

Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities

Progress Report

October 2021



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee

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Dolly Williams (Co-chair) - East Preston
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Partner Organizations

- Black Business Initiative (BBI)
Nova Scotia Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA)

Sponsors



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MESSAGE FROM IRVINE CARVERY & DOLLY WILLIAMS

CO-CHAIRS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE



As we look throughout Halifax, there are many markers of development and growth. There are dozens of cranes in the sky, our population and economy are growing, and there are businesses starting and succeeding in our city every day.

Halifax has had three successive five-year economic strategies spanning 2005-2021 which have focused on growing Halifax's population and GDP by attracting and retaining people, improving the business climate, and making Halifax a better place to live and work.

Halifax's growth and success can be traced back to the consistent efforts, collaboration, and investments from public, private, post-secondary and community partners. The same will soon be said of the African Nova Scotian community as we implement our first five-year African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan (REPAP) launched in January of this year.

For generations, African Nova Scotians have advocated for unity and prosperity and have remained committed to building and maintaining our community by carrying each other's challenges and solving them together. Developed and led by the community, the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan is a continuation of this legacy.

Through our Action Plan, we are working with private, public and community partners to ensure that African Nova Scotians are engaged in planning, policy making, and decisions that impact our community. We are building formal partnerships, frameworks, and processes that can be adopted and implemented by all African Nova Scotian communities.

Growth is a long-term goal that takes consistent focus, investment, and action. This is why we named our plan the Road to Economic Prosperity. It is a pathway that will create the conditions and environment that will allow all African Nova Scotians to achieve their goals while contributing to the long-term development and success of our community.

In this report, we are pleased to share progress on priorities and actions since the launch of the Action Plan. We look forward to our continued work together to implement the plan and lead the way for economic prosperity for African Nova Scotians.

ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY ACTION PLAN



Launched in 2021, the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan (REPAP) is a five-year economic development strategy developed and owned by the African Nova Scotian community to address systemic issues and improve economic and quality of life outcomes for African Nova Scotians.

The Action Plan is the result of two years of community consultation, building on the legacy of generations of community economic development work. It reflects and remains committed to ongoing community efforts and provides a space for defining and realizing future opportunities for all people of African descent.

The Plan is being led by the Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee (REPAC) in partnership with the Halifax Regional Municipality and Halifax Partnership and with support from private and public sector sponsors. Since launching the Plan, we have created working groups with representatives from the Advisory Committee and the African Nova Scotian community that are responsible for advancing each of the three priorities and the 30 actions within the plan.

The Advisory Committee and working groups have made progress on a number of the actions in the Plan, and we are pleased to share progress to date.

ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES



Build Unity and Capacity Among African Nova Scotians



Establish Land Ownership, Develop Infrastructure, and Attract Investment



Increase Participation in Education, Employment, and Entrepreneurship




PRIORITY I:

BUILD UNITY AND CAPACITY AMONG AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIANS

This priority is dedicated to building unity and capacity within and among African Nova Scotian communities by sharing best practices, increasing collaboration, and building the leadership and skills needed to advance this work. By building bridges between communities, we can help support one another to take on priorities and projects of unprecedented scale and impact.

The African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index is one project that is sure to have lasting impacts on the community. For the first time, we will be able to measure and report on our economic outcomes, challenges, and opportunities backed by data and research. This will help provide a better understanding of our economic prosperity and wellbeing and which programs and policies are working and which are not. As we collect this information over time, it will also help us present our needs and priorities to public and private partners and better influence policies and decisions.

We are also working to continually build and strengthen bridges within and between communities. One example is the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan Community Summit which provides an opportunity to report on progress and hear from and engage with the community.

