Crisis Services

2018 Annual Report

Features:

50 Years of Help & Hope The State of Suicide in Erie County Agency in Action



Celebrating 2018

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Pictured above: (Left) members of Crisis Services' Advocate Department | (Middle) Cheektowaga Police Department's Lt. Brian Gould presenting on officer safety during CIT Training | (Right) Walk A Mile 2018 Participants @ UB South Campus

Front Cover: Picture from Crisis Services' official ribbon cutting & open house, May 17, 2018.

"Surviving & Thriving"

A message from Crisis Services' CEO, Jessica Pirro

As I reflect on 2018, two words come to mind: surviving and thriving.

Each day, we see our teams work with members of our community to help them survive thoughts of suicide, recover from the impact of trauma after a rape or domestic violence incident, support their struggles with mental health, or assist in the effort it sometimes takes just to keep up with the pace of a society that seems to move faster each day.

I also see myself as one of those who survived. I entered 2018 as a survivor of breast cancer. This experience brought home the many emotions and thoughts one has to manage when dealing with a life-altering situation. It helped me better understand the challenges our clients face every day and to celebrate our team's willingness to be with people during those challenging moments to give help and hope.

Surviving is also knowing that with each moment, things can get better. This was the inspiration for our logo refresh and new tag line.....this moment forward.

These three words give you something to grab on to when you think you can't make it through the next hour or the next day.

With one call, from this moment forward we will help guide, support, direct, intervene- and with that, help, safety, and hope ensues.

As you read of the amazing work highlighted in this report, you will see the story of an organization that is thriving. It is my purpose to continue to make our mission thrive and ensure that no one is ever alone in their time of need.

As community leaders in crisis response, we want to help our community thrive. Our crisis first responders do this in numerous ways:

We break down stigmas around mental health, domestic violence and rape.

We encourage help for everyone. No one is immune to the need for support.

We strive to make sure we answer the call and show up for everyone connecting with our services.

We collaborate to help our system thrive and build partnerships in this work with other disciplines across the community.

We educate to help build needed skills for healthy relationships.

We provide a voice to those silenced by trauma.

We stand together so that from this moment forward, you are never alone.

Thank you to our amazing staff, volunteers and board members that make up our top notch team.

Thank you to our donors and funders who invest in our critical mission.

We strive to survive challenges and continue to thrive by building on a vision of safety, help and hope.



For Crisis Services 2018 was the agency's 50th anniversary. It was a year of looking back at its rich history that brought the organization to where it is today.

Crisis Services officially began taking calls November 12, 1968. In the first few months of business the founding fathers and mothers took 1,000 calls. Today, we average over 7,000 calls to the 716-834-3131 line each month. The agency started with a budget of around \$50,000. We now run on a \$5.8 million dollar budget for our 24 hours operations.

A Breath of Fresh Air: Brand Refresh

On November 12, 1968 Crisis Services was born. Fifty years later the organization celebrated this milestone by officially launching a refreshed logo, mission, vision and tagline on November 1, 2018.

"Revitalizing the Crisis Services brand is an exciting accomplishment resulting from a year of hard work by our Leadership Team, Staff, Volunteers and Board of Directors. As we embarked on a strategic planning process, the creative focus on how to define our voice and vision for Crisis Services of today unfolded. As the only 24-hour crisis center, our role and impact on the community is significant. Our Crisis First Responders are the unsung heroes in this community. They strive to save lives 24-hours a day providing hope while combating the impact of trauma and crisis." said Jessica Pirro, Chief Executive Officer of Crisis Services.

White Bicycle, a local design group, helped fullfill our new vision with an updated logo and developed language that better defines our work in the community.









MISSION STATEMENT

We are a 24-hour comprehensive crisis center and community resource whose first responders provide support to anyone in need. We save lives by restoring safety, promoting emotional strength and reducing the impact of trauma through intervention, education, prevention, and community collaboration.

VISION STATEMENT

A community where people in crisis find safety, help, and hope.

Agency Growth

Three Year Strategic Plan Finalized in 2018, Ready to Launch for 2019-2021

The few years leading up to the launch of the 2019-2021 strategic plan featured many agency milestones:

- The agency moved to a larger facility in the Fall of 2017
- Crisis Services celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018
- We also launched a brand refresh in the Fall of 2018

Throughout this time Crisis Services worked to develop language that better defines our role in the community. These efforts carried over into the work of our strategic planning.

