

Jaku Konbit Launches the Black Justice Navigator Program



Rooted in 25 years of community trust and the findings of Jaku Konbit’s “Gold Standard” Report, the Black Justice Navigator Program offers culturally responsive, trauma-informed support for Black individuals navigating Canada’s justice system, dedicated to the over 100,000 people of African heritage residing in the Ottawa-Gatineau region.

Ottawa, Ontario — April 18, 2025

On Thursday, April 7th, **Jaku Konbit**, one of Ottawa’s longest operating African-Caribbean community organizations proudly launched a landmark **Black Justice Navigator Program (BJN)**. The program is part of a larger national initiative to reduce the over-representation of Black individuals in Canada’s criminal justice system and empower Black families through legal knowledge, culturally responsive care, and coordinated community support.

Held at the Bayview Yards in Ottawa, the event was attended by a representative range of community members, elected officials, and partner organizations whose shared commitment to justice and equity filled the room with purpose and hope.

DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND PURPOSE

This program is dedicated to the more than 100,000 people of African heritage and descent who call the Ottawa-Gatineau region home. Your presence, your resilience, and your community are the reason this work exists.

The much-anticipated program evolved directly out of Jaku Konbit’s performance as one of only 15 organizations selected from across the country to participate in the *Canada Black Justice*

Strategy (CBJS) community consultation project in 2023. The CBJS is a 10-year federal initiative to address systemic over-representation across five pillars: social determinants of justice, policing, courts and legislation, corrections, and parole and reintegration. Assigned a National Capital Region and Eastern Ontario catchment, Jaku Konbit proficiently engaged 170 participants ensuring that Black community voices shaped national justice reform. Jaku Konbit's 2023 project report was dubbed the "Gold Standard" by Justice Department officials.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The 2026 launch of the Black Justice Navigator Program acknowledges the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 to 2024), declared under the theme Recognition, Justice, and Development. Jaku Konbit further recognizes Canada's subsequent extension of the Decade to 2028, a commitment to continued action that this program directly embodies.

The evidence following the report was staggering:

2x

Black individuals are twice as likely to be accused compared to other individuals

9%

of federal corrections population is Black, despite representing only 4% of Canadian adults

19%

of Black respondents believe the justice system treats everyone fairly

Guided by its core values of dignity, equity, and interdependent community relationships, Jaku Konbit created the Black Justice Navigator Program to meet Black individuals where they are, with compassion, cultural understanding, and practical tools. Trained Black Justice Navigators provide one-on-one support through every stage of the legal process, including court appearances, bail, probation, parole, and reintegration. Services include navigation in English and French, and direct referrals to legal aid, housing, mental health, and employment supports.



"The Black Justice Navigator Program was born from a simple yet powerful truth: that knowledge is power, and access to that knowledge should not be determined by the size of one's wallet, the neighbourhood one lives in, or the color of one's skin."

Rawlson King
City Councillor, Ottawa



“Together, let us continue to build a justice system that reflects fairness, dignity, and equity for all. Where we all work together in the African proverb of Ubuntu, I exist because of you, that my humanity is connected to your humanity. That we are a part of one big family, a global village.”

Kenneth Campbell

Executive Director, Jaku Konbit

The program is open to all self-identified Black individuals aged 18 and older, of all genders, and including newcomers, refugees, and permanent residents who are accused, on bail, probation, or parole. No referral is needed. Individuals can reach out directly to Jaku Konbit to access services, and referrals are also welcomed from service providers, legal professionals, and partner organizations.



“This program is going to allow individuals to have somebody who will listen to them, to be there on their side, allow them to figure out the pathway, so that they can get a fair hearing, fair justice, that is a constitutional right to everyone.”

Yasir Naqvi

Member Of Parliament, Ottawa

Community engagement data from the Gold Star Report affirms the program’s potential for impact. 91% percent of participants believe that addressing social determinants will reduce Black involvement in the justice system, and 88% agreed that stronger correctional and reintegration supports would help Black individuals successfully rebuild their lives.

Services are delivered from Jaku Konbit’s Ottawa Centre office and extend across Eastern Ontario, including Kingston, Cornwall, Lanark County, and surrounding rural communities, reflecting Jaku Konbit’s longstanding commitment to reaching community members across the region.

The Black Justice Navigator Program is made possible with the generous support of the Department of Justice Canada through the Justice Partnership and Innovation Program. Jaku Konbit is deeply grateful to every community member, partner organization, and ally whose courage, trust, and vision helped bring this program to life.

To access services or learn more, visit jakukonbit.com, call 613-601-5262 or 613-540-0826, or visit Jaku Konbit at 106A, 211 Bronson Ave, Ottawa. Program brochures are also available at legal aid offices, courthouses, and community centres across the region.

ABOUT JAKU KONBIT

Jaku Konbit is a registered non-profit community-based organization that has served Ottawa's National Capital community since 2000. Dedicated to advancing inclusivity and meaningful participation, Jaku Konbit supports individuals and families of African and Caribbean descent and all equity-deserving individuals through culturally responsive programming that leads to successful economic and civic participation in Canadian society.

Serving over 3,000 individuals and families annually, Jaku Konbit's programs span youth mentorship, elder programming, Black youth entrepreneurship, provincial youth outreach, and justice navigation. Guided by values of dignity, equity, teamwork, and community relationships, the organization is a recognized anchor in Ottawa's African and Caribbean communities.

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