

## Item 4: Department of Human Services

### 211info COVID-19 Workload

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**Analyst:** Laurie Byerly

**Request:** Establish a \$1,000,000 Other Funds expenditure limitation for funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund received by the Department of Administrative Services and transferred to the Department of Human Services to maintain 211info services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Description:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) and other state agencies contract with 211info to help people find health and social services. These include housing and shelter, utility assistance, food, physical or mental health services, and child care. This nonprofit resource and referral organization is part of the nationwide 211 network; support also comes from local government and other nonprofit partners.

By mid-March 2020, 211info contact volumes were two to three times higher than normal. For example, contacts in March 2019 numbered 9,073 while 211info had 23,219 contacts in March 2020. Contact volume has fluctuated since that high point; while trending generally lower it is still well above historical levels. Through a combination of loaned and temporary staff, 211info has been able to manage this workload to date but these arrangements are not sustainable.

With an additional \$1 million, 211info could continue to meet workload needs and higher service demands through the end of the current calendar year. The organization would use the funding as outlined below; pricing is based on six months of costs from July through December 2020.

- One Statewide Emergency Manager (\$52,219); this position participates in emergency and economic resource planning to help maintain 211info readiness.
- Ten Community Engagement Coordinators (\$322,174); these staff live and work in local communities. They would keep the 211info resource database current, train/engage with local partners, and conduct webinars or other outreach efforts.
- Nineteen Call Center and Resource Specialists (553,019); this team will be trained to handle both contact center and resource database responsibilities. Some positions would be filled with proven temporary staff hired earlier this spring.
- Flexible funding (\$72,588); this would support additional contact center coverage, data reporting, training, supplies, and other COVID-19 driven needs.

The funding request would be covered by CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) monies. CRF funds can only pay for costs incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency during the period from March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020.

**Recommendation:** The Co-Chairs of the Emergency Board recommend approval of establishing a \$1,000,000 Other Funds expenditure limitation for the Department of Human Services for funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund received by the Department of Administrative Services and transferred to DHS to maintain 211info services during the COVID-19 pandemic.