

Annual progress report 2021: Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan

Learn about our progress implementing the Anti-Racism Strategic Plan.

Message from the Minister responsible for anti-racism

As Ontario's new Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate, I am pleased to present Ontario's second annual progress report on our Anti-Racism Strategic Plan.

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen a rising tide of racism, including anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, and anti-Asian racism. Recent events, such as the horrific Islamophobic attack in London, sadly serve as a constant reminder that there is more work to be done to build fully inclusive communities in Ontario.

While we continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19, it's critical to remember that worry and fear can fuel racism and hate, which are serious threats to the safety, health, and prosperity of our society. Our government remains committed to addressing systemic racism and advancing racial equity across the province.

This second annual progress report on Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan is a snapshot of the work carried out over the past 12 months, and the whole-of-government approach in this effort. It also shows how we can make real change when we work together with our sector partners, community leaders, and organizations toward real, concrete outcomes that have a meaningful impact on people and their ability to participate fully in our society and economy.

I am proud of our efforts so far and look forward to continuing to work across government and with community partners to address disparities and build a better Ontario – one that is equitable for all, and that creates opportunity for everyone.

Overview

This report reflects progress made towards meeting the objectives outlined in Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan. In collaboration with Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities, ministry partners, Indigenous partners, community organizations and public sector organizations (PSOs), and through the leadership of the Anti-Racism Directorate, we are:

Delivering a plan of action

Eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity requires real, lasting change through a solid policy, research and accountability framework to examine government policies, legislations, practices, programs and services. The [Anti-Racism Act, 2017 \(/laws/statute/17a15\)](#) (Act) requires Ontario's [Anti-Racism Directorate \(/page/anti-racism-directorate\)](#) (ARD) to assist the Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism to carry out their duties. The Directorate provides expertise, tools and resources to lead anti-racism work across Ontario, and move the [Anti-Racism Strategic Plan \(/page/ontarios-anti-racism-strategic-plan\)](#) forward. Key drivers of this are [Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards \(/page/anti-racism-data-standards-order-council-8972018\)](#) (ARDS), which set out how PSOs in child welfare, education and justice areas must collect, analyze and report race-based information. Consistent, effective data standards for race-based data collection are critical for driving evidence-based decision-making and ensuring public accountability.

Creating and adapting strategies to identify and address systemic racism

Specific strategies were implemented to focus on how systemic racism impacts Indigenous, Black, and other racialized populations. These strategies aim to close gaps and address disparities in the delivery of public services and in the workplace, educational achievement, and interactions with the justice system. Initiatives include anti-racism training and accountability programs for public sector service providers, culturally-focused mental health, wellness and leadership skills development, mentorship to help students excel, community outreach programs, youth-leading-youth programs, and more. The

Ontario Public Service (OPS), Ontario's second largest employer, continues to expand and enhance its anti-racism training and accountability measures. These initiatives work to change behaviours and practices. They help ensure the OPS reflects and represents the diversity of all of its employees and the people they serve.

Collaborating with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities

The Anti-Racism Directorate is committed to establishing and continuously strengthening relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis leadership, organizations and communities, guided by the principles of truth and reconciliation, respect for unique constitutional rights, and Nation-to-Nation partnership.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls on provincial and federal governments to close the gaps or reduce overrepresentation of Indigenous people in child welfare, education, health, justice systems and employment. Addressing systemic and overt anti-Indigenous racism, including the legacy of colonialism in these systems, is essential as the province moves forward in closing gaps and increasing equitable opportunities and outcomes. The Anti-Racism Strategic Plan identifies the development of an Indigenous-focused strategy as a key priority.

As part of our whole-of-government approach, the Anti-Racism Directorate works with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO) to address anti-Indigenous racism through the cultivation of strong and sustained partnerships. With the support of IAO, the Anti-Racism Directorate and our partner ministries will continue working in partnership with First Nation, Inuit and Métis leadership, organizations and communities to build initiatives focused on community-led solutions, public education and awareness, and programming to remove systemic barriers.

Collecting race-based data to eliminate systemic racism and advance racial equity

The Government of Ontario is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable society for all Ontarians. By identifying and monitoring systemic racial disparities, public sector organizations (PSOs) will be in a better position to close gaps, eliminate systemic racial barriers, and advance the fair treatment of everyone.

The Anti-Racism Data Standards provide a consistent approach to identify systemic racism and advance racial equity.

The Anti-Racism Directorate developed the data standards based on extensive internal and external engagements, covering a broad range of ministries, community organizations/leaders, academics, and experts. The Directorate also worked closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario and the Ontario Human Rights Commissioner to strengthen privacy protections and security of personal information, and to include a focus on human right principles.

Targets and Indicators were developed to track the progress of the race-based data collection and establish a baseline for the three sectors required to collect race-based data: child welfare, education, and justice. In cases where self-reported data is collected, “race-based data” includes the Indigenous identity, race, religion, and ethnic origin of the person. Where perceived observation data is collected, it includes perceived race but not the other categories.

The regulated ^{*****}PSOs currently collecting race-based data in these priority sectors are required to report compliance and response rates annually. The compliance rate is the number (and percentage) of programs, services, and functions collecting race-based personal information. The response rate is the number and percentage of individuals (for example, service recipients) providing race-based personal information.

Our goal is to achieve 100% compliance for each of the regulated areas and sectors currently collecting race-based data. For response rates, the goal is to achieve as high a percentage rate as possible, while recognizing individuals have a right to decline to provide the information

As a next step, regulated areas will be required to conduct analysis and report on their findings. The objective is to eliminate systemic racism and advance racial equity for the regulated sectors, by using the data and findings to inform changes to their policies, programs, services, and functions.

The regulated sectors (i.e. justice, education, and child welfare) ^{*****}have made significant progress in collecting race-based data. The collection, analysis and reporting of information is required, but responses from individuals who interact with those systems/sectors are voluntary. The regulated areas and sectors are continually working on strategies to improve both compliance and response rates. The data reported here is current as of Summer 2021.

Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services

The ministry is committed to redesigning the child welfare system to ensure that children, youth and families receive services that are community-based, high quality, culturally appropriate, and responsive, with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

Over the past 12 months, we have worked closely with sector partners and stakeholders to shift investments from protection services to community-based prevention that better supports the unique needs of kids and their families from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous, Black, racialized and LGBTQ2S children and youth, and those with special needs.

We continue to work with First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous partners to support their families and expand access to care that better reflects their customs, heritages, and traditions.

Effective July 1, 2021, specified children's aid societies listed in regulation under the Act were required to begin collecting race-based data in accordance with the Act and the Anti-Racism Data Standards (ARDS). The ministry is currently working on an approach to reporting identity-based data, including race-based data in alignment with the Act and ARDS, which will include engagement with societies.

The collection of race-based data is underway in all program areas in the Youth Justice Division where there is legal authority to collect information on Indigenous identity, race, ethnic origin, and religion under the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*. The compliance rate is 100% and the response rate is 72.6%. The reporting rates provided were compiled using aggregate data sources.

Ministry of Education

Prior to 2017, only the Toronto District School Board collected comprehensive student demographic data. Since 2018, 17 additional school boards have administered a student census following the requirements for race-based data collection in the Anti-Racism Data Standards. The census will help identify disparities in student outcomes. In total, 18 boards, including Ontario's three largest boards, Toronto, Peel and York, collect race-based data. As of January 1, 2023, all school boards will be required to collect race-based data.

Ministry of the Attorney General

The Office of the Independent Police Review Director (April 1, 2020) has a compliance rate of 100% with regulated programs, services and functions collecting race-based data on a member of the public who makes a complaint to the Independent Police Review Director. The response rate since April 1, 2020, is 82%.

As of July 2021, the Ministry of the Attorney General began collecting race-based data from individuals who have been charged with an offence and appear in bail court. Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) has been collecting race-based data on the ministry's behalf in respect of LAO Duty Counsel clients. While LAO does not interact with all individuals in bail, they do represent and collect data from a significant majority of all accused. In 2019, in the Ontario Court of Justice, there were approximately 61,000 people with a "first bail hearing" appearance, and 73% were represented by LAO Duty Counsel. These numbers decreased in 2020, with just under 47,000 people and 69% represented by LAO Duty Counsel. While this data represents a significant portion of accused that appear in bail, the ministry is investigating the best methodology to collect the remaining data from non-LAO clients.

