
**UNDERSTANDING
THE STATE
OF GLOBAL
LGBTQI+
PERSECUTION**

ANNUAL REPORT
2023



**RAINBOW
RAILROAD**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RAINBOW RAILROAD

02 GLOSSARY

06 FOREWORD

**10 TOP 10 COUNTRIES
WHERE REQUESTS FOR
HELP ORIGINATE**

**12
GET MORE
TO SAFETY
NOW**

**14 UNDERSTANDING
OUR WORK**

16 STORIES: FLEEING FEAR

**18 UNDERSTANDING
OUR PERSPECTIVE**

20 AT A GLANCE

**38 A NEW PARTNERSHIP
FOR LGBTQI+ REFUGEES
IN CANADA**

**39 COMMUNITIES OF
CARE RESETTLE LGBTQI+
REFUGEES TO THE US**



**26 STORIES: COURAGE
ACROSS CONTINENTS**

**42 LGBTQI+ PEOPLE
IN CRISIS**

**43 THE GLOBAL ANTI-
GENDER MOVEMENT AND
DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING**

**44 A COORDINATED CRISIS
RESPONSE IN UGANDA**

**48 STRATEGIC COORDINATION
ON AFGHANISTAN**

**52 RUSSIA'S CONTINUED
ASSAULT ON UKRAINE**

54

QUEER THE SYSTEM



84 STORIES: JANNAT'S ARTIVIST JOURNEY

56 UNIQUE DATA

57 A DATA DRIVEN APPROACH

58 WHERE THE DATA COMES FROM

58 WHO WE HELP

74 DATA INSIGHTS

75 BRIDGING THE GAPS

77 BEYOND RELOCATION

80 THE POWER OF QUEER GLOBAL ADVOCACY

81 SECURING GOVERNMENT REFERRING PATHWAYS

83 UN ENGAGEMENT

86 QUEER FORCED DISPLACEMENT INITIATIVE

87 RAINBOW RAILROAD'S PLEDGE

88

STRENGTHEN OUR FOUNDATION

90 ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS

92 OUR STAFF

93 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

94 THANK YOU

94 DONORS

106 VOLUNTEERS

112 FINANCIALS

114 GET INVOLVED

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

GLOSSARY

AGENDER	A term describing people who do not identify with any gender. This term may also encompass people who experience a lack of gender and people whose gender is neutral. Agender people have a range of sexual orientations, gender expressions and sex characteristics.
ALIAGENDER	A non-binary gender identity that doesn't fit into existing gender schemas or constructs. Persons are not a mixture of male and female, nor an absence of gender, but instead identify with a strong, specific gender identity that is not man or woman.
ASEXUAL	Often called "ace", asexual refers to a complete or partial lack of sexual attraction or lack of interest in sexual activity with others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and asexual people may experience no, little or conditional sexual attraction.
ASYLUM SEEKER	An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim.
BISEXUAL	A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one gender, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with pansexual.
CAR	Caribbean
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CIS-MAN	Cisgender Man. A person designated male at birth who identifies as a man.
CIS-WOMAN	Cisgender Woman. A person designated female at birth who identifies as a woman.
CITIZEN	A person who, by place of birth, nationality of one or both parents, or naturalization is granted full rights and responsibilities as a member of a State.
EE	Eastern Europe
ETS	Emergency Travel Support

GAY	A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Men, women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.
GENDER IDENTITY	A person's internal, deeply felt sense of being female or male, both, or something other than female and male, such as a third gender or non-binary.
GENDER NON-CONFORMING	A person who does not conform to stereotypical appearances, behaviors or traits associated with sex assigned at birth.
GENDERFLUID	A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.
HETEROSEXUAL	Also "Straight." A person whose romantic, emotional and/or physical attraction is to people of a different gender.
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INTERGENDER	A non-binary gender identity that describes the experience of having a gender that falls somewhere in between woman and man or is a mix of both man and woman.
INTERSEX	An umbrella term that refers to a range of variations in chromosomes, gonads, and/or genitals that vary from what is considered typical for female or male bodies.
LA	Latin America
LESBIAN	A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. Women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Plus
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NA	North America
NO LEGAL STATUS	Someone without any legal immigration status (either temporary or permanent) in their country of residence. This is sometimes also referred to as "undocumented migrant" or "person without status."

NON-BINARY	An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.
OCEA	Oceania and Pacific Islands
PANSEXUAL	Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.
PERMANENT RESIDENT	A person who has been granted the right to reside permanently in a certain country, but is not a citizen. Permanent residents are often afforded basic rights similar to those of citizens, with some limitations and restrictions.
QUEER	A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as an umbrella term, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities.
SCA	South-Central Asia
SEX	The biological classification of bodies as male or female based on such factors as external sex organs, internal sexual and reproductive organs, hormones, and chromosomes.
SEX CHARACTERISTICS	Each person's physical features relating to sex, including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, genitals and secondary physical features emerging from puberty.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people. An individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STATELESS PERSON	A person is "stateless" if no State considers them a citizen. States have specific obligations towards their citizens and grant citizens significantly more rights than non-citizens. Since no State recognizes them, stateless persons are deprived of many basic rights and have no State to protect them.

STRAIGHT	Also "Heterosexual". A person whose romantic, emotional and/or physical attraction is to people of a different gender.
TEMPORARY RESIDENT	A foreign national who is legally authorized to enter and live in a certain country for temporary purposes (work, studies, etc.).
TRANSGENDER/ TRANS	The gender identity of people whose sex assigned at birth does not conform to their identified or lived gender. A transgender person usually adopts, or would prefer to adopt, a gender expression in consonance with their gender identity but may or may not desire to alter their physical characteristics to conform to their gender identity.
TRANSGENDER MAN	A person designated female at birth but who identifies, and may present themselves, as a man. Transgender men are referred to with male pronouns.
TRANSGENDER WOMAN	A person designated male at birth but who identifies and may present themselves as a woman. Transgender women are referred to with female pronouns.
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
REFUGEE	Refugees are persons who are outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection. Some refugees are registered by UNHCR under their mandate.
WE	Western Europe
WHO	World Health Organization

FOREWORD

A MESSAGE FROM RAINBOW RAILROAD'S BOARD CHAIR

Photo by David
Peinado Romero



Reflecting on the events of 2023, I'm struck by the profound significance of Rainbow Railroad's work and the unwavering support of our community. This past year has been marked by urgent calls for the services we offer and critical advocacy to confront systemic challenges facing LGBTQI+ individuals worldwide. From navigating major humanitarian crises to confronting significant crackdowns and rollbacks on LGBTQI+ rights, our mission has never been more vital.

Last year we also embarked on the initial stages of our latest Strategic Plan. In this report you'll see its key themes emerge under three pillars of action guiding our work: Get More to Safety Now, Queer the System, and Strengthen our Foundation.

Operating at the crossroads of LGBTQI+ rights and forced displacement, we spent the year amplifying our voice on the global stage. Our mission, deeply rooted in the pursuit of queer liberation, guides our actions as we assist at-risk LGBTQI+ individuals in finding safety and advocate for structural changes to the international refugee system.

Despite some progress globally, the rise of anti-LGBTQI+ sentiments and legislation signals a broader erosion of democratic values. We continue to navigate the complexities of the anti-gender movement, particularly evident in the United States, where new legislation poses threats at the same time that our community is mobilizing to welcome LGBTQI+ newcomers.

In 2023 we experienced significant victories as an organization, building partnerships with the Canadian Government and Welcome Corps in the United States that will allow us to get more people to safety. We engaged in international spaces to advocate for change and influence policy discussions on a global scale.



Photo by
Stephanie Kenner

Progress is piecemeal, and globally, there have been strides made in the advancement of LGBTQI+ rights over the past year. Multiple countries decriminalized consensual same-sex relations and there have been judicial or legislative wins for LGBTQI+ rights.

Yet, amidst these efforts, the failures of the global humanitarian system persist. LGBTQI+ individuals remain disproportionately affected during crises, highlighting the urgent need for tailored support and pathways to safety. Over the past year, there have been major setbacks in the work of queer liberation.

Since March of last year, we have been deeply involved in a response to the passing of the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) in Uganda, a legislative attack on queer and trans people that resulted in a major spike in requests for help from LGBTQI+ Ugandans, and queer and trans people from the surrounding region fearing similar legislation.

Throughout 2023, we continued to experience a high number of requests for help from LGBTQI+ Afghans amidst a protracted crisis. We facilitated the ongoing resettlement of individuals reaching out to us while developing strategic direction for the future of our response efforts.



As an organization that tracks crisis situations around the world, we recognize that during crises, including geopolitical, climate, or state-sponsored crackdowns against civilians, LGBTQI+ forcibly displaced persons are disproportionately and severely impacted. In a global landscape defined by the criminalization of queer, trans, and intersex people, LGBTQI+ persons are pushed to the margins of society, and experience direct persecution, exclusion and discrimination within existing protection systems.

We are witnessing an unimaginable humanitarian crisis in Gaza that has led to an increase in the number of forcibly displaced people. While Rainbow Railroad imagines a world where no one has to flee their homeland for fear of their lives, we also know that when people have to flee there must be options to do so. Currently, humanitarian response to those most affected in the region is nearly impossible under the ongoing killing and mass displacement of LGBTQI+ Gazans.

As we look ahead into 2024 and beyond, we are closely monitoring the situation to ensure we can respond effectively as we find and create safe opportunities to provide assistance. As in other contexts, international humanitarian funding fails to reach the most vulnerable, and particularly LGBTQI+ persons with the least access to these programs.

Our 2023 Annual Report shares insights from a challenging year, but it is a testament to the power and resilience of our community. Throughout the report, you will read reflections and accounts from the individuals we support, that will give you a holistic picture of the complexity of the problems LGBTQI+ persons face and the systems we must challenge.

The global state of LGBTQI+ persecution can feel insurmountable, but I hope that, like me, by witnessing the power of our collective global efforts toward queer liberation, you will feel energized and inspired to continue this fight.

Though the challenges may seem daunting, together, we continue the fight for queer liberation, fueled by the power of solidarity and hope.



CALEB GOODMAN (HE/HIM)

Chair of the Board
Rainbow Railroad



TOP 10 COUNTRIES WHERE REQUESTS FOR HELP ORIGINATE

- PAKISTAN
- AFGHANISTAN
- UNITED STATES
- UGANDA
- KENYA
- TÜRKIYE
- NIGERIA
- MOROCCO
- RUSSIA
- EGYPT

TÜRKIYE

Many requests for help we receive from Türkiye come from Iranian migrants in Türkiye. To read one of their stories, turn to page 65.

UNITED STATES

To learn more about the complexities of requests for help from the United States, turn to Top 10 Nationalities and Countries of Request, page 61.

RUSSIA

To learn more about the crackdown on LGBTQI+ populations in Russia, turn to page 52.



NIGERIA

MOROCCO

EGYPT

KENYA

UGANDA

To learn more about how we're responding to the current situation in Uganda, turn to page 44.

PAKISTAN

81% of the requests originating from Pakistan are from Afghans seeking temporary refuge in the country.

AFGHANISTAN

To learn more about our ongoing work in Afghanistan, turn to page 48.

GET MORE TO SAFETY NOW

**THIS SECTION
EXPLAINS HOW
WE PARTNER WITH
INDIVIDUALS AND
ORGANIZATIONS
TO GET MORE TO
SAFETY NOW.**



Rainbow Railroad's primary goal is to assist LGBTQI+ individuals to move to safer locations as quickly as possible, and the individuals seeking our assistance must be centered in all aspects of this work. This requires a multifaceted approach that involves identifying and creating new opportunities for mobility while refining existing pathways to safety. While we continue to provide emergency travel to safer countries, we are committed to exploring new and innovative ways to expand transit country engagement and routes to safety.

UNDER- STANDING OUR WORK

THE APPROACH WE TAKE
TO OUR WORK IS

V-I-T-A-L



V

I

T

A

L

WE VERIFY. We thoroughly verify and identify each case through interviews, documentary evidence, and supporting testimony to learn about the circumstances of the individual facing persecution and to determine how we can help. We always apply a queer-sensitive, trauma-informed, survivor-centered approach in our verification process. Our team has unique expertise that allows for verification in a way that is not only robust and systematic, but also tailored to the complexities of LGBTQI+ experiences of persecution. We do this in collaboration and partnership with Human Rights Defenders on the ground, mindful of the security risks for field operations in countries that criminalize same-sex intimacy.

WE INITIATE. Once we verify a case, we work with individuals at risk to identify the best outcome for safety. Through our comprehensive case management process, we research possible routes to safety and connect with local contacts who provide logistical support. This includes providing support to the individual in-country, through safehouses, shelter assistance, cash assistance, and complementary forms of support.

WE TRAVEL. Once a safe route has been identified, we facilitate travel. This is often to a country that accepts refugees and upholds the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons. What “safety” looks like depends on the unique individual’s needs – and is not limited to high-income countries. Travel may also mean relocation within the country of origin. If an individual crosses international borders, upon arrival, we provide limited, short-term support to help them settle and connect to resources in their new country.

WE ADVOCATE. Due to barriers for LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum and accessing traditional resettlement, we have needed to advocate for expanded and flexible pathways to safety for at-risk LGBTQI+ persons, working in collaboration with governments, academics, local partners, affected populations, and civil society. Advocacy has been especially necessary when there have been state crackdowns on LGBTQI+ persons that require an immediate response from the Government.

WE LEARN. It is important that we continue to learn, as the only organization of this size and scope engaged in this type of work. We monitor and evaluate our programs to enhance service delivery and impact, implementing insights gained from LGBTQI+ people at risk into concrete action. We also serve as thought leaders, sharing emerging trends, recommendations, and situational analyses with the global humanitarian community, governments, and grassroots actors to fill the gaps in knowledge regarding LGBTQI+ forced displacement and to generate new protection solutions.

FLEEING FEAR:

FROM PERIL TO PROMISE, A JOURNEY TO SAFETY AND NEW BEGINNINGS

The story of each LGBTQI+ refugee we assist is deeply unique, complex and personal. One such individual, Chase, allowed us to share their journey navigating the international asylum system in their own words.

“Resettlement isn’t a fairytale ending – but it’s not the end, it’s a first step into a new future.”

By Chase

If that terrified nineteen-year-old could see me now, he’d probably wonder who let this bitter, sarcasm-spewing guy steal his body. The scars from his misadventures in the Middle East – both mental and the raised welts on his back – tend to do that to a person.

Home sweet home consisted of being zip tied to our radiator with its chipping paint, and some truly creative uses for bamboo canes. Not exactly the décor you’ll find in home improvement magazines. It turns out my family’s views on interior design didn’t quite align with my ‘lifestyle choices.’ I’d scrub myself under scalding water afterwards, trying in vain to wash off the sweaty smell of fear that soaked my skin. You see, my parents believed in tough love; specifically, the kind that leaves you looking like a zebra.

I learned early that joy is dangerous territory. There was danger in each shared smile with a guy, in every soft meeting of the eyes that held a promise of what could have been. If I so much as brushed shoulders with a guy in some hallway, panic would claw at my insides. Did he think I was gay for not avoiding his shoulder? Did others?



Home wasn't an escape either. I would spend each night navigating the minefield of my parents' moods as if I were reading tea leaves. Would my father's clenched grip on the newspaper turn into clenched fists pummeling into me? Would the annoyed look on my mother's face translate into barbed comments from her venomous mouth?

They eventually found out I was gay. I have no memory of the precise moment, just of the world imploding. My father's fists slamming into me, his face inches from mine, spittle flying as he shrieked at me for being "a disgusting pervert who went against the natural order." I knew I had to flee.

Escape was a frantic leap into the unknown - Türkiye, where I lived with the bone-deep fear that the next knock at the door would be my parents coming to bring me back. You don't realize how deafeningly loud silence can be until it's an endless loop of every nightmare that brought you to that point.

Rainbow Railroad. Almost ironic, isn't it? I went from an underground existence hiding my true self from my parents, to an underground railroad leading to freedom. They tackled the resettlement process on my behalf, a twisted bureaucratic mess in which the possibility of falling through the cracks was all too real. Yet alongside that were Devon and Adriana, the Rainbow

Railroad caseworkers who were by my side every day, even though they were a hemisphere away. They let me choke out my sob story without making me feel like the broken mess I was.

As for Canada? Well, YOU try surviving on cold smiles and minimum wage for a true taste of character-building. They have lovely winters up here, just cold enough to match the bleakness of my soul. It took a while, a lot of caffeine-fueled nights, and a not insignificant amount of rage-studying to turn things around. Now, I stroll alongside other fresh-faced hopefuls at U of T, reminding myself every time I get the urge to complain about essays and assignments, that it is a privilege for me to even have things to complain about, because it means I made it out alive. How fortunate must I be for my biggest gripe to be an essay?

Life's funny that way, I suppose. One day you're fleeing from country to country and continent to continent in a bid for freedom, and the next you're just another overworked student complaining about exam season and Toronto housing prices.

It's not a fairytale ending. In fact, it's not an ending at all, because thanks to Rainbow Railroad, I have my whole life ahead of me, to complain, to celebrate, to explore, to love, to hate, to be. Not only did they make survival possible, they gave me a shot at building a life even I didn't expect. Let's be honest, my odds weren't great. And for all those workers and supporters, my sarcasm probably isn't a great thank you! But my sarcasm is better than my silence, which is what would've happened to me if it weren't for Rainbow Railroad: Silence.

There are others still living in that world I so narrowly escaped from. It fuels me. It serves as a constant reminder that cynicism never built a safe haven and that complacency has not and will not save lives. Rainbow Railroad helps turn nightmares into futures. Darkness into hope. If my story, with all its rough edges and sarcastic quips aside, inspires even one more donation, one more act of kindness—well, that's how we chip away at the darkness: one brick at a time.

UNDERSTANDING OUR PERSPECTIVE

Although there are countless insights to be gained from the nuances of one individual's story, analyzing a larger dataset alongside personal narratives enables us to see global trends from different perspectives. Collecting data on LGBTQI+ individuals is a complex and iterative process. The data included in this report is based on the requests for help we receive and the individuals we support. By sharing this information, we aim to provide a window into the state of LGBTQI+ persecution around the world.

Our data is subject to several limitations and considerations.

1

If you are interested in accessing the anonymized data used to produce this report, you can submit a request and justification to info@rainbowrailroad.org

OUR DATA IS LIMITED TO THE LGBTQI+ INDIVIDUALS WE WORK WITH.

Rainbow Railroad's work is limited in scope, both in terms of whom we interact with and where they are located. Further factors based on individual perception about Rainbow Railroad, who we help, what services are accessible, and what is safe to disclose to us, cannot be fully accounted for in our data.

Additionally, more concerns are often uncovered as we work with a person over time. Because we have limited resources, we cannot always assist each person who reaches out to us, meaning some people are likely experiencing more safety or health and welfare concerns than are captured in our system. This means that any trends we identify from our data are likely underreported.

As such, this data is not generalizable or representative of all LGBTQI+ displaced and at-risk persons. Despite these limitations, given the limited data available on a hard-to-reach community, this report sheds light on patterns in human rights violations and protection concerns which can inform policy responses and offer key insights into the unique experiences of this particularly vulnerable population. Our goal is for our data to play a role in addressing the broader gap in international forced displacement and LGBTQI+ rights research.

DATA IS DISAGGREGATED BY SOGIESC IDENTITY AND OTHER DEMOGRAPHICS.

Rainbow Railroad receives requests for help from people around the world. However, our requests reflect that intersecting forces of marginalization mean our services are most accessible to cisgender gay men. To mitigate the overrepresentation of certain demographics in the data, we disaggregated some data by location, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) information, and age.

Despite our best efforts to indicate where regional trends impact our data, in 2023, nearly half of the number of requests for help constituted three situations: Afghans fleeing the Taliban, Ugandans in the wake of the Anti-Homosexuality Act, and an increasing number of requests from the United States. This must also be considered when viewing the data.

2

OUR DATA FOCUSES ON THE PRIMARY LGBTQI+ APPLICANT REQUESTING HELP FROM RAINBOW RAILROAD.

The analysis of the health and welfare and safety concerns provided in this report is based only on the individuals who requested help, even if their partners or other LGBTQI+ members of their families have also faced persecution and subsequently received our support. Our most detailed data surrounds the primary applicant and we provide limited information on dependents, representing another source of underreporting.

3

NOT ALL CASES IN RAINBOW RAILROAD'S SYSTEM HAVE BEEN VERIFIED.

These requests for help include both verified cases and those which we have not yet verified through interviews and documentary evidence. In that sense, we cannot independently corroborate all of the reported concerns. However, trends between verified cases and cases which are not yet verified are broadly consistent.

4

OUR WORK

In 2023, Rainbow Railroad received an unprecedented 15,352 requests for help from LGBTQI+ individuals around the world. We have a range of programming to support as many people who reach out to us as possible. Because of the financial cost of helping people who are at risk, the number of people we supported in 2023 was about half the number of people requesting help.

We delivered a total of 7,690 direct services to 7,265 individuals.

OF DIRECT SERVICES DELIVERED

ETS: EMERGENCY TRAVEL SUPPORT	434
-------------------------------	-----

PROGRAM 1: CASH ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN IMMINENT DANGER	219
--	-----

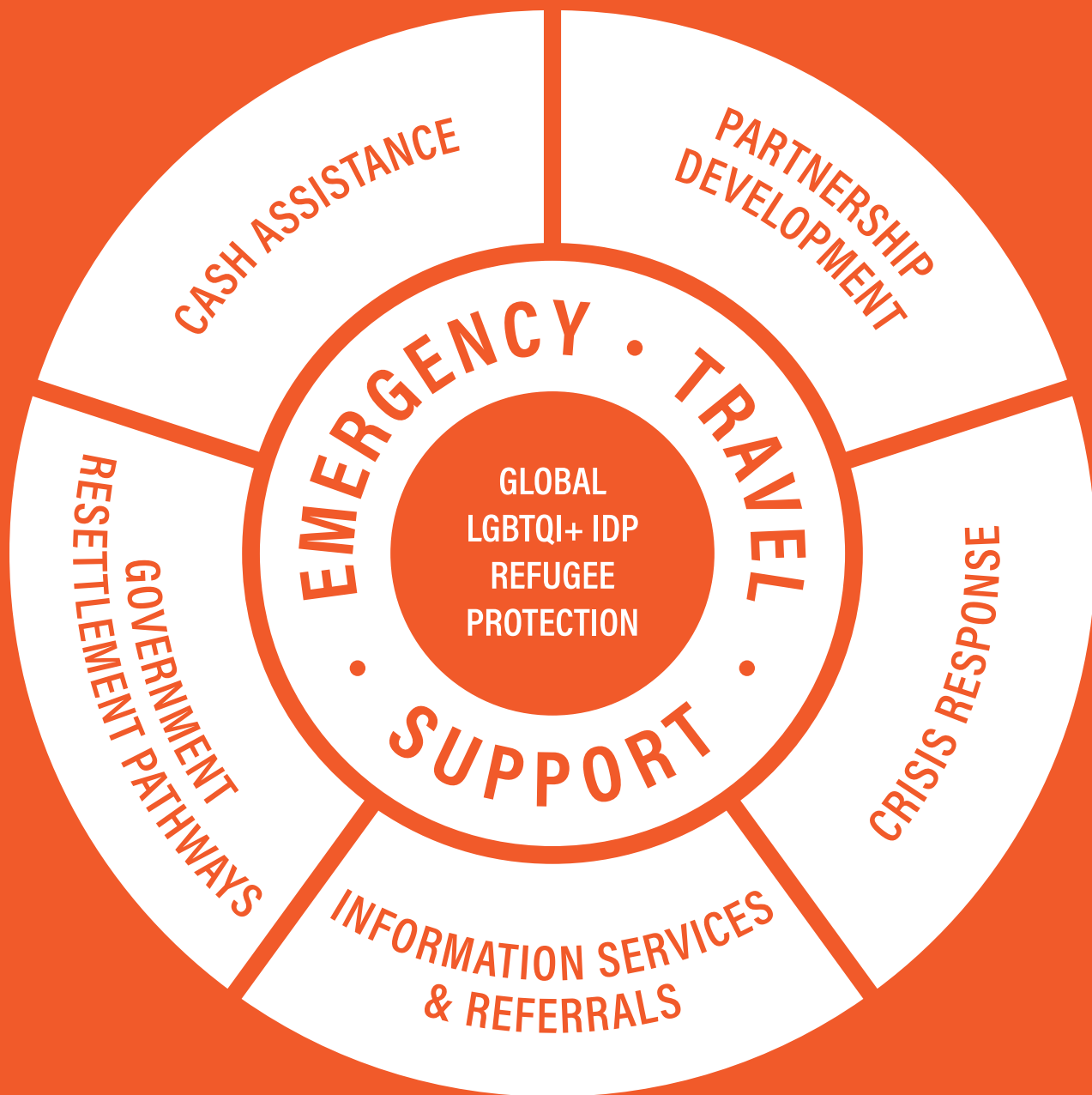
PROGRAM 2: DIRECT SUPPORT TO PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS	4174
--	------

PROGRAM 3: CRISIS RESPONSE TO CRACKDOWNS ON LGBTQI+ PEOPLE	2645
--	------

PROGRAM 4: INFORMATION SERVICES AND REFERRALS FOR PEOPLE AT IMMINENT RISK	188
---	-----

PROGRAM 5: GOVERNMENT RESETTLEMENT PATHWAYS	30 ¹
---	-----------------

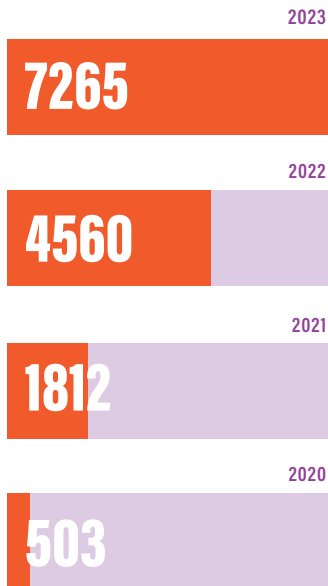
Almost half of the individuals that Rainbow Railroad supports will access more than one program. The total number of direct services delivered does not equal the unique number of individuals impacted by our services in a given year. In 2023, we delivered a total of 7,690 direct services to 7,265 individuals.



