



**POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING
SUPPORT FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS**

Adopted March 12, 2013.

The following is adopted as a guidance statement regarding how and when the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council will consider requests for statements of support or endorsement for suicide prevention projects. The Council has adopted a policy of support for evidence-based suicide prevention projects and programs, with special emphasis on culturally-appropriate practices and suicide prevention practices that mitigate suicide risk among people served.

I. Requirements for Requests for Support

The Council will consider requests for statements of support or endorsement of suicide prevention projects only when:

1. the request is made in writing to the Council, whether through the chairperson or staff;
2. the request includes a project proposal that clearly explains the objective, strategies, and expected outcomes of the project and a project budget; and
3. the request includes an explanation of how the project furthers one or more of the goals and strategies of *Casting the Net Upstream: Promoting Wellness to Prevent Suicide*, the state five-year suicide prevention plan.

II. Consideration of Requests for Support

The Council shall consider requests for support at regularly scheduled quarterly public meetings, or at the discretion of the chairperson, at a publicly noticed *ad hoc* meeting. In deciding whether the Council should provide a statement of support for a project, Council members will consider whether or not the project incorporates evidence-based safe messaging protocols and instant and ongoing services and supports, if needed, for individuals affected by the project.

III. Safe-Messaging Protocols

Evidence-based recommendations for creating safe and effective suicide prevention messages, whether in public and community education materials or through artistic endeavors, include parameters for content, delivery, and objectives. To be considered for support by the Council, suicide prevention projects should:

1. emphasize the importance of help-seeking and include Alaska Careline and other crisis line contact information (telephone number, text number, website, etc.);
2. emphasize that suicide is preventable and reinforce the fact that there are actions Alaskans can take if they feel suicidal or know someone at risk of suicide;
3. expressly include the warning signs of suicide, as well protective factors against suicide; and
4. emphasize that mental illness and substance abuse are factors in suicide and that treatment can help prevent suicide.

To be considered for support by the Council, suicide prevention projects should not:

1. glorify or romanticize suicide;
2. include personal details about a specific suicide attempt or death, specifically to include information about the means or scene of death;
3. overly memorialize deaths by suicide;
4. normalize suicide as a common or expected event;
5. attribute suicide to an unknown or inexplicable cause; or
6. oversimplify the causes and risk factors for suicide.

Based on [Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) (2006).

IV. Services and Supports

Some suicide prevention projects will result in a direct effect upon the people who see, watch, or participate in the project. Depending on the project, there may be a reasonable concern that the project could create a situation or environment resulting in distress or crisis for a participant. Suicide prevention efforts must recognize the risk of suicide contagion, resurrecting feelings of grief or loss, triggering memories of loss or trauma, and causing possible distress among participants.

In considering requests for support for suicide prevention projects that are directly observed or participated in by Alaskans, the Council shall consider whether mental health and/or other professional counseling services are made available during the event/project and for a reasonable time afterward. Examples of projects that could reasonably be expected to include immediate and ongoing support services are: prevention and wellness camps, documentaries, film, musical and theatrical productions, art installations, cultural events specifically focused on suicide, etc.

Support services for participants – whether direct participants or secondary observers – include access to behavioral health professionals, school social workers or counselors, traditional healers, grief and/or bereavement counselors, and/or community members trained in ASIST, safeTALK, Gatekeeper, or other evidence-based suicide prevention models. These services and supports could be provided as part of the project or in partnership with local community organizations (community mental health centers, suicide prevention coalitions, tribal organizations, hospice providers, etc.).