

Diversity Council Annual Report | 2022

Formed in 2021, the **Organic Trade Association (OTA)**'s **Diversity Council** aims to make a conscious effort to ensure that our successes within the organic movement promote diversity rather than perpetuate social inequalities. Members work to develop practices and processes that embed justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) into the fabric of OTA and the organic movement.

2022 Highlights:



The Council created the Diversity Resource Library.

- The Library is a repository of over 150 resources to aid in the work of creating and more diverse and representative organic trade.
- OTA members and the public can look to this resource library as a first stop when diversifying their conferences, businesses, supply chains, marketing, and more.



The Council sponsored two events to help strengthen its coalitions with other diverse organizations.

- OTA participated in two panels and translated resources on organic transition and certification materials into Spanish for the first time for the National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Conference.
- As a sponsor of the We Are Still Here (WASH) Conference, the Council participated in a convening of 25 Black-owned farms and businesses to hear firsthand the barriers keeping them out of the supply chain and the organic trade.



The trade association entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Black Farmers Index, welcoming them to the Diversity Council.

- Black Farmers Index is the largest, free, most comprehensive directory of Black Farmers, connecting you to traditional and non-traditional growers.
- The common objective of the MOU is to promote OTA's programming.
- The goal is to increase enrollment in the Diversity and Entrepreneurship Program, which assists farmers in becoming certified organic.

Looking Ahead to 2023:

In 2023, the Council will focus on internal accountability and outreach. Among the pillars of OTA's JEDI work is to hold ourselves accountable. Along with OTA continuing its participation in a 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge, staff will complete practitioner-led work to further our collective goals towards equity and inclusion. Also, OTA will participate in more outreach by attending and speaking at conferences held by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and other BIPOC-led organizations, with the intent of greater coalition building.

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Change Your Food - Change Your Life!™ Inc



Fig Hill Consulting



Good JuJu Brands



Karlin Strategic Consulting, LLC



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Plant Odyssey

Practical Botanicals



Staley Farms LLC



Kelli Tubman White



Kellee James (Mercaris) serves as the Chair of the Diversity Council, alongside Carla Balen (Organically Grown Company) as Vice Chair. Stephanie Jerger, OTA's Vice President of Administration, is the staff liaison to lead its work. To join the Diversity Council, please contact Stephanie (sjerger@ota.com).



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