

# 988 Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline for Montana

Emily Burns  
AmeriCorps VISTA  
Special Populations  
BHDDD



- ▶ The Lifeline is accessible through the toll-free number 988 by any cell phone, land line, or voice-over internet
  - ▶ Who can call 988?
- ▶ The Lifeline operates **24 hours per day, 7 days per week.**
- ▶ The Lifeline program contains three primary elements:
  - ▶ A national network of over 200 independently operated and funded local call centers;
  - ▶ Nine national backup centers; and
  - ▶ A single national system administrator
- ▶ The former 10-digit number, 1-800-273-TALK(8255), is still available

## What is 988?

## What Will 988 Do?

- ▶ Connect a person in a mental health and/or substance use crisis to a trained counselor;
- ▶ Reduce health care spending with more cost-effective early intervention;
- ▶ Reduce use of law enforcement, public health, and other safety resources;
- ▶ Meet the growing need for crisis intervention at scale; and
- ▶ Help end stigma toward those seeking or accessing mental healthcare.
- ▶ Connect individuals with community-based crisis care

# The Crisis Now Model

Someone to Call



Someone to Respond



Somewhere to Go





# Accredited Lifeline Call Centers

- ▶ Call centers have written policies and guidelines addressing referral, training, and suicide risk assessments
  - ▶ Trained crisis workers answer calls.
- ▶ Participate in national Lifeline evaluation activities
- ▶ Montana's Lifeline Call Centers have the top service level in the nation
  - ▶ 96% in-state answer rate (Oct-Dec 2021)
- ▶ Expected 30 percent (+/-) increase in call volume with 988 implementation.

