

# SAMHSA's Preparation for 988: The National Perspective

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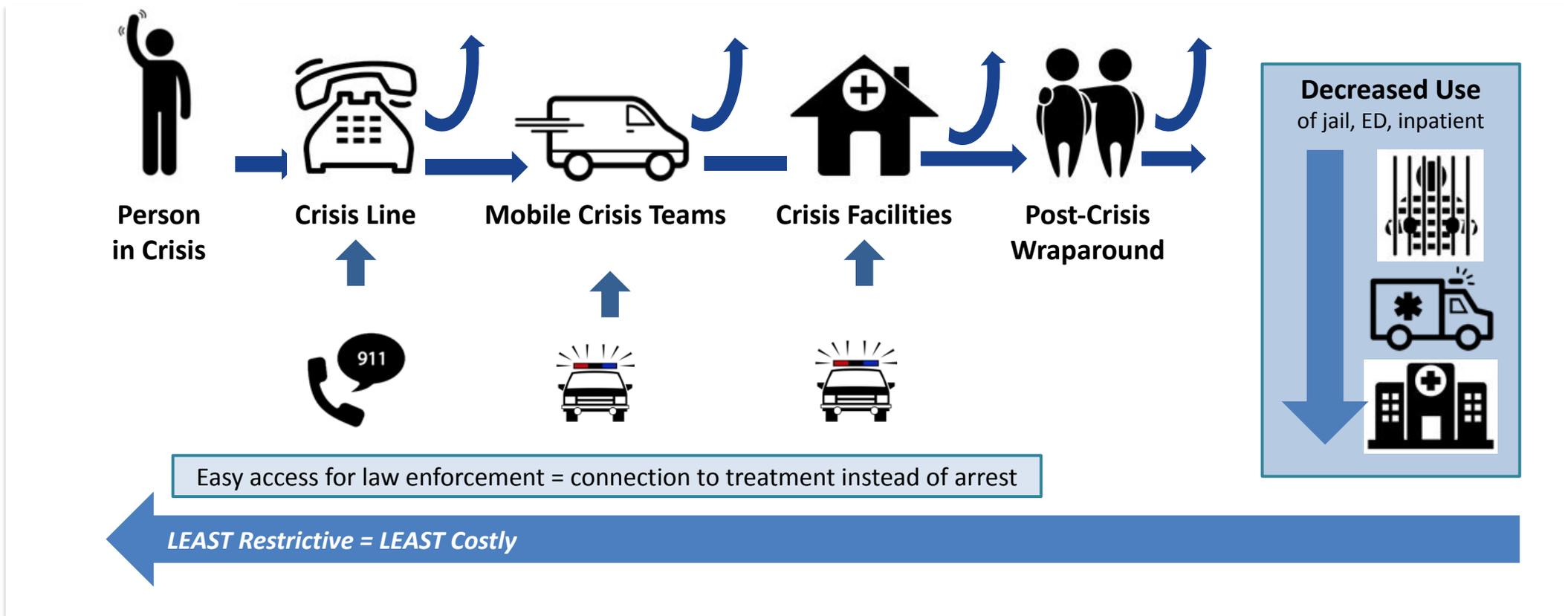
**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# America's Suicide and Mental Health Crisis



- Too many **Americans experience suicide and mental health crises** without the support and care they need
  - In 2019, **61.2M** Americans had a mental illness and/or substance use disorder
  - In 2019, there was **approximately one death by suicide every 11 minutes in the US**
  - From 1999 through 2018, **the suicide rate increased 35%**
  - **For people aged 10 – 34 years**, suicide is the second leading cause of death
  
- Since 2005, the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255)** has helped millions of individuals in emotional distress
  - 46K calls received (2005)
  - 3.6M calls, chats, texts received (2021)

# Components of a Behavioral Health Crisis Response System



“As we continue to confront the impact of the pandemic, investing in this critical tool is key to protecting the health and wellbeing of countless Americans – and saving lives. Giving the states a tool to prevent suicide and support people in crisis is essential to our HHS mission of protecting the health and wellbeing of everyone in our nation. We know that remembering a three-digit number beats a ten-digit number any day, particularly in times of crisis, and I encourage every state to rev up planning to implement 988 for the sake of saving lives.”

- HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, Press Release, 12/20/21

# The Opportunity of 988

Transitioning to 988 is an important step in transforming crisis care in the country, creating a universal entry point to needed crisis services in line with access to other emergency medical services.

