

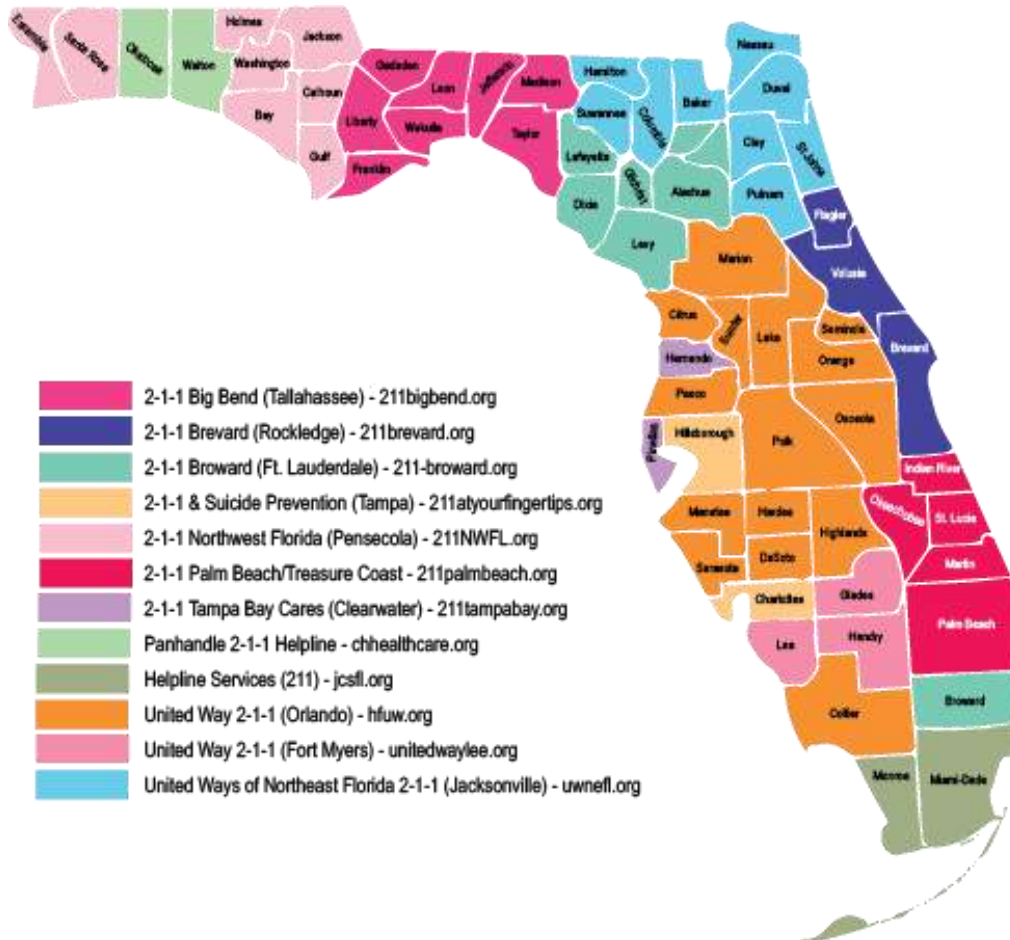
## What is the Florida 2-1-1 Network?

**Single point of coordination for health & human services information and referrals.** Section 408.918 (1), F.S. The Legislature authorizes the planning, development, and, subject to appropriations, the implementation of a statewide Florida 2-1-1 Network, which shall serve as the single point of coordination for information and referral for health and human services.

**Provides comprehensive and cost-effective access to health and human services information.** Last year over 1 million Florida residents turned to 2-1-1 for health and human service information and referrals and the numbers continue to grow. 2-1-1 has information on more than 40,000 different programs and services across the state and its professional and certified staff help relay these callers to appropriate care and services.

**All 2-1-1 providers must be fully accredited, which requires 2-1-1 organizations to be able to manage suicide prevention and other crisis intervention related calls.** In order to participate in the Florida 2-1-1 Network, a 2-1-1 provider must be fully accredited by the National Alliance of Information and Referral Services or have received approval to operate, pending accreditation, from its affiliate, the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services. In case of non-accreditation, the Public Service Commission “shall request that the Federal Communications Commission direct the local exchange company to revoke the use of the 2-1-1 number.”

