Safe2Tell Annual Report

Office of the Attorney General

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Message from the Director

Dear partners in school safety and fellow Coloradans,

Safe2Tell is in its 16th year as a valuable resource for school safety for communities across Colorado. Safe2Tell's mission is to encourage and empower Colorado youth and residents to report concerns about their safety and the safety of others when a trusted adult is not available.

When the 2019-2020 school year began, Safe2Tell saw a consistent increase in tip volume each month compared to the 2018-2019 school year. This trend continued for approximately seven months until March 2020, when tip volume drastically decreased as Colorado schools transitioned to virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Safe2Tell historically experiences a decrease in tip volume during planned school breaks, but the March, April, and May 2020 reductions were the first of its kind since the program was brought into the Colorado Department of Law in 2014. As a result, Safe2Tell saw a 7% decrease in tip volume for the 2019-2020 school year compared to the previous school year.

To remind youth and community members that Safe2Tell is available to assist with safety concerns, we launched a digital marketing campaign which ran during December 2019 and May and June 2020. Additionally, Safe2Tell received federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funding, appropriated to Safe2Tell by the General Assembly, which will allow us to conduct new, COVID-19 specific, statewide outreach through the end of the 2020 calendar year.

Coloradans have felt the deep impacts of the pandemic as we navigate these unprecedented times together. Moving forward, we will redouble our effort to increase awareness about situational anxiety and isolation-induced stressors, and as always, we will continue to encourage all youth and community members to utilize this valuable and anonymous safety reporting tool, along with accessing the other excellent resources across our state.

It's okay to not to be okay during these times, but as we tell students throughout Colorado, you must speak up when you or your peers are in danger or need help. Safe2Tell is here 24/7, 365 days/year. Stay safe and healthy during these times; despite all the uncertainties and challenges behind us and ahead, we still believe in the hope a new school year brings. Wishing you and yours a great 2020-2021 school year.
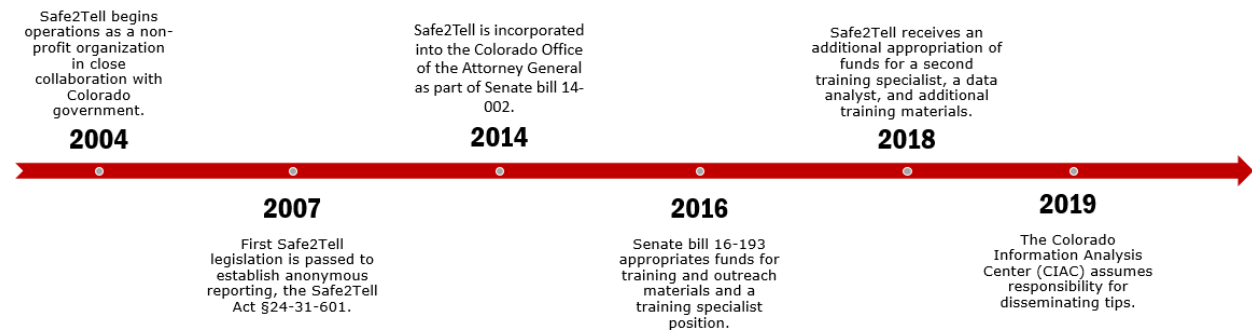
Very sincerely,

Essi Ellis
Safe2Tell Program Director

History and Purpose

History

Safe2Tell begins operations as a non-profit organization in close collaboration with Colorado government.
2004

First Safe2Tell legislation is passed to establish anonymous reporting, the Safe2Tell Act §24-31-601.
2007

Safe2Tell is incorporated into the Colorado Office of the Attorney General as part of Senate bill 14-002.
2014

Senate bill 16-193 appropriates funds for training and outreach materials and a training specialist position.
2016

Safe2Tell receives an additional appropriation of funds for a second training specialist, a data analyst, and additional training materials.
2018

The Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC) assumes responsibility for disseminating tips.
2019

Purpose

Safe2Tell is a framework for students and community members to anonymously report safety concerns. The program promotes early intervention by serving as a conduit of information between tipsters and local multidisciplinary teams, which are comprised of caring adults in community organizations such as schools and law enforcement agencies. Safe2Tell encourages the use of mental health and/or other early intervention partners as deemed appropriate by local multidisciplinary teams.

