant money to support the work.

APPENDIX A: THE CONSULTANTS

Kenn Allen

Kenn Allen was one of the lead consultants in development of the 2-1-1 National Business Plan in 2002, working jointly with United Way of America and the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). That work included designing and facilitating a collaborative planning process and preparing the business plan. Individually, Kenn later provided follow-up assistance for the two organizations as they sought to define and implement their partnership.

In 2003, he served as a lead consultant in helping AIRS implement a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support development of 2-1-1 in the Pacific Northwest. His team designed and facilitated collaborative planning processes and prepared business plans for WIN 2-1-1 (State of Washington), Oregon 2-1-1, *2-1-1info* for the four-county region which includes Portland, Oregon and 2-1-1 for King County (Seattle), Washington. The team also was the primary authors of the AIRS 2-1-1 Planning Tools, developed under the same grant, including the AIRS 2-1-1 Financial Planning Tool.

Since then, Kenn has had the opportunity to serve as consultant to 2-1-1 business planning processes for the following:

- State of Texas partnership between Texas 2-1-1 and the Texas Workforce Commission (with Melissa Krinzman)
- Florida 2-1-1
- Northern Virginia 2-1-1
- 2-1-1 Maryland
- New York City 2-1-1
- Rhode Island 2-1-1
- Minnesota 2-1-1
- United Way 2-1-1 for Southeast Michigan
- Michigan 2-1-1
- Wisconsin 2-1-1
- Pennsylvania 2-1-1 (with Tom Page)
- 2-1-1 New York State
- Georgia 2-1-1 (current)
- Kentucky 2-1-1 (current, with Tom Page)
- Ohio 2-1-1 (current, with Tom Page)

In each case, he designed and facilitated collaborative planning processes, prepared five-year financial projections and wrote the business plan.

He also has worked with 2-1-1s in Indiana (board retreat and ongoing technical assistance) and Illinois (state summit, state AIRS conference and technical assistance). He also served as consultant and facilitator for the 2-1-1 Institute and 2-1-1 Assembly for three years. In 2005, for United Way of America, he researched and wrote a full report on the response of 2-1-1s in Florida to the 2004 hurricanes (available at www.2-1-1.org). He also served as consultant to the Ohio 2-1-1 Collaborative in preparatory work intended to lead to the full

strategic planning process that they will undertake in 2009.

In short, Kenn has perhaps the broadest experience of anyone in the country in supporting the planning for 2-1-1s and in developing business plans for them.

Two of his past engagements have brought him into contact with 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares and with the broader development of 2-1-1 both throughout the State of Florida and in the Tampa Bay region.

- In 2003, Kenn led the strategic planning process for 2-1-1 in the State of Florida that was undertaken by the Florida Association of Information and Referral Systems and the United Way of Florida. The result of that process was a strategic business plan for the development of a statewide 2-1-1 system in Florida.
- In 2006, Kenn was engaged by the United Way of Tampa Bay to facilitate a two-part project related to provision of 2-1-1 for the region. In the first part, he facilitated a fact-finding working meeting of representatives of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and representatives of United Ways in the Tampa media market that provided input to the work of a media consultant who was charged with developing a regional marketing plan for 2-1-1. In the second part, he designed and facilitated a process of dialogue between 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares and the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay that led to development of and agreement on a memorandum of understanding intended to create the framework within which they could increase their cooperation toward a shared goal of providing the best possible 2-1-1 service to the people in their combined service areas. The MOU included but was not limited to an understanding of how they would work together in preparation for and response to disasters or emergencies.

In neither of these projects did he undertake the kind of in-depth analysis called for by the current HHSCC project but did gain insight into the overall environment for 2-1-1 in Florida and the Tampa Bay region and into the operations of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares.

Professionally, Kenn:

- has been in private practice as a consultant for eight years after a career in nonprofit organizations, serving as a senior executive at the local, state, national and international levels;
- is a skilled interviewer, qualitative researcher and writer as well as a stand-up trainer and process consultant;
- has a doctorate in Human Resource Development from George Washington University.

Tom Page

Tom Page, as Executive Director of the Washington Information Network 2-1-1, worked with Kenn and his colleagues, coordinating and participating in

the Washington State and Seattle planning processes, as well as the Oregon planning effort. Upon completion of the Washington plan, he had primary responsibility for implementing the plan, successfully completing the development of the first fully integrated statewide 2-1-1 network with eight call centers sharing common database and call management systems. This work included providing technical assistance and support to the eight call centers for the development of their regional 2-1-1 business plans.

