

FACT SHEET: 988 AND 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, 2022.

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 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>.