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Building  
Diversity  
Awards.

Community  
Benefits  
Summit.

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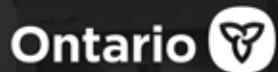
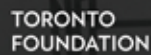
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# Our Funders

Thank you to all our funders whose generous support makes Toronto Community Benefits Network programs possible and helps us create lasting impact in the community.



Funded in part by the  
Government of Canada's  
Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy







**Premier of Ontario - Premier ministre de l'Ontario**

May 29 – 30, 2025

### **A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DOUG FORD**

I'm delighted to extend a warm welcome to everyone participating in the fifth annual Canadian Building Diversity Awards.

Ontario takes pride in its vibrant workforce and thriving business community. That is why I commend Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) for its commitment to championing diversity, equity, inclusion and reconciliation within our construction industry.

Congratulations to all the nominees, and a heartfelt thank you to the TCBN for presenting these awards. Through the TCBN's leadership, advocacy and cross-sector partnerships, it has helped promote equitable access to well-paying jobs in construction and public infrastructure projects. By working together, we can build a stronger, more diverse workforce and resilient economy — now and for the future.

Best wishes for a successful and memorable awards celebration!

**Doug Ford**  
**Premier**



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NEXGEN BUILDERS YOUTH POLICY TABLE

## Powershift

TCBN is seeking youth representatives from our member and partner organizations.

// [nexgenbuilders.ca/powershift](https://nexgenbuilders.ca/powershift)



## HER PATH FORWARD


Empowering Women In *Construction*

Empowering Women to Build the Future We're inviting women who are interested in joining or advancing in the construction industry to be part of Her Path Forward.

// [nexgenbuilders.ca/her-path-forward](https://nexgenbuilders.ca/her-path-forward)





A close-up portrait of Rosemarie Powell, a Black woman with a voluminous, curly afro hairstyle. She is smiling warmly at the camera, showing her teeth. She is wearing a black turtleneck sweater. Her right hand is raised, with her index finger pointing upwards. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, circular gold-colored pin or badge. The overall lighting is soft and even.

Building Diversity Awards  
Creator & Executive Producer

**Rosemarie  
Powell**





Dear Friends and Partners,

Welcome to the 5th Annual National Building Diversity Awards! It is my great pleasure to extend warm greetings on behalf of Toronto Community Benefits Network and our event organizing committee.

This evening is a celebration of those building stronger, more inclusive organizations — and, by extension, a more just and equitable country. We are proud to recognize changemakers from across the nation whose dedication and vision are transforming our sector. Thank you to our Nominations Committee for thoughtfully reviewing the shortlisted nominees.

A heartfelt thank you to our Presenting Sponsor, Desjardins, for your continued support and leadership. We're also deeply grateful to our union, industry, and community partners — this event is a testament to what we can accomplish together. Special thanks as well to the Great Canadian Casino Resort for hosting us and for your ongoing commitment to equity through your Community Benefits Agreement.

We are thrilled to welcome keynote speakers Angela Clayton, Interim-President and CEO of Infrastructure Ontario and Heather McDonald, President & CEO of United Way Greater Toronto. Their leadership and insight reflect the power of cross-sector collaboration in driving systemic change.

And we have a special performance ahead — none other than Kardinal Offishall will be joining us on stage! It promises to be a celebration to remember.

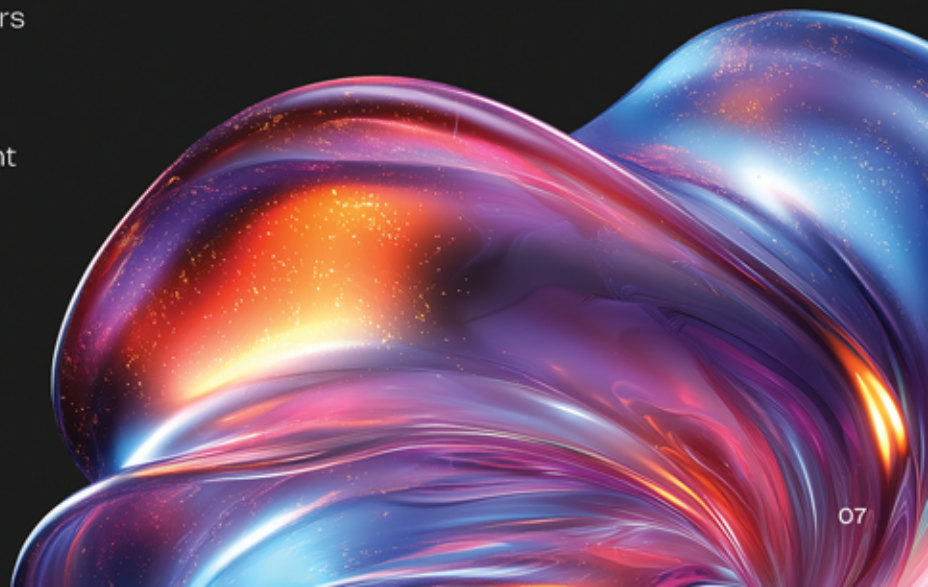
But the momentum doesn't end tonight. Tomorrow, we convene for the Community Benefits Summit — a space for learning, dialogue, and strategy among advocates, practitioners, and thought leaders working to embed equity in all we do.

We recognize that these are challenging times. Globally, equity efforts face mounting resistance. Yet here, through the Building Diversity Awards, we reaffirm our Canadian values — fairness, inclusion, dignity, and opportunity for all.

Thank you for being part of this journey!

A handwritten signature in gold ink that reads 'Rosemarie Powell'.

**Rosemarie Powell**  
Executive Director  
Toronto Community Benefits Network







Community Keynote

Angela  
Clayton





# Angela Clayton

President & CEO  
Infrastructure Ontario

Angela Clayton was appointed Interim President and CEO of Infrastructure Ontario in December 2024, while continuing in her role as President of Project Delivery. In this dual capacity, she leads one of Ontario's most critical infrastructure agencies and oversees Infrastructure Ontario's extensive portfolio of infrastructure projects across the province.

With more than 20 years of experience in the infrastructure sector, Angela has worked across both public and private sectors, specializing in strategic planning, risk management, and large-scale program delivery. At Infrastructure Ontario, she has been instrumental in shaping the strategy, planning, and implementation of some of

Ontario's most significant infrastructure projects, ensuring alignment with government priorities while driving innovation and efficiency.

Angela is a Chartered Professional Accountant with a bachelor's degree in commerce and holds several professional designations, including Project Management Professional (PMP), Facilities Management Administrator (FMA), and Real Property Administrator (RPA). Her expertise reflects a unique blend of financial acumen, operational leadership, and technical oversight, making her a trusted voice in Ontario's infrastructure landscape.

