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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force (Task Force) was established in 2018 to study the increasing number and rate of youth suicides in Kansas. The Office of the Attorney General (OAG), in cooperation with Dr. Walt Menninger, chairman of the Tower Mental Health Foundation, requested the Task Force to convene and provide recommendations on ways Kansas can work to combat the issue of youth suicide. The Task Force held seven meetings in six Kansas cities and solicited input from Kansas and national leaders on youth suicide prevention. The Task Force issued a [report](#) detailing their work and recommendations in December 2018. The Task Force recommended the creation of a Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention (YSP) Coordinator position within the OAG which would be tasked with carrying out other recommendations made by the Task Force.

Based on recommendations from the Task Force, the Legislature created the role of the YSP Coordinator and detailed specific duties to focus on within the OAG with the passage of 2019 HB 2290. These duties, codified as [KSA 75-772](#), includes developing and implementing a website, online application, and mobile phone application to communicate with youth for the purpose of preventing youth suicide. The program is housed within the OAG's Victim Services Division, and the YSP Coordinator serves in a part-time capacity with assistance from other employees in the Victim Services Division.

The YSP Coordinator has focused on the following priorities since 2019:

1. Researching and leading the development of a mobile phone application designed to facilitate communication with youth for the purpose of preventing youth suicide and promoting youth safety and well-being;
2. Developing and promoting multidisciplinary and inter-agency strategies to help communities, schools, mental health professionals, medical professionals, law enforcement, and others to work together and coordinate efforts to prevent and address youth suicide; and
3. Organizing events that bring together youth, educators, and community members from across the state to share information and receive training to prevent and address youth suicide in their communities.

In FY 2020, the YSP Coordinator completed research on best practices and model programs that exist in other states, to inform the drafting of a request for proposal (RFP) for the youth suicide prevention mobile application. After review of this research, the OAG began the RFP process to implement the mobile application. The YSP Coordinator also serves as part of a suicide prevention working group, which recently released the [state suicide prevention plan for](#)

[2021-2025](#). This working group includes representatives from the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Governor's Behavioral Health Services Planning Council, Kansas Suicide Prevention Headquarters, and representatives from regional suicide prevention coalitions. The YSP Coordinator also serves on the 988 implementation planning team with KDADS, the Kansas Department for Children and Families, the Kansas Suicide Prevention Resource Center and the Kansas Suicide Prevention Headquarters (formerly known as Headquarters Counseling in Lawrence). The YSP Coordinator collaborates with these groups to coordinate efforts to prevent and address youth suicide throughout the state.

Youth suicide prevention within the OAG has been funded entirely from special revenue funds, specifically the Victims Assistance Fund. Expenditures for the program through FY 2021 total \$72,635 which have been used to fund the part-time YSP Coordinator position. During the 2021 Session, the Legislature added \$100,000 in FY 2021, and \$50,000 for FY 2022, all from special revenue funds, for the creation of a youth suicide prevention mobile phone application within the Victim Services Division in FY 2021 and computer software maintenance costs for FY 2022. A RFP was issued in FY 2021 and currently remains open to develop the mobile phone application and an associated website. Expenditures have not yet been made for this purpose and will not be made until a contract is awarded.