

A horizontal row of silhouettes of diverse people of various ages and ethnicities, shown in profile facing right. The silhouettes are dark against a lighter background, with some internal highlights in shades of blue, green, and orange. The word "inseparable" is overlaid in large white lowercase letters.

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Montana 911 Coalition
Strengthening Crisis Response:
Strategies to Support and Coordinate with 988
August 27, 2026

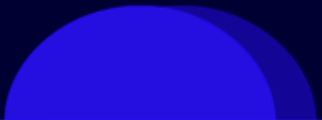
inseparable

a national advocacy organization dedicated to winning better mental health policy



Youth Mental Health

Addressing mental health at the earliest possible point helps young people live longer, healthier lives.



Access to Care

Ending coverage gaps, denials and delays makes mental health care easier to find and easier to afford.



Crisis Response

Emergency care that focuses on recovery helps ensure that no one's worst day keeps them from living their best life.



Mental Health Workforce

Having more qualified providers in our communities eases the struggle to find care.

How We Work

Our bipartisan, campaign-style approach is designed to deliver consequential mental health policy wins *quickly*.

Our Campaigns:

- **Map policy opportunities**, focusing on achievable, high-impact wins.
- **Work closely with committed governors, legislators, and staff.**
- **Equip policymakers** with research, reports and policy.
- **Forge local partnerships** to bring the right voices to policy debate.
- **Methodically mobilize** our capacities to turn good policy into law.



The crisis continuum of care model offers the promise of a better response, better outcomes, and better use of state and local resources.



**Someone
to Talk To**



**Someone
to Respond**



**A Safe Place
for Help**

Reliable Crisis Response Requires Reliable Funding

Sustainable funding ensures 988 can maintain the staffing, technology, and capacity needed to appropriately and swiftly respond when someone reaches out for help.

- **Crisis response can't wait.** Stable funding is critical for the staffing, technology and capacity needed for 988 to respond 24/7.
- **Demand continues to grow.** Sustainable funding allows 988 to keep pace with increasing call, text, and chat volume.
- **Federal grants are not permanent.** Dedicated state funding reduces reliance on time-limited federal investments and creates greater long-term stability.
- **988 does not operate in isolation.** Reliable funding supports coordination with 911, mobile crisis, and other community-based services, strengthening the broader crisis response system.

988 Funding Models

Telecom Fee	A separate, fixed monthly fee is added to a customer's phone bill for each eligible line. Telecom providers collect the fee and remit the revenue to 988.
Excise Tax	A percentage of a customer's charges is collected through an existing tax rather than a separate 988 fee . The additional revenue is dedicated to 988.
State Appropriations	State funds are allocated through the legislative budget process to support 988. Funding may be provided annually or established as an ongoing appropriation.

How Telecom-based Models Work

Model 1: Telecom Fee (Flat Per-Line Fee)



Model 2: Excise Tax (Percentage of Telecom Charges)



Key Difference:

A telecom fee is a fixed amount per line, while an excise tax is a percentage of telecom charges (included in an existing tax) — and both are dedicated to 988.

988 Telecom Fees in Practice: Revenue and Impact

Even modest telecom fees can generate dedicated, sustainable funding for 988 call center staffing, technology and capacity.

State	Telecom Fee	2024 Revenue	Impact
Colorado <i>SB 21-154 (2021)</i>	\$0.14	\$14.6M	95.6% of calls answered , with just 1.1% rolling over to the national 988 backup network and an average answer time of 11.6 seconds (Colorado Behavioral Health Administration)
Minnesota <i>SB 2995 (2023)</i>	\$0.12	\$3.4M* (began Sept. 2024)	In-state answer rates increased from 81% in 2023 to 91% in 2025 , even as contacts increased 48% from 2024-25; 911 connection only required in 0.4% of contacts (MN Dept. of Health)
Nevada <i>SB 237 (2023)</i>	\$0.35	\$14.8M	In-state answer rate increased from among the nation's lowest in 2023 to 87% in 2025 , even as average monthly calls more than doubled (Nevada Current, 2025)
Washington <i>HB 1477 (2021)</i>	\$0.40	\$46.7M	Maintained a 92–94% in-state answer rate as monthly calls nearly tripled; 5,036 were diverted from 911 to 988 in FY25 (Washington State Dept. of Health)

Federal Communications Commission, 2025

States are Using Multiple Approaches to Sustain 988

Illinois Excise Tax <i>1.65% of monthly charges</i>	Utah State Appropriations
Illinois enacted HB2755, increasing its existing telecommunications tax rather than creating a separate flat per-line fee and dedicating the additional revenue to 988. The projected estimate is approximately \$49 million annually.	Utah appropriates state funds into a Statewide Behavioral Health Crisis Response Account to provide ongoing funding for its behavioral health crisis response system. In FY25, Utah appropriated over \$39 million to the account.

The Impact: Investment in Mental Health Crisis Care

Investment in crisis services saves lives and reduces costs.

- Mobile crisis response cost **23% less per case** than police response. ([Scott, 2020](#))
- Mobile crisis resolved **55% of crises without hospitalization**, compared with 28% under police response. ([Scott, 2020](#))
- States with the largest increases in answered 988 calls experienced the **largest reductions in youth and young-adult suicides**. ([JAMA, 2026](#))

thank you

please stay in touch

Marianne Gibson

Vice President, Youth, Crisis, and Workforce Policy
marianne@inseparable.us

