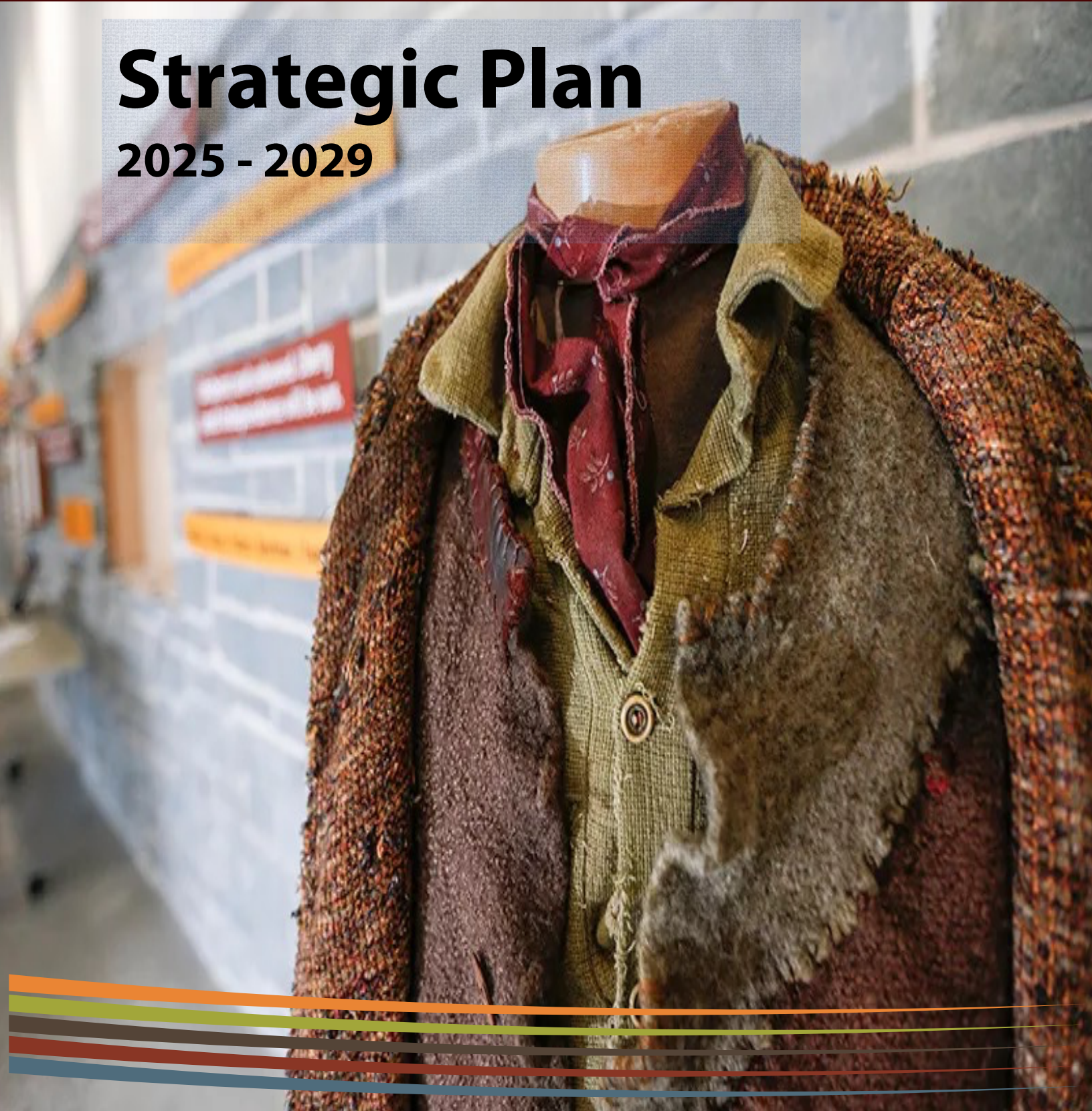


# Black Loyalist HERITAGE CENTRE

— PRESENTED *by* EMERA —  
A PART *of* THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

## Strategic Plan

2025 - 2029



# BLACK LOYALIST HERITAGE SOCIETY

## Strategic Plan 2025-2029

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## **OUR VISION**

**We celebrate the rich legacy of the Black Loyalists as an integral part of the diverse heritage of Canada and beyond.**

## **OUR PURPOSE**

**We honour and safeguard the enduring legacy of the Black Loyalists.**

## **OUR MISSION**

**We empower descendants of Black Loyalists to foster social and economic equity while inspiring recognition of the Black Loyalist story.**

# OUR PROMISE



**Andrea Davis**  
**Executive Director**



**Sheila Hartley-  
Scott**  
**President**

The Black Loyalist Heritage Society proudly stands at the crossroads of history and progress, safeguarding the stories of resilience, determination, and hope that define the legacy of the Black Loyalists. With this Strategic Plan, we take an intentional step forward, honoring the voices of our ancestors while embracing the dreams of future generations.