Tom also served as a beta-tester for the AIRS 2-1-1 Business Planning Tool Kit and provided feedback on final design of tools. He gave direction and technical assistance for business planning to eight local call centers serving Washington State, then worked with the call centers to secure over \$5.5 million in public and private funding to support 2-1-1 planning, implementation and operations.

As founding co-chair of the 2-1-1 State Directors Association, he has jointly designed and delivered the programming for the 2-1-1 Assembly at the past four AIRS conferences. He was a co-trainer on using the 2-1-1 Business Planning Tool Kit at the 2005 AIRS conference, and developed and presented workshops on “Building an effective 2-1-1 Collaborative”, “Effective decision-making for 2-1-1 partnerships”, “2-1-1: Public policy & Advocacy” at the past five AIRS conferences and the national Canadian Community Information and Referral Conference in 2005.

In his position with WIN 2-1-1 he developed an academic research partnership with the Information School at the University of Washington. Under his direction, the researchers completed a cost-benefit analysis for 2-1-1 service, a benchmark performance study, and developed a comprehensive program evaluation plan to assess 2-1-1 service delivery. During this time he worked with the National Community Voice Mail office to develop and implement a pilot project for CVM clients to access their voice mail through the 2-1-1 number. He has also served as a guest lecturer on public policy development and advocacy at Information School at the University of Washington.

Tom left the position of Executive Director of Washington Information Network 2-1-1 in early 2007 to establish his consulting practice. He has completed projects for 2-1-1 Ontario, for Oregon 2-1-1 on state system development, for 2-1-1 Los Angeles on technical system assessment and resource development and for United Way of America on collaborative initiatives by 2-1-1 programs. He partnered with Kenn on development of the strategic business plan for Pennsylvania 2-1-1 and has led the strategic planning process for the Leatherstocking 2-1-1 region in Central New York. He has continued to work with Pennsylvania 2-1-1, providing ongoing assistance as they put their state business plan into operation.

Other relevant experience includes:

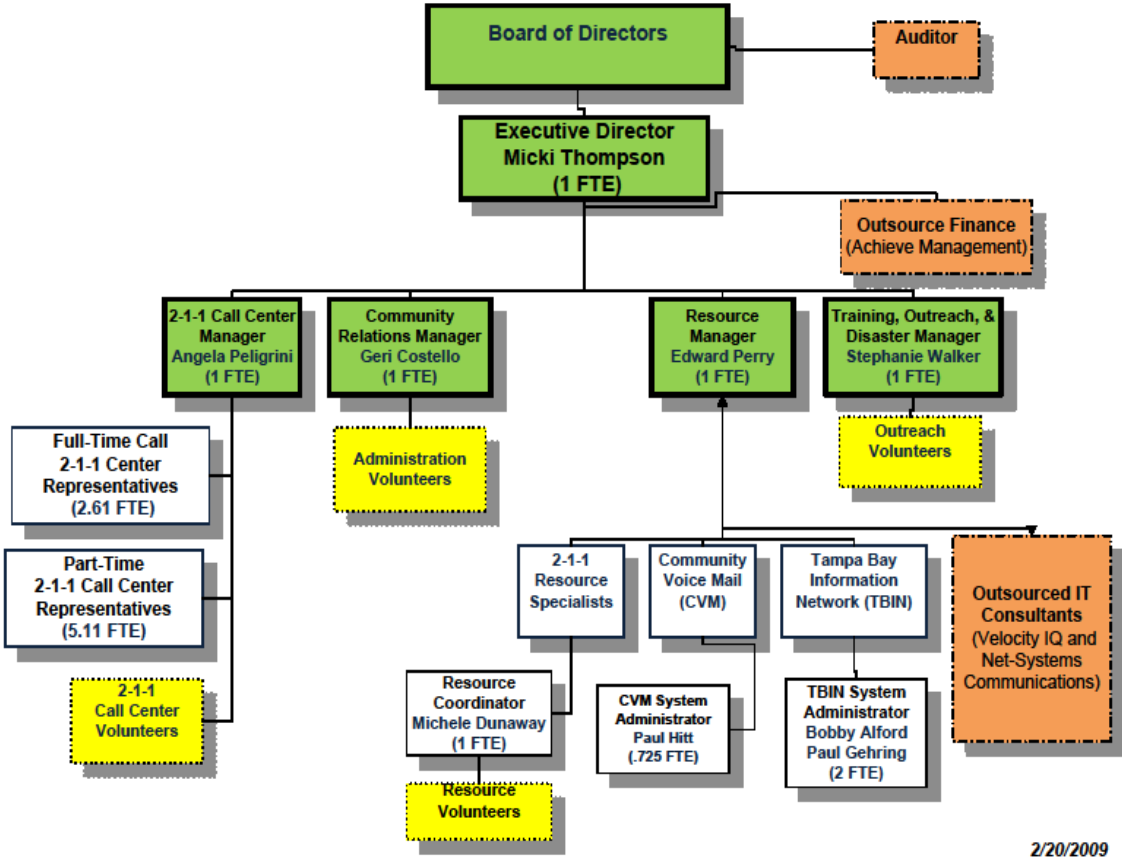
- Serving as founding co-chair of the 2-1-1 Leadership Council/2-1-1 U.S. to facilitate and support North American 2-1-1 integration.
- Overseeing the development of criteria and selection processes for database and call management systems in Washington State. Provided

