INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

EXPLORING THE BARRIERS FACING BLACK ENTREPRENEURS IN CANADA

David Coletto, Chief Executive, Abacus Data
Colin Deacon, Senator for Nova Scotia, Senate of Canada
Alfred Burgesson, Project Lead

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The COVID-19 pandemic has unearthed a reckoning in our society. As we seek to rebuild, it is imperative that we make equity a central consideration in our policy making.

Black communities in Canada have always possessed a strong spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation. We must fuel this energy, nurture and build on this strong spirit or Canada will not only leave behind some of its most talented citizens, but severely limit its ability to compete globally.

This study is extremely timely as it sheds light on our shortcomings as a society during this period of intense debate about our economic future. Black Canadians can, and should play a central role in rebuilding our economy, creating new jobs and stimulating innovation. These findings will provide our political leaders, policy makers and public administrators with clear paths towards the goal of unlocking the entrepreneurial potential of Black Canadians.

It is my hope and expectation that this study will have a meaningful impact for years to come. On behalf of the African Canadian Senate Group, I am proud to support this study and I thank Senator Deacon, Mr. Burgesson and Mr. Coletto for their hard work on behalf of all Canadians.

The Honourable Rosemary Moodie, Chair of the African Canadian Senate Group
Senator, Ont. MD. MBBS MBA MPA FRCP
Entrepreneurs are natural problem solvers. They take risks to create innovative solutions. They are adaptable, resilient, and ever optimistic. They create opportunities, jobs and prosperity in communities across the globe.

Prior to being appointed to the Senate, I was an entrepreneur. I have a good sense of how tough it is to turn an idea into a successful business. However, until far too recently, I never appreciated just how much my being White and male increased my chance of success throughout my career.

The more our office has learned about the ways systemic racism manifests itself in the barriers facing racialized Canadians, the more determined we are to understand the intersection of racism and entrepreneurship. Our intention is to identify specific and actionable legislation and policy options that will promote inclusive entrepreneurship. We hope that this study is one small step toward better enabling every Canadian who wants to solve an important problem, to have a realistic chance of doing so by becoming an entrepreneur.

I am ever grateful to my colleagues in the African Canadian Senate Group, our survey partners who lead exemplary Black business groups, and countless Black entrepreneurs across the country who have helped us to learn and continue to challenge us.

Canada cannot afford the personal, social and economic loss caused by systemic racism. The results of this survey point to some important lessons learned that, if directly addressed, will better empower Black entrepreneurs across Canada.

The Honourable Colin Deacon
Senator, Nova Scotia
TIFFANY CALLENDER
FACE Coalition

Canada's economic development is contingent on our ability to ensure full and active participation of all our talents and all our skill sets, which includes those among Canadian entrepreneurs of African descent.

Unfortunately, there are still major obstacles that undermine the growth and performance of Black entrepreneurs in Canada. Today, more than ever, we need to work to eliminate those barriers and ensure that equality before the law becomes equality in reality.
A new survey of over 300 Black entrepreneurs in Canada finds that systemic racism and widespread barriers face Black Canadians who are looking to start and grow businesses.

Commissioned by the African Canadian Senate Group and Nova Scotia Independent Senator Colin Deacon, the survey conducted by Abacus Data finds that most Black entrepreneurs face real challenges accessing capital, building supportive networks, and developing the skills needed to succeed in business.

The study sought to understand the difference between empowered and unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

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**Systemic racism impacts most Black entrepreneurs:** 76% of Black entrepreneurs surveyed said their race makes it harder to succeed as an entrepreneur.

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**Access to capital is the greatest barrier for Black entrepreneurs:** When we ask Black entrepreneurs what they say their top three challenges they experienced in their journey as an entrepreneur, access to funding, financing, capital or sales was the top stated challenge by a long shot. 75% say that if they needed to find $10,000 to support their business, it would be difficult for them to do so.

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**Networks and support are critical to empowering Black entrepreneurs:** A majority of Black entrepreneurs said they do not know how to access supports or advice when challenges arise in their business. This is one of the biggest gaps between what the report describes as empowered and unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

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**Many Black entrepreneurs are unable to pay themselves:** 44% report not being able to pay themselves from their business. This figure rises to 50% among unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

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**Low trust in banks is widespread:** Only 19% of respondents said they trust banks to do what is right for them and their community. Unempowered Black entrepreneurs were less likely to trust banks than empowered Black entrepreneurs.

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**Representation and relationships matter:** Those who have a relationship with someone at a bank or another financial institution are much more likely to say they trust their bank.

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**Black-led business organizations are important:** In total, 45% of Black entrepreneurs we surveyed said that Black-led organizations have been either essential or very important to their business, with another 25% describing them as somewhat important.

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**Despite systemic racism, weak networks, and challenges accessing capital, Black entrepreneurs are optimistic about their businesses:** 87% of Black entrepreneurs report that they are either very or somewhat optimistic about the future of their business. This is true of 92% of empowered experienced entrepreneurs, 93% of empowered new entrepreneurs, and 83% of those we classify as unempowered Black entrepreneurs.
The findings in Inclusive Entrepreneurship: Exploring the Barriers Facing Black Entrepreneurs in Canada highlight how systemic anti-Black racism is limiting Black entrepreneurs and preventing them from reaching their business goals. If we want Black entrepreneurs to succeed, we must take bold action and dismantle corporate structures that uphold anti-Black systemic racism and that prevent Black entrepreneurs from accessing capital and diminish their trust in financial institutions.

In addition, a key insight in the Inclusive Entrepreneurship report points to the need to recognize and maximize the important role that Black-led business organizations - such as the BlackNorth Initiative - can play in supporting and empowering Black entrepreneurs.
What We Heard from Black-led Business Organizations and Leaders

To better inform the development of the survey, we conducted about a dozen interviews with leaders of Black-led business organizations across Canada, as well as some prominent Black entrepreneurs. Here’s a summary of what we heard from the community:

From the start of their journey, Black entrepreneurs were already at a disadvantage, and they continue to experience barriers and lack of support throughout. Ryan Knight of the Afro Caribbean Business Network described this disadvantage as being constantly on defence:

“The difference is between being on defence and offence. In the Black community, I see a lot of entrepreneurs on defence. They are just trying to get to the end of the week, they’re just trying to figure out how to survive. Whereas my white colleagues are on pure offence.”

How Black entrepreneurs fund their business and the challenge in accessing capital was raised consistently in our interviews. In fact, the consensus was that access to capital is the most significant barrier facing Black entrepreneurs in Canada. Most Black entrepreneurs cannot count on family wealth or a network of potential investors, meaning they rely heavily on bootstrapping, credit cards, and government funding to finance their businesses.

“There’s a huge gap between where the Black entrepreneurs are and where the mainstream entrepreneurs are. It is a systemic pandemic around race and addressing lack of access to capital, which is the number one challenge that Black entrepreneurs face.”
- Nadine Spencer, Black Business & Professional Association

We also heard about low trust between Black entrepreneurs and institutions including banks, governments, and community organizations. Negative encounters with banks and financial institutions only serve to reinforce perceptions that they are not open, inclusive, and working in the best interests of Black entrepreneurs. Many called for banks and financial institutions to break this cycle of distrust by creating a fair and transparent environment for Black entrepreneurs in Canada. Building deep and strong relationships with individuals at financial institutions, in community organizations, and with governments are generally expected to lead to better outcomes.
PART 1

WHAT WE HEARD FROM BLACK-LED BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS

“Build a stronger relationship with the banks. Provide more access to capital. Provide more access to funding programs that are geared to economic traction, improvement and infrastructure.” – Isaac (Dream Maker Foundation) & Dahabo (Black North Initiative)

We were also reminded that the Black community in Canada is not a homogenous group – there is not a one-stop solution for the barriers and struggle felt by Black entrepreneurs. Intersectionality – race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities – need to be understood and reflected in programs and services as well as public policy. Black women entrepreneurs, for example, experience the compounded effects of racism and sexism that impact their ability to start and grow a business.

