

# Alaska and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 2019

What's the Lifeline?

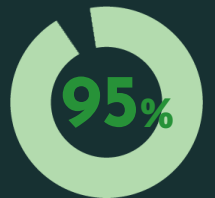


**24/7**

free and confidential support  
 to people in suicidal crisis or  
 emotional distress

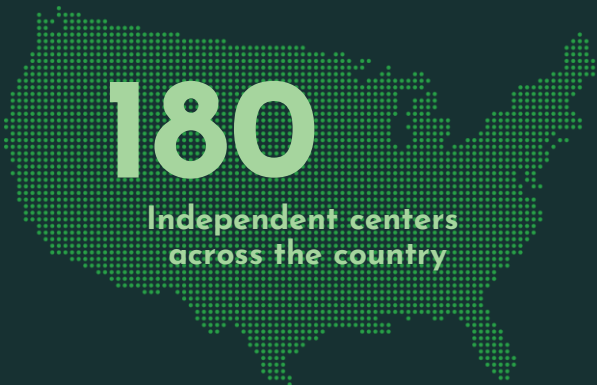


The Lifeline connects  
 more than 80% of callers  
 to a call center on the  
 first routing attempt  
 (within 30 seconds after the greeting)



and around 95% on  
 subsequent attempts  
 (within 60-90 seconds  
 after the greeting)

If a local center is unable to answer, the call is  
 rerouted to one of our national backup centers.



Administered by **Vibrant**  
 through a grant from **SAMHSA**



## Lifeline calls in Alaska



Lifeline-affiliated  
 centers currently  
 in Alaska

Alaska Lifeline Call volume  
 has increased **208%** since  
 2016

**208%**

In 2019, the Lifeline received  
 nearly **2.3 million** crisis calls  
 across the United States

**2.3 million !**

**11,877**

calls were from  
 Alaska

**6,296**

calls were connected to  
 crisis centers in state



Of the 11,877 callers, 2,855  
 pressed "1" to be transferred to  
 the **Veterans Crisis Line**

and 27 pressed "2" for  
 the **Spanish Language Line**



# Why were only 70% of Lifeline's calls in Alaska answered in-state in 2019?



If a state or locality does not provide funding to a local crisis center, their ability to effectively serve all community members is lowered. Lifeline call centers in Alaska set the hours and coverage areas for when they will take Lifeline calls. They do this based on **funding** and **staffing levels**.



Despite their best efforts, periods of high call volume can affect crisis centers' capacity and longer wait times can occur. When a local call center is unable to answer, the call is routed to one the Lifeline national backup centers.



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

## Investing in crisis centers is investing in your community

These call centers are key components of Alaska's behavioral health systems. They are a vital entry point for coordinated care, providing critical services for Alaska residents at serious risk

### 911=\$

A typical 911 call results in thousands of dollars in cost to taxpayers



**Calls to Lifeline call centers cost a fraction of a 911 call**



An emergency department visit or hospitalization is also much more costly



Emergency medical services are dispatched for only 2% of Lifeline calls, reducing the burden on law enforcement and emergency medical resources so they can better respond to other public safety needs

Over two thirds of our crisis centers provide suicide prevention and other mental health training within their communities



Callers to the Lifeline have better health outcomes than people in crisis who are triaged with emergency services personnel

Investing in crisis centers puts money back into the community by supporting local resources, local research, workforce development and local businesses




## Here's How You Can Help

- Allocate funding to support Lifeline call centers and suicide prevention activities in Alaska
- Consider expanding state and local investment in call centers when promoting use of the Lifeline
- Partner with local call centers for town halls and other community events
- Utilize suicide prevention and mental health expertise of call centers when crafting public policy
- Invite call centers to participate in task forces, roundtables, or other forums on mental health and suicide prevention

To learn more about the Lifeline and the call centers in your state visit: [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)