

Agriculture Recruitment & Involvement Guide:

For African American Youth



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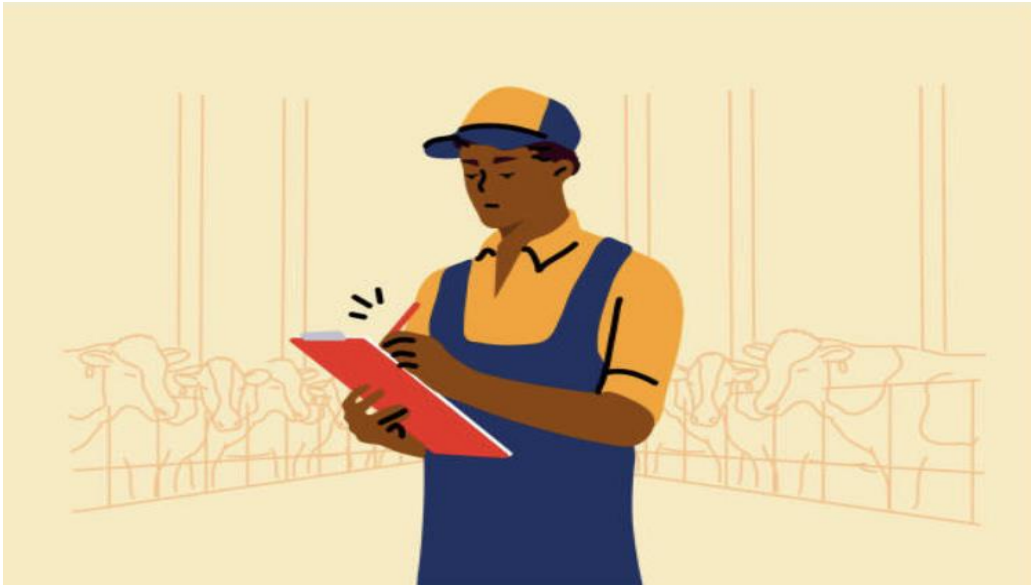
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Purpose of this guide

The purpose of this guide is to help inform educators, agricultural professionals, businesses, and schools about the importance of diversity in agricultural careers. Specifically, this guide is focused on African American youth interest in this field. It is important that as professionals, we understand that recruitment starts at a young age. Students often focus on the career that they are most familiar with or have interest in. Unfortunately, due to racial history and environmental factors, there is a stigma in the African American community towards agriculture careers. This stigma has been passed down from generation to generation, causing students to drift away from agriculture careers. We cannot change history; however, we can help in changing the mindsets of the individual student. Agriculture is an amazing and rewarding career, but some African American youth are not exposed to the possibilities of this field. Before one can apply methods in recruiting and increasing interest, one must understand the history behind the mistrust.



Diversity in Agriculture



- According to the United States Bureau of Labor and statistics population survey, in 2021. Only 3% of African American households were employed in the Agriculture industry. Compared to other Nationalities with Hispanic households having 25 % and White households with (91.9) being employed in agriculture.
- It can be inferred that the percentage of African Americans in agricultural fields will continue to decrease over the years if no effort is made. Production agriculture in particular has seen a drop in diversity over the last 100 years due to systematic discrimination by the public and by the United States Department of Agriculture. Although there is less interest from younger generations to pursue a career in farming, there still may be hope for other agriculture related career paths.

History of African Americans in Agriculture

Between 1916 and 1970 there was a big cultural event that occurred called The Great Migration. It is also known as the “Black Migration” which involved the movement of about 6



million African Americans out of the rural south of America. Their goal was to travel to the northern United States in hopes of jobs and freedom from racial injustice.

In the south there was racial segregation, discrimination, and Jim Crow laws. African Americans moved to major cities such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, leaving farm life behind. Southern Blacks were forced to make a living by using their land to make enough money to feed their families. However, without loans from the federal government, farmers were left with no choice but to move their families. Word spread that they could make more money up north than where they were. In fact, “factory wages in the urban North were typically three times more than what Black people could expect to make working the land in the rural south (History,2021).” At the time, African Americans thought that by leaving the south they would give their children opportunities for generational wealth. However, by leaving their lands behind, they also gave up land ownership. Their future grandchildren would most likely not own land in the south. Each generation that refused to farm and instead pursue other careers, would continue to miss out on wealth.

