



REPORT ABSTRACT

# EMERGING FROM THE PURGE:

Reviewing the State  
of LGBTQI2S Inclusion  
in Canada's Federal  
Workplaces

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*Emerging from the Purge: The State of LGBTQI2S Inclusion in the Federal Workplace* is a report written for the [LGBT Purge Fund](#) to support the Government of Canada in its efforts to foster a more diverse workplace that is equitable and inclusive of LGBTQI2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, Two Spirit) people. It forms part of ongoing reparations for LGBTQI2S veterans and public servants who were directly affected by the “LGBT Purge” within the Canadian government during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2016, survivors of the LGBT Purge launched a class action lawsuit against the Canadian government and reached a settlement of \$145 million in 2018.

This report is the final output from the consultation period mandated by ‘Schedule K’ of the Final Settlement Agreement for both LGBTQI2S training and workplace inclusion. It includes an assessment of the current state of LGBTQI2S training and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts within the Government of Canada, as well as recommendations on how the government can move forward to make federal workplaces more inclusive for LGBTQI2S people. It includes assessment and recommendations for the three federal entities specifically named for consultation for inclusivity training (Canadian Armed Forces (CAF); Canada School of Public Service (CSPS); Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)) as well as six Federal Public Service (FPS) departments and agencies who were invited to participate by the LGBTQ2 Secretariat and the LGBT Purge fund (Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Department of National Defence (DND), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)).

There is no singular or definitive guide on how to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce. Truly meaningful change toward the creation of inclusive environments should take many responsive forms based on local workplace contexts. This includes consideration of the degree to which leadership, staff, and communities are willing to invest in sustained collaboration toward acknowledging and rectifying all forms of identity-based privilege and oppression that exist within the workplace.

The approach in producing this report focused on identifying a range of current promising practices to assist in this process of creating an inclusive workplace for LGBTQI2S people, while recognizing that these practices will have to continually evolve and develop.

An extensive online literature review revealed 150 unique evidence-based practices. These were compiled and compared, being further refined to three overarching categories:

- a. Workplace inclusion policies, procedures and practices
- b. Training structures
- c. Organizational culture

Many federal entities are taking steps toward improving LGBTQI2S EDI, and there is generally a willingness to improve workplace inclusion for LGBTQI2S people within the federal workplace. However, this was not found to exist evenly across all participating bodies. There remains work to be done to turn positive intentions into practical and structural solutions that promote sustainable culture change and foster an inclusive workplace across the government.

Here we provide a snapshot of assessment findings across all participating entities:

Strengths:

- Pride Network Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are the participating entities' main strength at present. They undertake and promote initiatives to improve the workplace experiences of LGBTQI2S staff and often act as a vehicle for voicing the concerns of their members.
- Positive Space training is the main form of education for employees on LGBTQI2S issues and concerns. Several entities reported good uptake of this training and some have developed a flourishing Positive Space Ambassador network as part of this initiative.
- Several of the participating entities have adopted executive-level Champions to act as liaisons, forwarding LGBTQI2S considerations and concerns to senior decision-makers.
- A handful of participating entities have made good efforts toward supporting transitioning employees, and toward adopting trans-positive policies regarding access to gendered facilities. Many have developed or adopted a formal guide to support transitions in the workplace.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- All participating federal entities appear to be lacking a clear and specific EDI strategy or explicit goals in support of LGBTQI2S people in federal service.
- Although some of the participating entities have taken formal steps to develop provisions and communicate trans-positive and gender-inclusive facilities (such as changing rooms and bathrooms), significant gaps remain overall across the federal workplace.
- There is an absence of supporting resources for ERGs despite the government's reliance on them as a key driver of inclusion and positive culture change. As a result, ERG efforts are often accomplished on volunteer staff leaders' personal time and with personal resources.
- There is generally a need for more systematic consultation with LGBTQI2S subject matter experts and employees themselves, particularly within training design and implementation.
- There is very little onboarding which provides an overview of LGBTQI2S EDI resources and support, and very few efforts to expand LGBTQI2S representation or reduce bias within recruitment and related processes.

Based on assessments of the participating federal entities, the following 23 recommendations are provided. It should be noted that although these recommendations are based on findings from a sub-set of federal workplaces, they can be read as broadly applicable to any government workplace in the pursuit of EDI for LGBTQI2S people.

