



## **The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Legislative Report for New York State**

The Commissioner of the Office of Mental Health (OMH), in consultation with the Commissioner of the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS), hereby presents this report which details the progress of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in New York State. This report is required by Part EE of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2022.

### **I. Background and Context**

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, officially launched across the nation in July 2022. The 988 Lifeline offers an accessible means of communication for the millions experiencing emotional distress while de-stigmatizing seeking mental health support. Since the launch, New York State has become a national leader in coordinated comprehensive crisis response services.

In New York, the 988 Lifeline is more than a suicide hotline—it is an immediate connection to local crisis counselors specifically trained to assess and provide support for people experiencing emotional distress, mental health or substance use crises, and/or suicidal ideation. Likewise, the 988 Lifeline is a mechanism for individuals concerned for a friend or loved one in crisis who may need guidance from a crisis counselor on how to best offer immediate support and link them to behavioral health services and/or community resources.

i. Milestones of 988

## 988 Milestones: 2023-2024

**June 2023**

NYS achieved 24/7 in-state coverage for chat and text, marking full coverage for all modalities

**August 2023**

MHA Essex officially launched as the 988 Contact Center to cover NYS' North Country counties.

**September 2023**

NYCWELL transitioned to NYC988

**October 2023**

Whitman Insight Strategies (WINS) conducted eight 90-minute virtual focus groups to identify high-risk populations

**January 2024**

NYS achieved 90% in-state answer rate for calls

**April 2024**

OMH awarded Miller-Advertising Agency, Inc. a competitive procurement to become the ad buy agency for the 988 Educational and Awareness campaign

**June 2024**

Vibrant Emotional Health endorsed FCC's Georouting proposal for the 988 Lifeline.

**September 2024**

Governor Kathy Hochul announced the \$5M 988 awareness campaign WE HEAR YOU: Georouting went live for two wireless carriers: T-Mobile and Verizon; NYS 988 Awareness Campaign went live.

## II. NYS 988 Contact Center Updates

In New York State, there are fifteen 988 Contact Centers operating 24/7 that are available to serve all 62 counties. Contact Centers have successfully been able to hire, train, and retain counselors so that they have the capacity to meet monthly minimum key performance indicators and the demand of New Yorkers seeking crisis support. As call volume increases, Contact Centers work with OMH and the Lifeline's administrator Vibrant Emotional Health to adjust which counties they serve as primary and backup coverage. Significant call volume increases have prompted some Contact Centers to adjust their primary and back-up coverage areas to reflect workforce capacities and ability to respond to crisis calls effectively. NYCWell transitioned to NYC 988 in September 2023 which significantly impacted the call volume to 988 from individuals seeking crisis support in the five New York City boroughs. This transition for the New York City 988 Contact Center, in addition to the overall improvement in hiring capabilities this past year, resulted in a significant increase of calls answered in New York State at the same time that the call volume almost doubled.

### i. New York State Primary Coverage Map

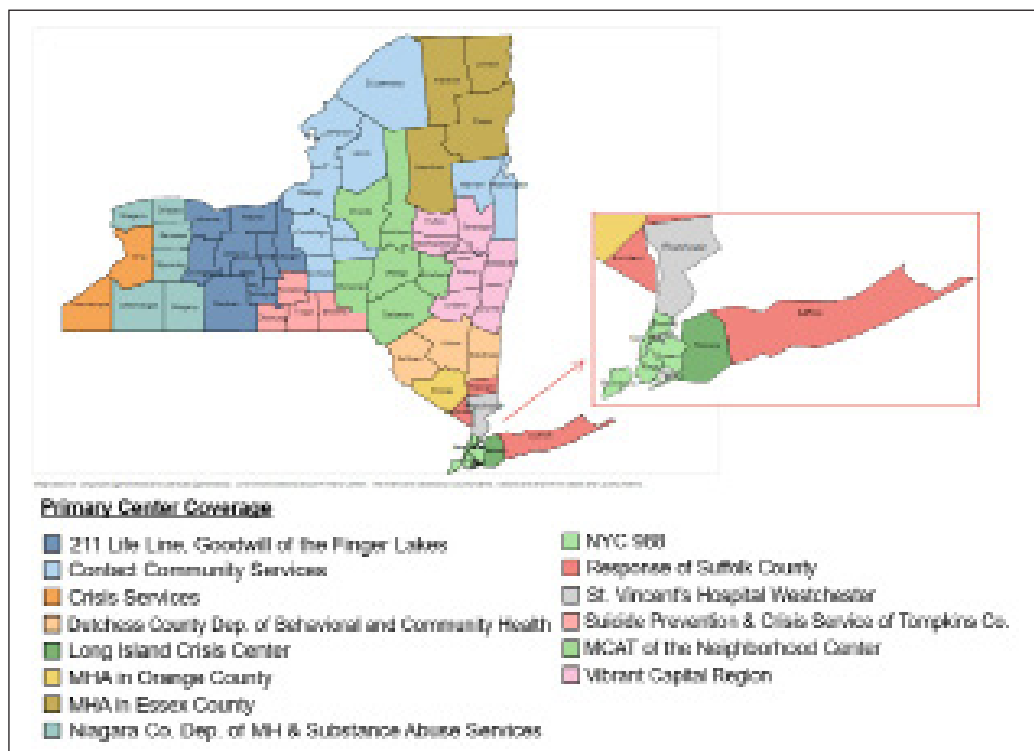


Figure 1 NYS Contact Center County Coverage Map

## III. Data Collection and Metrics for New York State 988 Contact Centers

The New York State 988 Contact Centers work closely with the OMH's Bureau of Crisis, Emergency, and Stabilization Initiatives and the OMH's Office of Population Health and Evaluation to reporting monthly data using REDCap self-report survey to collect the following metrics:

