

Eden I&R, Inc.

"linking people and resources"

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2-1-1 Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2008

(July 2007 – June 2008)

The first year of 2-1-1 Alameda County has been a huge success! Eden I&R officially launched the 24/7 three-digit phone line, 2-1-1, on July 1, 2007. At first there was a "soft launch", with relatively little publicity, because the agency was awaiting the public sector funding needed to ramp-up the 2-1-1 phone line staff. As the funding was received, new staff was hired and trained, marketing efforts were greatly increased, and the call volume soared. In recognition of 2-1-1's value to the community, Eden I&R was the recipient of two awards (United Way's Community Impact Award for Community Collaboration; Housing Rights, Inc.'s 40th Anniversary recognition of 2-1-1) and multiple proclamations (Alameda County Board of Supervisors, and the cities of Hayward and San Leandro).

During and after the October 2007 Southern California Wildfires 2-1-1 providers throughout the country assisted 2-1-1 centers in San Diego and surrounding counties. Eden I&R deployed two experienced 2-1-1 Resource Specialists to help answer the thousands of daily calls from fire victims. 2-1-1 was advertised by the Southern California media and first responders (fire and police) as the number to call for public information about open transportation routes, shelter locations, fire areas that were open/not open to the public, recovery services like FEMA insurance, etc.

Bill Gore, San Diego's Undersheriff stated, *"The 2-1-1 service was an invaluable resource during the firestorm in that it freed up calls from 9-1-1."* Greg Cox, San Diego County Board of Supervisor's Chairman added, *"2-1-1 has become the centerpiece of our region's communications system, providing critical health and community information to people who need it."*

Additional highlights for these past twelve months include:

- Residents, employees and advocates within all 14 cities utilized 2-1-1's 24/7, multilingual services.
- Eden I&R continued to be the only agency in Alameda County that called shelters at least twice a day to check on bed availabilities. This information was available 24/7 to all 2-1-1 callers, whether the caller was in need of emergency housing or was calling on behalf of others.
- Callers who did not speak English were assisted by on-site Resource Specialists who are fluent in their language (particularly Spanish, Cantonese and/or Vietnamese) or they were assisted by a "real time" interpreter (via TeleInterpreters which provides over 100 languages) who translated between the caller and the Resource Specialist.
- All agency health, housing and human services databases were, and continue to be, enhanced to provide the most comprehensive and accurate data possible. The health and human services database currently has over 1,350 records, and the housing database currently tracks over 62,700 housing units.
- Caller client databases were, and continue to be used to collect the most comprehensive information possible (e.g., size of family; income resources; disability and veteran status; age; etc.) for the following primary purposes: 1) to assist with making appropriate referrals; 2) to aggregate the data for demographic statistical purposes.
- In April 2008, 2-1-1 Resource Specialists worked with the Red Cross to assist the 50 families that were displaced by the West Oakland Adeline Fire. That same month, the agency participated in Operation Building Bridges, the Bay Area Cross Sector Pandemic Functional Exercise. This exercise was in addition to the annual Alameda County disaster drill at the Emergency Operations Center that Eden I&R participates in each fall. In May 2008 the agency signed the Alameda County Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program Cooperative

Agreement that includes 2-1-1 and the Public Health Department participating in mutual trainings, disaster drills and an exchange of information during an emergency.

- AT&T and Eden I&R worked together to reduce the number of Phantom Calls (when no one is on the line) entering the 2-1-1 phone system (in just 7 months the agency had received 15,933 phantom calls on the 2-1-1 phone line). This continues to be a nation-wide technical problem and Eden I&R is spearheading the movement to greatly reduce or eliminate this problem.
- Eden I&R technical staff worked with each of the 14 cities to alert large businesses (like hospitals) and government offices that they have to program 2-1-1 into their phone systems (much the same as 9-1-1 access).
- Every Alameda County cell phone provider was contacted and an individual 2-1-1 contract was negotiated to guarantee equal access for all cell phone users.
- The agency submitted monthly detailed statistical reports to funders that can be used to monitor and evaluate 2-1-1 service delivery. These reports can also be accessed online at www.211alamedacounty.org.

