
SEEKING ASYLUM IN A QUEER SANCTUARY

How San Francisco Can Better
Support LGBTQ Asylum Seekers

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Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

40% of the world's population live in countries where identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) is a crime. Often in these countries, LGBTQ people flee and seek asylum in more accepting places. LGBTQ asylum seekers are drawn to San Francisco because of its Sanctuary City status and reputation as the world's "gay mecca". Still, LGBTQ asylum seekers face countless barriers impeding their capacity to sustain life economically, socially, and physically in the city. The San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) is uniquely positioned to help this community gain more agency in the city. This report analyzes quantitative and qualitative data to inform MOHCD how to better support LGBTQ asylum seekers.

The **main findings** of this report are:



Less than half of one percent of immigration funding in the U.S. is given to LGBTQ immigrant issues (Machado & Maulbeck, 2014).



There are between 200 and 8,675 LGBTQ asylum seekers in San Francisco. However, the real size of this population is likely in the middle.



LGBTQ asylum seekers face barriers in accessing **legal services, housing, economic and employment resources, healthcare, and community.**



Overcoming legal barriers to obtain a legal status is an effective way LGBTQ asylum seekers can reduce other barriers and gain more access and agency in the city.



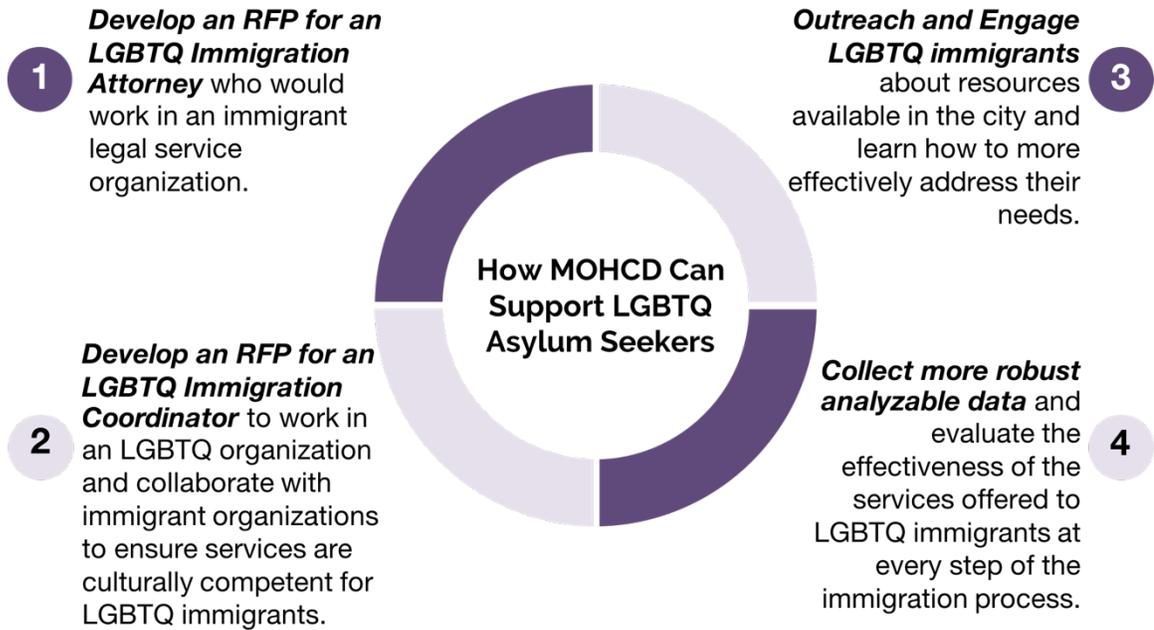
Three immigrant legal service providers in the Bay Area specifically focus on LGBTQ immigrant issues.



MOHCD does not fund any organizations focusing on LGBTQ immigrants, but it awards millions to immigrant service providers annually.

Based on these findings and policy alternatives explored, this paper recommends MOHCD **direct funding to immigrant legal services specifically targeting LGBTQ immigrants** through two Request for Proposals (RFPs).¹

This includes **four recommendations**:



By implementing these recommendations, MOHCD can serve as a facilitator to fill the funding gap within services focused on LGBTQ immigrants. This will guarantee MOHCD isn't incidentally supporting LGBTQ asylum seekers and can start working towards supporting them more intentionally and effectively.

¹ "A request for proposal (RFP) is a document that solicits a proposal, often made through a bidding process, by an agency or company interested in procurement of a commodity, service, or valuable asset, to potential suppliers to submit (Blake & Bly,1993)."