

**YOUNG FARMERS**

**RACIAL**

**EQUITY**

**TOOLKIT**

**THE NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION | 2020**

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# Contents

## Part 1: Introduction to the Young Farmers Racial Equity Toolkit

- 3 Toolkit Contents
- 3 Intended Audience
- 3 Why is the Coalition Working on Racial Equity?
- 4 Glossary
- 5 What is Racial Equity?
- 6 A Note on Intersectionality
- 7 How is the National Young Farmers Coalition Holding Itself Accountable to People of Color?

## Part 2: Consciousness-Raising Tools and Anti-Racist Organizing

- 8 Guide to Hosting a Study Group and Organizing Around Racial Justice in Agricultural Settings
- 8 Why Should Farmers Organize for Racial Equity?
- 9 How to Use This Resource
- 10 Setting Ground Rules
- 11 Mechanisms for Establishing Trust and a Sense of Safety in Your Study Group
- 12 Sample Study Group Agenda
- 14 Suggested Readings and Resources
- 24 Guide to Organizing an Anti-Racism Training with a Hired Facilitator
- 28 Land Acknowledgement

## Part 3: Direct Action

- 32 Partnering with BIPOC-led Organizations and Groups
- 33 Allyship
- 34 Resource-sharing
- 34 Reparations and Voluntary Taxation
- 36 How Can White Readers Hold Themselves Accountable to People of Color?
- 37 Additional Materials and Resources

## Young Farmers Racial Equity Toolkit

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***This toolkit is a starting point. It aims to orient and incite members toward preliminary consciousness-raising and direct action. This toolkit does not detail a universally applicable pathway toward resolving pervasive racialized oppression; it is an initial resource for people who are overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of the problem, and need help determining how to start dismantling racism in their communities. We hope these resources help build foundations for broader organizing in our networks, and more concrete action toward dismantling racism and reckoning with histories of racialized dispossession and violence. As always, we invite feedback and critique on the structure and content of this document; we plan to create revised versions of this resource in the future.***

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### Toolkit Contents

The goal of this toolkit is to help farmers organize around transformative learning and action. The **first** section provides basic background information about the Toolkit, including foundational understandings about racism, how it operates in our food system, and why dismantling racism is central to the pursuit of a just agricultural system, and collective liberation more broadly. The **second** section of the Toolkit provides guidance, structure, and practical tools for convening conversations about race, racism, equity, and justice with your chapter and/or community. Our hope is that these conversations will spark deep engagement and greater personal and collective understandings around the ways in which food, land, and climate justice are contingent on efforts to understand, identify, confront, and dismantle racism. The **third** section of the Toolkit offers some guidance around organizing toward direct action based on principles of resource-sharing, reparations, and movement building. Direct action will take different forms for different

chapters, geographies, and organizers, but this third section is an effort to outline how accountability and action must coincide with self-education and individual transformation.

### Intended Audience

This guide was initiated in response to requests from majority-white Coalition chapters for resources and guidance on how to initiate conversations and organizing efforts around racial equity in their chapters and broader communities. Parts of this resource will be mostly relevant for white farmers and organizers. Many of the concepts and analyses of racial dynamics in the readings are important for people from all backgrounds to understand in order to work towards justice and healing, but some resources may be less useful for people of color who have more immediate lived experience of racial oppression, and those whose lives and communities may be more integrally braided with movement work. Feel free to take what is useful, and leave what is not.

In working through the Toolkit, there may be occasions where you and those you're working with feel profoundly uncomfortable, uncertain, angry, and upset. Please take the time to feel that discomfort, rage, and sadness. Looking honestly at histories of violence and oppression includes observing the ways racism limits and injures people without power, and (in different, often more subtle ways) also harms people with various forms of power and privilege. Reckoning with harms committed, and repaying the debts of those violences, is necessary work in building a more just society that honors the dignity of the planet, and its human and non-human inhabitants. Part of this work is building stamina and refocusing on the nourishment and joy implicit in embracing a goal of collective liberation.

### Why Is the Coalition Working on Racial Equity?

The history of U.S. agriculture is inseparable from the history of U.S. racism. Indigenous land dispossession, slavery, the ongoing exclusion of racial minorities from federal agricultural programs and support systems, present day exploitation enabled by lack of labor protections for agricultural workers, and disempowering immigration policies are all examples of the ways in which racism has been woven into agriculture on every level since this land was colonized (to learn more about these histories, please see the study guide section, and the bibliography of additional resources). Examples of racism in agricultural contexts exacerbate inequity and injustice throughout the food system and society more broadly, contributing to community food insecurity, labor exploitation, and

# Glossary

## Allies and Accomplices

These terms point to a strategy of aligning one's organizing efforts with marginalized communities in efforts initiated within the community itself, rather than acting on the organizer or activist's assumptions about what the community wants or needs. See the section below, Partnering with BIPOC-led organizations and groups, for more.

## Cultural Humility

This term indicates a non-hierarchical attitude toward different forms of knowledge and value sets present in different cultures and communities. Practicing humility—particularly in relation to people with different perspectives, identities, and lived experiences—requires listening and receptivity in circumstances of difference.

## Decolonization

In the abstract for their article, "Decolonization is not a metaphor," Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang write that "decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life," or returning land that was stolen to its original inhabitants. They continue to distinguish the concept behind this term from its metaphorical or abstract uses, writing that "decolonization, a distinct project from other civil and human rights-based social justice projects, is far too often subsumed into the directives of these projects, with no regard for how decolonization wants something different than those forms of justice."

## Food Apartheid

Egregiously apparent division between parallel conditions that result from the unequal effects that racialized economic disparities and racialized food geographies have on BIPOC access to land and food.

## Heteropatriarchy

A value system that assigns social, cultural, and economic power disproportionately to cisgender heterosexual males, dispossessing women and queer people of power and opportunity.

## Racial Equity

"Racial equity is a set of social justice practices, rooted in a solid understanding and analysis of historical and present-day oppression, aiming towards a goal of fairness for all" (Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance). See Part One for further discussion of racial equity.

## Rematriation/Repatriation

The returning of assets—in this toolkit, specifically land—to the people from whom these assets were stolen.

## Reparations

"The action of making amends for a wrong one has done, by providing payment or other assistance to those who have been wronged" (Oxford Dictionary). In this toolkit, this term specifically refers to the practice of paying for the injustices of slavery in payments to Black people, and returning land stolen from Indigenous people. See the sections on Direct Action and Additional Resources for more information about reparations.

## Safer or Liberated Space

A *safe space* is defined by Merriam-Webster as "a place intended to be free of bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations." The term *safer or liberated space* recognizes that despite whatever ground rules or best intention, no space can be completely "free" from oppressive forces, ignorance, and power imbalance. The term *safer space* affirms the need to recognize and allow for reactions, responses, and amends-making around microaggressions or other forms of harm that might occur in candid conversations around race. See the section on organizing a study group for more on this idea.

## Structural Racism

A system of public policies, representations, institutional attitudes and practices, which reinforce and perpetuate racial inequity, exposing Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color disproportionately to various forms of disenfranchisement and violence.

## White Privilege

Advantages that people of European descent and people perceived as white benefit from based upon their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice. People can be beneficiaries of white privilege without consciousness of racism or forms of privilege; they often feel entitled to the benefits of this privilege even as it perpetuates structural oppressions.

## What is Racial Equity?

This definition of *racial equity* was written by the Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA). The emphasis is ours:

*“Racial equity is a set of social justice practices, rooted in a solid understanding and analysis of historical and present-day oppression, aiming towards a goal of fairness for all. The key to explaining racial equity as opposed to terms like racial justice or racial equality is acknowledging and adequately communicating that everyone is not given the same opportunity to succeed in this country. The institutional policies and practices that determine the circumstances people of color live under, the structures they are required to participate in to become successful and the tools used to measure their success were built for and by white people, without the inclusion of people of color. Often, these systems were built to intentionally exclude and marginalize people of color and limit their ability to succeed. As an outcome, achieving racial equity would mean living in a world where race is no longer a factor in the distribution of opportunity. Everyone has access to the tools they need to thrive and succeed, regardless of their skin color. People of color have the power to be owners, planners, and decision-makers in the systems that govern their lives. As a process, we apply racial equity when those most impacted by the structural racial inequities mentioned above are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.”*

AORTA also offers other resources to further understand the issue of racial equity: [racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/core-concepts/racial-equity](https://www.aorta.org/fundamentals/core-concepts/racial-equity)



ERIN MCCARLEY

other forms of racialized oppression. **Dismantling racism in our society must involve deep change in our agricultural systems.**

It is crucial that farmers, organizations that work on agricultural issues, and people involved in food systems at every level directly address racism, the myth of white supremacy, structural inequity, and the ways they manifest as ongoing violence and dispossession in relation to land, food, climate, and labor.

Given our nation’s history of genocide, slavery, land theft, dispossession, and inequitable life outcomes based on race—including success in farming—we believe it is imperative that the Coalition commits to racial equity integrally. Racial justice has not historically been a central theme in majority white agricultural communities. For many beneficiaries of white privilege, it can feel safe and comfortable to be “color blind.” But rather than fostering inclusivity, “color blindness” and other modes of ignoring race and racism lead to erasure and complacency with forms of inequity. **Our coalition believes that without addressing racial injustice—within our organization, in our chapters, and in our advocacy and policy work—we are complicit in injustice.**

Over the years, staff members of the Coalition have received many questions about how we hold ourselves accountable to histories of racialized violence and land dispossession within our agricultural system. We received criticism about our failure to address the particular needs and issues of farmers of color and Indigenous farmers, effectively building a Coalition that was not inclusive. In the beginning, we felt that focusing on the underlying economic and structural issues would help us build a diverse coalition. But not only are these barriers experienced differently and more intensely by Black farmers, Indigenous farmers, and other farmers of color (BIPOC farmers); BIPOC farmers face specific challenges—rooted in both contemporary articulations of racism, and the legacies of historical dispossession and marginalization—that were unaddressed in our initial formation

as an organization. We realized we couldn't be color blind in our work and narratives. The Coalition was not a welcoming place for everyone. Though our programs and policy solutions may have been intended to be "inclusive," they were not equitable.

In the fall of 2016, during a wave of rising public awareness about state and police violence against people of color, Coalition staff felt we could no longer stay silent. We published this statement: **Ending violence against people of color in food and farming.** The statement speaks to the urgency of directly addressing racism, and signaled an intention to have anti-racism permeate our work and culture.

