

3 May 2017



Submission by

Rainbow Foundation of Hope

to

## The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Rainbow Foundation of Hope (FOH) is a Canadian charity registered and founded to provide financial assistance to other Canadian charities actively supporting **LGBT+** Asylum Seekers, Refugees, and Newcomers to Canada. Operated by a working board of volunteers, FOH is the first organization of its kind in Canada and possibly the world. The Foundation originated as a group of individuals who co-sponsored two gay Syrian Refugees to become permanent residents as Newcomers to Canada under Canada's private sponsorship program. Through its work, the team learned that a queer Refugee's path is neither simple nor easy. A tremendous amount of resources are needed to escape untold hardships.

Foundation of Hope does not appeal directly to individual cases of persecution on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity (**SOGI**). Having received registered charitable status in 2015, FOH is legally required to direct all contributions to other Canadian charities working directly with individual cases of SOGI persecution. Our mandate is to ensure broad representation to meet the needs of **LGBT+** Refugees and Newcomers and is predicated on collaboration, transparency, and accountability to our donor base. Support encompasses financial assistance to unique organizations in Canada that provide avenues for private sponsorship of Refugees or community support services to assist Newcomers.

Financing charities allows FOH to address the important issue of SOGI persecution worldwide while remaining at arm's length in support of **LGBT+** individuals seeking asylum. We believe there are emergent benefits through a goal of collaboration and hold a broad mandate to support these initiatives, not only as a funding partner to the individual charities that align with our purpose, but also to seek out partnerships among charitable organizations and donors that share common interests. Through collaboration, FOH believes the broader goal to improve and expand the support network can more swiftly and effectively enable solutions to **LGBT+** Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Newcomers wherever they intersect.

Most importantly, this goal begins with the donors and partners that entrust us to ensure their generous contributions are directed to wherever LGBT+ Refugees and Newcomers are in need. It is incumbent upon FOH steward such generosity in a manner that is transparent and accountable to achieve success as efficiently and effectively as possible. In this respect, valuable partnerships have emerged to include corporate contributions like the TD Aeroplan Pride gift of 3,000,000 Aeroplan miles to use in accordance with FOH's Purpose, individual donations through grassroots fundraising, and key government partnerships such as the [Rainbow Refugee Assistance Program \(RRAP\)](#) initiated by the Government of Canada in 2011. The RRAP has been invaluable in enabling Constituent Groups and co-sponsoring organizations in their tireless efforts to bring LGBT+ Refugees to safety, where they are free to be themselves.

## About the Butterfly

The monarch butterfly in many circles has become a metaphor of the immigrant facing near insurmountable barriers to migration. Not only is the monarch butterfly under threat from human-induced disturbances such as climate change and habitat loss, it is a phenomenon of nature with an extraordinary strategy for migration. This remarkable insect flies thousands of kilometres between continents, over vast expanses of ocean, and across many borders.

With respect to these threats, they are not unlike the vulnerable human populations facing crises across the world, such as the current situation in Syria and the unparalleled degree of human displacement that is unprecedented in our history.

## About the Grant Process

Foundation of Hope provides grants to registered charities in Canada. As a registered charity, FOH must work in this capacity to realize a Vision that will help build strong communities of support and integration for LGBT+ Newcomers in Canada. Foundation of Hope offers two grant funding streams that comprise the following:

- Financially assist LGBT+ people under persecution to gain asylum as Refugees in safe countries, such as Canada, through the [Refugee Sponsorship](#) stream of grant funding; and
- Financially assist LGBT+ people under persecution to become integrated into Canadian life as Newcomers through the [Community Services](#) stream of grant funding.

## Refugee Sponsorship Support

Sponsorship support grants are awarded to eligible sponsorship and resettlement groups to privately sponsor LGBT+ Refugees including the following entities existing as, or in partnership with Canadian registered charities:

- Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH);
- Constituency Group (CG);
- Community Sponsor (CS) for UNHRC Convention Refugees; and
- Urgent situations that involve acute persecution of LGBT+ Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

## Community Services Support

Community Services grants to Registered Charities that provide Newcomers resettlement services for LGBT+ individuals including, but not necessary limited to:

- Non-government funded medical services;
- Educational services to enhance settlement and integration;
- Counselling and mental health services;
- Social support services; and
- Secure housing.

## About the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program

The Sponsorship Grant Support Stream seeks to enable LGBT+ Refugees to leave their country of origin where their lives are in danger or leave their country of refuge to come to Canada through private sponsorship. Individual Asylum Seekers looking for refuge in a safe country can either come to Canada or another country that is generally understood to be safe compared to the country of origin, as a special case for urgent sponsorship support. In any case, FOH's charitable designation with CRA requires that sponsorship support grants for such migrants must be administered through a Canadian organization that is also a registered charity. Applicants can also apply to this grant stream for funds that shall be used to meet their current sponsorship obligations.

