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# 988 MICHIGAN CRISIS AND ACCESS LINE

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHAT IS 988?

988 is a direct, three-digit, and easy to remember phone number to [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) call centers nationwide (formally known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline). 988 is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Trained counselors, who are not clinicians, are available to provide free, confidential emotional support for people in distress and answer all calls at local crisis call centers. With an easy to remember number like 988, the Lifeline hopes to reach many more people in emotional crisis and connect those to services if needed.

### WHAT IS MICAL?

The Michigan Crisis and Access Line (MiCAL) is Michigan's statewide crisis and access line. It is Michigan's central crisis line that accepts 988 calls originating from Michigan. MiCAL is **not** a replacement for Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSP), Crisis Lines, and Specialist Crisis Services. CMHSP crisis lines fill an important role of providing integrated crisis care for people who receive CMHSP services. MiCAL also provides the Michigan Peer Warmline, staffed by MDHHS certified Peer Support Specialists, and the Frontline Strong Together line for first responders. For more information on these lines, please visit the [MiCAL Website](#).

MiCAL is primarily responsible for answering 988 calls statewide except in Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, Kent, Macomb, St. Joseph, & Van Buren counties where, three regional call centers provide primary coverage and, MiCAL provides backup call coverage to the existing 988 call centers. Calls are routed by area code, not by location.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 988 AND MICAL?

988 is a direct, three-digit, and easy to remember phone number to [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) call centers nationwide (formally known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline). MiCAL is Michigan's central crisis line and 988 call center, primarily responsible for answering the majority of 988 calls in Michigan.

### WHY DO WE NEED 988?

Behavioral health support and suicide prevention are critical needs. Since 2008, [suicide](#) has ranked as the tenth leading cause of death in the United States. The adoption of the new three-digit number reflects a commitment to delivering necessary intervention services. Like using 911 for emergency calls, switching to an easy-to-remember 988 for suicide prevention and mental health crisis services will make it easier for Americans in crisis to access the help they need and decrease the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health issues.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CALL 988?

When calling 988, callers first hear a greeting message while their call is routed to the local Lifeline network crisis center (based on the caller's area code). A trained crisis counselor answers the phone, listens to the caller, understands how their problem is affecting them, provides support, and shares resources if needed. If the local crisis center is unable to take the call, the caller is automatically routed to a national backup crisis center. The Lifeline provides live crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 250 additional languages for people who call 988.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CHAT VIA 988?

Chat (English only) is available through the Lifeline's website at <https://988lifeline.org/chat/>. People seeking chat services are provided a pre-chat survey before connecting with a counselor, who identifies the main area of concern. If there is a wait to chat with a crisis counselor, a wait-time message will appear. If demand is high, people can access the Lifeline's "helpful resources" while waiting. Once you are connected, a crisis counselor listens to you, works to understand how your problem is affecting you, provides support, and shares resources that may be helpful.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I TEXT 988?

When someone texts to 988, they are responded to by a group of Lifeline crisis centers that answer both chats and texts. This service will expand over the next few years to increase local and state level response. Once you are connected, a crisis counselor listens to you, works to understand how your problem is affecting you, provides support, and shares resources that may be helpful. Currently, texting is available in English only.

## WHO IS 988 FOR?

Anyone. 988 is for anyone in emotional distress or having a behavioral health or suicidal crisis. It is also for an individual who is worried about a loved one and not sure how to support that person or where to get them help. Trained counselors, who are not clinicians, are available to provide free, confidential emotional support to all callers.

## IS 988 ONLY FOR SUICIDE-RELATED-CRISIS?

No. With the implementation of 988, the Lifeline's purpose is expanding to provide support for people with any behavioral health crisis (crisis is defined by the caller). It is no longer just for people who are feeling suicidal.

## IS THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE NUMBER (NSPL) GOING AWAY?

No. Moving to 988 does not mean that the 800 number goes away. Dialing either number will get people to the same services, no matter which number they use. In the end, 988 is an easier-to-remember way for people to access a strengthened and expanded network of crisis call centers. The same centers that answer the 800 number will answer 988.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 988 AND 911?

The 988 number was established to improve access to behavioral health crisis services in a way that meets our country's growing suicide and mental health-related crisis care needs. The 988 number is distinct from the public safety purposes of 911 because it serves as an access point to both resources and certified crisis workers who are trained in crisis de-escalation. 911's focus is on dispatching Emergency Medical Services (EMS), fire, and police as needed.

## IF I CONTACT 988, WILL 911 AUTOMATICALLY GET INVOLVED AND BE DISPATCHED TO MY LOCATION?

When an individual contacts 988, 911 is **not** automatically dispatched. Currently, less than 1% of 988 calls have required emergency interventions or activation of the 911 system in Michigan. A crisis specialist would only share information crucial to saving a life with 911 in situations where there is imminent risk to someone's life that cannot be reduced during the interaction. For more details, click here: [Vibrant: 988 Police Intervention](#)

## HOW WILL 988, 911, AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICES PROGRAM INTERACT?

Increased collaboration between 988, 911, and the Emergency Services Program will give more options for those in crisis, such as dispatching mobile crisis teams to individuals in mental health, substance use, or suicidal crisis rather than police, fire, or EMS, and greater coordination of care options like crisis stabilization units.

## HOW DOES 988 IMPACT THE VETERANS CRISIS LINE?

Veterans can use this new option to access the Veterans Crisis line by dialing 988 then pressing 1. Veterans may still reach the Veterans Crisis Line with the current phone number—1-800-273-8255 and Press 1— through chat, and by text (838255). For more information, please visit: [What is 988? \(veteranscrisisline.net\)](#)

## WHAT LANGUAGES WILL 988 SERVICES BE AVAILABLE?

The Lifeline currently provides live crisis center calling services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 250 additional languages. Text and chat are currently available in English only.

## WILL 988 ACCOMMODATE THOSE WHO ARE HARD OF HEARING OR BLIND?

The Lifeline currently serves TTY users either through their preferred relay service or by dialing 711 then 1-800-273-8255. Lifeline also offers services through chat and text. Lifeline is in the process of expanding to video phone service to better serve deaf or hard of hearing individuals seeking help through the Lifeline/988.

## WHY HAVEN'T I SEEN PUBLICIZED MATERIALS ON 988 IN MICHIGAN?

Per Vibrant and SAMHSA's original recommendations, Michigan decided to wait until 2023 to initiate marketing for 988. In 2022, our focus was on developing and strengthening infrastructure (resources, staff, and coordination). Beginning in 2023, we are focusing our efforts on marketing and advertising the 988-dialing code throughout Michigan.

## WHEN CAN I START SHARING MATERIALS ON 988?

Now. We are focusing our efforts on marketing and advertising the 988-dialing code throughout Michigan and encourage stakeholders to start advertising and distributing 988 information. Stakeholders are free to share the 988 number openly and use [SAMHSA materials](#) at their discretion.

## WHAT CAN I, OR MY ORGANIZATION, DO IF WE WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN 988?

Please contact us at [MPCIP-support@mphi.org](mailto:MPCIP-support@mphi.org) if you would like to get involved or have questions.

## CONTACT US

1. For stakeholders - please contact us at [MPCIP-support@mphi.org](mailto:MPCIP-support@mphi.org) with feedback, questions, concerns, or if you would like to get involved.
2. For other general questions, feedback, or complaints related to 988 or MiCAL, [please click here](#) or visit the [MiCAL Website](#).