



London
CANADA

ANTI-BLACK RACISM ACTION PLAN

Supporting success for London's Black communities.



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Land and African Ancestral Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the City of London is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Attawandaron peoples. We honour and respect the history, languages, and culture of the diverse Indigenous people who call this territory home. We acknowledge all the treaties that are specific to this area: the Two Row Wampum Belt Treaty of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy/Silver Covenant Chain; the Beaver Hunting Grounds of the Haudenosaunee NANFAN Treaty of 1701; the McKee Treaty of 1790, the London Township Treaty of 1796, the Huron Tract Treaty of 1827, with the Anishinaabeg, and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum of the Anishnaabek and Haudenosaunee. The three Indigenous Nations that are neighbours to London are the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation; Oneida Nation of the Thames; and the Munsee Delaware Nation who all continue to live as sovereign Nations with individual and unique languages, cultures, and customs.

In acknowledging the Treaties of these lands, the City of London also recognizes all Treaty peoples of this territory, including settlers of the past and present, and the African ancestors who were forcefully brought here because of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. It is important for Canada to acknowledge its devastating history of enslavement and the impact it has had on generations of people of African descent, but also the enduring contributions of Black communities to this Land. Let us honor this legacy and strive for justice and reconciliation between all peoples.

Background

The presence of Black people in Ontario dates to the early 19th century¹. In Southwestern Ontario, it is reported that several Black settlements, including Wilberforce (near Lucan), Chatham, Dawn, and Elgin, existed prior to the 1850's². Many of these Southwestern Ontario cities, including London were terminus points of the Underground Railroad, and became home to enslaved persons who had escaped from the United States. In London, the Fugitive Slave Chapel (the first African Methodist Episcopal (AME)³ and the First Convention of the Canadian League for the advancement of Colored People⁴ are two of the historical facts that well establishes the presence and activities of Black persons.

¹ Adams, T. Making a Living: African Canadian Workers in London, Ontario, 1861-1901. (2011). *Labour/Le Travail*, 67, 9-43.
² Museum London. Black Communities in Southwestern Ontario 1830-1920 Teacher Resource Guide. (2008). Microsoft Word - Teacher Resource Guide.doc (museumlondon.ca). Retrieved August 1st, 2023.
³ Beaudoin, M., Martelle, H., Brandon, N., & Dann, D. (2014). Preserving Black Heritage in London, Ontario: The Fugitive Slave Chapel (1847-1869). Preserving Black Heritage in London, Ontario: The Fugitive Slave Chapel (1847-1869) - Society for Historical Archaeology (sha.org)



As of 2021, Canadian census data showed that there were 18,780 people living in London, Ontario who identified as Black (Statistics Canada, 2021)⁵, making the community the third largest visible minority group within the city. The two largest visible minority groups in order of size are the South Asian and Arab communities. The Black community in London is diverse in terms of origin, culture, and ethnicity. While a significant number of Black Londoners immigrated from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Diaspora, there are members of the Black community whose immigration history cannot be traced and are either the descendants of enslaved or freed persons who settled in London and Middlesex County beginning in the 1800s. Several languages are spoken within the community: including Akan, Creole, Yoruba, Swahili, Somali, Amharic, Hausa, French, and English. Religions often practiced within the community include Christianity, Islam, and Bahaism.

Despite many being in London for generations, Black people continue to experience anti-Black racism, i.e., the prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent. Anti-Black racism, largely rooted in a unique history of enslavement and entrenched in political, social, and economic spheres and institutions, often manifests as unequal access to programs and services, low rate of participation and representation in political and institutional decision-making processes, low social recognition valuation and appreciation of their diversity, low income, and poorer health and social outcomes.


