

**KEVIN CHASE
EXECUTIVE SEARCH
GROUP**



**LEADERSHIP TRANSITION
EXECUTIVE SEARCH
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Recruitment Profile
for

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER**



Rainbow Railroad
(U.S.A./Canada)

March 2025



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POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Organization:	Rainbow Railroad (https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/)
Reports to:	Board of Directors
Location:	Rainbow Railroad is headquartered in Toronto with U.S. offices in New York City. A new CEO could be based in Canada or in the U.S. with an expectation of regular travel to/time spent in Toronto.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Rainbow Railroad stands at the forefront of the global movement to advance and protect the human rights of LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex) people wherever they are in the world. With a focus on helping those at-risk find safety from persecution and violence, Rainbow Railroad is internationally recognized for its work in providing humanitarian protection, support, and resettlement assistance to individuals in countries that criminalize LGBTQI+ identities. Rainbow Railroad is also committed to building strong post-relocation support systems for LGBTQI+ refugees and asylees in their countries of relocation, where they can live with dignity.

Rainbow Railroad was founded in 2006 in response to a global forced displacement crisis that affected LGBTQI+ people who could not access safety and protection in their countries of origin. Rainbow Railroad's mission is to help at-risk LGBTQI+ individuals get to safety as they seek a safe haven from state-enabled discrimination, harassment, and violence. Rainbow Railroad provides financial support that facilitates departure, travel, and arrival; resettlement assistance and referrals; information, resources, and advice for asylum claims; and, increasingly, social services and support to assist newcomers with community integration.

Across the globe, more than 60 countries have laws that expressly criminalize homosexuality and many more have laws and policies that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. In 11 countries, same-sex intimacy can be punishable by death. In too many countries, LGBTQI+ people are routinely arrested, denied basic human rights, or are being brutally attacked, tortured, or murdered.

In partnership with a global network of LGBTQI+ organizations and human rights defenders, Rainbow Railroad coordinates directly with individuals experiencing violence to get them out of harm's way. Around the world, Rainbow Railroad is recognized for its efforts to support and protect the thousands of LGBTQI+ people living in countries which criminalize their existence. Since its founding Rainbow Railroad has assisted more than 20,000 at-risk LGBTQI+ people with relocation, emergency livelihood assistance, information and referrals to queer and trans advocacy resources, and post-relocation support.

With offices in the U.S. and Canada, Rainbow Railroad employs a dedicated and mission-driven staff of more than 60 employees and also supports a large, global network of volunteers. The organization is largely funded through private donations and has a current revenue budget of ~\$13 MM (CAD)/\$9.1 MM (USD). Approximately 28% of Rainbow Railroad's revenue comes from Individual & Major donors, ~28% from Foundation/Institutional giving, ~22% from Corporate Sponsorships, and ~22% Community Giving (including third party and local events). Rainbow Railroad is governed by a 12-person volunteer Board of Directors, representing community, business, and philanthropic leaders from Canada, the U.S., and the UK.

(For more information, please visit <https://www.rainbowrailroad.org>)

THE FIGHT FOR LGBTQI+ LIBERATION: **Rainbow Railroad's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan**

Since its founding, demand for Rainbow Railroad's services has skyrocketed in the face of rising global economic disparity, an alarming increase in anti-LGBTQI+ and anti-immigrant sentiment, and the ongoing lack of durable and sustainable mechanisms to get at-risk LGBTQI+ people to safety. Rainbow Railroad's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan aims to tackle these challenges head-on, with a commitment to expanding and refining programs and centering the work on the individuals Rainbow Railroad serves.

Key Strategic Initiatives

- **Maximize** existing visa-free pathways
- **Optimize** established government pathways for LGBTQI+ people
- **Implement** the [Queer Forced Displacement Initiative](#)
- **Fund & Build** solidarity with LGBTQI+ organizations and leaders
- **Lead** as advocates for LGBTQI+ justice.
- **Amplify** our global visibility, reach, and influence in the media
- **Build** strong support systems for LGBTQI+ people affected by displacement
- **Unlock** more funding opportunities and strengthen our donor network
- **Enhance & Streamline** case management systems
- **Promote** a framework of continuous Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning across all departments
- **Foster** a positive and inclusive people culture across the organization

Our Vision:

A world where LGBTQI+ people are free of persecution and live a life of their choosing. Until full liberation is possible, we must continue to help LGBTQI+ individuals at risk now.