## What Areas of the State does the 2-1-1 Network Serve?



## Who Coordinates Florida's 2-1-1 Network?

Under Section 408.918(2), F.S., the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services is the 2-1-1 collaborative organization for the state which is responsible for studying, designing, implementing, supporting, and coordinating the Florida 2-1-1 Network and for receiving federal grants.

## What are the Network's objectives as outlined in statute?

### ***Access to Information & Referral Services***

- Improve access to accurate information by simplifying and enhancing state and local health and human services information and referral systems and by fostering collaboration among information and referral systems.
- Electronically connect local information and referral systems to each other, to service providers, and to consumers of information and referral services.
- Promote the use of a common dialing access code and the visibility and public awareness of the availability of information and referral services.

### ***Data Collection & Case Management***

- Test methods for integrating information and referral services with local and state health and human services programs and for consolidating and streamlining eligibility and case management processes.
- Establish and promote standards for data collection and for distributing information among state and local organizations.
- Provide access to standardized, comprehensive data to assist in identifying gaps and needs in health and human services programs.
- Provide a unified systems plan with a developed platform, taxonomy, and standards for data management and access.

### ***Technical Assistance & Training***

- Provide a management and administrative structure to support the Florida 211 Network and establish technical assistance, training, and support programs for information and referral-service programs.

### ***Veterans Suicide Hotline***

- Section 394.9087, F.S. authorizes the Department of Veterans' Affairs to contract with a nonprofit accredited by the Council on Accreditation, the National Alliance of Information and Referral Services, and has statewide phone capacity to serve veterans to enter into agreements with Florida 2-1-1 Network participants to provide veterans and their families in this state with dedicated behavioral health care referral services, especially mental health and substance abuse services.

### ***The State of Florida relies on the 2-1-1 Network to implement a variety of other programs, including:***

- Dept. of Children & Families worked with the Florida 211 Network directly for the FEMA Crisis Counseling Program in response to the pandemic disaster. This project began July 2020 and ended September 2021.
- Dept. of Health contracts with the Florida 211 Network, through 211 Big Bend, for an annual Diabetes project.

- Dept. of Corrections contracts with the Florida 211 Network, through 211 Broward, for an annual re-entry project.
- Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, with the Florida 211 Network, through 211 Broward, for the annual Summer Break Spot project.
- Dept. of Children and Families funded and worked with 211 Tampa Bay Cares and the 211Counts.org vendor to merge all the needs requested by 211 clients within the Florida 211 Network into one statewide dashboard for the Governor's office in addition to the creation of an additional public viewing dashboard which can be found at <http://fl.211counts.org/>.

## What is 988?

Through its toll-free number (800-273-TALK), the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides a national toll-free portal designed to connect callers in need to local services so that persons calling from anywhere in the country who are in emotional and/or suicidal crisis can benefit from the most appropriate, nearby behavioral health treatment, support, crisis and/or emergency services.<sup>1</sup> While it is a national portal for crisis care, the Lifeline is intended to route callers to local centers who are most prepared to assist them with their local needs.

In August 2019, FCC staff—in consultation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and SAMHSA, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, and the North American Numbering Council—released a report recommending the use of 988 as the 3-digit code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

In July 2020, the FCC adopted [rules](#) designating this new phone number for Americans in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. The transition will result in phone service providers directing all 988 calls to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by July 16, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## 988 Implementation

**Florida DCF was awarded a statewide planning grant from Vibrant<sup>3</sup>, a NY-based mental health advocacy organization, to access funding to implement 988 in Florida.** Vibrant Emotional Health (formerly MHA of NYC) has been the administrator of the SAMHSA-funded National Suicide Prevention since 2004, launching the service with its partner NASMHPD in January 2005. DCF is soliciting feedback from Florida Lifeline providers and will submit its 988 state plan in January 2022.