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is required to collect information on race in circumstances in which a person is seriously injured or dies and in which the injury or death may have resulted from criminal offences committed by a police officer. Race-based data is required to be collected on the person who suffered injury or death (called the complainant) and the police officer(s) involved. **Compliance rate** measures whether race-based data was requested from a subject (in this case, the complainant and police officer) and **response rate** measures whether race-based data was voluntarily provided by the subjects. Since October 1, 2020, the SIU has an 84% compliance rate on race-based data collection for complainants, and a 100% compliance rate for police officers. The response rate is 27% for complainants and 3% for police officers.

Ministry of the Solicitor General

As of January 1, 2020, the Ministry of the Solicitor General is required to collect the perceived race of individuals on whom force is used, and a use-of-force report is completed. When a use-of-force report is required, police services across Ontario use a form that requires members to indicate the perceived race of an individual on whom force was used. The compliance rate for responding to questions on the race of individuals is 100% for all use-of-force reports submitted to the Ministry of the Solicitor General by police forces.

In August 2020, Correctional Services began collecting race-based data from people who are in custody in Ontario correctional institutions, and people who are under community

supervision (released on parole, subject to a probation order or a conditional sentence order and subject to supervision by the ministry). All 25 Ontario correctional institutions and all 119 Ontario Probation and Parole Offices are collecting race-based data from individuals as part of their intake processes. Information on the number of individuals who have been asked compared to the number of individuals being served by these divisions is not yet available.

The ministry is refining the data collection process based on feedback from those who are collecting the data from individuals under care/supervision. Revisions to the language in the consent form and identifying best practices as to when it is best to collect the data are being considered.

Ministry of Health

In addition to regulated sectors included under the Act, the Anti-Racism Directorate has been working with the Ministry of Health (MOH) on race-based data collection. On March 5, 2021, the ministry began collecting socio-demographic data from persons receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Data collection is voluntary, and covers race, ethnic origin, language (mother tongue and the official language people are most comfortable with), household income, and household size. Collecting this data will help the province have a more complete picture of who is being vaccinated, and how to ensure a more equitable and efficient vaccine rollout across the province.

On June 3, 2021, the government passed legislation that would support timely reporting to MOH of all relevant data from COVID-19 vaccination sites, including voluntary socio-demographic information. On July 9, 2021 MOH, made the sociodemographic data being collected in the COVID-19 vaccination program available to Public Health Units in a de-identified format, to support vaccine rollout planning.

MOH is currently exploring options for a long-term approach to sociodemographic data collection to identify and respond to health system inequities beyond COVID-19.

Fighting inequity in the Ontario Public Service

The [OPS Anti-Racism Policy \(/page/ontario-public-service-anti-racism-policy/\)](/page/ontario-public-service-anti-racism-policy/) was established in 2018. It commits the OPS to create equitable human resources policies and practices for all employees, by:

- Identifying and removing systemic racism barriers in human resource policies, programs and practices.
- Ensuring that the diversity of the senior leadership reflects the Ontario labour force by 2025.
- Providing all staff with a foundational awareness and understanding of systemic racism, and the skills to address it.

Over the past year, the OPS has built on the progress detailed in its report of [July 2020 \(/page/ontario-public-service-anti-racism-policy-progress-report\)](#). Notable achievements include:

Third-Party review of OPS inclusive workplace policies and programs

In June 2021, the OPS completed a third-party review of its inclusive workplace policies and programs with a focus on finding effective approaches to:

- identifying and addressing systemic employment barriers and discrimination
- address workplace issues both within and out of scope of the Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention (WDHP) Program
- strengthen the early resolution of workplace issues

The review focused on all Human Rights Code grounds, with a special focus on anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, transphobia and the specific barriers for people with disabilities. Based on recommendations from the review, OPS leadership has committed to tangible actions to accelerate change across the organization, including:

- an apology from the Secretary of the Cabinet and Deputy Ministers to Black, Indigenous and any employees for the harm caused by racism, discrimination, harassment, and barriers in the OPS
- a leadership pledge outlining concrete steps to address racism, discrimination, harassment in the OPS
- development of an integrated plan for actions on the Leadership Pledge and other actions identified through the review
- providing regular and transparent progress updates on the implementation status of recommendations

Building Anti-racism competency and capacity (ARCC)

The Anti-Racism Directorate has developed the Anti-racism competency and capacity (ARCC) Building Program, an anti-racism training that develops knowledge, and skills to promote behavioural change. Anti-racism training for all OPS staff, management and HR professionals fulfills a key commitment under the OPS Anti-Racism Policy. It increases employee understanding of the issues, and enhances their ability to address systemic racism and promote racial equity in the workplace. As of December 31, 2020, all deputy ministers and their senior leadership teams completed this mandatory anti-racism training, through a customized version of the Anti-Racism Competency and Capacity Building (ARCC) program. Mandatory ARCC training will begin rolling out for all OPS staff in Fall 2021. This is a priority action to help shift the culture toward building an equitable Ontario Public Service.

Roadmap to racial equity

The Roadmap to Racial Equity in the OPS is an enterprise-wide action plan developed by the Anti-Racism Directorate to fulfil a key requirement under the OPS Anti-Racism Policy. The roadmap provides direction to ministries and commissioned public bodies to mobilize change in key focus areas and identify and remedy systemic racism barriers in employment within their organizations. The development and implementation of ministry anti-racism action plans enables the realization of the objectives and goals of the roadmap.

As of April 1, 2021, all ministries and commissioned public bodies submitted anti-racism action plans which were evaluated by the Anti-Racism Directorate. In addition to these plans, some ministries are developing divisional level anti-racism action plans, such as GovTechON's Addressing Anti-Black Racism in GovTechON Action Plan.

Some notable ministry initiatives include the:

1. Relaunch of the Ministry of the Attorney General's Diverse Interview Panel Program (DIPP) — now a multi-ministry program (Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services; Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries; Cabinet Office; and Ministry of Transportation). DIPP offers leaders who identify as part of an OPS under-represented group an opportunity to volunteer as a diverse panel member. In this role, they promote bias-free and barrier-free recruitment practices to enhance fairness and transparency in hiring practices, while bringing a diverse perspective and range of subject matter expertise and skills to the candidate selection process.

2. Prioritization of under-represented groups for leadership development programs across the Ontario Public Service.
3. Utilization of the Anti-Racism Directorate's Anti-Racism Impact Assessment Framework to identify, remove and prevent systemic racial barriers in transfer payments, policies, programs, and services.
4. Energy and Northern Development and Mines and several partners (Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and Indigenous Affairs Ontario) have committed to increasing their outreach to post-secondary graduates within the past five years who self-identify as Indigenous, and encouraging them to apply to their Indigenous Internship Program leveraging substantial outreach to Indigenous organizations.
5. Within the Ministry of the Solicitor General, the Corrections Centre for Professional Advancement and Training is collecting identifiable socio-demographic data from approximately 5,200 candidates in the CO recruitment process through a survey. This will provide the ministry with informed hiring data for CO positions. Correctional Services has also recently established the Corrections Conflict Management Office providing conflict resolution services and support managers with workplace conflict resolutions.

Talking anti-racism

The Anti-Racism Directorate has facilitated "Race Talks" with senior management teams across ministries, as well as educational sessions, workshops and town hall presentations for various ministry branches and divisions. These include Anti-racism 101, Anti-Black racism 101 and Engaging in conversations about anti-racism.

Many ministries are continuing their own "Race Talks" with employees throughout their organizations as part of their ministry action plans. For example, the ongoing conversations sparked through "Race Talks" will inform how the Correctional Services' Workplace anti-racism action plan is implemented in each institution. These conversations will continue to build awareness and understanding for all.

Educating the public about anti-racism

In addition to the Anti-Racism Directorate's work, ministries also collaborate with key stakeholders and partners. Their work supports public education and awareness

initiatives to address racism and hate within the K-12 education system and other community-based settings.