7690

**DIRECT SERVICES
PROVIDED TO ALL
INDIVIDUALS**

INCREASE IN SUPPORTED INDIVIDUALS



Between 2020 and 2023, the number of individuals supported by Rainbow Railroad increased by 1,344%.

As the need for our services increases, so does the complexity of the care we need to provide for each individual. As part of our commitment to offering comprehensive services, this year we considered how an individual may have several different touch-points with our various programs over the course of their journey. Almost half of the individuals we support will engage with two to four different programs in a year.

This may include an individual who receives Cash Assistance (Program 1) for shelter, food or other basic needs, Information Services and Referrals (Program 4) to access resources available in their local area, as well as relocation assistance through our Emergency Travel Support program. Some individuals will also access different programs across different years as their protection needs evolve over time, necessitating layered, multi-year support. We supported 101 individuals in 2023 whom we also supported in 2022. We supported 38 individuals who have received some form of assistance since 2021.

In 2023, Rainbow Railroad assisted 7,265 individuals through one to four different programs throughout the year. Of the people receiving services directly from Rainbow Railroad, 53% of individuals accessed one program in 2023, 44% accessed two programs during the year, 3% accessed three programs, and 0.1% accessed four programs over the course of the year.

The number of services delivered, a new statistic available in our 2023 report for the first time, represents a shift in our approach to measuring impact; it reflects a more accurate representation of the wraparound care provided to each individual, in addition to a summation of the total number of services we provide. With advancements in our tracking system, we now have the capability to track the comprehensive journey of each person we serve. This evolution allows us to better understand and address the diverse needs of the community. The reality that people must access multiple programs in order to successfully complete their journey highlights the systemic discrimination and marginalization individuals overcome in seeking safety.

For example, an Afghan individual fleeing Afghanistan must first renew their passport at a Taliban passport office, then undertake a difficult journey to Pakistan for refugee processing and keep themselves safe in a new city, including completing medical and security checks, until they can relocate many months later. Few journeys are completed as a simple movement, because each person

faces barriers and obstacles in their path, challenges which are directly addressed by our bespoke program modalities.

In 2023, Rainbow Railroad also deepened our commitment to support diverse SOGIESC identities. We are committed to reaching out to underserved LGBTQI+ populations, recognizing that our programming needs to be accessible to those who are most marginalized and in need of support. While cis-men represented the highest supported gender identity, this number proportionately decreased from 59% in 2022 to 53% in 2023. Trans women constituted the second-most supported group at 19%, followed by cis-women at 10%. In 2023, 37% of the individuals we supported identified as transgender or gender diverse compared to 27% in 2022.



**I REMEMBER THE DAY
WHEN, FOR THE FIRST
TIME, I WROTE MY STORY
TO RAINBOW RAILROAD
AND PRESSED THE
ENTER BUTTON.**

I didn't know that it was the moment when my life was taking its biggest turn. I waited impatiently every day until I got my first reply and I got my caseworker. I felt it was a dream that strangers from across the globe were trying to save my life when even my own family has never helped me."

ARMAN

434

**INDIVIDUALS
EVACUATED
THROUGH
EMERGENCY
TRAVEL
SUPPORT
LAST YEAR**

“

**I CANNOT HEAL
AS A SOLDIER
IF I AM STILL ON
THE BATTLEFIELD.
[WITH RELOCATION,]
EVERYTHING IS
NOW POSSIBLE.**

**I can be whoever I want to be.
I am growing and healing.
Being relocated helped me
understand myself; before,
I never thought about myself.
I can now become a family.
The Rainbow Railroad impact
did not just affect me, it has
made me think of starting
a family, it has created a
chance for continuation.”**

FERRAND

EMERGENCY TRAVEL SUPPORT

ETS

Our core program is Emergency Travel Support (ETS), which provides LGBTQI+ individuals with lifesaving resources and travel support to access pathways to safety in another country. ETS plays a pivotal role in our efforts to queer systems, because it operates outside the restrictions of government resettlement programming, reaching people who would otherwise be left behind by the resettlement system.

Since our founding in 2006, ETS has supported over 1,900 people from 34 different countries on their journeys to find safety. Our ETS program provides limited financial support to individuals to prepare them for their journey and to support their arrival in a safer country, where many individuals exercise their right to seek asylum. This financial support is targeted to cover essential expenses such as travel costs, accommodation, medical care, documentation requirements, legal fees, and other basic needs.

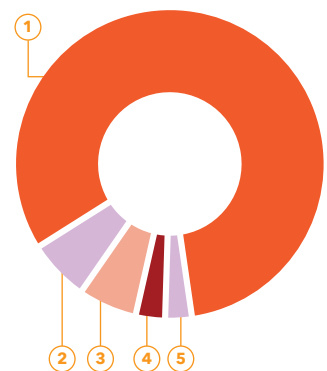
In 2023, we evacuated 434 individuals through emergency travel support.

The majority of ETS cases last year were nationals of Afghanistan, Jamaica, Russia, Egypt, and Uganda. These cases were driven by the significant harm to LGBTQI+ people in those countries rooted in state-sponsored homophobia and transphobia. Over a third of the individuals we supported through ETS were displaced and living outside of their country of nationality when they originally requested help from Rainbow Railroad.

In 2023, we helped individuals move to 24 countries: *Canada, Germany, United States, France, Argentina, Spain, Netherlands, Montenegro, Australia, Brasil, Finland, Malaysia, South Africa, Kenya, Mexico, Togo, United Kingdom, Italy, Lebanon, Nepal, Portugal, Rwanda, Switzerland, and Turkiye*. Some of these locations are final destinations where individuals will build new lives and seek protected status, while some are locations of transit. In their temporary new homes, individuals might be applicants for resettlement programs, laying low before attempting to return home, or may be en route to other countries that provide better conditions for their futures.

The ETS work we do is vital and remains our flagship program. But the number of people reaching out to our organization has increased drastically over the last several years, making it increasingly more challenging to move all LGBTQI+ individuals who reach out for help to safer countries. This is why we also provide five additional programs to increase the number of individuals we can support who are facing state-sanctioned persecution and violence.

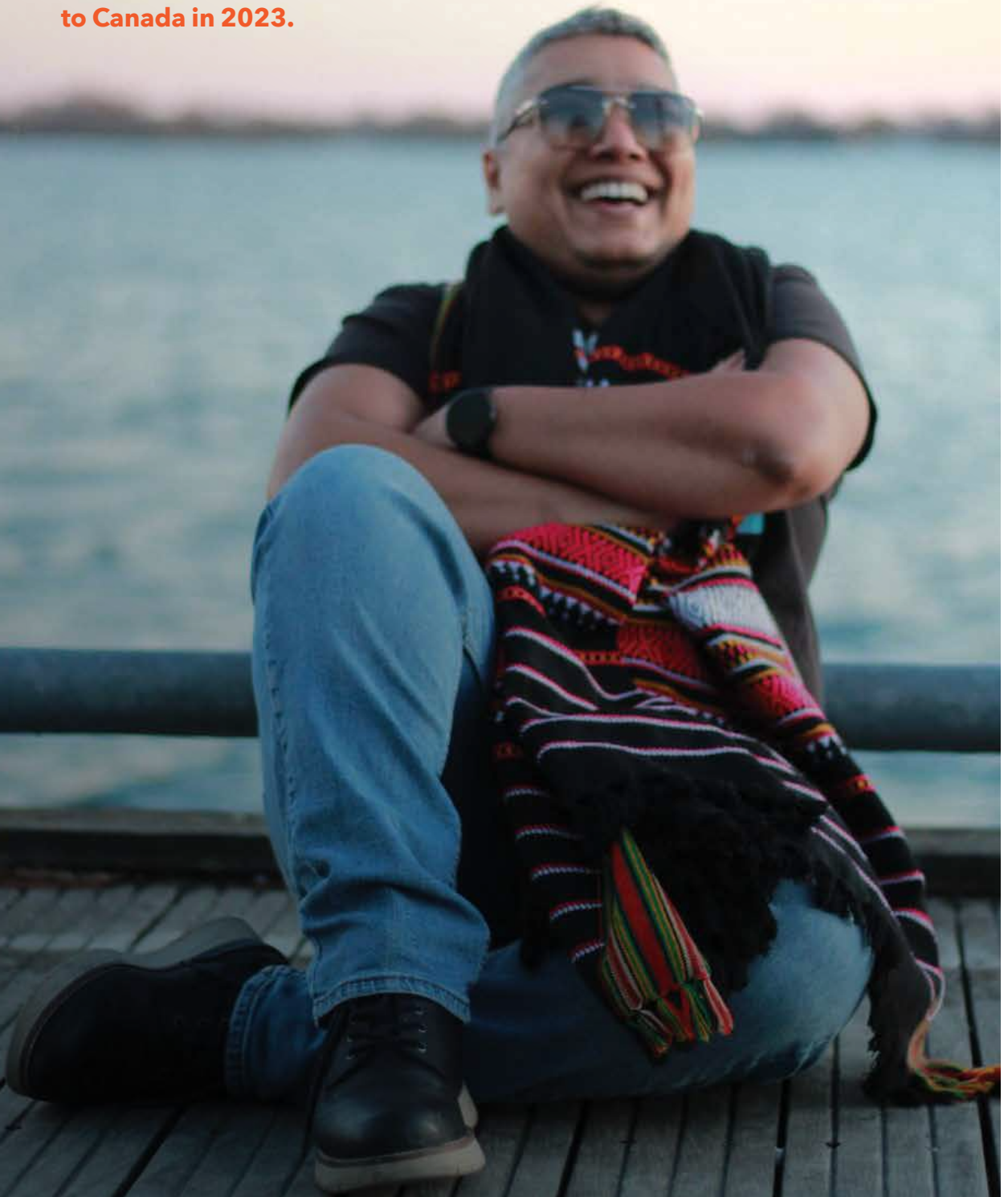
ETS DESTINATION COUNTRIES



1. **Canada (311)**
2. **Germany (24)**
3. **United States (23)**
4. **France: (12)**
5. **Argentina: (10)**

This graph shows the top 5 countries that individuals were relocated to in 2023.

Bali Ali, founder of Q-Global, a support network for lesbian and bisexual women in Pakistan. Resettled to Canada in 2023.



COURAGE ACROSS
CONTINENTS:

BALI'S JOURNEY FROM PAKISTAN TO CANADA

Bali Ali, founder of Q-Global, a support network for lesbian and bisexual women in Pakistan, relocated to Canada due to safety concerns and societal non-acceptance of their identity. "Living in a [homophobic] country, people might not be that religious, but they're still always ready for honor killing. Somebody snitched about one of my safe houses and I was attacked twice," they said. Despite leaving their homeland, they remain dedicated to supporting lesbian and bisexual women in Pakistan through Q-Global, easing the survivor's guilt they sometimes experience, saying, "I like my country. I have worked in my country. I have been the support group in my country, so that guilt is there, that I should be there with them."

Bali established Q-Global to create a safe space for lesbian and bisexual women in Pakistan, advocating for their rights and visibility. From 2013 until now, Q-Global has been active in Karachi and Lahore, after initially starting with providing safe housing. Since then, Q-Global has increased its capacity to provide legal and mental health support while also relocating individuals for work opportunities. Their journey mirrors the struggles and aspirations of LGBTQI+

individuals globally, demonstrating resilience and determination in the face of adversity. Despite the challenges they faced, Bali's commitment to their cause remains unwavering, showcasing their passion for creating positive change in their community.

In Canada, Bali found a more accepting environment, enabling them to continue their activism while also finding personal fulfillment and safety. However, relocation has not been without challenges. As they stated, "To be honest, it is so far a very bumpy road, but I like obstacles. When we are in our country we think that coming to a first world country is something very beautiful, and everything is okay. You're just crossing the rainbow, you'll be all happy and gay. But no, that's not the truth. It's not an easy road to travel on, from shelters that do not serve halal food to difficulty getting benefits. The good part is I made beautiful friends who were like my family."

Their heart remains with the queer community of Pakistan, and they continue to strive for progress and equality in their home country. Bali continues their advocacy, seeking to create spaces where queer individuals, especially lesbian and bisexual women, could thrive and feel supported. They plan to be a helpful guide for LGBTQI+ newcomers in Canada and continue contributing to the queer community. Their dream of opening a queer cafe isn't just about serving coffee; it is about fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment for their community. Bali reflected on their journey and expressed gratitude for the allies who had stood by their side, especially mentioning the support of their friend Latoya. Their story is a testament to the power of resilience, compassion, and solidarity in the pursuit of human rights and queer liberation.

PROGRAM
ONE

CASH ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN IMMINENT DANGER

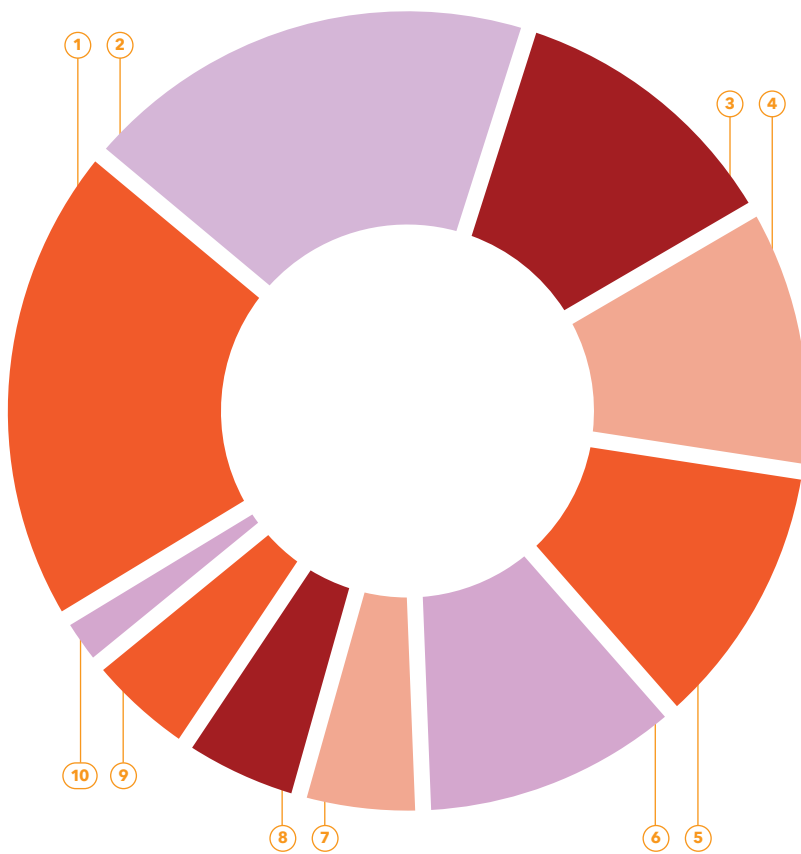
219

**INDIVIDUALS
PROVIDED
WITH SUPPORT
THROUGH CASH
ASSISTANCE**

Many individuals requesting help from Rainbow Railroad have limited options to leave their country to find safety. Their travel documents or passport may subject them to mobility restrictions or government policies on airlines, and travel outside of their current location may be hindered by religious, ethnic, and racialized discrimination. These individuals may access alternative options through financial assistance. Cash assistance also enables Human Rights Defenders to safeguard themselves while helping others and sustaining their activism in their home country.

This program provides direct cash assistance to alleviate essential needs such as accommodation, healthcare, and local transportation, for those who are not able to leave their country. Individuals can also access support in situations where in-country relocation is the most viable option. Other options include time off work to find new safer employment opportunities, and funds needed to affirm gender expression, mental health services or legal expenses. In 2023, the top three needs supported by our cash assistance program were accommodation, food, and transportation. The length of support provided to individuals can vary based on their unique circumstances but, on average, we provided between one and six months of financial support to individuals.

Working closely with individuals to determine their best option for a safe pathway can be a complicated and lengthy process, which sometimes spans years. In 2023, 59% of the individuals we supported through our cash assistance program also received cash assistance in 2022, and 14% had been receiving cash support since 2021.



We know that the support we provide cannot fully resolve the systematic marginalization which LGBTQI+ people face, and global research on cash programming demonstrates that increased funding for cash assistance is sorely needed². However, by collaborating closely with the individual and partners on the ground, our cash assistance program facilitates autonomy and allows individuals the dignity to meet their own needs.

CASH ASSISTANCE

1. Accommodations (20%)
2. Food (19%)
3. Medicine/Healthcare (12%)
4. Transportation (11%)
5. Communications (11%)
6. Other (11%)
7. Per Diem (5%)
8. Personal Items (5%)
9. Travel Documents (5%)
10. Internal Relocation (2%)

This graph represents the top 10 forms of cash assistance provided to individuals in 2023.

PROGRAM
TWO

DIRECT SUPPORT TO PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

4174

**LGBTQI+
INDIVIDUALS
RECEIVED
ASSISTANCE
THROUGH
PARTNERSHIP
SUPPORT
THIS YEAR**

Through our partnership program we work with local Human Rights Defenders, activist networks, and grassroots organizations. These individuals, collectives, and organizations possess invaluable on-the-ground insights and help us to identify, verify and provide logistical support to LGBTQI+ people at risk in their local area. Our partners offer healthcare support for affected individuals, provide shelter, operate safehouses, and engage in legal advocacy. Together, through our efforts in building the capacity of individuals and organizations, and elevating their access to platforms and spaces where they can share their expertise, we are paving the way for a stronger global LGBTQI+ rights movement.



Progress is being made, and allies and advocates are working towards a more inclusive world. You have the right to live free from discrimination and prejudice. Hold onto your dreams and know that your existence is a testament to courage and authenticity."

Mariano Ruiz, Derechos Humanos y Diversidad
Asociación Civil



Derechos Humanos y Diversidad Asociacion Civil (DHD), an organization in Argentina that supports and advocates for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees. Through our partnership program in 2023, Rainbow Railroad provided support to DHD along with 17 other organizations globally.

Last year we built and sustained partnerships with 18 organizations across 15 countries and 6 regions.

Since 2006, we've partnered with over 50 organizations across 28 countries and 6 regions. Rather than attempting to transpose our work into a criminalized country, we invest in our partners who already developed the regional, national, and localized expertise and understand how to effectively operate and defend LGBTQI+ rights in complex contexts. As we support the launch of an international queer forced displacement initiative, mobilizing this global knowledge will be key to supporting LGBTQI+ persons around the world.

While government partnerships will continue to be a strong advocacy priority in creating new pathways to safety, global partners remain at the forefront of facilitating the journeys of individuals accessing these pathways and supporting folks on the ground who may not be able to access them at all. LGBTQI+ rights defenders, activists, collectives, organizations, and regional networks advance the work of queer liberation every day, and investing in these partnerships is vital to our work.

DIRECT SUPPORT TO PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

ADVOCACY

65%

BASIC NEEDS

32%

LEGAL

25%

MEDICAL

30%

OPERATIONS

86%

OTHER

6%

RELOCATION SUPPORT

32%

SHELTER

43%

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

10%

We provide multiple forms of direct support to most of our partner organizations. Percentages will therefore exceed 100.

PROGRAM
THREE

CRISIS RESPONSE TO CRACKDOWNS ON LGBTQI+ PEOPLE

In 2023, we monitored and responded to four different crises in Uganda, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Russia. Our crisis response program monitors and responds to sudden state-sponsored persecution against LGBTQI+ individuals. Crisis situations may occur because of political instability at the State, regional and international levels, mass detentions following triggers such as public protests or internal state policy changes, adoption of regressive anti-LGBTQI+ legislation, or targeted arrests of LGBTQI+ individuals. Through tracking ongoing trends in our data, and leveraging our network of partners and Human Rights Defenders, we monitor crisis-prone areas and identify possible pathways to safety.

Crisis Response overlaps with other programs and support we provide for LGBTQI+ individuals. Other support given can be ETS, application support for Government Resettlement Pathways, support for organizations on the ground, or cash assistance for individuals who are in imminent danger.

We are currently monitoring anti-LGBTQI+ persecution in various countries, including Uganda, Ghana, and Russia.



THE REGIONAL CRISIS DRIVING DISPLACEMENT TO THE US SOUTHERN BORDER IS NOT GOING AWAY

In the wake of Venezuela's prolonged economic and political turmoil, over 7.7 million individuals have fled, sparking one of the largest refugee crises in recent history. The majority sought refuge in Latin American and Caribbean nations, while thousands more, hailing from around the world, find themselves in Mexico. Restrictive US border policies confine them to precarious conditions in border cities, anxiously awaiting a chance to seek asylum in the United States.

LGBTQI+ individuals on the move face heightened risks during their journey, encountering challenges such as navigating the perilous Darien gap into Central America and confronting severe border enforcement measures in Mexico and Guatemala. Meanwhile, Canada, the US, and Western Europe lag in resettling refugees at a pace that meets the rising global refugee crisis. Additionally, the failure of governments and UN agencies to systematically document LGBTQI+ refugee data contributes to the invisibility of queer individuals, hindering the provision of essential services.

In recent years, Rainbow Railroad has strategically invested in partnerships in Latin America, recognizing that the pivotal role played by regional and local organizations in offering services and generating solutions is often overlooked and underfunded. Last year, Rainbow Railroad supported the launch of the Regional Network for Human LGBTQ+ Mobility – a coalition comprising eleven organizations across ten countries in Latin America. This network aims to adopt a comprehensive 'whole of route' approach, providing a vital support system for LGBTQI+ individuals as they migrate across the region, fostering safe spaces and peer-to-peer care.