Upon review of our data and consideration of where we want to be in three to five years, where we are today, and where our priorities lie, several strategic themes emerged. These themes generally describe our areas of focus over time and will help us organize the many goals which must be achieved to fulfill our mission.

With the themes and revitalized identity in place building the framework around these goals crystallized. For every theme there is a target (or multiple targets), with conditions, steps for implementation, who is the responsible team member, along with team support, and end-date goals.

1. STAFF STABILITY AND CAPACITY

While Crisis Services is viewed as a good place to begin a career, it is not widely viewed as the preeminent place to build a long-term career. Enhancing staff hiring and retention practices has been identified as a first step toward improving the organization's image among current and potential staff.

2. FINANCIAL STABILITY

In 2018, approximately 40% of Crisis Services' revenues were derived from contracts with Erie County, with an additional 20% coming from New York State. Obviously, that ratio of public to private funding represents a risk today. In addition, the lack of operating reserves and endowment funds represents a risk to the future. Structured planning, introduction of legacy giving, and delineation of roles for both the Agency and Foundation Boards of Directors will provide the impetus to achieve financial stability.

3. STRONG BOARD GOVERNANCE

The success of top-performing organizations begins at the top, and for a nonprofit organization, that means the Board of Directors. Entrusted by the community to fulfill Crisis Services' mission, the Board of Directors sets the vision and the strategy for the staff and volunteers. Thus, it is obvious that strengthening board governance will strengthen the organization.

4. ACCURATE COMMUNITY AWARENESS

A sample poll of Erie County residents in 2017 showed that nearly 60% of respondents said that they were not familiar with Crisis Services. Since people with mental health conditions and those experiencing crisis and trauma are often plagued by stigma and discrimination, accurate awareness is crucial across our community. Our intention is twofold: improve the community's understanding of our services through a dedicated marketing plan and expand our education efforts about our services so people in crisis find safety, help and hope.

5. WIDE-RANGING OUTREACH & EDUCATION

People needing our services are as diverse as the community as a whole. They come from every neighborhood, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, religion, socio-economic stratum, nationality, gender identity, and age. People needing our services gather in all kinds of places, such as houses of worship, schools and colleges, work places, neighborhood centers, and clubs. Creating a structured outreach and education program with appropriate information and training for as many of our neighbors as possible is our short-term target.

6. BEST-IN-CLASS PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Through interviews and surveying our community partners and funders, we know that our services and programs are well-regarded and are getting the job done. Of course, as next steps, we must always improve our current services and continually evaluate how technology might enhance them. Additionally, we must continue to develop meaningful ways to measure our impact by learning from the data, our client's stories, and use this feedback to enhance our operations and continue to save lives in our community.

2018 Achievements

Men Who Cook 2018: Savor. Support. Save Lives.

The 12th Annual Men Who Cook was the most successful to date! On October 3, 2018, over 430 attendees dined and donated to help Crisis Services' gross over \$65,000 to support our mission. Our Amateur Chef of the Year trophy was awarded to Mark Gardner for his amazing Bananas Foster! A few other highlights included second place to Dave Mann of Buffalo Police Department for his Corn Chowder, and third place went to Patrick Finan of Block Club for his Tacos in a Bag. Thanks again to WIVB Channel 4 for providing outstanding Media Sponsorship coverage and our Executive Chef Sponsor, Wegmans.

Walk A Mile In Her Shoes 2018

In April 2018 Walk A Mile In Her Shoes returned to it's inaugural location at UB's South Campus. After the agency move in 2017 it became clear Walk A Mile was in need of a new home. Thankfully our partners at UB welcomed the walk back. Walk A Mile 2018 raised \$9,101 for Crisis Services' Advocate Department!

Crisis Services Day in Buffalo, May 17th

After months of settling in, Crisis Services' welcomed the public to come look around on May 17, 2018 with an official ribbon cutting and open house ceremony. Mayor Byron Brown's office sent over a proclamation naming it "Crisis Services Day" in Buffalo. In addition, Senator Timothy Kennedy, Erie County Commissioner of Mental Health Michael Ranney, Assemblyman Robin Schimminger, Comptroller Mark Schroeder and representatives from Mayor Brown, Assemblywoman Monica Wallace, Congressman Brian Higgins and Senator Chris Jacobs stopped out to see Crisis Services' new home.

