

# Indiana 211 Partnership, Inc.

## Report to Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission - September 2010

### Access to 2-1-1

The map of “coverage” for 2-1-1 in Indiana does not reflect the true challenge of providing 2-1-1 access in an ever-changing telecommunications environment. The landscape of telecommunications is much broader than landline and wireless services. Consumers attempt to access 2-1-1 from a range of incumbent local exchange carriers, competitive local exchange carriers, VoIP providers, cable/telephone providers, pay telephones and wireless carriers.

Challenges include:

- Companies *provide telecommunications services without making 2-1-1 dialing available* to their customers.
- *Consumers that have subscribed to certain bundled service packages* (telephone, cable and internet) are now *unable to reach 2-1-1 from their telephones*, even though they live in areas where 2-1-1 was formerly available to them through the same company. Companies report that 2-1-1 is not mandated and that they are working on a solution with possible implementation in 2011.

### Routing of 2-1-1 Calls

IN211 continues to observe 2-1-1 calls mis-routed to the wrong IN211 centers.

Reasons for mis-routing include:

- *Companies sometimes do not send the ANI* (automatic number identification) information with the call which is essential for appropriate routing in IN211’s current system.
- In an effort to implement 2-1-1, *some communications providers seek out a 10-digit number for technical programming without going through the IN211 office*. By programming 2-1-1 to reach certain administrative lines at 2-1-1 centers, customers of these companies are not routed over IN211’s telecommunications system which manages the call flow.

### Technical Issues

In prior reports to the IURC, we have discussed other technical issues, which still pose occasional, but not as frequent, problems for consumers accessing 2-1-1.

Examples include:

- *“Phantom calls”* or “ghost calls” where something has triggered a call connection for which IN211 pays the connection and toll charges, and yet no person is on the other end.
- *Mis-routed phone calls* resulting from NPA-NXX routing or telecommunications provider overflow routing.
- An occasional *technical issue associated with the nature of the 2-1-1 dialing code*. For example: an IN211 Center receives a call and is able to hear, but not participate in, another conversation—often made by a residential customer to a telephone number which includes the three digits 2-1-1 somewhere in the number (e.g., 372-1146).
- *Business phone systems* that have not enabled 2-1-1 or have enabled it incorrectly.
- Some *private telephone system* owners continue to use 2-1-1 as an internal extension or maintain a “block” on three-digit dialing.
- A *4-1-1* vendor programmed its system to direct callers to IN211’s network.

### Telecommunications Providers’ Response

Most telecommunications providers are responsive to requests to look into and resolve issues.

The biggest challenges are:

- Identifying the source of the issue.
- Accessing the technical staff for a company.

*Ensuring appropriate access, routing and technical issue resolution remains an administrative burden on IN211 and its local centers.*

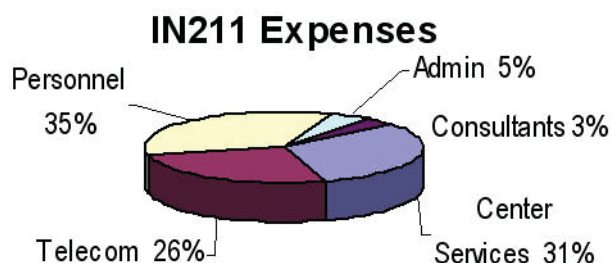
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### 2009 Financial Condition

Below represents the breakdown of expenses (\$205,739) and new revenues (\$181,079) for the IN211 office in 2009. This represents less than one-tenth the total investment in 2-1-1 in Indiana in 2009.

Not unlike other Midwestern states, the economic conditions in 2009 put serious strains on IN211 and its 2-1-1 centers. Philanthropic funding remained flat or was reduced at a time when 2-1-1 calls were increasing in numbers, taking longer and becoming more complex. Demand for services nearly exceeded capacity to meet people's needs.



### 2-1-1 Account at IURC

Under I.C. 8-1-19.5-11, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission has responsibility for administering a "211 services account" established in the state general fund to make 211 services available throughout Indiana. As of September, 2010, the Commission has received no funds in the 2-1-1 services account.

### Recommendations for Policymakers

#### ■ **Requirement that companies enable 2-1-1**

IN211 seeks a policy that would require companies providing telephone service in Indiana to enable 2-1-1 service for their customers as a part of their offering basic telecommunications services.

#### ■ **Location-Based Routing**

Aligned with the goals of the national N11/8XX Essential Services Interoperability Council (NESIC), IN211 believes that location-based routing is essential for appropriate service. IN211 recognizes that implementation of location-based routing will require technical and policy changes in Indiana and nationally.

#### ■ **Issue Resolution**

Resolution of technical issues for ensuring appropriate 2-1-1 access and routing is an administrative burden placed on IN211. For the benefit of all Hoosiers, this should be reduced through preventive measures taken by telecommunications providers and appropriate responses once issues are identified.

#### ■ **Funding for 2-1-1**

Just as 9-1-1 is critical to Indiana's system of public safety preparedness and response, 2-1-1 is critical to the Indiana's human service delivery system. However, unlike 9-1-1, 7-1-1, 5-1-1 and 3-1-1, Indiana's 2-1-1 system does not receive any public funding dedicated to its infrastructure, telecommunications routing, database management or trained staff to answer calls. Sources of public funding need to be developed to ensure statewide ongoing 2-1-1 service for Indiana.



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