- Demographics (gender, age, race/ethnicity, language, military status)
- Primary presenting concern
- Suicidal ideation and experience

- Homicidal ideation and experience
- Imminent risk/emergency dispatch
- Third party imminent risk
- Outcomes/ Referrals and Transfers
- Follow-up
- How they heard about 988
- Workforce Development

In addition to the REDCap self-report survey, New York State receives a Broad State Metrics report from Vibrant Emotional Health, the administrator of the 988 Lifeline. This report highlights the call, chat, and text volume in New York State as well as answer rates, time to answer, and Contact Center specific data. The report also gives insights into the volume of callers from New York State reaching out to the nationally answered 988 lines; Veteran’s Crisis Line, dedicated Spanish line, and the LGBTQ+ youth and young adult line.

### i. Volume Trends Over Time

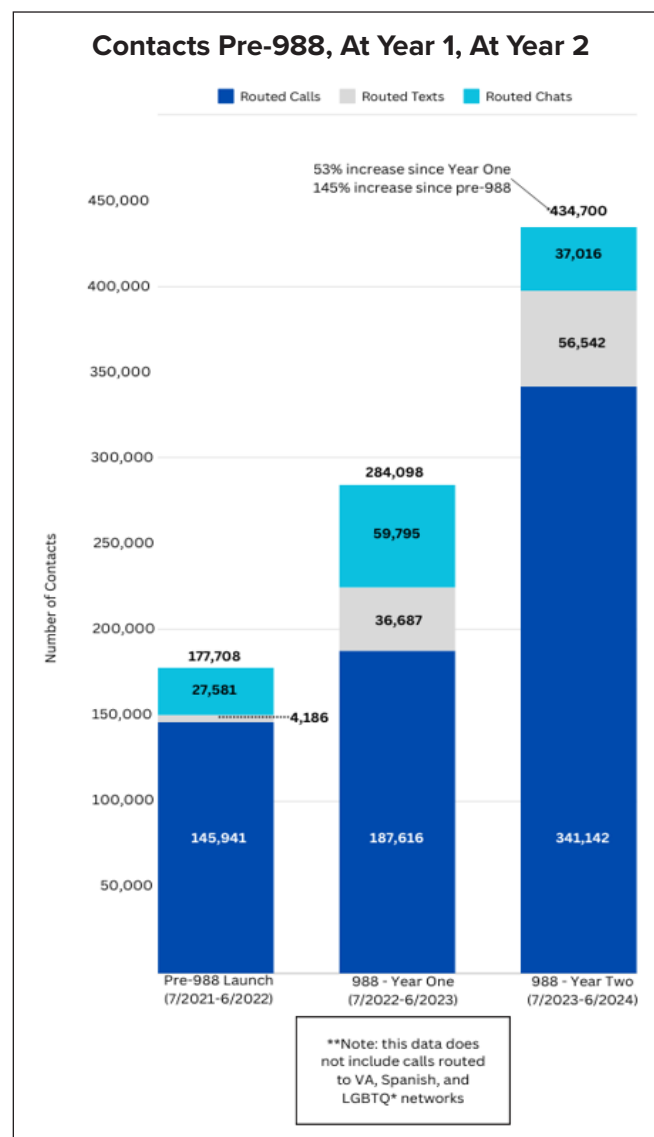


Figure 2 988 Call Volume Trends (Vibrant Broad State Metrics)

## ii. Year 2 Utilization of 988 Lifeline and Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators	July 2022 - June 2023	July 2023 - June 2024	Percent Change
Received Calls	181,973	356,044	96%
Answered Calls	150,465	309,428	106%
Average In-State Answer Rate	83%	87%	4%
Transfers to 911	455	339	-25%
Average Speed to Answer Calls	19 seconds	16 seconds	-16%
Average Talk Time	18 minutes, 6 seconds	12 minutes, 20 seconds	-32%
Average Abandonment Rate	14%	12%	-2%
Mobile Crisis Referrals	1,337	5,953	345%

*Table 1 Difference in Utilization of 988 from Y1 to Y2 per REDCap Survey*

The workforce expansion efforts at the Contact Centers positively impacted the New York State 988 key performance indicators as seen by the increased in-state answer rate while receiving 174,071 more calls. The answered calls more than doubled while there was a reduction in the average speed to answer. Another key success achieved this year has been a reduction in the number of 988 calls transferred to 911. Involving 911 or law enforcement in 988 originating calls has been a concern expressed by advocates. New York State 988 Contact Centers have worked diligently on ensuring the crisis counselors are equipped with the skills to minimize the involvement of 911. OMH has clearly communicated to the public that 988 is a separate and distinct service from the 911 network. This distinction has resulted in the number of transfers to 911 decreasing significantly as the usage of mobile crisis increased by 345 percent. The effective training methods at the Contact Centers combined with the increased experience of crisis counselors has resulted in a reduced talk time since the counselors are able to make referrals and connect callers with the necessary referrals much quicker. As the 988 Contact Centers have strengthened their workforce and enhanced their capacity to respond to increasing call volume, the abandonment rate of calls originating in New York State—calls being rerouted to the national back-up system—decreased by 2 percent. Despite the call volume increasing, more calls were being answered in-state than flowing to a national back-up system.

