

Support Sustainable Funding for 988 Crisis Services?

In July of 2022, 988 became the nationwide number to call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which provides 24/7 support during a suicide, mental health, or substance use crisis. Since the transition from a 10-digit number to 988, the Lifeline has answered millions of calls, chats, and texts from people who need life-saving behavioral health support. But our work on 988 is not finished. With ever-increasing outreach to 988, we must ensure that the Lifeline receives funding.

AFSP urges state lawmakers to provide permanent, sustainable funding for 988 by enacting small 988 fees on phone bills (similar to how 911 is supported), and also urges the federal government to provide increased, ongoing funding to meet the needs of millions across the country who are in crisis.

Below are some important points to know about advocacy surrounding the 988 Lifeline.

Background:

- Annually, Congress determines the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and must choose to set aside money for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and crisis care services
- Each state can choose to pass a law that adds a small fee on monthly phone bills in order to support the statewide crisis network.

Facts & Data:

- Individuals can call or text 988 to be connected to a nationwide network of crisis centers, offering 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors
- Since its implementation in July 2022, the 988 Lifeline has received and routed over nine million calls, chats, and texts to state-run call centers
- Centers rely on state and local funding to operate. Only ten states have implemented low monthly phone bill fees, while about half of all states have used state dollars to fund 988
- Only 20% of the nearly \$1 billion in federal 988 investments is distributed to states, territories, and tribes to increase capacity and improve response times
- Full implementation and promotion of 988 will reduce health care spending through cost-effective early intervention, which lessens the burden on emergency rooms and law enforcement, and improves outcomes for people in crisis

AFSP Recommendations:

- Congress must fully fund 988 Lifeline operations across the crisis care continuum, and states must establish 988 phone bill fees and appropriate state funds to support those in crisis.

For more information about the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, visit [AFSP.org/988](https://afsp.org/988), or contact the Public Policy Office at Advocacy@afsp.org.