The Network focuses on respecting refugee autonomy and agency. It shares information about secure settlement options within Latin American countries, offers safe shelter and meets essential needs during transit. The network's overarching objective is to deliver services, champion collective advocacy, particularly on trans rights, lobby for rights-respecting migration policies, and mobilize financial resources to empower LGBTQI+ organizations. In doing so, it seeks to alleviate the challenges faced by forcibly displaced LGBTQI+ people and contribute to a more compassionate and inclusive response to this complex global crisis. As Rainbow Railroad looks towards the collective creation of a global network on forced displacement, mobilizing our allies doing this work in regional contexts will be key to developing solutions for LGBTQI+ refugees around the world.

Monitoring crisis response on a geo-political level can feel abstract. But each person affected by crisis has their own journey and their own story. We spoke with someone who experienced the Afghanistan crisis firsthand and partnered with Rainbow Railroad to find their path forward.

2645

**LGBTQI+
INDIVIDUALS
FACING CRISIS
SITUATIONS
SUPPORTED
THIS YEAR**

A JOURNEY OF
RESILIENCE:

OGAIE'S COURAGEOUS PATH FROM AFGHANISTAN TO CANADA

Ogaie's journey is one of resilience, courage, and authenticity. Born in Afghanistan, she was forced to navigate a landscape where the concept of being LGBTQI+ was foreign. "I was born in a country where we didn't know what gay was... At that time, I did not know what transgender was, what homosexuals were, what that was – but why was I like that?"

By 2015, Ogaie endured daily assaults from her family and she sought refuge in Türkiye. Despite the distance, Ogaie refused to be silenced by fear. When the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021, Ogaie provided support and resources to those in Afghanistan seeking to escape. Through this work she learned about Rainbow Railroad, and after reaching out to share her own story, she received support to resettle in Canada in December 2021.

BUILDING HOME AND COMMUNITY IN CANADA

Ogaie and her partner then faced the task of rebuilding from scratch in Canada. "It doesn't matter which country you come from, you will still miss that place that you lived in for a while." Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are

global phenomena and Canada has its own trials: "There are some days where it's no different than any other country – they will judge you, they will say things to you, they will misgender you even if they know who you are."

However, Ogaie found her chosen family. "When I'm with the queer community, it's like I'm me – and I can be me. I have felt so much love from my community that I can never say it's not enough." To those facing similar circumstances, she says, "You are not in any way or shape obligated to show people who you are. Just try to be strong."

Armed with resilience and a passion for her culinary heritage, Ogaie now embarks on a new chapter, dreaming of one day owning an authentic Afghan restaurant. This authenticity and perseverance has persisted as Ogaie's journey continues to unfold today, and in her own words, "Being transgender or being non-binary or being whatever you feel like you would like to be, is not something you want to be. It's something you are born with. It's something you are."

PROGRAM
FOUR

INFORMATION SERVICES AND REFERRALS

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION TO PEOPLE AT IMMINENT RISK

RESOURCES

76%

REFERRAL

73%

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

12%

LETTER(S) OF SUPPORT

11%

CONSULTATION/ADVICE

1%

Our Information Services and Referrals Program provides essential resources and referrals to service delivery organizations, as well as mental health support to at-risk LGBTQI+ people. While resettlement may seem like the most reasonable first choice, it may not be for everyone. By connecting individuals with support networks, we strive to create a system of empowerment and autonomy by limiting barriers to accessing essential resources and tools. This program also provides non-monetary assistance such as letters of support and travel preparation information, as individuals face roadblocks when accessing essential services, and navigate through cumbersome international asylum systems.

Everyone deserves a supportive community, and many of the persons we refer to external organizations have cases which fall outside our organizational mandate, but whom we still try to connect with local support resources. In 2023, we supported 77% more individuals through the Information Services and Referrals Program than in 2022, and we endeavor to continue improving the number of people we're able to reach. With thousands of individuals in our database who are in need of assistance, we also know that our resources are limited. This critical program shares information about other avenues for protection, which may be available even in cases where we are not able to support directly.

We supported 188 LGBTQI+ individuals with referrals and information services in 2023.

Individuals reaching out to request help may receive more than one type of resource or information services. This graph represents the most common types of services provided.

GOVERNMENT RESETTLEMENT PATHWAYS

PROGRAM
FIVE

Rainbow Railroad continues to work with governments to pursue direct refugee referral pathways for the individuals we serve. One of these key opportunities is through the development and expansion of private sponsorship programs for LGBTQI+ refugees. There are limited safe pathways for many of the LGBTQI+ individuals who request our assistance and this program allows us to prioritize individuals facing the highest barriers to international relocation, such as trans individuals, and lesbian and bisexual women. Once individuals arrive in their new country, our program includes working with communities to provide circles of support for them.

In 2023 we launched the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) Program in Canada, we participated in the launch of the Welcome Corps Program in the US and, in response to our advocacy, saw a strengthened partnership with the US Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Persons.



Former Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship for Canada, Sean Fraser, speaks at Rainbow Railroad's Freedom Party Toronto in June 2023.

A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR LGBTQI+ REFUGEES IN CANADA

Rainbow Railroad, its partners, and community of newcomers meet with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the Toronto Freedom Party. June 2023. Photo by Adam Scotti.

At the Toronto Freedom Party in June 2023, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a partnership with Rainbow Railroad to identify and directly refer up to 250 at-risk LGBTQI+ refugees per year for resettlement to Canada through the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) Program. This historic achievement is the result of several years of strategic, persistent advocacy by Rainbow Railroad for a dedicated LGBTQI+ referral pathway, and marks a new chapter in our journey as an organization.

In 2023, Rainbow Railroad submitted the first GAR applications for 10 individuals, which are now being processed for resettlement to Canada.

Cutting across multiple Rainbow Railroad departments, the GAR program represents a significant and complex organizational lift which has implications for each of our existing program areas, from intake, ETS and service referrals to external partnerships and community engagement. Developing robust frameworks and processes to ensure that we effectively triage the most urgent cases for resettlement through this stream is going to be vital. We have invested in creating queer-sensitive screening and interview tools to prevent complicity in government systems, but are instead queering those same



systems through our approach, which is rooted in respect, dignity and solidarity.

To ensure that Rainbow Railroad has sufficient capacity to move individuals through the program with efficiency, rigor, and care, implementing the full GAR program has also required a significant investment in human resources and staffing. While we continue to build out the integral scaffolding for this program, we recognize the enormous potential presented by the GAR program to positively impact the lives of hundreds of at-risk LGBTQI+ refugees in the years to come, and to solidify Rainbow Railroad's position as a global leader in the fight for queer liberation.

Rainbow Railroad's work subverts restrictive political systems by building power and capacity for mutual aid. At the same time, we hold governments accountable and call on states to do more to address both the root causes and harmful effects of homophobia and transphobia. Our dual strategy, working inside and outside of the system, resulted in significant new pathways to protection for LGBTQI+ people in 2023, while we continue to maintain our commitment to emergency travel outside of government partnerships.

COMMUNITIES OF CARE RESETTLE LGBTQI+ REFUGEES TO THE US

Every queer person deserves home, belonging, and safety. In 2023, the US government created a new refugee sponsorship program, Welcome Corps, which enables Americans to support a refugee in their community. Through intensive US government advocacy, Rainbow Railroad was named a private sponsor organization with Welcome Corps and selected as one of four pilot organizations to refer refugees directly to the program. Our government advocacy was complemented by a mobilization strategy to recruit and support volunteer sponsors and partner organizations to build Communities of Care across multiple LGBTQI+ affirming cities in the United States. Communities of Care are the volunteer sponsorship circles and the local queer network organizations that support them in resettling LGBTQI+ refugees. We also engaged in a global strategy to identify LGBTQI+ refugees eligible for the program in partnership with grass-roots LGBTQI+ organizations around the world.

Our work with Welcome Corps uncovered a major policy gap: the US government does not track which refugees are LGBTQI+ identified, making it difficult to match queer refugees with LGBTQI+ sponsor groups. We are advocating for systemic changes to the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) to ensure that LGBTQI+ refugees are flagged to receive queer-sensitive resettlement and support

services. Holding the US government accountable to its commitment to advance LGBTQI+ rights globally, we advocated for direct referral mechanisms for organizations led by LGBTQI+ people. In 2023, the government created a new mechanism in response to our calls for action. We have strengthened our partnership with the US Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Persons to increase the number of LGBTQI+ refugees referred for resettlement to the US.

**IN 2023 WE WELCOMED
10 LGBTQI+ INDIVIDUALS
TO CANADA THROUGH
THE PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP
PROGRAM, AND SUBMITTED
10 NEW APPLICATIONS
WITH COMMUNITY
SETTLEMENT PARTNERS.**

In 2023 we launched the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) Program in Canada, we participated in the launch of the Welcome Corps Program in the US and, in response to our advocacy, saw a strengthened partnership with the US Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Persons.



THERE'S A PROFOUND SENSE OF LONELINESS THAT COMES FROM FLEEING. QUEER AND TRANS REFUGEES OFTEN FLEE ON THEIR OWN...

It is a deeply isolating experience. Adjusting to your new home can be difficult and daunting, especially if you don't know anyone or have a community. You become a stranger overnight."

KENDRA FRITH, SENIOR ENGAGEMENT OFFICER, RAINBOW RAILROAD

Community members learn about how to get involved with Rainbow Railroad's Communities of Care program at an event in Chicago, IL, November 2023.



FRIENDS OF RAINBOW RAILROAD: I WANT TO EXPRESS MY MOST SINCERE THANKS FOR ALL THE SUPPORT THAT EACH OF YOU HAVE GIVEN ME IN THIS RESETTLEMENT PROCESS.

It has been three months since I arrived in Chicago and this experience has been wonderful thanks to the organization and each of you who have been there to support me. Thanks to the organization and the group of volunteers who made it possible for my resettlement process to be a pleasant experience. You are a fundamental part of this process that has allowed me to change my life story and today I can continue building my life in a place where I feel safe. I wish that life and the universe can return with many blessings to your lives for what you do for us LGBTQI people."

INDIVIDUAL RELOCATED THROUGH WELCOME CORPS





SOUNDING THE ALARM ON LGBTQI+ PEOPLE IN CRISIS

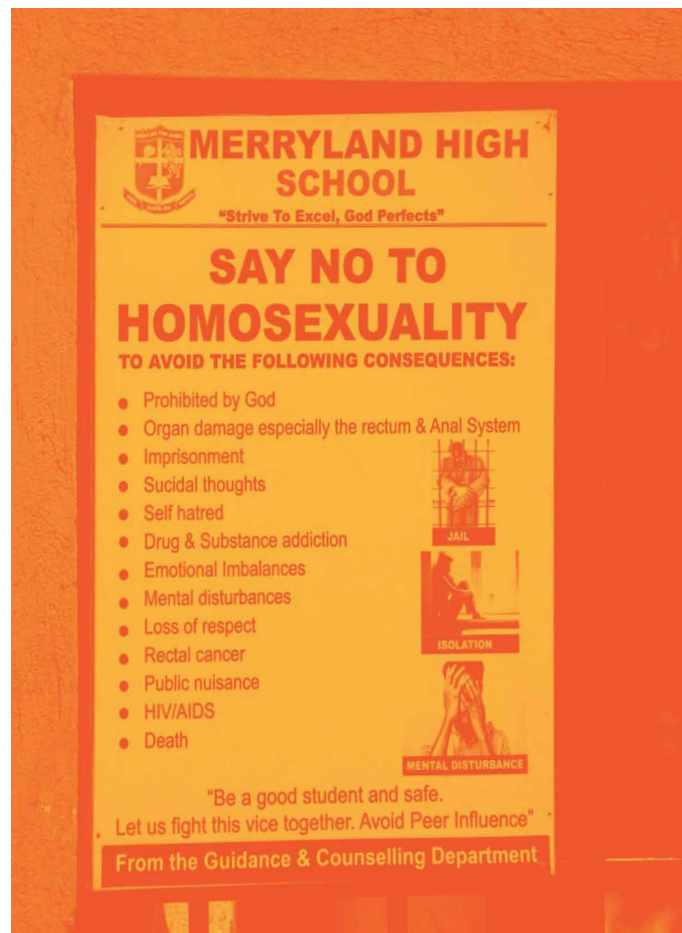
UGANDA
AFGHANISTAN
UKRAINE
RUSSIA



THE GLOBAL ANTI-GENDER MOVEMENT AND DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING

The crisis situations we have been tracking in Uganda, Afghanistan and Russia are all signs of the rising global anti-gender movement. This coordinated transnational attack on the LGBTQI+ community is being elevated through funding and resourcing from the global north³. Commenting on the current crisis in Uganda, Dr. Frank Mugisha, Nobel Prize nominee and Executive Director of Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) noted, "I am hopeful that at some point we'll be successful, as long as we are able to hold the American evangelicals accountable for the hatred they have promoted."

The global trend of social and legislative regression cannot be viewed in isolation, and has demonstrable links with anti-democracy efforts. In Uganda, our partners made clear that efforts to erode rights and protections for queer and trans people led to rushed legislative processes that saw open beratement, denigration, and violent threats to parliamentarians, experts, civil society leaders, and citizens. Researchers are seeing the links between attacks on LGBTQI+ rights and democratic backsliding⁴, and sounding the alarm on the ways that cultural weaponization of the queer and trans community undermines liberal democracy⁵.



A COORDINATED CRISIS RESPONSE IN UGANDA

We have worked continuously in Uganda since 2017 but, in 2023, we received 1,399 requests for help from Uganda, more than triple the previous year. Last year we supported 1,140 individuals through programs including Emergency Travel Support (ETS), Cash Assistance, Partnerships and Grants, Crisis Response, Information Services and Referrals, and Government Resettlement Pathways.

In March 2023, the [Anti-Homosexuality Act](#)⁶ was introduced in parliament, introducing severe penalties for any form of same-sex intimacy. By May, the bill became law. The Act had an immediate effect in displacing LGBTQI+ persons including through violence, threats, evictions and pressure from landlords, as well as community pressure to leave. The requests for help we received in the aftermath reported mob justice, public humiliation, and beatings.

In response, Rainbow Railroad funded Sexual Minorities Uganda's (SMUG) Minority Report, a legal effort to stop the implementation of the Act. We also funded bail bonds, enabling the release of more than 32 LGBTQI+ persons from prison, and provided internal relocations and shelter support for Human Rights Defenders at risk. Notably, 94% of requests we received in response to this crisis came from Ugandan nationals, who would not be eligible for refugee protection because they had not yet crossed an international border. While not all individuals may wish to relocate outside of their country, this crisis is yet another reminder that the international refugee system remains largely inaccessible to LGBTQI+ persons experiencing persecution, and that states should develop visas and humanitarian corridors for LGBTQI+ internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Ugandan president signs anti-LGBTQ+ law with death penalty for same-sex acts

Global outcry over Museveni's assent to draconian new anti-gay law, condemned as 'permission slip for hate and dehumanisation'





Pax Santos,
Rainbow Railroad's
Director, Policy and
Advocacy, speaks
with Frank Mugisha,
Executive Director
of Sexual Minorities
Uganda to Rainbow
Railroad staff,
June 2023.

WE FACE A COMBINATION OF CHALLENGES AND REWARDING MOMENTS.

The difficult parts primarily revolve around the persistent discrimination, persecution and violence faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in Uganda. It is heart-wrenching to witness the hardships LGBTQI+ individuals endure due to societal prejudice and discriminatory laws. Additionally, working in an environment where our mission is met with resistance and hostility can be emotionally taxing. However, we're never deterred by these challenges. We also witness the transformation and positive impact of our work on the LGBTQI+ individuals we support. These success stories serve as a guiding light and inspire us to continue our work. The resilience and strength of the LGBTQI+ community in Uganda are a constant source of inspiration for us."

**REAL RAYMOND, MBARARA
RISE FOUNDATION (MRF)'S
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

We received funding requests from 40 organizations totalling over \$500,000 USD. In July, staff from Rainbow Railroad visited Uganda to meet with partners on the ground, and found international funding efforts were failing to reach those most vulnerable. We invested over \$140,000 USD in crisis response funding for organizations and activists on the front lines. We continue to closely monitor the situation in Uganda, and advocate that nimble flexible funding has to find a way to partners on the ground, operating in a now criminal context.

A poem by Steven Muleme, a Ugandan Human Rights Defender, artist and playwright, who was supported by Rainbow Railroad in traveling to safety.

AFRICA AFRICA AFRICA

Africa, God and Homosexuality
Is God in Africa?
May be!
Walls of God should not be built in Africa
Walls tend to fall
Oh yes!
They eventually do, but love remains

They say, and keep reminding us, that
Our existence is against their God
The God of Africa and hatred
Hatred towards consenting adults
who love each other
Love is all we need, just like you.
But the God of hatred is in Africa
And they do so much to make us
believe in the same God

In Africa, parliaments are full to capacity
When it's time to discuss Homosexuality
But do you know what? They go empty
when it's time to discuss
corruption!
Oh yes, their African God loves corruption!
And that's okay!
What a seasonal God!!

I am trapped in anguish every day of my life
Did I make the wrong choice to love
a fellow man?
Oh yes, I am judged for loving
a fellow woman too!
Their thoughts rush to different conclusions
And we are sent to prisons of hell
because of who we love
And how we love
Will they parade me to death because
of a law that is against my choice?

We want equality in Africa!
Their dream is to be loved unconditionally
And this is what we are creating
for ourselves regardless of who
we love
Laws should be for all of us and not
only for Homosexuals
Let men be women and women be men
We are the Pan-African
LGBTIQ+ movement

ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT:

LEVERAGING CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE ON UGANDA

In March, Rainbow Railroad and the Dignity Network Canada organized a meeting with Ugandan Human Rights Defenders to brief Canadian government officials on the situation in Uganda and coordinate response efforts, based on our partners' [advocacy priorities](#)⁷. In June, Rainbow Railroad facilitated a delegation of Ugandan Members of Parliament, a representative from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and Executive Director of SMUG and Nobel Prize nominee, Dr. Frank Mugisha, to advocate with senior Canadian policymakers, on how to leverage Canada's international influence to oppose the Anti-Homosexuality Act.

In June, we brought international partners from Kenya and South Africa to Canada to speak to the spillover regional effects from spreading anti-LGBTQI+ sentiment triggered by the Anti-Homosexuality Act. We recognize that the crisis in Uganda is not happening in isolation, and that we are in a critical moment to interrupt anti-LGBTQI+ sentiment and legislation that is spreading globally. Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania have all seen varying efforts to advance legislation criminalizing LGBTQI+ individuals.

Rainbow Railroad also supported the US Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons, Jessica Stern's official visit to Canada. We aligned her visit with that of the Ugandan delegation and other international activist partners. This was coordinated to help Canadian lawmakers understand why Rainbow Railroad continues to advocate for referral pathways for LGBTQI+ persons facing unique criminalization in countries of origin and LGBTQI+ refugees stuck in transit countries. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, publicly acknowledged Frank Mugisha and SMUG, providing much-needed international visibility for the crisis.

In September, Rainbow Railroad sounded the alarm on Uganda at a roundtable discussion on Uganda at the White House by the US National Security Council. Additionally, Rainbow Railroad spoke at a side event during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which convened civil society and activists with UNGA delegates to hear field updates on the status and impact of anti-LGBTQI+ legislation in Uganda, Ghana, Tanzania, and Kenya, as well as the United States. This pressure on governments has been essential in ensuring that donor governments and financial institutions took action to pause funding or administer targeted sanctions.

We continue to elevate Ugandan activist partners' calls for humanitarian funding and visa corridors for LGBTQI+ persons in Uganda.

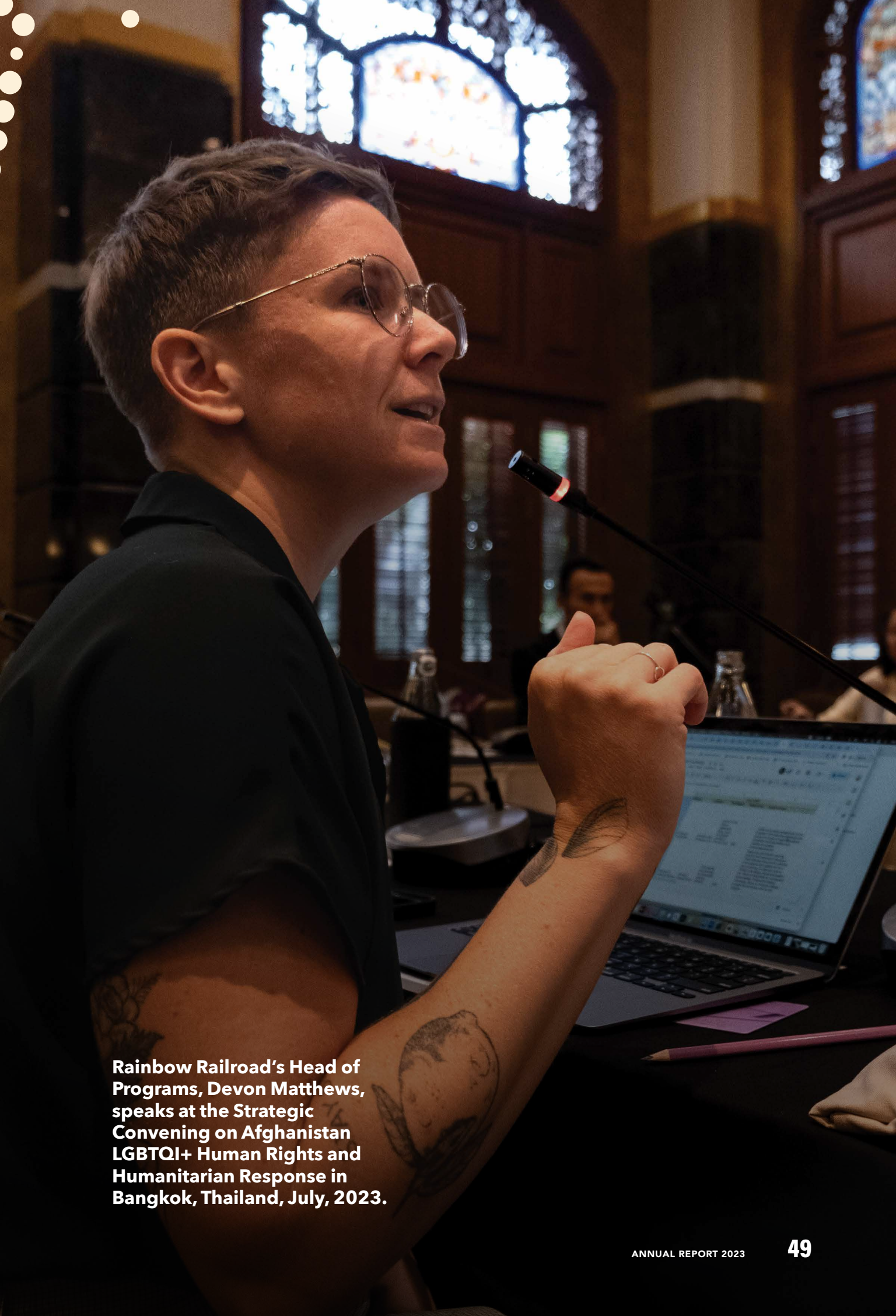
STRATEGIC COORDINATION ON AFGHANISTAN LGBTQI+ HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

303

**AFGHANS
RESETTLED
IN CANADA
THIS YEAR**

Amidst the scale of the protracted situation in Afghanistan, Rainbow Railroad supported 303 LGBTQI+ Afghans and their family members in 2023. Rainbow Railroad effectively raised the alarm about the critical danger facing LGBTQI+ Afghans, resulting in a direct referral pathway with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for up to 600 individuals at risk.

In 2023, we implemented this direct referral pathway, and supported the majority of individuals in relocating out of Afghanistan for continued processing, while nearly half of this cohort has already resettled in Canada.



Rainbow Railroad's Head of Programs, Devon Matthews, speaks at the Strategic Convening on Afghanistan LGBTQI+ Human Rights and Humanitarian Response in Bangkok, Thailand, July, 2023.