“It’s important to focus on the Black business community, but also to know that the community is not homogeneous. There are several different layers there. You can go through ethnicities and the differences between African and Caribbean diasporas, Black Canadians in the Maritimes, migrant experiences, and experiences of Black Canadians.” – Stephanie Dei, Diversity Institute, Ryerson University

This also extends to how programs and information are designed. We heard that those programs and information available are not targeting Black entrepreneurs. Either it’s not designed with them in mind or it isn’t reaching them.

The importance of mentorship, advisors and supporters was raised consistently by those we interviewed.

“If you are not in the right networks, right groups, or don’t have the right mentors, you are not going to move up…” – Andria Barrett, The Diversity Agency

This is especially true of Black-led organizations. Building capacity, connecting Black entrepreneurs with other Black entrepreneurs and building support networks are critical. The value of Black-led organizations as conduits to engage Black entrepreneurs was clear.
NADINE SPENCER
Black Business and Professional Association

This study shows to a very large extent the unique challenges that Black entrepreneurs continue to face, challenges that were exacerbated by COVID-19. The pandemic reinforced the inequities our entrepreneurs and businesses continue to face.

Some challenges and points not identified or to be explored further in the study include:

- The impact that the school system has on Black students, and its ability to help them network and their feeling of a lack of inclusiveness in the Canadian landscape. That feeling of acceptance, ownership and belonging by Black students goes a long way towards making for a successful citizen and by extension a successful business person.

- Better insights on the business represented in the Other category of the Business Profile on page 14. While the breakdown is quite detailed and exhaustive, we find Other at 23% to be a very high number.

- That amongst the entrepreneurs who have made it, majority are suppliers to the Black community, who use their products.

- The importance of Black entrepreneurs defying social expectations, owning their accomplishments, and being taken seriously.

At the Black Business and Professional Association, we are encouraged and believe this is a very good start to implementing positive change for the Black community. Many of the roadblocks and challenges identified on pages 27 & 45 are the issues we initially recognized and identified that gave rise the BBPA BAIDS program. The BAIDS program is expected to help our Black entrepreneurs and businesses succeed in a manner never seen before and will create positive financial and social impact in our community, for generations to come.
To better understand the experience faced by Black entrepreneurs in Canada and to validate the hypotheses we heard from the Black business leaders and organizations we consulted, we conducted a national survey of Black entrepreneurs. This study was conducted by Abacus Data, and commissioned by Senator Colin Deacon, with the support of the African Canadian Senate Group. Senators Wanda Thomas Bernard, Mobina Jaffer, Marie-Françoise Mégie, Rosemary Moodie and Mohamed Raoula, and with project leadership from Alfred Burgesson.

Specifically, the survey sought to answer several questions:

1. **What is the experience of Black entrepreneurs as they work to build their business and succeed?**

2. **What might explain why some Black entrepreneurs are able to succeed and achieve their goals while others struggle to do so?**

3. **What impact does systemic racism play in preventing Black entrepreneurs from excelling in business and entrepreneurship?**

4. **What role does having access to a support network, trusted relationships at financial institutions, and access to other resources have on the empowerment of Black entrepreneurs?**

To help answer these questions, we designed a comparative study that seeks to identify differences between Black entrepreneurs we classify as “empowered” and those classified as “unempowered.”
SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENT PROFILE

To explore these questions in more detail, a survey of Black business owners and entrepreneurs was conducted from March 23rd to April 15th, 2021. A total of 342 Black business owners from across Canada completed our survey.

Respondents were recruited through several methods. First, invitations were sent out by Black-led business organizations, who partnered with our team throughout the survey design and reporting phases, to Black entrepreneurs in their networks. Second, links to the survey were shared on social media, where Black entrepreneurs and business owners were asked to complete the survey. Finally, at the end of the survey, we encouraged respondents to share the survey with others in their own networks.

While it is difficult to determine whether our sample is representative of the Black business community, the variation in demographic, regional, and experiential characteristics allows us to understand the difference between those Black entrepreneurs who are empowered and those who are unempowered. Throughout this report we compare both the attitudes and experiences of what we define as empowerment, as having a sense of empowerment versus unempowered Black entrepreneurs in Canada.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 44</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 59</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Canadian</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carribean Canadian</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Canada</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or less</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/Apprentices</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENT PROFILE

As the business profile below highlights, the businesses owned by the Black entrepreneurs we surveyed come from a diverse range of sectors with most from small businesses earning less than $100,000 a year in revenue.

BUSINESS PROFILE

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

- None: 3%
- 1: 68%
- 2: 23%
- 3 or more: 6%

YEARS IN OPERATION

- 0 to 2 years: 45%
- 2 to 5 years: 30%
- 6 to 10 years: 11%
- 11+ years: 14%

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

- None: 47%
- 1 to 3: 39%
- 4 to 10: 8%
- 11 to 50: 5%
- 50+: 1%

2019 REVENUE

- Under $50,000: 11%
- $50,000 to $100,000: 8%
- $100,001 to $250,000: 4%
- $250,001 to $500,000: 6%
- Over $500,000: 52%
- Not applicable/ Business did not exist: 19%

INDUSTRY

- Aesthetics, Beauty & Grooming: 8%
- Agriculture & Clean Energy: 1%
- Automotive industry: 1%
- Construction & Manufacturing: 5%
- Consulting, Education & Management: 15%
- Media Arts & Culture: 12%
- Medical & Dental: 4%
- Other: 23%
- Professional Services: 8%
- Retail Services: 11%
- Science & Technology: 6%
- Travel, Hospitality & Food: 7%
This report aligns with what we have seen on the ground and we hear from all the businesses we have been in contact with.

It is a great first step and affirms our mandate for BEBC's work and service to Black Businesses in Western Canada. The data in the report highlights:

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The need to bring Black businesses into the main business and economic ecosystem of Canada.

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The importance of collaboration in addressing the problems Black entrepreneurs continue to face in Canada. Collaboration will help us move forward faster. We appreciate and are very happy to be partners with Senator Deacon and his fantastic team on this work.
EMPOWERED VS. UNEMPowered
BLACK ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Empowerment is a critical attribute to the success of entrepreneurs. In this study we define empowerment as a concept in which an individual feels they have the skills, network, and relationships to enable them to achieve their goals and grow their business.

Empowered Black entrepreneurs know how to access supports and advice for the business challenges they encounter. They are more likely to have access to funds needed to support their business goals. They are more likely to have mastered the skills necessary to run their business. They are more likely to have confidence in their ability to respond effectively to problems that arise in their businesses. And they’re more likely to have confidence in their ability to recover from any setbacks they face.

In contrast, unempowered Black entrepreneurs do not have access to the supports and advice for business challenges. Most have very little access to the funds they need to support their business goals and are much less likely to have mastered the skills to run their business effectively. Perhaps most importantly, they are less likely to have confidence in their abilities to respond effectively to problems and to recover from setbacks.

EMPOWERED ENTREPRENEURS

- Know how to access supports/advice for business challenges.
- More likely to have access to funds needed to support business goals.
- More likely to have mastered skills to run business.
- Confidence in ability to respond effectively to problems.
- Confidence in ability to recover from setbacks.

UNEmpowered ENTREPRENEURS

- Do not know how to access supports/advice for business challenges.
- Nearly no access to funds needed to support business goals.
- Less likely to have mastered skills to run business.
- Reduced confidence in ability to respond effectively to problems & recover from setbacks.
In our sample of 342 Black entrepreneurs, about half are classified as empowered (44%) and about half are classified as unempowered (56%).

Along with comparing the views and experiences of empowered and unempowered Black entrepreneurs, this report also distinguishes between experienced empowered Black entrepreneurs and new empowered Black entrepreneurs.

Experienced empowered entrepreneurs have been in business for six years or more, while new empowered Black entrepreneurs have been in business for less than six years. This distinction is important in explaining several outcomes, including overall revenue, and plans for future growth.
DAHABO AHMED-OMER
Black North Initiative

Examining the systemic challenges Black entrepreneurs face is the first step in working across disciplines to build capacity and dismantle systemic barriers. There remains more work to do to empower Black entrepreneurs. The Black North Initiative will continue to work with our partners to break down systematic barriers caused by anti-Black racism.
## RESULTS

### Systemic Racism Impacts All Black Entrepreneurs

Regardless of whether a Black entrepreneur is empowered or not, being Black is perceived to have a big influence over whether or not an entrepreneur can achieve their goals. In our survey, three in four Black entrepreneurs believe their race has made it harder for them to succeed as an entrepreneur in Canada. This is one of the few areas where we find very little difference across the three key groups.

