



988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Someone to talk to. Someone to respond. A place to go.

What You Need to Know

Beginning on July 16, 2022, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) will transition to the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#). Ohioans who are experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis, and their family members, will be able to call, chat, or text the 988 number in order to reach a trained counselor who can offer help and support.

Moving to the easy-to-remember, 3-digit number will provide greater access to life-saving services, and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) has been planning for this transition over the last 18 months to ensure Ohio is ready for 988.

988 builds on the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline system and will provide 24/7, free and confidential support to Ohioans in a behavioral health crisis. It is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress – whether that is thoughts of suicide, mental health or addiction concerns, or any other kind of emotional distress.

Research shows that most calls to the Lifeline can be managed and resolved through a consultation on the phone; however, if a person needs an emergency, in-person response, 988 counselors are trained to connect the person in crisis with a mobile response team, which may be a behavioral health team or first responder team (or a combination of both) who will meet the person at their place of crisis.

What You Can Do to Prepare

For Individuals

- Before July 16, 2022, continue to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.
- When you call, lifeline counselors are trained to reduce the stress of your challenge, provide emotional support, and connect you with local resources.
- If you or someone you know is in imminent danger, call 911. Familiarize yourself with the differences between 911 and 988 with this helpful [“When to Call 911/When to Call 988”](#) Fact Sheet.



For Behavioral Health Providers

- Begin conversations with staff in your agency about the transition to 988.
- Continue to provide the 10-digit number (1-800-273-8255) to clients until July 16.
- Begin to plan for incorporating 988 into your resource materials. SAMHSA has provided various communications and outreach materials to help communities understand what 988 is and how it will work at <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/partner-toolkit>. A national marketing campaign from the federal government is not expected this year.

For County and Municipal Governments

- Engage your local partners such as your local ADAMH board, behavioral health providers, law enforcement agencies, schools, and 911 centers to discuss how your community will use 988.
- Lifeline centers will transfer a 988 caller/contact to a county's crisis response or emergency response teams if the person consents and desires more services than the Lifeline center can provide.
- SAMHSA has provided various communications and outreach materials to help communities understand what 988 is and how it will work at <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/partner-toolkit>. A national marketing campaign from the federal government is not expected this year.

For 911 Centers

- The National Emergency Number Association has a 911-988 Interoperability Standards Workgroup that this summer will release best practice recommendations on 911 and 988 interactions.
- Ohio has a 911-988 Interoperability Committee that has been ensuring ongoing communication between the state's 911 operators and call centers and the National Lifeline regional call centers in Ohio. Sample agreements to establish call transfer protocols have been developed.



Ohio 988 Fast Facts

- In 2020, Congress designated the new 988 dialing code to operate through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. **Ohio convened a broad and diverse stakeholder planning group** to prepare the state for this transition. Ohioans with lived experience, family members, veterans, multi-cultural, and other special population groups participated in the planning process along with law enforcement, local ADAMH boards, providers and telecom operators.
- **988 will accept calls, texts, and chats from anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health, or addiction crisis.** People can also call 988 if they are concerned about a loved one in crisis.
- Ohio's 988 implementation plan is **part of the state's larger commitment to providing quality, person-centered crisis supports in communities** across the state. The state's crisis system is being built to enhance our Connect, Respond, Stabilize and Thrive supports in all communities.
- **Ohio has increased the number of in-state Lifeline approved call centers** from 12 to 19 in preparation for the transition to 988. These [call centers](#) are actively providing call coverage to the entire state. Ohio has also established secondary, back-up, and chat and text providers so that the state can achieve its goal of all calls, texts, and chats made to 988 being answered in-state.
- In 2021, there were approximately 90,000 calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline from Ohio.
- Ohio's Lifeline counselors are trained to listen and support callers who are in distress with a focus on de-escalation and coping skills. Ohio's Lifeline call centers will offer language translation services when needed. Spanish language counselors can be reached by pressing "1" after the voice prompt. Other languages are available based on a caller's needs.
- 988 in Ohio is supported by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and its **first year of operations is fully funded** with federal dollars that the Department has dedicated to the launch of 988. The DeWine Administration and the Ohio Legislature are evaluating ongoing use and needs and determining an appropriate, sustainable funding plan to ensure the long-term success of 988 in Ohio.
- In addition to the state-operated Ohio CareLine, many communities offer local crisis and support lines. The Ohio CareLine and **local support and response lines will not go away** when 988 launches and will continue to provide support to Ohioans who use them.