Where We Are Now:

Right now, there are more forcibly displaced people in the world than at any other time in recorded history. Queer and trans refugees are uniquely vulnerable due to systemic homophobia and transphobia which are at an all-time high. Protection pathways are increasingly inaccessible, and safer countries are becoming more restrictive and unwelcoming

The View Forward:

In 2026, we will celebrate 20 years of vital and revolutionary work to 'queer the system' and to get more LGBTQI+ people to safety. We will continue to evolve our strategy, programs, and priorities in response to changing geopolitical realities, including in the U.S. where recent executive actions have suspended life-saving refugee admission programs and severely curtailed the right to seek asylum. By leveraging partnerships and the power of community, our work will continue to center around three priorities:

- 1) Getting More People to Safety Now.** Rainbow Railroad's primary goal is to assist LGBTQI+ individuals in moving to safer locations as quickly as possible, and the individuals seeking our assistance must be centered in all aspects of our work.
- 2) Queering the System.** We will be leaders by advocating for the inclusion and protection of forcibly displaced LGBTQI+ persons at every level of the global asylum system.

3) Strengthening our Foundation. As we move forward, we remain focused on strengthening our organization, evaluating and refining our systems, and becoming more efficient and effective with the funds entrusted to us by our supporters.

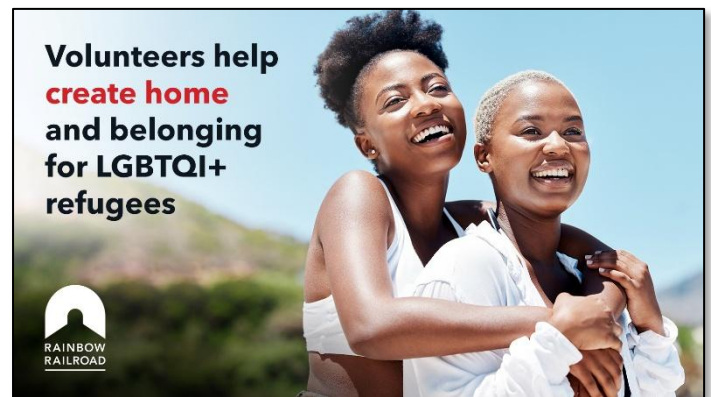
REPORTING

Reports to the Board of Directors via the Executive Committee. Direct reports include the Heads of Operations, Programs, Development/Fundraising ('open' position currently filled on an interim basis), and Engagement, who comprise the Senior Leadership Team. Supports a team of 60 located in the U.S. and Canada.

POSITION

In cooperation with the Board of Directors, the CEO is responsible for organizational vision, strategy, and daily leadership of the organization. Working with a dedicated Senior Leadership Team and staff, this position drives strategic, operational, administrative, and financial decisions. The new CEO will work with Board, staff, government, donors, and community partners to create and implement strategic goals and objectives that advance Rainbow Railroad's mission of helping at-risk LGBTQI+ people get to safety. A top priority of this position is representing, advocating for, and defending the work of Rainbow Railroad and those it serves with high emotional intelligence and deep understanding of the landscape of global LGBTQI+ rights.

Following years of remarkable growth and expansion – coinciding with significant geopolitical changes and a recent shift in executive leadership – Rainbow Railroad has been in a mode of continuous evolution for the last several years. While the organization remains healthy, stable (with year-to-year revenue increases), productive, and on-track with its strategic plan, Rainbow Railroad is seeking an experienced, accomplished, and visionary new CEO to guide the organization on a path of sustainable growth, deeper impact, and continued mission advancement.



PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

[NOTE: We understand that no single candidate will have equal expertise in all these areas of responsibility. Successful candidates will possess a compelling combination of many of them and the self-awareness and wisdom to leverage existing and/or new resources for support in the area(s) where they lack personal mastery.]

