

# BLACK COALITION FOR AIDS PREVENTION

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**B.C.A.P.**

Charitable Number  
1322-19601 RR0001

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## **Re: Deputation in Support of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism – Year Three Update**

Dear Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

My Name is Muhaari, I work for the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention-Black CAP, I am the Director of Programs and Services. Black CAP works to create culturally relevant outreach, prevention and support services for people infected with, affected by, or at risk of contracting HIV. The work that we do is necessary, but it is not easy. Social barriers like HIV stigma, racism, homophobia, and poverty make our work more difficult, however, it's our understanding of these barriers that strengthen Black CAP's efforts.

We deliver support services that meet the health and wellness needs of our clients who are living with or affected by HIV or AIDS. To do this, we provide much-needed counselling, settlement, practical and peer support, employment, housing, and social support services that help people achieve their goals. We also work with men, women, youth, and LGBTQ communities to increase their knowledge and reduce their vulnerability to HIV, AIDS, and sexually transmitted infections. This is accomplished through prevention, outreach and harm reduction programming that is delivered in communities across Toronto. Black CAP is Canada's largest Black-specific AIDS service organization. Our volunteer Board provides oversight and leadership, while our staff delivers programs and services that help us meet our mission to:

1. Reduce the spread of HIV infection within Toronto's Black communities
2. Enhance the quality of life of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS

Black CAP strongly supports the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit in the ongoing implementation of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. We ask that Committee Members support the unanimous adoption of the Toronto Action Plan Year Three Update. The CABR Unit has walked in solidarity with us and the communities we serve in supporting and leveraging resources to support our programming.

Since 1989, the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP) has worked to respond to the threat of HIV and AIDS in Toronto's African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities. Our work is guided by our motto, 'Because All Black People's Lives Are Important', which serves as a reminder of our commitment to the human rights and dignity of all Black people who are vulnerable to STBBIs. Black CAP is an important resource for the thousands of Black people in Toronto living with, or at risk for, HIV, AIDS and STIs



Unity



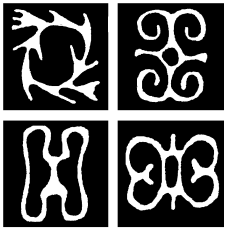
Strength



Hope



Together we are linked in life and death



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Through the partnership with the CABR Unit, over 3,000 of our services users have benefitted through several projects; The African, Caribbean and Black Queer and Trans Youth Pilot Project which supported youth ambassadors who developed a creative program around the idea of 'Community Youth Facilitators' the youth ambassadors participated in training and were able to curate a creative and educative space for youth culminating in a published Zine, through this project, over 50 youth facing food crisis due to COVID-19 received food support and mental health supports. The partnership is also supporting the Trans and Non-Binary Youth employment service plan that supports young Trans and Non-Binary youth with employment supports, offering employment preparedness training and connecting the youth to potential employers through convening employment events.

The mental health and Supports program was key in supporting over 300 community members' access to mental health supports and connecting them to care services across the city, this project supported our agency to host a learning management system and a 'connected to care' portal to enhance virtual access to our services that have increased our reach and enhanced accessibility.

Throughout COVID-19, Black communities were disproportionately impacted by the effects of the pandemic facing increased food insecurity, loss of income and other social-economic impacts. The CABR Unit leveraged further supports to enable us to convene and commemorate the mental health week and mental health day, community members were engaged in a Mind Body Soul event where we debuted our filmed mental health group session and had conversations around what mental health means to our community. The benefits of this relationship cannot be overstated as the impacts are long-lasting and will catalyze the envisioned change 'Because All Black People's Lives Are Important'

We are writing in support of the City Council adopting the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism – Year Three Update. The Plan works to address the ongoing impacts of anti-Black racism on the lives of Black Torontonians. Thank you to the members of the Economic and Community Development Committee for considering our comments today.

Sincerely,

**Muhaari A.**

Director of Programs and Services

Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention

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Strength



Hope



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