Re-Accreditation & High Praise from the American Association of Suicidology

Crisis Services is the only agency accredited by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) in the WNY area. At the end of July 2018, the agency had its site visit to be reviewed for re-accreditation by AAS. The agency passed with flying colors! This can be attributed to the incredible work of the Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) for their preparation and Crisis Services' COO, Robyn Wiktorski-Reynolds, for her leadership organizing the visit and all the other staff that assisted by talking with our site evaluator. To the right is the quote from the evaluator:

"Crisis Services of Buffalo, New York is a first-rate crisis and suicide prevention agency. Because of the depth of highquality crisis services, the excellence of staff interviewed, and the solid policies and procedures in evidence, this evaluator strongly recommends re-accreditation of Crisis Services suicide and crisis hotline. In addition, Emergency Mental Health Outreach Services should be Accredited as a solid component of crisis services delivery for this outstanding crisis intervention agency."



Pictured above: (Left) Crisis Services' CEO, Jessica Pirro, & Senator Tim Kennedy at the Agency's Open House, May 2018 | (Middle) Mark Gardner, 2018's Amateur Chef Winner | (Right) Walk A Mile 2018 Participants @ UB South Campus

THE FACTS WHY THIS MATTERS WHAT CRISIS SERVICES IS DOING

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TAKE ACTION

data in this section collected by crisis service

THE FACTS

SUICIDE CONTINUES TO BE ON THE RISE IN THE UNITED STATES AND ERIE COUNTY HAS NOT BEEN IMMUNE TO THIS INCREASE. HOWEVER, OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS CRISIS SERVICES AND THE SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION OF ERIE COUNTY HAVE OBSERVED A SHIFT IN THE LOCAL POPULATION IMPACTED BY SUICIDE.

FURTHER, WE BELIEVE THAT POSITIVE IMPACTS CAN BE MADE WHEN SAFE AND APPROPRIATE TOOLS ARE IMPLEMENTED TO DECREASE SUICIDE.

58,405 MINUTES

The amount of time our Crisis Counselors spent talking with clients about suicide between Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2018. This equals 973 hours which translates to 41 days. Forty-one days, non-stop assisting people in Erie County in a state of crisis solely about suicide.

1 HOUR 40 MINUTES

The longest call in 2018 in speaking with someone about suicide.

1,968 MOBILE OUTREACH CALLS

Mobile Outreach responded to 1,968 calls in 2018. Of those, 1,345 were able to remain safe in the community. The other 623 were transported to get the help they needed.

ALMOST 10,000 CALLS

The amount of after-hours calls Crisis Services received for 28 mental health clinics in Erie County. This is important to note because these are people in the community who seek regular care and were in some form of crisis when their normal provider was not available. Crisis Services is always available.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Crisis Services serves as the administrative home for the Suicide Prevention Coalition for Erie County. With the help of the Erie County Department of Mental Health, we have a part time Coordinator that supports the Coalition's work. In addition to Crisis Services being a Coalition member, Jessica C. Pirro serves as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Coalition. This partnership allows us to be the clearinghouse on all matters related to suicide prevention, intervention and post-vention. We strive to keep our goals in line with the State and National strategies to reduce suicide in our community.

The Suicide Prevention Coalition's goal is training and awareness and they are going above and beyond to meet that goal. In 2018, they trained close to 3,000 school faculty in suicide prevention efforts, including bus drivers to bring awareness to all levels of personnel. The coalition also trained various disciplines including primary care physicians, health care workers, correctional facility staff, and various community based groups. The Coalition helped bring awareness to various communities through tabling events, awareness activities and presentations including convening our local and state legislative officials, in partnership with the VA of WNY and AFSP of WNY, to assist creating critical polices needed to address this issue. This amazing group of stakeholders, representing over 30 different agencies and organizations strives each day to prevent suicide in our community.

CRISIS **SERVICES** DUING

RESOLVING ISSUES

Our Hotline Counselors and Crisis First Responders are professionals when responding to crisis. It's their job. The agency has strict employment requirements when it comes to hiring. Ensuring someone answers the phone at any given moment is one thing. Ensuring that someone has the proper education and training to help a client to their next moment is another. From putting someone in touch with a member of our Advocate Department, or transferring a caller to our Mobile Outreach Response Team, we proactively connect individuals in crisis and their families with the help they need.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

In addition to supporting callers in their time of need, increasing agency awareness, and providing trainings, we need to continue our education & prevention efforts to work on breaking the stigma and equipping those who can make a difference with the skills and tools they need to have an impact. One program actively tackling this goal includes the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) Project. The CIT Project is specialized training for law enforcement centered on responding to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The training focuses on identification of mental illness and referral to appropriate resources in the community, particularly immediate linkage to programs within Crisis Services. The goal of the CIT Project is to create CIT Teams in **ALL** police agencies in Erie County.

