



Department of Health  
 2023-25 First Supplemental Budget Session  
 Policy Level - TP - 988 Technology Platform

### Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Health (DOH) requests funds to build an IT system that will work with the 988-call center IT platform to provide required interoperable capabilities with Health Care Authority 988-related systems. This platform facilitates receipt, answer, triage, and referral of callers, texts, and chatters to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The system capabilities are required by RCW 71.24.890 (5).

### Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
<b>Staffing</b>						
FTEs	12.5	15.0	13.75	15.0	17.6	16.3
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 25N - 1	\$2,281	\$17,881	\$20,162	\$17,819	\$18,797	\$36,616
Total Expenditures	\$2,281	\$17,881	\$20,162	\$17,819	\$18,797	\$36,616

### Decision Package Description

What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

DOH does not currently have the technology platform required by RCW 71.24.890 (5) which must include capacity to receive crisis assistance requests by phone, text, chat, and other methods that may be developed in the future that promote access to the behavioral health crisis system.

DOH initially waited to see if the national system would be able to meet the requirement of E2SHB (HB) 1477, now RCW 71.24.890. Last year the national platform work was delayed, which caused a delay in DOH's ability to determine if the national platform would meet the state's needs. Later it was determined the national system would not meet the requirements.

Funds received by DOH to date have covered 988 Lifeline crisis center and program operations and related costs. This request is for additional funds to support IT staffing and contract dollars needed to identify and develop the required technology platform. The IT positions provide implementation support by gathering and documenting requirements, defining the architecture, ensuring the products developed meet state requirements and go through the appropriate user acceptance testing. The contractors need funds for software development, quality assurance, testing, and licensing.

<p>What is your proposal? What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?</p> <p>The proposed solution is to assemble a team of temporary and permanent employees, including a Special Assistant Attorney General and one contracted project director. This team will find a qualified contractor to build the system required by RCW 71.24.890 (5). The team will put together a contract and build, manage, monitor and support the project as the system is built. Temporary staff team members will stay with DOH while the required system is built. Once the system is in place, the contractor will maintain the system at a lower cost than the build, and permanent staff will manage the contract and support the system long term.</p> <p>The detail breakdown includes funding for 8.0 FTE, four temporary and four permanent, along with contract costs for a vendor to build the IT platform needed to meet the requirements of RCW 71.24.890 (5). Additional contract costs include a service contract with a project director for the duration of the project.</p> <p>The core functions of this platform are not met by any software DOH or HCA currently own. Where certain requirements are met by currently owned technology, those will be leveraged. Funding this platform ensures delivery of Washington State specific requirements for the 988 program. If callers from Washington State are being routed to Call Centers outside of Washington State, there is no ability for DOH or Crisis Call Centers to ensure Washington State specific 988 line laws are met.</p> <p>The 988 IT system has four core segments that will serve the Hubs) and other key users of the 988 system: Telephony, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) + Referral Management + Dispatch, Integrations, and Data and Analytics.</p> <p>The Telephony and CRM segments will be positioned to assist with receiving calls and performing intake operations by Hub staff who include behavioral health (BH) professionals with the capability to resolve calls, texts, and chats when contact is made with a caller.</p> <p>The Integrations will allow Hub staff to see and allocate different BH and BH-adjacent resources for the benefit of 988 contacts when an immediate resolution may not be desired or possible. Actions such as dispatching of BH professionals to a scene, EMT response, transport, and availability of hospital beds will be able to be located and assigned for the 988 contact.</p> <p>There is no existing platform able to meet the needs of Washington state's behavioral health crisis system. An extensive RFI has been conducted to ensure we understand the landscape of technology available to meet our requirements. Those responses inform the content of this request.</p> <p>All residents of the state of Washington will be served by this system if they contact the 988 Lifeline. The future Hubs will be the direct end users of this system and enabling them with a high-quality platform will make their roles easier and ensure higher quality care while meeting the requirements outlined in statute.</p> <p>What alternative did you explore and why is this option chosen?</p> <p>There are no known existing platforms available in the state network able to meet the needs of the 988 Crisis Response System.</p> <p>Not funding this proposal will result in a 988 system that does not meet all the requirements established in statute, RCW 71.24.890 (5). We have explored the federally available platform and confirmed it does not meet all the requirements. To the extent it covers some of our requirements, the architecture team will review the potential for leveraging portions of the functionality so long as it does not significantly compromise the usability, security, or stability of the system.</p> <p>All known and existing agency-owned or operated solutions that meet portions of the requirements have been thoroughly reviewed for their applicability and will be leveraged as possible to ensure all fiscally responsible options are utilized.</p>	
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**Assumptions and Calculations**

***Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:***

Funds currently provided to DOH for the 988 program are fully used for the 988 Lifeline crisis centers and program operations. There are no additional dollars to fund the IT platform. This request includes costs for a three year, one-time platform project implementation and ongoing maintenance and operation costs to support the platform implemented.

***Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:***

Funds are needed to pay for the additional IT staff and contractors to identify, develop, implement, and support ongoing maintenance and operations of a new system. The project team conducted an RFI and market scan of potential vendors who have the required technical capabilities to deliver a 988 platform across the call and response continuum. The responses and associated cost estimates provide a guide for the cost of building the system, but ultimately are not definitive enough to ensure capture of total cost.

The system contract cost includes a project manager and a best estimate based on past contracts with vendors managing similar IT systems. The Request For Proposal (RFP) is in process and will provide a precise cost once a vendor is selected.

#### Contracts

- \$397,000 - Project Director FY24-FY27: Provides coordination, facilitation, and guidance in obtaining a new IT solution.
- \$15,500,000/FY – System procurement and implementation FY25-FY27: System, implementation and quality control related cost estimate.
- \$250,000 – Special Assistant Attorney General (SAAG) FY24 \$187,500; FY25 \$62,500: Assist in preparing the telephony RFP and contract/s, lead contract negotiations, identify missing requirements or legal nuances. Hiring the SAAG is recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

#### **Workforce Assumptions:**

##### 1.0 FTE IT Business Analyst – Journey:

The IT Business Analyst takes information regarding system needs and translates them into formal functional requirements for the IT solution. Included in their duties are:

1. Requirements Elicitation
2. Project Documentation
3. Conducting Meetings
4. Business Communication
5. Change Requests
6. Requirements Validation
7. User Acceptance Testing and End User Training
8. This role is necessary for the entire project, and then in a support role ongoing for Maintenance & Operations.

##### 1.0 FTE IT Architecture – Expert:

The IT Architecture Expert arrives at high-level solutions for business applications, systems, portfolios, infrastructures, or an entire enterprise. They develop IT services and solutions for the organization and often design and manage communications, security, networking, and storage. They

monitor progress with systems development projects to assure compliance with State requirements and alignment with Agency strategy.

-- This role is necessary for the Project only

##### 1.0 FTE IT Project Management – SR/Specialist:

The IT project manager is responsible for planning, organizing, allocating resources for, budgeting, and successfully executing the project's specific IT goals. They monitor the scope, schedule and budget of a project to assure that it is done within acceptable parameters for success.

-- This role is necessary for the project only.

1.0 FTE WMS2 (Business Project Manager):

The Business Project Manager performs similar to the IT Project Manager, but from a Program-specific lens. They focus on those elements of the project that are outside the scope of the IT PM, and direct efforts at managing the resources, planning, scheduling, and decision making for the Program, to align with both Agency direction and IT project management work.

-- This role is necessary for the project and will need to be populated in the Program when the system is implemented.

2.0 FTE Management Analyst 5 (Organizational Change Management (OCM) Consultant):

The OCM Consultants provide a systematic approach to aid engagement, adoption and usage of new solutions, processes and programs created by the 988 project. The consultant's responsibilities include identifying impacted groups and assessing change impacts for those groups. Coaching project sponsors throughout the project. Developing and implementing change management plans and communication to support impacted staff and external partners and building in sustainment and reinforcement of new practices and procedures following the changes.

-- This role is necessary for the project only.

