



Rainbow  
Registered

# Application Guide

# Step by Step Guide for Rainbow Registered Applicants



# Introduction

## ABOUT CANADA'S LGBT+ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (CGLCC)

Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC) links LGBT+ businesses in Canada to the wider business community. CGLCC advocates on behalf of LGBT+ entrepreneurs and business operators to increase visibility and to help them grow and succeed. By bringing people together and highlighting the right resources, we are working to realize a more inclusive Canadian economy. Visit [www.cglcc.ca](http://www.cglcc.ca)

## RAINBOW REGISTERED PROGRAM APPLICANT GUIDE

This Guide is a resource for organizations applying for the **Rainbow Registered Program**. It outlines each step in the application and assessment processes and provides applicants with everything they need to understand, participate in and complete the accreditation process. The Guide is the primary resource for the **Rainbow Registered Program** and is a must read for all applicants. All applicants must follow the policies and procedures outlined in this Guide. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are provided in Appendix A.

The CGLCC reserves the right to change the standards, application, and requirements for the **Rainbow Registered Program** and will do so as necessary; therefore, it is important that applicants refer to the online handbook for the latest version.

### Questions about the Assessment Process?

Contact the Rainbow Registered Program Manager at [rainbowregistered@cglcc.ca](mailto:rainbowregistered@cglcc.ca)

# The Rainbow Registered Program

The **Rainbow Registered Program** recognizes market ready businesses and organizations that are receptive to LGBT+ customers. The Program is based on criteria that define the required standards of practice and are informed by National Guidelines. Accreditation is awarded following rigorous assessment and having successfully met the required standards. Accreditation demonstrates commitment and consistent effort in providing customer satisfaction through progressive policies and practices.

## BACKGROUND

Providing customer satisfaction goes beyond offering products and services of value. Businesses and community groups must ensure that LGBT+ customers feel welcome and accepted. LGBT+ customers are seeking safe spaces and destinations with businesses that demonstrate a commitment to the LGBT+ market through inclusive initiatives and exceptional service standards.

Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce (CLGCC) partnered with Tourism HR Canada, thanks to funding from the Government of Canada, to design and deliver a responsive, comprehensive and sustainable LGBT+ market-ready program aimed at helping businesses and communities develop the lucrative and fast-growing LGBT+ market. Businesses and community organizations that are awarded **Rainbow Registered** accreditation benefit from the independent recognition of their efforts. Accreditation attests to their progressive policies and practices and inclusive cultures.



# PROGRAM TENETS

The **Rainbow Registered Program** is a voluntary process that grants a time-limited recognition to businesses or communities for demonstrating compliance with the quality standard (i.e., the National Guidelines). Accredited businesses are deemed market ready for the LGBT+ customer and given the right to be associated with the program's prestigious designation mark (i.e., **Rainbow Registered®**).

## **The National Guidelines provide:**

- Explicit, measurable, attainable criteria reflecting current and emerging best practices;
- Market-ready business criteria specific to the needs and interests of LGBT+ customers.

The Program is sustainable and scalable with sufficient flexibility to respond to emergent needs and be attainable to a variety of business and organization types and sizes across a range of industries.

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# Assessment Process

## Step 1 – Accreditation Application

- 1.1 Applicants review the **Rainbow Registered** Assessment Standards, developed by the CGLCC.
- 1.2 Applicants use the **Rainbow Registered** Application Form to begin the review process and submit it to the **Rainbow Registered** Program Manager.

## Step 2 – Assessment Preparation

- 2.1 Applicants review the Assessment Criteria section of the Applicant Guide (see Appendix C) to help them prepare the information they will share during their assessment.
- 2.2 Applicants gather any written materials, policies or documents they may have if they form part of their evidence.
- 2.3 The **Rainbow Registered** Program Manager assigns an Assessor to the applicant business/organization.