4093

**REQUESTS FOR
HELP FROM
AFGHANISTAN
THIS YEAR**

The violent fallout from the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 continued to impact all program areas in 2023, underscoring the sheer magnitude of this crisis and the unabated need to urgently respond. We received 4,093 requests for help from Afghanistan last year, a 47% increase from 2022. More than a quarter (27%) of all requests came from citizens of Afghanistan, whether inside the country or in the surrounding region. LGBTQI+ Afghans continued to disclose experiences of severe persecution including community rejection and violence, verbal threats and abuse, and family-based rejection, forcing many to live in hiding due to credible threats against their lives.

The journey to find safety for queer Afghans is fraught with systemic barriers. Many of the individuals we support must transit through countries where they face varying degrees of LGBTQI+ criminalization, and must navigate complex and ever-changing visa and permit requirements. In October 2023, Pakistan announced it would expel all unregistered migrants remaining in the country as of November 1st, and since then there have been widespread reports of officials using violence to forcibly deport Afghans from the country⁸.

Rainbow Railroad continued to dedicate energy and resources toward forward-looking, strategic advocacy to address the Afghan crisis. In July 2023, Rainbow Railroad and International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) Asia co-hosted a Strategic Convening on Afghanistan LGBTQI+ Human Rights and Humanitarian Response in Bangkok, Thailand, attended by stakeholders from Afghan-led organizations, LGBTQI+ organizations from the US, UK, Germany, Pakistan and Thailand, and the Canadian government. The convening developed a pathway forward for the next phase of the Afghanistan response, which will focus on resourcing Afghan-led diaspora organizations who are leading in advocacy and humanitarian response in coordination with Human Rights Defenders on the ground.

FINDING SAFETY AND SOLIDARITY IN CANADA

Arman's perspective of what it feels like to escape persecution in Afghanistan and build a new life in Canada.

I remember the day when for the first time I wrote my story to Rainbow Railroad and pressed the enter button. I didn't know that it was the moment when my life was taking its biggest turn. I waited impatiently every day until I got my first reply and I got my caseworker. I felt it was a dream that strangers from across the globe were trying to save my life when even my own family has never helped me.

It took me six months till the day when I was packing my bag to travel to Canada. That night was unforgettable – it was the end of Ramadan and I could not sleep, I was fasting and praying with my transgender friend the whole night. At the airport I had goosebumps. When the airplane announced that we were about to land in Canada, my eyes blurred with tears as I remembered all the torture that I suffered for three decades. When I stepped in Toronto Airport for the first time in life I experienced calm. I felt life, and I felt human. I smiled without fear.

In Canada, it has not always been easy. We still feel some discrimination, and it is a struggle to find shelter, to learn the language and to survive. Back home many LGBTQI+ people were dancers or sex workers and now they need training to make it here. People feel alone and can be depressed. In Pakistan I provided support and HIV+ education to these same communities, and I understand their struggle because I went through it myself. Now, I use my own experiences to help others in the same situations. We need to keep an eye on people after they arrive here to make sure they are safe and can succeed.

Now I live in Vancouver. Although it can be very hard, I am safe here and my inner happiness has made me feel beautiful on the outside too. My passion is to be a healthcare educator, or a makeup artist, which I hope to do one day.

RUSSIA'S CONTINUED ASSAULT ON UKRAINE


AND ON THE RUSSIAN
LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY



**DESPITE BRUTAL HOMOPHOBIC
GOVERNMENT POLICIES, ACTIVISTS
IN RUSSIA CONTINUE TO DO
EXTRAORDINARY WORK.**

Rainbow Railroad's support has meant that grassroots organizations, who are closest to their communities, have been able to navigate the tense environment in order to keep providing support through either in-person underground or online events to provide legal, mental health and peer support. Our support has helped more than a dozen activists to relocate to neighboring transit countries that have allowed them to keep up the LGBTQI+ movement in Russia. In a poll conducted during a recent regional conference, Russian activists were asked: "Is activism possible in Russia?" 95% responded "yes". When the results were announced in the meeting room, the group felt charged and the activists renewed their commitment to further continue the work."

ADRIANA ESPINOSA, DIRECTOR, CASH ASSISTANCE &
EMERGENCY TRAVEL SUPPORT, RAINBOW RAILROAD



As the brutal conflict between Russia and Ukraine drags on, LGBTQI+ rights in the region continue to hang in the balance. In Ukraine, Rainbow Railroad has seen a decrease in the number of requests for help in 2023. The Russian invasion resulted in an increasing acceptance of LGBTQI+ rights in Ukraine due to the visibility of LGBTQI+ people serving in the military and solidarity in the face of Russian oppression. Still, any progress on the Parliamentary bill to legalize same-sex marriage was deferred until the resolution of the conflict, despite a regional human rights court ruling that Ukraine's failure to legalize same-sex marriage is a human rights violation.

Russia remains one of our top ten countries for requests for help, with 347 requests from Russia in 2023. This number has increased slightly since 2022 when we received 318 requests from Russia. In 2023, Rainbow Railroad relocated 15 people through emergency travel support and funded two Russian organizations providing direct support to LGBTQI+ people at risk. In December 2023, we provided emergency funds to support the implementation of contingency plans and strategies to ensure organizational stability and the creation of a rapid response fund to address urgent needs within the LGBTQI+ community in Russia.

The top safety concerns reported by individuals at risk in Russia included rejection by the local community, verbal threats, violence from community or family members and physical assault. In 2022, these requests were often related to the conflict with Ukraine but, over the past year, it is Russia's own domestic legislation which drove queer people to flee. In our program data, we noticed spikes in requests for help from Russia following the introduction of homophobic and transphobic legislation or legal decisions. For example, we observed spikes in requests for help at the end of 2022 after a "gay propaganda" law was passed, again in June and July 2023 after the adoption of an oppressive anti-trans bill and, most recently, in December 2023, following a Russian Supreme Court decision criminalizing association with the international LGBTQI+ movement. The Supreme Court ruling is already leading to arrests and prosecution for acts as simple as posting a rainbow flag on social media, with penalties up to 12 years in prison.

We continue to track the situation in Russia and are working closely with partners in the region on protection and exit strategies as the effects of the Supreme Court decision unfold.

347

**REQUESTS FOR
HELP FROM
RUSSIA
THIS YEAR**

**RUSSIA REMAINS
ONE OF OUR TOP
TEN COUNTRIES
FOR REQUESTS
FOR HELP**

QUEER THE SYSTEM

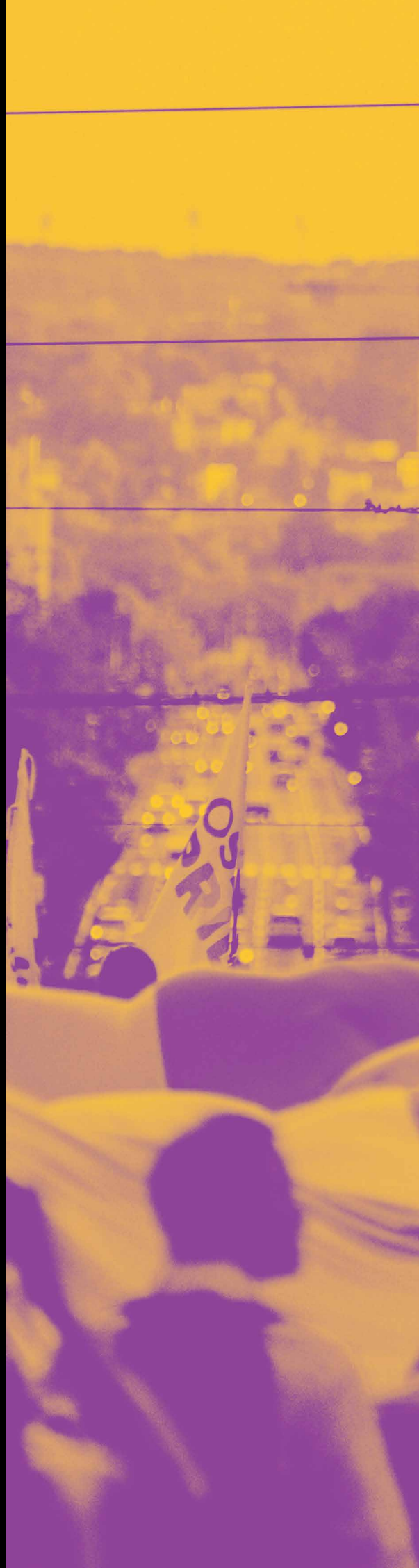
**THIS SECTION
DESCRIBES THE
IMPACT WE'VE
SEEN THROUGH
ADVOCACY
UNDERTAKEN
BY RAINBOW
RAILROAD
IN 2023.**

Rainbow Railroad aims to queer the system by bringing an LGBTQI+ lens to mainstream humanitarian protection work and multilateral bodies. While we recognize the bureaucratic and legal complexities of the refugee sector that make navigating these systems challenging, we will be leaders by advocating for the inclusion and protection of forcibly displaced LGBTQI+ persons at every level of the global asylum system. Advocacy is a core aspect of our work, and it is informed by our proprietary data regarding the people we serve and those still requesting our help.



UNIQUE DATA

ON THE STATE OF
GLOBAL LGBTQI+
PERSECUTION



A DATA DRIVEN APPROACH IN OUR PURSUIT OF QUEER LIBERATION

15,352 people requested our help last year. This represents the highest number of requests the organization has ever received in one calendar year with a 60% increase since 2022. Given what we know about crises affecting LGBTQI+ people, as described in the previous section, this should come as no surprise. With exponential growth in our requests for assistance with each passing year, it is imperative that we constantly assess and evaluate our approach to collecting and analyzing LGBTQI+ data. We keep the experiences of LGBTQI+ people at risk at the heart of our advocacy efforts and raise visibility and awareness through sharing our analysis publicly.

Capturing a person's experiences and identity requires nuance and adaptability. We must balance our data collection process with the needs of the individuals we serve in an ethical way. Our data assessment systems are constantly evolving to respond to the ever-changing needs of the communities we serve.

In our approach to data, we often grapple with the fact that the LGBTQI+ community –and particularly LGBTQI+ individuals in forced displacement– is often missing from global humanitarian and refugee reporting. While it can be difficult to accurately capture and present the holistic stories and experiences of the individuals we work with, we understand how imperative it is to shed light on the patterns we observe, the intersecting forces of marginalization, and the unique experiences of the LGBTQI+ community in forced displacement.

To better understand the drivers that cause LGBTQI+ individuals to seek assistance from us, the following sections explore our data and insights on those requesting assistance.

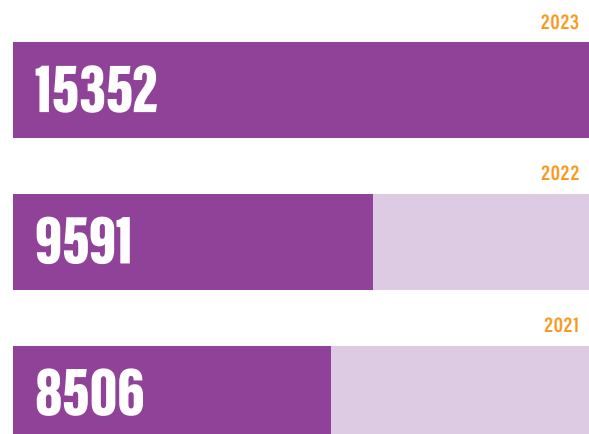
WHERE THE DATA COMES FROM

The information in this section is gathered by the Rainbow Railroad Intake team. In 2023, Rainbow Railroad’s Intake team had the responsibility of screening 15,352 requests for help, a number which continues to rise year-over-year. Intake caseworkers are the first point of contact for individuals seeking our help. They must approach each case with care and sensitivity, knowing this may be the first time a person has ever disclosed their queer identity to someone else. As we increase access to government pathways, each with their own eligibility criteria, the Intake team plays a key role in ensuring we can take advantage of these pathways by triaging cases to the right program area or service. The Intake team also collects data about the needs and experiences of LGBTQI+ people at risk, featured in this report, which ultimately drives and informs programming and advocacy decisions across the organization.

WHO WE HELP

To better understand the global trends in drivers that cause LGBTQI+ individuals to seek assistance from us, it is important for us to analyze who is requesting assistance and where they are requesting assistance from.

INCREASING REQUESTS FOR HELP



Since 2021, Rainbow Railroad’s requests for help have increased by 80%. We measure the total number of primary applicants requesting help, although there can be up to ten individuals associated with one request.



REFUGEE
LIVES

MATTER

**UNITED
AGAINST
RACISM**

Photo by
Dutchmen Photography

REGIONS OF REQUEST

1. South-Central Asia (5445)
2. Sub-Saharan Africa (3711)
3. Middle East and North Africa (2796)
4. North America (1986)
5. Eastern Europe (500)
6. Caribbean (347)
7. Latin America (280)
8. Western Europe (196)
9. Oceania and Pacific Islands (16)



There were 75 individuals for whom we did not receive data for their Region of Request.

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

Our requests for help are categorized into the following regions: Caribbean (CAR), Eastern Europe (EE), Latin America (LA), Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), North America (NA), Oceania and Pacific Islands (OCEA), South and Central Asia (SCA), and Western Europe (WE).

In 2023, the top region for request was South and Central Asia (SCA), with 5,445 individuals seeking assistance; 70% of these requests came from Afghans located in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Türkiye due to the ongoing impacts of Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Many of these requests come from both LGBTQI+ individuals and families. After SCA, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) continued to be in the Top 3 Regions of Request for Help.

Requests from SSA increased by 31% from 2022. Uganda made up 41% of all requests from the region, prompted by the passing of the Anti-Homosexuality Act, which further criminalized same-sex relations and LGBTQI+ activism.

TOP 10 NATIONALITIES AND COUNTRIES OF REQUEST

Rainbow Railroad defines a “country of request” as the country where an individual is living at the time of their request for help. In comparison, “country of nationality” refers to the country where an individual was born or where they hold legal documents.

In 2023, we continued to see the impact of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and it remained one of our top countries of request. In 2023 we received the highest number of requests ever from Afghans both inside and outside of Afghanistan. Many of the requests we receive from individuals in Pakistan are Afghan nationals.

The United States continues to be in the Top 10 countries of request, and alarmingly moved from #8 in 2022 **to #3 in 2023**. In 2023 alone we received over 1,900 requests from individuals seeking our assistance from the United States, a **523% increase** from last year. In 2022, the majority of individuals seeking help from the US were asylum seekers from other countries; however, in 2023, 86% of US requests came from American citizens, an 826% increase from the previous year. We believe this stark increase can be attributed to the rise in anti-LGBTQI+ hate and legislation. At the same time, the United States is still a leading resettlement country for LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers, both a source of risk and safe haven for the LGBTQI+ community. This tension illustrates the challenges we face in pursuing queer liberation, as the anti-gender movement permeates the global policy discourse.

This year also saw the introduction of Egypt as a top country of request, meanwhile Morocco, Algeria, Kenya, and the US entered the Top 10 Nationalities list. We will continue to track these trends into 2024.

TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF REQUEST

1. Pakistan⁹
2. Afghanistan
3. United States
4. Uganda
5. Kenya
6. Türkiye
7. Nigeria
8. Morocco
9. Russia
10. Egypt

TOP 10 NATIONALITIES

1. Afghanistan
2. Uganda
3. United States
4. Pakistan
5. Russia
6. Nigeria
7. Syria
8. Morocco
9. Kenya
10. Algeria

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, GENDER EXPRESSION AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS (SOGIESC)

Rainbow Railroad collects SOGIESC data from individuals who choose to disclose their identity¹⁰. We recognize that there is nuance to collecting data on diverse SOGIESC identities and our process is constantly evolving. Our caseworkers work with individuals to ensure that we are accurately capturing the various ways that they may identify, both at the start of their journey and throughout the process of working with us. Ultimately, we understand that defining one's identity can be an iterative process.

While individuals have the option to describe their identities to our caseworkers outside of existing labels, we also disaggregate our data into the following gender identities: Agender, Aliagender, Cis-Women, Cis-Men, Genderfluid, Gender Non-conforming, Intergender, Transgender Women, and Transgender Men.

In 2023, the top three gender identities requesting help were cisgender men, cisgender women, and transgender men. As a result of our commitment to implement diversity measures in the services we provide and access the most vulnerable LGBTQI+ persons facing persecution, the proportion of cisgender men continues to steadily decrease. In 2023, cisgender men comprised 53% of all requests, down from 59% in 2022. The total number of requests for help increased by 60% between 2022 and 2023, including increases in requests from individuals representing all gender identities. In particular, transgender men, gender non-conforming, and genderfluid individuals increased at the highest rates.

We also disaggregate our data by the following sexual orientations: Asexual, Bisexual, Gay, Heterosexual/Straight, Lesbian, Pansexual, and Queer.

The top three sexual orientations remained the same as the year prior, with the most requests coming from individuals identifying as gay, bisexual, and lesbian respectively. Notably, 2023 was the first year that gay individuals represented less than half of Rainbow Railroad's requests for help at 48% of all requests. Overall, pansexual individuals experienced the highest increase compared to other sexual orientations with the total number of requests increasing by 297%.

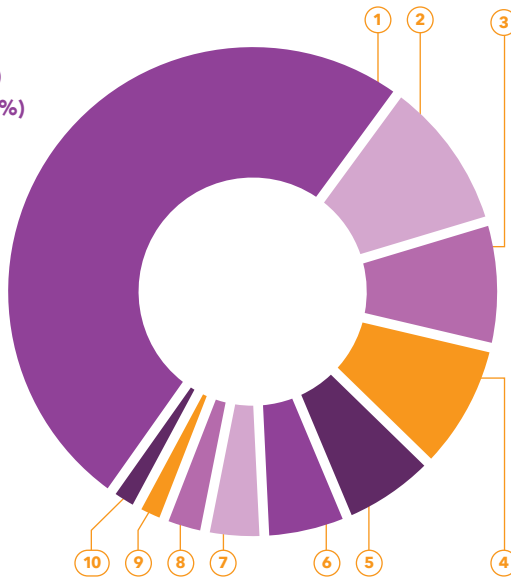
INTERSEX

Intersex individuals are born with sex characteristics that do not fit the binary definitions of male and female bodies. 'Intersex' is often used as an umbrella term and is not a sexual orientation and not always a gender identity, but rather a description of certain sex characteristics. In 2023, intersex individuals comprised 3% of our total requests for help. This represents a 112% increase from 2022.

While intersex individuals face unique harms due to state and socially-enforced sex-gender binaries, there are overlaps in the experiences of discrimination and persecution reported by the individuals we serve across sexual orientations, gender identities and intersex persons. As such, it is important to include them in our analysis to compare their experiences with the other individuals requesting our assistance.

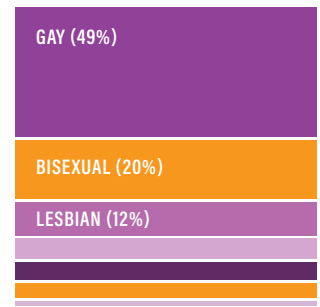
GENDER IDENTITY BREAKDOWN

1. Cis-Male (54%)
2. Cis-Female (11%)
3. Transgender Male (9%)
4. Transgender Female (9%)
5. Gender non-confirming (6%)
6. Gender Fluid (5%)
7. Agender (3%)
8. Intergender (2%)
9. Aliagender (<1%)
10. Other (<1%)



SEXUAL ORIENTATION BREAKDOWN

1. Gay (49%)
2. Bisexual (20%)
3. Lesbian (12%)
4. Queer (7%)
5. Straight/Heterosexual (6%)
6. Pansexual (5%)
7. Asexual (1%)
8. Other (<1%)



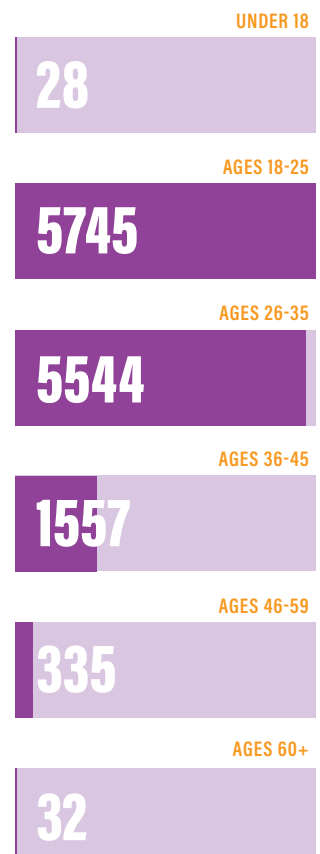
AGE BREAKDOWN

In 2023, 18-25 year olds represented the age group submitting the most requests for help, representing 43% of all requests. This represents a 128% increase from 2022, more than double the amount requested from this age group compared to the previous year. We also received 28 requests for help from those under the age of 18, but we are unable to provide support to this age group. We ask them to reach out to us again once they reach the age of 18.

Individuals in the 26-35 year old age group received 50% of the support that Rainbow Railroad provided in 2023, across all programs. This age group constituted 42% of total requests for help this year, which is broadly consistent with the level of support we provided to this age group. In contrast, the 18-25 age group received 30% of Rainbow Railroad services overall, which is somewhat less than the proportion of requests received for this age group and may be indicative of the challenges in supporting LGBTQI+ youth.

Rainbow Railroad collects the age data from the primary applicant in a request for help and only from individuals who choose to disclose this information. This means that there is a portion of the individuals requesting help from us for whom we have no data on their age.

AGE BREAKDOWN



INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES REQUESTING OUR HELP

96%

**OF REQUESTS
CAME FROM
SINGLE
INDIVIDUALS**

3%

**OF REQUESTS
CAME FROM
FROM COUPLES**

The vast majority of requests for help came from individuals seeking safety on their own behalf, rather than through referrals. 96% of requests came from single individuals, an increase of 162% compared to 2022, and they make up 75% of the support that we provide. In our experience with individual casework, we've found that single adults traveling alone often face challenges of loneliness and isolation during their journeys. We also receive some requests from couples; 3% of requests were from persons seeking assistance for themselves and their partner.

The remainder of requests for help, just 1%, come from families ranging from 3-10 family members. 75% of requests came from SSA and MENA, particularly Uganda and Afghanistan. Based on our experience reviewing cases and speaking to individuals, larger family sizes may be indicative of the mass movements of people due to political instability or armed conflict, or in regions where forced marriage of LGBTQI+ people is more common.

TRANSCENDING
TRAUMA:

TIMO'S NEW BEGINNING



Timo, an Iranian trans woman, was a UNHCR-registered refugee in Türkiye for eight years. There, she faced threats and discrimination due to her transgender identity, reminiscent of the challenges she sought to escape in Iran. In Iran, doctor's advice and family pressure led to a forced marriage, and her wife eventually became pregnant. Timo had to flee to Türkiye without her child, and she believes her family's transphobia affected her child's perspective of her. Her child will not speak to her anymore. "I feel like a mother who has lost her child," Timo says. Timo eventually found refuge in Canada; however, new challenges emerged.

To Timo, success as a transgender person means becoming a nurse or physician to support other members of the LGBTQI+ community. Timo expressed that the best part of her journey was fighting for her true self and her life. As a voice for silenced queer and trans people

in Iran and Türkiye, Timo urges people to understand the rich tapestry of emotions within the queer community. In Timo's words: "Not every aspect of a transgender person's life links back to sex. The queer folks have feelings, they fall in love, they want to be loved, they want to be welcomed in the community, and they want to be heard." In the fight for queer liberation, Timo highlighted the "Woman, Life, Freedom movement," which was groundbreaking for removing taboos and affirming LGBTQI+ existence in Iran. Timo believes that creating an LGBTQI+ community network could help newcomers feel less isolated and give support and guidance tailored to their needs, and where they can feel a sense of belonging. She envisions a world where LGBTQI+ folks can flourish without fear.

BREAKING
FREE:

TITI'S JOURNEY FROM OPPRESSION TO LIBERATION

Growing up, TiTi, a non-binary Iranian, always felt like they stood out from other kids and were constantly teased by their peers. As they grew older, TiTi began to dress differently and their true identity started to become more apparent. However, their family was extremely religious and they felt that they had to hide their identity.