Michelle L. Hughes, our former Director of Investments and Partnerships, and a POC member of our team, contributed the bulk of the labor behind this statement, which effectively launched our racial equity work. Although our entire organization benefited from the powerful statement, her individual contribution went largely unrecognized; the statement was published on behalf of the organization without being credited to individual authors, and completed by Michelle despite being outside the parameters of her job description (meaning this additional effort was effectively uncompensated). Beyond her role in authoring the statement, Michelle shouldered much the burden of holding space for the Coalition's initial efforts toward addressing racial equity. In our organization's racial equity work, we must also work to dismantle internal organizational dynamics that perpetuate the myth of white supremacy, which includes fully recognizing the contribution of BIPOC staff, and compensating them for this work.

## A Note On Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the failures of mainstream feminism and movements for racial justice to address Black women's experiences of overlapping racial and gender oppression. Intersectionality helps us understand how occupying various marginal identities can compound or complicate the oppressions and discrimination they experience, even as these identities are primarily a source of vitality and sense of richness.

People are born into various forms of structural privilege and oppression. Learning about racism, heteropatriarchy, intersectionality, and other systems of power is the first step toward reckoning with inequity in our society, and responding with action. Identifying the ways in which we ourselves have been marginalized—how these experiences dovetail with our privilege—can serve as an access point to understanding forms of oppression that we may not experience ourselves. That being said, the concept of intersectionality should not be used to minimize the impact of racism on people of color. It is important to recognize that racism is the most powerful form of oppression in our country.



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BIPOC Caucus, Convergence 2019

## How is the National Young Farmers Coalition Holding Itself Accountable to People of Color?

We are working to build authentic relationships and partnerships with farmers of color and BIPOC organizations. Our goal is to engage in ongoing conversations and meaningful work over time through commitment to understanding what our farmers and partners care about, their goals, and their theories of change. We will make space in our organizational work to show up for our partners on their terms, getting involved in their work, and to put our voice and power toward their mission. We are making a long-term commitment to continuing the Coalition's racial equity work, even when it's not easy. This includes committing significant resources to this work, developing our new policy-setting processes with an equity focus, and finding tangible ways to support BIPOC-serving and BIPOC-led organizations. We know that people and organizations with power and racialized privilege can serve as gatekeepers, and we aim to cede our power and truly pass on resources without an agenda and without strings attached. We continue to gather funding for racial equity trainings for our chapters and transform our organization's work so that it is more compelling to young farmers of color. Our ultimate goal is to ensure these farmers feel represented and supported by the Coalition, and that they will benefit from becoming part of our organization's membership.

Our co-executive directors, Sophie Ackoff and Martin Lemos, and Michelle A. T. Hughes, our Equity and Organizational Change Manager, will write and publish the first Young Farmers Accountability Report at the end of 2020. The report will include the background of our racial equity work outlined above, identified gaps in this work (both past and current shortcomings), progress our coalition made in 2020 towards advancing racial equity as a core principle of our work, and goals and strategic plans for 2021 and beyond. Our Accountability Report will present a holistic overview of our organization's action on racial equity. In the newly created Equity and Organizational Change Manager role, Michelle has been meeting with Young Farmers' program directors monthly to support their work and ensure we are weaving racial justice into the fabric of our programming. Specific attention has been given to the planning of our Annual Leadership Convergence, which will center farmers of color this year, and an organizational assessment of our operations processes to ensure they are equitable as well. Working closely with the majority of staff on these efforts is furthering our progress on this work on a daily basis.



The Abundant Table, California

STELLA KALININA

### Guide To Hosting A Study Group And Organizing Around Racial Justice In Agricultural Settings

*“None of us want to feel implicated. Because then we would have to feel responsible for problems we don’t want to feel responsible for—deep, old, intractable divides...[this] has been instrumental in helping us see that we benefit disproportionately from systems that were set up to serve us, even when we aren’t intending to do harm.”*

—KATRINA BROWNE, Director of the documentary *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North* as quoted in *Farming While Black* by Leah Penniman

#### Why Should Farmers Organize for Racial Equity?

If you have found yourself here, it is likely you already understand why this work is important. We want to offer some preliminary thoughts for those who may not yet be onboard, or who might be confused or conflicted about participating in work to dismantle racism and oppression.

The legal and social constructs of race in the U.S.—and the very idea of “Blackness” and “whiteness”—were created early in the history of this nation by wealthy landowners who understood that an alliance of European and African-descended slaves and indentured servants posed a major threat to their power and wealth. Race and the idea of white supremacy served to prevent natural alliances between Black and white working class people, and protected the ruling class and the prevailing economic system. Understanding this history helps us understand that racism and oppression affects all of us, not only people of color. Because racism and white supremacy undermines our relationships and coalition building, it is destructive to our society, our economy, and our movement.



Urban Sprout Farms, Georgia

RICHELLE GRAHAM

Agriculture in the United States is based on the exploitation of land, water, other natural resources, and labor—all for the benefit of a select few. The barriers young farmers experience are directly related to this exploitation. Our labor is devalued. Land is primarily accessible to wealthy people and white people: beneficiaries of land theft, labor exploitation, and slavery. Many young farmers enrich land in ways that are wholly uncompensated. These systems of exploitation harm the environment, forge an unjust food system, and contribute to insurmountable barriers to entry into agricultural careers.

Racism is the root of innumerable injustices in the food system. 24 million people in the U.S. live under what has been described as *food apartheid* conditions, through which access to healthy, nourishing foods is extremely difficult. Thirty-eight percent of the U.S. population is made up of people of color, and yet the 2017 Agricultural Census found that 95% of U.S. primary producers surveyed identified as white; and the number of Black, Latinx, Asian American, and Native American primary producers all decreased between 2012 and 2017 (USDA 2019). And the significant contributions of people of color to agriculture in general, and to the sustainable agriculture movement—as farm owners and farm workers; and as pioneers of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farmer cooperatives, regenerative practices, and community land trusts—often go unmentioned.

We will only succeed in establishing a more just food system if we recognize and address the exploitation and inequity



that shore up the entire agricultural system. Historical and contemporary reliance on resource and labor exploitation disproportionately harms Black, Indigenous, and people of color. By centering racial equity, we commit to working toward a food system that is not based on exploitation. By prioritizing marginalized communities, we commit to building an agriculture system that is different from the one that does not serve us now. Racism harms people with certain identities more egregiously than others; and ultimately living under systems of oppressions harms all of us. Challenging racism requires that we both recognize *and* reckon with the benefits afforded to us through the power and privilege we hold. It requires us to refuse the systems that have caused such harm. We must relinquish our privilege and its benefits toward solidarity with those who do not have access to the same privileges.

Our movement in support of young farmers will not be successful unless it is inclusive and addresses the deep structural racism in agriculture and our food system that affects all of us. For more information on this and the Coalition's commitment and strategy to dismantle racism in the food system, please read our statement, "[Ending Violence Against People of Color in Food and Farming.](#)"

## How to Use this Resource

The goal of this section is to provide guidance and structure for starting conversations about race, racism, justice, and equity with your chapter and community. In the U.S., we have a culture of avoiding these difficult conversations, so beginning this work can be overwhelming. These issues are personal and can feel raw. You might feel unqualified to convene meetings to address racism, even if you have gone through a formal anti-racism training. Yet we all need to do this work, and we need to start somewhere. **Don't let fear stop you from contributing to this work and making progress.**



**Form a study group.** A study group creates space for farmers and their communities to learn about—and practice talking about—race and racism. Reading what others have written on these topics, or watching documentaries, or listening to podcasts, will deepen your collective and personal understanding of these issues, and can inform how they affect matters that farmers might have more comfort discussing: land, farms, and food systems. Discussing these materials with your community will help build shared vocabularies that enable further conversations about the ways in which racism shapes the agricultural landscape locally, and what role farmers can play in dismantling

racism and white supremacy. We have selected 13 resources to structure a new equity study group. If these resources aren't appropriate for or interesting to your group, we have also linked to Soul Fire Farm's extensive bibliography of resources. Please sift through and design a curriculum for your group that reflects the level of knowledge and experience around racial equity work.



**Explore readings.** The Toolkit consists of 13 readings with suggested discussion questions and prompts to help facilitate productive conversations. If your study group chooses to meet monthly, this toolkit will get you through your first year of preliminary conversations about race and structural racism that will hopefully lead to more in-depth work and organizing.

This work will take on different forms in different settings. Organizing within predominantly white chapters will look different from organizing in diverse communities. Regional differences may also affect the character of a study group. Organizing locally is an opportunity to respond to local history and other contexts. You will likely want to adapt some of these materials to be appropriate for your group or region. The most important thing is to start talking openly about the history of racism in this country, its legacies in our farm communities, our role in dismantling it, and how to support those already doing the work.



**Consider group make-up.** Anti-racist consciousness-raising and organizing takes different forms for people of color and for beneficiaries of white privilege. Membership of each chapter will inform what aspects of this resource are most relevant, what background work is necessary to support the development of shared understandings that will help people of various racial identities feel confident collaborating with one another, and to build trust in mutual commitment to consciousness-raising and movement building. Different organizing structures and principles may be required based on the demographics of your chapter and community. Mixed race groups may need to introduce more protocol in order to avoid creating spaces in which unchecked ignorance create harmful experiences for people of color. It can be triggering for people of color to be exposed to white people learning out loud. If your chapter is predominantly white, it is important for participants to reckon with how they will be accountable to people of color and to circumstances of ongoing injustice. There are mechanisms a group can put in place to create

opportunities for people of all racial identities to process the complexity of experiences that come with sharing space around anti-racism work. Some of our recommendations for these mechanisms are outlined below in the section about ground rules.

## Set Ground Rules

**Racism permeates every facet of our society, culture, communication, and the systems we exist in.** Creating structure for conversations about dismantling racism within ourselves and society can help people feel safer and more open to learning, making mistakes, and being uncomfortable. Establishing mechanisms to directly address microaggressions and other forms of violence, pain, and discomfort that emerge in meetings helps build trust between participants, and creates opportunities to learn from these moments. Taking responsibility for your own speech and behavior in an anti-racist study group—and helping others do the same—is an important practice in making a safe space. Practicing these interventions in the context of the study group also helps participants practice speaking up when they witness ignorant or hateful speech and behavior in other spaces.