resources and assistance for technical systems selection processes to California, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Northern Virginia, Oregon, and South Carolina.

- Serving on the Regional Advisory Council for the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine.
 - Assembling the 2-1-1 Advocacy Tool Kit and drafting model 2-1-1 enabling legislation.
 - Earning a Master's degree in Not-For-Profit Leadership from Seattle University.
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APPENDIX B: 2-1-1 TBC ORGANIZATION CHART

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc. Organizational Chart



2/20/2009

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Rhonda Abbott, City of St. Petersburg Social Services
Arlinda Amos, Children's Board of Hillsborough County
Cindy Arenberb Seltzer, Children's Service Council of Broward County
Susan Arnette, United Way of Pasco County
Diana Baker, United Way of Tampa Bay
Joe Baldwin, HHSCC
Lourdes Benedict, Department of Children and Families
Sally Bishop, Pinellas County Emergency Management
Nancy Bostock, Pinellas County Commission
David Braughton, Crisis Center in Hillsborough
Neil Brickfield, Pinellas County Commission
Sue Buchholtz, PARC
Eddie Burch, Juvenile Welfare Board
Beverly Burton Area Agency on Aging
Suzan Buza, 2-1-1 of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast
Tim Caddell, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
George Catanese, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
Dr. Claude Dharamraj, Pinellas County Health Department
Jim Coats, Pinellas County Sheriff
Duggan Cooley, Religious Community Services
Guy Cooley, Coordinated Child Care
Kip Correview, Salvation Army
Rod Cyr, Juvenile Welfare Board
Barbara Daire, Suncoast Center for Community Mental Health
Jim Dates, Assistant County Administrator
Delphinia Davis, Juvenile Welfare Board
Bob Dillinger, Juvenile Welfare Board
Don Dixon, Children's Board of Hillsborough County
Tana Ebbolle at Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County
Maria Edmonds, Juvenile Welfare Board
David Fischer, Community Foundation of Tampa Bay
Maureen Freaney, Pinellas County Health and Human Services
Chuck Freeman, Pinellas County Emergency Communications
Major George Steffen, Pinellas County Sheriff's Department
Patricia Gerard, City of Largo
Ted Granger, United Way of Florida
Denise Groesbeck, HHSCC
Sally Gronda, Area Agency on Aging
Nancy Hamilton, Operation PAR
Jane Harper, Family Resources
Calvin Harris, Pinellas County Commission
Deborah Harris, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay (Hillsborough County)
Karen Higgins, PARC
Gay Inskeep, 6th Judicial Court
Judge Irene Sullivan, 6th Judicial Court
Mary Jo Monahan, Family Service Centers
Kathy Jones, United Way of Hernando County
Gay Lancaster, Juvenile Welfare Board

Susan Latvala, Pinellas County Commission
Martha Lenderman, Juvenile Welfare Board
Steve Lesky, Allegany Franciscan Foundation
Carl Littlefield, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Sheila Lopez, Catholic Charities
John Marmish, United Way of Citrus County
Bernie McCabe, Juvenile Welfare Board
John Milford, Juvenile Welfare Board
Rhonda Miller Sheared, Family Services
Jim Mills, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
Kathy Mitchell, Pinellas County Health and Human Services
Frank Murphy, Catholic Charities
Timothy Niermann, Department of Juvenile Justice
Art O'Hara, R-Club
Linda Osmundson, CASA
Catherine Penrod, Switchboard of Miami 2-1-1
Carlen Petersen, Clearwater City Council & Homeless Leadership Network
Grant Petersen, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
Amy Petrila, Children's Board of Hillsborough County
April Pichelu, Eckerd Community Alternatives
Karen Reich, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
Virginia Rowell, Community Volunteer
Nancy Sackett, Sheriff's Office of Protective Investigations
Van Sayler, Juvenile Welfare Board
Karen Seel, Pinellas County Commission
Donna Sicilian, Pinellas County Schools and 2-1-1 TBC Board Member
Cliff Smith, Pinellas County Health and Human Services
Joseph Smith, Juvenile Welfare Board
Sheila Smith, 2-1-1 Broward
Sarah Snyder, Homeless Coalition
Browning Spence, Juvenile Welfare Board
Elithia Stanfield, Pinellas County
Major George Steffen, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office and 2-1-1 TBC Board Member
Sandy Tabor, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
Sheri Taylor, United Way of Tampa Bay
Alexander Trujillo, Children's Home
Jean Vleming, Pinellas County Health and Human Services
Jane Walker, Day Star
Thomas Wedekind, PEMHS
Ken Welch, Pinellas County Commission
Tom Wiediken, PEMHS
Alex Young, United Way of Sarasota for United Way 2-1-1 of Manasota

