

Idaho Suicide Prevention Program

Annual Report to the Legislature (SFY2022)



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH



**SUICIDE
PREVENTION**
PROGRAM

Department of Health and Welfare
Division of Public Health
Suicide Prevention Program

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2022 Legislative Session, the Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee appropriated \$1,783,800 to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Public Health’s Suicide Prevention Program (SPP). This annual report provides an overview of SPP’s activities and progress toward reducing suicide in Idaho during SFY22.

In CY2021, the **Idaho suicide rate improved to 20.4 suicides per 100,000 population**, representing a reduction of over 14% since the 2018 baseline. Although Idaho still ranks among the top 10 states for suicide, the rate decline is a hopeful sign that the overarching goal of reducing suicide by 20% by 2025 is possible through continued public-private collaboration and investment across the state.

In the past year, **SPP continued to support Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC)**, a public/private, multidisciplinary stakeholder group comprised of individuals who shaped the *Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan 2018-2023*. SPP served as the facilitator, provided technical assistance, and supported implementation activities of ISPAC and the stakeholder teams that manage and implement the plan.

In accordance with the Legislature’s annual budget appropriations, **SPP updated agreements with State Department of Education to deliver youth suicide prevention programming statewide**. During the 2021-22 academic year, regional coordinators directly engaged with 176 Idaho elementary and secondary public schools, delivering support resources and prevention trainings.

In SFY22, **SPP supported the launch of 988** – the new universal phone number for the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. This support was possible due to additional state and federal funding. These added funds were subgranted to the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline to support capacity needs related to the transition to 988 in July 2022. The first week following the 988 saw a 36% increase in crisis line contacts in Idaho, consistent with projected higher demand for services. Following staffing, training, and technology upgrades, the Idaho crisis line achieved National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration performance standards, including a 90% in-state response rate for calls originating in Idaho. Call volume from Idaho is expected to further increase in coming years due to population growth and widespread promotion of the 988 line.

SPP awarded **subgrants to all seven Idaho Public Health Districts to establish local suicide prevention collectives** in SFY22. Each district is responsible for building local capacity to develop and implement suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention activities. Local plans are aligned with the Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan and its goal of reducing suicide throughout Idaho. Coordinators in each Public Health District provided local outreach events and educational resources promoting suicide awareness and prevention.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of Idaho Resident Suicide Deaths	418	365	421	387
Annual Suicide Rate	23.8	20.4	22.9	20.4

Source: Bureau of Vital Statistics, Division of Public Health, September 2022



ANNUAL REPORT

This annual report provides an overview of SPP's activities and progress toward reducing suicide in Idaho during SFY22. During the 2022 Legislative Session, the Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee appropriated \$1,783,800 to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW), Division of Public Health's Suicide Prevention Program (SPP).

Bureau of Equity and Strategic Partnerships

In May 2022, DHW established the Bureau of Equity and Strategic Partnerships (BESP) which combines the work of Get Healthy Idaho to advance Idaho's health improvement plan, priorities of the CDC COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant, and three programs: Drug Overdose Prevention Program, Refugee Health Screening Program, and SPP. BESP collaborates across the department with other state and local government agencies, community partners, and organizations across industry sectors to ensure a multi-pronged cohesive statewide strategy is developed to identify and address the social determinants of health, which are the root causes of inequities in health outcomes.

Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC)

Since 2018, SPP has participated in and provided administrative support to the Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC), a public/private, multidisciplinary stakeholder group comprised of many of those individuals who participated in the strategic planning process in 2018. SPP collaborated with ISPAC to determine the scope of work to be conducted with the funds appropriated to SPP for SFY22, including setting priorities for the program and determining budget amounts to be spent within each priority area.

SPP serves as the facilitator for ISPAC, provides leadership and guidance to ISPAC, and supports coordination and

implementation activities of ISPAC and the stakeholder teams that manage and implement the six Key Performance Areas (KPA) of the suicide prevention plan. SPP staff serve as facilitators and support staff for each of the six KPA teams. While the relationship continues to evolve, SPP and ISPAC operate with a coordinated and common vision.

