

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 Granting It Authority as an)
Information and Referral Provider for Purposes)
of Obtaining 211 Service.)

Case No. TO-2007-0312

ORDER GRANTING AUTHORITY TO SERVE AS AN **INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE PROVIDER**

Issue Date: May 11, 2007

Effective Date: May 21, 2007

Background

On February 23, 2007, the United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc. filed an application with the Missouri Public Service Commission seeking authority to act as an Information and Referral Provider under Commission rule 4 CSR 240-32.200. As described in the rule, the purpose of 211 service is:

[I]ntended to enhance the ability of the public to access services that provide free information and referral to community resources in situation that are not immediately life-endangering, but still represent a serious but less urgent threat to basic human needs and individuals' health and welfare.

As required by the rule, the Commission issued an order directing that notice be sent. Specifically, the Commission directed that its Data Center notify all incumbent local and facilities based alternative local exchange telecommunications companies, all county seats for the requested exchanges and all city government in cities with the requested exchanges that have a population of 5,000 or more persons. Included in the application is

a list of counties proposed to be served. Later, the United Way filed an amended “Proposed List of *Exchanges* to be Served by 2-1-1.”

The rule also requires service upon all human and social services organizations listed in the yellow pages for the exchanges to be served. Rather than require the Commission’s Data Center to undertake this task, the Commission directed the United Way to notify all of those agencies it funds. Upon such notice, the Missouri Independent Telephone Company Group¹, AT&T Missouri, Windstream Missouri, Inc., and CenturyTel of Missouri, LLC, and Spectra Communications Group, LLC, d/b/a CenturyTel, requested and was granted intervention.

On April 25, 2007, the Staff of the Commission filed its memorandum recommending that the Commission grant the requested relief. All parties have responded to Staff’s recommendation and do not oppose the United Way’s applications.

The Application

Under Commission rules 4 CSR 240-32.200(3)(A)(2)–(17), and (3)(B)(1)–(3) an applicant seeking authority to serve as a provider of 211 services must make a number of affirmations in the application. The United Way has satisfied the Commission’s requirements in this regard. With regard to the exchanges to be served, through the amended list of exchanges, it is the United Way’s intention to serve all those portions of Missouri that the Heart of America United Way does not intend to serve. The Heart of America United Way has a pending application before the Commission to provide 211 services.²

¹ Alma Communications Company, d/b/a Alma Telephone Company, Chariton Valley Telephone Corporation, Choctaw Telephone Company, Mid-Missouri Telephone Company (Otelco), and Northeast Missouri Rural Telephone Company.

² Case No. TO-2007-0338.

Staff Memorandum

Staff states that the application meets the requirements of the Commission's 211 rule and should be granted. Staff goes on to explain that the "rule requires an entity applying for 211 accreditation to adhere to standards set forth by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) and to either already be accredited by AIRS or to seek AIRS accreditation." Staff notes that the United Way states that it is seeking such accreditation and expects to be accredited by October 2008. In this regard, Staff recommends that the Commission direct the United Way to state the status of AIRS accreditation in its annual reports, which are already required to be filed subsection (16) of the rule.

Discussion

The Commission has reviewed the United Way's application and Staff's memorandum, which are hereby entered into evidence, and will grant the requested relief. As recommended by Staff, the Commission will also require the United Way to include in its annual report the status of its AIRS accreditation. Consistent with the Commission's 211 rule, the United Way shall also include in its annual report the geographical areas served, call volume, number of abandoned calls, average speed of answering, average call length, information on inquirer needs and barriers to service. The annual report shall cover the period from July 1 through June 30 of the previous year and shall be filed no later than August 1 of each year.

Also consistent with its rule, the Commission points out that the United Way will be responsible for all costs of provisioning service, including nonrecurring and recurring charges incurred by the use of the 211 dialing code. Further, the United Way shall not

charge end users a separate charge specifically for 211 service nor shall the 211 code be used for commercial advertisements or solicitation.

Finally, the Commission notifies the United Way that if the Commission receives a formal complaint that the United Way is in violation of the AIRS criteria, or of a statute, rule, order or tariff applications to the provision of 211 service, or that its continued authorization is not in the public interest, the Commission shall investigate the complaint and take appropriate action, which may include revocation of the United Way's authorization.

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. The United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc.'s application for authorization to serve as a 211 Information and Referral Service Provider is granted.

2. The United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc. shall comply with the statements set forth in the application.

3. The United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc. is granted authorization as a 211 Information and Referral Service Provider for a period of three years.

4. If the United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc. wishes to continue as a provider after the three year period, it shall reapply as required under Commission rule 4 CSR 240-32.200.

5. If after having becoming accredited, the United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc. loses AIRS accreditation, within 45 days of such loss, it shall submit to the Commission for approval a plan to secure such accreditation.

6. The United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc. shall submit to the Commission an annual report documenting information and referral services as described in the body of this order and consistent with Commission rule 4 CSR 240-32.200.

7. This order shall become effective on May 21, 2007.
8. This case may be closed on May 22, 2007.

BY THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colleen M. Dale', written over a horizontal line.

Colleen M. Dale
Secretary

(S E A L)

Kennard L. Jones, Senior Regulatory
Law Judge, by delegation of authority
pursuant to Section 386.240, RSMo 2000.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 11th day of May, 2007.