History of African Americans in Agriculture

- In 1920 there were 949,889 black farmers in America. Out of the 3.4 million farmers today, only 45,508 farmers are black. This means that there are only 1.3% of black farmers in America (Sewell, 2019)
- Majority of the farmers now are older. If the youth today do not continue the tradition of farming, then there will be less than 1% of black farmers over the years. The average “age of African American farmers (is) 65 years or older compared to the national average (Balvanz, et.al ,2019).”
- As seen in figure 1. there has been a dramatic decrease in farm ownership of African Americans. This has drastically caused a generational setback for African Americans.

Number of Farm Acres Owned by Black and White Farm Operators in the U.S., 1910-2007				
Year	Black	Percent change	White	Percent change
1910	16 million		832 million	
		- 74%		+ 15.5 %
1978	4.2 million		961 million	
		- 45%		- 9.2 %
1999	2.3 million		873 million	
		+ 34%		-1%
2007	3.2 million		864 million	
Overall percentage change between 1910 – 2007		- 80%		+ 3.8%

Youth Interest and Perceptions



- A study was conducted with black youth (Townsend,1994) which found that there was a lack of mentorship and a “sense of belonging” in the fields of agriculture. The agriculture industry is very diverse in the various career opportunities one can have. However, this is not always known to prospective students (Baker,2011).

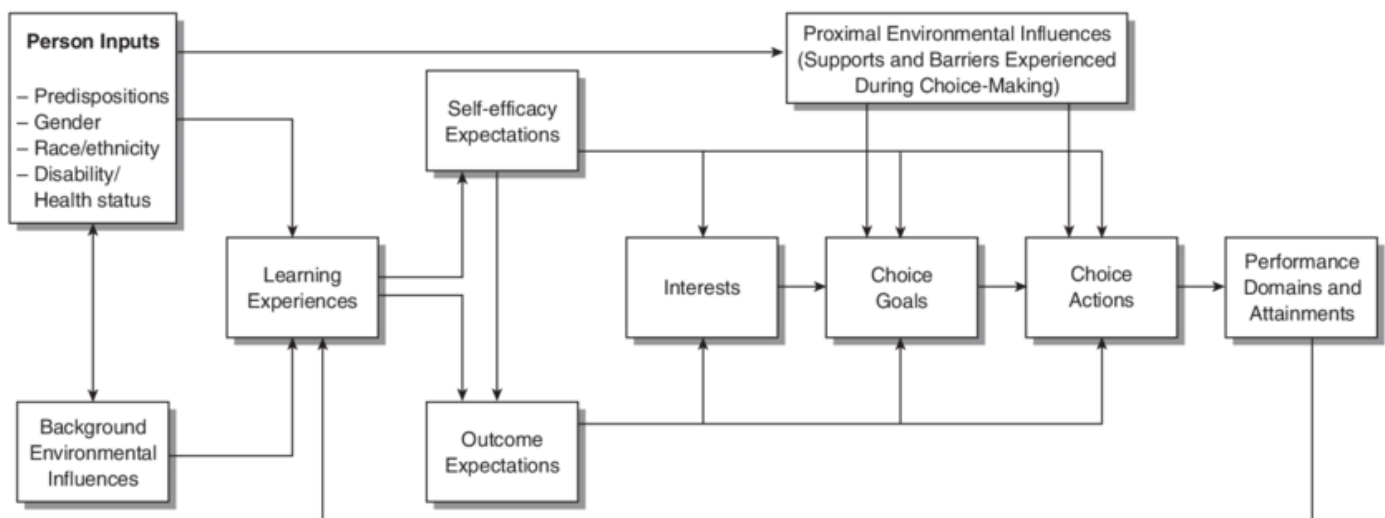
- Urban youth is defined as youth that are typically in areas where high populations of Blacks and at-risk Black youth reside (Kupermic et al,2013). It was found that they had little interest in agricultural careers but it was suggested that early childhood education would have influenced their interest in agricultural careers and post-secondary studies (Holz-Clause & Jost, 1995).

