



Funding 988 & the Arizona Crisis System

Dec 17, 2021



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Background on Arizona's Crisis System

AHCCCS oversees the crisis response system in Arizona, often recognized as one of the most robust in the nation, that includes 24/7 crisis hotline services, mobile crisis teams, and crisis stabilization facilities. The crisis stabilization facilities offer intensive, time-limited services (24 to 72 hours) that are intended to stabilize or prevent a potentially dangerous condition. The Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (RBHAs), contracted by AHCCCS, administer the crisis system by braiding funding sources from federal, state, county, and other local entities. All crisis services are available to every Arizonan, regardless of Medicaid eligibility or insurance coverage.

Background on 988

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (S. 2661), signed into law on October 17, 2020, designated 988 as the dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL), and included language for a federal appropriation. The legislation also cleared a path for states to deploy a local telecommunications fee to fund 988 (similar to 911). 988 must be implemented on or before July 16, 2022. More than 90 percent of phone service carriers have already enabled 988 functionality.

Currently in Arizona, NSPL runs parallel to the Arizona crisis system. NSPL contracts with La Frontera and Solari to administer crisis call centers (see left side of Figure 1). When a crisis is identified that cannot be resolved via the phone, La Frontera transfers the call to the applicable RBHA call center (see right side of Figure 1) for follow-up and possible mobile-team dispatch.

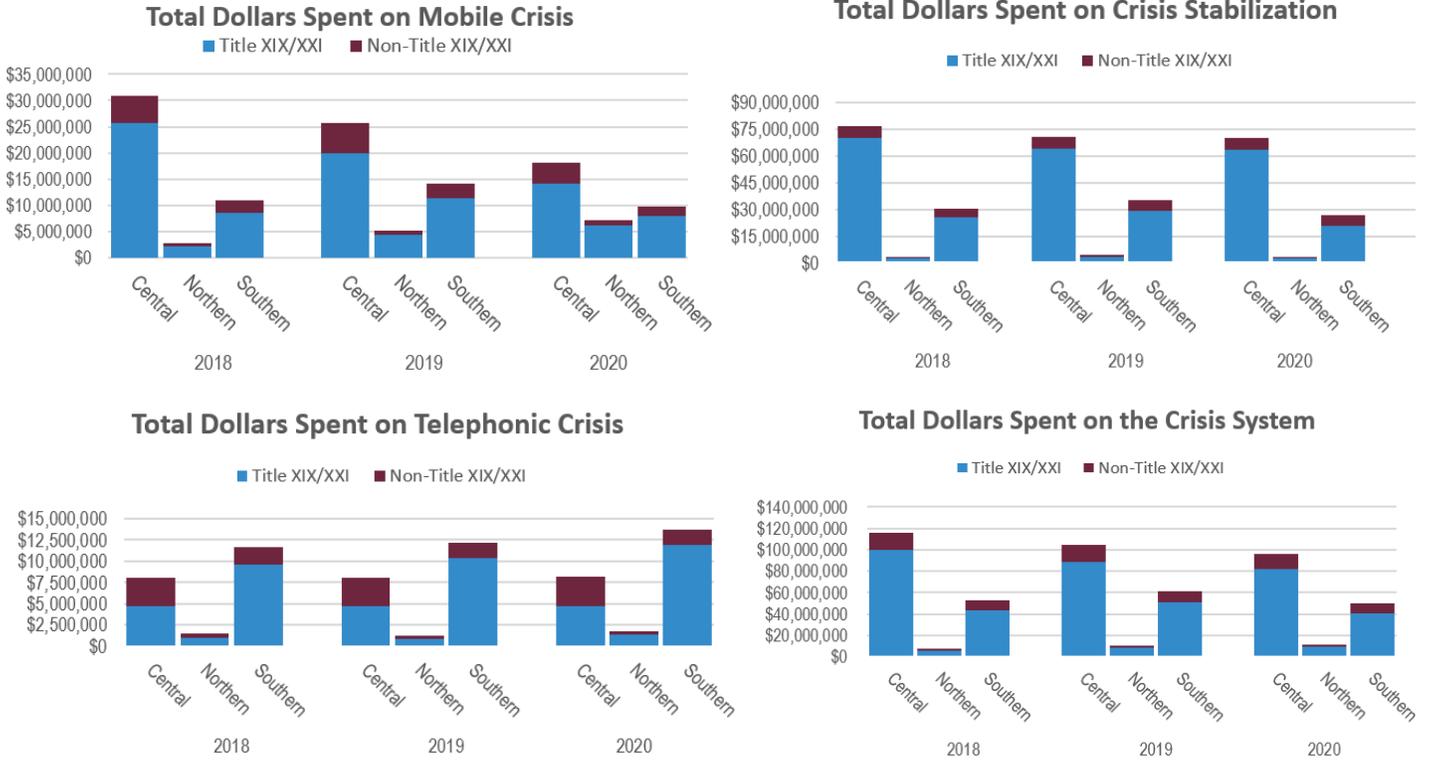
Figure 1



Arizona Crisis Funding

In CYE2020, the State of Arizona through RBHAs spent approximately \$158.5 million on crisis services, of which, approximately \$26 million (or 16 percent) was spent to serve non-Medicaid members. Over the past five years, more than 80 percent of Arizonans who sought crisis services were Medicaid members, an important note because AHCCCS is able to draw down federal funding for crisis services offered to Medicaid beneficiaries and match the state's contribution. Services for individuals who are not Medicaid eligible are paid for with State general fund dollars dedicated to the provision of crisis services, county fund dollars, and grant funds as applicable.

