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# VIA LINK 211 Pilot Marketing Program



**May 5, 2003**

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## **The Team**



### **Leadership Slidell Project Group**

Chuck Dammon - Dammon Engineering  
Don O'Bryan - Hover-Freight International  
Greg Olivier - NorthShore Psychiatric Hospital  
Harvey Troutman - Defense Information Systems Agency

### **VIA LINK Staff, New Orleans, LA**

Marguerite Redwine - CEO  
Marilyn Shraberg - Director of Information & Crisis  
Services  
Susan Tatje - Development & Marketing Director

### **Government Agency**

John Tobin - Social Services Coordinator,  
St. Tammany Parish Government

### **Ad Hoc Member**

Nancy Stamilio - Administrator, YWCA Slidell, LA

# Introduction & Purpose



## Introduction

The VIA LINK 2-1-1 Marketing Program began on October 1, 2002 and was completed on May 4, 2003. The program was built on the infrastructure of a well-established non-profit organization in New Orleans, LA called VIA LINK. The infrastructure included a 24-hour, 7 days a week Call Center that provides crisis and suicide prevention counseling, information & referral, and advocacy for an eleven parish region of southeast Louisiana.

This marketing program was the result of a team effort between a Leadership Slidell Project Group (of the Slidell Chamber of Commerce Class of 2003) , VIA LINK (a United Way member agency), and St. Tammany Parish Government.

## Purpose

The purpose of the VIA-LINK 2-1-1 Marketing Program was two fold:

- ◆ To bring awareness of the 2-1-1 service to agencies and residents of St. Tammany Parish (county) through a comprehensive parish-wide marketing program.
- ◆ To develop and implement a 2-1-1 marketing program that could be replicated in other communities.

# VIA LINK 2-1-1



## VIA LINK History

VIA LINK has 28 years of experience providing telephone crisis & suicide prevention counseling, advocacy, and information and referral services in the New Orleans area.

## VIA LINK Acquires 2-1-1 License

- ◆ In July 2000, the Federal Communications Commission passed legislation designating 2-1-1 as the national number for access to human services.
- ◆ VIA LINK petitioned the Louisiana Public Service Commission and was granted a license as a 2-1-1 provider, effective April 2001.
- ◆ The 2-1-1 service thus became an addition to VIA LINK's 24 hour, 7 days a week Call Center services (crisis & suicide prevention and I&R) that was already receiving 70,000 calls a year.
- ◆ During the 90-day period allowed for the 2-1-1 service to be initiated in VIA LINK's service area, VIA LINK worked closely with BellSouth to arrange for the implementation of area telephone system changes necessary to activate the 2-1-1 service.
- ◆ To facilitate the 2-1-1 service, BellSouth petitioned the Louisiana Public Service Commission for a new Tariff for N-11 numbers. This Tariff reduced the rates and charges for N-11 numbers.
- ◆ The 2-1-1 service was activated on June 29, 2001 at VIA LINK to serve 9 parishes of southeast Louisiana, in the New Orleans area.



### **VIA LINK Capacity Building**

- ◆ The 24 hour Call Center was expanded through the purchase and installation of state-of-the-art telephone and database information technology, and ongoing onsite technology application development and design.
- ◆ The 24-hour Call Center computer work-stations were redesigned and increased to ten.
- ◆ The new customized telephone system “aka” Customer Interaction Center (CIC I-3) runs on a PRI-(T 1) line capable of handling 23 incoming/outgoing lines and is easily expandable to meet emerging community needs. Additional PRI lines can be added to the I-3 software based system. I-3 provides skills based routing of calls and produces detailed statistical reports.
- ◆ The new customized internet-based software database system, Service Point, uses national Alliance of Information and Referral (AIRS) taxonomy, stores and provides easy access to comprehensive community resource information for large geographic areas and is easily expandable to meet emerging community needs.

### **VIA LINK begins 2-1-1 Marketing Program**

An expanded 2-1-1 marketing program began in October 2002. Staff expertise, community partnerships, sophisticated technology, accurate data, effective marketing & sustainable funding are all needed to successfully establish and maintain a 2-1-1 system.



