

Public Service Pride Network



Strategic Plan 2023-2025

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Contents

Introduction	2
Our Vision	3
Our Mission	3
Who We Are	4
Our Why	5
How We Do Our Work	7
<i>The PSPN Secretariat</i>	7
<i>Gender Identity and Expression Action Committee</i>	8
<i>Policy and Outreach Action Committee</i>	8
Our Activities to Support our Mission	8
A. Public Service Pride Week	8
B. Public Service Pride Awards	9
C. 2SLGBTQIA+ Executive Network	10
D. Pride Mentoring Program	10
E. Brave Space Discussions	11
F. Pride Flag Protocol	11
G. Promoting a Safer and More Welcoming Workplace for:	11
i. All 2SLGBTQIA+ employees.....	11
ii. Transgender, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse Employees.....	12



Introduction

Dear members of the Public Service Pride Network,

It is with excitement that I present to you the Public Service Pride Network's first **Strategic Plan** (2023-2025). As a network dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion within the federal public service, we recognize the importance of having a clear roadmap for achieving our goals and objectives. In the past five years, our network has grown from a grassroots initiative to an established network that provides programming, support, and a forum for the voices of employees of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to be heard.

This strategic plan represents the culmination of months of hard work and collaboration among our members, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ Executive Network. It highlights our successes and takes into consideration our current challenges, in consideration of the socio-political environment and current issues affecting our communities.

The goals and objectives illustrated in purple boxes throughout the plan are ambitious, but achievable with the dedication and support of our members, allies, and senior leaders in the public service. There is much work to be done, but we are committed to leading the charge.

This plan provides a clear roadmap for achieving our mandate of creating a safe space for individuals to be their authentic and true selves at work, in support of broader diversity and inclusion objectives in the Government of Canada. We are excited to embark on this journey together and to continue working towards our shared goals.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the Public Service Pride Network.



Jason Bett
Champion, Public Service Pride



Our Vision

A workplace within the federal public service that is safe and welcoming for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees, through policies, programs, systems, and initiatives that demonstrate intersectional equity and inclusion.

Our Mission

To achieve our vision, our mission is to represent 2SLGBTQIA+ employees through:

1. Being Community-Driven

Recognizing and valuing our contribution to the public service and promoting a sense of belonging by providing opportunities to:

- celebrate our diverse communities and successes
- connect with each other
- learn from each other
- promote our visibility
- recognize efforts to advance our cause

2. Information Sharing

Facilitating information and advice to policy and decision-makers on issues or initiatives that impact our communities, including making ourselves available for consultation.

3. Advocacy

Playing an advocacy role to hold decision-makers accountable for delayed or nonexistent responses to issues that impact 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.



Who We Are

The Public Service Pride Network (PSPN) is made up of federal public servants who belong to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and who want to help us achieve our vision, as well as our allies. We bring diverse and rich lived experiences to the workplace. We are a source of knowledge about our communities, our history, our challenges and our successes. We are LGBT Purge survivors and successors.

While Pride initiatives in the public service date back decades, what is today known as the PSPN began in 2018 as a small network of federal employees. Today, the PSPN has grown to represent thousands of 2SLGBTQIA+ employees and allies in 70 federal departments and agencies across Canada and in missions abroad. The Network is supported by micro-assignments.

We use the 2SLGBTQIA+ acronym to reflect the following communities:

- **2S** first, acknowledging Two-Spirit people as the first of our communities on these lands
- **L**esbian
- **G**ay
- **B**isexual
- **T**ransgender
- **Q**ueer
- **I**ntersex
- **A**sexual, Aromantic, Agender
- **+** to be inclusive of individuals who identify as part of our communities but who use other terms

We recognize that the Government of Canada (GC) officially uses the 2SLGBTQI+ acronym. Members of the PSPN advocated to include "A" to be more inclusive and reflective of our communities. Other organizations may use different acronyms and PSPN will use their acronyms when their work is reflected in our materials.

The PSPN aims to represent members of our communities. Because 2SLBTQIA+ employees have not been formally recognized as a designated group under the *Employment Equity Act*, there is limited data available about our communities' representation or experiences in the public service. However, we know from the [2022 National Census](#) that Canada is home to approximately 1 million LGBTQ2+ people; furthermore, about 100,815 people in Canada are



transgender (59,460) or non-binary (41,355). We affirm that the Canadian public service must be reflective of the diversity of the population that we serve.

We also recognize that people in many of our communities are members of other equity seeking groups; 2SLGBTQIA+ public servants are also women, Black and/or Indigenous people, racialized people, and people with disabilities. We celebrate intersectionality and will work collaboratively with other employee-led networks wherever possible to advance our common goals. We recognize that to achieve meaningful inclusion, we must put in the work to ensure that our advocacy is as rich and complex as our lived experiences.

