

The 9-8-8 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and mobile crisis integrations in California

DH

Compassionate care when and where it is needed.

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Crisis Care Mobile Unit Learning Collaborative
Sacramento, CA

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Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Center, Los Angeles



- Founded in 1958 as the nation's first suicide prevention center.
- Inaugural member of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (now 988) in 2005.
- Crisis chat/text services since 2012.
- A member of the 988 Lifeline national-level: Spanish language subnetwork, chat/text backup and Disaster Distress Helpline.
- The highest volume 988 center in both California and the U.S.

988 : A New Number Built From A Strong History



The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline...



Est. 2005



...is now
The **988** Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



launched July 16, 2022

<https://988lifeline.org/>



The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

Press '1' for Veterans,

Press '2' for Spanish,

Press '3' for LGBTQ+ people under the age of 25



<https://988lifeline.org/>



<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>



The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline : Key Points



- Easier Access: **9-8-8** is new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the national Lifeline. **988 chat and text is also available.**
- No matter where you live or how often you move, **988** is an easy to remember, free, **24/7 national** portal for connecting to **localized** services.
- Translations services in **160+** languages is available, as is American Sign Language videophone and connections with the **988**-affiliated Disaster Distress Helpline.
- There are **230+** independently operated and funded local and state crisis call centers in the U.S. – **12 of which are in California.**
- Multiple, independent research studies since 2010 have shown 988 Lifeline services are effective at reducing crisis, preventing suicide, and providing resources. (See: <https://988lifeline.org/research-and-evaluation/>)



988: Meeting Community Needs



**Utilize least
invasive, most
collaborative
intervention**



**Highly Trained
Counselors**



**Locally Fielded
Contacts**



**Specialized
support for
LGBTQ+, veterans,
Spanish speakers**

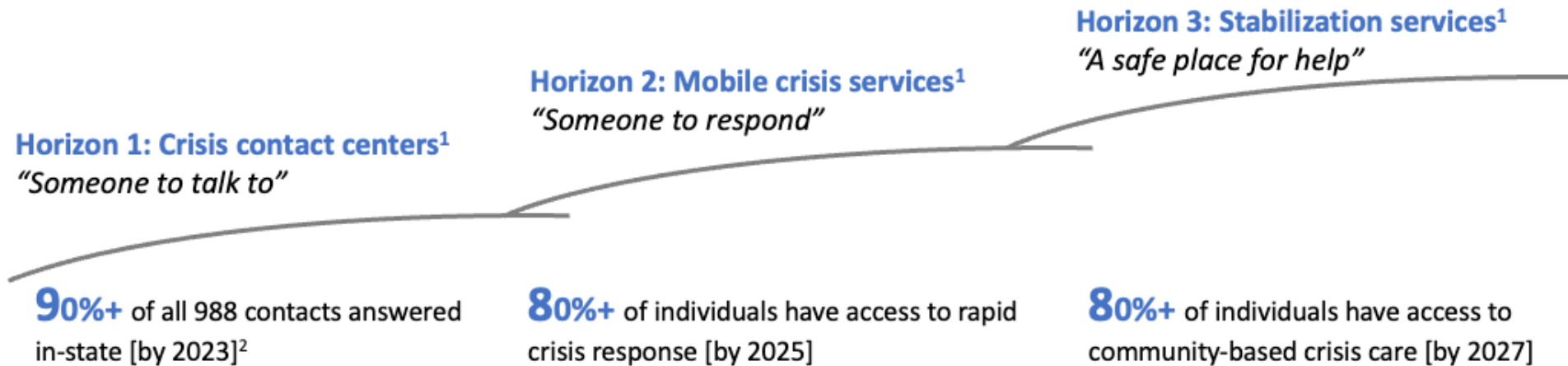
GOAL: Help people stay safe and facilitate access to quality mental health support

988 is a key part of the national vision for crisis care



SAMHSA's vision for crisis services

988



Provide individuals experiencing suicidal, mental health, and substance use crises, and their loved ones, with caring, accessible, and high-quality support

