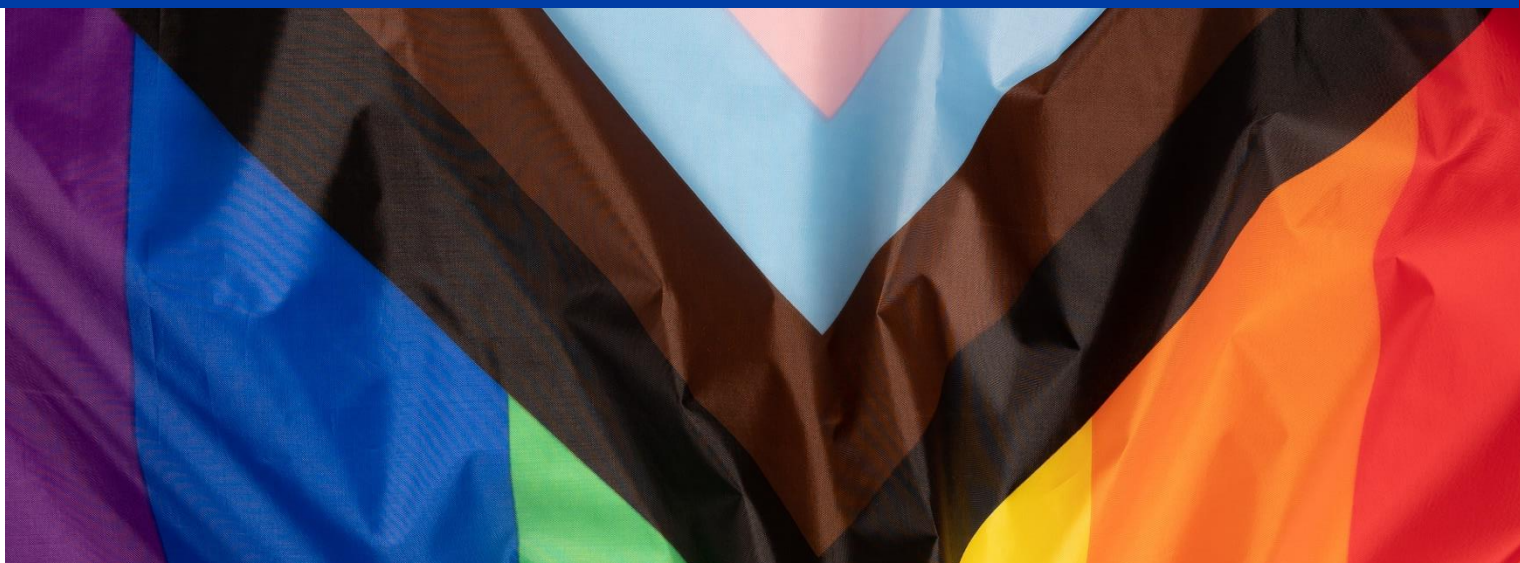




Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget



August 2023





Recommendations from Egale Canada

Recommendation 1: That the federal government provide an update on the progress to date and the timeline for launching the National Action Plan on Combatting Hate, involve 2SLGBTQI and other community organizations in the implementation strategy for the Action Plan, and allocate funding for 2SLGBTQI and community organizations to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

Recommendation 2: That the federal government update the Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan to address fundamental gaps relating to healthcare and mental healthcare access; poverty, housing, and employment; education access; sports inclusion; seniors; criminal law reforms; and international assistance, in line with Egale Canada's response, and undertake further stakeholder engagement to successfully deliver on the policy and programmatic outcomes envisioned by the Action Plan.

Recommendation 3: That the federal government enhance support for SOGIESC / LGBTQI human rights in international assistance to \$20M a year.

Founded in 1986, Egale is Canada's national 2SLGBTQI human rights organization. Egale works to improve the lives of 2SLGBTQI people in Canada and to enhance the global response to 2SLGBTQI issues by informing public policy, inspiring cultural change, and promoting human rights and inclusion through research, education, awareness and legal advocacy. Egale's vision is a Canada, and ultimately a world without homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and all other forms of oppression so that every person can achieve their full potential, free from hatred and bias.

Language note: Egale Canada uses the acronym 2SLGBTQI. When we refer to international issues outside of Canada, we use the LGBTQI acronym as it is widely used internationally and recognizes that Two Spirit is a Canadian term not used by Indigenous communities in other parts of the world. SOGIESC is also a commonly used international term to refer to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics.

Combating the rise in anti-2SLGBTQI hate

(Recommendation 1)

Around the world, societies are bearing witness to an unprecedented and exponential rise in anti-2SLGBTQI, hate-fueled, and gender-critical movements. Unfortunately, Canada has been no exception in this regard. There is a growing reactionary movement in Canada threatening the safety, freedoms, and rights of 2SLGBTQI people, especially those who are Two Spirit, trans, nonbinary, and/or gender non-conforming (2STNBGN).

From coast to coast to coast, 2SLGBTQI community events are being protested, disrupted, and even cancelled due to safety concerns. For the first time ever, the government had to step in and provide emergency security funding to support organizations this Pride Season amidst increased hate. Transphobia and homophobia are spreading through secondary and post-secondary schools from board meetings to on-campus speaking engagements; at one school, the Pride flag has been desecrated on numerous occasions. The message could not be more clear – our 2SLGBTQI communities are under attack.


