

A vibrant rainbow flag with horizontal stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple is shown waving against a bright blue sky filled with soft, white clouds. The flag is attached to a pole on the left side of the frame.

# The Experiences of Queer Refugees

Kevin Pham  
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# Unique Experiences

- Are not supported by other religious and community groups that other refugees can integrate into
- Typically can not repatriate even once native government becomes stable
- Often resettle alone without families or friends
- Conceal their sexual orientation/gender identity, even to resettlement agencies and Homeland Security



# Resettlement location is important!

- Major metropolitan areas are best suited for queer refugees
- Pros of cities
  - Established queer communities
  - Large people of color and immigrant population
  - Networks of refugee-focused services
- Con of cities
  - Higher cost of living
- How do we combat the higher cost of living?
  - Find supporter willing to offer housing at below-market rates
  - Supplement with fundraisers hosted by local community groups



# How can we support queer refugees?

- Create guardian groups:
  - Friend → provide social support
  - Mentor → provide help with accessing employment, education, housing and health care, public benefits
  - Champion → accompany refugees and help set a comprehensive integration plan
- Organize computer and English classes
  - Those who are computer literate and proficient in English have easier transitions and access to communities

# How can resettlement agencies support queer refugees?

- Receive queer diversity training
- Add rainbow flag to information brochures
- Recruit “ally ambassadors” within immigrant communities
- Incorporate queer issues during cultural orientation training and ESL classes for other immigrants
- Create participant-led affinity social groups for queer refugees
- Connect queer refugees with queer and allies organizations
  - Can empathize with the struggles of queer refugees
  - Process specialized knowledge of queer-specific resources
  - Build alternative networks of support and form second families





# Organizations working with LGBTQ refugees

- Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration <http://www.oraminternational.org/en/>
- Heartland Alliance International's Rainbow Welcome Initiative <http://www.rainbowwelcome.org/>

# Sources Cited

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