- We are strengthening and expanding the National, state and territory infrastructure to respond to all behavioral health crisis calls, texts, and chats anywhere in the country;
- We are transitioning the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-8255) to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit number (988);
- An unprecedented opportunity to improve behavioral health crisis response and care for the nation.
- SAMHSA can't do this alone. We embrace the partnership from states and territories to meet the needs of anyone in crisis



# 988 Builds Directly on the Existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

**2001: Congress appropriates funding for suicide prevention hotline;** SAMHSA awards competitive grant to establish a network of local crisis centers

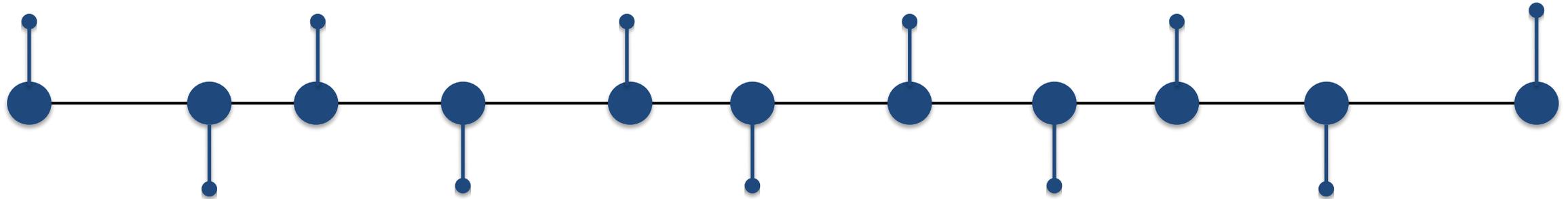
**2007: SAMHSA and VA partner to establish 1-800-273-TALK as access point for the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL)**

**2015: Disaster Distress Helpline** was incorporated into Lifeline cooperative agreement

**2020: Lifeline began incorporating texting service** capability in select centers

**2021: SAMHSA/VA/FCC are responsible for submitting multiple 988 reports to Congress**

**2022: 988 fully operational for phone and text** in July 2022



**2005: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline)** was launched with number 1-800-273-TALK

**2013: Lifeline began incorporating chat service** capability in select centers

**2019: FCC designates 988** as new three-digit number for suicide prevention and mental health crises

**2020: National Hotline Designation Act** signed into law, incorporating 988 as the new Lifeline and VCL number

**2021: State 988 funding opportunity released,** and states are responsible for submitting **planning grants to Vibrant**

# 988 Vision & Near-Term Pillars

## SAMHSA goals

**1** Strengthen and enhance Lifeline

**2** Transform and strengthen broader crisis care continuum

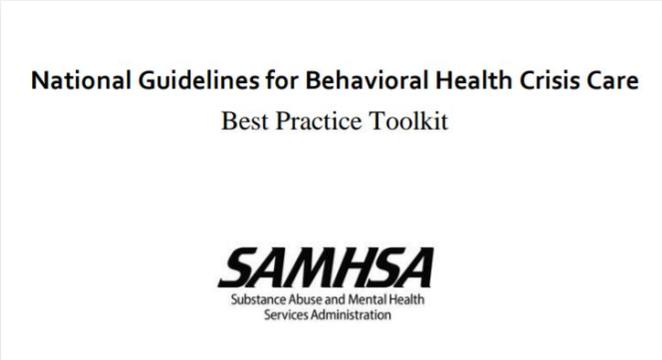
## Pillars defined by SAMHSA

- 1A Federal planning and convening:** putting robust federal funding, leadership, and policy direction in place to strengthen the Lifeline network and the broader crisis continuum
- 1B Operational readiness of the Lifeline network:** ensuring the Lifeline network is equipped to respond to projected FY22 contacts
- 1C Messaging and public communication:** educating key stakeholders about 988 messaging and the broader public about how and when to use 988
- 1D Foundation for comprehensive crisis services:** putting the building blocks in place to ensure a robust and responsive crisis system that provides direct, life-saving services to all in need

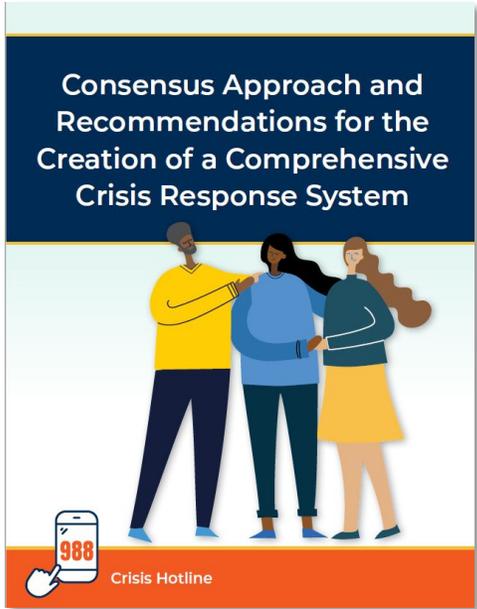
*Activities underlying each of these pillars evolve across phases of implementation (e.g., pre- and post-July)*

# The Crisis System: SAMHSA is investing heavily to help build local crisis systems

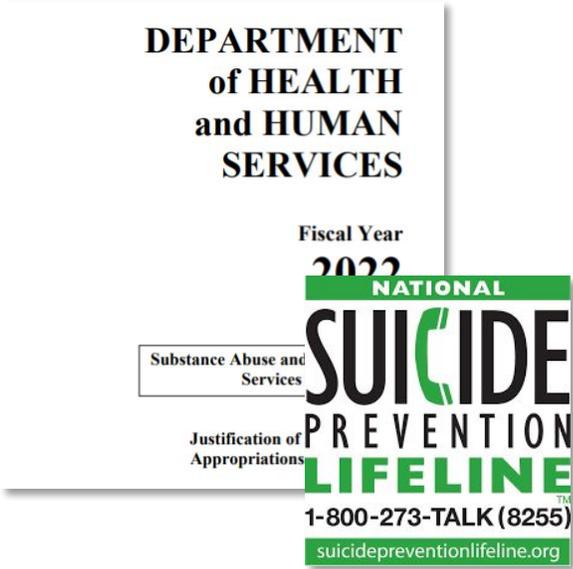
## SAMHSA 2020 National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care