Context and purpose of the Action Plan

Recognizing the prejudice experienced by People of African Descent, the world over, the United Nations in 2015 designated the years 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent to acknowledge their outstanding contributions to the development of societies and nations throughout history and in the present. The goal of the declaration was for Member states and people everywhere to end racial discrimination and systemic exclusion, and enhance equal participation in public, political and economic life, justice, and protection of the law for people of African descent⁶. As the decade ends, it has become even more important for these goals to be fully recognized and integrated into the fabric of society.

⁴ First Convention of the Canadian League for the Advancement of Colored People, cover. (Created: 1927-10-10). Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.31814292>

⁵ Statistics Canada. (2021). 2021 Census of Canada. Retrieved August 1st, 2023 from Statistics Canada: Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - London [Census metropolitan area], Ontario (statcan.gc.ca)

⁶ United Nations & Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2015). International Decade for People of African Descent. https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2019/12/african_descent_booklet_web_english.pdf



In 2020, London's City Council made a resolution that acknowledged that Anti-Black racism exists in London, made a commitment to eradicate racism and oppression, and established **Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression** as a 6th priority of City Council's Strategic Plan. Through Council direction, the City's Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Division (within the City Manager's office) was subsequently established. The mandate of the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Division is to create and sustain action-focused, positive, and lasting systemic change in the City of London so that race or membership in an equity denied group does not predict one's access to opportunities or ability to engage whole heartedly in the London community. A primary role of the Black Community Liaison Advisor is to strengthen the relationship between the City and Black communities within London.

City Council then directed the development of an Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, demonstrating the City's commitment to prioritize issues facing Black communities, reduce barriers to participating in City services and make London more welcoming, supportive, and safe for Black communities. The intention of the plan is to provide recommendations and measurable actions on how the City of London can better deliver and support services that meet the needs of Black Londoners. Through this action plan the City looks to strengthen its relationship with London's Black communities through ongoing collaborations and meaningful dialogues, while developing and implementing community-centered approaches to eliminate Anti-Black Racism. In addition to addressing the inequities experienced by Black communities in London, the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan is part of the City of London's preliminary efforts towards the attainment of the International Decade's goals within our municipality.



Connections to Council's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan

Building on Council's direction in 2020, Council's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan includes a Strategic Area of Focus, Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion. The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan is grounded in this area of focus and many other outcomes throughout the Strategic Plan as outlined below:

Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion

- 1. The City of London is a leader in becoming an equitable and inclusive community.
- 2. All Londoners have opportunities to participate in civic engagement.

Wellbeing and Safety

- 1. London has safe, vibrant, and healthy neighborhoods and communities.
- 2. London is an affordable and supportive community for individuals and families.

Economic Growth, Culture and Prosperity

- 1. London encourages equitable economic growth and diversification.
- 2. London encourages the growth of local artistic and musical talent.

Safe London for Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse and Trans People

- 1. The City of London demonstrates leadership by taking meaningful actions to address and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, gender-based violence, and sexual violence.

Well-Run City

- 1. The City of London is trusted, open, and accountable in service of the community.
- 2. The City of London is a leader in public service.



A plan shaped by London's Black communities

To develop an action plan that is tailored to the needs of London's Black Communities, we gathered feedback and input from Black Londoners using a variety of community consultation formats:

1. Online Survey: An online survey was conducted between the months of April and May of 2023.
2. One-on-one key informant and community member interviews: One-on-one conversations with community members and service providers were conducted between March and April 2023.
3. Focus group discussions: 10 focus groups were held with members of the Black community between November 2022 and July 2023. Recognizing that the Black community is diverse in terms of their histories and intersecting identities (culture and ethnicity, gender identity and expression, ability, age, sexual orientation, religion, language), we structured our consultations to capture this diversity. In addition to the general group sessions, sessions were held for youth (ages 16-24), women, Muslims, Francophones, 2SLGBTQIA+ members, newcomers, seniors, and people with a disability.
4. Community plans and reports: The following community strategies and reports informed our plan: Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy report⁷, the Middlesex-London Health Unit Anti-Black Racism Action Plan⁸, the Needs Assessment for Labour Market Integration and Planning Report⁹, London Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership Report on Experiences of Discrimination in London¹⁰, and the City of London 's Equity and Inclusion Action Plan survey results report.