## ii. Year 2 Utilization of 988 Lifeline and Key Performance Indicators

The REDCap survey gathers information on the different types of support that was needed by contacts that reached out during the reporting year. Contact Centers did share that during some contacts they are not able to gather enough information to determine why the person reached out.

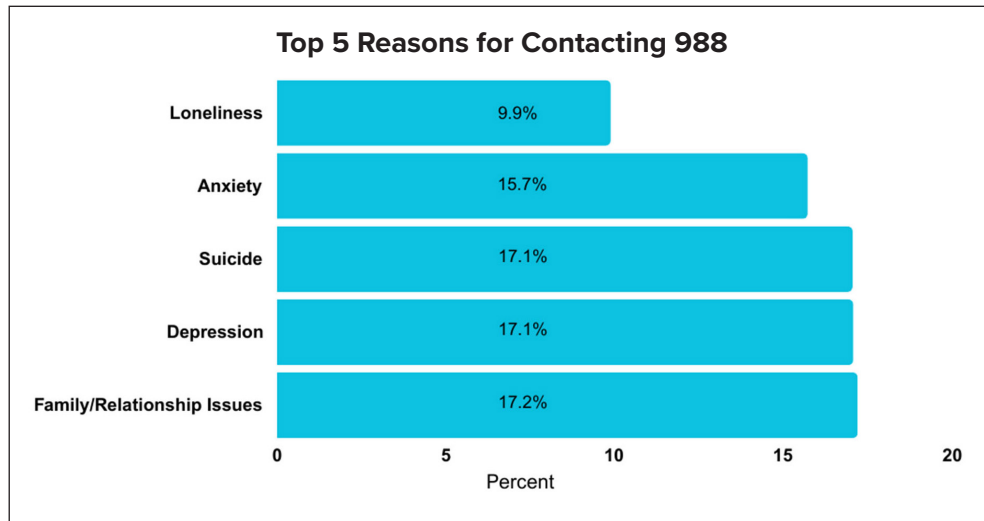


Figure 3 Reasons for Contacting NYS 988 per REDCap Survey

The 988 Lifeline is a voluntary and anonymous resource; therefore, Contact Centers are only capable of reporting the demographic information that is voluntarily shared at the time of contact. The above charts depict the reporting of age, gender, race, and preferred language of individuals contacting the 988 Lifeline.