1.0 FTE IT Network & Telecoms – Journey level

The IT Network and Telecom Specialist designs, implements, manages, and maintains information technology (IT) networks and telecommunications systems within the Agency. The role involves ensuring that the agency's communication infrastructure is efficient, secure, and aligned with business goals.

1.0 FTE System Administration – SR/Specialist

The IT System Administrator is responsible for ensuring the reliability, security, and functionality of a system by managing various components, troubleshooting issues, implementing security measures, and providing support to end-users and colleagues.

Estimated expenditures include salary, benefit, and related costs to assist with administrative workload activities. These activities include policy and legislative relations; information technology; budget and accounting services; human resources; contracts; procurement; risk management, and facilities management.

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## Strategic and Performance Outcomes

### **Strategic Framework:**

This decision package supports the Governor's Results Washington Goal 4: Healthy & Safe Communities.

An interoperable platform improves the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline which offers support to Washingtonians in crisis and contributes to creating healthy and safe communities by reducing the number of suicides in Washington state. The system requirements of RCW 71.24.890 create an improved crisis response system that will reduce reliance on emergency room services and the use of law enforcement for behavioral health crises. These changes stabilize and improve the lives of community members.

The 988 Lifeline also supports people with substance use concerns and connects them to Washington-specific services and resources, which may help reduce the number of opioid and drug overdoses in our state.

This decision package supports the agency's Transformational Plan Priority 1: Health and Wellness. The work of the 988 program includes engaging with partners and people with lived experience to prevent injuries and violence, deploy proactive communication and health promotion strategies that promote mental health while countering stigma in seeking care.

This proposal would increase the agency's state dollars received from the 988 tax fund account in the current biennium (SFY24-25) expenditure authority 25N by \$19,909,000 and the next biennium (SFY26-27) by \$36,616,000.

### **Performance Outcomes:**

Adequately funding the IT platform for the 988 program will allow the 988 Lifeline crisis centers to provide services 24 hours per day, and achieve an in-state call response rate of at least 90% by enabling the creation of an interoperable technology platform that 988 Hubs can access.

DOH anticipates the system will provide access to real-time information relevant to the coordination of behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention services for people. It must be designed to interoperate and will be used by designated 988 contact hubs (Hubs) and across crisis and emergency response systems through the state.

The system will request deployment of appropriate crisis response services, track local responses through GPS, track the outcome of calls/text/chats to 988 (to enable appropriate follow-up), cross system coordination, and accountability. In addition, the system will facilitate actions to verify and document whether a person's transition to follow-up non-crisis care was completed. It checks services offered and enables crisis centers to provide geographically/culturally/linguistically appropriate services to people who are at increase/higher risk or who need specialized services or accommodation. The system will also support and improve consults with tribal governments to ensure coordinated care in government-to-government relationships and access to dedicated services to tribal members.

Pending vendor considerations, by July 1, 2026, DOH, HCA, and partners will launch the first version of the interoperable technology platform for the 988 Crisis Response System, which will improve service for customers.

Pending vendor considerations, by July 1, 2026, all designated 988 contact hubs in Washington state will have access to an interoperable technology platform that facilitates the receipt, answer, triage, and referral of callers, texters, chatters to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

## Equity Impacts

### ***Community outreach and engagement:***

#### **Community Outreach & Engagement**

DOH has begun efforts on a plan to work with the community to ensure usability of the system is user friendly. DOH engages the Crisis Response Improvement Strategy (CRIS) Committee and several of its subcommittees, such as the Lived Experience Subcommittee, for community feedback and convenes a user group with the three current 988 Lifeline crisis centers that facilitates this kind of engagement. Community outreach will grow in the near future as a robust statewide communications plan and campaign is developed, implemented, and evaluated. Community engagement efforts are also conducted by the crisis centers to inform the community about these resources and gather input on the direction of their programmatic work.

