



**MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND
MULTICULTURALISM**

2026-27

Black Youth Action Plan

Economic Empowerment Program

Funders Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

The Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP) is a provincial initiative launched in 2018 and aims to reduce barriers and increase opportunities for Black communities across Ontario. BYAP supports children, youth, families, young professionals and entrepreneurs. Community organizations are funded to deliver services and supports, including family wellness and early intervention; and educational supports.

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 across Ontario. While the program helped meet the needs of job seekers, entrepreneurs and employers, Ontario's economy and labour market are shifting significantly. Since its inception, the changing landscape has accelerated the need for a refreshed and more responsive approach to the delivery of the BYAP EE Program including the need for expanded investment, cross-sector collaboration, and innovative partnership and funding models.

Opportunity to Support Young Black Professionals and Entrepreneurs

The Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (MCM or the ministry) is inviting private-sector and philanthropic organizations/funders to co-invest in BYAP's high-impact Economic Empowerment Program. Initiatives will be delivered by community organizations selected through a Call for Applications (CfA) process. These organizations will implement sector-focused employment and entrepreneurship initiatives designed to equip Black youth and entrepreneurs with the skills, experience and networks they need to succeed in today's economy.

This funding model offers a unique opportunity for funders to go beyond traditional philanthropy by contributing to a coordinated, province-wide strategy that strengthens talent pipelines, supports business growth and drives inclusive economic development. By investing with BYAP, funders can help unlock new opportunities for emerging professionals and entrepreneurs while also supporting Ontario's long-term competitiveness, innovation and workforce sustainability.

Applicants will have the opportunity to fund initiatives delivered through one or more of the following streams/options:

- The BYAP Career Readiness Stream (CRS);
- The BYAP Entrepreneurship Stream (ES); or
- Another initiative that supports the employment outcomes for Black youth, communities and entrepreneurs, or with the broader vision and goals of BYAP.

For the purposes of this program guideline, any reference to “partnerships” does not imply or include reference to a legal partnership within the meaning of the *Partnerships Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.5.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Applicants are invited to submit a proposal to contribute funding to one or more of the following Economic Empowerment streams/options:

Career Readiness Stream

CRS initiatives will 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.

Entrepreneurship Stream

ES initiatives will support **Black entrepreneurs (age 18 – 29) who are ready to grow and scale** their businesses, expand their market reach, and increase their revenues, particularly in sectors that are driving Ontario’s economy and creating jobs through business development services including training, coaching, mentorship, and other growth supports.

Funder-led Initiatives

An initiative identified by the applicant that is aligned with the vision and goals of BYAP EE Program, which is to eliminate disparities for Black youth, families and communities by expanding economic opportunities for Black youth, young professionals and entrepreneurs across Ontario.

Please refer to [Appendix A for the Career Readiness Stream’s logic model](#).

Please refer to [Appendix B for the Entrepreneurship Stream’s logic model](#).

Role of Funders

Applicants can support BYAP in one of two ways:

Provide Funding Only: Selected applicants will have the opportunity to fund CRS and ES initiatives selected through the Calls for Application process. The Ministry will identify and share initiatives that align with funder priorities and facilitate potential funding matches, allowing selected initiatives to leverage both Ministry and applicant funding contributions.

Provide Funding and Deliver Services: Selected applicants may receive Ministry funding to supplement their own financial contribution and independently deliver a BYAP EE program.

Target Population

BYAP EE initiatives will serve the following populations:

- Black youth, ages 17–29, who are seeking employment, career advancement, skills development, training, mentorship, or work-integrated learning opportunities.

- Black entrepreneurs, ages 18-29, seeking to grow and scale their businesses.

Geographic Scope

The BYAP EE Program prioritizes Black youth, young professionals and entrepreneurs within the three catchment areas of BYAP – the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), Ottawa and Windsor. Initiatives may be delivered within or outside of these communities where there is demonstrated need.

Priority Sectors

Funders are encouraged to invest in initiatives that support **Ontario's identified priority¹ and high-growth sectors**, where there is strong potential for employment growth, business expansion, innovation and long-term economic opportunity, including but not limited to:

- Advanced manufacturing and automotive
- Artificial Intelligence (AI), 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
- Other sectors that demonstrate strong growth potential, meaningful employment opportunities for Black youth and market opportunities for Black entrepreneurs.