The idea of a *safe space* has limitations. No matter how intentional participants and organizers are, no space will feel inherently safe or free for all people. Terms like *safer space* or *liberated space* point to this idea: that despite all best intentions, it is impossible to ensure that a space will be completely safe for everyone. Rather than making the promise of a *safe space*, we can work to establish processes for addressing instances of violence, hurt, and ignorance that may come up. Part of making ground rules is establishing ways to deal with conflict or discomfort. Ground rules, shared understandings, and clear and explicit means of addressing issues that come up is an important part of building trust in these spaces.

The idea of a *safer* or *liberated* space has multiple dimensions:

- Consider what structures will establish a supportive space for people to speak and study freely, including setting intentions for the group and ground rules that everyone agrees to.
- Consider how to make it safe for people to be challenged and called in, so that instances of ignorance are opportunities for positive growth and learning for the whole group. This includes establishing guidelines for participants to come to organizers with any issues and grievances.

Conflict and tension can (and most likely will) arise in conversations about race and racism. Participants in your group will have different racial identities, personal and family backgrounds, and levels of conversance with anti-racist principles. Conflicting opinions and perspectives about historical and contemporary violence can be painful, enraging,

and triggering. Part of building a safer space is making room for feelings to arise—specifically feelings of hurt, anger, and frustration when somebody says something ignorant or racist—with a sense that reckoning with them is a part of your community’s healing and trust-building. Making space for confrontation and conflict means committing—as organizers and participants—to honesty, openness, and a sense of generosity and patience in problematic moments. Organizers should consider how they can support people who experience microaggressions, harm, and trauma in these spaces in dealing with and healing from those experiences.



Michelle A. T. Hughes,  
Convergence 2019

ERIN MCCARLEY

## Here are some mechanisms that can be useful for establishing trust and a sense of safety in your study group:

### **Redefining terms.**

Begin meetings by reviewing a set of shared understandings the organizers have chosen as critical foundations for your work together. Redefining terms such as structural racism, white privilege, and even safer space to help orient people who might be new to these ideas to the conversation (see sample agenda). This might feel repetitive, but it helps to establish a baseline vocabulary around principles that can be reference points throughout the conversation. This can be especially useful if somebody is struggling with a concept or circumstance that is being discussed, and to orient new participants to the shared understandings and values of the group. These words and definitions can help ground conversation around texts, news items, personal experiences, and even in circumstances of conflict and disagreement.

### **Debrief prior meeting.**

Make time at the beginning of each meeting to talk about the last meeting, in case something came up in the interim, or somebody was not able to bring something up in the moment. Also encourage participants to talk to somebody else in the group if something hits them wrong and they don't want to bring it up in the moment with the whole group.

### **Designate a person who anyone can go to if something hurtful or triggering comes up during a meeting.**

Select a person at the beginning of each meeting (or one or two people who commit to this role in a longer-term way) who will be available after the meeting (or via email or phone) to field discomforts or further conversation around how a conversation went. This person can be a sounding board so that no one is left alone wondering whether a microaggression or instance of ignorance went unnoticed, and can help strategize about follow up. Sometimes when a harmful instance occurs there is no intervention in the moment. It is important to build structure to reflect on what goes on in meetings so that there are opportunities to correct and make amends for hurtful language or interpretations once the moment has passed.



### **Represent only your own experience.**

People can only speak for themselves, and only from their own experiences. Nobody should be asked to speak on behalf of other people with shared identities.

# Sample Group Agreements

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## **Speak from your own experience.**

Use “I” statements and don’t speak for or reinterpret what others say..

## **Seek understanding.**

When somebody is negatively impacted by something that was said, try to put aside your own judgments, biases, viewpoints, and even the intention of the speaker, and listen to the harm that was felt..

## **Prepare to be open, vulnerable, and a little uncomfortable.**

Accept that we won’t always say the right thing. Be willing to make and accept our own and others’ mistakes.

## **Participate to the fullest of your ability.**

Community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.

## **“Move up, move up.”**

If you’re someone who tends to not speak a lot, please move up into a role of speaking more. If you tend to speak a lot, please move up into a role of listening more. This is a twist on the more commonly heard “step up, step back.” The “up/up” confirms that in both experiences, growth is happening. (You don’t go “back” by learning to be a better listener.) Saying “move” instead of “step” recognizes that not everyone can step (AORTA).

## **Listen actively.**

Repeat back if necessary. Seek clarification and make sure that you are understanding the speaker correctly before responding. Try to put your own assumptions and viewpoints aside.

## **Engage in dialogue, not debate.**

Dialogue is open-ended, and shared learning is the goal, not winning an argument. The goal is not to agree, we are sharing experiences and perspectives with the goal of gaining deeper understanding. Use “Yes, and...” language instead of “But...”

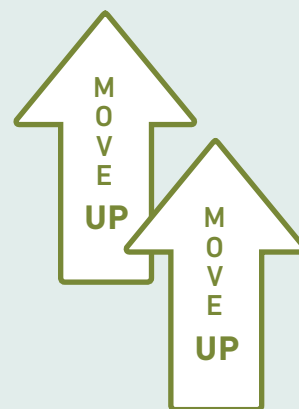
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but focus on ideas and refrain from personal attacks.
- Challenge statements rather than the person who said it. Stay open to being challenged.
- Instead of invalidating somebody else’s story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.

## **Pause.**

Take a deep breath or count to 10 before responding to strong emotions or ideas that are particularly difficult for you personally.

## **Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses—**

they can be as disrespectful as words.



# Sample Study Group Agenda

This sample agenda is provided by the Justice and Agriculture Study Group of the Young Farmer Network of Southeastern New England—a local Young Farmers chapter. This is an example of how you might structure your study group's meetings, but you may need to adjust this to fit the needs and goals of your chapter and community.

## Young Farmer Network Justice and Agriculture Working Group SAMPLE AGENDA

### 1. SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS: State that this is a living document. Welcome comments.

We recognize the Narragansett/Wampanoag tribe—Original human occupants of the land this house is on, and the non-human occupants who preceded them even.

Structural racism is a shared understanding—A system of public policies, cultural representations, institutional practices, and other norms which reinforce and perpetuate racial inequity.

White privilege is a shared understanding—A set of advantages, entitlements, and/or immunities that white people benefit from on a daily basis beyond those common to all others. White privilege can exist without white people's conscious knowledge of its presence and it helps to maintain the racial hierarchy in this country.

This is a safer space:

- Safe for people to speak freely, and also safe for people to be humble in being challenged and checked, and to be brave in checking one another
- If someone upsets you and you don't feel comfortable confronting them, consider talking with someone else in the group about how to have the conversation/for support

Introductions: Name, relationship with agriculture/farm, racial identity, pronouns

### 2. CONVERSATION

Focused around a reading

Processing justice-related situations/work happening in the community/in the world/on the farm (e.g. news,

experiences of racism, forms of structural oppression we observe in our landscape)

### 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS & FOLLOW UPS: On specific work/policies/events/planning/organizing.

Examples:

Land research @ Brown University

- Census of Dispossession: Would you like students to research the history of the land you're on? You can participate as much or as little as you like in the process. They will work on a template and platform for farmer research on the history of land. Let me know if you'd like to have your land be included in the inventory
- Date of presentations: Dec 9
- Modes of research

Anti-racism training this winter

- When: 25 February 2017
- Goals
- Who do we invite
- How do we make this collaborative between the agriculture community and activist community?
- Next steps

### 4. Individual Work/Next Steps:

*Laura:* Try and get in touch with some of the people named in the Mashapaug Nahaganset article about supporting their lawsuit.

*Emily:* Visit South County museum and report back to group.

*Sophie:* Follow up with next planned reading.

# Suggested Readings and Resources

The following is a list of readings that can be used to structure study group meetings. Each reading comes with a brief overview and a set of discussion questions that can help guide your reading and conversation. The discussion questions are meant to facilitate a deeper dive into these issues. For an intensive study group, pick one reading per week for twelve weeks. If you are adding a racial equity study group to your chapter's activities, meet monthly and use one reading per month to increase your knowledge and understanding of racism.

You can also tailor the reading list specifically for your group. If you'd like to make your own selections for reading material, Leah Penniman's bibliography of **Most Cited Resources** is an excellent place to start.

## NOTES

1

**"Agrarian Questions and the Struggle for Land Justice in the United States,"** by Eric Holt-Giménez. **Introduction to LAND JUSTICE: Re-imagining Land, Food, and the Commons in the United States:** [foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/HoltGimenezIntro.pdf](https://foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/HoltGimenezIntro.pdf)

This article is an overview of the history of agriculture in the United States within a broader context of global capitalism. Holt-Giménez illuminates the ways in which food economies have relied on extractive methods and policies, and are structured around the exploitation of labor and natural resources. It ties together key concepts regarding racism in the food system, and lays a foundation for conversations about transformative change.

- ① *What did you learn about history? What threads of the history presented were new information for you? What subtle or not-so-subtle edits to your understanding of history were established by this article?*
- ① *What does the author mean when he says, "The politics of food is never far from the politics of land, water, or labor?" What are examples from our farms and lives in which dynamics around land, water, or labor reflect larger issues in our food system?*
- ① *How has a global mentality around food markets and hunger shaped the agricultural landscape in this country? How are the effects of a global mentality around food visible in our region, community, and neighborhood?*
- ① *The author writes: "The contradictions of the capitalist food regime have exacerbated vulnerabilities and historical injustices. This country produces more food than any other, yet one in seven people are food insecure. There are epidemics of diabetes, hypertension, and other diseases related to unhealthy food. People of color, children, women, and those working in the food sector are most affected." What are examples of contradictions of the capitalist food regimes on our farms and in our communities?*
- ① *What does a "radical or transformative struggle" for food and land justice look like? What are the planks in that platform?*

**2** The National Young Farmers Coalition's Equity Statement, "Ending violence against people of color in food and farming": [youngfarmers.org/2016/09/ending-violence-against-people-of-color-in-food-and-farming/](http://youngfarmers.org/2016/09/ending-violence-against-people-of-color-in-food-and-farming/)

This is a racial equity statement the National Young Farmers Coalition released in September of 2016. It was developed in response to persistent violence perpetrated against people of color, especially Black people, brought to the forefront due to the deaths of Black men such as Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, and many others. The statement's purpose is to examine how a predominately white organization can work towards creating a just and equitable society and make an organizational commitment to racial equity.

