

# THE INTERSECTORAL ACTION FUND NEWSLETTER

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## A message to readers

Welcome to the Intersectoral Action Fund's (ISAF) newsletter series! The ISAF is a unique funding program from the Public Health Agency of Canada that champions upstream, cross-sectoral action to tackle the social determinants of health (SDOH) and reduce health inequities. As a community-based funding program, ISAF invests in multi-stakeholder interventions seeking to improve the structural factors that shape people's lives and their behaviours - from addressing housing instability and promoting financial wellbeing to changing the way decisions are made to support more equitable policy and programs.

In 2024–25, ISAF launched an open call for proposals and awarded funding to 14 new projects across Canada, investing \$3.1M over two years to help communities integrate health, equity, and wellbeing into local decision-making.

Each project is a testament to the power of collaboration and local leadership. In this edition, we are thrilled to feature a project by the **Black Food Sovereignty Alliance** (BFSA; March 2025 to March 2027). The BFSA's project will establish an alliance of Black Food Sovereignty champions; raise awareness of systemic food sovereignty issues and priorities; create economic opportunities for low-income Black Torontonians; and support policy and leadership development for Black Food Sovereignty. The following sections reflect insights provided by the BFSA.

## 1 Featured organization: Overview



The BFSA is a Black community-led, Black-focused and Black-mandated (B3) network advancing Black Food Sovereignty, land justice, and equitable food systems across Canada. We work at the intersection of policy, practice, and community power-building to



address systemic barriers faced by Black farmers, growers, food workers, and food-insecure communities.

BFSA convenes Black-led organizations, producers, and knowledge holders to strengthen leadership, share resources, and mobilize collective action. Our work includes policy and advocacy, research and knowledge mobilization, leadership development, and community-based initiatives that support sustainable, culturally rooted food systems.

**Our mission is to advance Black Food Sovereignty by building collective power, influencing food and agricultural policy, and supporting Black communities to reclaim control over food systems that impact our community, rooted in equity, self-determination, and intergenerational resilience.**



## 2 What does “upstream” mean to your project or community, and why is it important?

For BFSA, “upstream” means addressing systemic barriers to food security, fostering community resilience, and promoting health equity within Black communities. Rather than relying solely on reactive, downstream emergency measures (like food banks), our work focuses on long-term structural change, ownership, and self-determination.

Over the past year, the BFSA has deepened its upstream work, addressing the root causes of food insecurity in Black communities rather than only the symptoms. We continue to advocate for systemic policy changes that recognize food as a fundamental human right, not a privilege. Our community’s food insecurity rate is 47%, the highest rate in the country. This is, and should be, recognized as a national crisis that requires urgent action from intersectoral stakeholders.

BFSA continues to strengthen partnerships with community, health, and academic institutions to advance B3 solutions, reflecting a strategic shift toward systemic, community-controlled approaches to addressing food insecurity, anti-Black racism, and structural inequities in the food system.



## 3 What are you hearing from your community?

We are hearing strong, affirming feedback from across our Black food ecosystem. Academic partners such as the University of Toronto, University of Guelph, and Toronto Metropolitan University Centre for Studies in Food Security regularly reach out to BFSA to collaborate on research, policy engagement, and community-based projects that advance shared goals around Black Food Sovereignty. These institutions consistently recognize BFSA as a trusted bridge between academic knowledge and Black-led, community-grounded practice.

At the same time, our Black Food Sovereignty champions across Canada, the United States, Ghana, and Guyana have expressed deep enthusiasm about working with us. They describe BFSA and its leadership as innovators and pioneers setting bold, collaborative, and culturally rooted pathways for the transformation of Black sustainable food systems at local, national, and transnational levels.

Community members also express appreciation for BFSA’s role in connecting them to practical knowledge, networks, and opportunities—whether that’s learning about food justice, supporting Black farmers, engaging in advocacy, or participating in events and dialogues.

## 4 Key project highlights & milestones



In October 2025, BFSA attended and participated in the historic Global Black Food Sovereignty Mbongi (learning circle) at the Kweku Andoh Sustainability Institute (KASI) in Ghana. The outcome of this international Black

Food Sovereignty gathering will be the soon-to-be-released Pan-African Declaration for Global Black Food Sovereignty (BFSA was nominated as the co-chair of the newly established Global Black Food Sovereignty Collective).

