



2021 Year in Review

Thank you for being a Black Opportunity Fund supporter. 2021 has been a year like no other. With your help, we have begun the hard work to dismantle anti-Black racism in Canada by building a sustainable pool of capital to support Canada's Black communities. Here's a look back at all we've achieved together this year.

Our mandate

To achieve our goal of a sustainable pool of capital to support Canada's Black communities we are:

- Facilitating access to capital for Black-led businesses to drive economic empowerment throughout the community.
- Allocating resources to Black-led community organizations leading initiatives that impact the quality of life in the Black community.

January 2021 Education Town Hall



Education in Canada:
Black Parents' / Caregivers' Experience

Date: January 30, 2021

Black Parents'/Caregivers' Experience was an interactive and stimulating town hall session designed to provide parents and caregivers of Black children, the opportunity to discuss their experiences within the Canadian education system, and to generate solutions.

The discussion addressed the gifts and challenges of Black learners, the programs needed from the community to sustain and serve Black learners, and how parents/caregivers could engage and have a voice within the education to advance the success of their Black learners.

March 2021 Craig Wellington appointed executive director

Friday, December 10, 2021

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The Caribbean Camera Focused... On Your News

COVID mystery in Africa

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Craig Wellington appointed executive director of Black Opportunity Fund

By The Caribbean Camera Inc. on March 26, 2021

Jamaica-born community organizer Craig Wellington has been appointed executive director of Black Opportunity Fund (BOF), a partnership comprising “businesses, philanthropists, foundations and the Black community.”

Wellington is a member of the Mississauga Mayor’s Black Caucus, and an advisory board member of the Black Community Action Network (BCAN) of Peel Region.

He is also a former member of the Toronto Chief of Police’s Black Community Consultative Committee.

A news release from the BOF notes that “Craig brings his vision and leadership to the organization

The Board of Directors started off the year strong by appointing Craig Wellington Executive Director of the Black Opportunity Fund.

Craig has brought scores of vision and leadership to the organization and has continued to grow the BOF’s investment fund and managed the establishment of the first set of Black Opportunity Fund grants and low-interest loans.

He was joined by the 19-member inaugural Board of Directors. [Click here to get more acquainted with BOF's board and the inaugural members.](#)

March 2021 Vaccine Confidence Town Hall and July 2021 Vaccine Hesitancy Research



ENG/FR



COVID-19 and the Black community:
Answering questions about COVID vaccines

Date: March 13, 2021

In March of 2021 Black Opportunity Fund held a Vaccine Confidence Townhall in partnership with the Black North Initiative, Black physicians of Ontario, and a number of organizations across Canada, to have prominent Black Virologists and other health experts dispel widespread myths about COVID-19 vaccines, and answer audience questions.

Following the event, the Black Opportunity Fund [issued a joint statement](#) with four Black health and medical organizations highlighting the issue of COVID-19 vaccine distrust within Black communities to the Premier of Ontario. The statement provided recommendations for public health institutions, Governments, researchers, and Black communities to ensure an equitable response rather than the historical norm.

The Fund followed up on this event by conducting a research study in partnership with Innovative Research Group (INNOVATIVE) and the African Canadian Civic Engagement Council (ACCEC) to quantitatively explore and explain the lagging vaccination rates in Black Canadian populations. **At the time of the survey, a 20-point gap existed among those who received at least one vaccine between White Canadians (65%) and Black Canadians (45%).**

The Black Opportunity Fund also participated in the Quebec Vaccine Confidence Project producing three videos featuring health professionals and community influencers to help reduce vaccine hesitancy among Black youth in Quebec. You can watch the first two of those videos [here](#) and [here](#).

The actions of BOF exposed how generations of exclusion, marginalization, criminalization and

discrimination have created an overall distrust of Canadian institutions of power, including the medical system.

May 2021 Survey of Black-led Canadian businesses



A national survey of over 300 Black Canadian entrepreneurs supported by the Black Opportunity Fund found the top challenge to Black entrepreneurship was access to funding, financing, starting capital and sales.

