

# 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

What 911, Fire, EMS, and First Responders Need to Know



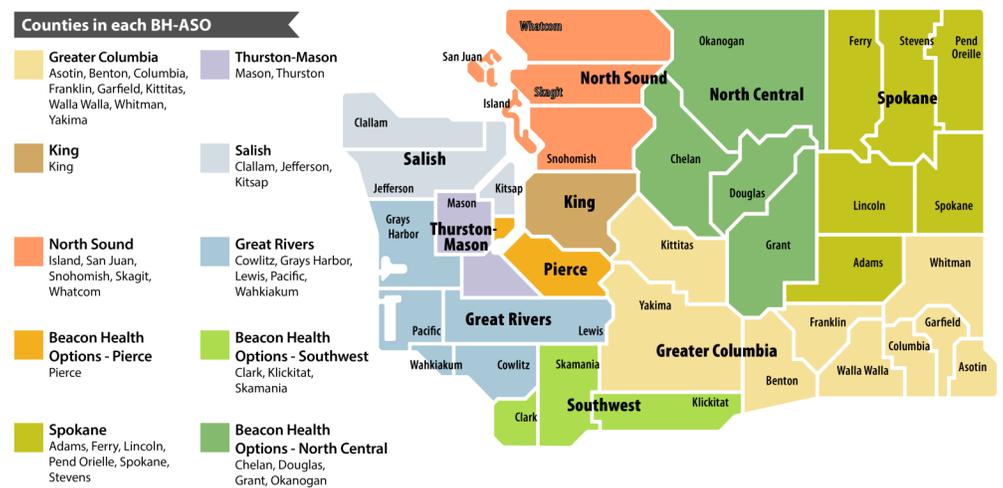
On July 16, 2022, Washington will join the rest of the United States in using the 988 dialing code — the new three-digit number for call, text, or chat that connects people to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL). People can dial 988 if they are having thoughts of suicide, mental 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. Prior to July 2022, NSPL crisis centers were accessed by calling 1-800-273-TALK (8255). This number will remain active during the transition to 988.

## 911 and First Responders: What you need to know for July 16, 2022

Continue to use your current processes for connecting with regional behavioral health crisis services, such as your regional crisis line and/or mobile response. You can continue to access those services the same way you always have.

See the map of service areas for Washington's Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organizations (BH-ASOs).

### Behavioral Health: Administrative Services Organizations (BH-ASO)



Behavioral health crisis services are administered and coordinated by BH-ASOs in the regions identified in this map. Contact the BH-ASO through the regional crisis line for more information on services available. **(Click the map for a list of county crisis lines.)**

# 988, WASHINGTON'S CRISIS RESPONSE

Building understanding, hope, and a path forward for those in need, where and when they need it.

## PHASE 1: The immediate work ahead

In the short-term, the goal is to **strengthen and expand the current NSPL crisis center infrastructure and capacity** to ensure trained crisis counselors are available to quickly respond to 988 via call, text, or chat.

On July 16, 2022, people who dial 988 will be connected to an NSPL crisis center. In Washington, 988 calls will be answered by the three current NSPL crisis centers: Crisis Connections, Frontier Behavioral Health, and Volunteers of America of Western Washington.

Calls are routed to the NSPL crisis centers based on the caller's area code using the map on the right.

There will be no change to the NSPL crisis centers' operations or services after July 16, 2022. They are working hard to bring on more staff in anticipation of a higher call volume.

Public promotion of 988 will occur after July 16 to ensure all phone carriers are ready to redirect 988 calls to the NSPL crisis centers. Washington's public promotion of 988 will align with guidance from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Vibrant, the national administrator of the NSPL. Public promotion will make it clear that 988 links people to the NSPL.



NSPL crisis center coverage in Washington by county.

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

The current NSPL phone number will remain active after 988 goes live.

## PHASE 2: Washington's vision for expanded and coordinated suicide and crisis services

In the longer term, the vision is to **build a robust crisis response system across the country** that links callers to community-based providers who can deliver a full range of crisis care services. In Washington, the work ahead is outlined by House Bill 1477.

House Bill 1477 outlines key changes to Washington's Behavioral Health Crisis Response System, including:

- Health plans making next-day appointments available (January 2023)
- Establishment of best practices for deployment of mobile crisis response teams (July 2023)
- Designation of crisis call center hubs (July 2024)
- Expansion of options for youth and adults to receive help while in crisis
- A technology platform that facilitates care coordination among crisis services in Washington

Over the next few years, the Crisis Response Improvement Strategy (CRIS) Committee will develop recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to support these important components of House Bill 1477.

For more information: [Crisis Response Improvement Strategy \(CRIS\) committees](#)

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DOH 971-052 June 2022

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