

2024 - 2027



# **BLACK FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ALLIANCE STRATEGIC PLAN**

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# WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

In 2019, the Afri-Can Food Basket established the Black Food Sovereignty Initiative Toronto (BFSIT) in response to recommendation #8 of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism Action Plan. With the support of the City's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit (CABR) and Toronto Metropolitan University's Centre of Studies in Food Security, this initiative was put in place to improve food access for low-income Black Torontonians. The BFSIT's objective is to create leadership and advocacy through a collective framework around advancing food issues impacting Black communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The Black Food Sovereignty Working Group is committed to critical dialogue that strengthens community understanding of food sovereignty and supports policy and program development for food sovereignty among Black communities. Since 2020, regular community conversations have been organized and a newsletter has been initiated to keep the dialogue alive. As part of a commitment to action-oriented dialogue, we have also initiated a publication series on critical issues for Black Food sovereignty nationally and in Toronto. The current policy-oriented report – Food Sovereignty for Black Communities in Toronto: Challenges and Policy Opportunities – is the first publication in the series. The second part is expected to be issued later in 2023, and other reports in the following years.



# OUR MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

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## MISSION

To advocate, educate and collectively dialogue and collaborate for Black Food Sovereignty for People of African Descent in GTA, embracing and honoring past wisdom and practice to ensure a sustainable and interconnected future for generations to come.

## VISION

To live in a society where People of African Descent enjoy equitable access to food and are empowered to exercise their own stewardship of food systems driven by their own interest and for the benefit of all Black communities in the GTA.

## VALUES

### *INCLUSIVE*

"I am because we are" - ensuring that no one is left out by accepting and respecting our diversity.

### *HONORING ANCESTRAL AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES*

As a foundation for today's solutions, we will utilize Afrocentric Principles and ancestral knowledge and practices by identifying, maintaining and centering them in our everyday activities to preserve and pass on to future generations.

### *SELF-DETERMINATION*

We are the authors of our own lives and as such we are coauthors with the institutions that govern our lives. We have the right and competence to make our own decisions free from oppression.

### *RESPECT AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT*

Our environment underpins our very existence hence, we are stewards of the environment and we embrace our responsibility to care for and protect it and respect it as the source of our existence.

