

Utah Farmers Market Network

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community of Practice

GOAL

Encourage Utah's farmers markets to be more welcoming and inclusive to historically marginalized and excluded populations, especially Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and LGBTQIA2S+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit) communities.

EVIDENCE OF NEED

Farmers markets play a vital role in supporting communities by providing gathering spaces and fostering local agriculture and economic development.¹ Farmers market demographics are predominantly white across staff, vendor, and customer populations posing high barriers to entry for people of color.² Diversity in the state is steadily increasing, and one in three Utahns will identify as nonwhite by 2060.³ Women, people of color, and LGBTQIA+ communities in Utah face many barriers that prevent them from participating fully in our markets.⁴

STRATEGY

The Utah Farmers Market Network convened a virtual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Community of Practice (CoP) to explore how markets could be more welcoming and inclusive to historically excluded populations. Between May and November of 2021, members of seven Utah farmers markets convened at least twice monthly to explore basic DEI concepts and create personalized DEI strategic plans for their markets.

IMPACTS

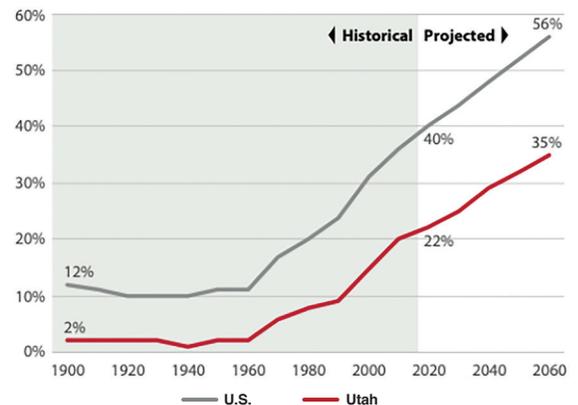
As a result of participating in the DEI CoP, 100% of the eight participants reported:

- Increased understanding of DEI principles and lived experience of the target audience.
- Developed DEI frame of reference, personal and professional.
- Enhanced sense of community fostered in CoP.
- Heightened appreciation for the accountability around continuing equity work in their field.
- Increased commitment to centering DEI in policies and procedures.



Image of Cole Eisenhour's "You Belong," visible from the Ogden Farmers Market grounds. Photo credit: Jaclyn Pace.

Minority Share of Population, Utah and U.S., 1900-2060



Note: Minority includes those identifying as something other than Non-Hispanic White. Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Perlich 2002; Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

Minority Share of Population (Gardner, 2021, p. 1)



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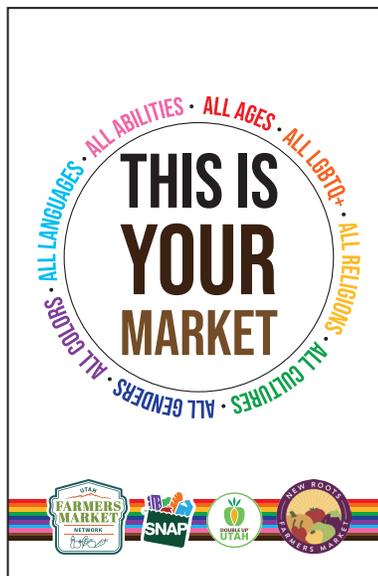
IMPACTS

Participants commented:

“I think a group like this can be started anywhere, it just needs some brave leadership and guidance. I'm grateful for this opportunity and to have deepened my understanding of DEI in the farmers market context.”

“I did not realize how many barriers there are, and have been, for those who are marginalized and how it affects every interaction they have throughout their days and lives.”

“This is one of the most beneficial things I have signed up for in my four-year career as a market manager. Not only has it helped me in my current role, but it will help me in years to come as DEI is at the forefront of many initiatives.”



Inclusive welcome signage designed by Jaclyn Pace, Regan Emmons & USU Marketing with input from the DEI CoP participants. Participating markets will display this signage starting in the 2022 market season.

“I feel like I have a whole new lens - I now see things in a different light and am aware of injustice happening around me.”

Participants created strategic, measurable, actionable, realistic, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable (SMARTIE)⁵ within four spheres: personal, market, organizational, and community.

Market goals include:

-  Recruiting diverse vendors and performers from marginalized communities.
-  Ensuring their vendor application process is both equitable and accessible.
-  Improving or changing their market location to ensure wheelchair accessibility, ample handicap parking, access to public transportation, and proximity to family and community gathering spaces (i.e., public parks or playgrounds).

Community goals include:

-  Soliciting input from farmers, vendors, and the community at large to make decisions about improving market accessibility and experience.

Personal goals include:

-  Engaging in conversations around DEI Personal goals within personal and professional networks.

Organizational goals include:

-  Recruiting and hiring candidates from diverse backgrounds.
-  Re-writing their mission statements and/or goals to reflect their commitment to DEI principles.

Go to utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org to learn more about the network's DEI initiatives.

CONTACT

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References

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