SUPPORT

Compelled to become involved in the public health crisis of suicide? Crisis Services needs your support to continue saving our community. An unanswered phone call could be the difference between saving a life and losing a life. By supporting Crisis Services, you are making a difference. You are helping keep our phone lines answered. You are helping train our teachers and police officers, in not only suicide prevention but mental health awareness, and overall creating a safer and more compassionate community. By supporting Crisis Services, you are helping break the stigma in Erie County. By supporting Crisis Services you are helping Crisis Services save lives. Ways you can help: TAKE ACTION

DONATE // ADVOCATE // FUNDRAISE // VOLUNTEER // WORK WITH US LEARN MORE AT: WWW.CRISISSERVICES.ORG

Hard Work, What's New In Our Departments & Programs

Advocate Department's 2018 Highlights:

15 Years of the SAFE Program!

The Advocate Department's Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner's (SAFE) Program celebrated 15 years of service! Our community based SAFE Program provides on-call coverage for nine Catholic and Kaleida health system hospitals in Erie and Niagara counties.

Awarded Funding to Make PREA Hotline Possible!

In April, the Department was awarded an Office of Victims Services grant through the NYS Coalition Against Sexual Assault to build a specialized Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) case management program for incarcerated survivors. In October, the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence awarded the Advocate Department the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Statewide Rape Crisis Hotline. This project will provide access to incarcerated survivors in 52 Department of Corrections & Community Supervision facilities in NYS to receive emotional support and linkage to specialized PREA Centers throughout the state.

2018 in a Nutshell

Hotline Counselors answered a total of 9,860 calls on the New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline. The average call length was 7 minutes. The highest call volume occurs between 11am-12 noon. Mondays are the busiest day of the week. August was the busiest month. Advocate Department Hospital Volunteers provided 6,696 service hours.

R6 Extended!

The Department was notified of a continuation of the Regional Center for Sexual Violence Grant from the NYS Department of Health. Crisis Services is the lead agency on this tri-county collaborative, which focuses on the primary prevention of sexual violence.

Where Our Advocate Staff are Co-Located

Advocate Department staff were co-located at Buffalo Police Headquarters, Town of Tonawanda Police, Erie County Sherriff's Office, Daemen College, Hilbert College, University at Buffalo, Canisius College, and D'Youville College.

Emergency Mental Health Response Services' 2018 Highlights:

SAMHSA Grant, Great News for CIT!

In late 2018, the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) Program, via the Erie County Department of Mental Health, received a substantial five-year federal grant from the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This grant allowed for significant growth and changes within the CIT Program, which provides mental health training to law enforcement, as well as crisis case management services to individuals with mental health issues who are interfacing with police. The grant has allowed the CIT Program to provide CIT training to police at a much higher volume, with a goal to train over 500 additional officers over five years.

Proud Work

Emergency Mental Health Response Services' 2018 Highlights, con't.:

SAMHSA Grant, continued

Furthermore, this grant added additional programming into the CIT Crisis Case Management Program, which will allow the case managers to provide longer-term case management services to identified individuals with higher needs, through an evidence-based model called MISSION-VET.

ECMC Renews Mobile Outreach Response Program's Contract

Also in 2018, the Mobile Outreach Program's contract with Erie County Medical Center was renewed. Mobile Outreach continues to provide emergency mental health evaluations and crisis intervention services to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Mobile Outreach opened 4,350 cases in 2018, and provided nearly 2000 assessments in the community. In partnership with the CIT Program, approximately 75 trained law enforcement officers shadowed the Mobile Outreach program for eight hours as part of their CIT training to enhance their education and build bridges between law enforcement and Crisis Services.

Mobile Transitional Program Receives Large Donation for Efforts

In recognition of their work with individuals transitioning from an inpatient psychiatric stay back to the community, the Mobile Transitional Program received a sizable donation from a community member, which was targeted for client needs. This donation has allowed the program to provide additional personal and financial supports to clients of the program. In 2018, the Mobile Transitional Support Program was successful at linking over 75% of their clients with ongoing mental health services.