Safe2Tell provides:

- An anonymous resource for students, parents, school staff, and community members to report youth and safety concerns.
- Marketing materials for schools and communities to build awareness and educate on the appropriate use of Safe2Tell.
- Technical assistance to schools and law enforcement regarding the Safe2Tell technological platform; and
- Training and outreach to encourage youth to speak up about safety concerns and subsequently break the "Code of Silence", which is withholding important information out of fear of being perceived as a "snitch."

Partners

Since March 2019, the Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC) Watch Center located in the Colorado Department of Public Safety has operated the dispatch and tip dissemination components of Safe2Tell. CIAC has partnered with the Colorado Department of Law to ensure the timely dissemination of tips to local multidisciplinary teams. CIAC and its diligent and thoughtful staff are fundamental to the Safe2Tell mission, and contribute to the program's effectiveness by engaging tipsters in two-way dialog to maximize the information obtained for follow-up, as well as directly connecting tipsters who need mental health resources to the appropriate mental health partners. Tips received regarding the COVID-19 pandemic are forwarded to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's COVID-19 hotline for follow-up.

Safe2Tell is also grateful for local multidisciplinary teams that support our youth and school safety throughout the state. These teams are best equipped to support students in need as they have well-established relationships with students and families.

Multidisciplinary Partner Spotlight

"For several years, our Prevention Team has been providing suicide prevention, mental health awareness and substance use prevention trainings to schools in Northeast Colorado. School personnel would often ask us about Safe2Tell and if it was a reliable resource. After hearing [Mark Lanning (Safe2Tell trainer)] speak at a local meeting, I knew we needed to be involved with getting the word out about Safe2Tell. The Safe2Tell lessons have been a great addition to the work we do and align well with our desire to ensure [that] youth and school staff know how to access this lifesaving resource."

- Maranda Miller, Prevention Services Program Manager

"The Summit County Sheriff's Office believes that Safe2Tell [is] an invaluable asset for students, staff, and law enforcement to work together to address a gambit of issues within our community such as bullying, suicide, sexting, planned attacks, and domestic abuse/assault. Being that Safe2Tell allows [for] reporting of mental health related issues, [our] co-responder SMART team [can] provide rapid mental health support to students in need. Safe2Tell is an exceptionally efficient way for a community to work together to respond to and prevent issues surrounding our kids and our schools."

- Sheriff Jaime FitzSimons, Summit County Sheriff's Office

School Year at a Glance

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Safe2Tell experienced a marked decrease in tip volume as schools transitioned to distance learning. Though suicide threats remained Safe2Tell's most frequently reported tip category, self-harm, welfare check, child abuse, and cyber-bullying reports increased from March through July. See *Appendix A* for tip totals by category and month.

20,822
Tips received during the 2019-2020 school year.

7%
Decrease in tip volume compared to the 2018-2019 school year.
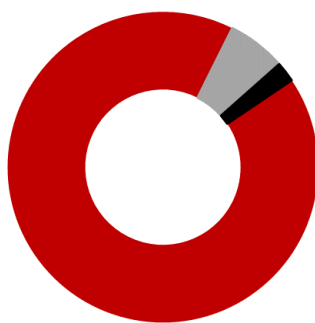
Reporting Methods

30% Phone

27% Mobile Web

18% PC Web

25% Mobile App

91.8% Actionable
Tips submitted in good faith for early intervention purposes.

6.1% Misuse
Non-actionable tips received with non-malicious intent (includes misuse, prank calls, and hang-ups). Safe2Tell saw an increase in misuse tips, specifically regarding COVID-19 related concerns.

2.1% False Tips
Non-actionable tips received with malicious intent that may include false information to harm, injure, or bully another person.

Top Categories
1. **Suicide Threats**
2. **Drugs**
3. **Bullying**
4. **School Complaint**
5. **Threats**