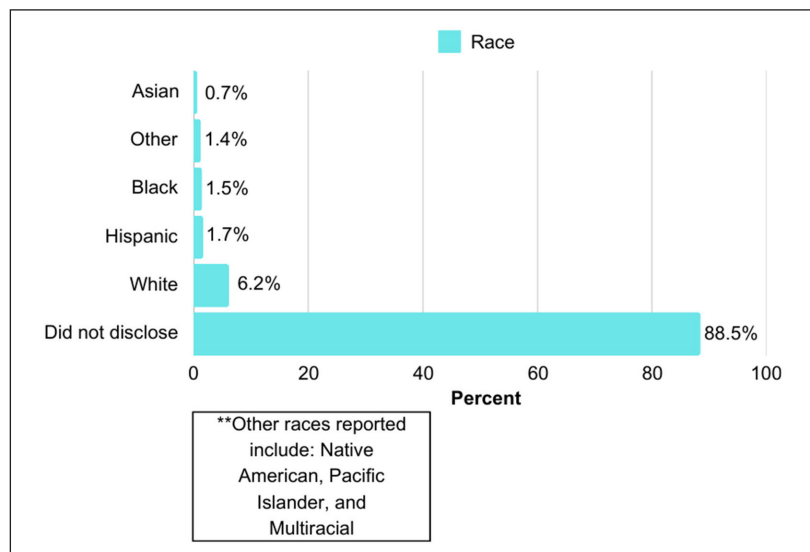


Figure 4 Demographics by Race per REDCap Survey

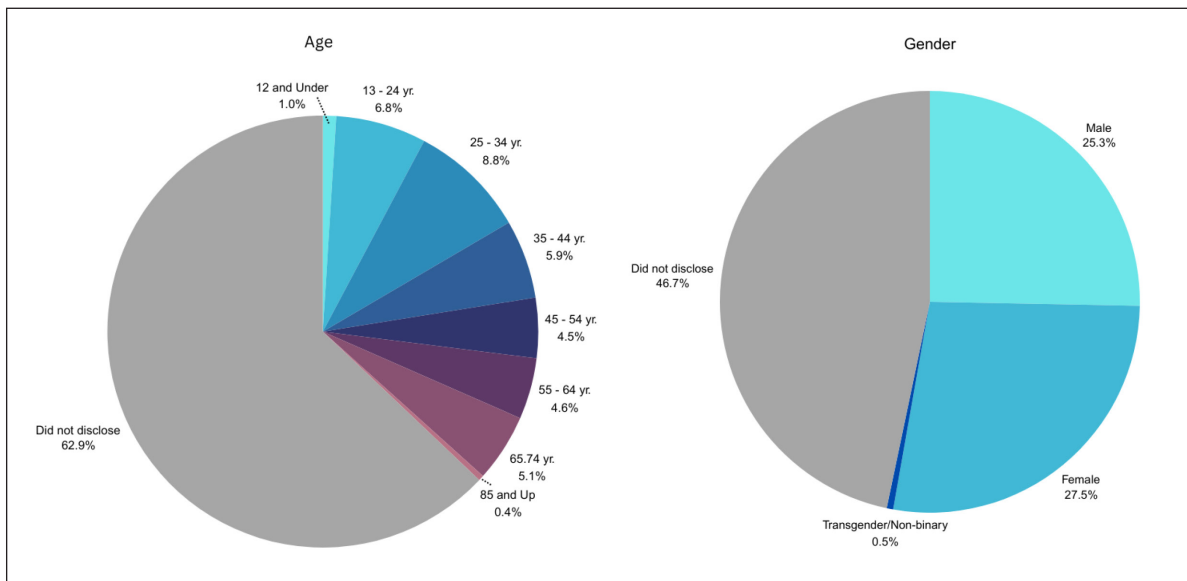


Figure 5 Demographics by Age per REDCap Survey

Figure 6 Demographics by Gender per REDCap Survey

#### i. Most Recently Reported Data (July – October 2024)

New York State received 50,683 total contacts in the first month of 988's third year. Of these were 38,093 calls, 9,090 texts and 3,500 chats, with an in-state answer rate of 90 percent. The Contact Centers in New York State maintained this in-state answer rate as they received 40,162 routed calls in August, which was over 20,000 more calls than the same time period in the previous year. Even with this increase in call volume, New York State maintained an answer rate of 90 percent, and an average speed to answer of 36 seconds, with only 1.7 percent of routed calls flowing out to national backup Contact Centers. Since the start of 988, New York State received the highest number of routed texts in July 2024, which was 9,090 texts and had an in-state abandon rate of just 1 percent. Recent data also indicates less calls have been flowing out to backup Contact Centers. The flow out to backup rate for July 2024 was 2.8 percent, which steadily decreased to just 1 percent in October 2024.

