

# **Aird & Berlis LLP/Aird & McBurney LP to partner with Black entrepreneurs to protect and drive innovation**

Toronto, ON – February 28, 2022

Today, the Black Creek Community Health Centre announced that Aird & Berlis LLP and Aird & McBurney LP have created a strategic collaboration with Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA) to provide legal guidance and support for Black entrepreneurs over the next three years.

The BEA is supported by a \$3-million Government of Canada investment through the Black Entrepreneurship Program (BEP) Ecosystem Fund delivered by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario).

“Black entrepreneurs continue to drive innovation in the Canadian economy, and our government is proud to support collaborations that foster the growth of business skills ecosystems,” said 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 is committed to ensuring Black entrepreneurs have the tools they need to drive strong, diverse and inclusive economic growth across Southern Ontario.”

“We see BEA as a platform for Black entrepreneurs in the community to refine their ideas and define their future. Protecting an idea and navigating the commercial and regulatory challenges in bringing it to market is just as critical as coming up with one,” said Tony Sabeta, Partner at Aird & McBurney LP and Co-Director of the firm’s Startups Group. “As a firm, we must also acknowledge the pervasive racial inequality in our society, take ownership of it and take action to contribute something enduring to solve the problem. We are committed to offering Black entrepreneurs practical and strategic legal expertise related to company formation and structuring, intellectual property strategy, financing, and other business matters.”

“Starting a new business can be a daunting endeavor. There are many things to consider such as intellectual property rights, raising capital, hiring the right employees, developing a marketing plan and executing a sales strategy,” said Olu Villasa, Manager, Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA). “One of the most important aspects of starting a business is ensuring that the business is legally compliant and protected. Unfortunately, this is one of the last areas considered by many entrepreneurs, Black or otherwise.”

“This strategic collaboration is an important step along the entrepreneurial journey, and we are excited to work with Aird & McBurney LP,” said Cheryl Prescod, Executive Director at Black Creek Community Health Centre. “Black entrepreneurs often lack the exposure and resources

needed to grow a business. Protecting intellectual property and familiarizing entrepreneurs with these services will benefit them and empower Black-owned businesses in our community.”

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### **About FedDev Ontario**

For more than 12 years, the Government of Canada, through [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 impacts the Agency is having in southern Ontario by exploring our [pivotal projects](#).

### **About Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA)**

In 2021, the Government of Canada announced an investment of close to \$3 million for the Black Creek Community Health Centre (BCCHC), in partnership with York University’s YSpace, Schulich Executive Education Centre (SEEC), and TD-Community Engagement Centre, to support Black-Canadian entrepreneurs and businesses in Humber River-Black Creek. The funding comes as part of the federal government’s first-ever [Black Entrepreneurship Program \(BEP\) Ecosystem Fund](#)— an investment of more than \$400 million to support the long-term success of Black entrepreneurs and business owners in Canada.

### **About Black Creek Community Health Centre**

Black Creek Community Health Centre (Black Creek CHC) is a respected multi-service agency serving Toronto’s North York West and adjacent communities since 1989. BCCHC works with individuals, families and organizations to deliver comprehensive health services and programs that enable community members to receive the best care, where they live. Best known for their holistic health care approach, Black Creek CHC brings together and relies on the continued support of government, healthcare and community partners to address the unique needs and challenges of the community.

### **About Aird & Berlis LLP/Aird & McBurney LP**

Aird & McBurney is a leading Canadian intellectual property boutique firm with an internationally-renowned reputation. Aird & McBurney works collaboratively and seamlessly with leading Canadian law firm Aird & Berlis LLP to provide strategic legal and business advice in all principal areas of corporate commercial law, including corporate finance, banking, technology and intellectual property, litigation, labour and employment, municipal, real estate and tax. Their clients benefit from the integration of agency and legal services within a single, full-service legal organization.

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