

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2015 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1030 (Delegate Cullison, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

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**2-1-1 Maryland - Procurement of Services to Operate a Public Information Telephone Line or Hotline**

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This bill requires a State agency that provides health and human services and establishes a public information telephone line or hotline to contract with 2-1-1 Maryland to operate the service. The requirement does not apply if the agency determines that (1) 2-1-1 Maryland cannot meet the procurement specifications; (2) the services cannot be provided within a reasonable time; or (3) the services provided by 2-1-1 Maryland are not cost effective. The agency must document and share with 2-1-1 Maryland its determination and reason for not contracting with it. The Board of Public Works may adopt regulations to implement the bill.

The bill applies only prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or application to any contract entered into before the bill's October 1, 2015 effective date.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** To the extent that the bill limits competition for public information telephone lines or hotlines, the cost of those services may increase minimally, as reduced competition has been shown to increase contract costs. To the extent that the State can take advantage of the expertise and infrastructure provided by 2-1-1 Maryland, operational efficiencies may be realized. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** A State agency that provides health and human services and establishes a public information telephone line or hotline must consult with 2-1-1 Maryland about using it to provide public access to information.

State procurement law defines a “preferred provider” to be a provider of supplies or services that is given preference in specified provisions of current State procurement law, which are Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE), Blind Industries and Services of Maryland (BISM), the Employment Works Program, and businesses owned by individuals with disabilities. State agencies and State-aided or -controlled entities must procure services and supplies from MCE, BISM, the Employment Works Program, or a business owned by an individual with a disability, in that order of preference. Only if none of those entities produces or provides the desired supplies or services may a State agency issue a competitive procurement.

**Background:** Statute establishes the three-digit number 2-1-1 as the primary information and referral telephone number for health and human services in the State. It also establishes a Health and Human Services Referral Board to oversee operation of the system.

2-1-1 Maryland is a private, nonprofit organization that established and maintains an information and referral service network available to all Maryland residents, offering 24/7 guidance in accessing health, crisis, and social services. It coordinates the activities of four partner call centers, provides oversight, and obtains funding to support its work. The State’s fiscal 2009 budget provided \$449,000 in general funds to the Department of Human Resources as a bridge grant to establish the 2-1-1 service. No further State funding has been provided. However, at least two State agencies have contracted with 2-1-1 Maryland for specific services: the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene contracted for a H1N1 virus hotline and the Department of Housing and Community Development contracted for mortgage foreclosure information services, both in 2009.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** 2-1-1 Maryland, Department of General Services, Department of Disabilities, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Department of Aging, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Legislative Services

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