# 1. What You Need to Know Before You Apply

This Call for Applications package is issued by Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario as represented by the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (the "Ministry").

> The Sector Innovation Networks funding initiative is the **third** of **three** funding initiatives being released under the economic empowerment stream of the Black Youth Action Plan. Eligible applicants may apply to multiple funding initiatives. More information about the plan and upcoming opportunities can be found in **Part 4**: Black Youth Action Plan – economic empowerment stream: overview, and at https://www.ontario.ca/page/available-funding-opportunities-ontario-government.

Before completing your Sector Innovation Networks application, please read the entire Sector Innovation Networks Program Guidelines.

You may also submit questions about Sector Innovation Networks to youthengagement@ontario.ca. For information about the application process and Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON), please visit: ontario.ca/getfunding.

# 2. Application Instructions

## Deadline and Required Documents

Applications for the Sector Innovation Networks funding initiative, including supporting materials, must be submitted no later than **Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST)**. Applications can be submitted in either English or French. The Ministry reserves the right to not accept late or incomplete applications.

All applications, including required attachments, must be submitted through the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) system located on the TPON portal at ontario.ca/getfunding.

A complete application includes:

- Complete answers to all questions in the online application form on TPON (see **Part 8**: Completing the Application Form).
- A digital signature by the applicant's signing authority.
- All required attachments (see **Part 8**: Completing the Application form).

## Using Transfer Payment Ontario

The Government of Ontario's online grant management system, TPON, provides one-window access to information about government grants, how to apply for grants and how to check the status of your application. For information on using TPON please visit

www.ontario.ca/page/get-funding-ontario-government or contact Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care, available Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except for government and statutory holidays, at:

**Telephone:** 416-325-6691 | Toll free 1-855-216-3090

**TTY/Teletypewriter (for the hearing impaired):** 416-325-3408 | Toll free 1-800-268-7095

**Email:** TPONCC@ontario.ca

## Supports for Applicants

Ministry staff will be offering additional support to assist prospective applicants in English and French. This includes answering program-specific questions at youthengagement@ontario.ca and hosting virtual community information sessions on how to apply for funding under the Sector Innovation Networks. For more information and to register for this session please visit https://www.ontario.ca/page/available-funding-opportunities-ontario-government.

# 3. Eligible Applicants

Funding is available to Black-led organizations province wide. Applications may be completed by a single Black-led organization, or on behalf of a coalition or a partnership.

Any coalition or partnership must include **at least one** eligible member (the "**lead organization**") that is a **legal entity** (e.g., non-profit, for-profit, board, association, First Nations band, municipality, university, college, school board, etc.).

If applying as part of a partnership or coalition, the **lead organization** must be Black-led and will be responsible for managing the Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (if successful). Partner organizations may be Black-led or non-Black led. Partner organizations will not be in a contractual relationship with the province, and as such, the province will not provide funding to any partner organizations.

> **NOTE:** See **Part 8 – Section E**: Organization Capacity for more information on lead and partner organizations.

Individuals and non-legal entities are **not** eligible to apply.

Applicants who currently receive funding through the Black Youth Action Plan are eligible to apply.

## French Language Services (FLS)

All applicants applying to deliver services in areas of the province designated under the *French Language Services Act* (FLSA), or province-wide, must demonstrate their capacity to offer services in French. At a minimum, **selected** applicants would need to ensure the following:

- Deliver services in French in accordance with the principle of active offer or have a formal referral agreement in place to re-direct French-speaking participants to a service provider offering services in French; and
- Submit a FLS quality improvement plan, in the form provided by the Province, that addresses a three-year strategy for improvement.

> **NOTE:** If selected applicants enter into an agreement(s) with third-party service providers or any partner organization(s), they must integrate a FLS clause to ensure FLS capacity and that services provided are delivered in accordance with the *French Language Services Act* (FLSA).

> **IMPORTANT:** See here for more information on the 26 French Designated Areas of Ontario. See **Part 8 – Section E**: Capacity to Deliver Services in French for **selected** applicant responsibilities.

# 4. Black Youth Action Plan – Economic Empowerment Stream: Overview

The Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP) was created to help address persistent outcome disparities for Black children, youth, and families across life stages. The BYAP's "cradle to career" approach views skills and career development as a vital step to long-term thriving.

As part of the 2020 Budget, *Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover,* the Government of Ontario announced new investments to sustain existing BYAP programs and to enhance the plan with a **new economic empowerment stream** that will support Black youth and young adults in achieving social and economic success.

While province-wide data is limited, evidence shows that:

- In Ontario, Black youth ages 15-24 are less likely to be in the labour market or employed, and more likely to be unemployed.[1]

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[1] Statistics Canada (2016): Black youth have a labour force participation rate of 52.2%; an employment rate of 38.8%; and an unemployment rate of 25.7%. The comparable rates for the general youth population are 60.2%; 49.6% and 17.6% respectively.

- In 2016, although 94% of Black youth aged 15 to 25 said that they would like to get a bachelor's degree or higher, only 60% thought that they could.[2]
- Black Canadians are underrepresented in key high-growth sectors. For example, they have among the lowest participation rates in technology occupations and are among the lowest paid group at technology companies in Canada.[3]
- In 2020, out of 1,600 corporate boards of directors in Canada, only 13 members were Black, and only two were Black women.[4]
- In Ontario, only 15% of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) financed in 2017 were owned by visible minorities.[5]

While the BYAP shows promise in building pathways to jobs and promoting the skills young people need to launch their careers, more needs to be done. New targeted, economic-focused programming (e.g., essential and technical skills development, high-quality[6] job opportunities, entrepreneurship, sector-led innovations) will help provide the supports Black Ontarians need to overcome barriers and enable them to equitably participate in a future-oriented economy.