APPENDIX D: THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please tell me a bit about your organization and your role in it.
2. In what ways does your organization relate to 2-1-1 TBC?
3. Do you think people in Pinellas County have trouble connecting with the services they need? Why or why not? Do you have any evidence about this?
4. How do you see 2-1-1 TBC now – the nature and scope of their services, the quality of their work, etc.?
5. Follow-up: How well do you believe 2-1-1 TBC does its core work of providing people with information that enables them to connect with the services they need? Do you have evidence to support your view?
6. Is 2-1-1 a valuable service for people in Pinellas County? Why or why not?
7. Is 2-1-1 a valuable service for human service agencies, county and local government in Pinellas County? Why or why not?
8. What would 2-1-1 be like if it were fully meeting your expectations? What else would it be doing? How would it be different than it is today?
9. Some people have said that 2-1-1 should not just provide people with information that enables them to connect with services but should intervene more actively to actually guide people to specific services, ensure that they can get appointments, ensure that they actually connect with the services they need, etc. What do you think of that?
10. Does 2-1-1 TBC compete with or overlap with any other information and referral providers in the county? If so, how does the nature and quality of their services compare?
11. As you know, the study we are doing was prompted by a decision by JWB to cut funding to 2-1-1 TBC. Do you agree with that decision? Why or why not? [If don't agree], what arguments would you make in favor of supporting 2-1-1 TBC?
12. What would be the impact if 2-1-1 no longer existed in Pinellas County?
13. There seems to be some push among funders to consolidate organizations and reduce the number of service providers. Do you believe that 2-1-1 TBC should in some way be merged with or into another organization or agency? If so, which one?
14. Given your perception of the value of 2-1-1, would you be willing to help fund it?
15. What is your perception of the three major funders – UWTB, HHS, JWB?
16. What is your perception of HHSCC?
17. What haven't I asked you or what else would you like to comment on?

APPENDIX E: THE FEDERAL CALLING FOR 2-1-1 ACT

Calling for 2-1-1 Act of 2009 (Introduced in House)

HR 211 IH

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.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Calling for 2-1-1 Act of 2009'.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) The Federal Communications Commission has assigned 2-1-1 as the national telephone number for telephone service for information and referral on human services, declaring that 2-1-1 best satisfies the public interest in allotting the limited resource of this abbreviated number.
- (2) The number '2-1-1' is an easy-to-remember telephone number that facilitates critical connections between individuals and families seeking services, volunteer opportunities, or both and appropriate human service agencies, including community-based and faith-based organizations and government agencies.
- (3) There are approximately 1,500,000 nonprofit organizations in the United States. Individuals and families often find it difficult to navigate through a complex and ever-

growing maze of human service agencies and programs, spending inordinate amounts of time trying to identify an agency or program that provides a service that may be immediately or urgently required and often abandoning the search from frustration or a lack of quality information.

(4) At the Federal, State, and local levels, government funding supports well-intentioned programs that are not fully utilized because of a lack of access to and information on such programs by the public. Program administrators have indicated that there is a need for a simple way to connect those eligible for programs with available program resources. 2-1-1 telephone service will reduce the number of inappropriate calls to government offices by directing consumers to the appropriate human services agency, resulting in a more effective use of government services.

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

(6) Many families need information on government and not-for-profit services that provide high quality health care, public health information related to bioterrorism threats, mental health services, drug treatment, elder care, help for victims of domestic violence, disaster recovery, and volunteer opportunities.

(7) Individuals often need support, services, or both when suffering emotional distress, having suicidal thoughts or behavior, contemplating violence, or using drugs or alcohol.

