



Informational material

**PRIORITY QUESTIONS
WHILE RECEIVING
SUPPORT IN ARMENIA:
FOR LGBT+ REFUGEES,
ASYLUM SEEKERS**

“Priority questions while receiving support in Armenia: for LGBT+ refugees, asylum seekers” informational material is prepared by Pink Human Rights Defender non-governmental organization and “Coalition to Stop Violence against Women” non-governmental organization.

The informational material was developed with the involvement of expert and social worker Anna Melikyan.

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Ընդդեմ կանանց սեփական
բռնության կոալիցիա
Coalition to stop violence
against women

pink
ARMENIA

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ABOUT THE GUIDE



Each year the number of refugees is increasing both worldwide and in Armenia. This increase is related to a number of socio-economic, political and various other issues. LGBT+ refugees are much more vulnerable, as there is a risk of facing multilayered discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, race, skin color, and so on.

This material aims to support and guide LGBT+ refugees in Armenia. Here you can find primary information on how to find out the various forms of support which is available in Armenia, where to apply, considering the situation you are in, what rights and legal regulations exist in the country, and which institutions and/or organizations you can turn to, if you face violence or discrimination.

The links and information included in this guide are presented according to data available in 2025. If some of the links do not work when you read it, please try searching for the data of the mentioned organizations and/or institutions using search applications.

WHO IS AN ASYLUM SEEKER AND A REFUGEE?



According to the Articles 5 and 6 of the Law on Asylum and Refugees of the Republic of Armenia¹:

An asylum seeker is a foreign citizen or a person without a citizenship who has applied for asylum in the Republic of Armenia. A foreign citizen or a person without a citizenship who has applied for asylum in the Republic of Armenia is considered an asylum seeker until a final decision is made on their application for asylum and enjoys all the rights of asylum seekers defined by this law in the Republic of Armenia.

A person is considered a refugee if:

- 1) They are a foreign citizen who, due to a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, because of such fear, is unwilling to ask for the protection of that country; or who, not having a citizenship and being outside the country of their former permanent residence, is unable or, because of such fear, is unwilling to return to it.
- 2) They are a foreign citizen who is forced to leave the country of their citizenship, or a person without a citizenship who is forced to leave the country of their former permanent residence, due to widespread violence, external invasion, internal conflicts, massive violations of human rights, or other serious incidents disturbing public order.

¹ Law on Asylum and Refugees of the Republic of Armenia (available only in Armenian). <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/193804/latest>

In the Republic of Armenia, the following residence statuses are established for foreigners:

- a) temporary;
- b) permanent;
- c) special.

● **Temporary residence status** is granted to any foreigner if they prove that there are circumstances justifying their residence in the territory of the Republic of Armenia for a period of one year or more.

Such circumstances may be:

- a) study, or
- b) the existence of a work permit in accordance with the Chapter 4 of the current law, or
- c) being the spouse, parent, or child of a foreigner with temporary residence status in the Republic of Armenia, or
- d) being the spouse or close relative (parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild) of a citizen of the Republic of Armenia or a foreigner with permanent or special residence status in the Republic of Armenia, or
- e) engaging in entrepreneurial activity, or
- f) being of Armenian nationality, or
- g) other cases defined by law.

Temporary residence status is granted for a period of up to 1 year, with the possibility of extending it by 1 year each time.

An application for extending temporary residence status must be submitted at least 30 days before the expiration of the status.

A shorter period may be set by the Government of the Republic of Armenia for submitting an application to extend temporary residence status for study purposes.

- **Permanent residence status** is provided to a foreigner, if they:
 - a) Provide proof that you have a spouse or close relative (such as a parent, child, sibling, grandparent, or grandchild) who is either a citizen of the Republic of Armenia or holds special residence status. This relative must have housing and financial means to support themselves in Armenia and must have lived in Armenia legally for at least three years before you submit your application for permanent residence.
 - b) Have an Armenian nationality or carry out entrepreneurial activity in the Republic of Armenia.

Permanent residence status is granted for a period of 5 years, with the possibility of extending it for the same period each time. An application for extending the permanent residence card must be submitted at least 30 days before the expiration of the permanent residence card's validity period.

