

Exhibit No.:	_____
Issue:	Overview of Application and expected I&R services
Witness:	Cheryl Polk
Sponsoring Party:	United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc.
Case No.:	Case No. TO-2007-0312

UNITED WAY OF GREATER ST. LOUIS, INC.

Case No. TO-2007-0312

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

CHERYL POLK

St. Louis, Missouri
April, 2007

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of the application of)
the United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc.)
for an Order of the Commission) Case No. TO-2007-0312
Granting it Authority as an Information and)
Referral Provider for purposes of)
obtaining 211 service)

AFFIDAVIT OF CHERYL POLK

STATE OF MISSOURI)
) ss.
COUNTY OF St. Louis City)

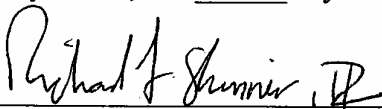
I, Cheryl Polk, of lawful age, and being duly sworn, do hereby depose and state:

1. My name is Cheryl Polk. I am presently Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc.
2. Attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes is my direct testimony.
3. I hereby swear and affirm that my answers contained in the attached testimony to the questions therein propounded are true and correct to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.




Cheryl Polk

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public, this 20th day of April, 2007.



Notary Public



RICHARD L. SKINNER, II
My Commission Expires
February 24, 2010
St. Louis City
Commission #06440022

1 TESTIMONY OF CHERYL POLK

2 I. INTRODUCTION

3 Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS FOR THE RECORD.

4 A. My name is Cheryl Polk. I am the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
5 of the United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc. My business address is 910 North 11th
6 Street St. Louis, MO 63101
7

8 Q. WHAT ARE YOUR DUTIES AS EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CEO OF
9 THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER ST. LOUIS (UWGSL)?

10 A. As Executive Vice President and CEO of UWGSL, I am charged by the Board of
11 Directors with managing facilities, human resources, training and development, legal
12 issues, area wide agreements, organizational and program assessment, strategic planning,
13 community partnerships and regional teams.
14

15 Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?

16 A. I am submitting this testimony in further support of UWGSL's verified application in this
17 case. Although the application supplies much information about UWGSL and its 2-1-1
18 proposal, it is brief on some topics and my testimony is intended to add detail that might
19 assist the Commission.
20

21 Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE MISSION OF UWGSL.

22 A. The mission of UWGSL is to unite people of diverse backgrounds and interests who
23 work together to strengthen health and human services in Missouri and Illinois. It
24 adheres to several core values, including two which I think demonstrate the mission and

1 objectives of UWGSL: UWGSL is the place where people of our community come
2 together to share our responsibility to care for one another. UWGSL is a catalyst for
3 change, creating awareness of needs and celebrating successes in caring for one another
4 and in creating a more compassionate community.

5
6 Q. WHEN WAS UWGSL FOUNDED AND HOW IS IT ORGANIZED AND
7 GOVERNED?

8 A. UWGSL was founded in 1922 as a non-profit corporation. It is a tax exempt organization
9 under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. UWGSL is governed by a 200
10 member Board of Directors. It invests \$56 million a year in agencies and services, and
11 has an annual operating budget of approximately \$6 million.

12
13 II. SERVICES OF 2-1-1
14

15 Q. WHAT IS THE 2-1-1 DIALING CODE?

16 A. Briefly, the 2-1-1 dialing code is a three-digit, easy to remember telephone number that,
17 when available, connects citizens with important community services and volunteer
18 opportunities. As a service, 2-1-1 is a comprehensive information and referral program
19 that responds to callers' non-emergency inquiries 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. 2-1-1
20 is known primarily for connecting people with health and human service providers for
21 every day needs. It, however, also serves as a vital coordinating point and follow-up to
22 organizations that provide first line response during local, regional or national
23 emergencies or disasters. It also centralizes the community's system for recruiting and

1 connecting individuals who wish to volunteer their time or donate goods to non-profit
2 organizations. Finally, a 2-1-1 service generates data important to the community's
3 larger needs assessment and resource allocation decisions.

