

ANNUAL REPORT | 2019/2020

Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit



**CONFRONTING
ANTI-BLACK
RACISM**

Photo by: Matt Atherton

Table of Contents

1. Acknowledgements	XX
--------------------------------------	----

2. **Introduction**

About CABR	XX
Anti-Black Racism in Toronto: A Historical Precedence with Present-Day Implications	XX
Principles of Ubuntu: Our Guiding Framework	XX
The CABR Unit within a Global Context: The UN International Decade for People of African Descent	XX

3. **A Word from the PAC**

HUDA AHMED (Partnership Accountability Circle (PAC) of the CABR Unit)	XX
---	----

4. **2019-2020 at a Glance / Priority Areas**

The Impact of COVID-19 on CABR's Work	XX
Priority 1: Building an Inclusive and Equitable Economy	XX
Priority 2: Community Capacity Building	XX
Priority 3: Continuing to Create Culture Change at the City	XX
Priority 4: Investing in Black Children and Youth	XX
Priority 5: Improving Customer Service	XX

Table of Contents

5. Highlighting Stakeholder Perspectives: Place, People and Community

Personal narratives of individuals running organizations	
ROMAIN BAKER (Black Urbanism TO)	XX
Community change narratives	
CHERYL BLACKMAN (Director of Museums and Heritage Services)	XX
System-wide impact narratives	
CHRIS THOMPSON (United Way of Greater Toronto/Black Resilience Cluster)	XX

6. 2021: Looking Ahead (Y3 overview)

Priority 1: Community Capacity Building	XX
Priority 2: Continuing to Create Culture change at the City	XX
Priority 3: Community Safety Wellbeing with Alternatives to Policing	XX
Priority 4: Black Community Resilience	XX

7. Conclusion

XX

8. References

XX

9. Contact Information

XX

Acknowledgements




Photo by: Eye for Ebony

Land Acknowledgement

The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit (CABR), as part of the City of Toronto, acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The City also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

African Ancestral Acknowledgement

The CABR Unit also acknowledges the generations of African peoples throughout the diaspora who have endured the systemic, pervasive, and damaging impacts of white supremacy over the past 400 years. As a tree is connected to its roots, we honour our African heritage, the resilience, creativity, and relentless striving for equality and justice. We acknowledge that African history is rich with wisdom and is much deeper than the tragedy that began through colonialism and slavery. May our future generations be empowered to continue the work of ensuring the human rights of all Black peoples are upheld, respected, and advanced.

A photograph of three young men on a city street. The man on the left is wearing a dark hoodie, a blue cap, and sunglasses, laughing with his mouth open. The man in the center is wearing a dark Adidas jacket with white stripes on the sleeves and a dark beanie, also laughing. The man on the right is wearing a pink hoodie and a green cap, looking towards the other two. They are standing on a sidewalk with cars and buildings in the background. The word "Introduction" is overlaid in white text with a green underline.

Introduction

Photo by: Jed Villejo

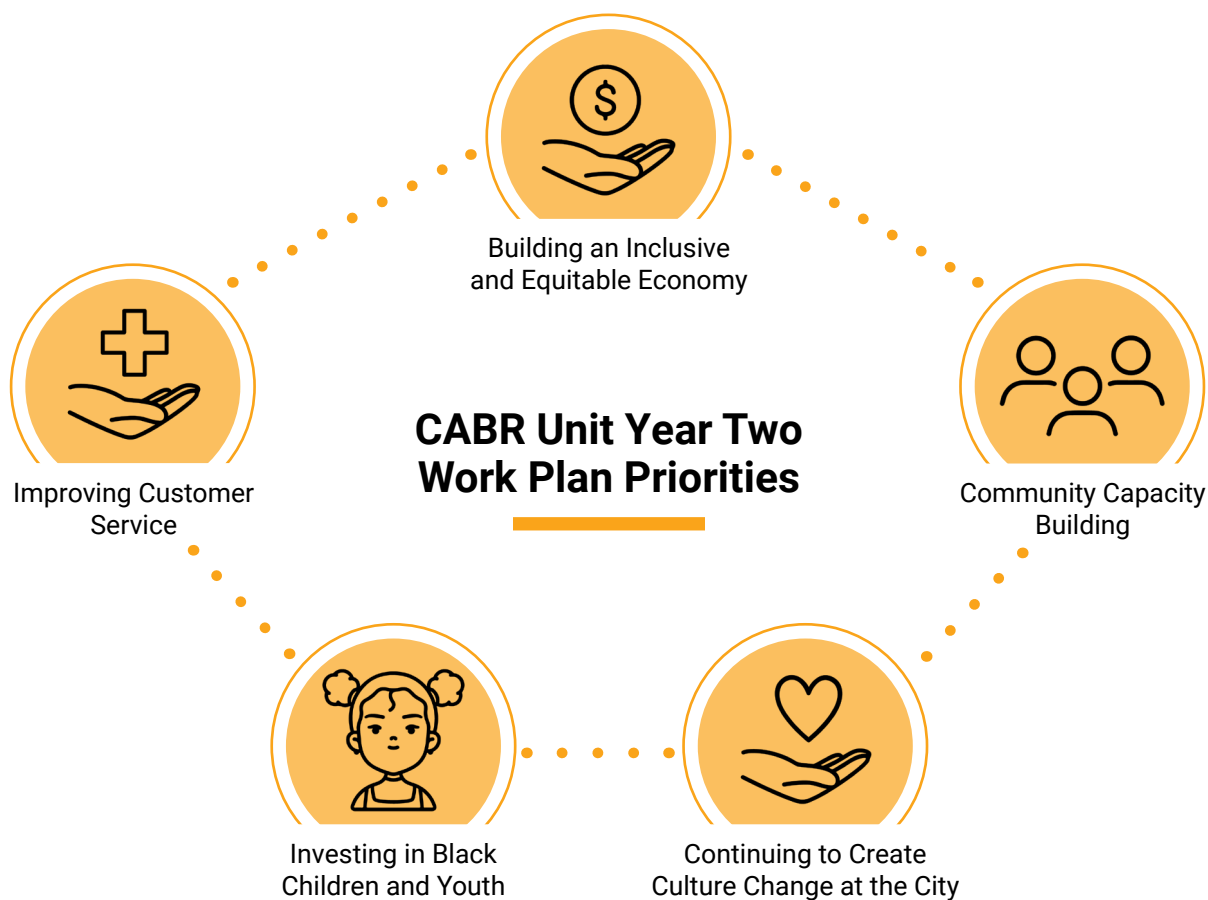
About the CABR Unit

The CABR Unit was established at the City of Toronto to ensure the full implementation of the 22 recommendations and 80 actions of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, which was unanimously adopted by Toronto City Council in December 2017. The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism is a five-year plan with implementation scheduled from 2018-2022. The Action Plan features 5 priority areas for bettering the lives of Black Torontonians: Children & Youth Development; Health & Community Services; Job Opportunities & Income Supports; Policing & the Justice System, and; Community Engagement and Black Leadership.

The CABR Unit is a permanent corporate office at the City of Toronto, and is housed in the Social Development Finance and Administration Division (SDFA). In 2019 and 2020, the CABR Unit was staffed by Aina-Nia Ayo'dele Grant, Manager; Mohamed Shuriye,

Policy Development Consultant; Anthony Morgan, Training and Development Consultant; Imara Ajani Rolston, Community Development Officer; and Lucy Nyarwai, Community Development Worker. The CABR Unit also has an annual youth internship program for four Black youth to support career exploration at the City while gaining valuable work experience.

The CABR Unit has a primary focus on driving systems change within the City of Toronto as a corporation, and within the broader city. There is a collaborative process by which City's divisions work with the CABR Unit to define the scope and goals of their work, as it relates to fully implementing the actions and recommendations outlined in the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. Each year, City divisions and select agencies, boards and commissions of the City are tasked with undertaking specific actions in the Action Plan to better social, cultural and economic outcomes for Toronto's diverse Black communities.



While substantial progress was made towards these goals, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability of the CABR Unit to achieve a number of the original targets set out in the Action Plan for Year Two. The CABR Unit is especially proud of supporting community stakeholder groups and organizations who have been on the frontlines responding to the changing needs of Black residents. Despite the unprecedented onset of COVID-19 and the significant adjustments and changes responding to this global pandemic required, the CABR Unit was still able to move forward with many important initiatives. Some of these initiatives include the Mayor's Roundtable of Black Businesses, the development of a community-led group on Black Food Sovereignty, and the establishment of COVID-19 rapid response forum led by the CABR Unit, known as the Black Resilience Cluster.

In this report, the extent to which Actions of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism were implemented and/or adjusted in light of the pandemic will be outlined in this report. Additionally, this report will speak to specific measures the CABR Unit put in place to further advocate for the needs of Toronto's Black residents who were made especially vulnerable to the social, economic and health disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anti-Black Racism in Toronto: A Historical Precedence with Present-Day Implications

Anti-Black racism is a systemic issue in Toronto, with a history rooted in centuries of the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. By briefly contextualizing the roots of anti-Black racism in Canada and, by extension, Toronto, we hope to provide necessary context for understanding why it remains a necessity to address anti-Black racism through the CABR Unit at the City of Toronto.

