



**MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND
MULTICULTURALISM**

2026-27

**Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP)
Economic Empowerment Program
Career Readiness Stream
Guidelines**

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INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2020, the **Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP) Economic Empowerment (EE) program** was created to remove systemic barriers and strengthen economic outcomes for Black youth, communities and businesses. While the program helped meet the needs of job seekers, entrepreneurs and employers, Ontario's economy and labour market are shifting significantly.

As part of the Government of Ontario's **Protect Ontario** plan to grow and strengthen Ontario's workforce and protect Ontario's workers, the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (the ministry) is introducing the new **Career Readiness Stream (CRS)** of the BYAP EE program. This stream builds upon the strengths of previous Economic Empowerment initiatives and draws from evidence-based practices in supporting youth to connect to employment.

The Career Readiness Stream

This stream is designed to help **Black youth (ages 17–29) enter, navigate and succeed in Ontario's labour market**. The CRS focuses on opening doors to real opportunities by helping Black youth to **gain in-demand skills, paid work experience, mentorship, and access to professional networks**. At the same time, the program helps employers and industries connect with emerging talent to grow a skilled, future-ready workforce.

STREAM PRIORITIES

The objectives of the CRS are to:

- **Build career readiness** by supporting Black youth to develop in-demand skills, access training, participate in work-integrated learning opportunities, and receive mentorship and career navigation supports;
- **Support labour market entry, retention and career progression** for Black youth at different stages of their employment journey, from entry-level to career advancement;
- **Expand access to professional networks, industry connections, and career development opportunities** that equip Black youth with the tools, knowledge and relationships to pursue careers aligned with Ontario's current and emerging economic needs; and,
- **Strengthen pathways between Black youth and employers** to support workforce development and connect industries with emerging talent.

Target Population

The CRS is intended to support **Black youth (ages 17 – 29)**, with a focus on older youth who are ready to get a job or are moving ahead in their careers. The program recognizes that young people are at different stages and may need different support as they move from school into work or try to build stable careers.

Geographic Scope

The CRS will be delivered in the BYAP catchment areas: the **Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area** (i.e., City of Toronto, Halton Region, Peel Region, York Region, Durham Region, City of Hamilton), **Ottawa**, and **Windsor**, with flexibility to support eligible participants from other regions in Ontario as capacity allows.

Priority Sectors

The CRS will prioritize initiatives that align with Ontario's current and emerging labour market needs and support sustainable career opportunities for Black youth. Funded initiatives should focus on **Ontario's identified priority¹ and high-growth sectors** that demonstrate workforce demand, and long-term economic impact, including but not limited to:

- Advanced manufacturing and automotive
- Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity and technology
- Health care, life sciences and biomanufacturing
- Clean energy, nuclear, and critical minerals
- Infrastructure, construction and skilled trades
- Supply chain logistics and professional services

¹ As identified by [the Protect Ontario plan](#).

- Other sectors that demonstrate strong growth potential and meaningful employment opportunities for Black youth.

Performance Indicators and Measures

Key performance indicators include, but are not limited to:

- The percentage of participants who demonstrate improved employability skills and job readiness at completion of activities.
- The percentage of participants who are employed.
- The percentage of participants employed in Ontario's identified priority and high-growth sector jobs.
- Participant employment retention rates.
- Participant wage growth rates.

INITIATIVE REQUIREMENTS, TIMELINES AND ELIGIBILITY

Initiative Activities

Selected applicants must deliver services that help Black youth build skills, gain paid work experience and connect with career opportunities. Services should be responsive to labour market needs, culturally relevant, grounded in community and employer partnerships and designed to support long-term employment success.

Core Activities (Required)

Selected applicants must deliver all the following core activities:

1. Skills development and training

Training that helps participants develop the technical, professional, and workplace skills needed for in-demand careers. This may include sector-specific training, work-based learning, micro-credentials, or the development of transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving.

2. Paid Internships, placements and work experience

Paid internships, job placements, employment or other work-based learning opportunities that provide participants with hands-on experience should help participants build practical skills, explore career pathways, and understand workplace expectations.

3. Mentorship and Career Guidance

Access to mentorship and career guidance to help participants set goals and navigate the labour market and career field. Supports may be tailored based on sector, career stage and/or participant needs.

4. Employer Connections and Networking Opportunities

Opportunities that directly connect Black youth to employers. This may include networking events, career showcases, sector-specific conferences and information sessions, talent matching platforms or portals, workplace tours and employer engagement activities to increase access and visibility.

Complementary Supports (Optional)

In addition to the Core Activities, applicants may offer complementary support services to strengthen participant outcomes and promote sustainable employment. Examples include employment-related financial supports to reduce barrier to participation (such as transportation, work clothing, tools, equipment, or training supplies), employment readiness services (such as resume development, interview preparation, and job search assistance), employer and workplace readiness supports, and partnership-based activities that strengthen pathways to employment and career advancement.

French Language Services

All applicants must demonstrate their capacity to offer active services in French where feasible. Where direct service delivery is not available, applicants are expected to facilitate referrals to appropriate French language or bilingual services to ensure participants can access supports in their preferred official language.

Timelines

Selected applicants will deliver initiatives between Fall 2026 and March 2027.

Final reporting, including outcomes and financial reporting, is due to the ministry in May 2027.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be a legal entity, which may include not-for-profit corporations, municipal governments, for-profit businesses, schools, colleges, universities, incorporated faith-based organizations, First Nations, and unions. Individuals and non-legal entities are **not** eligible to apply.