Sponsorship grants of up to **\$7,500** per project are designed to stimulate direct and concrete efforts that support LGBT+ Asylum Seekers and Refugees. The program is entirely funded through community donations and corporate sponsorship. **Importantly, every successful application to FOH for sponsorship support to date has also relied on the RRAP.**

Submissions are reviewed by a Foundation of Hope Grants Committee Review Team, which is assembled by the Committee Chair and is composed of FOH Board Directors and volunteer representatives of the LGBT+ community across Canada. The review process is intended to be transparent and ensure accountability in keeping with the **Vision** of FOH:

A world where  
LGBT+ Refugees and Newcomers  
are safe and can be themselves.

Financial support is the core Purpose of FOH and integral to the ability to accomplish its Mission. The following set of criteria used by the Grants Committee Review Team to evaluate proposals:

- **Efficacy** - FOH is looking for effective ways to appeal to our Vision, Mission, and Purpose.
- **Significance** - We look for clarity in how the goals of the project address LGBT+ Refugee and Newcomer needs. Are people most at risk directly targeted? How many at risk people will benefit?
- **Action Plan** - We look for a well thought out action plan that works towards achieving the stated goals of the project. Does the application effectively demonstrate how closely the action plan aligns with the budget and timeline provided?
- **Collaboration** - We recognize that the monies awarded to individual projects may not meet the level of need requested. A clear description of the role of FOH funds in collaboration with other affiliated groups is key to a successful proposal.
- **Feasibility** - We look for a realistic project that is feasible in terms of time, budget, and available resources. Are the goals and objectives clearly identified in the measures of success? Are there any risks to the project in terms of achieving measures of success identified?
- Foundation of Hope also considers other factors related to sponsorship goals, such as **urgency**.

## Measures of Success

In less than three years since becoming a registered charity in 2015, FOH has awarded close to **\$90,000** in grant funding **across Canada** through ongoing fundraising efforts. Organizations that have previously received funding will be evaluated based on proven success in meeting grant deliverables.

### 2015

A total of **\$25,000** disbursed in grant awards including \$17,500 for sponsorship and \$7,500 for community support for LGBT+ Newcomers. Recipients included **Toronto**-based Rainbow Railroad for its Lifeline Syria Project and **Vancouver**-based MOSAIC for continuation of its iBelong Project.

### 2016

A total of **\$42,062.88** disbursed in grant awards, including \$12,500 for sponsorship support and \$29,562.88 for community services support for LGBT+ Newcomers. Recipients included **Ottawa**-based Capital Rainbow Refuge as a CG for LGBT+ Refugees, **Toronto**-based Égale Canada Human Rights Trust for its Youth OUTreach Program, **Vancouver**-based Inland Refugee Society for its Newcomer housing project, and reinstatement of the iBelong Project with MOSAIC.

### 2017

A total of **\$22,500.00** approved or disbursed in grant awards to date, including \$15,000 for sponsorship support and \$7,500 for community services support. Recipients include **Ottawa**-based ORFA and Baker's Dozen as CGs for 4 LGBT+ Refugees, Vancouver-based St. Andrews Wesley United Church as a CG for 2 LGBT+ Refugees, and the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network for LGBT+ Newcomer youth representation at the Youth Action Gathering in **Winnipeg**.

## A Partnership in the Government of Canada

Foundation of Hope gives what it receives entirely through **volunteer** fundraising efforts on the ground. We have been able to form unique partnerships with CGs and SAHs for Refugee Sponsorship across Canada, but this only represents one of two essential funding streams. Newcomers remain vulnerable upon arrival to Canada and benefit from community services that are vital to successful integration into Canadian society. Both streams reflect Canadian values for human rights that are unique in the world.

Canada has established itself as a nation that is highly regarded for its role in promoting equal rights through social justice, peacekeeping, and humanitarian aid. Canadian support for diversity in the expression of sexuality and gender identity is a hallmark of such international regard. Indeed, Canada has become a sanctuary for the LGBT+, whose rights have been trampled on in so many parts of the world while ongoing trauma from persecution persists to this day. Unwavering support for sponsorship of countless victims of SOGI persecution is integral to that hallmark.

Rainbow Foundation of Hope is proud to extend a charitable hand as a **lasting partner** working alongside the Government of Canada through its **Rainbow Refugee Assistance Program** for the successful resettlement of LGBT+ Newcomers to Canada.

Respectfully,

Chad Wilkinson, Chair

**Foundation of Hope Grants Committee**

1500 W Georgia St #1250, Vancouver, BC V6G 2Z6