Organizational Leadership & Strategy

- Inspire, motivate, and lead a community of highly engaged professionals – Board, staff, stakeholders, and partners – in achieving Rainbow Railroad's mission, vision, and goals;
- With Board and Senior Leadership Team, review current strategic plans, ensuring their continued alignment with organizational priorities and the evolving needs of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers;
- Provide leadership to the development and improvement of organization processes, systems, and strategies to maximize efficiency and facilitate continued growth;
- Provide strategic support and thought partnership to Development, Programs, Engagement, and Operations departments to drive sustainable growth;
- Work proactively and intentionally to elevate Rainbow Railroad's visibility, credibility, and impact.

Fundraising & Resource Development

- In partnership with the Chief Development Officer (open position currently filled on an interim basis), develop clear, achievable revenue goals and objectives that ensure sufficient funding for the organization and its work;
- Partner with and support the work of the Chief Development Officer, Development department, and Development Committee of the Board to ensure all fundraising goals – including the re-building of reserves – are met or exceeded;

- Help to evolve overall development strategy, grow fundraising programs, and diversify revenue streams to broaden Rainbow Railroad’s base of support and strengthen its financial position;
- Personally, and directly maintain positive relationships with key individual and institutional donors.

External Relations and Community Engagement

- Passionately and persuasively advocate for Rainbow Railroad’s mission and the individuals it serves in a variety of national and international business, political, and civil service environments;
- Work to enhance relationships and deepen credibility with Rainbow Railroad’s local and international programmatic partners, elected and appointed government officials, LGBTQI+/refugee/resettlement movement leaders, funders, and thought leaders, among others;
- As the face and voice of Rainbow Railroad, work proactively to elevate the credibility and reputation of Rainbow Railroad as a vital partner in the global LGBTQI+ community;
- Leverage connections with LGBTQI+ communities and organizations worldwide who can support the advancement of Rainbow Railroad’s mission;
- Effectively and appropriately represent Rainbow Railroad with supported individuals, partners, funders, at special events, and in the media.

People & Team Management

- Partner with, support, and harness the expertise of an accomplished Senior Leadership Team, including the Heads of Operations, Programs, Development, and Engagement, and a dedicated staff and volunteers in the U.S. and Canada;
- Support policies, practices, and the development of organizational culture that maintains high employee morale, facilitates recruitment and retention of qualified staff, and provides opportunities for career advancement within the organization;
- Encourage the creation of professional development plans for team members to enable continued learning, training, and advancement, and to build a leadership pipeline for the organization;
- Champion the cultivation of an inclusive, values-driven culture that is collaborative, transparent, and respectful/affirming of all backgrounds and identities.

Finance & Administrative Oversight

- With the Head of Operations, develop annual budgets for Board approval and manage the organization’s finances with strong and equitable fiscal and administrative controls;
- Analyze and advise the Board on financial and operational issues that could impact Rainbow Railroad’s pursuit of its strategic goals;
- Assess business risks and opportunities and provide ongoing assessments of organizational performance;
- Ensure compliance with charitable and corporate regulations and requirements in the U.S. and Canada.

Board Relations

- Develop, maintain, and support a strong Board of Directors and serve as an ex-officio member to ensure governance best practices and compliance;
- With the Governance/Nominating committee, identify and steward potential new Board members;
- Actively engage and motivate Rainbow Railroad Board members in growing and expanding revenue opportunities;
- Seek and engage Board involvement in Rainbow Railroad’s work and in the development and execution of strategic plans.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

You are a proven executive leader with a strong track record of leading cross-functional teams to greater success and impact. You thrive in an environment of shared leadership and working with an accomplished, empowered senior team. You are a veteran of the LGBTQI+ (or allied progressive justice) movements. You have a keen understanding – from lived and/or professional experience – of the complex, intersecting issues facing

marginalized LGBTQI+ individuals and communities globally. Your perspective and point of view on LGBTQI+ liberation are informed by your knowledge and experience in an international context. You have demonstrated passion for Rainbow Railroad’s mission, as well as content expertise in international refugee/asylum/migration and/or a directly related human rights field. You are a skilled messenger who can speak credibly and authentically to the urgent challenges of LGBTQI+ people affected by violence, discrimination, and forced displacement. You have grit, tenacity, and optimism in the face of organized (often hostile) opposition and are energized by the fight for justice.