137
Mental health related self-reports. **Fifteen** of these tipsters agreed to be transferred to the state crisis hotline. The average time for Safe2Tell to gather information and deliver tips or transfer tipsters was **18** minutes.
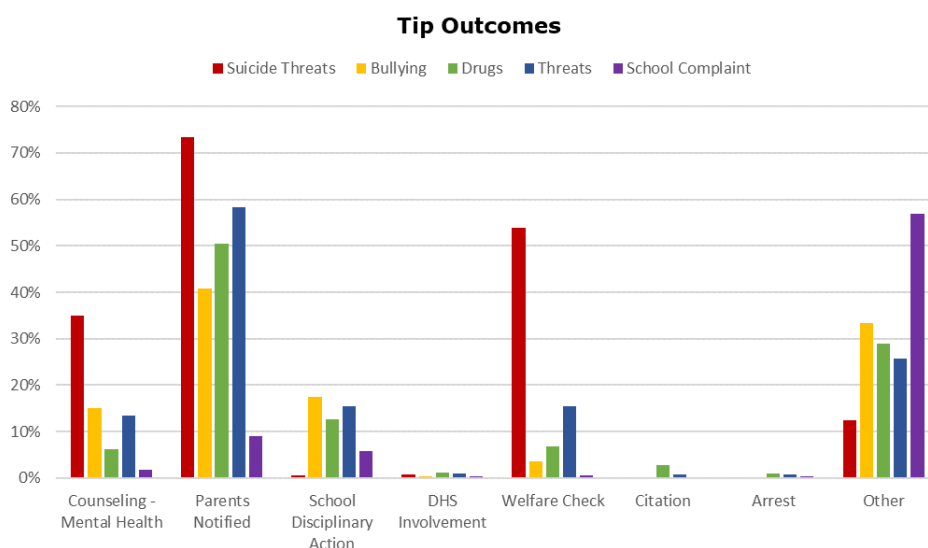
Duplicate Tips
1,856
Reports made regarding a concern that has already been reported, an indicator of healthy reporting culture within a community.

Outcomes

What happens when Safe2Tell receives a tip?

Every tip that Safe2Tell receives is reviewed by analysts at the CIAC Watch Center and forwarded to local multidisciplinary teams. Safe2Tell encourages multidisciplinary teams to promptly respond to all tips. Once a tip has been addressed, the intervening party or parties are required to complete a disposition documenting how the tip was addressed and any relevant outcomes. The graph below illustrates the most common outcomes (as reported by multidisciplinary teams) for Safe2Tell's most frequently reported tip categories: Suicide Threats, Bullying, Drugs, Threats, and School Complaints.

Tip Outcomes

■ Suicide Threats   ■ Bullying   ■ Drugs   ■ Threats   ■ School Complaint

*Counseling-Mental Health may include referrals to school and/or community mental health professionals.
**Welfare Checks may be conducted by school officials, SROs, and/or law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety or wellbeing of a person.

Does Safe2Tell decide how multidisciplinary teams respond to a tip?

No. Safe2Tell serves as a conduit of information between tipsters and local multidisciplinary teams and does not dictate how tips are addressed. When a tip is received, our team at the CIAC Watch Center sends it to the corresponding local multidisciplinary team that determines if, when, and how to include mental health or other intervention partners to respond effectively, based on their expertise and local resources.

What does Safe2Tell do about false tips?

The vast majority (91.8%) of tips received by Safe2Tell during the 2019-2020 school year were submitted in good faith for intervention purposes. A small percentage (2.1%, down from 2.5% during the 2018-2019 school year) of tips were false and were submitted with malicious intent that may include false information to harm, injure, or bully another person. While this is a small percentage, false tips can be disruptive to families, schools, and law enforcement agencies. Safe2Tell provides comprehensive training about proper use of the program and collaborates with local partners to reduce false tips.
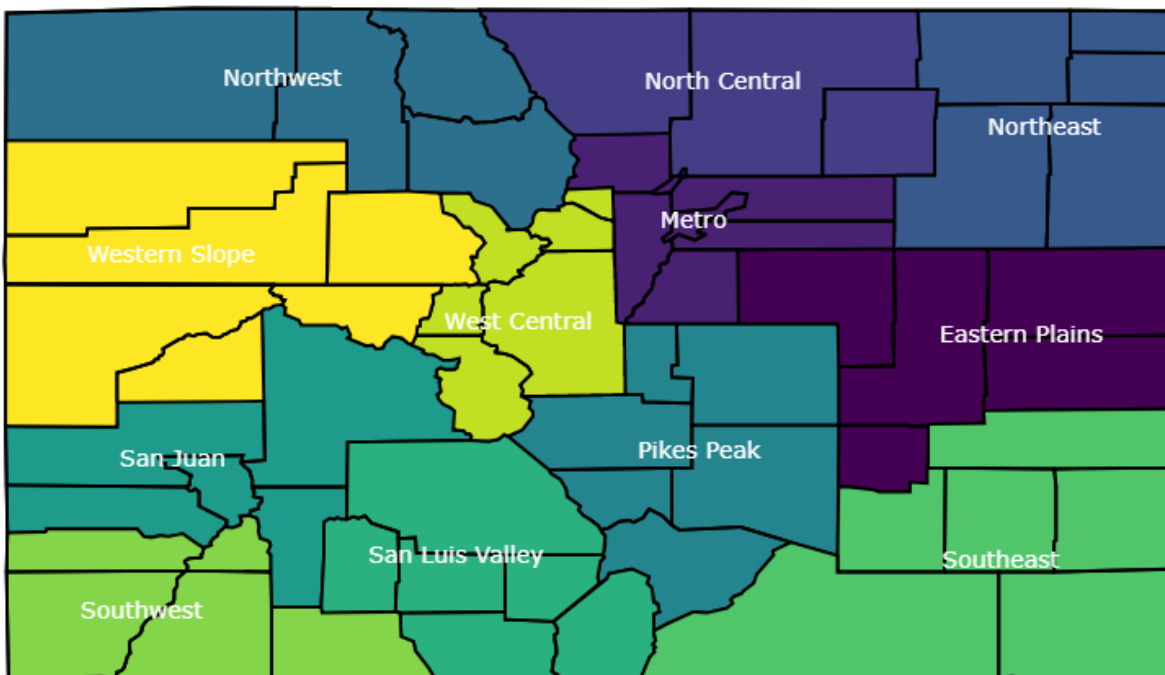
Training and Outreach