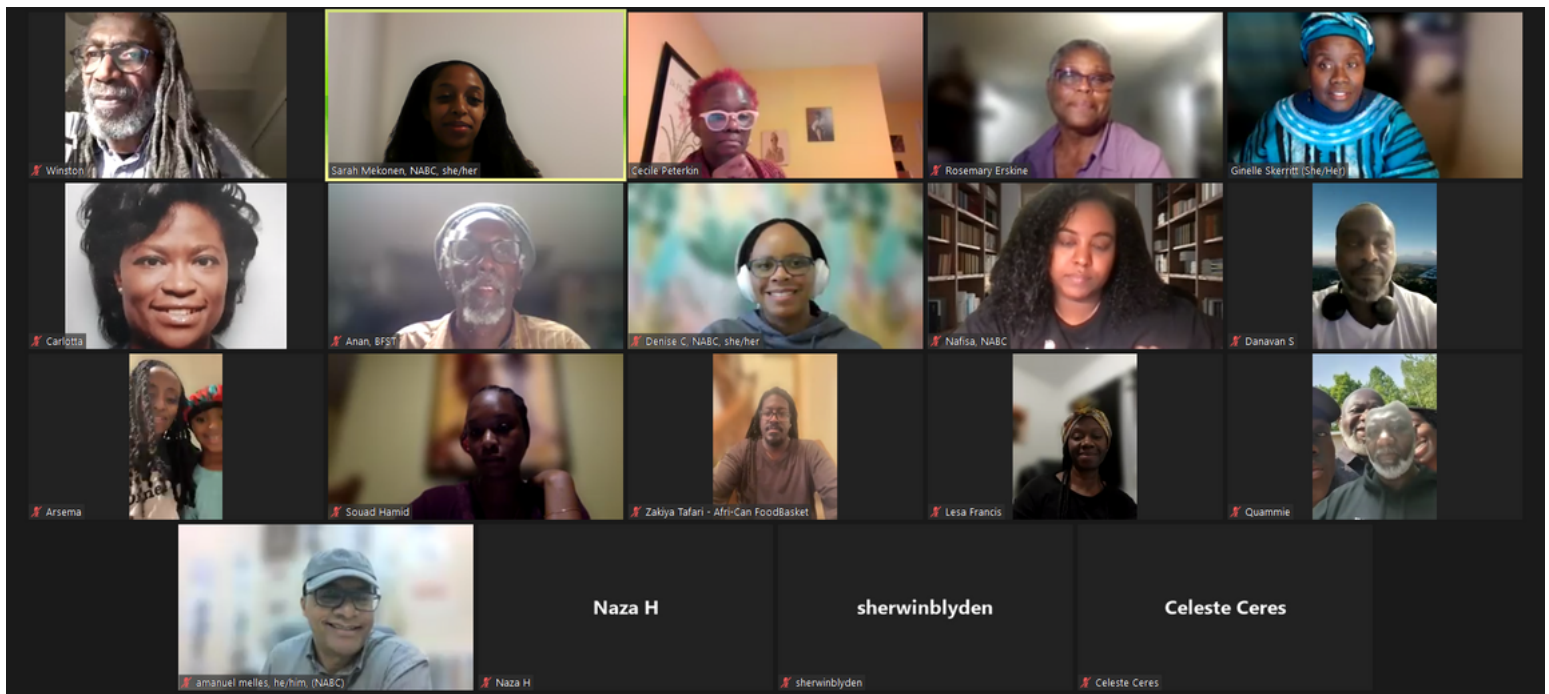
### *COLLABORATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING*

We work and learn together with our communities, various sectors, industries, and groups in authentic and trusting relationships with a shared vision and understanding to tackle the most complex issues to bring about food sovereignty for people of African Descent.

### *INTEGRITY*

Integrity is a matter of one's word and honoring our word is the foundation from which we work, and is the necessary condition and standard from which we operate with individuals, groups, and organizations.





# INTRODUCTION

In 2021, to advance the initiative, the Black Food Sovereignty Working Group submitted a successful proposal to the Metcalf Foundation to advance Black Food Sovereignty in Toronto. A primary objective was to build an Alliance of community stakeholders and institutional partners to work together to coordinate and enable community engagement and leadership of the City of Toronto's Black Food Sovereignty plan

In 2023, the Black Food Sovereignty Working Group (BFSWG) contracted the Network for the Advancement of Black Communities (NABC) to develop a three (3) year strategic plan with the focus of building the Alliance. The strategic planning process began in late June 2023 and concluded in November 2023. This strategic plan is a response to building the Alliance and creating

a new strategic phase of realizing self-determination, addressing the structural roots of anti-Black racism, and promoting health and wellbeing. This will be a collective effort of partners representing Black farmers, restaurateurs, dieticians, nutritionists, importers, and more to secure resources for their communities, empowering them to become more food secure, and ultimately, food sovereign.

NABC facilitated a process that included: a discussion of future directions with the working group and key stakeholders, a review of the organization's mission, vision, and values, and a SOAR analysis in which the organizational strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results were identified from stakeholder interviews. Four (4) strategic themes emerged from the analysis of data and environmental scan. The process also resulted in four strategic pillars.





## CONTEXT

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In 2018, Black families in Canada were 3.5 times more likely to be food insecure than white families, and over one-third of Black children lived in food-insecure households (Dhunna and Tarasuk, 2021; FoodShare and PROOF, 2019). This chronically insecure access to food illustrates how systemic inequality undermines Black Canadians' health and well-being. Inequitable access to food and other inequalities in health and well-being are the result of years of racism, discrimination, and inequality (Roberts 2020). Black Food Sovereignty is an approach to addressing inequitable food

access—it supports Black people to exercise stewardship of food systems in their own interests.

