

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to governmental services telephone  
3 systems; creating s. 365.180, F.S.; providing legislative  
4 findings; defining the term "coordinated 311 nonemergency  
5 and other governmental services telephone system";  
6 authorizing the Department of Community Affairs to accept  
7 and administer funds to provide grants for certain  
8 governmental services telephone systems; authorizing  
9 counties and municipalities to apply for grants; requiring  
10 a county or municipality to provide matching funds;  
11 providing procedures for approval of grant awards;  
12 requiring approval by the Secretary of Community Affairs  
13 or appropriation by the Legislature; providing for certain  
14 limitations on grant funds amounts; requiring a report to  
15 the Governor and the Legislature detailing expenditures;  
16 authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing an  
17 appropriation; providing an effective date.

18  
19 WHEREAS, in 1997, the Federal Communications Commission  
20 authorized the use of 311 as a telephone number for

21 "nonemergency police and other governmental services," and

22 WHEREAS, in 2001, the Legislature authorized a 311 pilot  
23 project in chapter 2001-133, Laws of Florida, to improve the  
24 overall efficiency of 911 telephone systems and reduce 911  
25 emergency response times, and

26 WHEREAS, several counties and municipalities in Florida  
27 have thus far implemented 311 telephone systems that provide a  
28 single access point to nonemergency and other governmental

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29 services, and

30 WHEREAS, 311 alleviates congestion on 911 circuits and  
 31 helps make 911 emergency systems more efficient by diverting  
 32 nonemergency calls that could impede emergency responses, and

33 WHEREAS, 311 has proven to be critical during hurricanes  
 34 and other emergency situations and disasters by diverting many  
 35 calls from 911 emergency systems and keeping 911 open and  
 36 available for truly life-threatening situations, and

37 WHEREAS, 311 provides important information not only to  
 38 citizens, but to government by providing data about the source  
 39 of and the reasons for calls, and

40 WHEREAS, 311's greatest value is its ability to coordinate  
 41 the efforts of municipalities, counties, and other state and  
 42 local jurisdictions to provide an integrated, seamless single  
 43 source for nonemergency and other governmental services, and

44 WHEREAS, 311 systems could provide mutual aid to  
 45 neighboring areas by serving as backup call centers under  
 46 circumstances where disaster may disable local city or county  
 47 communication networks, and

48 WHEREAS, 911 was established to provide "rapid direct  
 49 access to public safety agencies," and the Florida 211 Network  
 50 was established to provide "coordination for information and  
 51 referral for health and human services," and

52 WHEREAS, 311 serves as an effective component of unified  
 53 governmental services which complements but does not duplicate  
 54 the services provided by 911 and 211, NOW, THEREFORE,

55

56 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

57  
58 Section 1. Section 365.180, Florida Statutes, is created  
59 to read:

60 365.180 Coordinated 311 nonemergency and other  
61 governmental services telephone system grant program; grants for  
62 operation; funding; approval; allocation.--

63 (1) The Legislature finds that a 311 telephone system for  
64 nonemergency and other governmental services may reduce the  
65 volume of nonemergency calls to 911 public safety answering  
66 points, particularly in times of a disaster. The Legislature  
67 further finds that 311 systems improve public access to  
68 government by providing seamless access to various governmental  
69 entities, enhancing coordination among state and various local  
70 jurisdictions, and improving service delivery.

71 (2) As used in this section, the term "coordinated 311  
72 nonemergency and other governmental services telephone system"  
73 means a 311 system that is multijurisdictional in nature such  
74 that it is designed to provide seamless access to nonemergency  
75 and other governmental services.

76 (3) The Department of Community Affairs may accept and  
77 administer funds that are appropriated to it for providing  
78 grants to counties and municipalities for the operation of a  
79 coordinated 311 nonemergency and other governmental services  
80 telephone system.

81 (4) A county or municipality may apply for a grant of  
82 state funds to support the implementation and operation of a  
83 coordinated 311 nonemergency and other governmental services  
84 telephone system.

85 (5) A state grant awarded under this section must be  
86 matched by a contribution from the county or municipality in an  
87 amount equal to \$1 for each \$1 awarded under this section.

88 (6) The Department of Community Affairs shall review each  
89 application submitted under subsection (4) for a grant to  
90 implement a coordinated 311 nonemergency and other governmental  
91 services telephone system and, annually, shall submit a list of  
92 all applications received and a list of the systems that are  
93 recommended for the award of grants, arranged in order of  
94 priority, to the secretary of the Department of Community  
95 Affairs for the secretary's approval. The Department of  
96 Community Affairs may allocate grants only for coordinated 311  
97 nonemergency and other governmental services telephone systems  
98 that are approved by the secretary or for which funds are  
99 appropriated by the Legislature.

100 (7) The annual amount of any one grant made under this  
101 section may not exceed the lesser of \$2.5 million or 50 percent  
102 of the total annual cost of operating the coordinated 311  
103 nonemergency and other governmental services telephone system.  
104 The total amount of the grants awarded to a coordinated 311  
105 nonemergency and other governmental services telephone system in  
106 a 5-year period may not exceed \$10 million.

107 (8) No later than December 15, 2007, each 311 system that  
108 receives funding under this section shall submit a report to the  
109 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
110 House of Representatives detailing expenditure of the funds  
111 appropriated to it for the purposes of this section.

112 (9) The Department of Community Affairs may adopt rules

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113 prescribing the criteria to be applied to applications for  
114 grants and rules providing for the administration of this  
115 section.

116 Section 2. For fiscal year 2006-2007, the sum of \$10  
117 million is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the  
118 Department of Community Affairs to fund the coordinated 311  
119 nonemergency and other governmental services telephone system  
120 grant program.

121 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.