Progress Against Actions			
5 Year Objectives	Years 1-2 Actions	Outcomes	Status
 Increase alignment and collaboration among African Nova Scotian communities and partners to create transparency and collective success	1. Establish the Road to Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee (REPAC) and Elders Council to provide leadership and oversight	REPAC and Elders Council established Increase in community leadership and capacity in ANS communities Regular reporting to HRM and ANS communities	Achieved
	2. Develop an ethical framework guided by shared principles and practices to promote accountability with bi-annual check-in	Shared vision and ethical framework and enhanced process for transparency and collaboration developed	Started & Progressing
	3. Bring ANS communities together to celebrate and share best practices and lessons learned	Annual Unity event held	Started & Progressing

	4. Report annually on the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan, highlighting progress and successes against outcomes	Increased knowledge on the state of African Nova Scotian communities with up-to-date data and analysis	Started & Progressing
	5. Recognize and promote the historical legacy and value of ANS communities	Legacy brochure and interactive online resources developed	Started & Progressing
	6. Collaborate with public, private, and post-secondary partners to establish an African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index modeled after the Halifax Index	ANS Prosperity and Well-being Index developed Annual Index event held with ANS communities and REPAP stakeholders	Started & Progressing
<div>1.2</div> <div>Build community capacity to mobilize and lead the implementation of the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan implementation</div>	7. Bring changemakers to the table who are ready and able to constructively and positively create change	Increase in resources and strategic partnerships to support activities	Started & Progressing
	8. Connect ANS communities to training and resources to develop leadership, facilitation, and resiliency skills	Leadership, facilitation, and resiliency skills program for ANS communities developed ANS communities connected to capacity-building programs and opportunities led by HRM and Halifax Partnership	Started & Progressing
	9. Develop a mentorship program to engage and support the development of ANS youth	Increase in youth connected to BBI and other youth mentorship programs	Started & Progressing
	10. Develop a speaker series hosting thought leaders on economic development in African communities globally	Speaker series developed Thought leadership events with ANS communities executed Increased awareness in ANS communities of the local and global implications of economic development on Africans in the diaspora	Started & Progressing
	11. Ensure ANS communities are aware of, and understand the impacts of, systemwide legislation and municipal by-laws affecting their communities and the mechanisms to provide feedback to government regarding necessary changes	Information sessions on legislation and municipal by-laws held Information shared with ANS communities through relevant and effective communications channels Increased awareness in ANS communities of legislation and by-laws impacting their communities and ways to engage and provide feedback	Started & Progressing

PRIORITY 2:

ESTABLISH LAND OWNERSHIP, DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ATTRACT INVESTMENT

The second priority aims to engage and empower African Nova Scotians in improving the current and future state of development, infrastructure, and investment within our communities. Historically, African Nova Scotian communities have been systemically displaced, stripped of their autonomy, blocked from land ownership, and left severely underfunded which has widened the social and economic gap between African Nova Scotians and the rest of the province. This priority addresses these long-standing issues.

We aim to redefine our relationship with the Halifax Regional Municipality, private developers, and other stakeholders. We will engage the community in defining and implementing policies and processes that will positively impact and shape African Nova Scotian communities. One example is the Community Action Plans that will integrate the vision of the community into the Municipality’s Planning and Development Strategy. This will be a major step in ensuring that the growth of the city is inclusive and beneficial to African Nova Scotian communities. It will help us direct infrastructure investments into the projects we know are needed to create healthy and prosperous communities.

As we create new processes, we will also review standing legislation, policies, and procedures to better understand how they are applied within our community and recommend steps to address negative impacts. This restructuring of policies and their application within African Nova Scotian communities will allow us to have greater agency and be at the table to determine what’s best for our communities now and in the future. This work relies on community involvement as we look to elevate our voice and perspectives within government.