## Step 3 – Accreditation Assessment

**3.1** The Assessor reviews the application and conducts initial research on the business/organization.

**3.2** The Assessor contacts the applicant to schedule a brief initial telephone interview.

During this interview, the Assessor will ask for more details about the nature of any written documentation to be shared. The Assessor will encourage the applicant to provide any written materials in advance of the in-depth interview.

**3.3** The Assessor then schedules an in-depth interview with the applicant to review their information.

If the applicant business/organization is large enough, the Assessor may also ask to interview others by telephone (e.g., other staff members, customers, community partners).

During the in-depth interview, the Assessor will invite the applicant to describe how their business/organization meets the standard in each of the four (4) categories of criteria. **Descriptions of the categories of criteria and related standards are found in Appendix C.**

The Assessor will use the Assessment Form to record the evidence presented and will attach copies of any written materials provided by the applicant. The Assessor's interview notes will also be attached as part of the assessment record.

**3.4** Using the Assessment Form, the Assessor provides feedback and recommendations for improvement if the applicant does not meet the standard required for accreditation.

**3.5** The Assessor provides the completed Assessment Form and copies of evidence to the **Rainbow Registered** Program Manager.

# MEETING THE STANDARD:

- A** The applicant must provide at least three (3) types of evidence to demonstrate that they meet the standard in each of the four (4) categories of criteria.
  - For example: For Category 1: Policies and Practices – a non-discrimination policy; responsive practices to negative customer experiences; and staff feedback on LGBT+ welcoming practices.
- B** The applicant must provide at least one (1) piece of external evidence to demonstrate that they meet the standard in each of the four (4) categories of criteria.
  - For example: a media article, a customer review, or a statement made by a community partner.
- C** Using the Assessment Form, the Assessor indicates whether, in their view of the evidence presented, the applicant has 'Met', 'Partly Met' or 'Not Met' the requirements for each of the four (4) category standards.
  - Note that the applicant must have 'Met' the requirements in each of the four (4) category standards in order to be accredited.
- D** Using the Assessment Form, the Assessor indicates whether, in their view of the evidence presented, the applicant meets the overall requirements for accreditation.
  - The Assessor will indicate that the applicant has 'Met', 'Partly Met', or 'Not Met' the requirements for accreditation.
  - If the applicant is already accredited and is applying in a subsequent year, the Assessor may also indicate that the applicant has 'Exceeded' the requirements for accreditation.

## Step 4 – Decision and Next Steps

- 4.1** The **Rainbow Registered** Program Manager will notify applicants of the decision and of next steps.
- 4.2** Applicants who do not meet the standard for accreditation will be provided with feedback on any gaps and recommendations for improvement.



# CGLCC-DRIVEN ASSESSMENT

CGLCC staff train the Assessors used in this program to ensure consistent, rigorous assessments. The Assessors work with the applicant businesses/organizations to ensure evidence is documented and that accreditation outcomes align with the program standards.

Assessors identify any gaps and provide feedback and recommendations for improvement for applicant businesses/organizations that do not meet the standard required for accreditation. Applicant businesses/organizations may use the feedback to make modifications and improvements to their efforts as necessary. They may then choose to apply for accreditation again at a future date.

Businesses that do not meet the standard required to become Rainbow Registered will have the opportunity to use the assessor's feedback to improve and, within one year, request to be reassessed at no additional cost.

The **Rainbow Registered** Program Manager will verify that the standard in each of the four (4) categories of criteria has been met and that the overall assessment recommendation has 'Met' or 'Exceeded' the requirements before awarding accreditation.



# Assessment Process Summary

## Step 1 – Accreditation Application

- 1 Applicants review the **Rainbow Registered** Assessment Standards, developed by the CGLCC.
- 2 Applicants use the **Rainbow Registered Program** Application Form to begin the review process and submit to the Rainbow Registered Program Manager.

## Step 2 – Assessment Preparation

- 3 Applicants review the Assessment section of the Applicant Guide to help them prepare the information they will share during their assessment.
- 4 Applicants gather any written materials, policies or documents they may have if they form part of their evidence.
- 5 The **Rainbow Registered** Program Manager assigns an Assessor to the applicant business/organization.