This five-year plan represents the culmination of an extensive and inclusive process that engaged a diverse cross-section of our community: affiliated organizations, community leaders, students, volunteers, staff, board members, and government partners. Through surveys, focus groups, and consultations, we reached deep into the heart of this community and beyond to ensure that every voice was heard and every perspective valued.

We heard you! Together, we have shaped a bold vision for the future, grounded in our shared commitment to preserving the Black Loyalist story and uplifting our community. The programs and initiatives of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society and Centre are not just about preserving the past—they are about shaping a future where the legacy of the Black Loyalists inspires global connections, cultural understanding, and social progress.

Our vision is for the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre to be more than a museum. We see it as a living, breathing hub for celebration, storytelling, and empowerment—where history comes alive and diverse communities come together to learn, share, and grow.

This Strategic Plan outlines four key themes that will guide us over the next five years:

1. Increase Awareness of the Black Loyalist Legacy
2. Engage our Communities
3. Strengthen our Organizational Capacity
4. Foster Learning and Education

The plan includes short-, medium-, and long-term objectives that will be implemented over the lifespan of this strategy. Recognizing that not all objectives can be accomplished simultaneously, we will prioritize them according to the evolving needs of the Society and its mission.

Our work will be underpinned by our core values of equity and belonging, dedication, and leadership, ensuring that we remain steadfast in our commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and community empowerment.

As we embark on this journey, we are inspired by the resilience of the Black Loyalists, who overcame extraordinary challenges to forge a place of belonging in Canada. Their story is our story—a powerful reminder of what can be achieved through unity, perseverance, and hope.

We invite you to join us in this endeavor as we celebrate the past, enrich the present, and build a future worthy of the legacy we are privileged to uphold. Together, we will ensure that the Black Loyalist story continues to inspire and empower generations to come.



# OUR PLAN – Strategic Themes

## 1. INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE BLACK LOYALIST LEGACY

The Black Loyalist Heritage Society is at a pivotal moment in its journey to honor and preserve the legacy of the Black Loyalists. To truly fulfill our mission, we must amplify our voice—not just locally, but across Canada and beyond. Our museum is a treasure trove of stories, resilience, and triumphs that deserves global recognition. By strengthening our presence on social media, leveraging cutting-edge digital marketing tools, and increasing representation at local and international forums, we will ensure people everywhere know who we are, where we are, and why we matter. We want to inspire descendant families to connect with their rich histories, educators to enrich their classrooms, historians to explore untold stories, and visitors from all walks of life to experience the powerful legacy of the Black Loyalists. Building greater awareness is not just about drawing attention—it’s about creating a movement that celebrates and shares the profound impact of this heritage with the world.



### OUR COMMITMENT:

**ENSURE THE HISTORY AND ENDURING LEGACY OF THE BLACK LOYALISTS IS PRESERVED AND SHARED, AND CELEBRATED LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY.**

#### SHORT TERM GOALS:

- **Develop a Marketing and Communications Plan to enhance visibility, including efforts to significantly increase domestic and international membership.**
  - Form a Marketing and Communications Committee.
  - Engage a marketing consultant to develop a detailed plan.
  - Identify target audiences and create tailored messaging strategies.
  - Design promotional materials (digital and print).
  - Partner with diaspora organizations to promote membership internationally
- **Establish an annual academic symposium and a YouTube channel to share Black Loyalist stories.**
  - Identify key topics and speakers for the symposium.
  - Secure funding and partnerships with academic institutions.
  - Develop a production plan for YouTube content.
  - Assign a content manager for video uploads and quality assurance.

- **Assess and optimize the use of social media platforms.**
  - Conduct an audit of current platforms.
  - Develop a social media calendar with regular posting schedules.
  - Train staff and volunteers on social media best practices.
  - Track engagement metrics and adjust strategies accordingly.

