

UNDERSTANDING THE STATE OF GLOBAL LGBTQI+ PERSECUTION

2025 Annual Report





Looking through
the windows of
the plane, seeing the
snow, and saying

‘Yes, I am here’

...That was the day
I’ll never forget.

Terry-Kay Walker, newcomer to Canada

STRANDED, DENIED, AND DISPLACED

Why Safe Pathways Matter More Than Ever

Before Terry-Kay Walker was approved for relocation to Canada last winter, the 38-year-old trans woman had long been living in limbo.

Seeking refuge from her home country of Jamaica, where she reported experiencing homelessness and violent attacks due to her gender identity, the activist applied for asylum to the US in 2024.

But shortly after her asylum application through the Priority 1 (P-1) referral pathway for at-risk LGBTQI+ refugees to enter the US was approved, the incoming administration terminated that program, and upended much of the wider asylum system in the so-called “nation of immigrants.”

“I started to run out of funds, starving for resources,” Terry-Kay says about her months in waiting. “I had to figure that out for myself.”

Prolonged periods of instability and precarity are common for many LGBTQI+ people

in search of safety, even more so amidst the global rise of xenophobia and anti-LGBTQI+ sentiment.

Rainbow Railroad has sought to address these challenges through the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) program, a partnership with the Government of Canada that allows Rainbow Railroad to directly refer at-risk LGBTQI+ people to Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for resettlement consideration.

This relocation pathway grants newcomers permanent residency upon arrival to Canada – allowing them to access health-care, housing, employment, and other vital support. GAR has served as a critical lifeline in the context of worsening global tensions, reflected in the record number of state-based conflicts in 2024. In the same year, the UNHCR found a 6% uptick in the number of forcibly displaced people escaping persecution, violence, and political conflict.²

Rising Need, Shrinking Options

The drivers of displacement that defined 2024 also fueled the record-breaking requests for help received by Rainbow Railroad last year. In 2025, more than 20,000 requests were made by individuals in countries spanning from the United States to Uganda. The US, once a desirable destination for LGBTQI+ migrants, now tops the list of countries where citizens, and particularly trans people, are asking for help.

The radical shift in the United States' reputation as a "safe" country for LGBTQI+ people starkly impacts individuals from countries with even harsher political and societal attitudes towards queer and trans communities – countries like Jamaica. In addition to laws criminalizing same-sex intimacy between men, the tropical island, whose tourism board³ calls on its millions of annual visitors to immerse themselves in the "freedom to let go and just be you", is also home to strong anti-trans sentiment and violence. "In Jamaica, I can't walk into a nail salon to get a service done. I can't walk into a hair salon to get my hair done. I can't dress and feel comfortable walking in the streets," Terry-Kay recounts. "It just wasn't safe [there] for me."

Increased Pressure on Relocation Programs

A total of 250 applications for GAR were submitted in 2025, some of which were from asylum seekers who had originally been approved for relocation, or who were in process of applying for relocation, in the US. Just one LGBTQI+ refugee was resettled to the US through P-1 in early 2025, compared to the 21 individuals who were able to enter the US with the assistance of Rainbow Railroad and other refugee and LGBTQI+ non-governmental organizations the year prior.⁴ Other applications came from individuals living in nations where citizens have no available relocation pathways due to visa restrictions and passport immobility – states including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Iraq, and Iran.

Backlogs and lengthy application processing times mean GAR newcomers wait an

average of three-and-a-half years from the time they first submit a request for help to the moment they arrive in Canada, though the wait time for some can be even longer. Many LGBTQI+ people can't afford to wait, causing some to travel to other countries in the interim, where they still face barriers to safety.

Emergency Support, New Beginnings

Shaker Nabil's story underscores the difficulties faced by many LGBTQI+ people at risk globally. The 39-year-old gay man, whose name has been changed to protect his privacy, fled his home country of Egypt after family members reported him to officials for posting in defense of LGBTQI+ people on social media. Homosexuality and consensual same-sex intimacy are illegal in the African country⁵ under its existing morality Penal Code, which prohibits acts of "indecent" and "debauchery." While the maximum penalty for these acts is a three-year prison sentence, at least one local organization has reported longer sentences for people convicted under this law.⁶

"The lawyer [representing me] told my mother, 'As long as your son is here, it will be under the chance that anyone can make more reports to the police,'" Shaker recounts. "He needs to go find somewhere else."

The threat of prolonged imprisonment prompted him to quickly flee to Dubai. Shaker's lack of residency, however, barred him from accessing employment and essential medicine, including his inhaler. "It was hell on earth," he shares of his experience. Enduring hunger and feeling hopeless about what to do next, he reached out to Rainbow Railroad as a last resort. "Before I knew about Rainbow Railroad, I tried to contact other organizations...I was trying to explain how down I am, how I'm about to die, how I'm about to be stuck somewhere or jailed for life. I didn't know how to express the point where I was at this moment. I was trying to find salvation."

After connecting with Rainbow Railroad, Shaker received funds through Rain-



bow Railroad's cash assistance program to buy food and essential medicine. And eventually, through the Emergency Travel Support (ETS) program, Shaker was able to successfully relocate to France from Jordan, where he had travelled following his short stint in Dubai.

Access to Pathways: The Difference Between Safety and Danger

Today, thousands of other individuals continue to await assistance as support systems for refugees, migrants and LGBTQI+ communities more broadly continue to shrink. In the absence of other relocation partnership programs with other nations, Rainbow Railroad relocated just 85 individuals through ETS in 2025. This significant decline – from 242 individuals who were assisted through ETS in 2024 – speaks to the immediate, and severe, consequences of harsher rules surrounding migration globally.

Now more than ever, access to pathways like GAR is the difference between safety and danger. This relocation pathway has allowed individuals like Terry-Kay to look forward to the everyday parts of life. For her, this means finding a job, sporting long

red manicures, and the dream of one day purchasing a small home outside of the big city. Thankful to have traded in the sandy beaches for the snow, she recounts the moment her plane started to descend in the country that is now her home. It's her favourite memory in Canada thus far. "Looking through the windows of the plane, seeing the snow, and saying 'Yes, I am here...The day that I landed [in Canada]... That was the day I'll never forget."

Now more than ever, access to pathways like GAR is the difference between safety and danger.

FOREWORD

People are seeking safety from within a country that has long positioned itself as a global refuge. When that premise fractures, the consequences do not stay contained within its borders. They reverberate across the entire protection system.

This year, we mark a sobering milestone.

In 2025, Rainbow Railroad received 20,215 requests for help from LGBTQI+ people from 172 countries — the highest number of requests we have ever received in our 20-year history. That is a 51% increase from the year before. Behind each number is a person navigating fear, exclusion, or violence, often with nowhere else to turn.

As an international human rights organization, we have long said that our work exists at the intersection of crisis and courage. Today, that intersection is under strain. The space between what people need and what systems can provide is shrinking rapidly, and by design.

Across the world, the systems that once offered pathways to safety are being dismantled or hollowed out. Governments are restricting access to asylum. Funding for LGBTQI+ organizations is being slashed. Digital spaces, once a refuge, are increasingly sites of surveillance and harm. And policies rooted in anti-rights ideologies are reshaping the global landscape in ways that make it harder for at-risk LGBTQI+ people to survive.

We feel these shifts acutely because the people we serve feel them first.

For the second year in a row, the United States was the single largest source of requests for help. In 2025, we received 6,253 requests from the US, accounting for 30.9% of all global requests. The overwhelming majority (88%) came from US citizens. This is not a trend. It is a rupture in the global protection system.

This is not an abstraction. It is a signal.

Alongside individual requests, we saw unprecedented demand from organizations holding the line around the world. In 2025, 827 LGBTQI+ organizations reached out to Rainbow Railroad, representing more than 1.7 million individuals in need of services. This surge reflects a deeper systemic failure. When systems retreat, the burden does not disappear. It is pushed onto those closest to the crisis, with the fewest resources to carry it. Grassroots organizations, often the first and only line of defense, are being asked to do more with less, even as the risks they face intensify.

The consequences are profound. Funding cuts have triggered a cascade of closures, service reductions, and unmet needs across the sector. Among global LGBTQI+ intermediary funders, regrantee budgets dropped by an average of 25%, with nearly 60% reporting overall budget declines. In our own programs, demand for support from frontline organizations surged far beyond what available resources could meet. Across our Grassroots Mobilization Fund and Crisis Response Fund, we received requests totalling \$18.5 million CAD and were able to fund only 6% of them. The gap between what is needed and what is possible is widening.

And yet, this is not a story of retreat. It is a story of how we respond when the ground shifts beneath us.

Scaling Safety Through Local Leadership

In 2025, Rainbow Railroad directly supported 7,521 individuals and an additional 17,855 people through funded partnerships. These numbers reflect not only the scale of need, but also the power of collective action.

Partnerships are not ancillary to our work – they are foundational. Local organizations and activists hold the knowledge, trust, and proximity required to respond effectively in their communities. In a moment when global systems are faltering, these networks are sustaining lifelines.

We have expanded how we resource this ecosystem. Through funding mechanisms such as the Crisis Response Fund, Grassroots Mobilization Fund, Community Access Fund, and Housing & Livelihood Assistance Fund, we direct critical resources to at-risk LGBTQI+ individuals and the community-based organizations that serve them in countries of origin and resettlement.

Partnerships have also shaped the evolution of one of our most critical responses: our Information Services and Referrals Program. This program was built out of necessity. As requests for help continue to grow, it is clear that not everyone will be able to access international relocation. The question, then, is not only how we move people across borders, but how we help people survive where they are.

We have invested deeply in strengthening these partnerships, even as resources contract. Through our Support Referral Network, we link individuals to trusted, sometimes underground, partners who provide mental health care, shelter, legal



assistance, and other essential services. This model allows us to extend our reach beyond what any single organization could achieve alone.

In collaboration with grassroots partners, we developed information packages for countries including Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, Türkiye, Uganda, and the United States. These guides provide practical, vital, and often life-sustaining information: where to find affirming health-care, how to access legal support, and whom to trust in moments of crisis.

These country packages are tools for navigation in environments where information itself can be dangerous or deliberately obscured. Alongside these resources, we provide tailored guidance — consultations, letters of support, and direct connection to services — ensuring that individuals are not left to navigate systems and pathways alone.

This is what adaptation looks like under pressure. It is pragmatic. It is imperfect. And it is necessary.

When Safety is a Privilege, Not a Right

At the same time, we are confronting another reality: the pathways to safety are collapsing.

In 2025, the number of people we were able to support through Emergency Travel Support declined sharply. Not because the need decreased, but because the routes themselves are disappearing. Restrictive policies, prolonged processing times, and political barriers are making it increasingly difficult for LGBTQI+ people to move to safety, even in the most urgent cases.

When borders harden and systems retract, vulnerability deepens. And still, people persist in seeking safety. They continue to reach out. They continue to resist invisibility. They continue to imagine futures beyond the constraints placed on them.

Our responsibility is to meet that persistence with action.

That means holding states accountable to international legal obligations and the enforcement of global and domestic human rights standards that apply to LGBTQI+ people experiencing persecution. It means ensuring their access to bodily integrity, autonomy, and self-determination, housing, healthcare, food security, and non-discrimination.

It also means advocating for policies that uphold the right to seek asylum and protect against refoulement. It means documenting and exposing the real-world impacts of legislative changes and funding cuts.



And it means continuing to transform our own organization.

Guided by Lived Expertise

Our commitment to becoming a refugee-led organization remains a critical direction, one that reflects our belief that lived expertise must shape how this work is done. At the same time, we are realistic about the constraints of this moment. Building towards this vision requires time, trust, and resources that are themselves under pressure.

Even so, we are taking steps to deepen the role of lived expertise across our organization, embedding insight into our programs, and ensuring that those closest to these systems inform how we navigate them. This is not about arriving at a fixed endpoint. It is about shifting how decisions are made, even in constrained circumstances.

There is no honest way to describe this moment without acknowledging its difficulty. We are operating in a time of contraction — of rights, of resources, of political will. The pressures facing our sector are not temporary disruptions; they are part of a broader erosion of rights and democratic backsliding that will shape the years ahead.

And yet, our response is grounded in two decades of action and impact. Since our founding in 2006, Rainbow Railroad has supported more than 48,000 LGBTQI+ individuals and families in finding safety. Over that time, we have grown into a global leader addressing queer forced displacement, working not only as direct service providers, but also as advocates, thought leaders, and movement strategists.

We have expanded and evolved our programming to meet changing contexts, adapting how we deliver services, how we resource communities, and how we influence systems. This evolution was required to remain effective in an increasingly volatile geopolitical and funding landscape.

But there is also continuity.

For 20 years, Rainbow Railroad has existed to respond to moments like this. Our methods have evolved, but our purpose has not. We co-create pathways to safety for at-risk LGBTQI+ individuals; however, that safety must be redefined in a changing world. Safety may mean relocation. It may mean accessing healthcare without fear. It may mean finding a community that affirms your existence. It may mean having the information you need to make your next life-changing decision. Safety is not static. And neither are we.

The tension between what is being dismantled and what we are building is real. We do not resolve that tension — we work within it. We adapt. We push. We hold the line where we can, and we create new pathways where we must.

This is what it means to continue under strain. It is also what it means to fight. Not with abstraction, but with action. Not with certainty, but with commitment. Not because the conditions are favourable, but because the stakes are too high to do otherwise.

To our supporters, partners, and the communities we serve: thank you for standing with us in this moment. The work ahead will demand more — from all of us. But it is work we know how to do. Because we have done it before. And because we will do it again.



Ilana Landsberg-Lewis
CEO

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ilana Landsberg-Lewis'.



Becky MacFarlane
Former CEO

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Becky MacFarlane'.

A MESSAGE FROM RAINBOW RAILROAD'S BOARD CHAIR

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by the tension that defines this moment for Rainbow Railroad. We are operating amid a global contraction — of funding, of political will, and of protection systems that at-risk LGBTQI+ people have long relied on. Across the humanitarian sector, resources are shrinking even as need intensifies. In this report, you will see what that looks like in real terms: record levels of requests for help, growing demand from frontline organizations supporting more than a million people, and an increasing number of crises requiring urgent response.