Achieving Black Food Sovereignty entails removing the systemic barriers that affect Black people's ability to produce and access food, and instituting policies and programs that support and strengthen access to food of appropriate quality and quantity. This paper outlines (a) how and why food insecurity has become a chronic problem among Black communities, and (b) policy directions and opportunities in the City of Toronto and elsewhere to promote food sovereignty.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

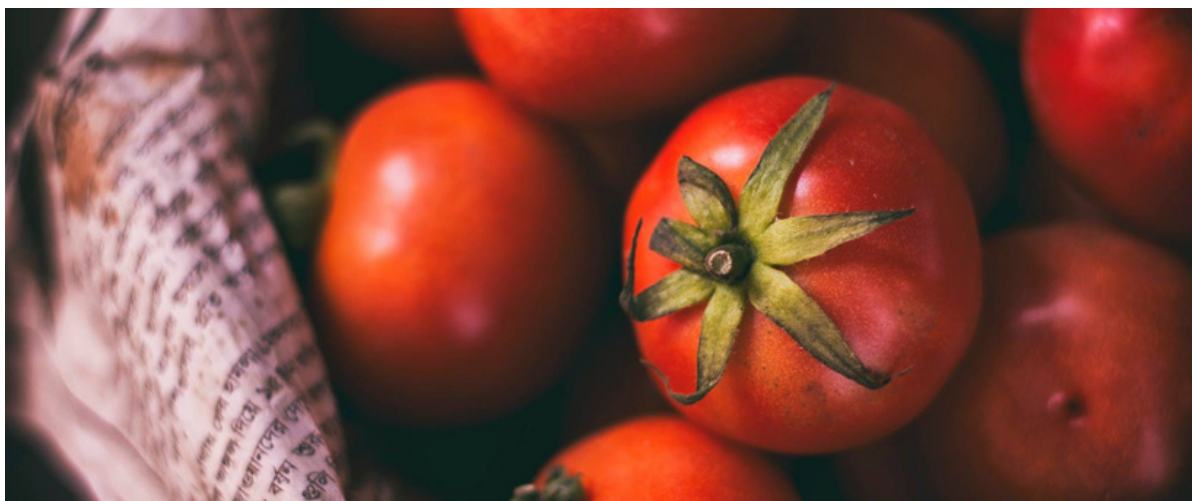
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As part of the strategic planning process, 23 stakeholders provided input on the vision, mission, values, and strategic directions for the next three (3) years. The past vision, mission, and values were reviewed and received unanimous suggestions to include a more Afro-centric lens into the vision, mission, and values. A comprehensive assessment was conducted both internally and externally which included interviews of 11 key stakeholders, a review of 2020-2021 Newsletters, and an environmental scan of the food industry and food organizations.

The assessment during the strategic planning process revealed that the Black Sovereignty Working Group mobilized the black community through community conversations which contributed to data collection, identifying gaps in food security for the black community and

provided opportunities for the black community to engage and learn about issues related to food and food security. It also showed that the Working Group was instrumental in advocating successfully for the City of Toronto's Black Food Sovereignty Plan and has been a partner with the City in implementing the plan. One of the primary strengths echoed by the stakeholders interviewed was the commitment of the Working Group and their deep knowledge and understanding of issues related to food and food security.

The strategic plan moves the needle forward for the Black Food Sovereignty Working Group to build the Alliance and be a catalyst for Black farmers, restaurateurs, dieticians, nutritionists, importers, and people of African Descent to realize food security, and ultimately, food sovereignty.



