



988 Update

NJ Association of Counties

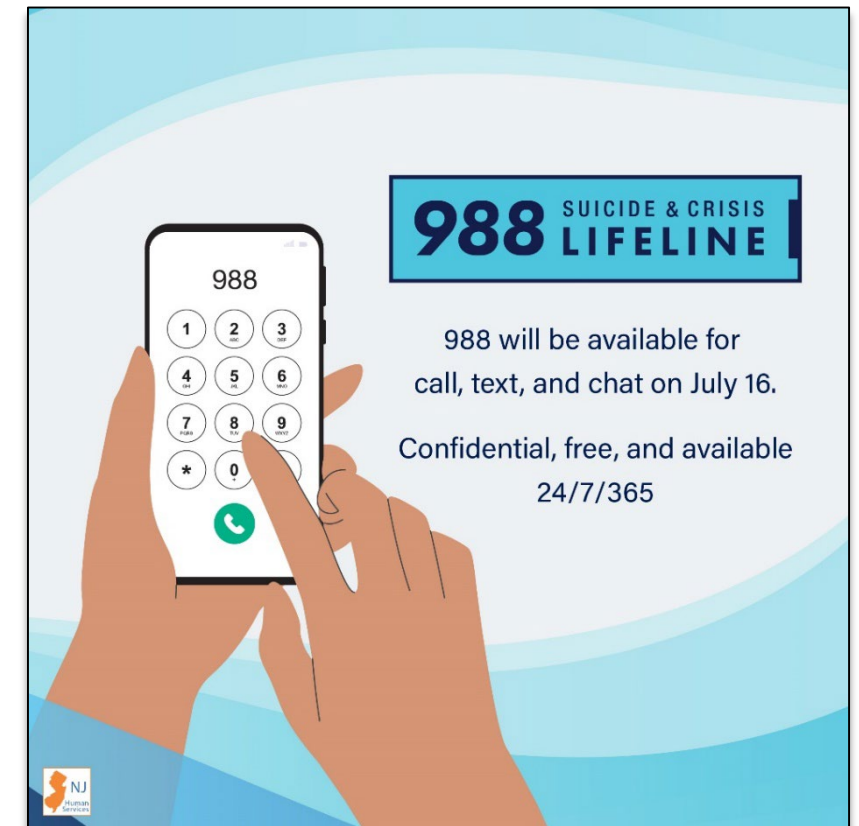
Department of Human Services

Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Valerie Mielke, Assistant Commissioner
September 14, 2022

What is 988?

- 988 is the new, nationwide 3-digit dialing code for suicide prevention and mental health or substance use crisis.
- When you dial or text 988, you will be connected to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline which is available 24/7.
- You can also chat with 988 at 988Lifeline.org/chat.
- On the Lifeline, trained crisis counselors offer compassionate care, and support will be available for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide, a mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.
- People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who is in crisis and may need urgent care or support.

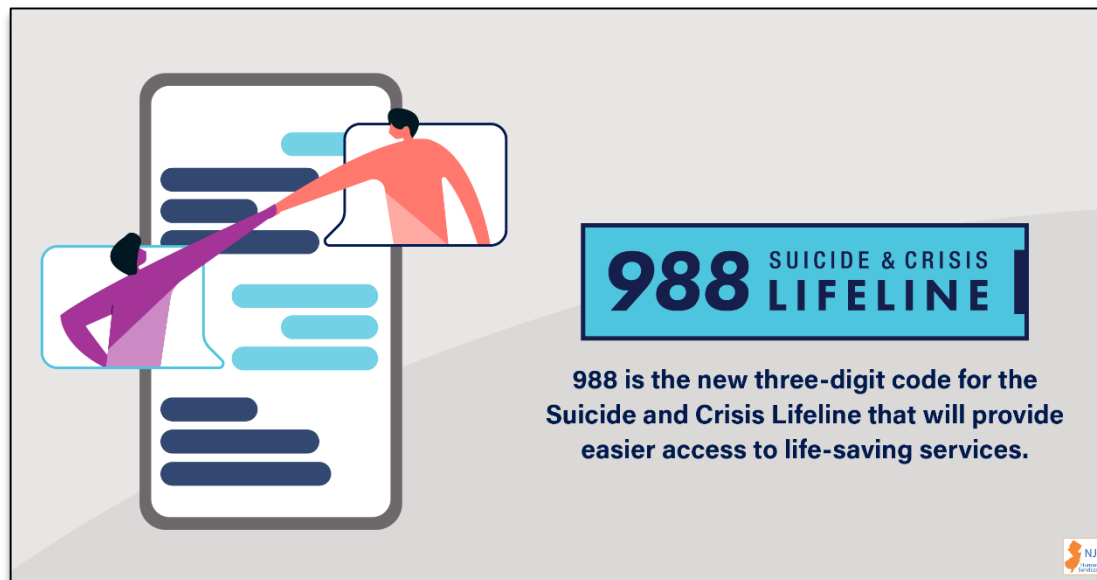


Preparation for 988

- The NJ DMHAS 988 Team has been working since January 2021 to prepare for the transition from the 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number to 988.
- DMHAS created a 988 Key Stakeholder Coalition of agency professionals, people with lived experience, and representatives from the Acute Care/Crisis Response system throughout NJ.
- Coalition Members met monthly to discuss planning for 988 and continue to be available for consultation.