Safe2Tell conducted 176 training and outreach events across all regions of Colorado during the 2019-2020 school year. Safe2Tell conducted 74 trainings for school leaders and/or students and 15 workshops for law enforcement and/or public safety answering points. Safe2Tell also attended 12 conferences and resource fairs. Additionally, program staff conducted two train-the-trainer sessions that certified school officials to present Safe2Tell curriculum materials to students and school administrators. Certified trainers in the Safe2Tell train-the-trainer network conducted 68 training and outreach events and the publicly available Safe2Tell curriculum was downloaded five times from the website.

Trainings in Northwest Colorado, the Western Slope, Southwest Colorado, and two train-the-trainers were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Safe2Tell conducted three webinars to promote awareness about Safe2Tell from March through July that had 250 registered participants.

Safe2Tell student training emphasizes four main ideas:

1. Youth know safety and mental health concerns about their peers before adults do.
2. Youth have a duty to tell and should report any safety concern when their desire is to protect, prevent, or help.
3. As a first step, youth should always try to talk to a trusted adult. If that's too hard, or if a trusted adult is not available, youth may anonymously report to Safe2Tell 24/7/365; and
4. Safe2Tell is anonymous to encourage youth to break the Code of Silence.

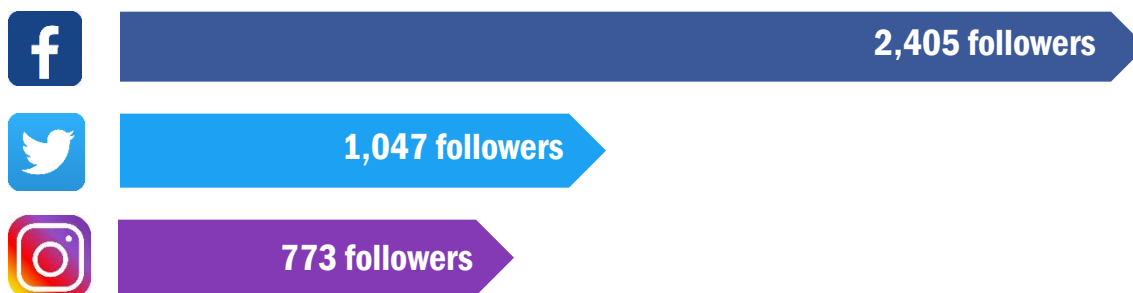**Click below to view Safe2Tell's interactive training map!**

Social Media Networks

Safe2Tell has a presence on a variety of internet and social media platforms to stay connected with users. The consistent messaging, information, and resources target both youth and adult stakeholders (including parents) and partners. The Safe2Tell website serves as a resource for all community members, including student, parent, school, and law enforcement. Through the website, users can submit tips and disposition reports, access marketing materials, and obtain information about program operations. The Safe2Tell YouTube channel is another resource for users to access Safe2Tell training videos and curricula.

Click the icons below to follow Safe2Tell on social media!