> The term "**Black**" is being used in its most inclusive sense to reflect the diverse ancestry, origins, ethnic identities, languages, and religious beliefs of individuals of African and Caribbean descent. The term is based on self-identification, is not mutually exclusive, and is recognized by Statistics Canada.

Stakeholder engagement helped identify three dimensions (or "pillars") of economic empowerment key to supporting Black Ontarians, alongside outcome statements and an over-arching vision to guide economic empowerment programming under the Black Youth Action Plan:

**VISION:** *Black Ontarians have equitable access to economic resources and high-quality opportunities and are equipped and empowered to fully participate in prosperous, sustainable, and thriving communities. Long-term success for Black youth includes personal wealth, economic resilience, increased agency and influence, and improved well-being, which will better enable Black youth to contribute to – and participate in – Ontario's economic prosperity.*

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[2] Statistics Canada (2020).
[3] Brookfield Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (2019).
[4] Diversity Institute (2020).
[5] Statistics Canada (2018).
[6] "**High-Quality**" for the purpose of the Black Youth Action Plan is defined as including: jobs/careers with high earnings potential; opportunities for long-term career advancement and professional development; and opportunities that are meaningfully aligned with an individual's experiences, goals, aspirations, sense of community and purpose; and that provide a secure and supportive work environment.

| PILLAR | 1. Strengthening the Talent Pipeline | 2. Jobs and Retention | 3. Diversifying Economic Opportunities |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SUCCESS UNDER THIS PILLAR WILL LOOK LIKE:** | Black children and youth have the skills, knowledge, and supports to succeed in education and the job market of today and in the future | Black youth and young adults are supported to find and keep meaningful, safe, and dignified work in line with their skills, potential, and career aspirations | Black Ontarians are supported to succeed in entrepreneurship and create jobs. |

The economic empowerment stream includes **three new funding initiatives**, aligned with each of the three pillars above. Funding will follow an open, competitive, initiative-specific application process:

| FUNDING INITIATIVE | Career Launch | Career Advance | Sector Innovation Networks |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OPEN** | February 23, 2022 | March 9, 2022 | March 23, 2022 |
| **DEADLINE** | March 23, 2022 | April 6, 2022 | April 20, 2022 |

For more information on the funding initiatives, including virtual community information sessions and other updates, please visit https://www.ontario.ca/page/available-funding-opportunities-ontario-government.

# Guiding Principles

Black Youth Action Plan economic empowerment initiatives will be informed by a **common set of guiding principles** in line with the Ministry's vision of economic empowerment:

1) **Promoting Cultural Relevance**
   Initiatives support Black children, youth, and young adults to develop and enhance their identity, culture, and sense of belonging to their community as an important factor in working towards their goals.

2) **Celebrating Black Excellence**
   Initiatives seek opportunities to recognize the achievements, successes, and contributions of Ontario's Black communities. Knowledge of the rich culture and history of Ontario's Black communities is foregrounded and celebrated.

3) **Challenging Anti-Black Racism**
Initiatives actively work to combat historical and ongoing anti-Black racism and create encouraging and supportive environments for Black children, youth, and young adults to thrive.

4) **Participant Engagement**
Individuals see themselves as full participants in creating and implementing programs and activities designed to help them succeed. Participants are meaningfully involved in the development of strategies to meet their goals and can exercise agency and influence in their lives and communities.

# 5. Sector Innovation Networks: Overview

The Sector Innovation Networks initiative will fund Black-led organizations to deliver services designed to help **Black-led beneficiary organizations** sustain momentum, grow, and recover within Ontario's evolving economy. This initiative is designed to help equip Black-led organizations with the tools they need to recover from the pandemic-related economic downturn and prosper long-term, supporting the well-being of Black children, youth, and families and helping create the conditions for young workers and entrepreneurs to thrive.

**Innovation** is a key driver of economic growth[7] that has been linked to long-term regional economic resilience.[8] [9] Networked approaches to innovation have been shown to foster rapid development in products and processes,[10] and play a key role in disseminating knowledge. Research also indicates that networks can help facilitate firm adaptability and potential for growth,[11] particularly when grounded in sector knowledge and an understanding of unique local conditions.[12]

Data shows that Black-led businesses in Ontario experience disparities in financial sustainability compared to the national average.[13] Black-led non-profit organizations face similar challenges in securing funding critical to their success and sustainability: a recent report prepared by the Network for the Advancement of Black Communities and Carleton University's Philanthropy and Non-profit Leadership Program demonstrates

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[7] Phan, Cleave, & Arku (2020); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], (2010); Cooke (2007)

[8] Bristow & Healy (2018)

[9] **"Economic resilience"** for the purpose of the Sector Innovation Networks initiative is understood as the capacity to adapt and respond to economic distress to maintain an acceptable growth path in output, employment and wealth over time.

[10] Wolman, Wial, St. Clair, & Hill (2017)

[11] Amin (2001); Clarke (1995); Canadian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (n.d.)

[12] E.g. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] Innovation Service (2021) / (disponible en anglais seulement)

[13] Black Business and Professional Association (2020) Network for the Advancement of Black Communities and Carleton University (2021). / (disponible en anglais seulement)

that for every $100 the top 15 community foundations disbursed in Canada in 2017-2018, only 0.07 cents went to Black-led organizations. At the same time, research shows that Black Canadians are experiencing labour market inequities and financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic,[14] magnifying existing systemic, historic, and structural inequities.[15]

Despite this, Black Ontarians continue to demonstrate high levels of resiliency, creativity, and professional excellence in a range of sectors across the Province. The Ministry has developed the Sector Innovation Networks initiative to support Black-led organizations to leverage their expertise, networks, and community strengths to advance Black-led, place-based,[16] and innovative solutions to sector challenges. Successful applicants will provide "**beneficiaries**" (see definition below) in their target **sector**(s) and **region**(s) with network linkages and free-of-charge services to address their immediate and long-term needs and build their innovative capacity, in order to bolster and unlock their economic and social capital.

