

# Office of Suicide Prevention

## 2023 Stakeholder Needs Assessment

### Results Summary



In May and June of 2023, the California Department of Public Health's Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP) conducted the first biannual Stakeholder Needs Assessment. Comprised of an online survey and follow-up interviews, the assessment gathered information about OSP stakeholders' recent successes, challenges, lessons learned, and ongoing needs related to suicide and self-harm prevention efforts. The purpose of the assessment was to inform OSP's internal planning efforts and help identify appropriate technical assistance tools and resources needed to support OSP's diverse partners.

Respondent Organization Type	Number
Community-Based Organization	21
Local Behavioral Health	18
County Office of Education	10
School District	10
Other Organization	8
County Health and Human Services	4
Local Health Jurisdiction	3
Total	74

Over 80 respondents participated, representing 74 local government and community-based organizations across the State. Respondents included program managers and administrators, clinicians, and project staff.

The assessment provided the OSP with a wealth of information on the current state of suicide prevention efforts in CA, focused on partners' ongoing challenges, needs, and promising practices.

### Challenges

When asked about their greatest challenges, survey respondents most frequently listed:

- Timely access to local level data on suicide and self-harm
- Coordination and communication among stakeholders
- Limited resources and infrastructure
- Staff turnover and leadership challenges
- Systemic and structural factors
- Stigma surrounding mental health and suicide
- Engaging parents regarding youth suicide prevention
- Public confusion over 988 rollout
- Integrating suicide prevention screening into routine practice and workflows

### Needs

Respondents also identified resource and technical assistance needs that provided insight into possible solutions for the challenges they had identified:

- Need for local, **timely data** on suicide risk, attempts and deaths.
- Need for **regular convenings** across counties, jurisdictions, and disciplines to promote promising practices, provide mentoring and support, and coordinate resources.
- Need for **consistent funding** to ensure the availability of dedicated staff to direct, manage and evaluate suicide prevention efforts.
- Need for **consistent messaging** from the State on the urgency of suicide prevention as a means for reducing stigma and catalyzing action.

- Need for access to **standardized, evidence-informed, and culturally sensitive tools and protocols** for community engagement, firearm safety messaging, individual and community risk assessment, crisis response and postvention.

### Promising Practices

The 2023 assessment also unearthed numerous examples of innovative and promising new practices to boost the effectiveness of suicide and self-harm prevention efforts. These include efforts in the areas of data quality, collaboration, community engagement, screening and assessment, crisis management, and postvention. The OSP is in the process of gathering additional information on these practices to highlight as part of an upcoming Community of Practice meeting series, described in the section below.

### Moving Forward Together

**Thank you** for your partnership and for contributing your time and expertise to the 2023 assessment. Your knowledge and insight have helped shape the path forward in 2024 and beyond.

Based on what we heard from you, the OSP will launch a **statewide Suicide Prevention Community of Practice**, to provide a virtual space for suicide prevention partners and stakeholders across the state to share innovative practices, successes, and resources, including promising practices identified through this needs assessment. Look for details about the Community of Practice in upcoming communications in early 2024.

Additionally, the OSP has identified the following ways our current projects can address needs and challenges identified in this needs assessment.

### In Progress:

- *Youth Suicide Prevention Media & Outreach Campaign*: In response to the increasing rates of youth suicide in recent years and the need for consistent messaging on this issue, the OSP is implementing a [Youth Suicide Prevention Media and Outreach Campaign](#) co-created by youth and paired with community-based projects that spark action within the suicide prevention space. The campaign is expected to launch in Spring 2024 and at that time campaign material and opportunities for youth involvement will be made available to the OSP partner network.
- *Youth Suicide Reporting and Crisis Response Pilot Projects*: Recognizing the need for local systems that support real-time data on suicide and effective crisis response and postvention protocols, the OSP is working with ten counties to pilot youth suicide reporting and crisis response projects. Funded counties are developing and testing models for making youth suicide and attempted suicide reportable events to initiate rapid crisis responses within community settings with the goal of strengthening local systems to prevent further suicides and attempts. The outcomes of the pilot projects will be shared with stakeholders to identify replicable practices and opportunities for coordination.

As a reminder, the OSP provides annual data reports on suicide and self-harm in specific populations and quarterly preliminary suicide death data, both available through the [Injury and Violence Prevention Branch webpage on Suicide and Self Harm Data](#). County data profiles for government partners are available by request. Additionally, the OSP supports the [California Violent Death Reporting System \(CalVDRS\) data](#)

[dashboard](#). These resources provide data on suicide, self-harm, and the circumstances and underlying causes of suicide in communities across California and can be used to guide data-driven suicide prevention actions at the state and local levels.

If you would like to share additional technical assistance needs or best practices with the OSP team, please feel free to contact us via email at [Suicide.Prevention@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:Suicide.Prevention@cdph.ca.gov). Received this report from a colleague? Email your name and contact details to [Suicide.Prevention@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:Suicide.Prevention@cdph.ca.gov) with “Add to Mailing List” in the subject line to receive future updates.

