



**Kern County Innovation Project
Special Needs Registry – Smart 911**

About Kern County:

Kern County is located on the southern edge of the San Joaquin Valley. With 8,163 square miles of mountains, desert and the ag-yielding valley, Kern County is geographically the third largest county in California. Bordered by eight counties, Kern lays neighbor to Kings, Tulare, Inyo, Ventura, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo. Kern County is a thoroughfare for travelers and commuters as it connects many on the north-south route via Interstate-5 and Highway 99.

Kern County has approximately 886,507 residents, the 11th highest populated county in California. Bakersfield, the county seat, has 373,640 residents and is the 10th largest city in the state. The population is made up of 51.5 percent Hispanic/Latino, 36 percent non-Hispanic White, 4.9 percent African American/Black, 4.4 percent Asian and the remainder multi-racial, Native American and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. The two threshold languages are English and Spanish. Local economy is richly laden in petroleum, animal and crop-based agriculture and military-based industry.

Primary problem to be addressed:

Often, individuals experiencing a mental health emergency come to the attention of law enforcement or emergency medical service responders following a call to 911. First response staff are typically provided only that information which can be gathered over the phone by the dispatcher. During those crises, those experiencing a mental health emergency may not be able to fully articulate symptoms and other pertinent information. The lack of information about mental health conditions, supports and effective interventions contribute to decisions to use force, arrest, incarcerate or hospitalize rather than de-escalate and redirect to sustained outpatient mental health care. This leads to costly arrests, hospitalizations and sometimes, injuries to the mentally ill person and/or first responders. By creating a special needs registry, emergency responders can be privy to vital information regarding mental health symptoms, interventions, medications and plans as they arrive in order to provide more appropriate services.

Community Planning Process

Individuals from special interest groups, such as groups of individuals with behavioral health challenges as well as those with co-occurring behavioral health and developmental disability challenges, expressed interest in having a Special Needs Registry for Kern. Some of them expressed their interest to individuals who participate in the Kern Crisis Intervention Team. In turn, the Special Needs Registry – Smart 911 project was initially proposed at the Crisis Intervention Training Steering Committee Meeting in 2014. The Steering Committee, comprised of law enforcement, Kern County Superintendent of Schools staff, members from faith-based



ministries, United Way Homeless Collaborative members, mental health professionals, community-based organizations, members from NAMI Kern and community members; recommended the registry in order to improve the quality of first responder services to achieve better immediate and long-term outcomes.

A second stakeholder group composed of persons with lived experience, family members and mental health professionals evaluated this and other proposals in order to identify proposals that best fit the Innovative program principles. The Special Needs Registry project was identified as a program that promoted interagency collaboration related to mental health services, supports or outcomes which introduced a new application to the mental health system of a promising community-driven approach that has been successful in a non-mental health context or setting. The project was selected to advance into the 2016 Community Planning Process that ultimately involved more than 325 persons throughout Kern County. Stakeholders overwhelmingly supported the project, noting that Smart 911 could reduce trauma associated with being served by police. Along with two other Innovation proposals, the Special Needs Registry was included in the MHSA Annual Update FY 16/17 where it garnered additional consideration and support during the 30-day annual review period, public hearing conducted by the Kern County Behavioral Health Board and the Kern County Board of Supervisors in November and December 2016, respectively.

Project Description

Rave Mobile Safety, Inc. has created Smart 911, a program which allows web-users the ability to create a password protected special needs registry free of charge to the user. The registry itself is accessed via Smart911.com. During calls to 911 from registered users, public safety entities that purchase and install the Smart 911 software are able to view the user-provided information on demand for a period of 45 minutes, allowing dispatchers and first responders access to critical information while also protecting the privacy of that information.

Kern County residents, including KernBHRS clients, will have the opportunity to create a secure, password-protected special needs registry on the Smart 911 website. KernBHRS clients will be encouraged to register and will be offered assistance from treatment staff. Registration will be available on personal devices (computer, tablet, smart phone) and in kiosks to be placed at each KernBHRS treatment location. Information entered into the Smart 911 database is only accessible to an emergency dispatcher and only when a registered user dials 911 from a phone number in the user's Smart911 profile. Clients may enter details which include mental health conditions, medications, medical needs and mobility issues, crisis interventions from their WRAP or Crisis Treatment Plan and other information which can assist in the event of a mental health or non-mental health related emergency. As part of the project, emergency dispatch centers throughout Kern County will be provided Smart 911 software, allowing them to receive registry information when a call is placed.

