

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission,) Application No. C-4392/
on its own motion, seeking) PI-179
comment on the request by the) GRANTED
City of Omaha to be assigned the)
use of "311" in Douglas County,)
for access to non-emergency)
police and government services.) Entered: October 4, 2011

BY THE COMMISSION:

On July 1, 2011, the Commission received a request by the City of Omaha, Nebraska, ("City") for use of "311" as the dialing code for non-emergency city government services in the City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. The request was docketed as Application No. C-4392/PI-179. Notice of the application was published in The Daily Record, Omaha, Nebraska, on July 7, 2011. No protests or comments to the application were received. This application is being processed by modified procedure.

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

The City seeks to implement 311 abbreviated dialing to consolidate access to a number of city telephone lines and hotlines to one three digit number. The current telephone lines allow residents to call for information on city services, leave suggestions, comments, or complaints and make requests in both English and Spanish. All numbers routed to 311 shall be for non-emergency purposes only. One hotline for citizen calls in the City averaged 2,023 calls per month in the first half of 2011.

In its application the City states the benefits of one consolidated number for all non-emergency city governmental services will be improved responsiveness and service to citizens, increased accountability and follow-up by city staff, and a reduction in duplicate calls. Further, the City states a central repository for information will eliminate needless call routing and misdirection of calls to the wrong department, and will leverage the existing City resources, especially staffing, to better manage citizen contacts.

The City plans to hire a consultant to assist in the development and implementation of a 311 Call Center. The City seeks Commission designation of "311" for use by the City as a necessary first step in developing the proposed City 311 Call Center. The City of Omaha anticipates beginning to receive calls routed via "311" to the 311 Call Center some time in the latter part of 2012.

The Commission finds that use of "311" abbreviated dialing by the City of Omaha should only be designated for calls within the legal boundaries of the City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. Any expansion of the use of "311" dialing outside the city limits of Omaha will require approval by the Commission. As telephone service areas do not correspond to the legal boundaries of municipalities, the Commission finds the City shall be prepared to transfer or forward any calls received via "311" from citizens in the larger metropolitan area surrounding Omaha to the appropriate entity.

The City is not yet prepared to initiate "311" routing until the establishment of the 311 Call Center. Therefore, when the City is ready to implement "311" routing for the City of Omaha, it shall notify the Commission in writing and the Commission shall establish in a subsequent order in the above-captioned docket a deadline for "311" routing implementation in the City. The City shall at that time also provide the necessary routing number. The Commission finds that if the City has not notified the Commission of its readiness for implementation of "311" call routing by December 31, 2012, the City shall advise the Commission in writing on the status of the use of "311" in Omaha and its anticipated implementation date. The contact person for the City of Omaha in this matter is Barbara L. Velinsky, Community Director, City of Omaha, Office of the Mayor, who can be reached at 402-444-6274.

Based upon the Commission's review of the application, it is the Commission's preliminary belief that individual carrier costs for "311" access will not be significant. If, however, a carrier seeks recovery of costs associated with routing "311" calls for "311" access to the City of Omaha, the Commission requires that plans for cost recovery be submitted to the Commission for approval.

Further, the Commission, upon the implementation of "311" routing in the City of Omaha, will make available suggested language for directory listings. The public must have easy directory access to "311" and other public interest numbers in order to maximize the benefit of such designations of scarce numbering resources. The Commission continues to strongly urge all carriers to require their directory publishing companies to display all public interest numbers such as 211, 311, 511, 711, 811 and 911 in a common and easily accessible location in the directory such as inside the front cover.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that "311" is hereby designated for use by the City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska for abbreviated dialing access to non-emergency government services in the City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the City of Omaha shall notify the Commission in writing as directed above regarding implementation of "311" in the City of Omaha and subsequently the Commission by further order shall establish a deadline for implementation of "311" and provide routing information necessary for carriers to implement the service.

IT IS FINALLY ORDERED that carriers seeking recovery of costs associated with routing "311" calls for City of Omaha submit cost recovery plans to the Commission for approval.

MADE AND ENTERED in Lincoln, Nebraska, on this 4th day of October, 2011.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chairman

ATTEST:

Executive Director

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NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

D. J. Johnson

Chairman

Dane Boyle

Gerald L. Voss

//s// Frank Landis

//s// Tim Schram

ATTEST:

Michael S. P.

Executive Director