



2021 Annual Report



OUR MISSION PROMISE:

Around-the-clock
crisis support when
you need it most.

Crisis counselors who
are compassionate and
ready to respond.

Support that will meet
you where you are –
via a phone call,
a text message,
a hospital visit or
mobile outreach visit.

Crisis care that offers
safety, help and hope
beyond life's darkest
moments.



JESSICA C. PIRRO
Chief Executive Officer

2021 has been a full year of possibilities & learning following an extraordinary 2020.

- We learned how **resilient and capable** we are.
- We learned more about how **our community cares** for each other.
- We learned the **value and appreciation** our community has for our lifesaving mission.
- We learned how **we can do even better**.

Crisis Services' first responders remain active through COVID-19, both on-site at our crisis center and off-site through our mobile outreach and intervention services responding to the community.

In March, we marked COVID's anniversary and celebrated the survival and resilience of our staff and volunteers who will be known in Crisis Services' history as serving during this pandemic. I have never been more proud.

Seamlessly and without interruption, our first responders continue to provide immediate intervention, help and hope. This was big, but it also wasn't our only battle.

While mobilizing our response to COVID-19, Crisis Services mobilized our response to creating racial equity. It is important to note how the pandemic intertwined with needed focus on lethality, health disparities, and systemic inequality leveraged against communities of color. The over-representation of people of color, the poor, the disabled and chronically mentally ill within criminal justice systems has caused isolation and harm for marginalized individuals. As a crisis care provider, it is our responsibility to respond. Our equity work in 2020 continued in 2021.

Crisis Services' vision for crisis care is rooted in providing inclusive, trustworthy, and effective interventions that address the impacts of racism and historical trauma on mental health outcomes for people of color.

Crisis Services is proud of our hard work and commitment in addressing two major and overlapping public health and safety challenges at once. Our team has been working on critical programming and services to address this needed change, improving crisis response to all in our community. It is work we feel uniquely suited to undertake and strive to continue with our remarkable team.

***Their efforts continue to be courageous and remarkable.
Here's to the work ahead of us.***

2021 | **By the Numbers**

71,156

of 24-Hour Crisis Hotline callers provided safety, help and hope by our First Responders

83

% of calls that were diverted from needing 911 emergency services

16,410

of calls received from survivors seeking domestic violence and sexual assault support

1,808

of individuals who received life-saving mental health assessment and intervention by our Mobile Outreach team

5,197

of calls responded to by the Crisis Services' Advocate Team on behalf of the Prison Rape Elimination Action (or PREA) Hotline

Paving the Way to

988

Over the past decade, conversations around access continue and questions on how to improve access have evolved to recommend a change from the longer 10-digit number to a three-digit number. This model is based on our conditioning to call 911 in the case of an emergency. Creating a new, easy-to-remember number for someone in suicidal, mental health and/or emotional distress situations was determined a national priority.

988 is set to launch in July 2022 and Crisis Services has been one of many local leaders in crisis response services shaping the goals and execution of this national initiative. As a precursor, you may have seen local news reports last year alerting residents about having to now dial 716 when calling a local number. For example, dialing a friend's phone number that begins with "988" without their area code first will soon connect you with the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**. Getting into a practice of dialing local numbers with the area code first is an important first step for 988 readiness.

Crisis Services is the network crisis center for WNY and is currently working with the NYS Office of Mental Health along with 12 other network centers in NYS to ensure a continuum of crisis care for those that chose to contact 988.

Here's fact #1: 988 is not 911.

Although 988 and 911 first responders both have trained expertise in their respective fields, the 988 line provides comprehensive care in one call. Our team of crisis intervention experts are ready and able to help you or a loved one assess the situation, provide critical crisis intervention support, supportive counseling, and connection to a robust level of community-based services that can help someone in need.

Here's another important fact: 85% of the calls received by a crisis hotline counselor are managed by the hotline counselor and don't require higher levels of emergency services like police or hospitalization. In the case of someone feeling suicidal or experiencing a mental health crisis, calling 911 might even delay receiving needed due to the need to reroute those calls back to Crisis Services for the specialized assistance we are able to provide.

It is our goal to ensure that all mental health crises get tended to by the mental health experts, like our crisis first responders at Crisis Services. We encourage all Erie County residents to call 716-834-3131 when you need 24-hour crisis support. When the national 988 lines arrives, you can also trust that you will still be connected to your local experts who are answering the call. national initiative.