**There are 82 area codes throughout the United States and Guam that currently use “988” as the first three numbers of a seven-digit telephone number, according to the Federal**

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<sup>1</sup> The hotline was established in 2005 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). <https://flairs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Florida-State-Report-January-June-2020.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fcc.gov/suicide-prevention-hotline>

<sup>3</sup> Vibrant Emotional Health, formerly the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC). Per the RFP, States/Territories with 11 or more Lifeline centers such as Florida will receive a maximum of \$275,000 + per center \$5000 stipends (ex: a state with thirteen centers could ask for a maximum of \$340,000). Up to 54 awards may be made through this grant competition. <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Lifeline-9-8-8-State-Planning-Grants-Final-Request-for-Applications-Due-1-8-21-1.pdf>

**Communications Commission.** Mandatory 10-digit dialing in 82 area codes in 36 states begins October 24, 2021. Beginning on Sunday, October 24, callers in these states that were able to make calls to the Lifeline with seven digits must now dial the full 10-digit number — their area code and telephone number — to place local calls, according to the FCC. Local calls dialed with seven digits may not connect on or after Sunday. This list includes Florida 321 (Brevard County only), 352, 561, 941). Callers in those area codes must phone the 10-digit number:

## **Funding Request**

**Florida’s 2-1-1 network has already been responding to 988 calls, both as a former 10-digit number and via the three-digit 9-8-8 number. No callers from Florida will need to use a 10-digit number to call 2-1-1.** 75 percent -- nine out of 12 of Florida’s 2-1-1 providers -- are already responding to 988 calls. Three do not at the moment but may wish to do so. There are 12 suicide prevention helplines throughout Florida that are part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) Network.

**The 2-1-1 Network is already under-supported and there is no need to reinvent the wheel.** Instead, Florida can use its existing statewide 2-1-1 network as the portal for 988. Not only does this adhere to statutory intent and ensure statewide reach and implementation, but every Floridian—whether in urban or rural areas – would have access to one of the existing 12 certified centers that blanket the state for mental health response and referral.

**More can be done to realize the potential of Florida’s 2-1-1 network as Florida’s designated “single point of coordination for information and referral for health and human services.”** DCF recommended and the Legislature approved \$3 million in recurring funding to the Department of Children & Families for 2-1-1 network mental health services in FY 2021-2022 (Line Item 362). Each 2-1-1 has worked with its managing entity to earmark its allocation of the funds.

The State of Florida should leverage its existing 2-1-1 network to respond to mental health and other health and human services – including coordinating training, data collection and other activities prescribed in statute -- by doubling or even tripling the \$3 million in recurring appropriations to the Department of Children & Families for 2-1-1 network mental health services.

**DCF should also work with the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS) to implement federal funding for 988 implementation throughout Florida.** FLAIRS is “the 211 collaborative organization for the state” responsible for studying, designing, implementing, supporting, and coordinating the Florida 211 Network and for receiving federal grants. Its statutory mission is to strengthen the health and human service information and referral provider network in the State of Florida through advocacy, coordination and education.

## FACT SHEET: 988 AND SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE

[Designating 988 for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline | Federal Communications Commission \(fcc.gov\)](https://www.fcc.gov/suicide-prevention-hotline)

In August 2019, FCC staff—in consultation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and the North American Numbering Council—released a report recommending the use of 988 as the 3-digit code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. In July 2020, the FCC adopted [rules](#) designating this new phone number for Americans in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. The transition, which will take place over the next two years, will result in phone service providers directing all 988 calls to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by July 16, 2021.

