



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **SUPPORTING BLACK CANADIAN COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE**

**Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources,  
Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons  
with Disabilities**

**Robert Morrissey, Chair**

**MARCH 2023  
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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Development and the Status of Persons with  
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**Robert Morrissey  
Chair**

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## **NOTICE TO READER**

### **Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons**

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.



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**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

has the honour to present its

**EIGHTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative and has agreed to report the following:





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## SUMMARY

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Black Canadians have faced, and continue to face, social and economic inequities in Canada. As the Government of Canada seeks to address racism and other forms of discrimination, it has launched programs to enable greater social inclusion of Black Canadians. One such program is the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, or SBCCI.

Over the course of three meetings, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (the committee) conducted a study on the SBCCI. The committee received testimony and written briefs from Black-led intermediary organizations that administered one of the SBCCI's funding streams, recipients of funding from the SBCCI's capacity building stream, and representatives of other Black-led organizations. The committee also heard from representatives from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the federal department responsible for the SBCCI. This report outlines the findings of the committee's study.

The committee heard about the systemic discrimination faced by Black communities in Canada, and about barriers Black-led organizations encounter when seeking funding. In their testimony and written submissions, witnesses described the important role that the SBCCI can play in filling this gap. They described the design and implementation of the SBCCI, giving particular attention to the funding stream under which a group of Black-led intermediary organizations awards grants to Black-led non-profits. The committee also heard testimony about how the implementation and impact of the SBCCI could be improved. The committee recognizes the goals of the SBCCI and appreciates its potential to address inequalities facing Black Canadians. Accordingly, the committee has made three recommendations that would see the government continue its support of Black-led organizations, measure the impacts of the SBCCI, and see the government build upon the successes and lessons learned from the SBCCI as it continues to work toward greater social inclusion for Black communities.



# LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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*As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.*

## **Recommendation 1**

**To enhance its efforts to dismantle barriers to equality faced by Black communities the Government of Canada should work to support Black-led and Black-serving organizations in equality-seeking work, not only through the activities of the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative but as a whole-of-government approach. .... 19**

## **Recommendation 2**

**That Employment and Social Development Canada:**

- develop clear metrics for evaluating whether the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, including its capacity building stream, is meeting its program objectives and having a positive impact on Black Canadian communities in all regions of the country; and,**
- use these results to inform the ways in which it funds and coordinates with Black-led non-profit organizations over the short and long-term..... 19**

## **Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada develop and communicate its plans for sustainably supporting Black Canadian communities through Black-led non-profit organizations, building upon the successes and lessons learned from the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative. .... 20**





# SUPPORTING BLACK CANADIAN COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

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## INTRODUCTION

Black Canadians have faced, and continue to face, social and economic inequities in Canada. As the Government of Canada seeks to address racism and other forms of discrimination, it has launched programs to enable greater social inclusion of Black Canadians. One such program is the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, or SBCCI.

On 7 February 2022, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA, or the committee) adopted the following motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study regarding the government's plans to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of Black-led and Black-serving organizations through the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.<sup>1</sup>

As a part of this study, the committee held three meetings between 28 September and 5 October 2022, hearing from a total of 10 witnesses, including representatives from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Black-led intermediary organizations that administered one stream of the SBCCI, and representatives of other Black-led organizations. The committee also received a brief from an organization in follow up to testimony provided by its representative before the committee. The committee would like to sincerely thank all those who participated for their important contributions to this study.

The committee understands that the SBCCI is intended to address long-standing inequities faced by Black communities by creating more space for the voices of Black

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1 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA), [Minutes of Proceedings](#), 7 February 2022.





people in advising government, and by strengthening the capacity of Black-led charities and non-profits.

In this report, the committee provides an overview of what it heard, as well as recommendations directed to the Government of Canada. After providing background information on the SBCCI, its context, and its purpose, the committee summarizes key testimony pertaining to the design and implementation of the SBCCI, with a focus on the capacity building granting stream. Finally, the committee considers what the future of the SBCCI looks like and makes recommendations to further the goals of the SBCCI.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative**

The Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI) provides federal funding to enhance the capacity and infrastructure of Black Canadian communities and organizations. According to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the SBCCI will “advance social inclusion measures for Black and racialized populations” through several channels.<sup>2</sup>

As outlined in Table 1, since being announced in Budget 2019, federal budgets have proposed a total of \$175 million in funding to the SBCCI over five years, with the bulk of it budgeted to be spent in 2021–2022.

