

Ohio's 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Help and Hope for Those in Need

OHIO'S VOICE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION



The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is an essential resource for Ohioans in mental health crises. Launched on July 16, 2022, it provides immediate, confidential support via calls, texts, or chats. Whether you are in crisis, concerned about a loved one, or seeking guidance, the 988 Lifeline connects you to trained counselors who are there to listen and help.

Restoring and protecting the \$72.9 million for Ohio's 988 system in the final state budget is crucial to providing timely help to those in need.

Why 988 Matters

- **Life-Changing Impact:** Research shows that individuals who reach out to a 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline counselor are more likely to feel hopeful and less likely to feel depressed or suicidal. **Nearly 98% of people who contact the 988 Lifeline receive the support they need, often without requiring further services.**
- **Trained Counselors Ready to Help:** 988 counselors are specially trained to de-escalate crises and guide individuals to local resources if additional support is necessary.
- **Fast, Reliable Support:** Ohio's 988 call centers receive an average of 19,000 calls, texts, and chats every month, with an impressive 25-second average response time—faster than the national average of 34 seconds.

*Ohio has
19 call centers
with 400 employees
(Part time, full time,
and
administrative staff)*

A Health Crisis that Demands Action

- **Ohio's Suicide Crisis:** Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among Ohioans aged 10-34 and the 12th-leading cause of death statewide. Tragically, five Ohioans die by suicide every day, and one youth dies every 34 hours.

Ohio's Commitment to Its Citizens

- **Local Support:** Ohio's 988 system is designed to prioritize local support. Calls are routed to local counselors who are familiar with community resources. If necessary, calls are routed to a national backup center to ensure immediate help.
- **Ohioans Can Reach Out Anytime:** No matter the crisis, 988 is available 24/7.

By the Numbers July 2022-March 2025

Provided by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

496,038	Total 988 contacts since launch	3,970	Average monthly texts from Ohio area codes
19,438	Average monthly 988 contacts	2,138	Average monthly chats from Ohio area codes
13,330	Average monthly calls from Ohio area codes	Less than 1%	Average calls rolled over to national backup center

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988 Financial Information

Since the launch of 988 in July 2022, Ohio has experienced a 42% increase in contacts, highlighting the need for adequate funding for crisis support. The state has invested \$6 million to promote 988 services and recent legislation (SB 234), effective April 9, 2025, aims to further enhance its reach.

- School districts serving grades 9 through 12 and higher education institutions must include the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline number on student identification cards, student planners, and electronic portals, ensuring easy access to the lifeline for young people in times of need.

Category	SYF 25 Funding	SYF 26 Funding	SYF 27 Funding	Description
Operating	\$23,775,621	\$26,255,640	\$27,752,940	988 contact center operations & call center back-up. Funding above base rate determined by proportionate contact volume being answered by each center
Chat/Text Operational Costs	\$3,300,000	\$5,000,000	\$6,000,000	Cost associated with increasing in-state chat & text response answer rate (currently at 50% in-state answer rate)
Administrative	\$486,681	\$530,000	\$557,000	Administrative oversight & coordination by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.
Technology	\$1,580,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,500,000	Infrastructure/system support to achieve 9-1-1/988 interoperability, develop in-state data control, dispatch mobile crisis response including MRSS.
Marketing	\$3,241,160	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	Public awareness & outreach campaigns. Funding approved by Controlling Board for FY 24 & FY 25.
Training	\$545,741	\$545,700	\$545,700	Ohio State University 988 Training Series to ensure all Ohio 988 Specialists receive continuous training to support help seeker needs.
Evaluation & Other Required Costs	\$267,560	\$267,560	\$267,560	Pacific Institute of Research & Evaluation (required evaluation for federal grants).
Telehealth		\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	Funding would be used to embed on-demand telehealth services within 988 for Ohioans in need of immediate crisis care.
TOTAL	\$33,196,763	\$39,498,900	\$42,623,200	
State Allocation	\$26,840,278	\$34,191,840	\$41,296,200	
Federal Allocation	\$6,356,485	\$5,307,060	\$1,325,000	

Future Funding Projections

The FY 2026 and FY 2027 funding amounts were based on an actuarial analysis predicting a 28% increase in contacts, adding approximately 528,000 contacts over two years. To manage this growth, HB 96 allocates funds to support the increased call volume and to sustain a new state-centralized system with 911-988 interoperability, providing Ohio with real-time data from the national vendor, Vibrant. This will enhance accountability for 988 call centers and transparency for OhioMHAS and the legislature. Continued investments are vital for meeting the needs of individuals in crisis while ensuring high service levels statewide.