



Economic Integration Action Plan

2026–2029

Prince Edward Island Faces a Paradox

We face significant labour shortages, especially in health care, education, and skilled professions. Yet, many Black, Indigenous, and newcomer, and internationally trained professionals remain underemployed, overqualified, or excluded from fully using their skills and experience within the provincial economy.

Employment and income disparities persist. Internationally trained professionals face credential barriers. Employers report hiring challenges. Community members describe experiences of racism and limited access to professional networks. These challenges are interconnected and require coordinated action.

This Action Plan was developed for BIPOC BPN through a literature review, a provincial Needs Assessment, and multi-stakeholder workshops involving government representatives, community organizations, academic institutions, economic and/or career development organizations, and BIPOC community members.

Participants identified three priority areas for coordinated action:

- 1 Expand Credential Recognition Pathways**
Advance bridging and micro-credential opportunities, with Provincial Immigration Partnership leadership, to improve workforce alignment for internationally trained professionals.
- 2 Strengthen Fair, Transparent, and Relationship-Based Hiring Pathways**
Support public sector leadership, equip small businesses with practical tools, and expand mentorship and social capital pathways that reflect how employment moves in small jurisdictions.
- 3 Strengthen Collaboration, Communication, and System Navigation**
Establish a Cross-Sector Navigation Table, align referral pathways, and explore digital enhancement opportunities in partnership with 211 PEI.

The principles of Collective Impact guide this Action Plan, including a structured approach to cross-sector collaboration built on shared priorities, coordinated action, transparent progress tracking, and sustained communication. In the PEI context, this approach is scaled to local capacity and designed to strengthen alignment rather than create parallel systems.

Over the next 36 months, partners will first focus on mobilization and alignment, then on pilot implementation, and finally on the strengthening and expansion of successful initiatives.

Primary implementation responsibility rests with institutions and organizations aligned with each priority area. BIPOC BPN is positioned to convene partners, support coordination, and advocate based on community evidence. Expanded backbone coordination will depend on future funding and formal partner agreements.

This Action Plan reflects both ambition and realism. It acknowledges data limitations, participation gaps, and the need for sustained investment. It also reflects strong cross-sector energy and a shared recognition that economic inclusion strengthens communities, institutions, and the provincial economy.

This Action Plan provides a coordinated starting point. Its success will depend on continued partnership, clarity of leadership, and sustained action over time.

**Let's make sure everyone who wants to call
PEI home can build a future here.**

Thank you. Wela'lioq. Merci. 谢谢. ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ
Salamat. شكرًا لك. Cảm ơn. Gracias

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Partners:

BIPOC Business & Professional Network, Native Council of PEI, WorkSource Alliance, Provincial Immigration Partnership housed at Immigrant & Refugee Services Association (IRSA) PEI, and PEI Community Navigators.

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Needs Assessment Highlights

The 2025 BIPOC Economic Integration Needs Assessment identified persistent barriers affecting the economic integration of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) in Prince Edward Island. Key themes included:

System-Level Barriers

- Persistent challenges in international credential recognition, including delays, unexpected expenses, and no clear pathways to recognition
- Limited transparency and consistency in hiring practices
- Underemployment of internationally trained professionals
- Fragmented service navigation and referral pathways

Ecosystem Gaps

- Communication gaps among community organizations, government, and individuals seeking services
- Service duplication in some areas and service gaps in others
- Limited employer awareness of newcomer and Indigenous workforce barriers

At the same time, the assessment identified notable strengths

- Committed community organizations
- Engaged employers and sector associations
- Post-secondary institutions with bridging capacity
- Growing policy interest in workforce development

These findings informed the prioritization of three interconnected focus areas and highlighted the need for stronger alignment across existing efforts.

Workshop Participation Overview

BIPOC BPN convened two multi-stakeholder workshops in February 2026 to translate Needs Assessment findings into coordinated action. Participants included representatives from government, community organizations, academic institutions, economic and/or career development organizations, and BIPOC community members.

Workshop #1 focused on validating the findings from the Needs Assessment, identifying priority recommendations, and assessing ecosystem readiness. Workshop #2 translated those priorities into phased actions with defined roles and early milestones.

Participants affirmed that while many organizations are advancing important work, stronger coordination and clearer pathways for collaboration would strengthen collective impact.

Coordinated Approach to Economic Inclusion

The key priorities identified were: credential recognition challenges, inequitable hiring practices, and fragmented navigation systems. Each of these extends across regulatory, institutional, employer, and policy domains. No single organization has the authority or capacity to address these challenges independently.

Many partners are already advancing important initiatives. This Action Plan creates a shared framework to align those efforts, reduce duplication, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Given its mandate and cross-community focus, BIPOC BPN is uniquely positioned to convene conversations that centre both Black/People of Colour and Indigenous economic inclusion. While other committees and tables focus on specific communities or sectors, BIPOC BPN provides a space that bridges these perspectives and elevates shared economic integration priorities.

