

AI NEXUS FOR BLACK INNOVATORS

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE AI FUTURE

A Black Youth Agenda for Canada

Submission to the People's Consultation on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

A human-rights, public-interest and economic-opportunity framework for Black youth

SUBMITTED BY AI Nexus for Black Innovators (AINBI)

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**SUBMISSION
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Black youth must not only be included in Canada's AI future. They must help lead, build, own and govern it.

March 20, 2026

The Honourable Evan Solomon
Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation
Government of Canada

Re: AINBI Submission to the People's Consultation on Artificial Intelligence

Dear Minister Solomon,

On behalf of the AI Nexus for Black Innovators (AINBI), I am pleased to submit our policy paper, Black Youth Must Help Shape Canada's AI Future, as part of the People's Consultation on Artificial Intelligence.

AINBI is a national organization working to advance the participation, leadership, and ownership of Black communities in artificial intelligence, technology, innovation, and public policy.

Our submission highlights both the opportunities and risks that artificial intelligence presents for Black youth in Canada. It provides practical policy recommendations related to AI education, employment, skills development, privacy, algorithmic discrimination, responsible governance, entrepreneurship, community-led research, and meaningful youth participation in policymaking.

Black youth should not be viewed only as users, consumers, or future employees of artificial intelligence. They must also be supported as innovators, researchers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and leaders who help shape how AI is developed and governed in Canada.

We respectfully ask the Government of Canada to ensure that equity, human rights, youth protection, and community leadership remain central to Canada's approach to artificial intelligence.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important national consultation. We would welcome future opportunities to participate in discussions, consultations, roundtables, or advisory initiatives related to inclusive and responsible AI.

Sincerely,

Meseret Haileyesus

President

AI Nexus for Black Innovators (AINBI)

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Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence is already changing how young people learn, apply for jobs, access public services, create businesses and participate in public life. For Black youth, this transformation brings genuine opportunity. It also brings a serious risk that old inequalities will be reproduced through new systems.

AINBI welcomes the People's Consultation on Artificial Intelligence because it places human rights and the public interest at the centre of the discussion. The consultation responds to a clear need for broader public participation, particularly from communities that are often affected by technology but rarely have equal influence over how it is designed, purchased or governed.^[1]

Canada should not evaluate its AI future only by investment, productivity or the number of new companies created. Progress must also be measured by whether Black youth can access quality education, secure good jobs, build and own technology, protect their privacy, challenge unfair decisions and participate meaningfully in AI governance.

Recommendations at a glance

- 1 Create a National Black Youth AI Advisory Council**
Establish a permanent, paid council with direct access to federal decision-makers and formal representation in national AI governance.
- 2 Fund a Black Youth AI Education and Leadership Strategy**
Provide long-term, community-led funding for AI literacy, technical learning, policy education, mentorship and leadership development.
- 3 Build paid pathways into AI employment**
Tie federal AI investments to paid internships, fair recruitment, job-quality standards and transparent equity outcomes.
- 4 Require Algorithmic Equality Impact Assessments**
Assess anti-Black, youth, disability, gender and intersectional impacts before high-impact systems are deployed.
- 5 Adopt a Youth AI Privacy and Safety Code**
Set enforceable protections for youth data, educational technologies, biometric surveillance and manipulative AI systems.

6 Guarantee explanation, human review and appeal

Give people clear rights when AI influences decisions about education, work, housing, credit, healthcare or public services.

7 Create public transparency and independent oversight

Publish a registry of high-impact systems and empower an independent regulator to investigate, audit and order remedies.

8 Invest in Black-led AI innovation and research

Use grants, procurement, research funding and public infrastructure to support Black ownership and community benefit.

1. About AINBI

AI Nexus for Black Innovators (AINBI) is a national platform advancing Black leadership, participation and ownership in artificial intelligence. AINBI works across education, research, policy, innovation and public engagement to ensure that Black communities can help shape Canada's AI future.

AINBI's platforms include the Black AI Academy™, Black AI Policy Lab™, Black AI Research™, Black AI Forum™ and Black AI Conference™. Through these platforms, AINBI supports accessible AI education, mentorship, community-informed research, responsible AI governance, policy leadership and pathways for Black youth, professionals, researchers and entrepreneurs.

Our position is grounded in a simple principle: Black communities should not only be prepared to adapt to technologies developed by others. They should have meaningful opportunities to design, govern, build, own and benefit from those technologies.