In the 2020-2021 school year, Ontario provided about \$763 million in funding to support key policy initiatives related to school reopening through the federal government's Safe Return to Class Fund. Some of these investments include:

- \$50,000 to the Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice to develop online resources and tools to help Chinese Canadian households engage their children, from Grades 3 to 5, in discussions about racism.
- \$10,000 to the Asian Canadian Educators Network (ACENET) to develop a series of professional learning and workshops about anti-Asian racism for schools and boards in Ontario.
- \$140,000 to Community Family Services of Ontario to deliver resources and supports relevant to pandemic-induced issues and risks faced by newcomers and East Asian Ontario families.
- \$225,000 to the Muslim Association of Canada to create digital resources for educators, students and parents to raise awareness about Islamophobia.
- \$75,000 to the National Council of Canadian Muslims to facilitate outreach and engagement with Muslim parents and families, with a focus on newcomer communities.
- \$327,000 to the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies to support two summer learning programs: 'Unpacking Intolerance: Equity and Diversity Training for Educators' program, which will provide professional development sessions to help educators learn about dismantling systems of oppression and antisemitism in homes, schools and communities, and the 'Tour for Humanity Virtual Summer Camp'.
- \$500,000 to the Lifelong Leadership Institute to develop and implement leadership, mentorship, academic, and entrepreneurship programs for Black youth in the GTA.
- \$300,000 to Parents of Black Children to help create and foster conditions for Black student success by developing a bilingual toolkit to provide educators with an understanding of the Black experience in the education system and developing a virtual campus that will offer tutoring services for students and resources for parents.
- \$280,000 to African-Canadian Coalition against Hate, Oppression & Racism (ANCHOR) to support the creation of a culturally relevant summer learning program for students in K-12.

- \$50,000 for Parents for Diversity to develop and deliver a series of webinars in French and English to support the engagement of racialized and newcomer parents, guardians and caregivers.
- \$50,000 to Regroupement ethnoculturel des parents francophones de l'Ontario (REPFO) to increase involvement of parents from Black Francophone communities in their children's schools.

Public education and awareness on anti-racism

The Anti-Racism Directorate provided \$100,000 to the Network for the Advancement for Black Communities (NABC) to host a two-day virtual anti-Black racism conference for over 500 participants in October, 2020. The conference fostered collaboration across non-profit organizations, federal, municipal and provincial sectors, to gain insights and formulate policy and program solutions that address the impact of anti-Black racism.

The Directorate is leading the government's new \$1.6 million investment to establish an Anti-Racism Anti-Hate Grant program, to ensure we advance the most effective public awareness solutions in the fight against racism and hate.

This program supports the government's commitment to collaborate with communities on anti-racism initiatives. The program focuses on increasing public awareness of the impact of anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of racism, including anti-Asian racism, which has spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2021, as part of its community efforts, the ARD collaborated with community partners to host and facilitate six virtual population-specific Co-Design Labs, with key stakeholders, partners, organizations and community leaders. Over 100 participants from across Ontario participated in the sessions, representing a range of sectors, ethno-cultural communities, ages, gender identities, and sexual orientations. Information from these sessions was used to inform the design of the Grant program. A call for applications will be released in Fall 2021.

The Ministry of the Solicitor General is currently investing more than \$2.5 million over two years (2020-2022) through the Safer and vital communities (SVC) Grant to help communities combat hate-motivated crime. The funding will support 25 community-based, not-for-profit organizations and First Nations Chiefs and Councils, in collaboration with their police partners, implement local projects that tackle discrimination, foster greater inclusiveness, and address the increase of police-reported hate crime.

Some examples of initiatives funded through the SVC Grant include:

- \$110,000 allocated to the Coalition of Muslim women of KW on supporting Waterloo Region's Response to hate crimes/hate incidents.
- \$110,000 allocated to the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians on developing Community-Informed Hate-Crime Reporting Processes in Toronto, Peel, York and Ottawa.
- \$85,041.60 allocated to the Grand Council Treaty #3 Representative Services to support Treaty #3 Youth Anti-Racism Training in Treaty #3 Territory.
- \$104,900.00 allocated to the Guelph Black Heritage Society (GBHS) for the project #ChangeStartsNow - Anti-Racism Educational Tools Summit in Guelph and Wellington County, Ontario.
- \$108,834.00 allocated to the Heritage Skills Development Centre (HSDC) for supporting Scarborough Community Against Hate Crime (SCAHC) in Scarborough.

Building community capacity to improve outcomes for Black communities

In collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Community Services, the Anti-Racism Directorate provided funding of \$192,000 to the Network for the Advancement of Black Communities, to support capacity building for community coordination and research. Funding included hiring an operations lead who provides support to the director and assists with contract compliance to funders, website maintenance, convenes various learning events and conferences, and coordinates capacity-building activities..

Working in the community

The Anti-Racism Directorate and numerous ministries worked closely with a wide variety of community and governmental agencies to further the cause of anti-racism across the province. The following stories illustrate a critical systemic change in:

- enhancing student success
- ensuring access, equity and opportunity at work
- closing the housing inequality gap
- providing equitable health care

- supporting community efforts

Enhancing student success

Graduation coach program for Black students

To support systemic changes and help remove barriers within classrooms and school communities so that all students succeed, the Ministry of Education is working with several school boards to deliver the Graduation Coach Program for Black Students. This program, launched in 2020-2021 and expanded for 2021-2022, provides comprehensive, culturally responsive support to Black students to help improve their academic achievement and well-being. Coaches provide advice to school leaders at both the school and school board levels to help effect system changes, so that Black students feel welcome, have a sense of belonging, and have a better school experience.

Graduation Coaches with lived experience in Ontario's diverse Black communities offer individual support and mentorship to Black students. Coaches will support students by:

- Helping identify and address barriers to ensure a welcoming and positive school learning environment in collaboration with school leaders.
- Providing targeted, culturally responsive mentorship and advocacy for Black students to improve their mental health, well-being, and academic achievement, with the assistance of school staff and board leadership.
- Acting as mentors and advisors.
- Identifying intervention points and facilitating access and referrals to academic support, as well as community and school resources.

This program offers students new opportunities to:

- be more engaged in school
- be better supported in achieving their academic goals
- connect with community and school resources
- build confidence so that they are more motivated to attend and graduate from school

Funding: \$2.94 million in 2021-2022 over three years

Ministry: Education

Transportation and stability support for children and youth in care

To improve the educational experience and outcomes of children and youth in care, the ministry provides funding to school boards to work with their local Children's Aid Societies to identify supports that enable positive and stable connections to school and learning during times of instability and transition.

This program is intended to:

- Promote mental health, well-being, and positive educational experiences by providing transportation to support a stable school experience as well as educational supports.
- Ensure the unique identities of children and youth in care are supported by community and cultural connections, positive relationships with peers, and caring adults at their school.

Funding is categorized as:

- Transportation supports that allow students in care to temporarily remain in their home school when they experience a residence change that typically would require them to switch schools during the school year. Transportation to the home school is provided when it is in the student's best interest until a more natural transition time (for example, end of the semester or school year).
- Stability supports that may include tutoring services, technology provisions (if determined to require more than what is provided by the school and/or other funding is not available), and culturally appropriate resources.

Funding: \$6.6 million

Ministry: Education

Advocating for Black children and youth

The government of Ontario is taking important action to support Black children and youth. Studies show Black students are more likely to experience negative educational outcomes, including suspension and expulsion. They are also less likely to complete high school or enter post-secondary education.

Expanding on programming under the Black Youth Action Plan, the Student and Family Advocates initiative in Ottawa, Hamilton and the Greater Toronto Area provides community-based and culturally relevant supports to Black students ages 6-25, to improve their educational outcomes. Working with local organizations, Student and Family

Advocates give Black students and their families specific supports tailored to their individual needs.

Supports include:

- working with students and families to develop a plan for achieving their goals
- meeting with teachers, guidance counsellors, and school administrators to discuss student progress
- building positive relationships with students, educators, student peers, and community members
- connecting students and families to resources and supports like community programming, learning opportunities, tutoring and mentorships, job placements and scholarship or leadership opportunities.

Funding: \$6 million over three years

Ministry: Children, Community and Social Services – Black Youth Action Plan

Strengthening educational supports for children and youth in care

Children and youth leaving the child welfare system have a greater likelihood to experience adverse outcomes, such as homelessness, mental health concerns, unemployment, lower education achievements, lack of education, and involvement in the justice system.

The Ontario government is taking important steps to set up children and youth in care for success by investing an additional \$1.5 million in the Education Liaison program. The program, launched in 2020-2021 and expanded for 2021-2022, helps connect students to supports such as tutoring, academic enrichment, career mentoring, and skills development, and improves collaboration between children's aid societies and school boards. With this investment, the total annual funding for this program has increased to \$5 million.