A Bold Vision Is Required

- The transition to 988 has required a bold vision for a crisis care system that provides direct, life-saving services to those in need.



NJ Acute Care/Crisis Response System

- New Jersey has a strong acute care and crisis response system currently in place.
- DMHAS is working to develop and implement additional programs that will establish the 988 system as a **comprehensive mental health response to people experiencing a suicidal, mental health or substance use crisis.**

The Guiding Principle of 988

- 988 is being set up using the guiding principle that there is always **someone to call**, **someone to respond**, and **somewhere to go**.

Someone to Call

- In New Jersey, the 988 system has 5 Lifeline centers that answer calls, chats, and texts made to 988.
- Together these 5 centers provide 24/7 coverage of 988 contacts for the entire state of New Jersey.
- Individuals can dial or text directly to 988. Individuals that prefer to chat should go online to <https://988lifeline.org/> for help.
- 988 is a new, easier number to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) which has been in existence since 2005.
- Individuals contacting 988 will continue to get compassionate care and support that the NSPL has provided for over 17 years.
- The previous NSPL number (1-800-273-TALK) remains operational.

Additional Call Lines

- Other call lines including **NJ 211**, **PerformCare** (services for the Children's System of Care), and the **Peer Warm lines** (Peer Recovery Warm line, COP-2-COP, etc.) are still available as additional resources.
- DMHAS is developing warm transfer protocols for the 988 network. Plans include bi-directional warm transfers with 911, PerformCare, NJ 211 and the Division of Developmental Disabilities. These will be used after an initial assessment determines specialists on other call lines could be helpful.

988 or 911 – What's the Difference?



- 911 is focused on **public safety** and will dispatch Emergency Medical Services, the fire department and police, as needed.
- If someone is **in immediate danger, if there is a fire, a crime, or someone has already hurt themselves** and needs immediate medical care, call 911.



- 988 allows easy access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline network which provides **de-escalation and support as well as linkage to mental health and/or substance use services** and other services as needed.
- If someone is having **suicidal thoughts or is experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis**, call 988.

Preparing for Increased Call Volume

- With the transition to 988, an increase in call volume to the Lifeline network was anticipated.
- DMHAS offered funding opportunities to the five New Jersey Lifeline centers to increase capacity in preparation for 988.
- Funds totaling \$3.7 million were available from a combination of federal grants. All five Lifeline centers now contract with DMHAS.

Preparing for Increased Call Volume

- From the transition to 988 on July 16, 2022, there was a 60% increase in call volume nationally. New Jersey centers saw an increase of approximately 26%.
- As the message of 988 continues to spread, the volume of contacts coming into the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is expected to increase.
- With DMHAS funding to increase staff and technology, New Jersey's Lifeline centers will be better prepared to respond.

Additional State and Federal Funding

- Governor Murphy's Budget Act for state fiscal year 2023 includes an increase of \$12.8 million to fund Lifeline centers and strengthen infrastructure for the 988 network.
- Programs that offer additional community-based services are being developed by DMHAS.
 - **Mobile Crisis Response** (someone to respond) - \$16 million in FY 2023 budget act.
 - **Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Centers** (somewhere to go) - \$11.5 million to be supported through a federal grant.

Mobile Crisis Response

(in development)

- Mobile Crisis Response in New Jersey will include 24/7, statewide coverage by Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams of mental health professionals and, whenever possible, trained peer specialists.
- These Teams will go into the community to meet with individuals, help them to de-escalate their crisis, and link them to treatment services and other resources as needed.
- Mobile Crisis Response will be dispatched without law enforcement when assessed to be safe to do so.

Mobile Services

- Mobile Crisis Response is a component of the 988 system focused on providing mental health care to adults in the community.
- Mobile Screening, an outreach component of Designated Screening Services, will continue to provide assessment for involuntary commitment in community settings as well as in hospitals.
- Children's Mobile Response will continue to offer community-based outreach to children, youth and their families in crisis.

Crisis Receiving & Stabilization Centers

(to be developed)

- Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Centers will offer community-based services in a facility designed to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.
- They will be staffed by mental health and substance use disorder professionals and, whenever possible, trained peer specialists.
- Located throughout the state, they will provide referrals and linkage to other community programs.

Existing Community Resources

- Several services are already available in New Jersey to individuals in crisis. They can be accessed by individuals directly or by someone concerned for a person in crisis.
- These include:



**Designated
Screening Centers**



**Crisis Residential
Services Programs**



**Early Intervention
Support Services**



**Certified Community
Behavioral Health Clinics**

Existing Community Resources

- New Jersey has 35 **Designated and Affiliated Screening Centers** that respond to urgent mental health situations and assess for psychiatric hospitalization.
- **Early Intervention Support Services (EISS)** offer crisis intervention and crisis stabilization services in a community setting. There are 11 existing EISS programs (covering 11 counties); 10 EISS programs are in various stages of implementation (covering the final 10 counties).