# STRATEGIC PILLARS

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The four strategic pillars are interdependent and focus on key growth areas for the Alliance. Each has associated goals, and strategies, with accountability indicators by which progress and success are measured. These will also be created in a scorecard framework that will be used as a roadmap for the Alliance to track its results. Below are the four strategic pillars with associated goals.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING – ALLIANCE, MEMBERS, COMMUNITY**

Goals:

1. Building a strong, resilient, visible, and adaptative Alliance that responds to the need for immediate and comprehensive action to address the problem of food insecurity experienced by people of African Descent
2. Amplify, elevate, and champion the voices and narratives of the Alliance members
3. Engage, educate, influence, and champion community leadership, particularly the youth to take action to advance Black Food Sovereignty

## **POLITICAL POLICY, ADVOCACY & RESEARCH**

Goals:

1. Develop policy priorities to ensure the continuity and sustainability of Black Food Sovereignty at the municipal level
2. Influencing government food policies by ensuring representation is present at policy meetings
3. Conduct and share research that enhances the Black food Industry and improves the lives of people of African descent

## **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

Goal:

1. Build strong relationships with municipal, provincial, and federal governments to leverage support for food disparities in Black communities

## **COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS**

Goal:

1. Develop a network organizing framework for collective visioning and action around food and food issues impacting people of African Descent





# STRATEGIC PLAN ROADMAP FOR THE NEXT THREE (3) YEARS

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Capacity Building Alliance, Members &amp; Community</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Political Policy, Advocacy &amp; Research</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Government Relations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Collaboration &amp; Partnerships</li></ul>
WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Building a strong, resilient, visible, and adaptative alliance that responds to the need for immediate and comprehensive action to address the problem of food insecurity experienced by people of African Descent.</li><li>Amplifying, elevating, and championing the voices and narratives of Alliance members</li><li>Engaging, educating influencing, and championing community leadership, particularly youth to take actions to advance Black Food Sovereign</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop policy priorities to ensure the continuity and sustainability of Black food sovereignty at the municipal level</li><li>Influencing government food policies by ensuring representation is present at policy meetings</li><li>Conduct and share research that enhances the Black food Industry and improves the lives of people of African descent.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Build strong relationships with municipal government to leverage support for food disparities in Black communities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop a network organizing framework for collective visioning and action around food and food issues impacting people of African Descent</li></ul>
THROUGH INITIATIVES THAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Build and sustain operational excellence (<i>financial sustainability, organization health, and infrastructure</i>)</li><li>Build a strong reputation for the Alliance through branding, promotion, and community engagement.</li><li>Increase the diversity of the members so that it is inclusive of everyone.</li><li>Foster healthy relationships and partnerships within the Black communities, government, groups, and organizations</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide support to the design and analysis of policies that aim to tackle structural racism to address systemic racism in the food agriculture system</li><li>Create and develop a research lab that systematically collects and analyzes data that contributes to the foundation of effective sustainable food security policies, and policy decisions that support the Black food agriculture systems' players in their endeavors.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify three (3) governmental priority initiatives to work on in tandem with the community and members.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work in partnership with other organizations to learn, adapt, and coordinate different approaches to work towards common food system objectives.</li><li>Create a directory, mapping the Black food system players to support resource development and distribution</li></ul>
AND RESULTING IN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A strong, resilient, adaptive, visible Alliance, of members and community that adapts to emerging needs and challenges</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Equitable, just, and sustainable policies that sustain the Black food ecosystem</li><li>A food and agriculture system that reflects and represents the diversity of Canada</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strong government relations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Trustful collaborative partnerships that build the economic wealth of the Black community</li></ul>
TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF OUR MISSION AND OUR VISION OF	MISSION To advocate, educate, and collectively dialogue and collaborate for Black Food Sovereignty for People of African Descent in GTA, embracing and honoring past wisdom and practice to ensure a sustainable and interconnected future for generations to come.					
	VISION To live in a society where people of African Descent enjoy equitable access to food and are empowered to exercise their own stewardship of food systems driven by their own interest and for the benefit of all Black communities in the GTA.					
WHILE BEING	Inclusive	Honoring Ancestral and Traditional Knowledge and Practices	Self-Determined	Respect and Protect the Environment	Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing	Integrity