*Ensure **integrated services are available** across the crisis care continuum, supported through strong partnerships (e.g., State, Territorial, Tribal, Federal)*

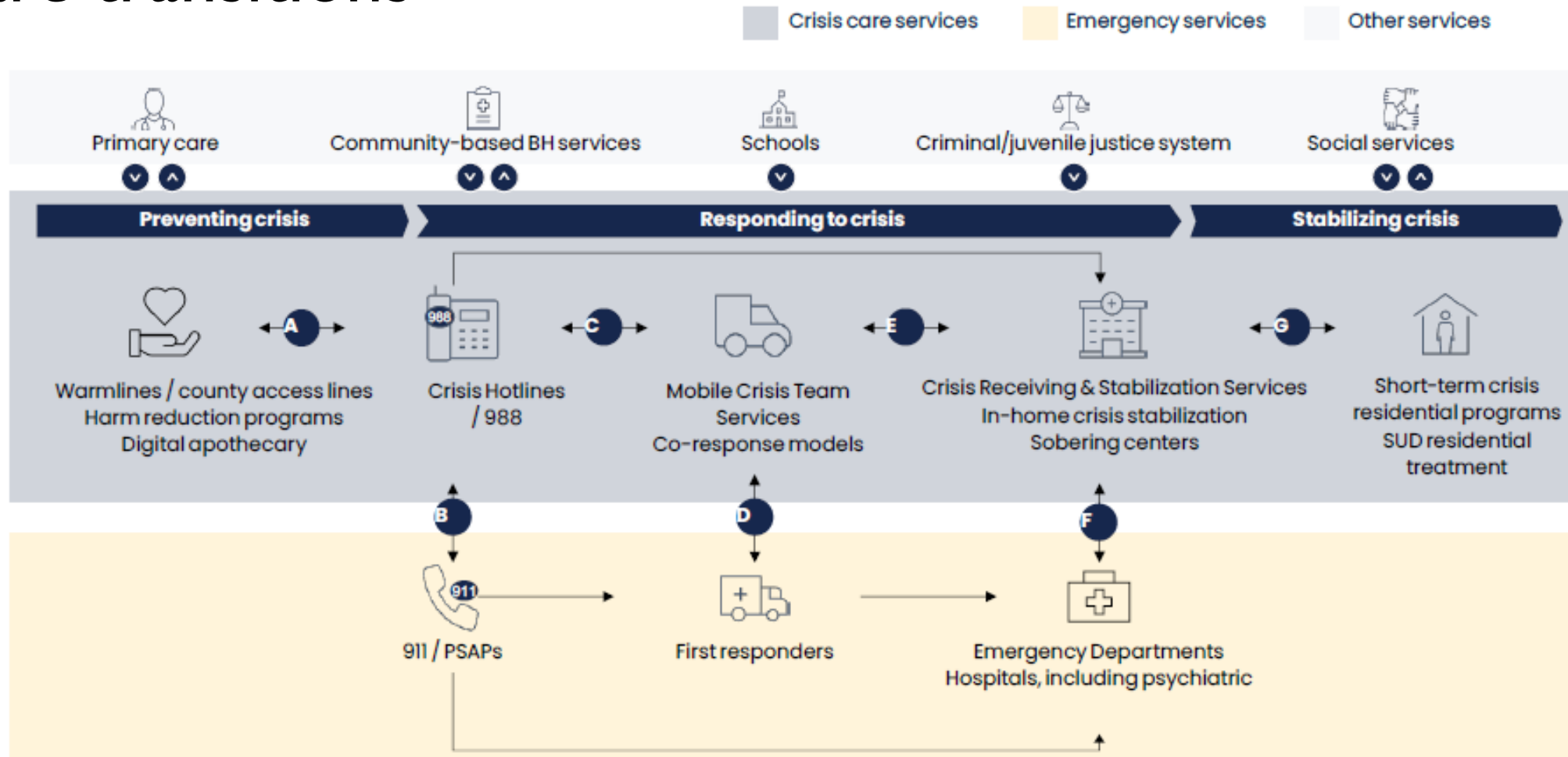
*Provide **"health first"** responses to behavioral health crises and ensure connection with appropriate levels of care*

