

## Black History Month 2026 Statement

As we approach Black History Month, OSSTF/FEESO is proud to celebrate the rich histories, achievements, and leadership of Black individuals and communities, whose contributions continue to shape workplaces, schools, and communities across Canada and beyond. This month is a time to honour Black excellence, brilliance, and resilience across generations, while also reflecting on the work we must continue to do as individuals and as a Federation to dismantle anti-Black racism in our schools and campuses, workplaces, communities, and within our own union.

The 2026 national theme, **“30 Years of Black History Month: Honouring Black Brilliance Across Generations, From Nation Builders to Tomorrow’s Visionaries,”** marks the 30th anniversary of Canada’s official parliamentary recognition of February as Black History Month. This theme celebrates the enduring contributions of Black Canadians, from historic pioneers who helped build this country to the young leaders, creators, and innovators shaping our collective future. It is a powerful reminder that Black history is Canadian history, and that Black excellence has always strengthened our society and will continue to do so for generations to come.

Black workers and activists have always played a foundational role in building and advancing the trade union movement in Canada and beyond. Despite being barred from joining many trade unions in both the United States and Canada, Black workers organized, led, and fought for justice, often at the intersection of labour struggles and the fight for civil and human rights. From organizing for fair wages and safe working conditions to challenging discrimination and exclusion, Black trade unionists have helped shape unions as vehicles for justice and collective power. This legacy includes the Black workers who established the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, whose work continues to strengthen and advance the labour movement today.

As a trade union, it is essential that we recognize and honour this history while also acknowledging our shared responsibility to confront and dismantle anti-Black racism within our workplaces, our institutions, and our own movement. Recognizing the long and impactful contributions of Black workers deepens our collective understanding of labour history and reinforces the role unions must continue to play in advancing equity and justice. This recognition is not only about the past, it is also an ongoing commitment to honouring the leadership, contributions, and futures of Black workers today and for generations to come.

Black History Month must also be a call to action. It is up to all of us to ensure Black histories, perspectives, and achievements are meaningfully embedded in curriculum and school and campus life year-round.

OSSTF/FEESO encourages members to take time to celebrate Black brilliance, build on their learning, and commit to ongoing, concrete actions that will carry this work forward throughout the year. Resources and ideas for action are available on the [Educators’ Resources page](#) of the OSSTF/FEESO website.

OSSTF/FEESO also proudly supports the Canadian Labour Congress’s Black History Month campaign, which this year centres on environmental racism and its ongoing impacts

on Black workers and communities across Canada. Environmental racism has deep historical roots and continues to shape where people live, work, and learn, often exposing Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities to disproportionate environmental harm and health risks. Addressing these inequities is a critical labour issue, with direct implications for workplace safety, public health, and community well-being.

As Canada develops its first-ever National Strategy on Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice, mandated by law to be tabled this year, there is a crucial opportunity to confront these longstanding harms and advance meaningful change. OSSTF/FEESO encourages members to [take action by sending a letter to the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Nature](#), calling on the federal government to address environmental racism and commit to concrete remediation. This is an opportunity for our members to add their voices to help ensure that justice, accountability, and equity are at the centre of this national strategy, not just during one month of the year, but [365 days a year](#).