Beyond her executive responsibilities, Angela is a passionate advocate for advancing women in the infrastructure sector. She actively mentors emerging leaders, contributes to industry associations, and dedicates time to community initiatives and volunteer work. Widely respected for her collaborative approach and strategic vision, Angela continues to shape Ontario's infrastructure future, championing projects that deliver long-term value to communities and support the province's economic growth.





Industry Keynote

Heather  
McDonald





# Heather McDonald

President & CEO  
United Way Greater Toronto

Heather McDonald brings over 25 years of leadership experience in the social and human services sector, with a career spanning community health care, harm reduction, and street outreach. Most recently, she served as CEO of LOFT Community Services, one of Ontario's largest providers of supportive housing and mental health services. Under her leadership, LOFT significantly expanded its housing portfolio, diversified funding streams, and deepened its impact across the Greater Toronto Area.

Heather holds a master's degree in social work from Wilfrid Laurier University and is certified in mediation. Her leadership and contributions have been widely recognized with numerous

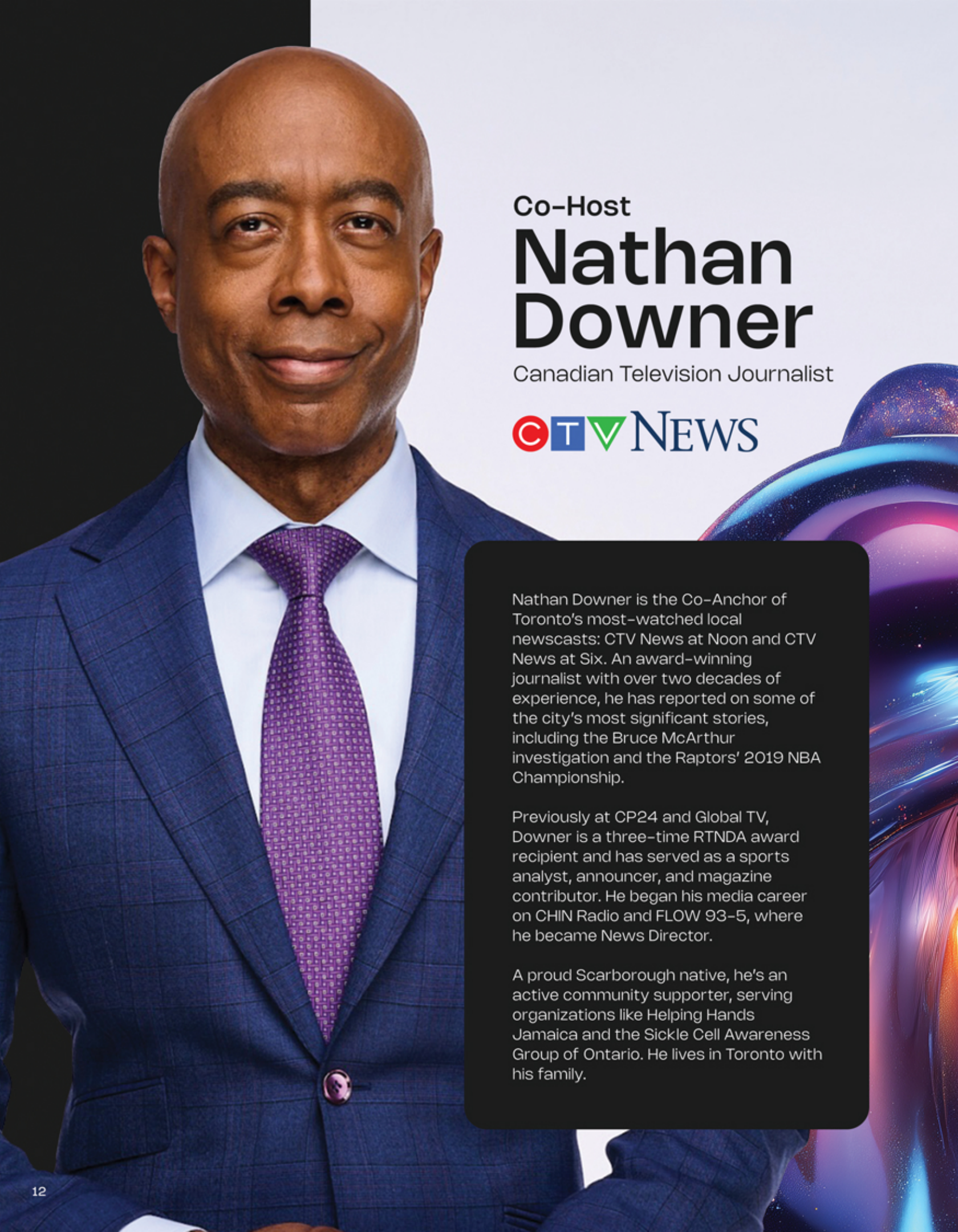
accolades, including the Globe and Mail's 2022 National Changemakers Award, Wilfrid Laurier University's Award for Community Impact in 2023, the North American Heart of Social Work Award in 2016, and the National Terry Fox Humanitarian Award in 1992.

Colleagues describe Heather as a "purpose-driven, values-driven leader" and a "servant leader deeply committed to city-building." Known for her positive energy, strategic mindset, executive presence, and strong people skills, she is widely respected for her ability to inspire teams and foster meaningful change.

In February 2025, Heather was appointed CEO and President of United Way Greater Toronto, where she now leads Canada's largest United Way as it embarks on an ambitious 10-year strategic plan and fundraising campaign.

Her vision and collaborative approach are central to driving systemic change, strengthening community supports, and improving outcomes for the region's most vulnerable populations.



A portrait of Nathan Downer, a Black man with a bald head, wearing a blue checkered suit, white shirt, and purple patterned tie. He is smiling slightly. The background is a gradient of light blue and white, with a colorful, abstract, swirling pattern on the right side.

