



**MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND
MULTICULTURALISM**

2026-27

Black Youth Action Plan

Economic Empowerment Program

Entrepreneurship Stream

Guidelines

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
The Entrepreneurship Stream	3
STREAM PRIORITIES	4
Target Population	4
Geographic Scope	4
Priority Sectors	4
Performance Indicators and Measures	5
INITIATIVE REQUIREMENTS, TIMELINES AND ELIGIBILITY	6
Initiative Activities	6
French Language Services	7
Timelines	7
Applicant Eligibility	7
INITIATIVE FUNDING	8
Third-Party Funding	8
Accountability	8
INITIATIVE BUDGET AND ELIGIBLE EXPENSES	9
Eligible Expenses	9
Ineligible Costs	9
APPENDIX A: Entrepreneurship Stream Logic Model	10

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's broader efforts to strengthen Ontario's economic competitiveness, attract investment, drive growth and create jobs, the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (the ministry) is introducing the new **Entrepreneurship Stream (ES)** of the BYAP EE program. This stream builds upon the strengths of previous Economic Empowerment initiatives and draws from evidence-based practices in supporting Black entrepreneurship.

The Entrepreneurship Stream

The stream is designed to 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. Organizations will receive funding to deliver sector-focused **business development services** to Black entrepreneurs, including training, coaching, mentorship, and other growth supports. These services will help businesses grow, expand market reach and achieve long-term business sustainability.

STREAM PRIORITIES

The primary objectives of the ES are to:

- **Equip Black entrepreneurs (ages 18-29) with the skills, knowledge and support** needed to expand their businesses through targeted training, coaching and mentorship;
- **Help participating businesses expand their market reach, pursue growth opportunities and increase revenues;**
- **Support participating businesses to strengthen their operations, access new markets, create jobs and achieve long-term business sustainability;** and,
- **Support business growth in sectors** that are driving Ontario's economy and creating jobs.

Target Population

The ES is intended to support young **Black entrepreneurs (ages 18 – 29)** with **established businesses in high priority or high growth sectors** and, that are at the **growth or scaling stage**¹.

Eligible businesses must:

- Be registered/incorporated with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).
- Operating in Ontario before accessing ES services and at all times while participating in the program.
- Have an existing business model and currently generating revenue.
- Have an annual gross revenue up to \$750,000;
- Offer a validated product or service (businesses ideas alone are not eligible).
- Operate in compliance with applicable Ontario laws and engage in socially responsible business activities.

While the ES will focus on Black entrepreneurs aged 18–29, businesses owned by entrepreneurs outside this age range may also be supported where appropriate.

Geographic Scope

The ES will be delivered across Ontario. Applicants should demonstrate an understanding of local or regional needs and the demand for entrepreneurship services in their communities.

Priority Sectors

The ES will prioritize Black-led businesses operating in **Ontario's priority and high-growth sectors**², including but not limited to:

¹ Growth and Expansion Stage – Businesses that have validated their product and have experience with operations. At this stage, the business owner may be interested in learning about hiring specialized skills, employee management, leadership and organizational culture, financial management, digitization, sales and marketing, new markets, additional capital, etc.

² As identified in the government's plan to Protect Ontario and literature.

- Advanced manufacturing and automotive;
- Artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and technology;
- Health care, life sciences and biomanufacturing;
- Clean energy, nuclear and critical minerals;
- Infrastructure, construction, skilled trades;
- Supply chain logistics and professional services;
- Other sectors that demonstrate strong growth potential and market opportunities for Black entrepreneurs.

Performance Indicators and Measures

Key performance indicators include, but are not limited to:

- 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

INITIATIVE REQUIREMENTS, TIMELINES AND ELIGIBILITY

Initiative Activities

Successful applicants will deliver **tailored sector-focused business development services** aligned with the stream's objectives. Services should be practical, hands-on, and designed to build the skills and knowledge needed to grow their businesses, expand market reach, increase revenues, strengthen operations, create jobs, and achieve long-term business sustainability. Successful applicants are expected to offer **a combination of the core activities** that respond to the needs of growth-stage businesses. Applicants will provide **one or more** of the first three core activities (#1 - #3) and **must** provide core activity #4.

Core Activities

1. Business Advisory and Technical Supports

Supports that help entrepreneurs strengthen business operations and pursue growth opportunities. Examples may include support for strategic business planning, operational improvements, technology adoption, market expansion, sales and marketing strategies, procurement readiness, and improving business systems and processes.

2. Entrepreneur Training and Human Capital

Training and supports that help entrepreneurs strengthen leadership and management skills and build high-performing teams. Examples may include leadership development, strategic decision-making, workforce planning, talent recruitment, and employee development.

3. Capital Raising Supports

Supports that help entrepreneurs strengthen financial management practices and prepare for growth. Examples may include budgeting and cash-flow management, investment readiness, identifying financing options, investor pitch preparation, and accessing capital opportunities.

4. Complementary Services (Required)

All projects must provide complementary supports that reinforce learning and business growth. This may include coaching, mentorship, peer learning opportunities, and connections to industry networks, professional advisors, supply chain partners, and other business resources.

Ineligible Services

Funding provided through the ES **cannot** be used to issue grants or direct financial assistance to participating businesses.

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 incorporated legal entities, 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 demonstrate:

- Established networks within targeted high-priority or high-growth sectors.
- Direct connections to industry and broader business ecosystems.
- Experience working with Black business owners and an understanding of the unique barriers and needs faced by Black entrepreneurs.
- Experience supporting growth-stage and scaling businesses, including achieving outcomes related to revenue growth, market expansion, or job creation and sustainability.
- Direct experience and/or sector-specific knowledge in high-priority or high-growth sectors, including active relationships with relevant industry stakeholders.
- Understanding of local economic conditions, opportunities and sector specific realities.

INITIATIVE FUNDING

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

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 successful applicants will receive the amount of funding requested. Funding decisions are made at the ministry's discretion and will take into account program 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 ES initiatives. Selected ES 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
- Program supplies, materials and equipment
- Participant or client honoraria/remuneration
- Online platforms and technology used to deliver the program
- Rent and occupancy costs related to program delivery
- Travel costs related to the initiative
- Staff recruitment and training
- Administrative and overhead costs that support the initiative (up to 10% of the 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
- Grants to participating businesses.

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: Entrepreneurship Stream Logic Model

The Entrepreneurship 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 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 Activities: - 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 completion of activities. Businesses experience 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.