

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Commission, on its own) Application No. C-2732
motion, seeking to assign)
"211" to United Way of the)
Midlands 'First Call For) GRANTED
Help' (FCFH) for Dodge and)
Cass Counties.) Entered: July 23, 2002

BY THE COMMISSION:

On May 3, 2002, the Commission docketed a request by United Way of the Midlands for use of "211" as the dialing code for First Call for Help (FCFH) services in Dodge and Cass Counties. First Call for Help is a comprehensive information and referral service.

The Commission previously assigned "211" to United Way of the Midlands for use in Douglas and Sarpy Counties by order entered February 20, 2002, in Application No. C-2621. In that application, the Commission held a workshop and a hearing to facilitate the potential implementation of a "211" system.

A hearing on the above-captioned matter was held June 5, 2002, at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission Hearing Room, Lincoln, Nebraska.

At the hearing, Ms. Jamesena Grimes Moore testified as follows: United Way is requesting the use of "211" in Dodge and Cass Counties so that their citizens, especially their vulnerable populations, can have easier access to health and human services. The "211" movement has gained momentum nationally. With the addition of Dodge and Cass Counties to the pilot, 38 percent of Nebraska's population will have "211" coverage.

Mr. Lowell Daisley of the Economic Development Commission in Cass County testified as follows: Cass County has a high percentage of elderly persons in remote, agricultural areas. Cass County does not have a hospital or a trauma center and must rely on volunteer squads for transportation to hospitals in adjoining counties. Cass County is expecting continued expansion in population as families migrate from cities such as Lincoln and Omaha.

Captain Abe Tamayo of the Salvation Army in Fremont testified as follows: He is president of the Dodge County Collaborative Team, which is a consortium of human services, law enforcement and education agencies. The Dodge County Collaborative Team views the "211" system as an opportunity to coordinate services and resources within the county and in surrounding areas.

No other parties testified.

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

The Commission finds that use of "211" by United Way of the Midlands should be expanded to Dodge and Cass Counties. As with the original application, "211" calls that can be routed locally in Dodge and Cass Counties should be routed to 402-444-6666, or in the alternative, to 866-813-1731. The contact person for United Way of the Midlands is Jamesena Grimes Moore, who can be reached at 402-522-7930.

Consistent with the original application, it is the Commission's preliminary belief that individual carrier costs for "211" access will not be significant. If, however, a carrier seeks recovery of costs associated with routing "211" calls for expansion of "211" access to Dodge and Cass Counties, the Commission requires that plans for cost recovery be submitted to the Commission for approval.

The Commission will make available suggested language for directory listings and bill inserts. The Commission encourages affected telephone companies to use, at minimum, the information contained in these materials to inform their customers of the availability of "211" service. Affected telephone companies include those that serve Dodge and Cass Counties.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that "211" is hereby, designated for use by United Way of the Midlands First Call for Help for Dodge and Cass Counties.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that October 1, 2002, is the deadline set by the Commission for implementation of "211" routing for Dodge and Cass Counties.

IT IS FINALLY ORDERED that carriers seeking recovery of costs associated with routing "211" calls for Dodge and Cass Counties submit cost recovery plans to the Commission for approval.

MADE AND ENTERED in Lincoln, Nebraska on this 23rd day of July, 2002.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chairman

ATTEST:

Executive Director