Co-Host

# Nathan Downer

Canadian Television Journalist

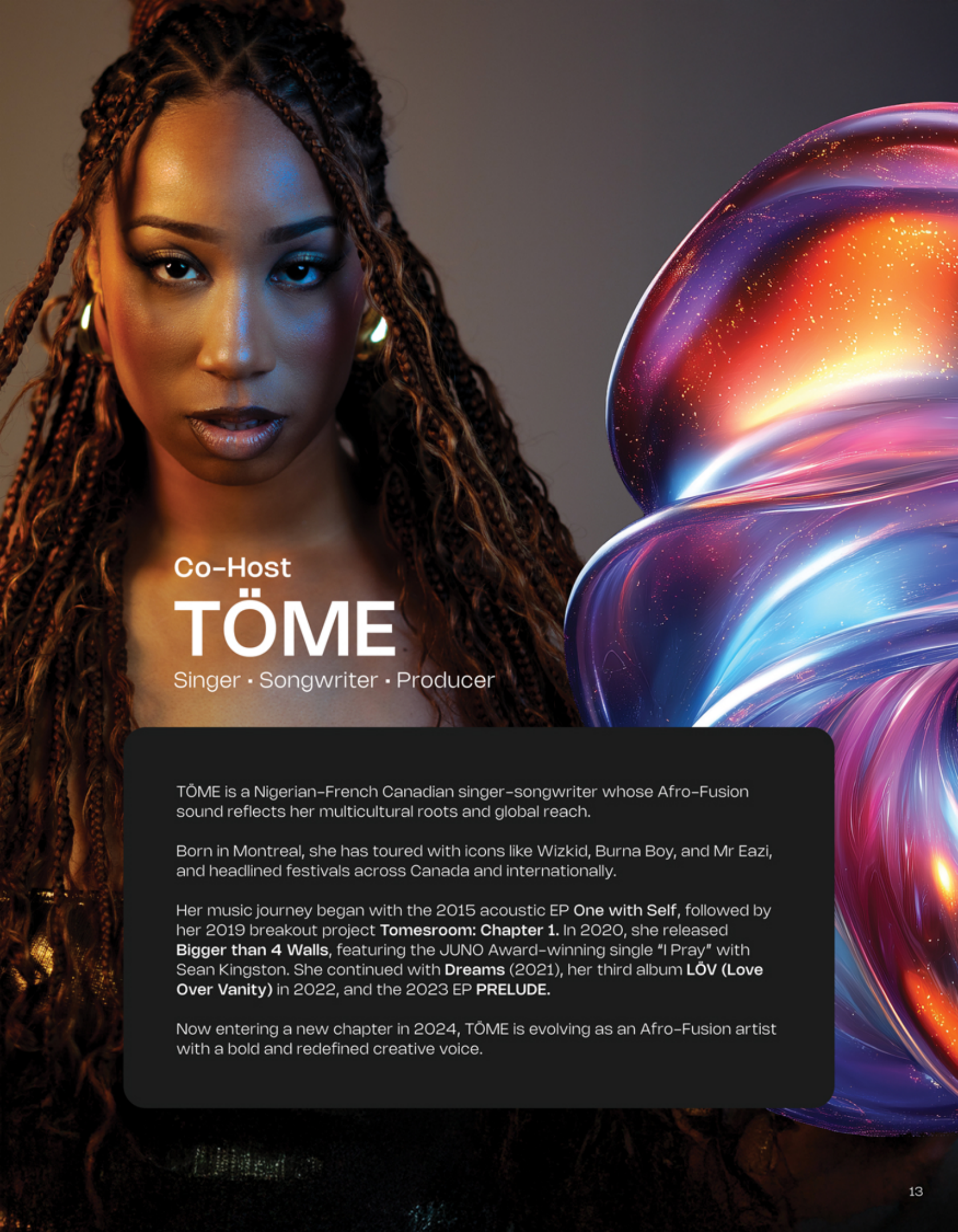


Nathan Downer is the Co-Anchor of Toronto's most-watched local newscasts: CTV News at Noon and CTV News at Six. An award-winning journalist with over two decades of experience, he has reported on some of the city's most significant stories, including the Bruce McArthur investigation and the Raptors' 2019 NBA Championship.

Previously at CP24 and Global TV, Downer is a three-time RTNDA award recipient and has served as a sports analyst, announcer, and magazine contributor. He began his media career on CHIN Radio and FLOW 93-5, where he became News Director.

A proud Scarborough native, he's an active community supporter, serving organizations like Helping Hands Jamaica and the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario. He lives in Toronto with his family.





Co-Host

**TÔME**

Singer • Songwriter • Producer

TÔME is a Nigerian–French Canadian singer–songwriter whose Afro–Fusion sound reflects her multicultural roots and global reach.

Born in Montreal, she has toured with icons like Wizkid, Burna Boy, and Mr Eazi, and headlined festivals across Canada and internationally.

Her music journey began with the 2015 acoustic EP **One with Self**, followed by her 2019 breakout project **Tomesroom: Chapter 1**. In 2020, she released **Bigger than 4 Walls**, featuring the JUNO Award–winning single “I Pray” with Sean Kingston. She continued with **Dreams** (2021), her third album **LÖV (Love Over Vanity)** in 2022, and the 2023 EP **PRELUDE**.

Now entering a new chapter in 2024, TÔME is evolving as an Afro–Fusion artist with a bold and redefined creative voice.



# This year's special guests.



**Marilyn Horrick**

Senior Vice President, Market Growth, Brand Expansion,  
and Partner Relations, Outside Quebec, Desjardins Group



**Ron Urquhart**

Chief Operations Officer  
Great Canadian  
Gaming Corporation



**Karla Avis-Birch**

Principal, Major Rail Projects Leader, Arup



**Damar Walker**

Airbus A320 Captain  
Air Canada



**Mustafa Abdi**

President  
Afro Canadian  
Contractors Association





**Rokhaya Gueye**

Stakeholder Relations &  
Ontario Chair  
Sisters in the Brotherhood



**Theresa Corazon**

Media Personality



**Layne the Auctionista**

Celebrity Auctioneer



**Bill Ferreira**

Executive Director, BuildForce Canada



**Colette Murphy**

Chief Executive Officer, Atkinson Foundation



**Dr. Wendy Cukier**

Founder and Academic Director  
Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University





# 2025 awards show performances and entertainment.

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**Jester**  
DJ & Producer



**Lissa Monet**  
6x Award-Winning DJ



**Nagata Shachu**  
Japanese Taiko Drumming



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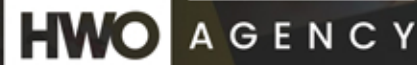


