URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for Judy Benson / Connecticut Sea Grant / Sea Grant Pod

This is what was found by [Judy Benson/Sea Grant Pod] at [Connecticut Sea Grant] on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

*Pods may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions. Consider this in the summary document and focus on capturing responses that are representative of the range in your pod.*

* **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:** CT Sea Grant mainly funds marine science-based research projects that are undertaken by other scientists. The types of research conducted by CTSG staff has involved testing of wastewater treatment plant effluent, seaweed cultivation and other scientific topics related to aquaculture. While none of these research projects specifically involve communities of color or other communities, some of our training and outreach projects have. These include seafood safety training courses that are required for workers in the wholesale and retail seafood industry that attract diverse students, and one-time science education and beach cleanup events in urban communities. We are in early stages of a creating storm preparedness materials that will address the needs both of renters and homeowners, and are planning to assemble diverse focus groups to guide this effort. We have also published Spanish-language educational materials on Long Island Sound and plan to expand our Spanish-language offerings. In 2019 we supported one of our aquaculture extension experts in a five-month research leave to develop and teach marine science at a school in the Dominican Republic for girls from impoverished families.
* **What worked well in these interactions?** Working in communities where we have already established relationships
* **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?** When there is a social science aspect to any research project, either one that CT Sea Grant funds or undertakes itself, it should be developed from the earliest stages to meaningfully engage communities of color whenever possible in the design, information dissemination and other aspects.
* **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**

*We are already planning to compensate focus group members on the storm preparedness project, but should be mindful to continue this practice in any other projects where community members are tapped for their input. We are meeting regularly about improving our DEI efforts generally, and as part of this are considering including land acknowledgement statements on our website and other materials, and developing ongoing outreach projects that are relevant to communities of color.*

**Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?** *A statement encouraging researchers to incorporate work with communities of color in their proposals has been added to recently revised guidelines for research proposals. Additional staff dedicated to outreach would be ideal. Existing staff must commit to continuing to make this a long-term priority, and realize that progress may be gradual and that building relationships takes time.*