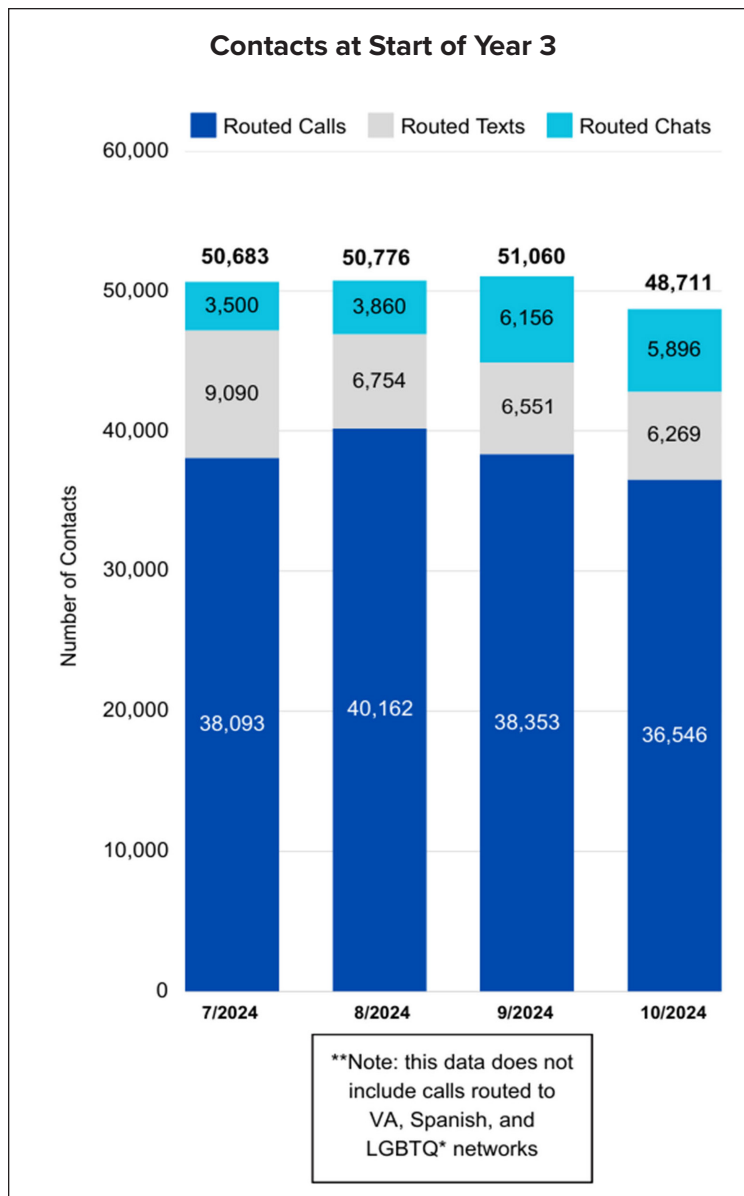


Figure 7 988 Volume for July to October 2024 per Vibrant Exchange

## ii. Mobile Crisis Data

An effective crisis response system includes the capacity to respond to, de-escalate, and follow-up on crises. OMH continues to develop and enhance the crisis response systems across NYS, including Mobile Crisis services, Crisis Residential programs, Crisis Stabilization Centers, and Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Programs or ‘CPEPs.’ 988 is working towards becoming a single point of access for mobile crisis referrals. According to the data provided by 988 Contact Centers there were 5,517 mobile crisis dispatches between July 2023 and July 2024. The 988 Contact Centers will continue to strengthen their connections with mobile crisis teams over the next year and beyond. This advancement in connectivity will naturally enhance as mobile crisis team expansion continues and connectivity between the various components of the comprehensive crisis response system evolves.



Mobile crisis services are a critical part of the crisis service continuum as they have the capacity to divert individuals from unnecessary law enforcement interactions and reroute them from excessive emergency room use and nonessential hospitalization. To understand the intersection of mobile crisis and law enforcement, OMH continues to collect and analyze data directly from the mobile crisis teams that have connected with 988. In addition, expanded data collection points include the frequency in which law enforcement is connected to mobile crisis responses, the role of law enforcement officers in the response, and the degree to which law enforcement is called to accompany mobile crisis as a default response.

In April 2024, OMH began collecting monthly data reports from the designated mobile crisis teams in NYS through a REDCap survey. This was a new process for most mobile crisis providers and the OMH Office and Population Health and Evaluation worked closely with the OMH Crisis Bureau to train all mobile crisis teams on the data collection methodology. The first data submission was for the period of January 2024 through March 2024.

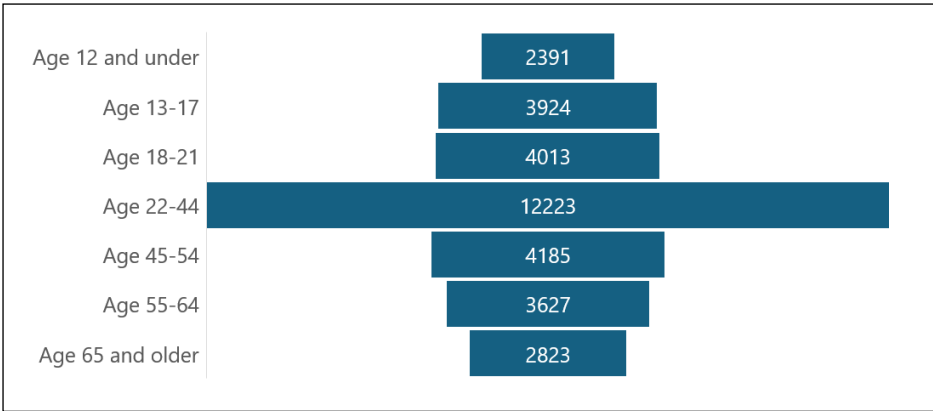
Beginning in April 2024, data was submitted monthly. The mobile crisis specific data included in this report is reflective of the date range Jan. 1, 2024 – Oct. 31, 2024.

All 56 designated mobile crisis providers were asked to complete the monthly data survey. The average survey response rate for the data included in this report is 75.7 percent. The number of individuals engaged by mobile crisis teams was 32,894. Mobile crisis teams coordinated transport of 353 individuals to crisis intervention services or other behavioral health crisis services; of these responses, 162 were transported to Crisis Stabilization Centers, nine to Crisis Residences, and 182 to behavioral health treatment providers. Mobile crisis teams had a total of 5,555 responses to individuals who required engagement of a mobile crisis team and subsequent transport to an emergency department.

As reasonably ascertainable, mobile crisis providers were also able to report the age, gender, and ethnicity of individuals contacted, transported, or transferred by each mobile crisis team. The most engaged range of individuals with a mobile crisis response were between 22 and 44 years of age at 36.8 percent of all responses.

The most frequently engaged gender in mobile crisis response was females (50 percent), followed by males (49 percent), and transgender individuals (1 percent). At the time of this report, there was no response rate for non-binary individuals.

