

Frequently Asked Questions about LGBTQI2+ Refugee Sponsorship for United Church of Canada Communities of Faith

When did Canada start its program for LGBTQI2+ refugees?

Canada's LGBTQI+ refugee sponsorship pilot program began in 2011. On June 1, 2019, the Government of Canada introduced the [Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership \(RRAP\)](#), which will support more Canadians in privately sponsoring LGBTQI2+ refugees who are fleeing violence and persecution on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

Why is it important to sponsor an LGBTQI2+ refugee?

LGBTQI2+ refugees are some of the most vulnerable refugees in the world and have some of the most vulnerable resettlement profiles (heightened physical and legal protection risks). They suffer physical, sexual, and verbal abuse and discrimination, and many face imprisonment and death. They urgently need church sponsors that can support their journey to a new and safe life.

In 2016, the United Nations Security Council issued a resolution condemning violence against LGBT people. Soon after, the UN Human Rights Council announced the appointment of an independent expert to monitor [LGBT violence around the world](#).

Many communities of faith want to welcome families, especially children who are at risk. Both The United Church of Canada and Affirm United celebrate and understand this. We encourage communities of faith who are sponsoring a family to also sponsor one or more LGBTQI2+ people at the same time.

What organizations work with LGBTQI2+ refugees in Canada?

- [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\)](#)
- [Capital Rainbow](#)
- [Francoqueer](#)
- [Rainbow Railroad](#)
- [Rainbow Refugee](#)
- [Reaching Out Winnipeg](#)
- Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia, [RRANS](#)
- [The 519](#)
- [Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto](#)

How do these organizations support churches with LGBTQI2+ refugee sponsorships?

By way of an example, here is how [Rainbow Refugee](#) works with Sponsorship Agreement Holders like the United Church:

Blended Visa-Office Referred (BVOR) LGBTQI2+ Refugees

BVOR newcomers co-sponsored by United Church communities of faith and Rainbow Refugee may receive financial support (start-up costs plus three months' support) through the Rainbow Resettlement Assistance Program (RRAP). This is in addition to the three months of financial support available through the federal government's Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). The sponsoring group would provide financial support for the remaining six months of the one-year sponsorship. In addition, the sponsoring group provides practical and emotional support for the newcomer in conjunction with government-funded immigrant settlement agencies. For more information on BVOR, see [Frequently Asked Questions about Refugee Sponsorship](#).

Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Cases

Newcomers co-sponsored by United Church communities of faith and Rainbow Refugee may receive financial support (start-up costs plus three months' support) through the Rainbow Resettlement Assistance Program (RRAP). The LGBTQI2+ newcomer would receive three months' income support and start-up costs from RRAP. The sponsoring group would provide financially for the remaining nine months. For more information on PSR, see [Frequently Asked Questions about Refugee Sponsorship](#).

What financial support is provided for sponsors of LGBTQI2+ refugees?

Sponsoring an LGBTQI2+ refugee is the same process as regular refugee sponsorship—same process, same paperwork. However, the federal government offers increased financial support for LGBTQI2+ refugees (start-up costs plus three months' support) that they don't offer other refugees. Additionally, LGBTQI2+ cases can be expedited.

Where can I learn more about LGBTQI2+ refugee sponsorship?

Learn more on the Sponsoring an LGBTQI2+ Refugee page on the [United Church website](#).

Who can I contact for more information or to express interest in sponsoring an LGBTQI+ refugee?

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