## SAMHSA/NASMHPD publications on crisis services



## SAMHSA FY2022 proposed budget



# SAMHSA 988 updates and resources

- **Finalized and shared congressional reports on 988**
  - Report to Congress on 988 Resources
  - Report to Congress on Training and Access to 988 for High-Risk Populations
  - 988 Appropriations Report
- **Announced \$282M to help transition Lifeline to 988**
  - \$177 million to strengthen and expand the existing Lifeline network operations, back-up center workforce, and telephone/chat/text infrastructure
  - \$105 million to build up staffing across states' local crisis call centers
- **Released \$105M Notice of Funding Opportunity to states and territories**



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<b>Newsroom</b>	<h2>HHS Announces Critical Investments to Implement Upcoming 988 Dialing Code for National Suicide Prevention Lifeline</h2> <p>Monday, December 20, 2021</p> <h3><i>American Rescue Plan Funding Will Support State Efforts to Transform Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Care</i></h3> <p>Today the Department of Health and Human Services, through its Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), will make critical investments in suicide prevention and crisis care services, announcing \$282 million to help transition the <a href="#">National Suicide Prevention Lifeline</a> exit disclaimer icon from its current 10-digit number to a three-digit dialing code – 988.</p> <p>In 2020, Congress designated the new 988 dialing code to be operated through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Converting to this easy-to-remember, three-digit number will strengthen and expand the existing Lifeline network, providing the public with easier access to life-saving services. The Lifeline currently helps thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day. The 988 dialing code will be available nationally for call, text or chat beginning in July 2022.</p>
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	
SAMHSA Blog	
Media Guidelines for Bullying Prevention	
Press Announcements	
Statements	

Logo Use Guidelines
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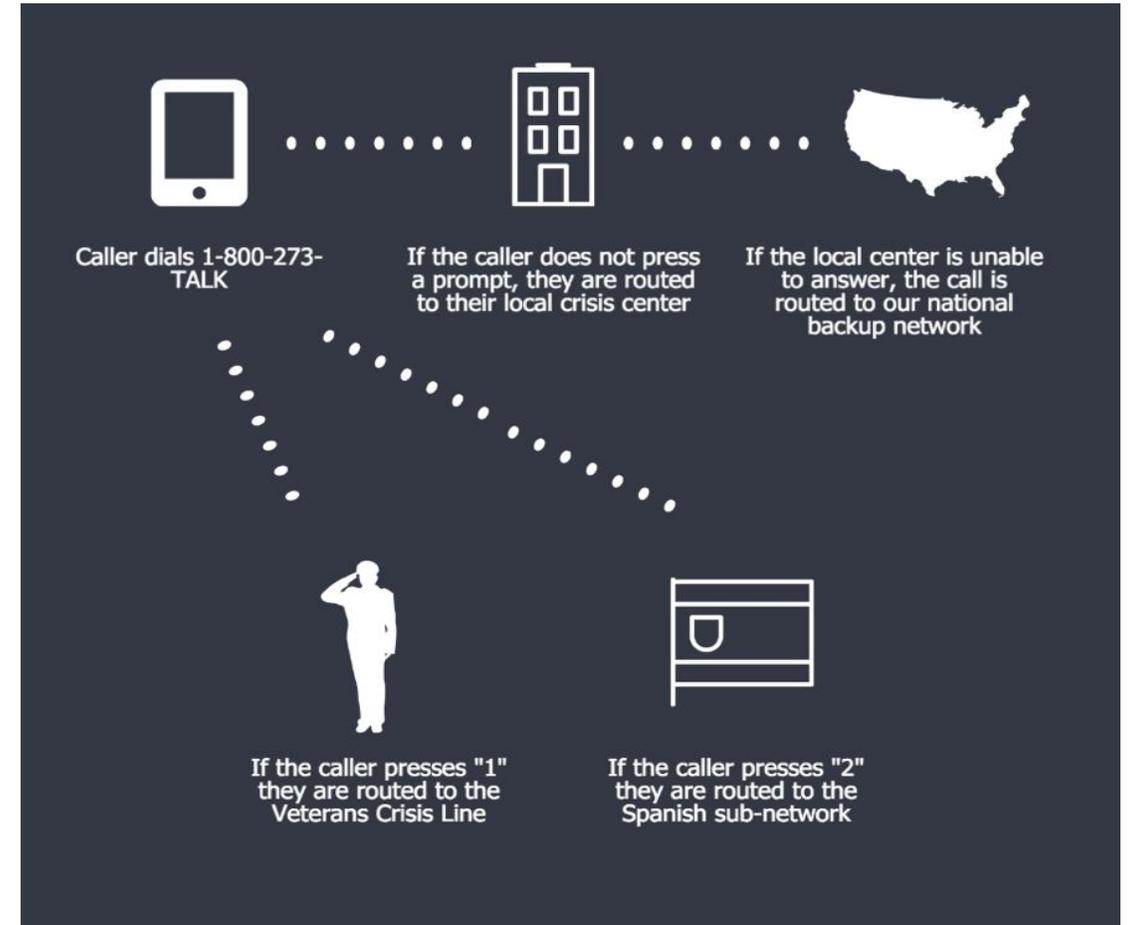
# About the Lifeline

