December 7, 2018

**ATTENTION: WC Docket 18-336 No. 18-336, CC Docket No. 92-105**

FORGE, Inc. submits these comments on the **Implementation of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act,**currently reviewed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments as FCC issues a formal recommendation on implementing an N11 code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (“NSPL”).

FORGE is a national transgender anti-violence organization. In recognition of the tremendously high rates of suicidality in the transgender community, FORGE includes suicide in the types of violence we seek to prevent. We are therefore greatly encouraged by Congress’s passage of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act (P.L. 115-233), and are grateful for the FCC’s efforts to promulgate regulations that will help save lives, including studying the feasibility of establishing an N11 code.

FORGE is writing to also ask the FCC to consider the need for specialized suicide prevention services for LGBQ, trans, and non-binary adults and youth. While LGBTQ+ individuals experience all of the same mental health issues other Americans do, our particular status as a stigmatized minority means that many LGBTQ+ people considering suicide are also struggling with LGBTQ-specific issues. Not only do we need and deserve to talk with crisis counselors who deeply understand those issues, but we are actually at increased risk of suicide when we encounter “helpers” who knowingly or inadvertently express homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic attitudes. In FORGE’s headquarters city of Milwaukee, WI, we have lost several transgender people who committed suicide *in an inpatient clinic* when clinic staff responded to them in transphobic ways. It is therefore critical that there be a mechanism for ensuring that suicidal LGBTQ+ individuals reach crisis counselors fully equipped to support them.

FORGE is not in a position to make specific recommendations for how this need should be met, but we do understand that the NSPL already is able to divert veteran populations to more specialized care, and we urge that something similar be considered for LGBTQ youth and adults. We also strongly encourage all NSPL crisis workers receive highly developed trainings on the unique needs of LGBTQ+ callers and what to avoid to ensure the call does not make the individual feel even worse.

The National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act creates an important opportunity to significantly reduce the suicide rate in the United States, and we thank the FCC for their commitment to address this important issue.

Sincerely,



Loree Cook-Daniels

FORGE Policy and Program Director