The history of enslaved Africans in the Americas began with our ancestors being forcibly kidnapped and brought to the shores of Turtle Island that were claimed as American colonies in the early 17th century. The enslavement of Africans provided European states, corporations and individuals with free labour for their plantations, construction projects, and manufacturing in the Americas. As a global system of anti-Black economic exploitation, the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery became an entrenched institution throughout European nations and the stolen lands that they claimed and colonized. This unjust and inhuman treatment of Africans was justified and excused through the invention and spreading of anti-Black ideas, prejudices and stereotypes that became popular throughout Europe and its colonies. For instance, Africans were regularly mischaracterized as being sub-human, lazy, of animal-like intelligence and tendencies, hyper-sexed, uncivilized and also violent and threatening. The social reproduction of these ideas across European societies and

colonies led the enslavement of Africans to find widespread support, thereby enabling centuries of exploitation of African people for the unjust enrichment of Europeans. The United Nations estimates that between 12 and 15 million Africans lived, suffered and died as a result of being enslaved. The legacies of anti-Black racism as rooted in the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery continues to be felt today by people of African descent across the world, particularly through disproportionately high rates of socio-economic marginalization, disadvantage and exclusion experienced by Black-identified persons.

The lands now claimed by Canada, including what is now Ontario and Toronto, were included in the global traffic and trade of enslaved Africans from the 1600s to the early 1800s when slavery was finally abolished on these lands. The Slavery Abolition Act which came into effect on August 1, 1834, abolished slavery throughout the British Empire, including British North America (which would become Canada in 1867). The abolition of the enslavement of Africans in the British Empire did not translate into full enjoyment of rights and freedoms for Black people in what is now Canada. Decades of formal and informal practices of segregation of towns, cities and public spaces immediately followed the end of enslavement to effectively 'keep Black people in their place'. Segregation and other similar policies and practices in Canada that followed the enslavement of Africans on these lands ultimately resulted in anti-Black racism being embedded in the social, cultural, economic and political fabric of Canadian society.

Photo by: Gayatri Mahotra



Photo by: Jacky Zeng

Photo by: Mike Von

Many examples of anti-Black racism exist throughout Canada's history. An example of one of these racist policies includes (but is not limited to) Canada's previously exclusionary immigration laws. In 1954, a Black Torontonians community leader and civil rights activist named Donald Willard Moore (1891-1994) led a delegation to Ottawa denouncing Canada's discriminatory immigration laws, which previously denied equal immigration status to non-white British subjects. This anti-Black racist advocacy resulted in changes to immigration law to allow persons of African and Caribbean descent to migrate to Canada to find employment on a more equal footing with their white counterparts migrating from European countries.

With respect to the City of Toronto, specifically, this city has had a Black population from its early days as a settlement. Its inhabitants included enslaved African women, men, and children, Black Loyalists, and African Americans escaping enslavement in the United States. It also included rural Black Canadians moving from Nova Scotia or southwestern Ontario, and people migrating from the Caribbean and the African continent. Members of each of these groups have contributed significantly to the growth, well-being, and development of Toronto as a unique city, expanding Toronto's identity as a multicultural hub.

Despite the longstanding presence and contributions of Black people, families and communities to this city, the legacy of anti-Black racism here persists. This is evidenced through current social, economic, and political marginalization of Torontonians of African descent. It is experienced as a lack of opportunity, poor health and mental health outcomes, poor education outcomes, higher rates of precarious employment and unemployment, significant poverty, and overrepresentation in the criminal justice, mental health, and child welfare systems.

Pivoting Through the Pandemic

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these and other vulnerabilities of Toronto's Black populations. For example, Toronto Public Health reports that COVID-19 is impacting racialized Torontonians, especially Black residents, and people living with low-income at disproportionately higher rates than the rest of Toronto's population. It is being increasingly recognized that the pandemic is deepening the hardships and inequities of poverty and racism for Black residents in this city. Torontonians who are Black, living below the poverty line and who identify as being under-housed are disproportionately represented in COVID case data. This disproportionate impact has been recognized by the City. Toronto's Mayor, John Tory, recognized this in these comments to the Toronto Star:

“What is clear during the pandemic is that there are extraordinary impacts that COVID-19 has had on a number of communities within our city, including the Black community... Black people, who represent nine (9) percent of Toronto's population, make up twenty-six (26) percent of the city's COVID-19 cases.”

The data collected and referred to in this article, coupled with organized advocacy of Black community organizations, community leaders and vocal residents, led the City of Toronto to respond by developing the Black Community COVID-19 Response initiative. This initiative provided funding to a dozen Black-led and primarily Black-serving community agencies providing health services in ten neighbourhoods with the highest COVID-19 case rates. The services included mobile and community-based COVID-19 testing, culturally appropriate mental health supports, emergency food supports and targeted communication tools.

As a proactive and culturally responsive approach to the systemic injustices impacting Toronto's Black communities, the content and implementation of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism drives towards the realization of improved outcomes for Black Torontonians by creating opportunities that promote and protect the social, cultural and economic well-being of Black communities across Toronto.

The actualization of the CABR Unit's Year Two Work Plan Priorities was particularly challenging for many, as COVID-19 impacted many strategies to implement change in the City and beyond. Despite challenges, the CABR Unit made great strides in the continued implementation of the Action Plan. The Year Two Annual Report highlights how CABR Unit was able to support diverse Black leadership, including amplifying the voices of the Partnership Accountability Circle (PAC), Black community stakeholder groups, as well as Black staff leadership at the City of Toronto. They all shared their perspectives on the impact of the CABR Unit's work over its second year, and the impact of COVID-19 on their work.

Principles of Ubuntu: The CABR Unit's Guiding Framework

The CABR Unit's work is guided by the African principle, Ubuntu: "I am because you are." This principle has guided the Unit's work to influence, promote and activate social harmony and affirmation of Black communities by identifying and removing barriers, and improving access to opportunities for Black residents of Toronto.

The CABR Unit's Ubuntu Framework has become a lens through which the Unit sees and evaluates the impact of its work on Toronto's Black communities. It also informs how we tell the story about that impact to ourselves, our communities and stakeholders. The CABR Unit understands its work through four spheres of change to help the Unit imagine and lead a more robust and multilayered impact-driven framework for change while remaining rooted in African practices and principles. Informed by Toronto's Black communities, it is the Unit's view that true change requires multi-level, interconnected and holistic shifts which happen at the individual, group, institutional, and societal levels. At each of these levels, the CABR Unit seeks the following:



Photo by: August de Richelieu





Personal/Individual

To activate, sustain, and promote change at the personal and individual level. Confronting anti-Black racism depends on the change in individuals at the psychological, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual level.



Group/Interpersonal

To transform group dynamics on the small-scale to form a foundation for broader institutional and communal change. The CABR Unit has been engaging teams, working groups, and committees in disruptive conversations that upset the dominance of white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, and class in small to mid-size group dynamics.



Institutional/Organizational

To sustain and contribute to broader societal and communal change. Anti-Black racism is embedded in all parts of society and must be confronted in all of its societal incarnations, whether it is racial profiling, disproportionate levels of mental health challenges, or a higher vulnerability to gentrification and displacement.



Community/Society

To transform and cultivate new cultures within organizations and institutions. These are cultures that promote robust engagement with the root causes of systematic disadvantage and inequity built on and sustained by anti-Black racism. This level is about our shared psychologies, emotions, systems, policies and practices.

These spheres of change are not new or novel. They simply help the CABR Unit understand and reflect on the change it aims to catalyze, incubate, and activate inside and outside of the City. The CABR Unit's second year report uses this story to shape its narrative of activating change across the multiple levels of the Ubuntu Framework. This report also tells a much broader story about the lifecycle of the CABR Unit's work and how it aims to honour African ancestors and the long history of work, organizing, and engagement that led to the Unit's creation. This report also articulates how the CABR Unit's work lays the foundation for a better Toronto for generations of people of African descent that are yet to be born. The CABR Unit's work and its commitment to the principle are about undoing legacies of anti-Black racism and accelerating the rebuilding of Black well-being for the present and for even more promising Black futures in this city and beyond.

The CABR Unit within a Global Context: The UN International Decade for People of African Descent

The grounding activities, actions and initiatives of the CABR Unit are driven by the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism and the Ubuntu Framework discussed above. The CABR Unit's work is also connected to the ongoing struggles towards justice, freedom and equality for global African diaspora communities. For this reason the CABR Unit has been keen to support the City of Toronto to recognize and undertake initiatives and activities to honour and align with the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024).

In 2019, CABR Unit was successful in supporting the City of Toronto to officially proclaim recognition of the UN International Decade for People from African Descent. In 2020, the CABR Unit continued in these efforts, which culminated in the City ultimately unveiling a new design for the iconic TORONTO sign on the grounds of Toronto City Hall, namely in Nathan Phillips Square. This was done to raise awareness of the aims and objectives of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent.



