

988 Frequently asked questions

What is 988?

In July 2022, the nation will transition to an easy-to-remember three-digit **suicide prevention and mental health crisis lifeline—988**—that will route all callers, texters, chatters to the existing [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) (currently reached via 800-273-8255). Utah will remain a National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) affiliate through the Utah Crisis Line, operated by Hunstman Mental Health Institute.

How does it work?

Currently, all callers access the NSPL network by dialing 800-273-8255. Starting in July, 988 will be marketed nationally, but callers can continue to call any NSPL “legacy” number, or numbers historically used, but no longer marketed.

At the beginning of the call, callers have the option to select the Veterans Crisis Line or the Spanish language Crisis Line. If the caller with a Utah area code does not select either of those options, they will be routed to Utah Crisis Line. If after 3 minutes, the call is not answered by a live person, the caller is routed to the NSPL backup affiliate network, or somebody in a different state.

988 will be a direct access point to compassionate care for people that are experiencing any type of mental health crisis including thoughts of suicide, mental health and substance use crises, or any emotional distress for either themselves or their loved ones.

Is 988 a Utah-based service?

Short answer: yes. 988 will begin in Utah July 16, 2022, with the national rollout. Calls placed to 988 will follow the same methods described above, with an additional text and chat service that will be added.

Callers who are connected with the Utah Crisis Line will receive specialized, individualized support by Certified Crisis Workers trained in suicide prevention, de-escalation and stabilization, and resources. The Utah Crisis Line will continue to work closely with the mobile crisis outreach teams across the state to support anybody who needs in-person intervention by a crisis-trained person.

FAST FACTS

- **The 988 number will be available for call, text, and chat on July 16, 2022.** Until then, those in crisis should continue to use 1-800-273-8255, which will continue to function even after the transition.
- 988 is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365, connecting those experiencing a mental health, substance use, or suicidal crisis with trained crisis counselors.
- 988 services will be available in Spanish, along with interpretation services in over 150 languages through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.
- Utah’s crisis system includes all critical components of a crisis system: someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere to go. The crisis line connects callers statewide to the mobile crisis outreach team. The crisis line also connects callers with a free, safe place to go in Davis and Utah Counties, with this same resource soon to be available in Salt Lake County, the southwestern part of the state, and Weber County.
- Though Utah’s Crisis Line is fully funded, the state is attempting to grow crisis services. Investment is critical to scale adequate corresponding resources such as mobile crisis outreach teams and community based receiving centers. To understand the needs in your community, use the [Crisis Resource Calculator](#), which utilizes an algorithm to demonstrate how many people in an area will need in-person services like those provided by the mobile crisis outreach teams.

Why do we need it?

Research shows that suicide hotlines save lives. The adoption of an easy-to-remember number, that will include text and chat, is vital in beginning to resolve mental health crises.

But, 988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number—it is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress. Too many Utahns experience crises, and COVID-19, together with global distress has further compounded this. In 2020 alone, the U.S. had one death by suicide every 11 minutes—and for people aged 10-34 years, suicide is a leading cause of death.

What is the vision for 988 in Utah?

Utah's vision for 988 aligns with the vision of our national partners and experts, "to build a robust crisis response system across the country that links callers to community-based providers who can deliver a full range of crisis care services..."

We remain committed and focused on building capacity for our phone-based services while continuing to expand in-person crisis services such as mobile crisis outreach teams and Zero Refusal Receiving Centers. 988 is just the beginning, and not the final solution.

Did Utah receive funding for 988?

The Utah Crisis Line is funded through numerous sources including Mental Health Block Grant funds, State General Funds that are appropriated by the legislature, and grant funding. It is important that crisis lines utilize diverse funding sources to maximize their service provision and availability. Utah's crisis line is fully funded July 2022-July 2023 and estimates it will be fully funded for the year after that.

Will Utah be "ready" for 988?

As a state, we will be closely monitoring volume increases and projections in the coming months and years to ensure we remain prepared for the transition.

Because Utah seeks to provide access to crisis care every time, everyplace and everywhere, "readiness" remains a constantly evolving target. We remain steadfast in our commitment to work towards the vision that every consumer experiencing a behavioral health crisis has a safe person to talk to, someone to respond, and somewhere safe to go when they need.

In comparison to other states in the nation, Utah remains ahead of the curve. We have the most critical component of an ideal crisis line—a statewide crisis line that connects and deploys community-based mobile crisis outreach teams. Additionally, we have developed 6 community-based Zero Refusal Receiving Centers, 2 of which are already running.

Can I give 988 out to my clients, friends, family members?

After the formal launch on July 16, 2022, we can advertise 988 as a usable number. Until then, please continue to provide callers with the NSPL 10-digit number (800-273-8255). Callers who access 988 before July 2022 will not be connected to the NSPL; we want to make sure every caller has access to help when they need it.

What is the difference between 988, 911, 211, and other lines such as the Warm Line or Behavioral Health Navigation Line?