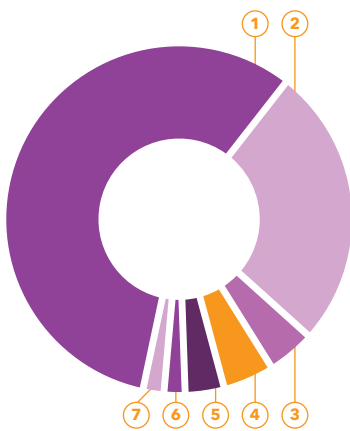
It was a constant struggle for TiTi to try to fit in and conform to societal expectations, and it felt like they were suffocating under the weight of it all. Despite their best efforts to cope with the situation for 23 years, everything came crashing down when their photos were leaked to their father during a party with their partner. TiTi's father didn't want them as part of the family and they had no choice but to leave home and move in with a friend in another city in Iran. TiTi managed to leave Iran with the help of a friend and after five years in Türkiye, TiTi was introduced to Rainbow Railroad by one of their friends, which helped them to relocate to Canada.



TiTi is optimistic about the progress the queer community has made toward achieving queer liberation worldwide; however, they believe there is a long way to go. They hope for a future where people look beyond labels and see each other as equals. TiTi also wishes that more queer Iranians could have the same opportunity to resettle in a safer country and live their lives authentically.

STATUS IN COUNTRY OF REQUEST

STATUS IN COUNTRY OF REQUEST



1. **Citizen (62%)**
2. **No Legal Status (28%)**
3. **Temporary Resident (4%)**
4. **UNHCR Reg. Refugee (4%)**
5. **Asylum Seeker (3%)**
6. **Permanent Resident (<1%)**
7. **Stateless Persons (<1%)**

Please note that percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; the sum of the individual percentage components does not add up to exactly 100%.

In order to better understand LGBTQI+ persons in forced displacement, Rainbow Railroad categorizes individuals requesting help into the following status types within their country of request: citizen, permanent resident, temporary resident, no legal status, asylum seeker, and UNHCR registered refugee. This information is important for informing our advocacy with governments and multi-lateral agencies, as we are able to identify the specific barriers our clients face when navigating the global asylum system.

In 2023, 62% of requests came from citizens requesting help from within their own country. Of the requests coming from individuals outside their country of citizenship, 73% of individuals had no legal status, meaning that they had no immigration status on a temporary or permanent basis in their current location. This was a 50% increase from 2022 when 53% of individuals outside of their country of citizenship had no legal status. The increase was driven largely by Afghans in Pakistan, Ugandans in Kenya, and Iranians in Türkiye. These individuals face unique challenges as individuals without immigration status face the most intractable barriers in accessing pathways to safety, a critical reminder as to why Rainbow Railroad must continue to work inside and outside government systems.

Of the individuals requesting help outside of their country of citizenship, 10% had UNHCR registered refugee status, while 10% were temporary residents. Understanding the experiences of LGBTQI+ people accessing UNHCR registration and temporary protection around the world informs our targeted programming approaches to build and execute on pathways to safety, as well as our advocacy and agenda-setting with governments and the UN.

DRIVERS OF DISPLACEMENT

WE TRACK THE FOLLOWING 16 HEALTH & WELFARE CONCERNS

1. Chronic Disease
2. Disability
3. Employment discrimination
4. Health status discrimination
5. HIV Positive
6. Experiencing Homelessness
7. Housing discrimination
8. Lack of Basic Needs
9. Lack of income due to COVID-19
10. Lack of Income due to discrimination
11. Low literacy
12. Mental Health Concerns
13. Poor Physical Health (incl. STI)
14. Pregnant
15. Risk of Suicide
16. Self Harm

When individuals reach out to Rainbow Railroad for support, we track the specific threats to safety, health and welfare they face throughout their journey. We categorize these threats as Health and Welfare Concerns and Safety Concerns, and continuously update our tracking systems based on what we learn from individuals and the nuances of their experiences.

Individuals often report on multiple Health and Welfare concerns. Please note that the figures below represent the most commonly reported concerns.

HEALTH AND WELFARE CONCERNS

Health and Welfare Concerns refer to factors relating to physical and mental wellbeing that also put people at risk. In 2023, we tracked 16 Health and Welfare Concerns impacting the lives of the individuals we serve.

Mental health concerns, lack of basic needs, and risk of suicide continue to be the top three health concerns faced by individuals seeking our assistance. In 2023, we noted that individuals also continued to face heightened employment discrimination and homelessness. In particular, trans men were more than twice as likely to face homelessness compared to other gender identities. In 2023, trans and non-binary individuals were 2.5 times more likely to face housing discrimination compared to cisgender individuals.

1325

INDIVIDUALS REPORTED ON HEALTH & WELFARE CONCERNS

42%

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

30%

LACK OF BASIC NEEDS



16%

**RISK OF
SUICIDE**

15%

**EMPLOYMENT
DISCRIMINATION**

12%

**EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS**

2105

**INDIVIDUALS
REPORTED ON
SAFETY CONCERNS**

78%

**COMMUNITY
REJECTION**

28%

**VERBAL THREATS/
ABUSE**

29%

**COMMUNITY
VIOLENCE**

46%

**FAMILY-BASED
REJECTION
(NON-VIOLENT)**

18%

**LIFE-THREATENING
VIOLENCE**

SAFETY CONCERNS

Safety Concerns are direct threats that individuals face from their family, community, or the state. In 2023, we tracked 38 Safety Concerns that LGBTQI+ people faced around the world.

Community rejection continues to persist among individuals requesting help from Rainbow Railroad. In 2023, 78% of all cases disclosing their safety concerns reported community rejection compared to 53% in 2022. Family-based rejection also persists, affecting 46% of individuals. In particular, individuals living in the MENA region were nearly three times more likely to experience family-based rejection compared to other regions.

Violence and threats also continue to affect the LGBTQI+ individuals we work with. Last year, 29% of individuals reported community violence, 28% reported experiencing verbal threats or abuse, and 18% reported experiencing life-threatening violence. Based on self-reporting, individuals living in Sub-Saharan Africa faced nearly three times the risk of experiencing family-based violence compared to other regions. Cisgender women were more than twice as likely to experience sexual violence compared to other gender identities.

Individuals requesting help often report multiple safety concerns. These figures represent the most commonly reported concerns.

WE TRACK THE FOLLOWING 38 SAFETY CONCERNS

- Acid attack
- Active Arrest Warrant
- Arson on home/business
- Physical assault
- Blackmailing
- Community rejection
- Community violence
- Conversion therapy
- Date baiting
- Detained multiple times
- Detained once
- Ethnic persecution
- Exorcism
- Family-based rejection (non-violent)
- Family-based violence
- Fear of being drafted/military conscription
- Financial Abuse
- Forced Anal Exam
- Genital Mutilation
- House Arrest/Seclusion
- Human trafficking
- In hiding due to credible threat
- Intimate partner violence
- Kidnapping
- Marriage under duress
- Medical Violence
- Police brutality
- Publicly outed/humiliated
- Religious persecution
- Sexual violence/crime
- Stoning/Lashing (punishment)
- Threat of conversion therapy
- Threat of Forced Marriage
- Verbal threats/ abuse
- Violence related to sex work
- Was denied medical care
- Whistleblower
- Xenophobic violence



Staries, an LGBTQI+ activist, who was resettled in New York with support from Rainbow Railroad in 2023.



FROM STRUGGLE
TO SOLIDARITY:

STARIES' QUEST FOR QUEER LIBERATION

Staries' story highlights the safety concerns that force many LGBTQI+ individuals to become displaced around the world. Staries is non-binary and uses all pronouns.

Staries was born in an abusive and conservative family in Indonesia, where they faced violence due to their identity. From a young age, Staries explored their own identity, as they were always a rebellious person. As a result of this, they experienced abuse including forced religious practice and conversion therapy. Despite their circumstances, they took a deep interest in spreading awareness in their community about human rights and queer issues. Always a leader, Staries started his own social media campaign and grew his following over time.

As their passion for activism spread, so did the threats for speaking up. Staries continued to speak publicly about LGBTQI+ rights and identities, and started receiving death threats and facing persecution simply for speaking up. Soon after, her parents found out about her support of a transgender campaign and Staries faced abuse, rejection and violence. After months of contemplating, they submitted a request for help and in 2023, Staries finally arrived in New York, a place where she could be free.

Along the way they formed a definition of what queer liberation and community means to them. To Staries, queer community is a family where you talk to one another with the freedom to be vulnerable and express yourself with no fear. Having a queer community also means queer liberation. It means receiving the same treatment and services that hetero cisgender people get without any bias or restrictions.

And to LGBTQI+ individuals who are still facing violence and persecution in Indonesia, Staries shares this message: "Hang on, there will always be brighter days ahead. It's not easy to ask for help. I hope you know that you deserve help, and you have the right to be able to express yourself as a queer."

INSIGHTS FROM OUR DATA

ON THE STATE OF
GLOBAL LGBTQI+
PERSECUTION



BRIDGING THE GAPS

At Rainbow Railroad, we seek to support as many individuals from various countries in any way possible. However, because of systemic barriers posed by widespread criminalization and the shrinking international commitment to uphold the right to asylum, LGBTQI+ individuals facing persecution are often prevented from accessing safety. Many of the countries where individuals report the greatest need are also countries where we encounter the most severe challenges in

delivering services. We have termed countries where we are unable to provide travel support to people living there as 'no option' countries. In 2023, we identified 20 countries with no current route to safety which is accessible for those still inside the country, absent a specific government policy, such as our resettlement of LGBTQI+ Afghans to Canada. These countries include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Yemen, Syria, Malawi, Tanzania, Chad, South Sudan, Sudan and Libya.

Through our intensive advocacy, expertise in relocation and nimble program implementation, we were able to support 1,953 individuals in Afghanistan, Kenya, Uganda, and Pakistan. We demand concerted effort and action from governments in order to establish innovative protection pathways, without which we often have little recourse due to the systemic barriers that LGBTQI+ people face. We were prevented from providing much-needed support to individuals in a number of restrictive country contexts including Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, and Algeria.

QUEERING THE SYSTEM THROUGH ETS

ETS is a transformational program because it reaches individuals at risk who would not otherwise qualify for refugee resettlement, most commonly due to stringent location and documentation requirements. ETS is also a faster path to immediate safety than refugee resettlement, where individuals often need to wait for years while their cases are processed.

In 2023, through a systematic review of our historical experience in providing emergency travel support and the changing nature of asylum, border, and travel legislation for countries around the world, our case workers identified new routes for individuals needing ETS. However, as each circumstance is unique, not all routes to safety

are accessible to every individual. For instance, persons in Sub-Saharan Africa, Türkiye, and India may have a harder time traveling to safer countries in the region compared to people in South America, who can travel throughout the region more easily. Fortunately, we created a number of new routes for several individuals last year, including a route in North Africa that we hope will be reliable for the foreseeable future.

Understanding and acknowledging these gaps is crucial to better understand where we can provide support. We are continuously trying to improve our programs and maximize resources in the hopes that all LGBTQI+ persons can one day be free to live a life of their choosing.

NAVIGATING
UNCERTAINTY:

THE NON-LINEAR RAILROAD OF RESETTLEMENT

When a person flees their home country, it is often the beginning of a long journey to finding safety. This was the case for Emmanuel, who was born in Rwanda and fled to Cameroon following the Rwandan genocide. Now based in Toronto, Emmanuel is adjusting to a new home, while facing the obstacles of living as a refugee in a new country.

Emmanuel lived in Cameroon for twenty-five years but was unable to secure government support as a refugee throughout this period. When an LGBTQI+ refugee leaves their home country, although they might escape immediate danger, it is not uncommon for them to flee to another country where it is difficult to access basic protections and support. Emmanuel struggled to find secure housing and employment and faced violence and discrimination because of his identity as a gay man. He made attempts to build a life in Cameroon, gaining work experience as a building technician, but lost his job due to discrimination.

Through a friend, Emmanuel learned about Rainbow Railroad, and made a request for help. In March 2023, he resettled to Toronto with the help of Rainbow Railroad and a volunteer settlement team.



Over the past year, Emmanuel has been adapting to major cultural differences, explaining that one of the biggest challenges is making friends. He describes this transition, saying, "To leave your country, it almost feels like dying. You leave everything that was attached to you. I left people who were so dear and so close to me. It's like part of you is dead. At times, it's very hard to accept it."

Emmanuel is currently gaining Canadian work experience through a trades training program. Although frustrating to start as an apprentice again with years of experience, he is hopeful that this will help him gain stable employment.

For Emmanuel, after living so many years without documentation in Cameroon, it is meaningful just to be recognized and supported as a refugee in Canada. "I have so many hopes and dreams," he shares, and although the road ahead of him is uncertain, he feels that the future is possible now.

BEYOND RELOCATION

In total, across all of our relocation programs, we relocated 447 people, including through government resettlement, private sponsorship and ETS. Having multiple pathways at our disposal means that we can reach more people in their specific circumstances. However, the journey of LGBTQI+ people toward queer liberation doesn't end when they arrive in a new country.

We spoke with individuals who we relocated through ETS to better understand their experiences after relocation. They told us that their path to safety and acceptance was paved with deep challenges. Relocating 434 individuals from 34 countries through ETS in 2023 was an important achievement, and we need to understand the complexity of people's individual experiences.

Even in safer locations, LGBTQI+ persons we supported still encountered issues related to building a new life in a new country, such as adapting to a new cultural reality, language barriers, social exclusion, and the search for community. Further, in the places they looked to find reprieve for their queer identity, many persons reported experiencing discrimination and racism in the communities they hoped to be welcomed.

Although the narratives shared are diverse, from grappling with the prolonged asylum processes in Canada to confronting racism in Germany, a recurring theme emerges: while welcomed for their queer identities, LGBTQI+ people who are relocated often experience discrimination or harm due to their racial or national identity. Even in states with legal protections for the LGBTQI+ community, safety for LGBTQI+ persons is a relative experience impacted by the intersections of an individual's identity.

People relocated through ETS also reported that their internal emotional landscape evolves over time. At first, they may feel loss or survivor's guilt, gradually growing in resilience and a commitment to supporting the broader queer community. However, this emotional journey is not linear. Even years after relocation, people can experience challenging resettlement outcomes. The post-relocation experience is unpredictable. Despite our support in relocation, and the extensive effort it takes to ensure that people are relocated to "safety", there is still a gap. We cannot close this gap alone. It is the collective responsibility of governments, civil society, and host communities to ensure safe relocation for LGBTQI+ people. By acknowledging that people have diverse and evolving needs that do not simply end at relocation, we can better identify and work collectively to dismantle the intersecting and systemic barriers keeping queer, trans and intersex persons from living full lives.

Thankfully, of the people we spoke with, 91% of people relocated by Rainbow Railroad reported enhanced personal safety in their destination countries and 76% reported that being relocated enhanced their quality of life. While these relocation challenges exist, we continue to do the work of queer liberation in communities where we relocate people. Many LGBTQI+ refugees feel more hopeful about their future after they relocate, while still navigating the difficult realities of relocation.


I AM ALIVE BUT AM I REALLY?

Pasha's story of the emotional challenges that come with resettlement, a journey that continues long after arrival in a new, safer country.

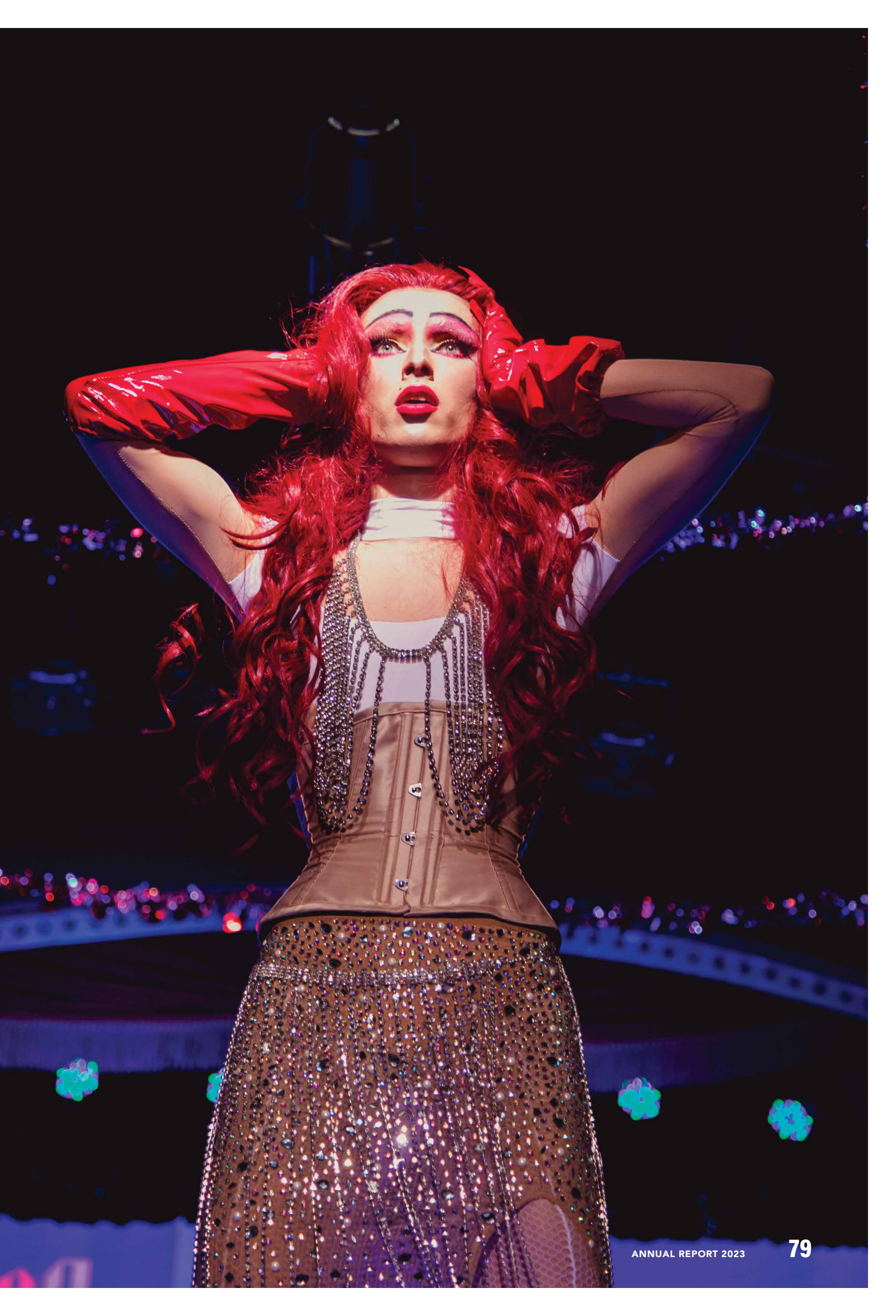
My fleeing journey started when I was 20. It's been almost four years since I left my home, family, and dreams behind. My country publicly traded my life and everything I had for political gain. It felt as if I was fighting alone knowing that I don't have a home to return to from now on.

I have never chosen what had happened to me, yet I still must prove that. My father attempted suicide when I finally told him the truth. The disgrace, disappointment, and shame he felt pushed him into the rope, not the horrific things I'd been through. Later my family even put responsibility for my dad's actions and inability to comprehend having a queer child on me.

It's been almost four years, yet I am still battling the aftershocks of that political earthquake. There wasn't a day when I wouldn't think about going back knowing that I can't. It is the feeling of living in a cage and witnessing from afar my country's falling into authoritarian hell that bothers me mostly. I have developed ADHD, PTSD, bipolar disorder, depression, chronic anxiety, and an eating disorder. I simply must find power to get up from my bed and cook a meal, not even talking about accomplishing other things. What once felt as the easiest task, now feels like unbearable weight. But most importantly I must find power to heal while everything around is built to prevent me from doing it. My escape hasn't ended while crossing borders. A safe place doesn't become safe when the mind is a hostage. I do need help in rebuilding my life and finding new dreams but also, I need a strong community that will help me heal and accomplish justice for those who seek it.



Although it can be difficult to read honest experiences of resettlement and relocation, it is important to understand these challenging narratives in light of hardships which do not end after crossing a border. Making queer liberation a reality is work that needs to be done in our own backyards as well as around the world. It takes time for people to find the home and belonging that they seek and we have an important role to play in this process. Ultimately, these stories are a stark reminder that more resources are critical for the necessary resettlement work it takes to close these gaps.



THE POWER OF QUEER GLOBAL ADVOCACY

Advancing queer liberation is a long journey, and victories along the way are constantly in danger of being reversed. Even in states where protections for LGBTQI+ persons have been secured, the rise of the global anti-gender movement is a reminder of just how tenuous these gains are, as backsliding threatens these advancements toward freedom around the world.



SECURING GOVERNMENT REFERRING PATHWAYS

The Chair of Rainbow
Railroad's Board, Caleb
Goodman and Canadian
Prime Minister Justin
Trudeau at the Toronto
Freedom Party, June 2023.

Amidst a global rights landscape in flux, the power of direct referral pathways for LGBTQI+ persons seeking refuge has long underpinned our advocacy efforts. Within an unjust system that prevents queer and trans people from accessing refuge, government referral pathways allow us to connect LGBTQI+ asylum seekers with the most urgent protection needs to routes to safety.

At the Toronto Freedom Party on June 8, 2023, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a partnership with Rainbow Railroad to directly refer at-risk LGBTQI+ refugees through the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) Program. Securing additional refugee pathways for LGBTQI+ persons to supplement existing asylum pathways has been our priority advocacy call to action for years and marks a new chapter in our journey as an organization. This new pathway was a direct build on the 2022 advocacy success that secured a landmark partnership to bring 600 at-risk Afghan refugees to Canada.

In the US, the Biden-Harris administration committed to protect LGBTQI+ rights at home and abroad, and to resettle LGBTQI+ refugees domestically. Rainbow Railroad has been [pressing the US government](#)¹¹ since 2020 to allow more LGBTQI+ people to resettle in the US, including through partnership with LGBTQI+ civil society. Our engagement on the Welcome Corps initiative as the only major LGBTQI+ organizer of private sponsor groups, has enabled us to continue to lead the design, development



and early implementation of this program. We continue to advocate that this pathway must be accessible to queer and trans refugees, navigating the US refugee admissions program (USRAP), through which we can now directly refer the individuals requesting our help.

Beyond Welcome Corps, we are pursuing numerous points of entry to partner with the US government, including through close collaboration with the US Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons. In partnership with the Dignity Network Canada and other Canadian LGBTQI+ organizations in this network, Rainbow Railroad co-lead the facilitation of Special Envoy, Jessica Stern's official visit to Canada. We previously partnered with her office during our early evacuation efforts to move LGBTQI+ Afghans to safety, and we will continue to pursue all available opportunities to secure government referral pathways with the US.

JOINT-ADVOCACY WORKING IN COALITION

In Canada, we engaged a number of IRCC senior officials with the From Borders to Belonging solidarity network. One of the key advocacy priorities included addressing the backlog of Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) waiting to be resettled in Canada through the Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (RRAP). Moving individuals through this program is how we are able to prioritize some of the most vulnerable persons we serve. They are often from underserved communities such as queer and trans women, and have often been kept waiting for years by an international refugee system that failed them. This program has been instrumental in demonstrating the power of direct state partnership with LGBTQI+ civil society which helped lead to our GAR partnership, and was vital to the development of Welcome Corps in the US.

In May, six individuals we supported in relocating from Jamaica, Kenya, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan joined over 200 participants on Capitol Hill with the Refugee Council USA (RCUSA). They advocated before Congress on welcoming immigrants with dignity. They also discussed oversight of inhumane practices at the US-Mexico border, the mental health impact of underfunded asylum processing, inadequate resources for support, and the importance of ensuring that asylum seekers and refugees have timely access to work permits and documentation.