**Age Distribution 36.8% of Individuals with a Mobile Crisis Response were Between 22 and 44 Years of Age**



*Figure 8 Age Distribution of Mobile Crisis Users in NYS*

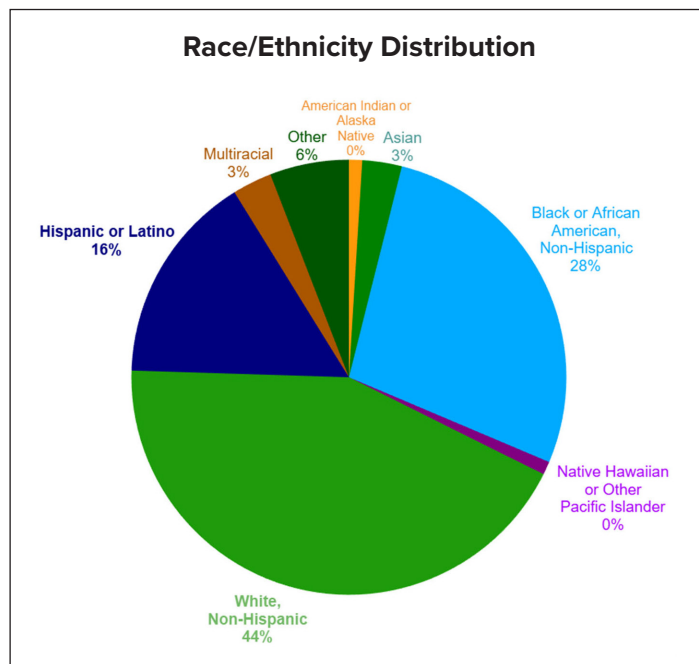


Figure 9 Race and Ethnicity Distribution of Mobile Crisis Users in New York State

At this time, reporting of all mobile crisis data is aggregate, so correlations of outcomes with specific identifying information such as age, gender, and ethnicity, cannot be deduced.

To understand the intersection of mental health crisis and law enforcement, preliminary data was obtained from the mobile crisis providers. Less than 1 percent of mobile crisis responses resulted in a transfer to the custody of law enforcement (a total of 77 responses).

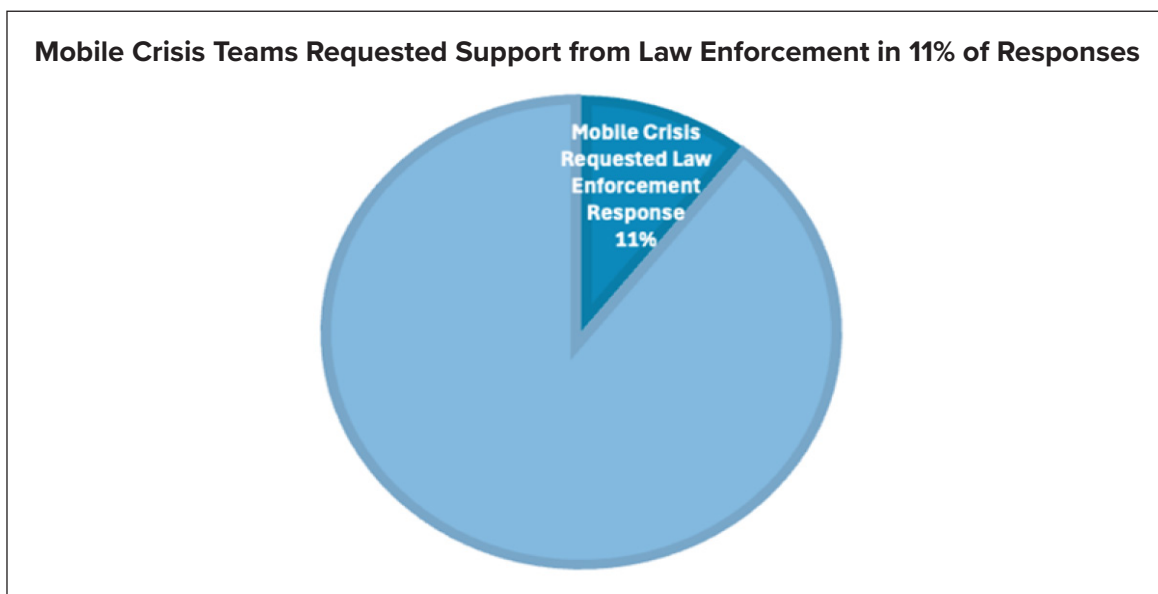


Figure 10 Percentage of Mobile Crisis Responses that Requested Support

Comparatively, the number of times a mobile crisis team was the first responder to a behavioral health crisis and the mobile crisis team had to request deployment of law enforcement to the response was 3,682, demonstrating that mobile crisis teams have been effective at deescalating a crisis in the community without the use or overreliance on law enforcement when not deemed necessary.

