



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Bureau of Ag Development & Resource Conservation**



Bryan P. Hurlburt  
Commissioner

860-713-2501  
CTGrown.gov

**Connecticut Department of Agriculture Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group  
Access to Resources, Infrastructure, and Business Planning  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Friday, August 6, 2021  
9:00-11:00 AM  
Held virtually via WebEx Platform**

**Members Present:** DiShaun Harris, Elizabeth Guerra, Kimberly Norman-Rosedam, Jaime Smith, Cyrena Thibodeau, MacKenzie White, Scott Kemp, Christine Kim, Robert Chang, and Lisa Griffin were in attendance.

**Members Absent: Dr. Kristin Cooksey-Stowers**

**DoAg Staff Present: Erin Windham, Jaime Smith, Cyrena Thibodeau**

1. **Welcome and Call to Order-** Meeting was called to order 9:06AM. Since this a public meeting, it is being recorded and will be available at the conclusion of the meeting.
2. **Group Introductions** – Everyone introduced themselves, along with their organization or role participating within this working group, preferred pronouns and something fun.
3. **New Business**
  - a. Community Agreements – Cyrena started a shared google doc with this agreement. This agreement is a set of basic ground rules that we ask participants in the space to follow.
    - Listen actively – safe space to really listen to one another
    - Share intentionally – collaborative sharing as a group
    - One mic, one speaker – so we are not talking over one another
    - Step up, step back – if you are one that feels that you always share your opinion, we encourage you to step back, if you're one to usually stay quiet we encourage you to step up and share that way we have a great balance of opinions and ideas within our group.
    - Be aware of power dynamics – be aware of folk's power dynamics
    - No one knows everything, together we know a lot – we're all experts in our own experiences, but pulling it all together we are a super powerful group.

**How do we organize opinions?** If someone would like to contribute with an opinion or idea, let's try to use the raise hand reaction, one of the co-facilitators will address us and then we can speak/share and see how it works.

b. Presentation and discussion with DoAg on existing programs and purpose/task of topic group – presented by Jaime Smith, Bureau Director, Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Conservation. The presentation will be available via the shared google

folder after the meeting along with the recording of this meeting which will be available on DoAg's website.

Some great questions discussed after the presentation included the following:

- Does DoAg track/measure work with BIPOC farmers in tis programs, if not currently, will it in future?
  - Answer = we do ask in our grant program applications, but not any other program that we can think of. There really is no tracking of BIPOC producers at the agency level, therefore that could be a recommendation....
- Just wondering how we will measure our success for new diversity initiatives.
  - Answer = I (Jaime) think we can establish a baseline for most of Ag Development programs. Participation in our programs and engagement by staff with participants makes determining that feasible.
- Can DoAg acquire resources to help with data gathering and measuring?
  - Answer= Can we acquire resources for data gathering/measuring...probably! As it's determined what exactly is desired, I think I can give you a better answer.
- Will there be follow up or accountability on implementation of the recommendations?
- One concern for future - how do we institutionalize long term recommendations so gains aren't lost when administration changes in 5 years/10 years
  - DoAg would like to see these workable recommendations institutionalized. Possibly having a DEI fulltime employee, formal accountability structure, and formalizing the next steps.

c. Future meetings: dates, length, documents/organization

Cyrena briefly reviewed over the “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Connecticut Agriculture Working Groups” document. This document is a working draft that is to be used as a meeting guidance document. Cyrena reviewed over each section which included the goals, outcomes, meeting timelines and templates, as well as the workable recommendations. This document is a guide for both the Core Group as well as the Topic Working Groups. This document will be finalized after the Core Group meets on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. This document is not confidential; however, it is not finalized and is still a working draft.

- Future Meeting Dates – use a poll

Meeting 2 – September/October – first Friday in September, September 3rd 9-11am

4. Public Comment- No public comments

5. Next Steps

By next meeting access to guidelines and Jaime's PowerPoint

Homework – review the meeting guidance document and the Department PowerPoint presented by Jaime and determine points, policies, or programs, that we would like to focus on. You can also pull in from any personal experiences or networks that you are a part of. It does not need to be from within DoAg, could be an outside organization or program (i.e; Solid Gound, UConn Extension). All documents will be available in a shared google folder that Cyrena will be creating. MacKenzie White will be the agency staff member within this topic working group assisting with coordinating the meeting times and taking official meeting notes. Cyrena Thibodeau will be joining as many meetings as possible. The agency would just like you to know we are always available for questions. If you have not filled out your tax forms for Cyrena, could



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Bureau of Ag Development & Resource Conservation**



Bryan P. Hurlburt  
Commissioner

860-713-2501  
CTGrown.gov

you please complete and get to Cyrena as soon as possible for your participation stipends. One final reminder there is always space on the agenda for general public.

6. Adjourn- Elizabeth motioned to adjourn the meeting; Christine seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10

Respectfully Submitted, Mackenzie White, AMIR 1, August 7, 2021.