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2021 | Program Highlights



With COVID-19 Pandemic Causing an Increase in Demand for Mental Health Services, Senator Tim Kennedy Makes \$500K Investment in Crisis Services

In July, Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) joined Crisis Services' Chief Executive Officer Jessica Pirro to announce he has secured \$509,071 in this year's state budget for mental health services across Western New York. This money will help to ensure that Crisis Services is able to continue to serve as the most comprehensive crisis center in Western New York.

The State funding came at a critical time. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health was intense in Buffalo and New York State. According to a report from the NYS Health Foundation, more than one-third of adult New Yorkers reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depression in May 2020. That number remained high five months later, with 37% of adult New Yorkers reporting poor mental health throughout the pandemic as of October 2020.

"As we begin to recover from the many effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's imperative that we're fully prepared to provide comprehensive care to those who may be struggling," said Senator Tim Kennedy.

"With this funding, we can rest easy knowing that those who need help will continue to have access to the top-quality support that Crisis Services is known for and delivers every day. The programs offered by Crisis Services are second-to-none, and I've been proud to work with them over the years to ensure they have the resources and the support they need from New York."

— Senator Kennedy

These dollars could not have come at a more critical time in our community and for our organization to support the lifesaving work provided 24 hours a day. We know that in a crisis, response time is critical. The support that Senator Kennedy has provided us will help to ensure our response can meet the pace of increased demand that we continue to experience across all of our departments at Crisis Services.

Sequential Intercept Mapping Project

In 2021, Crisis Services responded to a national solicitation released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for applications from jurisdictions interested in Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) mapping workshops. The application that was submitted on behalf of Erie County was selected and the county was awarded a SIM mapping workshop that was conducted virtually in May and June.

SIM Mapping Workshops bring together key stakeholders from local criminal justice and behavioral health systems to identify resources for responding to the needs of adults with mental and substance use disorders who are involved or at risk for involvement in the criminal justice system, as well as gaps in services and opportunities for cross-system collaboration and partnerships.

SIM Mapping Workshops result in the development of strategies for diverting individuals in the target population out of the criminal justice system and connecting them appropriate community-based treatment providers and support services, including the development of a local systems map that illustrates how the target population come in contact with and moves through the criminal justice system, local priorities for change, and strategic action plans.

The SIM mapping workshop was hosted and facilitated by SAMHSA's GAINS Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation (SAMHSA's GAINS Center). SAMHSA's GAINS Center, operated by Policy Research Associates, Inc. (PRA), is known internationally for its work regarding adults with mental and substance use disorders who are involved or at risk for involvement in the criminal justice system.

Crisis Services was honored to serve as the lead agency for this workshop and excited to receive the strategic plan that this group will be accountable for implementing over the next year.

Making the Case for 911 Call Diversion

Crisis Services, along with Erie County Central Police Services and Buffalo Police Department's 911 Dispatch, completed a pilot for a 911 Call Diversion model in 2020/2021. This Diversion model, similar to a model that is operating effectively in Broome County, NY, trains 911 Dispatchers/Call Takers to identify calls related to mental health crises and re-route these calls to Crisis Services 24-hour hotline instead of dispatching a patrol officer. This reduces unnecessary police response to mental health calls. The Broome County model demonstrates that such diversionary efforts (1) reduced transports by police to CPEPs (or comprehensive psychiatric emergency programs), and (2) far fewer calls required re-referral to 911 for police response once assigned to a mental health professional.

In the fall of 2020, Crisis Services was given permission to use funding from a local private Foundation to run the pilot project to assess need and effectiveness in our local area. Buffalo Police 911 Dispatch staff were trained by Crisis Services to use the CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Training Model. This training was condensed to a one-day training that provides tools on how to identify potential mental health issues in a call, how to access a CIT Officer, and how to safely de-escalate a caller. Crisis Services has been providing this training to local Police Departments for years and developed the training into a virtual format, so that training can continue to be delivered during COVID-19.