⁷ Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2017). CDIS-Report2017.pdf (unitedwayem.ca)

⁸ Wright of Way (WOW) Consultancy Inc. (2021). Middlesex-London Health Unit: Anti-Black Racism Plan. Anti-Black Racism Plan — Middlesex-London Health Unit

⁹ Woldemicael, G; Odanga, J. E.; Namukasa, I; Garba, A; Baya, M; Mlotha, M; Mokanan, H; Abiola-Ogedengbe, A. (2015). Needs Assessment for Labour Market Integration and Planning: A Project on African-Canadian Community in London, Ontario. London, ON: African Canadian Federation of London and Area. Needs-Assessment-Report_All.pdf (acfol.ca)

¹⁰ Vaswani, M & Esses, V. (2021). Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants, Visible Minorities, and Indigenous Peoples in London and Middlesex An Empirical Study by the London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership: Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants, Visible Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in London Middlesex

Our consultations covered four main themes:

- Experiences and barriers to City service use and access,
- Sense of belonging,
- Representation, and
- Actions/initiatives to address Anti-Black racism.

In total, over 300 members of the Black community generously shared their experiences and recommendations on how Anti-Black racism can be addressed in the community and at the City of London. This feedback helped us to better understand the experiences and perspectives of Black Londoners, and to identify the key issues, challenges, and opportunities for change within the City's programs and services, policies, and procedures.



Recommendations for the Corporation of the City of London

From our engagement, we heard a wide range of suggestions on how anti-Black racism can be effectively addressed by the City of London. Some of the key themes that emerged from our conversations include increased employment and job opportunities, service awareness and inclusivity, sense of connectedness and belonging, safety and security and funding. In this section, we reorganize the recommendations to align with the role and functions of the City of London: **Policy Maker, Funder, Service Deliverer, Employer**. The goal is to clearly map out the linkage of recommendations to city functions, while working through the strategic plan to implement these recommendations. The detailed recommendations are outlined below.

A Policy Maker:

As a policy maker, the community recommended that policies and procedures be developed and implemented through an equity lens. The following recommendations were offered:

1. Develop and promote housing and transportation policies and procedures that support equity-denied communities:

Housing

- a. Apply an Equity Tool to support equitable access to housing e.g., community housing and housing benefits.
- b. Increase the range of quality, affordable and supportive housing for Black youth and vulnerable persons (e.g., seniors and persons with disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, new immigrants, international students).
- c. Improve quality and safety of community, supportive and social housing.
- d. Work with other organizations, e.g., the Landlord and Tenant Board and the London Middlesex Immigration Partnership, to facilitate education around housing rights for vulnerable groups, including international students, seniors, new immigrants.
- e. Provide education on how to submit a property standards complaint via Service London portal.
- f. Increase responsiveness to tenant complaints and feedback about housing conditions.



Transportation

- a. Apply an Equity Tool to support mobility and transportation planning.
- b. Foster and support a policy framework to identify and address gaps in transportation among the Black Community.
- c. Promote efforts to align housing and transportation strategies.
- d. Increase “cycle-highways” to enhance quick and efficient commute around London.

2. Encourage, promote, and support civic engagement within the Black community:

- a. Advertise City agencies, boards, and commissions positions more widely.
- b. Investigate ways to increase meaningful representation for publicly appointed committees, boards, task forces, agencies, and commissions by focusing on recruitment strategies that represent Black Londoners diverse backgrounds to City agencies, boards, and commissions and community advisory committees.
- c. Increase the availability and accessibility of municipal government services, programs, opportunities, and information through a variety of formats.
- d. Engage Black employees through the African Black Caribbean Employee Resource Group to provide feedback on the implementation of the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.
- e. Create an anti-Black racism reference group for consultation and feedback on the action plan.
- k. Work with ARAO to engage diverse leaders and organizations to disseminate important information to communities that represent the diversity of the City of London to help support and encourage candidates for municipal elections.
- l. Work with ARAO to develop practices and procedures to improve voter engagement, participation, and awareness of municipal election services.
- m. The “Pan African” flag or other community approved flag to be flown during the first week of February each year to recognize Black History Month.
- n. Annually host a City-led community conversation focused on Black communities, their needs, and priorities.



