Protecting the future of 988: Oklahoma's mental health lifeline

hm.
HEALTHY MINDS
POLICY INITIATIVE

988 is the national three-digit number to call for immediate support for mental health, substance use, and suicide crises. Thousands of Oklahomans have called 988 for mental health support since the three-digit code launched in 2022. But without action, funding for Oklahoma's 988 lifeline will run out in June 2026.

HB 4092 would create a revolving fund for Oklahoma's mental health crisis response system and require the state to fund 988, either through an appropriation or other means. HB 4092 would also direct the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to oversee the 988-system statewide.

Oklahoma's 988 lifeline

- When people call 988 in Oklahoma, they get help from Oklahoma-based call-takers who understand the state's systems, services, and pathways for mental health and substance use care
- Without local call centers, 988 crisis calls are routed to national backup centers
- More than **178,000 Oklahomans have called 988** and been connected to services since its inception
- Oklahoma's call centers have an average answer time within 11 seconds
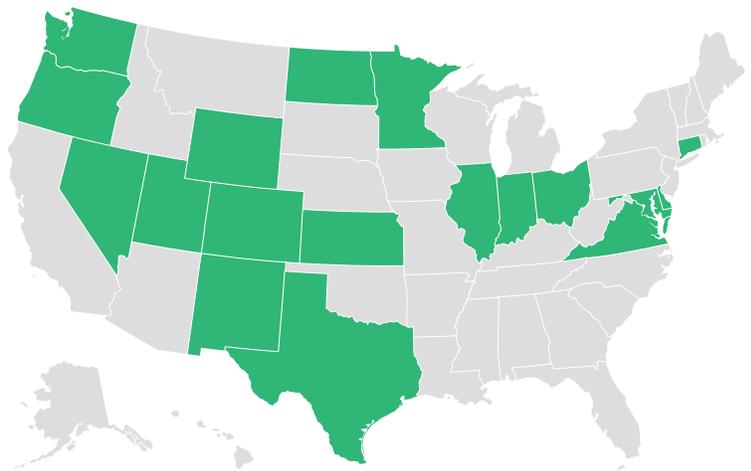
Elements of the ideal crisis system

- The ideal crisis system has three elements: someone to call, someone to respond, and a safe place to go
- In Oklahoma, 988 is our main "someone to call"
- **90% of 988 calls in Oklahoma are resolved entirely over the phone**

Someone to call
988 or local crisis lines

Someone to respond
Mobile crisis teams

A safe place to go
Crisis centers

How other states fund 988

- 19 states have established a 988 revolving fund through statute, including Texas, Colorado, Kansas, and New Mexico
- Some states have enacted permanent funding for 988 through a fee on residents' cell phone bills, and others plan to fund 988 through recurring state appropriations

States with revolving funding for 988

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). "988 Crisis Response State Legislation Map."

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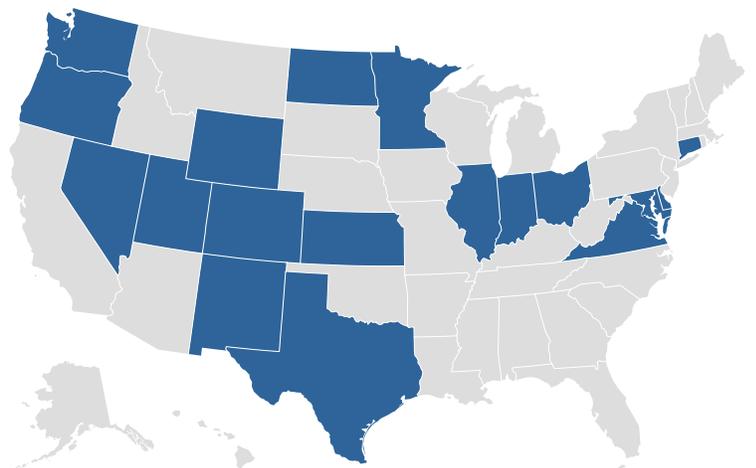
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