

The Canadian Council of Business Leaders Against Anti-Black Systemic Racism



CEO Pledge:

It is time for anti-Black systemic racism to end.

I, as the leader of my company, along with all CEO signatories, commit to implementing the following pledge. Where companies have already implemented one or several of the commitments, the undersigned commit to support other companies in doing the same.

We acknowledge the existence of anti-Black systemic racism and its impact on Canada's 1,198,540 Black citizens (or 3.5% of the population) and the need to create opportunities within our companies for Black people.

The persistent inequities across our country underscore our urgent, national need to address and alleviate racial, ethnic, and other tensions and to promote the elimination of anti-Black systemic racism wherever it exists. As leaders of some of Canada's largest corporations, we manage hundreds of thousands of employees and play a critical role in ensuring that inclusion is core to our workplace culture and that our businesses are representative of the communities we serve. Moreover, we know that true diversity is good for the economy; it improves corporate performance, drives growth, and enhances employee engagement.

Simply put, organizations with truly diverse teams perform better.

We recognize that diversity and inclusion are multifaceted issues and that we need to tackle these subjects holistically to better engage and support all underrepresented groups within the business community. To do this, we believe we also need to address honestly and head-on the concerns and needs of our diverse employees and increase equity for all, including, but not limited to, Black, Asian and other racialized communities in Canada, Indigenous peoples, members of the LGBTQ+ community, persons with disabilities, and women. Collectively as business leaders we agree that we must do more. For us, this includes committing to six

goals we believe will move Canada toward ending anti-Black systemic racism and creating opportunities for underrepresented groups.

1. Working through community organizations, including the BlackNorth Initiative, we will increase our efforts to make our workplaces trusting places to have complex, and sometimes difficult conversations about anti-Black systemic racism and ensure that no barriers exist to prevent Black employees from advancing within the company. We will create and maintain an environment that fosters open dialogue, including listening forums where our people feel comfortable to gain greater awareness of each other's experiences and perspectives. By encouraging an ongoing dialogue and not tolerating any incongruence with these values of openness, we are building trust, encouraging compassion and open-mindedness, and reinforcing our commitment to a culture of inclusivity.

2. Working through community organizations, including the BlackNorth Initiative, we will implement or expand unconscious bias and anti-racism education. We all have unconscious biases—that is human nature. Unconscious bias education enables individuals to begin recognizing, acknowledging, and therefore minimizing any potential blind spots they might have. We will commit to rolling out and/or expanding education that addresses unconscious bias and anti-Black systemic racism within our companies and make non-proprietary unconscious bias education modules available to others free of charge.

3. We will share best—and unsuccessful—practices. We know that many companies are still developing programs and initiatives around true diversity and inclusion. We commit to helping them evolve and enhance their current diversity strategies and encourage them, in turn, to share their successes and challenges with others.

4. We will create and share strategic inclusion and diversity plans with our board of directors. We will establish at least one diversity leadership council and make efforts to ensure these groups include diverse representation, including senior Black leaders, within our organization. The diversity leadership council will work with the CEO who will be accountable to our board of directors (or equivalent governing bodies) through the development and evaluation of concrete, strategic action plans to prioritize and drive accountability around diversity and inclusion, including as it relates to Black employees. We recognize that boards and CEOs play an important role in driving action together to cultivate inclusive cultures and talent.

5. Working through community organizations, including the BlackNorth Initiative, we will ensure employment opportunities are visible and barrier-free to all under-represented groups, including Black people. We commit to hiring goals that achieve an employee demographic profile reflective of the demographic profile of Ontarians, including a goal of 5% of our student workforce from the Black community.

6. We will create the conditions for success. As in all business ventures, ‘what gets measured gets managed’, so it’s essential that we collect data on race and ethnicity, including from Black employees, to understand where we have gaps and when we are making progress. We will work through community organizations, including the BlackNorth Initiative, to attract and retain diverse talent, including from the Black community. We commit to developing and advancing underrepresented groups, including Black people, within our organization to ensure a pipeline of talent as we build inclusive leadership teams that are representative of the communities we serve. We will set inclusive talent management goals and include them in senior executives’ annual performance scorecards.

We also pledge to create accountability systems within our companies, share our goals internally and externally, track our progress, and share regular updates with each other to catalog effective programs and measurement practices.

We recognize that these commitments are not the complete answer, but we believe they are important, concrete steps toward building more truly diverse and inclusive workplaces. We hope our list of signatories will grow, and we invite other CEOs across Canada to join us.

Let’s come together to make good on the inherent promise that all of our people should be able to bring their best selves to work and unleash their full potential.

By working together toward true diversity and inclusion within our workplaces, industries, and broader business community, we can cultivate meaningful change for our society and end anti-Black systemic racism.

Organization:

Travel Industry Council of Ontario

Signature:



Date: July 15, 2021