Who 2-1-1 Assisted:

Due to the breadth of marketing efforts and “word of mouth” publicity, Eden I&R Resource Specialists were able to handle **46,106 2-1-1 calls from July 2007 through June 2008**. Individuals and families, as well as their advocates, were assisted with up-to-date health, housing and human services information. Of the unduplicated callers, 22% were disabled, and 32% were female heads of households with minor children. The total referral information distributed throughout the fiscal year included **65,118 human service referrals and 12,022 housing referrals**. The following example 2-1-1 calls from across the county are indicative of the varied needs of 2-1-1 callers:

- A 36 year old veteran from **Newark** called seeking legal assistance for an eviction notice. Caller had lost her job. Caller also had a military service connected disability.
- A **Fremont** woman called seeking assistance for her grandmother who is low-income and in need of major house plumbing repairs.
- A senior from **Castro Valley** called seeking rental assistance.
- An **Emeryville** woman called seeking counseling, anger management and parenting classes for a family member.
- A Spanish speaking man from **Berkeley** called seeking treatment for alcohol abuse.
- A woman from **Pleasanton** called seeking information on low-income housing in the Tri-Valley area.
- A Mandarin speaking woman from **San Leandro** called about getting a drivers license (e.g., DMV location; help with understanding the process; and transportation information).
- A **Livermore** woman with an eleven year old daughter called looking for a domestic violence shelter.
- A Spanish speaking man from **Hayward** called seeking counseling for depression.
- A female **Dublin** senior citizen called to get section 8 information.
- An **Albany** resident called about her 52 year old mentally disabled son who lives in unsanitary conditions and wanted to know who to contact for help and advice.
- An **Alameda** resident called on behalf of her brother who lives in Long Beach. He has a substance abuse problem and she wanted referrals to a residential drug program near her in the Bay Area.
- A single mother of a 5 year old child in **Piedmont** called seeking childcare subsidies. Although she is employed she could not afford child care
- A mother of six children from **Union City**, who had been a victim of domestic violence, called from a domestic violence shelter. She needed to get information about future shelter (transitional housing), food and clothing.
- The **Oakland Fire Department** called for information on how to direct clients who come to their station asking for shelter information.
- A Victim Witness Program staff member in the **Alameda County District Attorney’s** office called seeking shelter for a mother with two sons.
- **Kaiser Hospital** called looking for emergency shelter for a woman and her nine year old daughter.

Marketing Outreach and Publicity

The success of 2-1-1 depends largely upon the public's awareness of this public communication vehicle. Throughout the past twelve months, Eden I&R staff members have participated in a variety of promotional efforts to notify Alameda County residents and employees about 2-1-1. These efforts included:

- A 2-1-1 billboard at the Oakland Coliseum, bordering Interstate-880, that was projected to be seen by 4.4 million people each month. Although the billboard was purchased through a public health grant for just one month, it remained in place for over three months.
- Individual cities assisted in publicizing 2-1-1 to their residents. For example, the City of Livermore included information about 2-1-1 on a monthly water bill.
- Two-page 2-1-1 ads were placed in all Alameda County AT&T Real Yellow Page directories (with Chinese and Spanish translations) as a result of negotiated barter agreements with AT&T.
- Mass mailings with 2-1-1 descriptions and flyers were sent by snail mail and email, to all social service programs listed in Eden I&R's social services database, all libraries, and all school districts' Superintendents.
- Presentations were made to social service collaborations/councils/commissions (e.g., EveryOne Home, Central Labor Council, Alameda County Area Agency on Aging Roundtable, Northern California Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), Children's Hospital, Alameda County Access to Care Collaborative, Fremont's Family Resource Center, Emeryville's Public Safety Committee); fire/police departments (e.g., Alameda County 9-1-1 Communications Managers); City Council meetings (including the Alameda County Conference of Mayors and the Alameda County City Managers meetings); Chambers of Commerce; and other public forums throughout the county.
- 2-1-1 was used to assist in seasonal events like Toys 4 Tots registration for Berkeley as well as providing access to Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) information during tax season.
- Meeting and participating in disaster drills with emergency responders to promote 2-1-1 as a critical public communication vehicle during and after a disaster.
- Meeting with the Hospital Council of Northern California in conjunction with other nonprofit health care providers to discuss using 2-1-1 as a bed reservation system for homeless patients about to be discharged.
- Participating in numerous fairs and events countywide to distribute thousands of 2-1-1 flyers to the public (e.g., Clean Slate Summit for ex-offenders, Newark's Resource Faire for Seniors, Latin American Education Summit, Emergency Survival Expo, ECHO's Senior Financial Health and Community Resource Fair, Project Homeless Connect, Success Train Job and Career Resource Fair, St Rose Hospital Health Fair, Fremont Community Ambassador's for Seniors Program).

