

# Alaska Callers in 2018

to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



In 2018, the Lifeline received  
**2.5 million**  
crisis calls from across the United States

**11,329**  
calls were from Alaska

Of the 11,329 callers, **3,019 individuals** pressed "1" to be transferred to the Veterans Crisis Line and **29** pressed "2" for Lifeline's Spanish Language Line.

Ideally, the remaining 8,281 calls in 2018 would have been **answered by Lifeline call centers in Alaska.**

Of those, **only 5,881 calls (71%)** were able to be answered in-state.

Which meant **2,400 callers in crisis were unable to be answered** by an Alaska call center.

## Established in 2005

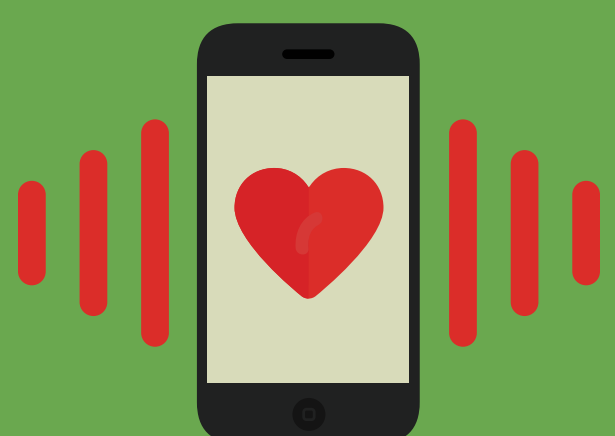
the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is the nation's most recognized suicide and mental health crisis line.

The Lifeline is not one large national call center. Instead, it is a network of 170 independently operated, independently funded local, regional, and state-level call centers. In 2018, there was 1 Lifeline-affiliated center in Alaska. They have the critical expertise and linkages to local resources that callers in crisis deserve.

In the event local centers are unable to answer, the Lifeline re-routes calls to backup centers in our network (both in and out-of-state).

To participate in the Lifeline network, centers operate to the highest standards of suicide care. They do an incredible job of de-escalating crisis situations, decreasing emotional distress, and reducing suicidality.

*Why is this?*  
*How can I help?*



**+184%**

The number of Lifeline calls that needed answering by Alaska call centers increased +184% from 2016 to 2018

The Lifeline is administered through Vibrant Emotional Health and funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



# In 2019, there is only **1** Lifeline network call center in Alaska



 Careline Crisis Intervention (Fairbanks)

**Why were only 71% of 2018's Lifeline calls in Alaska answered in-state?**

Lifeline call centers set the hours and coverage areas for when and where they will take Lifeline calls. **They do this based on funding and staffing levels.**

Most Lifeline-affiliated call centers in the U.S. (including in Alaska) answer calls on other helplines in addition to the Lifeline. **Despite their very best efforts, call volume can, at times, strain center capacity and callers may hang up while they wait for the next available counselors.**

When local call centers are unable to answer, the Lifeline pulls the call back and sends it out of state and into our national backup center sub-network.

When calls are re-routed to centers out-of-state, Alaska callers in crisis wait longer, they receive fewer linkages to effective local care, and they are more likely to abandon their calls.



## Proven effective; needing support

The Lifeline's hotline services have been shown by research to be effective, life-saving safety nets for those in crisis (Gould et al., 2007, 2013, 2015, 2017; Ramchand et al., 2016). According to a 2018 survey of Lifeline centers, **almost 98% of the crisis calls are de-escalated such that costly, highly-restrictive responses from law enforcement and emergency medical services are not necessary.**

The Lifeline is federally funded to manage the call routing, best practice standards, public messaging, capacity-building opportunities and technical assistance for its nationwide network. However, **the funds that sustain our network's crisis centers come from state, county and local sources.** Many of our network's centers are struggling to find enough funding and resources to operate and grow.

Careline Crisis Intervention is a key component of Alaska's city, regional and state behavioral health systems because they represent an entry point into other levels of coordinated care. They provide critical services for Alaska residents at serious risk, especially those with nowhere else to turn.

**Lifeline needs more centers. Careline Crisis Intervention needs expanded support.**

**You can advocate for them.**



**Please join the cause!**

**Reach out to your local centers and decision-makers in Alaska.**

Learn more about the Lifeline as well as how to contact your center in Alaska by visiting:  
<http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/our-network/>