

## Media Release

### Leading Canadian Foundations Answer The Foundation for Black Communities' Call to Action

TORONTO, March 9, 2021 – The Foundation for Black Communities announced today that it has achieved an important milestone towards its goal of establishing a \$300-million-dollar endowment. The Laidlaw Foundation and the Inspirit Foundation are committing a combined \$3.85 million dollars to the Foundation for Black Communities to ensure a sustainable base of support for Black-led and Black-serving organizations.

Last December, a call to action was made to the Canadian philanthropic sector following the release of the *Unfunded Report*, a research report prepared by the Network for the Advancement of Black Communities and Carleton University's Philanthropy and Non-Profit Leadership program. The report identified a failure on behalf of the Canadian philanthropic sector to sufficiently invest in Black communities and Black community organizations, and called upon Canadian foundations to work towards a solution that will adequately meet the needs of Black communities.

The findings of the report recommended the establishment of a Black-led and Black-serving philanthropic foundation, the Foundation for Black Communities, so that Black communities are given the agency to prioritize and allocate investments based on their needs as understood by themselves directly.

The Laidlaw Foundation and the Inspirit Foundation will lead Canadian philanthropy in providing cornerstone funding for the Foundation for Black Communities' initial endowment. Both the Laidlaw Foundation and the Inspirit Foundation are contributing 3.5% of their capital base towards the establishment of the Foundation for Black Communities. These funding commitments will provide the sustained resources needed to make a meaningful impact.

For the Inspirit Foundation, that contribution will be comprised of approximately \$1.35 million, with an immediate, unrestricted grant of \$350,000 and a \$1,000,000 million capital transfer to the Foundation for Black Communities' endowment. The Laidlaw Foundation will be contributing \$2.5 million directly towards the Foundation for Black Communities' endowment.

The Foundation for Black Communities will use this funding to invest in change, working with Canadian philanthropic, political, and business partners to ensure that Black-led and Black-serving organizations have the funds that they need to meet the unique and specific needs of Black communities.

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## Quotes

"With this historic announcement, we have charted a new path for Canadian philanthropy. Inspirit Foundation and Laidlaw Foundation have demonstrated leadership with these investments. Other funders and government must also step up to course correct for systemic underinvestment in Black communities."

*Rebecca Darwent, Working Group Member, Foundation for Black Communities*

“Our partnership with Inspirit Foundation and Laidlaw Foundation is centred around justice not charity. It commits to sharing power in a way that honours the inviolable dignity and self-determination of Black communities to lead in their own solution-making. It sets ablaze a more equitable path for contemporary philanthropy in Canada that we can only hope others will embrace.”

*Liban Abokor, Working Group Member, Foundation for Black Communities*

"The opportunity for meaningful and lasting Black led philanthropy has been long overdue. Laidlaw Foundation is privileged to support Foundation for Black Communities (FFBC) in its vision to identify gaps, invest where it's most needed, advance public policy, and most importantly bring awareness to the priorities of Black Canadians. We believe in community-led solutions and this is our chance to be part of a solution-based model, led by community leaders."

*Jehad Aliweiwi, Executive Director, Laidlaw Foundation*

“As a foundation committed to equity and pluralism, we recognize Black leadership must have the power and agency to set their own priorities; the Foundation for Black Communities will be a very important step in that direction. We encourage all our friends and partners in philanthropy to step forward. This is the time.”

*Sadia Zaman, CEO, Inspirit Foundation*

"Things remain the same, if we never change them. To combat systemic racism, we must challenge and change the systems in place. Within philanthropy, it can seem like there is nothing more precious than a foundation's capital base, something to be preserved and protected, never shared. That is why I'm proud to see the Inspirit Foundation break from conventions to support the Foundation for Black Communities by transferring a portion of our capital into its new fund, empowering and welcoming a generation of Black community leaders to contribute directly to the communities they come from."

*Barbara Hall, Board Director, Inspirit Foundation*

## **Related Links**

Backgrounder: <http://bit.ly/Backgrounder-FFBC>

## **Contact**

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About the Foundation for Black Communities

Foundation for Black Communities exists to ensure every Black person in Canada can thrive and all Black communities have agency in defining their own future. We will invest in change making, working with Canadian philanthropic, political and business partners to ensure that Black-led and Black-serving organizations have the sustained resources they need to make a meaningful impact. The Foundation for Black Communities is being stewarded by a working group of Black professionals within the non-profit, charitable, philanthropic and

community development sectors. The working group is supported by a growing network of Black and ally leaders from across Canada.

#### About the Laidlaw Foundation

Laidlaw Foundation is committed to supporting young people impacted by the justice, education, and child-welfare systems. We do this by investing in innovative ideas, community-led grassroots initiatives, convening, advocating for systems change, and sharing learning across the sector.

#### About the Inspirit Foundation

The Inspirit Foundation funds media and arts for social change, supports young content creators, and invests its assets to align with its mission to promote inclusion and pluralism in Canada – specifically addressing discrimination based on ethnicity, race, or religion.