



2024 Presentation

Prepared By:
Phiona Durrant

Prepared For:
Mayor and Council



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www.aurorablackcommunity.com

Reshaping the community
landscape by fostering
understanding, celebrating
diversity, and creating impactful
programs that unite and uplift all
residents.

Thank
you!



Before we begin, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Town of Aurora staff, Mayor and Councillors for your continued support each February during Black History Month. Through your partnership, we've been able to make meaningful strides towards inclusivity and awareness within our community. Special thanks to past Councillor, Sandra Humfryes and Councilor Wendy Gaertner for the guidance and support in the beginning stage, we could not have done it without you. We also want to acknowledge Councillor Kim for his initiatives around inclusive work in the town. With your support and consultation with ABC, we've seen positive changes that reflect our shared commitment to progress. For example, we've noticed an increase in town-wide acknowledgment and celebration of Black history and culture, improved support of Black-led initiatives, and greater community engagement in diversity-focused events. These small but impactful changes are setting a strong foundation for a more inclusive Aurora, and we look forward to building on this progress together. Thank you for your dedication and for believing in the vision we all share for our community.



"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." – Margaret J. Wheatley



SUNDAY SKATE – Black History Month and Family Day came together at Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Park on Sunday as the Aurora Black Community Association, Sport Aurora, the Central York Girls Hockey Association, and the Town teamed up for a free public skate. The “Diversity on the Ice” event was intended to break down barriers and encourage more people to get involved in winter sports. Pictured above on the rink are Councillors Harold Kim and John Gallo, Adrian Martin, Ron Weese of Sport Aurora, Councillor Sandra Humfryes, Phiona Durrant, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Naomi. This was just one of several Family Day events held throughout the weekend including a return of the Town’s Arctic Adventure celebrations. For more, see Pages 18 & 19.

Introduction



Aligned with Aurora's vision, mission, and values, the Aurora Black Community Association (ABC), is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment that serves all residents. Our work in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), economic empowerment, and addressing issues impacting diverse communities directly supports the town's commitment to being progressive and inclusive. We focus on both anti-racism and anti-Black racism, and our programs and advocacy work are designed to serve people from all racialized communities, fostering unity and understanding across cultural lines.

This commitment is evident in our advocacy for the Asian child who faced assault, our support for the Indian family experiencing discrimination, and our solidarity with the Persian community in their own struggles.

Through educational initiatives, cultural events, and community resources, ABC challenges biases, empowers marginalized voices, and promotes economic opportunities for all. By creating safe spaces for dialogue and understanding, we reinforce Aurora's dedication to inclusion and exceptional service.

Together, through partnership, ABC and the Town of Aurora can transform shared values into impactful actions, building a community where everyone is proud to call Aurora home.



We asked ourselves:





If Aurora envisions itself as a community where all residents are proud to call it home, how is it addressing the lack of diverse voices in its current, employment, leadership and community representation?

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What specific steps is Aurora taking to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are not just words, but visible, measurable actions that impact all residents?



S T R O N G E R
T O G E T H E R





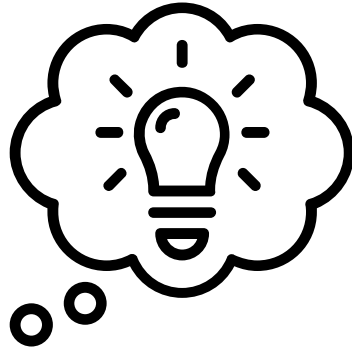
What mechanisms does the town have in place to hold itself accountable for DEI goals, and how will it ensure these are met with tangible results?

How will Aurora measure its success in building an inclusive community, and what role can community partners like ABC play to make sure these goals are met?

How can we contribute to Aurora's growth as a progressive and inclusive community that values diverse voices?

What initiatives will truly reflect and celebrate the diversity of our town's growing population?