In May 2022, SPP facilitated an annual meeting with ISPAC to evaluate progress on the statewide Suicide Prevention Plan and discuss annual work plan priorities. Along with reviewing impact and annual progress, the collective group identified the following priority areas for the next fiscal year:

- Create, coordinate, and monitor prevention, intervention, and postvention activities in each local health district.
- Improve state, tribal, and local capacity to use data to identify and address equity and risk disparities in higher suicide risk population segments. SPP data analysis identified the following high-risk segments in Idaho: military service members and veterans, rural residents, tribal community members, LGBTQ community members, those affected by disability and/or chronic illness, and youth/adolescents.

Priority areas for the annual workplan are closely aligned with DHW Strategic Plan Goal 3 – **Help Idahoans become as healthy and self-sufficient as possible** – and its objective to reduce Idaho's suicide rate by 20% by 2025.



Following input from ISPAC to align activities with the state plan priorities for SFY23, the SPP budget was allocated as follows:

Staff Salaries	\$318,700
General Operating Expenses	\$30,000
Youth Education and Prevention	\$423,000
Idaho Crisis and Suicide Hotline	\$448,000
Training and Technical Assistance	\$20,000
Suicide care model/Zero Suicide	\$54,000
Local Collectives, Public Health Districts (7)	\$315,000
Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC)	\$70,000
Communications and Outreach	\$105,100
Total State General Funds Budgeted	\$1,783,800

KPA tasks are outlined within the suicide prevention action plan. KPA teams are as follows:

- Capacity Building and Infrastructure
- Suicide Care and Zero Suicide
- Communication and Outreach
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Data and Evaluation
- Advocacy and Policy

With support from SPP, each of the six KPA teams is responsible for directing activities that help accomplish the state plan goal of reducing the Idaho suicide rate by 20% by 2025 compared to the baseline statewide suicide rate in 2018. A 20% reduction in the baseline 2018 Idaho suicide rate of 23.8 per

100,000 residents equates to a rate of 19.0 or lower as the goal for 2025.

In 2021, the Idaho suicide rate improved to 20.4, representing a reduction of over 14% since the 2018 baseline. Although Idaho still ranks among the top 10 states for suicide rates, the rate decline in both 2019 and 2021 is hopeful sign that the plan's overarching goal is possible through continued aligned efforts and investments from all stakeholders.

The following is a summary of SPP's scope of work and notable accomplishments in support of the Idaho State Suicide Prevention Plan in SFY22, as well as ongoing efforts during SFY23.

Capacity Building and Infrastructure

- Developed a suicide-prevention training packet for degree-seeking students in behavioral health disciplines at Idaho colleges and universities
- SPP and stakeholders continued to explore options for funding and maintaining a statewide online repository or website to simplify access to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention resources offered through ISPAC partners and local collectives

Suicide Care Models and Zero Suicide

- Selected the Zero Suicide model to equip health care systems with the tools and mechanisms needed for suicide safe care. This program promotes and implements effective clinical and professional practices for assessing and

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treating patients at risk for suicidal behaviors

- In support of ISPAC annual work plan priorities, SPP and ISPAC Zero Suicide KPA team led implementation of a three-year Zero Suicide care model initiative. Year one (SFY22) efforts focused on recruiting a cohort of providers in a range of healthcare settings: primary care centers, behavioral health clinics, and/or hospital departments and health care systems
- In partnership with American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the Zero Suicide KPA team selected three Idaho healthcare organizations (Shoshone Medical Center in Kellogg, Snake River Community Clinic in Lewiston, and Caribou Medical Center in Soda Springs) to receive SafeSide® Prevention training scholarships. SafeSide® provides training for health and community organizations that aspire to Zero Suicide implementation
- SPP contracted with Education Development Center's Zero Suicide Institute to lead a workshop covering the core components of the Zero Suicide Framework. The contract scope of work also covers one year of project consulting and support for healthcare organizations piloting the Zero Suicide model
- In May 2022, staff representing Caribou Medical Center, Owyhee Community Health (Shoshone-Paiute tribe), Panhandle Health District, Kootenai Health, St. Luke's Health System, Marim Health (Coeur d'Alene tribe), Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center, and Saint Alphonsus attended the Zero Suicide Workshop to learn tenets of creating a leadership-driven, safety-oriented culture committed to reducing suicide among people under care
- Ongoing objectives (SFY23-24) are focused on supporting healthcare

providers with Zero Suicide Institute programming. The goal is to establish four (4) Zero-Suicide pilot sites in Idaho, and to work with community health partners in implementation and support

