Innovative Supports for Black Parents Initiative
Application Feedback (Program and Research Project)

The following document reflects feedback provided by the selection committee for the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan – Innovative Supports for Black Parents (ISBP) Initiative – Program Delivery (in Winter 2017) and Community Based Research Project (Spring 2018).

The selection committee was made up of Ontario Public Service staff from a variety of ministries across the Ontario government, with expertise in parenting, health, education, community work and youth justice, who also self-identified as members of the Black community. Applications that were in French were reviewed by French-speaking committee members.

The feedback from the selection committee has been summarized below, to support organizations to improve future funding applications / proposals that they may undertake.

1. **Overall Feedback**

1.1 **Read the Application Package Closely**
Every program under the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan had a separate application package posted on the website: Ontario.ca/BlackYouthActionPlan. Completing the correct application package, and answering all of the questions in the application template was critical to completing a successful application. It also included scoring criteria and relevant timelines.

1.2 **Use the Application Template**
Included in each package, was an Application Template. Each section of the application template was assigned a weight and detailed the scoring criteria that should guide the depth of the responses. It contained information such as: proposed program goals and outcomes, and their alignment with the BYAP Guiding Framework; and detailed information about the applicant and partners.

1.3 **Answer the Application Questions Clearly**
Selection committee members could only review what was in the application and the reference letters. Selection committee members may not be familiar with the work of the applicant, which is why it was important for applicants to answer all of the elements of each question.

2. **Section One: Organizational Overview**

2.1 **Emphasizing Black Leadership**
The organizational overview asked applicants to indicate their connection to the community.

- **High scoring applications** clearly indicated in their application that the lead organization was Black-led or Black-focused (i.e. there are Black community members at the leadership table, the organizational mandate is to serve Black Ontarians etc.).
- **Lower scoring applications** did not explicitly indicate that the lead organization or partners were Black-led or Black-focused in the application. Lower scoring applications may have indicated that they had Black program beneficiaries, but Black identity was not at the core of their individual organization, partners or collaborative.
3. Section Two: Organizational Experience

3.1 Clearly Demonstrate Related Experience
The application asked applicants to indicate their experience delivering parenting or related family programming. This question helped selection committee members determine the applicant’s capability to deliver the program / centre they were proposing.

- **High scoring applications** clearly linked their experience to the program. For example, they not only indicated their experience delivering programs for parents / families, but specifically the targeted approaches they use to serve Black parents / families, including outreach methods and involvement of key partners. High scoring applicants also clearly indicated their (or their identified partners’) experience working specifically with the Black community.

- **Low scoring applications** did not indicate their experience serving the Black community or provide examples of experience delivering programs for Black parents / families specifically.

3.2 Don’t Forget to Indicate Your Partner’s Experience
Many applications focused on the experience of the lead organization, but there was an opportunity to identify the experience of partners as well.

- **High scoring applications** leveraged the experience of their partners to bolster their application. Collective Impact relies on partnerships that help maximize the impact of the program.

- **Low scoring applications** did not indicate their partner’s experience – or did not indicate any secured or expected partners at all.

4. Section Three: Program / Centre Model Proposal

4.1 Make Sure to Address All Elements of the Application
The application asked applicants the following elements of their proposed program / centre (see below). Applicants that scored higher responded to every single element.

- **High scoring applications** presented a clear description of the program / centre they intend to deliver. Key areas that marked high scoring applications were:
  - **Program Idea**: The application clearly outlined the proposed program / centre including how it was linked to and supported the Guiding Principles for the ISBP Program (e.g. cultural identity focused, culturally welcoming, inclusive of intersectionalities, etc.).
  - **Beneficiary Community**: The application clearly defined a BYAP beneficiary community and presented evidence to support the urgent need for service in their geographical area. Statistical data, community composition or barriers were identified to highlight gaps in service.
  - **Beneficiary Population**: The application identified a specific population requiring support and described them by using multiple intersecting qualifiers (i.e. age, gender, birthplace, nationality etc.). Recognition and understanding of cultural identity is clearly articulated to support alignment with the Collective Impact and
Cultural Identity (CI²) guiding principles. It was clear how the proposed program / centre would support the particular needs of this population.

- **Program Activities and Outcomes:** The application clearly described the planned activities and expected outcomes of the proposed program / centre, and those matched what was described in the call for applications.

- **Low scoring applications** did not address all of the elements described above.

4.2 Make Sure to Address All Elements of the Implementation Plan

Applicants were asked to outline the project plan in a chart, including projected milestones, dates, resources required and a description of the activities involved.

- **High scoring applications** outlined in detail each of the steps that they would follow to plan and implement their proposed program / centre. Key areas that marked high scoring applications were:
  - **Recruitment:** The application outlined specific recruitment techniques for program participants to ensure that the target population would be aware and access their proposed program / centre.
  - **Partnerships:** The application clearly outlined how any expected partnerships would be secured.
  - **Start-up Activities:** The application outlined what start-up was required for the proposed program / centre.

- **Low scoring applications** did not address all of the elements above clearly, or sections of the chart were incomplete (e.g. descriptions of milestone activities were not included, etc.)

4.3 Staffing Model

- **High scoring applications** outlined the number of staff that would run the program / centres, the level of experience that staff would require and how they would be trained. In particular, specific details about a training program that would reflect the unique cultural identities of the proposed beneficiary population and support CI² guiding principles (i.e. Anti-Black Racism Training).