Agency Infrastructure Advances:

● Staffing

Throughout the year Eden I&R needed to add several new Resource Specialists to answer the increase in 2-1-1 calls. These additional staff members assisted in reducing call wait times from about one minute during peak periods at the beginning of the fiscal year to just 22 seconds by September 2007. As the call volume continues to increase staff will monitor wait times and add additional 2-1-1 Resource Specialists when necessary. In order to keep all phone line staff abreast of the ever-changing services provided by local agencies and government departments, In-Service Presentations were held on a weekly basis. Example presenters included: Bay Area Women Against Rape, Salvation Army, Hedco House/BACS, SSA CalWORKS and Food Stamps divisions, Lighthouse Community Center, Fremont Family Resource Center, Tri-Cities Elder Coalition, East Bay Community Law Center, Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL), and SISTA: Effective Behavioral Intervention for HIV Prevention for African American Women.

● Health, Housing and Human Services Data Resources

During the past twelve months, **Eden I&R's housing database grew by 7,881 units to 62,771 units of housing** (as of 6/30/08) including subsidized, Below Market Rent, Market Rent, residency hotel rooms,

SROs, and shares. The majority of the 2-1-1 calls continue to be for housing and housing supportive services (e.g., domestic violence shelter beds; residential care facilities; subsidized housing).

During Fiscal Year 2008 Eden I&R's **health and human services database of over 1,350 records** was updated not only for the 2-1-1 callers but also for the printing of the 2008 edition of *The Big Blue Book: The Directory of Human Services for Alameda County*. This database can be accessed, at no charge, via the agency's online websites at www.211alamedacounty.org, www.alamedaco.info, or www.edenir.org.

- **Technology Capacity**

Throughout the year a variety of enhancements were added to the agency's phone system to accommodate the 2-1-1 services including: automated call reporting systems; an additional TTY system; Call Manager software; and an upgraded "PRI" T-1 line to allow advanced features for disaster preparedness including Alternate Call Routing and Enhanced Busy Routing.

Regional 2-1-1 Partnerships:

Eden I&R continued to meet on a monthly basis in partnership with The United Way of the Bay Area and the Contra Costa Crisis Center to create a seamless and coordinated 2-1-1 regional system that includes:

- **Common Client Data:** Bay Area 2-1-1 centers are aggregating information about clients – demographics, needs, location, follow-up (success or other findings), etc. – consistent with statewide data collection by the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS). This data assists in identifying unmet needs throughout the region.
- **Sharing Resource Information Databases:** Sharing databases enables I&R Resource Specialists from a variety of counties to access resource information in other areas to reduce the number of subsequent calls a 2-1-1 caller has to make. Since 2-1-1 programming ensures that calls are routed to the 2-1-1 center serving the county that the call originated in, shared databases enables callers to get the best information possible from local experts outside of their county via shared technology and data. The goal is for 2-1-1 call specialists throughout the Bay Area to have easy access to resource databases when callers have multiple needs that cross county lines.
- **Handling Call Volume Overflow:** Bay Area 2-1-1 centers are continuing to develop a rollover system for calls to be rerouted to another center when call volume gets past a certain level – i.e. assisting with overload especially during unforeseen situations such as a disaster (earthquake, fire, flood, terrorist attack, toxic spill, etc.).
- **Mutual Communication and Outreach:** Joint public information and marketing strategies (and materials) continue to be developed that emphasize and recognize the Bay Area-wide 2-1-1 system (and its local components). This marketing effort helps clarify the difference between 2-1-1 and other N-1-1 numbers to avoid public confusion. Coordinated outreach also ensures that 2-1-1 information is consistent, accurate, and effective.
- **Disaster Response Preparation:** Since 2-1-1 is a public communication tool that is critically needed when disaster strikes, mutual aide agreements are being crafted that will enhance the capacity of Bay Area 2-1-1 centers. These agreements involve making sure that the regional service continues via back-up at alternative sites when necessary, as well as the ability for expanded services immediately following a disaster. This type of mutual assistance was tested and proved to be exceedingly successful during the Southern California Wildfires.
- **Public Policy:** 2-1-1 service providers at the local, regional and statewide level continue to meet to promote a coordinated campaign to support the federal "*The Calling for 2-1-1 Act*" as well as statewide legislation that would help fund 2-1-1 on an ongoing basis.
- **Regional Events:** On 2/11/08, "2-1-1 Day," over one hundred representatives attended a press

