



SHAPING CRISIS RESPONSE:

# SPOTLIGHTING LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIF.

**Los Angeles County, Calif.**  
**County Seat: Los Angeles, Calif.**  
**Population: 10,014,009**

The National Association of Counties (NACo), in collaboration with [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#) and [RAND](#), hosted a series of conversations with county leaders to understand the progress, challenges and lessons learned from 911/988 interoperability across various models, including embedded clinicians, call transfer and co-located response. This series will spotlight the work of five of the innovative counties shaping crisis response systems.

**Los Angeles (LA) County** is the most populous county in the United States, with over 10 million residents, 70 public safety answering points (PSAP) centers and 80 law enforcement agencies, making the integration of 988 and 911 a challenge. However, LA County embraced this undertaking by launching a comprehensive call diversion program to make behavioral health care as accessible as traditional emergency responses. This effort began in February 2021 with a one-year pilot program funded by the Innovation Commission at the Mayor's Office. The program contracted LA's Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services (Didi Hirsch), the nation's first and largest Suicide Prevention Center, to respond to mental health calls transferred from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). **Following the five-month pilot, the LAPD allocated additional funding to the transfer program and expanded the contract, effectively increasing operability from its initial eight hours to 24 hours a day, seven days a week services.** Since then, law enforcement agencies within LA County, as well as several neighboring counties, have joined the LAPD in participating in the call transfer program.

**Didi Hirsch's call transfer program utilizes a warm-transfer model that allows one group to transfer callers to the crisis line with a single click.** Understanding that 911 dispatchers receive critical calls and require a speedy response, Didi Hirsch maintains a separate queue that gives the highest priority to calls transferred from the LAPD. Limiting a caller's wait time when transferred to 988 is a crucial component of streamlining access to behavioral health care as it minimizes the likelihood of dropping calls or that people will redial 911.

**The University of Southern California's School of Social Work is partnering with the call transfer program to evaluate its impact and is finding groundbreaking results.** Due to compounding barriers such as social stigma, medical mistrust and lack of cultural competence, men, particularly men of color, have historically had limited access to behavioral health care. LA County is one of the most diverse regions in the U.S. and, with further examination, can serve as a valuable resource for determining if call transfer programs effectively reach populations that traditionally have limited access to behavioral health care.



**Early demographic data collection indicates that the transfer program reaches more men and people of color.**

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