

IT POLICY LETTER

NUMBER:

ITPL 10-12

SUBJECT:

REDUCING CHARGES FOR 411 DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE SERVICES

EMPHASIS: Use of free alternatives to 411 Directory Assistance Services.

DATE ISSUED:

SEPTEMBER 21, 2010

EXPIRES:

Until Rescinded

REFERENCES:

Government Code Section 11545 et seq.

ISSUING AGENCY:

OFFICE OF THE STATE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

DISTRIBUTION

Agency Secretaries
Department Directors
Agency Chief Information Officers
Department Chief Information Officers

PURPOSE

To promote the efficient and effective use of information technology (IT) in furtherance of the Legislative intent of Government Code Section 11545 et seq., and reduce charges incurred from 411 Directory Assistance Services (411 services), the purpose of this Information Technology Policy Letter (ITPL) is to:

- Announce requirements to limit the use of 411 services.
- Provide information on no-cost alternatives to 411 services.

BACKGROUND

The State of California's use of 411 services cost, depending on the provider, between \$1.25 and \$1.79 per call, with statewide usage patterns indicating approximate costs of \$165,600 to \$180,000 annually. Many Web sites on the Internet have been created that provide no-cost alternatives to the use of 411. In addition, there exists telephone numbers that provide directory assistance at no cost.

APPLICABILITY

This ITPL applies to all Executive Branch state agencies¹.

POLICY

Effective immediately, state agencies shall implement procedures to reduce 411 service charges and, where practical, restrict access to 411 services for both landline and wireless telephones. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Blocking access to 411 services from Private Branch Exchange

¹ When capitalized, the term "Agency" refers to one of the state's super agencies such as the State and Consumer Services Agency or the Health and Human Services Agency. When used in lower case, the term "agency" refers to any office, department, board, bureau, commission or other organizational entity within state government. Within this ITPL, "agency" and "department" are used interchangeably.

(PBX), Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP), or equivalent telephone systems.

- Blocking access to 411 services from existing telephones and when requesting new or additional telephone numbers from telephone service providers.
- Providing outreach directing employees and contractors to use free alternatives to 411 services whenever practicable.
- Reviewing and, if applicable, modifying internal procedures to identify 411 service charges that the organization considers to be excessive, and, as appropriate, providing additional outreach of no-cost alternatives to the applicable work units or individuals.

EXCEPTIONS

Telephone service providers may impose additional charges when changing service options to block 411 access, thereby diminishing any potential cost savings. **Consequently, blocking 411 access does not apply if it would result in additional charges from the service provider.** State agencies should perform a cost-benefit analysis of the various alternatives available to each business unit to determine the most effective way to reduce or eliminate the cost of 411 services.

NO-COST ALTERNATIVES

There are many no-cost alternatives to 411 services, some of which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1-800-GOOG-411 (voice)
- 1-800-FREE-411 (voice)
- 411.com
- Free411.com
- People.yahoo.com
- Phonenumber.com
- Whitepages.com

CONTACT

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to your OCIO PMO representative. A listing of OCIO PMO Managers and Principals and their departmental assignments can be found at the OCIO Web site located at: http://www.cio.ca.gov/Contact_Us/staff_assignments.html.

SIGNATURE

/s/

Teri Takai,
Chief Information Officer
State of California
