

SOUTH DAKOTA SUICIDE PREVENTION PLAN 2025-2030

# 2025 PRIORITY STRATEGIES OUTCOMES REPORT

988 - Call. Text. Chat.



[sdsuicideprevention.org](https://sdsuicideprevention.org)



## DATA

To measure the impact of the implementation of the 2020-2025 SD Suicide Prevention Plan, 5 performance measures were identified and are posted on the data dashboards on [SDSuicidePrevention.org/data](https://SDSuicidePrevention.org/data). These are monitored on an annual basis to assess progress and inform our priority strategies for the next year. Below are the data points for the Suicide State Performance Measures:

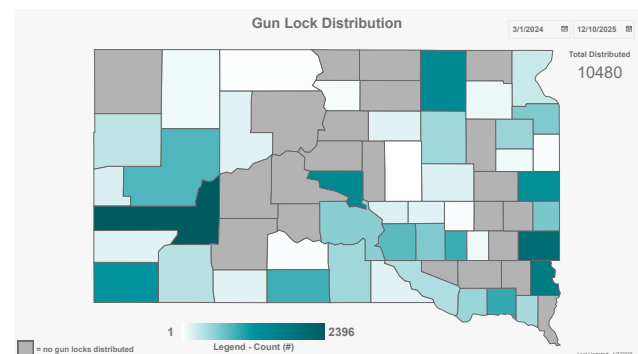
1. By 2025, increase the average monthly number of unique users who visit the SD Suicide Prevention website from 2,324 (2020) to 4,638.
  - a. 2024 = 3,108
  - b. 2025 = 1,697
2. By 2025, increase the number of annual community helper trainings offered and individuals trained from 61 trainings, training 1,179 individuals in 2020 to 71 trainings, training 1,367 individuals.
  - a. 2024 = 286 trainings, training 7,035
  - b. 2025 = 375 trainings, training 9,212
3. By 2025, increase the number of calls from South Dakotans to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline from 3,811 (2020) to 4,661.
  - a. 2024 = 12,072
  - b. 2025 = 15,056
4. By 2025, decrease the percentage of high school students who reported they attempted suicide from 12.3% (2019) to 9%.
  - a. 2023 = 8.4%
  - b. 2025 = data will be available summer 2026
5. By 2025, decrease the number of suicide deaths from 185 (2020) to 167.
  - a. 2023 = 180
  - b. 2024 = 198

In 2025, additional data was added to the [SD Suicide Prevention data dashboard](#) to include populations of focus, which includes Veterans, American Indians, and Youth/Young Adults. These populations were identified as high-risk and were included in the 2025 Priority Strategies of the South Dakota Suicide Prevention Plan. The addition of this data provides an opportunity to increase data sharing and awareness around some of the high-risk populations in South Dakota.

To increase awareness about suicide data and highlight available resources, the SD Suicide Prevention Workgroup developed additional population-specific infographics focused on **Construction and Manufacturing workers**, based on data indicating an increase in suicide deaths within these workforce sectors. This infographic, along with the previously created population infographics (American Indians, farmers and ranchers, Veterans, and youth), highlight some key data points, warning signs of suicide, ways to reduce the risk of suicide, and available resources that are specific to each population. These infographics are available on the South Dakota Suicide Prevention website.

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

50% of suicide deaths in South Dakota are firearm related. A continued partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs provides gun locks to promote secure storage of firearms statewide. **From January to December 2025, 4,564 gun locks were distributed, with a total of 10,480 since launch.** The heat map below illustrates the geographic distribution of gun lock requests in South Dakota.





Between 2015-2024, 35% of suicide deaths were from hanging, strangulation or suffocation. A focus on **ligature safety** was a priority in 2025, with additional resources available through a [Ligature Safety infographic](#) and education on the South Dakota Suicide Prevention (SDSP) website.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Let's Be Clear campaign, a [Safe Medication Storage and Disposal infographic](#) was created to promote the use of lock boxes, Dispose Rx packets and take back locations.

**PsychArmor's** courses are for those who interact with service members, veterans, and their families. These courses provide valuable education on military culture, including suicide prevention, military values, transitions and more. The platform is self-paced and offers the knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully with the SMVF community personally and professionally.

The Helpline Center is working with 25 schools to implement the evidence-based peer-to-peer program, **Hope Squad**. A Hope Squad is a group nominated by their peers that meets regularly with trained advisors to talk and learn about mental health. Squad members are trained to watch for at-risk students, provide friendship, identify suicide warning signs, and seek help from adults. The program aims to reduce the risk of youth suicide through education, training, and peer intervention. The Helpline Center provides QPR training to the Hope Squads, monthly check-

in support with advisors, and hosts quarterly meetings for all advisors across the State.

