

## 988 Coming to Illinois

The Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Mental Health (IDHS-DMH) plans to launch 988, a national three-digit dialing code for the Lifeline and for calls. On July 16, **individuals experiencing a crisis or any other kind of emotional distress- whether that is related to suicide, mental health and/or substance use crisis can dial 988 for support. The Lifeline provides information and support to concerned family, friends, and caregivers.**

988 is a direct access point to compassionate care by trained professionals. IDHS-DMH's vision for 988 includes partnering with the six existing Lifeline call centers in Illinois, as well as building upon the existing crisis care continuum into a robust system that links callers to community-based providers who can deliver a full range of crisis care services.

988 is just the beginning, and not the final solution.

## How does it work?

Currently, all callers have access to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) network by dialing 800-273-8255.

Beginning, July 16, 2022, 988 will be launched as the three-digit dialing code. 988 will be a direct access point, providing greater access to life-saving services and compassionate care.

At the beginning of the call, callers have the option to select the Veterans Crisis Line or the Spanish language Crisis Line. If the caller with an Illinois area code does not select either of those options, they will be routed to an Illinois Lifeline Call Center. If after 3 minutes, the call is not answered by a live person, the caller is routed to the NSPL backup affiliate network, which includes call centers that operate in other states.

## What to Expect from 988?

Calls placed to 988 will follow the same methods described above. In the coming months, text and chat services will be available for users. Callers who are connected with the Illinois Lifeline will receive specialized, individualized support by trained call takers trained in suicide prevention, de-escalation and stabilization, and resources.

## What is the difference between 988, 911, 211/311, and other local hotlines?

### 988:

- Suicide prevention and mental health crisis lifeline
- Specialized intervention by trained call takers with advanced training in de-escalation and clinical suicide prevention
- Confidential, free, and available 24/7/365
- Eventually, 988 call centers will function as access points to statewide community-based crisis

### 911:

- Emergency line for public safety emergencies, medical emergencies, and law enforcement
- Provides limited de-escalation or emotional support; staffed with public safety answering point dispatch workers
- If the public safety or medical emergency is pertaining to someone who has a mental health condition, or appears to be experiencing a mental health crisis, a crisis intervention team (CIT) trained officer with basic training in mental health crises may be available through 911 dispatch
- Free, and available 24/7/365

### 211/311:

- Resource support line that links callers to resources related to quality of life (housing, food, other important services)
- Ability to transfer callers to the Lifeline Line
- Free, and available 24/7/365
- 311 is specific to Chicago and Cook County, while 211 is available in approximately half of other Illinois counties

### Local mental health/substance use crisis hotlines:

- Resource for people who need help getting into behavioral health services
- Various hours of operation, according to the hotline's capacity
- Provides screening, assessment and referrals to helpful services

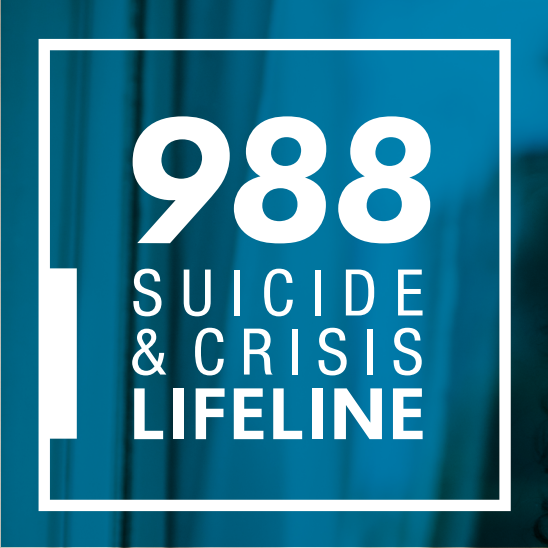

### Illinois Warm Line: (1-866-359-7953):

- Free phone support for anyone living in Illinois to include emotional support, recovery education, self-advocacy support, and referrals
- Staffed by Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS)
- Not a crisis line, rather, works with callers to address aspects of their wellness by identifying triggers, developing action plans, and learning what is necessary to maintain wellness
- Free, available Mon- Sat, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

## FAST FACTS

- **The 988 number will be available for calls on July 16, 2022.** Until then, those in crisis should continue to use 1-800-273-8255, which will continue to function even after the transition.
- 988 is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365, connecting those experiencing any type of emotional distress, including mental health, substance use, or suicidal crisis.
- Research shows that suicide hotlines save lives. The adoption of an easy-to-remember number, that will later include text and chat, is vital in beginning to resolve mental health crises.
- 988 is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress., including family, friends, and/or caregivers.
- 988 services will be available in Spanish, along with interpretation services in over 150 languages through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.





**988**  
SUICIDE  
& CRISIS  
LIFELINE

**In 2020, Congress designated the new 988 dialing code to operate through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.**

**The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** is the lead federal agency, in partnership with the Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Veterans Affairs, working to make the promise of 988 a reality for America. Moving to a 3-digit dialing code is a **once-in-a-lifetime opportunity** to strengthen and expand the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (the Lifeline).

Of course, 988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number—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 substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. Preparing for full 988 implementation requires a bold vision for **a crisis care system that provides direct, life-saving services to all in need.**

SAMHSA sees 988 as a first step towards a transformed crisis care system in much the same way as emergency medical services have expanded in the US.



In pursuit of this bold yet achievable vision, SAMHSA is first focused on strengthening and expanding the existing Lifeline network, providing life-saving service to all who call, text or chat via 988. Longer term, SAMHSA recognizes that linking those in crisis to community-based providers—who can deliver a full range of crisis care services—is **essential to meeting crisis needs across the nation.**







## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Lifeline and will 988 replace it?

**The Lifeline** is a national network of over 200 local, independent, and state-funded crisis centers equipped to help people in emotional distress or experiencing a suicidal crisis. **Moving to 988 will not replace the Lifeline**, rather it will be an easier way to access a strengthened and expanded network of crisis call centers. Beginning July 16, 2022, people can access the Lifeline via 988 or by the 10-digit number (which will not go away).

### When will 988 go live nationally?

**The 988 dialing code** will be available nationwide for call (multiple languages), text or chat (English only) on July 16, 2022. Until then, those experiencing a mental health or suicide-related crisis, or those helping a loved one through crisis, should continue to reach the Lifeline at its current number, **1-800-273-8255**.

### How is 988 different from 911?

**988 was established to improve access to crisis services** in a way that meets our country's growing suicide and mental health related crisis care needs. 988 will provide easier access to the Lifeline network and related crisis resources, which are distinct from 911 (where the focus is on dispatching Emergency Medical Services, fire and police as needed).

### How is 988 being funded?

**Congress has provided the Department of Health and Human Services workforce funding through the American Rescue Plan, some of which will support the 988 workforce.** At the state level, in addition to existing public/private sector funding streams, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 allows states to enact new state telecommunication fees to help support 988 operations.

### Is 988 available for substance use crisis?

**The Lifeline accepts calls from anyone who needs support** for a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis.

## Urgent realities.



Too many Americans are experiencing suicide and mental health crises without the support and care they need. In 2020 alone, the US had one death by suicide about every 11 minutes — and for people aged 10-34 years, suicide is a leading cause of death.

## Easier access.



Moving to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code will provide greater access to life-saving services.

## There is hope.



Providing 24/7, free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress works! The Lifeline helps thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day.

Email 988 questions to:

**988Team@  
samhsa.hhs.gov**