



Legislation Text

File #: 23-2009, **Version:** 1

Chief Administrative Office and Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) recommending the Board:

- 1) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign a letter to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) rescinding El Dorado County's authority for 211 dialing effective December 15, 2023;
- 2) Consider the following regarding Agreement for Services 5792 with Interface Children and Family Services, Inc. (ICFS), for the provision of County 211 information and referral services:
 - a) Make findings that the provision of 211 information and referral services provided (ICFS) are in the public's best interest and that there are specialty skills, qualifications, and equipment not expressly identified in County classifications involved in the performance of the work in accordance with El Dorado County Ordinance Code, Chapter 3.13.030(B);
 - b) Approve and authorize the HHSA Director or Chief Administrative Officer to negotiate and sign an amendment to Agreement 5792 to extend the term by 16 days, for a new term of September 1, 2021, through December 15, 2023, adding up to \$10,000 in compensation, for a new total compensation amount up to \$250,019.32;
- 3) Direct staff to cancel Agreement 3245 with Charity Logic for 211 call logs and resource database, Agreement 3440 with AT&T and Agreement 3496 with Cellco Partnership, doing business as Verizon Wireless, for 211 routing, and Agreement 3076 with web.com for the 211eldorado.org domain name so that services terminate as soon as contractually allowable after December 15, 2023; and
- 4) Direct staff to implement a County resource and department information line by April 2024, and provide other direction on 211 services.

FUNDING: 100% General Fund.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:

On October 10, 2017, HHSA presented an overview of 211 services to the public, after which the Board gave direction to staff to move forward with the 211 information and referral services (Legistar item 17-1010). A Request for Proposal (RFP) was launched to solicit contractors for consideration, and on March 13, 2018, the Board awarded RFP 18-915-028 to the only successful proposer, Interface Children and Family Services (ICFS). HHSA contracted with ICFS on July 31, 2018, under Agreement 2853 for a term that expired on August 31, 2021, with a maximum obligation of \$150,000. On August 31, 2021, the Board approved the Renewal Agreement 5792 with ICFS, for a term of September 1, 2021, through August 31, 2023, with a maximum obligation of \$216,215, for the continuation of services with enhanced access to staffing and new features that provided improved support for the community (Legistar item 21-1183). ICFS provides information and referral services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to 211 callers and those utilizing 2-way-text messaging.

211 information and referral services are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in California. El Dorado County submitted a request to the CPUC in August 2018 that they certify El Dorado County as the 211 information and referral services provider for El Dorado County. Per the CPUC, 211 information and referral services must be provided 24 hours a day and seven days a week and adhere to policies established by the Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS). On February 21, 2019, the

CPUC adopted Resolution T-17645 which granted El Dorado County the authority to use the abbreviated 211 dialing code and certified El Dorado County as the 211 information and referral services provider in El Dorado County. Resolution T-17645 outlines that if El Dorado County wishes to alter its provision of 211 services, it must notify the CPUC's Director of Communications Division and Executive Director at least 30 days before modifying 211 services.

There are four additional contracts that are required to provide 211 services. Agreement 3076 with web.com is for the 211eldorado.org domain name hosting. Agreement 3440 with AT&T and Agreement 3496 with Cellco Partnership, doing business as Verizon Wireless, is for switch controls that direct 211 calls in El Dorado County to ICFS. Agreement 3245 with Charity Logic for 211 call/contact logs and resource database services.

While under contract for both agreements, ICFS received a total of 11,130 calls and 7,355 of those calls were handled (66%). Of this total number, 3,672 were abandoned calls that entered a 211 County queue, but which were not answered because the caller hung up before the phone system was able to send the call to the Call Specialist. For the initial contracting period of July 31, 2018, through August 31, 2021, ICFS handled 6,626 calls. For the secondary contracting period of September 1, 2021, through August 13, 2023, ICFS handled 4,504 calls for a reduction in total calls per agreement term of 32%. Throughout all contracting periods, there was an average of six calls per day handled by ICFS, with an average number of nine calls per day during a disaster period. For example, during the Mosquito Fire, there was a 33% increase in the number of calls received.

On August 9, 2023, with Legistar item 23-1606, the Board directed staff to develop a plan to provide 211 services with County resources. The plan should look to the County to hire a staff person to serve in the function currently held by Interface Children and Family Services to be supported by County Disaster Service Workers during disaster periods. In collaboration with the Chief Administrative Office, staff would determine the appropriate classification and the department in which this position will reside.