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2      Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), [Departmental Plan, 2022–23](#), 22 April 2022.

**Table 1—Proposed Federal Budget Allocations by Year to the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (in millions of dollars)**

	Fiscal Year 2019–20	Fiscal Year 2020–21	Fiscal Year 2021–22	Fiscal Year 2022–23	Fiscal Year 2023–24	Total
Budget Year 2019	5	5	5	5	5	25
Budget Year 2021	0	0	100	0	0	100
Budget Year 2022	0	0	0	25	25	50

Source: Government of Canada, [Investing in the Middle Class](#), Budget 2019; Government of Canada, [A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience](#), Budget 2021; Government of Canada, [A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable](#), Budget 2022. Note that there was no federal budget in 2020, or any additional funding for the SBCCI in [the Fall Economic Statement 2020](#).

During their appearance before the committee on 5 October 2022, officials from ESDC described the SBCCI as having three pillars: capacity building, systems change, and emerging gaps and priorities.

The capacity building pillar is designed to strengthen “foundational infrastructure and sustainability” and “enduring supports within communities.”<sup>3</sup> It is thus far the highest profile of the pillars and contains two distinct funding streams for Black-led non-profit organizations. The capital funding stream, directly administered by ESDC, offers support for physical capital projects. To date, approximately \$82 million has been granted to over 1370 projects through this stream of the fund. The second stream funds organizational capacity building, including supporting organizations to become eligible for charitable status, improving their grant writing capacity, and strengthening their governance structures.<sup>4</sup> This stream is administered by four intermediary organizations, which themselves are Black-led non-profits. Over two funding rounds, the intermediaries have administered grants worth approximately \$25 million to projects

3 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1635 (Karen Hall, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Income Security and Social Development Branch, Department of Employment and Social Development).

4 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1550 (Louis-Edgar Jean-François, CEO, Groupe 3737); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1700 (Warren Salmon, President, Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators).



that will benefit over 700 different Black-led organizations.<sup>5</sup> Most of the testimony heard by the committee related to this stream of the SBCCI, and it is therefore the focus of this report.

The second pillar of the SBCCI, systems change, is intended to “address systemic barriers and inequities faced by Black Canadians.”<sup>6</sup> This pillar includes the creation of an external reference group which will provide advice to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. It also includes the creation of the National Institute for People of African Descent, which will provide similar advice across the federal government and will produce research on topics relevant to Black communities. Both of these initiatives remain in development.<sup>7</sup>

The final pillar considers emerging gaps and priorities, “as identified by Black community stakeholders and other community of practice networks.”<sup>8</sup> The committee heard that the transformation of the former Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children into a community hub was a project funded through the emerging priorities pillar of the SBCCI.<sup>9</sup>

The SBCCI functions alongside other recent federal initiatives meant to provide support to Black-led organizations, such as the Black-led Philanthropic Endowment Fund and the Black Entrepreneurship Program.<sup>10</sup>

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5 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1615 (amanuel melles, Executive Director, Network for the Advancement of Black Communities); [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1635 (Karen Hall).

6 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1635 (Karen Hall).

7 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1725 (Karen Hall).

8 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1635 (Karen Hall).

9 Ibid.

10 Budget 2021 announced the [Black-led Philanthropic Endowment Fund](#) and proposed to allocate \$200 million for its establishment. The Fund will support Black-led organizations and charities serving youth as well as social initiatives. [The Black Entrepreneurship Program](#) was announced in September 2020 and is designed to provide loans and other support to Black business owners and entrepreneurs. It is a partnership between the Government of Canada, Black-led business organizations, the Business Development Bank of Canada and other financial institutions.

## Context and Purpose of the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative

Over the course of the study, witnesses informed the committee of the challenges the SBCCI was designed to help address, and provided testimony on the inequities faced by Black Canadian communities.