4
5 Q. IS 2-1-1 AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF CONNECTING SERVICE PROVIDERS AND
6 THOSE WHO NEED SERVICES?

7 A. Yes, definitely. Most people have little idea where to acquire the services they need for
8 themselves and their families. Given the dramatic increase in the number of social service
9 agencies, programs and helplines, people do not know what choice is most appropriate
10 for their needs. Non-profit agencies that are there to help rarely have either the resources
11 to do community-wide outreach to "advertise" their services to potential clients; or to
12 provide connections to other types of services for their clients. In many cases, individuals
13 go without needed services, rather than "navigate the maze" within the human services
14 system.

15
16 Q. WHAT SERVICES ARE OR CAN BE CONNECTED BY USE OF 2-1-1?

17 A. 2-1-1 offers access to a comprehensive range of services, including:

18 > Support for children, youth and families: child care, after school programs, family
19 resource centers, camps and recreational programs; mentoring, tutoring,
20 protective services.

21
22 > Basic human needs: emergency assistance, utility assistance, housing and rent
23 assistance, shelters, food pantries, homeless services.

1

2 > Physical and mental health resources: health clinics, Medicaid and Medicare,
3 Children's Health Insurance Program, medical information lines, crisis
4 intervention services, support groups, counseling, and substance abuse
5 intervention/treatment/rehabilitation.

6

7 > Employment supports: job training, transportation assistance, literacy and adult
8 basic education/English as a Second Language programs.

9

10 > Support for seniors and individuals with disabilities or special needs: adult day
11 care, home health care, Meals on Wheels, respite care, transportation, and
12 homemaker services.

13

14 > Access to volunteer opportunities and avenues for donations of goods and
15 products.

16

17 III. UWGSL APPLICATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

18

19 Q. IN WHICH EXCHANGES IS UWGSL ASKING FOR AUTHORITY TO ACT AS AN
20 INFORMATION AND REFERRAL (I&R) PROVIDER WITH RESPECT TO 2-1-1
21 SERVICE?

22 A. UWGSL is seeking authority to act as the I&R Provider and subscriber to 2-1-1 service in
23 the telephone exchanges located on Exhibit 7 of the application filed in this case. I will

1 note that an amended Exhibit 7 has been filed in this case which clarified the exchanges
2 in which authority was sought. It was discovered that there was some overlap between
3 our application and the authority given the Heart of America United Way (HAUW), the
4 other I&R Provider in the state at this time. UWGSL had no intention of seeking
5 authority where HAUW was already providing service but wants authority in nearly all
6 exchanges not presently within HAUW's authorized area. Amended Exhibit 7 is designed
7 to effect that objective.

8
9 Q. IS UWGSL QUALIFIED TO ACT AS THE PROVIDER OF THE 2-1-1 SERVICE FOR
10 THE TELEPHONE EXCHANGES ON EXHIBIT 7?

11 A. Yes, it is. UWGSL will have access to national organizations that support expansion of
12 2-1-1 including United Way of America (UWA) and the Alliance of Information and
13 Referral Systems (AIRS). UWA and AIRS will provide technical assistance and other
14 support where necessary for UWGSL's 2-1-1 services. UWGSL is also supported in this
15 application by local organizations. The letters of support attached to the application
16 confirm the degree to which UWGSL is endorsed in this initiative.

17
18 UWGSL has qualified leadership in its efforts to establish a 2-1-1 program. It is
19 experienced in the process of obtaining, organizing and providing information on
20 community health and human services through telephone inquiry, printed directories and
21 web sites.

22
23 UWGSL will have the financial systems and processes needed to provide 2-1-1 in the

1 applied for service area. UWGSL invests approximately \$56 million a year in the
2 community through agencies and programs, and has an annual operating budget of
3 approximately \$6 million. UWGSL has a financial staff of 7 full time individuals
4 dedicated to complete and accurate financial management. UWGSL is audited on an
5 annual basis and files a Form 990 with the IRS.

