



Los Angeles County 211 Information and Referral Line

August 3, 2022

NOTE: On Aug. 3, 2022, the Board of Supervisors declined to approve the contract with Deloitte on a vote of 2-2, with one abstention. Given the Board's decision not to award this contract, the Chief Executive Office intends to seek an extension with its current 211 vendor, whose contract expires in December, and then formulate a strategy that best serves the residents of LA County going forward.

BACKGROUND

Sometimes change is hard but necessary. After working with a single contractor for more than 40 years, a reassessment of the County's 211 call line service was overdue. To improve and expand responsiveness for our County residents—who rely on this service for important and sometimes urgent needs—the CEO, in consultation with the Board, hired an outside consultant, whose comprehensive evaluation concluded that the County was using “20th century technology to address 21st century social challenges.” Subsequently, the Chief Executive Office conducted a formal RFP process (released February 11, 2021) based on a new scope of services that reflected the consultant's recommendations as well as input from various focus groups, constituents, County departments/offices and non-County stakeholders.

The selection process was conducted fairly and professionally, and ranked a clear top candidate, Deloitte, in terms of both high-quality and cost-effective service delivery. The current service provider, 211 LA, unsuccessfully appealed the award and has since engaged in some high-profile and frankly misleading tactics to exert political pressure to overturn the selection process. These included programming self-interested messaging onto the 211 call-in line, subjecting callers seeking housing, food or mental health services to partisan messaging attempting to build support for overturning the selection process.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

If approved by the Board of Supervisors at its meeting on August 2, 2022 (tentative), the current vendor will operate the 211 line until a changeover on or before July 1, 2023, to the new system.

The new approach will leverage technological advances to modernize the system, better track outcomes and do a more effective job of quickly



connecting residents to services. The current call center operator was originally contracted to answer 80% of all calls within 60 seconds, but could no longer commit to that level of service and was most recently self-reporting wait times of 5-7 minutes.

In addition to ensuring that those most in need are able to quickly reach a live agent who can provide helpful information and referrals in their language of choice, the new 211 line will empower those who prefer technology by putting LA County services at their fingertips online via computers, tablets and smartphones, as well as through multiple online self-service portals for specific audiences.

The RFP and subsequent contract require the selected vendor to:

- Ensure that all callers who dial 2-1-1 are connected to live agents who answer their questions and refer them to the appropriate services, offering a “warm hand-off” in the case of higher-need services.
- Meet strict customer service expectations, including that 80% percent of all calls be answered within 30 seconds, with financial penalties for falling short.
- Provide additional transparency regarding how contract dollars are spent.
- Commit to enhanced performance measures, several service-level agreements, and real-time reporting of productivity, informed by our current experience, to prevent cost overruns and ensure the selected vendor performs at the optimum level to which they commit in their contract with the County of Los Angeles.

If approved by the Board as the selected contractor, Deloitte plans to hire 56 Community Resource Advisors from Los Angeles County, 12 more than currently employed by 211 LA.

The next step, if the Board approves the contract, will be for the County to formally apply to the California Public Utilities Commission to obtain the authority over the 2-1-1 dialing code, which currently resides with 211 LA.