#### **MEDIUM TERM GOALS:**

- **Develop public awareness campaigns focused on education and engagement.**
  - Create thematic campaigns tied to significant dates and events. (i.e. No. 2 Construction Battalion Monument)
  - Engage media outlets to amplify reach.
  - Host workshops and seminars to promote awareness.
- **Create virtual exhibits to expand access to Black Loyalist history.**
  - Secure funding for virtual exhibit technology.
  - Collaborate with historians and designers to curate content.
  - Implement interactive features (e.g., 3D models, narrated tours).
- **Launch an Online gift shop.**
  - Research e-commerce platforms and select a vendor.
  - Curate Black Loyalist-themed merchandise from local vendors and non-local vendors
  - Build and test the online shop interface.
  - Promote the gift shop through social media and newsletters
- **Develop a short-term fundraising plan to address immediate needs, such as the 10th-anniversary event.**
  - Identify key fundraising targets.
  - Organize donor outreach and promotional events.
  - Partner with local businesses for sponsorship opportunities.
  - Assign responsibilities for the executive of 10th Anniversary Events (Staff and Board)

#### **LONG TERM GOALS:**

- **Create travelling exhibits with Canadian, and International Museums that have significance to the Black Loyalists' history and legacy.**
  - Create a portable exhibition of key artifacts, stories, and multimedia presentations that can be hosted by partner museums across Canada and internationally.
  - Co-Curate Joint Exhibits with partner institutions to co-curate thematic exhibitions that explore intersections between Black Loyalist history and global history.
  - Borrow exhibits from partner institutions, tailor exhibits to highlight shared histories, such as the Loyalist migration or connections to the African diaspora.

- Establish Partnership Agreements with museums that have an interest in African diaspora history, such as the Canadian Museum for Human Rights or the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, through memoranda of understanding (MOUs).
- **Establish Black Loyalist memorial spaces, signage, benches, and other significant landmarks.**
  - Develop a funding proposal and seek donor support.
  - Partner with local artists and historians to design installations. (i.e. No.2 Construction Battalion Monument)
  - Coordinate with municipal authorities for approvals.

## 2. ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITIES

Meaningful programming, and vibrant celebrations that include all ages and walks of life foster a deep sense of connection and pride within our communities, ensuring that our shared history remains alive, relevant, and honored. Digital access to family records, oral histories, photos, artifacts, and other historical data of the Black Loyalists is vital to preserving and sharing these rich legacies with descendants, historians, and educators so that their stories of resilience, struggle and triumph are not lost, but instead are passed on to future generations.



By involving our communities in program development, and genealogy research, we create spaces where their voices are heard, their stories are valued, their history is safeguarded, and their contributions are recognized. Prioritizing these areas in our strategic plan for the next five years is essential to strengthening our role as a trusted steward of Black Loyalist heritage and an inclusive hub for education, family research, celebration, and empowerment.

### OUR COMMITMENT:

#### DEFINE AND DELIVER PROGRAMS THAT WILL MAXIMIZE ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

##### SHORT TERM GOALS:

- **Establish a Black Loyalist Genealogy Centre**
  - Provide digital access to a database of family records, oral histories, photos, artifacts, and historical data of the Black Loyalists, ensuring the safeguarding of this rich heritage and its availability to descendants, historians, and educators for future generations

- **Expand Visitor Amenities and On-Site Experiences**
  - Establish an on-site bistro coffee shop to provide visitors with a space to relax and enjoy refreshments while enhancing their overall experience -making the Centre more appealing for day trips and extended visits.
  
- **Diversify and Modernize Exhibits**
  - Introduce new dynamic and interactive exhibits that tell compelling stories of the Black Loyalist experience and connect them to broader themes of migration, resilience, and cultural diversity.
  
- **Strengthen Outreach and Accessibility to Under-served Audiences**
  - Develop targeted marketing and community outreach programs to attract and engage youth, newcomers, and individuals from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds including First Nations Peoples.
  - Collaborate with schools, settlement services, and community organizations to create tailored experiences and educational programs that reflect the unique interests and needs of these groups.
  