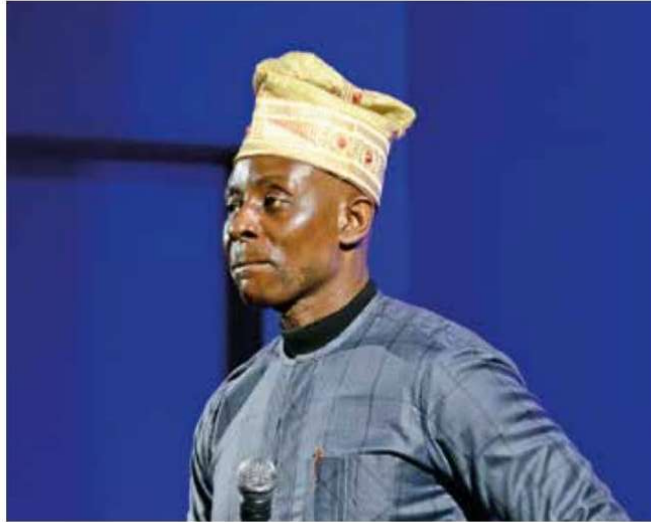




How can the town invest in initiatives and grassroots organizations that foster belonging for every community member?

How can we close gaps in representation and ensure policies and programs truly reflect the needs and contributions of our diverse community?

Making Room & Opening Doors at Gala

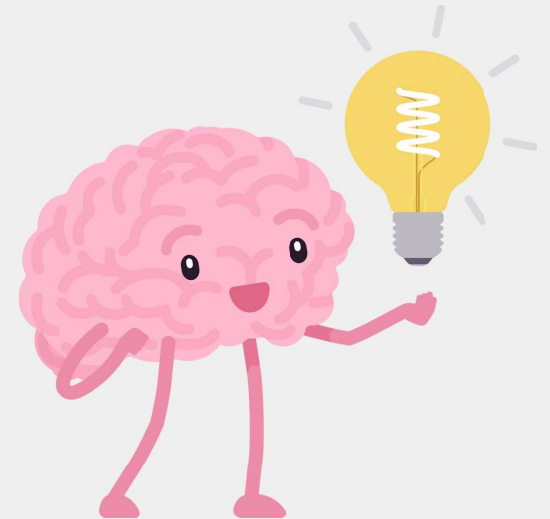
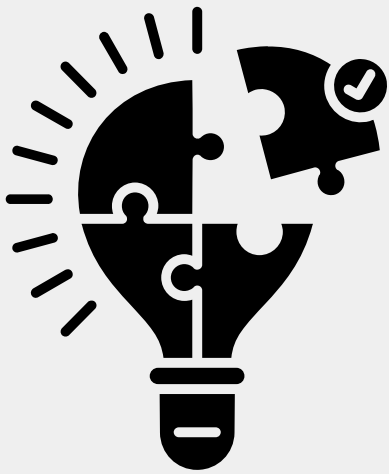




What steps will bring tangible representation and inclusion to Aurora's diverse population. How can we create spaces for youth, families, and newcomers to learn, connect, and thrive in Aurora?

How can we support the town in taking meaningful risks to bridge cultural gaps, fostering an environment where all residents feel represented and valued?

Solution



This is where ABC comes in.



*When we work
Together*

Our Values

Our values are grounded in three core pillars: collaboration, equity-building, and community empowerment. We are dedicated to fostering inclusivity, uplifting marginalized voices, and creating spaces where everyone feels seen, heard, and respected. Through our work, we aim to build strong partnerships, bridge cultures, and strengthen the bonds within our diverse community.



01

Collaboration

We actively partner with community groups, organizations, and local leaders to create shared opportunities and amplify collective impact, fostering a united approach to social change.

02

Community Building

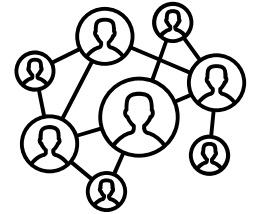
We create spaces and initiatives that celebrate cultural pride, encourage personal growth, and strengthen community bonds, ensuring all voices are valued and respected.

03

Diversity and Equity Work

Our EDI Strategy focuses on building relationships, fostering allyship, enhancing cultural understanding, addressing unconscious biases and systemic barriers, and creating equitable access to resources, representation, and opportunities. Through these efforts, we aim to empower our community to thrive.

As a Cultural Partner with the town, we will work together to...



Youth and Sports Engagement:

To develop or enhance programs that encourage more Black youths and other marginalized groups to participate in swimming, hockey, and skating, reaching over 25-70 families each year. These activities not only promote physical fitness and skill-building but also foster a sense of belonging and representation in sports where diversity has been limited.

