



**Report**  
**Staff Report**  
 The Corporation of the City of Brampton  
 2/28/2024

**Date:** 2020-01-22

**Subject:** **City of Brampton Black Economic Development Initiatives**

**Contact:** Denise McClure, Senior Manager, Economic Development

**Report number:** CAO's Office-2024-165

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the report from Denise McClure, Senior Manager, Economic Development, to the City Council Meeting of February 28, 2024, re: **City of Brampton 2023 Black Economic Development Initiatives**, be received; and
2. That City staff continue to deliver programs and services to Black entrepreneurs and businesses and lead initiatives within African and Caribbean markets to attract investment and start-ups.

**OVERVIEW:**

- **This report provides an overview of the City of Brampton's 2023 Black Economic Development Initiatives.**
- **The City of Brampton Economic Development Office (EDO) is committed to delivering programs and services to Black entrepreneurs and businesses through a range of initiatives.**
- **EDO has a dedicated resource to lead initiatives within the African and Caribbean markets, fostering strong economic partnerships and identifying opportunities for mutual growth and investment.**
- **The City's Black African and Caribbean Social, Cultural and Economic Empowerment and Anti-Black Racism Unit (BEU) engages with Black entrepreneurs in Brampton and hosts successful networking and mentoring events.**
- **Nigeria's Film Industry (Nollywood) is the second largest film industry in the world, and Brampton's active Nigerian-Canadian community positions the city well to generate economic opportunities with the industry.**
- **There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.**

## **BACKGROUND:**

Throughout February the City of Brampton celebrates Black History Month by honouring its Black community, whose achievements have contributed so much to make Brampton the vibrant and prosperous city it is today.

According to the 2021 census, 85,310, or 13.12%, of Brampton residents identify as Black. This includes the African and Caribbean diasporas as well as those who identify as being of African descent, whether born in Canada or abroad.

## **CURRENT SITUATION:**

The City of Brampton's Economic Development Office (EDO) recognizes the active and diverse role of its African and Caribbean communities in Brampton's economic development.

In the Spring of 2023, the City's EDO was recognized by Business Facilities Magazine for its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The magazine's Annual Economic Development Organization awards organizations that create impactful programs and initiatives aimed at improving the communities they serve. The City of Brampton was the only large Canadian city so recognized.

EDO was recognized in particular for having dedicated staff serving the African and Caribbean markets.

### **City of Brampton Black Economic Development Initiatives**

The City of Brampton Economic Development Office would like to acknowledge and express its gratitude to the content contributors of this report:

- Jennifer Vivian, Manager, Entrepreneurial Services
- Daniel Bishun, Business Advisor, Brampton Entrepreneur Centre
- Amanda Leard, Manager, Investment Attraction
- Uche Okugo, Coordinator, Africa and Caribbean Markets
- Erica Henry-Jackman, Advisor, Economic Development Initiatives
- Jasmine Danial, Coordinator, Innovation & Tech
- Jessica Hale, Coordinator, Strategic Projects
- Gwyneth Chapman, Sr. Advisor, Black Empowerment Unit
- Michael Okolie, Advisor, Black Empowerment Unit
- Gage Board, Manager, Tourism
- Michael Ciuffini, Specialist, Film

## ***Black Business Directory***

The City of Brampton's GeoHub now features the Black Business Directory as part of its open data initiative, making it freely accessible to the public.

Business owners are encouraged to register their Black-owned businesses through an [online form](#) to be included in the directory. This valuable resource facilitates the discovery of Black-owned businesses across various sectors, from healthcare to culinary and beyond, within the community.

The directory offers comprehensive details on each listed business, such as the company name, business description, address, website link, North American Industry Classification Code, year of establishment, among other pertinent information.

## ***Brampton Entrepreneur Centre, Small Business Support***

As part of the Economic Development Office, the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre (BEC) is committed to supporting Black entrepreneurs in the City of Brampton.

### Resource Site for Black Entrepreneurs

The BEC business advisors have researched and developed a [landing page](#) on the BEC site that consolidates information on resources and funding opportunities available to Black and BIPOC entrepreneurs. The site includes information on Futurpreneur's Black Entrepreneur Startup Program.

### Small Business Grants

BEC delivers the Starter Company Plus and Summer Company grant programs on behalf of the Province of Ontario. The Starter Company Plus program assists entrepreneurs with expanding or purchasing a business, and provides free training, business skills development, mentorship, and an opportunity to apply for a grant of up to \$5,000. The Summer Company program helps youth between the ages of 15 and 29 launch and operate a business during the summer. Youth receive training, mentorship, and an opportunity to receive a grant of up to \$3,000 to help launch a summer business (Attachment 1).