*Integrate **lived experiences of peers** and support for populations at high risk of suicide, such as Veterans, LGBTQ, BIPOC, youth, & people in rural areas*

*Advance **equitable access to crisis services** for populations at higher risk of suicide, with a focus on Tribes and Territories*

1. Inclusive of intake, engagement, and follow-up
2. Proportion may differ with chat/text vs. calls; "contacts answered" is defined as connected with a trained responder

988 as a key part of CA HHS' plan for improving care transitions



**SOME REASONS TO
CALL, TEXT,
AND CHAT
988**

Trauma

**Thoughts
of suicide**

**Feeling
depressed
or anxious**

**Drinking too
much or drug use**



What To Know About 988

988 ~~≠~~ 911

Crisis call centers stabilize most situations over the phone through support, compassion, and guidance.

Protecting privacy, saving money, ensuring safety and empowering community members.



What To Know About 988



988 IS



- Free to use
- Confidential
- Staffed by highly trained counselors
- Nonjudgmental support
- For everyone

988 IS NOT



- An alternative to 911
- A hotline to find a therapist
- Forced mental health treatment
- Part of law enforcement

When to contact 988

- *I can't stop thinking about suicide and I really need to talk to somebody who won't judge me.*
- *I think my cousin is using drugs and I am worried about her.*
- *My friend is thinking about suicide, and I want to know how to support them.*
- *I feel sad and lonely all the time. I can't seem to shake it off. I don't know how much longer I can go on like this...*
- *One of my students is going through a really hard time. He's nervous about calling the crisis line but agreed to do it together...*

There is hope.



988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Talk with us.



What happens when you call 988?



Trained, caring and compassionate crisis counselors will invite you to share what is going on.

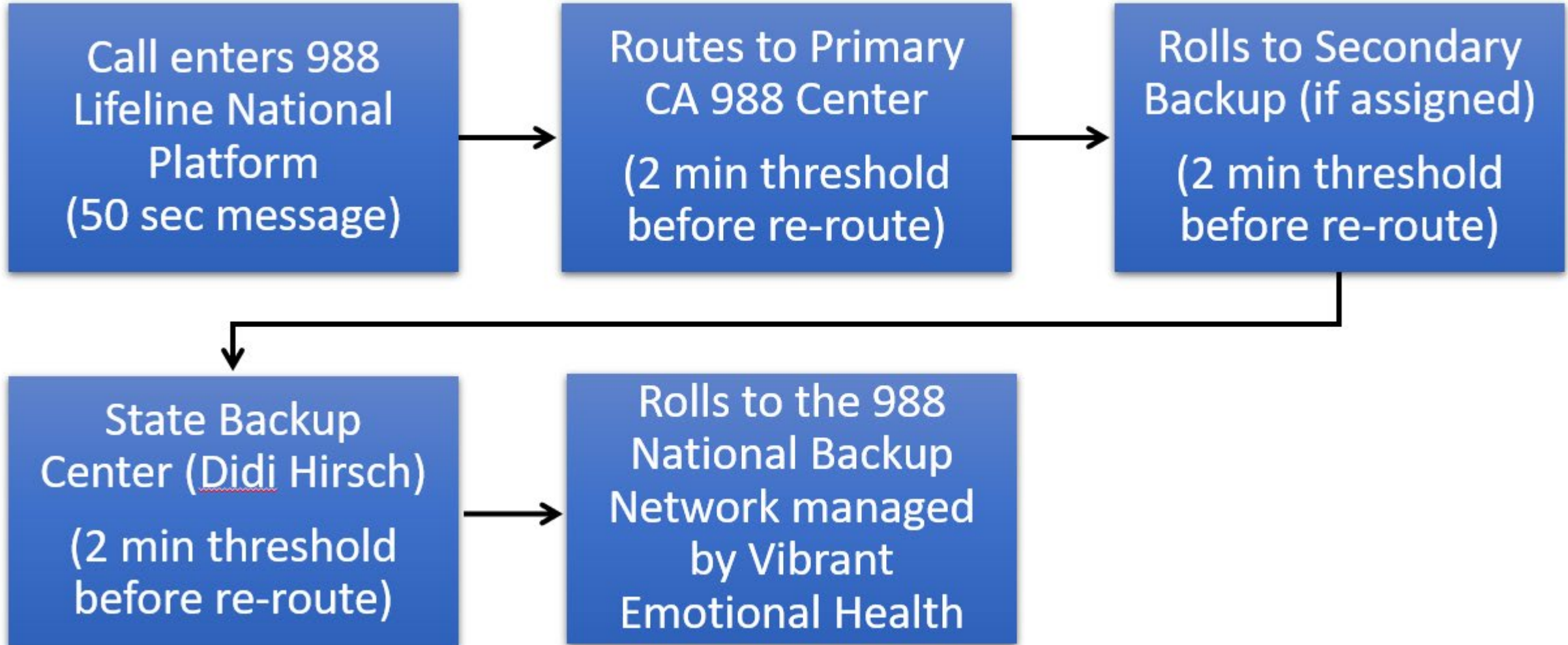
As they **listen to your story**, they will also likely:

- Ask what they can call you (your first name)
- Ask a few demographic questions about you
- Ask suicide safety assessment questions (mandatory)
- Collaborate with you to develop a **safety plan** and/or next steps
- Provide you with local referral resources
- Connect you with mobile crisis if needed, available and agreed to.
- Offer you a follow-up call, if needed and if you consent to it.

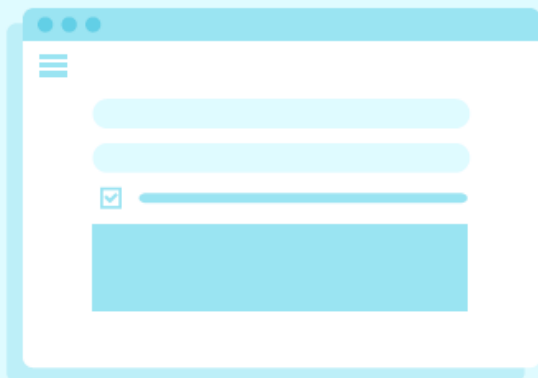
A screenshot of a 'Safety Plan' form. The form is titled 'Safety Plan' and includes an introductory paragraph: 'A safety plan is designed to guide you through a crisis. As you proceed through the steps, you can help yourself and feel safer. Keep your plan easily accessible in case you have thoughts of hurting yourself.' The form is divided into four steps, each with a heading and a brief description, followed by a 'Ask Yourself' section with a text box for the user's response. Step 1: 'My Warning Signs' - 'A warning sign is something you think, feel, or do as suicidal thoughts are starting to develop.' Step 2: 'My Coping Strategies' - 'Coping strategies are things you can do on your own to help feel a little better in the moment.' Step 3: 'My Distractions' - 'Distractions are people or places that may offer comfort in a time of distress.' Step 4: 'My Supports' - 'Supports are people you feel comfortable talking to about what you're going through, and who can provide some help.' Each step also includes a 'Contact Info' field for the person or place mentioned.

In **rare** circumstances (**typically 2% or less**), when an individual is in imminent risk of harming themselves or others, and they are unable to stabilize and complete a safety plan, emergency intervention is required.

Current 988 call routing structure in CA



What happens when you chat to 988?



When someone uses the Lifeline chat via <https://988lifeline.org/chat/> they'll **first complete a short survey** letting the crisis counselor know a little about their current situation, and **then see a wait-time message** while they are connected to a crisis counselor.