The authorized state administration body from the police of the Republic of Armenia makes a decision on granting or refusing temporary and permanent residence status within 30 days from the date of submitting the application.

- **Special residence status** is provided to foreign citizens of Armenian nationality. Special residence status may also be granted to other foreigners engaging in economic or cultural activities in the Republic of Armenia. A foreigner may appeal the refusal of an application for obtaining or extending residence status through court.

HOW IS THE ASYLUM PROCESS ORGANIZED?



Asylum is granted to an applicant by recognizing them as a refugee. Even if you have crossed the border illegally and are seeking asylum, you are not subject to criminal or administrative liability. You have the right to be provided with a free of charge translation for written and oral communication. You have the right to receive free of charge legal counseling by applying to the Public Defender's Office, or if the issue concerns your sexual orientation and gender identity, you can contact the lawyer of Pink Human Rights Defender non-governmental organization or the lawyer of Right Side non-governmental organization.

Public Defender's Office: (+374) 10 600714

Pink Human Rights Defender NGO: (+374) 33 522533

Right Side NGO: (+374) 11 880770

You can also apply to the Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson) if you believe your rights have been violated by state, local self-government bodies or officials, as well as by organizations providing public services.

Hotline of Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson): 116

To submit an asylum application in Armenia, you must visit the Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia. Here you should submit an application. If you need assistance during the application process, you can ask the staff. The application can be filled in Armenian, your native language, or one of the UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish).

If you are applying to the Migration Service with your family members, you can submit one general application by any adult family member. However, you can also submit individual applications.

Along with the application, you should submit the following documents:

- Copy of the passport, copies of other identity documents (ID), if possible
- Copy of birth certificate (if you are a minor)
- Any documents you have that might substantiate your application
- 2 color photographs (35x45 mm)

The asylum application is reviewed by the Migration Service, and the decision is made on that basis. The decision can be positive or negative. If the decision is positive, you receive a refugee status. If it is negative, you are obliged to leave Armenia if you do not appeal the decision. For receiving consultation on such cases, you could call to:

Pink Human Rights Defender NGO: (+374) 33 522533

After submitting the application, you will be called for an interview. You should be informed about the date and time of the interview by notice within three days of the application. During the interview, you will be asked questions about the reasons for leaving your country of residence. Try to answer the questions completely and in detail. It is often difficult to talk about traumatic experiences. If during the interview you feel that you cannot continue, ask for a small break, take a deep breath, and if you feel safe, you can also share what you are feeling at that moment.

The interview is confidential. The information provided by you should not be communicated to the authorities of your country, including embassies, or to any other person. This information can only be

provided to other persons with your written consent.

Upon your preference, the interview will be conducted by a staff member of your preferred gender. If you do not speak Armenian, the interview can be conducted with the participation of a translator of your preferred gender invited by the Migration Service. You can also offer a translator of your own choice, but at your own expense. An employee of the Migration Service will prepare a protocol of the interview. If you consent, your lawyer may be present during the interview.

Within 3 working days after submitting an asylum application to the Migration Service, you should be provided with an asylum seeker's certificate, which will confirm that you are legally residing in Armenia. The asylum seeker's certificate is issued for a period of three months until a decision on granting asylum is made. If no decision has been made before the expiration of the term, the certificate's term is extended by another three months, and so on.

A special shelter operates under the jurisdiction of the Migration Service, which is intended for the residence of asylum seekers and their family members in Armenia. However, in the last few years, the Migration Service has not accommodated asylum seekers in the special shelter, citing a lack of vacant places. Nevertheless, it is recommended to mention it in the asylum seeker's application or to submit a separate application. If there is no vacant room in the special shelter, a referral is not provided. In that or any other cases when it is not possible to allocate a room in the special shelter for you for any reason, you can apply for financial assistance for renting an apartment. Financial assistance is provided for a period of three months, and if the term for reviewing the asylum application has been extended, it is provided until the end of the application review (maximum six months).

HOW TO FIND AN APARTMENT?



If you have a certain amount of money and are ready to rent an apartment independently, you can consider suitable options on the websites listed below. It is preferable to sign a contract with the owner of the apartment. It does not have legal force unless you certify it through a notary, but it is important to have an evidence.

