

November 19th, 2021

## 2SLGBTQI+ organizations write open letter on policy priorities for the new federal government

To: The Office of the Prime Minister of Canada; the Honourable Minister of Women and Gender Equality; the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion; the Minister of Canadian Heritage; the Minister of Tourism; the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

We are writing as a collective of national and regional organizations that represent hundreds of 2SLGBTQI+ community organizations across Canada.


First, we would like to extend a sincere congratulations on forming government and appointing the Honourable Marci Ien and Ahmed Hussen as Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth and Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion. We look forward to supporting the fulfilment of their forthcoming 2SLGBTQI+ related mandate letter commitments. Through close collaboration with civil society organizations, including the signatories on this letter, the possibilities for positive social impact are endless.


Over recent years, the Government of Canada has taken key actions to address the historic and systemic barriers that 2SLGBTQI+ people in Canada continue to face. Your government has pursued meaningful gains such as the creation of the first federal LGBTQ2 Secretariat, and the historic investments in 2SLGBTQI+ communities made through the LGBTQ2 Community Capacity Fund. However, considerable action is needed to continue this progress, and to avoid losing the hard-earned gains made by your government. The creation of a bold, well-funded federal LGBTQ2 Action Plan is the mechanism positioned to continue and safeguard this progress.

Due to systemic discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, 2SLGBTQI+ communities in Canada continue to face increased rates of suicide and homelessness, in addition to other devastating health, safety, employment, housing, and migratory outcomes. Recognizing that mainstream health and social service organizations also embody the systemic barriers that impede access for 2SLGBTQI+ communities, 2SLGBTQI+ organizations fill an urgent gap by providing the effective, culturally appropriate, trauma-informed support that is not being offered otherwise.

Even during the pandemic, 2SLGBTQI+ organizations have continued to provide life-affirming support, despite a lack of stable funding and aggravated social determinants of health. According to recent research, our communities have been disproportionately impacted by several issues including financial insecurity, housing insecurity, and worsened mental health as a result of COVID-19. As your government takes office, the need for support is at a crisis pitch. With the creation of a bold and well-funded federal LGBTQ2 Action Plan, your government is positioned to take an unprecedented step to improve the social and economic outcomes of all Canadians.

During the election campaign, your government pledged to release Canada's first-ever federal LGBTQ2 Action Plan within your first 100 days in office. We are writing to emphasize key priorities that would be necessary to foster the success of the forthcoming federal LGBTQ2 Action Plan.





Firstly, we are calling for the federal LGBTQ2 Action Plan to pledge a minimum of \$25 million in ongoing annual funding to support the capacity and stability of 2SLGBTQI+ organizations and improve the health, safety, employment, housing, and migratory outcomes of 2SLGBTQI+ communities. As leaders of Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ organizations, we are well-equipped and willing to support your government to scale existing mechanisms to flow funding to Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ sector in a way that is effective, accessible, equitable, and sustainable.

Additionally, we are calling for the following points to be substantively amplified by the upcoming federal LGBTQ2 Action Plan, particularly through relevant Ministerial mandate letters:

- Reiterate the Calls to Action outlined in the MMIWG2SLGBTQIA+ National Action Plan;
- Commit permanent funding to the federal LGBTQ2 Secretariat;
- Fully implement a 2SLGBTQI+ lens into GBA+ considerations across all federal departments and their existing funding programs;
- Support legislative progress around:
  - The federal ban on conversion therapy and supports for survivors;
  - The end of the blood ban;
  - The decriminalization of sex work;
  - And the ban on involuntary surgeries on intersex infants and children.

Every new federal Cabinet has the chance to improve the wellbeing of 2SLGBTQI+ communities by building a Canada where everyone is free to be themselves. In many ways, your government has taken the initial steps to head that call. With hope and optimism, we look forward to working closely with your government to uplift Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ sector towards the freedom and safety that is possible across the country.

Best regards,

The Enchanté Network / le réseau Enchanté

Pride at Work Canada / Fierté au travail Canada

JusticeTrans

Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity

Conseil québécois LGBT

Fierté Canada Pride

Dignity Network Canada / Réseau Dignité Canada

Egale Canada

Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce

2 Spirits in Motion Society

