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Black Professionals in Tech Network Releases: The State of Black Canadians in STEM

Partnerships with corporate sponsors, the government and the education sector aim to close the network gap.

Toronto, ON (May 17, 2022) – One year after announcing a 3-year partnership with RBC Future Launch to help more than 1,000 early career Black tech professionals find roles within Canadian companies, [Black Professionals in Tech Network \(BPTN\)](#) released a report on the State of Black Canadians in STEM and calls for more to be done.

When the initiative was announced at the beginning of 2021, it inspired lead sponsors RBC and League to help recruit other companies to form BPTN's Champions Table. The Champions Table consists of senior executives from top Canadian companies who have committed to building more inclusive work environments. They have also taken action to diversify their workforces through clear hiring commitments, inclusive hiring practices and mentorship.

As a result, the Champions Table has collectively exceeded the year 1 target of 324 by hiring a total of 1,002 Black tech professionals. In addition to RBC and League, the corporate champions are Bell, Rogers, Deloitte, CIBC, Hootsuite, Sun Life, Facebook, Shopify, Canada Life, Rakuten Kobo, Top Hat and Softchoice. These organizations have demonstrated what is possible when meaningful commitments and focussed efforts combine to close the representation gap in tech.

Progress is being made but the report emphasizes that challenges remain. BPTN estimates that without action, about 33,000 Black tech workers could still miss out on employment in the sector by 2024. Research shows that this is not due to a shortage of qualified STEM workers. This employment gap in, what is arguably Canada's fastest-growing economic sector is not only hurting Black tech workers but also Canada's economy.

"Our intention is not only to make people aware of the gap in employment of qualified workers, but to move them to participate and take steps to solve what is an industry and market problem," says Lekan Olawoye, Founder and CEO, BPTN. "Not fully utilizing our STEM qualified Black workers in such a tight job market impacts our competitiveness and is a risk to Canada's economy."

The report also points out that our education sector is not producing STEM-qualified Black graduates at representative levels. Of all post-secondary credentials achieved by Black students, only 16% were in STEM (compared to a 23% average for all minorities). Results show that while there are enough Black STEM qualified workers entering the Canadian labour force each year, in order to close the representation gap in tech by 2024, the vast majority of them (80%) are immigrants.

“Canada is over-dependent on immigration to meet its talent needs,” Olawoye reiterates. “This approach is risky. An over-reliance on immigration as a source of Black STEM talent leaves tech companies vulnerable if immigration is halted (e.g. Covid) or if immigrants choose other destinations in the global job reshuffling.”

The Canadian tech sector has begun to mobilize around the hiring issue and these efforts are gaining momentum. But, Canada cannot afford to waste one of its major advantages or the diversity of its talent pool. It is time to close the gaps in STEM education for Black youth.

Our asks are simple:

1. Governments must do their part to maintain the supply of STEM-qualified Black immigrants in Canada.
2. The education sector must actively work to close the gap in Black STEM graduation rates and ensure a strong and diverse talent pipeline for Canada's economic future.

Read the [full statement](#).

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About Black Professionals in Tech Network (BPTN)

Black Professionals in Tech Network (BPTN) is the largest Black community of tech professionals in North America. Founded in 2018, BPTN bridges the network gap in the tech industry by providing Black technical and business professionals with access to senior executive sponsorship, skills building and a strong peer network to level up their careers. BPTN partners with companies to attract, hire and retain Black talent. With more than 50 thousand members and 66 customers, BPTN launched Obsidi.com a multi-sided networking platform of choice for professionals looking to learn, grow and level up their careers. Learn more [here](#).

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