In 2023, over 80% of the Starter Company Plus grant recipients self-identified as being BIPOC, with 33% of those identifying as Black or of African/Caribbean descent. Similarly, 60% of the Summer Company recipients in 2023 self-identified as Black. This translates to approximately \$85,000 being granted to Black entrepreneurs in Brampton.

The diversity in the 2023 grant programs reflects the team's commitment to supporting a wide range of entrepreneurs and businesses, recognizing the value and innovation that come from a diverse set of voices and experiences.

## ***Investment Attraction***

The African and Caribbean diaspora in Brampton is a vital link for the City of Brampton when it comes to developing relationships both locally and in international markets. As such, the Investment Attraction team has been actively engaging with the diaspora community.

### Coordinator, Africa, and Caribbean Markets

The Coordinator, Africa, and Caribbean Markets is a unique role within EDO. The City of Brampton is the only city in Canada with a dedicated resource in these markets.

This role leads the coordination of the City's investment attraction strategy for the Africa and Caribbean countries by fostering partnerships in these markets and identifying opportunities for mutual growth and investment. The coordinator supports both inbound and outbound delegations, highlighting Brampton's value proposition to businesses looking to expand to Brampton.

### Inbound Delegations

In 2023, 11 delegations from Africa and the Caribbean markets were hosted in Brampton. These delegations highlighted Brampton's investment opportunities to dozens of international businesses looking to expand to Brampton. In January of this year, a delegation of Black-owned businesses in Brampton visited City Hall to meet with Mayor Patrick Brown and Council. As a result of the City's investment attraction efforts in these markets, there has been an increased interest from this demographic locally in establishing businesses in Brampton. During this visit, the delegation toured BEC to learn more about the services provided to local entrepreneurs.

### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

In October 2023, the City of Brampton signed an MOU with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). The MOU was developed to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations and to promote economic ties in the Innovation & Technology and Tourism sectors.

## ***Innovation & Tech Events and Support***

### Collision 2023

EDO hosted a private panel session during the 2023 Collision Conference featuring the Hon. Zanana Akande, the first Black Cabinet Minister and Black female MPP, and the Hon. Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman to serve as a federal Minister of the Crown and Member of Parliament. This was a unique event at Collision and garnered significant media attention.

EDO hosted several inbound delegations from African markets at Collision, including an information session on Brampton investment opportunities in Innovation & Technology to 29 start-ups from Nigeria. This was the largest Nigerian delegation to Collision.

### Brampton Tech Talks: Black Business Success Stories

On Thursday, February 22, 2024, EDO partnered with the Brampton Library to host a Brampton Tech Talks session focusing on Black Business Success Stories.

Panelists shared their challenges and support systems on their paths to success. The session featured entrepreneurs from Brampton's Innovation District, including:

- a) Jonathon Bloomfield, Founder of **Edventive** (with Startup Peel).  
Edventive, formerly Scooli, is an automation tool for teachers' marking, feedback and report cards.
- b) Darace Rose, Founder of **Oppos** (with Rogers Catalyst Accelerator)  
Oppos is a cybersecurity compliance service, creating streamlined solutions for clients facing cybersecurity and regulatory compliance issues.

### ***Brampton's Black Empowerment Unit (BEU)***

The BEU is responsible for black economic, social, cultural and youth development programs. This team leads monthly information and networking events with Black businesses and entrepreneurs. These events connect people to Black ecosystems in Canada and support business growth. For further background on the Black Empowerment approach, please refer to Attachment 4.

The BEU works with small business owners to create opportunities such as:

1. Relevant financial education for entrepreneurs.
2. Working with different government agencies and partners to provide funding opportunities through grants, loans, and other financial incentives.
3. Creating a supportive legal framework.
4. Stimulating networking and collaboration.
5. Encouraging innovation.

The BEU also engages and collaborates with residents on the following initiatives:

1. A series of sessions to connect people to job recruitment opportunities and job preparation sessions.
2. An in-depth Community Voice Consultation project which will identify the gaps in the Black Economic, Social, Cultural, Civic and Youth Development to guide the City's actions towards the empowerment of Brampton's Black community.

3. Facilitating the Black Economic Empowerment Conference which presents opportunity for learning, networking, providing financial, entrepreneur and business support to help in the community development.
4. Creating info sessions on preparations for home ownership and providing support to further the goal of using home ownership as equity to build more economic base.

### ***Nollywood in Brampton***

The Nigerian film industry, known as Nollywood, is a prolific film industry and produces thousands of movies each year. After India, it is the second-largest film industry in the world in terms of output, surpassing Hollywood.