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### Key Definitions for Applicants

**Innovation:** Broadly defined as an ongoing process of learning which results in new products, techniques, forms of organization, and opportunities. May include creating something new or improved (i.e. invention), and/or organizational upgrades that enable an organization to do more with less (i.e. adoption or uptake of new ways of doing things).

**Black-led:** An organization that has a mandate to serve the Black community and has Black leadership at all levels (i.e., staff, executive, governance).

> **IMPORTANT:** *Applicants* to Sector Innovation Networks (i.e. organizations applying for funding to *deliver services*) must be Black-led organizations capable of entering into contracts (i.e. legal entities). See **Part 5: Organizations** (page 10) for more information on eligibility.

> *Beneficiaries* of Sector Innovation Networks (i.e. organizations *receiving services* from selected applicants) will be Black individuals (including entrepreneurs), Black-led organizations, or Black-led business partnerships with different needs and at different stages in their entrepreneurial/business

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[14] Statistics Canada (2021) / Statistique Canada (2021)
[15] Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce (2021) / (disponible en anglais seulement)
[16] The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (2019) defines **Place-Based Economic Development** as: An approach that empowers local actors to shape their own economic development, with a focus on mobilizing regionally specific assets and competitive advantages. / (disponible en anglais seulement)

building pathway (e.g. COVID-19 recovery, scaling, refinement, expansion), including those approaching incorporation or registration.

**Region:** This initiative defines regions broadly, without making a statement about how they should be organized or delineated. Applicants are encouraged to draw on existing definitions (e.g. Statistics Canada's economic regions, municipalities) and boundaries relevant to their sector and/or core business (e.g. Greater Golden Horseshoe, industrial corridors) when identifying their target region(s).

**Sector:** A category of businesses focusing on delivering a similar type of good or service (e.g., information technology, financial services, life sciences, social enterprise).

> **NOTE:** See "**Priorities**" (page 8) for a definition of a **high opportunity** sector.

# Priorities

Sector Innovation Networks will fund Black-led organizations with connections to **existing professional networks**, including:

- **Formal networks** dedicated to learning and making use of technical knowledge (e.g. communities of practice).[17]
- **Cooperative and collaborative networks** within a specific sector (e.g. professional associations).
- **Geographic networks ("clusters")** of interconnected firms, service providers, funders, institutions, and other organizations within a field.
- **Social and institutional networks** that connect organizations and the supporting business ecosystem.

Applicants must provide a comprehensive **outreach plan** demonstrating how their proposed initiative will be widely socialized to effectively serve its target population and reach beneficiaries outside their established network.

Applicants must demonstrate how they will **leverage their professional networks** to support beneficiaries throughout the delivery of their initiative. In addition, applicants must demonstrate how their proposed initiative aligns with the priorities of the Sector Innovation Network initiative, which are to:

1. **Support Black-led organizations in high opportunity[18] sectors,** including:

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[17] Gertler, Wolfe, & Garkut (1998)

[18] **"High opportunity"** for the purpose of the Sector Innovation Networks initiative is defined as a high-growth or emerging sector.

- Sectors where **Ontario has been identified as having a competitive advantage** (e.g., advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and technology).[19]
- Sectors where **Black Ontarians are underrepresented** (e.g., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [STEM], and the skilled trades).
- Sectors linked to **high earning potential** and **longevity** (e.g., financial and/or legal services, construction).[20]
- Sectors where there is an **identified or upcoming skills shortage** (e.g., automotive, environmental, hospitality, health care).[21]

2. **Build on community assets and strengths,** including:

- Local knowledge and talent (e.g., specialized knowledge base).
- Existing local and/or regional economic activity (e.g., recognition of the area as an industry "hub").
- Institutions and infrastructure (e.g., universities, colleges, municipal innovation districts).
- Existing local networks (e.g., coalitions, formal and/or informal relationships).

# Direct Services

Successful applicants will draw on their expertise to provide free-of-charge services to Black-led organizations in their target sector(s) and region(s) to address their immediate and long-term needs and build innovative capacity.

Services will fall within **one or more** of the following four broad categories, which the Ministry has identified as key drivers of innovation:

1. **Technology,** including but not limited to:

- Technological improvement and invention: Specialized expertise and advice to produce technologically new or substantially changed goods or services (e.g., technology accelerators).
- Digital capacity and transformation: Services that increase an organization's digital capacity and/or digital presence and reach (e.g., e-commerce, cloud computing, specialized software, operations management).

2. **Human Capital,** including but not limited to:

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[19] Invest Ontario (2021).
[20] Government of Canada (2021). Job Bank: High Paying Programs.
[21] Flavelle, D. (2020); ECO Canada (2020). *Environmental Labour Market Supply (2020).*; Canadian Manufacturing (2021); The Canadian Business Journal (2014).

- Talent Management: Services that support organizations to access and retain talent in the sector and keep pace with changes in the economy.
- Workforce Development Strategies: Services to strengthen internal workforce development strategies, including the development of future-facing skills.

3. **Business Advisory,** including but not limited to:

- Business Strategy: Services that help facilitate organizational growth and sustainability (e.g. scaling-up strategies, not-for-profit growth, market positioning strategies, navigating tender/procurement opportunities).
- Operational Strategy: Services that provide expert opinions, analysis, and recommendations in an area of operational specialization (e.g. financial management, risk and compliance, process improvements).

4. **Financial Capabilities,[22]** including but not limited to**:**

- Navigation and Consulting Services: Expertise to navigate barriers in accessing financial and capital markets, including leveraging and accessing existing funds and opportunities.
- Investments and Financial Growth: Services to connect organizations with existing investors, and/or supporting organizations to build expertise on how to invest strategically and expand their financial acumen.

> **NOTE:** Examples are not exhaustive. Applicants are encouraged to suggest different and/or additional activities/services that align with one of the four categories and further the desired outcome described on page 11.

