

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Women and Gender Equality Canada team up with Black Women Business Network to close the gap for underrepresented Black women in tech.

... Launch project to identify and address systemic barriers.

Vancouver, Canada, December 1, 2021— In what has been described as a timely intervention, Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) and Black Women Business Network (BWBN) have launched a project to close the gap for underrepresented women in the tech field. The project will support the ongoing efforts of the government of Canada to improve the economic security and prosperity of women and girls by addressing systemic barriers to women's equality.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered one of the worst job crises since the Great Depression and magnified systemic and longstanding inequalities, with women and girls disproportionately affected. For tech workers, the pandemic, however, presented a unique opportunity. With people increasingly conducting their daily lives online and businesses increasingly relying on online selling and service channels, tech professionals are quickly becoming an integral part of most industries.

As Canada recovers from the pandemic, digitalization and technical jobs will be in high demand. Currently, the number of women in tech is lower than their male counterparts. The gap is significantly greater when considering women of colour. The project will identify and address systemic barriers that prevent Black women and girls from equitably accessing and participating in high-paying resilient tech jobs.

Black Women Business Network will collaborate with the British Columbia Institute of Technology, The Voice, Black Buildup, HelpAide, and other equity-seeking organizations to develop interventions to address the systemic barriers and tech-skilling for Black women and girls.

The project is funded by WAGE's Feminist Response and Recovery Fund, which aims to support a feminist response and recovery from the current impacts of COVID-19 through systemic change projects in three priority areas.

Pasima Sule, Executive Director, Black Women Business Network said:

"We appreciate the generous support from Women and Gender Equality Canada to improve the lives of Black women and girls in Canada by examining the systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing high-paying resilient tech jobs. We cannot achieve gender equality until we identify and remove systemic barriers that hold women back from reaching their full potential.

BWBN will contribute to addressing the systemic barriers by advancing inclusive policies and practices, increasing networks and collaboration to accelerate systemic change, and addressing persistent harmful gender norms and attitudes to support women's equality."

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