



March 10, 2014

Chairman James M. Allison
Tennessee Regulatory Authority
502 Deaderick Street, 4th floor
Nashville, TN 37243

Chairman Allison:

The 2-1-1 Advisory Council was created by statute on July 1, 2009 and charged with “advising and assisting the authority in establishing statewide standards that will ensure that the citizens of this state are served by an efficient and effective 2-1-1 service.”¹

In keeping with its mission, on December 15, 2011, the 2-1-1 Advisory Council unanimously approved proposed 2-1-1 rules to be recommended to the Tennessee Regulatory Authority for consideration. The 2-1-1 Advisory Council worked diligently to develop comprehensive standards for 2-1-1, and the Council would like to express our gratitude to the TRA Staff for their invaluable assistance in getting the rules finalized. These rules embody the Council’s vision for the standards that should be implemented on a statewide basis to establish an efficient and effective 2-1-1 system in Tennessee.

I have attached a copy of the rules approved by the 2-1-1 Advisory Council and ask that the Authority open a rulemaking docket or take the steps the Authority deems necessary to consider these proposed rules.

If the 2-1-1 Advisory Council can be of any assistance in this process, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Ronald E. Reid

¹ See Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-4-117(b)(2)(A).

WORKING DRAFT OF 2-1-1 RULES
September 1, 2011

Note: Text in *italics* represents the adopted recommendations of the Standards Workgroup

1220- -.01 DEFINITIONS

- (1) Any term used in these rules that has been defined by statute shall have the meaning given the term in the particular statute.
- (2) Any term defined in a chapter of these rules shall have the meaning as therein provided for the purposes of that chapter.
- (3) In addition, for the purpose of these rules generally, the following terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:
- (4) "AIRS" means the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems.
- (5) "AIRS Standards" means Version 6.0 or its successor of the AIRS Standards for Professional Information and Referral and Quality Indicators as published by AIRS.
- (6) "Authority" when used to refer to an agency of the State of Tennessee, means the Tennessee Regulatory Authority.

1220- -.02 ROLE OF 2-1-1 ADVISORY COUNCIL

- (1) The 2-1-1 advisory council is charged with advising and assisting the authority in establishing statewide standards that will ensure that the citizens of this state are served by an efficient and effective 2-1-1 service.
Authority: T.C.A. §65-4-117(b)

1220- -.03 LIMITATIONS ON 2-1-1 SERVICE

- (1) No party shall provide 2-1-1 Service without receiving approval by the Authority.
- (2) The TRA shall approve only one 2-1-1 Service Provider for a geographic service territory. A 2-1-1 Service Provider may serve more than one service territory.

1220- -.04 DUTIES OF 2-1-1 SERVICE PROVIDERS

- (1) A 2-1-1 Service Provider shall provide 2-1-1 Service throughout its service territory.

1220- -.05 REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNATION AS 2-1-1 SERVICE PROVIDER

(1) Any party seeking to provide 2-1-1 Service in Tennessee shall file a petition with the Authority containing the following information:

- (a) The service area to be covered by the 2-1-1 Service Provider.
- (b) Documentation showing the applicant has sufficient financial capability to provide 2-1-1 Service throughout its proposed service area.
- (c) A narrative demonstrating that the applicant has sufficient technical ability to provide 2-1-1 Service. The narrative should include a specific discussion of the telecommunications and information technology infrastructure the applicant will use to provide 2-1-1 Service.
- (d) A demonstration that the applicant has sufficient personnel resources to continuously provide 2-1-1 Service in accordance with AIRS and TRA standards related to operating hours and call answering standards.
- (e) A description of the extent and duration of the applicant's service to the local community.
- (f) A statement indicating that the applicant has the ability and willingness to comply with any applicable Authority rules and policies.
- (g) A narrative describing the planning and budgeting necessary to achieve AIRS Accreditation.
- (h) A narrative describing efforts to comply with TRA Rules 1220- -.06(2) and 1220- -.06(3).
- (i) A description of its complaint resolution process.

1220- -.06 STANDARDS FOR 2-1-1 SERVICE PROVIDERS

(1) AIRS Accreditation

- (a) *A 2-1-1 Service Provider shall submit the initial fee to begin the AIRS accreditation process within six months of the 2-1-1 rules becoming effective.*
- (b) *A 2-1-1 Service Provider that is seeking AIRS accreditation shall provide quarterly reports of its efforts to achieve accreditation to the Authority.*
- (c) A 2-1-1 Service Provider shall notify the Authority when it either achieves AIRS accreditation or has been denied AIRS accreditation.
- (d) Upon knowledge that a 2-1-1 Service Provider has failed to achieve AIRS accreditation, it shall file with the Authority a plan to correct deficiencies and achieve accreditation within 60 days.