conference and breakfast that formally announced and publicized the Bay Area 2-1-1 launch of seven local counties (Alameda, San Francisco, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Solano and Santa Clara/Silicon Valley). This public relations event informed the general public, advocates, elected officials, funders and the media about 2-1-1. Eden I&R experienced a large increase in call volume as a result of this publicity. Additionally, in October 2007 a regional press conference was held that focused on publicizing 2-1-1 to the “ethnic press,” particularly Chinese and Spanish media representatives.

Funding Successes and Challenges:

Throughout the fiscal year, Barbara Bernstein, Eden I&R’s Executive Director, made presentations at City Council meetings in order to get final approval for FY2008 2-1-1 funding from individual cities. By mid-year, although all of the cities and the county had indicated they were leveraging their funding toward 2-1-1, Eden I&R did not start receiving much of its government funding until six to nine months into the fiscal year. This delay in funding was a huge challenge for the agency. It set back the timely hiring and training of new staff, and greatly hampered the purchase of outreach materials. The result was that the annual call volume could have been even higher if the marketing and phone line staff capacities could have been enhanced earlier in the fiscal year.

The private sector continued to be an enthusiastic supporter of 2-1-1. For this, and many other reasons, Eden I&R is extremely grateful to the following funders for their past and/or current support:

The United Way of the Bay Area; Walter & Elise Haas Fund; Pacific Gas and Electric Company; Kaiser Permanente; The San Francisco Foundation; AT&T Real Yellow Pages; Community Technology Foundation; First 5/Every Child Counts; Western Digital Foundation; and Eden Township Healthcare District.

Next Steps:

Throughout FY2009 Eden I&R will focus on:

- Promoting 2-1-1 so that every resident in the county knows about this very critical service. This effort will necessitate the help of the cities and the media to be successful. Therefore Eden I&R staff will work with our many partners throughout the county to broadcast news about 2-1-1 in printed, electronic and verbal messages targeted to individuals and families, and their advocates, in need of health, housing and human services.
- Continuing to request and respond to feedback about 2-1-1 services so that the communication system expands in its breadth as well as its customer services.
- Joining and partnering with the various Chambers of Commerce to further promote 2-1-1 to local businesses and their employees.
- Participating in disaster drills locally, regionally and statewide to provide the public with vital information before, during and after a disaster.
- Continuing the agency’s high profile participation in the California Alliance for Information and Referral Services (CAIRS), especially as Chair of the statewide Public Relations Committee.
- Working with the federal, state and local government to pursue ongoing leveraged funding. For example, in September 2008 Eden I&R, in conjunction with CAIRS, will co-host a statewide 2-1-1 Summit with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to solicit ongoing leveraged funds from key stakeholders. Also, Eden I&R and CAIRS will continue to work with the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) to get 2-1-1 formally included in California’s new emergency disaster plan. This too can result in ongoing leveraged funding.

As always, Eden I&R staff and Board of Directors thank and truly appreciate all of the support and assistance we have received this past year from city, county and private sector officials, staff, and business leaders. We look forward to our continued partnership efforts.