
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1832 (Ransom) - 2-1-1 information and referral response system

Version: June 18, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: E.M. 9 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Janelle Miyashiro

Bill Summary: AB 1832 establishes, upon appropriation, the 2-1-1 Fund and requires the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to allocate the funds to support the California 2-1-1 Providers Network (211 California) in expanding its statewide coverage, upgrading disaster readiness, improving data sharing with state agencies, and integrating its communication protocols with other emergency networks.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown ongoing General Fund cost pressures, likely ranging in the tens of millions of dollars, to provide additional funding for 211 system enhancements. For context, the author's office has submitted a budget request for \$20 million in one-time funding; however, it is ultimately unknown at what level an appropriation for the bill might be made. Additionally, while the bill directs OES to allocate this funding, it does not specify whether the office must act as the lead program administrator for statewide 211 coordination or primarily as a pass-through entity tasked solely with distributing funds. If OES is required to assume an active administrative role in leading these system enhancements, it would require substantial additional resources.

To that end, OES estimates ongoing annual costs of up to \$35 million (General Fund) for consulting, vendor contracting, and 13.0 positions. These resources would support developing guidance and technical assistance for 211 entities on emergency operations planning; managing an increased legal and regulatory workload (including contracts, potential litigation, and California Public Records Act requests); and reconfiguring systems to align the 211 and 911 networks. This estimate assumes that California's more than 50 local 211 providers would require ongoing technical assistance, support, and oversight from OES. Notably, the bulk of this \$35 million estimate consists of \$20 million to \$30 million in annual vendor contracting costs to stand up and maintain an independent network infrastructure. According to OES, the 211 network and the 911/988 networks run on the Public Switched Telephone Network and cannot directly interconnect without this specialized infrastructure.

Staff notes that if OES does not assume a significant administrative role, the office would still likely incur additional workload, potentially in the hundreds of thousands to low millions of dollars, to create funding allocation criteria and evaluate reports for future fund distribution.

Background: In 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 211 as the official, toll-free number for health and human services information and referrals. Beyond connecting individuals to essential resources, such as housing, utility, food, employment, and mental health assistance, 211 also plays a critical role in disaster response, offering preparedness and recovery services during emergencies.

As outlined in its 2026–2028 Strategic Plan, 211 California operates as a statewide 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Comprising more than 20 local and regional providers, the network covers over 98% of the state's population.

According to the organization, most local providers deliver comprehensive service navigation and care coordination that extend far beyond a basic referral. These advanced services include:

- Accessing care for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Screening and enrolling residents in health and human services programs
- Recommending caregiver support resources
- Providing Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) safety planning for vulnerable households
- Arranging transportation and trip-planning assistance
- Collaborating with county and community partners to determine broader program eligibility

The demand for these services remains exceptionally high. In 2025 alone, 211 California providers responded to 1.8 million calls and texts, with housing assistance and food programs topping the list of requests.

Proposed Law:

- Establishes, upon appropriation, the 2-1-1 Fund in the State Treasury. Requires OES to allocate moneys from the Fund to 211 California for all of the following purposes:
 - Enhancing critical 2-1-1 system capacity and service quality through core operating support, including all of the following:
 - Staffing to handle 2-1-1 contacts.
 - Training, supervision, and quality assurance.
 - Consistent data collection and reporting.
 - Multilingual and multichannel access through modern technology and infrastructure.
 - Providing equitable access to 2-1-1 dialing and services by closing 2-1-1 coverage gaps and ensuring basic 2-1-1 service access statewide.
 - Publishing a statewide 2-1-1 community needs data dashboard for use by state agencies in monitoring and identifying community and disaster needs and resource gaps, and to inform efficient and responsive resource allocation.

- Strengthening 2-1-1 community resource databases and enable resource data sharing and delivery to state agencies, health systems, and other key partners, and reduce redundancies in resource directory building and updating.
- Developing aligned systems and protocols with 9-1-1 and 9-8-8 to strengthen integration and direct people to the right number for the right resources at the right time.
- Promoting 2-1-1 awareness through public education and outreach opportunities.
- Improving 2-1-1 system readiness, infrastructure, and capacity to respond to disasters and all hazard events, including by doing all of the following:
 - Completing local and statewide 2-1-1 emergency operations plans.
 - Securing needed infrastructure updates, tools, protocols, and training for both local disaster response and statewide mutual aid and network response.
 - Engaging with local counties, cities, community-based organizations, and voluntary organizations active in disaster response planning, regarding the role of the 2-1-1 system and communication protocols.
 - Providing emergency funding for 2-1-1 disaster activation when local or philanthropic funding is not available or not sufficient to match 2-1-1 disaster contact volume.
- Requires 211 California to annually provide a report to OES on the 2-1-1 system status, use of any funds, and future 2-1-1 system funding needs.
- States legislative findings and declarations.

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