Additional Community Resources

- NJ has **Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)** across the state. They offer comprehensive behavioral health treatment and services to adults and children who have a mental health, substance use or co-occurring disorder. Additionally, they collaborate with medical service providers for integrated health care.
- **Crisis Residential Services** provide short-term residential care as an alternative to hospitalization. These programs provide a variety of models including peer respite. All offer 24/7 staffing in a therapeutic setting.

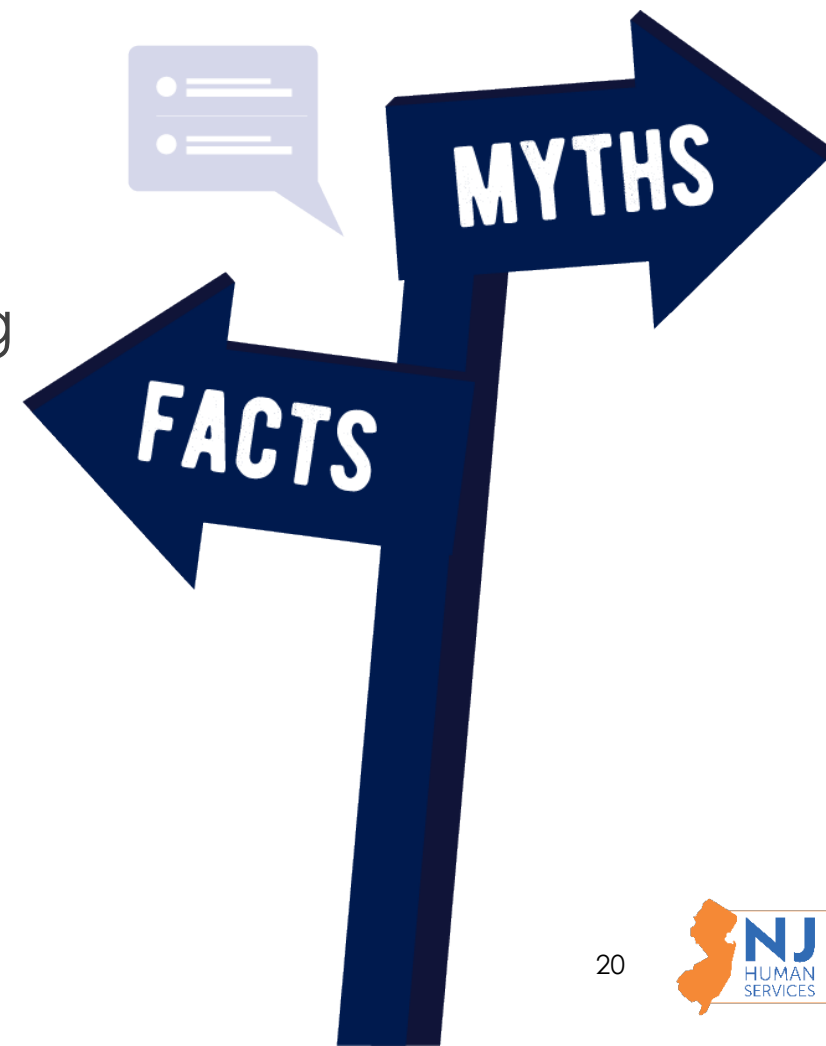
Help Share the Facts about 988

- To help share accurate information about 988 and support individuals in your community that may be in crisis, please see the DMHAS messaging tool kit at [Department of Human Services | 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline \(state.nj.us\)](https://www.state.nj.us/dmhas/988-suicide-crisis-lifeline).
- Additional messaging material for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available on SAMHSA's website at [988 Partner Toolkit | SAMHSA](https://www.samhsa.gov/988-partner-toolkit).



Geolocation – Myths and Facts

- DMHAS and SAMHSA are aware that some negative messaging related to 988 has been circulating on social media.
- Many of these messages are related to the use of geolocation by 988 and concerns that contacting 988 will result in police rescue or involuntary hospitalization. Although this may happen in a life threatening situation, it is not a frequent occurrence.
- It's important to know and share the facts.



Geolocation – Myths and Facts

- Geolocation is not currently available for 988 Lifeline centers.
- 988 is designed to provide free and confidential emotional support to individuals in crisis.
- Unless a situation is life threatening, 988 call specialists will not transfer calls to 911 or contact a Designated Screening Service without the knowledge of the person in crisis.



Please share accurate information about 988 to help ensure that facts are available to everyone

988 – A Bold Vision for Crisis Care



Need More Info? Have Questions?

For more information about 988, go to:

[Department of Human Services | 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline \(state.nj.us\)](#)

[988 Frequently Asked Questions | SAMHSA](#)

Questions about 988? 988Questions@dhs.nj.gov