



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



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

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**Connecticut Department of Agriculture Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group
*Market Access and Diversification***

Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday September 16 10:30am-12:00pm
Via WebEx

Members Present: Shana Smith, Vicheth Im, Brandon Blank, Tida Infahsaeng, Frankie Douglass, Mary Claire Whelan, Debbie Thomas-Sims, John Filchak, Yvonne Renee Davis

Members Absent: None

DoAg Staff: Cyrena Thibodeau, Erin Windham

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Meeting was delayed due to technical issues. Called to order at 10:36 AM by Vicheth Im

2. **Group Check in:** After technical issues were resolved, members introduced themselves.

3. **Old Business-**

Review access to Google Drive and shared documents, make sure everyone has link

4. **New Business-**

a. **Begin group discussion on areas of focus (programs, policies, gaps):**

Discussion was had regarding the need for resources for new farmers. Other topic areas discussed included:

- The need for business resources- setting up a business, certifications, and needs to help with market access.
- Land access was also mentioned as a large barrier to getting started in farming or expansion.
- Diversification within urban areas
- The need for a central point of contact for farmers to access information such as toolkits.
- Backyard farmers who are unable to sell at markets due to restrictions and barriers were discussed among attendees.
- Developing a coalition of farmers of color was brought up which led to discussion of farming coops. The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program was discussed with regard to outreach and redemption among participants.

Cyrena recapped the big ideas of the meeting and asked for any additional thoughts

b. **Set up standing meeting time?**

Future meetings were discussed and attendees were asked if a standing meeting would be best. It was agreed that Thursdays at 11 AM or 11:30 AM would work for most.

5. **Public Comment: NONE**

6. **Next Steps:** Meetings will be scheduled and invites sent to members.
7. **Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:51 AM by Vicheth Im.

Respectfully submitted by Erin Windham, AMIR I, September 24, 2021