

# The importance of local union involvement in Pride parades, festivals and events



Local unions play an important role in advocating for equality, inclusion and social justice. Supporting Pride parades, festivals and events is a great way for local unions to stand in solidarity with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Part of being a good ally, active participation helps to build stronger relationships and alliances, and ensures that all workers, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, feel valued and protected.

## Why local unions should support pride events

1. **Demonstrating solidarity:** By visibly participating in Pride events, local unions show their commitment to inclusivity and equality, reinforcing that discrimination and harassment have no place in the workplace.
2. **Strengthening worker protections:** Many 2SLGBTQIA+ workers still face discrimination, wage gaps and workplace harassment. Engaging in Pride activities helps local unions advocate for stronger policies and protections.
3. **Building membership and community relations:** Supporting Pride events enhances the local union's visibility within the community and attracts new members who value equity and fairness.
4. **Encouraging inclusivity:** Active engagement in Pride builds a more inclusive culture within the local union itself, helping to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ members feel seen, heard and supported.

For a list of upcoming pride events across Canada, check out [usw.ca/steelpride](https://usw.ca/steelpride).

## Accessing support from the Family and Community Education Fund

Local unions can access financial support for Pride participation through the USW Family and Community Education Fund (FCEF). Encourage 2SLGBTQIA+ members and allies to lead a Pride Month event or workshop. Your community likely hosts a parade or other activities you can support. If not, consider partnering with a local 2SLGBTQIA+ organization.

Events could include a speaker panel, music, a meal with 2SLGBTQIA+ unionists and allies, a solidarity march, BBQ, a film screening, trivia or drag queen story time for the little ones. Get creative!

If your local union isn't a FCEF member, contact your District's Human Rights Committee for support.

# Steps for local unions to build relationships with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

## 1. Participate in Pride events

- Organize a delegation from your local union to march in local Pride parades or participate in festivals and events.
- Host a booth at Pride festivals to provide information about union advocacy and support for 2SLGBTQIA+ workers.
- Order USW pride merchandise to wear and to give to members and people in the community.
- Sponsor or co-sponsor Pride-related events.

### Did you know?

Local union participation in small-city pride events allows for a more direct and visible connection with the community.

## 2. Engage in community outreach

- Partner with 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations on joint initiatives, such as educational workshops or advocacy campaigns.
- Volunteer or provide financial support to local 2SLGBTQIA+ charities and shelters.

## 3. Educate and train union members

- Offer diversity and inclusion training to union members and leadership.
- Establish a Human Rights Committee or Steel Pride caucus to address 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in the workplace.
- Develop materials that educate members about 2SLGBTQIA+ rights and workplace protections.

## 4. Advocate for policy changes

- Work with employers to implement inclusive workplace policies, such as gender-neutral washrooms and anti-discrimination policies.
- Push for contract language that explicitly protects 2SLGBTQIA+ workers from discrimination, covers medical leave or treatments for transitioning workers, provides coverage for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), HIV/AIDS medication and gender-affirming medical care.
- Support legislative efforts that enhance 2SLGBTQIA+ rights and protections.

## 5. Promote representation and leadership

- Encourage 2SLGBTQIA+ members to take leadership roles within the union.
- Ensure union materials and communications are inclusive and representative of diverse identities.
- Highlight and celebrate 2SLGBTQIA+ union activists and leaders.

*Building lasting relationships with the rainbow community benefits 2SLGBTQIA+ workers and the labour movement while reinforcing union values of solidarity, fairness and inclusion.*

