

**INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CANADA (ISED)
ISED 206402**

ADVANCE CONTRACT AWARD NOTICE (ACAN)

An Advance Contract Award Notice (ACAN) allows departments and agencies to post a notice, for no less than fifteen calendar days, indicating to the supplier community that it intends to award a good, service or construction contract to a pre-identified contractor. If no other supplier submits, during the fifteen calendar day posting period, a statement of capabilities that meet the requirements set out in the ACAN, the competitive requirements of the government's contracting policy have been met. Following notification to suppliers not successful in demonstrating that their statement of capabilities meets the requirements set out in the ACAN, the contract may then be awarded using the Treasury Board's electronic bidding authorities.

If other potential suppliers submit statements of capabilities during the fifteen calendar day posting period, and meet the requirements set out in the ACAN, the department or agency must proceed to a full tendering process on either the government's electronic tendering service or through traditional means, in order to award the contract.

Contracting Officer

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DESCRIPTIVE TITLE:

Study on Black Executives (EXs) within the Federal Public Service (FPS).

BACKGROUND

Since 1996, Canada's Black population has more than doubled to almost 1.7 million (~4.3% of the Canadian population) and is projected to represent between 5.0% and 5.6% of the total population by 2026. From 2016 to 2021, the percentage of Black population in the Canada has increased by 23%, which is significant considering the visible minority population only increased by 19%. Black Canadians are the fastest growing segment of the visible minority population; with the majority being second and third generation Canadians/being born in Canada.

However, national data indicates the Black population is disproportionately affected by significant, systemic inequities compared to the broader population. This includes low employment rates and higher prevalence of low-income, a lower likelihood of thinking that they can obtain a university degree even when they aspire to, a lower socio-economic status, unfair treatment or discrimination at work and higher cases of COVID-19.

These concerning trends experienced by Black Canadians are founded on our history of anti-Black racism in Canada, traceable to the enslavement of Black people in Canada and its legacy, through specific laws and de facto practices enforcing segregation in education, residential accommodation, employment and other socioeconomic

opportunities. The impacts of our history have allowed anti-Black racism and other forms of stereotypes to be normalized and entrenched within Canadian institutions, policies and practices. Unfortunately, these same issues hold true to being Black within the federal public service (FPS), which is a microcosm of Canadian history.

In 1989 the first Black Deputy Minister was appointed in the Ontario Public Service. In 2022, more than thirty years later, the first Black Deputy Minister was appointed in the federal public service. In 2016 there were 56 Black EXs in the public service. This number has grown to 128 in 2021 and is currently estimated to be around 150. This is indicative of the extensive underrepresentation at the senior levels of the federal public service with Black executives representing approximately 2% of the executive cadre though Black public servants represent slightly more than 4% of the entire public service workforce.

The unique and persistent challenges posed by the pervasive nature of anti-Black and systemic racism at the federal level continue to have devastating impacts in terms of career progression, mental health, and salary stagnation, as well as in terms of service to Canadians who are not benefiting from the full range of talent available to develop policies and deliver program and service excellence.

The Black Executives Network was established in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd to provide support a platform of peer support, as well as collective capacity and leadership to support federal efforts to address anti-Black and systemic racism. In 2018, Canada recognized the United Nations Decade for People of African and committed to learning more about issues specific to Black Canadians, which included a commitment to improving research and disaggregated data collection. Subsequently, the government announced several budget/mandate commitments specific to addressing Black Canadians and pledged to work with community organizations to advance positive change. In addition, the Clerk of the Privy Council issued the Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion which asked all federal leaders to take specific and meaningful actions to address all barriers and disadvantages faced by Black, Indigenous, and other racialized groups in Canada.

REQUIREMENTS/RESULTS:

The Black Executives Network / Le Réseau des exécutifs noirs (BEN/REN) requires a Contractor who can provide a broad set of research and engagement services to conduct demographic analysis and document the lived experiences of Black Executives (EX) within the FPS. Specifically, the Contractor will examine and document the demographic composition of the Black EX community including age, gender, cultural background, education, citizenship or permanent resident status, official language, professional certification, career progression, etc—for the target survey sample size, and conduct comparisons with available information from other groups of EXs. The study will also examine their unique lived experiences of the Black EX community in the federal public service, in order to surface systemic barriers to participation and inclusion and to highlight measures to improve working conditions and representation across the federal public service. Additionally, the Contactor's focus is to understand how Black EXs navigate being in leadership roles and positions of power, while simultaneously navigating anti-Black and systemic racism, discrimination, marginalization and exclusion. The idea that Black EXs “have to work twice as hard” for half the recognition

and respect or shoulder enormous pressure to be the model minority, and the cumulative mental health impacts of Black Ex's career experiences will also be explored. The Contractor would also collect data from Black EXs to understand their expectations in terms of what is needed to create a truly inclusive and barrier free environment, as well as what the necessary supports for success should look like, including to promote and support their well-being and psychological safety. Participants will consist of EXs at all levels of executive leadership.

The contractor will be required to propose multiple assessment methodologies to triangulate evidence to reach a conclusion. These methods may include but not be limited to literature review, documents review, interviews, expert interviews, data/demographic/trend analysis, case studies, and focus groups. In addition, the Contractor can incorporate historical examples to chronicle how anti-Black racism and other forms of racial stereotypes have been entrenched and normalized within federal institutional policies and practices.