# Effectiveness of Lifeline

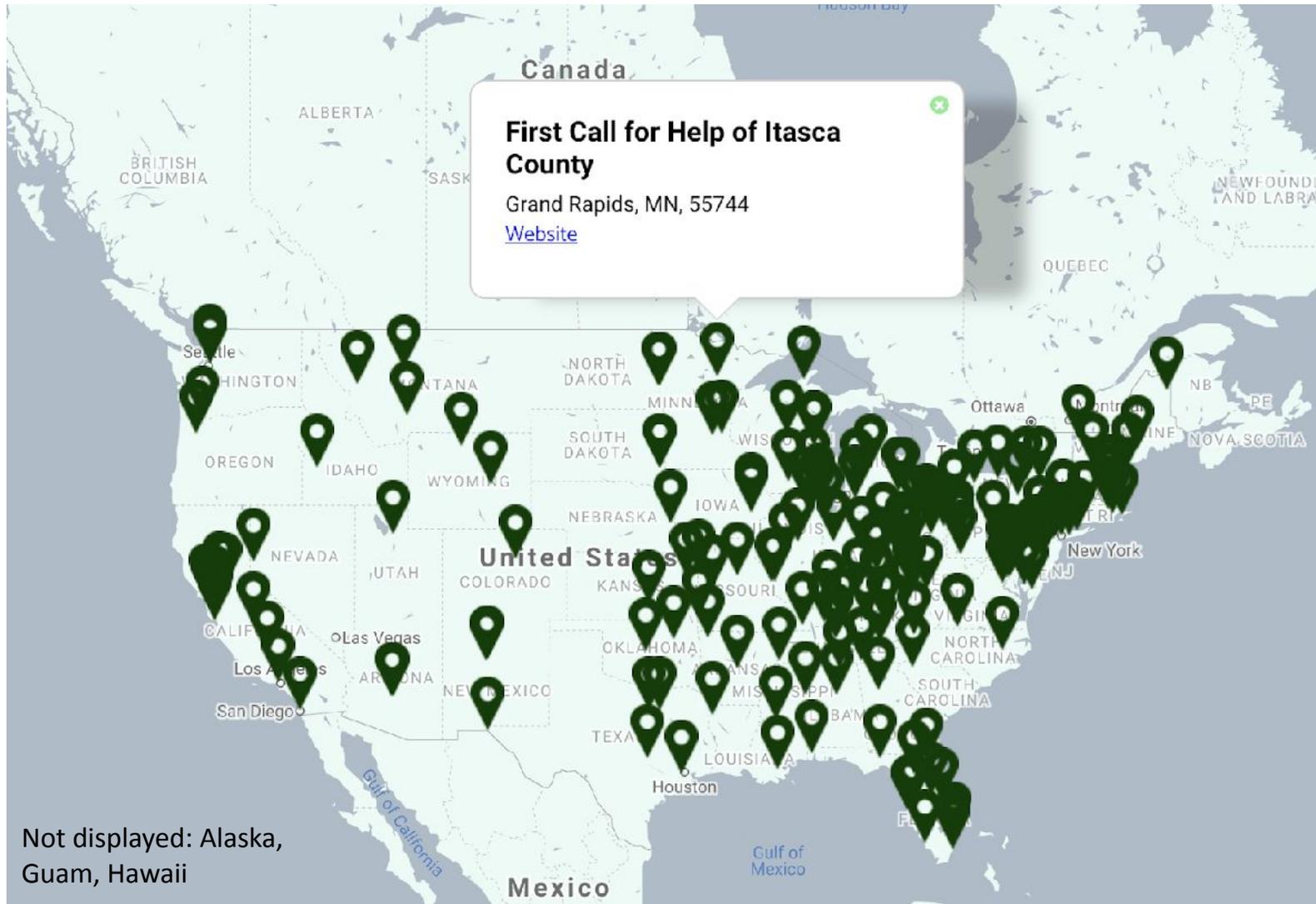
- Seriously suicidal persons call, chat, or text the Lifeline (23% callers, 60% chatters)
- Callers intent to die is significantly reduced during the call (Gould et al. 2007)
- Counselors able to obtain collaboration on over 75% of imminent risk calls (Gould et al, 2016)
- Counselors at Lifeline centers were more likely to inquire about current suicidal ideation, recent ideation, and past attempts, and callers were more likely to experience reduced distress. (Ramchand et al., 2017)
- Follow up calls by Lifeline centers to suicidal callers are experienced by 90% of callers as helping keep them safe and not kill themselves (Gould et al, 2018)
- Suicidality reduced among 50% of those accessing chat (Gould et al, 2021)
- “Third-party callers” calling the Lifeline when they are worried about someone deemed to be at imminent risk are provided a range of interventions which can supplement, and at times replace, calling 911. (Gould et al., 2021)