Our Why

We've always been here, making progress for our communities

Pride initiatives in the public service date back decades, and the PSPN acknowledges the path blazed by brave public servants who worked to end the discriminatory policies of the LGBT Purge. In 2021, the public service commemorated the 50th anniversary of the very first Pride protest organized among public servants in 1971.

Today, the PSPN pursues the work of building a strong, diversified, and inclusive public service. The PSPN is now viewed by a growing number of public servants as the trusted, go-to resource for a wide range of services and as a consultative body on 2SLGBTQIA+ community issues. In some cases, our community members are bypassing other avenues within the public service and coming directly to the Network for support.

The Public Service sees us, hears us, and is responding

In the past few years, the socio-political environment has quickly changed. More than ever, groups that have faced barriers and discrimination are advocating for themselves and driving change. The public service recognizes this momentum and is responding in a number of ways.

As noted in the [Clerk's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service](#) (2021), public service leaders have been called to enable and advance the work of grassroots networks and communities and to bring them to discussions at senior executive



tables. They have also been tasked with including voices from diverse backgrounds in the identification of systemic discrimination and barriers to inclusion, and in the design and implementation of actions and solutions.

The 2021 report [Emerging From the Purge: Reviewing the State of LGBTQI2S Inclusion in Canada's Federal Workplaces](#), published by the [LGBT Purge Fund](#), surveyed a subset of federal entities. Their assessment stated that:

“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.”

The Report further highlights that “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.” Furthermore, the report provides 23 recommendations, which emphasize the importance and value of engaging and hearing the voices of 2SLGBTQIA+ employees and networks in developing organizational policies, procedures, practices. Organizations must be conscious to advance work on the recommendations holistically, and not in a piecemeal fashion or by focusing only on those with lower scores.

In the [29th Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada](#) (2022), the Clerk acknowledged the progress made by employee networks in advancing diversity and inclusion. She specifically noted the increase in participation at Public Service Pride Week and the Public Service Pride Awards, and stated:

“Employees are also taking action. They are proactively starting new interdepartmental networks and leveraging existing networks to represent and support specific communities within the Public Service... Networks and communities are leading initiatives to advance Public Service priorities... We can make change if we work together across the Public Service.”



August 2022 saw the launch of the first [Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan](#) which specifically notes the Government of Canada’s commitment to encouraging and supporting employee-led networks, referencing the PSPN specifically as “key to nurturing a 2SLGBTQI+ inclusive workplace through awareness-raising and learning – and providing sources of peer support and community connections for 2SLGBTQI+ federal employees.” The Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan also speaks to the resilience and resurgence of Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ communities as the first 2SLGBTQI+ communities. The PSPN recognizes the importance and uniqueness of two-spirit identities and is committed to advocating for two-spirit employees, recognizing the themes in the calls to justice from [The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#).

How We Do Our Work

The PSPN’s success is the result of its members’ engagement and participation in their areas of interest, and of their passion to make meaningful change. We have a variety of events and programs that are at different stages of maturity – some well-established, and others in the development or pilot stage.

We also consider issues of the day, how they affect our communities, and the best way to respond – through gathering and sharing information, making connections, and direct advocacy.

The PSPN Secretariat

The PSPN Secretariat works with the Public Service Pride Champion and:

- develops and pilots programming and activities
- delivers established programming and activities, such as:
 - Public Service Pride Week, the Public Service Pride Awards and PSPN Communications (web, internal, social media)
- liaises with senior policy and decision-makers to advance our mandate
- connects with other equity-seeking employee networks to collaborate on shared issues using a collective voice
- leads the 2SLGBTQIA+ Executive Network



Gender Identity and Expression Action Committee

The Gender Identity and Expression Action Committee brings together transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse public servants to support and advocate for themselves and for its diverse communities. The work of this committee focuses on processes and policies impacting its community members, as well as training and education around their issues and experiences.

Policy and Outreach Action Committee

The Policy and Outreach Action Committee has a dual mandate to:

- conduct outreach to other equity-seeking employee networks to identify and collectively advance shared issues
- conduct policy analysis and provide positions and recommendations on various issues on behalf of the PSPN

Our Activities to Support our Mission

A. Public Service Pride Week

Organized annually since 2019, Public Service Pride Week (PSPW) is designed to educate and celebrate 2SLGBTQIA+ public servants across Canada and in missions abroad. In 2022, PSPW was attended by more than 8400 participants in 70 departments and agencies. As a result, PSPW is now a key component of the public service's approach to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

2023 will mark the 5th Annual PSPW under the theme *Taking Action to Create a More Inclusive Public Service*. It builds on the themes of previous years: *Intersectionality (2021)* and *Being Your Authentic Self at Work (2022)*.



