



BC 211 Initiative

United Way of the Lower Mainland
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Phone (604) 268 1311
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December, 2005

Dear Sir/Madam:

RE: BC 211 Final Report and Business Plan: Providing 211 to all British Columbia

On behalf of the BC 211 Steering Committee, I am pleased to publicly release the final report from IBM Business Consulting Services: **BC 211 Final Report and Business Plan: Providing 211 to all British Columbia**. This report was unanimously accepted by the Steering Committee on November 15, 2005.

The BC 211 Initiative was initiated through a partnership between the United Ways of BC, Information Services Vancouver, BC Alliance of Information and Referral Services and the BC Crisis Lines Association. The goal for BC 211 is to connect people to the services that they need in order that they can live fuller, healthier lives. This vision can be achieved by developing a province wide interconnected telephone and web system that will provide telephone access to trained 211 specialists and web access to the 211 database of services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We hope that the report findings and recommendations will focus efforts and discussion among those of us working to implement a provincial 211 system in BC.

The BC 211 Steering Committee will continue to provide leadership to move this initiative forward until such time as Implementation Phase partners have been assembled and a governance structure instituted that is appropriate for the work to be conducted. In the interim we will endeavor to keep you fully informed on our collective progress. Please see the initiative website at www.bc211.vcn.bc.ca for further information.

I would like to thank my fellow volunteer members of the Steering Committee who not only represented the multiple and diverse stakeholder groups across the province with great commitment and objectivity but also for their leadership on behalf of all British Columbians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Webster'.

John Webster
Chair, BC211 Steering Committee

BC 211



Final Report and Business Plan
Providing 211 to all British Columbia

Executive Summary



Prepared by IBM Business Consulting Services

November 2005

Information
Services
Vancouver



Executive Summary

What is 211

Information and Referral (I&R) provides people in need information about human services and resources available in their own communities. There are hundreds of social and community service agencies across British Columbia who are currently providing some degree of I&R in their communities. Some of these agencies provide specialized I&R (drug helpline, seniors services, childcare resources) and some provide I&R in conjunction with their primary agency services (community resources, crisis line, youth services). Few are providing comprehensive I&R services and no single comprehensive database of human services information currently exists. This is the opportunity for 211.

211 is an easy to remember telephone number that will become the single access point for citizens to connect to the services that they need. Establishing 211 dialing across the province and developing a single, comprehensive database of human services information that can be utilized by 211 Specialists to make referrals will provide significant benefits to BC citizens and the province.

The BC 211 Initiative

The BC 211 Initiative has been established through a partnership between the United Ways of BC, Information Services Vancouver, BC Alliance of Information and Referral Services and the BC Crisis Lines Association. IBM Business Consulting Services has been engaged to assist in the development of this Business Plan for BC 211.

The goal for BC 211 is to connect people to the services that they need in order that they can live fuller, healthier lives. This vision can be achieved by developing a province wide interconnected telephone and web system that will provide telephone access to trained 211 specialists and web access to the 211 database of services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

This telephone and web system would be enabled by a comprehensive database of resources which include, federal, provincial, and local government agencies, community-based social service and charitable organization, private programs and emergency response resources. The 211 system will also compile caller data, providing critical information for community services planning, such as data on social needs, trends and duplication or gaps in services.

The BC 211 Initiative has been receiving wide spread support across all community stakeholders and levels of government. In Premier Gordon Campbell's recent address to the Union of BC Municipalities he said, "I can tell you today that the province (of BC) is going to strive to become the first province in Canada to put in place a province-wide 211 service...". The BC 211 Initiative is currently collaborating with the Ministry of Labour and Citizen Services to make this a reality.

Benefits of 211

The benefits of 211 are far reaching – there are benefits to the citizen, to the service agencies, to governments, policy makers and community planners. Cost benefit analysis studies have been conducted in both Canada and the US. Both indicate positive returns with benefits outweighing costs by a factor of 2.4 to 1 in Canada.¹

There is quantitative evidence demonstrating that the quality of service that citizens receive has a direct impact on the level of confidence they have in their democratic institutions. Fifty-six percent say that service quality shapes their view of government to a large extent, while only 17 percent say that it does not². This research indicates that there is significant value to government in improving the accessibility of services for the citizen. 211 can help.

Operations Strategy

The value-add of I&R services for those in need is the *human* connection between the caller and a trained 211 specialist. By asking follow-up questions, the specialists are able to help callers define specific needs and refer them directly to the most appropriate service provider.

The recommended BC 211 operations strategy is to build on the capacity and capability of existing I&R expertise across the province today. Information Services Vancouver (ISV) has been providing I&R services for 50 years in the Lower Mainland including specialized helpline services to people across the province. ISV is a prime candidate to become the primary Regional 211 Call Centre, providing leadership and shared services to the other 211 call centres in the province. A secondary call centre is envisioned in the interior of BC, and possibly one or two remote call centres in either northern BC and/or on Vancouver Island. The next phase of the project should identify and establish formal partnerships with all of the agencies who will become 211 call centres for their regions. To balance cost efficiencies with service excellence the consulting team have identified the requirements for a minimum of two and a maximum of four 211 call centres servicing the province.

All 211 call centres must meet the InformCanada *Minimum Standards for Operating a 211 Service* as well as the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems *Standards for Professional I&R*. (See Appendix B & C respectively.)

¹ Deloitte & Touche, Canada 211 Business Case, July 2005

² Citizens First 3 Summary Report, January 2003, Institute for Citizen Centered Services

Supporting Technology

A key component in the 211 system is an integrated telephone system that will support the entire province and link call centres together for emergency back-up and shared after-hours services while remaining as cost efficient as possible. If one call centre is out of service, another call centre can easily pick up those calls.