# Agency Awareness

## Critical Issues

### **1. Available Community Resources:**

VIA LINK needed to have sufficient data about all available St. Tammany Parish community resources. To accomplish this, St. Tammany agencies were encouraged to register their services on-line on the VIA LINK website, [www.vialink.org](http://www.vialink.org), or if they preferred, through phone or fax. Agencies already listed with VIA LINK were encouraged to update their services as soon as changes occur for as long as these services are offered. Thus, the free on-line Community Resource Directory database can be accurate and accessible for public use at any time.

### **2. On-Line Community Resource Directory:**

VIA LINK needed to make local agencies aware of their free on-line Community Resource Directory database which provides a comprehensive directory of agencies and their services. The availability of this Directory database on-line and in printed form (including subdirectories by request) saves individual agencies valuable time and resources that would otherwise be used to create their own various community directories.

### **3. On-Line Registration Instruction Sheet:**

The team decided on the best design for this tool and created a one page document that provides easy to follow step-by-step instructions for how to register or upgrade on-line at the VIA LINK website.

### **4. Non-Internet Registration Options:**

VIA LINK anticipated that some agencies would not have access to the internet in order to register or upgrade their agency services. Therefore, the team developed a paper registration form to allow agencies to complete and fax or mail to VIA LINK. Agencies also were given the option to register over the phone.

### **5. Promotional Materials:**

VIA LINK redesigned their tri-fold brochure, business cards, posters and letterhead, and with pro-bono local talent and expertise, created a 30 second TV/Radio PSA to provide promotional collaterals to facilitate agency/public awareness.



## 6. Comprehensive Community Partnership activities

The team collected all other/smaller St. Tammany Parish community resource directories. VIA LINK made sure that all of this information was included in the comprehensive VIA LINK Community Resource Directory database. John Tobin, St. Tammany Parish Government Social Services Coordinator, implemented various social service agency awareness activities. Many of these activities are on-going. They include:

- ◆ Monthly mass fax to 200+ social services agencies in St. Tammany Parish. The faxes provided key information as needed to keep the community partnership going strong. Faxes encouraged area agencies to register or update their information on the VIA LINK website or through fax, mail or phone, included promotional flyers, registration forms and any other pertinent communications.
- ◆ Regular attendance at targeted St. Tammany Parish community and social services meetings to promote the 2-1-1 service by Susan Tatje, VIA LINK Development & Marketing Director and Lyn Shraberg, Director of Information & Crisis Services. The meetings include St Tammany Parish Social Services Advisory Committee on the third Thursday each month, and the St. Tammany Commission On Families on the second Tuesday each month.
- ◆ Additional contacts with and commitments from large and influential St. Tammany social service agencies. For example, Community Action Agency (CCA) is the primary St. Tammany Parish Government monetary distribution agency. CCA provides multiple grant designated relief funds directly to the public in need. CCA made a commitment to regularly update VIA LINK when new relief funds became available and when specific funds are expended.



**Determine Critical Community Needs for St. Tammany Parish and Identify Resources in St. Tammany Parish that Meet These Needs.**

**Top 11 St. Tammany Parish Community Needs \***

1. Emotional Mental Health/Substance Abuse Treatment
2. Rent
3. Utilities
4. Mortgage (foreclosures)
5. Support for physical challenges including: wheel chairs, ramps, lifts, vans, hearing aids, etc
6. Home repairs
7. Food and special diets
8. Furniture such as beds, sofas, chest of drawers, etc
9. Prescription medicine
10. Clothing, toys, grocery store certificates
11. Transportation (for addictive disorders and substance abuse treatments, etc.)

\* VIA LINK analyzed call data to determine these critical services.