(8) Americans desire to volunteer and become involved in their communities. This desire, together with a desire to donate to organizations which provide human services, are among the reasons to contact a center which provides information and referral on volunteer opportunities and human services. A simple call to 2-1-1 will help a citizen find the volunteer opportunity they seek.

(9) Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, an estimated 400 telephone hotlines were established in New York, New York, for various funds and services, creating a confusing network for victims and volunteers to navigate. A Comptroller General report on charitable aid following the terrorist attacks found that 'families of victims generally believed they had to navigate a maze of service providers in the early months' and that 'good information about and easy access to available assistance could help survivors in the recovery process'.

(10) During the Hurricane Katrina disaster in 2005, 2-1-1 served as a crucial backup in areas of the Gulf Coast where 9-1-1 centers went down, providing access to emergency responders as well as serving as a source for information about loved ones, food, shelter, and other vital services.

(11) The 107th Congress recognized the importance of 2-1-1 telephone service in community preparedness and response by including use of that telephone number for public information as an allowable use of funds under grants for preparedness and response to bioterrorism and other public health emergencies under section 319C-1 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d-3a), as added by section 131 of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-188).

(12) While 69 percent of the population has access to 2-1-1 telephone service in 41 States, inadequate funding prevents access to that telephone service throughout each of the States. 2-1-1 telephone service is currently available statewide in only 17 States.

(13) Rapid deployment nationwide of 2-1-1 telephone service as a means of access to information about and referral on human services requires collaboration among State governments, comprehensive and specialized information and referral centers, including Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, human service organizations and service providers, emergency management and homeland security officials, telephone companies, and other relevant entities.

(14) 2-1-1 telephone service facilitates the availability of a single repository where comprehensive data on all community services is collected, maintained, and updated regularly, reducing costs and duplication of efforts. The reliable data provided through 2-1-1 telephone service helps to better assess the needs of our communities and to immediately mobilize resources toward those needs.

SEC. 3. GRANTS TO FACILITATE NATIONWIDE AVAILABILITY OF 2-1-1 SERVICE FOR INFORMATION AND REFERRAL ON HUMAN SERVICES.

(a) Grants Required- The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall award a grant to each State to carry out a program for the purpose of making 2-1-1 telephone service available to all citizens in the State for information and referral on health and human services, including volunteer services. These grant dollars shall not supplant existing funding streams or services.

(b) Grant To Be Available for Each State- In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall develop a formula for allocating grant amounts among the States so that a grant may be awarded to each State seeking a grant.

(c) Requirement on Share of Activities-

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

(2) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS- The requirement in paragraph (1) may be satisfied by in-kind contributions of goods or services.

(d) Lead Entity-

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

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

(A) exists for such purpose under State law;

(B) exists for such purpose by order of the 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 submit to the Secretary an application therefore in such form as the Secretary shall require.

(2) INFORMATION- An application on behalf of a State under this subsection shall contain information as follows:

(A) Information on the program to be carried out by the lead entity of the State so that every citizen with phone service may dial the 2-1-1 telephone service in order to plan to make available throughout the State 2-1-1 telephone service for information and referral on human services, including information on the manner in which the lead entity will develop, sustain, and evaluate the program.

(B) Information on the sources of resources for the program for purposes of meeting the requirement in subsection (c).

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

(D) Any additional information that the Secretary may require for purposes of this section.

(f) Subgrants-

(1) AUTHORITY- In carrying out a program to make 2-1-1 telephone service available throughout a State at no charge to the caller, the lead entity of the State may make

subgrants to such persons or entities as the lead entity considers appropriate for purposes of the program, including subgrants to provide funds—

- (A) for the provision of 2-1-1 telephone service;
- (B) for the operation and maintenance of 2-1-1 call centers; and
- (C) for the collection and display of information for the statewide database.

(2) **CONSIDERATIONS-** In awarding a subgrant under this subsection, a lead entity shall consider—

- (A) the ability of the person or entity seeking the subgrant to carry out activities or provide services consistent with the program;
- (B) the extent to which the award of the subgrant will facilitate equitable geographic distribution of subgrants under this section to ensure that rural communities have access to 2-1-1 telephone service; and
- (C) the extent to which the recipient of the subgrant will establish and maintain cooperative relationships with specialized information and referral centers, including Child Care Resource Referral Agencies, crisis centers, 9-1-1 call centers, and 3-1-1 call centers, if applicable.

(g) **Use of Grant and Subgrant Amounts-**

(1) **IN GENERAL-** Amounts awarded as grants or subgrants under this section shall be used solely to make available 2-1-1 telephone service for community information and referral on human services to all citizens of the State with phone access, including telephone connections between families and individuals seeking such services and the providers of such services.