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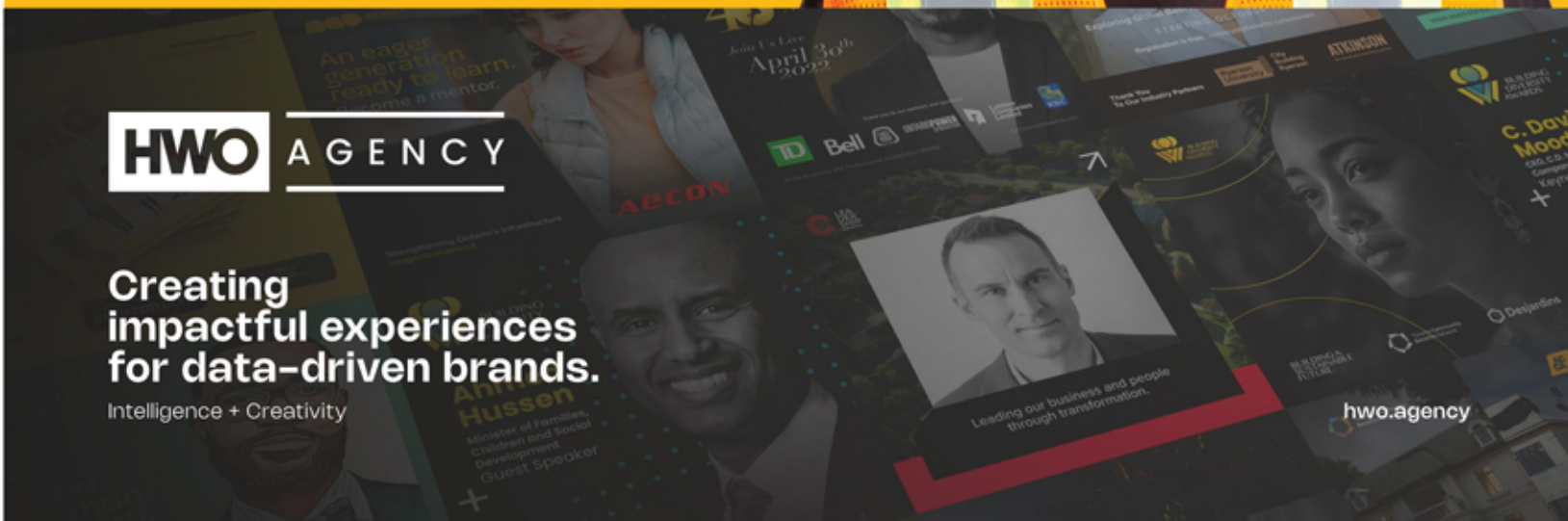
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# Event Planning Committee



## PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Karla Avis-Birch

Principal, Major Rail Projects Leader  
Arup

### Maureen Brown

Founder and Director  
Rock Diversity

### Lyn Caine

Fundraising Consultant  
Family Services of Peel

### Marie-Eve Da Silva

Chief Executive Officer  
Afri Canada TV

### Beth Eshete

Senior Specialist, Community Engagement  
Great Canadian Casino Resort Toronto

### Rokhaya Gueye

Stakeholder Relations & Ontario Chair  
Sisters in the Brotherhood

### Vanessa Houle

Conseillère – Dons et commandites  
Desjardins

### William Muyuku

Chief Executive Officer  
Afri Canada TV

### Joel Johnson

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HWO Agency

### Sarah Margolius

President  
Sarah Margolius Impact

### Dwayne Rutherford

Chief Executive Officer  
Debonair Corporate Events

### Dwayne Soverall

President  
HWO Agency

## TCBN STAFF

### David Anderson

Community Benefits Organizer

### Kumsa Baker

Director, Community Benefits Campaigns and  
Engagement

### Maria Bedoya

Policy Coordinator

### Tanesha Bloomfield

Programs Manager

### Trang Ho

Coordinator, Marketing and Communications

### Erica Leaven

Coordinator, Partnerships & Capacity Building

### Rosalin Maraventano

Consultant, Corporate Engagement

### Hassan Mohamud

Community Benefits Researcher

### Henry Murithi Mwangi

Mentoring Coordinator

### Sherene Nichol

Coordinator, Community Engagement &  
Campaigns

### Lauren Osbourne

Volunteer Coordinator

### Farahnaz Pamiri

Employment Services Assistant

### Lensa Simesso Denga

Director, Community Benefits Programs

### Walid Soufian

Industry Partnership Coordinator

### Chiu Man Tsang

Program Assistant

### Emmanuel Ugwu

Coordinator, Training & Capacity Building

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Building Diversity Awards Event Planning Committee for their exceptional dedication, expertise, and tireless efforts in bringing this event to life.

From countless planning sessions to late nights spent fine-tuning every detail, your commitment to celebrating equity, diversity, and inclusion in the industry is deeply appreciated.

Your work has helped shape an inspiring evening that honours the changemakers building a more inclusive future.





# Past Honourees.



## The Daniels Corporation

Leading on Diversity Award  
2024 • Client/Owner



## Nikki Muswaggon

NexGen Builders Award  
2024 • Mentee



## NCC Investment Group

Leading on Diversity Award  
2024 • Contractor



## UBC Built

Leading on Diversity Award  
2024 • Union



## Bubba Qwulshemut

NexGen Builders Award  
2024 • Mentor



## Kezia Osei

Diverse Contractor to Watch  
2024



## Trades NL

Community Benefits Award  
2024 • Coalition



## Rexdale Casino Woodbine

Community Benefits Award  
2024 • Project



## Brenda Ireland

Community Benefits Award  
2024 • Champion



## Purpose Construction

NexGen Builders Award  
2024 • Employer



## Retrofit Construction

Diverse Contractor to Watch  
2024 • Quebec



## Fastwel Contractors

Diverse Contractor to Watch  
2024 • Ontario



## Clifton Donegal

Community Benefits Award  
2024 • Lifetime Achievement



## David Lepage

Community Benefits Award  
2024 • Lifetime Achievement



## Carvery's Construction LTD.

Diverse Contractor to Watch  
2024 • Nova Scotia



## Jane Wilson

Community Benefits Award  
2024 • Lifetime Achievement





**Brandi Ferenc**  
NexGen Builders Award  
2023 • Mentor



**Brandi Jonathan**  
Community Benefits Award  
2023 • Champion



**Building UP**  
NexGen Builders Award  
2023 • Employer



**Chinyere Johnson**  
NexGen Builders Award  
2023 • Mentee



**Dream Makers  
Developments**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2023 • Contractor



**IUPAT DC 46**  
Leading on Diversity  
2023 • Union



**Tridel**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2023 • Owner/Client



**Amina Dibe**  
Community Benefits Award  
2022 • Champion



**Carpenters  
Local 27**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2022 • Union



**Daniels  
Corporation**  
NexGen Builders Award  
2022 • Employer



**Desiree Smith**  
NexGen Builders Award  
2022 • Mentor



**Dream Unlimited**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2022 • Owner/Client



**Mosaic Transit  
Group**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2022 • Contractor



**Rokhaya Gueye**  
NexGen Builders Award  
2022 • Mentee



**Chris Campbell**  
Community Benefits Award  
2021 • Champion



**Crosslinx Transit  
Solutions**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2021 • Contractor



**Kimoy Francique**  
NexGen Builders Award  
2021 • Mentor



**LiUNA Local 506**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2021 • Union



**Metrolinx**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2021 • Owner/Client



**John Cartwright**  
Leading on Diversity Award  
2021





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# Leading on Diversity Award

## Community - Shortlisted Nominees

Honours a community, labour, and industry leading organisation that is making extraordinary efforts to ensure historically disadvantaged communities and equity deserving groups are accessing jobs and opportunities in construction.



### Skills Ontario

Skills Ontario is deeply committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the skilled trades and technology sectors. Beyond advocacy, they invest in workforce development initiatives prioritizing equity-deserving groups, including women, Indigenous communities, newcomers, racialized youth, and persons with disabilities.

