



For Immediate Release:
July 16, 2025

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Marks Third Anniversary of Providing Lifesaving Support to Ohioans

Ohio Mental Health Officials Announce Launch of New Online Store to Help Boost Awareness, Reduce Stigma with 988-Branded Merchandise

(COLUMBUS, OH) – Today, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline commemorates three years of service. Since launching in 2022, the Lifeline’s trained specialists have responded to nearly 600,000 calls, texts, and chats from Ohioans experiencing emotional distress or a behavioral health crisis.

In Ohio, 988 is administered by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) through an in-state network of 988 contact centers that provide coverage to all 88 counties. Ohioans who are experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis can call, text, or chat 988 to access free, confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"988 is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing behavioral health related distress," said OhioMHAS Director LeeAnne Cornyn. "By providing immediate support, the Lifeline makes behavioral health care more accessible for everyone, no matter where they are or what they're facing."



592,294

total 988 contacts (calls, chats, and texts) since July 2022.

16,453

average number of 988 contacts per month.

2,026

average number of chats received per month from Ohio area codes.

3,131

average number of texts received per month from Ohio area codes.

11,296

average number of monthly 988 calls from Ohio area codes, including veteran and Spanish-speaking calls routed to specialized national call centers.

1.5%

average percentage of calls rolled over to a national back-up call center.

23 Seconds

average speed to answer rate in Ohio, compared to **34 seconds nationally.**



Ohio's call centers are staffed by specialists trained to respond to crisis calls appropriately, offer support, and connect individuals to resources within their own communities. So far this year, these specialists have responded to an average of approximately 22,000 contacts each month. Almost 98% of people who call, text, or chat the 988 Lifeline receive the crisis support they need without requiring additional services at that moment. However, contact specialists can provide referrals to local treatment providers and recovery supports when necessary.

OhioMHAS is marking the anniversary and looking to boost awareness of the Lifeline with the launch of a new, online store (988.ohio.gov/store) offering a variety of Ohio 988-themed merchandise, including t-shirts, polos, sweatshirts, hoodies, buttons, keychains, car magnets, tumblers, and mugs. The store is hosted on Zazzle, an online marketplace that specializes in made-to-order customizable products.



“By featuring 988-branded apparel and accessories, we aim to spark conversations around mental health, reduce stigma, and inform more people about this vital resource,” said Director Cornyn. “Every purchase helps spread the message that support is just a call, text, or chat away.”

The department expects the volume of calls, texts, and chats to increase as familiarity of the resource grows. “As more Ohioans become familiar with the service, our hope is that reaching out to 988 for a behavioral health crisis will become as natural as calling 911 for other types of emergencies,” said Director Cornyn.

In May, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine joined state mental health leaders and suicide prevention advocates to [announce](#) the availability of a new 988 specialty license plate. The license plate featuring Ohio’s 988 logo is available now for purchase at deputy registrar locations and online at [BMV.ohio.gov](https://bmvo.ohio.gov). The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation will receive \$25 from the sale of each plate to support suicide prevention initiatives in communities throughout Ohio.

Last year, OhioMHAS launched a statewide campaign to increase public awareness of 988. The campaign included a baseline survey that revealed about a third of Ohioans knew about the lifesaving resource. A follow-up survey is in the works to help measure the impact of the campaign and gauge awareness.

Ohioans are also encouraged to check out the [Ohio 988 Toolkit](#) and [Materials Generator](#), which allows community groups, faith organizations, businesses, schools, and others to create free, customizable awareness resources. Learn more at mha.ohio.gov/988.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988 or visit [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) for 24/7, confidential support.

#

OhioMHAS Contact:

Eric Wandersleben, Director of Media Relations and Outreach
eric.wandersleben@mha.ohio.gov | 614.359.6754