Safe2Tell Social Media Engagement

f	**2,405 followers**
(Twitter)	**1,047 followers**
(Instagram)	**773 followers**

Safe2Tell & Teens2Teens Outreach Initiative

During the summer of 2019, Safe2Tell coordinated with mental health partners and Janicek Media to produce a series of public service announcements (PSAs) geared toward addressing teen mental health and youth safety concerns. The goal was to end the stigma surrounding mental health and highlight the importance for teens to talk about their struggles. Safe2Tell launched the PSAs on October 8, 2019, and they were subsequently nominated for a Homeland Emmy Award in July 2020. **Click the image below to watch these brave teens speaking to each other and to their parents!**

Real Teens. Real Stories.

Success Stories

PREVENTING TRAGEDIES
"I'm really grateful someone reported [to Safe2Tell] a weapon that was brought to our school. That was a really good use of the program."

- High School Student

EMPOWERING STUDENTS
"We recognize that our students have access to a variety of communication tools where they may be the first recipient of potential threats to themselves or to others. Educating students in how to respond is the key to keeping them safe as well as keeping our schools and communities safe. The Safe2Tell program also provides that dialog opportunity within the classroom setting. Safe2Tell is more than a tip line; it is the education and empowerment that all of our students need!"

- Director of School Safety and Security

BUILDING SAFER SCHOOLS
"I'm impressed with the 'whys' as well as the [Safe2Tell] resources to speak to students [about school safety]. I'd highly recommend a Safe2Tell training."

- Middle School Administrator

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH
"Even though some students might not know it, Safe2Tell puts a ton of effort into mental health. They really care about making sure we feel like we matter and that there's someone there for us to rely on."

- High School Student

FOSTERING COMMUNICATION
"The open line of communication between school administrators and [our] office is very helpful; Not only during the initial investigation, but in the follow up after."

- Student Resource Officer

EDUCATING SCHOOL TEAMS
"I thought I knew everything about Safe2Tell. I'm grateful I attended a workshop to give us direction on how to improve Safe2Tell implementation."

- Equity and Inclusion Director

CARING FOR COMMUNITIES
"Our students really understand how much Safe2Tell cares after the[ir] presentation [at our school]."

- High School Counselor

PROTECTING ANONYMITY
"Being anonymous is important to our kids and staff because it allows them to report serious issues [without fear of being perceived as] a 'snitch.'"

- High School Counselor

SAVING LIVES
"Safe2Tell offers an anonymous tool that our community has embraced and has saved lives in our district. The connection between families, school teams, law enforcement, and mental health has prevented tragedies and helped us get help to families in need. This is a vital resource."

- Rural School District Coordinator

Recommendations

Based on a review of the available data, Safe2Tell has identified the following recommendations to improve the Safe2Tell program:

- Enhance training efforts statewide through the continued education of school teams and law enforcement agencies on Safe2Tell best practices (see High Functioning Teams Guide), understanding differences between unfounded and false tips, using the Safe2Tell digital platform, and continuing to promote proper use of the program. Safe2Tell plans to provide digital trainings and educational resources during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Develop new marketing strategies to best align with the needs of students, teachers, and parents in the digital age by exploring new platforms for tip submission and ways to reach students (e.g., texting), as well as continuing to promote Safe2Tell as a resource for students during school breaks and online learning.
- Encourage collaboration between school teams, law enforcement agencies, and mental health partners as appropriate by providing resources for developing and maintaining high functioning multidisciplinary teams.
- Minimize instances of false reporting and misuse of the program through the continued education, support, and empowerment of school teams and law enforcement agencies to address these issues at the local level by providing resources to strengthen Safe2Tell culture.
- Continue to develop and improve Safe2Tell's capabilities through the redevelopment of the program website, creation of an online train-the-trainer certification course, and implementation of a text/short message service (SMS) tip submission pilot study. These items are contingent upon receiving funding through the *Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) Grant Program* provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the U.S. Department of Justice. The Safe2Tell STOP grant application was submitted in June 2020.
- Continue to bolster partnerships with community mental health partners by holding stakeholder webinars and meetings to develop a plan to offer direct connection or contact information for the state crisis hotline to tipsters who submit a tip to Safe2Tell.