### Topline Takeaways on 988:

- **Suicide prevention is a critical need.** Since 2008, suicide has ranked as the tenth leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide claimed the lives of more than 48,000 Americans in 2018, resulting in about one death every 11 minutes.
- **Americans who need help today can find it by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.** The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached by calling 1-800-273-8255 (1-800-273-TALK) and through online chats. Veterans and Service members may reach the Veterans Crisis Line by pressing 1 after dialing, as well as by chatting online at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net) or texting 838255.
- **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of approximately 170 local- and state-funded crisis centers.** The Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration administers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, which manages the Veterans Crisis Line.
- **Under the new rules, calls to 988 will be directed to 1-800-273-TALK, which will remain operational during and after the 988 transition.**
- **The requirement to transition to 988 as the National Suicide Prevention Hotline will take effect on July 16, 2022.** The transition time gives phone companies time to make necessary network changes. It additionally provides time for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to prepare for a likely increase in the volume of calls following the switch.
- **The adoption of the new rules reflects a commitment to delivering Americans necessary intervention services.** Switching to an easy-to-remember 988 as the '911' 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. FCC staff first proposed 988 as a three-digit, nationwide number in a report submitted to Congress in 2019.

To learn more, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/suicide-prevention-hotline>.

## FLORIDA STATUTES

### **408.918 - Florida 211 Network; uniform certification requirements.**

(1) The Legislature authorizes the planning, development, and, subject to appropriations, the implementation of a statewide Florida 211 Network, which shall serve as the single point of coordination for information and referral for health and human services. The objectives for establishing the Florida 211 Network shall be to:

- (a) Provide comprehensive and cost-effective access to health and human services information.
- (b) Improve access to accurate information by simplifying and enhancing state and local health and human services information and referral systems and by fostering collaboration among information and referral systems.
- (c) Electronically connect local information and referral systems to each other, to service providers, and to consumers of information and referral services.
- (d) Establish and promote standards for data collection and for distributing information among state and local organizations.
- (e) Promote the use of a common dialing access code and the visibility and public awareness of the availability of information and referral services.
- (f) Provide a management and administrative structure to support the Florida 211 Network and establish technical assistance, training, and support programs for information and referral-service programs.
- (g) Test methods for integrating information and referral services with local and state health and human services programs and for consolidating and streamlining eligibility and case management processes.
- (h) Provide access to standardized, comprehensive data to assist in identifying gaps and needs in health and human services programs.
- (i) Provide a unified systems plan with a developed platform, taxonomy, and standards for data management and access.

(2) In order to participate in the Florida 211 Network, a 211 provider must be fully accredited by the National Alliance of Information and Referral Services or have received approval to operate, pending accreditation, from its affiliate, the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services. If any provider of information and referral services or other entity leases a 211 number from a local exchange company and is not authorized as described in this section, the Public Service Commission shall request that the Federal Communications Commission direct the local exchange company to revoke the use of the 211 number.

(3) The Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services is the 211 collaborative organization for the state which is responsible for studying, designing, implementing, supporting, and coordinating the Florida 211 Network and for receiving federal grants.

### **394.9087 - Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program.**

(1) The Department of Veterans' Affairs may establish the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program. If the Department of Veterans' Affairs establishes the program, it may contract with a nonprofit entity that is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, is fully accredited by the National Alliance of Information and Referral Services, and has statewide phone capacity to serve veterans to enter into agreements with Florida 211 Network participants to provide veterans and their families in this state with dedicated behavioral health care referral services, especially mental health and substance abuse services. The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall model the program after the proof-of-concept pilot program established in 2014 by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Manatee Counties.