The expanded program now supports a full-time Education Liaison in every children's aid society. The Education Liaisons will improve educational outcomes by coordinating educational services and building capacity within children's aid societies and school boards.

Funding: \$5 million

Ministry: Children, Community and Social Services

Combating anti-Black racism within the child welfare system

Research conducted by the Children's Aid Society of Toronto identified that Black children and youth in care accounted for five times their representation in the city's overall population. African-Canadian and Black children, youth and families in the child welfare system have historically and continue to disproportionately experience adverse outcomes.

The Ontario government is investing \$800,000 annually in One Vision One Voice (OVOV), a community-led initiative with a focus on anti-Black racism. The project supports the delivery of culturally appropriate services to address the outcome disparities and disproportionalities experienced by African Canadian and Black children and youth in the child welfare system.

The project supports the delivery of safe and suitable services to improve outcomes in Ontario's child welfare system. Some significant achievements include:

- an OVOV Practice framework, which provides society staff and caregivers with anti-oppressive and anti-racist clinical practice guidelines
- an anti-Black racism training program for child welfare leaders
- aunties and Uncles, a unique initiative offering Black and African Canadian youth in care a Black mentor who can provide a sense of cultural self-identity
- an African Canadian service delivery model to help children's aid societies support Black and African Canadian children, youth and families
- a mentoring program for African Canadian child welfare staff to advance to senior level positions
- multiple youth symposiums for African Canadian and Black youth in care and symposiums for all-Black staff

Funding: \$800,000 annually

Ministry: Children, Community and Social Services

Addressing anti-Black racism in the Children's Aid Society of Toronto

The Anti-Racism Directorate provided \$100,000 funding in 2020 to support the Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAST) in addressing Anti-Black Racism in their organization. Their initiative aims to shift the mindset and practices of CASTs leadership teams as well as increase collaboration with mandated referral sources (for example, education/school boards, police/law enforcement, medical practitioners) to analyze data and challenge biases and blind spots, which may contribute significantly to the overrepresentation of African Canadian children and youth in child welfare agencies. CAST has completed Cultural Safety and anti-Black racism training with 150 leaders, including supervisors, HR leads and lawyers.

Funding: \$100,000

Anti-Racism Directorate

Dismantling systemic barriers at school

Systemic barriers at school are impeding the progress of some Ontario students. A new planning tool will help school boards revise policies and practices that have adverse impacts on under-served student populations. The Board Improvement and Equity Planning Tool will increase accountability and standardize commitments for advancing human rights and equity across the publicly-funded education system.

Starting with the 2021-2022 school year, school boards must work with parents and local communities to identify and dismantle systemic barriers facing under-served student populations. School boards must submit their reports to the Ministry of Education and post them publicly.

The Ontario government has introduced a new Grade 9 math course starting in September 2021 to help all students succeed. The new course ends the practice of streaming Grade 9 students into applied and academic courses, a practice that has disadvantaged some students. Ending early streaming will keep options open for all students to pursue postsecondary education and training in any pathway they choose.

Funding: \$1.43 million

Ministry: Education

Dismantling Anti-Black racism

The Anti-Racism Directorate has collaborated with school boards by funding initiatives with the goal of improving the education outcomes of Black students:

This includes funding support of \$200,000 since 2020 to the Durham District School Board, to develop anti-Black racism training for kindergarten teachers, school administrators and special education staff. Knowledge Building Foundational Sessions to disrupt and dismantle anti-Black racism were attended by about 1,500 Durham District school board administrators, program facilitators, campus educators, special education central staff/psychological services and social work and kindergarten, grade 1 and 2 campus educators. This work is ongoing.

ARD also supported the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in 2020 with \$200,000 funding for the implementation of the Board's anti-Black racism initiatives, such as the Pre-Kindergarten Africentric and Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy Summer Learning program, and Black Students Success and Excellence (BSSE) program. Insights from these initiatives will support the recently launched Centre for Excellence for Black Students Achievement. In addition, a series of engagement sessions were held with 300 school administrators on building the critical consciousness to address, interrupt and disrupt issues of anti-Black racism at their schools and sites of practice. TDSB has implemented the "Addressing Debt in Adolescent Literacy (DIAL)" initiative, using a culturally relevant and responsive approach to literacy teaching that nurtures and affirms students' racial, cultural and reader identities in multiple content areas. The Black Students Leadership (BSL) initiative, which involves the development of Black student focused leadership programs tied to Youth participatory action research (YPAR) has been implemented and is progressing well.

Funding: \$400,000

Anti-Racism Directorate

Increasing access to financial support for Indigenous learners

Until early 2021, students attending Indigenous Institutes could only receive funds from the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) if the program was delivered in partnership with an Ontario college or university. To remedy this inequality, Ontario has designated Indigenous Institutes as approved institutions for OSAP purposes to allow eligible students to apply for assistance.

Indigenous students will be able to access culturally supportive, OSAP-eligible programs that are independently delivered at Indigenous Institutes. Indigenous Institutes are an integral part of Ontario's postsecondary education system, and this financial assistance will help Indigenous learners get the skills they need to succeed. This investment in culturally responsive postsecondary education opportunities for Indigenous learners will reduce the “attainment gap” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners.

Funding: ongoing

Ministry: Colleges and Universities

Ensuring safe and effective learning environments for Indigenous students

The Ontario government is providing \$17 million dollars over three years for additional support to First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous education partners. This funding will provide certainty for Indigenous education partners while ensuring safe learning environments for Indigenous students — either in person, or through remote and alternative learning options. Programs include:

- Focusing on safe transitions and well-being for First Nation students from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and Indigenous students from remote northern communities.
- Providing land-based and elder programming for First Nation students relocating to larger, urban centers to attend secondary school.
- Advancing recommendations from the Seven Youth Inquest including: training and supports for Boarding home parents to ensure students have a safe learning environment away from their home communities.
- Creating/promoting a culturally rich alternative learning program for Métis students through the "River Program," in partnership with Limestone District School Board.
- Capacity building for the Tungasuvvingat Inuit to increase access to culturally appropriate supports and resources for Inuit students.

The province is also providing First Nation schools with the personal protective equipment required to reopen in their communities safely at no cost to them.

Funding: \$17 million over three years

Ministry: Education

Ensuring academic success and well-being for Indigenous students

Starting in 2021-2022, the Ontario government will provide an additional \$576,925 per year for the expansion of the Indigenous Graduation Coach Program, supporting an additional five Indigenous Graduation Coach positions per year for a total of 15 new coaches by 2023-2024.

The Indigenous Graduation Coach program helps Indigenous students obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma and successfully transition into post-secondary education, training or labour market opportunities. It is a flexible, culturally sound program that allows boards to build a supportive process for Indigenous students to succeed in school.

Ontario funded a total of 34 Indigenous Graduation Coach positions in 27 participating school boards in 2021-2022. The Indigenous Grad Coaches have deep connections to the local Indigenous community, an awareness of local Indigenous community resources, and the ability to connect students and families to these resources.

Data collected through program evaluation shows increased graduation rates, increased credit accumulation, and increased supports for pathway planning.

Funding: Total funding for the program in 2021-2022 is \$3,923,090, which includes an expansion of five additional coach positions with multi-year commitment until 2023-2024, including annual program expansion of \$576,925, which is equivalent to five additional coaches annually.

Ministry: Education

Supporting Indigenous education initiatives across Ontario

In 2021-2022 Ontario will provide \$22.4 million across all 72 Ontario school boards to support the development and implementation of a Board Action Plan on Indigenous Education (BAP) in all provincial school boards.

The yearly BAP allocation funds the implementation of programs and initiatives that support the academic success and well-being of Indigenous students, as well as build the knowledge of all students and educators on Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives

and contributions. The BAP allocation is enveloped to ensure that funds are directed to support Indigenous learning.

Funding: \$22.4 million

Ministry: Education

Supporting culturally responsive alternative learning environments

The province has provided an additional \$1.25 million funding in 2021-2022 for the Alternative Secondary School Program (ASSP) to support the expansion of the program to up to four new sites in Ontario, bringing total annual funding for the program to \$2.55 million.

