

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025-2026 SIMULATION SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO. 43

Introduced by Senator Ochoa Bogh

September 30, 2025

An amendment to AB-3020 regarding social services for disaster relief.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SB 43, as introduced, Ochoa Bogh. Amended Infrastructure Act

AB 3020, as amended, Reyes. 2-1-1 Infrastructure Act.

Existing law vests the Public Utilities Commission with regulatory authority over public utilities, including telephone corporations. Pursuant to authority delegated by the Federal Communications Commission to state regulatory bodies and its existing statutory authority, the Public Utilities Commission has established procedures for implementing 2-1-1 dialing in California to connect people to social services and aid in times of disaster. Existing law, until January 1, 2023, authorized the commission, if it determined that doing so was an appropriate use of funds collected from ratepayers, to expend up to \$~~1,500,000~~ 2,000,000 from the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee Fund to help close 2-1-1 service gaps in counties lacking access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information and referral services, where technically feasible, through available 2-1-1 service. Existing law establishes the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) within the Governor’s office to provide long-range planning and research and to serve as the comprehensive state planning agency.

This bill would, upon appropriation, require the OPR to establish and convene the 2-1-1 Strategic *Advisory Committee*. The bill would require the *committee* to be composed of specified members **to ensure proper help is provided to those in crisis**, including directors of specified state agencies or their designees, representatives of community-based organizations that represent specified vulnerable populations, a member of the public with lived experience in utilizing 2-1-1 services, and city or county officials with knowledge or experience with local 2-1-1 programs and services. The bill would require the committee to, among other things, identify and establish an ongoing funding source for statewide 2-1-1 infrastructure and operations, and recommend policies and priorities to encourage the development of California’s 2-1-1 infrastructure. The bill would require the committee’s meetings to be open to the public.

Vote: 2/3 Appropriation: Yes Fiscal Committee: Yes Local Program: Yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

- (a) In order to create a statewide disaster preparedness, response, and recovery system and to facilitate the reach of local services to vulnerable populations, this act is hereby established to create the 2-1-1 Strategic Advisory Committee to recommend policies and priorities to the Governor, the Legislature, and to appropriate state agencies to encourage the development of California's 2-1-1 infrastructure to promote equity, strengthen wildfire resilience, and promote public health and safety.
- (b) 2-1-1 is a free-to-use information and referral service that connects people in covered areas to health and human services in their community. First established in 2000 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), 2-1-1 service is fully deployed in 41 California counties and partially deployed in 17 rural counties, activated only when a state of emergency has been declared. [This bill aims to expand the access of the service to more rural counties with full deployment.](#)
- (c) Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has regulatory authority over public utilities, including telephone corporations. The FCC, pursuant to its existing authority over the North American Numbering Plan, has established several abbreviated dialing codes, including designating the number 9-1-1 for persons to dial to obtain emergency services, designating the number 3-1-1 for persons to dial for nonemergency police assistance, and designating the number 2-1-1 for persons to dial to obtain information about, and referral to, community social services.
- (d) Pursuant to authority delegated by the FCC to state regulatory bodies and its existing statutory authority, the PUC has established procedures for implementing 2-1-1 dialing in California, including designating qualifying entities to manage 2-1-1 service in the state.
- (e) Every day, thousands of Californians contact 2-1-1 operators who are trained to connect callers to services in their community. 2-1-1 is available to people of all income levels, languages, cultural backgrounds, [and regardless of immigration status](#) and is a critical gateway for federal, state, and localized information and resources to all communities for services such as shelter, food, health care, and support during times of emergency or disaster.
- (f) During times of economic uncertainty as well as disasters, the demand for rapid response resources, complex case management, and coordination increases significantly. In many cases, individuals and families who have not had to use health and social services find themselves struggling to navigate various systems of care. 2-1-1 acts as the community front door in these

cases, ensuring individuals are referred and connected to appropriate local agencies and community organizations.

(g) 2-1-1 service increases the reach of government, nonprofits, and community programs by offering callers information on, and access to, a variety of health and human services, rent and utility assistance, physical and mental health resources, employment opportunities, support for older Americans and persons with disabilities, and support for families with special needs.

(h) 2-1-1 is a hub for disaster-related information and plays a critical role during emergencies and disasters, such as fires, floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, and epidemics, reducing nonemergency call volume on 9-1-1 lines, which frees up emergency responders to address true life-or-death situations, thus effectively leveraging local public safety resources.

