

PROTECTING & ADVOCATING FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, & INTERSEX (LGBTI) ASYLUM SEEKERS



EBSC provides legal assistance & psychological support to LGBTI people fleeing violence and persecution in their home countries.

- » Helped 2,400+ LGBTI people receive asylum
- » Over 99% success rate for asylum
- » Free or low-cost psychological evaluations
- » Community-building, arts, & storytelling workshops



OLAS LGBT SANCTUARY PROJECT

EBSC is a fiscal sponsor for OLAS, a community support program for LGBTI asylum seekers. Facilitated by bilingual LGBT people of color and mental health professionals, OLAS workshops help to jumpstart healing through mental health support, stress reduction tools, community building, arts, and education.

TRANSGENDER ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO HARASSMENT & PERSECUTION

“Rita” was born in Mexico and was physically, emotionally, and sexually abused by relatives and a neighbor. She also received verbal abuse from peers for being effeminate. A few years ago, while walking with a transgender friend, Rita was abducted and raped by three policemen. She fled to the U.S. and came to EBSC. It was the first time she had disclosed some of the abuse she had suffered. Rita was granted asylum and is receiving treatment to transition. She is excited to advance her career in the airline industry now that she has permanent legal status.

WHY DO LGBTI PEOPLE SEEK POLITICAL ASYLUM?

- » **71 countries** criminalize homosexuality.
- » **17 countries** have laws that limit LGBTI freedom of expression.
- » **14 countries** punish homosexuality with a life sentence in prison.
- » **11 countries** punish homosexuality with the death sentence.¹
- » **Map of countries that outlaw same-sex relations between consenting adults [here](#).**
- » In countries that recently recognized same sex marriage, there are **backlashes of violence** against LGBTI people, **including homicide**.²
- » Police in many countries are among the most intolerant of the gay community; **making a police report can bring additional violence and trauma**.³
- » Many LGBTI people are disowned by their families and are at risk of losing their jobs or their children if their sexual orientation or gender identity are discovered.

WHAT IS THE ASYLUM PROCESS LIKE FOR LGBTI PEOPLE?

Attaining asylum is a complex and difficult journey. Even if their claim is successful, LGBTI refugees are forced to confront the reality of a country that is homophobic and hostile to immigrants.⁴

Moreover, many LGBTI people do not have the support of their family or religious community, making the experience even more isolating.

To apply for asylum, LGBTI people must go through a rigorous process of retelling painful experiences of abuse; this process itself can be traumatizing for survivors.

To learn more, visit
www.eastbaysanctuary.org

[1] <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/map-of-criminalisation/>

[2] Yucatan Ranks Fourth Place in Homophobic Crimes in the Nation, www.yucatanahora.com (Jan. 19, 2011).

[3] Maciel, Camila, Investigation Identifies the Police as the Group Most Intolerant of Sexual Minorities, www.conapred.org. (2011).

[4] http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2017/06/28/for_lgbtq_refugees_to_the_u_s_newfound_visibility_can_be_problematic.html

[5] A Government Accountability Office report (2013) found that 1/5th of confirmed sexual assault cases between 2009 and 2013 in detention facilities involved trans immigrants ([Slate.com](http://www.slate.com)).

[6] <http://www.newsweek.com/transgender-immigrant-asylum-court-decision-immigration-368607>