- SPP has allocated \$54,000 in SFY23 for Zero Suicide model recruiting, training, and professional facilitation

Communications and Outreach

- Engaged Department of Health & Welfare's marketing agency, RIESTER Mountain, to produce four (4) new "Rock Your Role" radio spots in English and Spanish. Suicide awareness messages are tailored for Idaho's high priority population segments including those living in rural communities, first responders, middle-aged males, and youth
- RIESTER created new outdoor advertising and updated existing "Rock Your Role" campaign materials. Along with suicide prevention messaging, the campaign was updated to promote the newly rebranded Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline and the national 988 crisis line
- SPP subscribed to Idaho State Broadcasters Association for reduced-cost media placement services through the Non-Commercial Supporting Announcements (NCSA) program. Local broadcast affiliates in all regions of Idaho aired "Rock Your Role" television and radio spots 15,872 times between January-June 2022
- To reach a broad audience with suicide prevention messages, SPP sponsored "Rock Your Role" social media and outdoor advertising campaigns between August-October 2022. Paid social media posts were placed on Facebook and Instagram. Non-skippable video spots ran on YouTube. Campaign billboards promoting suicide prevention awareness and the 988 crisis line were installed on major traffic roadways, including rural



stretches in Idaho's northern, central, and eastern regions

- Media reporting guidelines endorsed by the American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were reviewed and approved. The guidelines were disseminated to SPP media partners through DHW's Office of Communications
- Suicide Health Tools education and crisis support publications were updated with the new crisis line number (988) and reviewed to ensure accuracy and currency of information. Materials are routinely distributed by SPP to various partners and individuals around the state, at no charge to them
- SPP has allocated \$105,100 to support messaging campaigns as well as for publication production and distribution in SFY23

Training and Technical Assistance

- Maintained and updated a list of trainers and training sessions across the state, which is accessible to the public on the SPP website
- SPP staff collaborated with Micron's Global Health & Wellbeing and Women's Leadership employee networks to host a mental health resource fair. 47 Micron employees completed on-site Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) gatekeeper training in 2022. With support from SPP, Micron plans to offer this training at all employee campuses in North America
- SPP will continue to provide funding and staff support to expand local access of evidence-based trainings such as postvention training created by the Dougy Center, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training®, and Crisis Intervention Team training
- SPP has allocated \$20,000 for investments in evidence-based training

curriculum and conference sponsorships in SFY23

Data and Evaluation

- Shared Idaho's Violent Death Reporting System data dashboard (www.gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/idaho-vdrs) at monthly stakeholder meetings, trainings, via newsletters and information briefings. The dashboard allows public access to official Idaho Vital Statistics suicide mortality data. Demographic detail is provided along with monthly updates on suicide counts in Idaho. These data summaries are instrumental in monitoring frequency of suicide, identifying priority population segments and measuring progress toward state plan goals
- SPP funded data collection and analysis from Idaho Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to monitor the prevalence of suicide attempts and sources of follow-up care. Data analysis identified Idaho adults at higher risk of suicide attempts as well as factors contributing to suicide attempts
- For SFY23, SPP is piloting a suicide attempt and ideation alert process using emergency department data available through the ESSENCE system. Once finalized, the data alerts will be used to develop communication protocol with partners statewide and support local response efforts

Advocacy and Policy

- Drafted Governor's Proclamation for Suicide Prevention and Recovery month to promote National Suicide Prevention Month by conveying the message "Connecting Help, Finding Hope, Building Recovery." Organized a Proclamation signing event with Governor Brad Little in Coeur D'Alene on September 10, 2022
- Supported KPA team in defining advocacy and policy objectives to



implement the strategic initiatives outlined in the state plan

- Assisted with legislation proposed during the 2021 and 2022 sessions to provide support for transition to a national mental health crisis support hotline (988)

Youth Suicide Prevention

SPP and State Department of Education updated their annual service agreement to deliver youth suicide prevention programming statewide.