A Funder:

As a funder, the community recommended that funding be provided for programs and services that support Black Communities and Anti-Black racism Initiatives. The following suggestions were provided:

- a. Continue to dedicate funding through the City of London Community Grant Program for all equity-denied groups including Black communities.
- b. Communicate funding opportunities more widely through diverse communication channels.
- c. Add the City of London's Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Framework and Equity Tool as a resource on the City of London Community Grants page.
- d. London Regional Employment Services to explore funding a specific program and/or initiatives to meet the needs of the Black job seekers and/or employers.
- e. London Regional Employment Services may consider adding additional providers to support Black job seekers through Black-led programming.

A Service Deliverer:

Black Londoners proposed the following to enhance supports for, and service delivery to, Black communities.

1. Support Black Businesses and Entrepreneurs

- a. City of London to provide meaningful leadership and encourage partnerships with other organizations, e.g., London Chamber of Commerce, to strengthen local Black businesses and build the capacity of Black entrepreneurs and business owners, especially Black women, through training, mentorship, and networking opportunities or programs.
- b. City of London to make information about business supports and resources more accessible and available to the Black Londoners through diverse education and outreach methods.
- c. Through the Equity Tool, develop a procurement framework (policies, procedures, training), that encourages more contracts with Black owned businesses and suppliers.
- d. Work with other community organizations to host a summit to promote Black talent, innovations, entrepreneurship, and networking opportunities with financial and other established organizations.

2. Facilitate, support, and strengthen community connectedness, health and wellbeing.

- a. Partner with individuals and community organizations, to launch, host and promote anti-Black racism initiatives and public awareness campaigns.
- b. Create a collaborative education, research, and learning network between the City and community organizations to understand and address anti-Black racism in our community.
- c. Continue to provide spaces where Black Londoners can congregate for programs and connect with each other.
- d. Collaborate with other community organizations, e.g. The London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership to develop future resources for newcomers about the diverse communities in London, including events and initiatives that highlight the history and contributions of Black Londoners.
- e. Create initiatives to recognize and honor the contributions of Black Londoners within City Hall and at cultural and public spaces within the city.
- f. Display artwork by Black artists in City Hall and other public spaces and build a collection of arts created by Black artists.
- g. Develop a directory of Black performers that could be accessed by the City for City Sponsored Programming.
- h. Continue to include diverse Black artists of all different artistic disciplines in programs beyond Black History and Emancipation months.
- i. Work with other organizations, e.g. the London Arts Council to access Black Artist talent and provide live performance opportunities for Black artists.
- j. Work with relevant community partners to explore the creation of an online reporting tool for hate-related or harassment incidents.
- k. Civic Administration to recognize, host, sponsor, and participate in events and initiatives that celebrate Black history, culture, talent, businesses, and excellence.