**Top 11 St. Tammany Resources to Meet the Community Needs**

1. Region IX Office of Mental Health, Lurline Smith Mental Health Center
2. Region IX Office of Addictive Disorders, Northlake Office of Addictive Disorders
3. Citizens with Disabilities
4. St. Tammany Parish Community Action Agency
5. Community Christian Concern
6. Caring Center of Slidell
7. Catholic Charities
8. Greater New Orleans Federation of Churches
9. St. Tammany Council On Aging
10. Office of Community
11. Services, Covington St. Tammany Public Transportation Plan



## **Summary of Major Activities and Con-**

### **Major Activities**

- tacts** ♦ St. Tammany Parish additions and updates in the VIA LINK Community Resource Directory database were completed in five months. Only four of the total 147 St. Tammany Parish listings did not need any updates or changes.
- ♦ All 147 St. Tammany Parish community resources were pulled from the VIA LINK Community Resource Directory database and sent via e-mail to a member of the subgroup of the St. Tammany Parish Social Service Advisory Committee. This list will be used by the committee to create a comprehensive plan for delivery of community resources in St. Tammany Parish and will fold into their 2025 Parish Plan.
  - ♦ Subdirectories by geographic specification or other category can be created and printed by VIA LINK from the comprehensive Community Resource Directory database.
  - ♦ For-profit organization criteria for participation in the Community Resource Directory database is still in development.

### **Contacts**

- ♦ For Community Resource Directory database additions and upgrades contact VIA LINK's Director of Information Technology Systems, Jonathan Padgett at (504) 897-4877 or [jpadgett@vialink.org](mailto:jpadgett@vialink.org).
- ♦ For other questions or concerns about use of the 2-1-1 number or the Community Resource Directory call VIA LINK's Director of Information & Crisis Services, Lyn Shraberg at (505) 895-5575 or [mshraberg@vialink.org](mailto:mshraberg@vialink.org) or call VIA LINK's Director of Development & Marketing, Susan Tatje at (504) 895-5536 or [statje@vialink.org](mailto:statje@vialink.org).
- ♦ A critical support and communication link throughout the Pilot Program has been St. Tammany Parish Social Services Coordinator, John Tobin at (985) 898-3074 or [jtobin@stpgov.org](mailto:jtobin@stpgov.org).

# Public Awareness



## **Promote VIA LINK 2-1-1 Service to St. Tammany Parish Residents and Agency Clients.**

### **Critical Issues to Public Awareness**

1. The dial 2-1-1 system is a new concept for communities, non-profits, government agencies and other interested parties who want to provide community resource information or get community resource information.
2. The potential scope of 2-1-1 extends far beyond any one parish or limited geographic locale. 2-1-1 is an interconnected and interdependent national system that will eventually be operational across all of the United States.
3. 2-1-1 is a quick way to get information to large numbers of people in the event of natural disasters and/or homeland security threats.

### **Approaches to Informing the Public**

1. First, educate and inform key St. Tammany Parish public officials about what 2-1-1 is, it's community value, how to access it, and it's progress and potential scope locally and nationally.
2. And, engage other key St. Tammany Parish community leaders/ stakeholders, such as the St. Tammany Parish Social Services Coordinator, into the marketing program to streamline the flow of information between the VIA LINK 2-1-1 Community Resource Directory database, community resource agencies and activities and people needing assistance. The leadership involvement of the Social Services Coordinator and frequent attendance at important social service meetings and other community activities highlighting the value of 2-1-1 were key to the success of the marketing program. The Social Service Coordinator diligently worked to get agencies to buy into and have a vested interest in 2-1-1.
3. Develop marketing strategies and techniques to inform and educate the general public about 2-1-1 in their community.
4. Early involvement of key individuals from the media and public officials in the 2-1-1 marketing program.