The principles of Collective Impact inform this Action Plan, including shared direction, mutually reinforcing activities, progress tracking, and ongoing communication. However, it recognizes current capacity realities. BIPOC BPN is a volunteer-led organization without dedicated funding or staffing to operate as a fully resourced backbone organization.

In the short term, coordination may take a lighter-touch approach, including:

- Board-level stewardship of priority areas
- Periodic cross-sector convenings
- Shared progress check-ins
- Targeted working groups aligned with specific priorities

As the work evolves, partners may explore the feasibility of securing or identifying dedicated resources to support a more formal coordination or backbone function. Any expansion of this role would be contingent on sustainable funding and partner commitment.

Year 1 (Mobilization & Alignment)

focuses on strengthening relationships, clarifying feasibility, and establishing shared foundations.

Year 2 (Implementation & Piloting)

focuses on launching targeted pilots and advancing partner-led initiatives aligned with the priority areas.

Year 3 (Strengthening & Expansion)

focuses on refining successful initiatives, strengthening coordination structures, and expanding aligned efforts where capacity allows.

36 MONTH ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY FOCUS 1:

Expand Credential Recognition Pathways

Scope

This priority focuses primarily on barriers experienced by internationally trained professionals and newcomers navigating credential recognition processes. Other priorities in this strategy address cross-cutting workforce barriers and Indigenous workforce realities.

36-Month Outcome

By 2029, PEI will have clearer and more coordinated credential recognition pathways for internationally trained professionals, with at least one occupation-specific pathway advanced and expanded opportunities for bridging and micro-credentialing aligned with labour market needs.

Year 1: Mobilize & Align (Months 1-12)

Focus: Clarify gaps, align existing structures, and advance feasible occupation-specific pathways.

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1-Q2	Confirm Provincial Immigration Partnership (PIP) as the coordinating lead for this priority	PIP (lead), BIPOC BPN (participant), Government of PEI, regulators, post-secondary institutions, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)	Coordination structure confirmed
Q2-Q3	Conduct a jurisdictional scan of credential recognition, bridging, and micro-credentialing models	PIP, post-secondary institutions, ISANS, contracted support (if funded),	Scan summary completed; viable occupation targets identified
Q3-Q4	Identify 1-2 occupation pathways for focused advancement (including potential health/medical pathways)	PIP, regulators, UPEI, Holland College, Collège de l'Île, MUN Faculty of Medicine - PEI Campus leadership, ISANS	Priority occupation(s) identified
Q3-Q4	Develop a feasibility brief for the selected occupation pathway (including awareness building with employers, bridging and micro-credential options)	PIP, institutional partners, ISANS	Concept brief completed and shared

Year 2: Implement & Strengthen (Months 13–24)

Focus: Advance pilot, institutional uptake, and structured policy engagement.

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestones
Q1–Q2	Secure commitment to pilot or expand selected occupation pathway	Government funders, post-secondary institutions, and regulators	Formal commitment or funding pathway confirmed
Q2–Q4	Launch pilot or formal expansion of bridging or micro-credential pathway	Lead implementing institution	Pilot initiated or program formally approved

Year 3: Strengthen & Expand (Months 25–36)

Focus: Refine pilot initiatives, expand viable pathways, and strengthen institutional alignment.

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1–Q3	Expand or refine the occupation pathway based on pilot learning	Lead institution, regulators, PIP	Adjusted program or expanded intake
Ongoing	Engage academic institution leadership in credential recognition dialogue (where applicable)	UPEI, Holland College, MUN Faculty of Medicine - PEI Campus, PIP, Collège de l'Île, Government	Formal engagement pathway established
Ongoing	Share progress updates with cross-sector partners	PIP, BIPOC BPN	Annual progress summary shared

Considerations

- Credential recognition pathways vary significantly across professions and regulatory bodies.
- Bridging programs, micro-credentials, and competency-based assessments may offer alternative routes to workforce integration.
- Health professions, including opportunities linked to the new MUN Faculty of Medicine - PEI Campus, present both complexity and strategic opportunity.
- Sustainable funding and regulatory alignment will be required to advance implementation.

What This Builds On

- Provincial Immigration Partnership (PIP) coordination structure
- Existing nurse bridging programs and health-sector pilot efforts
- Post-secondary institutional capacity (UPEI, Holland College, Collège de l'Île)
- Regulatory engagement already underway
- 2025 Economic Integration Needs Assessment findings and the prioritization work undertaken during the 2026 engagement workshops

Advancing credential recognition pathways will require coordination across immigration, workforce development, regulatory bodies, and post-secondary institutions, recognizing the distinct roles and mandates of each.