6
7 In addition to its own investment in 2-1-1, UWGSL has obtained the financial support of
8 the Missouri Foundation for Health. Any additional financial support will be obtained
9 from public and private sources which have traditionally contributed to UWGSL's
10 efforts.

11
12 IV. 2-1-1 SERVICE IN MISSOURI
13

14 Q. DESCRIBE THE 2-1-1 SERVICE UWGSL PROPOSES IN THIS PROCEEDING.

15 A. UWGSL 2-1-1 will be a full service, comprehensive information and referral call center
16 accessible by telephone and Internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The
17 2-1-1 call center will be professionally staffed, with trained information and referral
18 specialists either certified, or working towards Alliance of Information and Referral
19 Systems (AIRS) certification. The 2-1-1 service will be provided at no charge to the
20 caller.

21
22 Q. WHERE WILL THE 2-1-1 SERVICE BE LOCATED, AND WHAT WILL BE THE
23 HOURS OF SERVICE?

1 A. UWGSL plans to house the call center at its office at 910 North 11th Street, St. Louis,
2 MO. UWGSL will offer 2-1-1 service from 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. Between the hours of
3 11:30 p.m. and 7:30 a.m., calls will be answered under subcontract by Life Crisis
4 Services, a program of Provident Counseling, Inc., a United Way-funded crisis hotline
5 whose personnel have been cross-trained in information and referral, as well as mental
6 health crisis response. It has sufficient space for the initial call center operation and has
7 space to expand. 211 calls will never be forwarded to an answering service or machine.
8 Calls will wait in queue for the next available call specialist. This queue will be
9 monitored by a call center supervisor at all times to ensure appropriate response time;
10 additional call center agents will be made available during crises or peak periods, or
11 when the average wait time is excessive.

12
13 Q. WHAT FACILITIES WILL UWGSL MAKE AVAILABLE FOR THE 2-1-1 CALL
14 CENTER?

15 A. There will be a twenty-five station call center equipped with a telephone system designed
16 for call center management and computers equipped with software specially designed for
17 information and referral/2-1-1 operations for the purpose of matching callers to
18 appropriate resources based on criteria such as need, zip code, age and eligibility criteria.
19 The software selected is that which is most frequently used where 2-1-1 has been
20 implemented in other states, enhancing the ability to create a national infrastructure for 2-
21 1-1.

22
23 Q. WHAT STANDARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE WILL UWGSL APPLY FOR

1 OPERATION OF THE 2-1-1 CALL CENTER?

2 A. UWGSL will operate United Way 2-1-1 in full accordance with the Standards for
3 Professional Information and Referral developed by the Alliance of Information and
4 Referral Systems (AIRS). AIRS is the professional association for nearly 1000 programs
5 throughout North America that provide information and referral on human services in
6 their communities. The AIRS Standards describe the functions of an I&R service
7 (classification system, resource file, inquirer data collection, analysis and reporting). The
8 U.S Administration on Aging has adopted the basic concepts in the AIRS Standards for
9 I&R for older persons, as has the U.S. military for staff in the Family Services/Support
10 Centers.

11
12 AIRS also provides certification for call center call specialists and resource data
13 specialists; and accreditation for call centers. UWGSL has call specialists with
14 certification on staff.

15
16 Q. HOW WILL CALL SPECIALISTS BE TRAINED?

17 A. Specialists will undergo more than 160 hours of training in a combination of formats
18 including classroom presentations, speakers, role-playing, observation and coaching by
19 experienced specialists, and web-based instruction. Topics include presentations on a
20 wide range of health and social issues, communication skills and crisis assessment.

21
22 Q. WHAT SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH UWGSL 2-1-1?

23 A. The primary intent of 2-1-1 service is to connect people with health and human services,

1 generally defined as basic human needs, physical and mental health resources, work
2 supports, supports for older people and persons with disabilities, and for
3 children/youth/family supports.

