

# North Dakota Callers in 2018

## to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

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

**5,058**  
 calls were from North Dakota

Of the 5,058 callers, **1,739 individuals** pressed "1" to be transferred to the Veterans Crisis Line and 26 pressed "2" for Lifeline's Spanish Language Line.

Ideally, the remaining **3,293** calls in 2018 would have been **answered by Lifeline call centers in North Dakota.**

Of those, **2,728 calls (83%)** were able to be answered in-state.

Which meant **565 callers in crisis were unable to be answered** by a North Dakota 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 is 1 Lifeline-affiliated center in North Dakota.** 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?*

 **+49%**

The number of Lifeline calls that needed answering by North Dakota call centers increased +49% from 2016 to 2018

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



 First Link HotLine (Fargo)

**Why were only 83% of 2018's Lifeline calls in North Dakota 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 North Dakota) 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 counselor.**

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, North Dakota 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

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.

Lifeline call centers are key components of city, regional and state behavioral health systems because they represent an entry point into other levels of coordinated care. First Link provides critical services for North Dakota residents at serious risk, especially those with nowhere else to turn.

**First Link Hotline needs expanded support.**

**You can advocate for them.**



**Please join the cause!**

**Reach out to your local center and decision-makers in North Dakota.**

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