**To what extent, if at all, does your race impact your ability to succeed as an entrepreneur in Canada?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My race makes it <strong>Harder</strong> to succeed as an entrepreneur</th>
<th>My race has <strong>No Impact</strong> on my success as an entrepreneur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All: 76%</td>
<td>All: 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowered Experienced: 79%</td>
<td>Empowered Experienced: 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowered New: 73%</td>
<td>Empowered New: 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unempowered: 78%</td>
<td>Unempowered: 21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All: 2%</th>
<th>My race makes it <strong>Easier</strong> to succeed as an entrepreneur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowered Experienced: 2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowered New: 4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unempowered: 1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But beyond an overall feeling that their race prevents them or makes it harder for them to achieve their goals, our survey also finds that being Black has impacted experiences with some day to day activities. For example, over half of Black entrepreneurs surveyed said that a customer or client refused to do business with them because they are Black. Almost half report a supplier or vendor refusing to do business with them at least occasionally because they are Black. 45% report being denied a loan from a financial institution regularly or occasionally because of their race. And 30% report that they have either regularly or occasionally been denied a grant or funding from a government organization because they are Black.
Unempowered Black entrepreneurs are even more likely to have experienced racism in these day-to-day business operations. For example, more than half of unempowered Black entrepreneurs say that a customer or client has refused to do business with them because of their race. Half believe they have been denied a loan from a financial institution because of their race, and over one in three say that they are regularly or occasionally denied a grant or funding from a government organization because they are Black.

The extent of perceived racism in their day-to-day activities is a defining feature of being a Black entrepreneur in Canada.
Networks and Support Are Critical to Empowering Black Entrepreneurs

Like all entrepreneurs, having access to supports and advice when challenges arise can make the difference between overcoming those challenges or failing to tackle them. In our survey, the biggest difference between empowered entrepreneurs and unempowered ones is having access to support.

Overall, 45% of the Black entrepreneurs we surveyed said they know how to access supports and advice when challenges arise with their business. But the difference between those who are empowered and those who are not is quite stark. Almost all empowered Black entrepreneurs we surveyed said they know how to access these kinds of supports and advice, compared with only 6% of unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

Do you know how to access supports or advice when you run into issues or challenges with your business?

Know how to access support/advice when challenges arise...  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Who said yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Empowered Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Empowered New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unempowered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings of this report are congruent with what we have observed in our work at The Diversity Agency. As a Speakers Bureau, Diversity & Inclusion Consultants and Strategic Consultants we connect Corporations & Government with Black Entrepreneurs, Consumers & the various Black Communities.

We will continue to focus on providing solutions to close the gap between Empowered and Unempowered Black entrepreneurs through training & coaching, providing supportive networks with other entrepreneurs, and working with corporations including financial institutions on Diversity & Inclusion programs.
**What is the impact of not having access to support?**

Empowered Black entrepreneurs are 27% more likely to say that when they have a set back in their business, they are confident they can resolve it. They are also 25% more likely to say they feel that they can respond effectively when business problems occur in their business. And there is an 18% difference in feeling that they have the skills necessary to run their business, compared with unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

Empowered Black entrepreneurs, regardless of whether they are experienced or new, have a sense of control and feel that they can affectively deal with challenges and struggles as they arise in their day-to-day business operations.

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Empowered</th>
<th>Unempowered</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“When I have a setback in my business, I am confident I can recover.”</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel like I can respond effectively when problems happen in my business.”</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have mastered the skills necessary to run my business.”</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS

What is the impact of not having access to support?

Most Black entrepreneurs in Canada lack strong networks, mentors, or advisors. However, empowered entrepreneurs are far more likely to have networks that are there to support them and guide them, compared to unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

For example:

69% of empowered Black entrepreneurs have people they consider mentors who have helped them be a better entrepreneur, compared to just over half of unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

While 65% of empowered Black entrepreneurs have access to other business owners in the same industry as them, only 41% of unempowered Black entrepreneurs have the same kind of access.

59% of empowered Black entrepreneurs know other Black business owners or entrepreneurs who can provide helpful advice, compared with only 45% of unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

Most striking, while 51% of empowered Black entrepreneurs say they have advisors at a bank, credit union, or another financial institution they can trust, only 23% of unempowered Black entrepreneurs feel they have the same relationships at a financial institution.

### Have you had access to helpful advice from the following as you have built and run your business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Advice</th>
<th>Empowered</th>
<th>Unempowered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People you consider mentors who have helped you be a better entrepreneur</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other business owners in the same industry as you</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Black business owner or entrepreneurs</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals like accountants and lawyers who help you make better business decisions</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members who have experience running a business</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors at a bank, credit union or another financial institution you can trust</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, Black entrepreneurs are less likely to say they have advisors at a bank, credit union or another financial institution they can trust than any other potential source of advice they might seek. Overall, only one in three Black entrepreneurs we surveyed said they have access to advisors at a bank, credit union or another financial institution they can trust. This is far lower than supports within their own community, among other entrepreneurs, or even among professionals, such as lawyers or accountants.
This report confirms

— That addressing the specific needs of Black entrepreneurs require specific solutions. This insight forms the core of Groupe 3737’s mission.

— That although resources are available to all, access to them is not. As such, creating specific access to resources for Black entrepreneurs (For example: the Black Entrepreneurship Program) is key to their success. This is an important strategic objective of Groupe 3737.

— That utilizing and leveraging resources is just as important as accessing them. Therefore, supporting Black entrepreneurs in achieving this is essential to Groupe 3737’s operations.
# Unempowered Black Entrepreneurs Are More Likely to Face Business Challenges

Not only do unempowered Black entrepreneurs lack support or networks to help them address challenges they face, our survey also finds they are more likely to be struggling to manage their debt, pay their suppliers or vendors on time, or have customers pay them for their products or services on time. This, in turn, also impacts their ability to pay their staff, as only about half say they can do so on a regular basis.

## How would you rate your business in the following areas today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your debt level is manageable</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re able to pay your suppliers/vendors on time</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers pay for products/services on time</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can pay your staff on time</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a good business plan</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have access to other business owners, coaches/mentors to provide help &amp; support</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have access to professionals who help you manage your business</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have access to funds needed to support your business goals</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GAP: (Empowered - Unempowered)
Unempowered Black Entrepreneurs Are More Likely to Face Business Challenges

The differences between empowered and unempowered Black entrepreneurs also extends to their ability to pay themselves. Four in ten of the Black entrepreneurs we surveyed overall say they do not pay themselves, that rises to 50% among unempowered Black entrepreneurs. Empowered entrepreneurs with at least six years experience in business are far more likely to either have themselves on payroll or pay themselves through dividends or profits, than either empowered new entrepreneurs or unempowered entrepreneurs.

The key takeaway here is that Black entrepreneurs not paying themselves, even after being in business for several years, is a systemic issue, which continues to persist long after initially starting a business.

How do you pay yourself?

- I am on payroll: 18%
- I pay myself through dividends/Profits from the business: 34%
- I don’t pay myself: 44%
- Other: 4%

Empowered Experienced  Empowered New  Unempowered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>+20</th>
<th>+4</th>
<th>+4</th>
<th>+6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am on payroll</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pay myself</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t pay</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey results are instrumental in contextualizing the struggle of Black entrepreneurs with digestible data.

ACBN is grateful for this as we continue to design our programming based on what we have heard in the report from Black entrepreneurs facing multiple barriers. Moving forward, the ability to reference data such as this will aid us in creating programming designed to alleviate the barriers that Black entrepreneurs face.
**RESULTS**

**Part 2**

**Access To Capital Is The Greatest Barrier For Black Entrepreneurs**

When we ask Black entrepreneurs what they say their top three challenges they experienced in their journey as an entrepreneur, access to funding, financing, capital or sales was the top stated challenge by a long shot. Overall, three in ten said that access to capital was one of their top three challenges. This challenge was followed, not so closely, by establishing their credibility with customers, clients and suppliers, and finding new or access to customers, clients and contracts.

