

Wyoming State Suicide Prevention Plan 2024-2028



Wyoming
Department
of Health



**PUBLIC HEALTH
DIVISION**



**COMMUNITY
PREVENTION UNIT**

Welcome

Purpose

The goal of the Wyoming State Suicide Prevention Plan is to support healthier lives and communities full of hope, purpose, and connection. By utilizing current partnerships, building new relationships, and collaborating with the Wyoming Alliance for Suicide Prevention, the Wyoming Department of Health's Injury and Violence Prevention Program will use this plan to drive suicide prevention efforts through 2028.

Dedication

The Wyoming State Suicide Prevention Plan is dedicated to the lives and families in Wyoming that have been impacted by suicide.

YOU MATTER.

If you or someone you know is in a mental health crisis or at risk of suicide, call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org/chat. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline) is free, confidential, and available 24/7.

No concern is too small. People call to talk about: substance use, economic worries, relationships, mental and physical illness, and more. When connected with the Lifeline, a trained crisis specialist will answer, listen, and provide support and resources, if needed.

Contact Information

Wyoming Department of Health
Public Health Division
Community Prevention Unit
Injury and Violence Prevention Program
122 W 25th Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002
WDH.Prevention@wyo.gov
<https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/prevention/wivpp/suicide-prevention/>

Table of Contents

Welcome	1
Purpose	1
Dedication	1
YOU MATTER.	1
Contact Information	1
Table of Contents	2
Preface	3
A Unified Approach to Tackling Suicide as a Public Health Issue in Wyoming	3
A Letter to Those Interested in Wyoming’s Suicide Prevention Efforts	4
Wyoming’s Commitment to Suicide Prevention	5
Suicide Prevention Infrastructure	5
Work Plan Development Process	5
Wyoming Suicide Data	6
Wyoming State Suicide Prevention Plan	8
2024-2028	8
Contributors	12
Want to get involved?	14
Resources	14

Preface

A Unified Approach to Tackling Suicide as a Public Health Issue in Wyoming

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

Suicide is not just a personal tragedy but a significant public health issue that requires our collective attention and action. The impact of suicide is far-reaching, extending beyond the individual and involving profound loss, trauma, and grief that ripple through families and communities. To effectively address this crisis, adopting a comprehensive approach encompassing upstream prevention, timely intervention, and sensitive postvention is essential. We will do this through;

Prevention: Our preventive measures focus on addressing the root causes of suicide, including enhancing mental health education, increasing access to counseling services, and fostering community programs that promote social connectedness and resilience. We aim to destigmatize mental health issues and encourage early help-seeking behavior by implementing education and awareness programs.

Intervention: Timely intervention is crucial in preventing suicide. This involves training healthcare providers, educators, and community leaders in identifying and responding to signs of distress and suicidal ideation.

Postvention: After a suicide occurs, it is vital to support the bereaved and affected communities. Postvention efforts include offering counseling and support groups for those who have lost a loved one to suicide, as well as community debriefing sessions to address collective grief and trauma. These services not only aid in healing but also prevent the ripple effect of suicide in communities.

The challenge of suicide prevention in Wyoming is multifaceted, and it requires the commitment and collaboration of multi-sectoral partners. By working together, and employing comprehensive strategies, we can make significant strides in reducing the incidence of suicide in our state. The challenge is immense, but so is our collective capacity to make a difference.

Your contribution to this endeavor is invaluable. Together, we can build a supportive environment where individuals feel seen, heard, and helped. Let us commit to this vital work with the seriousness and urgency it deserves. I appreciate your dedication to the health and well-being of the people of Wyoming. I look forward to our collaborative efforts to make a meaningful difference in the lives of many.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Pyle, MBA
Senior Administrator,
Public Health Division

A Letter to Those Interested in Wyoming's Suicide Prevention Efforts

I've been honored to serve as the Chair for the Wyoming Alliance for Suicide Prevention (WASP) alongside the Wyoming Department of Health and leaders in suicide prevention across the state. In this role I have been able to observe the development and implementation of the state's suicide prevention plan. Every county and community in our state has been touched by suicide.

