



LGBTQ+ Blended Sponsorship Pilot

In 1993, Canada became among the first countries to extend refugee protection to those facing persecution of their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE). Canada continues to receive recognition internationally as a place of safety and respect for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer and other gender or sexual minority (LGBTQ+) refugees. To build and sustain Canada's important role in protecting and promoting the human rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, we ask that all parties endorse the renewal and regularization of the LGBTQ+ pilot blended sponsorship program.

- The Rainbow Refugee Assistance Project (RRAP), a blended private sponsorship agreement announced on March 14, 2011 is an Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada (IRCC) partnership with Rainbow Refugee Society.
- Rainbow Refugee Society (RRS), a Vancouver based organization with 16 years of direct experience supporting LGBTQ+ refugees, has been proud to steward the RRAP since its inception. Initially a 3-year pilot, the RRAP was renewed twice.
- Between 2011-2016, members of LGBTQ+ communities and allies have formed sponsorship circles in 14 municipalities across Canada, including from Halifax to Salt Spring Island.
- 75 matches and applications have been completed for individuals from 13 countries including: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Congo, Gambia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Russia, Uganda.
- IRCC's matching contribution of \$300,000 has encouraged Canadian Sponsorship Circles to raise \$1.4 Million in support LGBTQ+ refugees through this program.
- The networks and knowledge of local LGBTQ+ communities enable RRAP sponsorship circles to offer practical, social and emotional supports. Circles and Sponsored individuals form mutually rewarding connections and enjoy the solidarity of working together to achieve respect and rights for LGBTQ+ globally.
- The current contract will end March 31, 2017; No additional applications can be submitted unless and until the program is renewed.
- Renewing and regularizing the funding the RRAP will allow circles across Canada to continue sponsoring and welcoming LGBTQ+ refugees, while enabling Rainbow Refugee to build the program sustainably.
- Given rising backlashes against LGBTQ+ individuals in many countries and heightened refugee exclusions, Canada must continue and expand its commitment to resettlement of LGBTQ+ refugees.