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.
- The percentage of businesses with increased revenue at 12 months
- The percentage of businesses still in operation at 12 months.
- The number and percentage of new jobs created by participating businesses

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

INITIATIVE REQUIREMENTS, TIMELINES AND ELIGIBILITY

French Language Services

The ministry is committed to ensuring that French-speaking Ontarians have equitable access to programs and services. Organizations funded through the CRS and the ES will be expected to demonstrate their capacity to provide services in French, where feasible, or facilitate referrals to appropriate French-language or bilingual services. Funders are encouraged to support initiatives that advance accessibility and inclusion for Francophone communities.

Timelines

Applicants will be expected to fund initiatives that are delivered between Fall 2026 and March 2027.

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- Foundations and charitable organizations;
- Corporate foundations;
- Private-sector businesses and corporations;
- Financial institutions;
- Industry and sector associations;
- Philanthropic organizations;
- Community investment funds;
- Other organizations able to demonstrate the capacity and authority to make financial contributions.

Applicants must:

- Be legally established entities;
- Demonstrate financial capacity to fulfill proposed commitments;
- Support the objectives of the BYAP EE Program;
- Agree to collaborate with selected service delivery organizations and/or the ministry.

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

INITIATIVE FUNDING

There is no minimum or maximum contribution amount.

Applicants proposing to provide funding and deliver services should request a funding amount that is proportionate to the scope, scale, and expected outcomes of the proposed initiative.

Accountability

Selected applicants will play an important role in supporting the success of the BYAP EE Program through financial contributions and collaboration. As part of their participation, selected applicants may be required to provide information that supports initiative planning, reporting, accountability, and partnership development activities.

Selected applicants will be expected to:

- Confirm their anticipated funding contribution and areas of investment interest.
- Participate in discussions regarding alignment with BYAP EE Program priorities.
- Work with the ministry and service delivery organizations to implement initiatives.
- Fulfill commitments outlined in any funding or contribution agreements entered into as part of the initiative.
- Provide information reasonably required by the ministry to support program monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities.

If the Ministry makes a connection between a selected applicant and a service delivery organization, the selected applicant and service delivery organization bear all responsibility for any discussion or relationships that may result from the connection. The Ministry shall have no responsibility in this regard.

INITIATIVE BUDGET AND ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Eligible Expenses

Funding contributions from selected applicants would cover eligible costs under the BYAP EE Program, which include:

- Staff salaries, wages, and benefits;
- Service delivery costs;
- Training, mentorship, and coaching activities;
- Participant supports;
- Technology, materials, and supplies;
- Travel and outreach activities;
- Facility and accommodation costs;
- Staff recruitment and training; and,
- Administrative and operational costs necessary to support initiative delivery.

All expenditures must be reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the successful delivery of approved initiative.

Ineligible Expenses

Examples of ineligible expenses under the BYAP EE Program include:

- 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 stream's 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 Services (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.

APPENDIX B: Entrepreneurship Stream Logic Model

The Entrepreneurship Stream logic model outlines the overall stream's design and intended outcomes. Proposed initiative 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 party financial contributions - Black-led/Black-focused organizations (encouraged) - Partner organizations and coalitions - Staff (e.g., business advisors, trainers, coaches) - Mentors, industry experts, and professional service providers (e.g., legal, accounting) - Entrepreneurship curricula, training tools and platforms	Core Services: - Deliver tailored business advisory supports to strengthen operations, systems, and growth strategies for scaling businesses - Provide training focused on leadership, management, and building effective teams to support business growth - Support financial management and investment readiness, including budgeting, forecasting, and access to appropriate financing options - Deliver coaching and mentorship, and facilitate connections to industry networks, advisors, and professional services to reinforce learning and support sustainable growth	- Number of Black entrepreneurs enrolled and served - Number of advisory sessions delivered - Number of entrepreneurs completing business and leadership development training - Number of entrepreneurs receiving coaching and mentoring - Number of businesses supported with operational or technology improvements - Number of businesses receiving investment readiness or capital navigation support - Number of connections facilitated to mentors, advisors, and sector networks - Number of Black-led businesses receiving external funding	Medium-Term (6-12 months) Participating businesses demonstrate improved business performance, including increased revenues and improved market reach. Businesses are better positioned to pursue expansion and scaling opportunities within priority and high-growth sectors. Long-Term (12 months and beyond) Participating businesses experience increased sustainability, remaining operational beyond one year following program completion. Business growth and expansion contribute to net job creation and longer-term economic stability. Black-owned businesses play a stronger role in Ontario's priority and high-growth sectors, contributing to a more competitive, resilient, and inclusive economy.