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HB 661, Engrossed 1

2006 Legislature

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
17 application evaluation criteria; providing grants may be
18 awarded as appropriated or as made available from private
19 sources; providing an effective date.

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

23 "nonemergency police and other governmental services," and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

57
 58 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

59
 60 Section 1. Section 365.180, Florida Statutes, is created
 61 to read:

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

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

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

78 (3) The Department of Community Affairs may accept and
 79 administer funds that are appropriated to it for providing
 80 grants to counties and municipalities for the operation of a

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81 coordinated 311 nonemergency and other governmental services
 82 telephone system.

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

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

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

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

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107 nonemergency and other governmental services telephone system in
108 a 5-year period may not exceed \$10 million.

109 (8) Each 311 system receiving state matching funds shall
110 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
111 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 15,
112 2007, detailing how the funds appropriated for the 311 system
113 were spent.

114 (9) The Department of Community Affairs may adopt rules
115 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 prescribing the criteria
116 to be applied to applications for grants and rules providing for
117 the administration of this section. The application evaluation
118 criteria shall, at a minimum, include the following:

119 (a) The population of the applicant county or
120 municipality.

121 (b) Prior establishment of a 311 number by the applicant
122 county or municipality.

123 (c) The interoperability between the proposed 311 system
124 and the existing 911 public safety answering points within the
125 applicant county or municipality.

126 (d) The commitment of funds by the applicant county or
127 municipality beyond the minimum match contribution.

128 (e) The long-range plan for sustainability of the proposed
129 311 system submitted by the applicant county or municipality.

130 Section 2. Grants for the coordinated 311 nonemergency and
131 other governmental services telephone system grant program
132 within the Department of Community Affairs may be awarded to the

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133 | extent funds are appropriated in law or made available from
134 | private sources.

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