

Expression of Interest FAQ Sheet

TCS Black-Mandated EarlyON Program

Background

This FAQ sheet supports applicants to the Expression of Interest for the TCS Black-Mandated EarlyON Program. It includes definitions, application guidance, use of artificial intelligence and documentation requirements.

What is the intent of the TCS Black-Mandated EarlyON Program?

Toronto Children's Services (TCS) is establishing two (2) new Black-Mandated EarlyON Programs in the City. These programs will be shaped by and for Black communities. This is part of our shared journey toward a more responsive, inclusive, and equity-driven EarlyON system, where Black children and families are reflected, supported and celebrated. The Black-Mandated EarlyON Programs will directly support the City's on-going commitment to confronting anti-Black racism. Specifically, aligning with the [City's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Action Plan](#) by advancing:

- **Recommendation 1: Increase access to high-quality programs for Black children and youth, and**
- **Recommendation 5: replicating and expanding effective models of Black-led health and community services to under-served neighbourhoods and populations of Black Torontonians.**

By centering Black identity, knowledge and leadership in all aspects of programming, the proposed Black-Mandated EarlyON Programs embody **Strategic Priority 6** of the [TCS Service Plan](#) by “centering inclusion in the early years for children, families and staff”.

What is the Expression of Interest Timeline?

To be considered for this EOI, applications must address the EOI pre-requisites and content requirements. Please be sure to complete and submit your application before the deadline on **Friday, December 5, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.** Applications submitted after this time and date will not be considered as part of this EOI. Only completed and eligible applications will be assessed by the Evaluation Committee. Please do not include any personal information.

What do I need to submit with my application?

Your application should include the following attachments to be considered complete:

- ☐ Letter from the current Board of Directors stating that the application is approved by the Board
- ☐ Declaration of Not-for-Profit Compliance
- ☐ Organization's By-Laws
- ☐ Copies of Agency's Audited Financial Statements for the two most recent years
- ☐ Written response to the Expression of Interest suitability questions
- ☐ Completed proposed EarlyON program budget

How do I complete the application?

Applications must be submitted before the deadline of **Friday, December 5, 2025 at 11:59 p.m.** Please follow these steps:

- ☐ Download the application form from the City's website
- ☐ Answer all required questions clearly
- ☐ Upload all required documents
- ☐ Submit by the deadline to be considered

If you have questions about the application for the TCS Expression of Interest for the Black-Mandated EarlyON Program or would like accessibility supports, accommodation and/or a different format, please contact EarlyON@toronto.ca.

What are the expected components TCS Black-Mandated EarlyON Program?

The Black-Mandated EarlyON Program is designed to improve the experiences of Black children and their families within EarlyON and early years settings. These EarlyON Programs will be deeply rooted in Black cultural identities, histories, languages and lived experiences to provide intentionally affirming, safe and empowering spaces. The programs will prioritize culturally responsive services and resources to foster a strong sense of belonging for Black children and their families through building capacity, promoting positive racial identity development, and celebrating diverse Black identities.

Who is eligible to apply to the Expression of Interest for the TCS Black-Mandated EarlyON Program?

Applicants must meet ALL requirements below to apply and be eligible for this EOI:

1. Be an established, Black-Mandated, non-profit organization, also referred to as B3 organization.
2. Be incorporated as a non-profit organization with a recently audited financial statement.
3. Be physically located in the City of Toronto (with a postal code that begins with the letter M) and whose primary activities take place within Toronto.
4. Be in good standing with the City, where applicable (e.g. recipients of funding must have met the terms and conditions of previous funding).
5. Have expertise in providing direct services to Black children and their families through Black/African centred approaches in programming, and/or service design.

What is the definition for a Black-Mandated Organization?

A Black-Mandated (B3) Organization or group **is assessed based on four key criteria below**. Applicants must meet all the criteria to be eligible to apply as an established, **Black-Mandated non-profit Organization**.