The ASSP is delivered through the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centers and supports Indigenous learners to obtain their Ontario Secondary School diplomas. It connects them to culturally-relevant education programming and wraparound learning supports, including Indigenous approaches and ways of knowing, land-based learning, connection to community, and access to traditional knowledge keepers and elders.

The program re-engages learners who may not be adequately supported in the mainstream education system. It also provides a trauma-informed education model that supports student well-being and holistic approaches to education.

Funding: \$2.55 million

Ministry: Education

Combating antisemitism in schools

Antisemitism is on the rise. According to Statistics Canada, the number of police-reported incidents in Canada targeting the Jewish population in 2019 was 296, the largest number of any religious group. Ontario is helping counter rising antisemitism with training initiatives and resources for educators and supports for students.

The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies in Toronto received \$327,000 in funding in 2021-2022 to support two summer learning programs:

- The **Unpacking Intolerance: Equity and Diversity Training for Educators program**. This helped educators learn how to dismantle systems of oppression and antisemitism in homes, schools and communities.
- The **Tour for Humanity Virtual Summer Camp Students** learned about human rights and how to deal with injustice and were encouraged to generate ideas for positive change.

Funding: \$327,000

Ministry: Education

Addressing the root causes of Islamophobia

Hate crimes have been on the rise in Canada, with a nine per cent increase in anti-Muslim attacks in 2019 compared to the previous year, according to data from Statistics Canada. Tragic and disturbing reports and incidents across Canada and the world over the past year, including the horrific Islamophobic attack in London show the need for action. Many Muslim students continue to face discrimination in schools and communities

Building on past initiatives, the Ontario government has invested in a plan to counter Islamophobia and ensure classrooms are free from discrimination. Working with community partners, the plan supports Muslim students and families by enhancing resources and training for educators, targeted supports for students, and digital resources for parents.

To raise awareness about Islamophobia, the Ontario government provided \$225,000 in 2021 to the Muslim Association of Canada to create digital resources for educators, students and parents. The resources provide information about Islamic practices, values and misconceptions. They also explore the root causes of Islamophobia and ways to help end racism and discrimination.

Ontario also provided in 2021, \$75,000 to the National Council of Canadian Muslims to facilitate outreach and engagement with Muslim parents and families, with a focus on newcomer communities

Funding: \$300,000

Ministry: Education

Engaging Indigenous Youth

Since November 2021, the [Indigenous Youth Leading Youth Anti-Racism Program](https://nordikinstitute.com/development/indigenous-youth-leading-youth-an-anti-racism-program/) (<https://nordikinstitute.com/development/indigenous-youth-leading-youth-an-anti-racism-program/>) has been available for community access. The program was designed to be delivered by Indigenous youth leaders to non-Indigenous audiences in workshops in elementary schools, high schools, post-secondary schools and other community settings.

Through interactive, age-appropriate workshops, participants discuss racism, biases and their negative impacts on First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in a culturally safe environment. Youth participants learn about the importance of being an ally, building respectful intercultural relationships and engaging in dialogue.

This flexible program includes six 90-minute workshop modules that can be tailored to suit the grade level of the intended audience. Training materials are also available, and facilitators can choose to run some or all of the modules.

Ministry: Indigenous Affairs

Ensuring access, equity and opportunity at work

Supporting young Black entrepreneurs

Black entrepreneurs face systemic and complex barriers when starting and growing a business. Although about 3.5% of Canada's population identifies as Black, a 2015 Black in Canada survey found only 2,000 Black-owned businesses of significant scale. Black Canadians have among the lowest participation rates in tech occupations.

The Ontario government is investing \$1.2 million over three years to help young Black entrepreneurs and Black-owned tech start-ups get the resources and tools they need to succeed. The funding is provided through Ryerson University's DMZs Black Innovation Programs, which connect businesses with customers, capital, experts, and a community of entrepreneurs and influencers.

The programs give Black entrepreneurs and Black-owned tech start-ups sales and marketing training, skills development workshops, mentorships, and dedicated workspaces. They also use industry partnerships for advice on how to attract investors, expand revenue growth and market their products and services to wider audiences.

Supporting and training young Black entrepreneurs and increasing Black participation in every aspect of the economy will build community, aid economic recovery, and set the path for economic growth and new opportunities.

This investment will support a more equitable and inclusive start up ecosystem. It will also drive real and impactful change in improving Black representation in Ontario's tech sector.

Funding: \$1.2 million over three years

Ministry: Children, Community and Social Services

Strengthening municipal codes of conduct

All Ontarians should feel safe and respected in the workplace. They should know that there are accountability measures in place for municipal council members that violate codes of conduct.

To ensure that these measures are in place in Ontario's municipalities, the Ontario government consulted with the municipal sector and the public to strengthen accountability for council members. The province wants to ensure that councillors and heads of council maintain a safe and respectful workplace. They must carry out their duties as elected officials in an ethical and responsible manner.

The consultations included input from members of councils, municipal associations, and staff on how to ensure that municipal staff and officials are supported and respected in the workplace. The goal was to gather input to ensure there are adequate mechanisms in place to hold council members accountable for unacceptable behaviour. The feedback provided will help the province determine what changes may be needed. The consultations will also help advance Ontario's commitment to upholding our shared values of respect, equity, equality, and fairness for all people in Ontario.

Under the *Municipal Act, 2001*, all municipalities are required to establish a code of conduct for councillors and certain local boards. They are also required to provide access to an integrity commissioner.

Funding: ongoing

Ministry: Municipal Affairs and Housing

Helping immigrants prepare for good jobs

Newcomers to Ontario are often challenged by a lack of specific training or skills needed to get in-demand jobs. The Ontario government is investing \$7.7 million in 19 projects that will help more than 2,700 newcomers qualify for in-demand jobs, and help employers find the skilled workers they need to maintain and grow their businesses.

The list of projects includes:

- South Asian Canadians Health and Social Services is receiving \$466,597 through the Skills Development Fund to provide training to 600 internationally educated healthcare professionals such as nurses, physicians and pharmacists looking to enter the healthcare sector in Ontario.
- The Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto is receiving \$937,584 through the Skills Development Fund to provide up to 1,250 racialized immigrant women with free skills training and other employment supports to help them find or re-enter jobs in various sectors including retail and sales, human services, security, business and self-employment.
- Ontario Food Processing Skills Canada is receiving \$1,210,245 through the Skills Development Fund to provide workplace and food safety training to 300 newcomers employed in the food manufacturing sector who face language barriers, including frontline workers, supervisors, meat cutters, food safety personnel and sanitation workers.
- Lighthouse Labs is receiving \$2,872,339 through SkillsAdvance Ontario to help 250 women, including newcomers in Toronto and Ottawa, gain the skills they need to pursue a career in web development.

Funding: \$7.7 million

Ministry: Labour, Training and Skills Development

Training Indigenous workers and women in nuclear industry trades

Women and Indigenous communities have been especially hard hit by job losses during the pandemic. In 2020, the unemployment rate in Ontario for Indigenous people living off-reserve was 12.5%, compared to 9.5% for their non-Indigenous counterparts. For women, it was 10% in 2020, up from 5.5% in 2019.

The Ontario government is investing \$500,000 to help train Indigenous workers and women for skilled trades careers in the province's clean nuclear energy sector. Led by the Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries and the First Nations Power Authority, the program will open doors for under-represented groups to start careers in skilled trades such as boilermaker, carpenter, electrician and welder.

The project will help increase the number of skilled workers available to extend the operating lives of 10 nuclear generating units at the Bruce and Darlington power plants. It will also support smaller employers who supply nuclear equipment and tools to those sites. At the end of the training, participants can be hired for jobs in the industry.

Funding: \$500,000

Ministry: Labour, Training and Skills Development

Enhancing workplace opportunities for racialized employees

By 2036, racialized people are projected to account for approximately 48% of Ontario's population. According to Statistics Canada, in October 2020, Canadians who belong to groups designated as racialized or Indigenous continued to have a higher unemployment rate (11.7%) compared to Canadians who are not racialized or Indigenous (6.7%).

COVID-19 has exacerbated challenges for racialized employees in the workplace, ranging from career progression obstacles to health and safety risks. Working in partnership with CivicAction, the Ontario government brought public, private and non-profit sector organizations together in a virtual roundtable. The goal was to identify concrete actions to enhance workplace opportunities for these groups.