- **Enhance Community Engagement and Relevance**
  - Develop and implement diverse programming, such as theme nights featuring music, crafting, dance classes, and cultural celebrations, that appeal to all age groups, including youth (ages 15-19), seniors, and newcomers to the community.
  - Include sporting events, cultural festivals, music festivals, art festivals and exhibits, outdoor and indoor markets, conferences, lectures, workshops, etc.
  - Consult with families from the surrounding Black Communities in the development of social and educational programming.
  - Engage with/host welcome events for newcomers to the community of various ethnic backgrounds.
  - Engage with Seniors to determine how to develop programs they would be interested in attending.
  - Engage high school students, youth groups to identify youth-appropriate events.
  - Foster a sense of belonging by incorporating local talent and traditions alongside themes celebrating global cultures and shared histories.
  
- **Establish an annual event calendar to enhance community connection.**
  - Include accessible events, ensuring inclusivity for diverse audiences
  - Conduct accessibility audits for event venues.
  - Develop multilingual promotional materials.
  - Partner with local organizations to ensure cultural inclusivity.
  - Collaborate with local businesses for sponsorships.
  - Promote the calendar through social media, news outlets, newsletters and community boards.

- **Strengthen relationships with local councils, schools and community organizations,**
  - Continuously engage the community through events, surveys, and transparent reporting.
  - Address past tensions with honesty and a commitment to inclusivity.
  - Schedule regular meetings with local councils and educational institutions
  - Identify shared goals and opportunities for collaboration.
  - Create a directory of community organizations for outreach.
  - Collaborate on event planning to maximize community reach and shared resources
  
- **Create partnerships for high school volunteering credits to foster youth involvement.**
  - Collaborate with schools to develop volunteer programs.
  - Offer training and mentorship for student volunteers.
  - Highlight volunteer contributions through recognition events.

**MEDIUM TERM GOALS:**

- **Develop a donation strategy and provide transparent reporting on its impact.**
  - Identify key donor segment – Individual, Corporate, Government, etc.
  - Develop tailored fundraising campaigns.
  - Publish quarterly reports outlining the use of donations.

**LONG TERM GOALS:**

- **Improve site accessibility, including transportation to and from the site, gender-neutral washrooms, mobility access, and language supports.**
  - Develop an accessibility improvement plan.
  - Secure funding for the purchase of a BLHS vehicle
  - Secure funding and hire contractors to implement changes.
  - Regularly review accessibility standards and update as needed

### 3. STRENGTHEN OUR ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Organizational capacity is the foundation of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society’s ability to achieve its mission and fulfill its potential as a leader in preserving and sharing the rich history of the Black Loyalists.



Organizational capacity means more than hiring—it's about empowering our team with the tools, resources, and training they need to succeed for the long term. We aim to develop our team so that they not only fulfill operational requirements but also fully embrace and exemplify the Vision, Purpose, Mission, and Core Values of the BLHS. Our hiring practices will reflect the Nova Scotia Museum's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion program and will ensure our job descriptions are competitive and offer professional growth opportunities to attract and retain top talent.

By ensuring we have the right people in the right roles, supported by clear structures, sustainable funding, and forward-looking strategies, we can secure the stability and longevity of our organization. Fostering a culture of excellence and inclusivity will position the BLHS for long-term success and meaningful impact within our community and beyond.

## **OUR COMMITMENT:**

### **SUPPORT, DEVELOP, AND EMPOWER OUR EMPLOYEES TO CARRY OUT THE MISSION OF THE BLACK LOYALIST HERITAGE SOCIETY.**

#### **SHORT TERM GOALS:**

- **Conduct a review to ensure the correct roles are in place to ensure organizational stability and sustainability;**
  - Define the optimal organizational structure to meet the needs of the Society
  - Review current staffing structure.
  - Ensure our job descriptions are in line with our organizational goals, and offer professional growth opportunities to attract and retain top talent
  - Embed the principles of Nova Scotia Museum's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion program into all hiring practices
  - Prioritize succession planning for leadership roles, ensuring continuity and sustained momentum in achieving our objectives
  - Hire talented and committed individuals who embrace and demonstrate the Vision, Purpose, Mission, and Core Values of the BLHS
  
- **Develop and implement training and development plans for staff members to ensure they are equipped to meet the evolving needs of the organization and contribute meaningfully to advancing the mission and vision of the BLHS.**
  - Conduct annual performance and goal setting exercises with each staff member at the beginning of each fiscal year.
  - Conduct performance reviews at mid- and year-end. Use this opportunity to identify growth opportunities, training and mentoring opportunities, and areas of success and areas for improvement:
    - Identify, skill-building opportunities, skills training, and continuous professional development for each staff member

