



Dear Community Partners,

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is coming to Missouri. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Missouri Department of Mental Health, there is tremendous need for 988 services in our state:

- Suicide is among the top 3 leading causes of death in Missouri for ages 10-34
- Approximately one in five Missourians above the age of 18 has a mental health condition
- Approximately 377,000 of Missourians age 12+ (or 7.4%) live with a substance use disorder
- Prior to the pandemic in 2019, 8.5% of adults in Missouri reported an unmet need for mental health treatment in the past year

Behind each of these data points, there are people, families and communities who have been impacted. Yet, in the face of these urgent realities, **there is hope.**

On July 16, 2022, Missouri will join the rest of the United States in beginning to use the 988 dialing code. 988 will be the new three-digit number for call (multiple languages), text or chat (English only) that connects people to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, where compassionate, accessible care and support are available for anyone experiencing mental health–related distress. The chat feature will be available through the Lifeline’s [website](#). People can use 988 if they are having thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crises, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

The Lifeline works! Since the Lifeline began in 2005, it has served as an invaluable resource, helping thousands of people overcome suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress every day. With the transition to 988, these life-saving services will be even easier to reach.



In preparation for the transition of the Lifeline to 988, the federal government and partners from across many industries in the public and private sectors are working together to provide guidance and resources to make our work a little easier.

Notably:

- The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and its messaging task force developed the [988 Messaging Framework](#) to provide guidance on developing 988-related messaging. We encourage you to closely review these guidelines. The framework provides strategies related to the timing of messaging before and after the transition to 988 in July. It also discusses the importance of understanding how 988 works locally, following communication best practices, and tailoring 988-related messages for specific audiences.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) created a one-stop shop, the 988 Partner Toolkit, at samhsa.gov/988. The toolkit is intended for SAMHSA's 988 implementation partners—including crisis call centers, state mental health programs, substance use treatment providers, behavioral health systems, and others—and provides [key messages](#), [FAQs](#), [logo and brand guidelines](#), and more information about 988. SAMHSA will add social media posts, wallet cards, magnets, and other materials about 988 to the toolkit over time.
- SAMHSA has worked with partners across several critical industries to create a holistic view of readiness for the implementation of 988 for states, territories, tribes, crisis contact centers, public safety answering points (PSAPs) and behavioral health providers. Through these collaborative efforts, SAMHSA created [guidance documents \(e.g., “playbooks”\)](#) for these critical groups to support implementation of 988.

While this is an exciting time to reimagine how we provide crisis services in our state and in the United States, the full vision of a transformed crisis care system with 988 at its core will not be built overnight. Transformation of this scale will take time, and we must all work together to make it happen. **It is important that we speak with one voice about 988 to ensure clear understanding about what it is and how it will work.** As SAMHSA continues updating its partner toolkit and providing guidance on 988 implementations, we look forward to working with all of you to bring these critical services to our Missouri communities.

For more information on 988 in Missouri, please visit <https://dmh.mo.gov/behavioral-health/988-suicide-and-crisis-lifeline>. If you have questions regarding 988 implementation in Missouri, please contact Casey Muckler at Casey.Muckler@dmh.mo.gov.