PRIORITY FOCUS 2:

Strengthen Fair, Transparent, and Relationship-Based Hiring Pathways

36-Month Outcome

By 2029, PEI employers, including the provincial public sector and small businesses, will demonstrate strengthened inclusive hiring practices and expanded relationship-based workforce integration pathways that reflect both immigrant and Indigenous workforce realities.

Year 1: Mobilize & Align (Months 1-12)

Focus: Establish leadership, clarify system barriers, and design practical hiring supports across the public sector and small businesses.

STREAM 1: PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP			
Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1	Identify a coordinating lead or co-leads for this priority area	Provincial Government, Public Service Commission (PSC), Health PEI	Lead organization or coordination structure confirmed
Q1-Q2	Convene dialogue with Public Service Commission, Health PEI, and Public Schools Branch to explore inclusive hiring within public systems	Provincial Government, PSC, Health PEI	Government roundtable held
Q2-Q3	Identify internal review opportunities related to recruitment processes, promotion pathways, and unionized hiring structures	PSC, department HR leads	Areas for exploration identified

STREAM 2: SMALL BUSINESS PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1	Identify a coordinating lead or co-leads for this priority area	Government HR leads, chamber of commerce organizations, sector associations, PIP (Open Doors PEI: Hiring for Success project)	Lead organization or coordination structure confirmed
Q1-Q2	Review existing PEI HR Toolkit and provincial resources to identify gaps specific to small and very small businesses	Government HR leads, Chambers, sector associations, PIP	Gap analysis completed
Q2-Q3	Consult with small business owners to understand practical hiring challenges	Chambers, small business associations	Consultation summary completed
Q3-Q4	Develop simplified PEI Small Business Inclusive Hiring Guide (possibly adapted from existing toolkit)	Employer advisory group	Guide drafted; pilot businesses identified

STREAM 3: RELATIONSHIP & SOCIAL CAPITAL PATHWAYS

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1	Identify a coordinating lead or co-leads for this priority area	Employer Orgs (Chambers), BIPOC BPN, sector partners	Lead organization or coordination structure confirmed
Q2-Q3	Design mentorship and connection-based workforce integration pilot linking employers and BIPOC professionals	Employers, BIPOC BPN, sector partners	Pilot model designed
Q3-Q4	Recruit employer champions and participants for the mentorship pilot	Employer networks, sector partners	Mentor-mentee cohort identified

Business moves at the speed of relationships, and in small places like PEI, that reality is amplified. Mentorship, sponsorship, and informal networks are often as influential as formal hiring policies. While changing the way hiring is done is important, strengthening social capital pathways in the short term is a core component of economic integration.

Year 2: Implement & Pilot (Months 13–24)

Focus: Pilot practical hiring supports, mentorship pathways, and public-sector engagement to test approaches and generate early learning.

STREAM 1: PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1-Q4	Advance one or more internal review or pilot initiatives within participating departments	PSC, government HR leads	Pilot reform or internal review process initiated

STREAM 2: SMALL BUSINESS PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1-Q4	Identify a coordinating lead or co-leads for this priority area	Government HR leads, Chamber, sector associations	Lead organization or coordination structure confirmed

STREAM 3: RELATIONSHIP & SOCIAL CAPITAL PATHWAYS

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1-Q4	Share learning and explore broader adoption of successful practices across departments	PSC, government partners	Government-wide learning summary shared

Year 3: Strengthen & Expand (Months 25-26)

Focus: Refine successful pilots and expand equitable workforce pathways for BIPOC communities across sectors.

STREAM 1: PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1-Q4	Share learning and explore broader adoption of successful practices across departments	PSC, government partners	Government-wide learning summary shared

STREAM 2: SMALL BUSINESS PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1-Q4	Refine and expand the hiring guide and employer supports based on pilot learning	Chamber, sector associations	Expanded employer uptake

STREAM 3: RELATIONSHIP & SOCIAL CAPITAL PATHWAYS

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1-Q4	Expand mentorship or relationship-based workforce initiatives based on pilot learning	Employer Orgs (Chambers), BIPOC BPN, sector partners	Expanded participation

Important Context Considerations

- The provincial government is the largest employer in PEI; public sector leadership has province-wide influence.
- Many PEI businesses are small or very small and lack dedicated HR infrastructure.
- Hiring practices in small communities often rely on networks and informal referrals.
- Indigenous workforce participation intersects with sovereignty, community governance, and distinct employment pathways.
- Immigrant workforce integration often intersects with credential recognition and professional licensing barriers.

What This Builds On

- Existing PEI HR Toolkit
- Public Service Commission policy frameworks
- Employer networks and Chambers of Commerce
- Lived experience insights from the BIPOC Economic Integration Needs Assessment

PRIORITY FOCUS 3:

Strengthen Coordination, Communication & System Navigation

36-Month Outcome

By 2029, PEI will have a more coordinated economic and employment-related service navigation ecosystem. This is supported by structured cross-sector communication, clearer referral pathways, and an enhanced digital access point aligned with existing platforms such as 211.

