

BREAKING BARRIERS PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Breaking Barriers is a national inclusion and sport access initiative developed by ICSN focused on increasing participation, representation, leadership development, and long-term opportunities for Indigenous, Black, and racialized (BIPOC) communities within Canadian amateur sport. The program operates as a multi-sport framework designed to remove systemic, socioeconomic, cultural, and accessibility barriers. While swimming served as the inaugural pilot stream, the long-term vision is to expand the model into additional sports and communities across Canada.

PROGRAM IMPACT — YEARS 1 & 2 (2024 -2025)



YEAR-OVER-YEAR GROWTH

Metric	Year 1 (2024)	Year 2 (2025)
Youth Participants	65	192
Trained Lifeguards	12	35
Coaches in Training	8	23
Program Locations	5 communities (ON, AB, BC)	
		16

THREE PROGRAM PILLARS

Youth Sport Access	Leadership & Workforce Development	Organizational Development
Free / subsidized programming Community-based delivery Beginner skill development 4–6 week program cycles	Coaching & officiating certifications Lifeguarding certification NCCP pathways Mentorship & job readiness	Equity & inclusion workshops Staff & volunteer training Inclusive leadership education Barrier reduction strategies

COMMUNITY VOICES

"First time seeing a Black swim coach. My daughter said she wants to be a lifeguard and my son said he is going to the Olympics. Thanks for letting my children see the potential they can be in the future."

"I lost several family members to drowning. Having the peace of mind that my son is getting the basic lessons means the world to me."

"Representation is important. In our city, there are no Black swim coaches or instructors. For my granddaughter to see Black coaches and lifeguards makes a big difference."

CURRENT PARTNERS

SOULCAP | Lifesaving Society of Canada | Coaching Association of Canada (CAC)

FUTURE EXPANSION

Breaking Barriers is designed as a scalable multi-sport framework. Future expansion into basketball, soccer, football, hockey, volleyball, and additional community sport programming is guided by community need, representation disparities, and partner readiness.

CONNECTING IT TO THE FUTURE OF SPORT COMMISSION

- Access & Participation: Removes barriers and increases sport opportunities for BIPOC communities.
- Representation: Creates pathways for diverse coaches, lifeguards, and sport leaders.
- Inclusion & Belonging: Builds welcoming and culturally relevant sport environments.
- Leadership Development: Supports youth growth through training, mentorship, and certification opportunities.
- System Change: Advances a more equitable and inclusive sport system across Canada.