

CRAIG WELLINGTON

Executive Director



Black Opportunity Fund: Forging the Way to a Thriving Black Canada

A community-led, registered Canadian charitable organization, BOF was established to respond to systemic underinvestment in Black communities by providing needs-informed capital streams managed by and designed for Black people to facilitate the growth of prosperous, healthy, and vibrant communities. BOF's national scope allows them to cultivate strong networks and collaborations, and continuously create ever-more relevant and impactful methods of support and advocacy. They provide Black-led businesses and community organizations with grants, loans, and capacity building, and to date, have helped hundreds of organizations. They also serve as community orchestrators, meeting with Black community organizations and leaders across Canada to develop, mobilize, and catalyze collective action and policy solutions to pressing issues facing Black Canadians. In 2022, BOF launched a micro-loan program for Black-led businesses that had been previously denied loans from traditional financial institutions. This year, BOF is thrilled to be working towards the launch of a \$50 million venture capital fund—that will be the largest of its kind in Canada—focused on equity investments in Black founders, and also funding other Black-led VC funds.

The Leader Fueling the Rapid Ascent of BOF and Black Communities

Craig joined BOF as their first executive director in 2021, and in just a few short years, he's helped to build it into a dynamic and well respected organization on a rapidly rising trajectory. His nearly 30 years in leadership roles at

ABOUT CRAIG

Craig Wellington is a strong believer in the Swahili principle of Ubuntu—'I am because we are' — that when all communities are allowed to achieve their potential, everyone is uplifted. That's why, as executive director of the Black Opportunity Fund (BOF), he's working to establish equitable, sustainable funding for the social and economic empowerment of Black communities across Canada. He uses his considerable expertise in not-for-profit and community leadership to develop and execute innovative strategies to secure and deploy capital for community good, while always maintaining an anti-oppression lens with a focus on community engagement and partnerships. Prioritizing initiatives around youth and education, women and gender, criminal justice, entrepreneurship, health, and arts and culture, BOF seeks to elevate the outcomes for generations of Black Canadians.



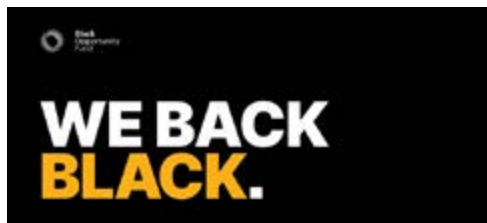
There is often a price to pay for standing up against inequity, but if people aren't willing to stand up, it's society that pays the price.

CONTACT:

www.blackopportunityfund.ca
craig@blackopportunityfund.org
LI: black-opportunity-fund
FB: BlackOpportunityFund
IG: blkopportunity



not-for-profits and partnerships with corporations, educational institutions, and all levels of government, give him the insight to establish sustainable, scalable practices that ultimately benefit the people who matter the most: Canada's diverse Black communities. BOF has received significant investments in its mission, including \$10 million from TD Bank – the largest commitment ever by a Canadian corporation to a Black-led, Black-focused organization, and \$6.5 million from National Bank Financial, allowing BOF to rapidly scale up operations and achieve positive community impact. “The significant investments by corporate Canada right from our inception, are a testament to the confidence inspired by BOF’s incredibly accomplished founders and board, led by Chair, Ray Williams,” says Wellington. “I am privileged to be steering this ship on the course these visionary leaders have charted.” In addition to his leadership experience, Craig is also a diversity, equity & inclusion consultant who has helped organizations in Canada and the U.S. develop and implement impactful strategies to transform their culture. He has significant experience in community advocacy and was a former member of the Toronto Chief of Police’s Black Community Consultative Committee and is a current member of the City of Mississauga’s Mayor’s Black Caucus. Craig has been a tireless champion for equity, including at the intersections of race, gender, economic status, gender identity, ability, religion, and national origin. “There is often a price to pay for standing up against inequity, but if people aren’t willing to stand up,” says Wellington, “it’s society that pays the price.”



Building Partnerships That Make a Difference

Craig is also leading BOF’s partnership efforts. “We’ve partnered with five of the six major Canadian banks, which is unprecedented, and we’re helping them to reach their social impact goals with regard to economic opportunity for Black communities,” Craig says. BOF has also funded the creation of a patient amenities fund at world renowned SickKids Hospital in Toronto, supporting the needs of children being treated for sickle-cell anemia and their families, as well as funding, with support from Walmart Canada, the creation and free distribution of a capsule shredder technology that will allow all Canadian children being treated for sickle cell disease, to safely be administered treatment in their own homes.

Uniting Society For the Betterment of All

Craig is inspired every day to lead BOF’s talented and dedicated team in dismantling the systemic barriers to social and economic inclusion and advancement that have too long stood in the way of Black entrepreneurs, and communities. “People often think equity is like pie, that there’s a finite amount, and if someone gets more, someone else will get less,” Craig explains. “But equity is additive. When any segment of society is allowed to achieve their full potential, everyone benefits. If we are successful in our mission, it will increase social and economic opportunities for all Canadians.”