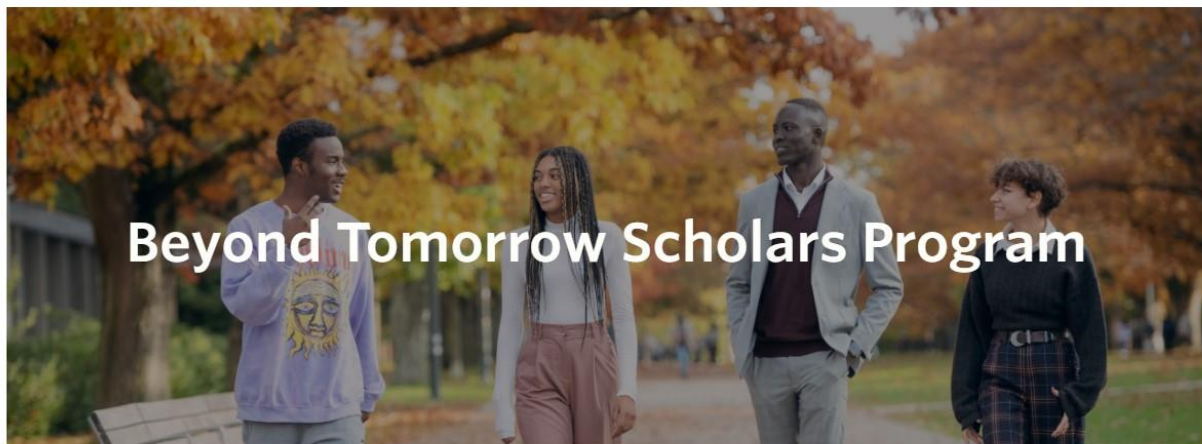
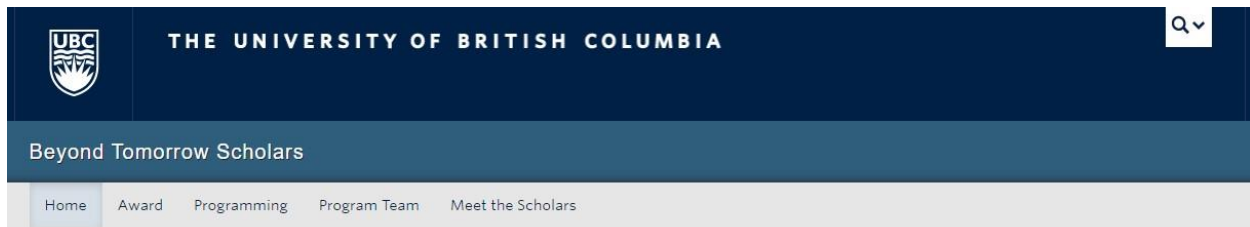
75% of Black entrepreneurs say that if they needed to find \$10,000 to support their business, it would be difficult for them to do so. The survey also found the following:

- **Systemic racism impacts most Black entrepreneurs:** 76% of Black entrepreneurs said their race makes it harder to succeed as an entrepreneur.
- **Access to capital is the greatest barrier for Black entrepreneurs:** 75% say that if they needed to find \$10,000 to support their business, it would be difficult.
- **Low trust in banks:** Only 19% of respondents said they trust banks to do what is right for them and their community.
- **Networks and support are critical to supporting Black entrepreneurs:** A majority of Black entrepreneurs said they do not know how to access supports or advice when challenges arise in their business.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted the Black business community and the Black

Opportunity Fund team recognized the importance of responding to urgent community needs while taking a long-term approach in building pathways to greater business sustainability.

June 2021 University of British Columbia Beyond Tomorrow Scholars Program



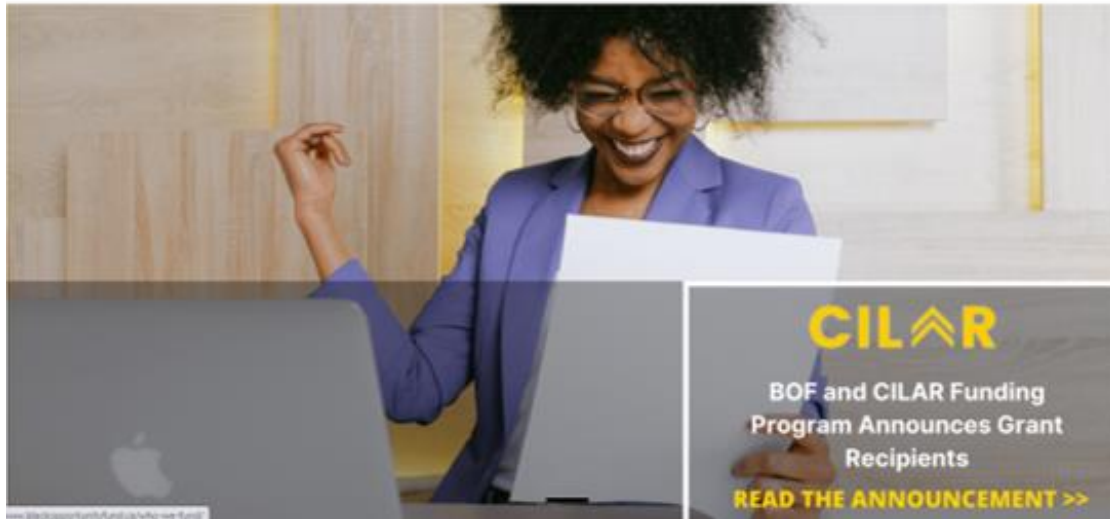
The Beyond Tomorrow Scholars Program will be launched for Black Canadian Scholars at both the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses and welcomes its first cohort in September 2021.

