




Office of Suicide Prevention Youth Suicide Prevention Program Highlights 2023

Suicide among California youth has been emerging as an urgent public health issue. Suicide was the second leading cause of death among youth (10-25 years old) in California between 2019 and 2021.¹ While California saw a slight decline in suicide rates overall between these years, the rates for some groups of youth increased (e.g., youth who are Black, and Hispanic).² Suicide rates for select groups of youth remained elevated in 2021 compared to 2019.³ While suicide death among youth under 10 years old is rare, there were several youths in this age range who died by suicide in 2020 and 2021.

To address these trends, the California Department of Public Health’s (CDPH) Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP) is administering two youth suicide prevention programs focused on supporting young people and their caregivers. These programs are part of the California Health and Human Services Agency’s (CalHHS) [Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative](#) (CYBHI). Both programs were established through one-time funding in the Governor’s 2022-2023 Budget and will run through June 2025.

This document provides Program Highlights for 2023 for the [Youth Suicide Prevention Media and Outreach Campaign](#), and the [Youth Suicide Reporting and Crisis Response Pilot Program](#).



“Suicide was the second leading cause of death among youth in California between 2019 and 2021.”

¹ Retrieved from Center for Disease Control (CDC) Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS)

² California Suicide and Self-Harm Trends 2020

³ California Suicide and Self-Harm Trends 2021

Youth Suicide Prevention Media and Outreach Campaign



This project includes development and implementation of a data-driven, population-specific, and community-based youth suicide prevention media and outreach campaign for youth at increased risk of suicide. The media campaign itself is being implemented alongside the work of community-based organization and tribal entity grantees who are helping engage the youth they serve in media co-creation, acting as trusted messengers in their local communities, and implementing local youth suicide prevention strategies to reinforce campaign messaging.

The goal of the campaign is to reduce suicide, suicide attempts, and rates of self-harm among three disproportionately impacted populations:



- American Indian/Alaska Native youth, who experienced the highest suicide rate from 2016-2021 (16.4 per 100,000 individuals)
- Black/African American youth, who experienced the greatest increase in rate from 2016-2021 (33% increase)
- Hispanic/Latinx youth, who experienced the highest number of suicides from 2016-2021 (1,435 suicide deaths)

As part of an intersectional approach to health equity, the Campaign is also inclusive of youth from the populations listed above who identify as having mental health and/or substance use challenges, having been impacted by the foster care system, and/or identify as 2S/LGBTQ+. The organizations selected to receive grants for the project were chosen in part based on their experience working with the Campaign's primary audience, helping to ensure media and programming efforts are culturally appropriate and youth-led.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance

The Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance is working to improve mental health for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx youth with an emphasis on queer and trans youth in Riverside and San Bernardino counties through group mentoring, creating a peer support network, and increasing protective factors to reduce suicide, suicide attempts, and self-harm behavior.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: Pala Band of Mission Indians

The Pala Band of Mission Indians is working to improve mental health for American Indian/Alaskan Native youth in San Diego County through training youth to identify and support peers and others at risk for suicide, and learn culturally relevant coping, problem-solving, and therapeutic techniques.

2023 Highlights

- CDPH contracted with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation for grantee selection and oversight, Civilian Agency to lead media efforts, and the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) to implement an evaluation of the program.
- 34 grants for up to \$500,000 were awarded to community-based organizations and tribal entities to amplify and reinforce campaign messaging through local youth suicide prevention efforts. Learn more about each grantee through [The Center at Sierra Health Foundation's campaign website](#).
- The 2023 Youth Convening was held to provide training in suicide prevention messaging and real-time opportunities for media co-creation with youth served by the project's grantees.
- In preparation for a Spring 2024 launch, the Campaign's look, feel, and messaging were developed based on best practices in suicide prevention and an extensive co-creation process involving over 420 youth from across California.

Youth Suicide Reporting and Crisis Response Pilot Program



This program involves developing and testing approaches to report youth suicide and attempted suicide so that rapid and comprehensive crisis services and follow-up support can be offered in the school and community settings where the deaths or attempts occurred. Ten counties were selected to participate in the program based on youth suicide rates, counts, rate increases over time, and racial/ethnic diversity. Counties with small, medium, and large populations, as well as a mix of counties that are urban, suburban, or rural were selected.



COUNTY SPOTLIGHT: San Joaquin

The San Joaquin County Office of Education (San Joaquin COE) is working to create and launch a website called FOCUS to bring together first responders, schools, and community members to report home visits where a student has experienced a traumatic event or has suicidal ideation. The system will send an alert to school-based personnel to be able to intervene and deploy appropriate crisis services for the student, family, and school community. San Joaquin COE is also working to coordinate suicide prevention training opportunities for all partners.



COUNTY SPOTLIGHT: Los Angeles

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) is working to plan and implement rapid reporting for youth suicides and suicide attempts by using data from the Medical Examiner and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Syndromic Surveillance Program. OVP is also working to develop a landscape analysis of existing crisis response activities and will use the findings, with input from local county and community partners, to guide the strengthening/expansion of existing crisis response networks and/or the development of new crisis response programs as needed.

2023 Highlights

- 10 counties selected to participate: Alameda, El Dorado, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Joaquin, and Solano.
- All 10 counties have submitted implementation plans and have begun program activities, such as developing an asset map to identify local resources, providing community or service-provider training, and implementing screenings, wrap-around support, crisis mobilization services, crisis-response training, counseling, and peer-support services.
- CDPH contracted with UCLA as the independent evaluator to determine the pilot's reach and impact.
- CDPH contracted with the Center for Applied Research Solutions (CARS) to provide in-depth training and technical assistance to the pilot program counties through trainings, topical webinars, and hosting Communities of Practice (CoPs).
- Preparations are underway for the first grantee meeting scheduled for winter 2024.



For more information on the Youth Suicide Prevention Media and Outreach Campaign and the Youth Suicide Reporting and Crisis Response Pilot Program, visit the CDPH [Youth Suicide Prevention Projects webpage](#).

Resource Connections

CDPH: Visit the [CDPH Suicide Prevention webpage](#) for a series of prevention resources, including:

- [Suicide Prevention Resources for Professionals](#)
- [Data on suicide and Self-harm in California](#)
- Population-Specific [Crisis Hotlines, Warmlines, and Resources](#)



Know the Signs

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) has developed Know The Signs as a trusted resource for learning practical first steps individuals can take to help prevent suicide in their home and community. “Every day in California friends, family and co-workers struggle with emotional pain. For some, it’s too difficult to talk about the pain, thoughts of suicide, and the need for help. Everyone can play a role in suicide prevention by learning the warning signs of suicide, finding the words to reach out to a loved one, and knowing where to turn for help.” Visit the [Know The Signs webpage](#) to learn more about suicide warning signs and what steps you can take to help yourself or someone you love.

Free & Confidential Support

The phone, text, and chat lines below can be used if you’re thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support. All resources listed below are free and confidential.

- Call or text 9-8-8 or chat on the [National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline webpage](#) (Support is available in English, Spanish, and TTY).
- Call 1-800-852-8336, text “TEEN” to 839-863 or chat on the [Teen Line webpage](#).
- Call 1-866-488-7386, text “START” to 678-678, or chat on the [Trevor Project webpage](#) (Serving LGBTQ youth).
- Additional support lines can be found on the [CDPH Crisis Hotlines, Warmlines & Resources webpage](#). For youth-specific supports, scroll to the bottom of the page and select “Youth and Young Adults.”