## Step 3 – Accreditation Assessment

- 6 The Assessor reviews the application and conducts initial research on the business/organization. The Assessor contacts the applicant to schedule a brief initial telephone interview.
- 7 The Assessor then schedules an in-depth interview with the applicant to review their information. The Assessor may also ask to conduct additional interviews with others.
- 8 The Assessor will review the information obtained about the applicant business/organization and will determine whether it meets the overall requirements for accreditation. The Assessor will document how their efforts compare to the program standards.

## Step 4 – Decision and Next Steps

- 9 The **Rainbow Registered** Program Manager will notify the applicant of the decision and of next steps.
- 10 Applicants who do not meet the standard for accreditation will be provided with feedback on any gaps and recommendations for improvement.

**An Application Checklist is included in Appendix D.**

# Appendix A

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is the Rainbow Registered Program?

The **Rainbow Registered Program** recognizes market ready businesses and organizations that are receptive to LGBT+ customers. The Program is based on criteria that define the required standards of practice and are informed by National Guidelines. Accreditation is awarded following rigorous assessment and having successfully met the required standards.

### What is Rainbow Registered accreditation?

Offered by Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC), **Rainbow Registered** accreditation is a time-limited recognition to businesses or communities for demonstrating compliance with the quality standard (i.e., the National Guidelines). Accredited businesses are deemed market ready for the LGBT+ customer and given the right to be associated with the program's prestigious designation mark (i.e., **Rainbow Registered**). Accreditation demonstrates commitment and consistent effort in providing customer satisfaction through progressive policies and practices.

## What kind of businesses or organizations should apply for Rainbow Registered accreditation?

The **Rainbow Registered** accreditation program is flexible and can accommodate businesses of all sizes. Formal policies, procedures, mission statements, etc. (including written documentation of the same) are not required. Similarly, training does not need to be formal. Assessors work with the materials and/or evidence of good practice that applicants already have in place. This includes unwritten evidence, such as customer reviews and oral interviews with businesses.

## Should DMOs (Destination Marketing Organizations) apply?

Yes. DMOs may apply and benefit from the program by becoming accredited themselves (members and potential members can be considered their customers, etc.) and by raising awareness of the program and its value with their members.

## What are the requirements for Rainbow Registered accreditation?

Applicants must first complete and submit the **Rainbow Registered Program** Application on the CGLCC website. They will then need to have their efforts assessed. Applicant businesses/organizations must demonstrate that their efforts meet the standard in each of the four (4) Categories of Criteria in order to be accredited. (See Appendix C for more details on the Criteria Categories.) If the applicant meets the required Program standards, the CGLCC will accredit the business/organization.

## How much does Rainbow Registered accreditation cost?

For current pricing information, please visit the CGLCC Rainbow Registered Program page at [www.cglcc.ca/programs/rainbow-registered](http://www.cglcc.ca/programs/rainbow-registered)

## How long is the assessment process?

The assessment process may take up to one month. However, the time required varies by how readily available applicant business/organization information is and on the applicant business/organization's location and availability. CGLCC staff will work closely with applicants to ensure they have a full and comprehensive understanding of the application process. Applications will be assessed on an ongoing basis, as they are received by the CGLCC.

## Where do I find the requirements for accreditation?

Assessors can find information on the **Rainbow Registered Program** standards and Categories of criteria in Appendix C. Information is also available on the CGLCC's online **Rainbow Registered Program** page at: [www.cglcc.ca/programs/rainbow-registered](http://www.cglcc.ca/programs/rainbow-registered)

## How were the Rainbow Registered Program criteria developed?

The program's design was developed and validated through consultations with a wide variety of stakeholders (including businesses of different sizes, industries and geographic locations).