- **Black-Led:**
An organization that is led by a majority (51% or more) of paid staff and board members who self-identify as Black, including African, Caribbean, or, of African descent
- **Black-focused:**
An organization that has a publicly facing mandate that explicitly states it serves Black communities and is grounded in Black/African-centred approaches across services and programs throughout the entire organization
- **Black-Serving:**
An organization that primarily serves (at least more than 40%) Toronto's diverse Black communities, including, but not limited to African-descendant populations, such as Black Francophones, Afro-Indigenous, Continental African, Caribbean descendant, 2SLGBTQ+, refugee and newcomer populations, and Black children and their families
- **Community Accountability and trust:**
An organization that has a proven track record of working in and with Black service users to respond to the pervasive and emergent needs of Black populations and continually develops and maintains positive relationships within Black communities being served, and with other Black-mandated organizations and groups community partners and vendors to deliver services to clients

This definition was developed by the City of Toronto's Social Development Division in close consultation with the [City of Toronto's Confronting anti-Black Racism Unit](#) and community organizations as part of the [Black Mandated Funding Framework](#) and expanded to ensure effective partnership to deliver Black-Mandated EarlyON Programs. **To be eligible to apply for this Expression of Interest, applicants must meet the definition of a Black-Mandated (B3) Organization, as described above.**

Can I partner with another Black-Mandated Organization to apply to the Expression of Interest?

Partnerships are welcome between Black-Mandated Organizations, especially where collaboration strengthens impact, community reach and the collective capacity to address systemic anti-Black racism. If two or more organizations are applying as partners to this Expression of Interest, all organizations must meet the Black-Mandated Organization eligibility requirements. One organization will act as the lead in providing the Black-Mandated EarlyON Program. Attach the partnership agreement (whether confirmed or pending) to your application. Please note that if your organization(s) are selected to provide the TCS Black-Mandated EarlyON Program, you will be required to provide a collaborative partnership agreement.

If the partnership between Black-Mandated Organizations becomes irreparable, then the funding will need to be reevaluated, including and up to the complete return of the designated funds.

In other circumstances, where the partnership dissolves, monies will need to be returned to Toronto Children's Services and the Black-Mandated EarlyON program will come to an end at this site.

If my Black-Mandated organization applies in partnership with another Black-Mandated organization, do we need to provide additional information?

Partnerships between Black-Mandated Organizations should reflect shared values, collective leadership and a commitment to community accountability. Applicants applying in partnership with other Black-Mandated Organizations will need to provide details on how the leadership role is centred, how decisions will be made and how benefits and responsibilities will be shared equitably.

Will a start up fund be provided for the new Black-Mandated EarlyON Program?

The start-up fund is a one-time fund. It is given at the start of the service agreement. These funds are for purchasing culturally-appropriate program materials and resources.

How can we best demonstrate how we currently work with Black children and their families?

Be specific: Provide concrete examples, numbers, and program names, where appropriate.

Focus on Impact and not just on the Activity: Provide tangible benefits and outcomes for Black children and their families because of participating in the programs you run.

Show Authenticity and Trust: Your response should reflect genuine relationships and trust built over time, not just recent outreach efforts.

Show how you Embed Cultural Competency in your Programs: Show an understanding of and responsiveness to the cultural nuances, strengths, and needs of Black communities.

Lived Experience and Representation: Highlight that your organization is Black-led, has significant Black representation at all levels (board, staff, volunteers), and incorporates lived experience into its program design and delivery.

Talk about your Partnerships: Highlight formal and informal partnerships with organizations specifically serving or led by the Black community. Describe the nature of these collaborations (e.g., joint programming, referrals, shared resources, advisory roles).

Can I use AI to help me complete my application?

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that information included in their grant applications is true, accurate and complete and that all sources are appropriately acknowledged and referenced. Applicants should be aware that using generative AI may lead to the presentation of information without proper recognition of authorship or acknowledgement.

Where can I get Help?

There will be two online information sessions held in November 2025.

Date	Time	Teams Meeting Information
Wednesday, November 19, 2025	3:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 249 406 706 019 27 Passcode: Mi2Xd2Tn
Friday, November 28, 2025	10:00 a.m. – Noon	Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 253 142 576 073 78 Passcode: FA36ZF7E

You can also contact the TCS EarlyON Team at EarlyON@toronto.ca.

What additional information and resources are useful in completing my application?

[2026 EarlyON Operating and Business Practice Guidelines](#)

[Toronto Children's Service Division Service Plan](#)

[Child Care and Early Years Act \(2014\)](#)

[Confronting Anti-Black Racism Action Plan](#)

[How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#)

[Raising the Village](#)

[CABR Anti-Black Racism Analysis Tool](#)

[Ministry of Education Service Management and Funding Guidelines](#)

Contact Earlyon@toronto.ca for a copy of the EarlyON Children and Families Design Guideline