Year 1: Mobilize & Align (Months 1–12)

Focus: Establish coordination structures, map services, and clarify referral pathways across partner organizations.

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestones
Q1–Q2	Explore collaboration opportunities with United Way and formalize the Cross-Sector Navigation Table, including identifying the lead organization	BIPOC BPN (convener), 211 PEI (United Way), community partners	Quarterly coordination meetings established
Q2–Q3	Conduct service mapping and identify duplication and referral gaps	Navigation partners	Shared service inventory completed
Q3–Q4	Develop shared referral protocol and warm transfer guidelines	Navigation Table, 211 PEI	Referral framework drafted
Q3–Q4	Assess the feasibility of digital enhancement aligned with the 211 platform (not a parallel system)	211 PEI, tech advisor, partners	Feasibility brief completed

Year 2: Implement & Pilot (Months 13–24)

Focus: Pilot integration and structured improvement.

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestone
Q1–Q2	Pilot coordinated referral protocol across participating organizations	Navigation Table members	Pilot initiated
Q1–Q3	Implement agreed-upon digital enhancements in partnership with 211 (if feasible and funded)	211 PEI, partners	Digital enhancement launched or integrated
Q2–Q4	Develop shared data-sharing and reporting practices (light-touch)	Navigation Table	Quarterly coordination summaries produced

Year 3: Strengthen & Expand (Months 25-36)

Focus: Strengthen referral coordination, expand adoption across partners, and share learning with the broader community.

Timeline	Action	Key Partners	Milestones
Q1-Q3	Expand coordinated referral practices across additional partner organizations	Navigation Table members	Expanded partner participation
Q2-Q4	Host a public update and learning session on navigation improvements	BIPOC BPN, partners	Community Information session held

Important Context Considerations

- 211 PEI, administered by United Way, provides a strong foundation for coordinated access to services.
- The goal is not to create a parallel system, but to strengthen alignment and enhance visibility.
- Service duplication and communication gaps were identified as key concerns in the BIPOC Economic Integration Needs Assessment.
- Digital tools must be feasible, sustainable, and supported by partners before implementation.

What This Builds On

- 211 PEI infrastructure and United Way administration capacity
- Existing navigation networks (IRSA, community navigators)
- Workshop ecosystem mapping
- Collective Impact communication commitments

COORDINATING THE ACTION PLAN

The principles of the **Collective Impact** framework guide this strategy through a framework designed to support coordinated, cross-sector collaboration on complex social and economic challenges.

In practical terms, Collective Impact means:

- Agreeing on shared priorities
- Aligning existing efforts rather than duplicating work
- Tracking progress in simple, transparent ways
- Meeting regularly to learn and adjust
- Identifying a coordinating body to steward the work

In the context of PEI, this approach must reflect local realities, including the size of the ecosystem, existing tables and networks, and organizational capacity.

This Action Plan applies these principles over a three-year horizon, allowing time to mobilize partners, test pilot initiatives, and strengthen approaches that demonstrate early success.

Collective Impact in Practice

1 Shared Direction

Partners align around three priority focus areas:

- Credential recognition (immigrant-focused)
- Hiring practices and relationship-based integration
- Navigation and coordination

Each priority includes phased actions that identify natural leads and supporting partners.

2 Shared Progress Tracking

Partners will identify a small set of shared implementation indicators for each priority area. These will focus on achievable, partnership-level milestones such as:

- Working groups established
- Pilots launched
- Employer participation levels
- Referral coordination improvements
- Public sector engagement milestones

At the same time, this strategy recognizes that the ultimate goal is not coordination for its own sake, but measurable improvements in economic outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities in PEI.

Where publicly available, population-level indicators will be monitored over time, including:

- Employment and unemployment rates by immigrant status, education attainment, and racial identity (Statistics Canada)
- Median employment income by immigrant status, education attainment, and racial identity
- Overqualification rates among internationally trained professionals
- Retention rates of newcomers and internationally trained workers
- Representation within employment and leadership roles (where data is available)

These broader indicators reflect systemic inequities that this Action Plan seeks to address. While no single initiative can claim direct causation, tracking these measures provides transparency and accountability around whether progress is occurring at the population level.

In addition, qualitative feedback from BIPOC community members, pilot participants, and employer partners will inform ongoing refinement of the strategy.

3 Ongoing Communication

Structured communication is essential for alignment and trust-building. This may include:

- Quarterly partner check-ins
- Annual public progress updates
- Cross-sector learning sessions

Communication is intended to strengthen collaboration, and the group strongly suggested that in-person sessions enable this while not creating an additional reporting burden.