- (2) The goals of the program are to:
- (a) Prevent suicides by veterans.
  - (b) Increase veterans' use of programs and services provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
  - (c) Increase the number of veterans who use other available community-based programs and services.
- (3) The program must be available statewide. Program services must be provided by program teams operated by Florida 211 Network participants as authorized by s. 408.918. A Florida 211 Network participant may provide services in more than one geographic area under a single contract.
- (4) The program teams shall provide referral and care coordination services to veterans and their families and expand the existing Florida 211 Network to include the optimal range of veterans' service organizations and programs. Florida 211 Network participants in the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program must include all of the following:
- (a) Telephonic peer support, crisis intervention, and the communication of information on referral resources.
  - (b) Treatment coordination, including coordination of followup care.
  - (c) Suicide risk assessment.
  - (d) Promotion of the safety and wellness of veterans and their families, including continuous safety planning and support.
  - (e) Resource coordination, including data analysis, to facilitate acceptance, enrollment, and attendance of veterans and their families in programs and services provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and other available community-based programs and services.
  - (f) Immediate needs assessments, including safety planning and support.
- (5) To enhance program services, program teams shall:
- (a) Track the number of requests from callers who are veterans or members of a veteran's family.
  - (b) Follow up with callers who are veterans or members of a veteran's family to determine whether they have acted on the referrals or received the assistance needed and whether additional referral or advocacy is needed.
  - (c) Develop and implement communication strategies, such as media promotions, public service announcements, print and Internet articles, and community presentations, to inform veterans and their families about available programs and services provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and other available community-based programs and services.
  - (d) Document all calls and capture all necessary data to improve outreach to veterans and their families and report such data to the contracted entity.
- (6) Florida 211 Network participants in the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program shall maintain a database of veteran-specific services available in the communities served by the programs. The Department of Veterans' Affairs and its selected contractor shall work with managing entities as defined in s. 394.9082(2) to educate service providers about the Florida Veterans Support Line and the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program.
- (7) Florida 211 Network participants shall collect data on the program and submit such data to the Department of Veterans' Affairs in the format prescribed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Department of Veterans' Affairs shall use such data to prepare a report for submittal to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2022. The report must include all of the following:
- (a) The number of calls received.
  - (b) Demographic information for each caller, including, but not limited to, the caller's military affiliation, the caller's veteran status, and whether the caller is receiving services provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or other available community-based programs and services.

(c) The nature of each call, including, but not limited to, the concerns prompting the call and the services requested.

(d) The outcome of each call, including, but not limited to, the services for which referrals were made and the organizations to which the caller was referred.

(e) Services received as a result of each call.

(f) Information regarding followup by the program team, including, but not limited to, the percentage of calls receiving followup and the outcome of followup.

(g) Information regarding the program's impact on each caller's quality of life and on the avoidance of negative outcomes, including arrest and suicide.

(h) Each caller's level of satisfaction with program services.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2021-198.

## GOVERNOR'S REMARKS – SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

[Governor and First Lady DeSantis Highlight Mental Wellbeing Efforts in Recognition of Suicide Prevention Month \(flgov.com\)](#)

### Governor and First Lady DeSantis Highlight Mental Wellbeing Efforts in Recognition of Suicide Prevention Month

*On September 21, 2021, in [News Releases](#), by Staff*

*September is Observed as Suicide Prevention Month in Florida*

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – This month, Governor Ron DeSantis [issued a proclamation](#) declaring September as Suicide Prevention Month in Florida. In recognition of this month, Governor Ron DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis are highlighting the administration's suicide prevention and mental wellbeing efforts.

“In Florida, we want to ensure our residents have somewhere to turn when struggling with life's challenges,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “The First Lady has championed the issue of resiliency and supporting the mental wellbeing of all Floridians. Our administration continues to work with partners throughout Florida to prevent suicide and to connect those in need of mental wellbeing resources with trustworthy services.”

“The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet had the opportunity to address an epidemic that has tragically taken hold – youth suicide,” said **First Lady Casey DeSantis, Chair of the Children and Youth Cabinet**. “Through the Hope for Healing initiative, we are focused on identifying strategies to reduce stigma surrounding mental health, and aiming to promote positive mental wellbeing to ensure those in need have access to necessary services to build the resiliency of all Floridians.”

The Governor and First Lady have placed significance on improving access to and awareness of mental wellbeing resources since coming into office, through:

Providing \$120 million for district Mental Health Assistance programs and \$5.5 million for Youth Mental Health Awareness and Assistance to continue evidence-based training to help school personnel identify and understand the signs of mental health and substance abuse problems for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

- Dedicating \$4.7 million to support and expand evidence-based suicide prevention efforts of Managing Entities and the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.
- Launching a new initiative spearheaded by the First Lady in collaboration with the Department of Education to help children build resiliency by adding curriculum around character development skills such as volunteerism, teamwork, and problem solving.
- Expanding the First Lady's [Hope for Healing website](#) to enhance the ability to connect Floridians in need of mental wellbeing and substance abuse services with local providers.
- Implementing Zero Suicide at the Department of Children and Families and through Managing Entities.
- Releasing social media messaging designed to promote suicide prevention and mental wellness.
- Teaching preventative instruction of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking within K-12 public school mandatory required comprehensive health education curriculum.

