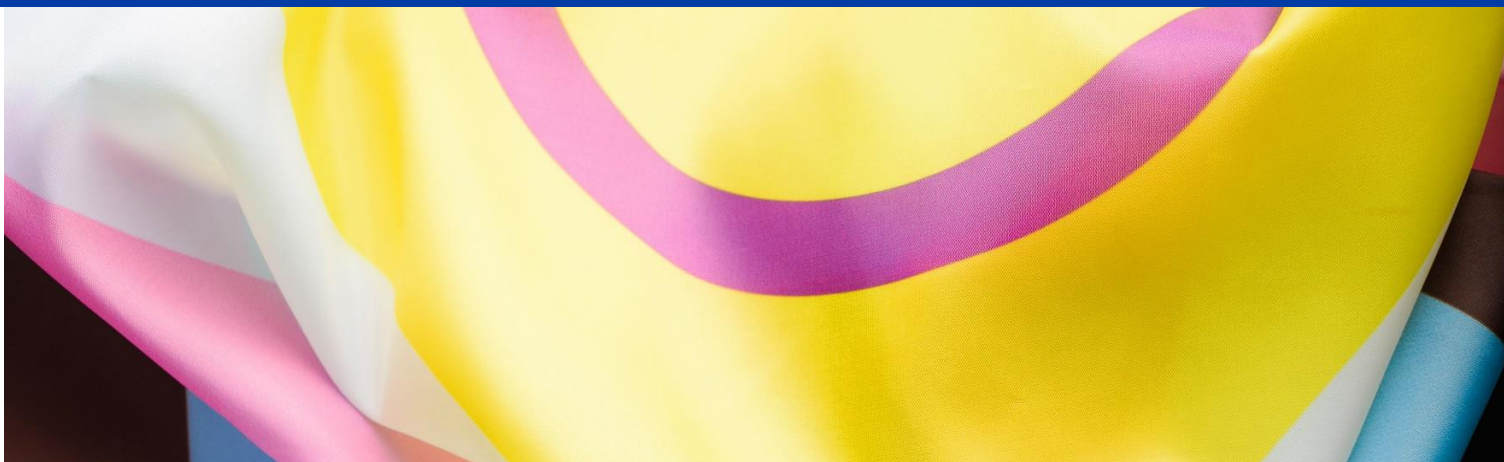




Written Submission for the
Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance
of the Upcoming **2025 Federal Budget**

Submitted August 2024



Recommendations from Egale Canada

Recommendation 1: 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: Begin consultations for an initiative similar to the Changing Narratives Fund that would allow 2SLGBTQI journalists and creatives to represent our communities and counter narratives that vilify 2SLGBTQI people.

Recommendation 3: Increase funding to the Court Challenges Program in order to allow individuals and groups to assert their *Charter* rights before the courts.

Recommendation 4: Allocate funding to CATSA to provide training to frontline security personnel in conducting airport security checks in a way that respects the dignity of Two Spirit trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming passengers.

Recommendation 5: Increase funding for the Canada Disability Benefit to end disability poverty.

Recommendation 6: Dedicate funding to culturally competent and 2SLGBTQI-affirming mental health services, ensuring that these services are affordable, accessible, and tailored to the needs of diverse communities.

Recommendation 7: Provide federal funding to train healthcare providers in 2SLGBTQI-inclusive care practices, reducing barriers and improving the quality of care received by 2SLGBTQI individuals, especially those with disabilities.

Recommendation 8: Increase funding for community-based organizations, specifically including those that work for and on behalf of Black, Indigenous, and racialized people, that offer employment support, entrepreneurial programs, mental health programs, social services, support groups, and advocacy for 2SLGBTQI individuals facing multiple forms of marginalization, including disability, race, and gender identity.

Recommendation 9: Increase funding for SOGIESC / LGBTQI human rights in international assistance to \$20M a year.

