## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Lambda Scholarship Foundation Canada and Rainbow Railroad Announce New Bursary Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Refugees

**Ottawa, ON** — Lambda Scholarship Foundation Canada (Lambda) and Rainbow Railroad announce today the creation of the ***Vu-Gruber & Lambda Scholarship Foundation Canada 2SLGBTQIA+ Refugee Bursary***.

The bursary will be granted annually to provide financial support toward tuition and educational costs for a newcomer student currently enrolled at a Canadian post-secondary institution or pursuing a recognized career training or certification program in Canada. Rainbow Railroad will be responsible for identifying and recommending eligible candidates from its active client or community network.

## From Refugee to Canadian Citizenship: The Donor's Story

> *"This bursary is a celebration of courage, learning, and belonging,"* says Gil Gruber, a first-generation immigrant and co-founder of the bursary. Statistics Canada research indicates that settlement success of refugee claimants is time-dependent with lower employment and higher social assistance early on. *"Our hope is that the bursary will open doors for individuals who, like my parents, faced the challenge of starting anew in a country full of opportunities,"* says Tuan Vu, a refugee from Vietnam and second co-founder. [Read the full donor story.]

## Bursary Details

The bursary, starting at $1,500, will be granted once per year beginning in August or September 2026. Unlike traditional scholarship competitions, this bursary does not require a public application process. Rainbow Railroad will identify and recommend a recipient directly from its active client and community network, confirming the candidate meets all eligibility criteria before notifying Lambda. This community-led selection model ensures that the bursary reaches those most in need, with care and discretion.

**To be eligible, applicants must:**

1. Identify as a 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomer who arrived in Canada through an approved refugee claim.
2. Be a permanent resident or protected person, as recognized by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) or Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).
3. Be currently enrolled (full- or part-time) in a Canadian post-secondary program or career certification program at a recognized Canadian institution, as listed in the Directory of Educational Institutions in Canada (CICIC).

4. Be a current client or member of the Rainbow Railroad community, or be recommended by one of Rainbow Railroad's governmental or community trusted partner organizations.

The bursary's value may increase in future years depending on the performance of the endowment held in trust at the Ottawa Community Foundation.

> *"This partnership allows us to match Lambda's national educational reach with Rainbow Railroad's deep community knowledge and direct engagement with newcomers. Getting to a safer place is only the first step. What follows is the critical work of rebuilding. Too often, newcomers face systemic barriers to education and employment in their first years in Canada. This bursary invests in individuals' potential so they can unlock opportunity and agency, and ultimately build stable, self-determined futures. Together, we can ensure support reaches those who need it most, in a way that is community-led, trauma-informed, and rooted in long-term success."* — Timothy Chan, Director of Communications, Rainbow Railroad

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## About Rainbow Railroad

**Rainbow Railroad** is an international human rights organization that creates pathways to safety for at-risk LGBTQI+ people and strengthens policies and systems that support their protection and integration. Founded in 2006 — its name an echo of the Underground Railroad that helped Black Americans escape enslavement — Rainbow Railroad is one of few organizations working simultaneously as a direct service provider, advocate, thought leader, and movement strategist addressing global queer forced displacement. Since its founding, Rainbow Railroad has supported over 40,000 individuals and families and has become a global leader in advancing LGBTQI+ rights.

For more information, visit https://www.rainbowrailroad.org

## About Lambda Scholarship Foundation Canada

**Lambda Scholarship Foundation Canada** is a national charity dedicated to advancing research, education, and leadership among 2SLGBTQIA+ and QTBIPOC communities. Through scholarships, mentorship, and partnerships with post-secondary institutions and community organizations, Lambda helps ensure equitable access to learning and recognition for queer and trans excellence.

For more information, visit www.lambdafoundation.org.

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