## **Do accredited businesses/organizations have to re-apply at any time in the future to maintain Rainbow Registered accreditation status?**

Accreditation is time-limited: businesses/organizations that meet the program standard will receive accreditation for a three-year period and must renew annually. Businesses/organizations that are awarded accreditation must respond to CGLCC's request for updates in order to maintain accreditation status. If these requirements change in the future, CGLCC will update this Guide and relevant information made available through the **Rainbow Registered Program** Portal. CGLCC will also contact accredited businesses/organizations to make them aware of any future requirements for maintaining accreditation status.

## **Is there a record of businesses/organizations that are accredited through the Rainbow Registered Program?**

The CGLCC maintains a record of all businesses/organizations that have been accredited through the **Rainbow Registered Program**. Profiles of accredited businesses/organizations are publicly available through the **Rainbow Registered Program** consumer website at [www.rainbowregistered.ca](http://www.rainbowregistered.ca).

## **Who can I contact with questions?**

Contact CGLCC with questions by email at: **rainbowregistered@cglcc.ca**

# Appendix B

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The vision of Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC) is that this accreditation program will recognize receptive businesses serving LGBT+ customers. Accredited businesses benefit from a formal recognition program trusted by LGBT+ customers, attesting to the progressive policies and practices that will attract the LGBT+ market.

**Rainbow Registered** accreditation recognizes efforts that meet a national standard.

The assessment process is voluntary and involves rigorous evaluation methods and evidence of relevant policies and practices. In keeping with CGLCC's vision and values, the **Rainbow Registered Program** holds its designates to a minimum level of integrity through adherence to a code of professional conduct.

As a business or community organization/group applying for **Rainbow Registered** accreditation, we commit to:

- Respect the fundamental rights and dignities of all people.
- Foster greater diversity and inclusion in Canada's economy.
- Exercise leadership in affirming LGBT+ inclusion.
- Conduct our operations with honesty, integrity and fairness.
- Not engage in sexual or gender harassment, discrimination or demeaning or disrespectful behaviour to others.
- Assume responsibility for diversity and inclusion training for staff and volunteers.
- Be alert at work to minimize any risks to the personal health and safety of staff, volunteers and customers.
- Protect confidential information acquired in a professional capacity.
- Accurately represent any information provided and clarify any questions or concerns about the application.

# Appendix C

## RAINBOW REGISTERED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

**Rainbow Registered** assessment criteria are based on validated National Guidelines. The criteria identify the policies, practices and behaviours required and expected of accredited businesses/organizations.

The assessment process is designed around:

- Clear, measurable, attainable criteria reflecting current and emergent best practices; and
- Market Ready' business criteria specific to the needs and interests of LGBT+ customers.

### Assessment Criteria Categories

**Accreditation assessment focuses on four categories of criteria:**

- 1 Policies and Practices
- 2 Training
- 3 Commitment to Inclusive Leadership
- 4 Culture of Inclusivity

Each of these is defined and described below. Applicants must meet the program standard for each category. The categories reflect distinct but related criteria which, taken together, provide a holistic approach to LGBT+ inclusivity. Examples of potential evidence that can be provided during the accreditation process are also provided.

#### **Note for Large Business/Organization Applicants (500+ employees):**

The following questions will be asked within each category:

- 1 Are the efforts described undertaken throughout the organization, including at the unit level? Are there any exceptions?
- 2 How does the organization monitor and evaluate its efforts at the unit level?
- 3 How does the organization address related staff or customer concerns at the unit level?

# 1. Policies and Practices

## **Program Standard:**

The business/organization's policies and practices are non-discriminatory and respectful of sexual orientation and gender identity.

## **Category Importance:**

Organizational policies, whether formal or informal, articulate the values and priorities that direct its actions. They provide information and clarity to staff, volunteers and customers regarding organizational expectations. Practices are the expression of policies in action and of organizational culture. An organization that is LGBT+-inclusive and affirmative will establish relevant and purposeful policies and practices.