- ? *Young Farmers equity statement was published in September 2016. How would you update or change the statement to reflect the political and cultural issues of today?*
- ? *Read Groundswell Center for Food and Farming's **organizational equity statement**. How does this describe their commitment to equity and anti-racism compared to Young Farmers'?*
- ? *What is the purpose of an equity statement, especially a statement from a predominantly white organization? How does the use of an equity statement advance the goal of racial equity?*
- ? *Write a personal equity statement for yourself. How would you implement this statement and hold yourself accountable?*

**3** The Homecomers Podcast, "On immigration, family pride, and the fight for farm-worker rights," with Leydy Rangel of United Farm Workers (UFW): [thehomecomers.org/episodes/leydy-rangel/](http://thehomecomers.org/episodes/leydy-rangel/)

This episode of The Homecomers podcast is an interview with Leydy Rangel, who works in communications at United Farm Workers (UFW). Rangel is a first generation college graduate and her parents are farm workers. The podcast speaks to her background growing up in a family of farm workers, and speaks both to the egregious human rights violations and indignities that farm workers in the United States are subject to, and also her family's skill and pride in their work in the fields and now in organizing work.

- ? *What was your experience of listening to Rangel's description of the way her parents come home from work (e.g. covered in dirt and pesticides) along with her description of their professionalism, skill, and work ethic?*
- ? *Rangel speaks to some amount of camaraderie among farm workers in the field that makes the work more enjoyable. How do methods for enduring and even enjoying the strenuousness of farm work relate to endurance and joy in movement building?*
- ? *As a farmer, what is your experience of listening to Rangel describing conditions in the labor camp where her family lived, and the labor conditions in general?*

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- ① *What did you learn from the story about Rangel's brother's heat illness, and his manager's unwillingness to respond adequately to the emergency?*
- ② *What are labor policies at your farm? How do you make sure you/your employees have their health needs met? What would it look like for our food system to prioritize the safety and well-being of farm workers?*

**4** **4 Not so Easy Ways to Dismantle Racism in the Food System,"** by Leah Penniman. *Yes! Magazine*, April 27, 2017: [yesmagazine.org/democracy/2017/04/27/4-not-so-easy-ways-to-dismantle-racism-in-the-food-system/](https://www.yesmagazine.org/democracy/2017/04/27/4-not-so-easy-ways-to-dismantle-racism-in-the-food-system/)

In this article, Leah Penniman offers four ways to shift our food system to create more equity, through the use of historical background, current data, and infographics. This is a great article to begin a chapter conversation as it offers critical information and possible solutions in an understandable and digestible format.

- ③ *"Food desert" vs. "food apartheid": reflect on these two terms, and why Penniman prefers "food apartheid" to describe geographic areas where access to healthy food is severely limited.*
- ④ *What does Penniman mean by the "colonizer" mentality? How has this mentality created the racist food and agricultural system that currently exists in the U.S.?*
- ⑤ *How have discriminatory lending practices contributed to increasing Black land loss over the past century? How has this led to farming becoming one of the top five whitest professions in this country today?*
- ⑥ *Discuss the Pigford settlement payment amount that went to each farmer in the context of how many acres of land that payment amount would be able to purchase in 2015. How would reparations begin to repair some of this loss?*
- ⑦ *Farm workers are excluded from labor protections, such as minimum wage, overtime pay, and child labor protections. Discuss how this has contributed to the percentage of farm workers who identify as Latinx vs. the percentage of farm managers who identify as Latinx. How would an increase to \$15/hr minimum wage for farm workers start to shift this?*
- ⑧ *Discuss Food Justice Certification, and how the farm owners in your group could expand their certifications to include this. Why is this important? What impact do you think this could have on your current and future customers? How might having this certification benefit your community?*

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**"Uses of Anger," by Audre Lorde. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 1/2, Looking Back, Moving Forward: 25 Years of Women's Studies History (Spring-Summer, 1997), pp. 278-285: [blogs.ubc.ca/hopeprinceengl470a/files/2016/10/audre-lorde.pdf](https://blogs.ubc.ca/hopeprinceengl470a/files/2016/10/audre-lorde.pdf)**

This essay from 1971 explores the role that anger plays in communicating about racism. Audre Lorde demonstrates how "anger is the grief of distortions between peers, and its object is change." She makes a case for learning how to receive anger without being reactionary, or driven by fear, guilt, and projection. These modes of response do not honor the gifts of honesty and expression (and thus vulnerability) that are contained by anger.

- ① *Does the definition of racism offered in the first lines of this essay fit with, add to, compliment, or complicate your understanding of racism? What are the key words in this definition that Lorde uses to sharpen our understanding?*
- ① *How does Lorde differentiate between anger and guilt/defensiveness as useful responses to racism? Consider the following quotation: "My anger is a response to racist attitudes, to the actions and presumptions that arise out of those attitudes. If in your dealings with other women your actions have reflected those attitudes, then my anger and your attendant fears, perhaps, are spotlights that can be used for your growth in the same way I have had to use learning to express anger for my growth. But for corrective surgery, not guilt. Guilt and defensiveness are bricks in a wall against which we will all perish, for they serve none of our futures." How do guilt and defensiveness limit reactions and responses to racism or to anger that stems from experiences of racism?*
- ① *Choose some of the bulleted examples of forms of racism and microaggression. Discuss the ignorance and harm embedded in these examples.*
- ① *"Everything can be used, except what is wasteful. You will need to remember this, when you are accused of destruction." What is Lorde saying here about usefulness versus wastefulness of the energy of anger? What does she mean when she refers to accusations of destruction brought about by expressions of anger in response to racism?*
- ① *How might accessing and communicating anger aid in the process of "identify[ing] who are our allies with whom we have grave differences, and who are our genuine enemies."*
- ① *"If I participate, knowingly or otherwise, in my sister's oppression and she calls me on it, to answer her anger with my own only blankets the substance of our exchange with reaction" (281). How does this passage and the rest of the piece suggest we hold or receive another person's rage?*
- ① *What is the importance of the distinction made between hatred and anger at the bottom of page 281 and top of page 282?*
- ① *At the end of the essay, Lorde distinguishes personal anger from examples of national/global violence. What is the purpose of this passage?*

## NOTES

6

**The Great Land Robbery, Vann R. Newkirk II. The Atlantic Magazine, September 2019. [theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/09/this-land-was-our-land/594742/](http://theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/09/this-land-was-our-land/594742/)**

This article by Vann R. Newkirk II explores the history of Black land dispossession in the United States, particularly in the Mississippi Delta. The article explores how Black land post-Emancipation was systematically stolen through racist, white supremacist ploys. We then learn of more recent coercive shifts in land ownership, from independent farmers to massive pension companies, and how these racist institutions continue to impact black farmers in the South (and across the country) today.

- ? *What did you learn about the history of dispossession? Were you aware of the impact that pension funds are having on farmland across the globe?*
- ? *What does the author mean by "the company's (TIAA) new found dominance in the region is merely the topsoil covering a history of loss and legally sanctioned theft..."*
- ? *How has discriminatory lending played a part in the loss of Black-owned farmland throughout the country? How have you seen racism and discrimination impact landownership in your community?*
- ? *Define "land hunger."*
- ? *How did the Pigford vs. Glickman lawsuit help bring some relief to Black farmers who faced racism by the USDA? What would true reparations look like for Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities?*

7

**White Allyship," by Adrienne Rich. Notes Towards a Politics of Location, 1984. [people.unica.it/fiorenzojuliano/files/2014/10/Adrienne-Rich-Notes-Toward-a-Politics-of-Location.pdf](http://people.unica.it/fiorenzojuliano/files/2014/10/Adrienne-Rich-Notes-Toward-a-Politics-of-Location.pdf)**

In this essay, written in 1984, Rich deconstructs her experience with feminism as a specifically white experience. She contrasts theory and specificity, discussing how abstractions often used in political movements or philosophy allow for an assumed white normal" and blocks out the variation in experience caused by racial inequity and the contributions, history, ideas, realities, and personhood of people of color.

- ? *Why do you think Rich begins the essay by focusing on place—on her U.S. citizenship and her evolving understanding of it? How does that understanding relate to the title: Notes Toward a Politics of Location?*
- ? *How does Rich, in her comparison of herself to the bumblebee stuck indoors and again in her understanding of the pieces of feminist history that she has missed (such as the mass protests by South African women), point toward the ways in which centering the white gaze hurts her, white women in general, or the feminist movement?*
- ? *At the end of the first paragraph of page 214, Rich writes "If we have learned anything in these years of late twentieth-century feminism, it's that 'always' blots*

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out what we really need to know: When, where, and under what conditions has the statement been true?" *Reflect on this statement. What is she saying about whiteness and the habit of centering whiteness? How might you speak or think differently were you to ask this question more often?*

- ? *What is the tone of Rich's writing? How does she seem to feel about writing this piece and how does reading it make you feel?*
- ? *What is Rich getting at in her story about the first female astronaut? What does she think the astronaut is missing or misunderstanding? How might Rich have seen the same scene before she began evaluating her own position as a white feminist?*

**8** **"The Color of Food" by Natasha Bowens. New Society Publishers, 2015.**  
[newsociety.com/books/c/the-color-of-food](https://newsociety.com/books/c/the-color-of-food)

*The Color of Food* stitches together diverse experiences of farmers in the United States from the personal experience of the author. Bowen explains how integral understanding our collective and individual history is to unpacking the damage colonialism has done by ignoring and forgetting these histories. Moving forward with an inclusive food movement requires recovering this history and rebuilding a collective food identity.

The book is broken up into portraits, which the author describes as a collage. Our suggestion is to read the Prologue; Part 1: Brown Girl Farming; and Part 6: Generation Rising. You can divvy up selected parts and portraits among the group. Use these questions for either group or personal introspection.

- ? *The author explores the identity of young/beginning farmers in the current "food movement." She explains her struggles, feeling peripheral to the movement as a farmer of color. This book was published in 2015. How do you understand the "food movement" today? Who identifies it?*
- ? *Consider your identity in the food movement. Where are you from? How did you grow up in relation to food and understanding where your food comes from? Where were your ancestors from and what was their identity in the food system? Consider how history impacts where you are today. How does your chapter reflect or not reflect the farming community in your region?*
- ? *Can you identify "food movement" practices that you see in your community that are exclusive? In the prologue, the author writes about farmers markets in D.C. growing food for wealthy white people, not reflecting the experience or needs of the diverse neighborhoods in the city, for example.*

**9** **"Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land," by Leah Penniman. Chapter 16 "White People Uprooting Racism."**

This chapter of Penniman's book outlines concrete steps that white allies can take to uproot racism in their communities and beyond. From reparations and various policy proposals to organizational transformation and building interracial alliances to personal examination and holding others lovingly accountable, she creates accessible guidelines

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for white folks that are grounded in the belief that racism and white supremacy erode all of our humanities and tear apart our communities. Penniman also provides ample historical, cultural, economic, and political context that connects the anti-racist work we must do in agriculture to the fight against other oppressive structures.