The SBCCI was created to respond to inequities faced by Black Canadian communities. As witness amanuel melles, Executive Director of the Network for the Advancement of Black Communities, put it, “systemic challenges” have “put Black communities on the periphery.”<sup>11</sup> Officials from ESDC and Rustum Southwell, CEO of the Black Business Initiative, agreed that racism and marginalization continue to prevent the full inclusion of Black communities.<sup>12</sup> The committee also heard of specific examples of Black people facing barriers and discrimination in banking, employment, and entrepreneurship.<sup>13</sup>

Even as racist, discriminatory systems are challenged and dismantled, inequities remain. amanuel melles observed that, on its own, the removal of barriers is not enough, stating that:

The challenge that we face in Canada for Black communities in terms of anti-Black racism is historical. It's generational. It's complex.<sup>14</sup>

The committee heard that one area where barriers remain is in the philanthropic sector. While Black-led organizations do, on paper, have equal access to public and private funding opportunities, witnesses told the committee that in practice, Black-led organizations have limited access to philanthropic funds. For example, multiple witnesses cited a 2020 report which found Black-led organizations received only 0.07% of funding from the 15 largest community foundations in Canada.<sup>15</sup> Witnesses argued

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11 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1610 (amanuel melles).

12 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1620 (Karen Hall); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1605 (Rustum Southwell, CEO, Black Business Initiative).

13 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1705 (Nosakhare Alex Ihama, Executive Director, Canadian Congress on Inclusive Diversity & Workplace Equity).

14 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1605 (amanuel melles).

15 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1710 (Alica Hall, Executive Director, Nia Centre for the Arts); [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1725 (Nosakhare Alex Ihama); [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1700 (Sandra Charles, Director, Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, Department of Employment and Social Development); [Brief](#), 4 October 2022, Nia Centre for the Arts; Rachel Pereira et al., Network for the Advancement of Black Communities and Carleton University Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership, [Unfunded: Black Communities Overlooked by Canadian Philanthropy](#), 7 December 2020.



that, as a result, there is gap in philanthropic funding for Black-led projects that specifically serve Black communities.

Given that Black-led organizations are situated in—and connected to—Black communities, they are well-placed to respond to the needs of Black communities, as well as to advance the social inclusion of these communities. An ESDC official explained that the SBCCI aims to support the “empowerment of Black-led and Black-serving community organizations, and their work in promoting inclusiveness” by building “community-based capacity.”<sup>16</sup>

As amanuel melles observed, “you cannot capacity build your way out of systemic challenges for Black communities.” Nevertheless, the SBCCI can “create the conditions for change.”<sup>17</sup> Multiple witnesses suggested that moving the dial on equality for Black communities requires more than just funding.<sup>18</sup> For example, Nosakhare Alex Ihama, Executive Director of the Canadian Congress on Inclusive Diversity & Workplace Equity, argued that funding must be accompanied by education and other federal efforts to end systemic racism.<sup>19</sup>

## **DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUPPORTING BLACK CANADIAN COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES**

According to amanuel melles, the SBCCI resulted from a co-design process involving Black stakeholder organizations and the federal government.<sup>20</sup> Karen Hall explained to the committee that the implementation of the SBCCI was aligned with the “by us, for us” principle, which centred the leadership of Black Canadians.<sup>21</sup>

These approaches informed how the SBCCI was designed. This section of the report provides an overview of several key features of the design of the capacity-building

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16 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1635 (Karen Hall).

17 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1545, 1605 (amanuel melles).

18 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1730 (Nosakhare Alex Ihama); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1605 (Rustum Southwell).

19 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1705, 1730 (Nosakhare Alex Ihama).

20 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1545 (amanuel melles).

21 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1635 (Karen Hall).

funding stream of the first pillar of the SBCCI, and how they responded to barriers identified by Black-led organizations.

## Distribution of Funding

### Separate Funding

Unlike other federal granting programs, or most other funding opportunities, the SBCCI focuses on organizations that are both Black-led and Black-serving. To receive funds through the stream, a non-profit or charitable organization must have a mandate to serve Black Canadian communities. Additionally, at least 2/3 of the organization's leadership and governance positions must be occupied by Black people.<sup>22</sup>

The committee heard how many Black-led organizations struggle to compete with other organizations for private and public grants. Alica Hall, Executive Director of the Nia Centre for the Arts, explained that many Black-led organizations are newer or smaller, meaning they are less able to compete for grant money against larger, more established organizations.<sup>23</sup> Established organizations often have history with funders and have dedicated fundraising teams. These qualities can make them more effective at attracting funds, even though they may not serve Black communities in the same ways as Black-led grassroots organizations.<sup>24</sup>