2. Why a Black Youth Lens Is Necessary**AI is entering institutions where inequality already exists**

AI systems are increasingly used to rank, predict, recommend, verify and monitor. These tools may influence school admissions, academic assessments, hiring, workplace management, financial services, housing, healthcare, immigration, policing and access to government programs. When these systems are trained on incomplete or historically biased information, they can reproduce inequality while appearing neutral.

The concern is not limited to explicit use of race. Seemingly neutral information - including postal codes, schools attended, work histories, gaps in employment, language patterns or previous contact with institutions - may operate as proxies for race, income, disability or

immigration status. Black youth may therefore experience discrimination without ever being told that an automated system influenced the decision.

Black communities continue to face unequal labour-market outcomes

Statistics Canada reported that Black populations represented 5.5% of Canada's labour force in 2025. Among core-working-age Black populations, the employment rate was lower and the unemployment rate was higher than for the total Canadian population. Black workers were also underrepresented in senior management, and Black self-employment remained below the national rate.^[2]

These existing gaps matter because AI will not enter a level playing field. Without deliberate equity measures, the people who already have access to advanced courses, equipment, professional networks, paid placements and investment capital will be best positioned to benefit.

Young workers may experience the transition differently

Early Canadian evidence does not show a broad collapse in employment caused by generative AI. However, Statistics Canada found that employment growth from late 2022 to the end of 2025 was weaker for younger workers and for people with less education. The study also recognized concerns about entry-level positions and noted that younger workers experienced more stagnant growth than workers aged 30 to 49.^[3]

Entry-level work is not disposable. It is where many young people build confidence, references, professional networks and the experience required to advance. Canada should not allow the first rung of the career ladder to disappear without creating credible, paid pathways into emerging roles.

Youth privacy and autonomy require stronger protection

Privacy authorities have warned that AI systems can create serious risks for children and young people, including opaque decision-making, discriminatory bias, manipulation, deepfakes and the use of children's personal information to train AI models. They have emphasized the need for child-appropriate AI grounded in the best interests of the child.^[4]

Canadian privacy commissioners have also raised concerns about educational technologies that infer sensitive characteristics, predict performance, use manipulative design or collect biometric information. These practices can shape a young person's educational path before they have a meaningful opportunity to understand or challenge the system.^[5]

Black youth may face compounded risks when privacy loss intersects with racial profiling, surveillance, disability, gender, immigration status or economic disadvantage. Consent alone is not sufficient where a young person has little bargaining power or where participation in school or a public service depends on accepting the technology.

3. Policy Principles

AINBI recommends that Canadian AI policy be guided by five connected principles.

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS
Substantive equality	Treating everyone the same does not create fairness when communities begin from unequal positions. AI policy must identify and remove systemic barriers, not simply prohibit intentional discrimination.
Meaningful participation	Black youth and Black-led organizations must be involved early, compensated for their expertise and connected to real decision-making authority.
Human accountability	An organization must remain responsible for decisions made or supported by AI. Responsibility cannot be transferred to a vendor, model or algorithm.
Public-interest innovation	Innovation should improve people's lives while protecting rights, public services, democratic participation and community knowledge.
Opportunity and ownership	Equity requires more than protection from harm. Black youth must also have access to education, jobs, entrepreneurship, research funding, procurement and intellectual-property ownership.

4. Policy Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Create a National Black Youth AI Advisory Council

The Government of Canada should establish a permanent National Black Youth AI Advisory Council. The Council should not be symbolic or limited to occasional consultation. It should have a defined mandate, a public work plan and direct access to ministers, regulators and senior officials.

- Include Black youth from every region of Canada, with attention to Francophone, newcomer, low-income, rural, northern, disabled and gender-diverse experiences.
- Compensate members for their time, preparation and lived expertise.
- Provide accessible training on AI policy, privacy, human rights, procurement and regulatory processes.
- Give at least two Council representatives formal seats on major federal AI advisory bodies.
- Allow the Council to initiate issues and publish an independent annual report, rather than only responding to government questions.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner's Youth Council provides a useful example of how young people can contribute directly to policy understanding. Canada should build on this approach and ensure that Black youth have a specific, sustained voice in AI governance.^[6]

Recommendation 2: Fund a Black Youth AI Education and Leadership Strategy

Canada should create a multi-year strategy delivered with Black-led community organizations, schools, postsecondary institutions and employers. AI literacy should not be reduced to learning how to prompt a chatbot. Young people should understand how systems are trained, where data comes from, how bias occurs, how privacy is affected and how to challenge harmful decisions.

