

Minimum Requirements

The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (the Lifeline)** is a network of crisis centers serving the entire country. Calls originating from anywhere in the United States will be routed, 24 hours a day, to the nearest available crisis centers. The Lifeline's call routing is based on crisis center call capacity and availability. The network is comprised of more than 150 individual crisis centers across the country and is administered by the Mental Health Association of New York City, which was awarded the SAMHSA grant in 2004.

Crisis centers that are interested in becoming part of this network are required to fill out an application and submit supporting documentation. This document outlines the basic requirements that crisis centers must meet in order to become members of the Lifeline network.

Certification/Accreditation

The crisis center must provide proof of certification/accreditation from one of the following:

- American Association of Suicidology (AAS)
- CONTACT USA
- Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS)
- The Joint Commission
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
- Council on Accreditation (COA)
- Utilization Review Accreditation Commission (URAC)
- DNV Healthcare, Inc.
- State/county licensure, as approved by the Administrator

Centers without certification/licensure may still be able to join the network, assuming there is a demonstrable need for a center in that area, and the center signs the provisional status amendment, by which it agrees to obtain certification within a set time frame.

Insurance

The center must have liability insurance that covers directors and officers, as well as staff and volunteers who respond to crisis calls in the amount of at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 aggregate, unless otherwise approved by the Administrator.

Coverage Capacity

The crisis center must have the ability to consistently cover a geographic region; designated by county, area code, zip code, or state.

Dedicated Staff & Guidelines

The organization is required to have a distinctive call operation with the capacity to identify, receive and respond to calls from individuals in distress, preferably 24/7. The crisis call operation must utilize its own policies, procedures and training protocols and have identified staff and an administration that is responsible for the oversight of the operation.

Training

The crisis center must provide for basic training of call center staff (for both new and active staff members).

Network Participation

The crisis center must be willing to engage in a contractual agreement with the Administrator by signing the Network Agreement.

Quality Assurance

The crisis center may not practice any of the following in order to manage incoming Lifeline calls:

- Utilize an answering service or cellular telephones;
- Utilize an automated attendant or any other system that requires a caller to press a telephone key in order to be connected with center staff/volunteers;
- Forward incoming Lifeline calls to a third party; or
- Allow a receptionist or any center staff/volunteers that have not been trained to assist callers to answer/triage calls.

Quality Assurance Evaluation

The crisis center must be willing to participate in National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network evaluation activities to promote quality assurance for network operations (e.g., call logs).

Crisis Center Liaison

The crisis center must provide at least one contact at the crisis center that will serve as a liaison to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and will provide all possible contact information (name, title, email, and phone numbers) for said contact.

Referrals

The crisis center must be able to offer callers referrals to service providers in its designated coverage area.

Suicide Risk Assessment

The crisis center must ask all Lifeline callers about suicide at some point during the course of the call and, if the caller answers affirmatively, conduct a more thorough suicide risk assessment by using an instrument which incorporates the principles and subcomponents of the Lifeline's Suicide Risk Assessment Standards.

Assisting Callers at Imminent Risk of Suicide

Effective as of 2/1/2012, the crisis center will need to adhere to the Lifeline's new Policy for Assisting Callers at Imminent Risk, which provides specific guidelines for assisting the Lifeline's high risk callers.