Last year, we were able to insulate much of our work from these pressures. That has shifted rapidly. Government support has become less predictable, and in some cases has been reduced outright. At the same time, philanthropy has not closed the gap, and some corporate partners are stepping back from commitments to the global queer community. The result is simple and stark: we are being asked to do more, for more people, with fewer resources.

And yet, within this contraction, something equally powerful has revealed itself — our





collective solidarity. The strength of this community continues to be our greatest constant. Our donors have shown up with conviction and generosity, even in uncertain times. Your support is not just financial; it is a statement that this work matters. At a time when others are pulling back, you are holding steady, and in many cases, increasing your support, affirming that LGBTQI+ lives are worth protecting, and that we will not retreat in the face of adversity.

I want to be especially clear about one truth: none of this work happens without the extraordinary staff of Rainbow Railroad. In a year that has asked more of them than ever before, they have responded with clarity, compassion, and resolve. They navigate increasingly complex and high-risk situations with care and agility, and continue to push the boundaries of what is possible, even when the systems around them fall short. Their expertise, humanity, and relentless commitment are the foundation of this organization, and this report reflects their courage and dedication.

Looking ahead, we know the road will be difficult. The forces driving displacement and exclusion are not receding. But neither is our resolve. We are adapting, strengthening our partnerships, and continuing to build pathways to safety that are both immediate and enduring.

This is a moment that demands more – from governments, from partners, from supporters, and from all of us. If you believe in a world where LGBTQI+ people are not forced to flee, then now is the time to act. To donate, to advocate, and to stand in solidarity. The need is urgent, and the path forward depends on what we do next.



Caleb Goodman
Chair, Board of Directors

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
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.
CISGENDER	A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.
CITIZEN	A citizen is 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
FDP	Forcibly Displaced Person; an umbrella term to refer to any person experiencing forced displacement regardless of their particular legal status.

FDP	Forcibly Displaced Person; an umbrella term to refer to any person experiencing forced displacement regardless of their particular legal status.
GAY	A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. People of all genders 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 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 nonbinary 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	Women and non-binary people who are emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women and non-binary people.
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 an undocumented migrant or a person without status.

GLOSSARY

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 used 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.
REFOULEMENT	The forced return of asylum seekers or refugees to their country of origin, or another country, where they could face threats to their life and liberty.
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 man who was designated female at birth.
TRANSGENDER WOMAN	A woman who was designated male at birth.
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USRAP	United States Refugee Admissions Program
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.
RFH	Request for Help. This is Rainbow Railroad’s terminology for tracking the number of individuals who reach out to us to request our help.
WE	Western Europe
WHO	World Health Organization

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SECTION 1

*Criminalized
and Targeted*

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Exclusive Data on LGBTQI+ Lives at Risk

UNDERSTANDING OUR WORK

Understanding Our Perspective

We recognize that collecting data on LGBTQI+ individuals is a complex process. To understand our data, it is useful to know how we collect and interpret it. The data in this report is based on total requests for help from LGBTQI+ individuals, as well as data specific to those we support. Through this information, we aim to provide insight into LGBTQI+ persecution and displacement around the world.

There are 5 Guiding Principles for How we Collect and Share our Data

1. Evidence-Based

and Human-Centered

We prioritize methods that respect individuals' experiences while ensuring non-extractive data collection.

2. Queer-Sensitive and Inclusive

Our frameworks address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals.

3. Decolonizing Data

We focus on identifying and amplifying underrepresented voices in forced displacement data.

4. Politically Informed

and Context-Aware

We adapt our work to sociopolitical contexts impacting the people we serve.

5. Adaptable and Innovative

We use flexible methods and new technologies to meet evolving needs and emerging challenges.

Our data is subject to a few specific limitations and considerations:

6. Our data is limited to LGBTQI+ individuals who work with Rainbow Railroad.

Rainbow Railroad's data draws from the global requests for help we receive. Many factors, including limits to what people feel they can safely disclose, their perceptions about who Rainbow Railroad helps, and their ability to access our services cannot be fully accounted for in our data.

Collecting data about the personal experiences of individuals is an interactive process. Often, more concerns are uncovered as we work with a person over time. Because we have limited resources, we are not always able to assist each person who reaches out to us. It is possible that individuals reaching out for support are experiencing more safety or health and welfare concerns than can be captured in our system. Any trends we identify from our data may be underreported.

7. This data is not generalizable or representative of all LGBTQI+ displaced and at-risk persons.

Although there is limited data available on LGBTQI+ forced displacement, 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 data can play a role in addressing the broader gap in research about international forced displacement and LGBTQI+ rights.

8. Data is disaggregated by SOGIESC identity and other demographics.

Rainbow Railroad receives requests for help from individuals of many different identities. However, it is important to acknowledge that our requests for help are a reflection of the intersecting forces of marginalization that result in our services being most accessible to cisgender gay men. To mitigate the overrepresentation of certain demographics in the data, we have disaggregated some data by location, age, and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) information.

Despite our best efforts to indicate where regional trends impact our data, in 2025, over 30% of requests for help came from individuals from the United States requesting assistance following the inauguration of the president and the subsequent escalation of anti-LGBTQI+ policies. This must also be considered when viewing the data.



9. Our data focuses on the primary LGBTQI+ applicant requesting help from Rainbow Railroad.

The data analysis provided in this report is based only on the individuals who submitted requests for help, even if other 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.

10. 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.

Our Work

- In 2025, Rainbow Railroad received 20,215 direct requests for assistance from LGBTQI+ individuals around the world. This is a 51% increase from 2024 and the highest number of requests the organization has ever received in one calendar year.
- This increase is primarily driven by requests from the United States. In 2025, we received 6,253 requests from the United States. This constituted 30.9% of our requests. An

overwhelming majority (88%) of the requests from the United States are from US citizens, 4.4% are asylum seekers, 3% are permanent residents, 1.9% have no legal status, 1.6% are temporary residents, and the remaining 1.1% are requests from registered refugees, stateless individuals, or individuals who reported their status as "other".

- Individuals supported by Rainbow Railroad may benefit from different programs throughout a given year. For example, an individual traveling through the Emergency Travel Support program may also receive cash assistance, as well as additional referrals or resources through our Information Services and Referrals program. Across our programs, we were able to support the following number of individuals:
 - **Emergency Travel Support:**
85 Individuals supported
 - **Cash Assistance:**
355 Individuals supported
 - **Information Services and Referrals:**
7,128 Individuals supported
 - **Government Resettlement Pathways:**
339 Individuals supported
 - **Post-Relocation Support:**
143 Individuals supported
 - **Refugee Leadership and Inclusion:**
27 Individuals supported

- We also received 827 applications from LGBTQI+ organizations accounting for 1,728,529 individuals in need of services from 96 different countries and 9 regions.
- We were able to support an additional 17,855 individuals by funding partner organizations globally:
 - **Grassroots Mobilization Fund:**
11,866 Individuals supported
 - **Crisis Response Fund:**
4,909 Individuals supported
 - **Community Access Fund:**
1,080 Individuals supported
- Overall, in 2025, Rainbow Railroad supported 7,521 unique individuals directly, and an additional 17,855 individuals through funded partnerships.
- In addition to providing targeted services for LGBTQI+ people, in 2025, Rainbow Railroad also continued our commitment to support diverse SOGIESC identities.
- In previous years, cis-men have been the most supported gender identity. However, in 2025 we focused our casework to prioritize and recognize the unique vulnerabilities of trans people. Of the individuals we served, trans women represented the most supported group at 34%. This shift also reflects a political climate where escalating anti-trans policies and rhetoric have made trans women more visible targets of violence and forced displacement.
- Trans men constituted the second most supported group at 19% of the individuals we served, followed by cis-men at 17%. Many individuals also identify with more than one gender identity.

Overall, in 2025, Rainbow Railroad supported 7,521 unique individuals directly, and an additional 17,855 individuals through funded partnerships



INDIVIDUALS DIRECTLY
SUPPORTED BY RAINBOW
RAILROAD

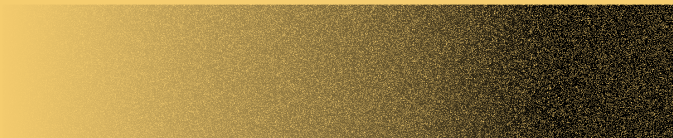
- Rainbow Railroad supported **7,521** unique individuals through relocation, cash assistance, information services and referrals, post-relocation, and refugee leadership and inclusion programs.
- In 2025, we were able to expand post-relocation support for individuals who have resettled in a new country, as well as our refugee leadership and inclusion efforts.

Emergency Travel Support

- The majority of ETS cases who relocated last year were nationals of Russia, Jamaica, Tunisia, Egypt, and Venezuela.
- 28% of the individuals we supported through ETS were already displaced and living outside of their country of nationality when they originally requested help from Rainbow Railroad.
- **IN 2025, RAINBOW RAILROAD EVACUATED 85 INDIVIDUALS THROUGH EMERGENCY TRAVEL SUPPORT.**

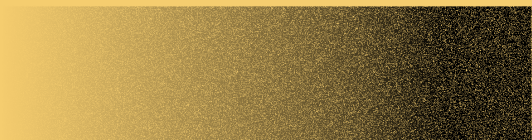
Top 3 ETS Destinations

01 *France*



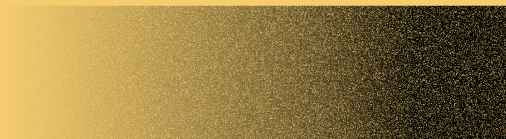
16

02 *Netherlands*



13

03 *Spain*



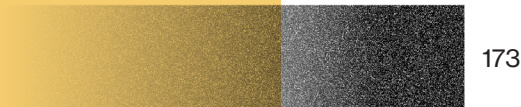
12

Cash Assistance to Individuals in Imminent Danger

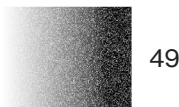
- The program supports individuals through direct cash assistance that can alleviate essential needs such as shelter, healthcare, and transportation. Individuals can also access support in situations where in-country relocation is the most viable option.
- In 2025, the top three areas of support through our cash assistance program were shelter, food, and post-relocation cash assistance.
- The length of support provided to individuals can vary based on their unique circumstances. Last year, we supported individuals with financial assistance for an average of 1 month.
- **IN 2025, RAINBOW RAILROAD PROVIDED 355 INDIVIDUALS WITH CASH ASSISTANCE SUPPORT.**

Breakdown of Cash Assistance Support

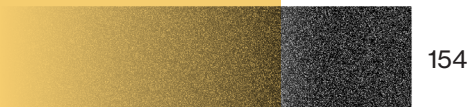
Shelter



Passport Fees



Food



Personal Items



Post-Relocation



Other



Transportation



Per Diem



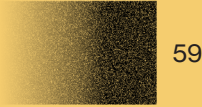
Medicine/Healthcare



Incidentals



Communication



Internal Relocation



This graph shows the different types of support that cash assistance can provide. Because an individual may receive multiple different types of support, the numbers in this graph will not add up to the total number of individuals supported by cash assistance.

Information Services and Referrals

- In 2025, there was a more than 1,000% increase in the number of individuals we supported through the Information Services and Referrals Program compared to 2024.
 - A large portion of this increase is a result of information packages designed to support individuals around the world. Designed in collaboration with our local partners, these packages contain critical details about local resources in their countries of residence, helping individuals meet urgent and vital needs with greater ease.
 - 97.6% of individuals supported through this program received support through resources.
 - **IN 2025, RAINBOW RAILROAD SUPPORTED 7,128 INDIVIDUALS WITH INFORMATION SERVICES AND REFERRALS.**
- The Housing and Livelihood Assistance Fund (HLAF) provides emergency cash assistance grants directly to LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and other LGBTQI+ migrants in the US and Canada who are experiencing financial hardship.
 - In 2025, the fund supported 131 LGBTQI+ individuals living in the US and Canada.
 - Through our Community Support Teams (CST) program, volunteer teams partner with Rainbow Railroad to provide up to 6 months of financial support, housing assistance/resources, and community integration support to LGBTQI+ asylum seekers.
 - In 2025, ten volunteer teams participated in the CST program and supported 12 LGBTQI+ newcomers in the United States.
 - The newcomers were from the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Uganda, Jamaica, Venezuela, Bangladesh, Iran, Uzbekistan, and Egypt.

Government Resettlement Pathways

- Rainbow Railroad continues to work directly with governments to pursue relocation pathways for LGBTQI+ refugees. There are limited safe pathways for many of the LGBTQI+ individuals who request our assistance, and these pathways allow us to prioritize individuals facing the highest barriers to resettlement options, such as trans individuals, and lesbian and bisexual women.
 - **IN 2025, RAINBOW RAILROAD SUPPORTED 339 INDIVIDUALS THROUGH GOVERNMENT RESETTLEMENT PATHWAYS.**
 - 118 of these individuals relocated by the end of 2025; the remaining individuals are currently awaiting travel.
- **IN 2025, RAINBOW RAILROAD PROVIDED POST-RELOCATION SUPPORT TO 143 INDIVIDUALS.**

Post-Relocation Support

- In 2025, we expanded our post-relocation support for LGBTQI+ individuals. This support includes the following areas of work:
 - Housing and Livelihood Assistance Fund (HLAF)
 - Community Support Teams (CST)



There are limited safe pathways for many LGBTQI+ individuals seeking assistance.