- Free, community-based AI literacy and digital-skills programs.
- Technical learning in coding, data science, cybersecurity and responsible AI.
- Policy, ethics, privacy, human-rights and media-literacy education.
- Mentorship from Black professionals, researchers, founders and policymakers.
- Paid summer programs, fellowships, research placements and work-integrated learning.
- Equipment, internet and accessibility supports so participation is not limited by income.
- Programming in English, French and community languages where needed.

Funding should be stable enough to build institutions and trusted local capacity. Short pilot projects may produce activity, but they rarely create a durable pathway from first exposure to education, employment, entrepreneurship and leadership.

Recommendation 3: Build Paid and Equitable Pathways into AI Employment

Every federally funded AI employment, training or work-placement initiative should include measurable equity requirements. Public investment should create pathways for people who do not already have privileged access to technology networks.

- Set transparent participation and outcome targets for Black youth.
- Require paid placements and prohibit the substitution of unpaid labour for entry-level employment.
- Partner with Black-led organizations for outreach, selection, mentorship and retention.
- Provide wraparound support for transportation, equipment, internet, childcare and accessibility needs.
- Measure wages, job quality, retention and advancement - not only the number of participants enrolled.
- Require employers to disclose when AI is used in recruitment, screening or workplace evaluation.

Federal funding should not reward employers that automate entry-level roles without a credible workforce-transition plan. Employers benefiting from public AI investments should demonstrate how young workers will gain experience, skills and advancement opportunities.

Recommendation 4: Require Algorithmic Equality Impact Assessments

Canada already has a federal Algorithmic Impact Assessment tool supporting the Directive on Automated Decision-Making. This is an important foundation, but high-impact systems should also be required to undergo an explicit equality assessment before deployment and throughout their lifecycle.^[7]

An Algorithmic Equality Impact Assessment should examine:

- Potential anti-Black, youth, gender, disability and intersectional impacts.

- The quality, origin and representativeness of training and testing data.
- Accuracy and error rates across demographic groups, not only overall performance.
- Proxy variables that may reproduce racial or socioeconomic inequality.
- Privacy, surveillance and data-retention risks.
- Whether the system is necessary, proportionate and more effective than a less intrusive alternative.
- The availability of meaningful human oversight, complaint mechanisms and remedies.

Assessments should be published before deployment, reviewed independently and updated when the system, data or context changes. A high overall accuracy score should never conceal serious errors experienced by a particular community.

Recommendation 5: Adopt a Youth AI Privacy and Safety Code

Canada should adopt an enforceable Youth AI Privacy and Safety Code applying to AI systems used by, marketed to or likely to affect children and youth. The best interests of the child should be a primary consideration.

- Privacy-protective settings by default and collection of only the minimum data required.
- Clear, age-appropriate explanations of how data is used and how decisions are made.
- Strict limits on behavioural profiling, targeted advertising and commercial reuse of youth data.
- Strong restrictions on biometric, emotional and inferred data in schools and youth services.
- Accessible rights to correction, deletion and withdrawal where appropriate.
- Independent privacy and security testing before deployment.
- Special procurement standards for educational technologies.

Canada should prohibit uses that create unacceptable risks, including routine facial recognition or emotion recognition in schools, AI systems that make disciplinary decisions without meaningful human review, manipulative systems designed to exploit children's vulnerabilities and the non-consensual creation or distribution of intimate synthetic images.

Recommendation 6: Guarantee Notice, Explanation, Human Review and Appeal

Anyone affected by an AI-supported decision in education, employment, housing, credit, healthcare, immigration, justice or public services should have enforceable procedural rights.

- The right to know that AI was used.
- The right to an understandable explanation of the factors that influenced the decision.
- The right to correct inaccurate information.
- The right to meaningful review by a qualified human decision-maker.
- The right to a timely, accessible and independent appeal.
- The right to an effective remedy where harm occurs.

Human review must be genuine. It should not consist of a staff member automatically approving an algorithmic recommendation. The reviewer must have the authority, information and time required to reach a different decision.

Recommendation 7: Create Public Transparency and Independent Oversight

Federal departments and federally regulated organizations should maintain a searchable public registry of high-impact AI and automated decision systems. The registry should identify the system's purpose, developer, data sources, affected population, impact assessment, known limitations, audit results, incidents, complaints and responsible decision-maker.

Canada also needs independent oversight with the authority to investigate complaints, compel information, order audits, suspend harmful systems, require corrective action, issue penalties and support remedies. Oversight must include expertise in human rights, anti-Black racism, youth rights, privacy, disability, labour and consumer protection.