IDENTIFICATION OF CONTRACTOR

Name of Contractor: Dr. Rachel Zellars

Address: 1 Starling Street

City, Province: Halifax, Nova Scotia

Postal Code: B3M 1V7

Telephone: (438) 879 1865

Email: rachel.b.zellars@gmail.com

REASON FOR AWARDING CONTRACT TO THIS CONTRACTOR

Dr. Zellars is well suited to undertake the activities in this contract given the fact that she is a nationally recognized expert in critical implicit bias and anti-Blackness. She is also a lawyer, Senior Research Fellow, and Assistant Professor at Saint Mary's University in the Department of Social Justice & Community Studies. Her research and scholarly studies focus on the history of Black Canada beginning with the American Revolution; slavery in the Maritimes and the lives of enslaved women; and gender violence and transformative justice.

In addition to her legal background, Dr. Zellars also holds a master's degree in Africana Studies from Cornell University and a doctorate in education from McGill University. She is currently completing the Harvard Executive Leadership Program.

Since 2014, she has facilitated dozens of critical implicit bias trainings for government leaders and management, both provincially and federally. She is recognized for her ability to centre local historical contexts, locate implicit bias within living histories of anti-Blackness, and address barriers to personal and structural change. Some examples of courses she has taught over the years include gender and the law; critical race theory; critical race feminism; critical race and Indigenous theory in education; politics of identity; introduction to feminist studies; production of subjectivity in the work of Felix Guattari and Saidiya Hartman (co-taught with Erin Manning); and multicultural education.

Dr. Zellars also has extensive experience as a skilled, compassionate facilitator and

community organizer. Her strengths lie in her ability to serve as an active listener and facilitate challenging conversations with openness and nonjudgment, while clearly centring subject matter related to the experience of racialization, cultural values, diversity, and class with great comfort and care. She is trained in mediation, conflict resolution, and restorative and transformative justice approaches to resolving conflict and harm. As a facilitator, she centers a trauma-informed approach within all of her gatherings.

For the last 20 years, Dr. Zellars' community work focuses on supporting survivors of gender violence; researching and supporting community accountability structures within Black communities; and working to transform small-scale social conditions that nurture and sustain violence within communities. She continues to study, practise, and facilitate in the context of transformative justice nationally. In 2020, Dr. Zellars co-founded the Black Lives Matter Solidarity Fund in Nova Scotia, a mutual aid fund responding to the realities of COVID-19, which has raised and distributed over \$300,000 to date. Additionally, she co-founded the African Nova Scotian Freedom School in Halifax in 2020 to honour the rich legacies of African Nova Scotian freedom fighters, educators, and community leaders throughout the province.

In 2021, Dr. Zellars was named as the inaugural visiting scholar at the Canada School of Public Service through the Jocelyne Bourgeon Visiting Scholar Initiative. In this role, she helped to shape the learning curriculum offered to federal public servants on topics such as unconscious bias and anti-Black racism. She also worked as a special advisor to the Deputy Minister at Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and completed various consultancy work with Treasury Board, Heritage Canada and the Office of Auditor General in 2022-23.

MINIMUM ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Any interested supplier must demonstrate by way of a statement of capabilities that it meets the following requirements:

Education

- Must hold a PhD degree from a recognized post-secondary institution with specialization in economics, sociology, political science, education, or other related studies on People of African Descent and the Caribbean diaspora.

Experience:

- Significant expertise and research experience on issues related to anti-Black racism, bias, and discrimination in Canada. Candidates must also have a deep understanding of the historical and contemporary issues faced by Black people in this country.
- Significant experience in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, developing strategic options and recommendations. This includes leading collaborative, trauma-informed initiatives, designing surveys, collecting and analyze data, conducting interviews, and interpreting findings.

- Significant experience working with a range of partners and stakeholders in public, private and/or non-for-profit sectors to advance key issues.
- Knowledge of the Canadian federal government system, including a comprehensive understanding of policies, programs, and organizational structures.
- Knowledge of trends, issues, data, and initiatives related to mental health, talent development and career progression of Black public servants in Canada.

PERIOD AND ESTIMATED COST OF THE CONTRACT

The period of the contract will be from contract award to December 31, 2023 and will cost \$75,986.25, inclusive of taxes.

APPLICABLE TRADE AGREEMENTS AND APPLICABLE LIMITED TENDERING REASONS

No Trade Agreements apply to this request.

Section 6(d) of the Government Contracts Regulations is being invoked in this procurement as only one person or firm is believed capable of performing the contract.

OWNERSHIP OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual Property does not apply to this contract.

CLOSING DATE AND TIME FOR WRITTEN SUPPLIER RESPONSES CHALLENGING THIS REQUIREMENT IS 2:00 P.M, EASTERN TIME, 07/28/2023

You are hereby notified that the government intends to solicit a bid and negotiate with the firm identified above.

If you wish to submit a written response showing that you are capable of meeting this requirement, it must be done not later than the closing date and time. As it is intended to proceed in a timely manner, responses received after the closing date will not be considered. The Crown reserves the right not to open this procurement to competition.

Responses received on or before the closing date will be considered solely for the purpose of deciding whether or not to conduct a competitive procurement. Information provided will be used by the Crown for technical evaluation purposes only and is not to be construed as a competitive solicitation. Your written response must provide sufficient evidence (e.g. specifications, technical data, drawings, or any other proof) that clearly demonstrates that your product or service is capable of fulfilling this requirement.

Suppliers that have submitted a response will be notified in writing of ISED's decision to continue with the non-competitive procurement or to compete the requirement.

Should you have any questions concerning this requirement, contact the contracting officer identified above. The Industry file number, the contracting officer's name and the closing date of the ACAN must appear on the outside of the envelope in block letters on the covering page.

The Crown retains the right to negotiate with suppliers on any procurement. Documents may be submitted in either official language of Canada.