

Community Updates

Mat-Su

The Mat-Su Crisis Now System continues to grow. In March, the Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) expanded from its existing service area of Wasilla to serve Palmer and the greater core area. This expansion included the formation of partnerships with the Palmer Police Department and the Alaska State Troopers. To support the expanded service area, the MCT added an additional team that is staged in Palmer. Each MCT response includes a behavioral health clinician and a peer support specialist. Between January and March 2024, the MCT responded to 59 calls for 56 unique clients. In April, the Wasilla Police Department hosted a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for officers, with 23 graduates of the program. The Community Care Team members share on their crisis services and this data is reported in a quarterly news brief. The core team members held a brainstorming session at the end of May to assess the current system and the opportunities to work in gap areas to help residents in their journeys out of crisis. The entire Mat-Su Crisis Now Team was nominated and won the Bert Hall Award from the Mat-Su Health Foundation. This award is given to a person or group who has consistently exemplified commitment to improving the health and wellness of people in the Mat-Su Borough by working at the systems level.

Fairbanks

Fairbanks mobile crisis response implementation is going strong with over 2.5 years of MCT service to the area. The last quarter averaged 86% community resolution for calls dispatched to the MCT from Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center. The City of Fairbanks continues to advocate for a stabilization center for individuals the MCT and public safety agencies serve, especially for those with co-occurring substance use.

NAMI hosted a well-attended provider training for medical providers working with patients with mental

health disorders. Fairbanks Native Association hosted a Traditional Peer Support Specialist training with 18 community members participating, and Tanana Chiefs Conference is hosting a behavioral health focused job fair as part of the Foundation Health Partner's pediatric behavioral health workgroups.

Kotzebue

Maniilaq Association continues planning efforts to open a co-located crisis stabilization and short-term treatment program with four recliners and eight beds. There is no current target opening for these services.

Ketchikan

The Ketchikan Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) program launched June 7th. This was made possible through the partnership between the Crisis Now Community Coordinator at the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition, the Division Chief of Community Risk Reduction at the Ketchikan Fire Department, and several other local and state partners. There are plans for the program to expand in terms of staffing and scope; however, the initial launch of the program will focus on: High Utilization, Outreach and Education, Vulnerable Populations, and Follow Up Care. Youth serving providers, Residential Youth Care, and Community Connections are working together to provide crisis stabilization services to the children and youth in therapeutic foster care.



The MIH van

Anchorage

Crisis service providers continue to meet monthly to discuss current community needs, review processes, and understand crisis service utilization in the community. Between January and March 2024, the Anchorage Fire Department (AFD) MCT, Anchorage Safety Patrol, and Anchorage Police Department (APD) Mobile Intervention Team (MIT) responded to 3,689 mobile responses, with an average of 72% of responses resolving in the community. During the same period, Anchorage's primary Public Safety Answering Point, operated by APD, transferred 29 calls to Careline/988 and dispatched 1,302 calls to either the AFD MCT or APD MIT.

Providence continues construction for 12 crisis stabilization recliners and 12 short-term treatment beds. The target opening date for services is January 2025.

Southcentral Foundation launched a \$100 million construction project in May. The new facility will provide 16 crisis stabilization recliners, 16 short-term treatment beds, 30 medically managed detox beds and other outpatient behavioral health services. A groundbreaking ceremony took place on May 28, with a target opening in early 2026. Read more at [ADN.com](https://www.adn.com).

Juneau

The Aurora Behavioral Health Center continues to provide crisis stabilization and short-term treatment services to adolescents. The Crisis Stabilization Unit has seen an average length of stay of 3-4 days, with youth and families reporting this service as a welcome resource. Due to financial challenges, the future of the program is being decided. Capital City Fire and Rescue (CCFR) continues to provide behavioral health training for MIH staff, and recently were awarded a grant to purchase a team vehicle. CCFR is working with the Juneau Police Department (JPD) to develop protocols and guidelines for MIH dispatch. JPD Dispatch continues to provide training and support to increase comfort to callers when transferring them to Careline/988.