Crisis Counseling Program (CCP)'s 2018 Highlights:

A Deeper Look at the AAS Reaccreditation



As highlighted on page 5 the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) granted Crisis Services its reaccreditation in 2018. One of the areas examined was the screening process when calls come into Crisis Services' 24-Hour crisis prevention hotline. AAS looks for crisis centers to have a general service delivery which focuses on a caller's entry into the agency, how we prioritize the services for a caller and how we triage into the different inter-agency services.

CCP's training program for its's Hotline Counselors was another area of focus to ensure they are given the tools and protocols to be fully prepared to answer calls. Since CCP has a training and monitoring protocol that new staff continues for months we are able to provide that one-on-one development time that is needed for the Hotline Counselor to have with each caller. We are proud to say the AAS Site Monitor recognized CCP for our continued efforts at making our quality service a priority. A few other areas that we were graded really well on included our outreach services, record/data keeping system, traumatic death services, suicide survivor services, and how we worked together with our local emergency services.

We were commended for our seamless comprehensive crisis model and told: "All of Crisis Services programs appear to be operating in a professional & effective client-centered way, and the entire staff appear to be high qualified and dedicated to their work."

Community Support =

2018 COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

Special thanks to our 2018 annual sponsors, UB|MD Emergency Medicine and VITEC Solutions. Their investment in our work supports hope year-long for those in need in Erie County. Our corporate sponsors totaled \$10,000 in gifts for the agency in 2018.

\$10,000



UB MD

EMERGENCY

THIRD PARTY EVENTS

Yoga, golfing, tattoos, drag shows, throwing teddy bears at hockey players - our community has creative ways to raise money for the mission of Crisis Services! Tremendous thanks to our third party events from 2018, which had a combined total of over \$56,000!



\$56,014

31 Club Fundraiser // Alex & Ani Event // Blue Table Chocolate: Help & Hope Truffle Series // Buffalo ComedySportz: A Year of Giving // Community Beer Works: 'Be Like Frank' Happy Hours // CowPok's Annual Semicolon Tattoo Event // Drag Out the Darkness // Drive for Devin Golf Tournament // Great Inflatable Race // Kory Memorial Golf Tournament // Ingram Micro Golf Tournament // Love in Motion Yoga Studio // Moe Open Golf Tournament // Photos from Near and Far - Larry Ross Photography Exhibit // SEAR - 'A Cook's Tour' After Party in Memory of Anthony Bourdain // South Buffalo Remembrance Walk for Hope // Vagina Monologues // Williamsville North Hockey Club Teddy Bear Toss // Williamsville North Post-Prom Party // Williamsville North

Softball's Out of the Darkness Play Day

Community Strength

Over the years the following donors have generously supported the mission of Crisis Services. The impact of their giving has not only strengthened our community and brought help and hope to those in need but it humbles our organization to know we have luminaries such as these invested in Crisis Services. The following amounts are lifetime donation levels since the first day of giving by these supporters..





\$10,000 - \$20,000

Dr. Jack & Lynne Stevens // Anne Showers

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Anne Young Taylor // Daniel & Gunilla Kester // Prabha Narayanan & Mahesh Sankaran // Tom & Marybeth Giambra // James Kunkemoeller // Steven Pierpaoli // Cindy Hammer // Marijke Kemble

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Dr. Theresa Vallone // Dr. Edmund Egan // Robert Fiore // Richard Mugel // Robert & Valerie Funk Rod Layton // James Kelly // Evelyn & Robert Hamilton // Brian Johnson // Bonne Hall Melissa Raab // Dr. Robert McCormack Valerie Ashley // Michael Huntress

\$2,000 - \$2,499

Tim Webster // Dr. James Lenker // Ryan Lucinski // Carolyn Huffman // Peter Herman // Jane Mogavero // Donna Perna // Jane Jayes // David Benes // Scott Atwater // Cristine Adams // Molly Sibley // Kevin Tamol // Dr. Joan McCool // Laurie Kalman

From Our Boards

From the Agency Board of Directors:

It was my privilege and honor in June 2018 to begin a term as President of the Board of Directors for Crisis Services of Buffalo. The agency is well poised for success, thanks to the leadership of our CEO, Jessica Pirro and our immediate past President Cindy Hammer. Under their direction, Crisis Services initiated our strategic plan which provides an essential framework to help our organization to achieve a successful future in meeting the needs of the people and the community we serve. This year we launched our brand refresh which we believe better reflects the work we do.