> **IMPORTANT:** Eligible costs for this program do not include direct financial supports for beneficiaries (e.g. business loans or start-up funding).
>
> See **Part 7 – Funding** for more information on eligible costs.

# Organizations

Successful applicants will be Black-led organizations. Applicants may choose to apply independently, or as part of a partnership or coalition.

If applying as part of a partnership or coalition, the **lead organization** must be Black-led and will be responsible for managing the Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (if successful). Partner organizations may be Black-led or non-Black led. Partner organizations will not be in a contractual relationship with

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[22] **Financial Capabilities** refers to having financial knowledge and competencies *and* being able to act on that knowledge through opportunities; Anucha, et al. (2021) [discussion draft]

the province, and as such, the province will not provide funding to any partner organizations.

> **REMINDER**: **Lead organizations** <u>must be a legal entity</u> capable of entering into contracts.
>
> See **Part 8 – Section E:** Organization Capacity for more information on lead and partner organizations.

In addition, applicants and/or partner organizations should demonstrate the following attributes/capacity:

- Existing professional networks in their target sector(s) and region(s) and a clear plan to leverage those networks;
- Experience relevant to the proposed initiative, including:
  - Experience working with and/or for Black-led organizations; and
  - Experience with initiatives linked to economic development and/or innovation (e.g., coaching and mentoring, relationship building, leadership, design thinking).
- Subject matter expertise, including:
  - Specialized knowledge of their target sector(s), including insights into trends and opportunities; and
  - Deep understanding of their regional business ecosystem(s), including community strengths and assets, and Black-led organizations who could benefit from the proposed initiative (potential beneficiaries).

## Geographic Scope

Sector Innovation Networks is available to applicants **province-wide.**

Selected applicants will identify a target sector(s) and region(s) in Ontario and demonstrate a thorough understanding of each. Applicants should, using evidence where possible, provide a rationale for the need of and opportunities presented by the proposed initiative with respect to the chosen sector and target region(s) in Ontario, including how the proposed initiative will contribute to positive outcomes for Black-led organizations.

## Desired Outcome

Selected initiatives will be designed to contribute to the desired outcome of the Sector Innovation Networks initiative, which is:

- **Communities and businesses leverage networks and local strengths to meet economic challenges and excel in high-opportunity sectors.**

In doing so, initiatives will contribute to the BYAP economic empowerment stream's long-term goal of supporting Black youth and young adults in Ontario to succeed in entrepreneurship/business building and create jobs (see **Section 4: Black Youth Action Plan – economic empowerment stream**).

Selected applicants will be required to participate in monitoring and performance measurement efforts by reporting on the desired outcome using standardized indicators that will be set out in the government funding agreement, in addition to core service outputs that relate to the following:

- Number of beneficiaries served; and
- Full-time Equivalent (FTE) positions created.[23]

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**NOTE:** Where possible, selected applicants will be required to establish baseline data for beneficiaries at the outset of service delivery in order to demonstrate progress toward their outcome.

**NOTE:** Selected applicants may be required to collect information from beneficiaries, including personal information on race and other measures, throughout delivery of the initiative. Selected applicants will have policies in place to protect the information and privacy of beneficiaries, and are responsible for ensuring appropriate confidentiality, privacy and security of information they collect from participants and all other individuals that they serve when carrying out the initiative in accordance with statute, regulation, policy and best practices. Please see Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards for more information, including steps to follow for data collection, management and use.

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# 6. Assessment of Application Criteria

A selection committee, which may include members from outside the Ontario Public Service, will review and assess the applications against the assessment criteria below to make recommendations for initiative funding.

Additional criteria such as cultural and linguistic diversity and the geographic distribution of services/supports across the province, will also be considered as part the Ministry's review and selection process.

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[23] Refers to the number of net-new FTE positions created to support implementation of the initiative.

See **Part 8 – Completing the Application Form** – for more details on how to complete each section.

| CRITERIA | WEIGHT |
|---|---|
| **Proposed Approach**<br>• The application identifies a **specific target sector and target geographic region(s)** in Ontario, and clearly describes how the proposed initiative addresses needs/presents opportunities for Black-led organizations, supported by research and evidence, where available.<br>• The application describes how it will leverage its professional network(s) to support proposed beneficiaries. The application outlines an outreach plan to widely socialize its initiative to serve the proposed target population and reach beneficiaries outside of the established network.<br>• The application clearly describes the proposed initiative and associated activities to deliver **one or more** direct service categories and demonstrates how they are aligned with sector/region specific opportunities and need.<br>• The application describes how the proposed initiative aligns with the priorities of the Sector Innovation Networks initiative (i.e., support Black-led organizations in high opportunity sectors and build on community assets and strengths).<br>• The application clearly identifies its target beneficiary population(s) and how the proposed initiative is tailored to meet their immediate and long-term needs and goals.<br>• The application clearly identifies how the proposed initiative aligns with the BYAP economic empowerment stream's common set of Guiding Principles. The application provides tangible examples of how the Guiding Principles inform both the design and delivery of the initiative. If the proposed initiative does <u>not</u> align with one or more of the principles, the application clearly outlines how the quality and integrity of programming will be ensured.<br>• The application aligns with the BYAP economic empowerment desired outcome; relationships between initiative activities and the expected outcome is clear and supported by evidence; the application clearly demonstrates how the proposed initiative will contribute to/achieve its outcome.<br>• The application includes a clearly developed logic model (see **Part 8 – Section G: Question 9;** and the **Appendix**) with alignment between the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. The BYAP economic empowerment desired outcome is included in the logic model. | **50%** |
| **Measurement and Reporting** | **15%** |