3. Enhance community awareness of services, and make City services more equitable, inclusive, accessible, and welcoming:

- a. Develop a centralized, singular information sharing system about City services with diverse community groups.
- b. In addition to the Foundations training, offer anti-Black racism, cultural awareness, unconscious bias and microaggressions training to all City of London leaders and staff.
- c. Offer recreation and sports programs specific to the Black community, including programs and services for Black seniors.
- d. Include Black community arts, designs, and culture in City spaces.
- e. Enhance Black Londoners' awareness of the public art calls to artistes.
- f. Promote arts opportunities to Black Artists.
- g. Continue to provide fee assistance to individuals and organizations for sports and recreation programs.
- h. Explore ways to make community centers, programs, services and public spaces more inclusive and welcoming to members from the Black community.
- i. Collect disaggregated data on the use of City services and facilities, e.g., recreational facilities to assess and foster an equitable distribution of resources.
- j. Proactively, create opportunities and pathways for Black youth to develop interest, learn about, participate, and obtain careers in core City services e.g., Engineering and Fire and emergency services.
- k. The City of London make its services more accessible to its non-English speaking clients; for e.g. provide more services in French.
- l. Requiring organizations that apply for or request city funding to demonstrate how they will be supporting and promoting equity, diversity and inclusion within their organization. Encourage community partners to promote and support anti-racism and anti-oppression initiatives within their organization.
- m. Encourage community partners to promote and support anti-racism and anti-oppression initiatives within their organization.

4. Foster community safety and security

- a. Increase hiring, training, and mentorship opportunities for Black individuals within the Fire departments.
- b. Provide opportunities for Black youth to learn more about Fire services through mentorship, workshops, internships.
- c. Provide anti-Black racism, intercultural awareness, and bias training to Fire service leaders and staff.
- d. Facilitate and strengthen ongoing dialogue and collaborations between the Fire departments and Black communities.
- e. Deliver and enhance equitable, high-quality, and effective fire and emergency preparedness services that makes London a safer city for Black residents.
- f. Provide training, tools, and resources that increase the capacity of the City of London agencies, boards, and commissions to recognize, address, and prevent hate and violence against Black residents.

5. Promote accountability

- a. Collaborate with community to develop and publicly share an implementation plan that clearly maps out the actions, tactics, timelines, and accountabilities of the action plan.
- b. Review and update the plan on an ongoing basis to ensure that the plan is relevant, and the goals are being met.
- c. Report back annually to community on progress being made.



An Employer

As an employer, the community recommended that the City of London increase access to employment and retention opportunities for Black people. Suggested ways to attain this goal were as follows:

- a. Reduce barriers to employment and increase recruitment, training, and mentorship opportunities by:
 - i. Continuing to diversify outreach and recruitment methods to intentionally reach Black communities. This includes attending job fairs and community events to discuss the City's recruitment process, increasing advertisements on targeted websites, and more.
 - ii. Annually reviewing the recruitment and selection process with the ARAO team.
 - iii. Increasing the representation of Black employees within the City of London workforce to better reflect the percentage of Black Londoners. This includes a self-identifying question when candidates apply, attending job fairs and community events to discuss the City's recruitment process, increasing advertisements on targeted websites, and more.
 - iv. Collaborating with the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) division to develop an inclusive mentorship program that specifically addresses the needs of equity-denied groups and provides culturally appropriate guidance and mentorship practices.
 - v. Continuing efforts to increase representation of the Black community in leadership positions.

- b. Foster the retention and promotion of Black employees within the City of London by:
 - i. Collaborating with the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) division to develop an inclusive mentorship program that specifically addresses the needs of equity-denied groups and provides culturally appropriate guidance and mentorship practices.
 - ii. Offering Anti-Black Racism training sessions for leaders and staff. Together, ARAO and People Services Learning & Development will develop a training program specifically focused on Anti-Black Racism, to be delivered across the entire organization.

Recommendations for community based and public sector organizations

While the City of London Anti-Black Racism Action Plan was primarily intended to address gaps in services, policy, and protocol development within the Corporation of the City of London, there were other key recommendations the Black community provided that require the attention and action of other community based and public sector organizations. These recommendations are listed below:

Police Services

- Increase racial and cultural diversity, including Black representation, on the Police Board.
- Increase hiring, training, and mentorship opportunities for Black individuals within Police departments.
- Provide opportunities for Black youth to learn more about Police services through mentorship, workshops, internships.
- Provide anti-Black racism, intercultural awareness, and bias training to Police leaders and staff.
- Facilitate and strengthen ongoing dialogue and collaborations between the Police and Black communities.
- Deliver and enhance equitable, high-quality, and effective police services that makes London a safer city for Black residents.

