

TOOLKIT FOR CONNECTING WITH NGOS & SECURING SUPPORT

1. OVERVIEW

Purpose:

To empower trans folks and allies in locating, contacting, and collaborating with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to get the support they need, be it legal, financial, emotional, or a mix of everything. In a rapidly changing social and political climate, NGOs remain at the forefront of advocacy and assistance.

Why It Matters:

- **Access to Resources:** Whether you need healthcare access, legal defense, or safe housing, NGOs often serve as life-saving intermediaries.
- **Community Building:** Partnering with credible organizations can provide you with a powerful network of supporters and resources.
- **Amplifying Your Voice:** NGOs have the reach and connections to help you advocate for systemic change.

What This Canvas Provides:

- Concrete steps to identify trusted NGOs
- Strategies to build strong relationships with these groups
- Tools, references, and suggestions for immediate action

2. INITIAL STRATEGY: UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEEDS

1. Identify Your Priorities

- **Legal Assistance?** If you are concerned about discriminatory laws or need help with ID changes, focus on civil liberties NGOs.
- **Healthcare Support?** For medical access and counseling services, seek out NGOs specializing in LGBTQIA+ healthcare or mental health support.
- **Financial or Housing Aid?** Look for non-profits that offer emergency grants, scholarships, or safe housing.

2. Create a Needs Checklist

- **Must-Haves:** “I need free legal advice,” or “I need a safe place to stay.”
- **Nice-to-Haves:** “A supportive community network,” or “Opportunities to volunteer.”

3. Assess Your Timelines

- **Immediate:** Rapid, short-term crisis help
- **Mid-Term:** Ongoing support to stabilize your situation
- **Long-Term:** Structural and legal changes to ensure your continued well-being

3. FINDING RELEVANT NGOS

1. Online Research

- **Keywords:** “Trans friendly NGO,” “LGBTQ+ legal aid,” “trans housing support,” “trans mental health,” or “trans advocacy.”
- **Global Directories:** Websites like [ILGA World](#) and [Transgender Europe](#) offer lists of regional organizations.
- **Local vs. National:** Larger organizations like the **ACLU** or the **Human Rights Campaign** might have more broad-scale advocacy, while local community-based orgs often provide more immediate, on-the-ground support.

2. Use Social Media

- **Hashtags & Groups:** #TransSupport, #LGBTQHelp, #TransRights, or region-specific hashtags.
- **Facebook Groups & Discord Servers:** You’d be surprised how many local trans support groups or volunteer networks exist online.

3. Referral from Allies

- **Word-of-Mouth:** Ask local activists, friends, or established LGBTQ+ centers for suggestions.
- **Campus Resources:** If you’re a student, check if your school’s LGBTQ+ group collaborates with NGOs.

4. EVALUATING NGO CREDIBILITY

1. Reputation Check

- **Online Reviews & Testimonials:** Look at Google reviews or community forums.
- **Social Media Profiles:** Check for transparency in activities and consistent advocacy for marginalized voices, especially trans voices.

2. Check Credentials & Transparency

- **Mission Statement:** Ensure they clearly align with your values, or at least genuinely support trans rights.

- **Funding Sources:** NGOs funded by questionable donors may have conflicting agendas.
- **Track Record:** Evaluate their history. Have they successfully assisted folks in the past?

3. Cultural Competence

- **Intersectional Support:** Look for NGOs that recognize the complexity of trans identity—race, class, disability, and migration status can all be part of the conversation.

5. ESTABLISHING CONTACT

1. Initial Outreach

- **Email Approach:** Clearly state your needs. Keep it concise yet detailed:
 - **Subject Line:** “Request for Support: [Brief Description of Your Need]”
 - **Body:** Who you are, what you need, how urgent, any relevant background.
- **Phone Call or Hotline:** Some NGOs offer dedicated phone lines. If you’re in a crisis, prioritize organizations with crisis hotlines (e.g., The Trevor Project at 1-866-488-7386).

2. What to Share

- **Relevant Documents:** If seeking legal help, gather identity documents, any relevant court or administrative paperwork.
- **Personal Background:** Enough to give them a picture of your situation without oversharing sensitive details unless you feel safe doing so.

