

The La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative (SPI) would like to request the Board's permission to move forward with sign placement on Cass Street & Cameron Street Bridges as well as the 3 stairways that lead up to the two bridges. We have discussed placing one sign on each end of both bridges and one in the middle of each bridge, as well as one sign on each of the 3 stairways that lead up to the bridges. In 2024 we are recognizing and celebrating that it has been 20 years that SPI has been in our community as a Suicide Prevention group providing education, raising awareness, and making a difference in our community. Currently, we are in the final phase of a project to replace existing signs on Granddads bluff and placing new signs on Miller Bluff aka "Rim of the City" for suicide prevention. These signs were unanimously approved through the City of La Crosse Park & Rec Board and were ordered on 3/13/2024; we hope to have them installed in late March/early April of this year. We would love to see bridge signs installed to include 988, the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, which is free of charge to call, text, or chat 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for individuals in crisis. As a group advocating for suicide prevention, we feel that it is important to place these signs in public locations so that when someone is in crisis and feeling suicidal, they will see a sign listing resource to contact at that moment. Our hope is that they will see that someone cared enough to place a sign there & would contact 988 to talk through their crisis. The crisis counselors at 988 are there to talk and connect them to appropriate assistance and resources, potentially saving a life.

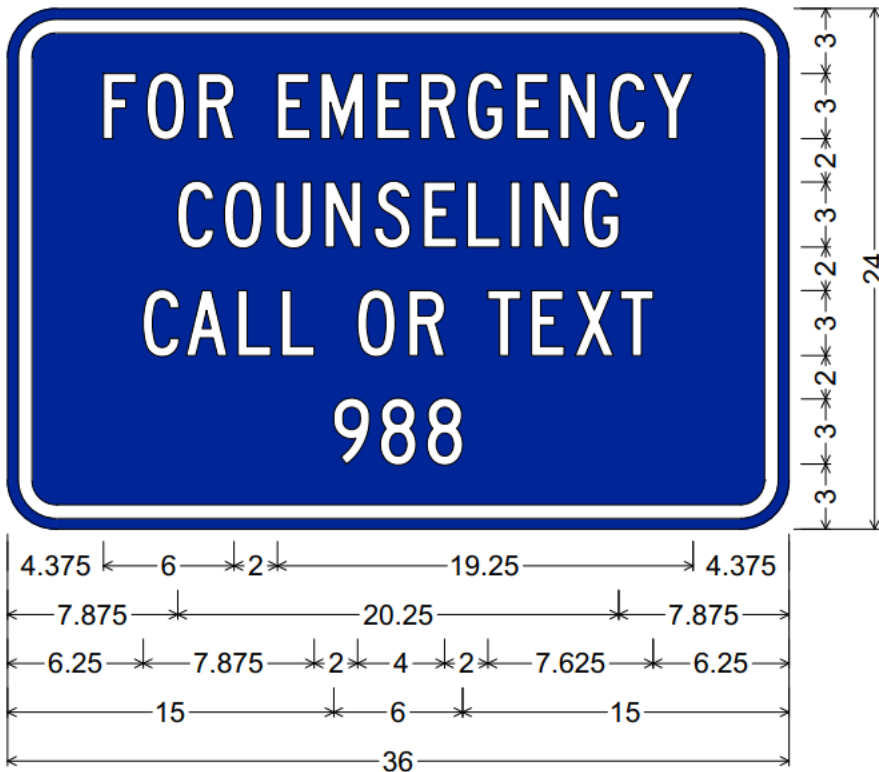
Appearing on behalf of this request will be **Tim Blumentritt** Director of Tellurian Care Center, member of SPI, & a La Crosse County Suicide Death Review Team, **Chris Hughes** who is a counselor at Gundersen Health Care Systems, & a member of SPI, and **Eric Glindinning** from WISDOT. Eric is working on permits for this project and outlining locations of sign placement. If there are any questions or comments, please direct them to one of the 3 individuals advocating for this project. We are flexible with sign placement, installation, and maintenance to align with your regulations and guidelines. As previously mentioned, our hope is to place a sign at each end of both bridges & one in the middle of each bridge, as well as one sign on each of the 3 stairwells **for a total of 9 signs**. We would not ask to place the signs in a location that would distract motorists and we look to the City of La Crosse or another recommended professional to install the signs where the City Board feels that it is most impactful and appropriate. There has been 1 documented suicide from this location which was in 2022. We feel that this signage may prevent future fatalities and provide a resource for someone in need. There are other states throughout our nation as well as other counties here in Wisconsin that have installed suicide prevention signs in their community. We look to you to help us promote suicide prevention and how to access emergency counseling to those who are in crisis. We are open to discussion with any questions, comments, concerns, or maintenance requirements. Please instruct us on how we can work together to get this project completed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karlene Buckmaster

La Crosse County Social Worker, SPI member, & facilitator of the La Crosse County Death Review team. I apologize for my absence as I will be out of town on March 18th and we did not want to delay this ask of the board for another month.

**Below are two examples of these bridge signs & the one with design specs surrounding the 3ft. wide x 2 feet tall blue sign is from Eric from the WISDOT. We are open to either image pictured below & I have also included images of our local bridges & staircases leading up to the Cass Street Bridge.



2.250" Radius, 0.625" Border, 0.500" Indent, White on Blue;
 "FOR", C; "EMERGENCY", C; "COUNSELING", C;
 "CALL", C; "OR", C; "TEXT", C; "988", C;









