

News Release

For Immediate Release

Minister Ng announces the launch of the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund

May 31, 2021 – Ottawa, Ontario

Black Canadian business owners and entrepreneurs make important contributions to the Canadian economy, yet they continue to face systemic barriers in starting and growing their businesses. This has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Canada is working to address these long-standing, systemic barriers with its first-ever [Black Entrepreneurship Program](#).

Today, the Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, and Greg Fergus, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government and Chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus, announced that the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund is now accepting loan applications.

They were joined by Rachel Bendayan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade and Member of Parliament for Outremont; Marci Ien, Member of Parliament for Toronto Centre; Emmanuel Dubourg, Member of Parliament for Bourassa; Tiffany Callender, CEO of the [Federation of African Canadian Economics](#) (FACE); Michael Denham, President and CEO of the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC); Christine Bergeron, President and CEO of Vancity; and Robert Paterson, President and CEO of Alterna Savings. Also present at the announcement were leaders from Black-led business organizations from across Canada and senior executives from committed financial institutions.

The Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund has been co-developed by the government in partnership with FACE as the loan fund administrator. Today, Minister Ng announced that BDC, [Alterna Savings](#) and Vancity will be the first partner financial institutions in the initial launch.

The loan fund is now a \$291.3-million investment, with a \$33.3-million investment from the Government of Canada, a \$130-million commitment from BDC, and a \$128-million joint commitment from the Royal Bank of Canada, BMO Financial Group, Scotiabank, CIBC, the National Bank of Canada, TD Bank, Vancity and Alterna Savings. FACE and the Government of Canada look forward to partnering with additional financial institutions to deliver the loan fund in the coming months.

Minister Ng also announced the launch of a pilot microloan program for Black entrepreneurs and business owners in British Columbia and Ontario seeking microloans between \$10,000 and \$25,000. The pilot, delivered by FACE in partnership with credit unions Vancity and [Alterna Savings](#), will help address a critical gap in the marketplace for Black businesses that need smaller financial support to start up and grow. The Government of Canada and FACE look forward to welcoming more financial institutions as partners to expand the pilot across Canada.

The Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund seeks to address the specific systemic barriers Black business owners have too often faced when seeking financing. It also demonstrates the government's commitment to addressing these barriers with long-term solutions by co-developing programs to better support Black entrepreneurs on their road to success.

The loan fund provides financing of up to \$250,000 for Black business owners and entrepreneurs so they can grow their businesses and succeed now and into the future. Eligible businesses must be majority owned by a Black Canadian and may include start-ups and existing for-profit small businesses in Canada, including sole proprietorships, social enterprises, partnerships or co-operatives. Businesses must have a business number, a business plan, and financial statements or projects for start-ups. For more information on the loan fund criteria, please see our frequently asked questions and reach out to FACE with questions.

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As part of the announcement, Minister Ng also shared that successful applicants to the Black Entrepreneurship National Ecosystem Fund would be announced across Canada in the coming weeks.

Quotes

“The opening of the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund is a historic achievement to support Black business owners and entrepreneurs so they can start up, scale up and grow across Canada and around the world. As a critical piece of Canada’s first-ever Black Entrepreneurship Program, the loan fund helps reduce barriers Black business owners and entrepreneurs face in accessing financing. Our government is proud to work with FACE and other Black community leaders to continue to address systemic racism against Black Canadians.”

– The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade

“It is an important day for Canadian entrepreneurs of African descent. Starting today, thanks to support from the Government of Canada and different financial institutions, the true value of Black entrepreneurship is finally being recognized. We are optimistic about the future of our entrepreneurs, and we are eager to accompany them as they achieve their business goals. This is a historic opportunity to become a sustainable part of the Canadian economic fabric, and we know that Black entrepreneurs are up to the task!”

– Tiffany Callender, CEO, Federation of African Canadian Economics (FACE)

“Alterna Savings is proud to partner on the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, and we are committed to joining with our peers to change the experience for the Black community when it comes to accessing capital and building a business. At Alterna, we have a deep understanding of community loan funds through our 20 years leading our Community Microfinance Program, and credit unions have a long history in Canada of supporting underserved entrepreneurs, helping them become economically and socially empowered.”

– Robert Paterson, President and CEO, Alterna Savings

“Serving Canadians as a financial institution is a privilege, and one that entails a great deal of social responsibility. Entrepreneurship can offer great mobility and prosperity, but systemic inequality has meant that this opportunity is not equally available to all Canadians. This program is an important step in addressing systemic racism faced by Black business owners and entrepreneurs, and Vancity is proud to work with FACE and looks forward to supporting Black entrepreneurs with much-needed microloans.”

– Christine Bergeron, President and CEO, Vancity

“As the bank for Canadian entrepreneurs, we recognize the valuable contribution of Black entrepreneurs to our economy and we are here to help them succeed. Over the past year, we have made it a priority to listen, learn and take action to support Black business owners, including signing the BlackNorth CEO Pledge and partnering with several organizations. Today, we are proud to extend our commitment through the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund.”

– Michael Denham, President and CEO, BDC

Quick facts

- FACE founders collectively have more than 35 years of experience serving Black Canadian business communities and will deliver the loan fund alongside participating financial institutions to ensure that it meets the needs of Black Canadian business owners and entrepreneurs from coast to coast to coast. FACE is a coalition that consists of several prominent Black business and community organizations:
 - [Africa Centre](#)
 - [Black Business and Professional Association](#)
 - [Black Business Initiative](#)
 - [Côte-des-Neiges Black Community Association](#)
 - [Groupe 3737](#)

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