The virtual roundtable discussion focused on:

- Helping employers better understand the distinct experiences and challenges faced by Indigenous, Black and racialized talent in entering the workforce and advancing their careers.
- Identifying promising practices and tools to help employers tap into Ontario's diverse workforce.
- Helping employers better understand the distinct experiences and challenges faced by Indigenous, Black and racialized talent in entering the workforce and advancing their careers.

Ministry: Solicitor General

Training Indigenous people for construction jobs

While the demand for skilled trades continues to grow, many in Ontario's Indigenous communities lack the training they need to enter the construction sector. The Ontario government is investing about \$350,000 from March 31, 2021 – March 31, 2022, to provide mentorship and training in construction for up to 60 people in the Sarnia region, mostly from local Indigenous communities. The project will prepare participants for a range of careers in the construction sector, including cement finisher and construction craft worker.

The program, led by [LiUNA Local 1089 Training Centre \(https://www.liuna1089.ca/about\)](https://www.liuna1089.ca/about), offers 12 weeks of training to participants who are often underrepresented in the skilled trades. They will acquire basic skills needed to move into apprenticeships, including construction safety, material handling, introduction to blueprints and specifications, introduction to construction tools, and scaffolding. Participants can gain up to 12 certificates in courses such as tool usage, working at heights, confined spaces and first aid.

The project will also prepare 12 working tradespeople to deliver training support trades through a train-the-trainer program that includes shadowing ongoing courses including pipe laying and construction craft work.

Funding: \$350,000

Ministry: Labour, Training and Skills Development

Expanding on-the-job training for disadvantaged youth

Employment prospects for disadvantaged youth have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. The creative industries (film, music, gaming, animation) are particularly tough to enter.

The Ontario government is investing almost \$1 million to expand on-the-job training for 350 young people, focusing on youth over 16 with disabilities, who are newcomers to Ontario, Indigenous or Black. This initiative is part of the government's effort to ensure that youth, who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, will connect to promising careers and contribute to the strength of our economy.

The project, led by the Stratagem Group, Magnet, and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, is being delivered by the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and Ontario colleges, through a mix of online and in-person learning.

During the eight-to-12-week program, participants will learn from top tier industry talent in fields such as film, music, gaming and animation. They will work together to research and collaborate on projects in their chosen field.

Funding: \$1 million

Ministry: Labour, Training and Skills Development

Closing the housing inequality gap

Investing in affordable housing for Indigenous people

Ontario recognizes that racialized and marginalized communities can face additional challenges when trying to find affordable housing. In Orillia, the Ontario government is providing over \$6.2 million to help create safe and affordable housing for Indigenous people. The funding is being delivered through the [Social Services Relief Fund \(https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000737/ontario-providing-more-support-to-communities-during-covid-19\)](https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000737/ontario-providing-more-support-to-communities-during-covid-19). It supports those who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless during COVID-19.

Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, in partnership with the Métis Nation of Ontario, is using the funding to acquire two new innovative apartment buildings on Elgin Street. The buildings house a total of 27 units. They were built using repurposed shipping containers, which allowed the homes to be created faster and more cost-effectively.

The project ensures that Indigenous community members who may be at risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to their current living conditions have immediate access to safe and affordable housing. The Métis Nation of Ontario will provide property management for the three-storey buildings, which have a mix of one and two-bedroom apartments.

Funding: \$6.2 million

Ministry: Municipal Affairs and Housing

Delivering affordable housing for families in Thunder Bay

The Government of Ontario has worked with the Government of Canada to deliver \$750,000 in joint funding through the [Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative](https://www.ontario.ca/page/affordable-housing-ontario) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/affordable-housing-ontario>) (OPHI) to create new affordable rental housing units in Thunder Bay. This joint funding will ensure more people have access to stable, affordable housing in their community. As part of the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative, Ontario is prioritizing specific populations that historically face additional barriers to accessing affordable housing, including Indigenous, racialized and newcomer communities, as outlined in Ontario's National Housing Strategy Action Plan.

The six new affordable community housing units for older adults with disabilities at 1100 Lincoln Street were developed under the Rental Housing Component of the OPHI. A vacant commercial space in the building was converted into accessible residential apartments featuring roll-in showers, wheelchair-accessible kitchens, and on-site amenities including scooter parking and charging stations.

Funding: \$750,000

Ministry: Municipal Affairs and Housing

Supporting homeless families in Peel Region

The Ontario government provided almost \$7.6 million to help create an emergency shelter and support more families who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness in Peel Region. The funding is being delivered through the [Social Services Relief Fund](https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000737/ontario-providing-more-support-to-communities-during-covid-19) (<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000737/ontario-providing-more-support-to-communities-during-covid-19>). It will be used to renovate a former hotel and convert it into about 120 permanent emergency shelter units.

The new Peel Family Shelter will replace the former 60-unit family shelter at 1767 Dundas St. East, Mississauga. The new units will be equipped with private washrooms — a best practice recommended by public health experts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 — and will be close to transit, dental, medical and pharmacy services, as well as parks and the Meadowvale library. The shelter opened in January 2021, with renovations expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The Social Services Relief Fund provides municipal service managers and Indigenous housing partners with funding to help protect vulnerable people from COVID-19. This

investment can help them protect homeless shelter staff and residents, expand rent support programming, and create longer-term housing solutions.

Funding: \$7.6 million

Ministry: Municipal Affairs and Housing

Launching strategies to reduce homelessness

Access to up-to-date data is a crucial tool in Ontario's strategies to address homelessness. To improve access to supportive housing the Ontario government directed municipal service managers in March 2021 to create by-name lists to better connect people experiencing homelessness with supports. A by-name list is a real-time list of people experiencing homelessness that includes detailed information about the needs of each individual. It can help create a foundation to improve access to supportive housing, connect people to services, and provide a more standardized approach for assessment and referral protocols to make sure people are being matched to the services they need.

Ontario's service managers and Indigenous program administrators are responsible for providing shelter, housing, and support services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, survivors of domestic violence, and members of Indigenous communities who are in need.

Ministry: Municipal Affairs and Housing

Providing equitable health care

The fair and equitable distribution of vaccines is vital at all times, and especially so during a pandemic. In response to this need, the Ontario government released an Ethical Framework for COVID-19 vaccine distribution to guide vaccine prioritization and distribution across the province. The province continues to vaccinate vulnerable populations and those who care for them through its three-phase implementation.

The Ethical Framework includes the following principles to guide COVID-19 vaccine distribution:

- Minimize harms and maximize benefits, to reduce overall illness and death related to COVID-19, protect those at greatest risk of serious illness and death due to biological,

social, geographical and occupational factors, protect critical infrastructure, and promote social and economic well-being.

- Equity in the distribution of vaccines without bias or discrimination, to reduce disparities in illness and death related to COVID-19 and ensuring benefits for groups experiencing greater burdens from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Fairness, to ensure that every individual within equally prioritized groups has the same opportunity to be vaccinated, and to ensure inclusive, consistent processes that are tailored to unique needs of Ontario's many and varied communities when making decisions about vaccine prioritization.
- Transparency, to ensure the principles and rationale, decision-making processes and plans for COVID-19 prioritization are clear, understandable and communicated to the public.
- Legitimacy, making decisions based on the best available scientific evidence, shared values and input from affected parties including those historically underrepresented, to ensure decisions have the intended impact, and to include participation of affected parties in the creation and review of decisions and decision-making processes.
- Public trust, to ensure decisions and decision-making processes are informed by these principles to advance confidence and trust in Ontario's COVID-19 immunization program.

Ministry: Health

Improving vaccine uptake

The Anti-Racism Directorate provided funding of \$200,000 to support the City of Toronto's COVID-19 Community Mobilization and Engagement Plan. The program is focused on increasing residents' confidence in vaccines and addressing barriers to the acceptance and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines. This funding will support the implementation of equitable community-based models and strategies (for example, transportation program, culturally responsive initiatives, equity engagement). This will enable Indigenous, Black and racialized populations, LGBTQ2S communities, people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, seniors, South Asian Torontonians, people who are undocumented, and youth in communities at risk with high positivity rates to have greater access to vaccines at existing vaccine centres or through mobile clinics. The City of Toronto and community partners are hosting engagement sessions to support residents in making informed choices about COVID-19 vaccines.