Because the registry is created by the client, only information which is shared voluntarily is released. The client creates their own profile username and password, and may manage their online account at will. With assistance from their KernBHRS Recovery Specialist, they may choose to include information from Crisis or WRAP plans; but KernBHRS will not provide information to Smart 911 or emergency dispatch centers as a result of the Innovative program. Emergency responders will, however, have the ability to share vital

information when providing emergency service, allowing for better interagency collaboration between fire, police and other public safety entities.

Innovative Component

Smart 911 has been implemented in cities throughout the United States, but Rave Mobile Safety, Inc. reports that a county has never-before implemented the program within a behavioral health system of care with the purpose of assisting clients in identifying special needs.

Learning Goals and Evaluative Measures

The Special Needs Registry – Smart 911 project will attempt to learn how Smart 911 affects the outcome of emergency services provided to those who create an online registry. It is anticipated that there will be:

- A reduction in injury, death, arrest and hospitalization resulting from emergency response to a behavioral health emergency event.
- A high rate of registration with a goal of 70 percent of new clients opting to create a special needs registry profile.
- High satisfaction rate of 75 percent or more positive feedback from clients on the effectiveness of response when public safety has access to Smart 911 information.
- Use of Smart 911 information for at least 20 percent of 911 calls which involve behavioral health key words. The first year would serve as a baseline by which to judge growth.

During services, clients will be asked if they have experienced a recent emergency event. Those who respond in the affirmative will be asked to complete a satisfaction survey via the onsite kiosk. Additionally, public safety agencies will survey dispatch and response staff felt in order to gather information about the value of their use of Smart 911 information.

Budget

The budget total for five (5) years is = \$3,170,514

Personnel:

1 FTE Program Specialist = \$561,065 over five years

The Program Specialist will be responsible for coordinating and providing training and support to Recovery Specialist staff working with clients to create user profiles in Smart911. This staff will also provide project management services for the implementation of Smart 911 at emergency dispatch centers, including the coordination of site trainings for dispatch staff and first response staff throughout Kern County.

0.25 FTE Administrative Coordinator (Program Evaluation) = \$148,303 over five years

The Administrative Coordinator will provide evaluation of the project, gathering and analyzing surveys from emergency dispatch and responder staff, data from Rave Mobile Safety, Inc., client surveys and number of clients registered.

0.10 FTE Senior Information System Specialist = \$74,815 over five years, with additional costs of \$5,985 in year one for kiosk programming and installation. In succeeding years, IT staff will install and manage online kiosks at clinic sites. This is an existing position from which 10 percent of salary will be supported by Innovation funds and the remainder to be funded by its current source.

0.10 FTE Maintenance Worker II = \$1,632 in year one for online kiosk installation.

2-0.5 FTE Law Enforcement Lieutenants assigned to dispatch centers = \$945,714 over five years

The Kern County Sheriff's Department and Bakersfield Police Department provide law enforcement services to most of the county's population. To assume a task as involved as managing the information received from Smart 911 – supported calls, we have assigned funding for two half-time lieutenants, one at each department. These lieutenants will manage the installation of Smart 911 by Rave Mobile Safety, Inc., train dispatchers and first responders as part of ongoing implementation of the program over time and provide support for the project by administering surveys and collecting data regarding calls. Officers assigned from these two agencies may also provide support for other entities including fire department and rural law enforcement agencies.

Evaluation:

Evaluation is budgeted at \$48,574 in year one, \$43,574 in succeeding years, totaling \$223,270 for the five-year term of the project. This cost includes both contracted and in-house evaluation services. Contracted evaluators will be provided information from KernBHRS, Rave Mobile Safety, Inc. and public safety agencies.

Operating Expenditures:

\$850,000 to fund Smart 911 software, installation and training for 13 dispatch centers
\$77,500 to fund connectivity for 40 online kiosks to be utilized in behavioral health clinics
\$4,900 annually for incidental hardware repair or replacement

Non-recurring Costs:

\$49,000 Online kiosks for behavioral health clinics
\$25,000 Deployment and implementation costs

Administrative Costs:

Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services estimates Administrative costs at 29.4 percent of personnel costs annually. Total Administration over five years totals \$422,774.