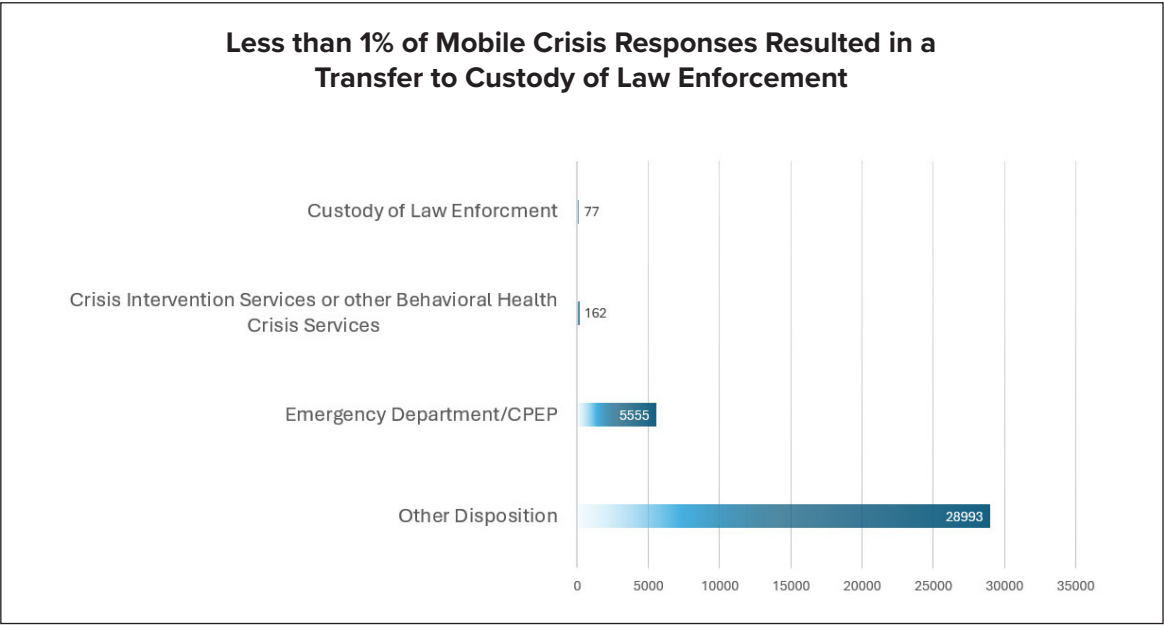


Figure 11 Mobile Crisis Responses Resulting in Transfer to Custody

The work for 2024 was to understand the current landscape of mobile crisis services in New York State, including current community mobile crisis response models, co-response models with law enforcement and/or emergency medical services or OMH Mobile Access Programs, intersection with law enforcement and community providers and make recommendations for mobile crisis team configuration and best practices.

IV. Follow Up Care

Follow-up care continues to be a priority for New York State 988 Contact Centers. Follow-up services reduce suicide risk, support people in crisis, and is a cost-effective intervention, especially when contrasted with law enforcement, EMS, and hospital utilization. It is the intention of OMH to ensure that follow-up care is offered and available to all individuals who contact 988. In the first year of 988, slightly more than 1 in 20 callers were being offered follow-up care, whereas in this reporting year, the second year of 988 operation, that number has increased to 1 in 10 callers being offered follow-up care. Of those offered follow-up care, 56.4 percent consented to receive a follow-up contact from a 988 crisis counselor. The expectation of offering follow-up to 100 percent of individuals who contact 988 will remain a priority for the next several years.

V. Georouting

In April 2024, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) published a notice of proposed rulemaking to require all wireless carriers to implement georouting for calls to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. On Sept. 17, 2024, georouting went live with two of the three major U.S. wireless carriers, T-Mobile and Verizon, with the third, AT&T, projected to transition to georouting by the end of the year. Georouting is a way of directing phone calls locally without including the caller’s precise location information in the transferred

call data. When a person calls the 988 Lifeline, their call would be sent automatically to a crisis call center near their physical location. With georouting, the routing and service providers would not receive detailed information about the exact 'pinpoint' location of callers. This change helps enhance the relevance and quality of care available to each caller. The calls are routed to the nearest 988 Contact Center, not by area code as was historically used for routing. The caller's privacy is still protected because their location cannot be identified through 988. Specifically, when a person calls 988, their call will be automatically sent to the 988 Contact Center nearest to their physical location as determined by pinging the three cellphone towers that they are closest to at the time of the call. This local response is important to ensure that the crisis counselor answering the call are well-versed in the specific communities' services and resources available to the caller. Georouting also protects the local investments made in 988 by providing a localized community response to the individual crisis.

In November 2024, the FCC released a Public Notice setting the dates for compliance with georouting rule, citing that nationwide Commercial Mobile Radio Services, or mobile carriers, must comply with the 988 georouting call rules adopted in the 988 Georouting Order no later than Jan. 13, 2025 and all mobile providers must comply no later than Dec. 14, 2026. These rulings by the FCC demonstrate the commitment to the future of 988.

## VI. 988 Awareness Campaign Across NYS:

### i. Community Engagement

OMH Crisis Bureau has a staff dedicated to community engagement for crisis services whose primary job focus is to establish relationships with providers, community members, and advocates across every community in New York State. The community engagement specialist works in tandem with the OMH communication manager of the Suicide Prevention Center of New York to spread awareness of the critical 988 service to all New Yorkers. These individuals educate the community, constituents, schools, and mental health providers on 988 and the other crisis services available to New Yorkers as well as receive direct feedback from the communities to incorporate into the policy development of crisis services. These community engagement specialists have attended 32 community engagement events as of Nov. 12, 2024, and shipped more than 430 boxes with 988 promotional materials to 53 counties in New York State. The community engagement specialists have attended events for identified high-risks groups such as youth and Veteran's, and engaged various religious affiliations to ensure that thorough awareness and education of these resources are presented in unique and relatable formats. In 2024, the community engagement specialists attended events in 10 different high schools and colleges in addition to shipping 156 boxes of 988 promotional materials to schools across the state. Other events include the New York State Fair, Hope in Harlem Conference, Military Family Resource Event, as well as visiting churches and healthcare facilities.