Recommendations are arranged into three categories:

- **Foundational:** These should be at the heart of all inclusion efforts. These act as the bases on which the other recommendations need to be built and are essential to the success of the other recommendations.
- **Supporting:** These build upon existing structures and initiatives within the federal workplace, while being mindful of the foundational recommendations.
- **Reinforcing:** These consolidate, cultivate and enhance the work undertaken within the first two categories.

All listed recommendations are of high importance to improve the LGBTQI2S workplace inclusion. As such, this categorization does not indicate priority level, but rather a suggested order of approach.

Foundational
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct formal consultation with LGBTQI2S employees, networks, external subject matter experts and/or other stakeholders during the development and review of all organizational policies, procedures and practices.</li> <li>2. Publish explicit goals for LGBTQI2S inclusion within the EDI strategy or within a dedicated strategy document, accompanied by clear progress monitoring and evaluation metrics.</li> <li>3. Apply an intersectional lens to the development and review of all EDI initiatives, including specific consideration to possible implications for all LGBTQI2S identities.</li> <li>4. Move away from a universalist approach to EDI and anti-discrimination initiatives to explicitly identify the marginalized groups of focus and articulate specific actions that seek to meet the needs of those groups.</li> <li>5. Equip ERGs and related EDI initiatives with sustaining resources that support their success, including budget, governance support and/or dedicated work time allocations.</li> <li>6. Develop mechanisms within Pride Networks and ERGs to ensure the full range of LGBTQI2S identities are represented within their governance structures.</li> </ol>
Supporting
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Implement components within onboarding for all new hires to familiarize them with LGBTQI2S identities, available resources, and expectations for participation in inclusion efforts.</li> <li>8. Review all formal documents and policies to include LGBTQI2S considerations.</li> <li>9. Extend platforms for communication and collaboration between LGBTQI2S ERGs, Positive Space networks and other EDI staff, enabling resources to be easily shared across sites and between federal entities.</li> <li>10. Implement robust communications strategies to familiarize all staff with policies and initiatives supporting LGBTQI2S inclusion in the workplace.</li> <li>11. Mandate and incentivize participation in LGBTQI2S EDI and training initiatives within performance management and leadership development for all staff.</li> <li>12. Tailor LGBTQI2S and EDI learning solutions to the needs of distinct roles within the workplace.</li> <li>13. Incorporate skill-building on how to actively reduce bias against LGBTQI2S people within learning solutions.</li> <li>14. Review the complaints and grievance process, incorporating the possibility for fully anonymous complaints and collecting data to ensure complaints are fully addressed.</li> </ol>

15. Provide gender inclusive facilities throughout government sites, including single stall all-gender facilities wherever possible and consistent distribution of non-gendered washrooms.
16. Streamline the process for updating employee information for employees undergoing transitions, ensuring HR is responsible for the majority of the workload.
17. Include questions on SOGIE identity with a broad range of possible responses in all employee forms and surveys.
18. Adopt recruitment and retention strategies that explicitly seek to mitigate anti-LGBTQI2S biases and foster more diverse representation of LGBTQI2S identities across all levels of public service.

#### Reinforcing

19. Mandate the use of inclusive language structures in the writing and translation of all French documents, ensuring French documentation is readily available to all employees.
20. Include first-person narratives in learning materials, representing a diverse range of LGBTQI2S experiences and experiences at the intersection of social identities.
21. Provide training and resources to all personnel who are in contact with grievance and complaints processes to ensure they are fully cognizant of LGBTQI2S experiences.
22. Clearly identify and communicate consequences for the perpetrators of discrimination and harassment, ensuring they account for aggravating factors such as repeat incidents.
23. Review benefits policies and collective agreements in consultation with LGBTQI2S employees to ensure they reflect the realities of LGBTQI2S people, including family structures and health care needs.

In the full report, each recommendation is accompanied by an explanation of rationale and the benefits workplaces can expect by addressing those areas. Where possible, additional explanatory notes and spotlights of relevant initiatives within some federal entities are provided.

In the interests of furthering LGBTQI2S EDI, the research team worked collaboratively with participating federal entities to clarify the current state of their EDI efforts. As such, this report should not be interpreted as criticism, but rather as a tool to assist in improving inclusion for LGBTQI2S employees. Fostering an inclusive workplace is always and necessarily an ongoing process; this document is one tool to support federal entities with those efforts.

To read the full report, visit [lgbtpurgefund.com/](http://lgbtpurgefund.com/).