# Montana Crisis Call Centers

## Voice of Hope



**Local Number  
Lifeline  
211**

## Help Center 211



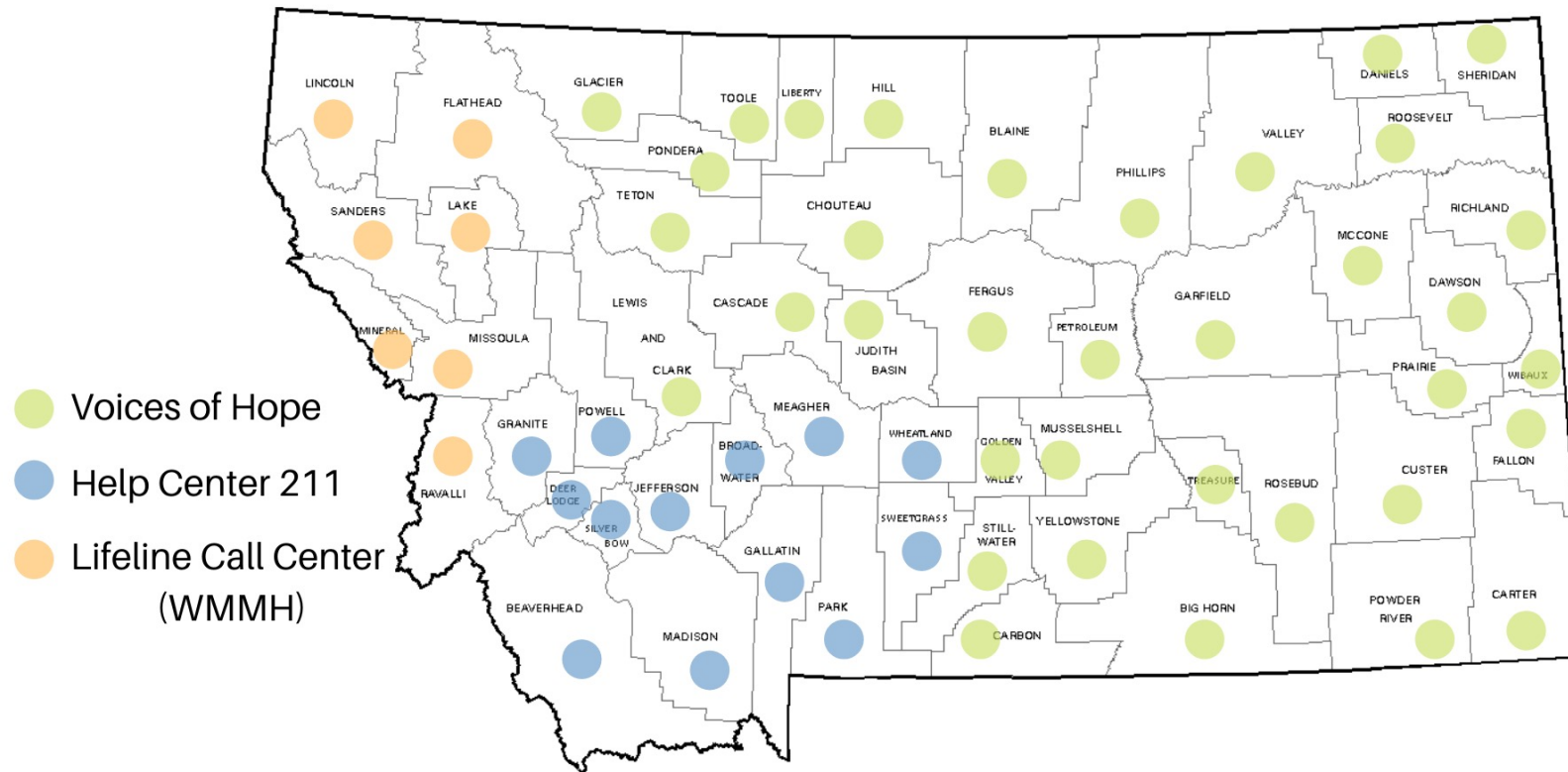
**Local Number  
Lifeline  
211**

## Lifeline Call Center



**Lifeline**

## Lifeline Call Center Coverage Map



# 988 and 211 in Montana

- ▶ All Lifeline Call Centers in Montana utilize 211's local resource and referral listings
  - ▶ Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)
  - ▶ Mobile crisis response teams
  - ▶ Crisis stabilization facilities
  - ▶ Emergency departments
  - ▶ 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs)
- ▶ Facilitate real-time dispatch and coordination of crisis services.



# Implementing 988 in Montana

- ▶ Montana's 988 Implementation Plan
  1. 24/7 statewide coverage
  2. Strategies for supporting funding Streams
  3. Center capacity building to maintain target in-state/territory answer rates
  4. Support crisis centers in meeting Lifeline's operational standards, requirements, and performance metrics
  5. 988 implementation coalition
  6. Maintain a comprehensive, updated listing of resources, referrals, and linkages; plan for expanded services
  7. Provide best practice follow-up to 988 callers/texters/chatters
  8. Consistency in public messaging

# Call Center Capacity Building

- ▶ ARPA and General Funds (2022-2025)
- ▶ SAMHSA 988 Capacity Building Grant (2022-2024)
- ▶ Adding chat and text
- ▶ Montana's performance relative to the rest of U.S.—phenomenal!

## Phase 2 - Focus of Effort

- ▶ Maintain call center performance for calls, chats and texts at, or above, Lifeline standard of 90 percent call handling, 24/7.
- ▶ Collect and report data on 988 call volume increases and call center performance metrics to SAMHSA.
- ▶ Continue to monitor and refine formalized crisis referral pathways to ensure air traffic control level of crisis management statewide.
- ▶ Pursue sustainable funding models beyond 2022-2025 grant period.
- ▶ Public Messaging
  - ▶ See <https://dphhs.mt.gov/suicideprevention/988>

# Questions?

John Tabb

[John.Tabb@mt.gov](mailto:John.Tabb@mt.gov)

(406)444-3929

Emily Burns

[Emily.burns@mt.gov](mailto:Emily.burns@mt.gov)

(406)444-3187