Appendix A

Appendix A: Number of Tips by Category and Month

Event Type	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	TOTAL
Alcohol	21	57	42	38	23	41	32	22	9	17	27	21	**350**
Anger Issues	7	16	11	13	9	9	21	12	2	9	1	0	**110**
Animal Cruelty	1	4	4	8	5	14	3	3	3	3	1	1	**50**
Assaults	19	28	29	26	14	22	19	8	3	4	6	4	**182**
Bullying	98	202	208	205	141	147	146	79	20	15	18	7	**1286**
Child Abuse	45	74	63	73	76	60	70	63	43	49	27	14	**657**
Choking Game	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Crime Stoppers	2	5	5	10	9	12	6	5	5	5	1	2	**67**
Cyber-Bullying	26	69	39	52	50	53	51	44	59	43	42	30	**558**
Dating Violence	6	8	8	5	8	6	12	6	1	3	2	1	**66**
Depression	34	73	56	65	58	58	71	35	28	23	23	10	**534**
Discrimination	4	16	13	11	10	6	12	12	3	4	15	5	**111**
Ditching	2	4	7	10	7	12	5	4	0	0	0	0	**51**
Domestic Violence	4	7	9	6	5	4	7	2	7	3	2	5	**61**
Drugs	114	170	182	186	150	180	215	101	40	54	38	38	**1468**
Duplicate Report	140	223	250	278	140	151	219	149	78	93	100	37	**1858**
Eating Disorder	5	14	8	13	6	7	6	4	0	1	2	1	**67**
Explosives	4	3	3	4	3	2	2	3	2	0	0	1	**27**
Extremism	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
Fighting	30	48	28	46	22	27	32	22	1	2	4	1	**263**
Fire Starting	1	3	1	2	0	0	3	2	0	2	0	0	**14**
Gangs	1	9	2	7	6	5	4	4	0	0	1	0	**39**
Guns	34	42	34	52	40	38	23	16	10	11	8	5	**313**
Hang-Up	45	83	79	70	43	48	60	48	19	35	22	19	**571**
Harassment	24	44	37	36	34	32	23	20	16	21	20	20	**327**
Knives	7	14	8	17	8	8	8	5	2	0	0	1	**78**
Misuse of Safe2Tell	17	20	36	28	18	22	42	62	18	21	10	25	**319**
Planned Parties	17	19	25	21	21	14	24	11	7	18	23	13	**213**
Planned School Attack	40	59	45	43	22	18	20	6	0	1	0	0	**254**
Prank Call	22	47	68	57	47	33	36	29	9	7	3	16	**374**
Requesting Information	38	50	38	43	48	50	54	56	43	24	13	27	**484**
School Complaint	78	154	132	116	114	92	151	126	22	13	7	12	**1017**

Category													Total
Self-Harm	61	119	131	123	98	102	101	90	44	30	12	13	**924**
Sexting	21	37	39	52	49	54	45	41	33	21	22	12	**426**
Sexual Assault	17	35	30	27	31	29	27	20	14	13	13	8	**264**
Sexual Misconduct	24	45	53	33	36	45	36	26	8	6	9	12	**333**
Smoking/Tobacco	5	8	5	6	3	5	8	6	2	4	0	0	**52**
Spam Tip	0	0	18	7	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	**29**
Suicide Threats	235	397	417	448	404	416	402	378	241	210	133	140	**3821**
Teasing	4	7	4	4	2	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	**29**
Test Tip	2	17	32	7	14	3	10	1	23	9	5	2	**125**
Theft	3	13	16	10	16	13	7	2	6	1	0	3	**90**
Threats	81	135	130	133	114	119	94	81	32	24	21	20	**984**
Transportation Complaints	8	12	11	3	8	5	6	3	0	0	0	0	**56**
Trespass	6	6	4	6	5	1	5	2	1	2	0	0	**38**
Unsafe Driving	13	8	16	6	15	7	11	7	2	2	3	2	**92**
Vandalism	3	12	11	9	2	5	7	11	1	1	2	1	**65**
Vaping	59	124	117	92	89	83	107	55	3	1	5	3	**738**
Weapons (Taser, Other than guns / knives)	0	2	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	**9**
Welfare Check	75	120	112	87	72	92	99	84	70	67	48	40	**966**
Total	**1503**	**2665**	**2622**	**2595**	**2100**	**2154**	**2348**	**1768**	**930**	**875**	**689**	**573**	**20822**

Note: Of the 20,822 tips received by the program, 356 were self-reports. Of those, 137 were mental health related, and 219 were other concerns.