

# New Jersey Callers in 2018

to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

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

**46,770**  
 calls were from New Jersey

Of the 46,770 callers, **9,626 individuals** pressed "1" to be transferred to the Veterans Crisis Line and **902** pressed "2" for Lifeline's Spanish Language Line.

Ideally, the remaining **36,242 calls** in 2018 would have been answered by Lifeline call centers in New Jersey.

Of those, **29,896 calls (82%)** were able to be answered in-state.

Which meant **6,346** callers in crisis were **unable to be answered** by a New Jersey 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. **Currently there are 5 Lifeline-affiliated centers in New Jersey.** They have the expertise and linkages to local resources that callers in crisis deserve.

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.

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).

*Why is this?*

*How can I help?*



**+80%**

The number of Lifeline calls that needed answering by New Jersey call centers increased 80% from 2016 to 2018

# In 2019, there are **5** Lifeline network call centers in New Jersey



- 📍 Caring Contact (Westfield)
- 📍 CONTACT of Burlington County (Moorestown)
- 📍 CONTACT of Mercer County (Pennington)
- 📍 Mental Health Association of New Jersey (Verona)
- 📍 Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care (Piscataway)

## Why were only 82% of 2018's Lifeline calls in New Jersey answered in-state?

Lifeline call centers in New Jersey 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 NJ) answer 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 counselor.**

When local 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, New Jersey callers in crisis wait longer, they receive fewer linkages to effective local care, and are more likely to abandon their calls.



## Proven effective; needing support

Research shows the Lifeline is an effective, life-saving safety net 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, and technical assistance for its network. However, **the funds that sustain our network's centers come from state, county and local sources.** Many centers struggle to find enough funding to operate and grow.

These call centers are key components of New Jersey's behavioral health systems because they represent an entry point into other levels of coordinated care. They provide critical services for New Jersey residents at serious risk, especially those with nowhere else to turn.

**Current New Jersey Lifeline centers need expanded support.**

**You can advocate for them.**



**Please join the cause!**

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

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