Egale's Pride Unravalled report shows that in the first three months of 2023, there were 6,423 anti-2SLGBTQI protests and instances of online hate in Canada.¹

The Statistics Canada report on police-reported hate crimes that was released on August 2, 2022 shows that since 2019, hate crimes targeting sexual orientation have risen in Canada. In 2019, there were 265 hate crimes that targeted sexual orientation, and in 2021, this number rose to 423. Since 2020, hate crimes targeting sexual orientation have risen 64 per cent.²

While one-time emergency security funding announced during Pride Season was necessary, this is a much bigger issue that exists all year-round. The data clearly demonstrates that there is a need for a long term, sustainable, and fully costed plan to protect the safety, rights, and freedoms of 2SLGBTQI people.

¹ *Pride Unravalled* report, Egale Canada, 2023 https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Egale_Pride_Unravalled_Government_Package_May23.pdf

² *Brief on Police-Reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2021: Hate Crimes Targeting Sexual Orientation*, Egale Canada, 2022 <https://egale.ca/awareness/brief-on-police-reported-hate-crimes-2021/>.



With anti-2SLGBTQI protests, discrimination and hate continuing to rise across Canada, the National Action Plan on Combatting Hate is urgently needed now and must include funded actions to combat anti-2SLGBTQI and anti-trans hate, and gender-based violence (developed in consultation with community), along with a clear implementation plan, and adequate funding for 2SLGBTQI civil society organizations.

Addressing inequities that continue to impact 2SLGBTQI people in Canada

(Recommendation 2)

Although the Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan contains programmatic guidance and funding allocations that will contribute to the advancement of 2SLGBTQI rights and wellbeing, little is laid out concerning numerous key domains that need immediate attention and continuous efforts to improve the lived experience of 2SLGBTQI individuals in Canada.


Due to a lack of substantive direction, the 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan is essentially a compilation of existing initiatives, policies, and programs in relation to 2SLGBTQI communities.

To this end, Egale Canada provides a response to the measures that are described in the plan, with hopes of guiding further consultations with communities and organizations so as to amend and streamline the implementation of the current plan on issues related to healthcare and mental healthcare access; poverty, housing, employment; education access; sports inclusion; seniors; criminal law reforms, as well as international assistance.³

Key budget-related recommendations in the response document include:

1. Funding and consultations necessary for the development of a government-wide integrated framework on strengthening access to healthcare/mental health for 2SLGBTQI populations in Canada.


³ Egale Canada's response to the Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan, 2022 <https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Egale-Canadas-Response-to-the-Federal-2SLGBTQI-Action-Plan-3.0.pdf>



This framework should include the goals of developing and implementing a universal, national gender affirming healthcare strategy to support trans and gender diverse communities that is competent, transparent, and accessible within a reasonable time; accessible without a mental health diagnosis of gender dysphoria; and comprehensive in covering all gender affirming care expenses.

2. Dedicated funding allocations for mental health services beyond major urban centers and inclusion training (pre and post-graduation) for all regulated service providers to ensure that they have knowledge and resources to serve and respond to the needs of 2SLGBTQI people.
3. Consultations and specific funding allocation for harmonizing Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy with tangible measures under the Action Plan that address issues experienced by 2SLGBTQI communities in accessing federal to provincial income support benefits and alleviating these challenges.
4. The synergizing of the National Housing Strategy with the Action Plan through specific funding allocations and consultations for targeted housing and housing related services for 2SLGBTQI communities, and ensuring services for those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity are inclusive and affirming for 2SLGBTQI people across all sectors through policy development and training of staff in shelters, transitional housing, drop-in services, social housing, and rent-geared to-income (RGI)/affordable housing.
5. Specific funding allocation to strengthen 2SLGBTQI diversity and inclusion in the federal government, acting on the recommendations arising from 'Emerging from the Purge: The State of LGBTQI2S Inclusion in the Federal Workplace and Recommendations for Improvement'⁴ report. While the Action Plan makes mention of this report to reference the objective of strengthening 2SLGBTQI diversity and inclusion in federal workplaces, the same cannot be achieved without dedicated funding.

⁴ *Emerging from the Purge: The State of LGBTQI2S Inclusion in the Federal Workplace and Recommendations for Improvement*, The LGBT Purge Fund, 2021
<https://lgbtpurgefund.com/emerging-from-the-purge/>

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6. Consultation and funding allocations to develop training materials focused on creating safer and more inclusive sport spaces and facilities, geared to coaches, athletes, spectators, and sport enthusiasts at any level.
 7. Consultation with Egale and other research groups that have already undertaken/presently undertaking research on issues of 2SLGBTQI seniors so as to avoid duplication; strategically channel funding on areas of research pertaining to 2SLGBTQI seniors that remains scarce; facilitate learning from experienced civil society groups on this issue and allocate relevant funding for the implementation of research recommendations.

The government is strongly urged to review Egale Canada's response to the Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan, and to make updates to the Action Plan based on the recommendations within the response.

Enhancing supports for LGBTQI human rights in international assistance

(Recommendation 3)

Global state-sponsored homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia remain pervasive. Over the past few years there has been a growing backlash in some parts of the world against the advancement and protection of LGBTQI human rights.

In reviewing Canada's international assistance programs, working toward the elimination of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation, must be the priority.

This is why Canada should dedicate \$20M a year of its overall international assistance budget for programs that advance the human rights of LGBTQI people internationally. This amount would roughly be 0.3 per cent of total international aid and bring Canada more in-line with the leading donor countries supporting LGBTQI human rights internationally such as the Netherlands and Sweden. With the rise of anti-LGBTQI legislation and hatred in many parts of the world, this is the moment that Canada should be a leader in this area and increase targeted funding to \$20M a year.

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