Egale Canada

Founded in 1986, Egale is Canada's leading organization for 2SLGBTQI people and issues. Egale works to improve and save lives through research, education, awareness, and by advocating for human rights and equality in Canada and around the world. Our work helps create societies and systems that reflect the universal truth that all persons are equal and none is other.

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

(Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Around the world, we are witnessing an exponential rise in hate-fueled anti-2SLGBTQI 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 second year in a row, threats to the safety of Pride season events made it necessary for the federal government to provide emergency security funding to Pride organizations.

Transphobia and homophobia are spreading through schools and postsecondary institutions, from attacks on 2SLGBTQI-inclusive learning materials to transphobic on-campus speaking engagements. Political and legislative attacks, including by the governments of New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, have added to the climate of hostility toward 2SLGBTQI people in Canada. It is crucial for 2SLGBTQI journalists and creators to be able to represent themselves and their communities fairly in order to counteract the hateful narratives being spread by anti-2SLGBTQI groups.

Meanwhile, police-reported hate crimes targeting sexual orientation have risen by a staggering 388% between 2016 and 2023, with a 69% increase between 2022 and 2023.¹ CSIS has warned that 2SLGBTQI people are at risk of extreme violence.²

The message could not be clearer: Our 2SLGBTQI communities are under attack. 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.

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

¹ Egale Canada. 2024. "Hate crimes targeting 2SLGBTQI communities are rising every year: Egale Canada calls on all levels of government to take action." <https://egale.ca/egale-in-action/2023-hate-crimes-july29/>

² Egale Canada. 2024. "Statement from Egale Canada re: CSIS warns that the 'anti-gender movement' poses a threat of 'extreme violence'." <https://egale.ca/egale-in-action/csis-statement-feb15/>

gender-based violence (developed in consultation with community), along with a clear implementation plan, and adequate funding for 2SLGBTQI civil society organizations.

As a separate matter within federal jurisdiction, is the implementation of CATSA's measures to allow trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming air passengers to travel safely and with dignity. Funding should be allocated to CATSA to train its frontline personnel to respect the privacy and dignity of trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people as they travel, particularly in the security process.

Finally, the government should increase funding to the Court Challenges Program. As elected governments and major political parties take aim at 2STNBGN people's rights, particularly those of young people, it is essential that our communities can access the justice system. Litigation is the avenue through which governments and legislatures can be held accountable to their *Charter* obligations toward marginalized groups.

Addressing inequities that continue to impact 2SLGBTQI people in Canada

(Recommendations 5, 6, 7 and 8)

Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary (2STNB) people in Canada are significantly more likely than cisgender people to live in poverty.³ Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in Canada [report](#) consistently less favourable working conditions, including higher prevalence of discrimination and humiliating behaviour. Gay and lesbian workers are less likely than straight workers to have access to benefits including paid sick leave, pensions, and health benefits.⁴ Among employed workers, heterosexual men earn more on average than women of any sexual orientation as well as more than gay and bisexual men; bisexual women face the most severe income disparities.⁵

Due to the multifaceted nature of poverty's causes and effects, broad intersectoral and intergovernmental collaboration is necessary to work toward equity. In applying the lens of Gender-based Analysis Plus to the fields of social, labour, housing, health, and even criminal justice policy, it becomes clear that there is a need for targeted measures to counteract the marginalization experienced by 2SLGBTQI people in Canada.

The social determinants of health, including income, employment, education, and access to healthcare, shape people's lives and wellbeing.

2SLGBTQI people, particularly those who are disabled, face significant barriers in accessing social and income supports as well as mental and physical health care. These barriers are rooted in systemic inequities, discrimination, and a lack of tailored support services that address their unique needs. The intersectionality of disability and 2SLGBTQI identities compounds the challenges faced, leading to higher rates of poverty, mental health issues, and social isolation.⁶

³ Statistics Canada. 2022. "Disaggregated trends in poverty from 2021 Census of Population." <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021009/98-200-X2021009-eng.cfm>

⁴ Kinitz, David J, Faraz Vahid Shahidi, and Lori E Ross. 2023. "Job Quality and Precarious Employment among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Workers: A National Study." *SSM-Population Health* 24 (December): 101535–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2023.101535>.