4 Backbone Coordination

BIPOC BPN is well-positioned to serve as a convener and steward of this strategy, given its cross-community mandate and its focus on advancing economic inclusion for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour in Prince Edward Island.

BIPOC BPN is a volunteer-led network and does not have dedicated staffing or funding to serve as a fully resourced backbone organization. The intent of this Action Plan is to support coordination across partners while maintaining this volunteer structure.

In the near term, coordination may include:

- Board-level stewardship of priority areas
- Facilitating cross-sector convenings and conversations
- Maintaining shared documentation and updates related to the strategy
- Supporting communication and connection between participating partners

As the work evolves, partners may identify opportunities to share coordination responsibilities, contribute in-kind support, or align existing organizational resources to strengthen collaboration.

Implementation of the actions outlined in this plan will remain the responsibility of partner organizations, consistent with their respective mandates, authority, and capacity.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND GAPS

This Action Plan is grounded in a literature review, a provincial Needs Assessment, and multi-stakeholder workshops. It reflects both ambition and realism. The following considerations are important to interpret the scope and direction of the strategy.

Evidence and Data Gaps

PEI's small population size presents unique data limitations.

- Quantitative data specific to Black, Indigenous, and racialized populations in PEI is limited.
- National datasets (e.g., Statistics Canada) may not provide disaggregated or timely provincial-level insights.

As a result, this strategy combines available data with insights from lived experience. Ongoing engagement and data refinement will be necessary to strengthen the evidence base over time.

Participation and Commitment Gaps

This Action Plan reflects contributions from engaged partners; however:

- Not all organizations referenced in the strategy have formally committed to implementation at this stage.
- Several proposed actions require additional dialogue, mandate alignment, and confirmation of resources.
- Some actions depend on future funding or institutional approval processes.

This Action Plan represents an early-stage coordination framework. Continued partner engagement will be required to formalize roles and commitments.

Structural and Capacity Gaps

Successful implementation will require:

- Dedicated coordination capacity
- Sustainable funding for pilot initiatives
- Data-sharing agreements
- Institutional and regulatory cooperation

BIPOC BPN operates as a volunteer-led organization and does not have dedicated backbone funding. Any expansion of coordination capacity will require additional resourcing.

Social Climate Considerations

Workshop discussions highlighted the growing concern around anti-immigrant sentiment and experiences of racism within the province.

At the same time:

- Immigration is central to addressing PEI's labour market challenges.
- Health care, education, and other critical sectors face significant workforce shortages.
- Internationally trained professionals are present in PEI and willing to contribute, yet often face delays in credential recognition and employment alignment.

This Action Plan acknowledges that economic integration does not occur in a social vacuum. Addressing systemic barriers must occur alongside efforts to strengthen social cohesion and public understanding.

Enabling Conditions and Strengths

Despite the challenges identified, several strong enablers are present:

- Cross-sector partners express high levels of energy and commitment
- Recognition that economic exclusion has real human and community impacts
- Existing infrastructure, such as 211 PEI, academic institutions, the PEI HR Toolkit, and the Provincial Immigration Partnership
- Public sector leadership interest
- Community-based organizations already advancing inclusion work

There is momentum to act collaboratively.

Participants' Voices

The following reflections were shared by participants during the 2025 Needs Assessment consultations. These voices reflect both a deep connection to the Island and the difficult decisions many face about whether they can build a future here.

"I am unsure because the work opportunities are very few and not well paid compared to other provinces."

"For convenience' sake I'd love to stick around but unless employment situation changes... we might be forced to leave."

"It all depends on how opportunities flow in my career."

"I want to stay here a long time after my school to work and live because the people are very gentle and willing to help and learn."

"I feel safe. I'm living with my wife and we want to raise a family. We think this is the perfect place to do it."

"PEI is my home."

"I love the Island, I have a little one that will grow up in a safe space."

"We plan to raise our kids on the Island."

Let's make sure everyone who wants to call PEI home can build a future here.

**Thank you. Wela'lioq. Merci. 谢谢. ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ
Salamat. شكراً لك. Cảm ơn. Gracias**

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Phase 1

Alignment and Foundation (First 6 Months)

Implementation of this Action Plan will proceed in phases. The first six months will focus on confirming commitment, clarifying leadership roles, and establishing coordination structures necessary to support sustained progress. This initial period is about alignment and feasibility, not full-scale implementation.

During this phase, partners will work together to define the scope, confirm participation, and identify realistic starting points within each priority area.