When the call is diverted to a crisis hotline, trained hotline counselors can provide support and further assessment and, when necessary, refer to our Mobile Outreach Program for a face-to-face crisis response. If a 911 response is truly needed, as assessed by the hotline counselor, the call can be referred back to 911 Dispatch for a police response. This service has received local County funding to support its expansion into more law enforcement agencies in Erie County and currently operates 5 days/week, 14 hours/day.

Staff & Volunteer APPRECIATION



A sunny celebration in June was a perfect, socially-distant opportunity to thank our incredible staff and volunteers for a job well done! In June, we closed off our parking lot, brought in Dickie's BBQ food truck, and honored several Crisis Services staff members and volunteers who have gone above and beyond for our mission.

Congratulations to the following staff on **five years of service** at Crisis Services:

Briana Brooks
MTS Program Counselor

Riessa Johnson
Crisis Counseling Program

Jackie Kimbrough
CIT Program Supervisor

Megan Moore
Advocate Dept. Supervisor

Danielle Simmons
Advocate Per Diem

Kevin Ward
Crisis Counseling Program

Jessica Zimpfer
Advocate Therapist

Three members from our Board of Directors were also honored for their **five years of service**:

Doug Anderson
Ingram Micro
CS Foundation Board

Jenna Luehrsen
Leadership Buffalo
CS Agency Board

Prabha Narayanan
M&T Bank
CS Agency Board

Special honors go to the following staff members on a remarkable **15 years of service**:

Tiffany Rogers
Administrative Assistant

Robyn Wiktorski-Reynolds
Clinical Operations Officer

Highmark BlueCross BlueShield Grant Partnership



In August, Crisis Services honored to receive Highmark BlueCross Blue Shield of WNY's award of a \$290,000 Blue Fund grant to bring text and chat to our 24-Hour Crisis Hotline. Soon, we will offer a new, convenient & confidential option for anyone seeking help in a crisis.



2021 | Special Events & Major Appeals

(A Year of Virtual **EVERYTHING**, Including How We Raised Funds!)



I ❤️ Crisis Services

A Virtual Wine and Chocolate Tasting with a Valentine's Twist!



Crisis Services

Posted by Candice Fletcher-Pacheco
Feb 12, 2021 · 🌐

Thanks for being our Valentines and for your support of Crisis Services! We had a fabulous night with you and raised over \$10,000 for our mission in crisis care!

THANK YOU, FRIENDS ❤️

Be sure to stay tuned with Kevin LoVullo at Sp... the Wine who we were so lucky to have join us for the night and for sharing his incredible knowledge and generosity!

Thank you also to our evening's sponsor, [West Herr Auto Group](#), and to our Board Members, Javeena Edwards and Mary Madonia, for steering this event.

Please be sure to support our vendors who provided OUTSTANDING flowers, chocolate and wine for us, including:

[Petrichor Flora](#)
[Blue Table Chocolates](#)
[McKinley Liquor of the Global Group](#)

I <3 Crisis Services
Virtual Valentine's
WineTasting w/
Kevin LoVullo
\$10,000

2021 Year-End
Appeal
\$16,280

3rd Party Fundraisers

Oak and Iron Tattoo
Target Circle Giving
Nova Healthcare
Amherst Central High School
Student Activity Fund
Tipico Coffee Roasters
Canisius College
North Park Theatre
Wild Things
Sweat716
You & Who w/ 26 Shirts

\$19,357

Men Who Cook Re-Imagined 2021

THANK YOU!



Men Who Cook
Reimagined!
\$27,983

WIVB 4



RICH'S

MULBERRY
Italian Restaurant

Wegmans



We deliver hope.
You can, too!

Top Year-End Appeal Donors

Samantha Bordonaro	Daniel and Gunilla Kester
Jessica Brown	Daniel & Paulette Krakowski
Sandy Calandra	Ryan Lucinski
Patrick & Kimberly Corbett	Michael Maxwell
Ramon Garcia	Dr. Joan McCool
Howard Gartenberg	Jessica Pirro & David Mann
Tom & Marybeth Giambra	Hugh & Linda Russ
Bradley Hall	Dr. Michael Rutter
Evelyn and Robert Hamilton	Michelle Suer
Michael Huntress	Anne and Dave Taylor
William Keefer	Dennis Walczyk