Through inclusive programming and outreach—such as the Young Women's Initiatives, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit-focused programs, and Black Youth in Skilled Trades events—Skills Ontario ensures underrepresented youth see a future in the trades. A standout example is the Umoja Series, which supports Black youth through storytelling, mentorship, and real-world exposure to skilled trades.



### A Woman's Work Support Centre

A Women's Work Support Centre (AWW) is Ontario's first trade school exclusively for women, offering free skilled trades training to address barriers faced by women from underrepresented backgrounds. Its 16-week program combines hands-on training in drywall, tiling, and framing with mentorship, mental health support, and job placements.

Since launch, AWW has enrolled over 900 women, with 150 trained and 45 placed in construction roles between 2024 and 2025. This measurable success highlights AWW's role in building a pipeline of skilled, job-ready women workers, advancing equity, and setting a new standard for community benefits in construction.



### Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre

WMRCC of Durham has served the community for 32 years, originally as the only organization in the region supporting Black and racialized women. It now offers trauma-informed care and entrepreneurship programs to help immigrant and racialized women, including young women, enter skilled trades and launch cooperative businesses through its Worker Cooperative Development (WCD) initiative.

A recognized leader in DEIA and social justice, WMRCC delivers training to institutions like Toronto and Durham Regional Police, Ontario Power Generation, CMHA, hospitals, colleges, and shelters. Its work models best practices in construction-related community benefits by advancing inclusive, equity-focused workforce development and sustainable employment pathways.



# Leading on Diversity Award

## Labour • Shortlisted Nominees

Honours a community, labour, and industry leading organisation that is making extraordinary efforts to ensure historically disadvantaged communities and equity deserving groups are accessing jobs and opportunities in construction.



### Canadian Union of Postal Workers

Under Jan Simpson's leadership, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has advanced community benefits through policies that boost Indigenous and racialized representation at Canada Post and within the union. Their affirmative action plans and influence on employment equity policies reflect a strong commitment to inclusive hiring and systemic change.

Since Simpson's election, CUPW's national office has diversified significantly, with measurable gains in Black, Indigenous, and racialized staff, tracked by the Joint National Human Rights Advisory Committee. CUPW also supports community-based initiatives like expanding postal banking to underserved rural and Indigenous communities, promoting economic inclusion and access to essential services.



### LiUNA Local 183

LiUNA Local 183 demonstrates leadership in advancing DEI in construction through its adoption of the LEAD Charter of Inclusion and Diversity, embedded in the 2022–2025 collective agreements. Representing over 70,000 members, the union aligns with community benefits goals by promoting racial and gender diversity across the industry and within local communities.

Key initiatives include the NexGen Builders Mentoring Program for Black youth and a partnership with Aecon to deliver the Women in Trades program. This program, held at the LiUNA Local 183 Training Centre, prepares women for construction careers and targets 20% female participation. These efforts highlight LiUNA Local 183's commitment to building an inclusive and equitable workforce.



### Trades NL

Trades NL represents 14 building trades unions with over 14,000 skilled workers, promoting a diverse, safe, and inclusive workforce. The organization values diversity and mental health, recognizing the importance of a respectful workplace. In 2018, Trades NL established the Indigenous Skilled Trades Office (ISTO) in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, expanding in 2023 to Corner Brook and St. John's to serve more diverse communities across the province.

The ISTO has supported over 500 clients with job search skills, preparedness, and employment interventions. Its mission is to create new opportunities for Indigenous apprentices and journeypersons, increase apprenticeship completion rates, and enhance employer and union engagement to remove barriers and foster workplace support.



# Leading on Diversity Award

## Industry • Shortlisted Nominees

Honours a community, labour, and industry leading organisation that is making extraordinary efforts to ensure historically disadvantaged communities and equity deserving groups are accessing jobs and opportunities in construction.



### Canadian Turner Construction Company Ltd.

Canadian Turner Construction Company Ltd. leads in embedding community benefits into infrastructure projects through measurable and inclusive practices. In 2024, 58% of its workforce is diverse, with over 50% of new hires from underrepresented groups. The Turner School of Construction Management supports minority- and women-owned businesses, while partnerships with the Afro Canadian Contractors Association and WoodGreen uplift BIPOC contractors and single mothers.

Turner fosters inclusion through employee resource groups, mentorship, and company-wide anti-racism training. Its recruitment uses bias-reducing scorecards and targets equity-seeking communities. Procurement policies prioritize diverse suppliers, and trade partners are encouraged to support equity goals. Turner's alignment of values and action sets a national benchmark for inclusive infrastructure.



### Bass Installation

Bass Installation, led by Natasha Callender-Wilson and founded by Stephen Callender, exemplifies community benefits in construction through strong commitments to diversity, inclusion, and local engagement. Their DEI, Performance Management, and Human Rights policies ensure fair treatment, equity, and dignity across their workforce, reinforced by a comprehensive Employee Manual.

They engage actively in community initiatives like Build a Dream to support underrepresented groups in trades. Collaborations with the Afro Canadian Contractors Association and Toronto Community Benefits Network highlight their broader impact, while involvement in projects like the Sixteen Mile Sports Complex reflects a focus on community-oriented construction.



### Tridel

Tridel's \$26.8 million commitment to community benefits in Regent Park and similar work in Alexandra Park emphasizes local hiring, training, and small business support. With over \$360,000 invested in social procurement, they prioritize diverse and social enterprises. Tridel tracks impact through recruitment analytics and employee engagement surveys, with over 90% participation.

Guided by a Multi-Year DEI Action Plan, Tridel partners with TCHC, Miziwe Blik, and the BOLT Foundation to engage underrepresented groups in construction careers. Their efforts include youth mentorship, scholarships, and Indigenous reconciliation through internships and Indigenous procurement, delivering measurable, sustainable community impact.



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# NexGen Builders Award

## Mentee • Shortlisted Nominees

Honours exceptional mentees demonstrating strong career advancement, mentors dedicated to guiding and uplifting others, and employers who actively foster inclusive, supportive workplaces in construction.



### Amadou Ceesay

Amadou Ceesay, a Journey Carpenter with Carpenters Union Local 27 and founder of Fanatech Cladding, exemplifies community benefit in construction. In 2024, he won the Ontario Regional Siding Competition and represented his craft at the National Apprenticeship Competition. Beyond his technical excellence, Amadou has mentored over 100 apprentices, newcomers, and underrepresented individuals across the GTA, Halton, and Durham regions.

Amadou's leadership is action-driven, co-organizing Local 27's first Black History Month celebration, serving on the EDI Subcommittee, and mentoring through Sisters in the Brotherhood. His initiatives, such as mentoring at TCBN and supporting youth workshops, reflect clear, purpose-led outcomes. He has also empowered 80,000 youth in The Gambia and raised \$20,000 for humanitarian work in Jamaica. Through Fanatech, he creates inclusive job opportunities, fostering learning and growth on every job site.