REQUIRED SKILLS & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (*must* have)

- Significant previous executive leadership experience (including CEO/Executive Director or similar roles in mission-driven nonprofit organizations), and strongly developed strategy, fundraising, organizational development, and relationship management skills
- Content expertise and history of engagement in LGBTQI+, migration/refugee/forced resettlement, global human rights and development, or directly related field(s)
- Comprehensive global lens/perspective and depth of knowledge of international human rights issues, movements, organizations, and frameworks
- Track record of success and innovation in fundraising and revenue development, and of diversifying funding sources to ensure financial sustainability



- Excellent people and team management skills with proven ability to support and empower experienced organizational leaders who are accomplished experts in their areas of focus
- Financial oversight and budget management experience in an organization of comparable size and complexity and with similar funding sources
- Familiarity with/experience in implementing operational and financial controls to ensure fiscal transparency, accountability, and responsibility
- Exceptional communication skills and style that will facilitate success as thought-leader, spokesperson, and advocate for Rainbow Railroad’s work and mission with a broad range of audiences including supported individuals, movement activists and

leaders, heads of governments, donors, the media, and other partners

- Seasoned, intersectional understanding of LGBTQI+ and allied social, political, and equality issues and history of involvement – personally or professionally – in these movements
- Strong DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) lens, and experience to lead by example in centering race and gender equity in all facets of an organization

ADDITIONAL, DESIRED SKILLS & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (*nice to* have)

- Undergraduate degree in a related field is strongly desired. An advanced degree (such as MBA, MPA, MSc., MA, or JD) might aid one’s success in this role
- Nonprofit/NGO leadership experience outside of North America
- Formal marketing/branding/communications education, training, or practical experience
- Knowledge of and/or experience creating and implementing human resources policies and practices
- Existing connections/relationships with other nonprofit organizations, movement leaders, policy makers, government officials, and/or funders
- Established name, brand, and reputation in LGBTQI+, migration/refugee/forced resettlement, or directly related human rights field(s)
- Experience in/exposure to a range of operating environments including grass roots/start up, rapid growth, and established, movement-leading organizations

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Demonstrated passion for Rainbow Railroad’s mission of getting at-risk LGBTQI+ people to safety
- Strong interpersonal skills and high levels of self-awareness and professional maturity
- Charismatic and dynamic personal style, ability to make authentic connections and inspire action
- Strong appreciation for grassroots organizations, advocacy, and movements
- Comfortable and agile in a dynamic, fast paced, startup-style environment
- Nimbleness and flexibility to pivot, shift gears, and/or re-prioritize seamlessly without losing patience or focus
- High level of comfort holding peers accountable to individual, departmental, and organizational goals
- Cultural competency and humility, including an intersectional lens and understanding of marginalized individuals, communities, and populations
- Fair, honest, inclusive management style and ability to lead team members from a broad range of professional backgrounds and personal identities

COMPENSATION

Rainbow Railroad is offering a compensation package that includes salary in the range of \$230,000 to \$260,000 and a comprehensive benefits plan.

TO APPLY

Kevin Chase Executive Search Group has been retained to lead this recruitment effort on behalf of Rainbow Railroad. Kevin Chase Executive Search Group works only with equal opportunity employers. No applicant will be discriminated against because of racial or ethnic identity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, age, or ability. Individuals of LGBTQI+ and/or lived refugee, resettlement, or asylum experience are strongly encouraged to apply.

To apply, please submit a complete resume with full employment history and a cover detailing your interest in the position and the professional and/or lived experience you believe make you a uniquely qualified candidate for this role to search@kevinchasesearch.com.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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All inquiries, applications, or referrals will be held in strict confidence.