

Diversity Council Annual Report | 2021

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. We would like to develop practices and processes that embed justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, into the fabric of OTA and the organic movement.

“Organic food and agriculture have always presented a sustainable alternative for our food system, but for that promise to be truly realized, the full participation of historically marginalized people must be a part of shaping and leading the organic community. The Organic Trade Association’s Diversity Council is an opportunity to be intentional about diversity, equity and inclusion so that organic lives up to its potential. Join the council to help foster new leaders, and maximize your impact at the individual, organization and community level.”

– Kellee James, Mercaris (Chair)

Highlights from 2021:

- Established the council in June and had our first meeting in August with 26 participants.
- Recruited 7 new OTA members through our Diversity and Entrepreneurship Program.
- Submitted comments to the USDA on racial equity in agriculture.
- Actively participating in OTA Board recruitment.
- Created a graduate fellowship to support the diversity work.
- Creating a DEI resource toolkit for members.

Looking Ahead to 2022:

- The Diversity Council has an exciting year ahead! While we work to create an actionable plan to increase and support diversity efforts, we will continue to build broader coalitions with organizations aligned with organic.
- We are bringing 3 of our Diversity and Entrepreneurship Members to the Hill for Organic Week and hope to bring more to Expo West.
- We are delivering a toolkit that offers a business case on how diversity can positively impact organic businesses.
- The council is working to highlight engagement, opportunity, and retention in 2022.
- We are fostering an inclusive environment in which diverse groups find their place in the organic movement!

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Staley Farms LLC



Fig Hill Farm Consulting



Oyster Bay Farm



Kelli Tubman
White



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A GREENER WORLD



Kellee James (Mercaris) serves as the Chair of the diversity council, alongside Carla Balen (Organically Grown Company), and Roxanne Myles (Kashi Company). 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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Locations

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