



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## AGENDA ITEM

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**DATE:** November 15, 2022

**04**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### **SUBJECT**

**EMERGENCY SERVICES - AUTHORIZE A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT FOR INFOLINE OF SAN DIEGO DOING BUSINESS AS 2-1-1 SAN DIEGO FOR AS NEEDED EMERGENCY ACTIVATION SERVICES (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

### **OVERVIEW**

In 2005, the State of California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) designated INFOLINE of San Diego, doing business as 2-1-1 San Diego, as the comprehensive information and referral services line for San Diego County. Since then, 2-1-1 San Diego has offered reliable, personalized, quick, and free access to County public information. As a nationally recognized call center leader, 2-1-1 San Diego provides 24/7 services in compliance with CPUC and the National Alliance for Information and Referral Systems Professional Information & Referral standards.

If authorized, this request for an as needed Emergency Activation Services contract would leverage the Office of Emergency Services' disaster preparedness, response and recovery services, regional partner support, and 2-1-1 San Diego's comprehensive call center resources. 2-1-1 has historically served as an important partner in public communication during times of crisis, helping the County identify gaps in information needs, rumors and misinformation circulating in the community, and gaps or resource needs in disaster impacted areas. This contract will be activated in the event of a large-scale or rapidly escalating emergency requiring a public call center response. Examples include wildfire, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters when emergency services are overwhelmed, and critical public information must be disseminated quickly and directly.

Activation of this contract will rapidly expand 2-1-1 San Diego call center capacity during an emergency, reduce impacts to 911 dispatch centers, and allow 2-1-1 to serve as the County's lead for a disaster response public call center, recovery support, and referral services. A key component of the contract's cost-effective strategy is the utilization of a large pool of trained Disaster Response Team volunteers and County Disaster Service Workers who will respond during disasters to accept calls from the public, managed by 2-1-1 San Diego.

This contract also ensures access to 2-1-1 San Diego information services in 200 languages, supporting the cultural diversity and needs of San Diego communities.

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Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, Section 2 identifies certain types of procurement for goods and services to be categorically exempt from competitive procurement and utility services is one such type. Today's action authorizes the Department of Purchasing and Contracting to use a categorical exemption for a utility service to continue the Countywide 2-1-1 San Diego toll-free call center, activated as needed, during a rapidly expanding emergency response and recovery.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, authorize the Director, Department Purchasing and Contracting, subject to successful negotiations and a determination of fair and reasonable price, to execute a contract with INFOLINE of San Diego doing business as 2-1-1 San Diego, for an as needed Emergency Activation Services for public outreach services when the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated for rapidly expanding emergency incidents. The contract is proposed for an initial one-year period, with four additional one-year options and an additional six months, if needed, and to amend the contract as needed to reflect changes to program, service requirements, and funding.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is committed to achieving and fostering a Whole Community emergency management system that is fully inclusive of all individuals. Programs developed for emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery phases of emergency management support the health and well-being of our residents, businesses, and visitors, and address the equity needs of our County, before, during, and after disaster strikes.

Individual differences include, but are not limited to, ability, access and functional needs, age, life experience, military/veteran status, race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, marital status, parental status, gender/gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, and religion. Through the integration of community-based organizations, partnerships with cities, special districts, tribes, service providers, government programs, and 2-1-1 San Diego referral services, OES supports and sustains an inclusive and equitable emergency management system.

This contract ensures access to disaster information in 200 languages, supporting the cultural diversity and inclusion needs of San Diego communities through sharing emergency information, aiding those with limited English proficiency, and engaging individuals with limited awareness about, or access to, vital services.

Services to be provided by 2-1-1 San Diego under this contract allow for a rapid response to unforeseen, quickly escalating emergency incidents, such as wildfires, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters.

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**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Maintaining a central point of contact such as 2-1-1 San Diego for County information and support services enhances the ability to reach and aid residents and businesses to restore and sustain health and well-being. Clear, consistent, multi-lingual information speeds up the recovery process for those impacted, lessening the health, environmental, and economic impacts of disasters. Outreach efforts are planned and conducted in a sustainable way, leveraging digital, web, phone, and in-person activities, and lessening our reliance on printed documents.