### ***Disproportional Impact Considerations:***

#### **Disproportional Impact Considerations**

Groups with suicide rates higher than the general population include Veterans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, LGBTQ+ youth, and people living in rural areas across the state. E2SHB 1477 states that the Legislature intends to further equity by addressing mental health and substance use treatment and provides a culturally and linguistically competent response to behavioral health crises. E2SHB (HB) 1134 requires the provision of geographically, culturally, and linguistically appropriate services to persons who are part of groups at increased risk for behavioral health crises, or otherwise have need of specialized services or accommodations. The legislation also requires these accommodations or services be documented. Historically, crisis response has placed historically marginalized communities, including those experiencing behavioral health crises, at disproportionate risk of poor outcomes and criminal legal system involvement. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline IT system helps assure all Washington residents receive a consistent and effective level of suicide prevention and other behavioral health crisis response no matter where they live, work, or travel to in the state.

As explained previously some populations in Washington are impacted by higher suicide rates including Veterans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, LGBTQ+ youth, and people living in rural areas across the state (Death Certificate Data, 2016-2020). The behavioral healthcare system DOH is designing will support a system of care geared toward the needs of these groups. DOH will continue to engage with community members to ensure a community-informed approach.

Engagement activities with other impacted users through the CRIS Committee and its subcommittees are underway. The communications and change management workgroup will be partnering closely with all the awareness campaigns launched to ensure we are building better broad community awareness of the services available and thus will be able to improve the feedback received about the system in specific engagement sessions.

The vendor and platform decisions enabled by this decision package will be reviewed in community engagement efforts. Thorough user experience, research will be conducted to ensure there are mitigations in place for any communities that may be marginalized because of any platform decisions.

### ***Target Populations or Communities:***

#### **Target Populations & Communities**

Mental health equity, a state of fair opportunity for all in achieving the highest level of mental well-being, is promoted through access to appropriate resources in the face of a mental health crisis. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline diverts community members away from inappropriate resources and connects them with care that addresses varying needs. Culturally and linguistically relevant lines support these populations and others who may need tailored support. These lines include the Veterans Crisis Line, the Native and Strong Lifeline, the Trevor Project, and the Spanish Language Line and serve specific populations at higher risk of suicide and mental health crises.

## Other Collateral Connections

### ***Puget Sound Recovery:***

N/A

### ***State Workforce Impacts:***

N/A

### ***Intergovernmental:***

Tribes: supports the provision of services to their key constituents.

Rural communities: supports the provision of services to this key population.

Health Care Authority: co-developing this platform with this agency. Funding of this portion of the platform is key to both agencies' success. Both agencies are committed in their support of each other's responsibilities for the ultimate platform delivery.

### ***Stakeholder Response:***

General public: anticipated broad support for the technology needed to support our behavioral health crisis system. There are communities in Washington, such as Black/African American and LGBTQIA+ communities who have expressed concern about contacting 988. Adding the IT platform will support Washington State's specific requirements targeting improvements in inequities.

Current 988 Lifeline crisis centers, regional crisis lines, and proposed potential crisis center or Hub applicants will be supported by this IT platform.

### ***State Facilities Impacts:***

N/A

### ***Changes from Current Law:***

N/A

### ***Legal or Administrative Mandates:***

This proposal supports the requirements in RCW 71.24.890 (5).

### ***HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions***

N/A

## Reference Documents

[988 IT - FnCal.xlsx](#)

[988 IT Addendum.docx](#)

[ITaddendumBudget2023-25 - 988 Project.xlsx](#)

## IT Addendum

***Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?***

Yes

## Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Obj. A	\$1,134	\$1,293	<b>\$2,427</b>	\$1,293	\$1,430	<b>\$2,723</b>
Obj. B	\$402	\$471	<b>\$873</b>	\$471	\$534	<b>\$1,005</b>
Obj. C	\$579	\$15,954	<b>\$16,533</b>	\$15,892	\$15,892	<b>\$31,784</b>
Obj. E	\$66	\$89	<b>\$155</b>	\$89	\$117	<b>\$206</b>
Obj. G	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	\$0	\$750	<b>\$750</b>
Obj. J	\$26	\$0	<b>\$26</b>	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Obj. T	\$74	\$74	<b>\$148</b>	\$74	\$74	<b>\$148</b>

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