| | |
|---|---|
| • The applicant(s) demonstrates sufficient capacity to undertake reporting and measurement activities in connection with the proposed initiative.<br>• The application clearly considers how reporting and measurement capacity will be leveraged to support specific activities relevant to the Sector Innovation Network initiative (e.g., Ministry-defined core service outputs, baseline data for direct beneficiaries). | |
| **Initiative Delivery**<br>• The application lists any relevant partner organizations and provides a brief description of their roles, responsibilities, and expected contributions.<br>• The initiative work plan outlines key activities that will be achieved within a feasible timeline. Potential risks (including any associated with COVID-19) are identified, and mitigation strategies are provided.<br>• The budget is reasonable and aligns with the initiative description, activities, outputs, and outcomes. | **10%** |
| **Organization Capacity**<br>• The application demonstrates the applicant(s) existing professional network(s) (i.e., formal, corporative and collaborative, geographic "clusters" and/or social and institutional), connection to the **target sector** and professional networks identified in the application, a thorough understanding of relevant trends, and capacity to facilitate connections to organizations and other key stakeholders within the sector.<br>• The application demonstrates the applicant(s) experience/capacity to deliver initiatives with comparable scope and objectives for the benefit of Black-led organizations (e.g., Black leadership in the governance, design and delivery of services and initiatives).<br>• The application demonstrates the applicant(s) relevant background that includes experience with initiatives linked to economic empowerment, including leveraging networks and local strengths, and ability to provide direct services to organizations.<br>• **Where applicable**, the application provides sufficient information for the Ministry to determine whether an applicant(s) has the capacity to offer French-language services or will refer to a service provider offering services in French, or has demonstrated a clear plan to ensure French-language services will be available at the time of service delivery. | **15%** |
| **Additional Information**<br>• Two support letters clearly demonstrate the applicant(s) connection to, or knowledge of, the target sector identified in the application **and** its capacity to contribute to positive outcomes for Black youth and/or young adults through the proposed initiative (See **Part 8 – Section K** for more details). | **10%** |

# 7. Funding

While actual costs will be determined and negotiated with each selected applicant, the maximum amount of funding available for each Sector Innovation Network initiative is **up to $500,000 per <u>full</u> fiscal year.**

Funding can be requested for up to two years (2022-23 through 2023-24). The funding amount for the first year of the initiative (2022-23) is to be pro-rated to the initiative's start date but may include costs associated with initiative **start-up.**

It is expected that selected applicants will begin delivering services in **Spring/Summer 2022.** The Year One (2022-23) budget should reflect this expected start date.

The Ministry does not guarantee that selected applicants will receive the amount of funding requested.

## Eligible Costs

Eligible costs are budget items directly related to the provision of the Sector Innovation Network initiative. This could include:

- Salaries/wages and benefits
- Program delivery, including costs associated with:
  - Year One start-up
  - Supplies, materials, equipment, web-based platforms, etc.
  - Supports for digital capacity transformation (e.g., equipment/resource installation and staff training to increase an organization's digital capacity)
  - Business strategy and advisory (e.g., workshops and supports for leveraging networking opportunities).
  - Supports for technological improvement (e.g., specialized software)
- Building accommodation
- Travel, staff recruitment and training
- Allocated central administration

Costs must be reasonable and necessary for the initiative's successful completion and implementation. Typically, the Ministry approves allocated central administration costs up to 10% of the total budget.

## Ineligible Costs

Expenses that are not directly related to the provision of the Black Youth Action Plan's Sector Innovation Networks funding initiative are ineligible for funding consideration. This includes all major capital expenditures, such as the acquisition of land/buildings.

## Accountability

- An application must be submitted by a single eligible applicant or lead organization, who is working with a coalition or partnership. If an application is

selected for funding, this single eligible applicant or the lead organization will be the signatory to the funding agreement with the province and will be identified as the funding recipient.

- If an application contains any coalitions or partnerships, a lead organization must take full responsibility for the application and, if selected, will be responsible for fulfilling all obligations set out in the government funding agreement.

- The distribution of any funding is subject to the successful negotiation of a funding agreement between the single eligible applicant or lead organization and the province that will set out the terms and conditions governing the funds, reporting, performance, and accountability requirements.

- Selected applicants will:
  o Be accountable to the Ministry for all monies and service components and will be the final decision-making authority among partner organizations for the initiative under the funding agreement.
  o Manage their implementation plan to meet financial and accountability reporting requirements and milestones, as identified in the funding agreement.
  o Be responsible for receiving, administering, and allocating funds to any partner organizations in accordance with the requirements of their agreements with partner organizations. The Ministry will only provide funding to the lead organization, and will not be involved in distributing funds to any partner organizations.
  o Be responsible for measuring results and reporting their performance as required by their funding agreement.
  o Report-back to the Ministry as required by the funding agreement.

- Funding will be paid in installments per a specific payment schedule that forms part of the funding agreement. Payment will depend on the funding recipient meeting all requirements under the funding agreement with the Ministry.

# 8. Completing the Application Form

Application to the Sector Innovation Networks initiative **must be completed** using the application form located on the TPON platform.

- Section A – Organization Information
- Section B – Organization Address Information
- Section C – Application Contact Information
- Section D – Organization Payment Information
- Section E – Organization Capacity
- Section F – Partner Organizations
- Section G – Initiative Information
- Section H – Initiative Workplan

- Section I – Budget
- Section J – Performance Measurement
- Section K – Support Letters
- Section L – Terms and Conditions
- Section M – Declaration/Signing

In addition to completing sections above, applicants must also submit all the following attachments:

- Proof of legal entity status (e.g., certificate of incorporation, certificate of registration).
- Logic Model (See **Appendix** for template).
- Two Support Letters.

Please complete the following sections, addressing the questions in each section within the character limits indicated in the application form.

