

# Using the SPRC State Suicide Prevention Infrastructure Recommendations

## About the Recommendations

Developed with an advisory panel of experts and stakeholders, SPRC's State Suicide Prevention Infrastructure Recommendations ("Recommendations") are designed to help state policy leaders assess the status of their current statewide suicide prevention efforts and plan for any needed improvements. Ideally, the Recommendations will inform and influence state policy and administrative decisions to improve sustained suicide prevention efforts across the United States.

The Recommendations lay out six essential infrastructure elements for advancing state suicide prevention efforts; each essential element (Authorize, Lead, Partner, Examine, Build, and Guide) includes activities that demonstrate a minimum level of commitment to that element as well as those that demonstrate a more advanced approach.

The Recommendations are not an attempt to create a single model of infrastructure for states to follow. Rather, they should be used by states to develop their best statewide suicide prevention infrastructure based on the state's unique needs as well as research and current practice across wide disciplines in prevention, public health, government, and related sectors.

### Format

The Recommendations live online at [sprc.org/state-infrastructure](https://sprc.org/state-infrastructure), with an interactive landing page that allows you to expand and learn more about each essential element and read real-life state examples. You may also download a **full report** of the Recommendations as well as **supplementary tools** such as an editable summary and checklist.

### Target Audience

Ideally these Recommendations will be used by state policy leaders to guide related policymaking, funding, and administrative decisions. They may also be used by other stakeholders who support and influence suicide prevention at the federal, state, and local levels, including funders, suicide prevention coordinators, coalitions, nonprofits and community organizations, advocates, and researchers.

### How You Can Help

Interested stakeholders can bring these Recommendations to the attention of state lawmakers and other public officials engaged in (or who should be engaged in) statewide suicide prevention efforts and funding decisions. These Recommendations can be used when meeting with state legislators and state agency leads to encourage an objective assessment of which of the six essential elements are currently being carried out in your state and where more advanced implementation is needed.

The remainder of this document is divided into three sections: (1) **Suggested prep-work** to be completed prior to meeting with a state legislator or state agency lead to discuss the Recommendations; (2) **Talking points** to use for that initial meeting; and (3) **Follow-up** information to be provided after your meeting.

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NOTE: Depending on how much time you have, you may want to ask two or more people to help you tackle the prep-work activities and have those individual(s) attend the meeting with you. You may find it helpful to share ideas and to divide the following tasks amongst a small group.

## Prep-Work

### Before meeting with a state legislator or agency lead to discuss the Recommendations:

- Read and print your current state suicide prevention plan ([sprc.org/states](http://sprc.org/states))
- Read and print your state's current AFSP Fact Sheet ([afsp.org/statefacts](http://afsp.org/statefacts))
  - Front of fact sheet contains most recent data available from the CDC on how many people die by suicide in your state and where your state ranks nationally
  - Back of fact sheet lists existing statewide suicide prevention activities and related state laws
- Connect with your local AFSP Chapter and other potential coalition partners to discuss where your groups are best-suited to contribute to the Recommendations and your state's suicide prevention plan
- Contact your current state suicide prevention coordinator(s) or other state-level representatives working in suicide prevention ([sprc.org/states](http://sprc.org/states)) to ask:
  - How much money does my state currently dedicate to suicide prevention?
  - Are there full-time or part-time staff positions dedicated to suicide prevention?
  - How much **federal grant money** is received for suicide prevention from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)? This could include Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal grants, Zero Suicide grants, National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (NSSP) grants, Suicide Prevention Lifeline Crisis Center grants, Community Mental Health Block Grants or other **grants**
  - What current activities are supported by state and federal funding, and are any in jeopardy of stopping once the grant cycles are over?
  - How are current suicide prevention activities evaluated?
  - What gaps currently exist? For example:
    - What populations/environments are currently underserved?
    - What in the state suicide prevention plan is unaddressed?
    - If more funding was received, what would you like to spend it on?
- Find out which of your state's crisis call centers operate within the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network (1-800-273-8255) and what percentage of calls are answered in-state (see state reports at [sprc.org/resources-programs/state-lifeline-reports](http://sprc.org/resources-programs/state-lifeline-reports))
- Identify other groups active in the state on suicide prevention (state coalition or commission, nonprofits, county coalitions or task forces), and investigate the following:
  - Do they work collaboratively with the state suicide prevention coordinator?
  - Are they currently working together on any initiatives?
  - Are they involved in implementation of the state suicide prevention plan?

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## Talking Points

### Take what you've learned and apply it to the SPRC Recommendations:

- Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is **[NAME]**, I currently live in **[CITY]**. **[SHARE ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION IF APPLICABLE]** (For example: I volunteer with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's **[CHAPTER NAME]** Chapter).
- I'm involved in suicide prevention because **[SHARE 30 SECOND "ELEVATOR SPEECH" OF WHY YOU'RE INVOLVED]**. I'm here today to discuss the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's State Suicide Prevention Infrastructure Recommendations.
- The Recommendations were developed based on a review of the research literature and input from national experts and stakeholders, including consultation with state suicide prevention leaders.
- The Recommendations are designed to help state policy leaders like you assess the status of our current statewide suicide prevention efforts and plan for any needed improvements. They suggest six essential infrastructure areas for advancing our state's suicide prevention efforts; each area includes activities that demonstrate what states should be doing at a minimum as well as those activities that demonstrate a more advanced approach.
- I've done some research and would like to discuss with you what I think our state is doing well and where I think our state could be doing more.
  - This is what our state is doing well... **[DESCRIBE WHERE YOUR STATE MEETS THE MINIMUM AND ADVANCED RECOMMENDATIONS]**.
  - This is where our state could be doing more... **[DESCRIBE WHAT GAPS YOU THINK NEED TO BE ADDRESSED]**.
- This is how my organization can help... **[SHARE WHAT RESOURCES YOUR ORGANIZATION/LOCAL AFSP CHAPTER OFFERS TO HELP CARRY OUT ASPECTS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR THE STATE SUICIDE PREVENTION PLAN]**.
- I'd like to leave some resources with you for your review and reference:
  - SPRC State Infrastructure Recommendations [website](#), [summary](#), and [link to full report](#)
  - AFSP State Fact Sheet
  - State suicide prevention plan
  - Your contact information and information about your local AFSP chapter
- Thank you for your time. I look forward to working with you/your office and hope to meet with you again soon to discuss next steps.

## Follow Through

### After your meeting:

- Do your best to find answers to any questions raised that you weren't able to answer and connect your legislator/agency lead to your local AFSP Chapter and the AFSP public policy team as needed ([advocacy@afsp.org](mailto:advocacy@afsp.org))
- Circle back with your state suicide prevention coordinator, local AFSP Chapter and AFSP public policy team to review what was discussed and act on any action items
- Schedule a follow-up meeting within 4-6 weeks to discuss next steps