## **Examples of Evidence/Indicators:**

- Non-discrimination policies that ensure equal treatment of staff and volunteers.
- Equal administration of staff benefits.
- Policies and practices that show the organization follows sexual orientation and gender identity non-discrimination laws.
- Policies and practices that support transitioning employees.
- Anti-harassment policies that protect customers from other customers.
- Anti-harassment policies that protect employees/volunteers from other employees/volunteers and customers.
- Mitigation policies and response practices for negative customer and staff/volunteer experiences.
- Requirement for gender neutral restrooms for staff, volunteers and customers.
- Policies and practices reflect use of gender-neutral / respectful language in organizational operations (e.g., respect for personal pronouns).
- Policies and practices recognize differing administrative needs of staff/volunteers/ customers (e.g., accessible forms that provide space for a legal name as well as a commonly used name).
- Policies and practices set expectations for – and responses to – staff behaviour outside of work.

## 2. Training

### **Program Standard:**

The business/organization provides diversity and inclusion training for staff and volunteers and contributes to public education on diversity and inclusion.

### **Category Importance:**

Staff and other representatives of the organization require training before they can enact organizational policies. Providing or supporting ongoing staff and volunteer training on the importance of LGBT+ inclusion is key. Training on how to operationalize inclusion in their respective roles is also critical. Training may be provided through in-house efforts, post-secondary education, community programming, or from other training providers.

### **Examples of Evidence/Indicators:**

- Diversity, inclusion and sensitivity training that includes LGBT+-specific training.
- LGBT+-specific diversity training (e.g., trans-specific education).
- Communications training, including use of gender-neutral language and respect for personal pronouns.
- Educating customers and the public about respectful and welcoming diversity and inclusion practices and behaviours (i.e., fostering allies).
- Education about implicit bias and challenging gender-based assumptions.
- Training on recognizing and addressing gender-based violence and harassment.
- Positive changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of staff, volunteers and customers.

## 3. Commitment to Inclusive Leadership

### **Program Standard:**

The business/organization demonstrates leadership and commitment to LGBT+ inclusion beyond its day-to-day operations.

### **Category Importance:**

Through its ongoing commitment to advancing or promoting LGBT+ inclusion, the organization demonstrates leadership. Actions that demonstrate organizational commitment to LGBT+ inclusion beyond day-to-day operations are another way for businesses/organizations to express their values and priorities. An explicit organizational commitment to LGBT+ inclusion may take the form of investment in continuous improvement, engagement in the local community, in the choice of partners and suppliers, or through another mode.

**Examples of Evidence/Indicators:**

- Renewable declaration of commitment to LGBT+ inclusion programming.
- Continuous improvement commitments.
- Demonstrated community support.
- Demonstrated community engagement.
- Philanthropic initiatives (CSR).
- Selection or rejection of suppliers based on their values and priorities.
- Selection or rejection of partners (e.g., social media influencers) based on their values and priorities.

## 4. Culture of Inclusivity

**Program Standard:**

The business/organization has established an organizational culture that is LGBT+-inclusive and affirmative.

**Category Importance:**

A culture of inclusivity demonstrates authentic organizational values and priorities.

Organizational culture starts at the top and flows throughout an organization. Culture is reflected through an organization's internally- and externally-focused policies, programs and behaviours. Internal culture is reflected, for instance, in human resource policies, senior staff directives and employee-employee conversations. External culture is reflected in marketing materials, supplier/partner arrangements, and employee-customer interactions, etc. An organization that is LGBT+-inclusive and affirmative will consciously embody and express its values.





### Examples of Evidence/Indicators:

- A code of ethics that reflects LGBT+ inclusivity.
- Commitment to LGBT+-inclusive practice in mission, vision and/or values statements.
- Diversity statement/policies or equivalents that explicitly include LGBT+ considerations.
- Commitment to providing safe environments for staff, volunteers and customers
  - free from gender-based violence and harassment.
- Physical and virtual environments, including information, structures, resources and processes, are LGBT+-welcoming.
- Marketing materials feature language and imagery that reflect the LGBT+ community.
- Use of gender-neutral / respectful language in organizational operations.
- Positive staff, volunteer and customer views of organizational culture.
- Satisfactory organizational responses to negative customer experiences and to negative staff/volunteer experiences.
- Meaningful engagement with the LGBT+ community.
- Commitment to fostering allies in offering LGBT+ respectful and welcoming environments, practices and behaviours.