The federal Directive on Automated Decision-Making requires impact assessment, transparency, quality assurance and recourse for covered government systems. These principles should inform a broader and enforceable framework that also addresses high-impact uses outside the federal public service.^[8]

Recommendation 8: Invest in Black-Led AI Innovation, Research and Ownership

Protection from harm is essential, but it is not enough. Canada should also invest in Black-led innovation and ownership. Black youth should have opportunities to create businesses, hold intellectual property, lead research and build community-serving technologies.

- Dedicated grants and fellowships for Black-led AI research and entrepreneurship.
- Access to public computing infrastructure, data resources and technical mentorship.
- Procurement pathways and supplier-diversity targets for Black-owned technology companies.
- Legal, intellectual-property and commercialization support that protects founder ownership.
- Funding for Black-led incubators, accelerators, policy labs and community research centres.
- Community data-governance agreements that prevent extractive research and ensure shared benefit.

Public investment should create lasting community assets: skilled people, trusted institutions, Canadian intellectual property, sustainable businesses and evidence that can improve policy. Black communities should not be treated merely as recruitment pools, data sources or consultation participants.

5. Implementation Roadmap

AINBI recommends a phased implementation plan that begins with immediate participation and transparency measures while building the legal and institutional framework required for long-term accountability.

TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY	ACTION
First 6 months	Participation and protection	Establish an interim Black Youth AI Advisory Council; begin the Youth AI Privacy and Safety Code; publish an inventory of federal AI systems; create a community participation fund.
Within 12 months	Standards and pathways	Launch paid Black youth fellowships; introduce equality-impact requirements; establish responsible AI procurement standards; fund community-led education and research.
Within 24 months	Law and oversight	Enact enforceable high-impact AI rules; establish independent oversight; create public reporting on discrimination, incidents, complaints and remedies.
Ongoing	Accountability	Publish an annual AI Equity and Youth Impact Report and review all federal AI investments through a substantive-equality and youth-rights lens.

6. Measuring Progress

Canada should publish an annual AI Equity and Youth Impact Report using disaggregated data while protecting privacy. At minimum, the report should measure:

- Black youth participation in AI education, research and paid work placements.
- Employment outcomes, wages, job quality, retention and advancement.
- Representation in AI leadership, advisory bodies and public appointments.
- Federal funding and procurement awarded to Black-led organizations and companies.
- Reported cases of algorithmic discrimination, investigations and remedies.
- Youth privacy incidents and the use of AI in educational settings.
- Regional, linguistic, disability, gender and income differences in access and outcomes.
- Public understanding, trust and the ability to exercise rights.

The report should be developed with Black-led organizations and youth representatives. It should explain not only what government funded, but who benefited, who was left out and what corrective action will follow.

7. Conclusion

Artificial intelligence can expand access to learning, strengthen entrepreneurship, improve services and create new forms of work. It can also automate the barriers that Black communities have spent generations working to dismantle.

Canada should therefore reject the idea that rapid adoption is automatically progress. Responsible innovation requires enforceable rights, democratic participation, public transparency, independent oversight and fair access to opportunity.

Black youth should not be required to prove that they were harmed only after an opaque system has shaped their education, employment, finances or future. Governments, developers, vendors and institutions must carry the responsibility to demonstrate that high-impact systems are necessary, safe, fair and accountable before they are deployed.

At the same time, Canada must move beyond a narrow harm-prevention approach. Black youth deserve access to the knowledge, networks, funding, infrastructure and ownership opportunities that will allow them to build the next generation of Canadian technology.

AINBI's central message

Black youth must be recognized not only as users of AI, but as rights holders, creators, researchers, entrepreneurs, workers, policy contributors and leaders. Inclusion after decisions are made is not enough. Black youth must have influence from the beginning.

Final call to action

Black youth must not only be included in Canada's AI future. They must have the power, resources and authority to help lead, build, own and govern it.

Respectfully submitted,

Meseret Haileyesus

President

AI Nexus for Black Innovators (AINBI)

ainbi.org

References

The following public sources informed the context and recommendations in this submission. All sources were available on or before March 20, 2026, except the AINBI organizational website, which is cited as the organization's current public description of its mission and platforms.

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2. Statistics Canada, "Black History Month... By the numbers," February 2, 2026.
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6. Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, "OPC Youth Council," 2025.
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10. Canadian Human Rights Commission, "Facial recognition technology use in policing," April 15, 2022.
11. AI Nexus for Black Innovators, organizational mission, platforms and partnership information.