HB 634 requires the state board of education to: 1) adopt rules supporting suicide awareness and prevention training each year for public school personnel; 2) develop a list of approved training materials to fulfill the requirements of HB 634; 3) requires each public school district to adopt a policy on student suicide prevention, and 4) requires the state department of education to develop and maintain a model policy to serve as a guide for schools

SPP and State Board of Education worked collaboratively to research and identify

programs for suicide prevention training in schools to share as approved training materials to fulfill the requirements of HB 634. This list of approved programs was finalized with representation from State Board of Education, SPP, and other ISPAC stakeholders with interest in youth suicide prevention.

State Board of Education routinely engages third-party evaluators to ensure that school suicide prevention programming is evidence-based and that it effectively achieves performance objectives. Evaluation teams from Boise State University and University of Rochester are currently studying the impact of SDE’s youth programs offered during the 2022-23 academic year. State Board of Education is currently developing “Suicide Safer Idaho: A One-Stop Guide for Schools” to help school districts consolidate information and easily access support materials.

In SFY22, State Board of Education partnered with Idaho Lives Project to implement youth suicide prevention programming and postvention services in public schools throughout Idaho. Idaho Live Project’s mission is to foster connectedness and resilience throughout Idaho school communities to prevent youth suicide. This partnership prioritizes opportunities to help districts and schools actualize their suicide safer prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts. Using funding support from SPP and two federal grants, services are provided to youth and adults at no cost to them.

During the 2021-22 academic year, Idaho Lives Project regional coordinators directly engaged with 126 Idaho secondary schools and 50 elementary schools (for a total of 176 schools), delivering support resources and prevention trainings. In partnership with the Division of Behavioral Health’s regional clinicians, coordinators facilitated a comprehensive School Postvention Crisis Team training for schools within Central

Key Figures

176 Number of Idaho **schools** that participated in suicide prevention trainings

2,131 Number of Idaho **students** who participated in school suicide prevention trainings

2,840 Number of Idaho **adults** who participated in school suicide prevention trainings



District Health and Southwest District Health in February 2022.

State Department of Education and partners created a statewide suicide-safer model policy that has been adopted by 23 public school districts. Evidence-based protocols which support the model policy were recently updated and are now available to all Idaho school districts. Sources of Strength training is offered at schools each year through scholarship awards. Sources of Strength is an evidence-based youth suicide prevention and wellness program. In SFY22, a total of 2,131 Idaho students in grades 3 through 12 participated in these trainings. Further, 19 new secondary schools delivered the training during the most recent academic year. Additionally, 2,840 adults were trained in evidence-based suicide prevention programs including Sources of Strength and professional gatekeeper training workshops such as Suicide Prevention Fundamentals Instruction and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training.

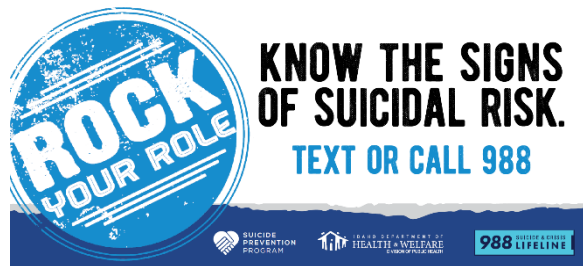
Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline Support

SPP has provided financial support to the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline since the program's inception. In SFY22, the availability of federal grants resulted in a substantial increase in subgrant funding to support staffing and training requirements related to the national crisis line transition to 988. Federal funding sources managed by partners in the Division of Behavioral Health combined with the SPP state general fund allocation (\$448,000) allowed SPP to provide a total of \$1,310,000 in funding to the hotline in SFY22.

988 Transition

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 designated 988 as "the universal telephone number for reaching a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis

hotline system operating through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline" and intended to be the mental health equivalent of the 911 emergency line. In preparation for the transition to 988 and to broaden the reach of their services, the hotline rebranded as Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline in Spring 2022. The hotline is a member of the national 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and their network of over 200 crisis call centers. Callers with an Idaho area code who dial 988 or (800) 271-8255 are routed to the Idaho hotline. Help seekers may also reach the hotline by texting 988 or (208) 398-4357 and through internet chat.



