

September 22, 2021

Re: Deputation In Support of the Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan: Agenda Item-EC 24.9

Dear Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

My name is Kanaka Kulendran. I am the Chair of North York Cluster's Food Security Working Group. I am writing on behalf of the The North York Cluster- Food Security Working Group, a collective made up of 15+ North York service providers and non-profits providing emergency and ongoing food security services and programs through out North York. We support the establishment of a community-led and City-supported approach to address Black food insecurity in Toronto. We ask that Committee Members support the unanimous adoption of the Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan.

Many of us work in neighbourhoods with African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities who continue to be adversely impacted by lack of sustainable funding and policy changes needed to address both the immediate impacts of food insecurity and long -term impacts of poverty on Black residents.

Many food security programs and services have systems in place that are inherently anti-Black, making access to emergency food even more challenging. Through out this pandemic, we have partnered and worked closely with Black resident leaders, grassroots groups, and collectives to ensure that our programs and services are culturally responsive and reduce and confront these systemic barriers. We know that Anti-Black racism and food insecurity contributes to greater health inequities in Black communities. If we are truly dedicated to addressing these inequities, we must take a systemic interventionist approach that addresses the roots of anti-Black racism in the food system and moves us towards Black Food Sovereignty.

To establish Black Food Sovereignty, sustainable access to land, space and funding for Black-led food security initiatives are essential. Supporting and investing in the capacity of Black resident leaders, Black-led and Black serving agencies & grassroots groups is paramount if we are truly able to move from the stop gaps of emergency food programs to addressing intergenerational health inequities in Black communities.

As the City works towards economic recovery, and ensuring that we protect, re-build and strengthen our social safety net, we encourage the approval of the proposed Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan. This comprehensive 5- year plan will provide meaningful and respectful engagement of local Black food leadership, alongside policy commitments and sustainable funding to continue to address the detrimental and daily impacts of anti-Black racism and work towards building a more just food system.



North York
Community
House

We strongly encourage and support the City to take this key step in approving the proposed Toronto Black Sovereignty Plan. Thank you to the Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee for your consideration of our comments on this matter.

Sincerely,

Kanaka Kulendran, Chair (North York Cluster Food Security Working Group)
& Manager of Community Development (North York Community House)