Photo by: Larry Crayton



Photo by: Reba Spike

Working in partnership with the City's Division, Economic Development & Culture, the CABR Unit collaborated to lead a selection process to identify a Black artist based in the City to design the Toronto Sign wrap in honour of UN International Decade for People of African Descent. The successful design, entitled 'Patterns for the People' was created by artist, Danilo Deluxo McCallum. The artwork design on the TORONTO Sign uses vibrant African fabric patterns as a backdrop to represent the diverse community of people of African descent in Toronto and globally. Woven into the colourful patterns are African cultural symbols like the Adinkra Sankofa bird, which represents the importance of moving forward through recalling the past. The inclusion of portraits of Canadians of African descent is an important statement in recognition that people of African descent are here, beautiful, bold and proud, holding Toronto accountable for justice and equity.

The Toronto Sign wrapped in the Patterns for the People design is an important symbol of the City's commitment to uplifting Black history and highlighting Black citizens' contribution to the City. The CABR Unit hopes that this new look for the Toronto Sign will galvanize public awareness of the City of Toronto's aims to address anti-Black racism in a manner that is consistent with the global activities being led by the United Nations under the Decade's theme, Recognition, Justice, Development. This action will follow up with ongoing community health events, symposiums, and educational sessions for municipal, non-profit, and private organizations to continue efforts to enlighten the public about the importance of confronting anti-Black racism in Toronto, while maintaining a connection and awareness to the ongoing global efforts towards achieving Black freedom.

A person is shown from the back, wearing a traditional red and white striped headwrap and a matching striped garment. The background is a blurred wall with a large banner that has the word 'HISTORY' in blue capital letters. Other people are visible in the background, including one in a pink shirt on the left and a drum on the right.

Reflections from the CABR Unit's Partnership and Accountability Circle

As part of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, the City engages with 12 Black Torontonians (African descent or origin, African Black Caribbean, African-Canadian, Canadians of African descent) to form the Partnership and Accountability Circle (PAC). The PAC guides and supports the full implementation of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. The PAC is supported by and works collaboratively with the City of Toronto's CABR Unit.

In Year Two Hodan A. Mohamed was Co-Chair of the PAC. She is a diaspora Somali Canadian and design-thinking strategist, with a focus on employment equity, public policy, organizational change, and diversity, and inclusion. Hodan described the relationship between the PAC and the CABR Unit and the intended impact of their collaborative working relationship in support of Black communities in Toronto.



“The PAC is the body that functions to keep CABR accountable for all the projects they embark on. It is composed of diverse community stakeholders who have experience from different walks of life and facilitate a relationship between CABR, the City of Toronto, and Toronto’s communities.

PAC members meet periodically to discuss matters related to the promotion, protection and advancement of diverse Black communities within the City of Toronto. PAC members are also responsible for sharing and promoting opportunities within the communities we are part of. We recognize community barriers and challenges, and we mobilize to ensure our community needs are heard at the CABR Unit. For example, in Year Two, we ensured sharing resources such as distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) to Black communities through our channels.

Year Two of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism proved to be a unique challenge for all Torontonians, including the CABR Unit and the PAC. Anti-Black racism and structural racism has a socio-economic and psychological impact on the Black communities far preceding the pandemic. However,

when COVID-19 hit, we realized that the pandemic showed the vulnerabilities and exacerbated the disproportional impact on the Black community due to factors such as the racialized care economy (where Black essential frontline workers providing care and critical services are more likely to work in these professions and at a greater health risk) and types of living arrangements common in Black communities.

COVID-19 slowed us down, as the PAC was assembled shortly before the pandemic started. PAC's legislation was passed in 2017, and it was formally assembled in 2019 just before COVID-19 came on the scene. During this time, PAC members had limited opportunities to engage effectively with the City of Toronto's civic leadership. Furthermore, due to COVID-19, the government dispersed the CABR team into different committees under the emergency act.

However, the PAC continued to support and hold the CABR Unit and City leadership accountable. The PAC had a series of meetings during the height of COVID-19, most notably with Mayor John Tory's Roundtable on Black Business (from healthcare to food sovereignty). This meeting created an opportunity for CABR and PAC to engage in productive discussions around the COVID-19 impact on the Black community. At this meeting, key promises and action items were put into focus, which led to CABR and PAC reconnecting to ensure the key promises were actually achieved by Mayor Tory's office. The actionable items discussed were realized during the government recovery reopening of Toronto. These successes would not have been possible without the PAC and the CABR Unit's leadership and follow-through.

We were encouraged by the focus on Black representation in the COVID-19 response, economic rebuilding, and healthcare meetings at the municipal level. The PAC's aim has always been to ensure that the Mayor's and elected City Councillors' decisions are informed by the progress made by the CABR Unit and City divisions, including the PAC report, in a way that fully and adequately prioritizes the socio-economic interest of Black Torontonians to correct the blind spot the City has historically had during policy-making processes. We look forward to seeing the positive impact these meetings will bring to the Black Community in Toronto throughout the future years of the 5-year plan."

”



A photograph of a protest scene. In the foreground, a person's arm is raised, holding a large sign with a raised fist symbol. The background shows a crowd of people, some wearing masks and hats, and city buildings under a clear sky. The text "2019-2020 at a Glance" is overlaid on the sign.

2019-2020 at a Glance

Photo by: Clay Banks



The Impact of COVID-19 on CABR's Work

The COVID-19 crisis and resurgent global movement for Black lives resulted in immense demand for the CABR Unit's expertise and guidance both within the City and to external partners. Two years of robust staff training efforts, anti-Black racism policy collaboration and intentional community partnership resulted in a wave of support and guidance requests. Continuous demands for intense and sustained engagement from the small staff complement are increasing and were especially heightened in Year Two. This reinforced the need for increased investment in anti-Black racism work across the City and the need for intentional and sweeping systemic change to better Black lives.

The implementation of Year Two Work Plan Priorities of the CABR Unit was deeply impacted by the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the eruption of the worldwide movement for Black lives, instigated by the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and, more locally, Regis Korchinski-Paquet. The disproportionate impacts of the local pandemic on Black residents and the global and local Black Lives Matter movements highlighted the urgency for profound systemic change. On an unprecedented level, Year Two of the CABR Unit's work made clear that true change must confront the legacy and pervasive presence of anti-Black racism in our society and further reinforce the need for intensified investments in spaces, policies, programs, and institutional change.

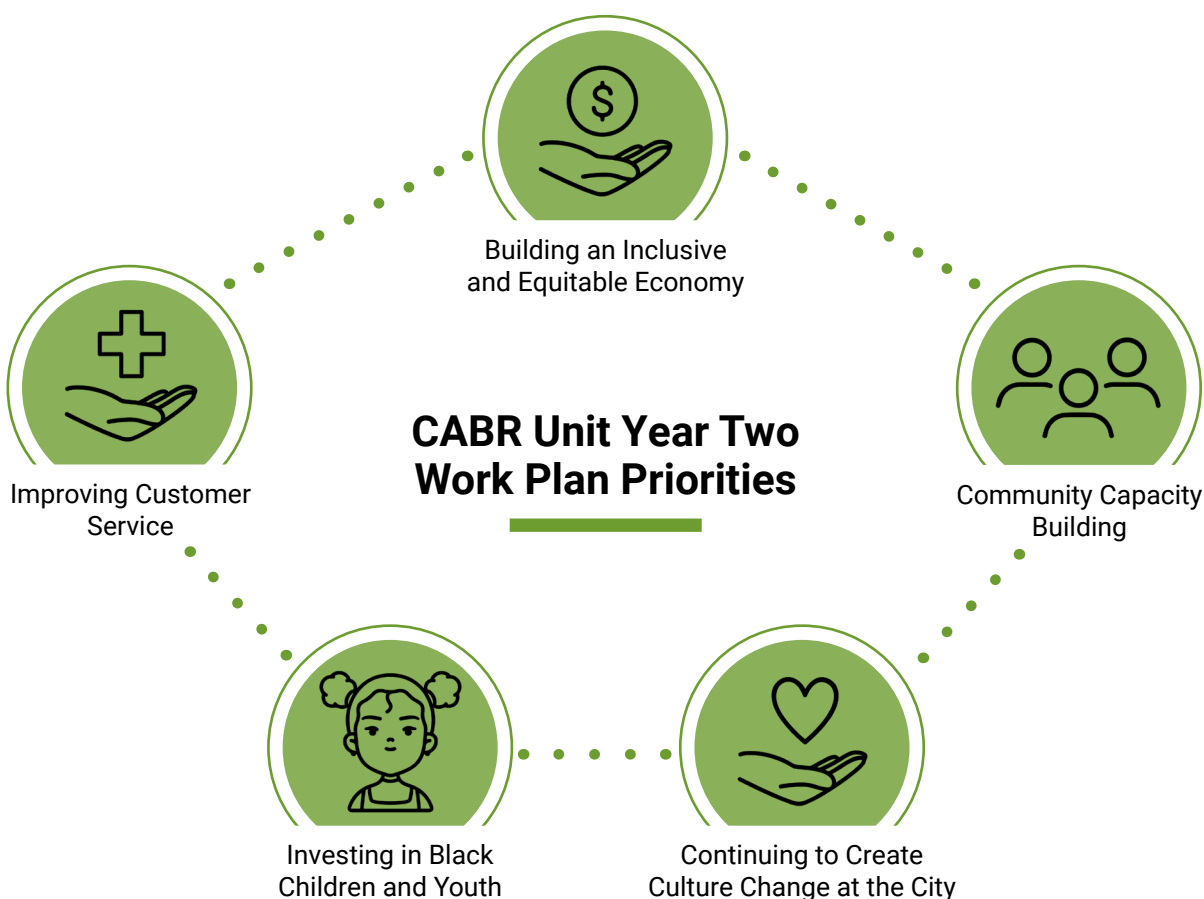
In response to COVID-19, the CABR Unit anticipated the pandemic's disproportionate impacts on Black communities early on. As such, the CABR Unit immediately proposed and received support to initiate rapid-response efforts through the City of Toronto COVID-19 emergency response mechanisms. In particular, the Unit promptly connected with Black-mandated organizations to mount and support a broad-based response to the pandemic. After consulting with the CABR Unit, less than a month after COVID-19 forced the City of Toronto in a lockdown, the CEE Centre of Young Black Professionals developed and published a report on the particular needs and challenges of Toronto's leading Black community organizations. The report was entitled, Covid 19 Emergency Aid Report . The report was developed through connecting a diverse range of over 36 Black organisations to identify their needs and ways in which they could collectively articulate their needs and the preferred ways they wanted to be assisted through the crisis by the City of Toronto and other leading social sector agencies and organizations across Ontario. The collective voice in which Toronto's Black community agencies spoke through this report provided critically needed insight, data and direction on what supports, programs and initiatives Toronto's Black social services organizations most desired and required to ensure that