The essential promise of 988 was defined by stakeholders as "someone to call, someone to respond, and a place to go." Fulfilling that promise requires ongoing collaboration and support from national and state agencies including Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health & Welfare's Division of Behavioral Health, Division of Public Health, and Division of Medicaid, as well as our Idaho Legislature.

The new three-digit number went live on July 16, 2022 as the universal phone number for the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The number was widely promoted through marketing campaigns and in media coverage during the summer months which resulted in a significant increase in hotline call volume. The first week following the 988 launch saw a 36% increase in hotline contacts, consistent with projected higher demand for services. Following staffing, training, and technology upgrades, the hotline achieved the National Lifeline and Substance Abuse and Mental



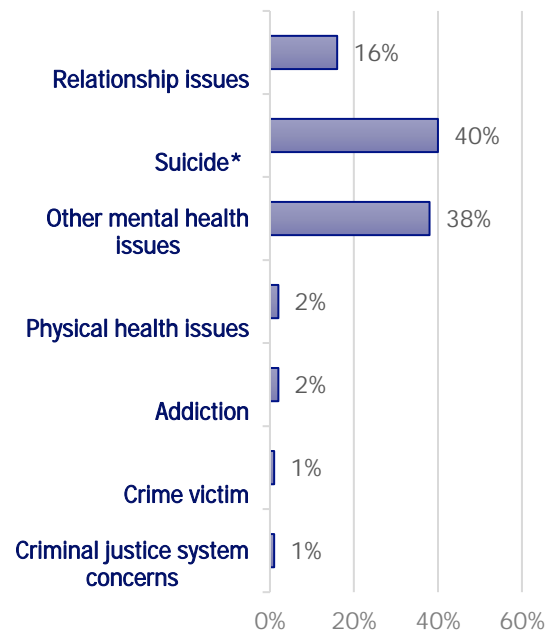
Health Services Administration performance standards with a 90% response rate for calls originating in Idaho. Calls that are not answered by an Idaho hotline operator are routed to the National Lifeline call center network.

In April 2022, SPP was awarded a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) appropriated through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in the amount of \$642,000 over a two-year project period. If spending approval is granted by the Idaho Legislature, these funds will be directed to hotline operations to help further build capacity to meet record high demand for crisis support services following the launch of 988. Sustained funding is essential to allow ever-growing numbers of Idahoans to receive the lifesaving support they seek.

Highlights from the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline 2nd Quarter Report (April-June 2022)

- Total number of contacts: 6,416 (5,784 calls and 632 texts/chats). This represents an increase of over 36% since the same time period in 2021.
- The hotline continues to experience increasing call volume, reaching historically high levels. During the second quarter of CY2022 (which pre-dates the 988 launch), the hotline responded to more calls and texts than any previous quarter in operating history
- In follow-up inquiries, 94% of help-seekers reported that they appreciated the hotline’s service
- After support from the hotline, 81% of help-seekers de-escalated or had reduced distress
- In compliance with National Suicide Prevention Lifeline protocols, crisis responders are required to ask every caller about suicide. In the second quarter, there were 4,711 contacts in

Reasons for Contacting the Hotline¹



¹ Reasons were self-reported

*Suicide includes callers who mentioned current ideation (47%), a current suicide plan (15%), concerns for a third-party (17%), attempt or loss survivor (18%), and past ideation (3%)

which suicidology was assessed and addressed with the caller.

Funding for Local Suicide Prevention Collectives

SPP awarded subgrants to all seven (7) local public health districts in SFY22 to establish and support local suicide prevention collectives. The subgrants allow each district to build local capacity to develop and implement suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention activities. The funds support a part-time coordinator in each district who is responsible for organizing and coordinating a collective of individuals, businesses, community members and survivors to develop a local plan that is aligned with the Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan and the goal of reducing deaths by suicide. Local coordinators attend monthly Learning and Action Network meetings led by SPP staff to



share best practices, solve problems, and connect resources.

The subgrant scope of work requires each local collective to conduct a local analysis to assist the district and local counties to identify gaps in their resources, policies, training, and services related to prevention, intervention, and postvention which will be used to inform and guide suicide prevention efforts; work with local school districts, State Department of Education, and contractors to ensure suicide prevention plans are in place and active; develop a data collection plan to ensure timely local suicide data; and support and evaluate local suicide prevention outreach events.