⁵ Statistics Canada. 2022. "Labour and economic characteristics of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in Canada." <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-28-0001/2022001/article/00003-eng.htm>

⁶ Félix Desmeules-Trudel, Brittany, Ellie Maclennan, Gazel Manuel, Celeste Pang, Noah Rodomar, and Kimberly Seida. 2023. "Social Determinants of Mental Health and Care Access among 2SLGBTQI People: Highlights from Community-Engaged Research." *Canadian Psychology* 64 (3): 189–99. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000363>.

2SLGBTQI people are significantly more likely to report both living with a physical disability and living with a mental disability than the average of people in Canada, with racialized and Indigenous 2SLGBTQI people reporting even higher rates than the 2SLGBTQI average.⁷

The reasons for higher rates of disability among 2SLGBTQI and specifically 2STNB people are unclear. Minority stress, gender dysphoria, social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the exacerbation of mental health symptoms left untreated due to stigma or lack of access to mental healthcare were identified as possible reasons for mental health crises that limited participants' ability to work.⁸

This evidence shows that disability justice and justice for 2SLGBTQI people are inextricable from one another. The new Canada Disability Benefit represents an important step toward counteracting disability poverty in Canada, but still does not allow people with disabilities to live above the low-income threshold in any province or territory when combined with the provincial/territorial disability assistance income.⁹ By extension, financial security for 2SLGBTQI people cannot be achieved as long as there is no financial security for all people with disabilities who are unable to work. The Canada Disability Benefit must be funded far in excess of the funding announced in 2024.

The federal government must prioritize funding to health care, including mental health, and social and income support programs. This must include expanding employment support and economic security programs, improving access to healthcare and mental health services, bolstering social support and community services, and investing in research and policy development. By allocating resources to these critical areas, the government can work towards reducing the systemic inequities and barriers that marginalize 2SLGBTQI people.

⁷ Egale Canada, ACCEC, and Innovative Research Group. 2020. "Impact of COVID-19 on Canada's LGBTQI2S Community." Egale Canada. <https://egale.ca/awareness/covid19-impact-second-national-report/>

⁸ Noah Rodomar, Dan Irving, Brittany Jakubiec, Félix Desmeules-Trudel, and Ellie McLennan. 2024. "Working for Change: Understanding the employment experiences of Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary people in Canada." Egale Canada. https://indd.adobe.com/view/publication/58481269-3b10-4fa1-be9f-3a9e0848e5d3/1/publication-web-resources/pdf/EN-Working_For_Change_Report.pdf

⁹ Leila Sarangi, Hannah Barrie, Alan Meisner, Rabia Khedr, Michelle Hewitt, Elizabeth Irwin, and Garima Talwar Kapoor. 2024. "Disability poverty in Canada: A 2023 report card." Disability Without Poverty. https://indd.adobe.com/view/publication/58481269-3b10-4fa1-be9f-3a9e0848e5d3/1/publication-web-resources/pdf/EN-Working_For_Change_Report.pdf



Enhancing supports for LGBTQI human rights in international assistance

(Recommendation 9)

Global state-sponsored homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia remain pervasive. Over the past few years, countries including Uganda, Kenya, Iraq, and Indonesia have introduced new or harsher criminal penalties for same-sex sexual relationships and gender nonconformity. Meanwhile, countries including Hungary, Russia, and the US have introduced restrictions on public representations of 2SLGBTQI people and lives, especially in schools.

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.

Moreover, given the relationship between conflict and gender-based violence, the government should renew its call for project concepts that are specifically dedicated to protecting LGBTQI people during periods of conflict and instability through the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program.

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