# About the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline)

- Established by SAMHSA in 2005, the Lifeline is a network of independently operated and funded local and state call centers
- Around 200 centers
- 46,000 calls received in its first year
- 3.6m calls, texts, chats received in 2021
- Chats answered through <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>



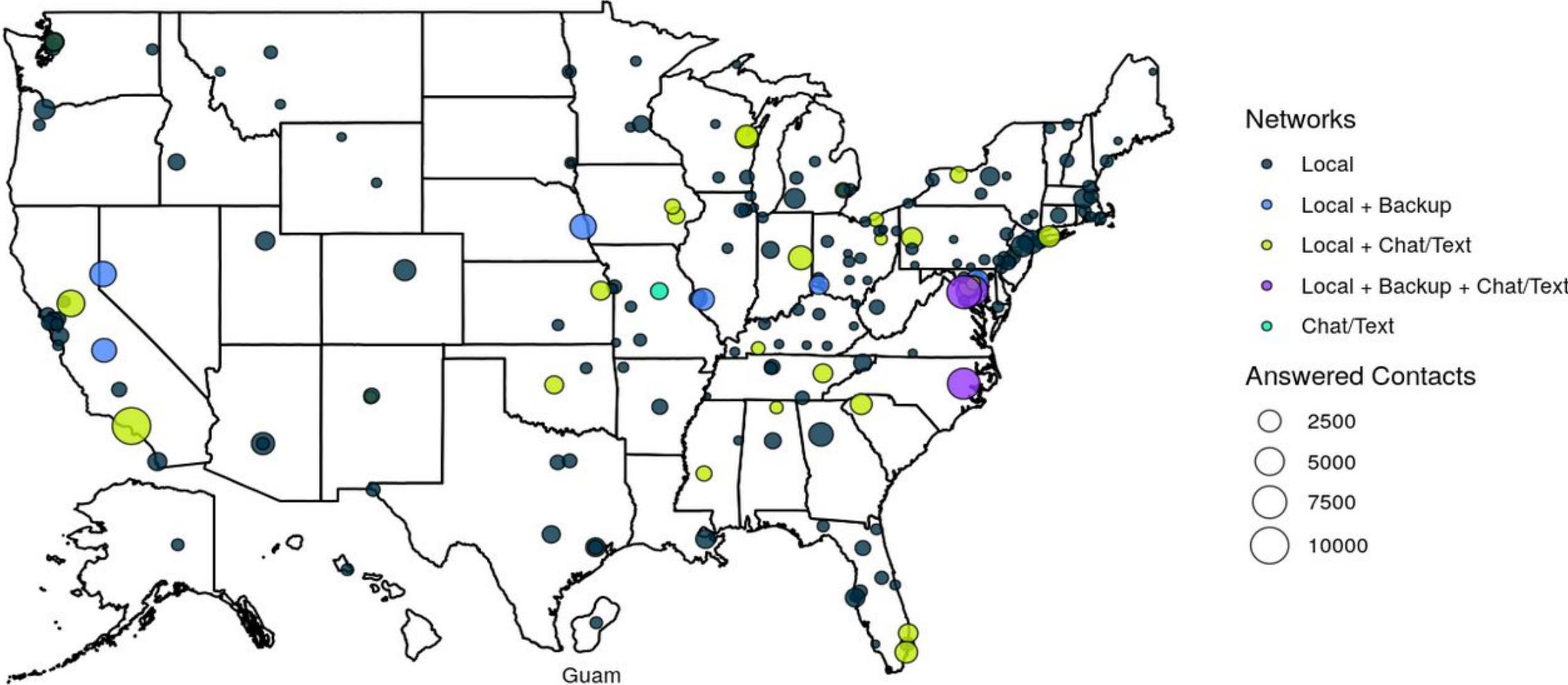
# Lifeline Centers- the Maps



<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/our-network/#section-4>

# Snapshot of the Lifeline Network (FY2022)

Lifeline Centers  
Jan 01, 2022 - Jan 31, 2022



# Lifeline Answer Rate Challenges

While the Lifeline has evolved significantly since its formation – and now comprises nearly 200 crisis centers across the country – **demand far exceeds capacity**

In 2020 alone, **hundreds of thousands of users** – many of whom may be actively suicidal – reached out for help and were **unable to connect with a trained counselor**



~15% unanswerd calls



~44% unanswerd texts



~70% unanswerd chats

# FY22 Goals of Funding to Lifeline Administrator

- Fund the National Backup, Chat, Text and Spanish language centers to increase workforce to meet anticipated demand
- Support and expand services for populations at high risk of suicide
- Strengthen Lifeline network infrastructure, standards, training and quality improvement

