

Preparing for 988 in Wisconsin

Spring 2022



What You Need to Know

As of July 16, 2022, anyone in the United States can call or text 988 or use the chat function via www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org to access the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The name of the service will be changing to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has been planning for 988 for nearly two years. Partnerships have been established to ensure Wisconsin is ready for 988.

ABOUT 988

- 988 will accept calls, texts, and chats from anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health, and/or substance use crisis. People can also contact 988 if they are concerned about a loved one in crisis.
- After July 16, 2022, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline will be accessible through the existing 10-digit number and 988. Prior to July 16, the 988 dialing code should not be promoted.
- Wisconsinites who use 988 will connect with Wisconsin Lifeline, an in-state call center where trained counselors answer calls, chats, and texts.
- Wisconsin Lifeline is supported and funded by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

ABOUT WISCONSIN LIFELINE

- Wisconsin Lifeline is Wisconsin's National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, answering calls, chats, and texts that come from residents throughout the state.
- It is operated by Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin, an agency based in Green Bay that serves all of Wisconsin with its National Suicide Prevention Lifeline call center.
- The counselors at Wisconsin Lifeline are trained to listen and support callers through their distress with a focus on de-escalation and coping skills.
- Wisconsin Lifeline has some bilingual counselors and staff and has access to third party interpreters 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

What You Can Do to Prepare



FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Before July 16, 2022, continue to call 1-800-273-8255 to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.
- Wisconsin Lifeline counselors are trained to reduce the stress of your challenge, provide emotional support, and connect you with local resources.
- Wisconsin Lifeline is not able to send an in-person response directly. A direct in-person response requires a transfer to another service and could involve law enforcement.
- If you or someone you know is in imminent danger, call 911.



FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

- Begin conversations with staff in your agency on the existing referral sources and how you will use 988 in the future.
- Continue to provide the 10-digit number (1-800-273-8255) to clients and other individuals.
- Do not identify 988 as an agency-specific crisis service. It can be incorporated as part of a safety plan, but it should not be the only point of contact for clients experiencing a crisis.



FOR COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

- Engage local partners such as behavioral health, law enforcement agencies, schools, and 911 centers to discuss how your community will use 988.
- Wisconsin Lifeline will transfer a 988 contact to a county's crisis program if the person consents and desires more services than Wisconsin Lifeline can provide.



FOR 911 CENTERS

- The National Emergency Number Association has a 911-988 Interoperability Standards Workgroup that will release best practice recommendations on 911 and 988 interactions this summer.
- Wisconsin has a statewide 911-988 Workgroup that has been meeting since last year and will continue to meet through the implementation of 988.