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- ① *Penniman writes that working-class Black and white people have long understood that we are natural allies. What instances can you come up with in which the owning class has sought to divide us? Have you seen it where you live and/or farm?*
- ① *What are some examples of how you individually or as a chapter exhibit white supremacist behavior? What are some action steps you can take to actively dismantle white supremacy?*
- ① *Penniman outlines nine guidelines for interracial alliance building. Which seems to be the most challenging for you and your chapter? Which seems least challenging for you and your chapter?*
- ① *Describe a time you called someone in. How did it go? Describe a time you called someone out. How did it go? What are the benefits to calling in rather than out? What are some strategies you can employ to make that process easier?*
- ① *Larisa Jacobson of Soul Fire Farm compiled a list of questions around cultural appropriation on page 313. Take some time to engage with each of the questions.*
- ① *Follow the instructions from Penniman on page 314 and explore the "Matrix of Intersectionality." Record your identities in the appropriate categories. Which identities are most difficult for you to claim? Why is that?*

**10** Episodes 5 and 6 of the New York Times 1619 podcast: [USDA loan discrimination against Black farmers: nytimes.com/2019/10/04/podcasts/1619-slavery-sugar-farm-land.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/04/podcasts/1619-slavery-sugar-farm-land.html)

These two podcasts use the experience of a Black sugar cane farmer who lost his farm after being discriminated against by loan officers who administer seasonal farm loans. It talks about this one case, and then extrapolates the racism experienced by one farmer to systemic discrimination in USDA programs and institutions that offer annual loans to farmers, ending in an explication of the Pigford case. This podcast talks about the systems that ensure the disproportionate land loss for Black farmers, Indigenous farmers, and farmers of color.

- ① *How does the exclusion of people of color from the agrarian community play into this story of land loss?*
- ① *How does solidarity and neighborly support operate in your agricultural community? Are there ways people are outside these systems of support? Can you think of ways to extend support to people who might be outside of your immediate circle of friends and collaborators?*
- ① *Discuss the themes around legacy in this podcast: in the form of agricultural skills and livelihoods, and also in the form of land. How does legacy, family heritage, and pride play into June Provost? How is your work rooted in history?*

- How does this story expose the myth that agricultural success is the product of hard work? What other factors contribute to the success or failure of a farmer or farm?
- Discuss your experience of the racist white farmer who says failure of Black-owned farms is because the farmers are "bad farmers." What would you say to this farmer if you were discussing Black land loss generally, or a specific case of an under-funded, over-collateralized farm that went under and he said something like this to you?

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11 **"The Elusive Inclusive: Black Food Geographies and Racialized Food Spaces,"**  
by Margaret Marietta Ramirez: [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/anti.12131](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/anti.12131)

This article examines two case studies of urban agriculture projects in a historically Black neighborhood in Seattle. One is a white-led non-profit, and the other is a project run by a church with roots in the Black liberation movement. The article maps how these two different organizations operate in the neighborhoods and communities where they are based, and points to the problematic nature of exclusively white leadership in agricultural organizations, especially in cities. *This article is written largely in an academic tone and with some dense language, so be aware of that if you're reading it in your group. It is on this list because of how adeptly and directly it addresses questions of history, sovereignty, race, and power in an agrarian context.*

- What does the term "viscosity" mean in this article (e.g. "viscosity of whiteness")?
- What does the writer mean when she refers to a "plantation complex?" How might this operate in agricultural spaces in our community?
- What are some of the specific agricultural histories that resonate on the land in our community? What are the ways these histories are revealed or re-inscribed through (social, political, cultural, economic) dynamics on farms and other food spaces in our community?
- What are some examples of white- or BIPOC- led organizations working on "food justice" in our community? How do these organizations talk about and do their work? (Look at some websites! Read mission statements and blog posts.)
- What modes of organizing, talking about, paying for, and structuring work get in the way of purported efforts to dismantle racism? Which qualities mark efforts that are enduring, sustainable, and impactful? Draw from the examples in the article: Ace of Spades and Clean Greens.
- What is the role of imagination in dismantling racism?
- What is the role of language in supporting transformative change? What is the role of language (particularly around urban space and agriculture in this article; subheading White Garden Spaces) in reinscribing the myth of white supremacy?

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**12** Community Voz Podcast: S4 Ep 10 Farmworker Tribunal 2020, [foodjustice.org/community-voz-radio](https://foodjustice.org/community-voz-radio)

This podcast episode is a recording of the 7th Annual Farmworker Tribunal in Olympia, Washington. At the tribunal, farm workers present their experiences and relevant grievances, which are heard by a set of judges who are charged with writing a report on their findings around forms of labor exploitation, human rights violations, and environmental degradation in agricultural contexts to propose direct action for civil society, and make recommendations to elected officials and relevant agencies for regulatory or policy change based on their findings.

- ① *How does the structure of a “people’s tribunal” make space for the amplification of voices that have previously been suppressed or erased?*
- ① *Discuss the implications of the fact that farmworkers in this country do not have the right to organize. What are the effects of this lack of labor protections of labor conditions? How does hearing about, for example, rules (or lack there of) around child labor on farms effect the way you think about?*
- ① *How does compensating workers based on piece-weight rather than with an hourly wage change the dynamic around labor? How are you compensated for your work? If you have employees, how are they compensated?*
- ① *How did it make you feel to hear the stories told as a part of the tribunal? What details struck you?*
- ① *Discuss the language around “farm workers” and “farmers.” What is the significance of this distinction, and what purpose does it serve?*
- ① *One speaker asks “How does one measure the value of a life of a farmworker?” How might farmers and consumers take responsibility for the health and safety of people who plant and harvest so much of the food grown in this country, whose are exposed to significant dangers, particularly pesticide exposure and effects of climate change, without protection?*
- ① *What do you make of the tribunal justices’ denouncements regarding farm worker conditions that are close to slavery, ICE raids in courtrooms, pesticide illnesses, immigration reform? What do you make of their recommendations? Is there anything you would add in any of these categories?*

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**13** “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40: [latrobe.edu.au/staff-profiles/data/docs/fjcollins.pdf](https://latrobe.edu.au/staff-profiles/data/docs/fjcollins.pdf)

This is another academic article, and is fairly dense. It considers the idea of “settler moves to innocence,” a concept which situates ways in which settler colonists make attempts to exonerate themselves from histories of violence and dispossession. It claims language around colonialism as naming specific acts of violence and dispossession, and thus asks that beneficiaries of land theft examine their relationship with land, history, and language.

Tuck and Yang's 2012 essay dives into how the language of decolonization has been superficially embedded in social justice spaces, education, and educational research. The authors break down how this superficial use of the word perpetuates violence against the indigenous peoples whom this land was stolen from and from whom it continues to be kept. The authors challenge those who are not native to this place to consider what their continued presence, stewardship, ownership, and settlement here means for Indigenous communities and the violence that settlement perpetuates while also asking readers to be self-critical about the ways they excuse that continued occupation. Though this essay is academic and dense, it provides a striking introduction to moving beyond just thinking about decolonization or acknowledging that settlement as a community of people who occupy and steward stolen land in our work as farmers and ranchers. This article may be uncomfortable for non-Indigenous farmers and ranchers to work through, but we encourage you to make space to fully understand and process this thesis together, knowing that to make "decolonization not a metaphor" would require you to be physically unsettled from the land you farm/ranch on.

## NOTES

- ① *What do the authors mean by "settler moves to innocence?" Try working through the bulleted list on page 4 to develop working understandings of each "move."*
- ① *What does "futurity" mean in this essay?*
- ① *What are some ways the authors identify decolonization being made a metaphor?*
- ① *What does decolonization "want" (reference to statement on page 3)?*
- ① *How do the authors lay out "settler colonialism" as different from other forms of colonialism? What do the authors mean by settler colonialism being "a structure and not an event" (page 5)?*
- ① *Explore as a group how settler narratives have played out in your own advocacy as farmers. For example, if land access has been something you've fought for or struggled with, engage together how this goal is inherently settler-motivated. What "moves to innocence" might you have participated in, knowingly or not, in your lives as farmers on this land?*
- ① *Have you witnessed behaviors of "playing Indian" or "become without becoming" in sustainable agriculture spaces? How might these look in a farming-specific context?*
- ① *The authors outline differences in the historic racialization of Indigenous peoples versus Black Americans on page 12. How did economics contribute to forming these social rules? How is agriculture, and land, central to the goals of these different racializations? What do the authors mean by "incommensurability?"*
- ① *As a community of land stewards, to participate in decolonization in any non-metaphorical way would mean giving up farming, among other things. Try to open a space to sit with that reality together and digest.*

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## Guide To Organizing A One-Day Anti-Racism Training With A Hired Facilitator

### Should we hire a facilitator for an anti-racism training? Yes!

Consciousness-raising is an ongoing, lifelong process. Developing awareness around systems of oppression can be difficult and uncomfortable; it can also be vitalizing and joyful. It includes both individual work and collective action. A study group helps in the process of building shared understandings and vocabularies around historical and contemporary articulations of racism. These shared vocabularies are instrumental in developing collective awareness, mobilizing around anti-racist work, and laying foundations for collective action. Bringing in an outside facilitator for a more formal anti-racism training can jump start this effort, or push an existing group toward community action and accountability.

Hiring a facilitator to plan and moderate an anti-racism training will be costly, and rightly so. It is difficult and skillful work to move a group with different understandings of racism toward common language and action. It is also emotionally taxing work for people of color. Bringing in an outside facilitator with experience guiding these conversations is an excellent way to

structure space for learning about these issues with your chapter and other community members. Putting resources toward a one-day or weekend-long event can energize an interested group toward existing movement building efforts, or future organizing.

### How to Prepare

**Consider your audience.** While it is difficult to know exactly how a training will pan out ahead of time, it is best to talk within your group about goals and desired outcomes—even if the details are preliminary and incomplete—so these goals can be articulated to the facilitator. This pre-work will support the facilitator in setting an agenda that is relevant to the audience. It is also useful to have a sense of who the audience is in developing goals for the training, and clear communication so that attendees or prospective attendees have an idea of what they are signing up for (see sections below on “Outreach and Registration”).