**The Ministry reserves the right to not accept incomplete applications.**

> **Section A**: Organization Information and **Section B:** Organization Address Information will be pre-populated based on your organization's account information in TPON. Please refer to the general TPON instructions to access and update your organization's account provided at [ontario.ca/getfunding](ontario.ca/getfunding).
>
> Complete **Section C:** Application Contact Information and **Section D:** Organization Payment Information as indicated on the application form.

# Section E: Organization Capacity

This section asks for information about **both the lead organization and any partner organization(s), where relevant:**

- The **lead organization** is the signing organization on the government funding agreement to deliver services under the Sector Innovation Network initiative.

- **Partner organizations** are organizations that play a co-leadership, collaborative, or supportive role in the delivery of services outlined in the government funding agreement. Partner organizations may have formal or informal agreements with each other and/or the lead organization that may be outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other contract. The Ministry would not have a contractual relationship with any partner organization, and will not flow funding to any partner organization.
  - See **Part 8 - Section F** for more details.

**Question 1: Describe the core business or field of activity of the applicant(s) (Maximum 2,000 Characters)**

- What is the applicant(s) core mandate/vision, its key objectives and goals and what beneficiaries does it serve?

**Question 2: Target sector (Maximum 500 Characters)**

- Identify the target sector in which the applicant(s) has experience / connections, and the professional network(s) that will be leveraged as part of the proposed initiative.

**Question 3: Applicant(s) experience (Maximum 3,000 Characters)**

- List and describe applicant(s) experience in/connection to the target sector/professional network(s) identified in question #2.
- List and describe any relevant experience the applicant(s) has in delivering services and supports with comparable scope (e.g., economic empowerment), objectives (e.g., leveraging networks and local strengths, providing direct services, etc.), and beneficiaries (e.g., Black-led organizations).
- Include any relevant past services or initiatives the applicant(s) was involved in, with particular attention to any that targeted Black-led organizations.
- Identify the degree to which Black leadership can or will be found in the governance, design and delivery of the applicant(s) services or initiatives.
- Briefly describe any existing relationships with and/or a clear plan to develop relationships or partnerships with organizations and other key stakeholders across the sector.

**Question 4: Capacity to deliver services in French (Maximum 1,000 Characters)**

- Indicate whether you are proposing to deliver services in one of the 26 [French-designated area of the Province](), or province-wide.
- If **yes**, indicate and briefly describe the applicant(s) capacity to provide an active offer of services in French or provide a formal referral to a service provider offering services in French to any prospective participants (beneficiaries) who require/request services in French.
- If the applicant(s) does not currently have capacity, please describe the measures you have in place or a clear plan to ensure French-language services will be available at the time of service delivery.

> **NOTE**: Active offer of French Language Services (FLS) is the set of measures to ensure that FLS are clearly visible, readily available, easily accessible, publicized, and of equivalent quality to services offered in English, and applies to all dimensions of service delivery (e.g., over the phone, in-person, signage, website, virtual and print materials, communications, events, and any third-party contracts).

**NOTE: Selected** applicants offering services in English will be required to develop a French Language Services (FLS) quality improvement plan, in the form provided by the Province, with a three-year strategy for improvement.

## Section F: Partner Organizations

- Using the table provided, please list **any partner organization(s)** that has committed to participating in the proposed initiative, including a brief explanation of why each organization listed is involved in the initiative and how working/collaborating with this organization will improve initiative delivery and outcomes.
  - Listed partner organizations should be committed to, and aware of, their role in the initiative.

| Partner Organization Name | Contact Information | How will this partner contribute? (financial or in-kind) | Describe how working / collaborating with this organization(s) will improve initiative delivery / outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

## Section G: Initiative Information

**Question 1: Initiative Name (Maximum 250 Characters)**

- Provide a short descriptive name that will easily identify the initiative.

**Question 2: Geographic Area (Maximum 2,000 Characters)**

- List in which geographic region(s), the proposed initiative will be delivered.
- Using evidence where possible, provide a rationale for the need of and opportunities presented by the proposed initiative with respect to the chosen sector and target region(s) in Ontario, including how the proposed initiative will contribute to positive outcomes for Black-led organizations.
- **Note:** Applicants are encouraged to draw on existing definitions (e.g. Statistics Canada's economic regions, municipalities) and boundaries relevant to their sector and/or core business (e.g. Greater Golden Horseshoe, industrial corridors) when identifying their target region(s).

**Question 3: Beneficiary Population (Maximum 2,000 Characters)**

- Identify the specific target beneficiaries your initiative will serve (i.e., organizations *receiving direct services*, including information on their needs and in what stage(s) they are in their entrepreneurial pathway (e.g., COVID-19 recovery, scaling, refinement, expansion).
- **Note:** beneficiaries must be Black-led organizations (including entrepreneurs) and may include those approaching incorporation or registration.
- Describe how the proposed initiative will be tailored to beneficiaries' immediate and long-term needs and goals.

**Question 4: Requested Funding Term**

- Indicate the funding term requested (between 1-2 years).

**Question 5: Total Funding Requested**

- Indicate the total amount of funding requested over the funding term.

> **NOTE:** While actual costs will be determined and negotiated with each selected applicant, the maximum amount of funding available for each Sector Innovation Network initiative is **up to $500,000 per <u>full</u> fiscal year.** Funding can be requested for up to two years (2022-23 through 2023-24).
>
> The funding amount for the first year of the initiative (2022-23) is to be pro-rated to the initiative's start date but may include costs associated with initiative **start-up.**
> It is expected that selected applicants will begin delivering services in
> **Spring/Summer 2022.**

**Question 6: Total Cost of the Initiative**

- If the total cost of the initiative exceeds the requested amount, please identify other sources of funding in your budget.

**Question 7: Initiative Summary (Maximum 500 Characters)**

- Please provide a high-level summary of your initiative. If the initiative is selected, the Ministry may include this description on its website.

> **REMINDER:** Applicants must align with the Sector Innovation Networks initiative's desired outcome.