**What would you say are the top three challenges that you have experienced in your journey as an entrepreneur and business owner?**

1. Access to funding/Financing/Capital/Sales (31%)
2. Credibility/Access to customers/Clients/Contracts (10%)
   - Staff/Management (6%)
   - Mentorship/Coaching (6%)
   - Advertising/Marketing/Branding (6%)
   - Racism/Discrimination (5%)
   - Having a network/Connecting (5%)
   - Opportunities/Growth (5%)
   - Access to the right information/Supports (4%)
   - Time (4%)
   - Getting help/Assistance (3%)
   - Motivation/Confidence/Support (3%)
   - Business competence/Ability (3%)
   - COVID-19 (2%)
   - Other (4%)

Under 2%:
- Equipment/Technology
- Leasing a business space
- Competition
- Gender/sexual orientation

Moreover, when we ask respondents what business problems are most likely to keep them up at night, almost half report funding, capital or sales as their most pressing concern. Responding to this inability to access capital should be priority number one for policy makers and other stakeholders looking to empower and strengthen Black entrepreneurship in Canada.

The issue of gaining credibility for their products and services, and finding clients, customers and contracts resurface, again not so closely, when we ask respondents what business problems keep them up at night.
## Results

### Access To Capital Is The Greatest Barrier For Black Entrepreneurs

What business problems are most likely to keep you up at night?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Empowered Experienced</th>
<th>Empowered New</th>
<th>Unempowered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to funding/Financing/Capital/Sales</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility/Access to customers/ Clients/Contracts</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities/Growth</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business problems in general</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/Management</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising/Marketing/Branding</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism/Discrimination</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time/Too many things to do</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to the right information/Supports</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None/Not sure</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we have seen with other research done on Black entrepreneurship, our survey finds that almost all Black entrepreneurs financed their business initially through personal savings, or credit cards. Few relied on a bank loan or line of credit, a loan or gift from a family member, a loan or investment from partners, or grants or funding from the government. This experience is true whether you are an empowered experienced entrepreneur, an empowered new entrepreneur, or an unempowered Black entrepreneur. **Bootstrapping is how most Black entrepreneurs fund their company.**

### How did you first finance your business? Please select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Empowered Experienced</th>
<th>Empowered New</th>
<th>Unempowered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal savings</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit cards</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank loan/line of credit</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan or gift from a family member</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan or investment from a partner(s)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant/funding from the government</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (inherited asset, grant/funding from org)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Black Opportunity Fund is pleased to support this important survey about the experience of Black entrepreneurs in Canada. The survey’s findings are important and two especially stand out.

- The majority of Black entrepreneurs feel unempowered and that access to support and advice is a key factor in being empowered.

- Trust is important. Black-led organizations are trusted by Black entrepreneurs far more than federal or provincial governments, banks, Chambers of Commerce or economic development organizations. This shows that Black-led organizations play a critical role in empowering Black entrepreneurs.
Access To Capital Is The Greatest Barrier For Black Entrepreneurs

But a lack of access to capital extends beyond just the initial stages of the business startup, it is a challenge that all Black entrepreneurs face even today. **When asked how easy it would be to find $10,000 to support their business, nearly 8 in 10 Black entrepreneurs say it would be difficult or impossible.** More specifically, three in four Black entrepreneurs said it would be at least pretty difficult, with almost half saying it would be nearly impossible or very difficult to find that $10,000 to support their business.

Unempowered entrepreneurs are much more likely to say they would face difficulty in finding this money than empowered Black entrepreneurs. 87% say it would be either pretty difficult, very difficult, or impossible to find $10,000 to support their business, compared with 58% of empowered Black entrepreneurs who feel the same way.

If you needed to find $10,000 to support your business, how easy or difficult would it be for you to get access to that money?
RESULTS

How Comfortable Are Black Entrepreneurs Applying For Funding Or Loans?

Our survey also sought to understand how comfortable Black entrepreneurs feel when applying for loans or funding from different sources.

The survey found that, overall, most Black entrepreneurs feel at least somewhat comfortable applying for loans or funding from the federal government, their provincial government, or not-for-profit community organizations. Comfort applying for funding at a bank was lower, though two-thirds felt they were at least somewhat comfortable doing so.

Despite the rise in FinTech lenders, about half of Black entrepreneurs say they are not comfortable at all applying for funding from these kinds of sources. This presents an opportunity for FinTech companies to engage with Black entrepreneurs to build comfort and trust.

How comfortable would you be in applying for funding or a loan from any of the following sources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Completely Comfortable</th>
<th>Somewhat Comfortable</th>
<th>Not Comfortable at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The federal government or agency</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your provincial government or agency</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit community organization</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A credit union</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FinTech lender</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS

How Comfortable Are Black Entrepreneurs Applying For Funding Or Loans?

As with other areas of this survey, unempowered Black entrepreneurs were somewhat less likely to feel comfortable applying for funding across all of the organizations we tested. This is especially true when it comes to banks. While only one in four empowered entrepreneurs said they are not comfortable at all applying for funding or a loan from a bank, 40% of unempowered Black entrepreneurs felt the same way – a 13% difference. A similar gap exists between these groups when it comes to applying for funding from a credit union.

We also found important differences in comfort level when it comes to applying for funding from government. With about half of empowered Black entrepreneurs saying they would be completely comfortable applying for funding from either the federal government or their provincial government, only about one in three unempowered entrepreneurs felt the same way.

How comfortable would you be in applying for funding or a loan from any of the following sources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Empowered</th>
<th>Empowered</th>
<th>Unempowered</th>
<th>Unempowered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The federal government or agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your provincial government or agency</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit community organization</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A credit union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FinTech lender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Green: Completely Comfortable
- Orange: Somewhat Comfortable
- Red: Not Comfortable at all
The report Inclusive Entrepreneurship: Exploring the Barriers Facing Black Entrepreneurs in Canada complement those in the Rise Up: A Study of 700 Black Women Entrepreneurs and the State of Women Entrepreneurship reports in many ways. Black women entrepreneurs require key support for business development and growth such as: access to funding, networks, and mentorship. To support Black women entrepreneurs across Canada, actions must be taken at the societal, organizational, and individual levels.

The Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub supports all women entrepreneurs by sharing resources and research on women entrepreneurs across Canada. Our research has shown that Black women entrepreneurs experience barriers to entrepreneurship that have been compounded amid the pandemic. WEKH will amplify the important data in this report as we continue to work towards increasing Black women entrepreneurs’ access to financing, talent, networks and expertise.
Black Entrepreneurs have Limited Trust in Institutions – Especially Banks

The survey also explored the extent to which Black entrepreneurs feel they can trust different types of organizations that might be there to support them as they grow their business. Overall, we find that for most institutions, there is little trust among Black entrepreneurs.

Only about one in five Black entrepreneurs say they trust banks in general, a local Chamber of Commerce or board of trade, their municipal government, the provincial government, or even their own bank or credit union. Trust levels are higher, but still quite muted, when it comes to economic development organizations in their community or the Government of Canada.

Half of those we surveyed say they trust Black-led business organizations in their community, underscoring the important role that these organizations play in supporting and building networks for the Black entrepreneurs they serve.

Do you trust the following organizations to do what is right for you and your community?

- **Black-led business organizations in your community**: 53% Yes, 10% No, 37% Unsure
- **The Government of Canada**: 39% Yes, 25% No, 36% Unsure
- **Economic development organizations in your community**: 34% Yes, 23% No, 43% Unsure
- **Your provincial government**: 24% Yes, 40% No, 36% Unsure
- **Your bank or credit union**: 22% Yes, 41% No, 37% Unsure
- **Your municipal government**: 22% Yes, 40% No, 38% Unsure
- **The local Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade**: 20% Yes, 35% No, 44% Unsure
- **Banks in general**: 19% Yes, 48% No, 34% Unsure
Black Entrepreneurs have Limited Trust in Institutions – Especially Banks

When we compare empowered and unempowered Black entrepreneurs on questions of trust, we don’t find any significant differences in trust when it comes to Black-led business organizations in their community, economic development organizations, the Government of Canada, or their provincial government. But we do find significant differences in trust when it comes to their local Chamber of Commerce, their municipal government, and especially trust towards financial institutions.