We emphasized the need for Congressional oversight to ensure the administration is held accountable for implementing permanent protections for refugees and asylum seekers, and understand how these protections are essential to the safety and well-being of refugees who are rebuilding their lives.”

Kendra Frith, activist relocated by Rainbow Railroad, now Senior Engagement Officer, Rainbow Railroad



Internationally, Rainbow Railroad continues to show leadership in organizing for LGBTQI+ rights, and we continue to lead as Co-Chairs of the National Laws and Policies thematic group of the [Equal Rights Coalition \(ERC\)](#)¹², a coalition of 43 member States. In September, National Laws and Policies hosted a webinar on Eliminating Harmful Practices against and Promoting Human Rights Protection of Intersex People. Featuring expert panelists from around the world, this webinar is the continuation of a series of publicly available practical resources to help state policy makers adopt laws and policies that protect the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons.

In November, we went to Quito, Ecuador, to attend Mi Casa Fuera de Casa - Chapter Quito, a Summit of Latin American organizations working on LGBTQI+ Forced Displacement. This event was organized by Act Together for Inclusion Fund (ACTIF) partner, Dialogo Diverso, and included representation from 10 countries and a number of international NGOs. The Summit formally launched the Regional Network for Human LGBTQI+ Mobility, which Dialogo Diverso has been building through ACTIF. Eleven organizations signed on to the regional network.

Since 2006, Rainbow Railroad has partnered with more than 50 organizations globally engaged in work with the LGBTQI+ community. Our partnership program allows us to collaborate with local Human Rights Defenders, activist networks, and grassroots organizations that are positioned to provide us with on-the-ground insight and support for persecuted individuals. We also support these individuals and organizations in capacity-building as they work to strengthen the global LGBTQI+ rights movement.

UN ENGAGEMENT

Increasingly, we have been leveraging the UN space to share our unique data insights, and serve as a voice at the table for LGBTQI+ forcibly displaced persons, who are often relegated to the margins of both conversations centering the rights of LGBTQI+ persons and forcibly displaced persons.

In June 2023, on World Refugee Day, we shared our unique data, *Understanding the State of Global LGBTQI+ Persecution*, at the Canadian Permanent Mission in New York, with UN State officials and international policy subject matter experts in attendance. Our data is one of the only sources on queer forced displacement in the world, and representatives from 22 States and seven permanent representatives at the UN attended to learn about it. Speakers included Ambassador Bob Rae (Canada), Ambassador Lisa Carty (USA) and activist Edafe Okporo, in addition to representatives from Outright International, UNHCR and the former UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Vitit Muntarbhorn, who contributed a video message. In UN spaces, LGBTQI+ issues are almost always considered too sensitive for discussion or engagement; data on LGBTQI+ persons of concern is not shared publicly as it is considered to be too controversial. Presenting data on LGBTQI+ refugees to UN representatives was an important step forward in combating the invisibilization and marginalization of queer people in multilateral fora.

In October, we attended the UNHCR ExCom meeting in Geneva. UNHCR is governed by an Executive Committee (ExCom) composed of 107 Member States, including Canada. They meet in Geneva annually to review and approve the agency's programmes and budget, and provide advice on international protection. Rainbow Railroad's Head of Impact, Kathryn Hampton, represented the US contingent on behalf of RCUSA (Refugee Council USA). LGBTQI+ inclusion at the global level is still highly contentious, and a group of countries were pressuring UNHCR to remove a diversity statement, which had been in their operational budget since 2006, concerning "equitable consideration for gender parity, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender diversity." However, states like the US and Canada strongly objected and insisted on a rights-based approach, and Mexico and Argentina led 44 states in signing a powerful statement in support of LGBTQI+ rights.



**The launch of
Rainbow Railroad's
2022 Annual Report
at the Canadian
Permanent Mission
in New York, with
UN State officials
and international
policy subject
matter experts in
attendance.**

TRANSFORMATION:

JANNAT'S ARTIVIST JOURNEY FROM PAKISTAN TO GLOBAL ADVOCACY

Our partner activist, Jannat Ali (she/her), Founder of Track-T, shares her story of being an Artist in Pakistan, and the sudden shift in political tides that forced her to flee.

I'm a transgender woman from Lahore, Pakistan and part of south Asian Khawaja Sira Culture and I'm an Artivist (Activist and Artist). I run Track-T, a track for trans persons and all my queer families, and I have been representing my community in 41 countries. I never thought to leave my country during my travels as I always wanted to learn, go back, and deliver, so that we can strengthen our global queer movement.

In 2017-2018, some key trans activists including me drafted and presented the Trans Rights Bill into the senate which focuses on self-perceived gender identity and prohibits any kind of discrimination in education, healthcare, property, employment and inheritance. After the Bill was passed and became Law in May 2018, Track-T organized the first Trans Pride in Pakistan to celebrate the Law and I am humbled and blessed I made history with the efforts of our whole team. Society started engaging trans people in different platforms, and giving them opportunities in different areas, and different stakeholders engaged them and started thinking about inclusion and diversity.

But after five years, a very conservative party came to power. We had no idea that even after five years of progress, anything can happen. When they challenged this law,

a group of transphobic people registered a petition against our legislation. There was a storm of hate and discrimination on all social media, public places, and workplaces, and also in religious places like in mosques. Because of this hate campaign, trans people began to be targeted and authorities started taking away every kind of opportunity for trans people, from jobs, to property, refusal of services including in hospitals and excluded from voting.

That was a very hard part of my life, after working as a global change agent. Trans life was ending, our movement was ending and I wasn't prepared for that. And it was really painful. I didn't want to see my movement die.

I would have to sacrifice and leave behind my family, my pets, my office and my life.

I think the first and foremost important thing is to save your life. Everybody has a right to freedom of movement. Whenever you have hope, when you have dreams, and when you have a hardworking positivity, I think you can survive. You can be alive in any place. So that's the message. We should always open our arms wide for everyone, regardless of their religion, race, gender or culture. Humanity comes first. That's not the message for just the Pakistani community, but for all the 2SLGBTQI+ community members.



INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION
HEALTH
CARE

QUEER FORCED DISPLACEMENT INITIATIVE

In 2024, Rainbow Railroad will launch the Queer Forced Displacement Initiative. This initiative is intended to serve as a launching pad for global queer activism and solidarity on LGBTQI+ persecution and forced displacement. As a coalition, we will build power together in order to coordinate and advocate more effectively with states and global institutions for effective protection solutions for queer people at risk.

Throughout 2023, we took part in key global convenings which helped to lay the groundwork for the initiative. In June, Rainbow Railroad met with UNHCR in Geneva for a stocktaking of the 2021 Global Roundtable on Protection and Solutions for LGBTIQ+ People in Forced Displacement alongside other global organizations led by LGBTQI+ people. We played a leading role in organizing the original convening with UNHCR, and used this opportunity to offer our leadership in implementing one of the key recommendations from the Roundtable, to launch an international queer forced displacement initiative. Ensuring that UNHCR and global LGBTQI+ organizations are engaged in this initiative will be key to its success.

Because this initiative is global in scope, it is critical that we present the initiative and solicit feedback internationally; in 2023 we did so in Africa. In July and August, we attended the Pan Africa ILGA (International Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans and Intersex Association) conference in Mauritius, moderating a panel on Enhancing Multilateral Collaboration on LGBTQI+ Forced Displacement. We highlighted the continued need for a coordinated global initiative in order to build on the success of regional collaborations, such as in Kenya and South Africa, where Rainbow Railroad partners Upper Rift Minorities, Access Chapter 2, and PASSOP are building South-South refugee resettlement routes for LGBTQI+ individuals fleeing persecution.

SPOTLIGHT:

RAINBOW RAILROAD AT THE GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

In December, Rainbow Railroad sent a delegation of six staff to the second-ever Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in Geneva, a multilateral convening on refugee protection held once every four years. Our participation at the GRF is evidence of the years of advocacy work we've done to significantly Queer the System. At the first GRF in 2019, there was extremely limited engagement of queer voices. This time, Rainbow Railroad had access and influence to a platform where multiple governments spoke out about our work specifically and the protection of LGBTQI+ persons experiencing forced displacement more broadly.

Rainbow Railroad leveraged this space to convene LGBTQI+ civil society organizations in a [joint statement](#)¹³ co-signed by nearly 80 organizations. The statement called on states to create more dedicated pathways for LGBTQI+ people at risk of persecution, including through humanitarian and development funding as well as resettlement pathways, and through partnership with organizations led by LGBTQI+ people.

RAINBOW RAILROAD'S PLEDGE TO QUEER THE SYSTEM FOR FORCIBLY DISPLACED LGBTQI+ PERSONS


1. Refer at least 1000 at-risk LGBTQI+ refugees for resettlement to the Government of Canada as Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) in partnership with trusted, LGBTQI+ led, grassroots networks operating in displacement contexts where LGBTQI+ persons face criminalization and other structural barriers to accessing traditional protection and resettlement services.
2. Refer at-risk LGBTQI+ refugees for resettlement to the U.S. Government in partnership with trusted, LGBTQI+ led, grassroots networks operating in displacement contexts where LGBTQI+ persons face criminalization and other structural barriers to accessing traditional protection and resettlement services.
3. Facilitate the resettlement of at least 50 LGBTQI+ refugees to the United States through the Welcome Corps private sponsorship program as the only LGBTQI+ led U.S. organization serving as a Private Sponsor Organization.
4. Collaborate with the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) to create new ways to safely identify LGBTQI+ refugees in the U.S. resettlement pipeline.
5. Advocate for a standardized mechanism for capturing LGBTQI+ disaggregated data and using it to pair LGBTQI+ refugees with needed queer-sensitive resettlement support.
6. Work with at least one other state to build LGBTQI+ specific private sponsorship pathways.
7. Launch an International LGBTQI+ Forced Displacement Initiative in collaboration with people with lived experience of forced displacement, civil society, academics, protection actors and states in view of the Summary Conclusions from the 2021 Roundtable.

STRENGTHEN

SUR

FOUNDATION

**WE ARE GRATEFUL
FOR THE
COMMUNITY
OF SUPPORTERS
WHO STRENGTHEN
OUR FOUNDATION
THROUGH
FINANCIAL
SUPPORT AND
BEYOND.**



In order to be effective, we must equip ourselves with the right tools, responsibly manage the funds entrusted to us by our supporters, and ensure that we're transparent in sharing the impact of our work. As we move forward, we remain focused on strengthening our organization, evaluating and refining our systems, and becoming more efficient and effective. We will responsibly add capacity where needed, while continuing to invest in our existing staff to ensure they have the necessary support and resources to do their best work.

ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS



Throughout the past year, we have made significant strides in enhancing our organizational structure and capacity, successfully accomplishing the goals we set forth at the outset.

Firstly, our commitment to strengthening governance processes and board engagement has yielded tangible results. Through a comprehensive review, we have implemented several measures to streamline governance, onboard new members and enhance decision-making processes with new reporting structures.

Our finance systems and capacity have undergone tremendous growth to reflect the increased size and scope of the organization. We have established robust frameworks to safeguard financial integrity while optimizing resource allocation to support our mission effectively. Our commitment to technological advancement has led to significant improvements in IT systems and cybersecurity. By updating and standardizing job descriptions, we have ensured alignment with our organizational chart, enabling smoother workflow and clearer role delineation.

Our dedication to fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace culture has been evident in our initiation of an HR policy review process. This thorough examination has enabled us to identify areas for improvement and develop policies that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout our organization. Our recruitment strategies have been refined to ensure access to diverse pools of talent, enriching our organizational culture with a variety of perspectives and experiences. Additionally, enhancements to onboarding and orientation processes have deepened staff knowledge and understanding of our programmatic work, fostering greater engagement and efficacy through a record year of growth in staffing.

In summary, our collective efforts have culminated in a strengthened organizational framework, poised to navigate the challenges ahead.

OUR STAFF

OPERATIONS

Becky McFarlane	Acting Chief Operating Officer
Taha Aroosa	Operations Officer
D'John Campbell	Events Intern
Rafale Chouinard	Director, Administration & HR
Aaron Hewitt	Logistics Officer
Michelle Jung	Senior HR Administrator
Emily Loebach	Senior Finance Officer
Ann Nweke	Finance Officer
Craig Palmer	Senior Officer, Events
Shaili Shah	Director, Finance
Julien Michel	Senior Administrator, Executive and Strategic Planning

DEVELOPMENT

Karen Haycox	Chief of Development
Yazan Alhajali	Director, Institutional Giving
Michael Anderson	Director, Individual Giving
Kathryn Busch	Director, Donor Relations
Michael Cady	Senior Development Officer, Major Gifts US.
Scott Ferguson	Director of Partnerships
Jasmine Ford	Senior Development Officer, Philanthropy
Kevin Lemieux	Donor Relations Officer
Taylor Luftig	Development Officer, Third Party
Jackson Schiefelbein	Development Officer, Corporate Partnerships
Brittany Skerritt	Director, Community Giving
Enloe Wilson	Senior Development Officer, Major Gifts Canada
Luke Wilson	Institutional Giving Intern

ENGAGEMENT

Latoya Nugent	Head of Engagement
Staries Azura	Engagement Intern
Timothy Chan	Director, Communications
Nicoy Davis	Engagement Officer, Volunteer Coordination & Community Mobilization
Kendra Frith	Senior Engagement Officer, Community Mobilization & Project Management, U.S.
Drew Heckman	Engagement Officer, Community Mobilization & Project Management, U.S.
Lily Kurtz	Project Officer, U.S.
Leora Mosman	Project Officer, U.S.
Ajay Patel	Design & Digital Officer
Emma Reid	Senior Communications Officer
Yara Said	Communications Intern
Sarah Seniuk	Director, Engagement
Deema Shahin	Communications Consultant
Samuel Wairiuko	Engagement Intern

IMPACT

Kathryn Hampton	Head of Impact
Nishin Nathwani	Head of Strategy
Jacque Daly-Voyska	Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Officer, Data
Hazem G	Senior Policy Research Officer
Dorrin Narenjiha	Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Officer, Evaluation
Swathi Sekhar	Director, Protection Initiatives
Monique Sereneo	Director of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning
Pax Santos	Director, Policy and Advocacy

PROGRAMS

Devon Matthews	Head of Programs
Rabab Al Khatib	Director, Intake, Information Services, & Referrals
Salem Azizah	Program Officer, Intake & Case Support
Joselynn Crosby	Program Officer, GAR
Adriana Espinosa	Director of Cash Assistance and ETS
Sizwe Inkingi	Program Officer, Transit Country Engagement
Josh Jenkins	Program Officer, Case Work
Karim Khalifeh	Senior Program Officer, Grassroots Mobilization
Rebaz Khursheed	Program Officer, ETS & Cash Assistance
Roland Kwesiga	Program Officer, Programs Volunteer Coordinator
Véro Lahaie Luna	Program Officer, Resettlement
Paige MacLean	Program Officer, GAR Internal Coordinator
Zahra Mahmoodi	Program Officer, ETS & Cash Assistance
Luis Maldonado	Program Officer, Intake
Maicel Neema	Director of Resettlement Pathways
Brandon Pearl	Senior Program Officer, Emergency Travel Support (ETS) and Cash Assistance
Sindi Pinari	Program Officer, Intake
Kiana Reyes	Senior Program Officer, Information Services, Referrals and Wellbeing Support
Derek Sebastian	Programs Officer, Intake
Ricardo Simpson	Programs Officer, Crisis Response and Complementary Pathways
Milo Stewart	Programs Officer, Intake
Aima Waheed	Director of Crisis Response
Dennis Wamala	Program Officer, Crisis Response

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CANADA

Caleb Goodman, Chair
Bruce Koff, Vice-Chair
Ian Gregoire, Treasurer
Al Ramsay
Andrew Swart
Devin O'Neill
Julian Morris
Krista Hill
Malik Brown
Muneer Panjwani

USA

Bruce Koff, Chair
Julian Morris
Malik Brown
Muneer Panjwani

THANK YOU

DONORS

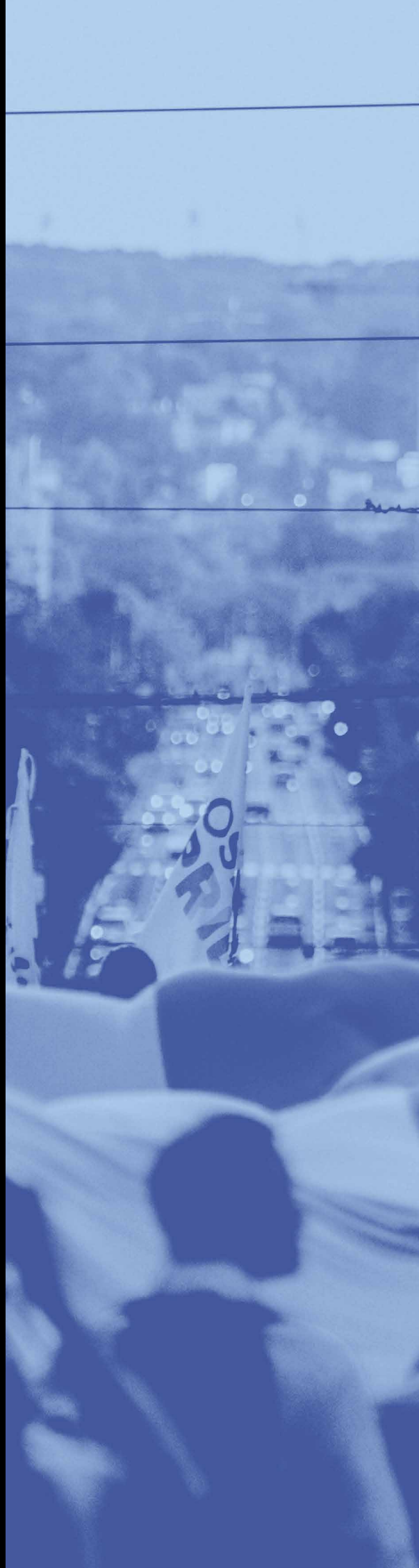
The vital work that we do would not be possible without the ongoing support of our incredible community of donors. We are deeply appreciative of the commitment and dedication of the individuals, community groups, corporations and foundations who sustain our work.

We are committed to using these resources in the most effective and efficient way possible, to get more to safety, queer the system, and strengthen the foundation of our organization.

Thank you for your dedication to this work.

† includes in-kind support

* includes fundraised amounts



CANADA

\$250,000+

LCBO (Liquor Control Board of Ontario)

\$100,000-\$249,999

Paul Austin & Dalip Girdhar
Equitas - International Centre
for Human Rights Education
Hudson's Bay Foundation
Mindset Social
Innovation Foundation
Robert Quartermain
Red Cross
Robert Bosch Stiftung
Scotiabank
TD Bank Group †

\$50,000-\$99,999

Andrew Beckerman †
BMO
Canada Lands Company †
DECIEM: The Abnormal
Beauty Company
Great Canadian Entertainment
Sylvia Jay
TELUS Communications Inc.
& Employees *
The Auxilium Foundation
The Beer Store
The Flanagan Foundation
Weber Shandwick Canada †
WES Mariam Assefa Fund

\$25,000-\$49,999

ARIDO GTA Chapter
Aviva Canada
Christopher & Timothy Carter
Connor Clark & Lunn Financial
Group and Employees
H&M North America
Interac Corp.
Mackenzie Together Charitable
Foundation
Mill Street Brewery †
Tom Mitchinson & David Connolly
Navigator
Out Adventures
Steven Spencer
The Kraft Heinz Company
Weishaupt Design Group
& Employees *†
Anonymous (1)

\$10,000-\$24,999

2500102 Ontario Corporation
Adobe Inc. & Employees *
Air Canada †
Barry's Bootcamp Canada Inc
Michael & Keith Battista
Bimbo Canada
Brown-Forman Canada
Capital One
Clyde & Co LLP †
DAVIDs TEA Inc.
Digital Extremes
Donald F. Hunter
Charitable Foundation
EverJonge Homes
FCB Canada
Nathan G.
Gato Negro †
Caleb Goodman
John Fluevog Boots & Shoes Ltd.
June Burland Fund and
the Ann Louise Pearson Fund
K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation
Estate of Pierre LaPlante
M·A·C COSMETICS
Martha LA McCain
John McNain
Miller-van Oord Family
Minden Pride *
Plusgrade
Mark Pratt
Québecor Media Inc.
Royal Ontario Museum †
RW&CO.
S.i. Systems
Scott Powell & Kirk Hill Foundation
Dr. Eric & Melanie Semlacher
Sentinel Maintenance Incorporated
Sephora & Employees *
Shreya Shah
Sour Puss
Jason Stone & Rob Connolly
Raymond & Felicity Stone
Andrew Swart & Michael Sacke
Ted Baker Canada Inc.
The Alva Foundation
The Canadian Tilling Foundation
The Imperial Court
of Toronto (TICOT)

The Jon Fedder & Mark Robertson
Community Fund
The Pride and Remembrance
Foundation
The York School *
TreadRight Foundation
William MacKinnon &
James Cooper
Jim Walker & Susan Eplett
Anonymous (3)

\$5,000-\$9,999

A Thinking Ape Entertainment Ltd.
AbsolutelyBlake
Arno Family Foundation
AstraZeneca
Bailey Nelson
Scott Baker & Blair Mascal
Booking.com
Robert Brews
Linda Briskin
& Carole Marshall
CAA
Mike Callaghan & Wade Turner
CGI Canada
Coyote Jocks Inc.
CPA Canada & Employees *
Thomas Deacon
Electronic Arts
Elephant Shoes Foundation
Andrew Fugard Swart
Professional Services Inc.
Golden Gate Graphics
Daniel-Robert Gooch
Google Employee Giving
Graham Family Foundation
Andrew Grimes
Groupe Leclair
Brian Henderson *
Stephen Johnson
Kismet Fund
Lady5 Community Drag
Pageant 2023 *
Roger Larios
George Lawrie
Left Turn Right Turn Ltd.
Christopher Lucki & Rodey Wing
R. Lyle
Maple Leafs Sports Entertainment †



**LCBO IS
INSPIRED
BY RAINBOW
RAILROAD'S
IMPACT
AS A LEADING
ORGANIZATION
THAT SUPPORTS
LGBTQI+ PEOPLE
IN NEED
AROUND THE
WORLD.**

LCBO
SPIRIT OF
SUSTAINABILITY

The collective impact from LCBO's annual Love Pairs with Everything campaign aims to support Rainbow Railroad's mission of helping at-risk LGBTQI+ people around the world get to safety." Thanks to the dedication of our employees and the generosity of Ontarians, we are proud to have raised over \$890,000 for Rainbow Railroad.

Through LCBO's Spirit of Sustainability platform, our work begins with strong partnerships with organizations that make a difference for the 2SLGBTQI+ community, such as Rainbow Railroad. We are inspired by a mission that aligns with LCBO's commitments to building thriving communities where all individuals have equitable access to the essential resources needed to live happy, healthy lives, regardless of gender, age, sex, race, class, religion, ethnicity, ability, language, sexual orientation, or gender identity."

