

PATH 988 Inclusion/Exclusion Policy

Policy Number:

Division: CS

Department/Type: Database

Program: 988

Policy/Procedure Title: Inclusion/Exclusion Policy

Date of Last Update: 2026.03

Date Effective (if different): N/A

Approved By: Chief Crisis Officer

Version History

| Date | Summary of Changes | Modified by |
|-------------|--|--------------------|
| 2023-10 | Update of existing policy for 988 Services | Chris Baldwin |
| 2025-10 | Improved wording/organization in a few places. Updated list of qualifying services to reflect Database capacity following cessation of 211 services. | Chris Baldwin |
| 2026-03 | Added line referring to AI policy. Reformatted according to new guidelines. | Chris Baldwin |

Review Schedule

This document should be reviewed once every year.

The next scheduled review is 2027.03.

Purpose

PATH provides suicide and mental health crisis lifeline services through phone and text/chat, supporting individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts, emotional distress, or crises. In alignment with its mission to empower individuals and communities in crisis, PATH also offers information and referral services that connect residents to life-sustaining health and human services. All resources included in the PATH 988 Resource Database are selected to reflect PATH's commitment to compassionate access, protection of life, preservation of dignity, and the promotion of stability. The following guidelines outline the criteria for inclusion in the Database.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals authorized to enter or update information in PATH's Resource Database. If the Database is used to maintain resources for other programs, inclusion under any one applicable policy is sufficient for inclusion in the Database as a whole.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Cost for Inclusion

There is no cost to any person or entity to be included in the database.

988 System Resources

Organizations meeting the following criteria **MUST** be included in the PATH 988 resource database.

- PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points),
- 590 Teams (state-funded psychiatric mobile response teams)
- Other programs as determined by the Illinois Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR)

These resources must be included regardless of whether they meet other inclusion or exclusion criteria below. PATH may update these entries based on information received from the Illinois Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery.

Mandatory Inclusion Criteria

The following criteria **MUST** be met to be considered for inclusion in the PATH 988 resource database.

- Organization provides relevant services (defined below).
- Organization must demonstrate provision of service for at least 6 months.
- Organization must have an established service site and business phone number. Exceptions can be made for web or telephone services that otherwise meet the inclusion requirements.
- Organization must provide updated service information at least once each year.
- Organization's service is available to residents of PATH 988's voice service area

"Relevant" Services

The following categories outline the types of services that qualify for inclusion in the PATH 988 Database.

- ❖ **Mental Health:** A wide range of services related to grief, addiction, demographic support, the psychological impacts of illness or disability, and other components of mental health:
 - Outpatient counseling and psychiatry and community mental health services
 - Inpatient psychiatry
 - Crisis response and stabilization, including comprehensive hospitals
 - Prevention and survivor services related to sexual assault, partner abuse, and child abuse
 - Mental-health drop-in centers
 - Support groups
 - Substance abuse and other addictions
 - Suicide and self-harm
 - Social support for a range of demographic issues (age, culture/ethnicity/language, immigration status, LGBTQ+ status, disability/illness, etc.)
 - Helplines, including targeted crisis lines, peer support lines, and other emotional support lines (talklines/warmlines).

- Child welfare services
- Mentoring and peer support
- Information and Referral on related subjects
- ❖ **Information and Referral (I&R):** Comprehensive health and human services I&R (211) and similar programs.
- ❖ **Disaster Response:** Immediate assistance in response to disasters, including local EMAs.
- ❖ **Military/Veterans:** Resources for active military and veterans.
- ❖ **Legal Aid:** Programs that offer free or sliding fee scale services.

If an organization offers additional services beyond those that qualify it for inclusion, only qualifying services are included.

For additional information & referral related to health and human services, PATH refers individuals to their local 211 provider.

Provisionally Included Organizations

Organizations meeting the following criteria may be considered for inclusion, provided they meet all mandatory criteria above and do not meet exclusion factors below.

