



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

450 Columbus Blvd, Suite 703 | Hartford, Connecticut 06103 | 860.713.2500

Bureau of Agricultural Development & Resource Conservation

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Connecticut Department of Agriculture Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group Access to Education and Training
Regular Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, March 16, 2022
11:00AM-12:30PM
Held Virtually via WebEx Platform

Members Present: Erica Fearn, Hector Gerardo, Shuresh Ghimire, Azeem Zakir Kareem, Ana Legrand, Lauren Little, Robert Peck

Members Absent: Xochitl Ahtziri, Tamika McPhail, Kimberly Acosta

DoAg Staff: Cyrena Thibodeau

Public Present: None

1. **Welcome and Call to Order-** Meeting was called to order by Cyrena Thibodeau at 11:05 AM.
2. **New Business-** The group reviewed the draft recommended facilitated by Blessings.

Discussed the information hub, who will host? What kind of information should be up on the website? Start with a virtual and then expand into physical.

Lauren Discussed the need to look at models that could work.

Ana discussed bring in speakers from different communities to speak on a topic.

Robert brought up incorporating a messaging option and having a list of seasoned farmers who could assist with issues that come up for producers.

Freedom- a lot of this information exists, how can we make something that isn't already out there? How is this going to be different? People are not taking advantage of the existing resources/don't know about them (UConn, Cornell, etc.).

Blessings- talked about his experience teaching the Solid Ground workshops last year, the outreach for them did not reach the community. It was predominantly a white audience that attended.

Lauren- we want to acknowledge that there is a lack of trust in these institutions. We want to act as a node, a connector to the resources exist. Need to build social capital.

Ana- Hub would make it easier like a "one stop shop" and would make outreach easier and more effective. Publicity campaign.

The group talked about having a paid internship/apprenticeship program. Ana talked about how UConn provides a stipend for students to do a research internship.

Freedom talked about then providing microgrants to individuals after they go through a internship program.

Shuresh mentioned that we talk a providing funding for individuals receiving training but also should address paying the person who's doing the training.



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Ana suggested having a virtual hub and a physical being two separate recommendations.

Shuresh talked about NCTFA survey.

Erica suggested that service providers need to be provide a report of their outreach.
Need diversity in ag commodity groups in CT.

Lauren- next time talk about models to consider and flesh out the recommendations.

Blessings- need to be more specific instead of just saying "programs".

3. **Public Comment-** No public comments
4. **Next Steps-** Cyrena will re-organize recommendations and send out to group for review.
Next meeting is April 20 from 11am-12:30pm.
5. **Adjourn-** Meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM by Cyrena Thibodeau

Respectfully submitted by Cyrena Thibodeau, AMIR 1 March 28, 2022.



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