### Said Keyliye

Said Keyliye, a Drywall Apprentice with Local 675 Drywall Union, exemplifies community benefits in construction. He has set measurable, timebound goals, including completing Health and Safety certifications and a Project Management course by summer, and achieving his Red Seal certification by year's end. His active involvement in Health and Safety Committees demonstrates a strong commitment to workplace well-being and leadership.

Said's journey began with TCBN's Quick Start program in 2021, which launched his career despite pandemic challenges. Now a registered mentor in the NexGen program, he supports emerging tradespeople, contributing to workforce development. By promoting safe, inclusive work environments and investing in his education, Said aligns with the goal of building skilled, diverse talent in construction, making him a standout nominee for the NexGen Builders Champion Mentee Award.



### Samuel Kuluuqtuq

Samuel Kuluuqtuq is a dedicated young Inuit tradesperson and a role model for builders in Nunavut. Starting as a laborer, he progressed through mentorship and formal training, completing a carpentry course at Algonquin College. He now works as an Apprentice Carpenter with NCC Development Limited in Iqaluit and is preparing for his Red Seal Exam.

Sam is passionate about mentoring Inuit youth and encouraging them to pursue trades. He values craftsmanship, sustainability, and community-based work, with knowledge of green and net-zero building. Through attainable goals, cultural relevance, and a vision for long-term impact, Sam embodies best practices in construction, making him an ideal candidate for this award.



# NexGen Builders Award

## Mentor • Shortlisted Nominees

Honours exceptional mentees demonstrating strong career advancement, mentors dedicated to guiding and uplifting others, and employers who actively foster inclusive, supportive workplaces in construction.



### Brittany Anderson

Brittany Anderson, a Natural Gas Pipeline Inspector at Enbridge, is recognized for her leadership in equity and inclusion committees and outreach to underrepresented jobseekers impacted by COVID-19 and job loss. She mentors women entering the male-dominated pipeline industry, creating safe, empowering spaces for open dialogue and support. Brittany's mentorship focuses on building confidence, technical skills, leadership, and resilience.

Her efforts lead to measurable growth in mentee confidence and leadership engagement, addressing systemic barriers through individualized guidance. Through programs like TCBN's NexGen Builders, Brittany's clarity and commitment to anti-racism make her an outstanding candidate for the NexGen Builders Champion – Mentor Award.



### Joel Kitaka

Joel Kitaka, a Journey Person Carpenter with Carpenters Union Local 27, is a standout mentor in construction, driving equity and systemic change. As Chair of the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee, Joel leads initiatives with measurable outcomes, like increasing Black and racialized worker representation, connecting mentees to apprenticeships, and celebrating cultural events like the union's first Black History Month. His active outreach during COVID-19 recovery supports marginalized communities.

Joel mentors through the Toronto Community Benefits Network's NexGen Program and in the workplace, fostering emotional intelligence, self-advocacy, and inclusive hiring. His "tough love" approach helps mentees overcome challenges, gain leadership roles, and mentor others, making Joel an ideal candidate for the NexGen Builders Champion – Mentor Award.



### Wade Whittle

Wade Whittle, Superintendent at NCC Investment Group Inc., is a dedicated mentor focused on community-based capacity building in construction. In Gjoa Haven, a remote community of 1,350, Wade has mentored eight local trainees who recently completed pre-trades training. His leadership has set clear, time-bound goals, preparing these individuals for the Trades Entrance Exam (TEE) and apprenticeships, creating meaningful pathways into the construction sector.

Wade's mentorship goes beyond technical training—he provides consistent support, sets high expectations, and offers tough but compassionate guidance. By fostering local employment and career advancement, Wade builds confidence, purpose, and future tradespeople, making him an ideal candidate for the NexGen Builders Mentor Award.



# NexGen Builders Award

Employer • Shortlisted Nominees

Honours exceptional mentees demonstrating strong career advancement, mentors dedicated to guiding and uplifting others, and employers who actively foster inclusive, supportive workplaces in construction.



## BC Infrastructure Benefits Inc. (BCIB)

BC Infrastructure Benefits Inc. (BCIB) is advancing workforce diversity in skilled trades through its mandate under the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA). The CBA prioritizes employment for Indigenous people, women in non-traditional roles, people with disabilities, and equity-seeking groups across 15 major infrastructure projects.

BCIB sets apprentice hiring targets aligned with provincial ratios and supports apprentices through union sponsorship, structured check-ins, and priority rehiring. As of March 2025, 11% of project hours were worked by apprentices, surpassing the 10% target, and 20% of the workforce were apprentices or trainees toward a 25% goal. In 2024, a first-year electrical apprentice earned the Top Apprentice Award at the National Training Institute Tradeshow.



## Building UP

Building Up sets industry-leading standards for advancing community benefits in construction. Through hands-on training and culturally relevant mentorship, it supports individuals from day one. Its alumni program offers job placement, career coaching, and networking for sustained employment. Strategic partnerships, including with LiUNA 506, create time-sensitive pathways into unionized trades careers.

Leadership development is central, with two women—one Black and one formerly incarcerated—recently promoted to managerial roles. The leadership team is 50% women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ2S+, setting a benchmark for inclusivity. Through social procurement and partnerships with other social enterprises, Building Up's impact extends beyond construction.



## NCC Investment Group Inc.

NCC Investment Group Inc., a 100% Inuit-owned organization in Nunavut, models best practices in community benefits within construction. It supports Indigenous talent through financial aid, on-the-job training, exam tutoring, and childcare—removing barriers to skilled trades. Clear apprenticeship pathways and wraparound services ensure sustainable career growth.

Leadership development is a priority, with one-on-one CEO coaching helping staff advance from operations to senior roles. A young Inuit employee was recently promoted to Corporate Operations Manager. NCC also invests in local training programs, allowing community members to access skilled jobs without relocating—boosting economic opportunity and self-sufficiency in the North.



# Shaping the Future of Work



The Diversity Institute's action-oriented **research and skills development** programs help **build inclusive workplaces and communities**, all while **driving economic growth**.

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# Community Benefits Award

## Coalition • Shortlisted Nominees

Honours organisations and individuals advancing national standards and best practices for community benefits across three categories: major projects with impactful CBAs, coalitions advancing local CBAs, and champions driving systemic industry change.



## Buy Social Canada

Buy Social is a social enterprise that views procurement as a tool for achieving community social and economic goals. Since 2014, Buy Social Canada has connected purpose-driven purchasers with social value suppliers, fostering relationships that generate social benefits. Through advocacy, education, and consulting, the organization drives social procurement to create impactful opportunities across the marketplace.

Buy Social collaborates with the community, private, and public sectors to provide training, develop policies, and share resources. They offer a nationwide social enterprise certification that connects suppliers with social purchasers. With over a decade of experience in community benefits in construction, Buy Social has created a guide to help policy makers, organizers, and construction companies align projects with community objectives.



## Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization

The Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization (OVCO) emerged from the Oakwood Vaughan Neighbourhood Action Partnership (OV NAP) in response to the closure and potential privatization of Vaughan Road Academy (VRA). Initially a resident-led sub-committee, OVCO transitioned into an independent organization, gaining the capacity to lead advocacy efforts, deliver services, and manage community-driven projects outside the City-sponsored initiative.

OVCO is a grassroots organization focused on uniting residents, advocating for a vibrant neighborhood, and creating a hub for local services. The organization values individual strengths, challenges systemic oppression, and supports those with fewer choices. Recognized by residents, community organizations, government, and the Toronto District School Board, OVCO leads with integrity, conducting research and championing community priorities.



## The Hamilton Community Benefits Network

The Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) was created in response to opportunities presented by the Hamilton Light Rail Project and the inclusion of Community Benefit requirements in Bill 6: The Ontario Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. Inspired by the success of the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN), HCBN aims to ensure equitable opportunities for all residents to contribute to Hamilton's growth.

HCBN envisions Hamilton as an inclusive, thriving city where all residents have the opportunity to build healthy communities and a prospering economy, promoting community benefits through infrastructure projects.



# Community Benefits Award

## Project • Shortlisted Nominees

Honours organisations and individuals advancing national standards and best practices for community benefits across three categories: major projects with impactful CBAs, coalitions advancing local CBAs, and champions driving systemic industry change.



## Crosslinx Transit Solutions Constructors

Crosslinx Transit Solutions Constructors is a leader in delivering measurable community benefits, beginning with the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project, where it became the first contractor to embed a Community Benefits Agreement. Through its Community Benefits and Apprenticeship Program, it hired over 600 individuals from diverse backgrounds, many of whom advanced to major transit projects or earned certifications such as PEng, PMP, and LEED.

Its workforce is 30 percent women, a notable achievement in construction. CTSC partners with unions like LiUNA 506 and Local 793, and groups such as Building Up and the Toronto Community Benefits Network. It has invested 8.8 million dollars in local businesses and 1 million in social enterprises, while promoting mentorship, leadership training, and cultural inclusion.



## Gordie Howe International Bridge

The Gordie Howe International Bridge project, a 7 billion dollar infrastructure initiative connecting Windsor and Detroit, sets a benchmark for community benefits with its formal Community Benefits Agreement. Scheduled for completion in fall 2025, the project incorporates industry leading standards for inclusive and sustainable impact.

Developed through engagement with equity deserving groups, the agreement ensures benefits throughout the project lifecycle. Highlights include a Community Benefits Program, quarterly public reporting, and a working group co chaired by community members. With contract clauses, dedicated funding, and strong stakeholder collaboration, the project prioritizes inclusivity, accountability, and risk management.



## New Saint Paul's Hospital Development

The New St. Paul's Hospital project in Vancouver, a 2.174 billion dollar development, demonstrates how community benefits can be integrated into large scale infrastructure. Launched in 2021, it was the first to activate the City of Vancouver's Community Benefit Agreement with goals of 10 percent new hires from equity deserving groups, 10 percent local procurement, and 10 percent social procurement. By early 2023, it exceeded all targets with 48 percent new hires, 30 percent spent locally, and 16 percent directed to social enterprises.

The commitment goes beyond construction. Providence Health Care will maintain community benefit standards throughout hospital operations. Partnerships with groups like EMBERS Staffing and CleanStart Property Services have created job opportunities and supported social enterprises, showing lasting community impact.



# Community Benefits Award

## Champion • Shortlisted Nominees

Honours organisations and individuals advancing national standards and best practices for community benefits across three categories: major projects with impactful CBAs, coalitions advancing local CBAs, and champions driving systemic industry change.



### Ticha Albino

As Human Rights Representative and lead instructor of the IBEW 353 Pathways Program, Ticha has championed access to the trades for Indigenous, racialized, and newcomer women. Since April 2022, 169 participants, including 150 women, have enrolled. Of these, 136 completed 15 weeks of training, 57 began job placements, 49 were sponsored as apprentices, and 42 are now in their first term, showing strong results in workforce integration.

Ticha also created the Bystander Intervention Train the Trainer program with Hamilton Interval House, launching May 22. This sector first initiative improves psychological safety. Her work with the Canadian Labour Congress and IBEW Minority Caucus continues to shape national labour equity strategies and policy.



### Varni Tayalan

Varni Tayalan, Community Relations Specialist at Aecon, is a leader in delivering meaningful community benefits in construction. On the Finch West LRT project, her work led to 21 percent of hires meeting community targets and over 25 million dollars invested locally. She connected 46 BIPOC and equity seeking professionals to jobs and organized 120 outreach events, 60 information sessions, and 50 resume workshops.

Varni launched a first of its kind internship with the Toronto Community Benefits Network, placing 20 newcomers, 19 of whom secured permanent roles. She partnered with LiUNA Local 506 to support apprenticeship dispatches, contributing to a workforce that is 12 percent apprentices and 20 percent women. Her efforts with TRIEC and Metrolinx raise the bar for inclusive infrastructure in Canada.



### Walied Khogali Ali

Walied Khogali Ali is a leading advocate for equity in Toronto's construction and urban development sectors. As Co-Chair of the Regent Park Social Development Plan, he has helped align the industry with community benefits standards. Walied led the 26.8 million dollar Community Benefits Agreement for the Regent Park Phases 4 and 5 Revitalisation Project, which includes local hiring goals for Black, Indigenous, and newcomer residents, along with mentorship and job retention support.

His leadership focuses on collaboration and measurable impact, mentoring youth and advising developers, unions, and governments on inclusive practices. His work has supported diverse workforce pipelines, job readiness strategies, and policy reforms, including advocacy for income based housing policies. Walied was awarded the Community Benefits Champion Award.



# Contractors to Watch Award

## Ontario • Shortlisted Nominees

Presented by the Afro-Canadian Contractors Association, this award honours standout emerging minority owner contractors or social enterprises from across Canada that demonstrate readiness to successfully compete for construction contracts.



### Aecon-Golden Mile

The Centre for Inclusive Economic Opportunity, Golden Mile (A-GM), is a community-driven construction social enterprise in Scarborough, Ontario. Formed in July 2022 as a joint venture between Aecon Utilities (49%) and CIEO Golden Mile (51%), A-GM provides utility infrastructure services—hydrovac, traffic control, fibre optic installation, and surface restoration—with union affiliations (LIUNA 183 & 793) and projects valued up to \$1.7M.

Since launching, A-GM has hired 35 individuals—67% racialized, 38% newcomers—and paid nearly \$2 million in wages. It reinvests 51% of profits into the Greater Golden Mile, advancing community wealth-building through equitable hiring, workforce development, and local impact.



