

B3 ACADEMY (PART 1)

SUPPORTING A JOURNEY OF EXCELLENCE FOR B3 LEADERS

Please find here a summary based on the Black Experience Project to support B3 leaders.

Launched in 2010, the Black Experience Project (BEP) is a seminal research study focused on examining the lived experiences of individuals who self-identify as Black or African heritage living in the Greater Toronto Area (Toronto, York, Durham, Peel and Halton). Led by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, along with lead partners the United Way of Toronto and York Region, the YMCA of the Greater Toronto Area, and Ryerson's Diversity Institute, this study aims to provide a better understanding of the lives of Black individuals within the GTA, including the factors leading to their successes and challenges. The results are intended to provide valuable insight and direction in identifying policies and other initiatives that will contribute to the health and vibrancy of the Black community, and by doing so, the health and vibrancy of the entire GTA community and beyond. (<https://www.theblackexperienceproject.ca/>)

It is intended to be a tool for leadership and advocacy as leaders engage within the Black community and pursue funding and resource support with governments and other organizations.

It helps to answer the question – what is in it for the community and the broader society?

It also speaks to wealth and vibrancy within our community, that can encourage leaders in this work.

Some statistics are also referenced from the Toronto Social Capital Study of 2022.

DATA & RESOURCE SUPPORT ARE IMPORTANT TOOLS FOR LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

A) The Black Experience Project (GTA) (2007 -2017) - survey research with and for the Black Community, intended to:

- 1) Be a resource for organizations and governments who are committed to supporting the aspirations of this vibrant community.

B) Broader – Toronto Social Capital Study (2022)

Although the Black community is not a monolith, anecdotal information points to similarity of experiences across Canada.

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Black community leadership and the Black community.

Recent explorations of the experiences of Black residents of Canada's largest metropolitan area have shone the light not only on the barriers imposed by systemic racism, but also the strengths of the community, particularly in terms of solidarity, community engagement, and community leadership.

Black identity, culture and leadership is a community resource.

Members of the Black community express a strong sense of a shared Black identity and solidarity. In the Greater Toronto Area:

- 75% of Black residents *strongly agree* that "in general, being Black is an important part of my identity" (97% strongly or somewhat agree);
- 75% of Black residents *strongly agree* that it is important for Black people to support other Black people to be successful" (96% strongly or somewhat agree). [Source: BEP]

And there is widespread agreement that the Black community has an important cultural, social and political influence the wider community. Among Black residents in the GTA, 61 percent cite their community's culture as being among its most important contributions to making the GTA a better place to live. The next most commonly cited contribution is the community's leadership and mentorship (36%). [Source: BEP]

Community engagement – volunteerism.

Black Canadians are active and engaged in their communities, often to a greater extent than the national average.

- In 2015, two in three Black residents of the GTA said they had volunteered at least some of their time during the past 12 months. Black Torontonians were more likely to volunteer than the national average, and those who volunteered tended to give more of their time than did Canadian volunteers on average. [Source: BEP]
- In 2022, 55 percent of Black residents of the city of Toronto felt that people working together can make a lot of difference in solving problems in their community, compared to a city-wide average of 41% (88% of Black Torontonians felt that people working together can make at least some difference). [Source: TSCS]

This greater extent of engagement is mirrored by greater confidence in the role of community institutions in providing help.

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- In 2022, 57 percent of Black residents of the city of Toronto felt confident that a religious institution would provide help to them if they were to fall on hard times (compared to a city-wide average of 42%).
- 54 percent of Black residents felt confident that a charitable organization in their community would provide help to them if they were to fall on hard times (compared to a city-wide average of 48%).

Strengths of and hopes for the Black community.

Black residents of the GTA are most likely to see perseverance, resilience, and community support as the main strengths of the Black community. And most speak of their hopes for the Black community in terms of building and advocating for a stronger community.

Strengths of the Black community in the GTA (top mentions)		Hopes for the Black community over the next few years (top mentions)	
Perseverance and hard work	50%	Build a stronger and more supportive community or culture	61%
Community support and solidarity	49%	More advocacy for the community	35%

[Source: BEP]

Confronting barriers in the wider community

Black community members and leaders must carry out their day-to-day community-building work in a context of systemic racism. As well as direct incidents of racism, unfair treatment and exclusion, which have been extensively documented, the Black community must contend with public perceptions and stereotypes that dismiss or misrepresent the contributions of Black individuals, organizations and leaders.

- Four in five Black residents of the GTA believe that non-Black people hold negative impressions of the Black people in their city.
- Four in five Black residents of the GTA say that Black people are portrayed inaccurately in the media in terms of an exaggerated extent of their involvement in criminal activities or drugs. Others points to inaccurate portrayals of Black people that rely on other negative stereotypes and misrepresentations. [Source: BEP]

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And Black individuals and leaders must contend with experiences of being over-looked or dismissed by their non-Black counterparts.

- In 2015, one in four (26%) Black residents of the GTA said they frequently experienced others expecting their work to be inferior. More than one in two (56%) said this happened to them at least occasionally. [Source: BEP]
- Similarly, in 2022, one in four (25%) Black residents of the city of Toronto said they experienced others acting as if they were not smart at least once a week. [Source: TSCS]
- More generally, the 2022 study found that Black residents of the city of Toronto scored much higher than other identity groups on an index of everyday racism (higher scores indicate more frequent experiences of everyday racism). [Source: TSCS]

Data sources:

BEP: The Black Experience Project in the GTA (see <https://www.theblackexperienceproject.ca/>).

TSCS: The Toronto Social Capital Study 2022 (see <https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/project-details/toronto-social-capital-study-2022>).