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# **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and 988 Planning Grant Overview**

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# Agenda



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- What is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline?
- The Lifeline in Texas
- 988 Planning Grant
  - ▶ Grant deliverables
  - ▶ Stakeholder coalition meetings
  - ▶ Eight Core Planning and Implementation Considerations
  - ▶ 988 implementation
- Questions

# What is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline?



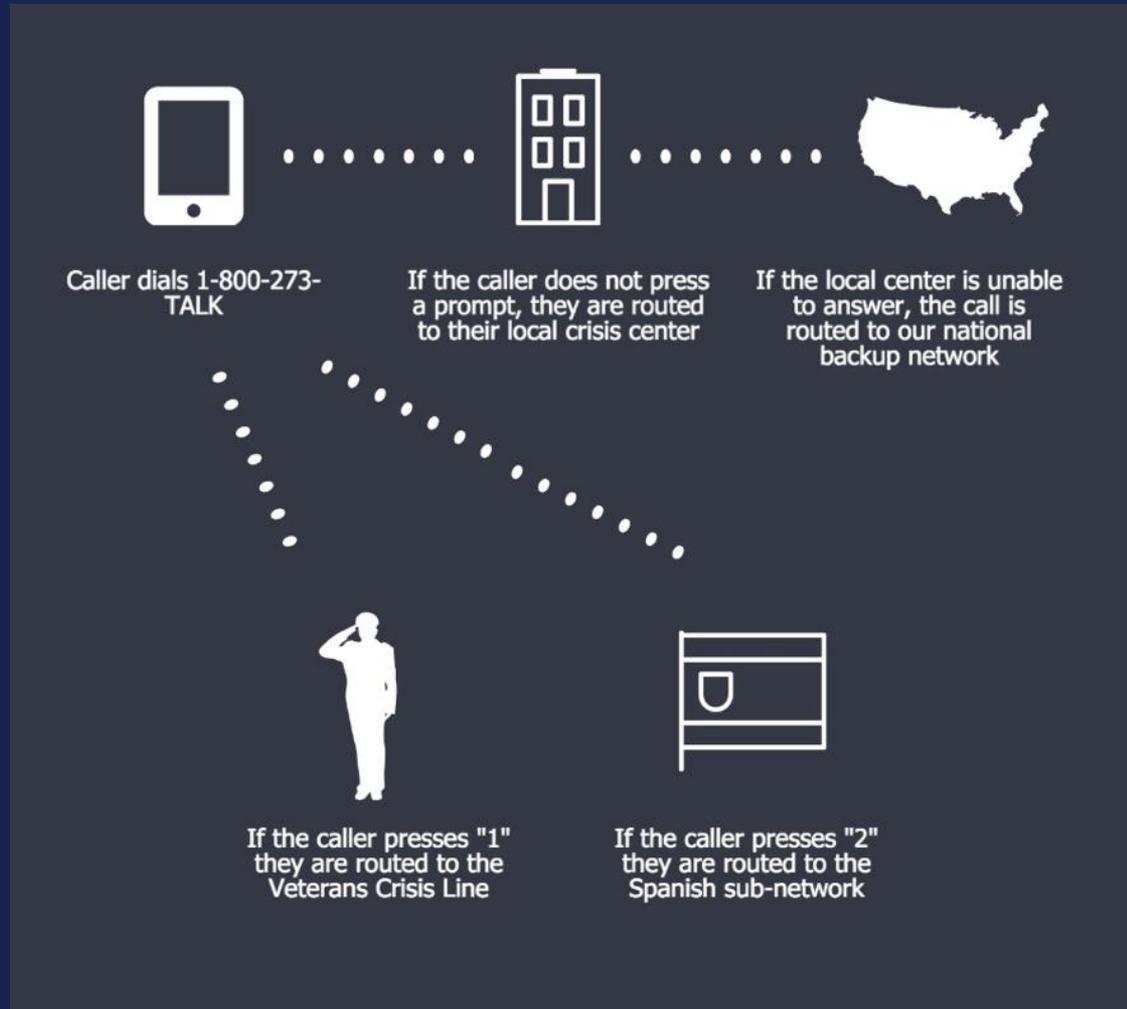
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- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) is a network of independent local and state call centers. It is not one large national call center.
- Lifeline is funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and administered by Vibrant Emotional Health (Vibrant).
- Lifeline provides 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in distress, suicide prevention and crisis resources, and best practices for professionals.
- On July 16, 2022 the national three-digit number for mental health crisis and suicide response (988) will launch.
  - ▶ 988 will be routed to Lifeline's current 1-800 number.

# What Happens When Someone Calls Lifeline?



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# Lifeline: Follow-Up Best Practices

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Vibrant requires a follow-up with callers with current thoughts of suicide 24 to 72 hours after they have contacted Lifeline.

- About 15% of calls.
- Most Texas Lifeline centers report they conduct follow-up calls within 24 hours.



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# Lifeline: Resources and Linkages

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- Texas Lifeline centers have access to various resource listings
  - ▶ 2-1-1
  - ▶ Aunt Bertha/findhelp.org
  - ▶ Network of Care
- Additional work is needed to ensure listings are comprehensive across all 254 counties in Texas (Core Area 6 of the Eight Core Planning and Implementation Considerations discussed later in the presentation)



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# Lifeline: Transfer to Local Crisis Services

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- Lifeline centers have written procedures for providing access to resources, making referrals for services, and activating emergency services for callers outside the Lifeline center's local service area.
- Callers requiring emergent or urgent care services are warm transferred to the crisis hotline of the local authority in their county of residence or current location.



