

WAC 246-350-020 Standards for designation as a 988 contact hub.

A crisis center must meet the requirements of this section in order to be designated as a 988 contact hub. At a minimum, a crisis center must:

(1) Obtain and maintain an active agreement with the administrator of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and remain in substantial compliance with that agreement to the satisfaction of the administrator.

(2) Participate in the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline network.

(3) Adopt and use a technology platform approved by the department and maintain the necessary infrastructure, including equipment and software, maintenance, upgrades, and technical support, to operate all required 988 services and respond to help seekers via phone calls, text, chat, and other similar methods of communication that may be developed in the future.

(4) Ensure interpretation services are available in the help seeker's preferred language.

(5) Ensure services are accessible to those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(6) Employ sufficient staff to respond to 90 percent of initial incoming contacts within 30 seconds without placing those contacts on hold.

(7) Provide designated 988 contact hub staff with initial and ongoing trauma-informed training in skills including, but not limited to, best practices in risk assessment; effective triage to system partners when additional clinical intervention is needed; cultural humility; providing developmentally appropriate, culturally appropriate services to support members of communities at higher risk for suicide, including members of the agricultural community; crisis de-escalation; information security; and collecting basic safety information. Training shall also include a self-care component designed to address secondary trauma.

(8) Provide crisis line counseling, intervention services, triage, care coordination, referrals, and connections to incoming contacts from any jurisdiction within Washington 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year.

(9) Provide referrals in the help seeker's geographical region to developmentally and needs-appropriate services including, but not limited to:

(a) Emergency medical care;

(b) Behavioral health crisis services;

(c) Tribal behavioral health services and, where needed, tribal first responders.

(10) Coordinate with certified peer counselors as available to respond to follow-up calls with the help seeker's consent.

(11) Maintain sufficient resources to provide follow-up communications with help seekers as appropriate.

(12) Provide services to help seekers regardless of the ability or willingness of the help seeker to disclose all information requested by crisis center staff and regardless of whether the help seeker is communicating through a third party.

(13) Collect and maintain current information on local resources that could be used as alternate interventions to 911, and ensure that staff are guided on how to access such services so that emergency services (911, police, sheriff) are contacted for assistance only in cases where risk of harm to self or others is imminent or in progress,

and when a less invasive plan for the help seeker's safety cannot be collaborated on with the individual.

(14) Adopt and implement policies and procedures for connecting self-identified tribal members in crisis to appropriate tribal services when the help seeker wishes to use tribal services; follow the tribe's established tribal crisis coordination protocols; and coordinate responses whenever possible with tribes, including tribal behavioral health agencies, Indian health care providers, and, where necessary, tribal police.

(15) Ensure messaging about the 988 and the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is consistent with messaging released by the authority, the department, the National 988 Administrator, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Veterans Crisis Line networks.

(16) Comply with all reporting requirements established by the department.

(17) Enter into and comply with an agreement with the department.

[Statutory Authority: 2021 c 302, 2023 c 454, RCW 43.70.040(1), and 71.24.890(3). WSR 25-02-079, s 246-350-020, filed 12/26/24, effective 1/26/25.]