

THE STATEHOUSE REPORT

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New 988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline will launch on July 16th

The federal 988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline will launch on July 16, 2022. Ohioans who are experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis, and their family members, will be able to call, text, or chat the 988 number in order to reach a trained counselor who can offer help and support.

Following the passage of federal legislation in October 2020, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS) has been planning and preparing for the launch. As part of the planning process, OMHAS has worked to expand the lifeline center network in Ohio. All 88 counties now have primary coverage from an agency. It is also important to note that the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) will still be available once 988 is live.

OMHAS has identified \$20 million in federal funds to pay for the start-up costs of 988. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) awarded Ohio a \$3.3 million that will be used over two years to improve capacity for answering calls, collect data for quality analysis, and develop policies and protocols for effective operation and caller support. OMHAS continues to explore long-term sustainable funding options for the 988 system.

[House Bill 468](#), sponsored by Representative Gail Pavliga, would codify the role of the 988 Administrator and create the 988 Fund in the Ohio Treasury. The bill passed the Ohio House this spring and awaits action in the Senate. The bill does not include any funding for 988 at this time.

OMHAS has shared the following information for county and municipal governments in preparation for the launch:

- Engage your local partners such as your local ADAMH board, behavioral health providers, law enforcement agencies, schools, and 911 centers to discuss how your community will use 988.
- Lifeline centers will transfer a 988 caller/contact to a county’s crisis response or emergency response teams if the person consents and desires more services than the Lifeline center can provide.
- SAMHSA has provided various communications and outreach materials to help communities understand what 988 is and how it will work at <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/partnertoolkit>. A national marketing campaign from the federal government is not expected this year.

OMHAS has also provided the following resources:

[988 Stakeholder Webinar Recording](#)
[988 Stakeholder Webinar Slides](#)
[988 Fact Sheet](#)
[988 FAQ](#)

Additional resources can be found [here](#).

Projects in six counties receive \$746,000 in H2Ohio funding

This week Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio EPA Director Laurie A. Stevenson announced a total of \$746,000 in funding through the H2Ohio program to projects in six counties.

The largest project is \$171,000 to improve drinking water quality and upgrade aging water infrastructure in Nelsonville in Athens County.

“Clean and safe drinking water is vital for every community in Ohio, and I am pleased that H2Ohio is continuing to invest in infrastructure and equipment to assist communities like Nelsonville to provide a reliable source of water for residents,” said Governor DeWine.

The remaining \$575,000 will be split evenly between Hocking, Jackson, Portage, Ross, and Seneca counties to assist health districts in repairing and/or replacing failing household sewage treatment systems in low- to moderate-income households.

“Throughout the state, addressing failing household sewage treatment systems – either through providing funds for replacements or upgrades, or the extension of centralized sanitary sewers – is a key goal of H2Ohio,” said Director Stevenson.

CCAO thanks the DeWine-Husted Administration for its continued dedication to ensuring that all Ohioans have the functioning infrastructure to ensure proper disposal of wastewater and to ensure clean drinking water.

Temporary virtual meeting authority expires June 30th

The temporary virtual meeting authority given to public bodies in House Bill 51 will expires on June 30, 2022. CCAO does not anticipate an immediate extension of this authority with the legislature in summer recess.

Bill Introductions

[SB 351](#) (Thomas, Maharath) - To require a firearm transfer to be made through a dealer, through a law enforcement agency, or pursuant to a specified exception, to require a background check when a firearm is transferred, to raise the minimum age to purchase a firearm to age 21, to increase the penalty for improperly furnishing firearms to an underage person, to establish a process for extreme risk protection orders, to prohibit negligent storage of a firearm, to authorize an income tax credit for the purchase of firearms safety storage units, and to make an appropriation.