Refugee Leadership and Inclusion

- In 2025, we expanded our work in Refugee Leadership and Inclusion. This area of work includes our:
 - Ambassador Program
 - Internship Program
- The ambassador program offers structured training and advocacy opportunities for LGBTQI+ individuals we previously helped relocate to the US and Canada.
 - In 2025, a total of 20 ambassadors brought their international expertise to 8 advocacy events in the US and Canada.
- The internship program supports refugees with short-term job placements that help them gain valuable work experience, develop new skills, and access professional networks in their new communities.
- Interns worked at Rainbow Railroad, Pride at Work Canada, Toronto People with AIDS Foundation, Family Service Toronto, and Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto.
 - In 2025, 7 different individuals participated in the internship program.
- **IN 2025, WE WORKED WITH 27 INDIVIDUALS IN REFUGEE LEADERSHIP AND INCLUSION.**

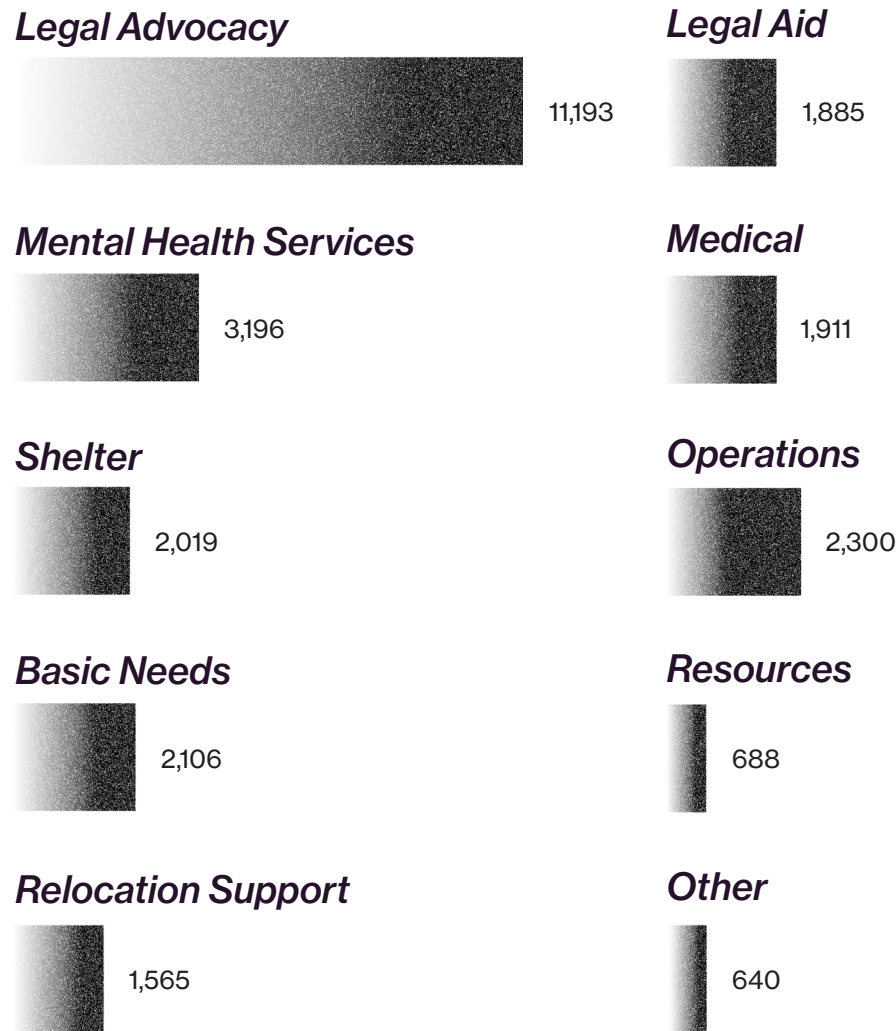
INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED
THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

- We provide grants to CSOs and grass-roots organizations globally through three different funds:
 - Grassroots Mobilization Fund
 - Crisis Response Fund
 - Community Access Fund
- In 2025, through our funding streams, we were able to support 17,855 LGBTQI+ individuals in 47 countries across 7 regions.

Grassroots Mobilization Fund

- Through the Grassroots Mobilization Fund (GMF), Rainbow Railroad works with local human rights defenders (HRDs), activist networks, and grass-roots organizations.
- The GMF provides flexible funding to enable local actors to respond to emerging needs while also strengthening the sustainability and long-term capacity of LGBTQI+ community support structures.
- In 2025, we built and sustained partnerships with 30 organizations across 20 countries and 6 regions.

Types of Support Through the
Grassroots Mobilization Fund



This graph depicts the different types of support that a partnership project can provide. Because each partnership may include multiple types of support, the numbers in this graph will not add up to the total number of partnerships.

- **IN 2025, A TOTAL OF 11,866 INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION FUND.**

Crisis Response Fund

- The Crisis Response Fund (CRF) is a new funding stream first announced in 2024 and operationalized in 2025.
- The CRF addresses urgent funding gaps faced by grassroots organizations that are supporting LGBTQI+ individuals and communities experiencing displacement.
- This fund provides accessible, flexible micro-funding to enable local organizations to respond effectively to crises and mitigate drivers of displacement by strengthening existing support structures for LGBTQI+ people in crisis.
- In 2025, we built and sustained crisis response partnerships with 33 organizations across 32 countries and 6 regions.
- **IN 2025, A TOTAL OF 4,909 INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED SUPPORT THROUGH THE CRISIS RESPONSE FUND.**

Community Access Fund

- The Community Access Fund (CAF) is a new funding stream created and operationalized in 2025.
- The CAF provides grants directly to service providers, community activists, and grassroots organizations in order to help meet the needs of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and other migrants in Canada and the US.
- In 2025, we established and sustained partnerships with 20 organizations supporting LGBTQI+ individuals in Canada and the United States.
- **IN 2025, A TOTAL OF 1,080 LGBTQI+ INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED SUPPORT THROUGH THE COMMUNITY ACCESS FUND.**



**Flexible
funding
enables local
organizations
to respond
effectively to
crises.**

SECTION 2

DATA

DATA

DATA

**on the State of
Global LGBTQI+
Persecution**

WHO WE HELP

- In 2025, Rainbow Railroad received 20,215 requests for assistance from LGBTQI+ individuals around the world. This is a 51% increase from 2024.

To better understand the circumstances that cause LGBTQI+ individuals to seek assistance, it is important for us to analyze who is requesting help and where requests are originating from.

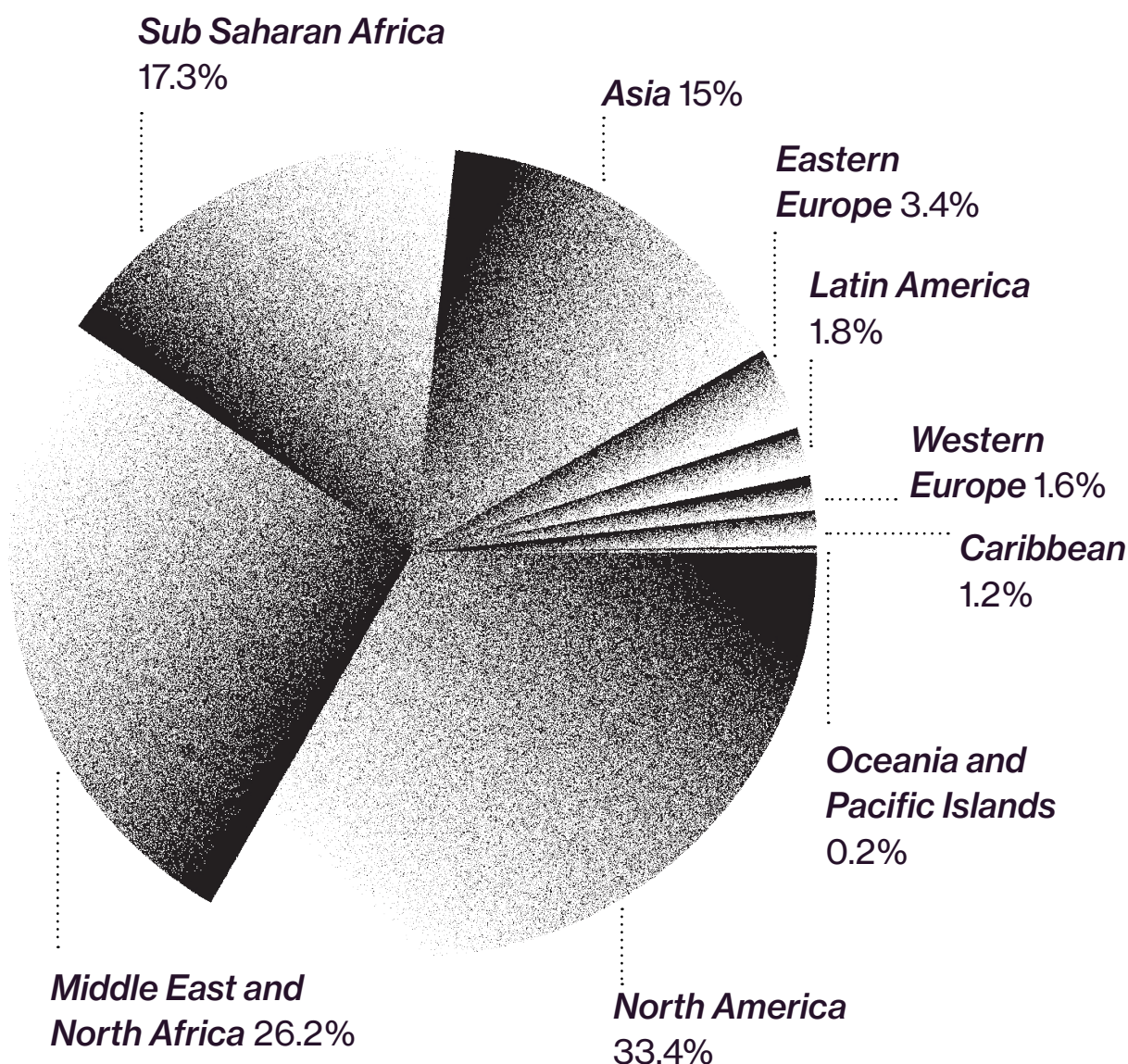
Regional Breakdown

- 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), Asia (ASIA), and Western Europe (WE).

- In 2025, the top region of request was North America, with 6,786 individuals seeking assistance; 92.1% of those requests came from individuals living in the United States seeking help in the aftermath of the inauguration of the president and the escalation of anti-LGBTQI+ policies.
- The Middle East and North Africa constituted the second-highest number for requests by region, with 5,315 individuals requesting assistance.
- Sub-Saharan Africa continued to be in the top 3 regions of request, with 3,508 requests.

Regions of Request



Top 10 Nationalities and Countries of Request

- In 2025, the United States remained the top country requesting help, a trend that suddenly emerged in 2024 following the results of the November 2024 election.
- In 2025 we received over 6,253 requests from individuals living in the United States. Most requests from the US were driven by fear of future persecution due to new policies targeting the LGBTQI+ community. This trend is divergent from typical requests received from other regions, where individuals tend to seek assistance after experiencing violence.
- In 2025, Uganda, Pakistan, Egypt, and Afghanistan remained in the top five countries requesting help. However, in 2025, Uganda replaced Afghanistan as the second-highest country of request, with 1,055 requests.
- It is important to note the 5,196-person difference between the country with the highest number of requests (the United States) and the country with the second highest number of requests (Uganda). In 2025, the United States constituted 30.9% of all our requests, which is an important consideration when viewing our data.

Top 10 Countries of Request

- 01 ***United States***
- 02 ***Uganda***
- 03 ***Pakistan***
- 04 ***Egypt***
- 05 ***Afghanistan***
- 06 ***Kenya***
- 07 ***Iraq***
- 08 ***Türkiye***
- 09 ***Canada***
- 10 ***Russia***

Top 10 Nationalities

- 01 ***United States***
- 02 ***Afghanistan***
- 03 ***Uganda***
- 04 ***Syria***
- 05 ***Iraq***
- 06 ***Russia***
- 07 ***Pakistan***
- 08 ***Democratic Republic of the Congo***
- 09 ***Egypt***
- 10 ***Morocco***





Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics

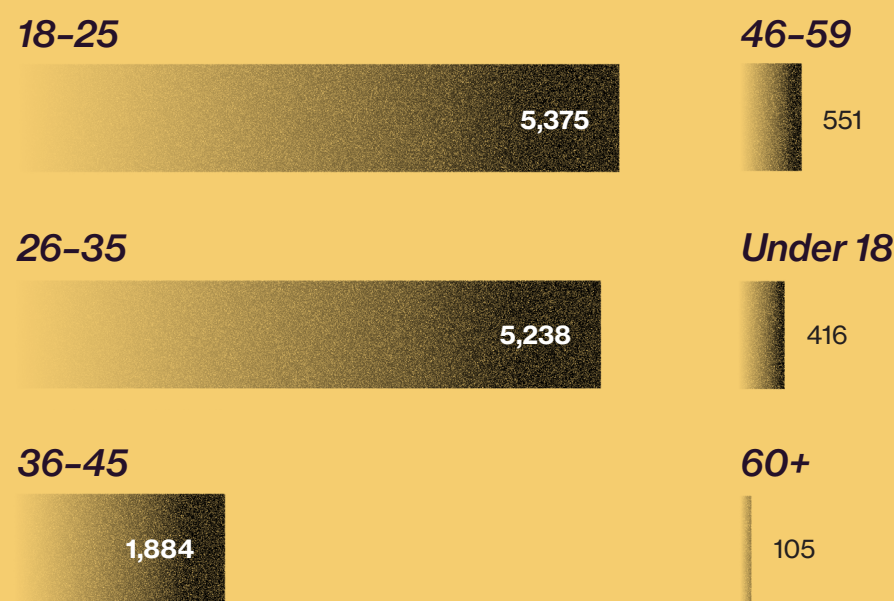
- While individuals have the option to describe their identities to our caseworkers outside of existing labels, we also disaggregate our data into the following gender identities: Agender, Aligender, Cis-Women, Cis-Men, Genderfluid, Gender Non-conforming, Intergender, Transgender Women, and Transgender Men.
- In 2025, the top three gender identities requesting help were cisgender men, transgender women, and transgender men.
- With a 51% increase in the total number of requests received in 2025 compared to 2024, all gender identities also experienced an overall increase in requests.
- 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 from 2024-2025, with the most requests coming from individuals identifying as gay, bisexual, and lesbian, respectively.
- Gay individuals continued to represent nearly half of requests for help at 46% of all requests.
- In 2025, intersex individuals accounted for 3.7% of total requests for help in which individuals disclosed their identity.