(2) **PARTICULAR MATTERS-** In making 2-1-1 telephone service available, the recipient of a grant or subgrant shall, to the maximum extent practicable--

(A) abide by the Key Standards for 2-1-1 Centers as specified in the Standards for Professional Information and Referral Requirements for Alliance of Information Referral Systems (AIRS) Accreditation and Operating 2-1-1 Systems; and

(B) collaborate with human service organizations, whether public or private, to provide an exhaustive database of services with which to provide information or referral to individuals utilizing 2-1-1 telephone service.

(3) **USE OF FUNDS-** Amounts of a subgrant under subsection (f) may be used by grantees for Statewide and regional planning, start-up costs (including costs of software and hardware upgrades and telecommunications costs), training, accreditation, public awareness, evaluation of activities, Internet hosting and site development and maintenance for a statewide database, database integration projects that incorporate data from different 2-1-1 programs to a single statewide database, and the provision of 2-1-1 telephone service.

(h) Requirement on Allocation of Grant Amounts- Of the amounts awarded under this section, an aggregate of not more than 15 percent shall be allocated for evaluation, training, and technical assistance, and for management and administration of subgrants awarded under this section.

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

(1) describe the program funding by the grant;

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

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

(j) Definitions- In this section:

(1) HUMAN SERVICES- The term `human services' means services as follows:

(A) Services that assist individuals in becoming more self-sufficient, in preventing dependency, and in strengthening family relationships.

(B) Services that support personal and social development.

(C) Services that help ensure the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

(2) INFORMATION AND REFERRAL CENTER- The term `information and referral center' means a center that—

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

(B) assists individuals, families, and communities in identifying, understanding, and accessing the providers of human services and the human services offered by the providers of such services; and

(C) tracks types of calls referred and received to document the demands for services.

(3) STATE- The term `State' means the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) In General- There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act, for each of fiscal years 2009 and 2010, \$150,000,000, and for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2014, \$100,000,000.

(b) Availability- Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (a) shall remain available until expended.

APPENDIX F: THE TBIN USER SURVEY

The Health and Human Services Coordinating Council for Pinellas County has hired Civil Society Consulting Group to do an independent analysis of 211 Tampa Bay Cares (2-1-1 TBC) services and performance. The goal of this study is to provide Pinellas County and 2-1-1 TBC with a multi-year plan to ensure the services offered by 2-1-1 TBC have the resources and support required to meet the needs and expectations of the community.

One important piece of this study is to look at how the Tampa Bay Information Network (TBIN) is being used by homeless service providers to support HMIS activities in Pinellas County. This survey is your opportunity to share information about your experience with TBIN: how you use it, what works, how it could be improved.

The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete. All responses are confidential. Responses will be aggregated for reporting purposes and no identifying information will be shared with 2-1-1 TBC and/or local funders or community planners in Pinellas County.

Thank you for your help.

1. What homeless-related services does your organization provide? (Check all that apply)

- Emergency shelter for individuals
- Emergency shelter for families
- Transitional shelter for individuals
- Transitional shelter for families
- Permanent supportive housing
- Food pantry/food bank
- Rent/utility assistance
- Substance abuse treatment
- Mental health services
- Physical (medical) health services
- Other: _____

2. How long has your organization been registered to work in TBIN?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2 years or more
- How long have you been registered to work in TBIN?
- How long have you been registered to work in TBIN? Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2 years or more

3. How often do you use TBIN?

- More than one time a day

- One time per day
- 1-4 times per week
- Less than one time a week, but more than once a month
- One time a month or less
- Rarely or never

4. Are you a:

- Full-time paid staff member
- Part-time paid staff member
- Volunteer
- Other (please specify)

5. What is your role in your organization?

- Executive Director/CEO/Director
- CFO/Financial Director
- Supervisor/Manager
- Direct services staff
- Volunteer

6. Approximately how many full-time employees and volunteers work for your organization?

- None
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-25
- 26-50
- 50-100
- More than 100

7. TBIN System

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree, please rate the following statements:

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| a. It is easy to use TBIN. | | | | | | |
| b. I can enter my client information into TBIN. | | | | | | |
| c. The TBIN system is user-friendly. | | | | | | |
| d. I can get the reports and information I need from TBIN without assistance. | | | | | | |
| e. I feel my client data in TBIN is secure. | | | | | | |
| f. I like using TBIN. | | | | | | |
| g. I would prefer to upload my client data, rather than entering it into TBIN. | | | | | | |

8. Have you used the "canned" reports in TBIN to get information about your organization's activities?

- Yes
- No

Do you have any comments on the canned reports in TBIN?