(i) In 2022 alone, 2-1-1 providers took on the challenge of obtaining additional resources and were able to make 2,000,000 connections via telephone call and made over 2,100,000 referrals, 710,000 of which were to address housing insecurity and homelessness. 2-1-1 providers across the state demonstrated their capabilities as experienced responders who are able to scale their infrastructure and offer new services quickly, such as addressing rising food insecurity and assisting people for whom online forms presented language, digital literacy, or internet access challenges.

(j) The limited emergency funding established under Senate Bill 1212 (Chapter 841 of the Statutes of 2016) expired on January 1, 2023, which put at risk the access of 17 rural and geographically diverse counties to 2-1-1 services. These counties and their [over 500,000](#) residents are especially vulnerable to natural disasters, such as wildfires, and thus have a greater need for expanded 2-1-1 services.

(k) The Legislature further finds and declares that every county in California needs full-time access to 2-1-1 information and referral services that use curated local resource information and that state funding is necessary to foster greater capacity, coordination, and alignment among all 2-1-1 providers in order to create a statewide health and human services navigation network, to improve its disaster preparedness, response, and recovery system, and to facilitate the reach of local services to vulnerable populations.

(l) It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this act, to establish a statewide *advisory committee* to support the equitable access to and coordination of 2-1-1 services statewide.

SEC. 2. Chapter 16.6 (commencing with Section 18998.6) is added to Part 6 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

#### **CHAPTER 16.6. 2-1-1 Infrastructure Act**

**18998.6.** This chapter shall be known, and may be cited, as the 2-1-1 Infrastructure Act.

**18998.7.** For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:

- (a) “2-1-1” means the three-digit telephone number designated by the Public Utilities Commission for the purpose of connecting individuals to local resources.
- (b) Committee means the 2-1-1 Strategic-Advisory Committee established pursuant to Section 18998.8.
- (c) “Office” means the Office of Planning and Research.

**18998.8.** The office shall establish and convene the 2-1-1 Strategic Advisory Committee under the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications. To the extent possible, committee members will reflect California’s diverse geography and populations. The committee shall be composed of all of the following members:

- (a) The Director of State Planning and Research, or the director’s designee.
- (b) The Director of Health Care Services, or the director’s designee.
- (c) The Director of Social Services, or the director’s designee.
- (d) The Director of Housing and Community Development, or the director’s designee.
- (e) The Director of Emergency Services, or the director’s designee.
- (f) The executive director of the California Workforce Development Board, or the director’s designee.
- (g) The Director of Civil Rights, or the director’s designee.
- (h) The Director of the California Department of Aging, or the director’s designee.
- (i) A representative of the statewide 2-1-1 coordinating entity identified by the Public Utilities Commission in Decision 11-09-016.
- (j) At least three representatives of community-based organizations that represent vulnerable populations, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
  - (1) Seniors.
  - (2) Farmworkers.
  - (3) Immigrants.

(4) Justice-involved communities.

(5) Children and youth.

(6) Individuals with disabilities.

(k) A member of the public with lived experience in utilizing 2-1-1 services.

(l) At least two city or county officials with knowledge or experience with local 2-1-1 programs and services.

**18998.9.** The-committee shall have all of the following duties:

(a) Identify and review the activities and funding programs of member state agencies that may be coordinated with to improve access to state services and programs and maximize 2-1-1 infrastructure, especially as it relates to populations experiencing housing insecurity.

(b) Identify and establish an ongoing funding source for statewide 2-1-1 infrastructure and operations.

(c) Recommend policies and priorities to the Governor, the Legislature, and to appropriate state agencies to encourage the development of California's 2-1-1 infrastructure to promote equity, strengthen wildfire resilience, and increase public health and safety.

(d) Establish a 2-1-1 portal to showcase emerging data trends.

(e) Encourage collaboration between the 2-1-1, 9-1-1, and 9-8-8 systems.

(f) Serve as the coordinating body for any federal 2-1-1 investments or initiatives.

**18998.10.** The-committee's meetings shall be open to the public and subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

**18998.11.** This chapter shall be implemented only to the extent that funds are appropriated for this purpose in the annual Budget Act or another statute, or are made available for this purpose from federal sources.