

## Introduction

Information in this chapter demonstrates the need for a comprehensive social services information and referral (2-1-1) system in San Bernardino County to refer individuals and families in need to social service agencies. Residents of San Bernardino County need a wide variety of social services. Unfortunately, not all needs can be met. Even worse, some needs are not met simply because those in need of assistance are not connected with agencies and programs that can help them. A well-implemented, county-wide 2-1-1 system can increase the number of families and individuals who come into contact with agencies that can provide them with needed services. This critical information system would also be able to respond immediately in the case of a community crisis or disaster situation, to field calls and direct callers to services most appropriate for their needs. Although there are currently some programmatic information and referral systems serving specific target populations in various regions of the county, there is no comprehensive, county-wide provider of information and referral for San Bernardino County. The Pomona Valley region is currently served by Info Line Los Angeles, which provides information and referral to all of Los Angeles County, and has been designated the 2-1-1 provider for Los Angeles County.

## Household Needs Assessment Survey Results

### The Need for Information and Referral Services

- 16.5% of respondents indicated that someone in their household had looked for help from a human service agency during the past year. The Morongo Basin survey area had the greatest percentage of respondents (28.1%) whose family had looked to assistance during the past year. The other four study regions had percentages ranging from 14.2% to 21.6%
- 72.7% of respondents who indicated that someone in their household looked for help from a human service agency had children in the household.
- 23.8% of Black families had someone who looked for assistance during the past year. Overall, Whites and Blacks had similar rates of looking for assistance, 16.0% and 16.8%, respectively. No Asian respondents indicated that anyone in their family looked for assistance during the past year.
- By extrapolating survey data based on 2000 census data, it is estimated that over 79,000 households would have at least one person who had need of at least one

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social service referral each year. In reality many households, most with children present, will need multiple referrals over the course of a single year.

- Survey respondents indicated a need for food (4.4%), affordable medical care (29.6%), affordable dental care (34%), transportation (20.8%), and housing (29%).
- Other social services that respondents thought might be needed are: help in case of natural or manmade disasters (46.3%), immigration services (41.6%), and legal services (45.5%).

### Not Everyone Finds Help

- 31.4% of all respondents indicated that their family does not have enough information about social services in their area. The rate of respondents indicating that their family did not have enough information about social services was similar across all survey regions.
- 27.7% of respondents who looked for help indicated that no help was found. The East Valley survey region had the greatest percent of persons not receiving help (36.7%). In every region, at least one-fourth of the persons looking for help did not receive it.
- The most often cited reasons for not receiving help were: the person looking for help was not eligible (45.2%), the person did not like the services that were offered (27.9%), and the program did not have funding to assist the person looking for help (14.8%).
- White persons were the most likely to receive help (78.3%). Blacks and Hispanics had similar success in finding help, 64.3% and 65.3%, respectively.

### Facts about 2-1-1

#### What is 2-1-1?

- 2-1-1 is the nationally designated number for health social services information and referral. It is free to users and works much like the emergency 9-1-1 system – users dial 2-1-1 and someone at a call center offers assistance.
- 2-1-1 services connect persons with organizations that provide for basic needs such as shelter and food, health services, work and childcare support, help for persons with disabilities and also information on volunteer opportunities.
- *The Calling for 2-1-1 Act* is federal bi-partisan legislation sponsored by members of both the house and senate that would provide \$200 million annually to create national 2-1-1 coverage. (UWA, 2003)
- Prior legislation allowed for the development of a 2-1-1 service, but funding was not subsequently provided.
- Nationally, 23% of the nation's population (in 22 states) is currently served by a 2-1-1 information and referral system. ([www.211.org](http://www.211.org))

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- More information about the status of 2-1-1 efforts can be found at [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)

### 2-1-1 in California

- The [California Alliance of Information and Referral Services](#) (CAIRS) formed a 2-1-1 steering committee in late 2000 to help in the development of 2-1-1 systems in California.
- In February 2003 the [California Public Utilities Commission](#) (CPUC) approved an order to implement 2-1-1 dialing in California. The CPUC will provide oversight of the 2-1-1 system throughout California. (Cunningham et al., 2003)
- California is currently in the negotiation stage which is the third and final stage before implementation of a 2-1-1 service. (Cunningham et al., 2003)
- The California 2-1-1 system will operate on a decentralized model with implementation on a county-by-county basis with each call center maintaining its own database of service providers. (Cunningham et al., 2003)
- Call centers must maintain National [Alliance of Information and Referral Service](#) (AIRS) standards, but do not have to be accredited by AIRS. (Cunningham et al., 2003)
- The cost of implementing and maintaining a statewide 2-1-1 system in California or countywide system in San Bernardino County is currently unknown. (Cunningham et al., 2003)
- Eleven California counties currently have plans to implement 2-1-1 systems in 2004. (Cunningham et al., 2003)
- 2-1-1 will build upon existing information and referral services. ([www.cairs.org](http://www.cairs.org))
- [Info Line of Los Angeles](#), the largest information and referral service in the nation, was the first to submit an application to the CPUC and will provide 2-1-1 service for Los Angeles County. (Cunningham et al., 2003)

### 2-1-1 in San Bernardino County

- Researchers from Loma Linda University, reporting for the [Children and Families Commission for San Bernardino](#) County (First 5 San Bernardino), found that for certain services "...there is a lack of awareness on how to access them, which may indicate a need for improvement in advertisement or service delivery."
- The First 5 San Bernardino Key Informant/Focus Groups analysis indicates that all geographic areas of the county need increases in multiple types of social services.
- The First 5 San Bernardino Community Advisory Teams reported that there is a lack of awareness of services available to the public in most areas of San Bernardino County.

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- The First 5 San Bernardino Community Advisory Teams reported that there is a lack of communication and information sharing among service providers in most areas of San Bernardino County.
- Currently San Bernardino County has no county-wide information and referral system such as 2-1-1 available.
- [United Way of America](#) has estimated that it will cost \$1 – \$1.50 per person to implement a 2-1-1 system that meets national standards. That translates into 1.8 – 2.7 millions dollars in San Bernardino County per year, and with a growing population this amount will surely increase.

### Conclusions

- Many residents do not know what services are available to them.
- Many residents do not know who to ask for help when in need.
- Many residents need help with transportation services to reach help once they have been referred.
- Lack of collaboration and information sharing among providers may result in individuals and families not receiving services or unnecessary duplication of services.
- An information clearinghouse for funding providers, service providers and persons in need of help is needed.
- Currently, there is no comprehensive, county-wide provider of information and referral for San Bernardino County.
- Info Line Los Angeles currently provides comprehensive information and referral for all of Los Angeles County, including the Pomona Valley region.
- Although federal legislation has been introduced, it likely will not provide enough funding to support a county-wide 2-1-1 system.

### References

Household Needs Assessment Survey data file. 2003. [Institute of Applied Research and Policy Analysis, California State University, San Bernardino.](#)

United Way of America. (2003). *Talking Points for Local United Ways around 2-1-1 Legislation.*

Cunningham, Carolyn, Erich Pelletier, & Sharon Strover. (2003). "2-1-1 State by State:" A Periodic Report on the National Implementation of Three Digit-Accessed Telephone Information and Referral Services . University of Texas: [Telecommunications and Information Policy Institute.](#)