

News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada invests to support not-for-profit Black-led organizations across Northern Ontario

FedNor invests more than \$1.1 million to support Black entrepreneurs and businesses throughout the region

March 11, 2022 – Sudbury, ON – Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario – [FedNor](#)

Black Canadian business owners and entrepreneurs make important contributions to the Canadian economy, yet they continue to face systemic racism and obstacles in starting and growing their businesses. This has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Canada is working to address long-standing barriers with its first-ever [Black Entrepreneurship Program \(BEP\)](#) – an over \$400-million investment to support the long-term success of Black entrepreneurs and business owners.

Today, Viviane Lapointe, Member of Parliament for Sudbury, and Marc G. Serré, Member of Parliament for Nickel Belt and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, announced that the Afro-Heritage Association of Sudbury will receive \$1,150,000 through FedNor to establish the Northern Ontario Black Economic Empowerment Program in communities throughout Northern Ontario. The announcement was made on behalf of the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister responsible for FedNor, and Member of Parliament for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

Using a business-first approach, this program is designed to address systemic racism and discrimination by creating greater pathways to opportunity. The program will gather, develop and deliver culturally appropriate support to Black entrepreneurs and business owners to address the gaps in the region's entrepreneurship ecosystem. Specifically, the funding will allow the Afro-Heritage Association of Sudbury to coordinate workshops, training seminars and trade shows, provide mentorship and consulting services, and support various events and activities that showcase Black talent, excellence, success and businesses. This strategic investment also allows the association to create four full-time high-quality jobs to support the administration of the program.

The support is provided through the National Ecosystem Fund, which was created to strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem for Black entrepreneurs and business owners across Canada. In Northern Ontario, FedNor is administering the Fund.

Quotes

“Through the National Ecosystem Fund, the Afro-Heritage Association of Sudbury will be able to expand existing initiatives or develop new ones, and provide critical support, services, and resources to Black Entrepreneurs and businesses throughout Northern Ontario. This important investment is another example of our government's commitment to diversity and inclusion and supporting the contributions of Black Canadians in our economy.”

- *The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for FedNor, and Member of Parliament for Thunder Bay–Superior North*

“Today's investment is an important step forward in building the foundation for long-term, lasting change by making a real difference in the lives of Black entrepreneurs across Northern Ontario, and indeed the country, for years to come. By helping Black entrepreneurs participate in and benefit from the regional economy, we all win.”

- *Viviane Lapointe, Member of Parliament for Sudbury*

“I am proud of our government's commitment to work with organizations, such as the Afro-Heritage Association of Sudbury, to address some of the long-standing challenges that Black-led businesses face in starting and growing their businesses. This initiative will enhance the important contributions that Black Canadian business owners and entrepreneurs across the region make to Northern Ontario's economy.”

- *Marc G. Serré, Member of Parliament for Nickel Belt and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages*



"We are excited to launch the Northern Ontario Black Economic Empowerment Program to help Black entrepreneurs grow their businesses and succeed now and into the future. This two-year initiative will allow us to help more than 70 Black-led businesses in their efforts to start up, scale up, create jobs and support sustainable growth in Northern Ontario."

- *Chantae Robinson, President of the Afro-Heritage Association of Sudbury, and Co-founder of the Northern Ontario Black Economic Empowerment Program*

"The Northern Ontario Black Economic Empowerment Program – NOBEEP – will work alongside the Northern Ontario economic and resource development ecosystem to support and grow Black-owned businesses in Northern Ontario."

- *Charles Nyabeze, Interim Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Northern Ontario Black Economic Empowerment Program*

Quick facts

- The Black Entrepreneurship Program (BEP) is a partnership between the Government of Canada, Black-led business organizations, post-secondary or other accredited educational institutions and financial institutions.
- Canada's regional development agencies deliver the BEP's National Ecosystem Fund, and work with selected partner organizations to assist them in implementing their services.
- The [Black Entrepreneurship Program](#) is an over \$400-million investment including:
 - up to \$53 million for the [National Ecosystem Fund](#) to support Black-led business organizations across the country. It will help Black business owners and entrepreneurs access funding and capital and provide them with mentorship, financial planning services and business training. An additional \$51.7 million for the BEP was provided in Budget 2021;
 - up to \$291.3 million in support of the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, which will provide loans of up to \$250,000 for Black business owners and entrepreneurs; and,
 - up to \$6.5 million for the [Black Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub](#), which will conduct qualitative and quantitative research, collect data on the state of Black entrepreneurship in Canada and help identify Black entrepreneurs' barriers to success as well as opportunities for growth.
- Canada's regional development agencies are on the ground helping businesses weather the effects of the pandemic. With the measures recently proposed in [Budget 2021](#), FedNor continues to be a trusted partner to deliver targeted support in Northern Ontario.

Associated links

- [Black Entrepreneurship Program](#)
- [Minister Ng announces the launch of the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund](#)
- [Minister Ng announces opening of applications for the Black Entrepreneurship Program's National Ecosystem Fund and Knowledge Hub](#)
- To find out more about FedNor's programs and services, please visit: fednor.gc.ca
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