(e) A 2-1-1 Service Provider that has achieved AIRS accreditation shall maintain and renew AIRS accreditation as necessary.

(2) Call Handling

(a) Within 12 months of the effective date of these rules, 2-1-1 Service Providers shall have 50% of eligible staff that have been answering I&R calls for 1 year achieve AIRS certification. Eligible staff includes interns and volunteers.

(b) All 2-1-1 Service Providers will track call volume and service level. Call centers must strive toward achieving or exceeding a minimum service level of answering 60 percent of all calls received within 60 seconds. All call centers must demonstrate progress toward achieving or exceeding this minimal service level annually in order to meet this standard.

(3) Other Standards

(a) All 2-1-1 Service Providers will comply with Title VI regulations and provide interpreting services to callers who do not speak English within 6 months of the effective date of these rules.

(b) All 2-1-1 Service Providers will use ServicePoint software to maintain resources, track referrals, and follow up with callers to ensure client satisfaction. ServicePoint software will be used by all 2-1-1 Service Providers for 100% of their incoming calls within 6 months of the effectiveness of these rules. This includes listing all available resources in ServicePoint and entering all calls in CallPoint.

1220- -.07 ABANDONMENT OF 2-1-1 SERVICE

(1) In the event that a 2-1-1 Service Provider can no longer provide 2-1-1 Service in all or part of its Service Area, it shall not stop providing 2-1-1 Service until it has provided the Authority a written notice 30 days prior to stopping service.

(2) The 2-1-1 Service Provider shall make all reasonable attempts to notify affected portions of its service territory that it will no longer provide service.

(3) A 2-1-1 Service Provider that can no longer provide 2-1-1 Service in all or part of its service area shall make all reasonable attempts to transfer its authorization to another 2-1-1 Service Provider.

1220- -.08 TRANSFER OF AND AMENDMENTS TO 2-1-1 SERVICE AREA

(1) A 2-1-1 Service Provider may transfer its authorization to provide 2-1-1 Service to another 2-1-1 Service Provider upon the filing of a joint petition and subsequent approval by the Authority.

(2) A 2-1-1 Service Provider that will acquire all or part of another 2-1-1 Service Provider's service area shall provide the following information:

(a) Documentation showing that it has the financial capability to support the incremental increase in operation cost associated with the acquired service area.

(b) A plan showing how it will adjust staffing levels to meet the service quality standards in TRA Rule 1220- -.06(2) after acquisition of the additional service area.

(3) A 2-1-1 Service Provider may provide service to the service area of another 2-1-1 Service Provider that has abandoned its service territory without prior approval by the TRA. The 2-1-1 Service Provider that has extended its service area shall petition the Authority within 15 days after extending service.

1220- -.09 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

(1) All 2-1-1 Service Provider shall file quarterly reports of call handling data sufficient to demonstrate compliance with TRA Rule 1220- -.06(2).

(2) All 2-1-1 Service Providers shall file an annual report containing the following information:

(a) Annual call handling data sufficient to demonstrate compliance with TRA Rule 1220- -.06(2).

(b) A narrative describing compliance with the call handling standards in TRA Rule 1220- -.06(2). If a 2-1-1 Service Provider does not meet a call handling standard a narrative explaining the cause of non-compliance and a plan to achieve compliance shall be provided.

(c) The status of AIRS Accreditation. If a 2-1-1 Service Provider has not achieved AIRS Accreditation, it shall indicate its progress in attaining accreditation.

(d) Financial statements detailing the previous year's operation. A narrative describing the 2-1-1 Service Provider's access to financial resources to provide service for the next year.

(e) Total number of calls handled.

(f) All metrics required by AIRS for accreditation purposes.

(g) A summary of all complaints received and how the 2-1-1 Service Provider addressed the complaint.

1220- -.10 ENFORCEMENT

(1) Upon its own motion and after hearing, the Authority may remove the authority of a 2-1-1 Service Provider to provide 2-1-1 Service. The Authority may remove a 2-1-1 Service Provider's authorization if:

(a) It is unable to achieve AIRS accreditation within a reasonable period of time.

(b) It is unable to cure the loss of AIRS accreditation within a reasonable period of time.

(c) It is in violation of a TRA rule or order.

(d) It fails to meet call handling standards found in TRA Rule 1220- -.06(2) for a period of twelve months.