Funding: \$200,000

Anti-Racism Directorate

Cultural supports for survivors of homicide victims and service providers

The Anti-Racism Directorate provided funding of \$125,000 to the [Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario \(https://ontario.cmha.ca/\)](https://ontario.cmha.ca/). This funding was used to:

- Conduct research with Survivors of homicide victims and service providers to inform culturally responsive services to survivors and training to service providers, determine where supports are needed, and develop policies related to survivor mental health services. One of the key findings was the need for culturally responsive approaches and valuing cultural norms and practices.
- Host a Public policy forum over two days, bringing together survivors and service providers to develop policy recommendations related to mental health services for survivors of homicide victims to enhance culturally-conscious continuity of care. The ARD participated in the Survivors of Homicide Victims and Mental Health Public Policy Forum on April 30, 2021. A request for Proposals entitled, “Creating Culturally Responsive Services for Indigenous; African, Caribbean, Black (ACB); and Racialized Survivors of Homicide Victims” to provide up to three eligible community-agencies with a maximum funding amount of \$25,000 per project/initiative was completed in July 2021.

Funding: \$125,000

Anti-Racism Directorate

Strengthening mental health services in the justice system

The Ontario government invested \$6.48 million in 2020-2021 to strengthen mental health and addiction supports for victims, front-line workers, Indigenous families, and youth involved in the justice system. The funding allowed victim assistance organizations to hire more staff, provide safe housing and mental health services for First Nations youth and families, and help community organizations provide COVID-19 emergency services.

This investment was part of the historic \$147 million in mental health and addictions supports announced in December 2020, and will be used to:

- Hire staff and increase mental health supports for victim crisis assistance organizations offering intervention services to victims and families in the immediate aftermath of a crime
- Make it easier for community organizations to safely provide supervised access services during the pandemic for children and families impacted by mental health and/or addiction issues
- Establish safe, secure housing and mental health services for isolated First Nations youth, adults and families and at-risk young adults in Kenora, including a new Land-Based Healing and Wellness program at Black Sturgeon Lake
- Help provide COVID-19 emergency services and tailored, culturally appropriate mental health and addiction supports for youth at the London, Toronto Northwest and Toronto Downtown East justice centres.

The Black Sturgeon Lake site brings First Nations adults, youth and families together in a physically distanced environment to benefit from current and new mental health and wellness programs, including healing circles, Right to Play and youth language revitalization.

In addition, as part of the government's Roadmap to Wellness, the Ontario government invested an additional \$37 million in annual funding to significantly expand mental health services across the justice system.

This includes:

- Over \$14 million for supportive housing programs designated for justice-involved individuals. This is funding up to 524 new units across the province for individuals who are either on diversion plans from mental health court, or have been released from a provincial correctional facility. It includes \$1.03 million for up to 20 units that are affiliated with five new post-court transitional case managers. Transitional case managers are also providing support to individuals involved in the justice system with mental health and/or addictions challenges to rapidly access services, such as counselling, therapy and peer support, so that they can live safely in the community
- \$2 million for addictions/withdrawal specialists to support safe beds. This funding is providing eight communities with addiction specialists for their safe bed programs, as well as addiction specialist support for the Kenora and Toronto Downtown East Justice Centre pilots

\$4 million for enhanced addictions programming within adult correctional institutions. This funding is providing substance abuse and addictions training and resources for health care and operational staff, as well as support for the hiring of additional specialized positions

\$2 million for mental health and addictions peer support for offenders under community supervision. This funding is helping to establish partnerships with local community-based mental health and addictions service providers and Indigenous organizations

\$2.25 million for a corrections peer support program. This program offers all corrections employees (including retirees and those on leave) who are experiencing distress of any kind, with non-clinical support for personal and workplace issues

\$1.1 million for mental health and addiction supports to vulnerable and marginalized persons as part of the Ministry of the Attorney General's Justice Centres. Investments provide critical mental health and addictions supports to prevent crime, break the cycle of offending and create safer communities in Kenora, London, and Toronto's Downtown East and Northwest areas. These investments also enhance access to culturally-relevant mental health and addictions services for Indigenous and Black communities.

Ministries: Attorney General/Health

Building a modern, connected and comprehensive mental health and addictions system

Since 2019, Ontario has announced \$525 million in new annual funding for mental health and addictions services. On March 24, 2021, the province announced \$175 million in new annualized mental health and addictions investments through Budget 2021-22. These investments build on earlier investments: \$176 million in 2020 and \$174 million in 2019 to help expand access for critical mental health and addictions services, create new supports, and expand programs. This funding is part of the province's commitment to invest \$3.8 billion over 10 years. It enables Ontario's comprehensive plan, [Roadmap to wellness \(/page/roadmap-wellness-plan-build-ontarios-mental-health-and-addictions-system\)](#), to deliver high-quality care and build a modern, connected and comprehensive mental health and addictions system.

The increased funding will help address urgent gaps in care, enhance access to mental health and addictions services, create new supports and expand programs in several

priority areas, including:

- community-based services in, including services for children and youth

- mental health and justice services

- supportive housing for individuals with serious mental health and addiction challenges, and who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness

- community and residential addictions, including treatment and care for opioid addictions

- increased supports for Indigenous peoples, families, and communities and

- more hospital in-patient beds for mental health and addiction patients

Additional details on the \$175 million investment are in development and will be available once finalized. The Centre of Excellence is:

- leading the implementation Roadmap to wellness

- developing clinical, quality and service standards for mental health and addictions

- developing metrics related to the performance of the mental health and addictions system

- providing resources and support to health service providers, integrated care delivery systems, and others related to mental health and addictions.

Funding: \$174 million (2019-2020 Roadmap funding); \$176 million (2020-2021 Roadmap funding); \$175 million (2021-2022 Roadmap funding)

Ministry: Health

Expanding mental health and addictions services

Since the start of the pandemic, Ontario has invested up to \$194 million for COVID-19 mental health and addictions emergency response. These investments are supporting service continuity by ensuring Ontarians have access to virtual and remotely delivered mental health and addictions services that they can receive safely from their homes. It also ensures that things like residential services that need to be delivered in person can continue to be offered safely.

The impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, including prolonged physical distancing, widespread financial uncertainty, and the constant stream of new information about the

virus, have made life increasingly difficult for many people and families across Ontario. This is especially so among those living with mental health and addictions challenges. The investment addressed the increasing demand for services during these difficult times.

Recognizing ongoing needs, Ontario is also investing up to \$23.6 million in fiscal 2021-2022 to support web-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which has been accessed by over 52,000 Ontarians since the province launched this program during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also investing \$2.5 million in Breaking Free Online, an innovative therapy tool that provides faster and easier access to safe and effective addictions supports.

Funding: \$194 million (COVID-19 emergency funding 2020-2021), \$26.1 million (COVID-19 funding 2021-2022)

Ministry: Health

Increasing mental health supports for Indigenous peoples, families and communities

In March 2020, Ontario released a comprehensive plan to build a fully connected mental health and addictions system, *Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System*. This plan was created after extensive engagement with experts, grassroots organizations, Indigenous partners, health care providers on the frontlines, first responders, people with lived experience, families, and caregivers.

Supported by a commitment to invest \$3.8 billion over 10 years, Roadmap to Wellness lays out a detailed plan for creating a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions service system offering Ontarians high-quality services and supports, where and when they need them.

In 2020-21, the government allocated \$12.8 million for Indigenous mental health and addictions services. Funding flowing to a range of services delivered across government, including:

- \$6.875 million to increase the availability of needs-based services for young Indigenous people in the youth justice system who have complex mental health and substance use needs. This funding will also support recruitment of two liaisons to help Indigenous-led organizations better address the complex needs of Indigenous survivors of human trafficking

\$1.4 million to enhance community mental health and addictions services and programs in Indigenous-governed primary care teams

\$1.25 million to expand supports for Indigenous students and their families, including hiring Indigenous Graduation Coaches, development of a strength-based initiative for Indigenous women and girls who have experienced or witnessed violence, and implementing the Trauma-Informed Schools model across the education system

\$1.375 million annually over 10 years to support the creation and implementation of 11 new Social Emergency Manager positions in Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and Grand Council Treaty #3 (GCT#3) First Nation communities. These new positions will build capacity around social emergency prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts in remote First Nations communities.