Black communities would not be left behind as a result of the pandemic. One of the most significant impacts of the report is that it spurred the City of Toronto to partner with The United Way of Greater Toronto to establish and drive the Black Resilience Cluster as part of their COVID-response community needs initiative, the Community Coordination Plan. The Black Resilience Cluster (BRC) functioned as a weekly huddle of anywhere between 15 and 50 Black-serving community organizations coming together to discuss pressing and impending needs, and coordinate quick responses to emerging health, education, employment, housing, child care and other social services needs of Toronto's Black communities.

Since starting in May 2020, the BRC has since grown to involve over 60 organizations, which meet on a weekly basis to share information and coordinate responses to the COVID-19 emergency and other pressing challenges. Through the TO Supports Investment Fund, a combined total of \$2.1 million was disbursed to 21 Black-mandated organizations across Toronto over two funding rounds to meet the emergency needs of Black Torontonians. The CABR Unit also engaged and facilitated several Black-focused COVID-19 response initiatives detailed in the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit COVID-19 Response Summary.

As noted earlier in this report, the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism features 22 recommendations and 80 actions to be implemented over a 5 year period. To ensure the sustainable, coordinated and strategic implementation of this Action Plan, the CABR Unit advances the actions and aims of the Plan through the development and adoption of annual Work Plan Priorities. These annual Work Plan Priorities support the CABR Unit to effectively track, evaluate, and report on the status of all the actions of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

The CABR Unit's Year Two Work Plan Priorities were informed by input provided by Toronto's Black communities, the CABR Unit's Partnership & Accountability Circle, progress achieved after Year One of the implementation of the Action Plan, and City of Toronto divisions, agencies, boards and commissions tasked with implementation of various actions in the Action Plan. The Priorities were as follows:



In the sections below, the actions, initiatives and activities under each CABR Unit Year Two Work Plan Priority will be discussed.

Priority 1: Building an Inclusive and Equitable Economy



Building an inclusive and equitable economy is critical to supporting Black Torontonians to access economic opportunities and build resilient communities. The CABR Unit has coordinated efforts to direct the Social Development, Finance and Administration, People and Equity, and Parks, Forestry and Recreation Divisions to participate meaningfully with Black communities to enhance economic outcomes. In this effort, important actors include Black-owned businesses, entrepreneurs, Black-focused employment agencies, and businesses that champion inclusive and equitable hiring practices.

Addressing the need for inclusive and equitable employment advocacy within City departments and throughout the business community.

In the pursuit of a more diverse representation of hires in the City of Toronto's public service, the CABR Unit developed a list of over 30 Black-led employment-focused agencies for outreach and City recruitment needs. The CABR Unit also participated in job fairs for the diverse Black community with a focus on young professionals and Black youth. These outreach events included the Black Policy Conference and the Canadian Association of Urban Financial Professionals.



The Partnership & Accountability Circle (PAC) also acknowledged these short-term outcomes as promising first steps toward building more inclusive and equitable representation of Black staff at the City of Toronto. However, in the development of the present report, the PAC noted that increased rigor and more detailed disaggregated data collection across the job life cycle had not been adequately advanced through the Action Plan. For example, assessing the effectiveness of targeted recruitment efforts could have been measured using statistical data collected on the numbers of Black applicants to city positions, compared with the number of Black people hired by the City.

Another outcome of the CABR Unit's Year Two Work Plan Priorities was the emergence of a partnership between the City of Toronto and John Howard Society on Ontario for a project called the "Second Chance Program." The Second Chance Program was an online e-learning program for individuals living with a criminal background. The Program aimed to enhance these individuals' understanding of their legal rights regarding criminal background checks, and inform employers on how to remove barriers to employment for these individuals. Furthermore, the City of Toronto's Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) division delivered record suspension services for Torontonians living with a criminal record. These services were provided in partnership with University of Toronto law students in 14 TESS offices. This initiative ultimately served 232 clients who received group or individualized onsite record suspension supports to help ensure that their criminal records did not unjustly prevent their active participation in the labour market.

Additionally, Toronto Employment and Social Services, in partnership with People and Equity, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Centre for Policy and Research, and the John Howard Society of Ontario, engaged employers to adopt rights-respecting hiring practices concerning police record screening. This was done through these partners hosting digital and in-person workshops for human resource professionals. A total of 112 HR professionals and employers attended these sessions.

The CABR Unit supported various City divisions, as well as community agencies in

Year Two to advance the economic security and well-being of Black Torontonians. This work has been undertaken to advance promising steps toward building inclusive and equitable representation of Black workers and professionals within City of Toronto Public Service and throughout the labour market and business community in Toronto.

Mayor John Tory's Roundtable on Black Business

One of the critical actions of CABR in Year Two was the ongoing work of the Mayor's Roundtable On Black Business. The Roundtable provides a space for Black leaders and professionals from a range of business and entrepreneurship sectors to connect directly with Mayor John Tory to share business opportunities, barriers, and important developments of significance to Toronto's Black communities. In Year Two, two sectoral focus tables were organized, namely, the "Black Tech Stakeholder Table," and the "Little Jamaica/Eglinton West Table."

In addition to advocating for improved support for Black businesses, these tables informed the Mayor's priorities and informed the creation of various City projects, including identifying the need for increased civic engagement opportunities for Black leaders; and informed multi-stakeholder action to address business challenges and displacement in Little Jamaica through the "Little Jamaica Campaign". These tables have been organized with community partners and stakeholders to identify the needs of Black businesses in these sectors.

The Growing In Place Initiative

The CABR Unit's Growing In Place initiative emerged in Year Two out of the recognition that confronting gentrification as a force that is displacing Toronto's Black communities and residence in the city requires organized community mobilization, strategic planning and amplification of the Black voices most impacted by these processes. This initiative aimed to foster a cross-sectoral public dialogue to inform the development of an anti-Black racism planning analysis for urban development projects in Toronto. Growing In Place provides a platform for the promotion of new approaches to neighbourhood re-development and changes that honour the communal bond and long legacies of Black communities in different parts of the city. Launched in Year Two, the initiative focused on areas with a high concentration of Black residents (like Jane & Finch and Eglinton West) and addressed issues of anti-Black racism related to destabilizing forms of neighbourhood redevelopment.

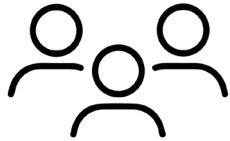
In partnership and collaboration with Economic Development and Culture, City Planning, Metrolinx, the Black Business Professional Association, and Black Urbanism TO, the CABR Unit's Growing In Place initiative championed a community engagement plan. This plan centred the importance of meaningfully engaging and involving Black community members, Black businesses and residents in conversations regarding city planning and cultural assets in their community, along with critical community dialogues on what they felt needed to stay and/or change in the reshaping of their predominantly Black communities. The Growing In Place initiative served to help translate what Black communities articulated as their needs into language that developers and planners could utilize in their planning and redevelopment practices and policies.

In Year Two, one of the outcomes of this initiative was "The Little Jamaica" campaign, focused on the Eglinton West corridor. This campaign served to raise awareness of the intersecting impacts of the Lightrail Transit (LRT) construction, COVID-19, and gentrification on Black-owned businesses along Eglinton West. This campaign also provided Black businesses in Little Jamaica with targeted financial management support and digital marketing support, courtesy of the Black Business Professional Association and Black Urbanism TO.