# Funding for 988 State and Territory Grant

- \$105,000,000 will be distributed to states and territories
- For accepted proposals, funding will be awarded based upon a formula using FY 2021 Lifeline calls received across states and territories
- Funding: American Rescue Plan Act funds, requires utilization for workforce support and development
- NOFO lists the FY 2021 call volume and maximum funding amount each state and territory can request for the grant period
- Grants will be programmatically overseen under the Office of the Assistant Secretary 988 Crisis Center Operations Team

# 988 State and Territory Grant Program

- States and territory government agencies, including the District of Columbia; Guam; the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; the Northern Mariana Islands; the Virgin Islands; and American Samoa.
- SAMHSA will only make one award per state and territory. If SAMHSA receives more than one application from a state or territory, SAMHSA will fund the application with the highest priority score.
- Up to 56 awards
- NOFO released 12/20/2021
- Application submissions are required by 01/31/2022
- Anticipated Award Date: 04/15/2022, Anticipated Start Date: 04/30/22, Project Period: 2 years
- Texas eligible to apply for up to \$8,367,877

# Goals of 988 State and Territory Funding

- Build a true collaboration and partnership between SAMHSA, States/Territories, and Lifeline Crisis Centers to respond to all those in need of 988 support
- 100% nationwide 988 coverage and response through all states and territories
- Build and/or improve the workforce for 988 response and improve crisis care coordination across states and territories through local, regional, and/or statewide Lifeline and community mental health services
- Designate and monitor Key Performance Indicators for states/territories and align with Lifeline network response
- Cooperative agreements are formula based- Goal for all states and territories to engage in 988 response

# Few Key Activities

- Increase response rates above 90% in-state
- Prepare for local chat/text response
- Collect and report data on emergency rescues, suicide attempts in progress, and/or mobile crisis outreach referrals
- Provide follow up services, including outreach for those identified at imminent risk of suicide and referred to emergency intervention
- Provide training on working with populations at higher risk of suicide, including awareness of referral options for high-risk population-specific services
- State oversight of 988 and 911 coordination in collaboration with the state's 911 administrator
- *85% of funds through grant must go directly to Lifeline crisis centers to support workforce*



# Texas Specific Lifeline Data

- Texas has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest Lifeline call volume of U.S., second only to California.
  - 152,200 calls were routed in 2021. This is a 14% increase compared to pre/Covid 2019 (133,039 calls routed)
- 5 centers in the Lifeline network currently- Harris Center, ATCIC, Emergence Health, ICARE, and Suicide and Crisis Center
- The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (TX HHSC) is funding Lifeline member centers through SFY 2023 with \$6,155,835 in Mental Health Block Grant Funds
- Texas was awarded a 2-year, \$3 million State Capacity Building Grant from the Lifeline/Vibrant Emotional Health in 2019
- Lifeline centers in Texas dramatically expanded their coverage areas during the 2-year grant, with their coverage for Lifeline call occurring in 203 of TX's 254 counties
- While some counties still do not have 24/7 coverage, the changes have been significant and coverage expansion will continue in 2022- **in 2019 the state had Lifeline coverage in 55 counties and 9 of the states 27 area codes**

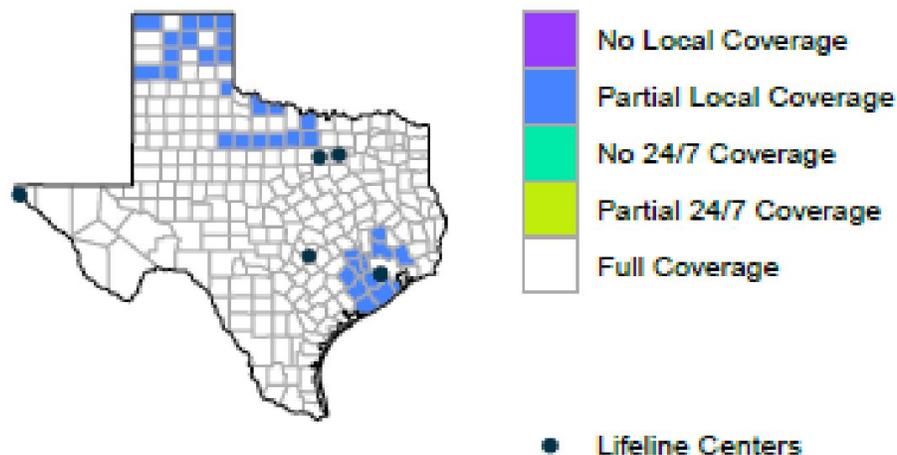
## Key Performance Indicators: TX

2022-01-01 to 2022-01-31

**Total Contacts: 21,298**

**Offered to Spanish: 493**

### County Coverage



## Lifeline Network Contacts (Excl. VCL & Spanish): 17,684

	Calls	Chats	Texts	Total
Offered	11,419	5,740*	525	17,684
Answered In-State	5,186 (45.4%)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Abandoned In-State	1,101 (9.6%)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flowout to Backup	5,132 (44.9%)	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-State ASA	00:00:25	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-State Avg Contact Time	00:14:10	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*Chat service does not record the location of unanswered chats. Offered chats are estimated.