**Question 8: Desired Outcome (Maximum 1,000 Characters)**

- Describe how your initiative will help communities and businesses leverage networks and local strengths to meet economic challenges and excel in high-opportunity sectors.

**Question 9: Logic Model**

- Using the table provided in the **Appendix,** please provide a visual representation of how your proposed initiative is intended to work, including:

   o **INPUTS:** What is *invested* in the initiative or what is *available* for initiative activities, such as staff, volunteers, time, money, technology, and partnerships.
   o **ACTIVITIES:** What will be *done* as part of the initiative. For example, business advisory workshops.
   o **OUTPUTS:** Products or services *produced through activities* and who is reached. For example, number of organizations who attended business advisory workshops, number of organizations that have improved their digital capacity, number of organizations that were able to hire and retain new talent.
   o **OUTCOMES:** Changes that occur as a result of activities. Applicants are encouraged to include **short and medium-term outcomes** for their initiative that support the long-term outcome(s). The logic model **must include the Black Youth Action Plan economic empowerment long-term outcome referenced on page 11.**

*Sample Logic Model*

| INPUTS | ACTIVITIES | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Example**: <br><br> Funding for: <br> • Program coordinator (1 FTE) <br> • Sector/industry consultant (1 FTE) <br> • Specialized e-commerce software <br><br> Partnership with high-opportunity | **Example**: <br><br> Outreach to identify and recruit Black-led organizations (e.g. via e-mail blasts, workshops, flyer distribution, posting through networks). <br><br> 1-on-1 "drop-in" sessions between participant organizations and sector/industry | **Example**: <br><br> 50 Black-led organizations reached through outreach efforts. <br><br> 25 Black-led organizations enrolled in program. <br><br> All Black-led organizations participate in 5 | **Example**: <br><br> **Short term:** Black-led organizations collaborate within a relevant professional network and gain tools and skills to foster innovative capacity <br><br> **Medium term:** Black-led organizations gain |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| sector/industry experts/consultants<br><br>Access to dedicated space and digital resources (e.g. space rental; teleconferencing software) for training and workshops. | consultant to navigate challenges and leverage opportunities<br><br>Network-wide group sessions to discuss challenges (e.g. to organizational growth) and how to leverage opportunities (e.g. existing funds)<br><br>Black-led organizations participate in collaborative, sector-specific business advisory workshops (e.g. identifying market trends and opportunities; strategies for scaling up)<br><br>Black-led organizations participate in collaborative workshops to build sector-specific investment expertise<br><br>Training on use of e-commerce software to expand digital presence and reach<br><br>Investor matching (Black-led organizations are provided warm connections/ introductions to existing investors within sector) | business advisory workshops.<br><br>All Black-led organizations participate in 5 investment workshops<br><br>All Black-led organizations participate in e-commerce software training<br><br>10 Black-led organizations secure viable investment opportunities through investor matching | expertise and connections necessary to respond to sector challenges and leverage opportunities.<br><br>**[REQUIRED] Long term (desired outcome):**<br><br>***Communities and businesses leverage networks and local strengths to meet economic challenges and excel in high-opportunity sectors.*** |

- Applicants may choose to use and upload another format to present the Logic Model, such as a diagram or other visual representation of the initiative, if all the required elements (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes) are included.
- Please note that all applications require a Logic Model to be considered for funding.

> **NOTE:** Additional guidance on Logic Models, including sample templates and definitions, can be accessed on the Youth Research & Evaluation eXchange's ("YouthREX") website. Additional logic model samples can be found on the Public Health Ontario website.

## Question 10: Initiative Description (Maximum 3,000 Characters)

This question asks you to provide detailed information about the key features of your proposed initiative and how it operates, including alignment with the Sector Innovation Networks initiative's priorities:

- Using evidence, demonstrate how the proposed initiative responds to or anticipates trends in the identified target sector(s)/region(s) in Ontario.
- Describe your organization's existing professional networks (i.e., formal, corporative and collaborative, geographic "clusters" and/or social and institutional). Describe your outreach plan to widely socialize to effectively serve the proposed target population and reach beneficiaries outside of the established network.
- Describe how your organization will leverage its professional networks to support beneficiaries throughout the delivery of the proposed initiative.
- Describe how the proposed initiative aligns with the priorities of the Sector Innovation Networks initiative (i.e., support Black-led organizations in high opportunity sectors and build on community assets and strengths). If the initiative does not align with one or more priorities, please provide rationale, supported by evidence, for the departure.
- Describe how the proposed initiative and associated activities align with **one or more** direct service categories (i.e., technology, human capital, business advisory, and financial capabilities). Demonstrate how the initiative's direct services are aligned with sector-/region-specific opportunities and need and address the immediate and long-term needs/build the innovative capacity of beneficiaries.
- Describe any risks, challenges, or obstacles that you anticipate while running the proposed initiative (including potential impacts of COVID-19) and planned mitigation strategies you will apply to ensure successful outcomes.

## Question 11: Alignment with Black Youth Action Plan's Economic Stream Guiding Principles (Maximum 1,000 Characters)

- Describe how the proposed initiative aligns with the Black Youth Action Plan economic empowerment stream's common set of guiding principles (see page 5). If the initiative does <u>not</u> align with one or more of the principles, applicants should clearly explain why in their application and address how the quality and integrity of programming will be ensured.

# Section H: Initiative Work Plan

- Please complete the Work Plan provided, indicating anticipated **key milestones** for the first two years, as applicable, of your initiative.
  - o The Work Plan should provide an **overview of key events** and act as a **high-level roadmap**.

> **REMINDER:** It is expected that selected applicants will begin delivering services in **Spring/Summer 2022.**

# Section I: Budget

> For definitions of individual budget lines, please refer to the TPON application form instructions.