Age Breakdown

- In 2025, the 18-25 age group was the largest group requesting help, representing 40% of all requests. The 26-35 age group followed closely behind, constituting 39% of all requests.
- These two categories were consistent with the top two age groups of individuals supported. However, in 2025, the 26-35 age group was the largest at 43% of the individuals we supported, while 25% were between the ages of 18-25.
- People aged 18-35 made up the overwhelming majority of those seeking assistance and receiving support, underscoring the disproportionate need among young people.

Young people
made up the
overwhelming
majority of
LGBTQI+
individuals
seeking support
in 2025.

Age Breakdown

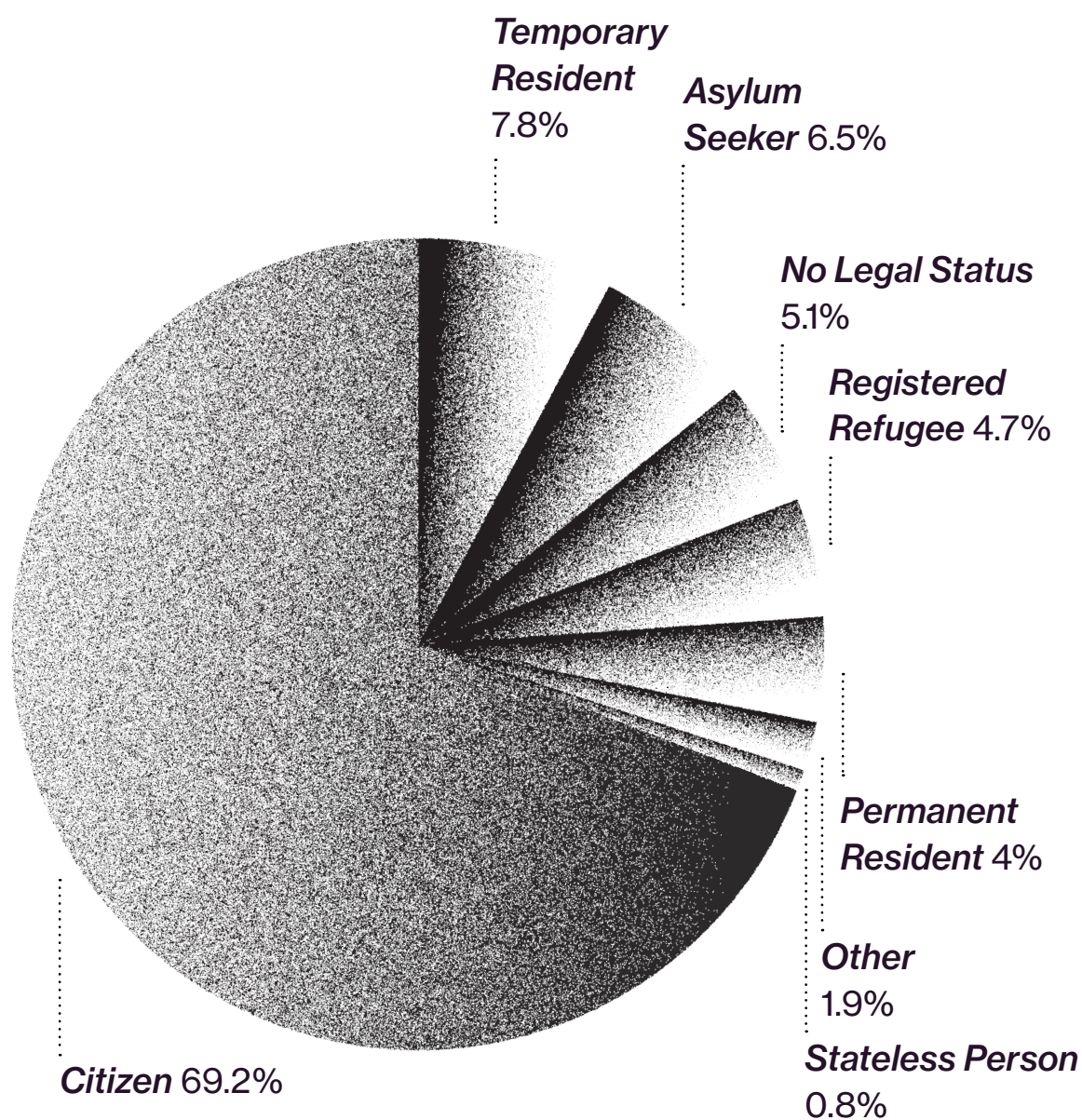


This graph depicts the age groups represented in requests for help. Rainbow Railroad collects age data from the primary contact in a case and only from individuals who choose to disclose this information. This means that there is a portion of individuals requesting help for whom we have no age data.

Individuals and Families Requesting our Help

- In 2025, the vast majority of requests for help came from individuals seeking safety on their own behalf.
- 77% of requests came from single individuals.
- 15% of requests come from individuals seeking help for themselves and one partner or one dependent.

Status in Country of Request

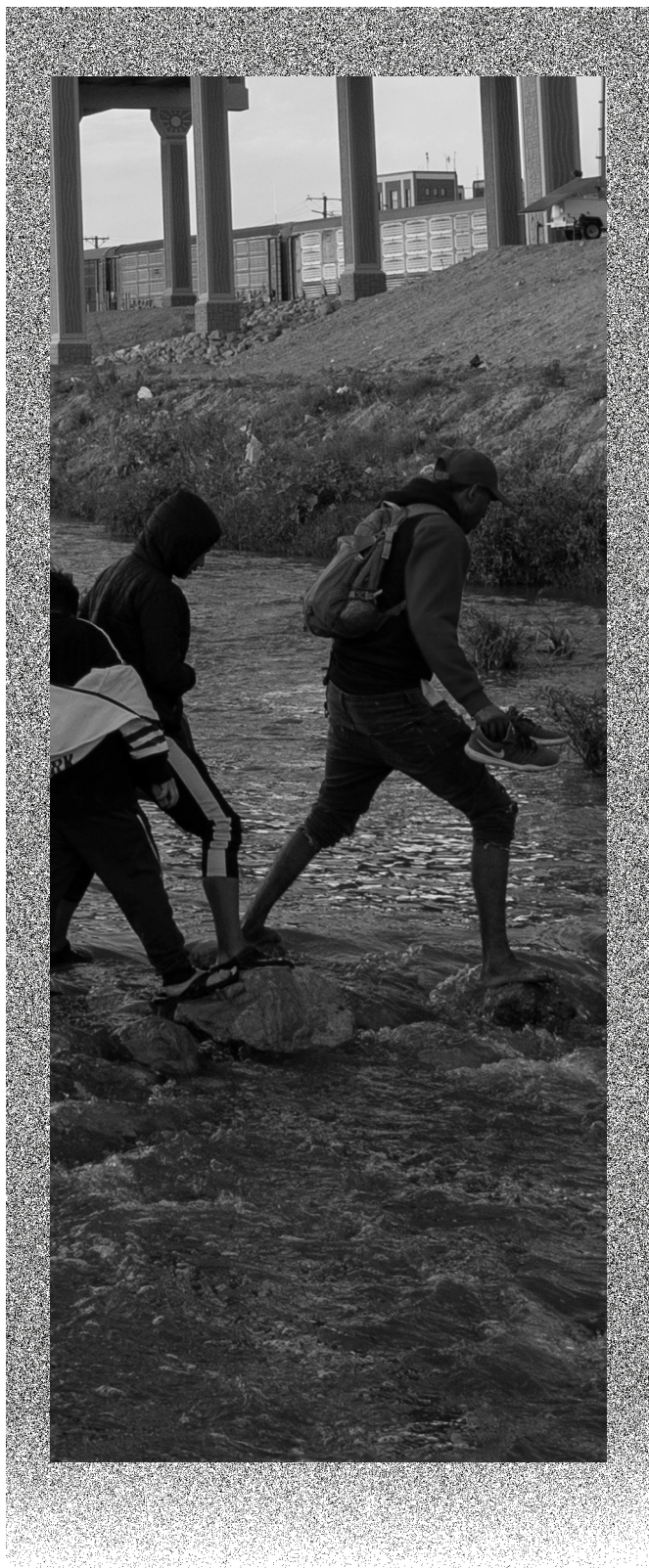


- The remainder of the requests for help, 8%, came from families ranging from 3 to 10 family members.
- Based on our experience reviewing cases and hearing from individuals, larger family sizes may indicate mass movements of people due to political instability or armed conflict, or in regions where forced marriage of LGBTQI+ people is more common.
- Rainbow Railroad categorizes individuals requesting help into the following legal statuses within their country of request: citizen, permanent resident, temporary resident, no legal status, asylum seeker, UNHCR-registered refugee, and stateless.
- In 2025, 69.2% of requests came from citizens requesting help from within their country of citizenship.
- Of the 30.8% individuals requesting help outside of their country of citizenship, 28.7% were temporary residents, 21.8% were asylum seekers, and 17% had no legal status.

DRIVERS OF DISPLACEMENT

Program Services Requested

- Rainbow Railroad tracks the following program services requested by individuals reaching out for support:
 - International Relocation
 - Relocation within the country
 - Shelter / Housing Assistance
 - Mental Health Services
 - Medical / Medication Resources
 - Letters of Support
- 80% of individuals from 172 different countries requested International Relocation. Of the individuals requesting international relocation, 26% were living in the United States.
- The second and third most requested program services were Shelter/Housing Assistance (35%) and Mental Health Services (22%).



Community rejection continued to be one of most persistent concerns facing LGBTQI+ individuals supported in 2025.

Health and Welfare Concerns and Safety Concerns

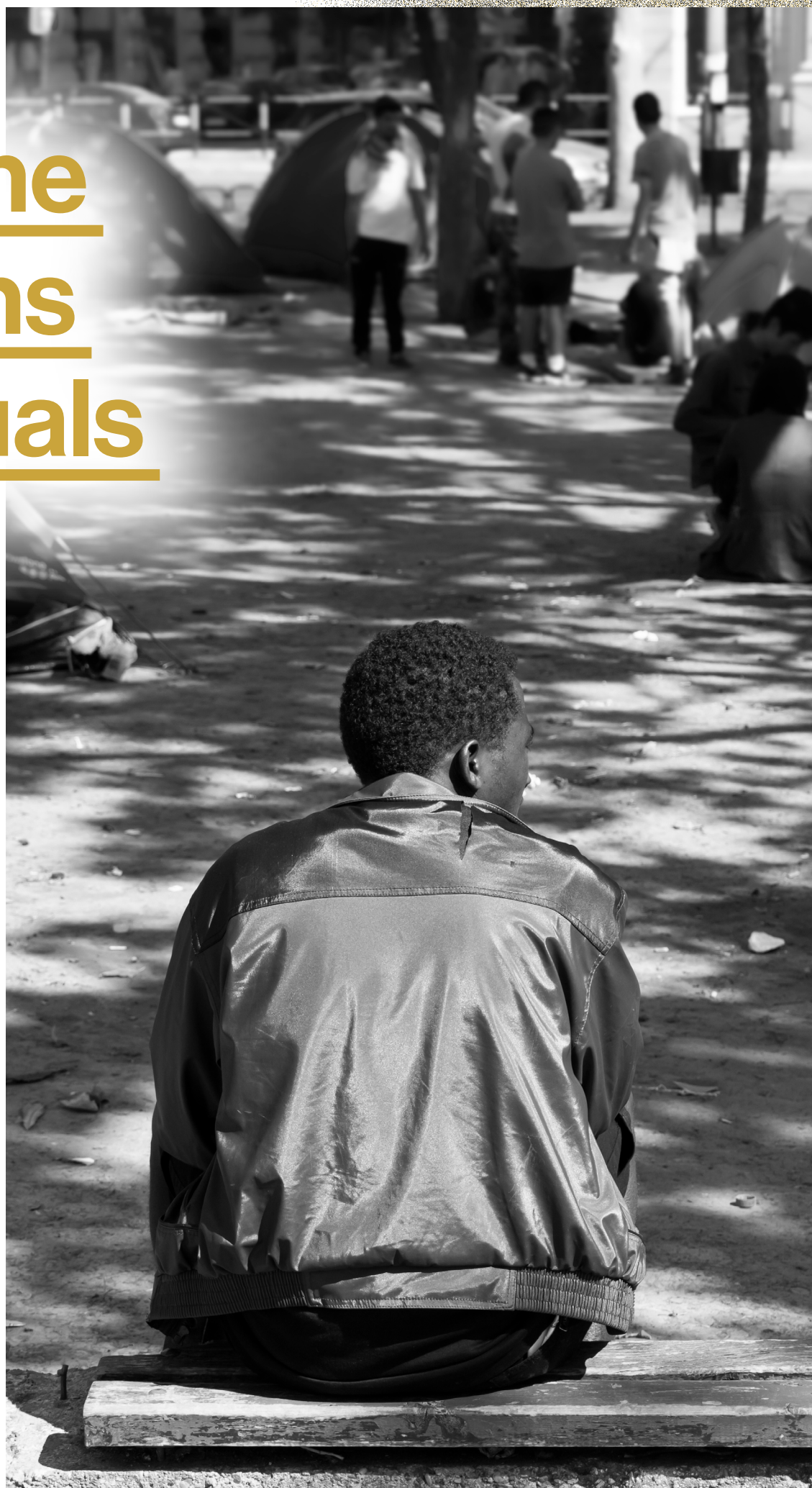
- When individuals reach out to Rainbow Railroad for support, we track the specific threats to safety, health, and welfare that they face throughout their journeys. These concerns are categorized as Health and Welfare Concerns and Safety Concerns, and are constantly evolving.
- Health and Welfare Concerns refer to factors relating to physical and mental well-being that put people at risk. In 2025, we tracked 16 Health and Welfare Concerns.
- In 2025, the top five Health and Welfare Concerns reported by individuals supported by Rainbow Railroad were:
 - Lack of Basic Needs
 - Mental Health Concerns
 - Homelessness
 - Employment discrimination
 - Lack of Income due to discrimination

- Safety Concerns refer to direct threats faced by individuals from their family, community or the state. In 2025, we tracked 39 Safety Concerns.
- In 2025, the top five Safety Concerns reported by individuals supported by Rainbow Railroad were:
 - Community rejection
 - Family-based rejection (non-violent)
 - Life-threatening violence
 - Verbal threats/ abuse
 - Community violence

Health and Welfare Concerns

- In 2025, we tracked the Health and Welfare Concerns of the individuals we supported across all of our programs.
- Lack of basic needs, mental health concerns, and homelessness were the top three Health and Welfare Concerns that individuals reported, consistent with 2024.

of the erns iduals



- This is particularly evident for individuals supported through the Emergency Travel Support (ETS) program, where 78% of individuals relocated were experiencing a lack of basic needs, 67% were experiencing mental health concerns, and 37% experiencing homelessness.
 - For individuals supported through our cash assistance program, the same top 3 concerns were seen: 84% of individuals receiving cash assistance reported lacking basic needs, 46% were experiencing mental health concerns, and 45% experiencing homelessness.
 - For those supported through information services and referrals, there is a similar pattern with 77% of individuals we supported reporting a lack of basic needs, 57% reporting mental health concerns, and 36% experiencing homelessness.
1. **Lack of basic needs** - 77% of cases disclosing concerns
 2. **Mental health concerns** - 55% of cases disclosing concerns
 3. **Homeless** - 36% of cases disclosing concerns

Employment discrimination - 29% of cases disclosing concerns

Lack of income due to discrimination - 24% of cases disclosing concerns

Safety Concerns

- In 2025, we also tracked the Safety Concerns of the individuals we supported across all of our programs.
 - **Community rejection** - 76% of cases disclosing concerns
 - **Family-based rejection (non-violent)** - 75% of cases disclosing concerns
 - **Life-threatening violence** - 63% of cases disclosing concerns
 - **Verbal threats/ abuse** - 63% of cases disclosing concerns
 - **Community violence** - 55% of cases disclosing concerns
- Community rejection continues to persist among individuals supported by Rainbow Railroad. Last year, 76% of all individuals supported reported community rejection as a top



concern. Community rejection often results in social exclusion, loss of housing or livelihood, and increased risk of violence. Family-based rejection also persisted, affecting 75% of individuals supported. All harms were more significant in countries where anti-LGBTQI+ legislation has codified homophobia and transphobia.