Suicide has been a public health issue for Wyoming for several years. Every time we lose someone to suicide our communities are impacted greatly. These losses impact all of us. The approaches outlined in this plan can be used for suicide prevention efforts on a community and individual level. Unfortunately, the suicide rates in our state and our nation remain high. Data helps to illustrate the vastness of this issue, but we remember that each number is a person with a family, friends, and a community.

Suicide is a complex issue without one single cause or a single solution. The Wyoming State Suicide Prevention Plan was built on evidenced-based research, informed by data, and considered lived experience of those who have a close connection to suicide. A variety of perspectives and experiences helped to create this culturally competent and comprehensive plan that will help meet the unique challenges we face in Wyoming.

Education, advocacy, intervention, and postvention are all parts of suicide prevention. Each person can play a role in suicide prevention. This plan is a guiding document to help everyone understand how and where they can play a role in suicide prevention while coordinating suicide prevention efforts happening across the state to create the most impactful outcomes. Although it is impossible to be fully inclusive of every approach to suicide prevention, this plan attempts to compile approaches to help define who, when, where, and how to prevent suicide in our state.

To those struggling with suicidal ideation or the loss of a loved one to suicide, we aren't giving up on this fight; you're not alone, and you matter. Suicide prevention work is not for the faint of heart. There is an amazing group of people dedicated to battling this public health crisis and our state is starting to see some positive changes. I'm continually inspired and impressed by the efforts of fellow preventionists. Thank you to all those who helped to create the strategic plan and serve the mission to end suicide.

With hope and gratitude,



Kayla Stevens, LCSW
Chairperson, Wyoming Alliance for Suicide Prevention

Wyoming’s Commitment to Suicide Prevention

Suicide Prevention Infrastructure

According to the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics, Wyoming suicide rates have historically doubled the national average. Suicide is the leading cause of preventable death in Wyoming. According to Wyoming Statute § 9-2-102, the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) must establish a statewide suicide prevention program. The Wyoming Department of Health, Public Health Division, Community Prevention Unit, Injury and Violence Prevention Program provides administrative support for the Wyoming Alliance for Suicide Prevention (WASP) and develops and implements the Wyoming State Suicide Prevention Plan (WSSPP). The state-wide coalition, WASP, was formed in 2022 as a partnership of non-profit, public and private sector representatives, community members, loss survivors, and attempt survivors to collectively address the critical issue of suicide in Wyoming. Additionally, Wyoming currently has two 988 call centers and directs state funds to support local-level Community Prevention Specialists in each of the 23 counties to carry out evidence-based, upstream suicide prevention work through the Community Prevention Grant. The Injury and Violence Prevention Program and the Department of Health’s Behavioral Health Division also participate in the Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families.