Staff from the Chief Administrative Office and HHSA have conducted further research on 211 information and referral services requirements and practices. In order for the County to utilize 211 dialing, the service must be provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week, along with other requirements as outlined in CPUC Resolution T-17645. No funding is provided from the State or Federal government for 211 information and referral services.

There can only be one entity per county that receives 211 calls, and in California, a variety of agency types provide 211 services. 211 services are provided by United Way in 46% of counties, nonprofits other than United Way in 12% of counties, and governmental organizations in 14% of counties. Of the counties that have 211 services, 20% only have 211 calls answered during emergencies. Modoc, Plumas, Sierra, and Yuba counties do not currently offer 211 services. El Dorado County could pursue disaster-only 211 services, but it would still come at a cost to the County. In recent disasters, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been able to operate an information line.

El Dorado County already provides comparable services to that of 211 services. The Community Hubs are a network of local resource centers with navigators who connect children, families, and individuals to support and services. Community Hubs services offer in-person services as well as call, text, or email options. During the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget Hearing, the Board directed that staff

determine a recommended funding source and expansion plan for the Community Hubs to be presented to the Board at or before the April 2024 Budget Direction Presentation (Legistar item 23-1120).

The County currently pays approximately \$142,000 per year for 211 services which is funded by discretionary funding. El Dorado County is experiencing an increase in unfunded State mandates at the same time that discretionary revenue growth is slowing. Due to low call volume and the availability of Community Hubs services, it is recommended that the County no longer utilize the 211 number for these services. In order to discontinue the 211 services, the Board will need to submit a letter to the CPUC's Director of Communications Division and Executive Director at least 30 days before modifying 211 services. Staff have drafted a proposed letter for the CPUC and is requesting that the Board approve the letter and authorize the Board Chair to sign the letter which will terminate 211 services on December 15, 2023.

If 211 services are not provided by the County, a nonprofit or other governmental agency could make a request to be the 211 provider for El Dorado County. It is likely that ICFS or another established provider may request from the CPUC the ability to direct 211 calls made in El Dorado County to their call center to address Statewide contracts the provider holds for things such as tobacco cessation or PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoffs. This would mean that when someone from El Dorado County calls 211, they would hear a message stating that regular 211 services are not provided for El Dorado County. However, they will be directed to press a button to access specific services that are available to them.

The current agreement with ICFS expires on November 29, 2023. Staff are requesting that the Board delegate authority to the HHSA Director or Chief Administrative Officer to negotiate and sign an amendment to Agreement 5792 to extend the term by 16 days, for a new term of September 1, 2021, through December 15, 2023, adding an amount not to exceed \$10,000, for a new total compensation amount up to \$250,019.32. The amendment will be similar to Amendment I to Agreement 5792 that is attached to this item for reference. In addition, staff will need to cancel Agreement 3245 with Charity Logic for 211 call logs and resource database, Agreement 3440 with AT&T and Agreement 3496 with Cellco Partnership, doing business as Verizon Wireless, for 211 routing, and Agreement 3076 with web.com for the 211eldorado.org domain name, so that services terminate as soon as contractually allowable after December 15, 2023.

Staff proposes that the County develop a County services information phone number and use existing staff to answer the calls and route them to the appropriate department. If this line results in a higher call volume than 211 services, additional staff may be needed. Staff are requesting direction to establish the County resource line by April 2024. This will allow staff sufficient time to develop procedures, service metrics, and the infrastructure necessary to provide this service.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board may choose to continue 211 services, provide disaster-only 211 response, or provide other direction.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

- 1) 10/10/17, 17-1010, HHSA 2-1-1 Presentation
- 2) 03/13/18, 18-0341, HHSA 2-1-1 Request for Proposal Award
- 3) 08/31/21, 21-1183, HHSA Agmt 5792 ICFC

4) 08/29/23, 23-1606, Direction to discontinue 211

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

If the Board directs the discontinuation of 211 services through ICFS, it will result in savings of approximately \$96,000 in Fiscal Year 2023-24. Funding for 211 services is included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget and is entirely funded by discretionary General Fund revenue.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

If the Board approves, obtain the Chair's signature on two original letters, and provide one copy to the Chief Administrative Office for submission to the CPUC.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:

Healthy Communities

CONTACT

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