Consider the following questions and concerns:

- Who is this training for?
- Is it for a racially mixed group, or more racially



homogenous group?

- Is it for farmers only, or a broader food justice/movement building community?
- What are the organizer's goals from the event? Personal goals? Group goals? Coalition goals?

Answering some of these questions will help the organizers and facilitators communicate about the training to attendees and prospective attendees, and structure the agenda and objectives to reflect the intentions of the group.

**Budget.** It is important to determine the budget for this event. Ways to offset costs include applying for grant funding, collecting a registration fee from participants (could be sliding scale), or soliciting sponsors. In assessing the budget, it is worthwhile to investigate whether some elements may be donated or provided (e.g. space to hold the event, food, or graphic design), but consider whether you need a budget for each of the following possible line items:

- Facilitator (honorarium and travel/lodging)
- Venue rental
- Food (ingredients for organizers to prepare in advance, or prepared food)
- Supplies (paper, markers, printing, eating utensils, etc.)
- Outreach (flyer design, printing)

**Facilitation and Agenda-setting.** Research possible facilitators, and reach out early to assess their interest in and availability for collaborating on a training. Facilitators may often be booked months in advance, so don't delay!

Iron out the scope of work and division of labor between the organizers and facilitator(s). Have a sense of the following dynamics in initiating a conversation with the facilitator:

- How are organizers contributing to the agenda?
- Are there partners (individuals or organizations in your area working on these issues) who you'd like to draw into the agenda- and goal-setting process?
- How will the facilitator be oriented to the character, history, and demographics of the group? If there is racial diversity among participants—or even if there isn't—it can be helpful to have a white facilitator and a BIPOC facilitator. There may be issues and questions that one or the other is more equipped to respond to.
- What is the day-of division of labor between the organizers and facilitator?

Determine facilitator logistics: travel, lodging, and compensation are all concerns to address ahead of time.

**Publicity and Outreach.** Details around outreach will determine who is in the room for the training, so conversations about an outreach plan emerge directly from conversations about the

## Facilitator List

The following list was compiled by Soul Fire Farm:

### BIPOC-LED:

[Access Consulting Services](#), translation and interpretation

[Adrienne Maree Brown](#), Organizational Healing

[Adaku Utah](#), Harriet's Apothecary

[Anti Racist Alliance](#), Ending Racism

[AORTA Collective](#)

[Beyond Diversity 101](#)

[Center for Whole Communities](#), Equity and Organizational Development, Kavitha Rao

[Diversity Project](#) with Eduardo González Jr.

Eb Brown at [Care Strategies](#)

Heidi Maria Lopez: <http://hlopez115@gmail.com/> - ending racism, intersectionality, conflict resolution

[Liz O'Gilvie](#), Ending Racism Training

Mistinguette Smith, [Interaction Institute for Social Change](#)

[Opening Doors](#)

[People's Institute for Survival and Beyond](#), Undoing Racism

[Racial Equity Institute](#)

[Training For Change](#)

[Vision Change Win](#), Transformative Justice

### ACCOMPLICE-LED OR MULTIRACIAL:

Ava Byrum, [Omnymyst](#), ending racism

[Catalyst Project](#)

[Center for the Study of White American Culture](#)

[White Noise Collective](#)



audience. Here are some guiding notes to help consider the outreach plan for your event:

- How do you target the audience you hope to see at the event?
- What forms of outreach/venues/methods are you using to publicize (e.g. flyers around town, social media, direct mailing/emailing, reaching out through organizations doing related work, tabling at farmers markets or elsewhere, etc.)?
- Are there specific people, organizations, or community members you might like to invite to participate or to contribute in specific ways?

**Registration.** Include a survey with some foundational questions that you can provide to the facilitators. Survey questions might include some of these examples, derived from the Soul Fire Farm and the Young Farmer Network’s pre-event surveys (note: some facilitators provide their own pre-training survey as well):

- Name, pronouns, contact information
- Farm/organizational affiliation

## Northeast SARE Grant

Over the past few years, Coalition chapters have been asking for funding to hire facilitators for chapter anti-racism trainings. In 2019, the Coalition applied for a Northeast SARE Partnership grant that would provide funding for three anti-racism trainings for Northeast chapters, as well as funding to finish and publish this toolkit resource. In partnership with Soul Fire Farm and Soil Generation, the Coalition was awarded the NE SARE grant. So far in 2020, we have been able to host two full day *Uprooting Racism* trainings with Soul Fire Farm for NE chapters and farmers, and are planning on a third training with Soil Generation in Pennsylvania. Over 60 farmers attended the first two trainings, which were held specifically for farmers, as opposed to service providers. Young Farmers plans to continue to apply for SARE Partnership grants in other regions of the country in hopes of bringing anti-racism trainings to as many of our chapters as possible.

- What made you interested in attending this training? Please describe your specific learning goals. (2-5 sentences)
- Name one challenge related to race and equity that you are currently experiencing in your organization/community that you would like support addressing.
- What experience with anti-racism work and/or theory do you have? (2-5 sentences)
- What experience with food justice and food sovereignty work and/or theory do you have? (2-5 sentences)
- What skills or knowledge do you hope to get out of this training? (2-5 sentences)
- What action steps do you hope emerge from this training? (2-5 sentences)
- What is your race/ethnicity/cultural heritage?
- Are you willing to read the assigned articles in advance of the training?
- Do you have any dietary restrictions?
- Do you need childcare?
- Is there anything else you’d like to share with the organizers prior to the training?

**Participant preparation.** In order to prepare people for the training, it can be helpful to provide participants with some sense of how the day will look. This can include sending the agenda ahead of time, or sending required or suggested readings. Reading is more accessible for some people than it is for others, so it is a good idea to not overwhelm people with too much preparatory reading, but a text can help orient people toward foundational understandings and goals for the training. Note: some facilitators may provide their own “pre-reading.”

Offering pre-reading (suggested or required—or required for white participants) that speaks to principles and language that will be used as a jumping off point (e.g. structural racism, white privilege) can also help build trust in the group before the start of a training. Setting aside time prior to the training to discuss these readings—possibly separate space for BIPOC participants and white-identified participants—can help clarify language and concepts that will be affirmed and used throughout the actual training so everyone comes in with a basic vocabulary. It can also help build relationships and can be a space to develop mechanisms for confronting microaggressions, ignorant comments, or other forms of harm that may occur in the training. Any space you create ahead of the training can help build trust among participants. Some Young Farmers chapters are using a *21-Day Racial Equity Challenge organized by Food Solutions New England* or other organizations to structure this effort. Be creative!

**Building trust.** Consider the goals of the training, and how you can prepare participants to enter the space with some degree of alignment around shared understandings and goals for the session. It is particularly important to be aware of the specific

stress and potential trauma for BIPOC in witnessing white people learning about racism. Facilitators and organizers need to have a sense ahead of time about how to support people entering a vulnerable space where they might experience this type of harm, and prepare to support the group in confronting and processing microaggressions and other forms of ignorance that might enter the space. Ideally, an anti-racism training can serve as an opportunity to work through confrontation, and organizers should be prepared to hold space for that type of interaction in real time. Building trust is an important part of making space for and supporting people through confrontations or discomfort that is likely to come up.

**Tips for including an agricultural focus.** Not all anti-racism facilitators are well-versed in the history of the land, nor specific articulations of racism in agricultural contexts. Ideally, you would find somebody with some familiarity with these issues. Selecting facilitators trained in agriculture-related settings—such as Soul Fire Farm’s Training Program—may help ensure that your facilitator has a familiarity with specifics relevant to your farm community. If it is not possible to locate a facilitator with an agricultural background, you can include orienting them to relevant details about your community and the history of the land in your planning work.

Other priorities may also have an effect on the facilitator you choose to guide this discussion. A facilitator from the same region as your group may bring recognition of local culture, history, and movement building efforts. Having conversations about your group’s objectives for the training ahead of reaching out to potential facilitators can help you communicate clearly and determine whether or not a given facilitator is a good fit.

## Further Considerations

### Food:

- In a day-long training, it is important to specify what people can expect with regards to meals and snacks.
- Is food provided at this event? If not, people should be reminded to provide their own lunch and snacks.
- Will coffee, tea, or water be offered?
- Will food be potluck-style, or is there a budget for prepared food? It can be a good idea to solicit grocery stores for gift cards to put toward ingredients, or to ask farmers to donate what they have in surplus for an event. If it is possible to raise money for a food budget, it is always great to pay farmers for food rather than soliciting donations!
- How are dietary restrictions accounted for in the registration process, and through food procurement and preparation?

### Venue and Accessibility:

- What are your requirements for selecting a space to hold your training? Consider size of the group, location, accessibility, etc.
- How does the space—or the entity that is donating or renting out the space—align with the goals of the training? If the space or the organization it is associated with has a problematic history or works with problematic partners, it can complicate the intention of the training. If this is true for the best available venue, think about how organizers can address this directly, or it will likely alienate some participants or discourage prospective participants from attending.
- What is the rental cost (can the venue be donated)?
- What are the accessibility needs?
- What are the facilitator’s audiovisual needs?
- Consider financial accessibility:
  - If there is a registration fee, will scholarships and/or a sliding scale be offered?
- Will childcare be offered?
- Will carpooling be offered?



## Land Acknowledgement

The following section provides guidance on incorporating Indigenous land acknowledgment into your trainings. We encourage you to use this information more broadly as well, to include the practice of acknowledgment into other chapter events and meetings, and to think about how it can fit into your personal and farm communications.

Indigenous land acknowledgement is the process of building a relationship with the history of the land you are on and the Indigenous people who still live there. For events, it often takes the form of a spoken statement at the beginning of the convening that includes naming the original inhabitants of the land, recognizing the history of the land's use, acknowledging the ongoing process of colonization, and offering gratitude to be on the land. Land acknowledgments should be thought of as a starting point for further inquiry, with the goal of building meaningful relationships, elevating narratives of oppression, and returning power to Indigenous people.

***“Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action.”***

***“Honor Native Land: A Guide And Call To Acknowledgment,”***  
U.S. Department of Arts and Culture

Acknowledgments can be a healing element of gatherings that help to encourage dialogue and partnership building in order to address historical and ongoing land-based discrimination. National Young Farmers Coalition staff have worked with Indigenous partners to incorporate land acknowledgments into local and national events, including our Annual Convergence.

This text, written by Stephanie Morningstar for *Farms Under Threat: A New England Perspective*, has been graciously shared with us. Her words give some background on Indigenous land acknowledgments and the role they can serve.