4
5 2-1-1 will also fulfill a significant role in providing access to individuals wishing to
6 volunteer their time or donate other goods and services to non-profit agencies. 2-1-1 will
7 also be utilized to provide direction to specialized services such as community health
8 screenings and access to low-income tax sites.

9
10 In times of local, regional or national emergencies, 2-1-1 will be a vital coordinating
11 point and follow-up to organizations that provide the first line response.

12
13 Through client and services data collection and demographic information documented,
14 reported and analyzed, 2-1-1 will provide significant assistance for community planning
15 and resource allocation decisions.

16
17 Q. DOES UWGSL MAINTAIN A DATABASE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL
18 RESOURCES?

19 A. Yes. The United Way has maintained a computerized database of health and human
20 services in the eastern part of the State since 1985. UWGSL has created partnerships in
21 four data regions or “hubs” of the area it intends to service; Columbia, Cape Girardeau,
22 Springfield, and St. Louis. Trained data specialists in each of these hubs will ensure the
23 comprehensiveness of the database. The information is maintained according to AIRS

standards regarding data elements and regular updates. For the purpose of 2-1-1 implementation, UWGSL will be converting its data to a more sophisticated web-based technology designed especially for 2-1-1's and similar operations.

Q. WILL THE DATABASE BE SHARED WITH OTHER INFORMATION AND REFERRAL PROVIDERS?

A. Yes. UWGSL will maintain a website page or address which will contain a searchable version of the database, and will be accessible to any Missouri I&R provider, as well as the general public. This database will be actively updated in compliance with AIRS standards, which requires formal verification of each organization's profile on an annual basis. Food and financial assistance programs for housing or utilities will be updated on a monthly basis. Agencies listed in the data base commit to immediate notification of changes in contact information or programs. Interim changes will be verified, made immediately and reflected in the web site in real time.

Q. DOES UWGSL WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH AGENCIES AND OTHER UNITED WAY ORGANIZATIONS?

A. UWGSL has historically worked collaboratively with local area agencies on aging, centers for independent living, child care resource and referral providers, and emergency responders in its traditional service area. The UWGSL will work collaboratively with local United Ways in Missouri to host informational meetings and develop Memoranda of Understanding with specialized I&R providers across the state. UWGSL has worked and will continue to work collaboratively with HAUW to consistently measure and

1 evaluate 211 outcomes.

2
3 Q. HOW WILL ORGANIZATIONS/PROGRAMS/SERVICES BE CHOSEN FOR
4 INCLUSION OR EXCLUSION IN THE DATABASE?

5 A. UWGSL has developed extensive inclusion/exclusion criteria for the database and those
6 criteria were attached as Exhibit 5 to the application.

7
8 Q. WILL 2-1-1 SERVICE BE AVAILABLE TO INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL
9 NEEDS?

10 A. Yes. Service will be available to TDD users, and to callers for whom English is not the
11 primary language through three-way connection with a translator or translation service.

12
13 Q. HOW WILL UWGSL ADVISE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF 2-1-1 SERVICES?

14 A. UWGSL will publicize the 211 services through a written public awareness, marketing,
15 advertising and education plan to inform the public regarding available services. The
16 plan is extensively described in the application.

17
18 Q. WOULD THE PUBLIC INTEREST BE SERVED IF UWGSL WERE GRANTED
19 AUTHORITY AS AN I&R PROVIDER IN THE EXCHANGES LISTED IN EXHIBIT
20 7?

21 A. Yes, it would. Grant of UWGSL's application would make citizen access to information
22 and referral through 211 virtually statewide. This would further convenience the public
23 in contacting service organizations and would supply easier access through 211 for

1 information during disaster and for access to volunteering/citizen service. UWGSL will
2 supply a valuable public benefit.

3

4 Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR DIRECT TESTIMONY?

5 A. Yes, it does.