



Network for the Advancement
of Black Communities

Réseau pour l'avancement
des communautés noires

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Re: Advancing Black Food Sovereignty

Dear Board of Health,

The Network for the Advancement of Black Communities (NABC) strongly endorses and supports the establishment of a Community Advisory Group and a five-year Black Food Sovereignty Plan in Toronto.

At NABC, we use a *Black Ecosystem Approach* to harvest the wisdom of all segments of Black Communities to create the conditions to address long-standing systemic disparities in Black Communities.

Our own experiences supporting the Black Community Sector to recovery has shown us how disproportionately Black communities have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Food insecurity is one of the top challenges faced by the Black community. Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving food organizations have all experienced unprecedented demand from Black communities who need support that get at the root of these inequities. Black-focused supports are what we need to address food insecurity and create access to healthy foods, green spaces, and the resources we need. NABC knows structural gaps in access to green space, sustainable resources, infrastructure, and food apartheid are longstanding, and will continue well after the pandemic without the City of Toronto's action and progress on a plan. A Black food sovereignty approach that emphasizes systems change is what we need now to address structural anti-Black racism and health inequities.

We know that short-term solutions are not enough. We need sustained and systems-focused change on the municipal level, including: 1) City-supported Black-led initiatives, 2) supports for food systems-focused Black-led, Black-serving, and Black-focused organizations to sustain a Black food sovereignty infrastructure, and 3) focus on systems change through all new and existing City initiatives to best support Black food sovereignty in neighbourhoods with high Black populations.

The establishment of a Community Advisory Group to advance this work is a critical step in continuing the direction given by the Board of Health to support the Black Food Sovereignty Plan. Only with commitment to these goals and this group in particular, can the workplan for the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism be realized. We know that community-driven efforts that bring together Black food leaders will be the driver in supporting Black wellbeing in Toronto and across the country.

Regards.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director, NABC