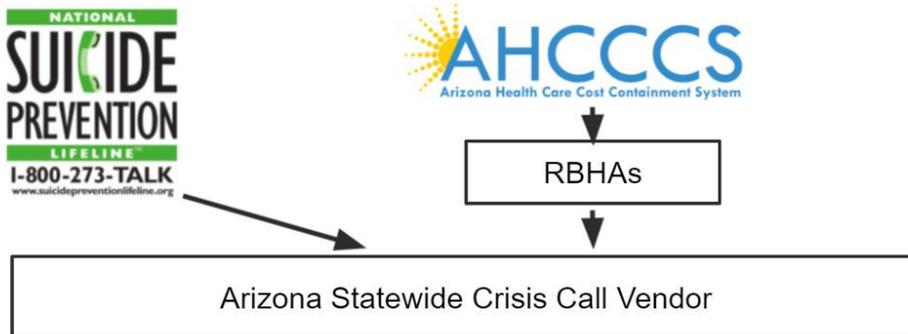
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988 Planning Grant

On February 1, 2021, the State of Arizona received a \$135,000 award for 988 implementation planning. The funds were used to establish a stakeholder coalition to discuss and consider consolidating current in-state crisis call center services into a singular statewide 988 and crisis services network. Discussions also covered how to sustainably fund 988 and how to align with the State's current system, which will require the RBHAs to contract with a single statewide vendor as of October 1, 2022 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2



Data

In 2020, NSPL answered 31,677 calls from Arizonans, achieving a 90 percent answer rate. In the same year, the RBHAs' call centers answered 345,268 calls with a 99 percent answer rate. For 988 specifically, Vibrant, the administrator for

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NSPL, estimates a year-one national forecast of 7.6 million for calls to the call center, and an answered call volume of 5.6 million.

National 988 Funding Discussion

Vibrant estimates a possible operating budget of \$681 million for 988 nationally for FFY23, which includes administrative and program costs. While every state has unique characteristics which will impact costs, Vibrant estimates that for the first year of 988 implementation, the national cost per contact will be approximately \$79. States have been exploring how best to fund the ongoing cost of 988; the most widely employed strategy is to assess a state and/or local fee on telecommunications (see examples in Table 1).

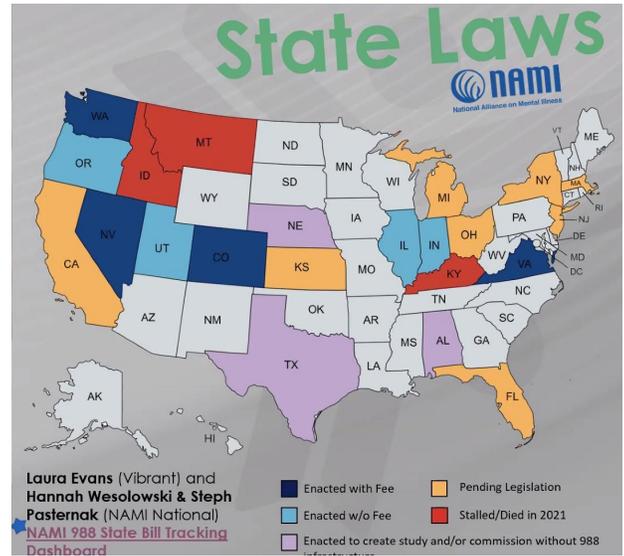


TABLE 1				
State	Bill Number	Status	Fee	Description of Funding Language
UT	SB155	Law	To be set by a commission recommendation	Creates the Statewide Behavioral Health Crisis Response Account. Establishes various one-time & ongoing appropriations to fund 988. Establishes a commission charged with establishing the 988 fee, among other charges. Directs department to submit a waiver/SPA to reimburse for 988-related services.
VA	SB 1302	Law	+ \$0.19 + \$0.13	Increases from \$0.75 to \$0.94 the wireless E-911 surcharge and increases from \$0.50 to \$0.63 the prepaid wireless E-911 charge.
IN	HB 1468	Law	N/A	Establishes a 988 trust fund, which includes: Appropriations made to the fund by the general assembly, funds received from the federal government for the support of 988 services in Indiana, investment earnings (including interest) on money in the fund, and money from any other source, including gifts and grants.
WA	HB 1182 HB 1477	Law	+ \$0.30, + \$0.50, + \$0.75	Imposes a statewide 988 BH crisis response line tax on the use of telecom and internet protocol service lines. For 10/1/21 through 12/31/22, the tax rate is 30 cents for each line. Beginning 1/1/23, through 6/30/24, the tax rate is 50 cents for each line. Beginning 7/1/24, the tax rate is 75 cents for each line.
CA	AB 270 AB 988	Pending	Office of Emergency Services to establish fee annually	AB270- Establishes a monthly statewide 988 fee on each resident that is a subscriber of commercial mobile or IP-enabled voice services at a rate that provides for the operation and maintenance of a statewide 988 system and the continuum of services provided pursuant to national guidelines for crisis services. AB988- The OES is to annually establish a surcharge amount that it estimates will produce sufficient revenue to fund the current fiscal year's 911 and 988 costs.
KY	HB 546	Stalled in Session	Amount not specified	Proposes a special tax or fee may include a subscriber charge for 988 crisis service that shall be levied on an individual exchange-line basis, limited to a maximum of twenty-five (25) exchange lines per account per government entity.

Note: This information represents a sample of introduced bills across the US. In total, 2 states have 988 legislation signed into law, 3 have legislation that passed at least one chamber, 14 introduced legislation in 2021 with no further action, and bills including 988 are likely in 3 additional states.