\$1 million for the expansion of a child and adolescent psychiatry program based in Thunder Bay, with satellite service locations across Northwestern Ontario

\$900,000 to support additional Indigenous focused mental health and addictions services and programs related to community safety and education

In 2019-20, the government delivered the first tranche of dedicated Indigenous mental health and addictions funding — over \$12 million. These investments were led by MOH, MCCSS, and EDU in partnership with IAO and went to a range of initiatives, including:

Over \$7.8 million for new and expanded on-the-ground Indigenous Mental Health and Addictions Services, including mental health and addictions programming, two additional Indigenous-led treatment and healing centres, traditional healing, continuing social crisis responses, and patient navigators in the North to support vulnerable communities.

Over \$1.6 million for training, development, and support for frontline mental health workers, including specialized training, therapeutic supports and self-care for frontline community-based workers, and trauma-informed training for education system leaders to better support Indigenous students.

Over \$3.2 million for critical system supports to improve client journeys and prevent social emergencies, including Indigenous Mental Health and Addictions System Coordinators, and supports for youth including additional youth-focused outreach workers.

Additional details on the dedicated Indigenous mental health and addictions investments in 2021-2022 are in development and will be made available once finalized.

Funding: \$12.8 million for 2020-2021; over \$12 million for 2019-2020

Ministry: Health

Enhancing health and safety for students and staff

The governments of Canada and Ontario provided \$656.5 million in funding for critical infrastructure upgrades to protect students and staff from COVID-19 in Ontario's schools. The majority of funding will support ventilation projects that improve air quality in classrooms across the province. Projects include HVAC renovations to improve air quality, installing water bottle refilling stations to improve access to safe drinking water, investing in network and broadband infrastructure to support remote learning, and space reconfigurations such as new walls and doors to enhance physical distancing.

The Government of Canada is investing \$525.2 million towards these projects through the COVID-19 Resilience stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The Government of Ontario is contributing more than \$131.3 million to the projects, building on infrastructure investments made since 2019.

In addition, 30 Indigenous education projects have been approved for Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program funding, including 27 "brick and mortar" Indigenous education projects (total of \$35.7 million) and three broadband projects to provide student connectivity for up to 55 First Nations in northern Ontario (total of \$14 million). The Government of Canada is investing \$39.8 million towards these projects through the COVID-19 Resilience stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure program, and the Government of Ontario is contributing more than \$9.9 million to the projects.

Ministry: Education

Supporting community efforts

Training correctional officers for community placement

Cultural sensitivity is vital for workers in the justice system. Over 250 new correctional officers and 14 probation and parole officers joined the frontlines last year, after receiving comprehensive training to ensure they can make critical contributions to the communities they serve.

Probation and parole officer graduates completed five weeks of extensive training, both virtually and in-person at Ontario's Correctional Services Recruitment and Training Centre. The training included learning about assessment and case plans, motivational interviewing, report writing, enforcement, and managing specialized cases.

The correctional officer training program was held virtually and in-person, with a focus on anti-Black racism, Indigenous cultural training and inmate management techniques. The training included enhanced communication and de-escalation skills.

The new correctional officers are part of the government's commitment to invest more than \$500 million over five years to transform adult correctional services and improve safety by hiring over 500 new correctional workers and modernizing outdated infrastructure.

Ministry: Solicitor General

Supporting local community projects through the Youth Opportunities Fund

The Ontario government is supporting 36 youth and community-led grassroots projects across the province with an investment of more than \$13 million through the Youth Opportunities Fund, a grant program administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The projects provide supports that help children, youth and families develop new skills, overcome barriers, and strengthen relationships within their communities. The Youth Opportunities Fund forms partnerships with youth and local leaders who are creating new opportunities for young people and families.

Some examples of projects receiving funding this year include:

Anishinabek Employment & Training Services, supporting Indigenous youth in Northwestern Ontario to improve educational outcomes and make transitions to employment

BLKGURL__, providing creative and engaging programming to build strong community and cultural connections for Black gender-marginalized and queer youth in Ottawa

Canadian Somali Mothers Association, providing workshops, coaching, referrals and networking opportunities to help Somali mothers in Ottawa navigate and access essential services

Canadian and African Women Aid Program, providing coding and programming training workshops to expand IT career opportunities for young Black parents, guardians and caregivers in Brampton

Kamalayan Konsconsciousness, providing workshops, mentorship and seminars for Filipino and Filipina youth in Toronto to address the impacts of racism and other issues

Ministry: Children, Community and Social Services

Combating Anti-Indigenous racism in the justice sector

The Anti-Racism Directorate provided funding of \$74,663 through a collaboration with the Ministry of the Attorney General's Indigenous Justice Division (IJD). This helps address systemic barriers faced by Indigenous peoples within the justice sector and enhances efforts for culturally responsive community reintegration.

Funding: \$74,663

Ministry: Anti-Racism Directorate (Citizenship and Multiculturalism)

Combating Anti-Black racism in the justice sector

In February 2021, the Anti-Racism Directorate provided \$200,000 of funding to the Peel Regional Police for the Youth engagement and Anti-Racism initiative (YEARI). This will support six individual projects to fight discrimination against Black, Indigenous and racialized populations, by promoting transparency and enhancing community trust in policing. This is in support of the agreement between the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) and Peel Regional Police (PRP) to develop strategies to end systemic racism. It includes remedies aimed at ending discrimination by promoting transparency and enhancing the community's trust in policing throughout Peel Region. The legally binding remedies proposed by the OHRC are built on the seven key principles identified in its Policy on Eliminating Racial Profiling in Law Enforcement. The Peel Regional Police have since established a Youth Engagement Steering Committee to guide and inform the police on positive engagement programming and conduct Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Training for Peel Regional Police members.

The ARD also provided \$60,000 in March 2021 to the Durham Regional Police Service to fund the Youth advisory committee (YAC) to develop measures to address systemic racial barriers within the service. The YAC worked with the Durham Regional Police Service to

develop a monthly Speakers Series, which began September 2021, providing members the opportunity to listen and learn from speakers on topics directly related to diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and discrimination awareness. The Durham Regional Police Service also hired two part-time students from Black, Indigenous or racialized communities to engage and directly lead and supervise YAC members, provide support to the Durham Regional Police Service Equity and Inclusion (EI) Unit, and strengthen the connection with youth and the Durham Regional Police Service. The program brings people of varied backgrounds and perspectives together to facilitate collaboration and generate innovation.

Funding: \$260,000

Anti-Racism Directorate

Next steps

The Ontario government remains committed to creating conditions that break down systemic racial barriers and advance racial equity, where every person has equal access to opportunities, and can achieve their aspirations.

It is vital that we acknowledge that some populations in Ontario — including the Indigenous, Black, Muslim, Asian, and Jewish communities — have been experiencing systemic racism and racially-motivated hate, leading to social, economic, and health disparities. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed existing inequities, revealing a disproportionate impact on Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities, while contributing to a pronounced spike in Anti-Asian racism.

The ongoing tragedy of residential schools, including the continued revelations of unmarked mass graves of Indigenous children, other devastating colonial policies, and current systemic race barriers, continue to deeply impact First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Ontario, perpetuating social and economic disparities. Ontario is committed to deepening and strengthening relations with these communities and organizations. We will collaborate with Indigenous partners and continue to seek input in addressing anti-Indigenous racism.

As part of its role for leading strategic initiatives and collaborating across government to eliminate systemic racism and advance racial equity in Ontario, the ARD is developing a framework to measure, track and monitor progress towards a more racially equitable

Ontario Public Service. This process involves partnering and collaborating with ministry policy leads, sector experts and leaders in racialized communities, to identify appropriate targets and indicators that can be used to assess progress in reducing systemic racial barriers and promote racial equity for all Ontarians. This will support the government to be accountable and transparent in developing and reporting on the policies, programs, services and practices that improve access to and outcomes for Indigenous, Black, and broadly racialized populations.

For all of these reasons, Ontario reaffirms its commitment to actively respond to the needs of all communities, and address racism, hate, and discrimination in all its forms.

Through the leadership of the Anti-Racism Directorate, we will continue to collaborate with Indigenous, Black, Asian and other racialized communities and leaders, ministry partners, and PSOs. This will ensure we remain relevant and responsive, and deliver on an ongoing-plan of action.

Updated: September 24, 2021

Published: September 15, 2021

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