Progress Against Actions			
5 Year Objectives	Years 1-2 Actions	Outcomes	Status
2.1 Address historic and current issues related to land ownership and environmental racism	12. Identify the best approach to include Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) as part of HRM’s Planning and Development strategies for ANS communities	Legislation, policy, by-laws, and best practice review complete CBA process for HRM/NS created	Started & Progressing

	13. Create a framework to identify and address legislation, policy, and land use by-laws that impact ANS communities, and establish mechanisms for community input on required changes	<p>Legislation, policy, and by-laws review complete</p> <p>Mechanisms for community input developed and communicated</p> <p>ANS communities actively engaged in providing input</p> <p>Framework developed</p>	Started & Progressing
	14. In partnership with the Province, develop an approach to resolve ownership, taxation, and planning issues on residential and community owned properties without clear title	<p>Increased opportunities for land and home ownership</p> <p>Increased opportunities for greater community capacity and infrastructure development</p>	Started & Progressing
	15. Support the Akoma-led master plan for the restoration of the historic Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children	Increased development opportunities in the areas of affordable housing, entrepreneurship, and sports	Started & Progressing
	16. Review the naming, boundaries, and zoning of historic ANS communities, and zoning affecting ANS communities	<p>Recognition and reestablishment of historic ANS community boundaries</p> <p>Increase in land base/mass for ANS communities</p>	Started & Progressing
	17. Identify and prioritize the remediation of government-owned contaminated sites in ANS communities	<p>Contaminated sites identified and prioritized for remediation</p> <p>Increase in clean and green spaces in ANS communities</p>	Started & Progressing
<h1>2.2</h1> <p>Increase alignment and collaboration among African Nova Scotian communities and partners to create transparency and collective success</p>	18. Prioritize and undertake infrastructure projects (capital and renewal) and support development projects across ANS communities	<p>Infrastructure development opportunities identified and prioritized</p> <p>Projects under development</p>	Started & Progressing
	19. Support ANS communities to identify and secure funding for the preservation and interpretation of ANS community heritage sites	<p>Increase in heritage and historical awareness</p> <p>Support secured for legacy projects</p>	Started & Progressing

	20. Prioritize and develop vacant lands within ANS communities	Increased capacity in ANS communities to develop places and spaces Inventory of vacant lands developed	Started & Progressing
	21. Redevelop and market spaces within ANS communities for commercial and/or community use	Increased capacity in ANS communities to develop commercial places and spaces Inventory of spaces for commercial and community use developed	Started & Progressing
<h1>2.3</h1> <p>Explore international economic and cultural opportunities</p>	22. Pursue sister city and international trade and development relationships with African countries with ancestral ties to African Nova Scotians	Formal sister city relationship established within the first year	Started & Progressing
		Develop cultural and historical links between ANS communities and West African Countries	Not Started
	23. Attract international investors into the African Nova Scotian communities	Relationships with potential investors developed	Started & Progressing



PRIORITY 3:

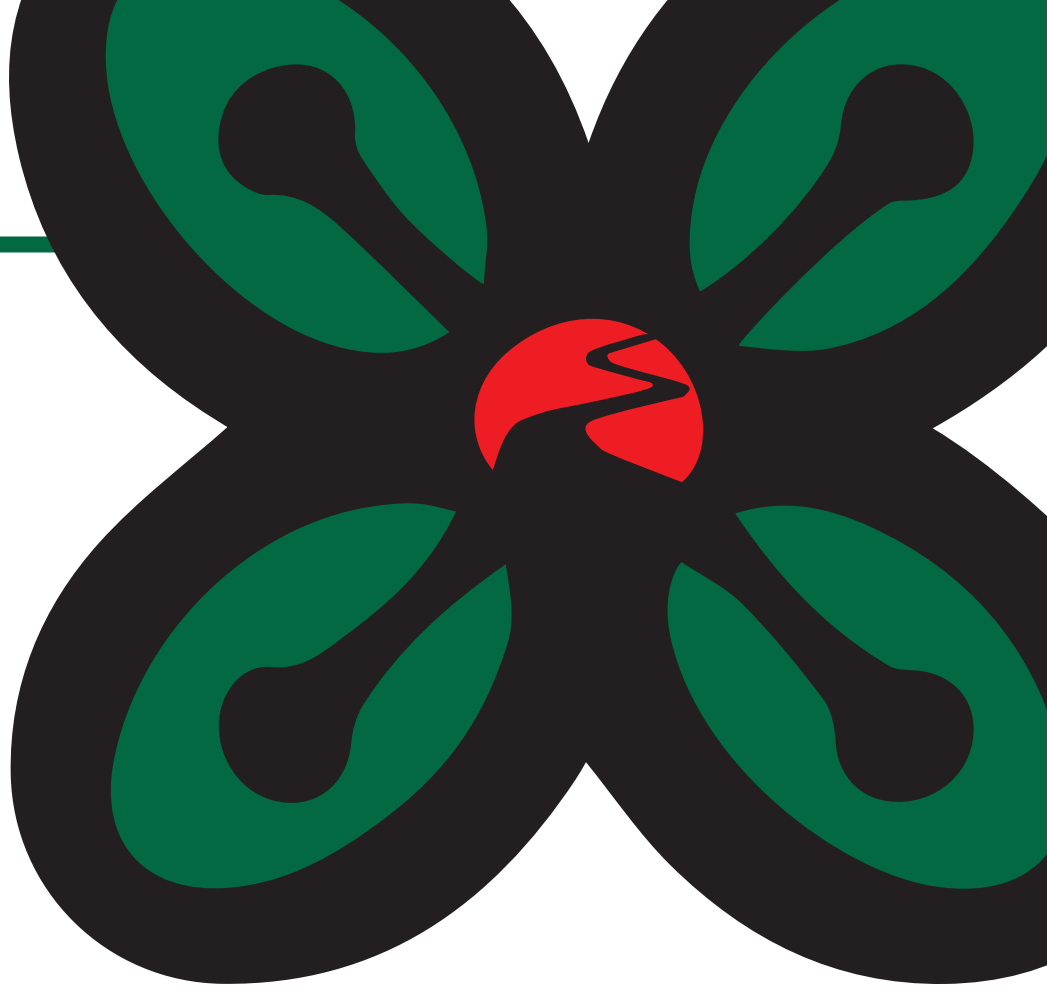
INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The third priority focuses on restoring the relationship between Nova Scotians of African descent and educational and economic institutions. To help restore this bridge, we will work to reconnect African Nova Scotians with opportunities in education, employment, and entrepreneurship.

We know our communities have a surplus of talent; what we lack are the chances to showcase our abilities. To support this, we have launched an African Nova Scotian stream of the Halifax Partnership’s Connector Program to support ANS youth in developing their business network and connecting to employment opportunities in a range of industries. Through this program, we are also providing opportunities for skills training and professional development in partnership with various organizations.

We are now beginning to promote and develop additional supports to help spur the growth and development of Black businesses in collaboration with the Black Business Initiative (BBI) and other organizations. In addition, we will help Black-owned businesses integrate into public and private supply chains and attract and retain talent to boost their competitiveness and success. These efforts, along with other action items, will help our community pursue their goals and grow their full range of talents.

Progress Against Actions			
5 Year Objectives	Years 1-2 Actions	Outcomes	Status
<div>3.1</div> <div>Increase labour force attachment for African Nova Scotians</div>	24. Establish the ANS stream under the Halifax Connector Program	ANS Connector stream established Track and increase the number of ANS Connectees and Connectors each year	Achieved
	25. Identify and share existing programs and services supporting the workforce attachment of African Nova Scotians	Track and increase ANS employment rates	Started & Progressing
	26. Connect African Nova Scotians to employment opportunities at HRM	Benchmark of ANS representation within the HRM workforce established Increase in ANS recruitment within various departments at HRM	Started & Progressing