A trained crisis counselor will answer the chat, converse with the chatter to understand how their problem is affecting them, provide support, and share resources that may be helpful.

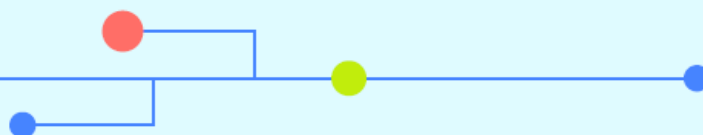
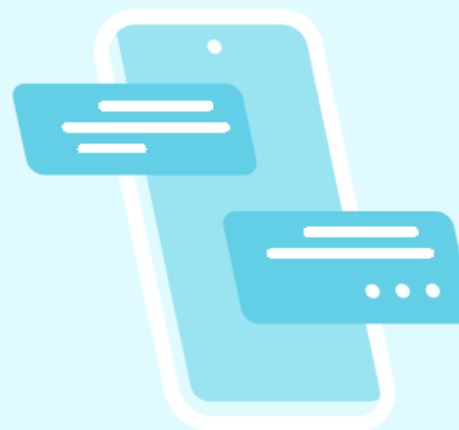


What happens when you text to 988?



When someone texts 988, they will **complete a short survey** letting the crisis counselor know a little about their current situation.

They will be then connected with a **trained crisis counselor**, who will interact with them to understand what the texter is experiencing, provide support, and connect them with any needed help or resources.



Current 988 chat/text routing structure in CA



Chat / text enters
988 Suicide & Crisis
Lifeline national
portal

Routes to California
statewide queue, answered
by the CA988 Network,
based on text phone
number or chat zip code
entered by user

The 988 national backup
network picks up chats/texts
unable to be answered in
California (not all CA 988
centers are 24/7 yet for 988
chat/text)

California 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Centers



- 1 Buckelew Suicide Prevention Program
- 2 Central Valley Suicide Prevention Hotline – Kings View
- 3 Contra Costa Crisis Center
- 4 Crisis Support Services of Alameda County
- 5 Kern Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Hotline
- 6 Optum
- 7 San Francisco Suicide Prevention Felton Institute
- 8 Santa Clara County Suicide and Crisis Services
- 9 StarVista
- 10 Suicide Prevention Center - Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
- 11 Suicide Prevention Service of the Central Coast
- 12 WellSpace Health



	988 Center Name	Primary Coverage Area	Backup Coverage Area
	Buckelew Suicide Prevention Program	Marin, Mendocino, Sonoma	Area code 415
	Central Valley Suicide Prevention Hotline – Kings View	Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus, Tulare, Area code 559	
	Contra Costa Crisis Care	Contra Costa	Alameda, Amador, Calaveras, Lake, Marin, Napa, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano, Sonoma
	Crisis Support Services of Alameda County	Alameda	Area Code 510
	Kern Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Hotline	Kern	
	Optum	San Diego	
	San Francisco Suicide Prevention/ Felton Institute	San Francisco	Area code 415
	Santa Clara County Suicide and Crisis Services	Santa Clara; Area code 510, 669, 650, 408	Area code 925
	StarVista	San Mateo	Area code 650
	Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services – Suicide Prevention Center	Inyo, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura	Statewide
	Suicide Presentation Service of the Central Coast	Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz	
	WellSpace Health	Alpine, Amador, Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba	Inyo, Imperial, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Cruz, Ventura

988 Center Accreditation and Counselor Training



- 988 centers undergo **clinical standards and training reviews** by Vibrant Emotional Health, the national administrator of 988, before joining, and now also by CA DHCS.
- 988 centers must also be **independently accredited**. All CA 988 centers are accredited by the American Association of Suicidology and some are *also* accredited with the International Council of Helplines, Joint Commission, CARF or AIRS.
- The 988 counselors (staff and volunteers) must **complete suicide safety assessment training**, role play simulations, participate in periodic live monitoring supervision, safety planning training, and complete training in specialized services / population care. Many requirements are annual.
- On **every** 988 contact counselors must ask: 1) *Have you had any thoughts of suicide in the past few days, including today? ..and* 2) *Have you taken any action to harm yourself today?*
- 988 Counselors **assess** the individual's Suicide *Desire, Intent, Capability* and *Buffers*.
- As of December 2023, just over **1,000 staff / volunteers** are answering 988 in CA