- Government (local, state, federal) agencies that provide relevant services to residents.
- Non-profit organizations that provide relevant services.
- Churches, social clubs, service organizations, and civic groups that offer a relevant service to residents.
- For-profit organizations providing relevant services not adequately available from the non-profit sector are considered on an individual basis.
 - The service must accept Medicaid or be available for free, low cost, or on a sliding fee scale based on income. The agency must have a documented policy for the provision of services on a sliding fee scale. If a service's cost is considered to be generally prohibitive, the service may not be included.
 - Individual or group private practice providers are generally excluded.
- Support groups that are not part of a larger agency that do not charge a fee for service and can demonstrate provision of service for at least 6 months.
- National organizations and out-of-county entities, including statewide and national toll-free phone services, that offer relevant services and which address a gap in local services or in the case where the out-of-county service is more accessible to residents than the equivalent services offered in-county.
- Professional Associations providing a relevant service (e.g. information and referral).

Exclusion Criteria

Organizations or services meeting the following criteria are excluded from the PATH 988 resource database.

- Any organization which promotes or delivers illegal services or conducts other proven or alleged criminal activities.
- Any organization that uses the service to fundraise.

- Organizations that offer free or low-cost services only to market the organization's main business when the organization's main business/services are not appropriate for 988 inclusion.
- Organizations that misrepresent themselves or their services, including organizations that fail to provide advertised services.
- Organizations that deny service based on prejudice or discrimination. This policy does not prohibit the inclusion of any program that targets services based on age, gender, health, disability, or other characteristic designed to meet special needs of targeted populations. However, the program must be open to all people in those targeted populations.
- Services which are available only to an organization's members or existing clients and not to the general public. For example, counseling only available to a church's parishioners, childcare only available to individuals receiving other services from the agency, or medical services only available to previously existing patients.
- Organizations that proselytize or require religious participation as a condition of services.
- Private practitioners or group practices of mental health providers, legal/paralegal providers, etc.
- Organizations that do not maintain a consistently available means of contact. Access through an answering machine or by email is acceptable provided the organization responds in a reasonable amount of time.
- Organizations that fail to respond to attempts to contact them to update information via phone, email, or other mutually agreed method.
- Services that rely on artificial intelligence (AI) for service or resource provision. Refer to the Policy on Artificial Intelligence for more details.

PATH reserves the right to exclude from its database any organization that it has adequate reason to believe may spread hatred or have a philosophy that could be hurtful to the well-being of individuals, groups, or the community as a whole.

Additional Information

Guidelines for Review and/or Appeals

Should special circumstances exist which are not effectively covered by the preceding guidelines, or if there is disagreement about inclusion or exclusion, the agency or organization in question may request a review of the inclusion/exclusion decision by contacting PATH at <https://pathcrisis.org/about/contact> or [this form](#).

Disclaimers

Eligibility for inclusion does not guarantee inclusion. Inclusion in the PATH 988 database does not imply endorsement and omission does not indicate disapproval.

While PATH strives to apply these inclusion and exclusion criteria as consistently and objectively as possible, there may be cases where it is not immediately clear how to apply the above

criteria. In these instances, PATH makes its determination using a collaborative review process, with consultation with and escalation to more senior roles as appropriate.

Information provided by organizations and individual service providers and included in the PATH 988 database is utilized by PATH's 988 Helpline. Apart from information reserved for internal use (such as to contact emergency responders), resources in PATH's 988 Database are provided to the public as a component of safety planning during 988 contacts.. PATH reserves the right to edit information to meet format, guidelines, and space requirements. Information listed in the resource database represents what is provided to PATH by service providers and, as such, PATH neither guarantees nor makes any representation as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in its resource inventory. PATH disclaims any and all responsibility and liability that may be asserted or claimed resulting from or arising out of reliance upon the information and procedures presented in the resource inventory.