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# Lifeline in Texas



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- There are five Lifeline-affiliated call centers in Texas:
  - ▶ The Suicide & Crisis Center of North Texas
  - ▶ The Harris Center
  - ▶ Integral Care
  - ▶ Emergence Health Network
  - ▶ ICARE Call Center of MHMR Tarrant
- To be part of the Lifeline network, a center must:
  - ▶ Be certified, accredited, or licensed by an external body;
  - ▶ Follow specific standards for answering Lifeline calls;  
and
  - ▶ Be willing to participate in Lifeline evaluation activities.

# How Is 988 Different From 911?



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988 is designated as the universal telephone number within the U.S. for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system operated through Lifeline.

- Centralized network routing
  - ▶ Backups and efficiencies
  - ▶ Centralized quality assurance and operating standards
- Crisis care service
  - ▶ Effectively reduces emotional distress and suicidality (free and accessible to all, 24/7/365)
  - ▶ Can link to care, outreach services, and follow-up
  - ▶ Care is grounded in a focus of least restrictive intervention possible

# 988 and Diversion



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- 988 will support Texas's current crisis services infrastructure.
- 988 may easily divert from law enforcement involvement in mental health emergencies due to the ease of remembering a three-digit number.
- 988 implementation planning efforts include outreach to 911/Public Service Access Points for telephone support and appropriate linkages to mental health services.

# 988 Planning Grant (1 of 3)



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- Eligible applicants for this grant were state mental health and public health agencies in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.
- Each Lifeline member center received a stipend for participation in the grant.
- Grant awards were non-competitive.

# 988 Planning Grant (2 of 3)

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The purpose of this grant was to assist agencies in planning for the implementation of a new, national, three-digit number for mental health crisis and suicide response.

- Vibrant awarded the grant to HHSC on February 20, 2021.
- HHSC partners with the following Lifeline-affiliated call centers: Integral Care, The Harris Center, MHMR of Tarrant County, and Emergency Health Network.
- Funds around \$180,000 were primarily used towards stipends for the Texas Lifeline call centers and a strategic planning consultant: Texas Suicide Prevention Collaborative.
- Grant period ends January 31, 2022.



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# 988 Planning Grant (3 of 3)



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Goal 1: Develop a clear roadmap to 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.

Goal 2: Plan for the long-term improvement of in-state answer rates of 988 contacts.

- This requires:
  - ▶ Ensuring the creation, and monthly convening, of a 988 key stakeholder coalition workgroup; and
  - ▶ Development of eight core 988 planning and implementation considerations.

# Grant Deliverables



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Deliverable	Due Date	Status
Landscape Analysis	April 16, 2021 (deadline extended)	Complete
Draft Implementation Plan	September 30, 2021 (deadline extended)	Complete
Final Implementation Plan	January 21, 2022 (deadline extended)	In progress

# Stakeholder Coalition Meetings

- Monthly coalition meetings began in April 2021
- Stakeholders include:
  - ▶ Persons with lived experience
  - ▶ Representatives from each Lifeline center receiving stipends through the grant
  - ▶ State suicide prevention coordinators
  - ▶ Mobile crisis services providers
  - ▶ Providers of crisis respite/stabilization services
  - ▶ Law enforcement leaders
  - ▶ 9-1-1/Public Safety Answering Points leaders
  - ▶ Peer support service providers
  - ▶ Major state/local mental health and suicide prevention advocacy groups



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# HHSC Priorities for 988 Implementation

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1. Ensure 24/7 statewide primary coverage of Lifeline calls to meet Vibrant answer rate goals.
2. Develop plans to secure sustainable and diversified funding to support 988 implementation.
3. Ensure adequate workforce pipeline to meet projected call volume estimates.
4. Evaluate Texas Lifeline system for adherence to Vibrant best practices and ensure plans are developed to close any gaps in operating policies and procedures or service provision.
5. Ensure all Lifeline centers have access to appropriate, reliable, and accurate resources, referrals, and linkages to all Texans who contact 988.



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# Eight Core 988 Planning and Implementation Considerations (1 of 2)

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1. Ensure statewide 24/7 coverage for 988 calls, chats, and texts.
2. Secure adequate, diversified, and sustained funding streams for Lifeline member centers.
3. Expand and sustain center capacity to maintain target in-state answer rates for current and projected call, text, and chat volume.
4. Support crisis centers in meeting Lifeline's operational standards, requirements, and performance metrics.



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# Eight Core 988 Planning and Implementation Considerations (2 of 2)

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5. Convene a coalition of key stakeholders to advise on 988 planning and implementation.
6. Maintain a comprehensive, updated listing of resources, referrals, and linkages; plan for expanded services.
7. Ensure all state centers can provide best practice follow-up to 988 callers/chatters/texters.
8. Plan and implement marketing for 988.



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# 988 Implementation (1 of 2)

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- By June 30, 2022 (988 pre-launch):
  - ▶ States are to achieve and maintain an 80% or higher in-state answer rate for Lifeline calls; and
  - ▶ Have sufficient capacity to receive and handle at least 50% of the projected chat/text volume.
- By June 30, 2023 (988 post-launch):
  - ▶ States are to achieve and maintain a 90% or higher in-state answer rate for Lifeline/988 calls; and
  - ▶ Have sufficient capacity to receive and handle at least 80% of the projected chat/text volume.
- 988 will launch July 16, 2022.



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# 988 Implementation (2 of 2)

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Possible delays to full implementation:

- Lifeline center staff turnover and retention challenges
- Lifeline center hiring challenges
- Lifeline center expansion challenges
- Lifeline centers in Texas do not yet receive texts/chats



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# Questions?

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# Thank you

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