	27. Provide opportunities for ANS-owned businesses into corporate supply chains and government contracts	Representation of ANS businesses within corporate and government supply chains increased and improved Participation of ANS businesses in government contracts encouraged	Started & Progressing
3.2 Increase entrepreneurship opportunities in ANS communities	28. Explore cooperative models and examine their validity for ANS communities	Increase in opportunities for housing and business development	Started & Progressing
	29. Connect ANS entrepreneurs to business development programs and services	Track and increase the number of ANS entrepreneurs referred to business development programs and services	Started & Progressing
	30. Support the growth of ANS Arts and Culture businesses and industries	Increase in the number and growth of ANS Arts and Culture businesses	Not Started

African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index

Modeled after the Halifax Index, we are developing the first ever African Nova Scotian Prosperity and Well-being Index. It will help us define the economic realities we currently face and to identify priority areas to close the gap between the African Nova Scotian community and the rest of the province. In today's world, data is the basis for all decision making. The Index will provide us with an objective measurement and the research-based insights needed to show the impacts of government legislation and policies on our communities.

For those of us with the lived experiences of being of African descent in Nova Scotia, we are acutely aware of how it influences and impacts our day-to-day lives. The issue comes when we try to translate that experience using anecdotes or analogies. Although accurate, they leave room for interpretation and are difficult to track progress against. The ANS Index will provide an objective baseline to track and compare consistent metrics year over year.

For this year's Index, we worked on building the process and identifying existing information and gaps in data and research. We began by outlining the information needed to tell a holistic story about the community, one that reviews social as well as economic determinants of well-being and looks at our community through a person-centered lens. The inaugural Index report is based on secondary data and pre-existing reports. It will pave the way for a future Index based on primary research with the community. Presented annually to the ANS community, partners, policy makers, and funders, the Index will inform evidence-based interventions and inclusive policy decisions. It will be an invaluable tool as we engage and collaborate with public and private sector partners on the Road to Prosperity.

Index Key Findings

This is a short summary of the ANS Index findings. We will present a more detailed review at the Summit with the full Index being made available on the website in the coming weeks.

Population

When trying to analyze the outcomes for the ANS community, we must be clear about whom we are talking about. As we based this initial Index on publicly available data, we had to build a proxy for the historic community as there is no identifier for African Nova Scotian specifically. Most datasets include data based on Visible Minority Status, e.g. how many people self identify as being Black. So where possible, we cross referenced the Black community with their Generational Status, i.e. whether they are non, first, second, or third generation Canadians. While imperfect, we worked under the assumption that if someone is Black and at least a third-generation Canadian, we can say they are part of the ANS community. We made sure that throughout this document the distinction is clear when the stats are talking about the “Black” community versus when they are talking about the “ANS” community.

What we found in reviewing the data was that in 2016 there were 21,915 Black Nova Scotians, 17,325 of which were third-generation Canadians, or what we use as a proxy for the ANS community. These communities are growing rapidly and are outpacing both the growth of other minority groups and non-minorities in the province. This growth is not seen evenly throughout each demographic age group, the most noticeable deviation from that trend is the age group 25 to 54. Due to this trend, we have seen that in general the ANS community is skewing older over time. The share of the population that are 55+ has increased from 24% in 2006 to 33% in 2016.

Home Ownership

There are two key considerations when discussing home ownership in any community. The first is the importance of home ownership to the overall economic outcomes of an individual. We know that home ownership is one of the most important factors in whether an individual can pass down intergenerational wealth. We also see that rising home prices are becoming a barrier to younger generations of all backgrounds who are trying to enter the housing market. Given the gap between the financial outcomes of those of African descent and the larger population, we know that this is having a disproportionate impact on our community.

Unfortunately, when reviewing the proportion of those determined to be in a “core housing need”, we can see this is only a fraction of the issue as identified within the Index. A household is in “core housing need” when it falls below certain defined benchmarks of either adequacy, affordability, or suitability. The Black community experiences core housing need at more than double the rate of the white population, and higher than other minority groups. This is true in Canada, Atlantic Canada, and Nova Scotia. As we implement our strategic plan, affordable housing and land ownership are two indicators we hope to see improve year over year.