- Violence and threats also continue to affect the LGBTQI+ individuals we work with. Last year, 63% of the individuals we supported reported facing life-threatening violence, while 55% reported community violence.
- These circumstances are often what force individuals to seek refuge in other countries.

A YEAR OF ESCALATION AND RESISTANCE: WHAT THE DATA REVEALS

Our data reflects the reality of a world in which LGBTQI+ rights are under attack. In 2025, Rainbow Railroad received a total of 20,215 direct requests for assistance from LGBTQI+ people at risk around the world, a 51% increase compared to the previous year.

At the same time, access to safe pathways is deteriorating, global humanitarian aid systems are being dismantled, governments are abandoning LGBTQI+ people and migrants, and hate is escalating. Countries previously considered “safe” for our community are experiencing backsliding on LGBTQI+ and refugee rights, driving a sharp increase in the number of individuals reaching out for support.

This data cannot be ignored. Requests for help are increasing because violence, fear, and dangerous political narratives are all affecting the wellbeing of our global LGBTQI+ community. The overwhelming majority of individuals reaching out to us are young people who are unable to meet their basic needs, experiencing family and community-based rejection. Frequently,

they are internally or externally displaced, confronting additional barriers to accessing support systems. Geopolitical crises, well-funded anti-LGBTQI+ and xenophobic movements also compound the precarity and instability for individuals most at risk.

Despite overlapping pressures and worsening conditions, our community continues to resist, adapt, and seek pathways forward. Our data represents the resilience of our community, and the potential for change. In 2025 we expanded our partnerships and grantmaking programs, deepening our connections within a global network of civil society organizations and human rights defenders. By working with frontline partners we were able to significantly increase the number of individuals we supported, meeting a variety of needs across a wider breadth of programming.

Overall, in 2025, Rainbow Railroad supported 7,521 unique individuals directly, and an additional 17,855 individuals through partnerships – the highest number of individuals we have ever been able to connect to vital services. Examining the data and insights from the past year of our work, it is clear that the needs of our community are intensifying but, alongside our supporters, our resolve is strengthening to meet this moment.

SECTION 3

Our Work in Action

THE HUMAN COST OF FUNDING CUTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS ON THE FRONTLINE

Global funding cuts caused severe harm to LGBTQI+ organizations around the world in 2025. In January of last year, the US administration issued an executive order that initiated the systematic destruction of international assistance around the globe. This decision, driven by anti-gender, anti-rights, and anti-trans ideology, marked the beginning of a year-long effort to dismantle USAID, weaponize foreign assistance for political gain, and purge federal references to LGBTQI+ rights, LGBTQI+ people, and DEI.

The administration scrubbed trans history from the Stonewall National Monument website. The Department of Government Efficiency used AI to scan and reject grant applications that mentioned LGBTQI+ rights.⁷ The ongoing attempts to erase LGBTQI+ identities have resulted in a wave of litigation and uncertainty. The cessation of US contributions to foreign aid is devastating. The administration targeted crucial areas of international funding that support LGBTQI+ rights, women's health and reproductive rights, and diversity equity and inclusion programming, calling them "antithetical to American interests."⁸

The consequences of cuts to foreign assistance have been most significant for vulnerable populations. Multiple marginalized populations, such as individuals living with HIV, have been severely impacted by the shifting tides of the current political landscape. LGBTQI+ people are a key population disproportionately burdened by incident HIV infections, already living on the margins of society.⁹

While the US administration is not the only government regressing in support for LGBTQI+ rights, its position on the global stage has been consequential. The cuts to funding for LGBTQI+ rights have led to a domino effect, with previously progressive nations retreating on their commitments, and others advancing regressive laws and policies. For example, there have been concerns expressed that the UK may back away from its £40 million pledge to support LGBTQI+ rights around the world.¹⁰ The Netherlands also scaled back support for LGBTQI+ rights through their missions, contributing to an estimated shortfall of 55% for embassy grants to local LGBTQI+ organizations.¹¹

Because of the global decline in funding, Canada and other donor countries must step up and increase their support.¹² Private donations are also contracting, with LGBTQI+ organisations confronting the fallout of an increasingly hostile political environment.



It is anticipated that available funding from private donors and government will decrease significantly in the coming years.¹³

There have been tectonic shifts in official development assistance (ODA) and philanthropy that are influencing the global LGBTQI+ funding ecosystem. Twenty-nine of the leading global LGBTQI+ intermediary funders were surveyed in 2025 and reported reductions to their LGBTQI+ focused regranting budgets, averaging 25% cuts since 2024. Nearly 60% have experienced declines in their own organizational budgets, and one-third have already reduced staff – most losing around 20% of their workforce. The largest intermediaries, which collectively move the most funding to LGBTQI+ movements in the Global South and East, report the steep-

est reductions.¹⁴ We are in the midst of an authoritarian shift, backed by coordinated government and billionaire-funded attacks that scapegoat LGBTQI+ communities.¹⁵

Rainbow Railroad has seen the impacts of funding cuts firsthand. Our data indicates that more organizations are seeking financial support as global funding sources evaporate. Demand for partnership and crisis response support is surging. Our Grassroots Mobilization Fund received 178 applications in 2025, a 305% increase from 2024. This represents a need of more than CAD \$2.5 million. Additionally, demand for funding under our new Crisis Response Fund was overwhelming. We received 592 applications for support, representing CAD \$16 million in requests.



These aren't just numbers, they are lifelines for LGBTQI+ people and the organizations that support them.

Global funding cuts have put LGBTQI+ organizations under pressure; this is evident in the widening gap between demand and funds distributed. We were only able to meet 6% of the organizational support requests we received, leaving the vast majority of LGBTQI+ organizations that sought our help without critical assistance. Substantially more funding is needed to respond to the increased risks facing frontline organizations. In 2025, we disbursed over CAD \$1.1 million to support grassroots movements and crisis response efforts, but we experienced funding demand of CAD \$18.5 million.

The Crisis Response Fund is one way we support communities. These aren't just numbers, they are lifelines for LGBTQI+ people and the organizations that support them. A beneficiary of a CRF-supported project shared the following reflection:

"In a context where being an LGBTQI+ person means living with fear and without access to support, this project represented a safe and vital space for me. Receiving affirmative psychological support and legal guidance allowed me to feel protected, validate my experience, and understand my rights. Beyond individual support, knowing that there are organizations backed by international allies such as Rainbow Railroad restored my hope and the certainty that our lives matter. This accompaniment marked a before and after in my well-being and my ability to envision a future with greater safety and dignity."



THE PATHWAY CRISIS: THE EU PACT AND A WORLD CLOSING IN

Pathways to safety are disappearing for LGBTQI+ people around the world. In 2025 the Canadian government introduced two separate pieces of legislation that target asylum seekers. The names of these bills reveal the government's intention; C-2 the Strong Borders Act, which was eventually abandoned after public pressure, and the second, C-12 the Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act which became law.

The *Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act* undermines access to asylum, and makes the process of claiming asylum more difficult for LGBTQI+ claimants. The Act limits the right to claim asylum by imposing a one-year bar on the ability to secure a hearing before the independent Immigration and Refugee Board. It also imposes harsh penalties for failing to meet deadlines in the immigration process, putting vulnerable LGBTQI+ people at risk.¹⁶

Our data shows the impact these and other laws around the world are having on LGBTQI+ people seeking safety. We received 20,215 requests for help in 2025; more than 7,000 of these requests came from countries where it is extremely difficult or impossible to find pathways to safety.

In 2024 we supported 242 people through our Emergency Travel Support program. In 2025 that number dropped to 85, representing a 65% decline, and only 8 of those people were able to leave countries where routes to safety are extremely difficult to map. We are also seeing a worrying number of requests for help from within the European Union. Despite the EU's public commitment to international human rights, LGBTQI+ refugees in the bloc are facing

serious protection gaps, an issue we are actively monitoring.

Across the international landscape, Canada's new laws are not unique. By mid-2025 the UNHCR was reporting that policy changes by several countries were expected to lead to further substantial reductions of new asylum applications. Because of these policy changes, reported statistics on individual asylum applications are likely to become less reflective of the true number of people who need to access asylum globally.¹⁷

Historically, the United States was the world's leading resettlement country, accepting more refugees in most years than all other resettlement countries combined. In January 2025, the administration suspended the United States Refugee Assistance Program. For fiscal year 2026 (October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026), the US will reduce resettlement numbers by 94%, to 7,500 people, and most slots will be allocated to white Afrikaners from South Africa.¹⁸ Although the administration later decided to lift a previous asylum adjudication pause,¹⁹ the landscape remains uncertain, making life even more challenging and precarious for LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum.

The UK has also proposed aggressive reforms to their immigration system. Proposals to make refugee status temporary, limit the number of safe pathways, and create fast-track removals will have a major impact on asylum seekers in the country.²⁰ These reforms are said to have been influenced by Denmark's already harsh asylum system, and may be even more restrictive.²¹

Germany likewise implemented significant changes in 2025, contributing to the gradual erosion of the asylum system and running counter to the spirit of The 1951 Refugee Convention.²² German policy has also wavered on issuing humanitarian visas for Russians and Belarusians facing political persecution at home.²³

Community Support Teams: Finding Moments of Hope in a Hostile Climate

Despite many challenges, we continue to intervene to support people facing an increasingly hostile asylum policy landscape in the United States. After individuals we support have found a way into the US, many spend time in detention centers as they await decisions on their case. Our volunteer Community Support Teams (CSTs) represent the strength of grassroots efforts to help individuals who are the targets of regressive anti-LGBTQI+ and xenophobic policies. In one case, we mobilized volunteers and worked with a church to show up in strong support of Michel – an LGBTQI+ asylum seeker – at a bond hearing. The Immigration Judge cited this support when setting an extremely low bond, enabling Michel's release to his CST who temporarily hosted him after his release from detention before church-sponsored housing was ready. Mobilized by Rainbow Railroad, this community-level intervention was the difference between freedom and continued ICE detention in hostile conditions.

Offshoring Agreements and Shrinking Access to Safety

Another disturbing trend in 2025 that will negatively impact LGBTQI+ people seeking pathways to safety is the “offshoring”²⁴ of refugees. The Netherlands and Uganda made one such deal, under which the Dutch government would send claimants to Uganda. The Dutch government has said that they would not send LGBTQI+ claimants to Uganda, which is cold comfort for LGBTQI+ people fleeing persecution.²⁵ This follows Australia's enhanced legal rules for paying third countries to accept people Australia intends to deport.²⁶ This legal change caps 25 years of Australian involvement in extended off-shore detention.²⁷

All these changes point to the incoming European Pact on Migration, which will introduce new restrictions across the European Union. The Pact includes provisions that, once implemented, will severely curtail human rights. These new rules will make it harder for individuals to access the right to seek asylum, as well as making it easier to rush decisions on asylum applications. This will disproportionately impact LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, and will increase instances of detention. Human Rights Watch has expressed that these

changes encourage EU states to return people to transit countries outside the EU where they could face abuse or chain refoulement.²⁸ While the EU may identify a country as “safe” for refugees, safety may not apply equally to LGBTQI+ refugees.

A System Built to Exclude: The EU Pact on Migration

Rainbow Railroad received 269 requests for help from the 27-country EU bloc last year. This is a 49% increase over 2024, when we received 181. Two thirds of these requests came from asylum seekers, temporary residents, registered refugees and people with no legal status. Individuals living in this context have expressed fears about their urgent needs for support; one individual shared “I have felt ignored, exposed, and treated as a number rather than as a human being. My real and urgent needs for protection and healthcare were ignored.”

Behind the language of efficiency, solidarity, and border management is a system built to exclude, detain, and deport.²⁹ The Pact will make seeking pathways to safety across the EU more difficult and dangerous for LGBTQI+ people. The Pact weakens the procedural rights of asylum seekers; for instance, trans people will be



systematically exposed to detention, where they will be segregated based on the gender markers on their official documents, leading to heightened vulnerability, discrimination, as well as physical, mental and sexual abuse.³¹ One family impacted by the Pact shared the following:

“We traveled through Czechia but did not apply for asylum there. We applied for asylum in Denmark, but our case was rejected under the Dublin Regulation.³² Denmark plans to deport us to Czechia, even though we face real danger there (we have received threats and cannot rely on protection from Czech authorities). We suffer from serious mental health conditions: PTSD, OCD, hallucinations, borderline personality disorder, severe anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. We are under medical treatment, and doctors have confirmed that deportation would place us at extreme risk.”