LCBO

CORPORATE DONOR

\$5,000-\$9,999 (CONTINUED)

Russell Mathew & Scott Ferguson
Rick Mercer & Gerald Lunz
David Miklas
Rod Miller
National Union of Public
and General Employees
Nigel and Rhonda Gilby Foundation
Paul Noble
Ian Nordheimer
Northland Power Inc
OMERS & Employees *
Deloitte Canada -
Ontario Organization
Transformation Team *
Oxford Properties & Employees *
Right Stuff Fund
Rob & Rick
Joel Rotstein & Frank Chester
Justin Stockman *
Sun Life Financial
That's Spooky Podcast
Jim & Judy Thiessen
Ian Turner
Unifor Social Justice Fund
Universal Music Canada
Ursel Phillips Fellows
Hopkinson LLP
Vitaly Design Ltd.
Allan Walkinshaw & Nancy Cobban
George Yabu & Glenn Pushelberg
Anonymous (4)

\$1,000-\$4,999

360insights
Abhi + Arty
AgencyAnalytics
Danny Agro
AIP Connect Inc.
Albert & Michael
Alexis Gallery Custom
Engagement Rings
Marcus Allan
Mark Allen
Allstate
Dave Anderson
Andrew Mahon Foundation
John Andru
Angela's Fundraising Page *
Jamie Angell
David Angelovich
Wesley Andreas
Nolan Andres
Paolo Aquilini
Gwendelyn Asante
Association of Law Officers
of the Crown
Athabasca University Students'
Union (AUSU)

Robert Atkinson
Ayushman + Souvik & Employees *
Bob & Anne Aziz
Daniel Bacinello
Chelsey Baidacoff
Baker & McKenzie LLP
Banff Pride, in partnership
with Sean Anthony
Bar Isabel
Stefania Baresic
Barilla Canada
Kevan Barnett
Michael & Keith Battista
Guy Beaudin
Bell Canada
Drew Bennie
Trent Berry
Michael Bertrand &
Anthony Merante
Pamela Bitar
Devon Black
Kurt Blais *
BlueCat Networks
James Bogle & Chrissy Bozik
Noah Bonder
Angus Bonnyman &
Michael Ashton
Jonathon Borland
Alex Borovoy
Brandsicle Inc.
Brisco Family Foundation
Colby Brose
Stephen H. Brown & Trevor Hennig
Kelvin Browne
Neil Buddel
Amanda & Ron Burkholder
CAAT Pension Plan -
Employee Social Committee
Kim Caerels McElhone
Roy Cain
Rafael D Calderon Narvaez
Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo
Canaccord Genuity
CanadaHelps.org
Canadian Gay Tennis Open
Canadian Soccer Supporter Groups
Canvaspop
Andrew Carroll
Tasha Carter
Centre for Commercialization
of Regenerative Medicine
& Employees *
Ray Chaaya
John Chandler
Joseph Cirone
Cameron Clark
Brian Clarkin
Clionadh Cosmetics
Bernard F. Cocchiola
Andrew Collins
Christopher Collins & Daniel Lander
Corrie & Michael Collins
Jacob Cook & Antonino Urbano
Morgen Cookson
Robert Cramer
David Crawford
Brianna Cuzzolino *
Edward DaCosta
Michael Daniels & Al Ramsay
Janine Davies
Randall Dawson & Rudy Ticzon
Jonathan DeGeer
Jessica del Socorro
Sanchez Castillo
Kathryn & Jeff Dennler
Louis & Fedora Deveau
Michaela Diakiw
Dig Insights
Dignity Memorial
Philip Doiron
Doll Haus Events
Ruth Donald
Adam & Mary Doran
Dallas Draper & Brian Lloyd
Dream Unlimited
Earls Restaurants
Philip Edwards
Environics Analytics & Employees *
Joseph Erban
Ernest Cider Co. Ltd.
F45 Ossington / Galleria
& Employees *
Fairlawn Avenue United Church
Collin Faubert
William Fee
Joe Fidilio
Fight Inspired Interval
John Fitzgerald
Marlaine & Terry Fitzpatrick
Dan Flanagan & Stephen Calnen
Travis Flath
Pinky Franklin
Fraser Direct
Alissa & Greg French
Julia Friesen
Serge Gallant
Berns Galloway
Daryl Gauthier
Phil Gazaleh
Zale Geller
George Brown College -
Drag Prom Fundraiser
George Weston Ltd.
Monica Gjendem
Gore Mutual Insurance Company
Grainger Canada
Griffith Foods Limited
Andrew Gillespie
Sylvain Giroux
Terry Goldie
Hazel Goldspink
Konstantin Gouchtchine
Yola Grant
David Grisim & Neil Chang
Allan Guinan & Chris Rock
Albert Haddad
George L. Hall
Kenn Hamlin & Anton Tabakov
Zoe Hanneman
HATCH & Employees *
Tim & Michele Hayman
Bennett Haynen
HELM Life
Melanie Hider †
David Highgate
Hill+Knowlton Strategies Canada
Hopewell Avenue Public School
Daniel Horsman
Hotjar
Elizabeth Howson
Jane Hutton
Steven Hutton
Andrew Innes & Donald Watson
Derek Innis
Richard Isaac
Suzanne Jabour
Jacobs Solutions Inc. & Employees *
Edward Janiszewski
Jarvis Consulting Group
Jenna & Amanda Bly *
JICS GSA *
JM Foundation
JTMH Family Foundation
Robert Juhasz
Jim Kapches
Paul Kaplan
KeepFit Women
Keg Restaurants Ltd.
Marc Kemerer
Robert Kim
Kinaxis
Jeffrey King
Myles J Kirvan
William & Gary Klein
Brent Knowles
Philip Kocev & Andrew Mainprize
Dario Kosarac
L'eat Catering †
Gustavo Labbe
Marcel Laberge
Doug Lee
Sid Lee
Tanya Lee & John Torrey
Jacob Levman
Michael Lisetto-Smith
Malcolm Lucy
Lumerate Inc.
Dane Macintyre
Susan L MacLaurin
Manulife

\$1,000-\$4,999 (CONTINUED)

Edmund Maidlow
McCall MacBain Foundation
Brett McGoldrick
Kevin McGuire
Trevor McGrath -
Frontrunners Toronto *
Ian McKay & Rob Vanderheyden
Sean McKenna
Penelope McLachlan
Richard McLellan
Medavie Blue Cross
Douglas Melega
Rohan Menon
Metrix Group
Jordan Merkur &
Ivan Joya Gonzalez
Jesse Michelin
Microsoft Corporation
MightyHive
Natalie Miller
Miller Thomson LLP
MINI Canada
Adrian Mitchell & Bruce Youngblut
Chad Molleken
Morningstar Inc. & Employees *
Adam Morrison & James Owen
Moss LED Inc - Our Glowing Hearts
Motorola Solutions Foundation
Gordianne Moynham
Curtis Murphy
Michael Murphy & Shane Small
Shubha Murthy
N. American Roof
Management Services Ltd
Marc Nadeau
Nancy Nicol
National Show Systems †
Netflix, Inc.
Bridget Netzel
Newall Family Foundation Trust
Northbridge Financial Corp.
Blair O'Connor
Mary O'Donovan
Onstage Uxbridge
Ontario Insurance
Adjusters Association
Out & Out Club (Toronto) Inc. †
Anne Owen
Pablo's Mecenat
David Palumbo
Greg Parsons
Lisa Pasquin
Peaches Sports Bar
Christina Peralta
Shane Percy
Bernardine Perreira
Pilot Coffee Roasters
Andrew Pineau *

Power Yoga Canada - Etobicoke
Prophix Software Inc. & Employees *
Provincial Employees Community
Services Fund
Brian Provini
Andrew Pruss
QuadReal Property Group
Queen's University
Quickies Beauty Inc.
Erin Quinn Jones
R&M Lang Foundation
RBC Foundation
Robyn Rapske
Sharon Reid
Chad Remis
Josee Rheault
Brian Richards *
Ride Cycle Club Ltd.
Candice & Jared Riley
Phil Roberts
Rod & Betty Wade Endowment
Fund at Calgary Foundation
Rogers Communications
Canada Inc.
Brian Rosborough
A K Ross & Ross Dobson
Wil Roth
Rodney Rousseau
Alan Rowe & Bryan Blenkin
Royal Bank of Canada †
Joe Rubin & Casey Gaunt
Andrew Rusk
RW&CO. on behalf of Myles Sexton
Salesforce.org
Brian Sambourne
James Sargant & Robert Fisher
Michael Sawdon
Mark Schaan
Kevin Schultz & Blake MacDonald
Kevin Sia
Richard Simm
Jonathan Simmons
Charles Sims
Skate Canada
Ben Skelton
Slalom Consulting ULC
& Employees *
Ross Slater & Wayne Smith,
Reach Capabilities Inc.
Babette Smith
Crawford Smith
Glenn L. Smith
Snapchat
So Fierce Music
John Soer
Cameron Soltys
Bruce Edward Southcott
Ron Southerland
Souvik & Ayushman
Staples

Starbucks Foundation
Charitable Fund
Brian Stearns
Ted Steenburgh
Pamela Steer
Steve MacLean Realtor
Neil & Anne Sternthal
Margot Stevens *
Strutt Family Philanthropy Fund
Ramesh Sukhnandan &
Rahim Chunara
Brian Sutton
William Svihovec
Sweaty Betty's
TGDOR Fundraiser *
Tenzing Communications Inc.
The Cabinet Salon Inc.
The Edith & Bernard Ennis
Foundation
The Get REAL Movement
The Region Municipality of York
Thinkific
Bindhu Alvar Thiruvendakathan
June Thompson & Terri Holizki
John Thorp
Jason Timermanis
Jill Tinmouth & Dianne Davis
Jake Tobin Garrett
Susan Toller
Vincent Tong
Julio Torres
Torys LLP
David Townsend
Trinity College
Pallavi Tripathi
Ubisoft Canada
Unifor Local 2002
Dan Urquhart & Mario Grech
Dona Vachon
Ryan Van Hatten
Dean Van Hooydonk
& Margaret Rutherford
Matthew Vanderwerff
Jennifer Vella
Vena Solutions Inc
Annette Verschuren
Russell Vert
David Viggars
Tuan Vu & G. Gruber
Allison Walters
Christopher Watson
Erin Watson
Gareth Watson
Wavemaker Canada ULC
WeShall Investments Inc.
& Employees *
Stephan Weishaupt
Peter Eliot Weiss &
Michael Sweeney
John M. Whillans



I HAD RECENTLY COME OUT MYSELF AND FINALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT PEOPLE GO THROUGH – HOW DIFFICULT IT CAN BE WHEN EVEN YOUR FAMILY DOESN'T UNDERSTAND. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE IF ONE'S LIFE WAS ALSO AT RISK, FOR BEING WHO THEY ARE.

I know how hard it was for me, and I live in Toronto, which is one of the most queer-friendly cities in the world! So I wanted to do something that would help people that have less access to resources, in countries that have state-enabled homophobia.

I was specifically looking to support an organization that helps the LGBTQ+ community. And it was sooo good to find Rainbow Railroad, an organization that provides such robust services to the community. I was really blown away by all



the different ways Rainbow Railroad has assisted those in need.

I continue donating to Rainbow Railroad because the organization is well-run. I have faith that this organization is doing all it can to help safely and discreetly help those that need to be brought to safety."

SHREYA SHAH

INDIVIDUAL DONOR

\$1,000-\$4,999 (CONTINUED)

Whiskful Thinking Bakery
John White
Kris White
Nino Wijangco
John Wilkin
Mark Wilson
Sandy Wishloff
Wood Hart Fund
Jinelle & Baylee Woodley
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts
Jeffrey Yap
Allen Yi & Marta Mussa-Calecas
Jamie Young & Glen Watson
Nora Young
Alex Zandi
Michael Zaranyik
Z Zurich Foundation
Anonymous (32)



**PARTNERING WITH
RAINBOW RAILROAD
WAS A VITAL STEP
FOR CHOOSE
LOVE, DRIVEN BY
OUR MISSION TO
TACKLE THE UNIQUE
CHALLENGES AND
VULNERABILITIES
FACED BY LGBTQIA+
INDIVIDUALS
AROUND
THE WORLD.**

**CHOOSE
LOVE**

Rainbow Railroad’s mission to support LGBTQIA+ people in finding safety from persecution and violence also echoes our own strategy of providing targeted assistance to marginalized communities affected by conflict, natural disasters, and displacement.

The alarming reality is that LGBTQIA+ people are subjected to severe persecution and violence, just for being who they are. These threats are exacerbated when they are forcibly displaced, making Rainbow Railroad’s work not just praiseworthy but indispensable. Their core Emergency Travel Support program represents the kind of life-saving intervention we aim to support. Through our partnership with Rainbow Railroad, we are making a step towards a world where LGBTQIA+ people can live more safely and without fear.

As the rights and safety of LGBTQIA+ people are being threatened in many regions worldwide, our support for Rainbow Railroad represents a commitment to promoting equality and safety for all.”

CHOOSE LOVE

FOUNDATION DONOR

USA

\$100,000-\$249,999

Alphawood Foundation Chicago
lululemon †
Prizeo
The Lefkofsky Family Foundation
The Yankee Candle Company, Inc †

\$50,000-\$99,999

Airbnb, Inc. †
Amazon
Expedia Group
Maxine & Irving Castle Foundation
Moncler for Giambattista Valli
The Points Guy and
Chase Sapphire®
Team Liquid
The Kraft Heinz Company *

\$25,000-\$49,999

Richard Appel
Carlo & Andy Brandon-Gordon
Caleb Burson & Timothy Gug
Choose Love
Paul Farr & Ryan Ellis
Google & Employees *
Robert R Holgate
Philanthropic Fund
Ross Srrirocham †
Vornado Realty Trust †
Welcome Fund, a program of
Welcome.U.S.
Evan Williams
Zia Tile

\$10,000-\$24,999

A. Jackson Neighbor Foundation
Berger Family Foundation, Inc.
Centaur Motorcycle Club of Virginia
Brandon Clarke & Matthew López
John Cooper
Dignity Memorial
DMK Cocktail †
Every Man Jack †
First Presbyterian Church
Marc Freed-Finnegan
GeoComply Solutions Inc.
Andrew Hauptmann &
Ellen Bronfman Hauptmann
Jan Jecha & Lawrence B Stone
Jones Day *
Arthur M Kaplan & R. Duane Perry
James Kinsella & Robert McNeal

Jonathan Kratz & James Kuerschner
David Lapham & Clark Mitchell
Lighten Up Inc. †
Little Nest Fund
Daniel Mallory
Neat Dude LLC & Team Neat Dude *
Cassidy, Halli and Zoon Nguyen
& Cathy Halligan
Jeffrey Nussbaum
Fotios Pantazis & Lee Bell
Clark Pellett & Robert Kohl
Phreesia Inc. & Employees *
Qatalyst Partners
Eric Schuman
Josh Slusher
John Spangler
Stonewall Sports Chicago
Ted Baker Ltd
The Bookish Box & Shop
The Matrix: Rainbow Revolutions *
Tyria Pride 2023 *
Jeremy Vogel
Mr. Patrick L. Weber &
Mrs. Marti A.M. Morfitt

\$5,000-\$9,999

Apple Inc.
Stephen Brockman &
John H Willoughby
John Brooks †
Angelo Caravano
Lukas Ceha
Chris & Rodey's Wedding *
Danielson Foundation
Martin Duberman
Teresa Emans
Drew Fenton
Fidelity International
Lars Förberg
Brad Fresia & Allister D'Souza
Richard Gallagher
A.J. Goulding & Jason Huang
Grammarly †
Mark Heumann & John Millea
William Hsu
International Flavors
and Fragrances, Inc.
Kelly Family Fund
Timothy Kirsch
Lazysnout's Pride fundraiser! *
Michael A. Leppen
Paul Lerner
Lesbian Equity Fund

Richard Merk & Brad Peyton
of Silicon Valley
Vivek Moitra
Nandre x Rainbow Railroad Pride *
NM Giving Fund
Ida Ovies
Permanent Mission of Canada
to the United Nations †
Lauren Rogen
Salesforce †
Sam's Third Streamaversary *
Seraphim Media LLC
Paul Solberg †
Sutton Communications †
The Jeanine Heller Foundation, Inc
The Kolasa Foundation
The Starlight Stitchery &
The Stitchers Collective
The Stephen Colbert Americone
Dream Fund
The Warburg Pincus Foundation
Unbreakable AKQA *
Xperi
Eli Zal
Zivin Family Foundation
Zoom Video Communications
& Employees *
Anonymous (5)

\$1,000-\$4,999

#rainbowroad for Rainbow Railroad
Abbott Laboratories
Austin & Guy Adair
Michael Anderson &
Timothy Buckenmyer
Chris & Vicki Andreas
Charles Arndt
Atlanta Hawks
Jesse Audet
Jonathan Aumais
AutoDesk, Inc. & Employees *
Azeroth Pride *
Donald Bacigalupi & Dan Feder
Bank of America
Richard Barry
Anthony Barsoumian
Vic Basile & Fabrizio Claudio
Richard Baxter
Benjamin & Seema Pulier
Charitable Foundation
BentallGreenOak (US) Limited
Partnership
Aaron Bentley

\$1,000-\$4,999 (CONTINUED)

BeyondGiving & Employees *

BeyondTrust LTD

Mark Bjerke

Jason Black

Sara Blackham

David Blatt & David Moore

BlueFille *

Jim Boneau

Booz Allen & Employees *

J Ben Bourgeois

Fred Bove

David Bowersox

Douglas Braun-Harvey &

Al Killen-Harvey

BrightLocal

Jerry Brooks

BrownMan LLC

Bulova Gale Foundation

Matty Burns

Elizabeth J Cabraser

Carla x Rainbow Railroad *

Roberto Castellanos

Lee Cattarin

Kun-Jang Chang

Charles Edward Wells Trust

Laura Cherny

Cisco Systems Inc. & Employees *

Howard Clauser

Clo and Vinnie WERKing *

Mark Colclasure & Charlie Potts

Tyler Condie

Graham Connell

Consilio

cousincatnip *

Kai Craven

John P. Cumiskey

Rachel Cunliffe

Curious Nature

J D

D Squared Gay Gents Fund

of Horizons Foundation

Databricks, Inc.

Michael Davidoff

Mark Davis

Dayforce

Anthony De Filippis

James DeMaiolo

Bernard DiCasimirro

Jason Doolan

Maureen Doran-Houlihan

Cameron Dosch

Michael Dyer-Evans *

Bill William Edminster

Energy 350

EP Pals x Rainbow Railroad

Pride 2023 *

Eric Hsu & James Chambers

Charitable Fund

Martin Erwin

escape23 *

Fandom Trumps Hate *

Fantastic Fund

FADER Label

Kevin J. Farrelly

David Fernandes & Jesse Kahn

Richard Field

Fifth Generation Inc

Figue

Fizz Pride Fest 2023 *

Robert Fogel

Jeffrey Foldvik

Matt Ford

Drs. David & Carol Forster

Forsman&Bodenfors

Fox Corporation & Employees *

Katie Frehafer

Pierre Frinault

Kenneth & Sue Furst

Milo Fultz

Allison Gans & Erin Wolfe

Nika Gay

Geass Fragments

Genentech, Inc.

Genesys Telecommunications

Laboratories, Inc.

Bryan George & Stephen Pielocik

Jelle Giraldo

Givsky

Drew Glick & Alan Miles

Martyn Goddard & Barry Scott

Raymond Goetz

Peter Goldberg

Goldman, Sachs & Co

Justine Graham

Kevin Gray & Justin Weitz

Meg Grounds

Gryphi x Rainbow Railroad *

Howard Hahn

Tyler Hall

Lance Hammond

Joe Harper & Mark Stephanz

Hazlanz Railroad Charity Week! *

Hearty Boys †

Allan Heinberg

Telaireus K. Herrin, PsyD

Hippiemommabags

Ryan Hitt

Michael Horvich

Howling Monkey Guitar Picks

Jessica Ibbitson

Daniel Ignatoff

Matt Jacolik

Christopher Jenkinson

Jayson Daboi Johnson

Arthur Johnston & Pepe Peña

Jones Pond Campground

Joy Family West

Mark J. Judge and So Far So Good

Terence Jukes

Martin Kahn

Charley Kearns

David Kerlick

Rick Ketchum

Matthew Kiesow

KKR

David Kleiman

Ian Klier

Bruce Koff & Mitchell Channon

Joseph Koipally

Kory & Andrew Celovebration

Fundraiser *

Taylor Kozaczki

Eric Kratsa

Bob Laidig

Alfredo Lanier &

Stewart Hammer

Lattice

Katie Leary Sebastian &

Jim Sebastian

Katherine Lehman

Albert Lepage

Doug Lester & John Mandeville

James M. Levinsohn

Robert Liem & Troy Calkins

LilijaTheLancer & Her Community

LinkedIn

LiveFromTheApocalypse *

David Long

Chris Lorway

Sarah Ludden

Macquarie & Employees *

William Major

Mark Mansfield

Salvatore Manzi

Ernest March

Paul Marsolini

Mastercard

Marc Maxwell

Sean McBride & Steve Cary

Stacey McCulloch

Kevin McDonald

Dr. Susan McEwen-Fial

Eric McGinnis

Jack McMahan

Medtronic

Lynn Meisles

Henning Meisner

Peter Mensch & Anita Britton

Kurt Mergen

Matthew Messel

Mikfoolery + The Fools

Danielle Miu

Liza Mock

Jonathan Morrow

Patrick Murphree

Mweor LLC

Naked and Thriving Inc.