In June, the Black Opportunity Fund and the University of British Columbia (UBC) announced a partnership that is currently empower Black Canadian students by helping them achieve their educational goals and career aspirations.

This new and comprehensive partnership will provide opportunities for Black students at UBC, including mentoring, internships, leadership conferences and networking opportunities, as well as transition support to move from university to permanent employment.

This is first partnership of its kind at a Canadian university, one that Black Opportunity Fund and UBC hope to build into a framework that can be adopted by other institutions.

July 2021 CILAR Grant Program



The Coalition of Innovation Leaders Against Racism (CILAR), in partnership with Black Opportunity Fund, developed a Grant program for Black-led businesses. The grant established a sustainable pathway to support economic and social empowerment for Black-led businesses in Canada through \$2,500 to \$10,000 grants per business, with the goal to provide capital resources for as many Black-led businesses as possible.

A collaboration was formed with [‘Pitch Better’](#) to address data gaps for Black-led/Black-serving organizations in Canada. Since 2019, Pitch Better has offered support to over 700 Canadian companies and helped almost 10% of the Black community access funding.

The Black Opportunity Fund received and adjudicated several received by the program, most of whom had never before applied for a grant, and you can view the 96 successful grant recipients [here](#). We also highlighted [Kemet Group](#) on our LinkedIn ([view that post here](#)) which is looking to solve drug shortages in low-resource areas with prefabricated manufacturing facilities.

September 2021 National Black Communities Arts & Culture Round Table Talk

Black Opportunity Fund

NATIONAL BLACK COMMUNITIES ARTS & CULTURE ROUND TABLE TALK

Thursday,
September 23rd, 2021
at 7pm -8:30pm EST

Gaëtane Verna
Director of The Power Plant
Contemporary Art Gallery

Delvina Bernard
Founding member Black Arts
Network of Nova Scotia; Chair,
Black Music Committee, ECMA;
EDIA Advisor Mount Saint
Vincent University

Stephanie Allen
Associate Vice President of
Strategic Business Operations
& Performance for BC Housing
and a founding board member
of Hogan's Alley Society

Belinda Uwase
Curator and Leader of
YEGTheComeUp's Arts
& Cultural Task force.

Dominique Fontaine
Curator & Founder of aPOSteRIORI

BAND **Colliers**

The Black Opportunity Fund in partnership with the BAND Gallery and Cultural Centre, and Colliers, hosted an exciting roundtable exploring the Black perspective on Canada's Arts and Culture sectors.

The discussion demonstrated that while artists from Black and other equity seeking groups are enjoying greater representation, Black and racialized people are not the ones who predominantly sell and buy their work or control the power dynamic in the arts & culture eco-system.

This roundtable provided the opportunity to understand the Black arts & culture eco-system and explore the challenges and opportunities Black artists, administrators and cultural workers across Canada are facing.

December 2021 Criminal Justice Town Hall

Black Opportunity Fund

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TOWNHALL

THE BLACK OPPORTUNITY FUND PRESENTS

**A Public Health Approach to
Violence Prevention**

The Fund hosted a talk which highlighted how society's response to violent crime is generally predicated on a reactive criminal justice approach, meaning criminal justice efforts primarily take effect when the risk of violence has been identified or when violence has already occurred.

Panelists spoke to how the public health approach emphasizes prevention over reaction and the reduction of "risk factors" over the incapacitation of criminal offenders.

This event focused on two key criminal justice issues from a public health perspective: Gun Violence and Gang Violence.

The public health perspective recognizes that violence is the result of a complex causal system and explores the social determinants of violence in the same way that socio-economic factors create disparate negative outcomes in healthcare for Black and racialized communities.

Thank you to all our supporters this year!



The Black Opportunity Fund has set the ambitious goal of raising \$1.5 billion in 10 years – to fund Black-led initiatives. The Fund has been taking a new approach by leveraging partnerships between government, Black communities, corporations, philanthropic foundations and individuals to drive a historic transformation of Canada's Black communities.

Recently, the Black Opportunity Fund has recently announced the following partnerships:

- [\\$6.25 million with the National Bank](#) – February 26, 2021
- [\\$10 million with TD Bank Group](#) – September 16, 2021

The Black Opportunity fund would also like to thank the contributions of several corporations and the incredible support from individual members of the Black community across Canada.

Thank you for making 2021 an awesome year. We look forward to making 2022 an even bigger year of fighting anti-Black racism in Canada.