Transportation Services

- Improve quality and access to paratransit services.



Post-Secondary Institutions

- Offer training in equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization to all staff and leaders.
- Continue to design and teach courses on Black communities, cultures, and experiences.
- Increase funding and other supports to enhance the integration of Black students, particularly international students, within the school system and general society.
- Work with other community organizations to host a summit to promote Black talent, innovations, entrepreneurship, and networking opportunities with other established organizations.

School Boards

Create a supportive, inclusive, and welcoming environment for parents and students by:

- Holding several consultations with the Black community, i.e., parents and children, to understand their concerns and needs, and to better support parents and children in the school system.
- Developing programs, policies, and strategies to address anti-Black racism at the Board, District, and school levels.
- Collecting data on the number of Black children in each school board and school district.
- Working with Black communities to be able to develop supplementary educational programs that can be rolled out, e.g. language schools.
- Diversifying the school curriculum to include materials that speak to Black culture, essence, and experiences.
- Training leaders and staff on racism, bias, intercultural awareness.
- Increasing the hiring and retention of Black staff and leaders.
- Developing resources to help schools to identify and effectively/appropriately respond to incidents of racism.

- Investing in psychosocial interventions and supports for Black children and parents within the school system.
- Equitably resourcing schools that have a larger proportion of children from equity denied groups.

Healthcare Sector

Address anti-Black racism in healthcare by:

- Acknowledging the existence of Anti-Black racism in the healthcare system and its impact on the health of Black persons.
- Address the underrepresentation of Black physicians in healthcare.
- Champion or promote policies that encourage family doctors to have a diverse patient base.
- Educating health care workers on anti-Black racism and offering cultural awareness and unconscious bias training to all health care leaders and staff.
- Increasing the number of Black physicians within the healthcare system.
- Developing, delivering, expanding, and consistently funding services that address Black health issues: e.g. Sickle Cell Anemia.
- Building stronger relationships and working with Black Londoners and Black serving organizations to address the health needs of Black residents.

Business Sector Support Organizations

- Increase Black entrepreneurs' awareness of available business services, resources and supports through diverse education and outreach methods.
- Provide meaningful leadership and encourage partnerships with other organizations to strengthen local Black businesses and build the capacity of Black entrepreneurs and business owners, especially Black women, through training, mentorship, and networking opportunities or programs.
- Make information about business supports and resources more accessible and available to the Black Londoners.

- Network and collaborate with Black businesses and vendors to provide services within the community.
- Work with other community organizations to host a summit to promote Black talent, innovations, entrepreneurship, and networking opportunities with other established organizations.

Local Immigration Supports

- Develop future resources for newcomers about the diverse communities in London, including events and initiatives that highlight the history and contributions of Black Londoners.
- Facilitate education around housing rights for vulnerable groups, including international students, seniors, new immigrants.

Next Steps

Understanding that the success of the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan lies in its implementation, our next steps in the process of finalizing the plan are as follows:

- **Implementation:** Upon Council's adoption, an implementation strategy outlining the key outcomes, performance indicators, timelines, leads etc. will be developed.
- All stakeholders will receive regular status updates on the plan, including through annual reports.

Conclusion

We are thankful to all Black Londoners, individuals, groups, and organizations, for taking time to participate in these meaningful dialogues and for providing the input needed to drive this work. We recognize the challenging nature of these conversations and are truly grateful for your keen interest and ongoing support in the creation of this action plan.

As a corporation, we acknowledge our role in addressing Anti-Black racism and are committed to implementing the recommendations suggested to us. We seek to do better by being better; and will therefore, be looking to the community to steer us on the right path to better serve Black Londoners. As the plan continues to unfold, we look forward to deepening/growing our relationship and collaborating with community and other key partners to identify the best approaches to implementing the suggested recommendations.

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