

27th April 2022

To: The Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee.

My name is Khary Collins. I am the Manager of the Sector Leadership Department. I am writing on behalf of the CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals, a non-profit charitable organization in the city of Toronto. Our mission is to create a society and economy in which Black youth achieve financial prosperity and high quality of life for themselves and their families to contribute to the advancement of Canada.

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CEE's Sector Leadership Department -Our vision is to build a robust Black Social Sector by providing targeted support for B3 organizations (Black-led, Black-focus, and Black Serving) to develop competent leadership and adaptive infrastructure. We aim to provide practical tools, best practices, and management skills development that assist them in overcoming socio-economic barriers which impede their adaptive capacity to current and future needs.

We are writing to support 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.

Why this is important to you/ your community:

The past two years have been long and challenging for many more-so members of the Black communities. The COVID-19 pandemic did more than break the economy; it laid bare the inequalities in our societal structures and communities. While many have come together to pivot and rebuild during this biological pandemic, the black community continued to experience its own pandemic of heightened anti-black racist acts within institutions and structures. This undermined years of relationship building and community engagement with Black-led initiatives through the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit within the City of Toronto and many other equity serving groups.

With Community leadership being central to the engagement process, the CABR Unit synthesized the disaggregated race-based data, which has been integrated into Toronto Public Health's approach to

collecting, analyzing, and reporting publicly on COVID-19 cases. This public health data now shows that Black communities represented 79 percent of hospitalizations and were the hardest hit in the first wave of the pandemic peaking at 33 percent of total monthly case rates in August 2020¹. A survey reported that approximately 75 percent of respondents rate their mental health as less than ok during this period¹. Structural inequalities like food insecurity are three times more prevalent among Black Canadians (at 29 percent) than their white counterparts, increasing the likelihood of contracting a severe case of COVID-19.²

The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism is a profound framework. Many of the listed deliverables are being executed with a human-centred approach backed by emerging data never before collected from the Black community. The unprecedented outcomes for black communities from this plan saw the birth of The [Toronto Community Crisis Service](#), formed from key recommendations (in the Action Plan, a Service is an alternate approach to responding to someone in crisis that focuses on health, prevention and well-being versus police enforcement. To date, the Crisis Service has developed partnerships with four service-delivery partners. The creation of the [Centre for Advancing the Interests of Black People](#) through the TCHC [Confronting Anti-Black Racism Strategy](#) and [Action Plan](#) Establishment of the [Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee](#).

As we assess and look toward a post-pandemic recovery, and as the City of Toronto continues to recognize its responsibility to create a city that works for all residents, we believe that this plan will support the delivery of effective and equitable solutions to the current challenges, safeguarding the well-being and rights of those in the Black community. With the support of the Confronting Anti-Black racism Unit – Black Resilience Cluster (BRC) group, we pivoted and surveyed the Black Canadian non-profit landscape and saw a critical need for a well-funded response to systemic inequities and structural barriers that continue to divide our community. The experiential relationship with the Confronting Anti-Black racism unit allows us to research and report on the funding and sustainability inequities of B3 groups, identify new and emerging trends, their impact, and how the unit is a collective and allies can continue to develop equitable and inclusive practices.

CEE is honoured to participate in the current Black Mandated Funding Framework Pilot. This pilot allows us to monitor, evaluate and contribute to a human-centred approach to transformation and recovery

1 McKenzie, K. & Khenti, A. *Fundamentals of Black Mental Health*, Dalla Lana School of Public Health and Temerity School of Medicine, Fall 2021.

2 [When it comes to tackling food insecurity, tackling anti-Black racism is an important part of the puzzle.](#) (2021). PROOF, University of Toronto.

as we address and document the gaps in funding in Black communities—. With \$3M to Black-led and serving agencies for mental health and COVID-19 emergency response, the Plan further identifies 21 actions led by City divisions and Black-led agencies, delivering a \$21.5 million investment to Black communities between June 2020 and December 2021, including \$7.1M in Black arts, culture and heritage initiatives; \$15.7M directly to Black communities. Access to these funds has somewhat eased some of the operational constraints that would typically impact retention and capacity to serve, creating a stop-gap preventing long-term scarring in the community and affecting the readiness and viability of Ontario’s recovering economy.

In unprecedented times like these, many equity-seeking groups, organizations, and communities will cease to exist without the support, advocacy, and strategic direction from bodies such as the Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit. COVID-19 introduced rapid systemic transformations, resulting in various barriers to be experienced again. This action plan recommends collaboration and coordination rather than being competitors in the same space.

CEE Centre, For young Black Professionals, endorses the Priorities for Year Four of the Action Plan

- **The Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan:** This intervention seeks to address high rates of Black food insecurity and cultivate Black-led local food systems.
- **The Black-mandated Funding Framework:** This intervention responds to a history of underinvestment in Black-led and Black-serving social service agencies, organizations and grassroots groups.
- **The Growing in Place Framework:** This initiative advances an anti-Black racism planning analysis for urban development projects to create city-wide approaches and interventions to address gentrification and Black displacement.
- **The Black Health Service Coordination Strategy:** To address poor health outcomes for Black communities and to respond to sector calls for targeted interventions for Black communities, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit is undertaking the development of a Black health service coordination response
- **Training and Organizational Learning:** To foster learning and continued engagement across the Corporation, Confronting Anti-Black Racism staff will also host several activities to support Black and non-Black staff. Learning opportunities include Unpacking Dialogues, Lunch and
- Learning and city-wide commemorative events, such as Black History Month and Black Mental Health Week events and Emancipation Month activities.

Thank you for considering these remarks in support of creating community-led City support for addressing anti-Black racism across the city.

Sincerely,

Khary Collins

CEE Centre For Young Black Professionals

Manager, Sector Leadership Department