Sharif Haji, Executive Director of the Africa Centre, noted that, since the murder of George Floyd and subsequent protests, there has been increased interest from funders in supporting Black-led and Black-serving organizations.<sup>25</sup> However, according to the Nia Centre for the Arts, funders often opt to support larger established charities that have no relationship to Black communities. Nosakhare Alex Ihama emphasized that many entities have contracted out work to combat anti-Black racism to organizations that are not themselves led by Black people.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast, the committee heard that the SBCCI's capacity building stream offered a level playing field for Black-led organizations where a lack of historical advantages or

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22 Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, [Program Guidelines](#), October 2021.

23 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1740 (Alica Hall).

24 [Brief](#), 4 October 2022, Nia Centre for the Arts.

25 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1705 (Sharif Haji, Executive Director, Africa Centre). In May 2020, George Floyd, a Black man, was murdered in Minneapolis by a police officer during an arrest, sparking significant protests in the United States, Canada, and other parts of the world.

26 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1705 (Nosakhare Alex Ihama); [Brief](#), 4 October 2022, Nia Centre for the Arts.



current resources don't hold them back. As Rustum Southwell put it, "we are filling the gaps where Black organizations and communities have found it difficult to compete."<sup>27</sup>

## Eligibility

The committee is aware of previous challenges surrounding the determination of eligibility for the capital stream of the first pillar of the SBCCI, where Black-led organizations were screened out on the basis that they had not provided sufficient proof that they met the SBCCI's eligibility criteria related to Black leadership.<sup>28</sup> Officials from ESDC explained that they listened to the concerns that were raised during the first capital funding round, and were aware of the administrative burden placed on all applicants to establish that their organization was indeed Black-led. In subsequent funding rounds, ESDC required organizations to attest that they were Black-led, rather than requiring documentation establishing Black leadership.<sup>29</sup>

The committee observes that ESDC must treat applicants respectfully and avoid needlessly burdening them in the application process, while also ensuring that SBCCI funds are directed to organizations that fulfil the program's Black-led and Black-serving criteria.

## Use of Intermediary Organizations

The committee understands that the use of intermediary organizations to administer funding in the capacity building stream of the SBCCI's first pillar helps to ensure grant making decisions are being made by those who are familiar with Black-led organizations, Black communities, and their context.

Because larger funders, such as the government, are not always well connected to Black communities, they may not be familiar with the landscape of Black-led organizations doing work in the community.<sup>30</sup> Large funders also may not be able to scrutinize how well a proposal meets the needs of a marginalized group like Black Canadians.<sup>31</sup>

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27 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1600 (Rustum Southwell).

28 Desmond Brown, "[Who decides who is Black enough, advocate asks, after hundreds of groups denied federal funding](#)," *CBC News*, 20 January 2021.

29 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1705 (Karen Hall); [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1705 (Katie Alexander, Director General, Program Operations Branch, Department of Employment and Social Development).

30 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1725 (Alica Hall).

31 *Ibid.*



To address this concern, the capacity-building stream of the SBCCI is funded by ESDC, but administered at arms-length from the department by a group of four Black-led intermediary organizations. ESDC described this approach as “unique” and “innovative” because it places decision-making power for grants in Black communities.<sup>32</sup> A witness noted that the SBCCI’s design builds on strategies that have been employed by large American foundations for decades to award capacity building grants through intermediary organizations.<sup>33</sup>

Currently, the four intermediary organizations are:

- Tropicana Community Services (Toronto);
- Groupe 3737 (Montreal);
- Black Business Initiative (Halifax); and,
- the Africa Centre, also known as the Council for Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta (Edmonton).

The committee heard that these intermediaries offer value to the grant-making process. For example, their relationships with Black-led organizations and Black communities can lead to a better understanding of local non-profits’ capacities and community realities. Representatives of the intermediaries explained that their location in four different regions of Canada allows them to develop a stronger understanding of local contexts and regional nuances.<sup>34</sup>

Sharif Haji, Executive Director of the Africa Centre, argued that while large Black communities have been long established in provinces such as Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia, growing Black communities in western Canada should not be overlooked.<sup>35</sup>

When the Africa Centre joined the original three organizations as an intermediary in September 2021, the addition of an Alberta-based organization to the group strengthened the intermediaries’ knowledge and connections to communities in western Canada.

