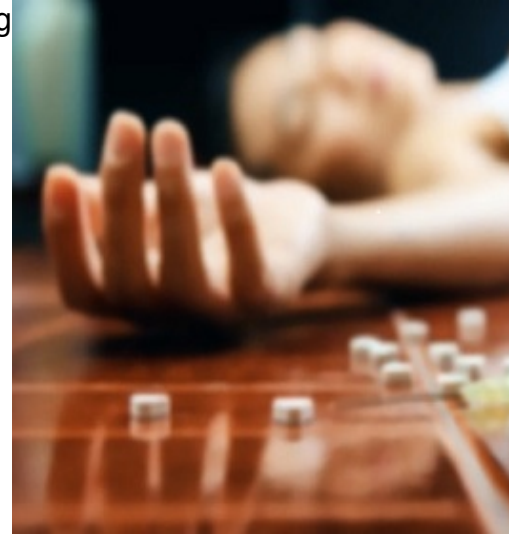


New Federal Grants to Support the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
Wednesday, 18 October 2023 15:30 -

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\$17 million in new federal funding will help increase public awareness of 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and its ability to help people with mental health and substance use needs.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced that the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is receiving nearly \$17 million in new federal funding to enhance operations of the [988 Wisconsin Lifeline](#), the service that answers calls, texts, and chats to the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) from Wisconsin-based phone numbers and locations.



“I declared 2023 the Year of Mental Health in Wisconsin because our state is facing a mental and behavioral health crisis, and we want folks of all ages and backgrounds who are working to overcome these challenges to know that help and support is available,” said Gov. Evers. “We will continue working to ensure Wisconsinites have access to the healthcare and resources they need, and we are grateful for the federal government’s continued investment in this vital service. These grants will help continue the good work of the folks at the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline to make sure that when our family, friends, and neighbors need someone to talk to,

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somebody is there to provide support and help save lives.”

This funding will support efforts to:

- Build the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline workforce, including creating more jobs throughout the state and expanding remote work options to allow for more follow-up contacts, ensuring people who need additional support beyond the call, text, or chat are getting connected to local care and support.
- Strengthen connections between the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline, 911 centers, and county programs that serve people experiencing mental health and substance use emergencies.
- Raise awareness of the service through statewide advertising and direct outreach campaigns to populations that are difficult to reach through traditional advertising methods, including people at higher risk for a mental health and substance use emergency.

“There is hope. There is help,” said DHS Secretary Kirsten Johnson. “The 988 Wisconsin Lifeline has proven to be a valuable service in protecting and promoting the health and safety of all state residents. This funding will have a positive impact on saving lives.”

The federal funding will come from two grants. The congressional spending project is providing \$3.1 million, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration improvement project is providing \$4.6 million a year for three years for a total of \$13.8 million.

Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin operates the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline through grant funding from DHS. From July 2022, when the three-digit number became available, through September 2023, the latest data available, Wisconsinites have made 91,860 calls, 15,442 texts, and 12,483 chats to the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline.

People can contact the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline to talk about any number of concerns, including anxiety, substance use, economic stress, feelings of depression, loneliness, mental and physical health needs, relationships, gender- and identity-related needs, trauma, and thoughts of suicide. The contact is free and confidential.

The 988 Wisconsin Lifeline is funded through a combination of federal grants managed by DHS. Gov. Evers declared 2023 the Year of Mental Health and, in recognition of the need for a sustainable funding source for the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline, included more than \$3 million for the service in his 2023-25 state budget proposal. Unfortunately, Republicans on the Joint Finance Committee removed this funding from the budget, and as a result, no state funding currently is used to support the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline.

The 988 Wisconsin Lifeline currently employs 49 trained counselors answering calls, texts, and chats 24/7, as well as 15 managers who support the counselors to make sure quality service is

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provided. Learn about [careers with the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline](#) .

Find materials to promote the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline at 988Wisconsin.org .