- ◆ The Team invited news media to attend working team meetings and to publish a series of articles reporting on 2-1-1 in the community in prominent local newspapers.
- ◆ The Team briefed the president of the parish (county) about the 2-1-1 project. His recognition of the public service potential caused him to become an active supporter. He then took the 2-1-1 message to his counterparts in other parishes (counties) during their periodic meetings.
- ◆ The Team identified TV as the best media vehicle for increasing public awareness of 2-1-1, and worked with the local cable television company and their media arm to produce a pro-bono 30 second public service announcement that began airing in a variety of free open time slots on local cable channels.
- ◆ When the Team was ready, the St. Tammany Parish President called a press conference to launch the general public 2-1-1 marketing efforts in the parish. At the press conference, the 2-1-1 Public Service Announcement was unveiled and released to cable TV and radio stations, and the project team briefed both print and broadcast media about the readiness and value of 2-1-1 for St. Tammany Parish.
- ◆ Sustained public awareness marketing efforts over time were critical and included:
  - Public Service Announcement — Cable and public service channels can be easy to partner with for free air time. Develop a PSA that has radio and TV application. The PSA must be crisp, professional and aired frequently.
  - Articles in print news media.
  - Provide 2-1-1 brochure to case workers in hospitals - Discharge team can provide to patients with limited resources.
  - Provide 2-1-1 brochures to students — Arrange with public school system to periodically insert 2-1-1 brochures in material sent home by teachers to parents.
  - Provide 2-1-1 brochures to public health clinics and mental health clinics.— Allows clients to access other needed services .
  - Provide 2-1-1 brochures to law enforcement and public safety personnel.

