

# Farmland Partnership Program Cohort Meeting 2

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Thursday, May 14, 2026 from 9am – 3pm

Wachusett Reservoir Field Headquarters, 180 Beaman St, West Boylston

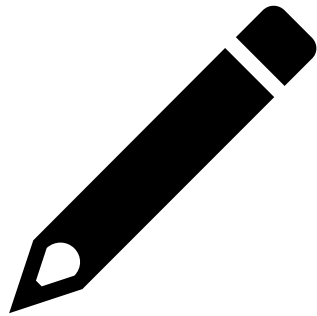
Facilitated by Katharine Otto, Farmland Action Plan Coordinator

[Katharine.s.otto@mass.gov](mailto:Katharine.s.otto@mass.gov)



# What to do before the meeting starts

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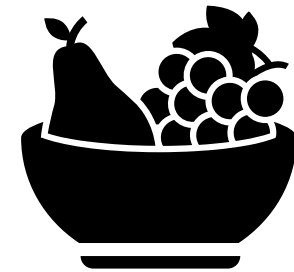


Write your name tent

- First and last name
- Organization



Introduce yourself to at least one person you don't already know



Grab coffee, juice and/or snack



# Welcome!

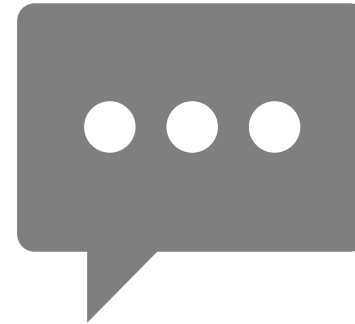
Gerard Kennedy, Director of the Division of Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance (DACTA), MDAR

# Introduce yourself

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30 seconds each

1. What's your name?
2. Which partner do you work for?
3. In one sentence, what would like to learn as part of your Farmland Partnership Project(s) and the Program?



# Cohort expectations

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Katharine Otto, Farmland Action Plan Coordinator, MDAR

# Starting point suggestions from Katharine

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## For partners

- Prepare ahead of time
- Balance your participation – speak and listen
- Stay in the room
  - Avoid doing other work during the meetings
- Be open minded
- Ask questions if you don't understand
- Be constructive
  - Suggest a potential way forward if you identify something you aren't happy with
- Be aware of potential bias
  - Consider what are other people seeing and working with – job responsibilities, lived experience, perspectives

## Katharine's Role

- Share agenda with clear expectations of what is intended to be covered during the meeting
- Define roles and responsibilities for participants
- At the end of the meeting summarize next steps, including for new items raised during the meeting

## Discussion Facilitator Roles

- Encourage some people to speak up more
- Monitor whether a specific side topic should be moved to another meeting
- Bring conversation back to topic as needed

Cohort  
expectations –  
Gather ideas and  
edit together

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# Reaching our audiences

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Opening by Katharine Otto

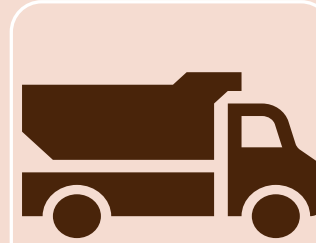
# Who is your audience and how do you reach them?

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**Are you connected to everyone you want to reach?**

This topic was sparked by two different partners asking how they can better reach part of their target audience as part of their project.

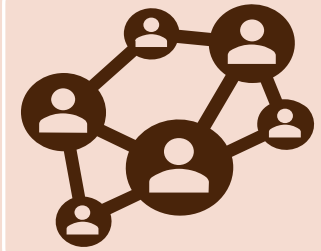
**Some examples to get us started:**



**Evolving  
and  
expanding  
methods  
to reach  
your  
audience**



**Seasonal  
changes  
on time of  
day to  
reach  
farmers**



**Expanding  
your  
contact  
list**

# Reaching our audiences – Some things to think about

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**Audiences aren't homogenous and their preferences change over time**

How do you adapt to various characteristics?

- Technology – smartphone, laptop, landline, snail mail, etc
- Expectations – including shaped by culture, generational differences, etc
- Schedules
- Trusted organizations and people
- Reading ability, language and accessibility
- Location
- Interests in particular topics
- Other things to think about?

**Which organizations do you connect with to help expand your outreach and why?**

**Where are you struggling to reach people who you have not previously served?**

# Discussion as a large group

What do you want to know?

What would you like the fourth audience to be?



Group photo





Break time!

10 minute break

# Instructions for break out groups on reaching your audience

Discussion in breakout groups for 15 minutes for one audience, then 5 minute report out. Then repeat.

All groups will discuss all audiences, in the following order:

- municipalities
- ag service providers
- farmers
- audience to be determined (land trusts? Other ideas?)

## Questions

1. What have you found works to reach that audience? And what doesn't work, and/or needs to be approached carefully?
2. Do you have any follow up questions or comments about a specific approach you've been hearing about?
3. Is there anything you would like to understand more about?
4. Can you see a collaboration opportunity with a project you are working on (FPP or non-FPP funded)?
5. Did anything surprise you in what you just heard?