### ii. 988 Awareness Campaign

The Crisis Bureau of OMH worked with the OMH Office of Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Center of New York to identify the following high-risk populations that are at an increased risk of suicide and mental health distress: Black and Latinx youth, LGBTQ+ young adults, first responders, healthcare professionals and older rural men. OMH contracted with Whitman Insight Strategies, which conducted eight 90-minute virtual focus groups to determine the perceptions of mental health and their general knowledge of 988. OMH and the state Office of General Services (OGS)



Figure 12 988 Awareness Campaign Bus Stop Advertisement

released a competitive procurement opportunity to hire an ad-buy agency for the 988-awareness campaign. This bid included a proposal highlighting the use of television, radio, social media, public transportation advertisement space and billboards as well as other forms of advertising to capture commuters.

In the spring of 2024, Miller Advertising Agency Inc. was awarded the competitive procurement opportunity for the 988 Awareness Campaign. Using the feedback from the Whitman focus groups, OGS developed culturally responsive and trauma-informed 988 advertisements and messaging for Miller to utilize for the awareness campaign. The media created specifically for the “We Hear You” campaign includes a series of 30-second, 15-second, and 6-second videos as well as other static and dynamic content that can be seen statewide. This 988-campaign will run for 12-months and is estimated to have 589 million impressions at the end of the yearlong campaign.

In September 2024, the governor’s office launched the statewide 988 Awareness Campaign in alignment with Suicide Prevention month. Since the statewide campaign launch, 988 advertisements can be seen on billboards, Stewart Shops, Telemundo, LinkedIn, Facebook, Netflix, Hulu, and other social media, music, and sporting platforms designed to reach a large target audience. In the first two months of the awareness campaign over 118 million impressions were made across all social media platforms, videos, radio, and billboards.

On Sept. 8, 2024, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) commemorated the first annual “988 Day” which was held to raise awareness about the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline across the country. The New York State 988 Awareness Campaign launched the same week, strengthening the message of hope and support being available to all New Yorkers.



*Figure 1213 988 Awareness Campaign Phone Advertisement*

## **VI. Enhanced Partnerships with 911 and Law-Enforcement**

OMH has been strengthening reciprocal relationships with law enforcement, Public Safety Answering Points, and other emergency response affiliates throughout the implementation and coordination of the 988 Lifeline in New York State. This effort to deescalate and build relationships is evident as evidenced by the data in the REDCap survey that only 339 of the 309,428 calls answered were transferred to 911 for additional assistance (0.09 percent).

There are currently 174 unique Public Safety Answering Points across the state, in comparison to 15 Contact Centers. Some Contact Centers have begun to formalize and develop a process for engaging with the Public Safety Answering Points and developing memorandums of understanding in order to easily connect with 911 Emergency Services and so 911 can connect non-emergency calls to the 988 Lifeline. Some Contact Centers have operationalized this by embedding a 988 counselor within the Public Safety Answering Points. Others have trained staff on protocols of how to transfer callers from 911 to 988 if it has been identified the caller does not need police, fire, ambulance, and are not suicidal with a plan. With the individual caller’s permission, the 911 dispatcher provides the 988-crisis counselor with a summary of the call to transfer to 988 and provide pertinent information and ensure the caller and 988 crisis counselor have established a connection before disconnecting from the line. Data-driven best practices for 911-988 interoperability are in the early phases and such data metrics are still being established in New York State. The foundation for enhancing this partnership is strong.

## VII. Funding

Dedicated and sustainable funding is critical to maintain capacity and achieve 100 percent in-state answer rates. Funding sources have supported the 988 Contact Centers in the advancement of their crisis response practices and will continue to support their growth and connectivity to additional components of the crisis response system. The FY 2025 Budget provides \$60 million for 988, growing from \$35 million in FY 2023. This critical increase in investment has supported the 988 Contact Centers in supporting and expanding their ability to respond to high-risk populations across the state during their time of crisis and beyond through follow-up and community linkage.

In 2022, OMH was awarded \$7.2 million over two years through SAMHSA'S Notice of Funding Opportunity, FFY 2022 cooperative agreements for states and territories to build Local 988 capacity and support the initial implementation of 988. This funding increased by an additional \$2 million as OMH applied for and was awarded a supplemental opportunity to support workforce expansion and follow-up capacities at the Contact Centers. In 2023, OMH also applied for and was granted a no-cost extension post-award amendment of 12 months for this funding, extending the project period of this award through April 2025.

In the same year, SAMHSA released the non-competitive funding opportunity named the 'FFY 2023 Cooperative Agreements for States and Territories to Improve Local 988 Capacity' with goals to increase workforce support at the Contact Centers, improve communication of 988 services to both the general public and high-risk populations, and expand on post-988-contact support connections, including mobile crisis outreach and stabilization services. This opportunity built upon SAMHSA's FFY 2022 funding opportunity. In June of 2023, OMH applied for and was awarded SAMHSA funding in the amount of \$33.9 million over three years (until September 2026) to support this initiative. This funding is crucial to the support of 988 expansion, community education/marketing, and connection with the other components of the comprehensive crisis response system.