Photo by: Benjamin Massello

Priority 2: Community Capacity Building



With the support of the CABR Unit, in Year Two, the City deepened its commitment to working closely with community institutions such as schools, youth recreation spaces, food justice initiatives, healthcare service providers, and community organizations that foster community resilience and safety for Black residents. This shift was driven and sustained by Black/African/Caribbean-centric service providers who organized and advocated for the City to make this change. With the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on Black communities, in Year Two, the CABR Unit partnered with Black communities to serve as a conduit for leveraging City resources in support of Black youth, families and residents.

Advocacy for Confronting Anti-Black Racism in Toronto's Youth Spaces

Action 3.1 of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism calls for the City to advocate for and coordinate with the province and the school boards to highlight the need for education improvements that support safe and effective learning for students of African descent. As such, in Year Two, the CABR Unit collaborated with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations (UARR) to deliver training sessions on anti-Black racism for staff and key stakeholders of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).



This work, which started before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, focused on the challenges faced by Black students in Toronto's schools. These challenges were linked to a lack of representation in the curriculum, as well as negative relationships between Black students and their teachers and guidance counsellors. To help address this, members of the CABR Unit's Partnership & Accountability Circle, stressed the importance of the CABR Unit working to improve their efforts to address anti-Black racism in school boards due to the disproportionately negative outcomes for Black youth in the school system. In partnership with the UARR, the CABR Unit's interventions were spurred by support from the PAC, and were also carefully delivered in a manner that was mindful of increasing feedback the Unit received from Black parents

who expressed a feeling that the TDSB was hesitant to reprimand teachers accused of anti-Black racist behaviour. Black parents confided in the UARR and the CABR Unit in sharing that they felt that the TDSB was under-responding to their concerns out of fear of their teachers unions who are responsible for advocating for and protecting teachers. In the UARR's workshops, events and supports provided to Black students and their families through funding from the CABR Unit, the UARR was able to support the TDSB and sympathetic members of the teachers' unions to explore ways to take responsibility for addressing teachers' anti-Black racist behaviour and adequately address anti-Black racism across the school board.

Holistic Approaches to Community Resilience: Strengthening Black Leadership for Black Food Sovereignty

In Year Two, Black communities identified the need to address food insecurity in the Black community as a critical component of community capacity-building to build healthier Black communities. The importance of this action was echoed by the Toronto Board of Health, and in various City priorities. To respond to this, the CABR Unit partnered with the Afri-Can Food Basket to fund the establishment of a community-led Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Initiative. The partnership supported critical stakeholder-led conversations that brought together residents, key Black food leaders, Black-led, Black-serving community organizations and activists to develop a framework and approach to realize food sovereignty for Black residents

in Toronto. The aim of this work was to begin a process of creating a reality where Black communities control their food systems, have access to healthy and culturally-appropriate food, and advance equal opportunities in Toronto's food system.

To complement the work of the Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Initiative, the CABR Unit supported the Afri-Can Food Basket to be able to coordinate weekly deliveries of fresh fruits and vegetables at no cost to Black communities who are most vulnerable to becoming food insecure and who needed support in accessing healthy, culturally-appropriate food.

Black Visibility in the Public Sphere

This year also saw the launch of the "Blacks on Board" campaign. The purpose of this initiative is to promote the City's public appointments opportunities and program advisories to Black Torontonians with the aim of increasing their representation on these bodies. The CABR Unit supported this work with an interest in ensuring that Black Torontonians have opportunities to participate in decision-making on City boards, agencies and commissions. Action 19.2 of the Action Plan calls for the engagement of Black communities in program advisory bodies. To better support recruitment, the City Clerk's Office and the City Manager's Office encouraged program advisory bodies to use the City Clerk's application portal to better track the socio-demographic data from applicants. Not all program advisory bodies transitioned into using the City Clerk's

application portal. However, in Year Two, select demographic information was captured, indicating a slight decrease in Black applicants from 11.1% to 10.6%, but overall appointments went up from 6.6% to 7.3%. As part of the Blacks on Board campaign, the City Clerk's Office partnered with the CABR Unit to organize two outreach events to engage Black professionals in working groups and roundtables to brainstorm strategies to build increased visibility of Black leaders and talent in the tech sector. The CABR Unit will continue to work with City Clerk's to better understand the reason for the decrease in applications and look to implement strategies that improve outreach and engagement in Black communities.



Priority 3: Continuing to Create Culture Change at the City



Following Year One, the CABR Unit continued its commitment to changing culture at the City of Toronto improve the experiences of Black Torontonians in Year Two. The establishment of the CABR Unit has been a substantial statement that the City is committed to creating change, taking action, and developing policies and procedures to removing barriers experienced by Black Torontonians in the City. The leadership and commitment of senior City staff has been critical to driving this priority. This was as true in Year Two as it was in Year One before it.

Growing the Black Staff Network

Addressing the need for inclusive and equitable recruitment of talent to the City was an ongoing CABR Unit priority in Year Two. The CABR Unit continued its work to engage with Black experts and community members to inform a talent acquisition strategy to increase the number of employees of African descent at the City of Toronto. Furthermore, a Black Employee directory was established because the City recognized the need for Black staff to fill open City positions. The Black Staff Network (BSN) grew to over 700 members, increasing 42% from Year One. The BSN continued to build on successes from Year One by organizing several professional development workshops for Black Staff.

Engaging City Staff and Toronto Police Services in Anti-Black Racism

In Year One, the CABR Unit developed a comprehensive curriculum for implementing the Action Plan for all City of Toronto staff. Working with the CABR Unit, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) also developed a mandatory anti-Black racism training module for all of its officers.

In Year Two, the CABR Unit led the continued delivery of this comprehensive, mandatory learning program for City staff and members of the Toronto Police Service. The training was delivered to all staff, from frontline to leadership levels, leveraging Black subject matter expertise and embedding capacity within the organization.



Working with a highly skilled and experienced group of Black subject matter experts as facilitators, the CABR Unit delivered the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Corporate Learning Program to thousands of TPS members and City of Toronto staff. Specifically, 8,838 City staff received training on “How to Address AntiBlack Racism” training in 175 training sessions. As a result of the Year Two training offerings, nearly 50% of all senior management (heads of divisions) at the City of Toronto had been trained by December 31, 2020. Additionally, 4,744 Toronto Police Service officers, including new hires, lateral hires, special constables, court officers, and civilian members, were engaged in deepening their learning and understanding of anti-Black racism through a training module adopted by the Toronto Police Service as a result of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.



Priority 4: Investing in Black Children and Youth



The complexity of issues found in working with Black, African, Caribbean children and youth, combined with the multifaceted problems of the Ontario criminal justice, child welfare and educational systems. In Year Two, this led the City to realize the necessity of interdisciplinary policy interventions, programs, scholarship and activism. This section highlights the CABR Unit's investments in children and youth during this period.

Increase supply and variety of culturally appropriate before and after school programs for children, including STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math).

Recognizing the need for increased availability of relevant and empowering before and after school programs for Black youth, the CABR Unit worked with partners in tech industries to provide workshops to build youth capacity in science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics (STEAM). Notably, the CABR Unit partnered with Microsoft to host free youth-friendly technology workshops during Year Two. The workshops were centred on increasing the technological literacy of Black youth from ages 8 to 15. The CABR Unit also sponsored over 250 youth to attend tech-related workshops and events, namely the Collision 2019 Conference (North America's fastest-growing technology conference), and the Move the Dial Global Summit hosted by BFUTR, the largest gathering of Black tech professionals held in Toronto, which hosted in partnership with TalentX, a premier social media monetization and talent development company.



These efforts, while significant in terms of youth exposure to STEAM industries, were only one-time events. To build more sustainable long-term opportunities, with the support of the CABR Unit, during Year Two, Parks, Forestry and Recreation developed a resource toolkit for staff on how to embed anti-Black racism analysis into the development, selection and delivery of their community recreation programming. The aim of this work is especially focused on increasing the quality and quantity of culturally appropriate before and after school programs for Black youth.

In addition to this, the CABR Unit also supported the division of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to develop a service framework for meeting the needs of Toronto's diverse Black youth. This service framework was developed, in part, to inform the division's new builds of community and recreation centres, programming needs, and customer service in existing and new spaces. The CABR Unit looks forward to relaunching this critical work to make city spaces more accessible and welcoming to Black community members once COVID-19 public health restrictions are adjusted to allow greater use of these city spaces and facilities. This is especially important because most after-school programs at community recreation centres still lack empowering curriculum targeted explicitly to Black youth. Furthermore, an overwhelming number of Parks, Forestry, Recreation staff, particularly in management and decision-making roles, are not racially representative of the Black communities in which they work. While acknowledging that branches are making efforts to increase the number of Black employees hired in Parks, Forestry and Recreation, there is still an opportunity to increase the number of Black staff at all levels of service, and in doing so, increase the relatability between youth and frontline staff. This is a part of the City's ongoing commitment to ensuring that City staff are representative of the communities they serve.