These developments are part of a broad global trend towards restricting access to asylum and externalizing refugee protection. These policies are being advanced despite, and in contravention to, the obligations states have under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Returning a LGBTQI+ asylum seeker to a country that criminalizes and persecutes LGBTQI+ people is a clear violation of the principle of non-refoulement. Policies shaping the treatment of LGBTQI+ claimants across the EU demand scrutiny. The Pact is a clear assault on the EU's foundational values of human dignity, human rights, and freedoms. Rainbow Railroad will continue to document, monitor, and speak out on the impact of the EU Pact on Migration, and the risks it poses to LGBTQI+ people.

Meeting People Where They Are: Developing Information Services and Referrals

Rainbow Railroad developed its Information Services and Referrals Program in response to the growing number of requests for help we receive from LGBTQI+ people around the world. The program is designed to connect as many people as possible with critical resources and affirming support wherever they are, recognizing that not everyone is able to access international relocation.

Through our Support Referral Network, we connect individuals directly with trusted partner organizations that provide vital services, including mental health support, medical care, shelter, asylum information, and legal representation. In addition to these referrals, Rainbow Railroad offers tailored queer competent guidance including consultations, letters of support, practical advice, and emotional support.

A key part of this work is the development of information packages – curated technical guides that help people identify and access assistance in their country of residence. In 2025, we deployed information packages for several countries including Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, Türkiye, Uganda, and the United States. These packages include practical information, support channels, and trusted contacts for LGBTQI+ people at-risk, helping individuals navigate options that are often difficult to find or inaccessible due to underground operations. As requests for help increase, Rainbow Railroad continues to strengthen and expand this program to ensure more LGBTQI+ people can access support, information, and community wherever they are.

RETREATING ASYLUM ACCESS IN THE US

The suspension of the United States Refugee Assistance Program has been devastating for LGBTQI+ refugees, and the global impact continues to be felt. The United States has retreated from their role as the world's leading resettlement country, and the right to seek asylum is also being systematically dismantled, despite this right being protected by international and US law.³³

The US administration temporarily halted asylum decision-making on November 28, 2025. Although the temporary asylum adjudication pause was lifted for some coun-

tries, they remain paused for individuals from the 39 countries on the administration's travel ban list. Asylum seekers have since reported widespread cancellations of interviews.

At the same time, asylum decisions continue to be granted to some of the individuals we support, underscoring the inconsistency and shifting policy signals within the current US asylum system. Additionally, the administration plans to review all asylum decisions made during the Biden administration.³⁴ These policy shifts abandon decades of US leadership in building responsibility-sharing between well-resourced donor and resettlement countries and those on the front lines of mass migration.³⁵

Requests from the US: A Growing Call for Safety

The increase in requests for help received from the United States is staggering. These requests include both citizens and non citizens including asylum seekers, refugees, permanent residents, people with no legal status, temporary residents, and others. These requests illustrate that, even within the United States, people seeking pathways to safety are being challenged by an increasingly hostile environment. The three most common types of support requested were for international relocation, shelter and housing assistance, and letters of support.

We do not collect state-level location data in our requests for help, but, after reviewing requests for help received in the first quarter of 2025 following the inauguration of the current US administration, we observed that 80% of requests for help from the United States originated from red states. Although Canada's immigration jurisprudence has begun to recognize the need to consider up-to-date dangers faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in their country of citizenship, including the United States,³⁶ the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement creates significant barriers for individuals in the United States who wish to seek asylum in Canada.

Facing Political Realities in the United States

Following the November 5, 2024 election, requests for help from the United States surged, with nearly three quarters of US requests for help from 2024 received in the final weeks of the year. Our data shows troubling trends with regards to the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ people in the US in recent years. In 2023 we received over 1,900 requests from individuals seeking our assistance from the United States, representing a 523% increase from 2022. In 2022, the majority of individuals seeking help from the US were asylum seekers from other countries – in 2023 that trend was reversed. The following year, 2024, one out of every five requests for help originated from the United States; in 2025, this increased to one out of every three requests. Last year was the second year in a row where the largest single source of requests for help was the United States. In cases where an individual requesting help disclosed their gender identity to us, the largest groups seeking assistance were trans women and trans men.



Although US citizens are asking for support, our data also shows that non-citizens are still seeking support from within the United States. We received 427 requests for help from non-US citizens within the United States in 2025. This represents an exponential increase over time, from 38 requests for help in 2023 and 94 in 2024, excluding cases where citizenship was not reported.

The political realities of the US today are severe. Travel bans have been imposed by the US administration on countries around the world. Individuals who felt protected have had their status revoked, and others are experiencing severe financial hardship because of significant cuts to refugee and asylum support programs. Rainbow Railroad's Housing and Livelihood Assistance Fund is one of the tools deployed to

respond to this reality. It provides emergency cash assistance grants directly to LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and other LGBTQI+ migrants who have been affected. In 2025, the fund supported 131 people.

Even amidst a worsening climate, our community is still mobilizing in support of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and migrants in the United States. Through the team we have built and the partnerships we rely on, we have been able to witness real moments of resilience and progress on an individual level. After 9 months in detention, one of the individuals we supported gained her freedom and a new start with the assistance of her volunteer Community Support Team, a powerful reminder of what community-building can make possible.



DIGITAL EXPRESSION AND QUEER ONLINE REPRESSION

Over the past 20 years, the digital landscape for LGBTQI+ people has changed dramatically. When other spaces feel closed off, LGBTQI+ people find community online. For LGBTQI+ young people in particular, online spaces may serve as a place to explore their identities, and seek out affirmation, resources, and peer support.³⁸ But the digital ecosystem is not always safe, and the targeting of LGBTQI+ people online is a byproduct of their legal precarity offline. The criminalization of consensual same-sex relations and the application of vague “morality” and “debauchery” laws against LGBTQI+ people embolden digital targeting, suppresses LGBTQI+ expression online and offline, and serve as the bases for prosecutions of LGBTQI+ people.³⁹

Rainbow Railroad's data offers us a window into this understudied environment. In 2016 and 2017, requests for help received by Rainbow Railroad rarely mentioned online platforms. In those two years, only 11 requests for help mentioned dating apps or social media. In 2025, almost 600 requests for help cited an online interaction as part of their reason for seeking safety, representing a more than 5,000% increase over 10 years. Since 2016 we have received more than 2,000 requests for help that reference the digital domain, inclusive of social media and dating apps. Among these 2,000 requests, the average age of individuals is 25 years old, which shows that young LGBTQI+ people are disproportionately affected by online risks.

The harms people reference experiencing online include being publicly outed or humiliated, date baiting, and blackmail. Our data shows that these harms are prevalent across the globe. Requests from the United States, Egypt, Pakistan, Uganda, and Nigeria most frequently include reference to online dangers. A total of 112 countries are reflected in this data.

Dangers online can result in real physical harm when people seek connection offline. Our requests for help indicate that, in certain cases, dating apps are being used by police and state actors to trap and extort LGBTQI+ people. Once a person is detained, authorities will routinely search through their digital platforms and accounts to find evidence of illegality. Individuals report violent, humiliating and degrading experiences at the hands of authorities when they are detained. In some cases, individuals report police trying to use information they have obtained to ambush or out other LGBTQI+ people.

Even if an experience of date baiting isn't perpetrated by the police, there are barriers to reporting any crimes that may occur; individuals who speak up risk being outed, blackmailed and revictimised. Dating apps may be used to sexually assault and rob LGBTQI+ people. In other instances, a person's intimate images are captured and used to blackmail them.

Despite the fact that LGBTQI+ people face particular dangers in a digital world, requests for help also demonstrate hope. Rainbow Railroad's presence on digital platforms continues to reach people in search of safety and community. Requests for help from countries like Sierra Leone, Mauritania and the United States all reference the sense of hope they experienced when they saw our work profiled on social media. The duality of hope and harm in digital spaces is an evident tension in our work. Despite the dangers online, our ability to connect people with resources is enhanced through digital platforms. It is clear that, given the significant risks and dangers present, partnerships between digital platforms and organizations like Rainbow Railroad are needed to improve safety for LGBTQI+ people online.

LANDING ISN'T THE FINISH LINE: LIFE FOR LGBTQI+ ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE US

While the story below is true, some details, including the name of the individual, have been modified to protect his identity.

Rio Santos can't help it. The smile lines of the 26-year-old gay asylum seeker, who hails from a country where consensual same-sex intimacy between men is criminalized, deepen as he recalls it: the first time he saw two men kiss each other in public.

"I felt freedom," Rio, who self-relocated to the US in 2025 in search of safety, tells Rainbow Railroad. "Nobody, no other people, were looking at them. Nobody beat them. Nobody hit [them]. If I were to do it... publicly, they would [have] kill[ed] me," he says about his home country.

The experience, which rendered him emotional, happened in the presence of his six-person volunteer Community Support Team (CST). CSTs, mobilized by Rainbow Railroad, provide six months of community integration assistance to LGBTQI+ forcibly displaced people in Canada and the US. The program emerged from the recognition that newcomers face additional barriers after resettlement, such as social and linguistic isolation, confusion about how to navigate the asylum or legal system, and a general change in cultural customs.

Rio is one of the nearly dozen individuals who has been assisted through CSTs in cities including Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Toronto. The program, in the absence of other forms of support, has

allowed him to grow and learn; it's helped Rio enroll in free English classes, secure housing through a local place of worship, and feel a sense of belonging in queer community spaces.

"They've already taken me in as a family member," Rio says about his CST. "They want to make sure that I'm enjoying myself, that I'm trying things that make me happy." Rio, who calls every moment with them his favourite memory, recounts the big and small moments that have made his time in the US meaningful: watching sunsets at the beach, visiting art museums, eating Korean barbecue for the first time, and relishing in the reciprocal good this program has brought all of them.

Community Support Teams alone cannot offer sufficient assistance for the many obstacles that asylum seekers face. Rio faced a months-long stay in detention, after which his asylum case was eventually approved in fall 2025. But the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) filed an appeal against his case, pausing his eligibility to obtain a work permit, which he otherwise would have been able to access after a 180-day period. "Getting him a job is our biggest hurdle and our biggest concern," says CST member Ryan Howard. "We have temporary free housing right now, but that's not going to last forever. And without employment, he can't earn enough to make a living."

It remains unclear when Rio's case, still in the hands of immigration officials, will be resolved.

The impact of this program, however, is not small. "You have this person who has been raised in an environment where being himself is a fearful thing. He risked everything to travel halfway around the world, sent to detention for months, which couldn't have been easy, and then, all of a sudden is just released into the world," explains Howard, who said he's seen Rio's confidence grow in the short time he's known him. "I don't know what people without a support team do because it's just an overwhelming thing to try to set up your life in a new country where language is an initial barrier."

This post-relocation program emerged fol-

lowing the termination of Welcome Corps, a partnership between the US government and several organizations including Rainbow Railroad that allowed for the private sponsorship of LGBTQI+ refugees to resettle to the US. Welcome Corps was suspended in 2025, on the current president's first day in office. The asylum system in the US has largely imploded.

Despite evolving policy around LGBTQI+ people, the CST program helps newcomers find a sense of community as an antidote to national anti-gender conversations on queer and trans individuals. It also serves as a reminder that the US can remain a hopeful place of safety for individuals like Rio who are fleeing persecution.

Relocating to the US, he says, was his only option. "I really do love my country, and I really do love my family, but I actually had no choice when it came to leaving," says Rio. "If there had been any opportunity whatsoever for me to find somewhere in my country where I could live peacefully and not feel threatened, I would never have [left]. I just did it because I had to."

If there had been any opportunity for me to live peacefully in my country, I would never have left. I did it because I had to.