***“As an active form of gratitude and relationship building with the Indigenous nations of Turtle Island, organizations and institutions have begun developing Land and Territory Acknowledgment policies to formally offer gratitude and recognition for the Indigenous lands that they occupy, as well as to recognize treaties and, sometimes, lack of such treaties on unceded territory.”***

***Acknowledgment can be a simple, powerful way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase the dispossession of Indigenous homelands and Indigenous people’s history and culture, moving toward inviting and honoring the truth. When land acknowledgments are done respectfully, without the performative “checking off the box” nature that often comes with them in institutional settings, they can be a key step toward honoring reconciliation and mending treaty relationships.”***

Written by Stephanie Morningstar, Oneida, Turtle Clan and Co-Coordinator of the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust for *Farms Under Threat: A New England Perspective*, a 2020 report from American Farmland Trust.

One way to think of land acknowledgments and blessings is to use the metaphor of being a guest in someone's home. In this sense, organizing an event or meeting is like inviting yourself into the house of the Indigenous community whose land you are on. If you were walking into someone's home, you would probably call in advance, ask if they would be willing to host you, find out if they are interested in taking part in the gathering, try to make your stay convenient, and offer a host gift. Likewise, good practice for incorporating acknowledgments and blessings into events involves doing some research, contacting Indigenous groups, inviting representatives to be a part of the event in a substantive way, asking if they would welcome you to the land, making it easy for them to do so (providing transportation, meals, etc.), and offering compensation and gifts.

One thing to note when approaching this work is the distinction between providing an acknowledgment and inviting an Indigenous community member to offer a welcome to the land. Acknowledgments can be given as a spoken statement by anyone as part of opening an event and can be written into materials such as brochures, reports, websites, social media posts, and email signatures. A welcome to the land should only be conducted by Indigenous community members and should take place at the very start of the event.

*“Any space, three-dimensional or digital, presents an opportunity to surface buried truths and lift up Native sovereignty, priming our collective culture for deeper truth and reconciliation efforts.”*

“Honor Native Land,” U.S. Department of Arts and Culture

## Steps to Take

Adapted from the “Honor Native Land” guide published by the [U.S. Department of Arts and Culture](#)

**Step 1: Plan and build relationships.** Understand and articulate the reasons for incorporating a land acknowledgment or blessing into your event ahead of time. Where possible, plan the event in partnership with representatives from local Indigenous organizations. Reach out prior to establishing a set date and location, explain the purpose of the event, ask for permission to host it on the land, invite partnership, share resources, and work together to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and experience into the event. This could look like tabling, longer speaking opportunities, or other ways of sharing information about their work with participants. Consider how you will build an ongoing relationship with the Indigenous community beyond the event.

## A Note On Urgency ⚠

A continued sense of urgency is one of the characteristics of white supremacy culture. Working urgently often means not taking the necessary time to be inclusive, make equitable decisions, or consider the long-term impact those decisions can have on people of color, especially when they are not included in them. However, equity work often demands “urgency.” Our definition of the word requires that this work be considered high priority, but not done in rushed or haphazard fashion. We expect you to prioritize this work over other issues on your plate, therefore enabling you to provide adequate time in your plan to build the foundational knowledge, relationships and skills necessary to address racial inequity in your community. You can still make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency, you just need to be intentional about the process!

### Step 2: Identify the traditional inhabitants of the land.

Given that this may be complicated by multiple and contested histories of settlement, resettlement, and recognition, it is important to approach this step with care. The Guide recommends that if multiple tribal groups claim belonging to the land, consider not naming any particular group or naming all of them in your acknowledgment. Engage in this step well in advance, without urgency, and understand that it may take time. Resources include:

- [Native Land map](#)
- [Native Languages site](#), with contact information for local tribes
- Wikipedia entries, cross-checked with other sources.
- Local resources, such as universities and other organizations, that may have published documents on this already.
- Dialogue and relationship building with local Native elders. When possible, the process of creating a statement should be done in collaboration with representatives of the Indigenous people whose land you are on.

**Step 3: Articulate.** This step involves creating and offering the land acknowledgment. The acknowledgment can take many forms, from a simple sentence to a longer statement that includes mention of treaties or other groups that have contributed to the culture of a place.

# Examples of Land Acknowledgments

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*"I want to respectfully acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ People, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations."*

*"We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the occupied/unceded/seized territory of the \_\_\_\_\_ People."*

*"Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We are standing on the ancestral lands of the \_\_\_\_\_ People [if possible, add more specific detail about the nature of the occupied land]. We pay respects to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events."*

**– From the Honor Native Land Guide**

*The Upward Bound Program at the University of Colorado Boulder and its faculty/staff members recognize that the university sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho peoples. Further, we acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to the lands that make up the state of Colorado.*

**– University of Colorado Boulder**

*"We would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on Indigenous land. We are on the traditional land of the Pamunkey and Piscataway people who have cultivated this land and have been known to live here for thousands of years. Today, this land is still the home to many Indigenous people and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in this territory. In particular, as we are gathered here to discuss policy advocacy and bringing our voices together for change, we want to recognize that the creation of our nation, and framework for our government, was greatly influenced by the advice and principles of governance already developed by Native people."*

**– National Young Farmers Coalition  
2018 National Leadership Convergence | Chevy Chase, Maryland**

**Step 4: Delivery.** The acknowledgment or blessing should happen at the very start of the event or gathering. It should be offered by the host of the event or local Indigenous representatives if you have built a relationship with them. If you are giving the acknowledgment, make sure you understand the proper pronunciation of the words you will be saying.

**Step 5: Valuing time and energy.** Offer compensation for travel and time to Indigenous individuals who you ask to offer a land acknowledgment or blessing at your event. Depending on travel distance and time, the amount will vary, but ensure this is included in budgeting as you make plans for your event. Ask the Indigenous community you are working with what is right for them. In addition, small gifts are also often welcome and appropriate. Consider sharing some seeds that you have saved from your farm or a piece of Young Farmers merchandise.

**Step 6: Combine with tools for further engagement.** Accompany the acknowledgment or blessing with a list of resources for participants to learn more about local Indigenous people and their history, and to take further action to return land and power. One resource you could share to help facilitate this is [\*Soul Fire Farm's Reparations Map for Black-Indigenous Farmers.\*](#)

Ts'uuya Farm, New Mexico



## Resources and Further Reading

*An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

[Beyond territorial acknowledgments](#)

[Native Land map site](#), a mapping resource

[Know the Land Territories Campaign: Publication: "Indigenous Allyship: An Overview"](#), includes a list of recommendations for conducting land acknowledgments, along with questions to ask

[National Congress of American Indians: Publication: "Tribal Nations and The United States"](#)

[Native Languages of the Americas](#)

[National Museum of the American Indian](#)

[UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People](#)

[U.S. Department of Arts & Culture: Publication: "Honor Native Land Guide"](#), includes a land acknowledgment pledge

[USDA Office of Tribal Relations](#)

[Whose Land](#) website



Consciousness-raising is an important part of dismantling internalized forms of racism. It is also a crucial part of addressing overtly or implicitly racist dynamics. Ultimately—especially for beneficiaries of white privilege—self-education and internal reflection must be the beginning of a journey leading to substantive, material efforts to dismantle racism. Consciousness-raising is an ongoing and lifelong effort. As we learn more, we can be overwhelmed by the state of the world, and the depth of historical violence and systematic oppression. Approaching these issues through direct action and organizing helps to refocus on our personal contributions to this work, and ways that we are positioned to leverage our individual and collective power to anti-racist movement building in our communities.

**This work is urgent.** (See sidebar on urgency on page 25). We have to learn how to hold ourselves accountable in the landscape of our lives even as we are constantly learning, and constantly dismantling forms of internalized racism that have been instilled in us by society. Private study is integral to the work of dismantling racism, but it does not directly address articulations of structural oppression in the real world, as racism continues to harm. Efforts toward self-education and accountability need to co-develop. Inaction equals complicity.

This section of the Toolkit offers a few ideas for how to engage in direct action, and use your resources and circumstance as a farmer or leader to address historical oppression, resist racism, and build community around these efforts. For a deeper dive on anti-racist action and policy, see also Soul Fire Farm's [\*\*Action Steps & Policy Platform for Food Sovereignty\*\*](#). Some action items recommended in this document will be referenced below.

*“The white man, preoccupied with the abstractions of the economic exploitation and ownership of the land, necessarily has lived on the country as a destructive force, an ecological catastrophe, because he assigned the hand labor, and in that the possibility of intimate knowledge of the land, to a people he considered racially inferior; in thus debasing labor, he destroyed the possibility of meaningful contact with the earth. He was literally blinded by his presuppositions and prejudices. Because he did not know the land, it was inevitable that he would squander its natural bounty, deplete its richness, corrupt and pollute it, or destroy it altogether. The history of the white man’s use of the earth in America is a scandal.”*

—Wendell Berry, *The Hidden Wound*, 1968

### Partnering with BIPOC-led Organizations and Groups

In organizing around direct action and resource-sharing, it is helpful to tap into the context of local movement building—especially BIPOC-led efforts—in order to respond to needs rather than put a lot of time and resources into work that does not support or feed existing and historical efforts, or respond to immediate community needs and desired change. For beneficiaries of white privilege, especially people new to this work, accessing information about existing organizing requires some relationship building. Organizers of color might not want to share space or movement knowledge with newcomers, or with people who aren’t trusted to stay committed to this work in long-term ways. It is painful and tiring to be let down repeatedly by people who call themselves *allies*. Below are some suggestions around how you can get involved in existing movement work.

**Show up:** When working with research initiatives or organizations doing work locally, reach out to the organizers, introduce yourself, and ask how you can support. If there are open meetings, go to them and listen. Pay attention to how you might contribute. When the organization asks for volunteers, offer your time. If you’re in communication with someone and it drops off, circle back. Part of building trust in this work is



showing reliability, and proving that this effort is important to you in an ongoing way.

**Listen:** Pay attention to communication from the activists and organizations you're building relationships with and take initiative to contribute to their efforts. Consider ways in which you can leverage your resources and power toward their goals and projects. Meetings, newsletters, or social media updates provide insight into current programs, initiatives, and calls for funding and other resources. Dig into the details of these messages, contribute, and share them with your network. Think about what you have to contribute to these causes, and gather these resources.