Local collectives promoted Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month in September 2022 through social media and Public Health District websites. Many hosted local events such as survivor walks and dinners to build community and spark important conversations. As part of their local suicide prevention plans, each collective distributed loss survivor support packets, promoted lethal means safety (by disseminating prescription lockboxes, drug deactivating pouches, and gun trigger locks), facilitated support groups, and participated in outreach events to provide suicide prevention education and share resources.

Highlights of recent accomplishments:

- **Panhandle Health District** purchased viewing rights to *My Ascension*, an acclaimed documentary about youth suicide. The district presented screenings for multiple audiences live and online. The Panhandle District is also an active partner in Zero Suicide implementation and plans to hire a local project manager to oversee pilots in all five of their county clinics
- **North Central Health District** forged new relationships with the Willow Center, Rural Crisis Center Network, University of

Idaho, Lewis-Clark State College, Walla Walla Community College, YWCA, and others local organizations to facilitate access to mental health resources and collaborate on trainings and educational events

- **Southwest District Health** hosted a “Mental Health Symposium” in spring 2022 with sessions on postvention, trauma-informed response, plus a 2-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)[®]. The local coordinator also teamed with Idaho Lives Project on a suicide prevention mural project in the Notus School District
- **Central District Health** organized a suicide awareness challenge at Tamarack Resort. Staff were trained in the Community Resiliency Model which seeks to expand trauma response capacity in local communities
- **South Central District Health** hosted a speaker event in Twin Falls featuring Kevin Hines, a nationally known suicide prevention advocate who survived a suicide attempt from the Golden Gate Bridge. As part of local 9/11 memorial events, this district promoted topics related to suicide prevention and mental health support for first responders and veterans. A large flag was displayed from Perrine Bridge to promote “Bands on the Bridge” and survivors tied “bands of hope” ribbons to Southern Idaho’s most visible bridge
- **Southeastern Idaho Public Health** hosted “Stories of Hope Across the Lifespan” which featured presentations from survivors, a screening of the suicide prevention documentary *My Ascension*, and a safety planning discussion led by local suicide prevention experts.
- **Eastern Idaho Public Health** implemented grief and loss support groups in rural areas. Their approach helped promote awareness of online resources (including



support groups specifically for those experiencing suicide loss) to those in remote communities with limited access to services

Question, Persuade, and Refer Training

SPP contracted with Whistle Communications to provide Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) gatekeeper training workshops via DHW Learning Hub employee training portal. Trainings are offered virtually to all DHW employees (full time, part time, and temporary). The ongoing effort strives to train at least 1,000 employees to recognize signs of suicide risk and learn how to intervene and refer individuals for care. As of June 2022, 83% of this training goal was reached and is projected to be exceeded by the end of the calendar year. The training is continuously promoted through DHW internal communications channels including DHW Connection employee newsletter, banner ads on Inside DHW (the Department's intranet portal) and periodic updates from the Director and Human Resources staff.

Pre-training surveys found that nearly all workshop participants have known someone who was struggling with thoughts of suicide. However, prior to completing the training, fewer than 1-in-4 knew how to recognize signs of suicide risk or how to appropriately respond. Following the training workshop, 9-in-10 of those trained reported being aware or extremely aware of recognizing signs. About the same number reported knowing what to say and what to do when someone shows signs of suicide risk.

Dougy Center Loss Survivor Support Group Facilitator Training

SPP's funding allocation supported a two-day postvention workshop developed by the Dougy Center in May 2022. Hosted by the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline, the training provided techniques for facilitating loss survivor support groups using the Dougy Center's pioneering peer grief support model. A representative from each of the seven Public

Health Districts participated in the training, expanding access to evidence-based loss survivor support groups in communities throughout the state.

Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

SPP staff is supporting Idaho's participation in the Governor's Challenge, ensuring alignment with Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan goals. Co-led by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and SAMHSA, and championed by Idaho's veteran and military affiliated organizations, this initiative is focused on strategies for reducing suicide risk among service veterans, service members, and their families over a four-year project period.