SECTION 4

What Makes
Our Work
Possible

What Makes
Our Work
Possible

What Makes
Our Work
Possible

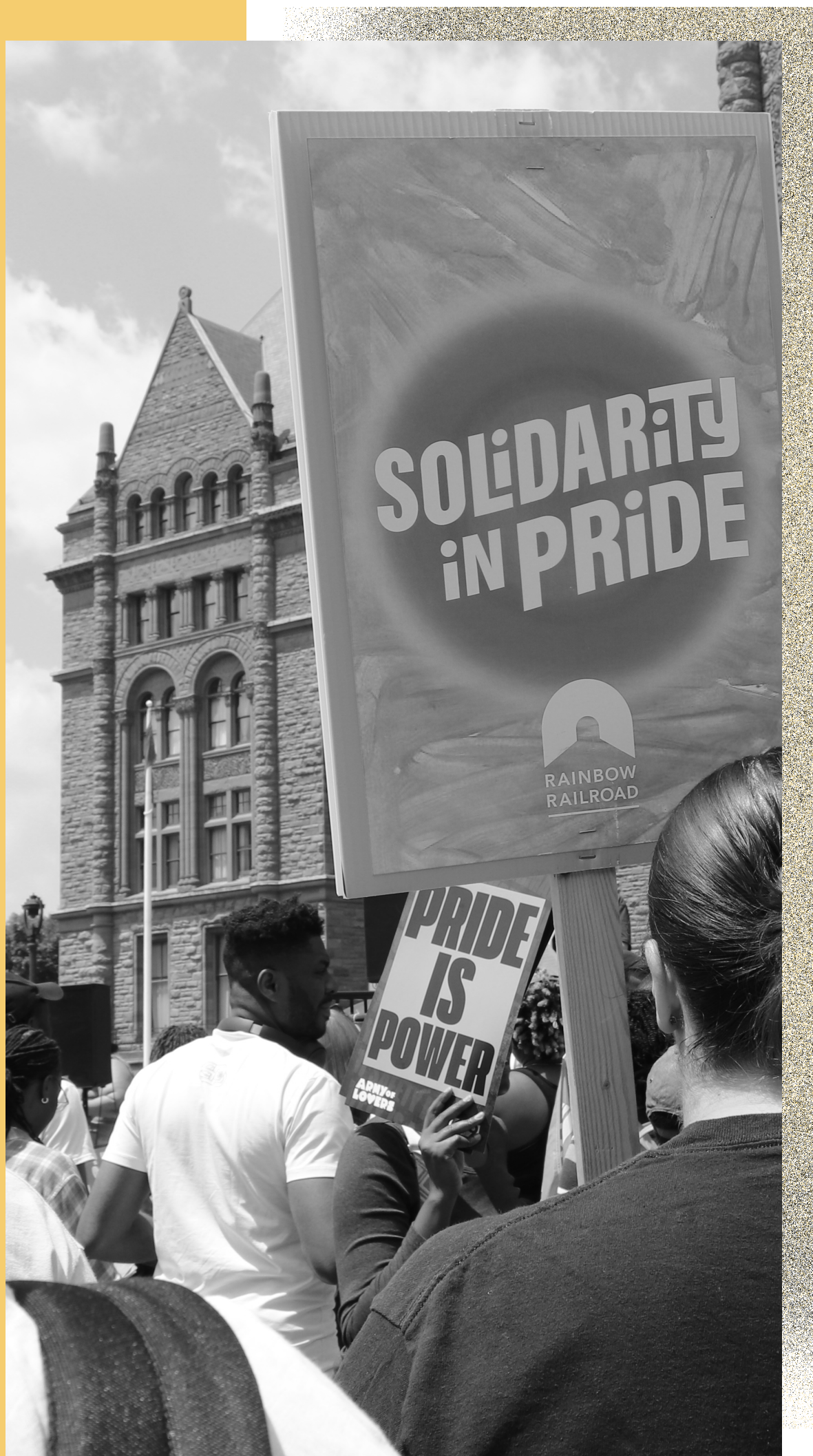
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 Sidney Semple
 Janice Siekawitch
 Travis Simms
 Ross Slater and Wayne Smith, Reach
 Capabilities Inc.
 Smile.io
 SML Canada Acquisition Corp. / Steve
 Madden
 Babette Smith
 Carolyn Smith and David Simms
 Sobrii †
 Solo Chicken Productions Inc.
 Ron Southerland
 Stantec
 Grant Statchuk
 Ted Steenburgh
 Margot Stevens
 Jay Stibbs
 Sun Life Financial *
 Swept Technologies Inc.
 Cat Swytink-Binnema
 Emily Taylor
 Team Vanessa and Therence *
 Teck Resources Limited
 Ten Foot Henry Inc.
 Teranet Inc.
 Cole Thomson
 Kyle Thomson
 Gemma Tomlinson
 Vincent Tong
 David Townsend
 Trinity College School
 Turner/Herrmann Foundation
 Timasha Udugama
 Ursel Phillips Fellows Hopkinson LLP
 Ventum Financial Corp
 Jennifer Vieno
 Tuan Vu and G. Gruber
 Megan Wagoner
 Kevin Wallace-Horswill
 Edward Wang
 Robin Ward
 Glen Watson and Jamie Young
 Maggie Wentz
 John M. Whillans
 John White
 Sarah Whitmore
 Lindsay Wiginton *
 Nino Wijangco
 Dave Wilkin and Evan Dell'aquila
 Sandra Wilkinson
 Bruce Wilson
 Mark Wilson

Wade Wright
Eugene Yu
Anonymous (53)

USA

\$100,000+

11:11 Media
IKEA US
Alison Lawton
Lillian Lincoln Foundation
Estate of Martin W. Madden
PLUS1 x Sabrina Carpenter
Zegar Family Foundation

\$50,000 – \$99,999

Arch Capital Group
The Steven & Alexandra Cohen
Foundation
Expedia Group *
GLBT Fund of America of the
Philadelphia Foundation
The Lefkowsky Family Foundation
Clark Pellett and Robert Kohl *
Anthony Pritzker Family Foundation
Anonymous (2)

\$25,000 – \$49,999

Ross Boucher
Stephen Brockman and John Doc
Willoughby *
Caleb Burson and Timothy Gug
Brandon Clarke and Matthew López
Rodney B. and Marjorie S. Fink
Foundation & Lee Bell and Fotios
Pantazis
Holgate/Baum z"l Fund
Bruce Koff and Mitchell Channon *
Estate of John G. Kroll
Morfitt Family Fund and Michael Wright
Qatalyst Partners
Anonymous * (1)

\$10,000 – \$24,999

Richard Appel
Joseph Arena and Dr. Thomas D'Eletto
Charitable Fund
Berger Family Foundation, Inc.
David Blatt and David Moore
Candy Hearts Anthology
Lukas Ceha Charitable Fund
Chrest Foundation
Classical Pride

The Danielson Foundation
Kitty and Reg Emans Memorial Fund
Epilogue Gaming *
First Presbyterian Church
Taner Halicioglu
The Jeanine Heller Foundation, Inc.
Izzy's Steaks & Chops †
Owen Keehnen
David C. Kleiman Charitable Giving Fund
The Kolasa Foundation
David Landis and Sean Dowdall
David Lapham and Clark Mitchell
Liz Lefkowsky
Lu Regent Street Fund
Daniel Mallory
Maxwell Sedel Family Foundation, Inc.
Charles Melton
Vivek Moitra
Mouthy Media LLC
Jeffrey Nussbaum Charitable Gift Fund
Dean Ogren
Michael Perrone
The Points Guy
Poop Coven *
George William Rogers
Eric Schuman and Lorn Folsom Thomas
Stahl and Julie Kim
Jeremy Vogel
Tyria Pride *

\$5,000 – \$9,999

Austin Baidas
Malik Brown *
Bryan and Derek's Wedding Fundraiser *
Graham Connell
D Squared Gay Gents Fund of Horizons
Foundation
Mark Davis
Timothy Dean and Christi Martin
Kenneth D. Dillon
Martin Duberman and Eli Zal
Engage for Good †
David Fernandes and Jesse M. Kahn
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Karoline Katus and Diedra Nelson
The Kaufmann Foundation
Alison Kemp

Timothy Kirsch
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 Craig and Daniel Loftin Family
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 NM Giving Fund
 Matthew Norman
 Dan Oliverio
 Demir Oral
 OutOfOffice.com LGBTQ+ Travel Carol
 and John Pesek
 Eric Porterfield and Kalman Varga
 Rainbow Rat Parade *
 Rainbow Risk Alliance
 The Rainbow Pineapple Foundation
 Wade A. Rakes and Nicholas T. Miller
 Estate of George Rudasill
 Patrick Sheahan
 Jeffrey M. Slutsky and John R. Spitzig
 Heather A. Steans and Leo A. Smith
 Tikkun Olam Foundation, Inc.
 Andrew Tobias
 Austin Walsh
 Webpros
 Aaron Jase Whipple and Frank Buccola
 Zivin Family Foundation
 Anonymous (3)

\$2,500 – \$4,999

Apple Inc.
 Axis Specialty U.S. Holdings, Inc. Donald
 Bacigalupi and Dan Feder Michael
 Balaban
 Glenn Bigonet
 Robert Breit
 Laura Cherny
 Mark Colclasure and Charlie Potts Flags
 for Good
 Franklin Templeton
 Joel and Demerise Gratch
 Kevin Gray and Justin Weitz
 Hrothmarket *
 JPC Giving Fund
 David Kerlick
 Christopher Lin-Brandt
 Danny MacDonald and Garrett Rippe
 Kathy Mallis
 Kurt Mergen
 Margie Morrison Zivin and Mark Zivin
 Patrick Murphree
 Brian O'Donnell
 Ralph Pellecchio and Jim Wernz PepsiCo
 Richard Perera
 Pfizer Inc. *

Prizeo
 Everette Quinton and William Fellows
 Holly Sasser
 StarCraft II Community *
 John Steffens
 Team Lakeview Episcopalians FETCHing
 Neighbor *
 James Nozar and Adam Unger *
 Jerre van den Bent
 Warburg Pincus LLC
 Waukegan Friends Corporation
 Zoom Video Communications &
 Employees *
 Anonymous (2)

\$1,000 – \$2,499

1Password
 24-hr Charity Stream! *
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 Adobe Inc. *
 Amplitude, Inc. *
 Michael Anderson and Timothy
 Buckenmyer
 The ATHENA Fund at The Chicago
 Community Foundation
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 Azeroth Pride *
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 Richard Baxter
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 Gabriel Benroth
 Emanuel Berger
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 Stephen Boustouler
 Fred Bove
 Jerry Brooks
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 Bulova Gale Foundation
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 Caravano
 Celestica
 Armand R. Cerbone and Michael F
 Zartman
 Michael Chong
 Robert Cieri
 Cisco Systems Inc. *

Howard Clauser
 Steve Coleman
 Ted Colman, in memory of Wade Carey
 Sean Congdon
 Christian Cooper
 James Cundiff and Dale Woods DGBH
 Charitable Fund
 The Clio Fund at Oregon Community
 Foundation
 David Dotlich
 Dodson Family Charitable Trust
 Huy Duong
 Elouise East
 Reuben William Edminster
 Kayla Ellis
 Martin Erwin
 Felter Family Descendants Fund Jeffrey
 Foldvik
 Matt Ford
 Andrew Fox
 Peter Frank and Michael Bailey
 Francisco Partners
 Zoe S. Friend Charitable Fund
 Furst Family Charitable Fund
 Frank Gannon
 Tracy and Christopher Giglio
 Drew Glick and Alan Miles
 Raymond Goetz
 The Goldish Family Fund
 Jeffrey Goodman
 Goldman, Sachs & Co
 Sallie Gratch
 The Will Green Charitable Fund
 Lynn Gutter
 Alex Hachiya
 Howard Hahn
 Halo Pride Community “Bonded by
 Battle” *
 The Lucy Harper Grier Benevolent
 Foundation
 Arthur Harrill
 Telaireus K. Herrin, PsyD
 Hi-Scores House: Friday *
 Hippiemommabags
 Brian Hope
 Jaren Howard
 William Hsu
 Daniel Ignatoff
 INSTANDA *
 Instacart *
 Intellistack †
 Hayder Jaafar
 Christopher Jenkinson
 JMao Photography
 Jamila K. Johnson

Quinn Jones
 Joy Family West
 Martin Kahn
 Mitchell Karp
 Micah Keawe
 Rick Ketchum
 KKSWEAT LLC
 Sara Konstantine
 Eric Kratsa
 Harry LaBelle
 Mark LaChapelle and Scott Brush Nancy
 Lanoue
 Ryan LaRosa
 Katie Leary Sebastian and Jim Sebastian
 Doug Lester and John Mandeville
 The Lightbringers *
 Lighthouse Future Fund
 Michael Longacre
 Loeb Charitable Foundation
 lululemon
 Victor Madrigal Borloz
 Steve Mahkovec
 Benjamin Manwaring and Daniel Fox
 John Manley
 Ernest March
 Scott Marson
 Christopher Mashiak
 Sean McBride and Steve Cary
 Dr. Susan McEwen-Fial
 Shane McHugh
 Jack McMahon
 Francesca McLin and Veronica
 Betancourt
 Medtronic plc.
 Merck & Co., Inc.
 Shayna Meyer
 Ellen Meyers
 MonsterdonSavesChristmas *
 Mortal Girl
 Ryan Mrazik
 Jeffrey Murdock
 Jeff Myers and Randy Bye
 Joe Nekrasz
 Netflix, Inc.
 Roman Nesis
 Maya Nigrosh
 OneStream Software
 Victor Ortale
 Otako’s Charity Auction *
 German Pabon and Marco Camacho
 Terry Pannell
 Noah Perrine
 Seth Persily
 James Petrine
 Tam Pham

Gabriel Pitta
 Jonathan Pizer
 Plus Life Lacquer
 Polk Bros. Foundation
 Pride Month Streams *
 Bryan Rafanelli and Mark Walsh
 Rainbow Raid Relay *
 Rainbow Railroad Fundraising
 Streamathon *
 Steven Reilley
 Jonathan Reel
 Reiss/King Family Fund
 Carol Risher
 Richard Rodes
 Jefferson Rogers
 Jordan Rose
 Rachel Ross
 Molly Roush
 Cullen Ruff
 Sarah Rund
 Luella T. Russo
 The River Rose Fund
 Tomer Saraf
 Ms. Ellen Saunders
 John Saveland
 Brett Schmidt
 Christopher Schlesinger and Albert
 Bussink
 Bea Schutz
 Jared Schwartz
 Philip Schwab
 Norman Scrivner
 Jared Seeger
 Yolanda Shea
 Jeffrey Sheets
 Randall A. Shields and Harrison Yeoh
 Silver-Streak *
 George Skillman
 David Skeist
 John Philip Smith-Lontz II
 Aaron Sofaer
 Jordan Sorensen
 Stephen Spivey
 Stat Check
 June Steen
 Alexander Steffensmeier
 The Brian D. Stevens Foundation Eric
 W. Stults
 Meghan Sullivan
 Sun & Moon Zine
 Kenneth Sugarman
 Mark R. Swanson
 TartHeart *
 Teddi's July Charity Fundraiser *
 Dennis Teske

TextNow, Inc.
 themarriedmakers *
 themavshow *
 Ann M. Throckmorton
 Boji Tony
 Garo Toomajanian
 Trans Justice Canberra
 Transgender Day of Remembrance
 Fundraiser *
 Traub Lieberman Straus & Shrewsberry
 LLP
 tridenttail *
 Tullsen Family Giving Account Unitarian
 Universalist Church of the Monterey
 Peninsula
 Ryan Valencia
 John VanderLinden and John William
 Butler
 Tom Watson
 Ben Weinberg
 Nola Werlinich
 Monica Williams
 Darrell Windle and Dave Samber
 Margaret Jeanne Wirpsa
 Dr. Michael Wolf
 The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
 President's Grant Fund
 Joel Yambert
 Tze Yep
 Mat Young
 YZY Prints Media
 Anonymous (24)

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.

