



July 13, 2022

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health (DHS-DMH) is preparing to launch "988," the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, across the state of Illinois on July 16. The new three-digit number for existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline calls, 988 will be available in multiple languages. People can dial 988 if they are having thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crises, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

Since the Lifeline began in 2005, it has served as an invaluable resource, helping thousands of people overcome suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress every day. With the transition to 988, these life-saving services will be even easier to reach.

In preparation for the transition of the Lifeline to 988, the federal government and partners from across many industries in the public and private sectors are working together to provide guidance and resources to make this work a little easier.

The following resources have been made available:

- Illinois DHS-DMH developed the [988 Planning webpage](#) and an [Illinois-specific 988 Fact Sheet](#).
- The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and its messaging task force developed the [988 Messaging Framework](#) to provide guidance on developing 988-related messaging. We encourage you to closely review these guidelines. The framework provides strategies related to the timing of messaging before and after the transition to 988 in July. It also discusses the importance of understanding how 988 works locally, following communication best practices, and tailoring 988-related messages for specific audiences.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) created a one-stop shop, the 988 Partner Toolkit, at [988 Partner Toolkit | SAMHSA](#). A SAMHSA 988 Fact Sheet is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). The toolkit is intended for SAMHSA's 988 implementation partners—including crisis call centers, state mental health programs, substance use treatment providers, behavioral health systems, and others—and provides key messages, FAQs, logo and brand guidelines, and more information about 988. SAMHSA will add social media posts, wallet cards, magnets, and other materials about 988 to the toolkit over time.
- SAMHSA has also worked with partners across several critical industries to create a holistic view of readiness for the implementation of 988 for states, territories, tribes, crisis contact centers, public safety answering points (PSAPs) and behavioral health providers. Through these collaborative efforts, SAMHSA created [guidance documents \(e.g., "playbooks"\)](#) for these critical groups to support implementation of 988.

DHS-DMH emphasized in a July 1 notice for community partners that while this is an exciting time to reimagine how we provide crisis services in the U.S., the full vision of a transformed crisis care system with 988 at its core will not be built overnight. Transformation of this scale will take time, and Illinois stakeholders must all work together to make it happen. DHS-DMH also emphasized the importance that all stakeholders speak with one voice about 988 to ensure clear understanding about what it is and how it will work. As SAMHSA continues updating its partner toolkit and providing guidance on 988 implementation, DHS-DMH looks forward to working with its partners to bring these critical services to the communities we serve.

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