



## Press Release

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### **Bank on San Francisco Teams Up with United Way's 2-1-1 to Connect Unbanked San Franciscans with Bank Services**

SAN FRANCISCO, January 3, 2006 – By simply dialing 2-1-1, San Francisco residents can quickly obtain information about Bank on San Francisco, an innovative program that aims to help 10,000 unbanked city residents open low-cost or no-cost bank accounts as a means toward asset building and financial independence.

United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA), which operates 2-1-1, and San Francisco Treasurer José Cisneros today announced that 2-1-1 will serve as the primary phone number for residents seeking information about Bank on San Francisco.

“Bank on San Francisco aims not only to encourage unbanked residents to open bank accounts, but also to make it as easy as possible to do so,” said Cisneros. “By partnering with United Way’s 2-1-1, we’re enabling San Franciscans to obtain essential information about enrollment and find participating banks with just one call to an easy-to-remember, three-digit phone number.”

Bank on San Francisco is a joint effort of Treasurer José Cisneros, Mayor Gavin Newsom and the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, along with 15 partner banks. During the next few months, the coalition will use targeted advertising and consumer education in multiple languages to promote low- or no-fee bank accounts. San Francisco is the first city in the nation to develop a program of this kind to help everyone enter the financial mainstream and start saving for the future.

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“United Way is pleased to partner with Bank on San Francisco to enable hard-working families expand their financial opportunities,” said UWBA CEO Anne Wilson. She noted United Way’s Earn It! Keep It! Save It! program also partners with Bank on San Francisco during tax season. In addition to providing free tax preparation service to qualifying households, Earn It! Keep It! Save It! encourages taxpayers to participate in Bank on San Francisco in order to avoid refund anticipation loans and check-cashing fees.

**About Bank on San Francisco**

Bank on San Francisco aims to bank 10,000 of the estimated 50,000 San Francisco households who currently have no checking or savings accounts. Without access to banking services, San Franciscans are forced to rely on high-cost check cashers, paying hundreds of dollars each year in fees just to cash checks and pay bills. Bank on San Francisco brings together 15 banks and credit unions to offer low- or no-cost accounts and financial training to unbanked residents. The 15 participating banks and credit unions are: Bank of America, Bank of the West, Citibank, Mission Area Federal Credit Union, Mission National Bank, Northeast Community Federal Credit Union, Patelco Credit Union, San Francisco Federal Credit Union, Spectrum Federal Credit Union, Sterling Bank and Trust, United Commercial Bank, US Bank, Washington Mutual, Wells Fargo, and Westamerica.

**About 2-1-1**

2-1-1, a service of United Way of the Bay Area, is an easy-to-remember, three-digit phone number that connects people in need with health and human services. This free, confidential, 24-hour multilingual information line also serves as a vital link for individuals seeking to volunteer, provide resources and assist during times of crisis. Currently, 2-1-1 service is available in San Francisco County from landline telephones and from Cingular, Metro PCS Sprint and T-Mobile cell phones. Residents using other cellular service providers or calling from outside San Francisco County can reach United Way’s 2-1-1 call center by dialing 415-808-HELP or 800-273-6222, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. For the hearing impaired, dial 415-808-4440 (TTY) or 7-1-1. United Way’s introduction of 2-1-1 in San Francisco is the first step in plans to promote and establish 2-1-1 service throughout the Bay Area. Learn more at [www.211bayarea.org](http://www.211bayarea.org).

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