If you are looking for an apartment in Yerevan, you can find more affordable options in the suburbs of the city. You can also consider other cities which are located closer to Yerevan and are accessible by public transport, for example, Abovyan, Ashtarak, Armavir, Etchmiadzin. Also, keep in mind that people in these cities might have more stereotypical views.

Websites where you can search for apartments for rent:



My realty real estate market: <https://myrealty.am/en>



Bnakaran: <https://www.bnakaran.com/en>



Estate: <https://www.estate.am/en>



List.am: <https://www.list.am/en/>

HOW TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT?



If you live in Yerevan and plan to use public transport, consider that public transportation is generally more active until 10:00 PM, and some also operate until 00:00 AM. You can plan your travel using the “Yandex Go Armenia” application. Here you can find a “Transport “ sub-section, where you can find the location of your preferred transportation number or what other options are available from that current station. You can pay using the “Telcell” application by buying an online ticket. Another option is to pay by ticket card, but again you need to have a pre-purchased package linked to your bank card.

Public transportation in the city, including the metro, costs 150 AMD.

If you plan to travel by taxi, you can use the “GG”, “Yandex Go Armenia”, “UVO” applications. It is recommended to specify the destination in the application. This way you will avoid paying more money. It is not recommended to take a taxi from the street, or if you do, clarify and agree on the amount to be paid beforehand. Information about transportation refers to the Yerevan city only.

WHAT MOBILE OPERATORS ARE AVAILABLE?



There are three mobile operators available in Armenia:



VivaCell MTS: <https://www.viva.am/en/>



Team: <https://www.telecomarmenia.am/en/>



Ucom: <https://www.ucom.am/en>

You can buy phone SIM cards from the offices of those operators. Sometimes they offer various affordable packages, including phone calls, messaging, and internet at the same time.

HOW TO USE MEDICAL SERVICES?



According to the Article 23 of the “Law on Refugees and Asylum” of the Republic of Armenia²:

Refugees who have received asylum in the Republic of Armenia have the right to use social services established for citizens of the Republic of Armenia by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia. They have the right to receive state allowances and other financial assistance, benefits for temporary disability, industrial injury, accidents, and occupational diseases. They have a right to receive free medical assistance and service guaranteed by the state, as well as have the right to pension provision and social protection in case of unemployment, if they meet the requirements provided in the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, regulating that field.

Asylum seekers and refugees who have not received asylum in the Republic of Armenia have equal rights with citizens of the Republic of Armenia to receive free medical assistance and services guaranteed by the state, if they meet the requirements of the legislation of the Republic of Armenia regulating the field.

If you are an LGBT+ refugee or an asylum seeker in Armenia and have a need of medical services, you should go to the medical facility (polyclinic) of your place of residence (the address you indicated to the migration service as your place of residence). At the polyclinic, you will receive free ambulatory medical assistance. This assistance does not include the services related to the hormonal therapy and

² Law on Asylum and Refugees of the Republic of Armenia (available only in Armenian). <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/193804/latest>

gender affirming medical care.

Take your asylum seeker's card/document with you. Be prepared that at the polyclinic they may only speak Armenian, and you will need someone accompanying you, or you can try to explain what service you need using "Google Translator". Your visit may be more effective if, for example, you are accompanied by a friend who speaks Armenian and the language you speak. Or, if necessary, you can involve a specialist who can accompany you to a medical institution. If you face discrimination or bad treatment in a medical institution, you can contact:

Hotline of the RA Ministry of Health: 8003

**Hotline of the Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson):
116**

Pink Human Rights Defender NGO: (+374) 33 522533

IF YOU NEED TO UNDERGO HORMONAL THERAPY OR PLAN TO HAVE GENDER AFFIRMING SURGERY IN ARMENIA



It is important to know that hormonal therapy is mainly available through private doctors. First, it is necessary to consult an endocrinologist, whose consultation as of 2025 is in average 15,000-25,000 AMD. The endocrinologist, before proceeding with hormonal therapy, will require a document from a psychiatrist. If you have concerns about visiting a mental health center and are worried about potential discriminatory approaches towards LGBT+ individuals, you can contact the social worker of the organization to get a referral to a supportive specialist (names are not mentioned in this material for safety reasons). One visit to a psychiatrist as of 2025 is in average 20,000-35,000 AMD. If you need a diagnosis from a psychiatrist, the diagnosis is usually provided within 2-3 visits.