Within the First 6 Months:

1. Confirm Participation and Leads

- Confirm lead partner(s) for each priority stream
- Identify organizational representatives for coordination meetings
- Clarify which actions partners are prepared to explore further

2. Establish Cross-Sector Navigation Table

- Confirm membership and meeting cadence (e.g., quarterly)
- Define scope and relationship to existing tables, including 211 PEI and the Provincial Immigration Partnership
- Agree on immediate coordination priorities

3. Clarify the Scope of Priority Streams

- Credential Recognition: Confirm Provincial Immigration Partnership (PIP) leadership and identify initial occupation focus
- Hiring Practices: Confirm exploratory interest across public sector, small business, and mentorship streams
- Navigation & Coordination: Confirm appetite and feasibility for digital enhancement aligned with 211 PEI

4. Identify Resource Requirements

- Outline funding needs for coordination and pilot exploration
- Identify potential funding pathways
- Clarify what actions can proceed within existing capacity

5. Establish Shared Progress Indicators

- Identify 3–5 coordination-level indicators to track during Year 1
- Confirm update cadence and communication format

BIPOC BPN will share progress with participating partners and use it to refine implementation planning for Years 2 and 3.



This Action Plan is grounded in a shared recognition: *economic integration and workforce inclusion are collective responsibilities.*

The challenges identified through the BIPOC Economic Integration Needs Assessment are significant. They affect real people, families, employers, and communities across Prince Edward Island. The consultation process also revealed that people are strongly willing to collaborate and move this work forward together.

Implementation will require participation across sectors and mandates. Each organization brings different authority, resources, and influence.

BIPOC BPN invites you to:

- Confirm participation in one or more priority streams
- Identify a representative for cross-sector coordination meetings
- Share existing initiatives that align with this strategy
- Explore opportunities to lead or support specific actions
- Contribute expertise, networks, institutional authority, or in-kind support

Participation can take many forms. For some, it may mean leading a pilot. For others, it may involve hosting a conversation, communicating with your members, aligning existing programs, sharing data, or lending institutional influence to advance a shared goal.

The Action Plan intends to evolve as partnerships deepen, resources are secured, and actions take shape. Continued engagement will clarify roles and strengthen collective progress.

BIPOC BPN will follow up with participating partners to confirm next steps and support coordination across the priority areas.

Appendix A: Project Overview

Workshop Title: BIPOC BPN Economic Integration Action Plan

Dates: Day 1 - February 4, 2026 & Day 2 - February 18, 2026.

Location: Rotary Auditorium, Charlottetown Library, PEI.

Participants: Approximately 40 participants per day, cutting across business development, career development, economic development, municipal government, provincial government, post-secondary education, BIPOC community, settlement, social action/justice.

Project Phases (Literature Review → Needs Assessment → Action Planning)

According to the BIPOC Economic Integration Needs Assessment report, recent literature (2020 onward) was reviewed to understand key labour market trends in PEI and Atlantic Canada, with attention to economic integration, entrepreneurship, and sector-specific workforce needs. The materials were analyzed for recurring themes, evidence gaps, and insights relevant to the project focus. The review also highlighted gaps in available research, particularly related to Indigenous workforce pathways and newcomer credential recognition.

Building on the literature review, a comprehensive Needs Assessment was conducted in 2025 to ground the initiative in PEI-specific evidence. The assessment synthesized secondary quantitative data (Statistics Canada labour market data, immigration trends, workforce participation data) and gathered primary qualitative data from BIPOC communities (Immigrant/Newcomer and Indigenous participants) through pilot interviews, focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews.

The Action Planning phase translated Needs Assessment findings and recommendations into structured, multi-stakeholder commitments. Two in-person workshops were convened in February 2026 at the Rotary Auditorium, Charlottetown Library, bringing together approximately 40 participants in each session. These workshops were designed to validate findings, prioritize interventions, and co-design an Economic Integration Action Plan. This phase culminated in the development of a 36-month Action Plan (2026–2029), structured around phased sequencing:

Year 1: Mobilization and Alignment (Clarify gaps, align existing structures, and advance feasible occupation-specific pathways.)

Year 2: Implementation and Strengthening (Advance pilot, institutional uptake, and structured policy engagement.)

Year 3: Strengthen and Expand (Refine pilot initiatives, expand viable pathways, and strengthen institutional alignment.)

Workshop Design

The two full-day workshops were intentionally structured to move from validation and prioritization to solution design and accountability.

Day 1 Morning: Opening; context/Needs Assessment presentations (changing population and workforce, labour market snapshot, business & entrepreneurship ecosystem, barriers & challenges to economic participation and existing enablers)

Day 1 Afternoon: Breakout groups and priority setting (review of the Needs Assessment recommendation); Dotmocracy exercise to streamline priorities; environmental scan and SWOT analysis exercise; problem mapping (root causes); asset mapping; and narrowing key priorities to 3 ahead of workshop #2

Day 2 Morning: Synthesis of Day 1 leading into the objectives of Day 2; building on the input and insights from Workshop #1; advancing three priority areas for the work moving forward:

- Improving credential recognition processes
- Increasing fair and transparent hiring practices
- Strengthening collaboration, communication, and system navigation

Day 2 Afternoon: Action planning sessions; brainstorming solutions; developing draft action plans for each priority area; exploring elements of the Collective Impact Framework, with a focus on:

- Shared Measurement: how we will know whether this work is making a difference
- Continuous Communication: how partners can stay aligned and accountable to the community over time

Day 2 ended with a Commitment Activity, inviting all participants to identify concrete actions that they or their organizations can take to support this work.