**Inventory Resources and Offer Support:** Once you have a sense of what is needed, mobilize your resources and offer them. There are many ways to support existing organizational work, so consider what you can share. Below is a (partial) list of resources that a farmer might have access to that could be put toward anti-racist organizing:

#### **Food**

- Allocate a percentage of your harvest for low-income customers, using strategies in the [\*Sowing Seeds of Food Justice Guide\*](#) (from the Soul Fire Farm Action Steps & Policy Platform)
- Food donations to events
- Free or subsidized CSA shares
- Extras from market or gleaned produce
- Prepared food for meetings or events

#### **Money**

- Structuring reparations and/or voluntary taxation (see [\*Creating a Network for Resource Sharing\*](#) for more on this) into farmers market or CSA sales
- Respond to fundraising efforts that movement organizations and individuals are making around specific initiatives
- Consider ways you might support general organizational budget or operating costs for movement organizations whose mission you support

#### **Time**

- Volunteer in response to specific asks, or offer to provide childcare during organizing meetings
- Show up to participate in actions or protests

#### **Space**

- Land: in the form of gifted land for farmers of color, usage agreements, or connections to landowners (see the [\*Soul Fire Farm's Reparations Map for Black-Indigenous Farmers\*](#))
- Space for meetings
- Space for events
- Space for organizers and activists to recenter or be in nature



***Allyship*** is a complex concept, and it is important for people who benefit from white privilege and other forms of privilege to reckon with the meaning of this term before identifying as allies. The term points to a strategy of aligning one's organizing efforts with marginalized communities in efforts initiated within the community itself, rather than acting on the organizer or activist's assumptions about what the community wants or needs. Adhering to this concept helps prevent people with privilege from drawing resources, attention, or power away from a community's wants or needs, or causing other forms of harm to existing efforts. If you are situated with power and privilege, even if your intentions are well-meaning, be aware of how your work is being received by the people you're aiming to serve. Unless members of the marginalized community you are attempting to ally yourself with refer to you as such, it can still be presumptuous to call yourself an ally. Some people find the term ally to be passive, individualistic, or politically safe, and prefer the term accomplice to describe a more active collaboration, and the expectation that the accomplice is working to challenge, undermine, and dismantle systems and institutions that perpetuate structural oppression.

### A Vehicle

- Offer rides
- Offer to transport people and materials for organizing efforts

### Access to people in positions of power:

- Use your positions of power in your community to speak to the issues you learn about
- Use relationships you have developed with elected officials to further partner causes and advocate for policies specifically focused on the needs of **Black** and **Brown** farmers and farm employees (from the Soul Fire Farm Action Steps & Policy Platform)

### Access to people with wealth:

- Use your network to engage potential donors, spread news about fundraising efforts, and make connections with partners

### Cultural sensitivity at farm and organizing events:

- Apply for Food Justice Certification through the **Agricultural Justice Project** (from the Soul Fire Farm Action Steps & Policy Platform)
- Incorporate **language justice** principles in chapter events and be inclusive of farm employees, many of whom speak Spanish and other languages (from the Soul Fire Farm Action Steps & Policy Platform)

## Creating a Network for Resource Sharing

As discussed in the previous section, considering the resources you have access to will help you be prepared to respond to the needs articulated by people in your community and organizations working on anti-racism. Chapter organizing can also include acts of *collective* resource aggregation. Once there is a sense of the **food, space, labor, time, expertise, money, etc.** available within the chapter and among its participants, these resources can be offered to other people and organizations. You might be surprised what you come up with when your chapter brainstorms about resources.

1. Compile an **inventory spreadsheet** listing farms that have offered to contribute food, space, volunteer time, outreach/ publicity, or other resources that might be useful for movement work.
2. It can be helpful to have one person manage this list, so that when organizations reach out this person can organize the farmers who have offered to contribute and **coordinate the donations** (e.g. picking up/dropping off food from farms, communicating between farmers and organizers about needs and supply).
3. If individuals have personal relationships with organizations that might want to participate in the resource network, **check in and offer these resources with some regularity**. Just as it can take time to build trust, it might take awhile for people to remember to call on allies and accomplices who have offered support, or to feel comfortable asking for these things.

## Reparations and Voluntary Taxation

In light of histories of land dispossession, slavery, and ongoing forms of labor exploitation in agriculture, there is a great unresolved debt owed to Indigenous people and descendants of slaves. Across the country, people are building a case for *reparations* and *rematriation*. Learning about these efforts is one way to build your understanding of history, and investigate what it would mean to contribute to these efforts for land justice. Complete reparations will require a broad restructuring, and a nationwide, systematic approach to accounting for dispossessions of land and lives. Until that happens, there are ways that people are working to be accountable to history in present-day occupation of Indigenous lands. Below are some resources on reparations and other forms of land-related accountability:

Soul Fire Farm has compiled a **Reparations Map for Black-Indigenous Farmers**. This enables people to reach out to BIPOC farmers who have posted on the map to offer land or funding. The beginning of the description of the map reads: “*The food*



ERIN MCCARLEY

system was built on the stolen land and stolen labor of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and people of color. We are claiming our sovereignty and calling for reparations of land and resources so that we can grow nourishing food and distribute it in our communities. The specific projects and resource needs of farmers of color are listed here. We are so excited about this powerful opportunity for people to people solidarity. It's simple. If you have resources, contact the farmer directly to share." This resource is national and can help people contribute personal resources to those who want to steward land.

**Voluntary Taxation** is a system through which people elect to pay "rent" or "taxes" on occupied lands. As a farmer, you can choose to pay this out of pocket, or you could add it as an extra fee for the food you sell. Adding a voluntary taxation fee to a CSA share, for example, would be a way to start conversations with customers about the history of the land, and why this is important. Voluntary taxation also requires that land stewards build a relationship with the tribe on whose land they farm, and to whom they pay taxes. Alternatively, the voluntary taxation

model could raise funds for another BIPOC-led justice project or group as a form of solidarity fundraising and reparations. There are organizers involved in Young Farmers who are in early phases of establishing taxes on occupied land; check back for case studies soon.

**Northeast Farmers of Color Network (NEFOC)** is developing tools toward *reparations* and *rematriation* that allies and accomplices can support. NEFOC is creating a land trust in order to be able to hold land for those who want to contribute to rematriation efforts, along with other tools and resources such as structures for voluntary taxation and cultural use easements through which Indigenous people can access land for specific uses in perpetuity. Please stay abreast of NEFOC's ongoing work and consider donating to support their efforts.



STELLA KALININA

# *How can white readers hold themselves accountable to people of color?*

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## **SOME IDEAS:**

### **Engaging in personal study and reflection to deepen critical analysis and awareness.**

- Self-education is not an endpoint! Consciousness-raising is an important part of being accountable to histories of racism and people most affected by racist discrimination. But translating internal growth and deeper understanding into action is a crucial part of accountability.
- Talking about what I am learning with people around me to build my vocabulary about race and racism, and to be more comfortable confronting instances of racism in real time.

### **Building authentic and honest relationships within which there is acknowledgement around privilege and racism.**

### **Committing to deep listening, especially when I am in a position of privilege or power.**

### **Remembering to step back in conversations particularly when I have privilege(s), and/or am in a position of power. Being mindful of how I present myself when giving public presentations.**

### **Uplifting/following BIPOC leadership.**

### **Remembering to be grateful for BIPOC feedback even when it comes in the form of anger, disappointment, or honest critique. It requires bravery, generosity, and vulnerability to offer feedback, and it is important to practice being accepting criticism and following up.**

### **Avoiding “color blind” analyses.**

### **Bringing other white people—family members, friends, chapter members, customers—along in this work.**

### **Intervening and speaking up when faced with hate speech or intentionally/unintentionally hurtful messages toward BIPOC.**

### **Only calling myself an “ally” when communities I wish to serve recognize me that way.**

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

[Leah Penniman's Most Cited Sources](#) has many excellent reading suggestions.

### Caucusing

[Racial Identity Caucusing](#): A Strategy for Building Anti-Racist Collectives by Crossroads Ministry

[How to Plan a White Caucus Agenda by Pippi Kessler](#)

[Tips for Creating Effective White Caucus Groups by Craig Elliott](#)

[The Wisdom of Caucusing for People of Color by Roots of Justice](#)

[Building an Effective White Caucus by Roots of Justice](#)

### Anti-racism

[Whiteness at work](#): Webinar that offers thoughts about why and how to challenge systems and expectations aligned with implicitly white supremacist aspects of workplace environments.

[White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo](#): A book specifically about why white people have trouble holding space for conversations around racism and direct action in response to structural oppression.

[How to be an anti-racist by Ibram X. Kendi](#): A memoir that asks readers to envision an anti-racist society in order to contribute to its materialization through the dismantling of forms of racism in our minds and world.

### Racial Justice and the Food System

[Farming While Black by Leah Penniman](#): Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land.

**Reparations** *(the following resources were collected by Food Solutions New England as part of their 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge)*

[Preliminary Reparations Program](#): The National African American Reparations Commissions draft platform to guide reparations.

[Land Reparations and Indigenous Solidarity Toolkit](#): A brief toolkit on solidarity around land dispossession from Resource Generation.

[Indigenous Principles of Just Transition](#): Brief on the principles and forms of just transition put forth by the Indigenous Environmental Network.

[Reparations...the Time is Now!](#): Overview on the principles and history of Reparations including current perspectives.

### History of American Slavery

[The 1619 Project - New York Times](#): Podcast that reckons with the history of American slavery and its contemporary ramifications.

### Racial Justice Policy

[The Case for Reparations by Ta-Nehisi Coates](#): Longform article that articulates a case for reparations for slavery in the United States.

### Community Agreements/Group Logistics

[Anti-Oppression Facilitation](#): Facilitation guide for conducting meetings on anti-racism.

[Calling Out vs. Calling In](#): A resource for facilitators and their groups that distinguishes between the concepts of "calling out" and "calling in" in addressing articulations of ignorance in group spaces.

[Infographic: Conversation Ground Rules](#): A resource that provides more examples around developing ground rules for a group building conversation around structural oppression.

[Infographic: Flip the Script: Race & Ethnicity in the Workplace](#): A succinct resource on some common microaggressions, why they're harmful, and how to understand their falseness.

[Infographic: Flip the Script: Create Connections, Not Conflict, in Tough Conversations](#): A resource that offers strategies for engaging in productive ways despite inclinations toward defensiveness or other forms of fear-based self-protection.

[Infographic: Flip the Script: Respond With Heart, Not Harm, in Tough Conversations](#): A resource that offers insight on how and why to cultivate attitudes of openness and generosity in conversations around oppression.



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