Although it is based in Nigeria, Nollywood provides several economic opportunities for the City of Brampton. The popularity of Nollywood films among the Nigerian-Canadian community in Canada is a significant market for the distribution and exhibition of Nigerian films. This provides opportunities for Canadian distributors, exhibitors, and other industry professionals to tap into this market and generate revenue.

The City of Brampton recognizes the importance of Nollywood as a tool of cultural representation and diasporic communication. It plays a central role in shaping understanding of Nigerian culture, identity, and society in transnational spaces. Brampton has a large and active Nigerian-Canadian community, and the City has been building on the bilateral opportunities and cultural ties that unite Brampton and Nigeria through past missions to Nigeria.

The Nollywood film industry has the potential to provide foreign direct investment and co-productions with Canadian filmmakers, leading to job creation and economic growth in Brampton. The industry also provides opportunities for cultural exchange and the promotion of diversity and inclusion in Canadian society, as it showcases Nigerian culture to a wider audience. For further background on the Nollywood Film Industry refer to Attachment 5.

Brampton has been a film-friendly city for years. The Brampton Film Office has a dedicated staff member that provides excellent location coordinating services for all film and media productions in the city and provides industry development support to the local screen-based community. In 2023, Brampton hosted 77 different film productions for a total of 131 film days.

A Brampton Film & Television Strategy is being produced in April of 2024, further cementing the City's commitment to advancing Brampton as a Film Hub.

Additionally, Brampton is a participating committee member of Ontario Green Screen, and with 171 languages spoken in Brampton, it provides global film attraction and diversity. Within Peel region, Brampton offers talent for development, pre- and post-production, production, distribution, RT3D, creative talent and supply chains, set design and build, fabrication, textiles, assembly, painters, and electricians.

Brampton's recognition of the importance of the Nollywood film industry and its active Nigerian-Canadian community positions the city to take advantage of these economic opportunities. The City's investment in the arts and creative industry development agency, and its support for the Innovation District downtown fosters an environment for the growth of the creative arts sector and the leveraging of economic opportunities, including those presented by the Nollywood film industry.

#### Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival (TINFF)

The Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival (TINFF) is a festival and award competition with live screenings held annually in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

In September 2023, EDO staff participated in the annual TINFF Gala and Awards Ceremony, where Mayor Patrick Brown presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to veteran Nollywood Actor, Richard Mofe-Damijo. In addition, EDO participated in a panel to discuss film opportunities in Brampton.

At this event, Mayor Patrick Brown invited Nollywood to consider Brampton as a choice location for movie shoots and premiers.

#### Brampton International Nollywood Film Festival (BINFF)

Tourism and EDO staff are currently in discussions with TINFF organizers to have components of the Toronto festival hosted in Brampton in 2024. In 2018, the festival was held at the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, and in 2019 it was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Brampton. Both events hosted over 450 participants from the Nollywood Film industry. The goal is for BINFF to return to Brampton in October 2024 and build on the momentum from previous years.

In February 2024, Mayor Patrick Brown presented a Lifetime Achievement Award to Mrs. Joy Efe Odiete, President of the Nigerian Association of Cinema Distribution, in Brampton. With a growing number of Nollywood artists based in Canada (especially in the GTA), City staff are continuing to engage the with the Nollywood community to attract filming and event opportunities to Brampton.

Also in February 2024, EDO staff attended the Canadian Black Screen Awards to provide a presentation on the film opportunities that exist for the Nollywood industry in Brampton.

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:**

#### **Financial Implications:**

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

**STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:**

This report supports the Strategic Focus Area of Growing Urban Centres and Neighborhoods to stimulate Innovation, Create Jobs, and Grow Investment.

**CONCLUSION:**

The City of Brampton will continue uplifting, empowering, and celebrating the Black community's valuable cultural, economic, and social contributions to Brampton's mosaic.

Authored by:

Reviewed by:

---

Denise McClure,  
Senior Manager, Economic  
Development  
Office of the CAO

---

Gage Board,  
Manager, Tourism  
Strategic Communications  
Corporate Services

Reviewed by:

---

Shanika Johnson  
Manager, Equity Office  
Corporate Support Services

Approved by:

Approved by:

---

Clare Barnett  
Director, Economic Development  
Office of the CAO

---

Marlon Kallideen,  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1 – Summer Company 2024 Information Session
- Attachment 2 – Summer Company 2023 Participants
- Attachment 3 – Brampton Entrepreneur Client Spotlights
- Attachment 4 – Innovation & Tech “Tech Talks” Event
- Attachment 5 – The Black Empowerment Approach



- Attachment 6 – Background on the Nollywood Film Industry