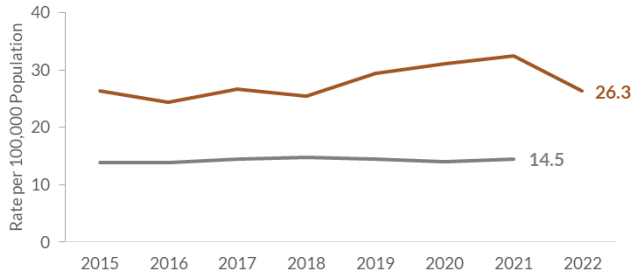
Work Plan Development Process



Wyoming Suicide Data

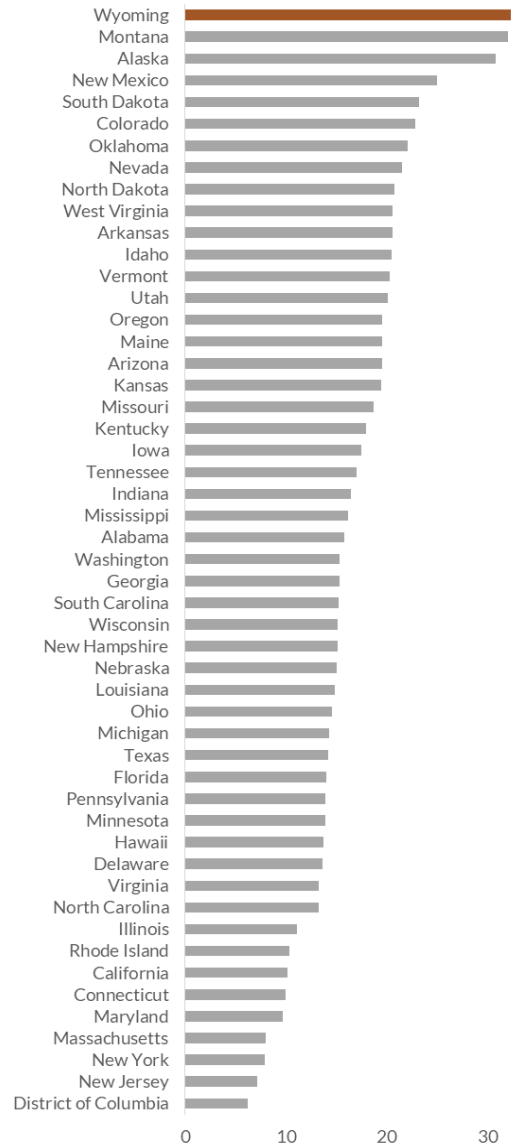
Wyoming consistently ranks among the top three states for the highest suicide rates. The **Wyoming Suicide Rate** is nearly twice the **U.S. Rate**.

Rates calculated per 100,000 population, 2015-2022



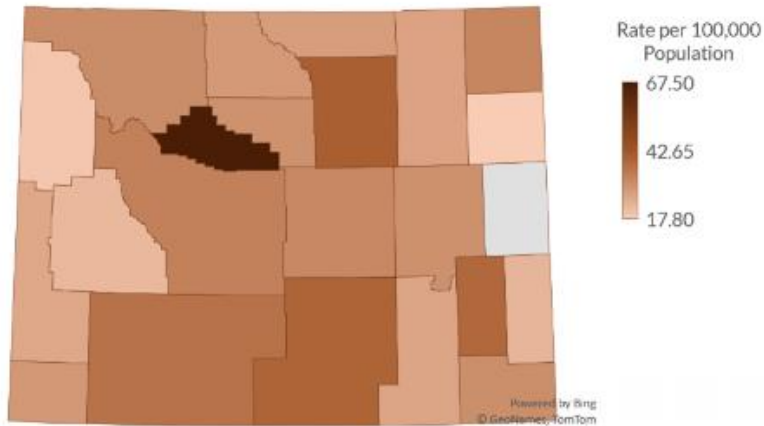
In 2021, **Wyoming** ranked 51st out of 50 states and D.C. for the Age-Adjusted Suicide Rate.

Age-adjusted Rates per 100,000 Population, 2021



Suicide Rates range across Wyoming Counties from the lowest 17.8 deaths per 100,000 population, to the highest of 67.5.

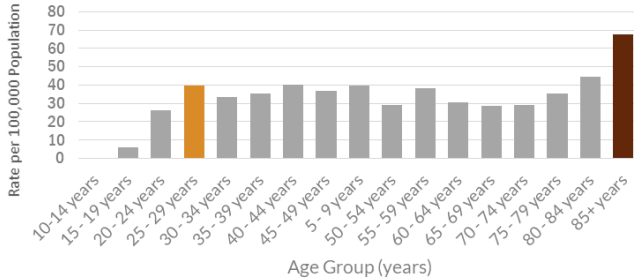
Rates per 100,000 Population, 2018-2022



Wyoming Suicide Prevention Resources. Suicide and Self-Harm Data Dashboard. Wyoming Department of Health, Public Health Division (2023). <https://sites.google.com/wyo.gov/suicide-prevention-resources/home>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2023. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2021, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-expanded.html>

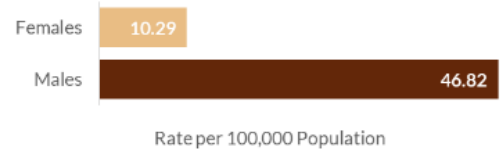
Wyomingites **aged 85+** experience the highest rates of suicide. Individuals **20-29 years** are also a cause for concern.

Rates calculated per 100,000 population, 2018-2022



Males have higher suicide rates than **females**.

