

Greenbelt's Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

As conservationists, Greenbelt works each day to preserve and protect Essex County's natural resources. Since our founding in 1961, Greenbelt's mission has evolved from its work as a small, localized land conservation organization to a larger, more sophisticated, county-wide resource. With that growth comes an increasing awareness of the need and desire to better serve historically excluded and currently marginalized communities in Essex County.

We recognize that the work of land conservation has historically played a role in perpetuating social injustice and racial inequity. Exclusion and displacement are interwoven into the history of American conservation. Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), Latinx and marginalized communities have been, and continue to be, disproportionately burdened by the adverse impacts of land use and environmental policy decisions.

Greenbelt is committed to considering historic and present inequities as we advance our conservation mission.

We recognize that not everyone has been able to benefit from nature and open space for many reasons including racism, fear, access, and discrimination. We are committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment. Consistent with these core beliefs, we commit to accountability and action around diversity, equity and inclusion to enrich our organization and our work.

Specifically, we will:

- actively engage communities of color and other historically excluded and currently marginalized voices, in order to better understand the needs and priorities of Essex County residents, relative to natural resources and land conservation;
- develop and apply an equity lens that examines equity implications for all aspects of our land conservation work – policies, decision-making, and property management;
- maintain an active Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, in order to hold ourselves accountable and continuously examine our own biases and the larger forces of structural inequity in our society;
- broaden the composition of our leadership, board, staff, partners, and supporters to better reflect the people of Essex County; and
- take risks and challenge ourselves, accepting that we will make mistakes and commit to address the impacts of those mistakes as we continue to learn

In order to meet these objectives, we will develop and implement a robust 3-year plan for increased diversity, equity and inclusion across the organization, and we will regularly evaluate our development through an annual DEI audit.