Please complete the following statements.

9. The best or most useful thing about TBIN is: _____ -

10. The biggest drawback or most frustrating thing about TBIN is: _____

11. TBIN Staff

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree, please rate the following statements:

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| a. TBIN staff provide the training and support I need to use TBIN effectively. | | | | | | |
| b. TBIN staff are available and willing to help when I need it. | | | | | | |
| c. TBIN staff respond in a timely manner. | | | | | | |
| c. TBIN staff at 2-1-1 TBC are committed to providing high quality services. | | | | | | |
| d. TBIN staff at 2-1-1 TBC are easy to work with. | | | | | | |
| e. TBIN staff have helped my organization improve the quality of our data in TBIN. | | | | | | |
| f. TBIN staff listen to my suggestions and feedback. | | | | | | |
| g. TBIN staff and 2-1-1 TBC work collaboratively with other providers. | | | | | | |

Comments: _____

12. TBIN Communications

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree, please rate the following statements:

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| a. TBIN staff provide effective communications about changes and updates to the system. | | | | | | |
| b. TBIN staff communicate changes to the system in a timely manner. | | | | | | |
| c. I know where to get answers to my questions about TBIN. | | | | | | |
| c. I know where to get answers to my questions about TBIN. | | | | | | |
| d. I generally feel informed about changes to TBIN that affect me. | | | | | | |

13. If 2-1-1 TBC were to make any changes in the area of communications about TBIN, what improvements would you recommend?

14. What changes or additional support find useful for your work in TBIN?

- | | Very useful | Somewhat useful | Not very useful | Would not use |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| a. One-on-one training | | | | |
| b. Group training on special topics | | | | |
| c. Online trainings/tutorials | | | | |
| d. TBIN-users support group | | | | |
| e. TBIN list-serv | | | | |
| f. Add my own tracking fields to meet my agency's needs | | | | |
| g. Real-time tracking of resources like shelter beds, rent assistance, holiday baskets, etc. | | | | |
| h. Electronic updates about clients being referred to my organization | | | | |
| i. ID cards for clients in TBIN system | | | | |
| j. Client eligibility screening | | | | |
| k. Centralized intake for services through TBIN | | | | |
| l. Other (please specify) | | | | |

15. Please share any other comments you have about TBIN and Tampa Bay Cares.

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions on this survey. Again, all responses are strictly confidential. The results will be compiled and published as part of a report on 211 Tampa Bay Cares to the Health and Human Services Coordinating Council for Pinellas County in April 2009.

APPENDIX G: DETAILS ON COST PROJECTIONS

Overview

As noted in the text, five year financial projections were done for the 2-1-1 service and the general administrative costs of 2-1-1 TBC using the AIRS National 2-1-1 Financial Planning Tool.

This is not a budget. Rather it is a projection of the expenses likely to be incurred in operating a high quality 2-1-1 with the operational assumptions outlined below. While it builds on actual costs of 2-1-1 TBC, we found that, with the possible exception of occupancy costs, those costs were not out of line with 2-1-1s of similar size. It does not take into account any existing contracts or programs funded by restricted grants.

The assumptions in the tool are based on data provided by leading 2-1-1s based on their experience at the time of its development. It has been used to project the costs for local 2-1-1s both within and independent of statewide systems and the costs for complete statewide systems. It has high face validity among local 2-1-1s and 2-1-1 statewide systems throughout the country.

Assumptions

Call Volume. Typically, call volume is expressed as a percentage of the population being served. Nationwide, 2-1-1s generally aim for call volumes at least in the 6-8% range with many moving into the 8-10% range. The AIRS 2-1-1 Financial Planning Tool asks for projected call volume in the third year of full operation of 2-1-1. For 2-1-1 TBC, we used 10% by year three with a 5% annual growth rate after that. This was based on the current actual call rate of just over 8% and assumes steady growth over the next three years as a result of the recession and improved marketing.

Call Duration. The length of the call plus the “close-out” time required to complete the record of the call constitutes the “call duration” and has a direct relationship to the number of staff required. Based on the actual experience of 2-1-1 TBC, we used 4.2 minutes as the average duration.

Call Specialists. The AIRS 2-1-1 Financial Planning Tool spreads calls across the week based on the actual experience of major 2-1-1s nationwide and, using a standard queuing formula, computes the number of call specialists required to answer varying percentages of the calls received. We projected for 85% of calls to be answered. While this is below the desired optimum of 95%, it certainly is in line with most 2-1-1s throughout the country and much higher than many are now able to achieve. We used a wage figure of \$14.00 per hour for call specialists and a fringe benefit rate of 28%. The hourly wage is 21.7% higher than what 2-1-1 TBC currently pays. But it is a more realistic rate at which to be able to recruit and retain quality call specialists. It remains well under the prevailing wage of around \$17 per hour for operators with comparable experience and complexity of calls in commercial call centers in the region.