Chats and Texts are not currently routed by location; in-state performance metrics are not applicable.

# SAMHSA Resources

# SAMHSA 988 Fact Sheet



**In 2020, Congress designated the new 988 dialing code to be operated through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the lead federal agency, in partnership with the Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Veterans Affairs, working to make the promise of 988 a reality for America. Moving to a 3-digit dialing code is a **once-in-a-lifetime opportunity** to strengthen and expand the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (the Lifeline).

Of course, 988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number—it is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for all Americans who might be experiencing suicidal thoughts, who are at risk of suicide, or who are struggling with emotional distress. Preparing for full 988 implementation and operational readiness requires a bold vision for a **crisis care system that provides direct, life-saving services to all in need.**

SAMHSA sees 988 as a first step towards a transformed crisis care system in much the same way as emergency medical services have expanded in the US.



Developed in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Lifeline and will 988 replace it?

The **Lifeline** is a national network of over 180 local, independent, and state-funded crisis centers equipped to help people in emotional distress or experiencing a suicidal crisis. Moving to 988 will not replace the Lifeline, rather it will be an easier way for all Americans to access a strengthened and expanded network of crisis call centers.

### When will 988 go live nationally?

The **988 dialing code** will be available nationally for call, text, or chat on July 16, 2022. Until then, those experiencing a mental health or suicide-related crisis, or those helping a loved one through crisis, should continue to reach the Lifeline at its current number, **800-273-8255**. SAMHSA recommends not promoting 988 widely until it is available nationwide.

### How is this different than 911?

Like **911**, there will need to be a system of entities working in lock step to support the establishment and growth of 988 in a way that meets our country's growing suicide prevention and mental health crisis care needs. SAMHSA is actively engaged with 911 counterparts at the federal, state and local levels to plan for smooth coordination.

### How is 988 being funded?

Congress has provided the **Department of Health and Human Services workforce funding through the American Rescue Plan, some of which will support the 988 workforce**. Also, the President's Fiscal Year 2022 budget request provides additional funding for the Lifeline itself and for other existing federal crisis funding sources. At the state level, in addition to existing public/private sector funding streams, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 allows states to enact new state telecommunication fees to help support 988 operations.

### Is 988 available for substance use crisis?

SAMHSA views 988 as an opportunity to transform our country's behavioral health crisis system to respond to anyone in need. The Lifeline accepts calls from anyone who is suicidal or in emotional distress, including substance use crisis. This transformation will take time and requires resources from federal, state and local levels to prepare the crisis system to better meet these needs.

## Urgent realities.



Too many Americans are experiencing suicide and mental health crises without the support and care they need. In 2019 alone, the US had one death by suicide about every 11 minutes — and for people aged 10 – 34 years, suicide is the second leading cause of death.

## Easier access.



Moving to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code will provide greater access to life-saving services.

## There is hope.



Providing 24/7, free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress works! The Lifeline helps thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day.

Email 988 questions to:  
**988Team@samhsa.hhs.gov**

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/988-factsheet.pdf>

# SAMHSA/NASMHPD 988 Co-sponsorship Group

1. **Assess the readiness** across relevant audiences to inform a roadmap and equip audiences with the information, data, and guidance to prepare for 988 in the near and long-term
2. Refine an **integrated roadmap for 988 implementation** and plan to incorporate stakeholders through the convening
3. Ensure **coordination among stakeholders** and secure commitment to 988 milestones across organizations
4. Align ways to **measure progress and success** across each horizon of 988 launch
5. **Harness the collective energy and engage diverse voices** at the national convening to inform effective 988 implementation
6. Ensure 988 is **designed from the perspective of end users** and reflects their needs and preferences.



# HHS Resources that Support 988 and Crisis Services

## SAMHSA:

- *988 State and Territory Cooperative Agreement (12/22)*
- *Community Mental Health Services Block Grant – 5% Crisis Services set-aside*
- Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) grant
- Zero Suicide Grant
- Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention (GLS) Grant
- Rural Emergency Medical Services Grant
- State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant & Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Grant
- Tribal Behavioral Health Grant (Native Connections)
- State Transformational Technology Initiative Grants (TTI-NASMHPD)
- Governors Challenges to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