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32 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1640 (Karen Hall).

33 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1635 (amanuel melles).

34 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1620 (Louis-Edgar Jean-François); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1655 (Sharif Haji).

35 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1705 (Sharif Haji).



According to Louis-Edgar Jean-François, CEO of Groupe 3737, another area of strength for the intermediaries is their ability to support grant-receiving organizations.<sup>36</sup> Intermediary organizations explained that they created opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practices among grantee organizations.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Sharif Haji told the committee that intermediaries offered a “nimbleness” that allowed “making changes that are needed” to administer the program effectively.<sup>38</sup>

Distributing grants through intermediaries also offered benefits to ESDC. From the intermediary organizations, the department has gained new connections to Black-led organizations as well insights into providing grants that serve the needs of Black communities.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, the committee learned that some challenges have arisen because the intermediary organizations are all existing charities that were not established for the purpose of administering grant funding and they do not have deep experience acting as funders.<sup>40</sup> Alica Hall also suggested that the four intermediary organizations covering the country “don't really have the infrastructure to be able to do that necessary outreach to ensure that they are reaching more rural communities, more emergent groups.”<sup>41</sup>

## Project-based Funding

Many witnesses raised concerns about the SBCCI's project-based funding model. A representative from ESDC told the committee that the project-based funding approach is the norm across Government of Canada grants and contributions programs.<sup>42</sup> In the case of the SBCCI, funds cannot be used for staff salaries, administrative costs are capped at a small percentage of the grant's value, and most funded projects must be planned to last no more than a year.<sup>43</sup>

Alica Hall described how project-based funding can constrain an organization's capacity:

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36 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1620 (Louis-Edgar Jean-François).

37 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1615 (Rustum Southwell).

38 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1655 (Sharif Haji).

39 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1725 (Karen Hall).

40 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1750 (Alica Hall).

41 Ibid.

42 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1705 (Karen Hall).

43 Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, [Program Guidelines](#), October 2021.

[N]ot many grassroots Black-led organizations [have funding for] an operations manager. The challenge we face is that the existing funding landscape doesn't support the kind of keep-the-lights-on resources that are needed to ensure that there's a charitable landscape that's supporting the Black community across the country and that has the resources to do so.<sup>44</sup>

Alica Hall argued that “over time,” capacity building will increase her organization’s ability to do work that promotes social inclusion, but that it doesn’t address immediate needs in Black communities.<sup>45</sup> She and amanuel melles urged ESDC to fund the core operations of Black-led organizations to sustain the gains created by the SBCCI’s capacity-building stream and to support greater social inclusion for Black people in Canada.<sup>46</sup>

## Experience of Grant Recipients

Overall, witnesses lauded the fact that Black-led organizations were being targeted by a federal funding program. However, the committee also heard more specific observations about the capacity building funding stream, including its limitations:

- According to ESDC, both the capital projects and the capacity building streams of the SBCCI were “oversubscribed.”<sup>47</sup> Other witnesses attributed the large volume of applications to the awareness of the SBCCI built by intermediary organizations, who were also able to redirect unsuccessful applicants to other funding programs.<sup>48</sup>
- The committee recognizes that reporting by recipients of government funding is necessary to ensure funds are being spent in line with a program’s goals. Reporting also enhances communication and provides a channel for feedback that can inform future government programs. At the same time, reporting requirements have the potential to place undue burden on recipient organizations. Alica Hall described the reporting requirements in the SBCCI’s granting streams as “too onerous.” She questioned whether all parts of the reporting provided information that

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44 *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, 1710 (Alica Hall).

45 *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, 1735 (Alica Hall).

46 *Ibid.*; *Evidence*, 3 October 2022, 1545 (amanuel melles).

47 *Evidence*, 5 October 2022, 1705 (Katie Alexander); *Evidence*, 5 October 2022, 1720 (Karen Hall).