- **Low scoring applications** provided limited, too general, or no information about the staffing plan. It may not have mentioned the required qualifications needed for staff, and the training plan, if mentioned may not have specifically addressed the need to ensure staff were trained in a way that would support the CI² guiding principles (i.e. Anti-Black Racism Training).

Section Four: Additional Information

5.1 Reference Letters

Applicants were required to submit no more than two reference letters. Applicants that submitted more than two, were only scored on the first two letters that were attached to the application – the selection committee was not given more than two letters to review.

- **High scoring applications** submitted two reference letters that:

Ministry of Children and Youth Services
Clearly described how the applicant / partners were connected to the children, youth, families and parents that the community that the proposed program / centre would be targeting;

Outlined the applicant / partners capacity to effectively deliver the type of program / centre they were proposing; and

Were written by individuals (i.e. parents, youth, etc.) who had received services from the applicant / partner(s), or were community partners (not identified as partners in the application) or community leaders.

**Low scoring applications** submitted less than two reference letters, or:

- The reference letters did not address the applicant / partner(s) capacity to deliver the program / centre that was proposed, or did not describe their connection to the community; or

- The reference letter(s) were written by the partner(s) identified in the application as partners delivering the proposed program / centre

### Section Five: Community-Based Research Project

#### 6.1 Research Question and Goals

The application asked applicants to describe the research questions, hypotheses, or anticipated outcomes of your proposed project.

- **High scoring applications:**
  Appropriate research questions, hypotheses and anticipated outcomes were clearly articulated.

- **Low scoring applications:**
  Did not demonstrate an understanding of the ISBP Project generally and as such did not fit with the intent of research and evaluation component of the Project. Did not demonstrate how their related knowledge and experience in the Black community could be translated and transferred to other and broader parenting circumstances. Research questions did not seem to fit with the Ministry stated objectives, and as such the proposed research outcomes do not fit with that of the Ministry’s.

#### 6.2 Approach

*The application asked applicants to describe their research methods, methodology, or theoretical framework, as well as their anticipated final product.*

- **High scoring applications:**
  The approach presented was appropriate for the proposed work and aligned with the research/evaluation questions. The approach presented was logical and clear and included alignment with the Collective Impact and Cultural Identity (CI2) and Anti-Black Racism (ABR) frameworks.

- **Low scoring applications:**
  The proposed research was vague, and provided little detail on the research methods, methodology, or theoretical framework. An understanding that the participants for this
research and evaluation project would include the beneficiaries of the ISBP funded initiatives was not demonstrated.

6.3 Implementation Plan
The application asked applicants to list the milestones and approximate timelines that they propose to achieve and reach the goals of their project.

- **High scoring applications:**
  The implementation plan was concise and addressed all the elements identified in the previous section (approach). The plan clearly identified appropriate roles of various individuals/groups. Timelines were appropriate and risk/mitigating strategies were outlined.

- **Low scoring applications:**
  The implementation plan contained little detail or was incomplete and the key required components were not outlined. Milestones and/or resource requirements were vague or incomplete and there was limited indication of who would be responsible for what. Identification of risks was not demonstrated.

6.4 Knowledge Mobilization:
Applicants were asked to describe how they plan to share their results and findings with diverse sectors and partners including targeted communications.

- **High scoring applications:**
  Applicants demonstrated a clear plan that detailed all of their proposed activities. A variety of activities were described and timelines were included.

- **Low scoring applications:**
  The Knowledge Mobilization Plan did not identify how the results and findings from the proposed research will be shared or was incomplete.

6.5 Proposed Budget
Applicants were asked to provide a proposed budget.

- **High scoring applications:**
  The budget presented was comprehensive and a detailed description of each expense was included. The proposed budget did not exceed the maximum amount per year.

- **Low scoring applications:**
  The budget presented did not provide a detailed description of each expense. The proposed budget exceeded the maximum amount per year.

5.6 Research/Evaluation Experience
Applicants were asked to demonstrate relevant experience in undertaking and completing successful community-based research and evaluation projects with or in the Black community, including developing evaluation frameworks, collecting and analyzing program data and making program and policy recommendations.

- **High scoring applications:**
  Ministry of Children and Youth Services
• Described extensive research and evaluation experience between the lead and partner applicant and significant Black community-based research and evaluation experience with a good success in helping to inform service delivery and policy-decisions
• **Low scoring applications:**
  Did not demonstrate any research / evaluation experience or the question was not answered directly.

6.7 Expertise in Related Fields/Connection to the Community
Applicants were asked to demonstrate expertise in relevant fields and a connection to the Black community.

• **High scoring applications:**
The applicants described relevant expertise in the area of culturally relevant parenting and family programming and demonstrated a significant and long-term connection with Black youth, families, neighbourhoods and agencies.
• **Low scoring applications:**
  Applicants stated community ties but offered few examples to substantiate the claims.

6.8 Collective Impact and Cultural Identity (CI2) and Anti-Black Racism (ABR) framework alignment is clearly articulated.
Applicants were asked to demonstrate an understanding of the CI2 and ABR framework and explain how the framework informed the design and guided the execution of the proposed project.

• **High scoring applications:**
  Applicants understood and integrated Collective Impact, Anti-Black Racism and Culturally Informed frameworks into their research, evaluation and programming activities.
• **Low scoring applications:**
  Applicants did not demonstrate and understanding of Collective Impact or Anti-Black Racism.