2021 | Major Donors & Supporters

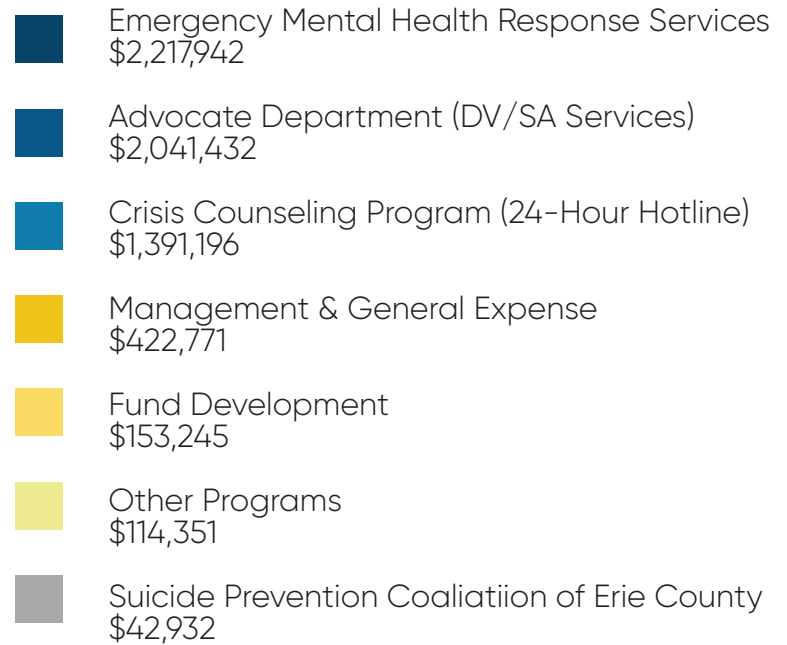
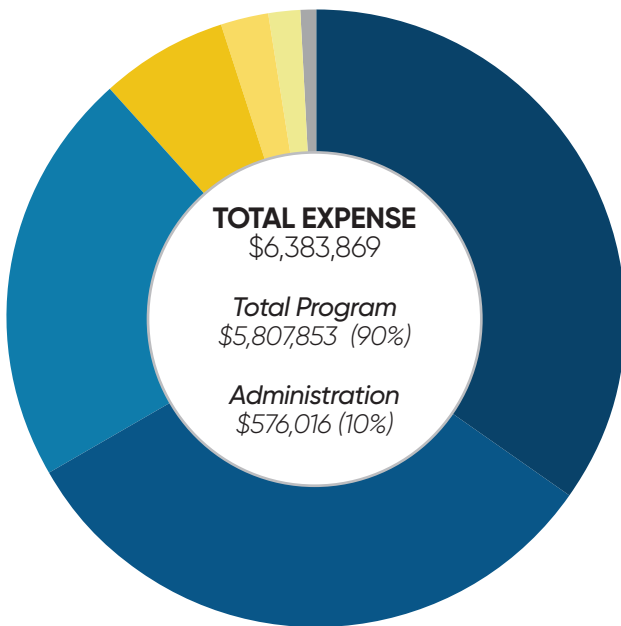
We offer our deep appreciation to the following donors for investing in our mission with gifts of \$500+ in 2021:

Doug Anderson	Amy Martoche
Jessica Brown	Joseph and Maureen Marris
Dr. Samantha Bordonaro	Dr. Joan McCool
Sandy Calandra	Michael Maxwell
Patrick and Kimberly Corbett	Kai Mikolajczak
Acacia Cormier	Richard Mugel
Ramon Garcia	Prabha Narayanan
Howard Gartenberg	Steven Pierpaoli
Tom & Marybeth Giambra	Deborah O'Connor
Bradley Hall	Jessica Pirro and David Mann
Evelyn and Robert Hamilton	Robert Powalski
Cynthia Hammer	Hugh & Linda Russ
Laurie Hennessy	Dr. Michael Rutter
Michael Huntress	Robert Stewart
William Keefer	Michelle Suer
Drs. Daniel and Gunilla Kester	Anne and David Taylor
Daniel and Paulette Krakowski	Paola Teegarden
James Kunkemoeller	Joanne Vogt
Laura LaCongo	Dennis Walczyk
Ryan Lucinski	Eric Worral
Deanne Maluchnik	