**Banks are the institution that Black entrepreneurs trust the least**, with half of unempowered Black entrepreneurs say they do not trust banks in general – 7% higher compared to empowered Black entrepreneurs.

---

**Do you trust the following organizations to do what is right for you and your community?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Empowered</th>
<th>Unempowered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black-led business organizations in your community</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Government of Canada</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development organizations in your community</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The local Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your bank or credit union</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks in general</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your provincial government</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your municipal government</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colors: Yes = Green, No = Red, Unsure = Grey
This report really connects to Dream Legacy Foundation’s work in driving access to capital, providing access to networks to scale, and helping Black entrepreneurs build strong institutional relationships. The important issue of access to capital, whether it be loans from banks or venture dollars is very clearly articulated in the report as an issue that needs to be rectified.

Our work during the past decade has been dedicated to solving some of the issues highlighted in this report. Thus far, we have launched the first Black Tech Incubator in a University, to create stronger institutional relationships and networks for Black entrepreneurs to grow their business. We have also launched one of the only institutionally backed Venture Funds, which we see as an opportunity to create a more deliberate access to capital and strengthen the Black community’s relationships with government, banks, and the private sector. The report findings will therefore continue to motivate Dream Legacy Foundation’s work in pursuing solutions to improve the experience of Black entrepreneurs.
RESULTS

Representation And Relationships Matter. Those With A Relationship With Someone At A Financial Institution Are Twice As Likely To Say They Trust Them

We also find that trust with one’s own bank or credit union is strongly correlated to whether one has a relationship with somebody at a bank or other financial institution. Those with a relationship at a bank or other financial institution are 21% more likely to say they trust their bank than those who don’t. This finding highlights the importance of building trusting relationships with clients, and having people who work at those financial institutions reflect and understand the experiences that Black entrepreneurs face. We heard that consistently in our in-depth interviews with Black entrepreneurs and leaders of Black-led business organizations.

Those **WITH** a relationship with someone at a bank or other financial Institution

Trust in your own bank or credit union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those **WITHOUT** a relationship with someone at a bank or other financial Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Importance of Black-Led Business Organizations

Given that trust is highest among Black-led business organizations in their community, it’s no surprise that many Black entrepreneurs in Canada say that the support and resourcing provided by Black-led business organizations has been essential or important to their business success.

In total, 45% of Black entrepreneurs we surveyed said that Black-led organizations have been either essential or very important to their business, with another 25% describing them as somewhat important. This feeling is true of empowered experienced Black entrepreneurs, empowered new entrepreneurs, and unempowered Black entrepreneurs. And it’s worth noting that within the data, we find that among empowered new entrepreneurs and unempowered entrepreneurs, even more report feeling that these Black-led business organizations have been essential to their success.

How important, if at all, have Black-led organizations been to you and your business?
Thriving Black businesses are an essential component to successful Nova Scotian and Canadian economies as they create jobs, generate wealth and improve the general well-being of often marginalized communities in which they operate. There is still a great deal more work to be done.

It is the powerful evidence we needed as it highlights the urgent need for a robust Black entrepreneurial culture and ecosystem to help sustain the current momentum of the Black Entrepreneurial Program. It certainly will enhance our purpose of “Changing lives by enabling economic independence.”

In our 25 years of operations we have seen many changes in the economy and within Black Businesses. This report confirms our own findings that negative economic conditions, such as COVID-19, has an impact that is amplified in Black businesses and communities. Now it is up to us to use this study to set the table to create the best conditions for Black-owned business success.
Despite Systemic Racism, Weak Networks, And Challenges Accessing Capital, Black Entrepreneurs Are Optimistic About Their Businesses

Despite all the challenges that Black entrepreneurs have faced, and especially among unempowered Black entrepreneurs, our survey finds that almost all are optimistic about the future of their business. More specifically, 87% of Black entrepreneurs report that they are either very or somewhat optimistic about the future of their business. This is true of 92% of empowered experienced entrepreneurs, 93% of empowered new entrepreneurs, and 83% of those we classify as unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

Optimism and a feeling that success is possible is what drives entrepreneurs to persist against day-to-day challenges. And despite feeling that their race is a barrier to success, the challenges they face in accessing capital to help grow their business, and the low levels of trust they have in major institutions to support them, Black entrepreneurs have a positive outlook about their future and the success of their businesses. This underscores the importance of supporting them and leveling the playing field with other entrepreneurs across the country.

Looking forward, over the next few years, what is your outlook when thinking about your business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Very Optimistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowered</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowered</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unempowered</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowered</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowered</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Do Black Entrepreneurs Say Would Help Them Most Right Now with Their Business?

When asked what things would help them the most with their business right now, funding or capital, mentorship or coaching, and support with staff and management were the top three most cited items. Others mentioned help or assistance in training or education, support with marketing or advertising, or building networks and relationships.

The most immediate need, as we have seen throughout this survey, is reducing barriers that Black entrepreneurs face in accessing capital to either start their business or help it grow.

What things would help you the most with your business right now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Funding/Money/Capital</th>
<th></th>
<th>32%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mentorship/Coaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Staff/Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assistance/Help/Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Marketing/Advertising</td>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the end of the survey, we asked respondents to share one piece of advice for other Black entrepreneurs.

Here’s a sample of what we heard:

“Seek help to work on your business plan. Seek advice from people who have businesses in the same field. Be disciplined with your personal finances and look for funding.”

“Start with what you have. Be reliable, trustworthy and honest. Let integrity be the foundation of the business.”

“Connect with a community that you feel can support your growth and continue looking for support and advice along your development.”

“Never give up. If you put in the work, every new day will look better than the previous and that’s progress.”

“Be confident in your dreams and don’t give up.”

“Do your homework. Carve your own space to remain unique and curious. Be disciplined.”

“Don’t rush for high growth; grow your business steadily and take the time to build a diverse network of trusted supporters.”

“The journey is difficult and will require both mental and physical toughness but it’s possible to succeed. Find something you enjoy doing and do not believe anyone who says it’s not possible to it.”

“Trust and believe in yourself and surround yourself with others who will support you.”

“Focus. Give it your all. Be persistent. Do not give up.”
CONCLUSIONS

Our survey of 342 Black entrepreneurs in Canada has highlighted many of the systemic challenges that Black entrepreneurs face in growing and running their businesses every single day.

Almost all Black entrepreneurs feel that systematic racism prevents them from achieving their business goals, including those who are most empowered and most likely to have access to support, financing, and networks they need to succeed.

The inability to access capital remains the greatest challenge facing Black entrepreneurs in Canada. Almost all funded their start-up with personal savings or credit card debt. Most say they would have a difficult time accessing $10,000 to help grow their business. Moreover, while most Black entrepreneurs say they are at least somewhat comfortable applying for funding or loans from most organizations or institutions we tested, there remains significant hesitation or apprehension about applying for funding or loans with financial institutions or a fintech lender. This is especially true among unempowered Black entrepreneurs.

Few Black entrepreneurs trust banks or other financial institutions. Trust in other institutions such as local Chambers of Commerce, federal, provincial or municipal governments, or economic development organizations in their community remains quite low as well. But when a relationship is developed and nurtured, trust can be built. Those with an advisor at a financial institution are about twice as likely to say they trust their bank as those without someone they consider an advisor.

Black-led business organizations are crucial to overcoming systematic barriers and building capacity with Black entrepreneurs. They empower Black entrepreneurs, with most entrepreneurs saying they are important especially among new entrepreneurs.