Sharing information quickly and efficiently is essential in emergencies, such as clarifying what areas are evacuated, the location of emergency shelters, enhanced public understanding of life-saving emergency alert and warning messages, and disaster health and response services. The focus is proactively reaching at-risk, vulnerable, and underserved communities, enhancing equity and inclusion of impacted communities, and helping socio-economic groups historically burdened by wildfires, natural and human-caused hazards.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with today’s recommendation. Staff will return to the Board to appropriate funds, as necessary. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

A robust County 2-1-1 service contract supports the business community and economic viability of our region. Communications and referral support before, during, and after emergencies leverages business community partners, non-profit agencies, and public service providers to aid residents and businesses during incidents such as wildfires, storms, public health crises, and power outages. This contract also supports the County’s Sustainable and Thriving Environments strategic initiative by providing and promoting services that increase the well-being of our residents and increases consumer and business confidence.

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

N/A

**BACKGROUND**

Since 2005, when the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) designated INFOLINE of San Diego (dba as 2-1-1 San Diego) as the comprehensive Information and Referral Services line for San Diego County, 2-1-1 San Diego has provided 24-hour comprehensive Information and Referral Service operating according to the CPUC and the National Alliance for Information and Referral Systems for Professional Information and Referral standards.

As a local nonprofit and designated Public Utility operating 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, 2-1-1 San Diego is the region’s trusted source for access to disaster information, referral, and recovery services. 2-1-1 is recognized, nationally and locally, by the public and service providers

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as the dialing code for information. By simply dialing 2-1-1, free, confidential public information is available to local callers in more than 200 languages. The 2-1-1 call center is supported by an electronic database, website, social media accounts and in-depth resource referrals. 2-1-1 is a “one-stop shop” phone, web, and media link between San Diego County’s three million plus residents and vital emergency response and recovery programs.

San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES) has long identified 2-1-1 San Diego as a regional provider of information and referral services during emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. As a result, OES has an existing, small annual services contract with 2-1-1 San Diego to ensure call center continuity resiliency and training for call center staff and agency resiliency, to ensure preparedness for emergencies. This new As Needed for Emergency Activation Service contract sets forth the terms for paying 211 for emergency response costs as activated for disasters.

The contract authorization request today is a new and separate 2-1-1 contract for OES, for As Needed Emergency Activation Services that builds on the existing County OES preparedness contract with 2-1-1 San Diego. This new contract offers a distinctly different statement of work for emergency activation during rapidly escalating incidents and allows for quick 2-1-1 response with rapidly expanding call center base of workers during a major emergency. This contract also has a separate and distinct body of work apart from the Health and Human Services Agency’s 2-1-1 San Diego contract for long-term social services, information and referral services, and emergency recovery.

**Justification for Categorical Exemption from Competitive Procurement:**

In accordance with the Board of Supervisors’ Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, County OES requests approval for a categorical exemption from competitive procurement for a contract with 2-1-1 San Diego for As Needed Emergency Activation Services.

*Goods or Services, Term, and Estimated Value*

Services to be procured are information and referral services for As Needed Emergency Response Services for up to a five-year period plus an additional six months if needed. 2-1-1 San Diego is the sole provider for these services in San Diego County. The estimated value for these as-needed services is \$500,000-\$2M annually. However, this amount can fluctuate due to unknown factors with no-notice emergency activations.

*Benefits to the County of San Diego*

This contract will be utilized for short-term, enhanced emergency call center and referral services, accelerating call capacity to meet the escalating needs of citizens and businesses during widespread emergency incidents such as wildfires, earthquakes, floods, and human-caused hazards. The ability of residents and businesses to call 2-1-1 to get quick and reliable County information and referral services in a wildfire, for example, helps them access evacuation, emergency shelter, food, water, health, and other support services.

*Qualification for Single Source Exemption*

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Pursuant to Board Policy A-87 2A, Categorical Exemptions from Competitive Procurement Policy, this contract is exempt because 2-1-1 San Diego is the CPUC's only designee for information and referral services in San Diego County. Additionally, this procurement is for 2-1-1 emergency response services where continuity of providers will provide efficiency or critical knowledge, and other providers of the services cannot provide similar efficiencies or critical knowledge, particularly within a short time period during rapidly escalating incidents. This As Needed for Emergency Activation Services contract builds on County OES' general services 2-1-1 contract for emergency response training and preparedness.

*Fair and Reasonable Price*

Fair and reasonable pricing will be determined by market research and pricing information from previous contracts with partner agencies.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's proposed action supports the Sustainability Initiative of the County of San Diego's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan by ensuring the County's emergency response and public information services are ready and capable of helping individuals, families, and the region respond to and recover from natural and human-caused disasters, enhancing community resiliency. These activities also support the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative by supporting safety for all San Diego communities, including regional readiness to respond to a disaster. Authorization of today's proposed action will enhance community safety and communications through just and equitable access to disaster information.

Respectfully submitted,



FOR

HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER  
Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

N/A