Rates calculated per 100,000 population, 2018-2022



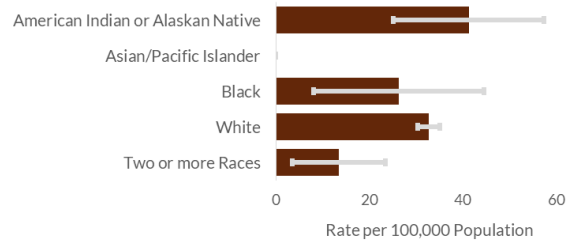
Males have higher suicide rates than **females** across all age groups.

Rates calculated per 100,000 population, 2018-2022



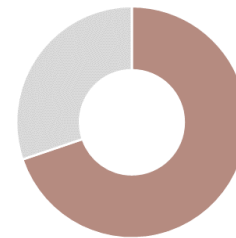
In Wyoming, suicide rates for American Indian/Alaskan Natives are high, but they are not significantly different than those identifying as White or Black.

Rates calculated per 100,000 population, 2018-2022



Over two-thirds (70%) of Suicides in Wyoming involved a **firearm**.

Percent of Suicides by method, 2018-2022



Wyoming Suicide Prevention Resources. Suicide and Self-Harm Data Dashboard. Wyoming Department of Health, Public Health Division (2023). <https://sites.google.com/wyo.gov/suicide-prevention-resources/home>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2023. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2021, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-expanded.html>

Wyoming State Suicide Prevention Plan

2024-2028

GOAL 1: Invest in strong and sustainable Wyoming Alliance for Suicide Prevention (WASP) infrastructure to ensure suicide prevention efforts can maximize impact.



Strategy 1A

Enhance the WASP Structure

- i. Develop and implement WASP leadership structure and responsibilities.
- ii. Ensure sustainable WASP structure to support WASP leadership, implementation of WSSPP, and WASP activities.
- iii. Continue to serve as the conduit for the implementation of the Wyoming State Suicide Prevention Plan (WSSPP).



Strategy 1B

Support Foundational and Annual WASP Activities

- i. Develop annual Action Plan.
- ii. Provide opportunities for networking and connection among WASP members.
- iii. Disseminate data from local, state, and national sources.
- iv. Map suicide prevention efforts by populations of focus.
- v. House and populate an evidence-based practice database.
- vi. Provide ongoing communication on WASP activities, WSSPP, and other prevention efforts.



Strategy 1C

WASP Resource Development Planning for Sustainability

- i. Identify and bolster resources for sustainability.
- ii. Recruit and retain WASP members.

W.  S. P.
Wyoming Alliance for Suicide Prevention

GOAL 2: Increase awareness of suicide and improve suicide prevention communication in Wyoming.



Strategy 2A

Provide messaging best practice guidelines to key partners.

- i. Identify messaging key partners.
- ii. Provide messaging best practice guidelines annually to key partners.
- iii. Formulate template for addressing concerning or harmful messaging practices.



Strategy 2B

Share available relevant Wyoming suicide data with the public.

- i. Maintain web-based dashboard with relevant suicide data.
- ii. Share newly identified trends with appropriate agencies and organizations.



Strategy 2C

Share and disseminate best practice strategies in order to raise awareness of suicide in Wyoming.

- i. Highlight suicide prevention activities at the bi-annual Wyoming Suicide Prevention Symposium.



Strategy 2D

Encourage the implementation, expansion, sharing, and evaluation of prevention messaging for the populations of focus.

- i. Coordinate effective local and statewide suicide prevention campaigns.
- ii. Evaluate effectiveness on intended populations of focus.

GOAL 3: Catalog and report on population interventions and promote program evaluation and sharing of best practices.



Strategy 3A

List and share interventions for populations of focus with WASP membership and local coalitions.

- i. Build database of suicide prevention and intervention strategies.
- ii. Consult with WASP and key stakeholders to maintain database on an annual basis.
- iii. Make available a list of promising practices applicable to populations of focus.



Strategy 3B

Support and encourage the use of evidence-based practice interventions and program evaluation.

- i. Develop a common definition of program evaluation.
- ii. Increase access and usage of comprehensive data to drive strategy selection and evaluation.
- iii. Ensure programming is implemented with fidelity.
- iv. Incorporate health equity into program planning.
- v. Practice equitable and ethical data collection principles.



