

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DT 04-027

UNITED WAYS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Petition for Designation as Lead Implementing Agency for 211 Services

Order *Nisi* Approving Assignment of the 211 Dialing Code

ORDER NO. 24,847

April 14, 2008

In this proceeding, the Commission previously approved the petition of United Ways of New Hampshire (United Ways) and the New Hampshire Coalition of Comprehensive Information and Referral Services (Coalition) for designation as the lead implementing agency for 211 services in New Hampshire, *see* Order No. 24,566 (Dec. 22, 2005), in light of the 2000 decision of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to assigned 211 as a national abbreviated dialing code to be used for access to community information and referral services. *See U.S. Dep't of Transportation*, 15 FCCR 16,753 (Jul. 21, 2000). The Coalition comprised all five of the state's existing comprehensive information and referral (I&R) agencies (Southern NH Services, Inc., Monadnock United Way Helpline, Info Link, Headrest, and N.H. Helpline). The 211 dialing code has yet to be activated for its approved purpose in New Hampshire.

On November 30, 2007, United Ways requested to be substituted as the lead entity and sole user of the 211 dialing code in New Hampshire. According to United Ways, the original members of the Coalition have ceased to meet as a single entity. In effect, United Ways, with the support of the original Coalition members, has become the lead organization in implementing 211.

On December 17, 2007, Staff recommended that the Commission seek comment from intervening parties prior to making a decision regarding United Ways' request. Staff noted that United Ways would need to renegotiate the 211 special contract with Fairpoint Communications, Inc. as successor to the utility franchise previously held by Verizon New England. Staff found the United Ways request to be reasonable and reported no technical impediments to granting it.

The Commission thereafter sought comments and a technical session with interested parties, which took place on March 27, 2008. According to Staff's report of the technical session, United Ways agreed that there will be a single statewide toll free number (866-444-4211) to which 211 calls would be routed on a 24-hour, seven days-per-week basis. Staff noted that an answering machine currently receives those calls on weekends, and between 5:00 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. on weekdays. United Ways further agreed to develop an implementation plan (which will include provisions for cooperative testing by United Ways and telecommunications providers) and will notify carriers of the plan and the proposed cutover date six weeks prior to implementation. The implementation would take place simultaneously throughout the state, with an employee of Heritage United Way serving as the point of contact for telecommunications providers.

Staff reported that under the above conditions, intended to simplify implementation, no party objected to United Ways' designation as lead implementing agency for 211 service. United Ways agreed to notify carriers within six to eight weeks after Commission approval, and 211 is expected to be fully implemented six weeks thereafter. In these circumstances, we find the designation of United Ways as the lead implementing agency for the 211 dialing code to be in the public interest and we hereby approve that designation.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED *NISI*, that subject to the effective date below, the petition of United Ways of New Hampshire to be formally designated as the lead implementing agency for 211 service in New Hampshire is hereby GRANTED; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that United Ways of New Hampshire shall implement all details outlined in Staff's report of March 27, 2008; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the Petitioner shall cause a copy of this Order *Nisi* to be published once in a statewide newspaper of general circulation or of circulation in those portions of the state where operations are conducted, such publication to be no later than April 21, 2008 and to be documented by affidavit filed with this office on or before May 7, 2008; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that all persons interested in responding to this Order *Nisi* be notified that they may submit their comments or file a written request for a hearing which states the reason and basis for a hearing no later than April 25, 2008 for the Commission's consideration; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party interested in responding to such comments or request for hearing shall do so no later than April 30, 2008; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that this Order *Nisi* shall be effective May 7, 2008, unless the Petitioner fails to satisfy the publication obligation set forth above or the Commission provides otherwise in a supplemental order issued prior to the effective date.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this fourteenth day of
April, 2008.

Thomas B. Getz
Chairman

Graham J. Morrison
Commissioner

Clifton C. Below
Commissioner

Attested by:

ChristiAne G. Mason
Assistant Executive Director & Secretary