Medication prescribed by an endocrinologist can be found in some pharmacies; sometimes they are ordered from other countries if not found in local pharmacies.

You can also receive a consultation on this matter from Right Side NGO.

It is also important to know that name change can be done in Armenia in a fairly short period, but legal gender recognition is still linked to the medical intervention.

Of course, we know how important hormonal therapy can be for you, but do not start this process without medical supervision. For finding the contacts of reliable medical specialists, you can contact:

Pink Human Rights Defender NGO: (+374) 33 522533

Right Side NGO: (+374) 11 880770

HOW TO RECEIVE EDUCATION?



If you are seeking asylum with your child who needs to continue their education in school, you can apply to the public education authorities to organize free education for your child in school. If your child does not speak Armenian, you can apply to a school where education is provided in your preferred language. However, you should consider that education in schools with specific languages may be for a fee. Another option is to apply to the school affiliated with your country's embassy.

If you want to receive higher education in Armenia, please note that you must apply to the preferred educational institution for the preferred specialty according to the procedure, which is the same as for citizens of the Republic of Armenia. Higher education in Armenia is tuition-based, but some international organizations provide scholarships specifically for refugees.

If you need Armenian language lessons, the “Armenian Red Cross Society” often has such opportunities; you can contact them by calling their hotline: 8184.

If you or your child face discrimination or violence in educational institutions based on your or your child's sexual orientation or gender identity, you can contact:

Hotline of RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport: (+374) 10 599600

Hotline of Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson): 116

Pink Human Rights Defender NGO: (+374) 33 522533

HOW TO FIND A JOB?



To find a job in Armenia, you can visit the following websites:



Job.am: <https://job.am/en/>



Staff.am: <https://staff.am/>



Myjob.am: <https://www.myjob.am/>



Worknet.am: <https://www.worknet.am/en/>

You can also apply to the State employment agency, where, according to the procedure, they should provide you with the necessary consultation and information. However, you may also face discrimination there. If you are subjected to violence at the workplace, you can contact the following organizations:

Police: 102

Hotline of Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson): 116

Pink Human Rights Defender NGO: (+374) 33 522533

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FACE VIOLENCE OR DISCRIMINATION?



If you have been subjected to **violence or discrimination based on your sexual orientation or gender identity**, or if you have been subjected to **violence by family members or a partner**, you can contact one of the specialists of an organization you know. Then, after receiving the relevant consultation, you can contact the police at 1-02. If you feel unsafe, contact one of your friends or someone you trust. This could also be a professional who has worked or is currently working with you. You can ask that person to come with you to the police station.

Although the police's function should be protecting the victim, unfortunately, some police officers may repeat existing societal stereotypes and try to insult you. In any case, if at the moment you assess that your life or health is in immediate danger, it is more advisable to contact the police and demand a quick response.

If you face such treatment from police officers, you can contact the Human rights defender's office and present the situation:

Hotline of Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson): 116

IMPORTANT TIPS



It is important:

- Do not disclose your LGBT+ identity to strangers or individuals you do not trust.
- Use secure means of communication, especially if you suspect you are being followed. If you are communicating with your relatives who live in the country you came from, avoid mentioning specific addresses and locations; just let them know that you are safe.
- If you move from city to city or change apartments, be sure to inform someone you trust in Armenia (it can be a friend, an organization employee, a specialist working with you).

Remember:

- You have the right to be protected.
- Discrimination and violence are prohibited by law.
- You don't have to remain silent. Your voice matters.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS



Police: 102

Ambulance: 103

State service of emergency situations: 911

Hotline of Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson): 116

Institutions and organizations supporting refugee matters:

RA Migration and Citizenship Service: (+374) 11 275015

Mission Armenia NGO: (+374) 10 444792

Armenian Red Cross Society: 8184

**KAZA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation:
(+374) 10 541844**

**International Organization for Migration:
(+374) 10 585692**

**UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):
0 8000 0025**

Organizations protecting human rights of LGBT+ people:

Pink Human Rights Defender NGO: (+374) 33 522533

Right Side NGO: (+374) 11 880770



pinkarmenia.org
coalitionagainstviolence.am