Strategy 3C

Provide a forum for peer learning and sharing of programming and evaluation.

- i. Host bi-annual Suicide Prevention Symposium.
- ii. Utilize WASP quarterly meetings as a platform for peer learning and sharing.

GOAL 4: Actively influence impactful systems and policy changes to reduce suicide and suicidal behavior and address risk and protective factors in Wyoming.



Strategy 4A

Strengthen and expand partnerships in the education system at the local and state levels.

(i.e. Wyoming Department of Education teacher recertification, postvention training).



Strategy 4B

Identify and pursue opportunities to work with county, tribal, and state government entities in suicide prevention efforts (ex. Coroner reporting system, standard law enforcement reporting, tribal resolutions).

i. Support treatment and prevention services for diverse cultural populations which address the cultural-specific risk and protective factors of the various populations they are serving.



Strategy 4C

Identify and engage healthcare organization partners for policy and systems change efforts.

(i.e. Wyoming Hospital Association, Wyoming Medical Society, Wyoming Association of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Centers).



Strategy 4D

Identify and connect with other invested partners and collaborators in suicide prevention efforts.

i. Engage new partners when new funding opportunities arise.
ii. Identify opportunities for quality improvement.

Contributors

Alicia Johnson	WDH, Behavioral Health Division (Cheyenne)
Annie Dundas	Natrona County Suicide Prevention Task Force (Casper)
Beverly Shore	Teton County Community Prevention Specialist (Jackson)
Bill Hawley	Johnson County Community Prevention Specialist (Buffalo)
Bill Morse	Safe2Tell Wyoming (Cheyenne)
Caleb Lindsay	Wyoming Governor’s Challenge (Casper)
Cathy Hoover	WDH, Injury and Violence Prevention Program (Cheyenne)
Coleman Griffith	White Buffalo Recovery Center (Ethete)
Dian True	University of Wyoming - Wyoming Center on Aging (Cody)
Emily Genoff	Wyoming Behavioral Institute (Casper)
Hailey Bloom	Casper-Natrona County Health Department (Casper)
Janet Nyberg	Fremont County Suicide Task Force (Riverton)
Jen Davis	Governor Mark Gordon’s Office (Cheyenne)
John Petley	Casper College Veterans Club (Casper)
Katrina Ferrell	Central Wyoming Counseling Center 988 Suicide Lifeline (Casper)
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Sabine Schenck	University of Wyoming - Wyoming Center on Aging (Laramie)
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Shawn Michael Moore	American Legion, Governor's Challenge (Casper)
Sheena Hixon	Mercer Family Resource Center (Casper)
Sheryl Foland	No More Empty Saddles and Private Practice Provider (Rawlins)
Stacey Haugen	WDH, Chronic Disease and Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Unit (Cheyenne)
Tamara Myers	White Buffalo Recovery Center (Ethete)
Tauna Groomsmith	Fremont County Community Prevention Specialist (Riverton)
Terresa Humphries-Wadsworth	Associates in Counseling & Therapy Services (Cody)
Wendy Morris	Healthy Park County Community Prevention Specialist (Cody)

Want to get involved?

Reach out to the Wyoming Injury and Violence Prevention Program to get involved in suicide prevention, or to be connected with your County Community Prevention Specialist at WDH.Prevention@wyo.gov.

To join WASP, complete the Google Form found at

<https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/prevention/wivpp/suicide-prevention/wasp>.

Resources

988 Suicide Crisis Lifeline

Dial or text 988

Press 1 for Veteran Crisis Line

Press 2 for Spanish Language Line

Press 3 for LGBTQIA+

<https://988lifeline.org/>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

Community Programs <https://afsp.org/community-programs/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Risk and Protective Factors <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/factors/index.html>

Suicide Data and Statistics <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/suicide-data-statistics.html>

Suicide Prevention Resource for Action <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/resources/prevention.html>

National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance)

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention <https://theactionalliance.org/our-strategy/national-strategy-suicide-prevention> revised plan available late 2024

Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)

Best Practice Registry <https://bpr.sprc.org/>