

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Service goes LIVE on July 16, 2022 — What you need to know



988 Fast Facts

- 988 will be confidential, free, and available 24/7/365, connecting those experiencing a mental health, substance use, or suicidal crisis with trained crisis counselors.
- Access to the NSPL is available through every land line, cell phone, and voice-over internet device in the U.S.
- 988 services will be available in Spanish, along with interpretation services in over 250 languages.
- The 988 dialing code will be available for call, text, and chat by July 16, 2022. Until then, those in crisis should continue to use 1-800-273-TALK (8255), which will function even after July 16.

The nationwide implementation of the 988 three-digit call, text, and chat line is just the first important step in re-imagining crisis support in the U.S.



Call Volume

Once 988 goes live in July, Washington should be prepared for an increase in calls, texts, and chats.



NSPL Crisis Centers

There are three NSPL crisis centers in Washington: Volunteers of America of Western Washington, Frontier Behavioral Health, and Crisis Connections.



HB 1477

HB 1477 provided funding to Washington's three NSPL crisis centers, including funding to begin hiring staff in anticipation of increased call volume.

988, WASHINGTON'S CRISIS RESPONSE

Building understanding, hope, and a path forward for those in need, where and when they need it.

Background and Implementation

- In 2020, the [Federal Communications Commission](#) (FCC) adopted the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act. The act made 988 the new, nationwide, easy-to-remember 3-digit dialing, texting, and chat number for anyone experiencing a suicidal or mental health-related crisis.
- 988 is not replacing existing crisis centers in Washington, but is the newest addition to the state's network of crisis center providers.
- To increase access to services for people in crisis, including people with disabilities and those who prefer text, the FCC adopted a Second Report and Order on November 18, 2021, to allow texting to 988.
- Veterans and service members may reach the Veterans Crisis Line by pressing 1 after dialing 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Spanish speakers may reach the Spanish Language Line by pressing 2.
- Vibrant Emotional Health, the National Administrator of 988, has done extensive planning to provide states with anticipated call, chat, and text volume estimates for when 988 goes live in July.
- HB 1477 dedicates crucial funding, via a tax on Washington's phone and Voice over Internet Protocol lines, to support the state's NSPL crisis centers' recruitment and hiring of additional staff to answer the anticipated increase of calls after July 16, 2022.

Highlights

- On July 16, 2022, phone calls to 988 will redirect to the NSPL crisis centers.
- The current NSPL number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), will remain active after 988 goes live.
- Washington has three NSPL crisis centers: Volunteers of America of Western Washington, Frontier Behavioral Health, and Crisis Connections.
- Over the next few years, the [Crisis Response Improvement Strategy \(CRIS\) Committee](#) will develop recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to support additional components of HB 1477.
- Learn more at the [DOH 988 webpage](#).

Contact

Washington State Department of Health
988ProgramInfo@doh.wa.gov

Washington State Health Care Authority
HCAProgram1477@hca.wa.gov



DOH 971-053 June 2022

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.