

Pennsylvania Callers in 2018

to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

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

78,649
 calls were from Pennsylvania

Of the 78,649 callers, **19,880 individuals** pressed "1" to be transferred to the Veterans Crisis Line and **643** pressed "2" for Lifeline's Spanish Language Line.

Ideally, the remaining **58,126** calls in 2018 would have been answered by Lifeline call centers in Pennsylvania.

Of those, **only 21,258 calls (37%)** were able to be answered in-state.

Which meant **36,868** callers in crisis **were unable to be answered** by a Pennsylvania 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 were 9 Lifeline-affiliated centers in New York. They have the critical 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?



+62%

The number of Lifeline calls that needed answering by Pennsylvania call centers increased 62% from 2016 to 2018

In 2019, there are **10** Lifeline network call centers in Pennsylvania



- Resolve Crisis Network (Pittsburgh)
- Center for Community Resource (Butler)
- True North Wellness Services (Hanover)
- Safe Harbor Behavioral Health (Erie)
- Montgomery County Emergency Service (Norristown)
- Family Service Association of Bucks County (Richboro and Wynnewood)
- City of Philadelphia, Dept. of Behavioral Health (Philadelphia)
- Centre Helps (State College)
- Resources for Human Development / New Perspectives (Stroudsburg)

Why were only 37% of 2018's Lifeline calls in Pennsylvania answered in-state?

Lifeline call centers in Pennsylvania 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 PA) 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.**

In addition, **some parts of Pennsylvania currently have no coverage for Lifeline calls.** This means calls the Lifeline receives from these areas must be routed and answered out-of-state.

When calls are re-routed to centers out-of-state, Pennsylvania callers in crisis wait longer, 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 Pennsylvania's behavioral health systems because they represent an entry point into other levels of coordinated care. They provide critical services for Pennsylvania residents at serious risk, especially those with nowhere else to turn.

Current Pennsylvania Lifeline centers need expanded support.

You can advocate for them.



Please join the cause!

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

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