I began my association with Crisis Services in 2012 as a volunteer in the Advocate Department. I was elected to the board in 2015 and have watched, and hopefully helped with, the amazing growth we have experienced in the past few years. Our major fundraising event, Men Who Cook, continues to grow and provide necessary resources for the agency.

It is an exciting time to be in a leadership role with Crisis Services. Ideas imagined a few years ago have gained momentum, and there has been growth in every area of the organization: our 24hour hotline - Crisis Counseling Program, Advocate Department, Trauma Response Services and our Community Education Programs. Our leadership and continued success are made possible by you, our engaged partners, donors, volunteers and friends of the agency. Your investment in Crisis Services of Buffalo is stewarded by our 19-member Board of Directors as well as our Foundation Board Members. The Boards remain committed to providing effective oversight, ensuring necessary resources are available and guiding Crisis Services of Buffalo into the future.

- Donna Perna, Agency Board President



Picture from 2018's Men Who Cook, a snapshot at some of our Board members. Top Left to Right: Cindy Hammer, Malcolm Ertha, Donna Perna, Jen Cawley; Lower Left to Right: Carolyn Huffman, Jessica Pirro, Samantha Bordonaro | Photo Credit: CK Photographic Systems

From the Foundation Board of Directors:

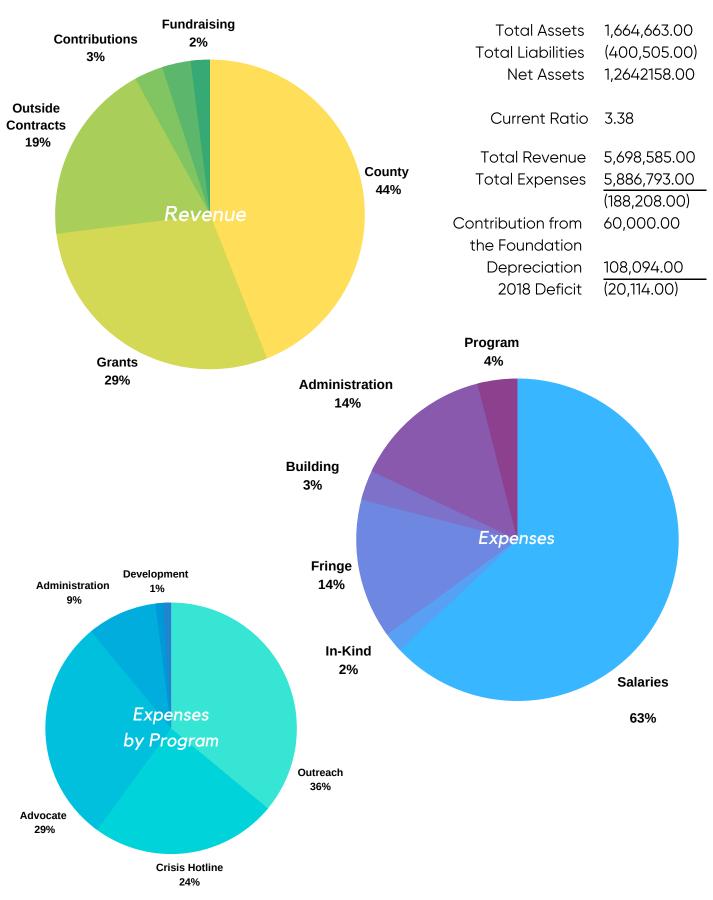
I had the honor of joining the Crisis Service Foundation Board of Directors as Board President in 2018. Our Foundation goals will be accomplished by working closely with the Agency CEO, staff and Agency Boards to ensure we continue to have a community where people in crisis find safety, help and hope, 24/7.

I invite you to join me in our mission to provide our team with the support we need to enhance our services as the most comprehensive Crisis Center in Upstate New York. We are here to help!

To all of our staff, advocates, partners, grantees, donors and friends, thank you for your perseverance.

- Cynthia A. Hammer, Foundation Board President

Financials



Executive Leadership

Chief Executive OfficerJessica C. Pirro, LMSWChief Financial OfficerJesse Lewandowski, CPAClinical Operations OfficerRobyn Wiktorski-Reynolds, LMSWDirector, Emergency Mental Health Response ServicesTracie Bussi, LMSWDirector, 24 Hour Crisis Counseling DepartmentRachel Morrison, LMHC-PDirector, Advocate DepartmentCaitlin Powalski, MPH

Agency Board of Directors

President	Donna Perna, Transi <mark>t Lanes</mark>
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