



A Business Assistance Alliance for Farm and Food Businesses

Integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Alliance seeks to become a network of professionals that implements our equity and inclusion framework, and ensures that these principles guide the Alliance's activities.

We know that these goals are better achieved when we work together as a larger region, rather than in our state silos.

We are in the ongoing process of integrating our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts into every aspect of our work as we begin to fully implement our Working Group work plans, our business plan, and our communications strategy. We will be intentional about inviting organizations to join our membership, which ensures the Alliance reflects the diversity of New England and the Hudson River Valley. As our membership grows, we will ensure that leadership teams reflect our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles.

Realizing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Process

The Alliance's lead organizations are transparent about the demographics of the communities we are currently serving while also moving forward with our programmatic efforts to support farm and food business advisors. We recognize that we cannot approach other organizations about joining us in this effort without a better understanding of ourselves. Additionally, our leadership is committed to participating in ongoing anti-oppression training to ensure that our alliance is as inclusive in our internal and external efforts to support one-on-one business assistance as possible.

We will not ask other organizations to do the work of "making us more diverse" but rather build a coalition that is willing to grow and change while being honest about who we are in the moment.

We began moving forward by:

1. Reviewing our 2019 summer leadership survey to determine which of our organizations are currently collecting demographic data about our clients/communities.

Over the coming months and years:

2. Building on this work, we will conduct an internal survey in late 2020 and early 2021 of our leadership and members to establish how our groups are moving forward with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts within their organizations.
3. Based on the results of this internal survey we will identify opportunities to share resources, provide training through our Workforce and Professional Development Working Group, or to seek funding through our Resource Development and Policy Working Group to better integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles in one-on-one business assistance for food and farm businesses.



4. Leadership in the Alliance has agreed to begin working within their own organizations in the coming years to conduct surveys mapping all client demographics data that is available. Our leadership will regularly compare our organization survey information to the demographics data of the communities we aim to serve, with the intentions of better identifying gaps in our services.

Ensuring Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the Long Haul

As part of our governance, we make agreements for timelines that include regular internal review of our coalition makeup, decisionmaking, anti-oppression training, and programmatic goals to ensure they are in line with our intentions of being a transformational coalition. This may occur once every six months, once a year, or once every two years, based on capacity and input from our leadership.

We will accomplish this by:

1. Establishing decisionmaking and accountability processes for the Executive Committee, Steering Committee, and all Working Groups and Task Forces that allow us to grow together in 2021 and beyond
2. Always bringing transparency about our efforts and demographics into meetings with potential coalition partners and inviting them to join us in this important work

We believe that by promoting internal awareness, transparency, and a willingness to build systems that allow for growth, we can promote a model that will adapt to our community's needs for years to come.

Lastly, we acknowledge that since this is lifelong work, we must move forward with our programmatic efforts while regularly taking the time to go through training, hire consultants as needed, and create accountability processes so that we can learn and grow together.

Alliance Leadership

Executive Committee

Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development
Corporation
The Carrot Project
Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

Steering Committee

Albany Cooperative Extension
American Farmland Trust
CEI Maine
Grow NYC
Land for Good
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

To learn more, visit thecarrotproject.org
or contact Johanna de Graffenreid at johanna@thecarrotproject.org