- Provide opportunities for mentorship initiatives, cross training opportunities and resources that support professional growth
- Develop and implement training programs to build a high-performing team equipped to navigate the challenges ahead.
- Provide transparent communication and training to align staff and board members with strategic goals.
- Foster a collaborative culture through shared values and behavioral principles.
- **Finalize and implement the strategic plan with clear roles and responsibilities.**
  - Assign tasks to staff and board members based on expertise.
  - Schedule quarterly progress reviews.
- **Launch a talent management program, including succession planning to ensure the BLHS is sustainably planning for the future leaders of the organization.**
  - Identify potential leaders within the organization and in the community.
  - Develop mentorship and training programs.
  - Document key processes for knowledge transfer.

#### MEDIUM TERM GOALS:

- **Grow the BLHS team to meet strategic objectives, including project management support, curatorial support and genealogy project leadership.**
  - Identify staffing gaps and create a multi-year hiring plan.
  - Secure sustainable funding for new positions.
  - Implement hiring plan

#### LONG TERM GOALS:

- **Establish a consulting (fee-for-service) plan to diversify funding streams for the BLHS**
  - Identify marketable expertise within the organization.
  - Develop a service catalog and pricing model.

## 4. Foster Learning and Education

Education is crucial to preserving and advancing the legacy of the Black Loyalists. Their stories of resilience, courage, and contributions to shaping history are not only vital to understanding our shared past but also serve as powerful lessons for our collective future. As we look ahead, the Black Loyalist Heritage Society is committed to finding innovative and impactful ways to deliver learning opportunities that keep these stories alive for descendants, historians, educators, and global audiences.



## OUR COMMITMENT:

**Preserve and advance the legacy of the Black Loyalists by delivering innovative and impactful learning opportunities that inspire, educate, and connect descendants, historians, educators, and global audiences.**

### SHORT TERM GOALS

- **Create a structured education program for professional development and partnerships.**
  - Collaborate with local experts to develop workshops.
  - Offer certification opportunities for participants.
  - Partner with educational institutions in the development and delivery of programs
- **Partner with NSCC to develop and launch an education program.**
  - Outline program goals and target audiences.
  - Develop curricula and teaching materials.
  - Host pilot sessions and gather feedback for improvement.
- **Schedule professional development sessions for Board, Staff, Volunteers and the general public**
  - Identify training needs through surveys and assessments.
  - Partner with training providers for tailored sessions. (including training provided through Nova Scotia Museums TRACK program)

### MEDIUM TERM GOALS:

- **Develop leadership programming for youth and community members.**
  - Create a program framework with clear outcomes: engage with high school students and educators
  - Recruit mentors and facilitators from the community.
  - Promote the program through schools, community centers, and social media

### LONG TERM GOALS:

- **Expand learning opportunities to include virtual and international audiences.**
  - Develop online courses and webinars.
  - Partner with international institutions for cross-cultural learning.
- **Develop a comprehensive collections plan for artifacts and exhibits.**
  - Inventory current collections and identify gaps.
  - Secure funding for acquisitions and preservation.
  - Develop a digital archive accessible to the public.
  - Diversify funding sources through grants, donations, and consulting services.

# Funding: A Foundation for Achieving Our Strategic Objectives

The ability of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society to achieve its strategic objectives over the next five years hinges on securing sustainable funding sources. Funding is the underlying thread that supports our goals of community engagement, building awareness of the BLHS, strengthening organizational capacity, and advancing learning and education.

To ensure the long-term viability of our initiatives, we must develop and execute a comprehensive funding strategy that aligns with these objectives. By prioritizing sustainability, we can build a financial foundation that empowers the BLHS to fulfill its mission and maximize its impact.