Lunch time!

1 hour

# Best practices for farmer peer-learning and peer- mentorship

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Opening by Mackenzie May, Ag Marketing Resource Coordinator,  
MDAR

# FPP projects with peer learning and peer mentorship components

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## Peer mentorship assessment and storytelling

- Assess peer-to-peer mentorship efforts in Massachusetts and identify key themes and best practices
- Led by New Entry
- NE 3.2

## Regenerative peer mentorship program for beginning farmers

- Pilot and expand peer mentorship programs for beginning farmers that focus on regenerative agriculture and area led by experienced BIPOC farmers.
- Led by PPLT
- NE 3.1

## Farmer mentorship and peer-to-peer programs

- Host regional farmer roundtables focusing on farm viability. Host farmer-led, on-farm skill-shares and workshops. Expand other networking and mentoring opportunities for farmers
- Led by SEMAP
- TCP 3.3

## BIPOC Farmer-to-Farmer Outreach and Peer Support

- BIPOC technical assistance providers will share resources, strategies, technical assistance, and build peer support relationships among BIPOC farmers to promote land equity.
- Led by Growing Places
- NE 3.5

## Learning circles with culturally appropriate outreach

- Convene learning circles for BIPOC farmers led by experienced farmers of color that focus on food production and trusted pathways to access knowledge, markets and other resources.
- Led by AFT
- AFT 3.1

Large group  
discussion –  
What is peer  
learning to you?

Use the QR code or visit  
[www.menti.com/????](http://www.menti.com/????)

Or visit [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com)  
and enter code **????** **????**

Add QR code

# Instructions for breakout groups on peer learning

Discussion in breakout groups for approximately 30 minutes, then 5 minute report out.

Please return to the main room at \_\_\_\_\_

## Questions

1. Required - How do you in your own work do peer learning for yourself? What do you find useful? What would you like to strengthen?
2. Required - How broadly or narrowly do you define peer-to-peer in your work with farmers? What defines someone to be a peer to another farmer?
3. Optional if you have time - How can peers evolve in their relationship together, or do they need to foster new relationships as they grow and diverge? Do the service providers need to classify farmers differently over time and adjust matches to meet emerging needs?
4. Optional if you have time - What have you found to be effective recruitment methods for mentees and mentors?
5. Optional if you have time - How do you set reasonable expectations for peer learning relationships?



Break

15 minutes

# Best practices for accessibility

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Presented by Katharine Otto

# Why talk about accessibility?

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**Accessibility** means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use and with the same level of security and privacy. (From the [Massachusetts Enterprise Digital Accessibility Policy](#))

## **Why does accessibility matter for our work for the people of Massachusetts?**

- 26% of individuals over 18 in Massachusetts have some kind of disability
- all of us will experience a disability in our lifetime, whether it is situational, temporary, or permanent.

To ensure that all of our constituents can access what they need, we need to make sure our content is accessible.

(From [Accessibility Awareness for Leadership](#) by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)

# Massachusetts Enterprise Digital Accessibility Policy

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Learn more with the [Enterprise Digital Accessibility Policy](#) for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The [Enterprise Digital Accessibility Policy](#) applies to

- MDAR per section 2.1.1 “The Executive Department including all executive offices, boards, commissions, agencies, departments, divisions, councils, bureaus, and offices within an executive office, hereafter referred to as “Commonwealth Agencies and Offices.”
- Entities who work with MDAR per section 2.1.3. “Any contracted staff or services firm that creates, customizes, or configures Digital assets on behalf of Commonwealth Agencies and Offices.”

Section 5.1 of the Policy outlines what digital assets are covered by the policy, which includes websites, electronic documents, multimedia, email communications, social media content, digital maps, and many other types of assets.

# What does this mean for the Farmland Partnership Program?

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## Sharing the deliverables created through FPP is important

- Much of your work is exploring new or improved ways to do approach farmland protection, access and viability.
- Your work will form the foundation for other partners wishing to replicate and/or evolve the approach.

## All deliverables created using this funding will need to be accessible

- Some partners may already be legally required to.
- Many partners are not, but if you are able to make your deliverables as accessible as you can, that would be appreciated. Small changes made when you start working on a document can save a lot of time later – both for you and for getting things posted online.
- When that is not enough, MDAR will make the required edits.

*We will provide additional information to support making your work accessible.*

# Digital Accessibility

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## Major things to think about content

- Plain language
- Sensory language
- Abbreviations
- Language used for links
- Images – alt text, captions
- Unique titles for each slide

## Major things to think about type and format

- Sans-serif fonts
- Text size
- All capitals
- Color contrast
- Underlines only for hyperlinks
- Hierarchy of headings using the “Style library”

**We will provide additional information to support making your work accessible.**

Any questions?





# Next steps and closing

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# Next steps

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## **Follow up from today**

- Katharine will be compiling notes for what was shared
- More information on accessibility

## **Takeaways**

- Agenda topics for next time
- Unresolved discussion
- Other observations

## **Next meeting**

- Likely in person
- Date to be determined via doodle poll
- More details to come shortly

## **Closing thoughts and thank you!**