Ultimately, the CABR Unit's efforts in Year Two to increase exposure and opportunities for Black youth in the tech sector in the following outcomes:

28 free youth-friendly technology workshops for Black youth from ages of 8-15 were

delivered in partnership with the Microsoft Corporation. Youth learned and enhanced their coding capacity as well as practiced computational problem solving and creative thinking skills.

50 Black youth were sponsored to attend Collision 2019 and Collision 2020 in partnership with Economic Development and Culture.

100 Black youth participated in the Move the Dial Global Summit focused on Black women leaders in the tech industry.

Over 100 Black youth secured sponsorship to attend the BFUTR tech conference through a partnership with Talent X.

10 Black youth participated at the Economic Club of Canada event, "Future Skills: A Conversation with President Barack Obama."

Black youth who participated in these initiatives and events were surveyed and interviewed. Their feedback indicated that the exposure they received expanded their employment prospects and exposure to coding and tech-oriented professions.

Continue to invest in community-led initiatives to support Black youth innovative leadership development, including rites of passage, civic and community leadership.

In Year Two, to support the continued implementation of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, the City of Toronto supported 3 Black-led organizations to foster, support and nurture increased leadership among Toronto's Black youth. This was done through a grant of \$465,000 that was shared among these organizations:

The first organization was Dance Immersion. This group's focus was to increase the number of Black youth arts administrators and with the support from the CABR Unit, received a grant to facilitate this. Resultantly, ten Black youth were engaged through training sessions and received placements with Black-led arts organizations for mentorship.

The second organization was Delta Family Resource Centre. With the CABR Unit's support, this organization received City funding to engage Black youth in civic participation. Short-term outputs included creating youth councils with over a hundred youth participating in civic engagement leadership series. The organization reported that 81% of youth participating in these offerings increased their civic engagement knowledge, and 60% reported increased knowledge of community resources to support the health and well-being of their communities.

Finally, the CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals (CEE) was the third organization that the CABR Unit worked closely with in Year Two to help advance Black youth leadership. During this time, CEE was supported by the CABR Unit to focus on increasing the representation of young Black leaders in the Social Service Sector. Through CEE's programming and services in this area, 64 participants completed a frontline trainee program that provided professional development accreditation and employment placements with not-for-profit agencies. Furthermore, 9 partner agencies offered placements to 12 program participants.



Continue to engage Black parents, service providers and youth to identify relevant education and support services to better support Black queer and trans youth.

In Year Two, the CABR Unit continued in its commitment to being responsive to the pressing needs of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (BLGBTQ) folks, especially youth. This is in meaningful part because the CABR Unit recognized that Black queer and trans youth continued to face higher rates of precarity and exclusion in the areas of education, employment, housing, health, safety and well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic sharply exacerbated these challenges.

With the support and strategic advice of the CABR Unit, the City's division of Children's Services procured a consultant to work with the early years and child care sector with the specific aim to better support Black queer and trans families. The consultant focused on assisting Children's Services in deepening its inclusive practices and increasing professional learning materials for its child and family programs to ensure better services outcomes and experiences Black queer and trans families and their children. To this end, learning materials were developed into learning modules for distribution to EarlyON and child care operators. While this work advanced quickly during Year Two, it did not get implemented due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic led this project to be reprioritized for implementation in Year Three of the implementation of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

Year Two also saw the continuation of the of the CABR Unit's Black Lives Getting Better Together (BLGBT) initiative. As part of this project, a day-long outreach and service support event was organized in partnership with BlackCap and Sherbourne Health Centre's Supporting Our Youth project. Over 140 Black queer and trans youth and service providers attended this gathering focused on increasing the City of Toronto's ability to identify and more effectively respond to the specific needs and service barriers of Black queer and trans youth. Out of this event came a report that described and explained the needs and service barriers that were named by the event's attendees. This report was shared with several City divisions to enhance their programming and service delivery with an eye towards bettering the experiences and outcomes of Black queer and trans youth. The City divisions that were most referenced and subsequently engaged to make changes based on this report included: Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Children's Services, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Economic Development and Culture, and Social Development, Finance and Administration.

Priority 5: Improving Customer Service



Develop a Disaggregated Race-Based Data Collection Strategy

The CABR Unit continued in Year Two to emphasize the importance of collecting race-based disaggregated data to measure the impacts of programs, policies, services and strategies of the City.

Year Two saw further advancements by City to support divisions to incorporate and/or deepen their practice of collecting race-based disaggregated data. For example, in October 2020, the City adopted a Data for Equity Strategy. This Strategy guides City staff on disaggregated demographic data collection questions, analysis tools, resources, reporting and use standards. The implementation of this initiative has resulted in various City agencies and corporations incorporating race-based and other socio-demographic data collection practices into at least 15 surveys, program records and other data collection activities of City business. Furthermore, as part of phase one of the Data For Equity Strategy, nine pilots were identified to test and learn from applying Data for Equity Guidelines in different program contexts.



Another area in which Year Two saw the CABR Unit advance the collection of this kind of data is in relation to the Toronto police. In Year Two, the CABR Unit was invited to become a member of the Anti-Racism Advisory Panel (ARAP) of the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB). With the CABR Unit's participation, the ARAP developed the Race-Based Data Collection, Analysis and Public Reporting Policy, focused on rights-protecting collection of socio-demographic data by the Toronto Police. The above-mentioned policy was adopted by the TPSB in the fall of 2019. As such, since January 2020, the Toronto Police Service has been required to collect socio-demographic data in all use of force incidents and strip searches. Training of police officers on the collection, analysis and reporting of data began in Year Two and continues to be underway, even though the rollout of these trainings has been hampered by delays resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The need for accurate race-based data collection is also connected to the CABR Unit's work to support the City to improve its complaint processes to ensure that anti-Black racism is more effectively addressed. As such, in Year Two, the city's division, 311- Toronto at Your Service, conducted user experience research with Black researchers to understand what channels, messages and information sources are necessary to improve awareness and understanding of their services among Toronto's Black residents, as well as their responsiveness to complaints of anti-Black racism.


As part of this process, almost 50 interviews were completed with Black service users, culminating in a series of recommendations on improving the customer service experience of Black residents. In Year Two, this data started being used to inform improvements in the customer service experiences of Black Torontonians as they interact with and demand accountability from City services and agencies.

Engaging Seniors of African Descent

In Year Two, CABR Unit committed itself to developing and implementing an engagement plan with Black seniors and Black-led agencies to inform program and service design and delivery by Seniors Services and Long-Term Care. To support this, the CABR Unit delivered a presentation to the Toronto Seniors Strategy Accountability Table, advising the group of this commitment. The Table was receptive and supportive. With the CABR Unit's guidance, Black-serving senior citizens agencies were successfully recruited and invited to join the Toronto Seniors Strategy Accountability Table. Organizations include TAIBU Community Health Centre and CAFCAN. Launched in Year Two, this Table continues to engage other agencies that support Black elders with a specific intention of improving outcomes and experiences of Toronto's Black seniors.

Advance a Tenant-Focused Service Delivery Model at Toronto Community Housing Corporation

In Year Two, the CABR Unit was engaged by senior leadership of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) to support the organization to better meet the needs, interests and concerns of Black residents of TCHC properties. This engagement evolved into the CABR Unit delivering a series of 8 training, learning and development sessions with the executive and senior leadership teams of the TCHC. The focus of these interventions by the CABR Unit was on supporting TCHC to identify, develop and/or enhance their housing services and programming for its Black tenants and their families. The CABR Unit also provided strategic advice to the leadership team of TCHC, ultimately leading the organization to commit to resourcing and adopting its own corporate strategic plan for addressing anti-Black racism throughout the organization.

A photograph of two Black women smiling and posing together at what appears to be a social or professional event. The woman on the left has curly hair and is wearing a red top. The woman on the right has long braids and is wearing a patterned top. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a banner with the word 'RIS'.

Highlighting Stakeholder Perspectives: Place, People and Community

In this section of this report, interviews with three critical CABR Unit stakeholders have been excerpted and/or summarized. These interviews describe the impact and experience the interviewees and their respective organizations/offices had in working closely in support of and/or in partnership with the CABR Unit to advance change for Toronto's Black communities during Year Two. These interviews capture these stakeholders' reflections on the challenges and successes their team's experienced in Year Two as they aimed to implement aspects of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

Community Partnerships: Romain Baker, Co-Founder of Black Urbanism TO

Romain Baker is a Jamaican-Canadian who co-founded Black Urbanism TO (BUTO), a non-profit organization founded to advance the economic, social, and cultural interests of Black communities with respect to the neighbourhoods they call home.



“Black Urbanism TO (BUTO) aims to increase the participation of Black people in community development to advance the collective cultural, economic and social interests in the neighbourhoods we call home. BUTO aims to address the main challenge: Black communities are overlooked, and input not sought during construction and urban development projects that impact us. With respect to Little Jamaica, BUTO's priorities are to:

- + Support the increased participation of Black residents and business owners in planning and community development processes.
- + Secure official recognition of Little Jamaica by local BIAs and the City of Toronto
- + Advocate for affordable housing in new and existing units.
- + Enhance the economic and cultural sustainability of Little Jamaica through City policies and tools.
- + Explore opportunities for community ownership of land and commercial spaces.