Empowered Black entrepreneurs differ from their unempowered peers because:

1. They have strong, well-developed support networks and benefited from mentors.
2. They feel they have the capacity to respond to challenges and opportunities that arise in their business.
3. They can more easily access capital, recover from setbacks, and move forward confidently.
We are proud to have intimately collaborated on this important data collection process. To complement the amazing work done at Abacus and Senator Deacon’s office has been a tremendous experience for us. At Influence, our diversity is at the core of our strength. Working on the branding, design and communication aspects of this project has been an honour.

As a Black entrepreneur myself, the findings in this historical survey are staggering. Besides, we cannot combat what we don’t measure. Imagine a world where we, as Black & Brown entrepreneurs, are burdened with proving the inequities and economic injustices we face on a daily basis.

This report clearly highlights these challenges and brings to light the obstacles accepted by our black business community when it comes to access. I believe there are four key pillars of accesses that are crucial for any entrepreneurs to shift their companies from “Surviving-Mode to Thriving-Mode”:

Access to Information
Access to Capital
Access to Networks
Access to Mentorship

Lacking any of the above will hinder your proficiency at scaling a sustainable enterprise. No one is asking for an equal outcome. We want equal opportunities! As Black Canadian citizens, we deserve the right to fully live and experience the Canadian Dream. Moreover, any form of wealth creation starts with the right set of circumstances for everyone to start the race on an equal playing field.

The upcoming economic rebound will need all hands on deck! Including melanin-powered-hands!

As a society, when we address systemic challenges from an economic perspective, we empower the Black Canadian community to become masters of their faith. Make no mistake about it, thanks to this report, we can demand concrete actions and collectively establish that the next 400 years of Black Canadian history will be better than the past 400.
#BlackEntrepreneur

VOICES OF CANADA
ABISARA MACHOLD

The increase of jobs and purchasing power will not only stimulate the black community but the Canadian economy as a whole. The strong and multiple barriers for black entrepreneurs in accessing capital and scaling their business are key factors for the low numbers of black - women owned enterprises in today’s Canada- a situation that asked for tangible measures and calls to action.

GABRIELLA GARBEAU

There is a huge gap between my entrepreneurial ambitions and the funding I am eligible for and I feel the same is true for many black entrepreneurs. The reasons we have barriers are well documented: unconscious bias, systemic barriers, and gender and race stereotypes. I think there was a lack of political will but luckily things are starting to change.

If Canada improves the entrepreneurship rate of black people and their ability to grow, it will have an impact on all of our communities. In addition, for me diversity is a source of richness and ingenuity. We are going to need their geniuses to go up the slope into which the Covid 19 has plunged us.

PAUL HARRY TOUSSAINT

Based on my experience, the biggest challenge faced by black entrepreneurs is access to financing. According to the study of the Black Chamber of Commerce of Canada, three quarters of black businesses are self-financed. The impression is that black businesses are automatically listed as at risk. Even successful black entrepreneurs, with a well-established business, have a lot of difficulties obtaining financing for its expansion.

Trust between banks and black entrepreneurs is non-existent.

Another major challenge is access to information through grant and loan programs that convey information so that it is too coded for the Black community and often the criteria are unfavourable to the community.

The lack of strong organizational grouping structures that can serve as a guide, information portal, database etc is also a big problem.

The system is designed so that black entrepreneurs cannot work they way to the top because the prerequisites do not correspond in any way to the reality of the community.

STEVEN SARAZIN

The current generation of Black entrepreneurs is composed for the most part of first or second-born generation Canadians, constantly acting as pioneers walking unbeaten paths and who often cannot rely on or look up to the previous generation for business development models. Hence, they must work extra hard to believe in themselves and their capacity, especially in 2021, where many may entertain the fear of business failure brought about by the pandemic. Also, they have to continue to prove themselves to the various stakeholders influencing their growth capacity, like financial institutions, funding agencies, and even the clientele they are trying to build-up. For this reason, a strong BE ecosystem becomes critical for Canada’s economic rebound strategy, which depends on immigration and its legacy to recover, while for Black entrepreneurs, such an ecosystem is like providing the soil, water, and sunshine a plant needs to grow and flourish.
ALEX VICTOR
The most important barrier is the lack of Love money due to the socio-economic background of our families and financing as a whole. We are lacking financial education and mentorship banks. Furthermore, Having a strong black entrepreneurial ecosystem is key to creating jobs in the black communities and empowering the community as a whole for sustainable change. The pandemic has had a deep impact in the black entrepreneurial community and we stand at a crossroad of either widening the economic gap if no measures are taken or shortening it with the momentum of the rebounding economy and the opportunities that will come from it. Not taking measures would put many black entrepreneurs in a position where they are unable to ride the wave.

GLENDA NADÈGE
I believe the biggest obstacles are access to information and exposure. We are in an era where technology and information are accessible to everyone, however, sometimes it is hard to know where to begin the research. Exposure to information on how to become an entrepreneur and finding the right resources is not always easy to come by. The best way to have access to this information is by exposing and teaching our kids younger about entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurs are the foundation of the economy. They contribute by providing employment and adding value to the economy. I believe that by having a strong Black entrepreneurial ecosystem, aspiring entrepreneurs will feel more confident starting their own businesses and inspire others to do the same. Just like seeing the first black president in the USA gives hope to a child to do the same, seeing other entrepreneurs that look like us will have the same effect. Role models are important!!

KERLANDO MORETTE
We black entrepreneurs, we face enormous difficulty due to several barriers, both in terms of accessibility to entrepreneurial information, funding but also the lack of organization at the provincial level helping black entrepreneurs. An entrepreneurial ecosystem that enhances, while giving unprecedented access to entrepreneurs from black communities in Quebec, will make it possible to have more viable businesses, at the same time allowing black communities to be economically strong.
MARIE-ELEONORE BAPTISTE

The main barriers for black entrepreneurs are systemic. Creditors have a hard time believing in our plans because we have very little opportunity to believe because of the color of our skin. I can’t count the times I had to turn back before I could even expose my project because clearly the color of my skin was problematic. Canada must develop a black for us by us ecosystem in order to help our people better organize themselves, especially for large-scale projects. It is time to assert ourselves and above all to restore hope to our young people through their insatiable creativity.

DJENNIE DORVILIER

The main barrier met by Black entrepreneurs is definitely financial. Money is a basic need when it comes to grow a business.

Many Black folks, including myself, are first or second generation immigrants, with no generational wealth built up. Most of us won’t inherit an already established business, nor start with “love money”. It’s a struggle to obtain funds to start a business, then help maintain daily operations. In the typical 9 to 5, systemic racism is so ingrained that it’s hard for racialized individuals to obtain better positions; many choose to become their own boss. Our money is strong enough to help influence decisions in society. As a structured community, we can therefore better our system: educational, political system, healthcare. And more could own rather than lease. A strong Black Entrepreneurial Ecosystem can help achieve that.

JASMINE & SONEL MERJUSTE

I think the main barriers for black entrepreneurs are access to capital, a lack of trust from partners or stakeholders, and a lack of support network in the community. In our case, as a first generation immigrant, we have been through hell in the financial world. Due to the lack of collateral, we were unable to obtain the necessary financing to launch and maintain operations. We should fight to be accepted as a credible partner with many suppliers. Some have just ignored us when we have a viable and promising project. We wandered for a while for lack of a support network for black entrepreneurs that could open some doors for us.
ROMUALD AUGUSTIN

The fact that we are using the term Black is the main part of the barrier. Black is not a nationality, an origin, culture or anything that guarantees the support of your community. We start with no home base. All other ethnicities mostly have their countries backing their voyage to a foreign land and a community of people from the same origin ready to support. Blacks have been making something out of nothing since we’ve been disenfranchised.

That being said, we’ve mastered the art of hustling and being productive in such a way that it is time for Canada to stand with us and offer the support we need to go from surviving businesses to thriving businesses. The better Blacks perform in Canada, the better it is for Canada on a global scale.

SHIRLY DELVA

Black entrepreneurs are marginalized and, as a woman of colour, it is hard to be taken seriously. More often our ideas and projects are dismissed based on unjust rationales. The lack of resources, business connections at high levels and access to capital are barriers. When I was looking for a space to rent for my work studio, it was an extremely frustrating process. I was constantly snubbed and turned away for baseless reasons. I had to reach out through my network of friends to find my studio.