Labour Force & Income

Reviewing the labour force characteristics of the ANS community, we can see the impacts of systemic barriers in the stark outcomes between the ANS community and the population at large. Black people across the country face higher unemployment rates than whites, often at twice the rate. Average Black incomes are lower than non-minority incomes with substantial difference in comparable individual incomes, ranging between \$10k-\$20k per year.

This discrepancy is also visible across different income levels. For example, 34% of the Black community is defined as being in low-income, using the Low Income Measure (LIM), compared to 17% of the non-minority population. Also 43% of Black individuals make less than \$20,000 a year in income, compared to 31% of the non-minority Nova Scotians. Black Nova Scotians earned, on average, between 14% and 27% less than their white counterparts. This gap was lowest among those with less than a high-school education (14% lower) and those with a college degree (15% lower). The gap was highest among those with some university education (27% lower) and those with a bachelor's degree or higher (24% lower).



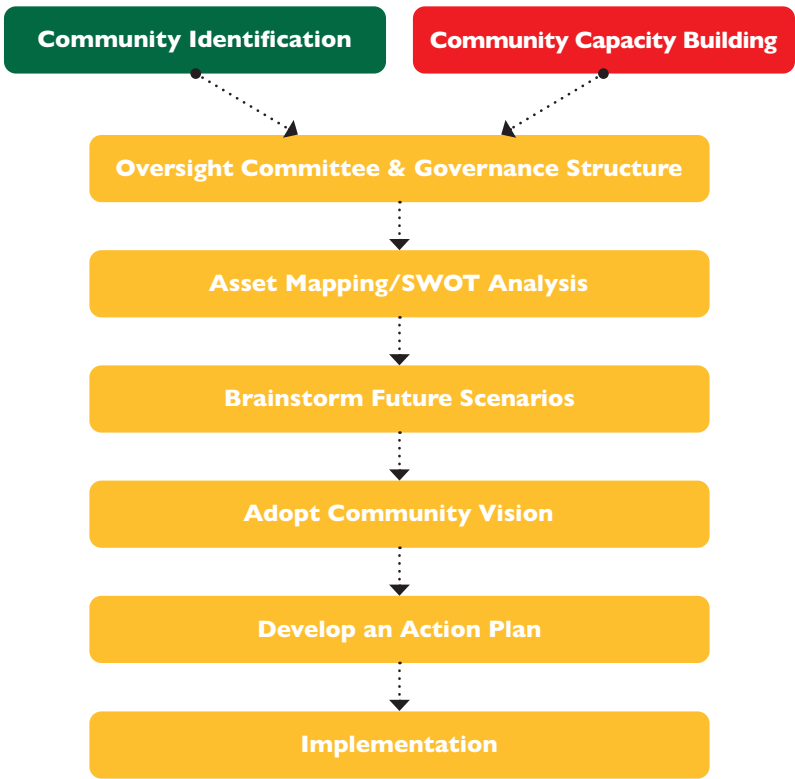


Community Action Plans

A Community Action Plan lays out a vision for the future of individual African Nova Scotian communities and outlines the steps needed to achieve desired outcomes. Owned and led by community, the creation of a community action plan is a process to identify the unique needs, advantages, and vision for each community. The Beechville community was the first to approve and implement a Community Action Plan with the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Having a Community Action Plan will be a crucial first step in re-imagining the relationship between the ANS community, the Municipality, and the development community. It will provide the foundation for future investment and infrastructure projects.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN PROCESS



JOIN US ON THE ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The Road to Economic Prosperity is not a path that can be built alone. Implementation and success are dependent on the engagement, support, and collaboration of our community and our partners. As we move forward, there are a number of ways for individuals to get involved whether by, participating in initiatives, attending events, or providing input and feedback on the Action Plan.

Elder and Youth Councils

Acting as advisors to our work, the Elder and Youth Councils will provide critical intergenerational perspectives to our work. We are working to build a Road to Economic Prosperity for all members of our community, but we know that everyone's needs are different.