Because we cannot project the final staffing mix of full-time and part-time, we have assumed that all call specialist staff will receive full fringe benefits. Since it is the practice of 2-1-1 TBC to designate one of the call specialists as a

supervisor, we have provided an additional 10% salary for one of the call specialists.

Resource Specialists. Resource specialists are responsible for building and maintaining the resource database that provides the knowledge base from which referrals are made. We allowed for 1.0 FTE resource specialist for every 1,300 records in the 2-1-1 TBC database at a salary of \$31,000 per year plus benefits.

Other Staffing. We budgeted for the following additional staff:

- Executive director @ \$60,000 per year
- Resource manager @ \$45,000
- Call Center manager @ \$40,000
- Training and Outreach manager @ \$35,000
- Community Relations manager @ \$30,000
- Administrative assistant – 50% at annualized salary of \$23,000

We also budgeted for two contract workers – the equivalent of a half-time fundraising director and of a half-time technical systems manager, both computed on an annualized salary of \$50,000.

In our opinion, this staffing alignment fairly reflects what will be found in 2-1-1s in similar size communities or regions.

Fringe Benefits. We assume that all positions, unless otherwise noted, are full-time and therefore eligible for benefits. We used a rate of 28% of salaries for all positions.

Projections of Operating Costs

We projected the following operating costs for Year One; for most line items we projected a 3% increase in each of Years Three, Four and Five. In our opinion, this projection of operating costs fairly reflects what will be found in 2-1-1s of similar size. The largest single variable is in the cost of occupancy which is the “most local” of the line item projections.

- Contract Services
 - Achieve Management for financial management services \$30,000
 - Half-time fundraising director under contract, \$25,000
 - Half-time technical systems manager, under contract, \$25,000
 - Net Systems management \$11,000
 - Net Systems seat licenses \$12,400
 - Velocity IQ maintenance \$4,440
 - Velocity IQ block time \$4,500
- Training and certification costs of \$2,600
- Telecommunications
 - Telephone \$82,500
 - Web Hosting \$4,150
- Marketing \$33,500

- Administrative costs
 - Occupancy \$110,000
 - Local Travel \$6,200
 - Non-local Travel (state and national conferences and trainings) \$10,000
 - Insurance - \$16,000 per year
 - Audit \$13,900 per year
 - Supplies \$7,200
 - Utilities \$12,900
 - Printing and Copying \$10,000
 - Postage \$3,500
 - Memberships, Dues and Subscriptions \$2,400
 - Volunteer recruitment and recognition \$3,000
 - Contingency \$15,000
-

APPENDIX H: PREFORMATTED TBIN REPORTS

Client Served - An unduplicated count and breakdown of clients the provider has served within a certain time period.

Daily Bed Report - A daily bed list report of which clients stayed in what bed on a specific night.

Entry/Exit Report – A report similar to the HUD Annual Performance Report that allows the user to select one of the other (Standard, PATH, Quick Call, or Basic) Entry/Exits.

Entry/Exit Report - Old version – An alternate format for a report similar to the HUD Annual Performance Report but allows the user to select one of the other (Standard, PATH, Quick Call, or Basic) Entry/Exits.

HUD-40118 APR - Generates the HUD Annual Performance Report for the provider and date range selected. The data for this report comes from HUD-40118 Entry/Exits and HUD-40118 Assessments.

HUD-40118 APR - Old version - An alternate format for the HUD Annual Performance Report with the provider and date range selected. The data for this report comes from HUD-40118 Entry/Exits and HUD-40118 Assessments.

PATH - Generates the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness report for the provider and date range selected.

Outstanding Referrals - Find outstanding (unresolved) referrals that have either been made by a provider or sent to a provider.

Service Transaction - A listing of clients with identified needs, referrals made and services delivered.

Needs Report - A listing of clients with their identified needs.

Call Record Report - A listing of call record information broken down by call, caller, and status types as well as a listing of call record referral information broken down by need type.

ReportWriter – Allows users to develop and save simple reports. Users select the tables, fields, filters, and options to query the ServicePoint database. Queries can be saved for future use in ServicePoint.

APPENDIX I: CALL FLOW ANALYSIS

2-1-1 TAMPA BAY CARES, INC.

