

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1832 (Ransom)

As Amended April 16, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) to convene state emergency planning agencies to establish communication channels between those agencies, including adding 2-1-1 to emergency notification and coordination channels, and to integrate 2-1-1 into the state emergency planning and emergency communication processes.

Major Provisions

- 1) Directs CalOES to support 2-1-1 providers with a variety of activities and, among other things, provide funding, if available, to local 2-1-1 providers and communicate 2-1-1 system needs to the Department of Finance and the Governor for consideration in state budget planning.
- 2) Establishes in the State Treasury the 2-1-1 Fund and dedicates moneys in the fund for the 2-1-1 system and related purposes.

COMMENTS

- 1) *What is 2-1-1?* 2-1-1 is a free telephone number providing access to local community services. The number connects callers to information and services, including referrals to physical and mental health resources; housing, utility, food, and employment assistance; and suicide and crisis interventions. 2-1-1 also provides disaster preparedness, response, and recovery during declared emergencies. However, unlike the 9-1-1 or 9-8-8 system there is no dedicated state funding support for the system, nor a statutory structure for the system should operate.

2-1-1 was first established in the early 2000's following a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) order, which reserved the 2-1-1 dialing code for providing non-emergency community information and referral (I&R) services. The FCC's order recognized and encouraged the states to implement 2-1-1 dialing for access to I&R services. In response and under its own authority, not legislative direction, the CPUC adopted a decision implementing 2-1-1 in California. To provide 2-1-1 service, providers and entities first apply to the CPUC for authority to provide these services. Under the decision, 2-1-1 services are operated by county-based entities that coordinate with local human services agencies and by providers who connect callers to local community services.

- 2) *The 2-1-1 lacks statewide coordination, support and focus.* The 2-1-1 system in California does not have any specific statutes governing its operations, nor any statutorily mandated functions or goals. Across the state the 2-1-1 is not well coordinated with state agencies or funding sources and instead manages its operations through local funding from counties and grants. The lack of a centralized state administration structure for the 2-1-1 system means its availability throughout the state is unequal, with 15 counties currently being unserved by 2-1-1 service.

In the counties where 2-1-1 does operate, the system does make millions of contacts per year and serves a variety of informational functions related to social services, public safety, healthcare, utility assistance, and other support services. In other words, the 2-1-1 system

operates as a catch-all system for public resources, but this also means the system's operations across the state lacks focus. Therefore, it has had limited usefulness to statewide initiatives. For example, in some counties the 2-1-1 system has worked on public information campaigns related to public-safety power shutoffs. In Los Angeles County, the system was used to report hate crimes under funding received from the California Department of Civil Rights. The system was also widely utilized as an emergency response tool during the Los Angeles area wildfires in 2025. In the same year, the 2-1-1 system 14.2% of 2-1-1 calls were abandoned or dropped.

- 3) *2-1-1 as an emergency response tool.* While the 2-1-1 system currently serves many purposes, this bill would formalize the system's operation as a tool for emergency response under the administration of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Given the emergency response lens, that would seem to be an appropriate place to assign the duties. On the other hand, 2-1-1 services go far beyond just emergency response. Given the breadth of 2-1-1 services, this has created a challenge to integrate 2-1-1 into any particular state agency, because it is intended to be a catch-all tool. As a result, focusing the system on one type of purpose inherently created cohesion issues with the other parts of the system.

According to the Author

"211 is a reliable alternative to 911 for Californians facing a crisis, a disaster, or needing access to basic needs. For families across California, 211 is a lifeline, and with the increase in large-scale natural disasters and emergency events, the need for a reliable 211 continues to grow. AB 1832 would ensure 211 has the support and visibility it needs to strengthen this statewide network and enable more people to get help quickly, especially after emergencies. In doing so, 211 service providers can relieve pressure on 911 and emergency response teams, creating a more coordinated and efficient disaster response system."

Arguments in Support

According to 2-1-1 California, this bill would support critical emergency management integration and ensure core operational capacity and infrastructure for the 2-1-1 system in California. AB 1832 addresses urgent vulnerabilities in local 2-1-1 funding that risk 2-1-1 service shutdown or service cuts in over a dozen counties, threatening the state's growing reliance on this essential community service and critical communications infrastructure that Californians can access year-round and during disasters.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, the fiscal impact of this bill is likely to reach the tens of millions of dollars. Convening 2-1-1 providers along with state emergency planning agencies, and providing support to, potentially, each provider will entail substantial resources, with costs likely to reach the millions of dollars (General Fund). Additionally, cost pressure in the millions of dollars (General Fund) to provide funding for the 2-1-1 Fund to pay for the full range of 2-1-1 services and supports.

VOTES

ASM COMMUNICATIONS AND CONVEYANCE: 9-0-0

YES: Boerner, Hoover, Bonta, Caloza, Castillo, Krell, Lowenthal, Rogers, Blanca Rubio

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

VERSION: April 16, 2026

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