

## Canadian Blood Services 2SLGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee Summary of Activities (2023 – present)

This document has been penned by WISDOM2ACTION CONSULTING LTD.



### **What is the 2SLGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee?**

The Advisory Committee (the Committee) is comprised of members from local and national 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations that were selected on the basis of their engagement with queer and trans communities on issues pertaining to 2SLGBTQIA+ health, public education, and knowledge translation. The organizations represented on the Committee have mandates and operations that include gay men's health, HIV advocacy, trans and gender diverse advocacy, organizations that serve African, Black, and Caribbean communities, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth organizations, research, community engagement, and 2SLGBTQIA+ service provision. Members also include CBS employees from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and staff. Wisdom2Action manages the logistics and engagement process of the Committee. Wisdom2Action also provides input to Canadian Blood Services on 2SLGBTQIA+-related issues and activities.

### **Summary of Committee Activities**

To establish rapport amongst its members and develop a work plan, the Committee met several times in person and virtually as well as asynchronously over the course of 2023 and 2024. Two in-person meetings were held in Ottawa. The first meeting included developing a strategy for engagement with 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations collaboratively and preparing for what would become the first draft of the apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities (discussed in greater detail below). Asynchronously and virtually the committee reviewed various drafts of the apology, provided feedback about the engagement strategy including informing Canadian Blood Services' Pride festival presence, and articulated the need for the microgrant Program (discussed in greater detail below). The second in-person meeting included reviewing a near final version of the apology, discussing elements of importance to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in delivering the apology, and planning how the apology would be delivered. Asynchronous and virtual meetings helped to finalize the apology review, and delivery of the apology. Throughout the course of the year there was ongoing discussion of the importance of Canadian Blood Services addressing remaining barriers to donation for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and discourse advising on this will be ongoing in the coming years.

### **More about the Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities**

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The historic apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities was released on May 10, 2024. The Committee's role in drafting the apology took place over many months of collaboration and consultation with the communities they represent. The importance of setting the historical context of the apology, highlighting the current work being undertaken to repair community relations, and Canadian Blood Services' future plans, were some of the key messages the Committee prioritized in the drafting process. The apology was launched during an in-person event that featured members of the Committee who spoke about the importance of the historic moment, and future possibilities in which they could work with Canadian Blood Services. Local (to Ottawa) members of 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations were invited to hear the apology in person. 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and stakeholders from outside of Ottawa were invited to view a live stream of the event. A recording of the apology event can be found [here](#).

### **More about the Microgrant Program**

The advisory committee identified that there is a lack of 2SLGBTQIA+ community developed, evidence-based resources about blood and plasma donation, including information about the updates to the donor eligibility criteria that improve inclusion for 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Therefore, knowledge about donation criteria changes is low within communities and Canadian Blood Services channels (website and social media) are not readily accessed by many in 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to learn about changes. As such they recommended a microgrant program for 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations to develop "for communities by communities" messaging about donation.

The microgrant launched in Summer 2024 and aims to support 2SLGBTQIA+ community organizations already engaged within their communities to increase awareness of donation and these donor eligibility criteria.

The microgrant applications were open to national and regional 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations to create new educational content related to Canadian Blood Services donation policy changes, donor eligibility criteria changes, and related topics that are relevant to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Round one (application period closed in late Summer 2024) provides funds to national or regional eligible organizations to create new educational content related to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, Canadian Blood Services policy changes, donor eligibility and outstanding issues. Round two (application period opened in Fall 2024) will provide funds to local, community-based Eligible organizations seeking to raise awareness in their communities about 2SLGBTQIA+ donor eligibility. These grant activities may take diverse shapes—town halls, panel discussions, development, and dissemination of educational materials, and more.

Initiatives successfully funded in round one will receive a maximum of \$15,000 per application. Initiatives that are successfully funded in round two will receive a maximum of \$4,000 per application.

The microgrant program is managed by Wisdom2Action using philanthropic funds from CBS financial donors. Information about the microgrant program is available on the Wisdom2Action

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website including the application form, contact information for support, and submission requirements.

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