Importance of Representation

- To increase African American representation in agricultural careers and industries, future and existing programs must be designed to engage youth in agricultural experiences and education. In addition, historical context must be addressed to help influence African American youth’s attitude towards agriculture.
- It is recommended that African American professionals from various agriculture related careers make an effort to become a mentor to some youth. As well as becoming involved in developing programs to get youth involved and interested in agriculture.Representation is key for black youth to be interested in agriculture. If they can not see themselves in that career (through mentors or representation) they will believe that it is not possible for them. They must be able to identify themselves in various agriculture related careers.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

- The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) model was developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett and it explores how career choices are developed and how these choices to pursue careers are made. This model is based on Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)
- Social Cognitive Career Theory concentrates on the role of self-efficacy and the outcome expectations that result from learning experiences
- In the model, environmental factors are divided between two areas. One focuses on proximal contextual factors such as known discriminatory practices in agriculture
- The model (figure 1.) demonstrates that African Americans had a negative history of discrimination which negatively impacts African American youth choice to pursue careers in Agriculture.
- The second environmental factor which is shown in the model involves structural determinants.



Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory is important to reference because it helps in providing a deeper understanding about African American experiences in relation to American society. Critical race theory (CRT) is responsible for race and racism that is deeply rooted in American society. CRT is used to understand how race was used as a factor for why Black farmers were denied support. CRT was founded by Derrick Bell Jr. He highlighted the inequalities of race from minorities perspective in the United States. Critical race Theory emphasizes the awareness of social structures of oppression in U.S society and is based on lived experiences of minorities. CRT studies demonstrate how racial inequities are created and sustained in the lives of ethnic minorities. Studies demonstrate how areas such as education and law show a divide in opportunities, access, and resources (Bhattacharya, 2017). This theory is described and used in the guide to understand and uncover how agriculture relationships are not as valued or used as they should be. This is necessary to improve and increase engagement with African American populations.

- As an organization or career professional, it is important to understand CRT and that it provides a structure for discovering racism. Critical race theory is important when challenging and revealing the reality of race
- It must be recognized and understood that racism still exists today. Understanding the under representation of African Americans include understanding the

structural barriers that contributed to the underrepresentation in agricultural careers.

Classroom Instruction & Career Demonstrations

In order to get African American Youth involved in agriculture, it is necessary for teachers and professionals to incorporate lessons catered towards them. Black youth must learn about their history to see that there was and still is African Americans in agriculture. It should be understood by youth that this is not a foreign practice to have a career in Agriculture. If they see themselves in these lessons (through pictures or videos) they will feel represented. Although addressing history is important, it is also necessary to show African Americans in the Agricultural field today.

Below is a potential lesson plan for Classroom Instruction:

Daily Plan		Educator:
Lesson Title:	African Americans in Agriculture	
Unit/Program	: Agriculture	
Estimated Time:	1- 2 hour	
Materials, Supplies, Equipment, References, and Other Resources:		
PowerPoint, YouTube Poll servicing website(mentimeter or kahoot), https://www.mentimeter.com/solutions/education https://kahoot.com/?utm_name=controller_app&utm_source=controller&utm_campaign=controller_app&utm_medium=link		
Learning Outcomes		
Essential Question:	How have African Americans impacted the agriculture industry?	
Learning Objectives:		

1. What different types career opportunities are there in agriculture?
2. Learn about different African American professionals in history and present

Preflection/Introduction (Interest Approach)	Estimated Time: 30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to list what they know about African Americans involvement with agriculture in history. After 5 minutes discuss as a group what was listed. (Sometimes students may only reference slavery, this is okay for brainstorming) Then show pictures of 7 African American contributors to agriculture (ie. Henry Blair, George Washington Carver, Federick McKinley Jones, Booker T Washington) and have students guess if they were an inventor or agricultural professional. After guesses, tell the students what each person did for agriculture. The students will be amazed to learn that African Americans did more in agriculture than just slavery. (Have fun with this, give students prizes for correct answers. If audience is younger use multiple choice answers for guesses) 	

Learning Activity		Estimated Time: 1 hour
Instructor Directions / Materials	Brief Content Outline	
<p>Suggested History Clip: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZVS3V40GPQ</p> <p>Create a PowerPoint presentation listing the various Agriculture careers (farmers, scientists, agri business, government)</p> <p>Soil, plastic cups or small pots, paper towels, seeds</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Show students a short video on YouTube about the history of African American farmers (4-5 minutes). Explain to students that African Americans were discriminated against in history and now. Explain to students that the only way to ensure that this doesn't happen again is to talk about the history and learn from it 2. Show the careers PowerPoint to students and explain different careers (30 min) 3. Take a trip outside (if applicable) and have students plant seeds in cups with soil to mimic farming. Allow students to take cup home to plant in their own gardens . 	