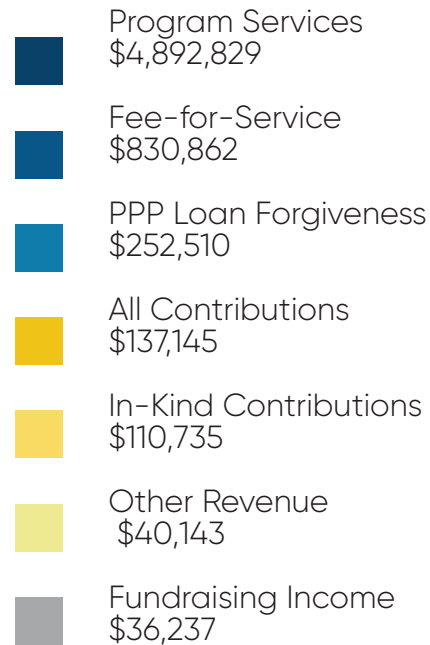
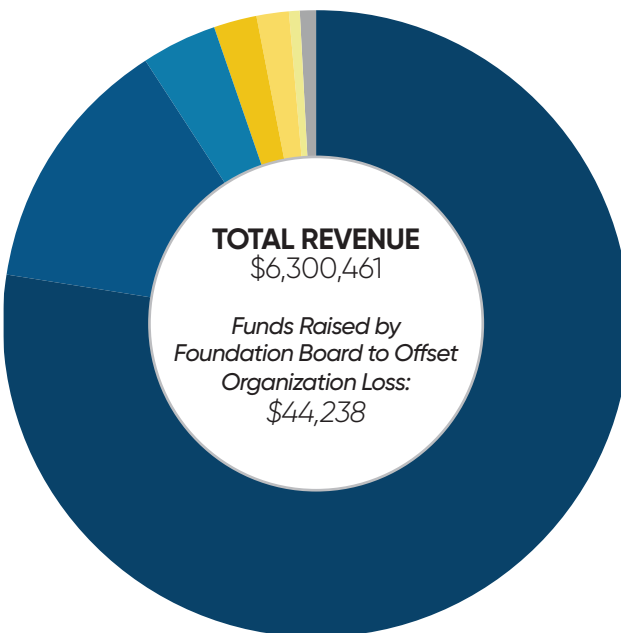
Thank you!

2021 | Financials

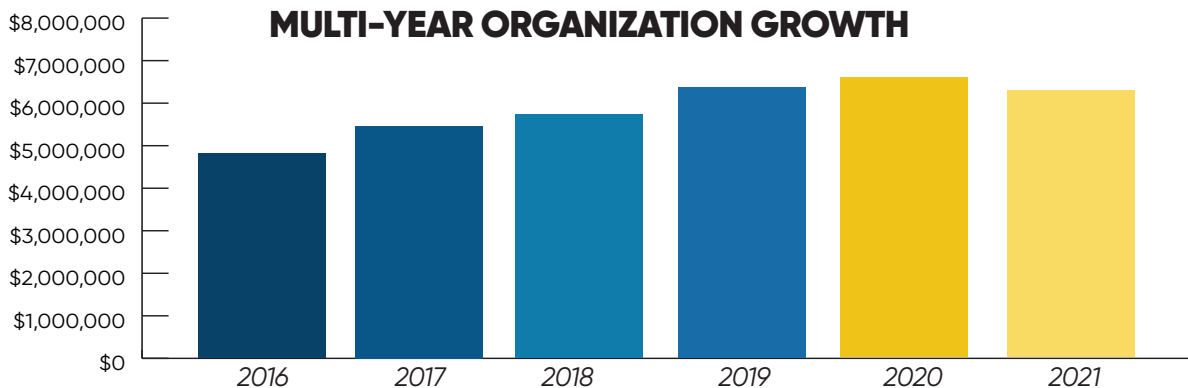
EXPENSES



REVENUE



MULTI-YEAR ORGANIZATION GROWTH



2021 | Agency Leadership

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Freed Maxick, CPAs

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Leadership Buffalo

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John Sinclair
Hanafin & Associates LLC

Robert Stewart
Pyramid Brokerage/Cushman & Wakefield

Crisis Services' Executive Team

Jessica C. Pirro, LMSW
Chief Executive Officer

Robyn Wiktorski-Reynolds, LMSW
Clinical Operations Officer

Jesse Lewandowski, CPA, MBA
Chief Financial Officer