When BUTO and CABR decided to partner, the objective was to support BUTO to engage Black business owners in Little Jamaica (Eglinton West) as part of the “Growing in Place” initiative to support Black residents and businesses to remain rooted in place. At its root, this initiative is about addressing gentrification and preventing the displacement of Black residents and businesses so that they can thrive and benefit from infrastructure projects rather than be displaced by them. Our consultation sessions were successful, resulting in a comprehensive report with recommendations for the City, community and other actors to act on. Some of these recommendations have led to creating a Little Jamaica Cultural District, which the City is currently consulting on. Furthermore, the partnership has also brought about creating a committee chaired by Mayor John Tory, which enabled BUTO to connect to other organizations to collaborate on initiatives to support the Little Jamaica neighbourhood.

Due to COVID-19, we faced some significant barriers. Data collection, analysis, drafting and reporting were handled on a volunteer basis, and most of our work requires physical encounters. The lockdowns have limited the gathering of contact information and data, and some business owners have become unreachable. We also have to ensure the safety of our volunteers. However, we are hopeful for continuing the work we do and look forward to supporting Black communities through impactful partnerships with organizations such as the CABR Unit.”

”

City Staff Divisional Collaboration: Cheryl Blackman - Director of Museums & Heritage Services

At the time of providing this interview, Cheryl Blackman was the Director of Museums & Heritage Services with the City of Toronto. However, at the time of the publication of this report, she was serving as the Interim General Manager of the City's division, Economic Development and Culture. In her previous role, Cheryl was responsible for the ten city-owned and operated historical museums, the city collection of 150,000 historical objects, more than 1 million archaeological specimens, 3,000 moveable fine art works, and an extensive portfolio of heritage buildings. In this interview, she reflects on the partnership between the Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Unit and her division, Economic Development and Culture (EDC) at the City of Toronto:



“Museums and Heritage Services at the City of Toronto has a true partnership with the CABR. Together, we will ensure that anti-Black racism is confronted in our division, which is important to me as a leader.

I joined the City of Toronto in 2018. At that time, I supported the creation of a division-wide five-year Equity Plan to address overall equity barriers, including anti-Black racism, in all the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) internal and public-facing activities. The plan, currently being implemented, is resulting in meaningful outcomes, including programs to support Black youth, partnerships with Black-led and Black-serving organizations, and activities to promote the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent. Throughout the pandemic, support to Black communities continued through important initiatives, such as one roundtable focused on recovery exclusively dedicated to Black business leaders and one dedicated session for Black artists and culture professionals.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has stripped away years of progress, for many Black Artists and business people. Rebuilding will be hard for


members of Black communities considering the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19. Programs created post COVID-19 will need to lay a new foundation which creates better opportunities for equity and prosperity.

The resilience of Black communities inspired The Awakenings Program, which launched on December 14th, 2020 during one of the most historic years in our lifetime. Presented by the Museums & Heritage Department, the Awakenings Program is a first step to address the lack of representation of Black communities in Toronto's history. More than 80 per cent of creative people involved in the Awakenings art projects are from the Black community which is a strong indication of our commitment to supporting Black creatives in multiple art forms. The Awakenings program addresses anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and anti-oppression through art and culture in the realms of music, art, technology, film, talks and more. It is centered on Black, Indigenous, and people of color who are all responding to Toronto's past, present and future and also includes the ability to share everyday stories from all walks of life. All programs are launched during key milestones in heritage months commemorating new dates in our calendar such as Black History Month, International Women's Day Month, Emancipation Day Month and Remembrance Day Month. It is an opportunity to close the gap between people and to provide a platform for diverse voices to be heard. COVID-19 distanced people, but it's times like these when we have to stand together. The Awakenings program is trying to generate change, and amplify examples of Black excellence which has brought the community together in a way like never before.

Right now we are in the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). The Economic Development and

Culture Division, working in partnership with the CABR Unit, issued a call for artists in October 2019 to create a new Toronto sign in Nathan Phillips Square. Patterns of the People, the work of Toronto artist Danilo Delux McCallum, was selected for the wrap by a community jury through an open-call process. Having the work of an artist from the African diaspora displayed on the Toronto Sign in front of City Hall is a highly visible symbol that change is here. The initiative demonstrates the powerful results that are possible through collaboration between City divisions and the community.

To me, every month is Black History month. My hope for the future is that there will be no need for Black communities to deal with issues resulting from being marginalized someday and that Black communities will instead spend their time being glorious.”



Institutional and Cross-Sector Strategy : Chris Thompson - Community Investment Manager for United Way

Chris Thompson is the Community Investment Manager and the Black Community Advisory Council Leader. Through his position with United Way, he has led the development of the Black Resilience Cluster - a network designed to create economic opportunities for Black-led grassroots organizations, businesses, and groups in Toronto.




“As the Community Investment Manager for United Way, I engage with the Black community through capacity-building programs that build bridges between the community. My role started with United Way - Peel Region before its merger with Toronto.

We started the Black Resilience Cluster (BRC) to address the specific needs of community groups, businesses, and organizations that serve the Black community. Working together with the CABR, United Way, and BRC, we noticed that Black communities had quite specific needs. Some of these needs came in the form of different food needs, cultural needs, social support needs and the like. We realized that the same type of solutions for other communities wouldn't be the same for Black communities.

For example, access to funding was a specific need for Black-led community projects. Many Black-led groups were on the ground, doing excellent community work, who did not have access to funding. The BRC attempted to address this issue by helping smaller Black-led groups access funding by connecting them to bigger Black-led groups. Another thing BRC did is to pull all individual groups into a network for increased access to information on opportunities.

During the pandemic, the BRC found unique ways to create clusters through collaboration to get the money to do the work



they want to do to address COVID-19 in different communities. The BRC worked with the CABR Unit and the City of Toronto within the Community Coordination Plan to better share information and coordinate responses with community-based organizations to the COVID-19 emergency. The BRC partnered with over 20 Black organizations to foster greater communication and coordination in meeting the urgent needs of Black Torontonians. Through the TO Supports Investment Fund, a combined total of \$2.1 million was disbursed to 21 Black-mandated organizations across Toronto.

The BRC is an evolving organic testing model of community development through a network model. It has been a great opportunity for me to see such growth since the number of organizations in the cluster is growing. We look forward to continually building a space for growth. We started as a means of resource delivery, but we're now a network that could make BRC an opportunity for so much more.”





2021: Looking Ahead

Photo by: Zach Lucero

The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism necessitates shared leadership and ownership with Black organizations and Black people across Toronto. Year Two was both crucial and monumental, with the CABR Unit responding to the changing needs of Black Torontonians. The global uprising for Black lives sparked in the summer of 2020, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, has inspired the CABR Unit to concentrate its efforts to uplift Black lives through collaborative partnerships within internal and external stakeholders; including City divisions, boards, agencies and partner organizations.

In Year Three, the CABR Unit will continue to advance the full implementation of Action Plan's 22 recommendations and 80 actions. The CABR Unit will continue engaging resources and expertise from City divisions, agencies, boards and commissions, and City partners to lead initiatives, monitor progress and publicly report on key deliverables driven by four priorities listed below.

Priority 1: Community Capacity Building

As part of the recognition of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, the City will build on key themes of The Decade: recognition, justice and development of Black communities through activities that support and strengthen the capacity of Black-led, Black-mandated and Black-serving organizations in the non-profit sector and work to support community leadership in building a better Toronto.