Preliminary data for the state shows that 3,113 Floridians died by suicide in 2020, an estimated 10.1% decrease from 2019.

“I believe this decrease is a testament to the partnership and the prevention efforts that the Council has brought forth under the Governor and First Lady’s leadership,” said **DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris**. “While we are trending in the right direction, we must keep working together to have a positive impact in our state. The diversity of the Coordinating Council shows that everyone can play a part in connecting Floridians with behavioral health resources to prevent suicide.”

In Florida, the Office of Suicide Prevention is housed under the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The office is responsible for managing the Florida Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council, a group comprised of 31 voting members representing families, law enforcement, health care workers, children, veterans, and more. The group meets quarterly to discuss areas of focus, prevention initiatives, new research, and outreach opportunities. The next meeting of the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council is September 24th in Tallahassee.

Crisis supports for individuals experiencing thoughts of suicide or other behavioral health needs can be accessed by calling the Suicide Prevention Lifeline, available 24/7, at 1-800-273-8255; **turning to local 2-1-1 providers, which offer confidential conversations to access help;** and starting a conversation through the Crisis Text Line, available by texting HOME to 74741.

## STATE PLANNING GRANTS

Vibrant will provide these grants to assist state agencies in planning for the implementation of a new, national, three-digit number for mental health crisis and suicide response (9-8-8). **When implemented, the new 9-8-8 number will be routed to the Lifeline's current 1-800-273-8255 number. While the current toll-free line will remain operative indefinitely, 9-8-8 will eventually supplant 800-273-8255 as the primary number marketed to the public for mental health and suicidal crises.**

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/988-planning-grants/>

In July 2022, 988 will become the national three-digit dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, replacing the current phone number of 1-800-283-TALK (8255). As the administrator of the Lifeline since its inception in 2005, Vibrant Emotional Health knows that a national three-digit phone number can improve access to vital crisis services, improve the efficacy of suicide prevention efforts, and reduce the stigma about mental health and getting help.

Vibrant, through a special funding opportunity, seeks to collaborate with public health and mental health agencies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to plan for the development of appropriate infrastructure and operations necessary for the full implementation of 988. U.S. Territories who, as of December 7, 2020, have a crisis center currently in the application process to join the Lifeline are also eligible for this funding opportunity.

Through this grant opportunity U.S. states, territories and Lifeline centers receiving grant funds will:

- Develop clear roadmaps for how they will address key coordination, capacity, funding and communication strategies that are foundational to the launching of 988 which will occur on or before July 16, 2022.
- Plan for the long-term improvement of in-state answer rates for 988 calls.

The number of awards to be paid depends on the number of successful applications, however, up to 54 awards may be made. **As the lead applicants, state/territory agencies must partner with Lifeline-affiliated call centers in their state/territory for this grant.**

**Applications are due no later than 5 pm EST, Friday, January 8, 2021.**

**Request for Applications (RFA) [updated 12/11/20] 9-8-8 State Planning Grants**

**Application Deadline: January 8, 2021, 5:00 PM EST**

**A funding initiative from Vibrant Emotional Health (administrator of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline)**

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Lifeline-9-8-8-State-Planning-Grants-Final-Request-for-Applications-Due-1-8-21-1.pdf>

## NEWS ARTICLES

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/guest-commentary/os-op-dial-988-for-behavioral-health-needs-20210812-qg7olklevdyjg5qwqyykmq6o4-story.html>

### Coming soon: 988 as a behavioral-health alternative to 911 | Commentary

By GAYLE GIESE | GUEST COLUMNIST | AUG 12, 2021 AT 5:30 AM

A new three-digit national phone number will be available for Florida to use as a help line for behavioral health needs, starting in July 2022. Will Florida be ready?

The number, 988, will take the place of the national 10-digit suicide prevention hotline, 800-273-TALK. The 988 number could be used as an alternative to 911 to provide around-the-clock response for behavioral health emergencies.