3. Questions to Ask

- **Available Programs:** Grants, therapy, legal clinics, etc.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Residency requirements, age, income thresholds, or membership.
- **Timelines & Follow-Ups:** How often can you communicate, and what is the usual response time?

6. MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP

1. Being an Active Participant

- **Attend Events:** Workshops, fundraisers, or support groups help you gain additional resources and build community.
- **Volunteer or Collaborate:** If you have time or a specific skill, offering your help can strengthen the connection.

2. Regular Check-Ins

- **Email Updates:** Let them know if your situation changes.
- **Ask for Next Steps:** Inquire about additional resources like job referrals, scholarship info, or mental health support.

3. Provide Feedback

- **Positive and Constructive Critique:** Helps the NGO improve their services and helps future trans folks seeking support.

7. POTENTIAL CHALLENGES & HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

1. Delayed Replies

- **Tip:** Be patient. Send follow-up emails. Check if there's a phone line for urgent queries.

2. Complicated Applications

- **Tip:** Ask for a social worker or administrative contact to guide you through forms.

3. Feeling Overwhelmed

- **Tip:** Prioritize immediate needs—housing, medical, or mental health. Later, you can handle long-term planning like legal name changes.

4. Mistrust or Trauma

- **Tip:** Take the time to build trust. Seek NGOs that emphasize trauma-informed care.

8. HELPFUL RESOURCES & REFERENCES

1. International Resources

- [Transgender Europe \(TGEU\)](#): Policy guidance, databases of trans organizations worldwide.
- [ILGA World](#): Global LGBTQ+ advocacy group with regional resources.

2. United States

- [ACLU](#): Legal support and advocacy.
- [Trevor Project](#): Crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ youth.
- [Lambda Legal](#): Legal defense organization for LGBTQ+ folks.
- [National Center for Transgender Equality](#): Policy and advocacy resources, ID documents help.

3. Regional Options

- **Check Local Centers:** Many cities have community-based LGBTQ+ resource centers that partner with bigger NGOs.
- **Activist Networks:** Use social media to find local collectives or mutual aid funds that can help complement NGO assistance.

4. Reading Material & Toolkits

- **“Surviving & Resisting Hate”** by multiple LGBTQ+ organizations
- **“Know Your Rights”** series by the ACLU

9. BUILDING ALLIES & COMMUNITY

1. Networking

- Join local trans support groups; share NGO contacts and resources.
- Collaborate with existing community organizers on events or protests.

2. Local Partnerships

- Connect with sympathetic faith-based organizations that run shelters or food banks.
- Seeking partnerships in local colleges/universities for meeting spaces or resource drives.

3. Amplify the Message

- Use your voice on social media to highlight NGO success stories and any ongoing calls to action.
- Encourage others to volunteer, donate, or participate in the NGO’s programs.

10. ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

1. **DEFINE YOUR NEEDS:** Make a clear personal checklist.
2. **RESEARCH & SHORTLIST:** Find NGOs that match your needs and align with your values.
3. **VERIFY CREDIBILITY:** Check reputation, mission, and track record.
4. **OUTREACH & FOLLOW-UP:** Communicate your story, ask pertinent questions, and follow through.
5. **STAY ENGAGED:** Volunteer, attend events, and offer constructive feedback to strengthen ties.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS & INSIGHTS

- **Engage Early:** Don't wait until you're in crisis. Building relationships with NGOs proactively can ease future emergencies.
- **Share Knowledge:** Keep track of resources and pass them along to others in your network.
- **Be Loud:** NGOs often respond effectively when communities rally together. If you're comfortable, use social media to put pressure on and draw attention to issues.
- **Stay Flexible:** New NGOs and grassroots collectives emerge all the time—keep an open mind and regularly revisit your strategy.

12. CONCLUSION

Connecting with NGOs can be a game-changer in navigating legal, medical, and community challenges, especially in the face of rising hostility toward trans individuals. By clearly defining your needs, researching and vetting potential organizations, and fostering meaningful two-way relationships, you will be better equipped to secure not only immediate assistance but also long-term structural support.

Remember: **You are not alone.** Organizations dedicated to uplifting trans communities are out there—eager to help, advocate, and stand with you in the fight for justice. Continue to learn, share your experiences, and remain vigilant. Together, our voices become harder to ignore, and our communities become fortified in the face of any adversity.