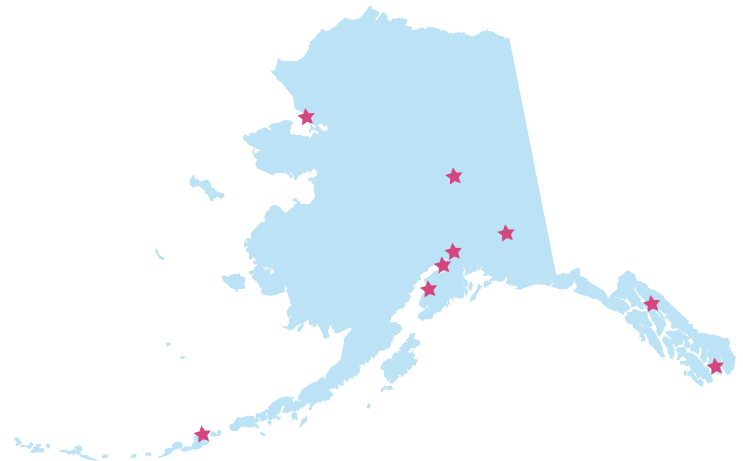
NAMI Juneau offered an in-person Peer Support Specialist training in April and have upcoming QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) and suicide safety planning trainings. They continue to offer support groups, classes and on-on-one support groups and classes – visit namijuneau.org for more information.

Kenai Peninsula

After a Crisis Now workgroup meeting in late March, the community is focusing efforts on how to further develop Crisis Now services in the borough. Current priorities include expanding MIH services and exploring the development of crisis stabilization services.

Unalaska

The Unalaska community continues robust efforts to help train community members on how to respond during a behavioral health crisis. Recent trainings offered to the community included an in-person Mental Health First Aid and SafeTALK course, and a virtual Youth Mental Health First Aid course. Community members are working with partners around the state to explore a Peer Support Specialist training cohort and possible development of a volunteer-led behavioral health mobile response.



To learn more about community implementation efforts or get involved, contact:

Anchorage: Lauren Rocco, Agnew::Beck Consulting, lauren@agnewbeck.com, (907) 277-5534

Fairbanks: Brenda McFarlane, bmcfarlane@fairbanks.us, (907) 459-6794, www.fairbanksalaska.us/crisis

Ketchikan: Lisa DeLaet, lisa@KetchikanWellness.org, (907) 225-9355

Mat-Su: Melissa Toffolon, mt@actionabledataconsulting.com, (907) 414-8180

Juneau: Megan Carlson, Agnew::Beck Consulting, megan@agnewbeck.com, (907) 277-1150

Crisis Now planning in other communities: Eric Boyer, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, eric.boyer@alaska.gov, (907) 269-7912

Training and Resource Updates

Crisis Now Resiliency Training Program

Thanks to a series of listening sessions with participants from a broad range of Crisis Now initiatives across the state, the Alaska Center for Rural Health & Health Workforce has put together the Crisis Now Resiliency Training Program which will be available through [CACHE: Clearinghouse for Alaska's Continuing Health Education](#).

The curriculum can be delivered in multiple formats to meet the needs of each specific team. The curriculum can be presented as an a la carte style of training, in that each “course” is centered around a specific concept. These “courses” can then be utilized as needed to fit the uniqueness of each scenario/client. The current set of courses for the curriculum are:

- Personalities and Work Styles
- Inter-generational Work Team
- Mental Health First Aid (Pre-designed courses)
- Communication Styles
- Healthy Conflict
- Defining Needs and Asks
- Defining Healthy Boundaries and How to Use Them in Healthy Ways
- Alaska Native Culture and Building a Cultural Context for the State
- Assessing and Addressing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

These trainings are both synchronous and asynchronous sessions and can be held within a 1-hour timeframe (excluding Mental Health First Aid).

In addition to these designed courses, the curriculum includes existing national and Alaska-specific course material such as Mental Health First Aid and a new Culturally Sustaining Healthcare course (launched at the end of May 2024). Upon completion, participants will be added to a learning community or resource hub to increase the networking of professionals working within Crisis Now.