## SUSTAINABLE FUNDING DEVELOPMENT

To secure funding for our strategic objectives, the BLHS will:

- **Diversify Funding Sources:** Identify and pursue a mix of funding opportunities, including government grants, corporate sponsorships, individual donations, and partnerships with like-minded organizations.
- **Build Relationships with Funders:** Establish and nurture strong relationships with potential and existing funders, emphasizing the societal and historical significance of our mission.
- **Develop a Donor Engagement Plan:** Create a structured approach to engaging with individual donors, including regular communication, recognition programs, and opportunities for meaningful involvement.
- **Host Fundraising Events:** Organize community events, heritage celebrations, and donor appreciation initiatives that align with our mission and generate both funds and awareness.
- **Leverage Grant Writing Expertise:** Invest in grant writing capacity to maximize our success in securing government and foundation funding.
- **Create a Case for Support:** Develop a compelling narrative and marketing materials that clearly articulate the importance of supporting the BLHS and its vision for the future.

# OUR CORE VALUES

## **Equity and Belonging: We strive to create a space where all feel a sense of grounding and belonging.**

We are deeply committed to fostering Equity and Belonging as fundamental pillars of our mission. We believe that everyone, regardless of their background, should feel respected, welcomed, valued, and connected within our community. Our spaces, programs, and initiatives are designed to honor diverse experiences and ensure that every individual feels a profound sense of grounding and inclusion. By celebrating the shared history and unique contributions of all, we aim to create an environment where everyone can feel a true sense of belonging and pride.

## **Dedication: We are steadfast in our commitment to preserving and interpreting Black Loyalist history.**

Dedication is at the heart of all we do. We are unwavering in our commitment to preserving and interpreting the rich history of the Black Loyalists and their descendants. Through meticulous research, education, and storytelling, we honor their legacy and ensure that their experiences remain an integral part of our shared heritage. This dedication drives our efforts to safeguard historical artifacts, provide accurate narratives, and inspire future generations to appreciate and continue this vital work.

## **Leadership: We lead with integrity, inspiring others to engage with and promote Black Loyalist Heritage.**

Leadership is a foundation of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society, reflecting our commitment to acting with integrity and inspiring others to engage with and promote Black Loyalist heritage. As leaders, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct, ensuring that our actions align with our mission and values. We aim to empower individuals within our community and beyond, encouraging active participation in preserving and celebrating Black Loyalist history. Through collaboration, vision, and dedication, we strive to set an example that motivates others to join us in advancing the recognition and understanding of this vital part of our shared heritage.

# CONCLUSION

## A Call to Action

The Black Loyalist Heritage Society's 5-Year Strategic Plan is more than a roadmap—it is a testament to our collective dedication to honoring the past, uplifting the present, and inspiring the future. It is a call to action for every individual who believes in the transformative power of history to guide us toward equity, belonging, and progress.



As we embark on this ambitious journey, we do so with the courage of our ancestors and the unwavering belief that their sacrifices were not in vain. Their resilience, hope, and determination live on in every story we share, every life we touch, and every initiative we bring to fruition.

This plan reflects the voices of our community—voices that have guided us, challenged us, and inspired us. It reflects a shared vision to build a stronger, more inclusive society where the Black Loyalist story is not just preserved but celebrated as an integral part of Canadian and global history.

The next five years will require bold leadership, innovative thinking, and steadfast commitment. But we are ready. Together, as stewards of this remarkable legacy, we will bring these goals to life. We will transform ideas into action, partnerships into progress, and dreams into reality.

We invite you—our community, partners, and supporters—to stand with us. Join us as we honor the legacy of the Black Loyalists, foster understanding across generations, and create a world where their story continues to inspire, educate, and empower.

# AT A GLANCE

## BLHS'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2025-2029

### 1. INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE BLACK LOYALIST LEGACY BY:

- Launching a Marketing & Communications Plan.
- Hosting annual symposiums & create a YouTube channel.
- Boosting social media reach with strategic content.
- Developing campaigns, virtual exhibits & an online gift shop.
- Creating travelling exhibits & memorial spaces.

### 2. ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITIES BY:

- Establishing a Black Loyalist Genealogy Centre.
- Enhancing visitor experiences with new amenities.
- Diversifying exhibits to reflect resilience & culture.
- Strengthening outreach with events & youth programs.
- Improving accessibility & grow local partnerships.

### 3. STRENGTHEN OUR ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BY:

- Optimizing staff roles with equity & succession planning.
- Investing in staff & volunteer development.
- Setting clear goals for the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Expanding the team for key projects & research.
- Diversifying funding & build sustainability.

### 4. FOSTER LEARNING AND EDUCATION BY:

- Developing education programs with institutional partners.
- Offering professional development for staff & community.
- Launching youth & community leadership initiatives.
- Expanding virtual & international learning opportunities.



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