

## BLACK ENTREPRENEURSHIP SHOWCASE APRIL 2022

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WATERLOO, ON - March 29, 2022** –The Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region (CCAWR) is pleased to present LiftOff's inaugural Black Entrepreneurship Showcase on Friday, April 1, 2022. The theme of the showcase is "**Black Businesses: Taking your place in the Ecosystem,**" and will be held at the St. George Banquet Hall in Waterloo.

Funded by a \$3 million investment through the Government of Canada's [Black Entrepreneurship Program \(BEP\)](#), the BEP was developed to respond to the pandemic economic impacts on Black businesses and entrepreneurs in Canada. With a Canada wide investment of up to \$265 million over four years, the program will help Black Canadian business owners and entrepreneurs grow their businesses and succeed now and into the future.

Recognizing the underrepresentation of the Black community in Waterloo Region's entrepreneurial ecosystem, the LiftOff Black Entrepreneurship Program was founded in 2021 by the Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region, an organization that has worked to promote the social, cultural and economic interests of Waterloo Region's Caribbean community since 1975.

LiftOff welcomed its first cohort of entrepreneurs in January 2022 and the showcase is an opportunity for these entrepreneurs to introduce the Waterloo Region community to their businesses, while pitching for support and prizes. The event will feature a keynote address from educator, author, activist and Wilfrid Laurier University Professor, Dr. Kathy Hogarth, as well as a pitch competition and panel discussion.

"The Government of Canada is proud to support the Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region's LiftOff Program and their work to support the success of Black entrepreneurs in the Waterloo region," says the Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

"Through this and other [Black Entrepreneurship Program](#) investments, the Government of Canada will continue to create new economic opportunities for all Canadians and build a strong, diverse and inclusive Canadian economy."

Speaking about the upcoming event, LiftOff's Executive Director, Dr Trevor Charles says, "It has been an exciting three months for the LiftOff team working with our entrepreneurs. They have demonstrated immense commitment to their businesses and, with the support of the Venture Coaches, mentors and resources provided, they have made significant progress. This event is an opportunity for the wider entrepreneurial community to see the impact of a program that addresses the unique needs of Black entrepreneurs. We hope that it inspires new partnerships and business collaborations."

For more information about the LiftOff Black Entrepreneurship Showcase, email [social@liftoffbyccawr.org](mailto:social@liftoffbyccawr.org).

## **Media contacts**

Monica Granados

Press Secretary

Office of the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

[monica.granados@feddevontario.gc.ca](mailto:monica.granados@feddevontario.gc.ca)

Trevor Charles

LiftOff by Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region

5195919817

[tcharles@liftoffbyccawr.org](mailto:tcharles@liftoffbyccawr.org)

## **About FedDev Ontario**

For more than 12 years, [FedDev Ontario](#) has worked to advance and diversify the southern Ontario economy through funding opportunities and business services that support innovation and growth in Canada's most populous region. The Agency has delivered impressive results, which can be seen in southern Ontario businesses that are creating innovative technologies, improving their productivity, growing their revenues, and in the economic advancement of communities across the region. Learn more about the Agency's impact in southern Ontario by exploring the [Southern Ontario Spotlight](#), [pivotal projects](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## **About CCAWR**