Beta-testers are requested throughout the months of June and July to review the curriculum, provide feedback, and suggest additional topics. If you and/or your team are interested in completing these trainings, please reach out directly to: Bekah Meyer, Training Coordinator (rlmeyer2@alaska.edu).

The Alaska Training Cooperative

Since 2022, the Alaska Training Cooperative (AKTC) has concentrated its staff resources to provide training specifically identified as essential for our state to implement the Crisis Now framework. Available trainings include:

- Understanding of the role of the Peer Support Specialist and the training gaps that exist to establish and maintain a certified Peer Support Specialist workforce in Alaska
- Evidence-based training in suicide prevention (CAMS, ASIST, QPR)
- Verbal and physical de-escalation training (CPI, Non-violent Crisis Intervention)
- Trauma Informed Care
- Mental Health First Aid
- Motivational Interviewing
- Call Center Crisis Response
- Mobile Crisis Response
- Crisis Stabilization settings work
- Managing Triggers in Crisis Work
- The Impact of Secondary Trauma and Compassion Fatigue on Behavioral Health Providers, and
- Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for law enforcement.

These training opportunities are currently available and can be found at the [AKTC course catalogue](#) or by contacting Jill Ramsey (jdramsey2@alaska.edu).

The Alaska Division of Public Health supported AKTC to train first responders, healthcare workers, public health specialists and Department of Corrections staff in Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety. Emergency Responder Trainers provide Trauma Informed Care and Trauma Informed De-escalation training for Law Enforcement. Recently, Fire/EMS departments in Ketchikan, Nikiski, and Haines received these trainings. Trainings titled Self-Care and Managing the Impact of Secondary Trauma are also available. This suite of trainings promotes safety, the reduction or elimination of use of force, a reduction in voluntary and involuntary hospitalizations for behavioral health reasons and creates space for partnership across organizations and sectors.

Division of Behavioral Health Updates

A virtual Zero Suicide Workshop on June 24th from 8:30 am–4:00pm will provide participants with information on how to implement the Zero Suicide model. This one-day workshop will be organized by the seven essential elements of suicide care, which are adaptable to the community, context, and needs of the organization. During this session, organizations will hear from health and behavioral health care leaders who have adapted and implemented Zero Suicide for their systems. Continuing education units are offered for this training. Registration is open at go.edc.org/AlaskaWorkshop.

Additional upcoming suicide prevention education and training courses can be found [at this link](#), including:

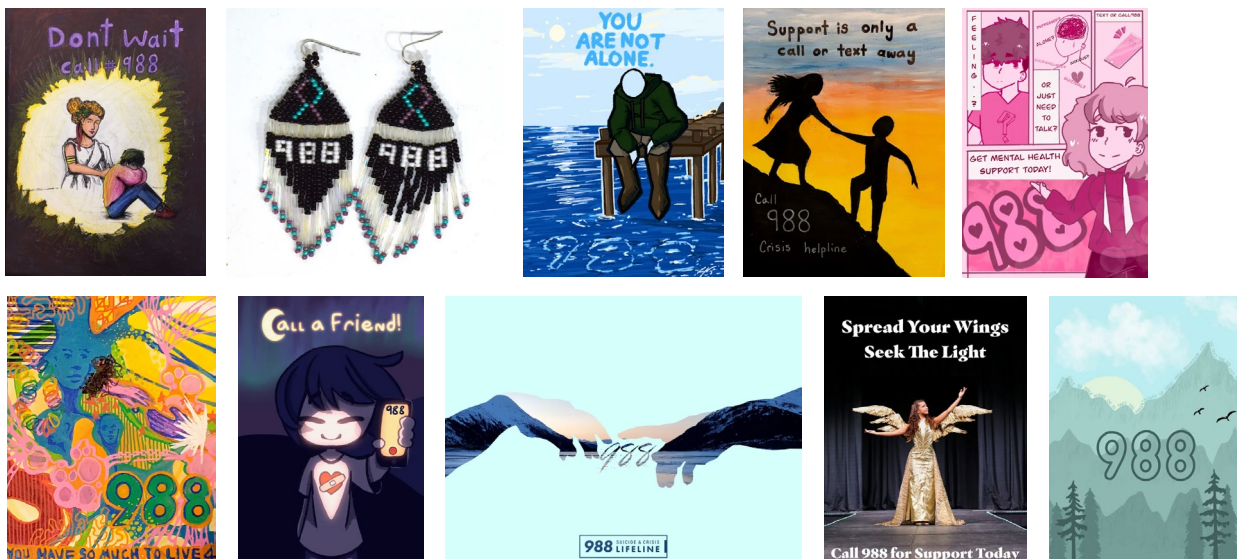
- Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS)
- CAMS4Teens
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Suicide Prevention
- Assisting and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) for direct staff providing inpatient and outpatient care