A single, integrated, province wide database of health and human services information is planned to be operational within the three year implementation timeline. This will enable each call centre to provide services to any citizen across the province and reduce overlaps and gaps in data. The database will facilitate 24/7 coverage and ensure redundancy in cases of a natural disaster or emergency. Data Partners will be identified as part of the next phase that will play a critical role in providing and maintaining community specific data in their regions.

The 211 system will also support a website allowing the Community Resource database to be available as a self serve resource to citizens and social service professionals 24/7. It is envisioned that over time, the website will evolve to become the commonly used portal for human services, providing pertinent, timely information and links to other web sites and service agencies.

Implementation Strategy

Four phases were identified for the development and implementation of BC 211, the first two of which have been completed:

- Phase 1 - Project Initiation Phase / October 2004 – May 2005
- Phase 2 - Collaboration and Business Plan Development Phase / June 2005 – November 2005

Phase 3 and 4 are scheduled to commence in January 2006 and are contingent on the availability of new funding:

- Phase 3 - Partnership Development & Implementation Planning Phase / January 2006 – April 2006
- Phase 4 - Implementation Phase / April 2006 – July 2008

Phase 3 will see the further development of activities relating to confirmation and contracting of 211 partners in regards to the specific agencies that will become a 211 Regional or Remote Call Centre, the specific agencies or organizations that will become 211 Data Partners, technology and call centre vendors, telecommunication providers, and provincial and municipal government involvement, partnering or funding.

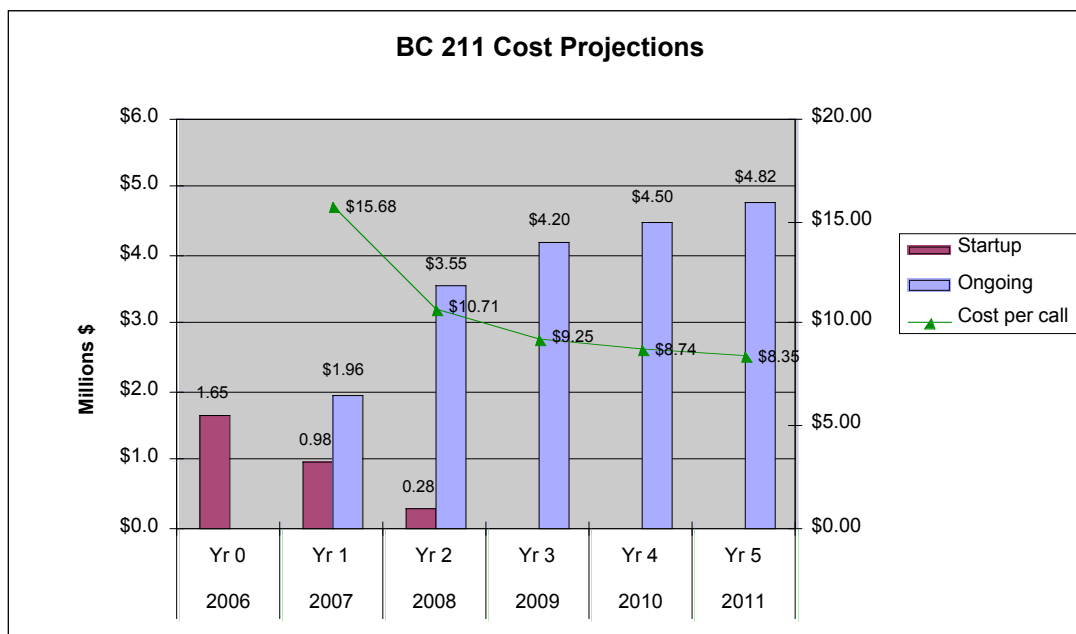
Detailed implementation planning will also take place during Phase 3 and will provide the confirmation of the schedule of activities for Phase 4 Implementation. The Phase 4 activities include data gathering and database build, call centre site and staff preparation, a three month pilot of the service and the phased roll out of service availability across the province.

Financial Summary

To develop financial requirements for a province wide 211 system, the consulting team developed financial projections for ongoing operations of two 211 call centres and a phased implementation rollout of the service across the province over a three year period.

One time startup funding of \$2,910,000 spread over three years is required in order to implement the proposed service. Operating costs will be in the range of four to five million dollars per year once the system is fully implemented.

Ongoing costs will depend entirely on the success of the system and the extent to which the public knows about it and uses it.



	2006 Yr 0	2007 Yr 1	2008 Yr 2	2009 Yr 3	2010 Yr 4	2011 Yr 5	Total
Startup	\$ 1,648,000	\$ 980,000	\$ 282,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,910,000
Ongoing		\$ 1,963,934	\$ 3,552,894	\$ 4,200,241	\$ 4,501,003	\$ 4,815,547	\$ 19,033,619
Total Yearly Costs	\$ 1,648,000	\$ 2,943,934	\$ 3,834,894	\$ 4,200,241	\$ 4,501,003	\$ 4,815,547	\$ 21,943,619
Net Present Value	\$ 1,648,000	\$ 2,850,539	\$ 3,595,432	\$ 3,813,036	\$ 3,956,442	\$ 4,098,642	\$ 19,962,091
Cost per call		\$15.68	\$10.71	\$9.25	\$8.74	\$8.35	
Cost per capita	N/A	\$0.68	\$0.89	\$0.96	\$1.02	\$1.09	

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