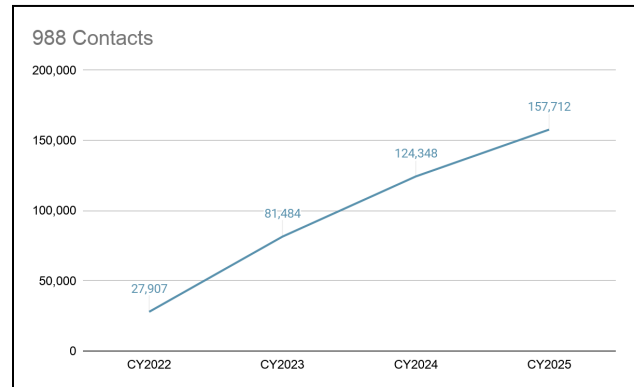


Maryland 988 Lifeline Overview

June 2026

The **988 Lifeline** provides free, confidential help for Marylanders with mental health, emotional distress, and/or substance use concerns. By calling or texting 9-8-8, or [chatting](#) 24/7, Marylanders can talk to a trained specialist, get connected to services, and receive immediate in-person support if needed.

Contacts to Maryland 988 have substantially increased since it launched in July 2022. In calendar year 2025, **157,712** contacts were made to 988, a 27% increase from the prior year. Nearly all calls (92%) are answered by Maryland call specialists; during high volume times, national back up centers help ensure every call gets answered.

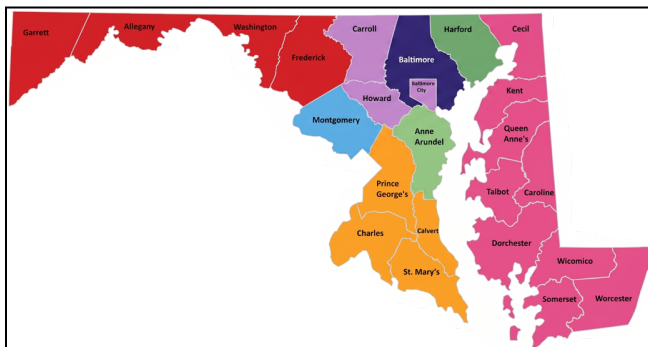


The Value of 988

The 988 Lifeline has been linked to an 11% decrease in suicides nationwide among individuals age 15-34, since its inception in July 2022 — translating to 4,400 fewer suicides than expected based on US historical trends. The ten states with the largest increases in 988 calls (which includes Maryland) experienced an 18.2% reduction in suicides among this age group compared with projections. Additionally, adults over age 65 — which has had lower but rising utilization of 988 — experienced a 4.5% reduction in suicides compared to projections ([JAMA](#)).

Structure

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) oversees the national 988 Lifeline system. The Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) oversees and funds Maryland 988, which is composed of eight regional call centers (shown below) that cover specified jurisdictions. When a person calls 988, they are connected to the nearest call center. 988 is the key entry point to receiving urgent behavioral health care and ongoing treatment.



Initiatives

BHA is continuously working to increase awareness, appropriate utilization, and the quality of 988 services. The following are recent accomplishments and ongoing initiatives.

Outreach and Marketing

- Partner with state agencies to increase awareness
- Establish 988 Partnership Committee to expand and formalize outreach and education efforts
- Continue marketing efforts through online, video games, minor league ballparks, billboards, and other advertising venues
- Create [988 Tip Sheets](#) for behavioral health providers and organizations that support veterans
- Promote and expand the [Maryland 988 Toolkit](#) of no-cost materials

988/911 Collaboration

- Lead 988/911 workgroup to increase coordination
- Conduct learning collaboratives to support local 988/911 coordination
- Distribute Maryland 988/911 coordination guidance and best practices
- Develop data dashboard to measure coordination progress

Quality Improvement

- Expand data collection in alignment with [SB 900](#)
- Improve and standardize grant contracts with Local Authorities
- Monitor and improve state and Center-level performance outcomes
- Require consumer satisfaction surveys to monitor service experience

Spread the Word about 988

Utilize [Maryland 988 Toolkit](#) materials to share information about 988 with your personal and professional networks.

[Sign-Up for the 988 Quarterly Newsletter](#)