- Provide a budget for the proposed initiative in the table provided.
  - o As a reminder, the budget should align with the INPUTS provided in your logic model.
- For multi-year initiatives, include your requested amount per year (costs can be equal across <u>full</u> fiscal years).
  - o **Pro-rate the budget for Year One (2022-23)**, with a projected start date of no earlier than May 2022 (Note: this does not guarantee that the initiative will start in May 2022).
  - o The funding amount for **Year One** may include costs associated with the **initiative start-up.**
- Review "Eligible Costs" (**Part 7**) to ensure the expenses listed are eligible.

> **NOTE**: Applicants may be asked to adjust the scale of their proposed budget, as a condition of funding.

> **NOTE:** The Province's fiscal year begins on April 1st of every year and ends on March 31st of the following year. Year 1 of the initiative is from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Year 2 of the initiative is from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

## Section J: Performance Measurement (Maximum 1,000 Characters)

- Describe the applicant(s) capacity for data collection, performance measurement, and reporting, including:
  - Any relevant experience your organization has in collecting program data, tracking and reporting on performance metrics, and/or conducting program evaluations (i.e., how the organization has measured, reported and shared program impact(s)/lessons learned; transferable skills that demonstrate the organization's readiness to undertake reporting and measurement activities);
  - Tools (e.g., surveys, software) or methods (e.g. case management, administrative tracking) your organization has used to support data collection, performance measurement, and reporting; or readiness to establish/adopt specific tools and methods.
- Describe how you will leverage existing capacity to support specific reporting and measurement activities in connection with the proposed initiative (e.g., Ministry-defined core service outputs, baseline data for direct beneficiaries).

## Section K: Support Letters

Please provide **two (2) support letters** which identify:

- The applicant(s) connection to, and knowledge of, an existing professional network within a target sector identified in the application; and
- The applicant(s) capacity to contribute to positive outcomes for Black-led organizations through the proposed initiative.

> **IMPORTANT: Support letters** may be provided by any individual or organization that has knowledge of/can speak to the applicant(s) experience, expertise and/or capacity (e.g., chambers of commerce, private sector or community partners, sector/industry leaders, elected officials, program participants, etc.)
>
> If you are applying as the **Lead Organization** on behalf of a partnership or a coalition, **at least one** support letter **must** be from a partner or coalition member. See **Part 8 – Section E**: Organization Capacity for more information on lead and partner organizations.

## Section L: Terms and Conditions

- Selected applicants delivering services in a French-designated area, or province-wide, shall provide an active offer of services in French. Where selected applicants are unable to deliver services in French, they shall refer the client to a service provider offering services in French.

- Selected applicants will have a written service complaint and problem resolution process that will be made available to participants (beneficiaries) upon request.
- Selected applicants must have policies in place to protect personal information and privacy of their participants (beneficiaries).
- Selected applicants are responsible to comply with all applicable legislation when delivering services (e.g., *Child, Youth and Family Services Act; Youth Criminal Justice Act*; *Human Rights Code*; *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*).
- Selected applicants will be required to carry out the initiative and use the funds received from the Ministry pursuant to the initiative without an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.
- A conflict of interest may include a situation where an applicant or any person who has the capacity to influence the applicant's decisions, has outside commitments, relationships or financial interests that could, or could be seen to, interfere with the applicant's objective, unbiased and impartial judgment relating to the initiative and the use of the funds.

For instructions on filling out **Section M:** Declaration/Signing, please refer to the TPON application form.

# 9. Further Information

## Risk Assessment

- Selected applicants will participate in the Ministry's risk assessment business process and submit any information required by the Ministry on all areas of risk as set out in the risk assessment.

## Compliance with Statutes

- Selected applicants will be required to confirm that they are in good standing with labour, environment and tax laws.

## Confidentiality

- The Ministry will disclose any information collected in this application if required by the provincial *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- The Ministry may also share application information with others, both within and outside of the Ministry, for the purpose of evaluating applications, assessing eligibility, and administering the Sector Innovation Networks initiative.

## Privacy and Personal Information

- Applicants are responsible for ensuring appropriate confidentiality, privacy and security of information that is collected from children, youth and families and all other individuals that they serve when carrying out the initiative.

# Rights of the Ministry

In applying, the applicant is deemed to have acknowledged that the Ministry may:

- Communicate directly with any applicant or potential applicants.
- At its sole discretion, accept applications for consideration that are not strictly compliant with the requirements outlined above.
- Verify with any applicant or with a third party any information set out in an application.
- At any time, and from time to time make changes, including substantial changes, to these guidelines and related documents including the application form by way of new information on the designated website.
- Cancel this application and call for applications process at any stage of the application or evaluation process.
- Reject any or all applications in its sole and absolute discretion.
- Fund legal entities for similar initiatives regardless of whether these entities have applied in response to these guidelines.

# No Commitment to Fund

The Ministry:

- Makes no commitment to fund all applicants or any one applicant.
- May choose which applicants to fund, if any, at its sole and absolute discretion.
- Does not guarantee funding even if an application meets all Sector Innovation Networks initiative criteria.
- Does not guarantee that the total amount of funding requested by a selected applicant will be approved.
- Shall not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by any applicant, including any costs or expenses associated with preparing and submitting responses to this call for applications.
- Will require selected applicants to execute a funding agreement outlining the terms and conditions relating to any funding as a condition of and prior to receiving funding.

# 10. Appendix

## Logic Model

| INPUTS<br><br>(What is *invested* in the initiative or what is *available* for initiative activities) | ACTIVITIES<br><br>(What will be *done* as part of the initiative) | OUPUTS<br><br>(Products or services *produced through activities* and *who* is reached) | OUTCOMES<br><br>(Changes that occur as a *result* of activities) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **REMINDER:** *Applicants are encouraged to include short and medium-term outcomes for their initiative that support the long-term desired outcome.*<br><br>**REMINDER:** *The logic model must include the Black Youth Action Plan economic empowerment stream desired outcome in question #8.* |