Data Sources

The initiative drew on multiple data sources to ensure rigour, contextual relevance, and credibility, including data sources from the needs assessment:

- Statistics Canada population and labour force data (2021 Census; 2024–2025 updates)
- Atlantic Provinces Economic Council
- Atlantic Economic Council
- Black Business Initiative
- Government of Canada
- Entervestor
- Futurepreneur
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Black Entrepreneurship Program
- PEI Connectors
- PEI Statistics Bureau, Department of Finance, Economics, Statistics and Federal Fiscal Relations
- Smith, S. (2021). BIPOC entrepreneurs tackle systemic barriers in Atlantic Canada
- The Conference Board of Canada
- The Tribe Network
- Ulnooweg

Data sources for the workshop/Action Plan

- 2025 BIPOC Economic Integration Needs Assessment findings
- Workshop participant input (breakout notes, prioritization matrices, SWOT analyses)
- Stakeholder insights from employers, regulators, immigrant-serving agencies, Indigenous representatives, and community leaders present
- Navigation and service coordination frameworks

How priorities were selected

The selection of priorities followed a structured and transparent methodology grounded in evidence and stakeholder consensus. Using breakout discussions and dotmocracy exercises, participants assessed barriers against criteria, including:

- Magnitude of impact
- Alignment with provincial economic priorities
- Potential for cross-sector collaboration and readiness of partners to engage
- Using the SWOT analysis to guide the proposed intervention

Appendix B: BIPOC Economic Integration Needs Assessment Summary

1.0 Key Barrier Themes

Changing demographics and labour-market context, PEI's population growth is being driven largely by immigration, with members of racialized groups representing a rapidly increasing share of the population.

Immigrants and Indigenous peoples contribute significantly to the labour force and to entrepreneurship, particularly in sectors facing persistent shortages. However, growth in workforce participation has not translated into equitable access to stable, well-paid, or advancement-oriented employment.

Across focus groups and interviews, immigrant and Indigenous participants consistently described systemic barriers that limit economic integration, including:

- Credential recognition and validation of skills, resulting in underemployment for immigrants and the devaluation of Indigenous cultural knowledge and lived expertise.
- Fragmented and difficult-to-navigate systems, spanning employment services, licensing, training, settlement supports, housing, and business development.
- Informal hiring practices and reliance on personal networks disadvantage those without established local connections.
- Experiences of racism, bias, and exclusion, both subtle and overt, affect hiring, advancement, and workplace belonging.
- Housing instability, transportation barriers, and limited healthcare access directly affect the ability to secure and maintain employment.
- Significant mental and emotional strain, linked to repeated barriers, uncertainty, and prolonged underemployment.

Despite these challenges, participants overwhelmingly expressed a desire to remain in PEI, contribute to their communities, and build long-term futures, provided that meaningful employment pathways and adequate support are available.

1.1 Indigenous experiences

Indigenous participants described additional barriers shaped by colonial history, intergenerational trauma, identity gatekeeping, and the lack of Indigenous-led, culturally grounded employment and training support. Participants emphasized that Indigenous knowledge, cultural practices, and land-based skills are frequently undervalued within mainstream labour and training systems. Short-term, project-based employment was also identified as a major source of instability, limiting long-term economic security and career development.

At the same time, Indigenous participants highlighted strong community assets, including cultural practices, relationship-based supports, and Indigenous-led organizations that provide trusted, culturally safe guidance.

1.2 Relevant Data Highlights

The initiative drew on multiple data sources to ensure rigour, contextual relevance, and credibility, including data sources from the Needs Assessment:

- Statistics Canada population and labour force data (2021 Census; 2024–2025 updates)
- Atlantic Provinces Economic Council
- Atlantic Economic Council
- Black Business Initiative
- Government of Canada
- Entervestor
- Futurepreneur
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Black Entrepreneurship Program
- PEI Connectors
- PEI Statistics Bureau, Department of Finance, Economics, Statistics and Federal Fiscal Relations
- Smith, S. (2021). BIPOC entrepreneurs tackle systemic barriers in Atlantic Canada
- The Conference Board of Canada
- The Tribe Network
- Ulnooweg

1.3 Demographic Context

Participants in the Needs Assessment reflect a predominantly newcomer/immigrant, Indigenous community, working-age population with a strong labour-market attachment and diverse racial and ethnic representation.