*"Hope Squad is a fun, proactive program that helps the student body focus on their mental wellbeing. Students are empowered to recognize warning signs of suicide and mental health concerns so that they can get help for their peers." – Hope Squad Advisor*

The **Lost&Found Peer2Peer Mentorship program** cultivates meaningful connections between trained student mentors and peers adjusting to campus life. Mentors help mentees access resources, build resilience, and feel a stronger sense of belonging while mentors gain vital listening and referral skills. In 2025, the program was added to the [Suicide Prevention Best Practices Registry](#), reflecting its proven effectiveness in supporting early intervention and community well-being. In addition to the Peer2Peer program, **Lost&Found serves 16 campuses** across South Dakota through campus chapter engagement, mental wellness education and outreach support. Lost&Found programming is informed by current students and the mental health challenges they face as they navigate their higher education journey. **In 2025, the Lost&Found Student Programs team engaged 13,114 students, faculty, and staff.**

*"This program helps me make more connections on campus...it helps me feel less alone" – Peer2Peer Mentee*

The **Campus Resilience Index (CRI)** is a partnership driven tool created by Lost&Found that assesses the suicide prevention capacity of college and technical school campuses and their communities, identifies areas of strength in prevention, and recommends programs, policies, or resources that can reduce suicide risk. In 2025, Lost&Found conducted the **Campus Resilience Index (CRI)** for a second time at Southeast Technical College. To date, the CRI has been conducted at seven universities across the state. A new document, **Creating Supportive Campus Environments: Best Practices for Mental Health Promotion in Postsecondary Institutions**, was developed and

shared with schools who have completed the CRI.

The Department of Education (DOE) in partnership with the Department of Social Services created mental health posters that were extremely popular and well received. DOE also reviewed and approved several youth suicide prevention trainings that are shared with the K-12 educators, counselors, and administrators. Schools can access these trainings via the DOE website or by reaching out directly to the Office of Student Wellness and Supports.

Department of Social Services hosted their fourth annual **Behavioral Health Conference**, bringing together around **600 participants** to focus on the topic of behavioral health, with emphasis on suicide prevention. This event united hundreds of South Dakotans in a shared commitment to saving lives and supporting mental wellness across South Dakota.

## COMMUNICATIONS

An inter-agency **Data to Action workgroup** continues to meet monthly to review provisional data and **identify communities at high risk for suicide**. After a high-risk community is identified, workgroup members proactively reach out to partners in healthcare, behavioral health, schools, and other local organizations to make them aware of the changes in data and provide additional support and resources. In response to provisional data analyzed by the Data to Action workgroup, additional media efforts were targeted toward Pennington, Dewey, Ziebach, Brule, Lyman, Lawrence, Meade, Union, Clay, Yankton, Butte, and Beadle counties. Digital and print media were used to tailor messaging towards identified populations of risk, including males, farmers, veterans, Native Americans, working class, and young adults. **The social media campaigns achieved an estimated reach of 316,173 people with 1.4 million impressions.**

To highlight national best-practices in suicide prevention, continued monitoring and updates to the SDSP website are made throughout the year. In 2025, a [Safe Language](#) page was developed to promote stigma-free and person-first language

resources in alignment with Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) recommendations.

To better understand South Dakotan's perceptions, The Department of Social Services conducted a biannual perception study measuring awareness of 988 and perceptions of behavioral health. Insights from this research are guiding the creation of targeted messaging to help reduce stigma and encourage individuals to seek support through 988.



Through South Dakota Department of Social Services **Notes to Self campaign**, a powerful 988 testimonial project was implemented in 2025, featuring real stories from South Dakotans whose lives and families have been positively impacted by the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. These testimonials were filmed against a striking backdrop—a wall covered with **13,500 sticky notes, each representing one of the 13,500 calls made to 988 in South Dakota in 2024**. This visual display served as a moving reminder that nobody is alone and highlighted the profound, life-changing difference 988 has made for thousands across the state. **The 988 wall and testimonial project received national recognition for its creativity and heartfelt representation of hope and sharing the ultimate message: you are not alone.**



The responses highlight the positive impact of this initiative, demonstrating how simple acts of kindness can contribute to emotional well-being and a stronger sense of community. Examples of messages submitted include:

- You have survived 100% of your worst days, and that's something to be proud of.
- Talk to yourself like you would talk to a friend: with kindness, empathy, and acceptance
- There is always hope! The most beautiful rainbows come out after the darkest storms.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement efforts in 2025 focused on utilizing workplaces as a platform to disseminate resources, promote the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, and advance suicide prevention training. **Multiple presentations and trainings were conducted—both in-person and virtually—for businesses and human resource professionals.**

Between 2020 and 2024, individuals employed in the **Construction and Manufacturing industries** accounted for approximately 23% of suicide deaths in South Dakota. In response, targeted efforts were initiated to address this population. These efforts included the development of a dedicated page under the [Workforce](#) section of the SDSP website, featuring tailored trainings, industry-specific resources, and a [specialized infographic](#). Connections were also made with the South Dakota Associated General Contractors (AGC). The Department of Health and Department of Social Services collaborated to create an article and infographic specific to the construction and manufacturing workforce. The resources were sent to the AGC and reached over 1,400 individuals in the construction and manufacturing industry across the state.

The West River Postvention Coalition, established in late 2024, was renamed the **Coalition of Hope in 2025**. The coalition includes statewide partners with a focus on Western South Dakota and aims to strengthen collaboration and coordination among suicide postvention providers. The Coalition of Hope brings together organizations and services to offer comprehensive and compassionate support to individuals and families grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide. Its goal is to build a coordinated network of care that helps reduce emotional and practical burdens for survivors by providing the resources, understanding, and community needed to heal and move forward with hope.

