

**Media Contact:**

Rochelle Cohen

rochelle.cohen@fcc.gov

**For Immediate Release****FCC PROPOSES RULES TO PROMOTE RELIABLE ACCESS TO THE 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE**

WASHINGTON, January 26, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed rules to help ensure that the public has access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline if a service outage occurs. The proposed rules would require 988 service providers to report outages that potentially affect 988 service, which would hasten service restoration and enable officials to inform the public of alternate ways to contact the 988 Lifeline.

Last July, the Commission required certain service providers to support nationwide three-digit dialing to the 988 Lifeline. Since then, the 988 Lifeline has received over 2 million calls, texts, and chat messages. Reliable, timely access to the 988 Lifeline is crucial to ensure that people experiencing a suicidal or mental health crisis receive immediate support.

On December 1, 2022, however, the 988 Lifeline suffered a nationwide service outage that lasted several hours, making the service inaccessible to voice callers. Once the Department of Health and Human Services became aware of the outage, it notified the public of alternative ways to contact the 988 Lifeline, including through texting or the Lifeline’s online webchat.

To address such issues in the future, the Commission today proposed rules to ensure that HHS’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), the Department of Veterans Affairs, the 988 Lifeline administrator, and the Commission itself receive timely and actionable information about 988 service outages. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking includes proposals to:

- Require certain 988 service providers to report outages that potentially affect the 988 Lifeline to the Commission’s Network Outage Reporting System, similar to the Commission’s existing reporting requirement for outages that potentially affect 911.
- Require these 988 service providers to provide notice of such events to SAMHSA, the VA, and the 988 Lifeline administrator.
- Define reportable outages as those that result in a loss of the ability of the 988 Lifeline to receive, process, or forward calls for at least 30 minutes in duration.

In addition to inviting comment on these proposals, the Notice seeks comment on:

- Whether cable, satellite, wireless, wireline, and interconnected VoIP providers should also be subject to reporting and notification obligations for outages potentially affecting 988.

- Various issues regarding the reporting and notice requirements, including whether the proposed reporting thresholds are appropriate, additional parties to whom notice should be given, the costs and benefits of the proposal, and timelines for compliance.

Action by the Commission January 26, 2023 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 23-7).  
Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving.  
Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioner Starks issuing separate statements.

PS Docket Nos. 23-5, 15-8; ,WC Docket No. 18-336

###

**Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / Twitter: @FCC / [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)**

*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*