

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

May 4, 2018

IN RE:

**PETITION OF NOTIFICATION AND
APPROVAL FOR UNITED WAY OF
METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE TO
CONTRACT WITH HEART OF FLORIDA
UNITED WAY FOR 2-1-1 SERVICES**

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**DOCKET NO.
17-00125**

ORDER GRANTING PETITION FOR CONTRACTING 2-1-1 SERVICES

This matter came before Vice Chairman Robin L. Morrison, Commissioner Kenneth C. Hill and Commissioner Keith Jordan of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (the “Commission” or “TPUC”), the voting panel assigned to this docket, at a regularly scheduled Commission Conference held on March 19, 2018 to consider the *Petition of Notification and Approval for Contracting Services* (“*Petition*”), filed by United Way of Metropolitan Nashville (“United Way” or “Petitioner”). On November 8, 2017, United Way filed a *Petition* seeking approval of a contract, entered into on October 1, 2015, with Heart of Florida United Way (“HOFUW”) to provide 2-1-1 contact center services across 42 counties in Middle Tennessee.

BACKGROUND

On July 31, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) released its *Third Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration* in CC Docket No. 92-105 (“*Third Report and Order*”) wherein it assigned the nationwide abbreviated dialing code 211 for access to community

information and referral services.¹ In so doing, the FCC specifically found in the *Third Report and Order*:

Individuals facing serious threats to life, health, and mental well being have urgent and critical human needs that are not addressed by dialing 911 for emergency assistance or 311 for non-emergency police assistance. . . . We believe that the Information and Referral Petitioners have shown a public need exists for an easy to use, easy to remember N11 code to efficiently bring community information and referral services to those who need them, providing a national safety network for persons to get access readily to assistance. Therefore, we find that the public interest standard has been met.²

In four (4) separate dockets between 2003 and 2010, the Commission approved United Way's requests to operate the 211 abbreviated dialing code in the middle Tennessee counties of Bedford, Benton, Cannon, Cheatham, Chester, Clay, Coffee, Cumberland, Davidson, Decatur, Dekalb, Dickson, Fentress, Franklin, Giles, Hardin, Henry, Hickman, Humphreys, Jackson, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Overton, Perry, Pickett, Putnam, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, White, Williamson and Wilson Counties.³

PETITION

On November 8, 2017, United Way filed its *Petition* for approval of a contract with HOFUW

¹ "Abbreviated dialing codes enable the caller to connect to a location in the network that otherwise would be accessible only via a seven or ten-digit telephone number. The network must be pre-programmed to translate the three-digit code into the appropriate seven or ten-digit telephone number and route the call accordingly. Among abbreviated dialing arrangements, 'N11' codes are three-digit codes of which the first digit can be any digit other than 1 or 0, and the last two digits are both 1." (Quoting from *In the Matter of: The Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements*, CC Docket No. 92-105, (July 31, 2000) (*Third Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration*) (hereinafter *Third Report and Order*).

² *Third Report and Order*, at Paras. 18-19.

³ See *In re: Petition of United Way of Metropolitan Nashville for N11 Allocation*, Docket No. 03-00383, *Order Approving Reallocation of N11 Number (211) from National Telephone Enterprises to United Way of Metropolitan Nashville* (February 23, 2004); *In re: Petition of United Way of Metropolitan Nashville for Allocation of an N11 Number (Abbreviated Dialing Code)*, Docket No. 04-00058, *Order Approving Petition for Allocation of N11 Number (211) to United Way of Metropolitan Nashville* (September 22, 2004); *In re: Amended Petition of United Way of Metropolitan Nashville for Allocation of an N11 Number (Abbreviated Dialing Code)*, Docket No. 06-00048, *Order Approving Amended Petition for Allocation of N11 Number (211) to United Way of Metropolitan Nashville* (January 30, 2007); and *In re: Petition of United Way of Metropolitan Nashville for Allocation of an N11 Number (Abbreviated Dialing Code)*, Docket No. 10-00211, *Order Approving Reallocation of N11 Number (211) to the United Way of Metropolitan Nashville for Provision of Information and Referral Services to Bedford, Coffee, Franklin and Moore Counties* (December 15, 2010).

to provide call center services. United Way's previous contract with Family & Children's Service ended on June 30, 2015 and both parties decided not to enter into another contract. Given that Petitioner is the only 2-1-1 provider in the state of Tennessee that operates 24-hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, Petitioner had to search for 2-1-1 operational partners outside of Tennessee in order to maintain the same level of access currently provided to 2-1-1 callers.

United Way identified HOFUW as the best partner to serve the 42 counties of Middle Tennessee for which Petitioner holds the N11 (211) dialing code. Petitioner retains ownership of the 2-1-1 dialing code in all 42 counties, retains financial responsibility for support of 2-1-1 as well as fundraising and manages the 2-1-1 resource database locally within the agency, using staff hired by Petitioner for that specific purpose.

HOFUW has provided 2-1-1 services in their local community since 2008 and was awarded accreditation by the Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS) that same year and also is accredited by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) as a crisis center, and all staff are trained in both 2-1-1 information and referral provision and crisis de-escalation. HOFUW agreed to enter all call and other contact data directly into Petitioner's database software, which is shared with several other 2-1-1s across Tennessee, to ensure the database is consistent across the state. HOFUW began providing 2-1-1 services on October 1, 2015.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

At the regularly scheduled Commission Conference held on March 19, 2018, the panel considered the *Petition*. The panel found that United Way has demonstrated that it has the necessary managerial, technical, and financial ability to provide quality service and continue operation of the 211 abbreviated dialing code for the middle Tennessee counties of Bedford, Benton, Cannon, Cheatham, Chester, Clay, Coffee, Cumberland, Davidson, Decatur, Dekalb, Dickson, Fentress, Franklin, Giles, Hardin, Henry, Hickman, Humphreys, Jackson, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon,

Marshall, Maury, Moore, Overton, Perry, Pickett, Putnam, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, White, Williamson and Wilson Counties. Further, the transition was seamless to citizens of these counties because those who call 2-1-1 have continued to receive quality information and referral services. The only change was the organization providing the service. The continuation of services in the region retains the quality of 2-1-1 services in Middle Tennessee, thereby fulfilling the public interest. Based on the record, the panel voted unanimously to approve the *Petition* of United Way to partner with HOFUW for the provision of 2-1-1 services across 42 counties in Middle Tennessee.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

The *Petition of Notification and Approval for Contracting 2-1-1 Services* filed by United Way of Metropolitan Nashville for Heart of Florida United Way to provide 2-1-1 health and human services information and referral to the citizens of the counties of Bedford, Benton, Cannon, Cheatham, Chester, Clay, Coffee, Cumberland, Davidson, Decatur, Dekalb, Dickson, Fentress, Franklin, Giles, Hardin, Henry, Hickman, Humphreys, Jackson, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Overton, Perry, Pickett, Putnam, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, White, Williamson and Wilson Counties in Middle Tennessee is granted.

Vice Chairman Robin L. Morrison, Commissioner Kenneth C. Hill and Commissioner Keith Jordan concur.

ATTEST:



Earl R. Taylor, Executive Director