Priority 2: Continuing to Create Culture Change at the City

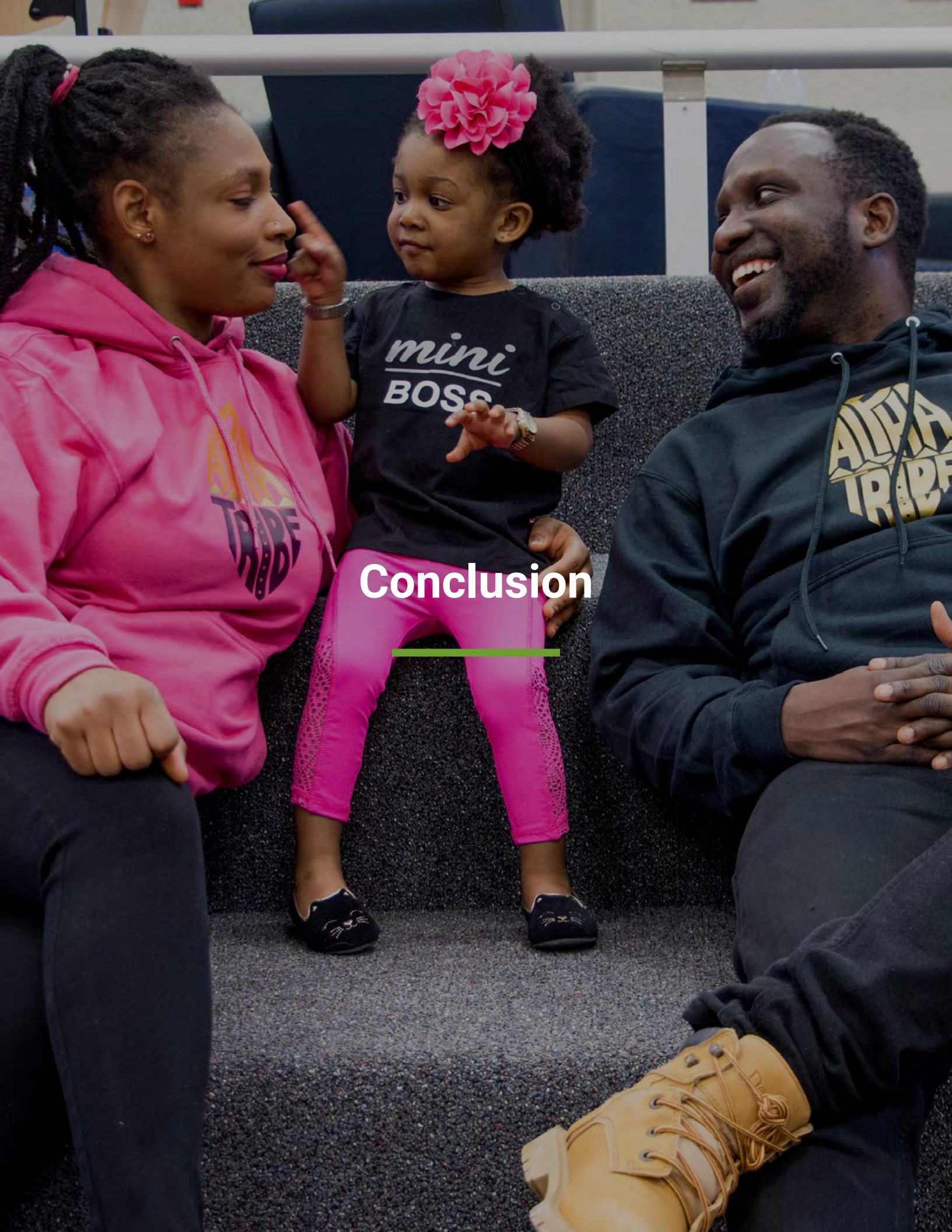
Research by Deloitte reported that when institutions bring together people from different backgrounds, skill sets, and mindsets, they achieve more. As part of driving systemic change, the Unit will continue to embed an anti-Black racism analysis in the City's culture, practices, policies, hiring and retention strategies and service delivery. In Year Three, the focus will be on increasing the number of staff trained, expanding the use of anti-Black racism analysis by City staff, and recruiting and retaining Black staff, which is particularly important as the City focuses on building a workforce that reflects Toronto residents.

Priority 3: Community Safety Wellbeing with Alternatives to Policing

Responding to Black communities' calls for alternatives to policing and new forms of safety and wellbeing, the Unit will support the development of policy and interventions in these areas. The Social Development, Finance and Administration Division, which houses the CABR Unit, is also facilitating the development of the provincially legislated Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan to establish alternatives to police response for mental health crisis calls, wellness checks and low-level disputes between community members. The CABR Unit has already begun to collaborate in these areas of work to bring forward related actions and insight from the Toronto Action to Confront Anti-Black Racism, anti-Black racism analysis and insights, and key partnerships to help deliver comprehensive strategic and relevant policy. The Unit will also invest in the critical community and social services that better address the root causes of safety and security, including investments in the Action Plan.

Priority 4: Black Community Resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed how chronic underinvestment in Black organizations and persisting social and economic disparities placed Black residents at greater risk. COVID-19 exposed the immense need to enhance Black community resilience through increased investments in Black organizations on the frontlines and Black resilience organizational ecosystems. It also highlighted the need for broad-based systemic change that addresses how Toronto's current growth trajectory creates heightened vulnerability in the Black community. In Year Three, the Unit will continue to build Black community resilience through the Black Resilience Cluster and increased institutional investments in the "Black COVID-19 frontlines". The Unit will also develop broad, comprehensive multi-divisional policy frameworks through the Growing in Place and Black Food Sovereignty initiatives that can have a dramatic impact on the way Toronto grows and develops to address the root causes of Black community vulnerability amid crisis.



Conclusion

Advocating for the protection and promotion of the present and future of African, Caribbean, and Black peoples in Toronto is a central priority of the CABR Unit. The work outlined in this report would not be possible without the extensive network of residents, activists, organizations, and institutions advancing anti-Black racism efforts in Toronto and abroad. The CABR Unit aims to continually work in the community, promoting and advancing the need for justice, opportunities and freedom for various Black communities in Toronto.

Year Two has been monumental and unprecedented for the CABR Unit. COVID-19 and the resulting disproportionate impacts on the Black community in Toronto underscored the necessity of the CABR to advance equity-seeking initiatives with the City of Toronto and its stakeholders. The information in this report explains the work that has been done to create equity and advance the needs of Toronto's Black residents in the context of the global pandemic and amid a rising tide of calls for justice, fairness and equity for Black people, families and communities. Within the initiatives and partnerships mentioned in this report, and throughout the next three years of the 5-year Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, the CABR Unit is looking forward to implementing learnings from this pivotal year and building on its ongoing successes from Year One and Year Two. As many changes have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, the CABR Unit aims to document and assess systemic vulnerabilities and advance initiatives that promote and

protect the needs of Toronto's diverse Black communities.

To close, Year Two saw the CABR Unit and the communities and stakeholders it supports experience unprecedented pressures. The global resurgence of the movement for Black lives erupting in the midst of a punishing global pandemic seriously stretched, bent, swayed and ruffled the plans and operations of the CABR Unit. But in the end, watered by the support of its key stakeholders in the City and most especially in Toronto's diverse Black communities, the team remained grounded, firm and determined. In doing so, the CABR Unit embodied a beautifully and defiantly resilient Blackness once articulated in the words of one of the greatest ancestors of Black liberation, Elder Harriet Tubman, when she said: "We're rooted here, and they can't pull us up."

The CABR Unit remains rooted in the City and more importantly, rooted in its commitment to identifying and dismantling barriers faced by Black Torontonians, come what may. Even as the COVID-19 pandemic lingers on, the CABR Unit will continue striving forward in the years ahead to lead and support community-informed and innovative ways of advancing the needs, interests and desires of Toronto's diverse Black communities. While a lot has changed in the last year and some, this commitment of the CABR Unit will always remain unshaken.

Asé

A nighttime photograph of the Toronto City Hall towers, which are illuminated with blue light. In the foreground, the large, colorful 'TORONTO' sign is visible, with the letters in various colors (red, yellow, green, blue, purple) and a stylized maple leaf on the right. The sign is reflected in the water in front of it. The word 'References' is overlaid in white text on the towers, with a red horizontal line underneath it.

References

Photo by: Conor Samuel

Afri-Can Food Basket. (2020). Black food Toronto – emergency food security – providing support TO AFRICAN, Caribbean, Black, individuals and families facing food insecurity during the The COVID-19 Pandemic. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://Blackfoodtoronto.com/>

City of Toronto. (2017). Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-109127.pdf>

City of Toronto. (2019, July 05). Land acknowledgement. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/indigenous-affairs-office/land-acknowledgement/#:~:text=Share,Nations%2C%20Inuit%20and%20M%C3%A9tis%20peoples.>

City of Toronto. (2019, November). 1st Annual Report - Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit 2018-2019. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/97ab-cabr-annual-report-2018-2019.pdf>

City of Toronto. (2020). Appendix B – Year 2 Partnership and Accountability Circle (PAC) Report. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-157932.pdf>

City of Toronto. (2020). Appendix C – Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Unit COVID-19 Response Summary. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/8fc3-cabr-summer2020-newsletter.pdf>

City of Toronto. (2020). Update on Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-134609.pdf>

City of Toronto. (2021, January 27). Black history in Toronto. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/access-city-information-or-records/city-of-toronto-archives/using-the-archives/research-by-topic/Black-history-in-toronto/>

Henry, N. L. (2016, June 16). Black enslavement in Canada. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/Black-enslavement#:~:text=The%20Slavery%20Abolition%20Act%20came,remaining%20enslaved%20people%20in%20Canada>

Kennedy, B. (2021, February 03). Toronto announces plan to combat disproportionate impact of covid-19 on Black communities. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/02/03/toronto-announces-plan-to-combat-disproportionate-impact-of-covid-19-on-Black-communities.html>

Pagliaro, J. (2020, July 30). New Toronto data Reveals Covid-19's Disproportionate toll on RACIALIZED and low-income groups. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/07/30/new-toronto-data-reveals-covid-19s-disproportionate-toll-on-racialized-low-income-groups.html>



Contact Information

Photo by: Sergay Zulkin

The City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Unit is responsible for rolling out the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism and responds to the priorities identified by Toronto's diverse Black communities.

Visit the CABR web page to learn about CABR and sign up for the CABR newsletter at:

Web: toronto.ca/abr

Instagram @CABR_Toronto

Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit

City of Toronto

City Hall, 14th Floor, East Tower 100 Queen Street West

Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Website: toronto.ca/abr Email: CABR@toronto.ca Twitter: @CABR_Toronto

