



Ask Me Anything: Black History Month

By: Shelby Racine, Events Management Officer

Panelists



Richard Sharpe



Karen
Spencer-Cousins

Ask Me Anything

A Courageous Conversation on
Black History Month



Sean Foyn



Commodore
Jacques Olivier

Time: 1:00 pm EST **Date:** February 9, 2022

Hosts: Samantha Moonsammy and Diana Kinimah

On Wednesday, February 9, we held our interdepartmental Ask Me Anything event, Black History Month, in collaboration with the Department of National Defence and Health Canada.

Participants tuned in virtually from many departments to take part in a powerful and compelling conversation on accessibility efforts within the government. Among the passionate speakers were:

- Karen Spencer-Cousins, Citizen Service Officer, Employment and Social Development Canada, CEIU Ontario Regional Women's Committee
- Richard Sharpe, Director of the Equity, Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion, Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Secretariat, Department of Justice Canada
- Sean Foyn, Senior Strategic Policy Advisor, Federal Black Employees Caucus

The conversation was co-moderated by Diana Kinimah, co-founder and business manager of the IRCC's Black Employee Network, Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada and Lamare Robinson, Parks Canada. Commodore Jacques Olivier, National Defence provided inspiring and heartfelt opening remarks for the event.

During the Ask Me Anything event, the speakers covered many different topics. Along with discussing their individual experiences, they spoke about the specific ways in which the government can better support Black employees. Within our everyday routines we all have the opportunity to practice allyship and advocate for Black individuals. It is not up to our Black colleagues to initiate this change; rather, it is up to everyone to push for

equality. Conversations like this one help us all to reflect on issues of racism, discrimination, microaggressions and stereotypes and why we need to work hard to ensure our workplace environments and practices are safe for everyone.

Thank you to all of our speakers for sharing your sincere thoughts, feelings, and ideas with us, and for ultimately helping public servants keep an active-mindset when it comes to accessibility efforts. Thank you to those who attended the event or watched the recording online for being a part of the change. Together, we're creating space for these important conversations within the Government of Canada.

For those who didn't get a chance to tune in live, we invite you to watch the [event recording](#) and to share this event with members of your family, friends, and community.

DFO-CCG events: Diversity and inclusion and Ask Me Anything series

Have ideas for upcoming AMAs, want to share more of yourself with our organization, or share general feedback? Contact the [Internal Communications, Event Management and Publications Team](#)! We are committed to learning more and doing better and hope you join us on this challenge.

To get involved with the Ask Me Anything Community and access documentation from past events, join us on our new [Ask Me Anything site on GC Wiki collab](#). Together, we're creating a safe space for these important conversations within the Government of Canada.