48 *Evidence*, 3 October 2022, 1620 (Louis-Edgar Jean-François); *Brief*, 4 October 2022, Nia Centre for the Arts.



was valuable to the intermediaries or to ESDC.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, ammanuel melles suggested that less-stringent reporting models could give recipient organizations more room to innovate and plan ahead.<sup>50</sup>

- ESDC normally takes six to eight months from the time the SBCCI application window opens until recipients begin receiving funds, though Sharif Haji suggested that intermediary organizations were able to fund projects faster.<sup>51</sup> In response to concerns about the length of selection processes, ESDC told the committee that it is trying to be more transparent to “manage expectations” about the duration of the process, and to notify applicants of delays.<sup>52</sup>

## Measuring Success

As previously discussed, the first pillar of the SBCCI funds Black-led non-profits’ capital and organizational capacity-building projects, which will equip them to better serve Black communities.

Through SBCCI capacity building projects, witnesses told the committee that Black-led organizations will become eligible, or more competitive, for other, larger grant programs.<sup>53</sup> This advantage, in turn, will allow them to better fulfil their mandate to support Black communities.<sup>54</sup> Warren Salmon, President of the Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators, said that the SBCCI grant provided grant-writing support to his organization and prepared them to apply for charitable status. This assistance accelerated his organization’s growth “by a few years,” by helping to open up new funding opportunities.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, ammanuel melles said:

One of the great things about this initiative is that it allowed of lot of its recipients to use it as a platform to access other resources...[In addition to] this funding that the groups have received, many of them have ended up receiving additional funding from

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49 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1800 (Alica Hall).

50 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1545 (ammanuel melles).

51 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1645 (Katie Alexander); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1655 (Sharif Haji).

52 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1720 (Katie Alexander).

53 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1645 (Karen Hall); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1710, 1600 (Rustum Southwell).

54 [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1735 (Alica Hall).

55 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1710, 1720 (Warren Salmon).

philanthropic foundations, United Way or local governments, so it has that ripple effect of enabling [access to new funding].

While the committee applauds these successes, it also heard that measuring the overall results of the program remains an ongoing project for ESDC.

Sandra Charles, the Director of the SBCCI at ESDC, told the committee that the department is using a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure social inclusion impacts in Black communities.<sup>56</sup> Intermediaries are also playing a role in collecting and generating data on the results of the capacity building stream.<sup>57</sup>

Program evaluation and results have not yet been published for the SBCCI as a whole. Sandra Charles informed the committee that the program is “on track to meeting our objective, but certainly there is still work to do.”<sup>58</sup>

## **FUTURE OF THE SBCCI**

Currently, the SBCCI has been funded through to the end of 2023–2024. Several components of the SBCCI remain in development, including the National Institute for People of African Descent. ESDC recently launched a call for proposals for the establishment of the Institute and expects to select an organization later this fiscal year.<sup>59</sup> Once established, the National Institute is expected to continue well past 2024.

Witnesses argued that funding to strengthen Black-led non-profit organizations should continue beyond the SBCCI’s planned end date in spring 2024.<sup>60</sup> For example, Louis-Edgar Jean-François of Groupe 3737 suggested that intermediaries could seek other non-government funding sources to continue the current approach of the SBCCI’s capacity building stream.<sup>61</sup>

The central purpose of the SBCCI’s capacity building stream to support social inclusion via the Black-led non-profit sector appears similar to that of a separate federal initiative:

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56 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1655 (Sandra Charles).

57 *Ibid.*; [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1550 (Louis-Edgar Jean-François).

58 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1640 (Sandra Charles).

59 ESDC, [Apply for funding to establish a National Institute for People of African Descent under the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative](#), October 2021.

60 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1615 (Louis-Edgar Jean-François); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1715 (Sharif Haji); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1720 (Warren Salmon); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1625 (amanuel melles).

61 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1615 (Louis-Edgar Jean-François).



the Black-led Philanthropic Endowment Fund. Budget 2021 allocated \$200 million for the establishment of the Endowment Fund.<sup>62</sup> The Endowment Fund is intended to be “a sustainable source of funding to help combat anti-Black racism and improve social and economic outcomes in Black communities” by supporting Black-led organizations and charities.<sup>63</sup>

Witnesses welcomed the proposed Endowment Fund, seeing value in the expertise and relationships that could be developed by a long-term, Black-led foundation.