### Enska

Énska, co-led by Tim Coldwell and Wes Hall, is Canada's first Indigenous real estate advisory and project governance firm. Based in Toronto, it partners with First Nations, governments, nonprofits, and investors to advance inclusive development. Rooted in the Mohawk concept of unity, Énska uses real estate to create shared value, build community wealth, and support environmental stewardship.

The company aims to impact 50,000 families through skilled trades employment. In partnership with groups like Honour the Work, Énska introduces underrepresented youth to trades. It ensures First Nations' involvement in all project phases and works with Buy Social Canada to track community benefits, setting a standard for transparency and impact in construction.



### ProPlanix Consulting Group Inc.

ProPlanix Consulting Group Inc., led by Neil Lowhar, specializes in construction consulting with services in project planning, estimation, training, and design-build solutions. Known for high-quality project controls, the firm delivers detailed, resource-loaded CPM schedules using Primavera P6, Microsoft Project, and Tilos. It also implements cost control systems using Earned Value Management (EVM) to track financial performance and ensure project success.

Neil is a mentor in the NexGen Builders Mentoring Program, guiding professionals from underrepresented communities. As a Platinum Member of the Afro Canadian Contractors Association, ProPlanix supports initiatives that create opportunities for Black and racialized professionals in construction.



# Building Diversity Legacy Award

## Honourees

Presented by the Toronto Community Benefits Network's Board of Directors, these awards honour long-standing supporters of TCBN's mission to advance community benefits throughout the Greater Toronto Area.



## Chris Campbell

Chris Campbell, President of the Toronto Community Benefits Board, brings over 30 years of leadership in the Canadian construction industry with a focus on equity, mentorship, and community empowerment. As outgoing President of Carpenters' Union Local 27 and current Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Carpenters' Regional Council, he has created pathways for Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth. He has also served on the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the Toronto Police Black Community Consultative Committee.

In 2023, he launched the Chris Campbell Perseverance Award at George Brown College to support diverse students in construction. His recognitions include the 2024 Impact Award, the 2022 Bromley Lloyd Armstrong Award, and inclusion among Canada's 100 Most Influential Black Canadians in 2022. His work continues to inspire the next generation in construction.



## David Galvin

David Galvin, Labour Relations Manager for Crosslinx Transit Solutions, has led efforts to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion into the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project. He developed a Community Benefits and Liaison Plan that led to the hiring of over 424 individuals from equity deserving groups, including 202 apprentices and 222 in technical, administrative, and professional roles. David partnered with unions like LiUNA Local 506 to recruit from underrepresented neighborhoods and support training and retention.

His mentorship and advocacy have helped many participants build lasting careers in construction, with impact extending to the Ontario Line and Hurontario LRT. David has built strong community partnerships, fostered cultural change within CTS, and serves as a role model for inclusive labor practices.



## Judy Brooks

Judy Brooks, Manager of the Community Benefits and Supports Program at Metrolinx, has integrated community-focused strategies into large-scale transit projects, creating over 1,700 job opportunities, with many filled by BIPOC communities and women. The program has also directed \$171.2 million in economic benefits to local businesses and social enterprises.

In addition to her work at Metrolinx, Judy is a recognized leader in community and policy development, specializing in program development, organizational effectiveness, and community planning. Her work demonstrates how infrastructure projects can drive positive, lasting impacts, reflecting her commitment to social equity and community empowerment.



# Nominations Committee.



Thank you to the Building Diversity Nominations Committee, comprised of industry professionals and DEI experts, for your thoughtful review of this year's awards shortlist.

Over 150 submissions were received and assessed for alignment with the Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks and emerging Canadian standards and best practices for CBAs.

Submissions were carefully assessed across four categories: Leading on Diversity, NexGen Builders, Community Benefits, and Contractor to Watch.

From this exceptional group, the TCBN's Board will also present three Building Diversity Legacy Awards to longstanding supporters advancing community benefits in the Toronto region.



**Karl Andrus**  
Executive Director  
Hamilton Community Benefits Network



**Pedro Barata**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Habitat for Humanity Canada



**Maureen J. Brown**  
Founder & Chief Learning Officer  
ROCK Diversity and Creator of Divigo



**Stephen Callender**  
President  
Afro Canadian Contractors Association



**John Cartwright**  
Past President  
Toronto & York Region Labour Council



**Paul Chamberlain**  
Manager, Inclusive Employment  
United Way Greater Toronto



**Frazier Fathers**  
Senior Housing Policy Consultant  
TWC Inc. & Owner/Principal at Community Policy Solutions



**Gilberto Fernandes**  
Research Lead / Visiting Scholar  
Dept. of History, York University  
Founder & Owner Tempo Historical Consulting



**Mary Huang**  
Steering Committee Member  
Ottawa Community Benefits Network



**Greg Johnson**  
Executive Director  
Stakeholder and Community Relations with BC Infrastructure Benefits



**Brandi Jonathan**  
Community Engagement  
Indigenous Skills, Employment, Apprenticeship and Development (ISEAD)



**Nektarios Kikonyogo**  
Director of Finance and Administration  
OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants



**Alan Richter**  
Founder & CEO  
QED Consulting



**Matti Siemiatycki**  
Director  
Infrastructure Institute and Professor of Geography and Planning at University of Toronto



**Sephton Spence**  
Vice President  
Afro Canadian Contractors Association





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# Community Benefits SUMMIT SPEAKERS

KEYNOTE



**Dr. Wendy Cukier**

Founder and Academic Director  
*Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University*

PANEL 1



**Heather Grondin**

Chief Relations Officer  
*Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority*



**Varni Tayalan**

Community Relations Manager  
*AECON Group Inc.*



**Beth Eshete**

Senior Specialist of  
Community Engagement,  
*Great Canadian Casino  
Resort Toronto*



**April Lim**

Manager  
*Community Benefits at  
City of Toronto (moderator)*



**Irene Kerr**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
*British Columbia Infrastructure  
Benefits (BCIB)*

PANEL 2



**Sabrina Musto**

Senior Social Procurement  
Consultant  
*Buy Social Canada*



**Brent Brodie**

Senior Procurement Analyst and  
Project Lead, Strategic Procurement  
Services  
*York University*



**Diana Levy**

Policy Development Officer,  
Purchasing and Materials  
Management Division  
*City of Toronto*



**Martin Aubut**

Director of Supplier Governance  
and Procurement Systems  
*Desjardins Group*

PANEL 3



**Deborah Childs**

Director of Strategic Partnerships  
*WCG Services*



**Maureen Brown**

Founder and Chief Learning Officer  
*Rock Diversity (moderator)*



**Ahmed Mohamed**

Founder  
*Somali Canadian Engineering Society*



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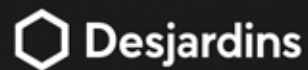




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