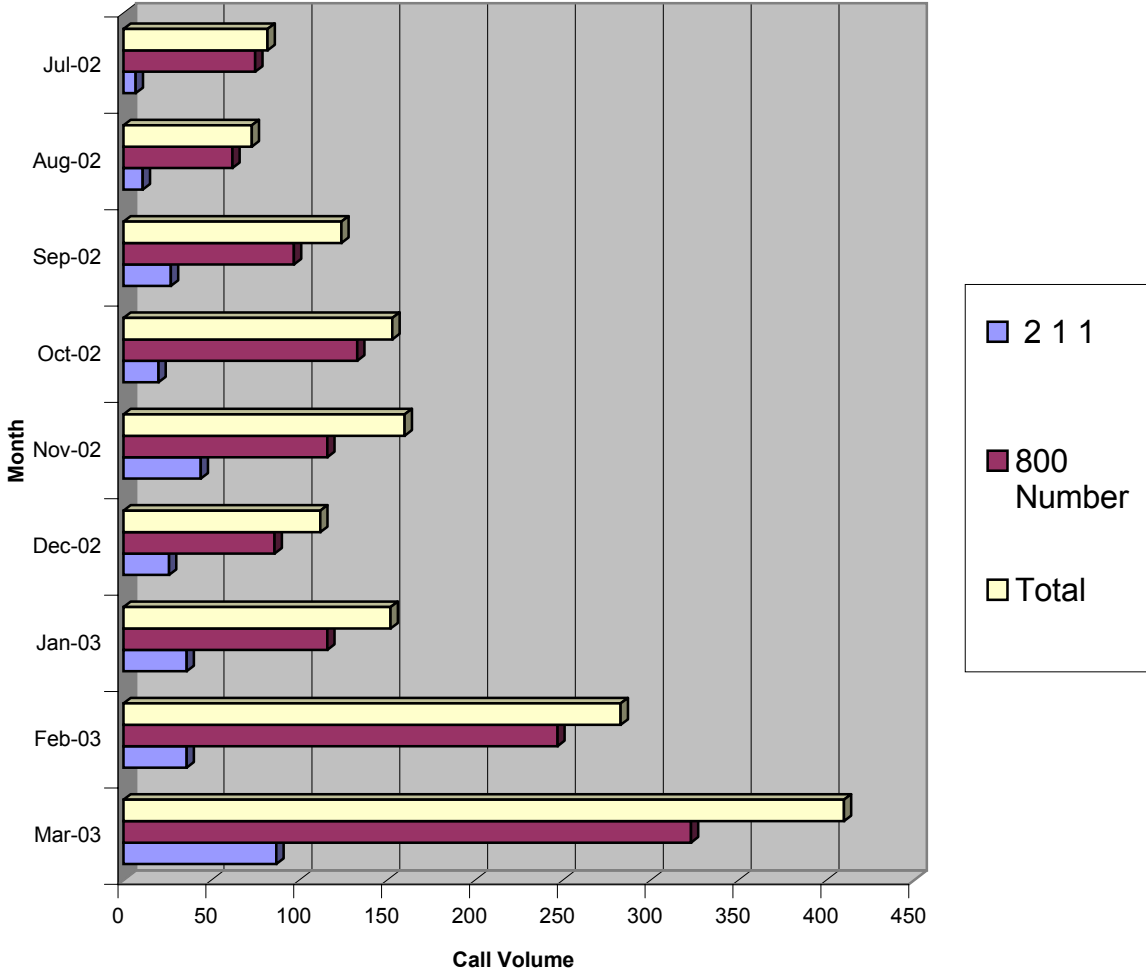
# Status of 2-1-1 in the Community



## VIA LINK Call Center Data For Calls from St. Tammany Parish — July 2002 to March 2003.

- ◆ Average wait call from 8 AM to 7 PM: 1 Min. 29 sec. (89 seconds)
- ◆ Number of community resources listed in the VIA LINK Community Resource Directory that list St. Tammany as their service area: 147

### 2-1-1 St. Tammany Call Increase



# Resource Requirements



**Table of Current Needs**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Call Center</b>	FTE Counselors (salary + benefits)	5 x \$23,000	\$115,000
	PT Call Center Supervisor, after hrs	1 x \$15,000	\$15,000
	Counselor Station Licenses	2 x \$2,750	\$5,500
	Counselor Computers	7 x \$1,000	\$7,000
	Counselor Headsets & Phones	4 x \$250	\$1,000
		<b>Subtotal</b>	
<b>Job Development</b>	Information Resource Director (upgrade)		\$15,000
	Directory Assistant (part time)		\$15,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Web Site</b>	Design, and Software (Uses a consultant & IT Director collaboration model to reduce costs and provides important easy public access to a free on-line Community Resource Directory)		\$3,200
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$3,200</b>
<b>Software</b>	Paint Shop Pro	1 x \$40	\$40
	XP Pro	14 x \$150	\$2,100
	Word, Excel, Access	6 x \$200	\$1,200
	Antivirus	1 x \$1,500	\$1,500
	Adobe	1 x \$900	\$900
		<b>Subtotal</b>	
<b>Hardware</b>	DVD Rewritable (To back-up system data and modify 2-1-1 marketing materials.)	1 x \$500	\$500
	Phone System, Lease Purchase	Balance due	\$90,000
	Batteries (To ensure uninterrupted power to Call Center database and telephone technology)	6 x \$330 1 x \$430 1 x \$290	\$2,700
	Networking equipment (To meet Call Center counselor station expansion needs.)	1 hub x \$59 7 cables x \$3	\$90 \$21
	High Volume Hewlett Packard Printers (For high volume reports/graphics generated by information technology.)	2 x \$130	\$260
	Scanner		
		<b>Subtotal</b>	
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$276,011</b>



### **Additional Resources**

- ◆ Volunteer counselors are needed to help answer the increased call volume from St. Tammany to 2-1-1.
- ◆ 2-1-1 needs to become operational with all cell phone companies, other phone companies & pay phones ASAP.
- ◆ State Legislative action to institute a surcharge on local telephone company bills can help defray costs of maintaining and operating a 2-1-1 system
- ◆ Federal and local Homeland Security and Bio-Terrorism money may be available to support 2-1-1 systems since they are a quick way to disseminate

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Action List to Commence a 2-1-1 Community Resource**

- ◆ Determine the organization, preferably an Information and Referral agency or a local United Way, with a 501(c)(3) designation, to be responsible for acquiring, implementing and maintaining the local 2-1-1 system.
- ◆ Choose or build a 24 hour call center with appropriate technology to implement a 2-1-1 system.
- ◆ Choose a 2-1-1 model that best meets your local community needs and fits into your statewide 2-1-1 efforts. (See the national web site for different models at [www.211.org](http://www.211.org))
- ◆ Acquire a local Public Service Commission license to operate the 2-1-1 system in your designated geographic area.
- ◆ Work with your local telephone companies to implement 2-1-1 according to your local telephone system requirements.
- ◆ Prepare for an extended technology application and refinement timeline.
- ◆ Identify and update community resources for 2-1-1 referrals.
- ◆ Work with other community partners to educate the public about 2-1-1.



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**For More Information Contact:**

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