Rustum Southwell called the Endowment Fund “visionary” and went on to suggest:

If it is managed well, continuous funds can be endowed to the community into perpetuity. I think it's going to lift the standard of Black communities for generations to come, which is something we were asking for... It's a major and historic step...<sup>64</sup>

At the same time, amanuel melles cautioned against ignoring the “national capacity building portal” developed by the intermediary organizations.<sup>65</sup> He argued that future funding should build on the work and best practices of the SBCCI capacity building stream.<sup>66</sup> Sharif Haji, the Executive Director of the Africa Centre, said that while the Endowment Fund was important, “I don't think it was built on the continuity of the work that the intermediaries have been doing... I don't know how the two will tie in.”<sup>67</sup>

Karen Hall from ESDC responded that while the Endowment Fund and the SBCCI have “complementary goals,” they are “parallel” and “separate” programs.<sup>68</sup> A foundation will be selected to manage the Endowment Fund and make decisions on granting from the fund. ESDC also specified in its call for proposals that the foundation managing the Endowment Fund would need to be well connected to regions across Canada, and ensure that grants are “accessible very broadly”.<sup>69</sup>

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62 ESDC, [Government of Canada launched call for proposals for the Black-led Philanthropic Endowment Fund](#), 3 October 2022.

63 Ibid.

64 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1720 (Warren Salmon); [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1640 (Rustum Southwell).  
[Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, 1750 (Alica Hall).

65 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1625 (amanuel melles).

66 Ibid.

67 [Evidence](#), 3 October 2022, 1715 (Sharif Haji).

68 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1655 (Karen Hall).

69 [Evidence](#), 5 October 2022, 1700 (Karen Hall).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the course of the study, the committee became familiar with the design of the SBCCI and its approach to addressing discrimination faced by Black communities in Canada. The committee recognizes the potential of the program’s objectives. As amanuel melles put it, the SBCCI offers the opportunity to shift “the relationship between Black communities and the federal government from one of transaction to one of transformation.”<sup>70</sup> He added:

There's an opportunity through the multiple funding streams you have—the entrepreneurship fund, the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative and the [Endowment Fund]—for us to regroup as Black leaders with the government and really reflect on how we can tweak this whole system.<sup>71</sup>

At the same time, the committee heard about concerns and constraints related to the SBCCI’s capacity building stream under the program’s second pillar, including the stated gaps in western provinces. ESDC can take this feedback as the department continues to adjust the program. The committee would also like to see the government build upon the successes of the SBCCI as it continues to work toward greater social inclusion for Black communities. Accordingly, the committee makes the following recommendations:

### Recommendation 1

**To enhance its efforts to dismantle barriers to equality faced by Black communities the Government of Canada should work to support Black-led and Black-serving organizations in equality-seeking work, not only through the activities of the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative but as a whole-of-government approach.**

### Recommendation 2

**That Employment and Social Development Canada:**

- **develop clear metrics for evaluating whether the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, including its capacity building stream, is meeting its program objectives and having a positive impact on Black Canadian communities in all regions of the country; and,**

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70 *Evidence*, 3 October 2022, 1545 (amanuel melles).

71 *Ibid.*





- **use these results to inform the ways in which it funds and coordinates with Black-led non-profit organizations over the short and long-term.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada develop and communicate its plans for sustainably supporting Black Canadian communities through Black-led non-profit organizations, building upon the successes and lessons learned from the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative.**

## APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

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The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>Canadian Congress on Inclusive Diversity &amp; Workplace Equity</b> Nosakhare Alex Ihama, Executive Director	2022/09/28	34
<b>Nia Centre for the Arts</b> Alica Hall, Executive Director	2022/09/28	34
<b>Africa Centre</b> Sharif Haji, Executive Director	2022/10/03	35
<b>Black Business Initiative</b> Rustum Southwell, Chief Executive Officer	2022/10/03	35
<b>Groupe 3737</b> Louis-Edgar Jean-François, Chief Executive Officer	2022/10/03	35
<b>Network for the Advancement of Black Communities</b> ammanuel melles, Executive Director	2022/10/03	35
<b>Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators</b> Warren Salmon, President	2022/10/03	35
<b>Department of Employment and Social Development</b> Katie Alexander, Director General, Program Operations Branch  Sandra Charles, Director, Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative  Karen Hall, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Income Security and Social Development Branch	2022/10/05	36



## APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

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The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

**Nia Centre for the Arts**



# REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 34, 35, 36, 47 and 51](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Morrissey  
Chair