For too long our community has been overlooked. We have proven over the years we can generate great ideas and raise capital. We can boost, in our own way, our community’s economy and contribute to the Canadian economy. It’s important for successful businesses to share their knowledge and build a strong business network so we can pave the way for the next generation.

RACHELLE ARTHUR

I think the obstacles faced by black entrepreneurs in 2021 are the lack of financial resources, the fact that one always has to look hard for black resources. A directory that centralizes all the resources needed to help black entrepreneurs would make a lot of things easier. For those who are starting out, the credit, the lack of financing. Personally, one thing that scares me and keeps me from going all the way in my project is my credit report. Many blacks have bad experiences with their credit which makes it more difficult for those who want to start their businesses because of this barrier. Personally, one of the reasons that motivates me is to be able to leave something to my future children, to my younger sisters and to be able to ensure that my mother and father no longer have to work. Also so that we no longer have to depend on others and even create our own neighborhoods, our own schools with mainly black staff.

NATACHA DEGAZON

The number one barrier is the knowledge of finance and management. Because of our slavery background, our relationship with money is not fruitful. We think we don’t deserve it so we have various issues invoicing/collecting/investing. How are we ever going to multiply if we operate under scarcity?

I also think mentorship is almost nonexistent. Evidently, we need mentors for guidance. Somebody outside of our direct circle who has gone through our challenges, somebody we can rely on to cultivate our personal development journey. A lot of us are not even aware of the importance of a mentor!! This is real!
SYLVIE ROSITA BIEN-AIMÉ

I fear that due to the negative stereotypes of what we can accomplish, we are often not taken seriously. That’s why we often target our own community, where people we actually know can vouch for their experiences and support. Getting out of the community and targeting new customers, is one of the barriers I face. According to Statistiques Canada, the population growth rate of Blacks in Canada is 141.9% (census 1996-2016). Also, Canada is the principal birth country of people of black origin. This shows that our youth will need to be guided, represented and given the opportunity to keep growing. This increase in diversity brings a lot of innovation and new ideas. When you diversify the workforce and entrepreneurial opportunities, innovation is possible. The latter increases the return on investment... The more new ideas there are, the more innovation there is, the more the Canadian economy can strive!

KEITHY ANTOINE

While it is not always easy for a woman to start an entrepreneurial activity, the obstacles are multiplied when she comes from a visible minority. Our institutions must position themselves as strong allies with racialized entrepreneurs, take the time to welcome them, find them the necessary and adequate support. And above all, relax or adapt the eligibility criteria for scholarships or funding, which are often too high and do not correspond to the socioeconomic reality of Afro-Quebec women. The investor, the lender, the bank, the school often have little or no knowledge of the products of these entrepreneurs and underestimate the market and the purchasing power of this specific clientele. This ignorance blocks access to the ecosystem. Several Quebec afro-entrepreneurs raise the point that they are not considered to be credible and that their products or services are devalued because they are black.

DENBURK REID

There is a lack of funding that would be needed to launch a business. It can also be seen in a lack of resources/understanding on where to and how to apply for grants (government and private grants). Our community has a great opportunity to pull together to create a space where collaboration and expertise can be shared. There is a disconnect, the knowledge from the elder businessmen or entrepreneurs does not get passed down. We lack mentorship and training for younger entrepreneurs.

English-speaking entrepreneurs struggle to get funding as most companies are run by French Québécois, and they support French-speaking business owners. We need an ecosystem that enables the sharing of data, expertise which can create mentorship. We do not lack vision nor creativity, but we lack capital and we lack access to proper funding so a well-structured ecosystem can help secure the necessary funding.
ARIEL GOUGH

Generally, barriers to entry for Black entrepreneurs are lower than ever. Black businesses need access to growth capital (diluted and non-diluted) and access to professionals such as accountants and legal advisors to help them to scale and stay in business long term. It’s just as important to create longevity for black business as it is to build them up.

Personally, I have faced similar barriers to other Black entrepreneurs. Building networks and gaining early traction is difficult. As a female entrepreneur of colour, these challenges are further amplified 5 to 10-fold.

Strong black entrepreneurial ecosystems don’t only benefit our economy, but also global economies. If Canada wants to be competitive globally and be a leader in innovation, we need to engage our black businesses in those efforts.

For public policy makers, this means digging deeper to eliminate systemic problems. For instance, reports have shown that women of colour are starting businesses in the manufacturing and retail sectors, yet, funding support for these sectors are often unavailable. Therefore, looking at the data and truly come up with solutions to eliminate these issues will be paramount for Black entrepreneurs to thrive.

DONALD LATURE

The biggest barrier I have faced as a Black Entrepreneur is a lack of Opportunity:

- Opportunity in accessing mentors and business leaders to help me reach entrepreneurial success.
- Opportunity to find a platform to showcase and share my international knowledge about the entertainment industry.
- Opportunity to access funding to further grow my business and OWN my business.

It is sad to say that in the Hospitality Industry, the other major barrier is the color of my skin. It is an uphill battle trying to prove that I am a lot more than what is the “typical” portrayal of a black man in videos or on TV. The time is now for Canada to make its Black Entrepreneurs shine with a Black Entrepreneurial Ecosystem because many talented, successful Black gems have been silent for too long. We are a force to be reckoned with in helping Canada regain its standing as a Land of Opportunity, especially Business Opportunity for all.
To begin, we want to get to know you a bit better. These questions will help us understand differences across different entrepreneurs and business owners. Some of them may seem personal but answering them will help us understand your situation better.

1. **What is your gender?**
   - a) Female
   - b) Male
   - c) Non-binary/third gender
   - d) Prefer to self-describe: [Open]
   - e) Prefer not to say

2. **What age group do you fall into?**
   - a) Under 30
   - b) 30 to 44
   - c) 45 to 59
   - d) 60 and over
3. Which province or region do you live in?
   a) Alberta
   b) British Columbia
   c) Manitoba
   d) New Brunswick
   e) Newfoundland and Labrador
   f) Northwest Territories
   g) Nova Scotia
   h) Nunavut
   i) Ontario
   j) Prince Edward Island
   k) Quebec
   l) Saskatchewan
   m) Yukon

4. What are the first 3 digits of your postal code?

5. Were you born in Canada?
   a) Yes
   b) No

6. [If Q5 = yes] What year did you move to Canada? [Open: ]
7. What language do you speak most often at home?
   a) English
   b) French
   c) Another language [please specify]: [Open]

8. What is the highest certificate, diploma, or degree you have obtained?
   a) Some high school or equivalency
   b) High school graduation or equivalency
   c) Other trades certificate or diploma
   d) Registered apprenticeship certificate
   e) College, CEGEP or other non-university certification or diplomas
   f) University certificate or diploma below bachelor level
   g) Bachelor’s degree
   h) Graduate degree

9. Which do you self-identify with? Please select all that apply.
   a) Black
   b) Canadian
   c) African Canadian
   d) LGBTQ+
   e) Caribbean Canadian
   f) Other: please specify: [Open]
   g) None of the above
The next few questions are about you and your business.

10. How many businesses do you currently own or have at least a majority ownership in?
   a) None
   b) 1
   c) 2
   d) 3 or more

[If Q10 = 1] Did you start the business? Are you the or one of the founders/owners?
   a) Yes
   b) No

[If Q10 = 2, 3 or more] Did you start any of the businesses? Are you one of the founders/owners?
   a) Yes
   b) No

These next few questions are about your business. If you own more than one business, please answer questions about the largest business you own.