In September 2025, the BFSA inaugural Black Farmers Tour celebrated the leadership of Black farmers and food growers in Toronto by connecting them with the broader community. The tour generated far more interest than we expected and encour-

-aged economic benefits, including increased sales for local urban farmers, and opportunities for collaboration.

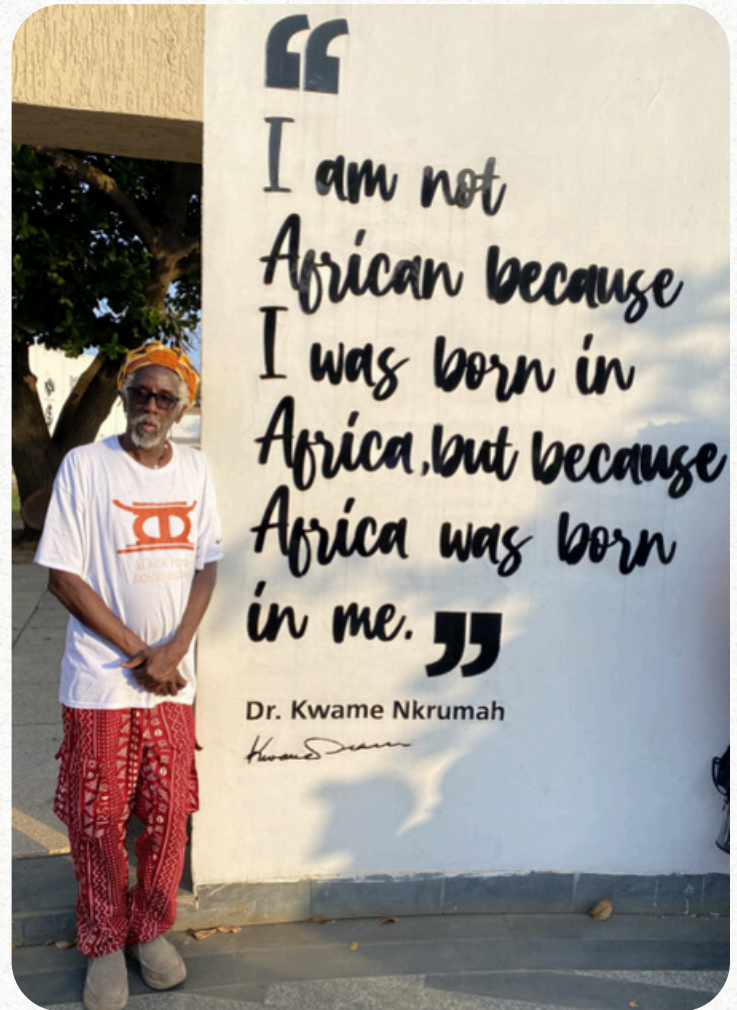
BFSA will soon release its Black Food Sovereignty Leadership Development Action Plan, developed with Black sustainable food systems leaders from across Canada and the U.S., to strengthen a resilient, visible, and adaptive food sovereignty community addressing food insecurity among people of African descent.

## 5 What’s next for your initiative?

Next for BFSA is a dynamic year of convening, learning, and movement-building. This Spring, we will host our annual conference, bringing together Black farmers, organizers, researchers, and policymakers to advance shared strategies for Black Food Sovereignty.

In the Summer, we will lead two farm tours of Black-owned and operated farms; one urban and one rural in partnership with the Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (CAFCAN). We will also begin our hands-on leadership training, creating opportunities for relationship-building, skills exchange, and on-the-ground learning across Black-led food initiatives across North America.

In the Fall, we will convene the 2nd annual Global Black Food Sovereignty Mbongi, a transnational gathering that connects Black Food Sovereignty leaders from across the diaspora to deepen collaboration, share knowledge, and strengthen collective action toward self-determined, resilient Black food systems.



We invite you to learn more about [ISAF's inspiring initiatives](#) and to share them with your networks to help amplify their impact.