Summary (Reflection)	Estimated Time: 15
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Reiterated to students that African Americans did more for society than slavery. Blacks invented machinery that helped to advance agriculture. Remind the students that there is no limit for achievement in Agriculture. Ask students what different types of agriculture careers they could be in the future and why.

Blank copy of Lesson plan

Daily Plan		Educator:
Lesson Title:		
Unit/Program :		
Estimated Time:		
Materials, Supplies, Equipment, References, and Other Resources:		
Learning Outcomes		
Essential Question:		
Learning Objectives:		
1.		
2.		

Learning Activity 1	Estimated Time:
Instructor Directions / Materials	Brief Content Outline

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Preflection/Introduction (Interest Approach)	Estimated Time:

Engaging Workshops with Agri Businesses and Organizations

Representation is important for black youth. Collaborating with Agri Businesses and other agricultural organizations, will help in showing that agriculture is more than just farming. Bringing black agriculture professionals into the classroom will inspire the students. They will be able to recognize that it is possible for them to pursue these careers. It is beneficial if these professionals or representatives become mentors to these children. Being actively present, showing interest, and answering tough questions will make the youth more inclined to participate. Organizations such as the Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) work in recruiting African American students to pursue careers in agriculture. Other Agriculture related business should work together to show representation for black youth. Hands on workshops for the students is recommended to achieve an agricultural experience in relation to that specific career.



Community Outreach

As an agriculture community it is important to show various sides of the agriculture industry. Some African American youth are not able to have access to these experiences. Organizations and professionals must bring these events to them. As well as, spreading the word about agriculture events that may spark interest in the student. Some organizations provide summer internships or summer programs for youth to learn about agriculture.



Ag Discovery is a program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. Which allows students to explore various

careers in agriculture. This is catered towards middle school and high school students who want to gain hands on experiences with agriculture.

Brochure Link:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/aphis_general/bro-agdiscovery.pdf

Historically Black Colleges and Universities often have summer programs for black youth involving agriculture. A list of various programs are noted in this guide but there are other programs available for African American youth to try and experience Agriculture first hand .

Websites and Resources



For anyone who desires to give black youth experience in Agriculture but may not have the resources to do so, may use virtual field trips. Although they may not bring the same affect of inspiration from a hands on experience, this will peak their interest in agriculture. The students

will be excited to try these experiences in real life, thus accomplishing the goal of having them learn about agriculture. However, one should not stop at finding other resources to expose the students to agriculture.

Virtual field Trips

- Crop Farms https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYA8jFF7Rfxv_531Gz-gcmm36suPsdGVS
- Introduction to Agriculture <https://youtu.be/NCp93xbSwWM>
- Farm work https://youtu.be/_KlJrj-TcA
- Animal farm <https://youtu.be/Hg2ZX0PF-jl>

Agricultural Summer Programs (HBCU)

- **CAALS 3-D** (Creating Awareness of Agriculture and Life Sciences Disciplines, Degree Programs and Discoveries) NC State

This project targets underrepresented minority groups and is sponsored by North Carolina State

- **Horticulture Science Summer Institute (NC state)**

High school students spend a week learning about the department of horticulture at North Carolina State. Students will explore career opportunities in horticulture.

- **United States Department of Agriculture Ag discovery**

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/civilrights/agdiscovery>

- **AgriTREK/SciTREK Summer Institute (Tuskegee University)**

Two week residential programs that create and awareness of the educational opportunities available in Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Mathematics (STEAM).

<https://www.tuskegee.edu/programs-courses/colleges-schools/caens/conferences-workshops/agritreksцитrek>

Resources

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