13. Approximately how many employees (full or part time) does your business have on payroll?
   a) None
   b) 1 to 3
   c) 4 to 10
   d) 11 to 50
   e) 50+
14. How long has your business been in operation?
   a) 0-2 years
   b) 2-5 years
   c) 6-10 years
   d) 11+ years

15. Which industry does your organization operate in?
   a) Accommodations, Travel, Hospitality & Food
   b) Consulting, Education & Management
   c) Legal, Accounting, Real Estate & Professional Services
   d) Science & Technology
   e) Aesthetics, Beauty & Grooming
   f) Retail Services
   g) Media Arts & Culture
   h) Construction & Manufacturing
   i) Agriculture & Clean Energy
   j) Medical & Dental
   k) Automotive industry
   l) Other: please specify [Open]

16. Does your business deal directly with consumers, or more with other businesses or professional customers, or a combination of both?
   a) Directly with consumers
   b) More with other businesses or professional customers
   c) A combination of both
Which of the following categories best describes your businesses revenue before taxes in 2019 (the year before the COVID 19 pandemic)?

a) Under $50,000  
b) $50,000 to $100,000  
c) $100,001 to $250,000  
d) $250,001 to $500,000  
e) Over $500,000  
f) Not applicable/Business did not exist

Do you have a business bank account for your transactions?

a) Yes  
b) No, I use my personal account

How do you pay yourself?

a) I am on payroll  
b) I pay myself through dividends/profits from the business  
c) I don’t pay myself  
d) Other [please specify]: [Open]
What is your primary business financial institution? We are asking the question to understand differences in experience depending on the financial institutions Black founders and business owners use.

a) TD  
b) RBC  
c) CIBC  
d) Scotiabank  
e) BMO  
f) Desjardins  
g) National Bank  
h) PC Financial  
i) Tangerine Bank  
j) A credit union: please specify: [Open]  
k) Other: please specify: [Open]  
l) Don’t know

Thanks for your responses so far. These next few questions are about how your business is doing and how you’re feeling about the business.

Do you know how to access supports or advice when you run into issues or challenges with your business?

a) Yes  
b) No

Have you gained access to this help through a black-led business organization?

a) Yes  
b) No
23. Which of the following best describes your current goal for your business?
   a) Grow the business quickly
   b) Grow the business, but slowly
   c) Maintain the business as it currently is
   d) Prevent the business from declining
   e) Unsure

24. Looking forward, over the next few years, what is your outlook when thinking about your business?
   a) Very optimistic
   b) Somewhat optimistic
   c) Neutral
   d) Somewhat pessimistic
   e) Very pessimistic

25. Which of the following comes closest to your own experience?
   a) All my time is spent serving customers and managing the business day to day.
   b) I am able to spend some time growing my business.
   c) I have just enough time to think about how to grow my business.
26. How would you rate your business in the following areas today? [Yes/No]
   a) Your debt level is manageable
   b) You’re able to pay your suppliers/vendors on time
   c) Customers pay for products/services on time
   d) You have access to funds needed to support your business goals
   e) You have access to professionals (accountants, lawyers, bankers) who help you manage your business
   f) You have access to other business owners, coaches, or mentors who are there to provide help and support
   g) You can pay your staff on time
   h) You have a good business plan

27. How would you rate your level of confidence in being able to build and grow your business in the way that you would like?
   a) Not at all confident
   b) Not very confident
   c) Somewhat confident
   d) Very confident

28. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Agree/Disagree]
   a) I have mastered the skills necessary to run my business.
   b) I feel like I can respond effectively when problems happen in my business.
   c) At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my business goals.
   d) At this time, I’m meeting the business goals I set for myself.
   e) When I have a setback in my business, I am confident I can recover.
If Q17 =/=< $100,000] If you needed to find $10,000 to support your business, how easy or difficult would it be for you to get access to that money?

- a) Impossible
- b) Very difficult
- c) Pretty difficult
- d) Pretty easy
- e) Very easy
- f) Not sure

If Q17 > $100,000] If you needed to find $50,000 to support your business, how easy or difficult be for you to get access to that money?

- a) Impossible
- b) Very difficult
- c) Pretty difficult
- d) Pretty easy
- e) Very easy
- f) Not sure

This section will help us understand your experience as a business owner and entrepreneur.
QUESTIONNAIRE

31. How important, if at all, have Black-led organizations been to you and your business?
   a) Essential
   b) Very important
   c) Somewhat important
   d) Not very important
   e) Not at all important

32. Have you had access to helpful advice from the following as you have built and run your business? [Yes/No]
   a) Other Black business owners or entrepreneurs
   b) Family members who have experience running a business
   c) People you consider mentors who have helped you be a better entrepreneur
   d) Other business owners in the same industry as you
   e) Professionals like accountants and lawyers who help you make better business decisions
   f) Advisors at a bank, credit union or another financial institution you can trust

33. If you have experience working with a mentor or business coach, what were the main benefits? [Open]
This section will help us learn a bit about the finances of your business.

34. How did you first finance your business? Please select all that apply.
   a) Bank loan/Line of credit
   b) Loan or gift from a family member
   c) Loan or investment from a partner(s)
   d) Inherited asset (like a house)
   e) Credit cards
   f) Personal savings
   g) Grant/funding from the government
   h) Grant/funding from organization
   i) Other [Please specify: Open]

35. How much was invested in your business in the first year?
   a) Under $25,000
   b) $25,000 to $50,000
   c) $50,001 to $100,000
   d) Over $100,000

36. Have you ever needed to do the following to access money or capital to support your business? [Yes/No/Not applicable]
   a) Refinanced your home
   b) Taken out a loan from the bank or credit union
   c) Opened a line of credit at the bank or credit union
   d) Accepted a loan from a family member or friend
   e) Accepted a monetary gift from a family member or friend
   f) Taken a loan from a payday lender (i.e. Money Mart, Cash Money)
   g) Sold something you own personally to help finance your business
   h) Stop paying yourself in order to finance your business
Have you applied for any programs through the federal or provincial government to assist entrepreneurs and did you receive funding/a grant?

a) Yes, I applied and received funding/a grant
b) Yes, I applied but did not qualify for the funding/grant
c) No, I don’t think I would qualify
d) No, I have no need to
e) No, I didn’t know about any programs
f) Not sure

Have you applied for COVID-19-related funding or grants through the federal government?

a) Yes, I applied and received aid/approved for aid
b) Yes, I applied but did not qualify to receive aid
c) No, but I want to
d) No, I didn’t think I would qualify
e) No, I haven’t needed to
f) No, I didn’t know about any programs
g) Not sure

Do you have a relationship with someone at a bank, credit union, or financial institution that can provide you with trusted advice for your business?

a) Yes
b) No
How comfortable would you be in applying for funding or a loan from any of the following sources? [Not comfortable at all, somewhat comfortable, completely comfortable]

a) The federal government or agency
b) Your provincial government or agency
c) Bank
d) FinTech lender
e) A credit union
f) Not-for-profit community organization

[If Q9 = Black, African Canadian, or Caribbean Canadian] How often, if at all, do you feel the following happens because you are Black? [Never, occasionally, regularly, unsure]

a) Denied a loan from a financial institution
b) Denied a grant or funding from a government organization
c) A supplier or vendor refused to do business with you
d) A customer or client refused to do business with you
e) Unable to secure rental lease space

To what extent, if at all, does your race impact your ability to succeed as an entrepreneur in Canada?

a) My race makes it harder to succeed as an entrepreneur
b) My race has no impact on my success as an entrepreneur
c) My race makes it easier to succeed as an entrepreneur
QUESTIONNAIRE

43 How would you describe your personal credit rating?
   a) Excellent
   b) Good
   c) Ok
   d) Poor
   e) Very poor
   f) Prefer not to share

44 Do you trust the following organizations to do what is right for you and your community? [Yes, no, not sure]
   a) The Government of Canada
   b) Your provincial government
   c) Your municipal government
   d) Your bank or credit union
   e) Banks in general
   f) The local Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade
   g) Black-led business organizations in your community
   h) Economic development organizations in your community

Thank you for your time so far. You have been so generous. We have one more section of questions before we end.

45 What would you say are the top three challenges that you have experienced in your journey as an entrepreneur and business owner? [3 open boxes]

46 What business problems are most likely to keep you up at night? [Open]
47. What things would help you the most with your business right now? [3 open boxes]

48. If you could give a new entrepreneur any advice, what would it be? [Open]

49. What do you think would make the biggest difference in helping Black entrepreneurs and business owners succeed in Canada? [Open]