Cultural Events and Education:

Enhance cultural events, provide training on cultural sensitivity for staff, committees, and affiliated organizations. Offer allyship workshops, develop/review a EDI Strategy Plan, and provide support and recommendation for reviewing policies and practices. This initiative aims to educate over 350 residents, volunteers, and town employees each year, promoting inclusivity and strengthening Aurora's commitment to diversity and understanding.

Economic Empowerment and Housing Support:

Work with local landlords and developers to create an affordable rental program and partner with businesses to increase hiring opportunities for underrepresented groups. By supporting 5-15 individuals each year, this initiative will help improve economic stability and access to housing for Black and underserved residents in Aurora.



AURORA BLACK COMMUNITY

RA RIDGE
S
NewRoads
Automotive Group
INTERNATIONAL INC.
ROAD
TENNIS
Sheridan
Nurseries
Nails Spa
MAGNA
Sheridan
Nurseries
AURORA BLACK COMMUNITY
ONE VISION
DIVERSE VOICES
AURORA RIVER
HOMES
Nails Spa
NewRoads
Automotive
ROAD
TENNIS

The Ask

\$180,000

FUNDING REQUEST

3 years

FUNDING TIMELINE -
FOLLOW REAPPROVAL

We are requesting to formalize our relationship as a Cultural Partner with the Town, along with \$180,000 in funding over three years to support our community-driven work. This funding would help cover the costs of one or two essential administrative staff to work alongside our dedicated volunteer team. This investment in our grassroots organization offers a more impactful and cost-effective approach than hiring a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) officer at the national average salary of \$93,405, which rises to \$144,901 for experienced DEI professionals. While a DEI staff role might "check the box," we believe that true impact comes from partnering with a local organization deeply invested in the community, with established relationships and a unique understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing diverse residents in Aurora. By funding our work, the Town of Aurora benefits from a comprehensive, hands-on approach that goes beyond policy—providing ongoing, authentic engagement, culturally relevant programming, and sustainable community partnerships that reach far deeper than any single DEI hire could achieve. This funding will not only enable us to expand our programs year-round but will also allow Aurora to make a meaningful investment in a future where diversity, equity, and inclusion are woven into the fabric of the town.



Results



Between July 2023 and April 2024, we conducted a door-to-door survey, supplemented with email outreach, to gather feedback from the community. Here's what people are saying:

Growing Diversity, Increasing Needs: Over 200 respondents agree that Aurora is becoming more diverse and expressed a need for more programs and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) initiatives to support this growth.

Concerns About Readiness for Change: Nearly 500 people feel that Aurora is still perceived as a predominantly white town resistant to change, and there is a worry among many (including both white and non-white participants) about whether meaningful progress will ever happen.

Impact Despite Limited Resources: With our limited resources, ABC has already made a tangible impact:

We helped two community members negotiate affordable housing arrangements with landlords.

Six families received funding for swimming lessons—a vital life skill.

We provided culturally appropriate employment and counseling support to two new immigrant families.

This feedback and our early impact underscore the pressing need for stronger support to meet the community's evolving needs. This is not including our community a

Results



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Through our community engagement efforts, ABC has made a tremendous impact in moving Aurora forward in its social responsibility. We have provided educational sessions in schools, senior homes, and various community spaces, raising awareness and fostering engagement across all age groups. These initiatives have significantly contributed to building a more inclusive, informed, and connected Aurora, aligning with the town's growing commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. By bridging gaps in understanding and encouraging active participation, we're helping to shape a community that values and celebrates its diversity.



Community
Solution





2023 Black History Gala

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Aurora Black Community Association has worked tirelessly to promote inclusivity, celebrate diversity, and strengthen community bonds in Aurora. Our programs not only enrich the cultural fabric of the town but also foster understanding and unity among all residents.

Community Impact

Our initiatives have brought new educational, cultural, and economic opportunities to Aurora, benefiting residents and local businesses alike.

Future Growth

With continued support, we can expand our reach beyond Black History Month, creating year-round programs that uplift the community and contribute to Aurora's growth.



Diversity on the Ice





Thank You For Listening



We look forward to the journey ahead, where we can turn our shared vision into reality.

 905-505-4673

 www.aurorablackcommunity.com

 ABC@aurorablackcommunity.com