988:

- Suicide prevention and mental health crisis lifeline
- Access point to statewide community-based crisis resources such as mobile crisis outreach teams
- Specialized intervention by certified crisis workers with advanced training in de-escalation and clinical suicide prevention
- Confidential, free, and available 24/7/365

911:

- Emergency line for public safety emergencies, medical emergencies, and law enforcement
- Does not offer de-escalation or emotional support; staffed with public safety answering point dispatch workers
- If the public safety of medical emergency is pertaining to someone who has a mental health condition, or appears to be experiencing a mental health crisis, a crisis intervention team (CIT) trained officer with basic training in mental health crises can be requested through 911 dispatch
- Free, and available 24/7/365

211:

- Resource support line that links callers to resources related to quality of life (housing, food, other important services)
- Ability to transfer callers to the the Utah Crisis Line
- Free, and available 24/7/365

Behavioral Health Navigation Line (833-442-2211):

- Tool for people who need help getting into behavioral health services
- Free, and available 7 a.m.-7 p.m., 7 days a week
- Provides screening and assessment
- Care navigators assesses how much help a caller needs with specialized screeners—high risk calls get transferred over to the Utah Crisis Line

Utah Warm Line: (1 833 SPEAKUT; 801-587-1055):

- A listening ear for callers as they heal and recover from personal struggles
- Provides connections to others who have been in similar situations
- Free, available 8 a.m.-11 p.m., 7 days a week

How should I talk about 988 with partners and the community?

Prior to the launch of 988, continue to answer questions on what 988 is, why it is important, and the vision. Conversations should be factual to ensure accuracy and safety.

After 988 launches in July, work with your state administration to transition messaging from educational to implementation. While messaging can begin promoting use of 988 via call, text, and chat once it's available nationwide, it's important to remember that it may take some time for 988 to be operating at full capacity in Utah.

As we anticipate an increased volume of calls, we want to ensure that we are adequately resourced to serve the needs of Utahns, and will be considering a phased approach to promoting 988. This represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to change how crisis services are delivered in the U.S. and we want to do it well. The July 2022 transition is just the beginning. Please contact NicholeCunha@Utah.gov for more information.

What about equitable access and cultural representation?

Utah remains committed to ensuring equitable access that is culturally and linguistically responsive to all Utah residents. Our first step was to engage in the [988 Consumer Engagement Study](#) to better understand the needs of various communities across the state. Currently, we are using this study to inform decisions and provide policy guidance to system providers and stakeholders. To provide additional feedback please contact NicholeCunha@Utah.gov.

For Additional Information:

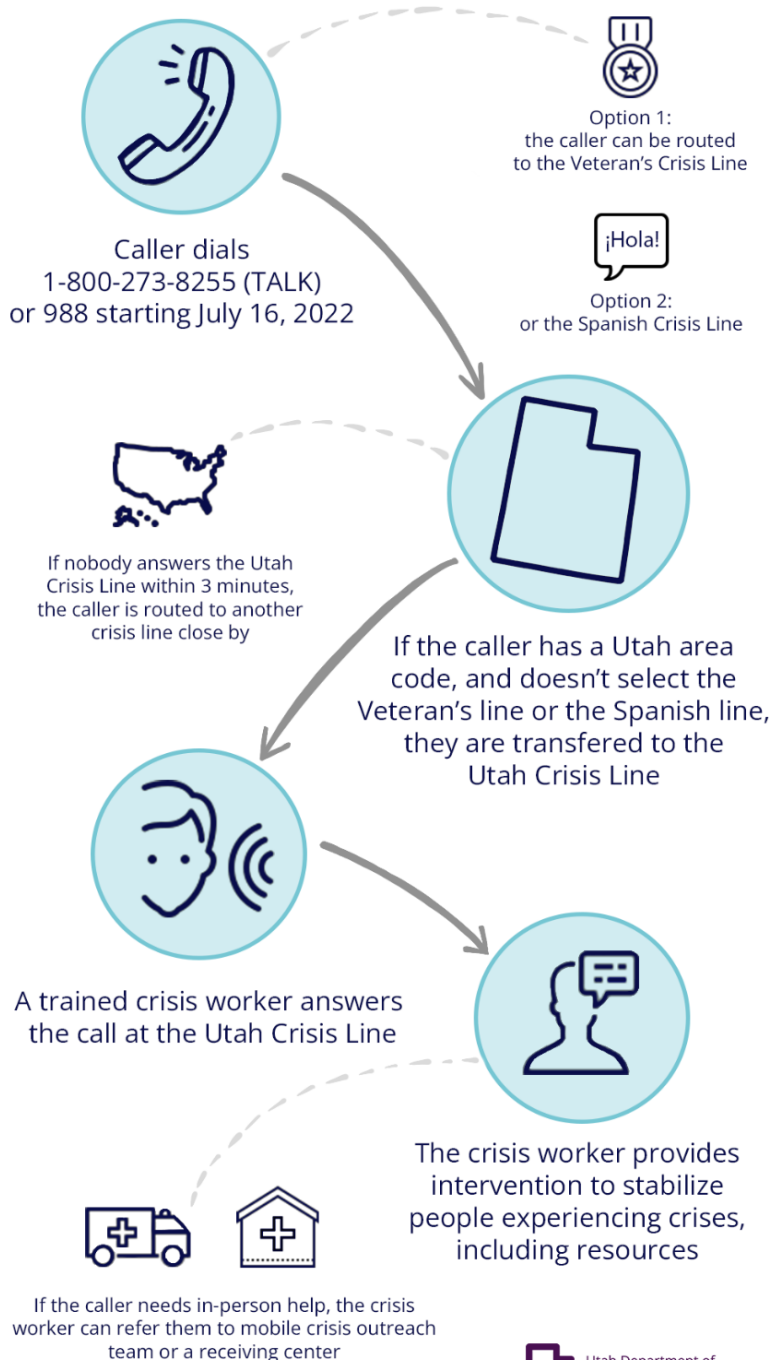
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The Utah Crisis Line is free and available 24/7, 365 days a year

Utah Crisis Line

What happens when someone calls?



Learn more: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/hmhi/programs/crisis-diversion/>