

Journey to Independence Pathway

A care-centered workforce model for African immigrant women impacted by gender-based violence

INITIATIVE STATUS	POPULATION	LOCATION
Pilot — Pending Funding	African immigrant women impacted by GBV	Winnipeg, Manitoba

WHY THIS MATTERS

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For many women impacted by gender-based violence (GBV), economic instability is both a consequence of abuse and a barrier to long-term safety.

Across Manitoba, women receiving Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) often express a desire to work, provide for their families, and build independent futures. Yet many face significant barriers during the transition into employment — including trauma-related stress, disrupted work histories, caregiving responsibilities, and financial insecurity.

While employment programs play an important role, many are designed to help people enter work — not necessarily stay employed during periods of instability and recovery.

This creates a critical gap.

The Gap We See

Too often, success is measured by placement rather than retention.

Women may secure employment but lose it shortly thereafter due to challenges that were never addressed during the transition process. The result can be a return to income assistance, renewed financial hardship, and increased pressure on public systems.

The question is not whether women want to work. The question is whether our systems are designed to support sustainable workforce attachment for women rebuilding their lives after violence.

NIA's Response

The Journey to Independence Pathway is a care-centered workforce model designed to support African immigrant women impacted by GBV as they move from EIA toward stable employment.

The model focuses on:

- Employment readiness aligned to real job opportunities
- Stabilization support during the highest-risk employment period

- Employer engagement and retention support
- Structured transitions toward economic independence

Rather than focusing solely on placement, the pathway prioritizes long-term stability and workforce retention.

WHY WE ARE ENGAGING GOVERNMENT

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The barriers facing women impacted by GBV are not individual challenges alone — they are systems challenges.

Government plays a critical role in shaping pathways that support economic recovery, reduce long-term reliance on assistance, and strengthen labour market participation.

We believe Manitoba has an opportunity to test innovative, evidence-informed approaches that improve outcomes for women while generating valuable learning for future policy and program design.

LOOKING AHEAD

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The Journey to Independence Pathway is currently being advanced as a pilot initiative in Winnipeg.

Our goal is simple: to explore what becomes possible when workforce transitions are designed with safety, stability, and long-term success in mind.

Economic independence is not only an employment outcome — it is a foundation for recovery, dignity, and lasting opportunity.

The Nia Initiative

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Care that reduces harm. Systems that restore dignity. Communities that lead.