## ASSESSMENT RATING

**Rainbow Registered** assessment is a voluntary process that grants a time-limited recognition to businesses/organizations that demonstrate compliance with the quality criteria. Accredited applicants are deemed *market ready* for the LGBT+ customer and given the right to be associated with the program's prestigious designation mark, i.e., **Rainbow Registered**®. Assessors will use the **Rainbow Registered** Program Assessment Form to evaluate applicant businesses/organizations. Accreditation program applicants will produce objective examples and evidence of good practice for each category of quality criteria. Assessments of criteria categories will generate ratings of 'Met', 'Partly Met' or 'Not Met' the program standard. Applicants must be rated as having 'Met' the standard in each of the four categories in order to be accredited. An overall assessment rating of 'Exceeded', 'Met', 'Partly Met' or 'Not Met' will be determined for each applicant. These will be determined as follows:

## Exceeded

**\* Available only in subsequent assessments of previously accredited businesses/organizations.**

All requirements for a 'Met' rating are achieved, plus at least three of the following:

- Evidence that consumer/staff/volunteer/other stakeholders' expectations have been exceeded.
- Evidence that the uptake of LGBT+-inclusive practice is recognized by external stakeholders.
- Evidence of outstanding risk management.
- Evidence of significant quality improvement since the last assessment.
- Evidence of innovation in achieving the intent of the category criteria.

## Met

The organization has 'Met' the requirements if evidence demonstrates that organizational and cultural efforts are systemic and sustainable. Examples of evidence include:

- Consumer/staff/volunteer needs are understood and met.
- Staff, volunteers and other stakeholders are aware of organizational expectations, as outlined in the organizational policies.
- Staff are appropriately trained and their performance is monitored.
- Organizational practices and performance are monitored and planned improvements are in place to address unsatisfactory practices or performance.
- Risks are managed appropriately.

## Partly Met

The organization has 'Partly Met' the requirements if some but not all the criteria demonstrate that organizational and cultural efforts are systemic and sustainable. Organizations will be offered a period for corrective measures to be implemented before being reassessed.

Examples of evidence include:

- Consumer expectations are mostly understood and met.
- Little or no guiding documentation in high risk areas.
- Practices are inconsistent with organizational policies or expectations.
- Organizational performance is not monitored, or is monitored but no planned improvements are in place to address identified performance issues.
- New policies or procedures in high risk areas are not yet fully integrated.
- Risks in relation to the criteria are poorly understood or managed.

## Not Met

The organization has 'Not Met' the requirements if none of the criteria have been met or, if any unmet criteria create high/extreme risk to consumers, staff, volunteers or the organization as a whole that are unable to be addressed.

### Examples include:

- Consumer expectations are not understood or met.
- The organization has committed to LGBT+-inclusive practice but has not yet implemented an approach, as demonstrated by:
  - Limited or no documentation;
  - Limited awareness demonstrated by staff or other key stakeholders;
  - Limited processes developed or implemented;
  - Lack of coordinated approach to implementing an emergent system; or
  - Poor oversight of high risk processes.
- Risk management is poorly understood and managed, and high or extreme residual risks exist.





# Appendix D

## RAINBOW REGISTERED APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Complete and submit the **Rainbow Registered** Application Form.
- ☐ Gather any written materials, policies or documents if they will form part of your evidence.
- ☐ Take part in a brief initial telephone interview with the Assessor.
- ☐ Take part in an in-depth telephone interview with the Assessor.
- ☐ Provide information to the Assessor if additional interviews are needed.
- ☐ Following completion of the assessment, the **Rainbow Registered** Program Manager will notify you of the decision and of next steps.



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