A majority of respondents (67%) were between 25 and 44 years old, indicating prime working-age participation, and 59% are employed full-time. Notably, 92% were born outside Canada, and 80% have lived in PEI for less than five years, underscoring the relatively recent settlement patterns shaping the province's evolving workforce.

Geographically, 44% reside in Charlottetown and gender representation was balanced (52% female, 46% male, 1% gender diverse), while racial and ethnic identities included 37% Black/African/Caribbean, 22% Latin American/Hispanic, 20% Southeast Asian, 10% East Asian, and 8% Indigenous respondents.

Appendix C: SWOT Summary

A traditional SWOT analysis is a strategic planning framework used to assess an organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is often grounded in competitiveness, efficiency, and market positioning. This approach can be useful for clarifying priorities and identifying operational gaps. However, when applied to social justice and Indigenous-centered organizations, a competitiveness-focused lens can miss the deeper realities shaping the work, including power, history, relationships, and structural inequities.

For this workshop, we used the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats framework through a decolonial and community-accountable lens, as designed by SH Chung, PhD. This approach shifts the compass from competition to accountability. It centres relationships with community, cultural grounding, and lived experience as core strengths. It examines weaknesses as areas of strain or harm, understands opportunities as openings for alignment and repair, and names threats as structural forces that shape the conditions in which we operate. Participants were divided into facilitated breakout groups and guided through a structured SWOT analysis to examine the internal and external factors shaping economic integration efforts for BIPOC in PEI.

Under Strengths, participants identified high levels of cooperation and collaboration across organizations, a strong sense of community, and a shared commitment to helping newcomers and BIPOC residents succeed.

PEI's small size and proximity to decision-makers were recognized as strategic advantages, enabling direct access to leaders and potentially faster decisions and change.

The growing and youthful BIPOC population, diversity of perspectives, accessibility of resources, faith-based networking spaces, and alignment around common challenges were also noted as key strengths.

Under Weaknesses, groups highlighted structural pressures, including housing shortages, an overloaded health system, childcare gaps, income insecurity, and limited full-time employment opportunities.

Participants also identified systemic issues, including a lack of openness among professional regulators, insufficient multilingual resources, funding misalignment, and weak public education to counter misinformation and anti-immigrant sentiment.

In discussing Opportunities, participants emphasized the potential to adopt a more human-centred and accessibility-focused approach. There was a strong

desire to establish connectors or a centralized hub for navigation. There are opportunities to strengthen transparency in government processes and explore cooperative business models and cross-cultural collaborations.

Finally, under Threats, participants noted external and systemic risks such as political shifts affecting funding, racism and rising anti-immigration sentiment, regulatory complexity, nepotism, limited access to capital, infrastructure gaps, and burnout resulting from slow system change.

Appendix D: Workshop Participation Snapshot

Number of participants

Day 1: 40 Participants

Day 2: 35 Participants

Workshop Operations Team: 7

Organizations represented:

1. WorkSource Alliance
2. BIPOC Business and Professional Network (BIPOC BPN)
3. PEI Community Navigators
4. Community Business Development Corp - Central PEI
5. Community Business Development Corp - Western PEI
6. PEI Business Women's Association
7. PEI Co-operative Council
8. Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce
9. Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (Atlantic Immigrant Career Loan Fund)
10. City of Summerside
11. City of Charlottetown
12. Workforce, Advanced Learning, and Population Division, Government of PEI
13. PEI Office of Immigration
14. Holland College
15. University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI)
16. Native Council of PEI
17. Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI
18. Immigration and Refugees Services Association PEI (IRSA)
19. Chinese Society of PEI
20. Chinese Culture Federation
21. Latinos Association of PEI
22. Nigerian Canadian Association of PEI
23. Black, Indigenous and People of Colour United for Strength, Home and Relationships (BIPOC USHR)
24. Filipino Community of PEI
25. Filipino-Canadian Association of Prince Edward Island

26. Canadian Lebanese Association of PEI
27. Somali Community of PEI
28. Sri Lankan Community
29. PEI Provincial Immigration Partnership
30. Cooper Institute,
31. Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)

Sector breakdown

- Business development
- Career development
- Economic development
- Municipal government
- Provincial government
- Post-secondary education
- BIPOC community
- Settlement organizations
- Social action/ justice.

Appendix E: Glossary of Acronyms

211 PEI - Province-wide information and referral service operated by United Way of Prince Edward Island

ARISA - Atlantic Region Association of Immigration Serving Agencies

BIPOC BPN - BIPOC Business and Professional Network

HR - Human Resources

IRSA - Immigrant and Refugee Services Association PEI

ISANS - Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

MUN Faculty of Medicine – PEI Campus - Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Medicine – PEI Regional Campus

PEI HR Toolkit – Online human resources resource designed to support Prince Edward Island employers.

PIP - Provincial Immigration Partnership

PSC - Public Service Commission

UPEI - University of Prince Edward Island