Additional information on how 988 works



- 988 is based on the philosophy of the least invasive intervention possible. When necessary, a **mobile crisis team** may be deployed to provide in-person de-escalation and assessment.
- Most 988 centers in CA do not *presently* have authority to directly deploy. They engage county agencies, 911 or whomever does have authority.
- Mobile crisis via 988 most often occurs **with the consent** of the individual who reached out for help. Typically, this will be when stabilization is needed but the individual is not in imminent risk of death or harming others.
- If a 988 center receives an **out-of-area call**, the center will still conduct a safety assessment and work empathetically to support the individual. If the caller consents, the center may then transfer the call to a more local center.

Data and Performance

- **Federal and state performance standards are extremely high** at: 90%+ answer rates, 95% of all contacts answered within 20 seconds, and 90% within 15 seconds. Abandonment rate target is <5% with a goal of fewer than 10% re-routing in the national backup network.
 - Since 988 launch in July 2022, the lifeline nationally has received and routed **8.1 million** contacts as of 12/31/23/ (Source: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/performance-metrics>).*



- July 2022-June 2023 (YI of 988), CA call volume +21%, texts +605% and chats +127% compared to the prior twelve months. In YI the CA 988 centers answered 307,549 contacts, **more than any other state.****



- In 2023, California's **monthly in-state** answer rate for 988 calls ranged between 84-91%. Contacts that can't be answered in-state were routed into the national 988 call, chat and text backup network.**



- **December 2023** = 29,893 calls from CA (average speed to answer (ASA), 39 seconds); 2,515 chats (ASA 7 seconds); 9,405 texts (ASA 15 seconds);*** **988 national avg length of call = 13.6 minutes; chats 27.10 minutes; texts 49:23 minutes.***

*Source: *** <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/performance-metrics> ; ** <https://988lifeline.org/our-network>; ***Vibrant Emotional Health Broad State Metrics Report;

988 de-escalates crisis. Emergency intervention is rarely needed

October – December 2023 data *as reported by the CA 988 centers:*

The 988 Vision



Someone to answer



Someone to respond



Somewhere to go

- Answer rate for all 988 contacts = 88.5%;
84.2% answered w/in 20 seconds; 75.9% within 15 seconds.
- Of 89,579 contacts answered:
 - 492 were suicides in progress (0.5%)
 - 3,776 resulted in emergency response **without** law enforcement (4%)
 - 2,634 resulted in mobile crisis referrals (3%)
 - 206 resulted in emergency response **with** law enforcement (0.2%)
 - ***Note: not all CA988 centers reported on the 4 points above so the data slightly under-represents both the statewide counts and percentages.**
- July-December 2023 Didi Hirsch LA County 988 data shows of 27,441 contacts answered:
 - 1,291 resulted in emergency interventions of *any kind* such as 911, EMS, mobile crisis, self-referral (5%)
 - 949 resulted in mobile crisis referrals (3.45% direct from 988 + self-referral /provided MCT dispatch # to individual for them to call)

988 is a transformative moment for crisis care



What 988 does for California and the nation:

- ✓ Helps **normalize help-seeking** and **end stigma** for accessing mental healthcare.
- ✓ **Reduces** use of law enforcement, public health, and other safety resources.
- ✓ Meets the **growing need for crisis intervention** at scale.
- ✓ **Reduces healthcare spending** with more cost-effective early intervention.

Be the lifeline.



Thank you.

Together, 988 and mobile crisis services are transforming care for those in need.



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