

COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF AFRICAN CANADIANS

Africa Centre Annual Update

RECOMMENDATION

That the August 8, 2022, Community Services report CS01279, be received for information.

Requested Council Action	Information only		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work as we work to achieve our strategic goals.	Healthy City		
City Plan Values	BELONG. LIVE. THRIVE. ACCESS. PRESERVE. CREATE.		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community safety and well-being Arts and culture Economic Growth
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the corporation		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C529 - Immigration and Settlement • C538 - Diversity and Inclusion • Capital Profile 15-21-1040 Wellington / African Multicultural Centre 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 6, 2017, City Council Budget CR_5319 Africa Centre - Operational Funding Request • November 9, 2018, Audit Committee CR_6548 Africa Centre Governance Management Review • November, 9, 2018, Audit Committee CR_6594 Administration Response Africa Centre Governance Management Review • February 11, 2021, Audit Committee OCA00340 - Office of the City Auditor Recommendations Follow-up Dashboard report - as at January 25, 2021 		

Executive Summary

- Incorporated in 2006, the Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta began its operations as The Africa Centre in the former Wellington Jr. High School. The Africa Centre is a non-profit organization whose mission is to create opportunities for access and the full participation of peoples of African descent. They provide programming and services to individuals, families and the community.
- The organization receives ongoing operational funding from the City of Edmonton of \$469,500; \$232,000 of which was approved in 2013 and an additional \$237,500 of which was approved in 2017.
- Since the 2017 funding approval, the Africa Centre has been through many changes - a City governance and management audit, a board of directors recruitment and refresh, and the hiring of new senior management staff - all of which have led to unprecedented growth for the organization.

REPORT

Historical Context

The Africa Centre is a non-profit organization whose mission is to create opportunities for access and the full participation of peoples of African descent. The City of Edmonton is a key partner to the Africa Centre. This relationship is over 15 years old and has enabled the Africa Centre to grow and serve Edmonton's Black population in the City through community engagement and services. Attachment 1 outlines the historical milestones, City funding support, as well as some of the growth challenges the organization has gone through in its history.

Today's Refreshed Africa Centre

The Africa Centre has had a period of stability as reported in its latest annual 2020/2021 report (Attachment 2). The organization addressed all the 2018 recommendations by the Office of the City Auditor and made changes in both service delivery and organizational capacity:

- The recommended process is now part of the organizational practices.
- Amended bylaws and reformed membership through community consultations for inclusivity and diversification.
- Built a collaborative environment with grassroots organizations and support initiatives that strengthen community organizations at a grassroots level.
- Expanded programming to include various programs that enhance community capacity and strengthen economic participation among African Albertans.
- Created an economic-focused program that will enable capacity support and access to capital for Black entrepreneurs.
- Increased staffing to meet the needs of the growing community.
- Created a communications department that focuses on community reach and expanded its community engagement and capacity development team.

COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF AFRICAN CANADIANS - Africa Centre Annual Update

The Africa Centre recently unveiled its five year (2021-2026) strategic plan, which focuses on catering to communities and developing resources to meet community need (Attachment 3).

As a result of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization adjusted and updated its program to meet community needs. It concentrated on mental health and wellness, self-care, academic support and food security. The Africa Centre also registered some of the following highlights:

- \$62,000 in scholarships provided to students of emerging immigrant and refugee backgrounds.
- 1,300 culturally inclusive food hampers provided to families.
- Over 40 mentor pairings.
- 600 hours of in-class and online job readiness provided to youth.
- Established a mental health Counselling Clinic, the first of its kind offering culturally inclusive free therapy sessions targeting African descent Albertans.

Next Steps

The Africa Centre has been working on its financial diversification and growth. Over the past three years, the organization has expanded its programs and services.

- Budget 2020/2021 was \$1.6 million
- Budget 2021/2022 was \$4.1 million
- Forecast 2022/2023 is \$4.1 million

The Africa Centre continues to partner with the Government of Canada to provide capacity building support to African descent grassroot organizations. Last year alone, the Africa Centre disbursed \$2 million in capacity building support.

Other community collaborative efforts and partnerships include:

- Over the past 12 months more than 80 organizations were funded with capacity support on governance, fiscal management and operational excellence.
- The Africa Centre continues to partner with Edmonton Community Foundation to support Black led organizations in fiscal management and coaching.
- The Africa Centre plays a secretarial role in the Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership and leads the communication and community engagement role.
- The Africa Centre has participated with a number of other organizations in Canada in the establishment of the Federation of African Canadian Economics, a national entity that supports Black business owners' access to loans.
- The Africa Centre embarked on a small business support initiative in Edmonton and Calgary to help African descent entrepreneurs access capacity support and coaching.
- Other programs expansions include:
 - Undertaking various initiatives that address systemic racism and promote inclusion, through the development of the UJIMA initiative (named after the third Principle of Kwanzaa, collective work and responsibility). This new program attempts to build young

COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF AFRICAN CANADIANS - Africa Centre Annual Update

Black leaders' capacity and diversity, through mentorship and volunteer experiences with authorities, boards and commissions.

- Community engagement initiatives continue to expand as in-person activities resume.
- Future risks and concerns/trends:
 - Edmonton is home to the third largest Black community in Canada. This is expected to continue to grow and so is the Africa Centre's program.
 - The organization has expressed a pressing need for capital and operational resources to keep up with the expansion of its services and growth of the African communities in Edmonton.

Budget/Financial Implications

Community Services Social Development Branch base budget provides annual operational funding of \$469,500 to the Africa Centre, with core funding of \$232,000 that has been static since 2013 and \$237,500 that was approved in 2017 for specific Council-approved items.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Community Insights were not collected by Administration for the purposes of this report. The partner group has actively engaged with its membership in their program delivery and governance activities.

GBA+

As the scope of the report is to provide City Council with an annual update on funding allocated to the Africa Centre, a comprehensive GBA+ analysis has not been conducted by Administration. However, in future years components of GBA+ analysis, as well as training/education could be built into future funding agreements with the Africa Centre.

The Africa Centre is a pan-African organization which serves Edmonton's diverse African communities. It fosters programs that create opportunities for individuals and families of African descent and their communities to participate in civic life. The focus of many of their programs is to influence racial disparity and the availability of social and economic resources. The Africa Centre, through its four strategic pillars: Cultural Identity, Advancement and Empowerment, Integration and Resource Diversification and Organizational Sustainability, aims to effectively deliver quality programs and services to meet various social change outcomes such as increasing the wellbeing of newcomer and immigrant social determinants of health. Through the various program offerings from the Africa Centre, the focus is on a spectrum of diverse needs and populations that range from early learning for children, food insecurity for families, mental health with cultural sensitivities, immigrant women's programs, youth leadership and employment for young professionals.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Historical Timeline of Africa Centre
2. Africa Centre 2020/2021 Annual Report

3. Africa Centre 2021-2026 Strategic Plan