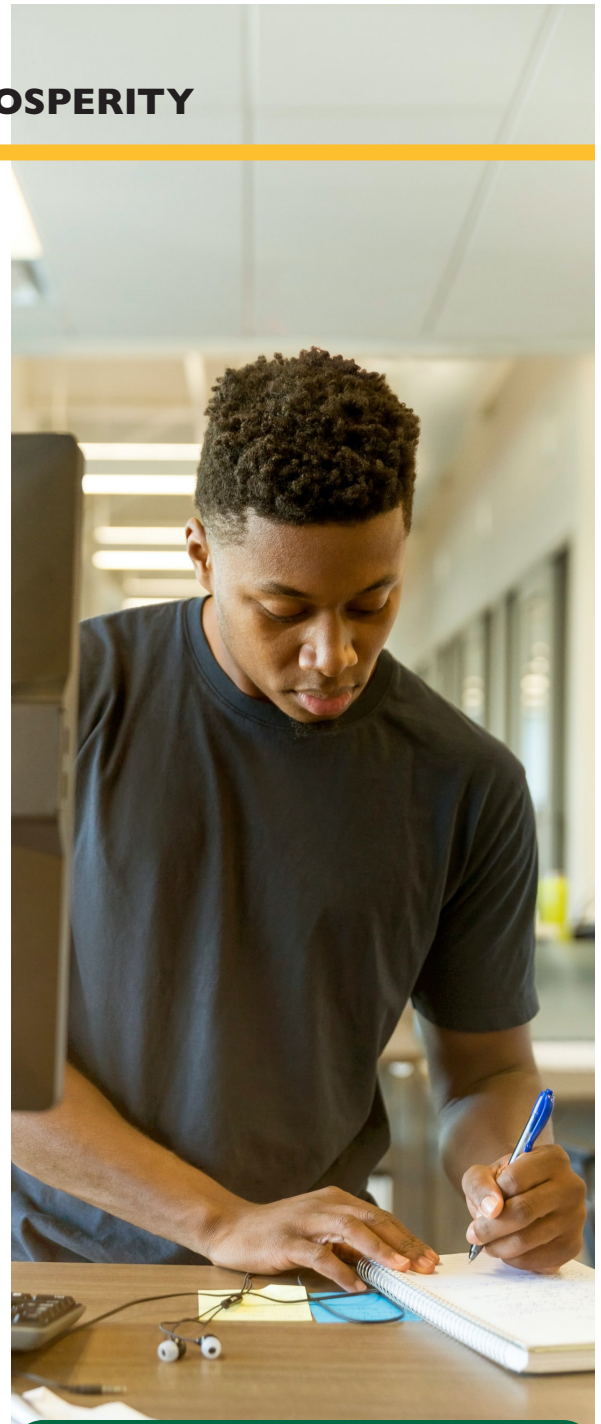
The work of developing our communities has always been one of intergenerational solidarity. Our elders have walked this path, they are the knowledge keepers and provide essential guidance. The youth will inherit our communities and have a key role to play in envisioning a new future for African Nova Scotians. Moving forward, we know that we will only find success through integrating both perspectives and experiences. Council members will act as representatives of their communities and their generation to guide and support the work. By sharing their experiences, needs, and issues they will help to highlight priorities and action items.

If you are interested in joining the Elder or Youth Council, please contact us.

African Nova Scotian Connector Program

The ANS Connector Program matches recent graduates (Connectees) in Halifax with established business and community leaders (Connectors) in a variety of industries. ANS Connectees are soon-to-be or recent university and college graduates, including those in the trades. Connectors are business owners and operators, managers, civil servants, and community leaders who volunteer to help ANS youth build their business network and connect with employment opportunities.

If you are interested in becoming a Connectee or a Connector, please contact us for more information.

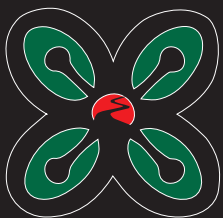


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