Imagine calling 988 and speaking with a “care traffic controller” who can send a mobile response team to your home, with workers trained to de-escalate a crisis and find you or your loved one help. This will be possible if communities coordinate the use of the 988 number with mobile response teams and community-based mental health services. A 2014 federal report shows that mobile crisis teams reduce psychiatric hospitalizations.

Diverting behavioral health emergency calls from 911 to a behavioral health call center with backup services would save money. Law enforcement would not need to respond to many behavioral health calls. Taxpayers would pay for fewer emergency room visits by uninsured patients. Fewer people with mental health issues would wind up homeless on the streets.

And with the proper care, fewer people would die. Drug overdoses kill about 80,000 people a year nationwide; another 48,000 die by suicide.

But money is needed to pay for call centers, response teams and centralized receiving facilities to screen patients and provide immediate care. As in Virginia, the money could come from a small fee added to phone bills, the same way 911 is funded.

A 28-member coalition formed by Florida’s Department of Children and Families’ Office for Suicide Prevention is preparing for Florida’s shift to 988. It will issue a report in October.

The Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition, a network that includes local chapters of two of the nation’s premier mental health advocacy groups — the National Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health America — will be asking policymakers to embrace 988 as a cost-efficient way to address behavioral health crises.

Our state legislators need to hear from citizens who understand that people having a behavioral health crisis need help, not handcuffs.

A call for help shouldn’t result in trauma or tragedy. Building a robust 988 crisis response system will move us closer to a respectful and effective response to everyone who experiences a mental health, substance use or suicidal crisis.

*Gayle Giese is president of the Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition, a NAMI-Florida board director and an appointee to the state’s 988 Planning Coalition. She lives in Broward County.*

<https://www.wptv.com/news/national/9-8-8-launches-as-the-new-national-suicide-prevention-lifeline>

## **988 launches as the new National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

### **New helpline takes effect in 2022**

By: [Joel Lopez](#)

*Posted at 11:26 AM, Oct 24, 2021 and last updated 10:14 PM, Oct 24, 2021*

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is launching a new number for people in crisis to call: 988.

By dialing 988, callers are connected directly with the National Suicide Prevention line's suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors.

Because many phone numbers in Palm Beach County also begin with the three digits 988, residents will need to dial an area code before making a phone call.

Palm Beach County is one of 82 area codes across the country impacted, a minor inconvenience to a much-needed resource.

According to the FCC, since 2008, suicide has been the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. claiming the lives of over 48,000 Americans in 2018. That's about one death every 11 minutes.

That same year the former suicide prevention hotline answered 2.2 million calls.

<https://trinitynewscommentary.com/some-us-callers-must-now-use-10-digit-dialing-as-fcc-sets-up-988-crisis-hotline/>

### **Some US callers must now use 10-digit dialing as FCC sets up 988 crisis hotline**

October 26, 2021 Trinity News Commentary

There are 82 area codes throughout these states and Guam that allow seven-digit dialing and currently use “988” as the first three numbers of a seven-digit telephone number, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

Beginning on Sunday, October 24, callers in these states that were able to make calls with seven digits must now dial the full 10 digit number — their area code and telephone number — to place local calls, according to the FCC. Local calls dialed with seven digits may not connect on or after Sunday.

The US states affected by the mandatory 10-digit dialing include: Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

The FCC last year established 988 as an easy to remember three-digit number for individuals seeking help to quickly dial and be directed to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The 988 dialing code will be available nationwide by July 16, 2022.

Callers can reach the 24/7 national hotline by phoning the 10-digit number: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK).

[Mandatory 10-digit dialing in 82 area codes in 36 states begins October 24, 2021 | About Verizon](#)

Mandatory 10-digit dialing in 82 area codes in 36 states begins October 24, 2021. On July 16, 2020, the FCC adopted “988” as a three-digit abbreviated dialing code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline starting July 16, 2022. For “988” to work for everyone in the 82 area codes listed below, all customers with a number from those area codes must transition to 10-digit dialing (list includes Florida 321(Brevard County only), 352, 561, 941).