Robert Adams Chvostal
 Cecilia Alejo Rivas
 Bernie Altman
 Michael Anderson
 Chanel Attema
 Scott Baker and Blair Mascall
 Eryn Batchelor
 Roger L. Bell
 Lawrence Bennett
 Stephanie Berliant
 Chris Black

Mark Black and Glen Leiner
Claire Blume Tate
Alex Borovoy
Christopher Brown
Colin Brownlee
Neil Buddel
Paul Cadiente
Cassian Catanzaro
Jamieson Cochrane
Mark Colclasure
Keyvis Dampthey
Robert Di Vito
Martin Duberman and Eli Zal
David Scott Edelman
Monique Fiedler-Sills
Richard Firsten
Jasmine Rae Friedrich
Michael Friesner
Peter Gallant
Edward S. Garrett
Caleb Goodman
Robin Grindley and Neil Hubert
Richard Guisso
Steve Gumbley
Charles Haack
John Thomas Hilton, Jr.
Stuart Holms
Michael Horvat
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Rohit Jajoo
Stephen Johnson
David Kerlick
Bruce Koff and Mitchell Channon
David Lampert
Malcolm Leibel
Michael Lisetto-Smith
Lenore MacAdam
Blair MacKinnon
Russell Mathew and Scott Ferguson
Victoria Jeanette Matthews Richard
McLellan
Richard Meyers
Charley Mills
Greg Minch
H. S. Mingle
Michael Murphy and Shane Small
Ceilidh Nevling
Christina Norgrove
Mark Owen
Jimmy Partee
Renzo Pella
Scott Powell and Kirk Hill
Rochelle Pyette
Steven Randolph
Ann Rosenfield

Paul Rosina
Roger Schmitz
Thomas Schroeter
Eric Schuman and Lorn Folsom
Sharon Scott
David Sector
Samuel Sferrazza
Catharine Shannon
Usman Sheikh and Jack Chang Jesse
St Croix
Grant Statchuk
R. Christopher Strietman and Blane E.
Halliday
Guillermo Javier Adrian Talavera Mark
Tan
Ray Wallach
Andrea Williams
George Yabu and Glenn Pushelberg
Anonymous (10)

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

In 2025, Rainbow Railroad volunteers continued to show up with care, commitment, and purpose. Across 598 recorded volunteer shifts and engagements, 256 volunteers contributed 24,799 hours in support of our mission, the equivalent of nearly 12 full-time employees. Their contributions strengthened work across events, private sponsorship and community support teams, interpretation, legal support, refugee-led advocacy, and other direct support efforts. In a year shaped by increasing attacks on LGBTQI+ rights and shrinking pathways to safety, our volunteers helped expand the care, connection, and community that make Rainbow Railroad's work possible.



Community Support Teams

Team LeDroit

Daniel Watson de Roux
Larry Handerman
Trent Bauserman

Windy City Welcome Crew (2U)

Alicia Obando
Brenna Lemieux
Amanda Thompson
Janet Scanlon
Sarah Byrne

Windy City Welcomers (CoH)

Grant Gigot
Gabrielle Gigot
Erik Renth
Anna Hastings
Trey Hansen
Don Berkman
Monica Berkman
Laura Varela
Lakeview Episcopalians FETCHing
Neighbors
Joshua Anderson
Kitty Wilson
Owen Johnson
David Long
Peter Wasik
Sweet Home Chicago
Liam Yonker
Lauren Draftz
Team Rainbow Loop
Jordan Russell
Peter Siepiora
Robert Bailey
Michael Fiorentino
DC Rainbow Metro Line
T.A. Green

[Boston Group]

Cristina Kotz Cornejo
Bear Secunda
Tristan Angieri
Anna Barsan
Finn McSwiggan
Pancho Mackin-Plankey

Bay Area United

Anne Raeff
Lori Ostlund
Jessica Woodard
Hema Padhu
Claire Hannemann
DC Rainbow Metro Line
Eli Frankel
Michael Gluck
Gabriela/ Gabi Rossner

Jordan Stoner
Andrea Z Solarz

Hollywood Depot

Ryan Howard
Brad Damaré
Russ Sommer

Lakeview Episcopalians FETCHing Neighbors

Joshua Anderson
Kitty Wilson
Owen Johnson
David Long
Peter Wasik

NYC Welcoming Project

Clint Okayama
Ace Sutherland
Henry Perea
Nathan Zebedeo

Qoachella Valley Embrace

Richard Renn
Bruce Scharf
Tim Baker
Phong Chu
June Sanchez

Sweet Home Chicago

Evan Siegel
Annie Avery
Eileen Castellanos
John Cipriano
Mike Duesenberg
Barbara Hill
Rich Rodes
Charlie Garrido

Welcome to New York (Not Taylor's Version)

Nathan Burstein
Tommy Lodge
Dan Fogarty
Danny Rosemarin
Jonathan Smith
Emma Webley

Team Rainbow Loop

Andrew Zickmund

Kaleidoscope Boston

Cristina Kotz Cornejo
Bear Secunda
Tristan Angieri
Anna Barsan
Finn McSwiggan
Pancho Mackin-Plankey

ABQ Pod

Molly Luethi
Daniella Matthews-Trigg
Evon Youkhana
Debbie Weissman

Hadley Pope

Bay Area United

Anne Raeff

Lori Ostlund

Jessica Woodard

Hema Padhu

Claire Hannemann

CoH Welcomes You to Chicago!

Ed Job

Leslie Worrell

Natalia Gancedo

Ben Rowley

Jonathan Horowitz

Joel Goldsmith

DC Rainbow Metro Line

Eli Frankel

T.A. Green

Michael Gluck

Gabriela/ Gabi Rossner

Jordan Stoner

Andrea Z Solarz

Hollywood Depot

Ryan Howard

Brad Damaré

Russ Sommer

Chrissy Heriat

Xavier Heriat

Ledroit Park

Jason Bello

Justin Conairis

Larry Handerhan

Rich Rossi

Ed Wood

David Robertson

Antoni Conidas

Donald Gatlin

NYC Welcoming Project

Clint Okayama

Ace Sutherland

Henry Perea

Nathan Zebedeo

Qoachella Valley Embrace

Richard Renn

Bruce Scharf

Tim Baker

Phong Chu

June Sanchez

Ruth's Promise

Doug Treadwell

Bee Davis

Gary Ely-Grisham

Chris Ely-Grisham

Jaime Segura

Dennis Bull

Steven Reed

Bill Skinner

Sharon Henry

Sweet Home Chicago

Evan Siegel

Annie Avery

John Cipriano

Mike Duesenberg

Barbara Hill

Rich Rodes

Liam Yonker

Lauren Draftz

Charlie Garrido

Team Rainbow Loop

Andrew Zickmund

Jordan Russell

Peter Siepiora

Robert Bailey

Michael Fiorentino

Tree Town Welcomes You

Catherine Thomas

Margaret McCall

Kevin Carney

Spencer Smith

Elizabeth Shea

United Prosperity Center

Maha Ahmed

Nancy Bleau

Richard Burgess

Zaid Thamer

Welcome to New York (Not Taylor's Version)

Nathan Burstein

Tommy Lodge

Dan Fogarty

Danny Rosemarin

Jonathan Smith

Emma Webley

Team Blue

Kerri True-Funk

Masha Trefilova

Jordyn Duggan

Feel at Home Inc

John Ssenyonjo

Sharifah Nangonzi

Paul Sekanjako

New Roots

Matthew Banninga

Hani Zakaria

Juan Rendon

PSR (Private Sponsorship for Refugees) Groups

Team Deloitte Canada

Alexandra Wilkinson
Ryan Sebastain
Annelise DeRoche
Sahhara Leckie
Nancy Dong
Michelle Zou
Attique Chattha
Jeff Dennler
Ashish Gupta
Pratanu Mitra
Sachin Kumar
Ogo Egwudo
Ritika Saraswat

Team Adrian

Kaanu Joshi
Vincent Mboya
Leticia Pinheiro Guimaraes
Morad Hallami
Noor ul Ain
Zoya Hussain
Zaina Aziz
Betina Sehnke

Team Craig (Frisha+Raad)

Victoria Hong
Alireza Sayahi Zenouz
Sarah McMillan
Arif Nagori
Craig MacDougall
James Breen
Saukyn Luque
Alireza Sheshlou

Team Dario (Deng)

Dario Kosarac
Stephanie Cook
Jayme Nadolny
Moein Sabouhiyan
Preetika Sharma
Antony Bright

Team David Balaga

Wilson Lixon Canirimana
Angela Bird
Kathleen Ann Namiiro
Brett Kane
Mohammad Faris Mohammad Rasiff
Bernard Price
Ross Dickson
Tyler Meidema
Julie Martinson
Maegan Thomas
Kintanar Andrea

Team Gionni (Bridget+Grace)

David Bayat
Sarah Leaper
Jerry Ajang Daniel
Ernest Akobundu

Team Greg (Aisha)

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

Team Mama Makeba

Roza Sapir
Naim siyoufi
Mathew Gallant
Shan Meshwa
Taki Missaoui
Yousef Alhamadi

Team Namar

Batu Kaya
Sergio Perez
SIMON LYNCH
Rita Wairimu
Tahirih Nasser
Marko Shkil

Team Tina (Stacy)

Laleh Moshiri
Kim Culmone
Alison Halsall
Stacy Zosky
Brendah Thurston
Zachary Levy
Alex Rogers

Team Abdulla

Noel Semple

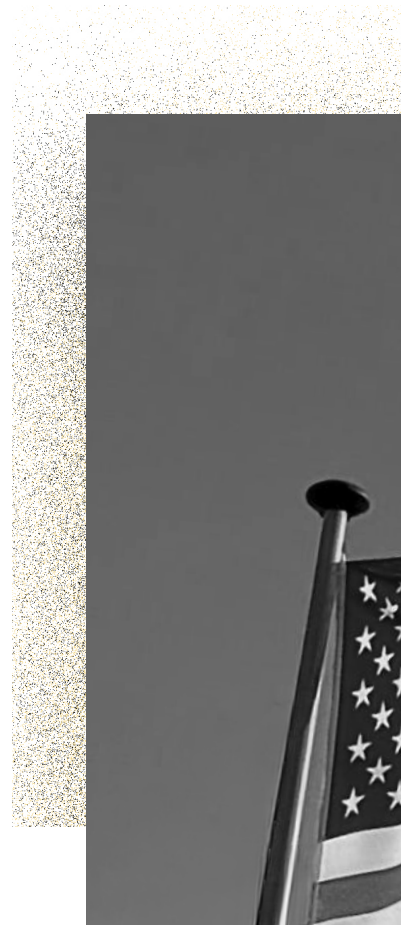
FINANCIALS

Statement of Operations and Net Assets

CANADA	2025	2024
Donations	\$8,305,110	\$7,021,027
Grants	\$2,054,790	\$1,452,874
Other	\$241,265	\$315,197
<hr/>		
Total Revenue	\$10,601,165	\$8,789,098
<hr/>		
Programs	\$7,420,047	\$6,038,945
Fundraising	\$1,597,021	\$1,553,139
Administration	\$856,034	\$1,095,728
<hr/>		
Total Expenses	\$9,873,102	\$8,687,812
Surplus (Deficit)	\$728,063	\$101,286
Net Assets		
Beginning of year	\$1,519,675	\$1,418,389
Surplus (Deficit)	\$728,063	\$101,286
End of year	\$2,247,738	\$1,519,675

United States (\$USD)

Donations	\$3,324,823	\$2,875,057
Other	\$366,245	\$216,357
<hr/>		
Total Revenue	\$3,691,068	\$2,923,037
<hr/>		
Programs	\$2,914,416	\$2,875,057
Fundraising	\$850,261	\$738,814
Administration	\$183,856	\$162,752
<hr/>		
Total Expenses	\$3,948,533	\$3,776,623
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$257,465)	(\$853,586)
Net Assets		
Beginning of year	\$1,113,915	\$841,857
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$257,465)	(\$853,586)
Other changes		\$1,125,644
End of year	\$856,450	\$1,113,915



At the start of 2025 Rainbow Railroad was prepared for a difficult financial year following the pressures experienced in 2024.

The fundraising landscape was unpredictable.

We were clear-eyed about the challenges and committed to restoring our reserves, creating pathways to safety for LGBTQI+ people experiencing violence and persecution, and strengthening our long-term financial position.

Our community of donors met the moment in the face of growing threats to LGBTQI+ people around the world.

In 2025, Rainbow Railroad saw renewed growth across our operations in Canada and the United States. In Canada, revenue grew by 20.6% from CAD \$8.8 million to CAD \$10.6 million, supported by an increase in donations and grants. In the United States, we saw a 26.3% increase in revenue from USD \$2.9 million to USD \$3.7 million, primarily driven by donations.

While the US entity ended the year in a deficit, that deficit narrowed significantly compared with 2024 when we had to draw on reserves to manage immediate cash flow challenges. We ended the year with a surplus in Canada, which improved the organization's capacity to respond to future financial shocks.

We continue to run a lean operation, with over 70% of revenue across Canada and the US dedicated to programs.

What our 2025 financials show is that in the face of global retreat on LGBTQI+ rights and refugee protection, donors continue to demonstrate confidence in Rainbow Railroad's mission.

This confidence is a galvanizing force as we mobilize the community to help us respond to recent funding cuts from the Canadian and UK governments.

Despite the challenges of this global moment, Rainbow Railroad remains a stable, resilient organization committed to getting more at-risk LGBTQI+ people to safety.



ENDNOTES

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5. [https://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/egypt/.](https://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/egypt/)
6. <https://rightsafrika.com/2020/03/08/repression-in-egypt-92-lgbtq-arrests-last-year.>
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34. <https://hias.org/news/trump-administrations-alarming-new-attacks-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>.
35. <http://hrw.org/news/2025/01/22/us-closing-door-refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants>.
36. <https://cila.co/jenkel-decision-federal-court-of-canada-halts-deportation-to-the-u-s-due-to-lgbtq-risk>.
37. A pseudonym.
38. https://bornthisway.foundation/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/BTWF_HL_onlinespaces_DRAFT16_revised-3April2025.pdf.
39. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/02/21/all-terror-because-photo-digital-targeting-and-its-offline-consequences-lgbt>.

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