Please contact Mya Robinson (mya.robinson@alaska.gov) if you want to join any of the following 988 and Suicide Prevention workgroups:

- Alaska 988 Coalition: 100+ stakeholders and biannual meetings to provide updates on 988 work across the State. They also have a Tribal/Rural Workgroup and Messaging Workgroup within this coalition that are actively working on projects, meeting about once a month.
- Alaska Statewide Violence and Injury Prevention Program (ASVIPP) Suicide Prevention Community of Practice: Quarterly meetings on different topics related to suicide prevention in Alaska.
- Alaska Zero Suicide Stakeholders group: More info coming soon!

Suicide Prevention and 988 Resources:

- [Alaska 988 Toolkit](#): Graphics, logos, artwork, etc.
- [Alaska Suicide Prevention Conference](#): Recordings from this year's conference will be available soon.
- [Statewide Suicide Prevention Council](#)
- [Alaska Suicide Postvention Guide: Preparing to Heal](#)
- [Alaska Suicide Prevention listserv](#)
- [988 Create](#): An awareness campaign featuring art by young people (ages 10-25) in Alaska. Below is a sampling of entries from the 2024 “healing and support” campaign.



Crisis Now Convening

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust) hosted a statewide Convening for Crisis Now on May 3, 2024. The all-day event in Anchorage was held at the Southcentral Foundation's Tribal Drum Room. The convening focused on bringing together partners actively working in the State to implement crisis call center, mobile crisis, and crisis stabilization center services. In the morning and early afternoon in-person sessions, participants had the chance to network and learn from peers and content experts about knowing the impact of your 'why' in your work, workforce development, and data, system monitoring and

care coordination. A hybrid afternoon panel was open to participants from around the state and provided updates on statewide implementation efforts and a panel from mobile crisis response providers. Over 130 people participated during the in-person or hybrid panel sessions, with a palpable sense of excitement and partnership for this first large-scale gathering about Crisis Now in over five years.



Click [here](#) for a recording of the discussion.



988 Turns Two in July!

In just two years, the 988 Lifeline has had over **9.6 million contacts** around the country via call, text, or chat. The Alaska Careline continues to see contact growth as well. During FY24, there has been a 35% increase in contacts to Careline and a 29% increase in contacts to 988.

Go to the [Division of Behavioral Health](#) or [SAMHSA](#) webpages for more information about 988, key messages, media resources, and other information.



FAQ

We are interested in hiring a Peer Support Specialist. What do we do if an applicant has barrier crimes?

As national Crisis Now initiatives expand the roles of Peer Support Professionals in crisis settings, frequent questions arise about hiring Peers who may have barrier crimes. Some organizations may have less experience hiring and working with Peers and feel cautious about the perceived risks of hiring someone with a criminal record. A recent [RAND Corporation research brief](#) provides research on frequent misconceptions about hiring individuals, not necessarily Peer Support Professionals, with criminal backgrounds.

Organizations interested in hiring Peers who have barrier crimes may have questions about the process for background check variances and waivers. The State of Alaska Department of Health and Department of Family and Community Services have a [webpage offering resources to understand the background variance process](#). One resource includes a webinar for individuals seeking a background check variance or for providers assisting individuals through the background check variance process. Please see the website for details on upcoming webinars and registration information.