Applications must be submitted by a single eligible organization (**the lead organization**). The lead organization may work with delivery partners to support initiative implementation.

If selected for funding, the lead organization will be solely responsible for entering into and complying with the Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. The ministry will have no contractual relationship with, and will not provide funding directly to, any partner organization.

Lead organizations and/or delivery partners should:

- Be Black-led and/or a Black-focused organization and/or with experience working with Black youth and young adults/the specified beneficiary population, and qualified and prepared to provide tailored and holistic supports for participants, including employment-related financial supports.
- Have experience providing services and supports linked to economic empowerment (e.g., employment, training, paid work placements and internships, skills advancement, credential-building, mentorship, career navigation).
- Have direct experience and/or sector-specific knowledge in high-priority or high-growth sectors, including active relationships with relevant industry stakeholders.
- Have existing relationships with and/or a clear plan to develop relationships or partnerships with employers and other key stakeholders across the sector.

INITIATIVE FUNDING

Applicants should request funding based on the scope, scale, and proposed outcomes of services provided.

Delivery is expected to begin in Fall 2026. Applicants should plan to start their initiatives no earlier than October 1, 2026, ensure proposed budgets align with this anticipated start date, and complete all initiative activities by March 31, 2027.

The ministry does not guarantee that selected applicants will receive the amount of funding requested. Funding decisions are made at the ministry's discretion and will take into account CRS objectives, available funding, risk assessments, and other relevant considerations.

Third-Party Funding

The Ministry has launched a separate Call for Applications for organizations that wish to contribute funding to new CRS initiatives. Selected CRS applicants may receive funding from a combination of Ministry and third-party sources. More information is found in the Funder Call for Applications.

Accountability

Funding is conditional upon the successful negotiation and execution of a funding agreement, agreement between the applicant (or lead organization, where applicable) and the ministry. The agreement will outline the terms and conditions of funding, including reporting, performance measurement, financial management, and accountability requirements.

Selected applicants will:

- 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.
- Manage their implementation plan to meet financial and accountability reporting requirements and milestones, as identified in the funding agreement.
- Be responsible for receiving, administering, and allocating funds to any partner organizations in accordance with the requirements of their agreements with partner organizations.
- Be responsible for measuring results and reporting their performance as required by their funding agreement.
- 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.

INITIATIVE BUDGET AND ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Eligible Expenses

Funding may be used for costs that are necessary to deliver the initiative and achieve its intended outcomes. Examples of eligible costs include:

- Staff salaries, wages, and benefits
- Supplies, materials and equipment
- Participant or client honoraria/remuneration
- Online platforms and technology used to deliver the initiative
- Rent and occupancy costs related to initiative delivery
- Travel costs related to the initiative
- Staff recruitment and training
- Participant internships or work placements, up to 50% of participant salary or wage costs.
- Administrative and overhead costs (cannot exceed 10% of the total budget)

Ineligible Costs

Funding cannot be used for costs that are not directly related to initiative delivery, including:

- Purchasing land or buildings
- Capital expenses including land, vehicles and construction/major repairing of buildings
- Core or ongoing operating expenses of the organization, including maintenance, leases and rents, utilities, repairs or supplies not related to initiative
- Expenses incurred before the funding agreement is signed, unless otherwise approved by the ministry
- Costs that have already been paid for or reimbursed through another funding source

The same expense cannot be charged to more than one funding source. Organizations receiving funding from multiple sources must be able to demonstrate how initiative costs were allocated and may be required to provide supporting documentation for shared expenses.

APPENDIX A: Career Readiness Stream Logic Model

The Career Readiness Stream logic model outlines the overall design and intended outcomes. Proposed initiatives may vary in approach and/or include more detailed and tailored activities; however, all initiative outcomes must include the stream's intended outcomes.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
- Government of Ontario funding through the Black Youth Action Plan Economic Empowerment Program - Other financial contributions - Black-led/Black-focused community organizations (encouraged) - Employer, industry and sector partners - Post-secondary institutions - Mentors and industry professionals - Staff - Sector-relevant curricula, training tools and platforms, - Employer worksites for paid internships and work placements - Employment-related financial supports (e.g., transit, uniforms, tools, equipment)	Core Activities (Required): - Deliver career-relevant skills development and training aligned to labour market demands. - Provide paid internship, placements and work-integrated learning experience. - Match participants with mentors to provide ongoing career guidance. - Facilitate employer connections, networking events, job showcases and workplace exposure goals and navigate the labour market and career field. Supports may be tailored based on sector, career stage, and/or participant needs.	- Number of Black youth enrolled and served - Number of participants completing skills training/micro-credentials - Number of paid internships, work placements and work experiences completed - Number of mentorship matches established - Number of employer/sector-based partnerships engaged - Number of networking and career employer engagement activities held	Short-Term (0-3 months): Participants increase their job readiness through skills training, mentorship, and exposure to employers and workplaces. Youth gain clarity on career pathways and build confidence in navigating the labour market. Medium Term (3-12 months): Participants secure employment, paid placements, or further training opportunities. Youth strengthen their workplace skills, expand professional networks, and begin to establish career stability within priority and high-growth sectors. Long-Term (12 months and beyond): Participants experience sustained employment, increased job retention, and career mobility. Youth progress toward higher wages, advancement opportunities, and contributing to a more resilient and inclusive workforce in Ontario.