B. Public Service Pride Awards

Created in 2021, the Annual Public Service Pride Awards have recognized individuals, networks, workplaces and initiatives that advance 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion in the workplace. The award categories include:

Agent of Change Award

An award for advocates and leaders who are initiating and driving action to remove systemic barriers and to advance the inclusion and integration of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in the federal public service. This action-oriented individual is amplifying the voices of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities within their department/agency or across the federal family. This individual's actions will have led to a marked improvement in their workplace.

Pride Network of the Year Award

An award to a departmental or agency pride network that stood out over the course of the year for its work in advancing 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion across their department or agency.

Workplace Pride Initiative of the Year Award

An award for a novel workplace policy, plan, event or activity that has demonstrated benefit for 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion in the workplace.

Career Impact Award

An award that recognizes individuals who have made a lasting impact during their career. This individual's long-standing and active support of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities within the federal public service will have had a cumulative and substantial impact.

Pioneer Award (2022 only)

This was awarded to Michelle Douglas, 2SLGBTQIA+ activist and Executive Director of the LGBT Purge Fund, to recognize 30 years since her landmark legal challenge in 1992 ended Canada's formalized discriminatory policy against 2SLGBTQIA+ members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Department/Agency Award for Excellence in Pride Leadership (New in 2023)

An award that celebrates a department or agency which, through sustained organization-wide actions or initiatives, has demonstrated exceptional leadership in supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ employees. For example, this award could recognize a department or agency that has made



meaningful improvements to internal processes and procedures relevant to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, or that has implemented a series of initiatives of benefit to these communities.

C. 2SLGBTQIA+ Executive Network

In January 2022, the 2SLGBTQIA+ Executive Network was established to increase the visibility, networking opportunities and professional development of 2SLGBTQIA+ executives through dialogue, peer support, and mentoring and coaching. With more than ninety members coming into 2023, the Executive Network also serves as a much-needed platform for aspiring leaders from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to see themselves reflected at the senior management level. The PSPN recognizes the leadership and management experience executives bring to the broader network, as well as the rich personal and professional lived experience these executives can share with members.

Increase and diversify membership year over year

D. Pride Mentoring Program

The Pride Mentoring Program pairs 2SLGBTQIA+ mentees with 2SLGBTQIA+ senior leaders in the public service. Mentors and mentees have the opportunity for 1:1 meetings, group mentoring, networking events and a dynamic curriculum of recommended courses by the Canada School of Public Service.

Build and deliver ongoing mentoring programming for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees and executives through partnerships with GC organizations

Topics that may be discussed through mentoring sessions include:

- coming out/being out at work
- dealing with challenging colleagues and work environments
- career planning and advancement
- navigating unique challenges of being 2SLGBTQIA+ in the federal public service (i.e., feelings of isolation and discrimination)
- professional development
- job shadowing



In addition to discussing workplace issues, the Pride Mentoring Program promotes community-building among 2SLGBTQIA+ employees at all levels, and between employees in various organizations in the GC.

E. Brave Space Discussions

Previously known as Safe Space discussions, these valuable conversations – held in breakout rooms of twenty people, to allow for greater participation – cover a wide range of topics. This experience allows members of our communities to connect and share their lived experiences in an open and safe environment where they can be vulnerable and brave.

F. Pride Flag Protocol

In 2022, the number of Progressive Pride Flags flying on federal properties during Public Service Pride Week rose to 140 properties in Canada and abroad, sending a strong message that members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities are valued for their countless contributions to the federal public service. PSPN helps to facilitate the purchasing of flags by interested parties.

G. Promoting a Safer and More Welcoming Workplace for:

i. All 2SLGBTQIA+ employees

The PSPN is looking to ensure that future and current 2SLGBTQIA+ employees are supported, and that organizations and managers have the knowledge, tools and resources to create safe and welcoming workplaces where employees can be their true selves throughout their career. The PSPN will also advocate for our communities to be involved in diversity and inclusion initiatives related to career advancement.



ii. Transgender, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse Employees

Many GC workplaces, processes and systems currently do not meet these communities' needs – from access to appropriate washrooms or sanitary facilities, to requirements to select between two genders in certain systems and forms, to unclear or inadequate processes for updating one's name or gender. Misgendering on an interpersonal level is also very common.

For many transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse employees, these are distressing experiences and can have significant impact on mental health, pay, security clearance and psychological safety in the workplace. Training and further engagement with employees and managers alike is important to increase awareness of the impacts of these issues. Above all, active change in the workplace is essential to ensure the wellbeing of these public servants.

Progress is being made in some areas, such as allowing employees in some organizations to display their pronouns in digital communications, but many employees in GC workplaces are still facing barriers. The PSPN will work to promote and advocate for continued and consistent policy, system, and program changes across GC workplaces, while supporting employees who are experiencing workplace challenges.

Release a workplace guide to support transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse employees

Increase of gender-inclusive washrooms in federal properties

Increase of pronoun display initiative

Play a leadership role in name and gender marker change processes

Supporting the Canada School of the Public Service to develop and implement a series of trainings and job aids.