Neko Bellingham LLC

Heidi Nickelsen
Dr. Hisashi & Lynn Nikaidoh
Nobody's Darling †
Matthew Norman
Notte Zines
Brian O'Donnell
Official Rebrand, Inc.
Rick Olanoff
Daniel Oliverio
Orix Foundation
Outsell Caring Committee
Spencer Owen
Everette Quinton &
William Fellows
Pact †
Bryant Page
Devan Paillet
Muneer Panjwani *
Dan Peebles and Sherry Zhao
Charitable Fund
Pegasystems Inc.
Ralph Pellecchio & Jim Wernz
Jonathan Penchoff
PepsiCo
Pfizer Inc. & Employees *
Owen Pierce
Anna Pittenger
Polk Bros. Foundation
Allison Porter
William Poulter
Proskauer
Ernest Pusateri
Tracy Raasch & Aybars Emsun
Rainbow Railroad Fundraiser *
Evan Ramsey
Ratner Family DAF
Reiss/King Family Fund
Alan Richoux
Dr. Ron Ritchhart
Jonathan Reel
Emmanuel Resch
Revs Javen Swanson &
Oby Ballinger
Alejandro Reyes García
Sara Rhoades
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Matthew Robins
Roblox
Raymond Rodriguez
Jefferson Rogers
Rick Rose *
Aaron Rosenberg
Joel Rosenfield
Kiran Rupakula & Bill Soward
Marc Scarduffa
Jared Schwartz
Edward Scott
Scott Family Foundation, Inc.
Norman Scrivner
S.E. Douglass Foundation

Sea of Thieves Solidarity in Pride *
Seattle Men In Leather
James H Secor III
Jared Seeger
Sheppard Mullin c/o Ashton Wiebe
Debra Shore
Bruno Silva
Neil Sims
Neil Sims
SiriusXM
Johnathan Skabowski
David Skeist
George Skillman
Daniel I Smith
David Smith
Evan & Cheryl Smith
Jeremy Smith
Verne Smith & Michael Sui
St. Thomas' Parish †
Sara & Felicia Steenhouse
John Steffens
Stockman Family Fund
Eric & Emily Strong
Tanis Sugden
Jeremy Sussman
Jon Taylor Steen
Team Journey Loves
Rainbow Railroad *
The Indig Family Foundation
The Kaufmann Foundation
The Lawrence Gerry & Gail Burrell
Gerry Charitable Fund
The Trade Desk
The United Methodist
Foundation of North
Kirk Thomas
Thomas J. Bonsaint Giving Fund
David Thomforde
Luke Thornburgh
Town & Country Furniture †
trans day of visibility! *
Miranda Trieston
Patrick Tubbs
Robert L. Tulini
Ukiyo *
Uniform Systems, Inc.
Karissa Van Baulen
Jerre van den Bent
Lilly Wachowski
Andrew Wachtfogel
Benjamin Wade
WaterField Designs
Watts The Safeword
Alexandra Wayman
Pamela Weekes
Ben Weinberg
Aaron Jase Whipple &
Frank Buccola
Bruce White
WidowFGC *

Joel Yambert
Tze Yep
Jarret Yoshida
Warren Young
zapsterrr *
Margie Morrison Zivin
& Mark Zivin
Anonymous (19)

LEGACY DONORS

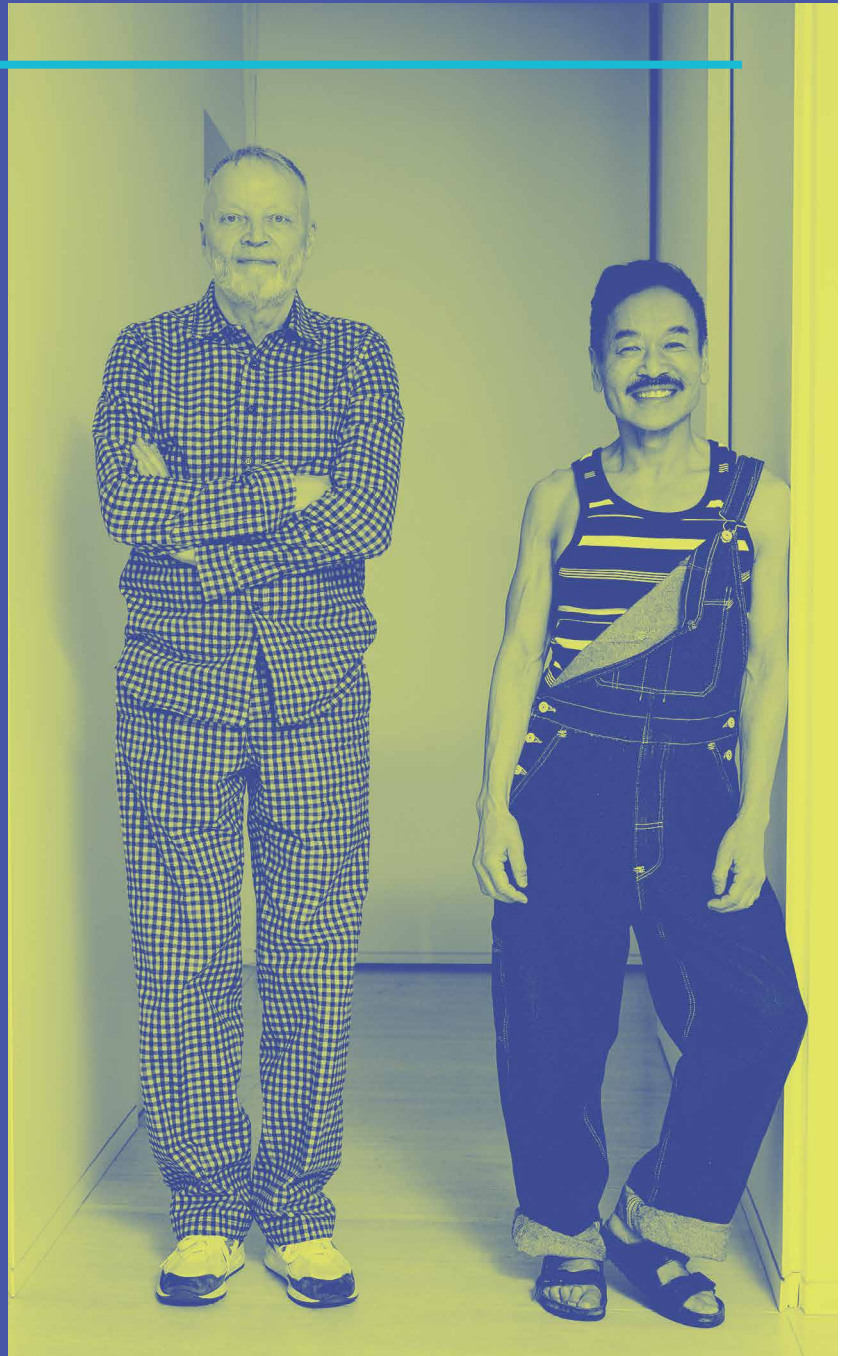
With gratitude, we are recognizing those who have generously confirmed a gift to Rainbow Railroad in their estate plans. These are just some of the thoughtful individuals who are dedicated to providing more at-risk LGBTQI+ people with pathways to safety.

Bernard Altman
Michael Anderson
Scott Baker & Blair Mascall
Eryn Batchelor
Roger L. Bell
Lawrence Bennett
Chris Black
Mark Black & Glen Leiner
Christopher Brown
Colin Brownlee
Paul Cadiente
Jamieson Cochrane
Mark Colclasure
Keyvis Dampthey
Andrea Doolan
Martin Duberman
Richard Firsten
Michael Friesner
Charles Haack
Stuart Holms
Peter Gallant
Caleb Goodman
Richard Guisso
Steve Gumbley
Robin Grindley &
Neil Hubert
Stephen Johnson
David Kerlick
Bruce Koff &
Mitchell Channon
William Kreutzweiser
David Lampert
Malcolm Leibel
Frank Lowery
Blair MacKinnon
Russell Mathew &
Scott Ferguson

Richard Meyers
Greg Minch
H. S. Mingle
Michael Murphy
& Shane Small
Ceilidh Nevling
Lawrence O'Neill
Mark Owen
Renzo Pella
Scott Powell & Kirk Hill
Rochelle Pyette
Steven Randolph
Ann Rosenfield
Paul Rosina
Juan Pablo Ruiz Scougall
Roger Schmitz
Sharon Scott
Thomas Schroeter
Eric Schuman &
Lorn Folsom
Catharine Shannon
Usman Sheikh & Jack Chang
Jesse St Croix
Grant Statchuk
R. Christopher Strietman &
Blane E. Halliday
Ramesh Sukhnandan &
Rahim Chunara
Mark Tan
Eli Zal
George Yabu &
Glenn Pushelberg
Ray Wallach
Andrea Williams



RAINBOW RAILROAD IS A TRUSTED GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION WE HAVE BEEN COMPELLED TO SUPPORT SINCE WE FIRST LEARNED ABOUT THEIR MISSION. THEIR EFFORTS ARE LIFE-CHANGING; THEY BREAK BOUNDARIES AND WORK TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO FEEL ACCEPTANCE.



By supporting Rainbow Railroad, we support our younger selves and the global LGBTQI+ community. They are fearless and overcome unfathomable obstacles to support unsafe and displaced people. Their work helps individuals access safety, where they can express themselves without fear of persecution. What inspires us about Rainbow Railroad is their constant consideration, mindfulness, and resourcefulness.

Rainbow Railroad is an organization driven by purpose. We chose to extend our resources

beyond our lifetime so Rainbow Railroad can continue its important, life-changing work. We are honored to support their mission and bring awareness to the adversity faced by the LGBTQI+ community that continues today."

**GLENN YABU &
GEORGE PUSHELBERG**

LEGACY DONORS¹⁴

VOLUNTEERS

At the heart of our organization's success lies the invaluable dedication of our volunteers. From forming private sponsorship groups to resettle queer and trans newcomers to fundraising, advocacy and direct support services, volunteers make a tangible difference in helping us get more at-risk LGBTQI+ individuals to safety. We're grateful for the volunteers who generously contributed their time, passion, and skills to support our mission.

TEAM LEDROIT

Justin Coniaris
Toni Codinas
Donald Gattlin
Jason Bello
Daniel Watson de Roux
Larry Handerhan
Trent Bauserman
Donnelly McDowell

TEAM SUPER BEST FRIENDS

Ryan Kaminski
Ryan Ubuntu Olson
Andrew Lohsen
Jesse Bernstein
Sandeep Shamasunder
Dylan Rassier
Matthew Schaef

PRIDE FLAME

Patricia Busch
Saúl Ulloa
Mia Katan
Siena Ruggeri
Emily Perrow

TEAM ROCK CREEK CIRCLE

Ian Lekus
Tarah Demant
Roberto Tijerina
Zakiya Lord
John Baker
Zoltan Varga

TEAM K STREET

Ethan Bishop-Henchman
Dominic Nozzarella
Karen Wires
Nathan Brown
Scott Spaulding

TEAM HORIZON

Gary Malphrus
John Thornburg
James Glueck, Jr.
Ian Poquet
Mark Manguerra
Valery Raytchev
Franklin Ortiz
David Jones

BCOA

Grace Wlnslow
Cheryl Gasperetti
Leslie Keilson
James Crews
Nam A. Nguyen
Brad Peacock
Bryan W. Dalton

ST. COLUMBA'S REFUGEE RESPONSE MINISTRY

David Griswold
Keri Piester
Margie Trinity
Gardell Gefke
Sharon Albinson
Carolyn Starek



IN A WORLD MARRIED BY CHAOS AND NEGATIVITY, SPONSORING AN LGBTQI+ NEWCOMER TO CANADA OFFERS A CHANCE TO MAKE A TANGIBLE DIFFERENCE.

Almost 30 years ago, a group of passionate people came together to help me. Their kindness changed my life forever and motivated me to pay it forward. This is one of the many reasons why I've chosen to get involved in sponsoring an LGBTQI+ refugee with Rainbow Railroad, an organization I've admired for years."

DARIO KOSARAC (HE/HIM),
TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA



YMCA GROUP 1

Frances Legrand
Omar Raldiriz
Anmar Al Hasani
Jessika Quijada
Erika Abdallah

UNITED PROSPERTY CENTER

Maha Ahmed
Richard Burgess
Rawaa ALRubaye
Zaid Thamer
Nancy Bleau

YMCA GROUP 2

Nailib Ahmadi
Waris Mayar
Bekhal Saeed
Jean Jacques Ruzahaza
Zakia Mahash

EELAB

Brad Fresia
Linda Kaufman
Maram Faragallah
Allister D'Souza
Mary Alcuin Kelly

ARCOIRIS

Carol Coonrod
Donnica Rae Wingett
Benjamin C Bynum
David Andrew Swanson
David R Jolliffe
Carriellen Beaudreau
Capri Collette Stevenson-Bisom

EDGEWATER

Bruce Koff
Ruslan Kim
Mitchell Channon
David Yanchinov Kim
Mauricio Cifuentes

TEAM BIG SHOULDERS

Tim Hamilton
Mike Edeke

UHURU

Abdallah Wambere
Yoshi Campbell
David Hodgkins
Tom Beyer
Emerson Miller

GARY

Gary McDowell
Lucas Rena
Zachary Marcus
Sean O'Neill
Navi's Afshar

RAEFF OSTLUND

Anne Raeff
Lori Ostlund
Katherine Proctor
Judith Kerr
Susan Guynn
Debbie Weissman
Nick Pauley
Barbara Ridley

BLUEGRASS RAINBOW ALLIES

Charles Kyazze
Kevin Ramsey
Frank Kiiza
Angelique Bell
David Sturgill

TEAM FAB CHICAGO

Tommy Lodge
Mark Sheilds
Tim Knipper
William Southerland
Ryan Hougardy

2U WELCOME CREW

Alicia Obando
Kristin Clowes
Curtis Smith
Maddie Mills- Craig
Arlene Tran
Surina Jindel
Gabe Spellberg

TEAM FAIRLAWN AVENUE CHURCH

Kevin Doe
Cecilia Crisostomo
Kevin Shea
Lori Hale
Margaret Ewing
Mary Ellen Richardson
Megan Shanks
Philip Blackford
Annie M.A. Ewing

TEAM FRESH START

Benjamin Gardent
Andrew Dunn
Batu Kaya
Jeffrey King
Lance Green
Rob Shapiro

TEAM GERARD

Gerard Byamungu
Albert Lam
Alex Chaharnyi
Chishimba Chibwe
Jaden Peng
Stephen H. Brown
Scott Stirrett
David Alexander
Alex Zandi

TEAM JESSICA

Jessica Shea
Amanda Spakowski
Elke Grenzer
Hannah Blum
Madeline Smith
Narges Fattahnia



**AS A QUEER
WOMAN WHO'S
FELT THE STING
OF CHURCH AND
COMMUNITY REJECTION,
VOLUNTEERING WITH
RAINBOW RAILROAD'S
WELCOME CORPS
INITIATIVE IS JUST
THE KIND OF PROGRAM
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW
I WAS LOOKING FOR.**

Rainbow Railroad makes welcoming an LGBTQI+ refugee simple and rewarding. I am thrilled to share everything about Rainbow Railroad with everyone I meet. No one is safe from my enthusiasm!"

**THE REV. LINDA M. KAUFMAN (SHE/HER),
WASHINGTON, D.C., US**

TEAM MATT

Matthew Kofsky
Andrew Aitchison
Ashley Sweetman
Cameron Bryant
Chloe Bayliss
Jenn St Louis
Preston MacNeil
Rayyan Dabbous

TEAM THOMAS

Thomas Fleming
Jeremy Fleming
Muayed Istifo
Tiffany Leung
Zahra Ashari Ghomi

TEAM CHADD

Chadd Pirali
Ash McCaffrey
Heather Lamourie
Natasha Hanna-Sawires
Nivedita Gajiwala
Ryan Campbell
Steven Angove

TEAM MICHAEL

Michael Sawdon
Cemile Marsan
Lesley Vaage
Liam Waugh
Sara Ashtiani
Vera Santillana

TEAM ELTON

Elton Oliveira Silva
Akashdeep Singh Rana
Davi Rocha
Jason Timermanis
Michael Binetti
Tony La Duca

TEAM DARIO

Dario Kosarac
Jayme Nadolny
Moein Sabouhiyan
Stephanie Cook
Preetika Sharma

TEAM AFRO BEATZ DANCE SQUAD

Nigel Chikukwa
Adonilton Almeida de Souza
Blair Voyvodic
Eva Bitri
Michael Shea
Olivia Coombe
Vini Mollo

DREAM TEAM

Shannon Boeckner
Carl Anthony John
Erin Campeau
Jasmine Ford
Mansi Setia
Nirmalan Vijeyakumar

TEAM RYLEIGH

Ryleigh Carson
Adi Shram
Alanna Going
Christen Carson-Traviss
Kimberley Vradenburg
Nina Harris

TEAM GREG

Greg Wilson
Aidan Tammaro
Jackie Cisneros
Paula Potts
Sadie Lewis
Xander Feng

TEAM HENRIK

Henrik Zheng
Abubaker Bukulu
Andrew Mazzanti
Erica Wennberg
Lucas Nogueira

TEAM CAROLINA

Carolina Bendaña
Andre Cooper
Jack Wilkie
Riley Javan
Vladimir Dvoretzkiy

TEAM ROB

Rob Peach
Arif Nagori
Craig MacDougall
James Breen
Sarah McMillan

TEAM SASHA

Sasha Girling
Edwar Dawlatly
Ayesha Maria Khan
Philip Roy
Sarah Shusterman

TEAM DAN

Daniel Urquhart
Alex Sisik
Cody Carvalho
Kristina Urquhart
Mario Grech

TEAM MALAJA

Andy Tran
Jonathan Love
Karen Francis
Michael Vieira
Nicholas Karatsoreos
Raz Cosio
Robert Ruggiero
Robin Bhargava

TEAM MICHAEL

Michael Petty
Anna Campbell
Dennis Findlay
Ian Cummins
Kristopher Librera
Natasja VanderBerg
Nigel Wynne
Tristan Whiston

TEAM SAFE HOME

Andrew Hood
Daniel Hood
David Ross
Emma Knight
Eric Tang
Martin Sterling
Steven Latanville

TEAM UHURU

Richard Fung
Barry Adam
Bob Gallagher
John Dufour
Mohamed Khaki
Tim McCaskell



**FOR ME,
THIS IS A
MINISTRY, AND
I EXPERIENCE
MY FAITH AND
MY HUMANITY
THROUGH MY
WORK WITH
REFUGEES,
REGARDLESS
OF THEIR
COUNTRY OF
ORIGIN OR
SEXUAL IDENTITY.**

**I am privileged to work
with Kendra Frith in having
the vision of Rainbow
Railroad be realized in the
Washington, DC area."**

**CAROL COONROD,
ST. THOMAS' PARISH,
WASHINGTON, D.C., US**

EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Kolawole Kushimo
Jess Jean-Baptiste
Kenneth Sergienko
Francess Ovbokhan Ehioba
Jennifer Fernandes
Nworah Mary chinenye
Nkem Gloria Odinma
Maksim Isaev
Zachary
Doug Fraser
Georgina Strachan
Sherri
Michelle Fox
Michael
Gabe
Victor Rosewrath - He/Him
Jess
Jeremy Kellen
Diego
Nicola Simpson
Vanessa Bullock
Vivienne Chartrand
Carmen Silva
Miko Potts
Zahra Ashari
Bianca
Bojan Francuz
Tom
Sachin Bhola
Cason Kirby

Keegan Scott
Andrey Egorov
Matthew Norman Ballek
Christopher Kervick
Shaunessy Ashdown
Debora Donato
John Tucker

PRO BONO LEGAL SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

CLYDECO

Claire Butler
Patrick Grand
Jack Stamos
Julien Brunelle-Desilets
Camille Beaudoin
Raphaelle Dussault
Catherine Ouellette
Caroline Loving
Jay Edwards
Gabrielle Dumas-Aubin

Laurie Lacasse
Emma Predan-Lepine
Dennie Michielsen
Isabelle Fabi
Viviane Tremblay
Vincent Dostaler-Tarte
Genevieve Boisvert
Kate Matta
Digisha Bhavsar

OTHER PRO BONO LEGAL SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

Doug Watkins

FINDING HOME AND
PURPOSE AGAIN:

HOPE'S INSPIRING STORY OF RESILIENCE AND ACTIVISM

In 2022, Hope sought assistance from Rainbow Railroad to avoid forced military service in Türkiye. After her relocation by Rainbow Railroad to Norway, she started a new life, supported by local organizations that provide support to LGBTQI+ individuals in Norway. Despite the challenges she faced, Hope remained focused and determined to achieve her goals. She is looking forward to completing her hormone therapy as she continues her transition and applying to university, paving the way for a successful career ahead. Hope's journey highlights the importance of safety and support for LGBTQI+ individuals. She understands that discrimination and lack of supportive laws can put people in danger, but she also knows that with the right resources, people can overcome these challenges and thrive.

For Hope, home is a quiet place where she can paint and work with her laptop. But home is also a community of people who welcomed her with open arms and continued to support her. As a volunteer for a local LGBTQI+ organization, she gives back to the community that helped her when she needed it the most. She builds connections with newcomers, even if they don't speak the same language, and provides a safe space for queers seeking advice and support. Hope's vision of queer liberation is simple yet powerful: to have the same rights as everyone else. She believes that everyone deserves to belong and be accepted for who they are. By sharing her story and volunteering her time, Hope is making a difference in the lives of others and inspiring us all to be more compassionate and inclusive.

2023 FINANCIALS

In 2023, Rainbow Railroad continued to provide support to the individuals reaching out to us, while working to strengthen and optimize the foundation of our organization for the future.

Over the last year, we have excelled in establishing long-term partnerships that will sustain us as we grow to meet the immense demand for our services. In our work, we must tackle the urgent crisis of global forced displacement, while building partnerships with governments, investing in technological solutions, and expanding our engagement with supporters.

The non-profit sector is facing a challenging financial landscape with inflation, rising interest rates, and a fear of recession causing an industry-wide decrease in charitable giving, while the costs associated with our work are only rising. As an organization we are well prepared and were able to utilize our operating reserve to compensate for a decrease in revenue in 2023.

Our donor base is strong, diverse, and committed to our work – our donor retention rate is above industry average and continues to increase year-over-year. Currently, more than 90% of our revenue is unrestricted, non-government revenue, which allows us to remain flexible and respond to emerging crises through our reliance on individual donors, corporations, and foundations.

While we are growing, we continue to prioritize our mission, with more than 70% of our total expenses spent on program delivery. Our revenue budget in 2024 is 40% higher than in 2023, allowing us to scale our operations while allocating more of our budget towards programmatic staffing and delivery costs.

Every day, our staff work to address an incredibly complex global issue, and it is critical that we continue to strengthen our organization and develop innovative solutions, while remaining nimble and flexible in order to get more LGBTQI+ people to safety.

70%

**OF OUR TOTAL
EXPENSES
ARE SPENT
ON PROGRAM
DELIVERY**

* In 2022, Rainbow Railroad USA received a transformative unrestricted gift of US \$5 million, allowing us to establish an operating cash reserve to support strategic initiatives. This year, we strategically utilized \$1.375 million from this reserve to fund critical initiatives and operations, resulting in a planned deficit of \$1.375 million. This approach ensures the continuation of our vital work and strengthens our long-term impact.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS & NET ASSETS

CANADA

DONATIONS	\$7,808,856
OTHER REVENUE	\$722,257

TOTAL REVENUE	\$8,531,113
----------------------	--------------------

PROGRAMS	\$6,285,652
FUNDRAISING	\$1,377,329
ADMINISTRATION	\$815,262

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$8,478,243
-----------------------	--------------------

EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	\$52,870
--	-----------------

USA

DONATIONS	\$3,067,377
OTHER REVENUE	\$258,564

TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,325,941
----------------------	--------------------

PROGRAMS	\$3,994,293
FUNDRAISING	\$613,493
ADMINISTRATION	\$93,460

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,701,246
-----------------------	--------------------

DEFICIT	(\$1,375,305)*
----------------	-----------------------

**FOR THE
YEAR ENDED
DEC. 31, 2023**

Together, we have made significant strides in helping persecuted individuals find safety and freedom. Through your generosity, we have been able to provide critical resources, advocacy, and relocation assistance to those facing violence and discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

Looking ahead, our commitment to the cause of queer liberation remains steadfast. We envision a future where every LGBTQI+ person can live openly and authentically, free from fear and persecution. With your continued support, we will work tirelessly to make this vision a reality.

THE LIFE OF A QUEER PERSON



**IF YOU WOULD
LIKE TO CONNECT
WITH US ABOUT
THE WORK WE'RE
DOING, PLEASE
REACH OUT.**

**WE LOOK
FORWARD
TO HEARING
FROM YOU.**

Donations support: donations@rainbowrailroad.org

Media inquiries: media@rainbowrailroad.org

Community engagement: community@rainbowrailroad.org

General inquiries: info@rainbowrailroad.org

Rainbow Railroad Canada
401 Richmond St. W, Unit 360
Toronto, ON
M5V 3A8

Rainbow Railroad USA
575 5th Avenue, Unit 15-135
New York, NY 10017
USA

ENDNOTES

- 1 Services related to Government Resettlement Pathways include application support and casework for individuals pursuing government pathways, as well as arrival support once an individual has reached their country of resettlement.
- 2 [6] OECD (2019), Humanitarian Surveys, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/humanitarian-financing/humanitarian-surveys.htm>.
- 3 McEwen & Narayanaswamy, UN Research Institute for Social Development, 2023
- 4 Williams Institute, September 2023
- 5 Ayoub and Stoeckl, 2024
- 6 <https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/the-latest/new-anti-lgbtqi-legislation-in-uganda-will-increase-harassment-and-discrimination>
- 7 <https://twitter.com/RainbowRailroad/status/1641132704530825262?cxt=HHwW3ICwrf3fvMYtAAAA>
- 8 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/28/pakistan-widespread-abuses-force-afghans-leave>
- 9 81% of the requests originating from Pakistan are from Afghans seeking temporary refuge in the country.
- 10 As mentioned in our 'Understanding Our Perspective' section, our data focuses on the primary LGBTQI+ applicant requesting help from Rainbow Railroad. We also only conduct our analysis on individuals who have disclosed their SOGIESC identity. This means that there is a small portion of the 15,352 requests for help received that are not accounted for in the the breakdown of our data.
- 11 <https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/the-latest/rainbow-railroad-calls-for-a-direct-referral-partnership-with-the-u-s-government>
- 12 <https://equalrightscoalition.org/>
- 13 <https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/the-latest/grf2023-statement>
- 14 Legacy donor refers to donors who have included Rainbow Railroad in their estate plans. To learn about how you can do the same, contact: donations@rainbowrailroad.org.



**I WENT
FROM AN
UNDERGROUND
EXISTENCE
HIDING MY
TRUE SELF
FROM MY
PARENTS,
TO AN
UNDERGROUND
RAILROAD
LEADING TO
FREEDOM.”**

**CHASE,
SUPPORTED
BY RAINBOW
RAILROAD**

Photo by
Jose V. Matutina.





Rainbow Railroad Canada
401 Richmond St. W, Unit 360
Toronto, ON
M5V 3A8

Rainbow Railroad USA
575 5th Avenue, Unit 15-135
New York, NY 10017
USA