

# Reinventing Crisis Response

## Preparing Illinois for 988

**988 can be more than a phone number.**

It's a historic opportunity to build a stronger mental health crisis system.

The July launch of the national 988 crisis line is **an important step for Illinois towards reimagining our mental health crisis system.**

**It will be the first step, but much more work remains.** Just like the 911 phone number is only one part of an emergency response system, the 988 line should be the front door into a complete mental health crisis system that includes the three components to the right.<sup>1</sup>

- 1 SOMEONE TO TALK TO**  
regional crisis call centers
- 2 SOMEONE TO RESPOND**  
mobile crisis team services
- 3 A PLACE TO GO**  
mental health focused  
walk-in crisis spaces

### HISTORY IN ILLINOIS

Each state is building 988 upon the infrastructure of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) and existing in-person crisis services. Illinois has a lot of work to do, because our past infrastructure is limited compared to many other states.

- **Someone to talk to:** Illinois' NSPL call centers have been under-resourced for many years. In the first half of 2020, **69% of Illinois NSPL calls were answered by call centers in other states**, and that only factored the early months of the pandemic call surge.<sup>2</sup>
- **Someone to respond and a place to go:** Many of Illinois' solutions for mobile crisis response, like 590 teams and CESSA, are new and still being developed. Illinois has limited mental health focused walk-in spaces for people in crisis to go, instead mostly relying on hospitals.

### FUNDING IN ILLINOIS

Illinois will receive federal funding to support 988 this year, but we will need **additional, sustainable state funding** to build the 988 system.

- **Call centers:** Illinois will likely distribute \$10-15M of federal grant funds to 988 call centers this year. That is about **20% of what SAMHSA believes will be needed yearly** by the end of 2023. More than 60% of the funds are time-limited by ARPA, only renewing through Dec. 2024.<sup>3</sup>
- **Proposed FY23 Budget:** Governor Pritzker has proposed allocating \$70M to 988.<sup>4</sup> This is an admirable down payment towards the funds needed, but does include federal funding that will expire in 2-3 years.
- **988 Trust Fund bill (SB2945):** This bill is being discussed by the Illinois legislature in Spring 2022. **This bill does not fund 988** or create revenue streams. It would simply establish a place in the State treasury to hold funds for 988.<sup>5</sup>

To get involved with 988 advocacy, please contact:

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# 988 Launch in Illinois

## February 2022 Status Update

### Our 988 Advocacy

#### ILLINOIS MUST BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUNDING STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT 988.

Federal funds and current State investment will get Illinois started in building our 988 system, but **it won't be enough**. Demand for mental health crisis services will continue to grow, and many federal 988 funding streams expire at the end of 2024.

Illinois has several options to create additional, sustainable funding streams to make 988 successful long-term, including:

- **Collecting telecomms fees** to support 988 operations, which has been done in states like Virginia, Colorado and Nevada.<sup>6</sup>
- **Increasing health insurance coverage** of in-person mental health crisis care, via Medicaid plan amendments and waivers and/or private insurance requirements.
- **Investing in treatment** by increasing resources for non-hospital, brick and mortar crisis receiving locations.

#### ILLINOIS MUST BUILD 988 AS A FULL CRISIS CONTINUUM.

Illinois must prioritize this historic opportunity to reinvent our mental health crisis response system. **We must not limit ourselves to thinking of 988 as a crisis line.** Our effort must include:

- Building sophisticated processes for 988 call centers to coordinate with mobile crisis response, 590 and CARES teams, 911, first response, and more.
- Investing in non-hospital crisis receiving and stabilization services statewide, so that people who call in crisis have somewhere to go.
- Creating a more hyper-regional network of call centers, so that people in crisis talk to a qualified call-taker located near them, who can connect them to locally appropriate resources.

1 Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration, [National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care: Best Practice Toolkit](#), (2020), 8.  
2 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Illinois: Semi-annual Call Volume Report \(January-June 2020\)](#), (2020).  
3 Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration, [988 Appropriations Report](#), (2021), 10.  
4 State of Illinois, Office of the Governor, Illinois State Budget Fiscal Year 2023, Powerpoint, January 31, 2022.  
5 SB2945, legislation under consideration in the 102nd Illinois General Assembly, accessed February 9, 2022.  
6 National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI 988 State Bill Tracking, accessed February 9, 2022.

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