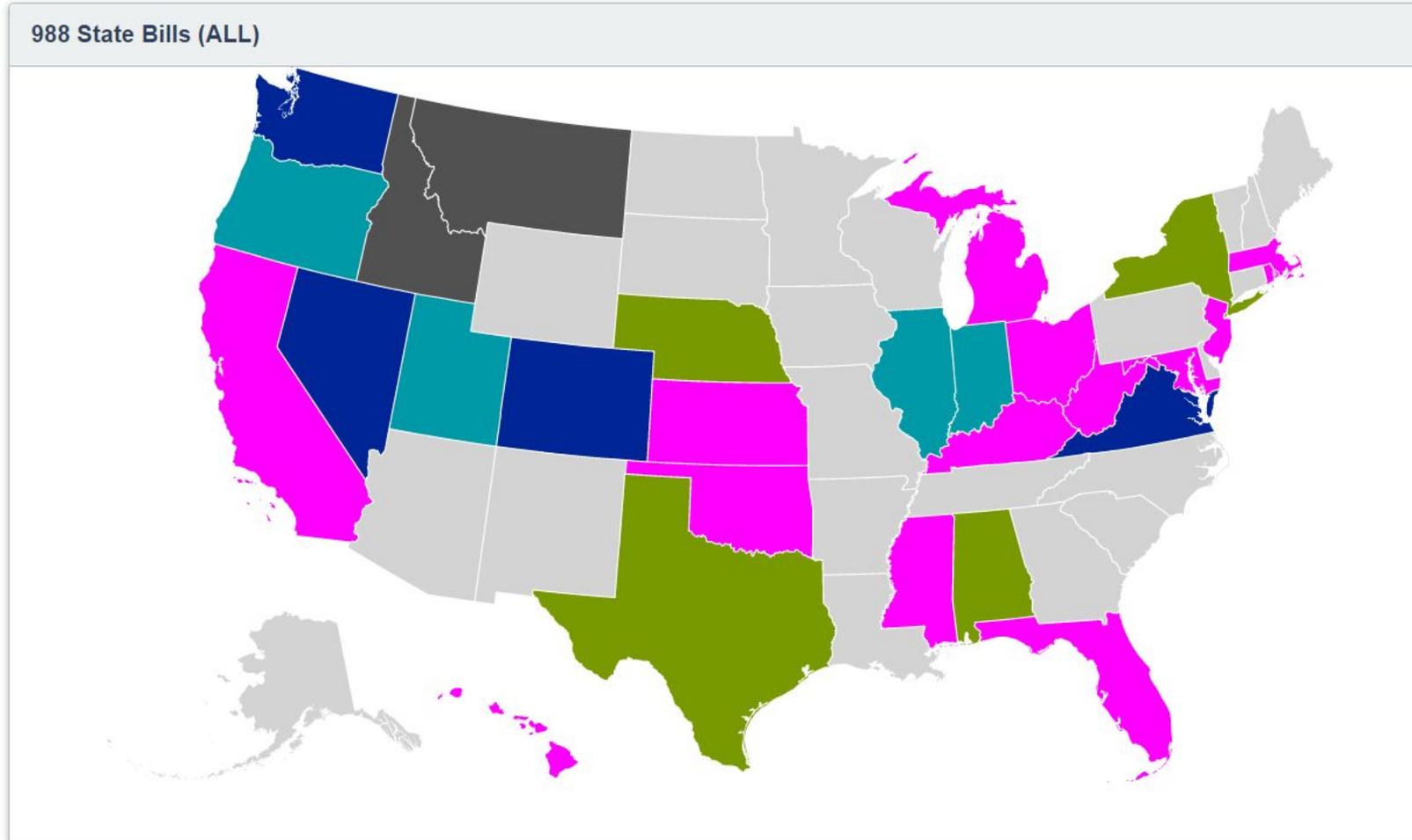
## CMS:

- Medicaid/CHIP Waivers – 1915 and 1115
- Medicaid/CHIP State Plan Amendments
- CMS State Planning Grants for Qualifying Community-Based Mobile Crisis Intervention Services (\$15M for 20 states)

## SAMHSA Technical Assistance:

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center
- Center of Excellence for Integrated Health Solutions
- National and Regional Mental Health Technology Transfer Centers
- GAINS Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network

# Sustaining 988 : Status of State 988 Legislation



- **BLUE:** 4 states enacted 988 infrastructure bill with a fee
- **TEAL:** 4 states enacted 988 infrastructure bill without a fee
- **GREEN:** 4 states enacted 988 legislation to create 988 study and/or commission
- **MAGENTA:** 13 states have pending 988 legislation
- **DARK GREY:** 2 states considered 988 legislation that did not pass

# Additional SAMHSA 988 Resources and Supports

- SAMHSA 988 Press Release: <https://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/202112201100>
- 988 webpage: [www.samhsa.gov/988](http://www.samhsa.gov/988)
- 988 Fact Sheet: <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/988-factsheet.pdf>
- 988 NOFO: <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-22-015>

988 Resource Mailbox: [988Team@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:988Team@samhsa.hhs.gov)

# SAMHSA 988 Team



**Miriam Delphin-Rittmon**  
SAMHSA Assistant Secretary; 988 Executive Sponsor



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Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary



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SAMHSA Chief of Staff; 988 Executive Sponsor



**John Palmieri**  
Acting Director for 988 Team; Chief Clinical Officer & Crisis Systems Lead



**Etan Raskas**  
Chief of Staff for 988 Team



**Becky Zornick**  
988 Policy Advisor and Project Manager



**Charles Smith**  
Senior Advisor to 988 team; SAMHSA Regional Administrator



**Kate Galatas**  
Chief 988 Communications & Engagement Officer (on detail from CDC)



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Chief of Crisis Center Operations



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Questions?

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