

# SMALL BUSINESS ACCESS COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT | 2024

(FORMERLY DIVERSITY COUNCIL)

Formed in 2021, the Organic Trade Association’s Small Business Access Council serves as the voice of emerging farms and brands within OTA. The Council works to identify and address the financial and technical barriers that keep small businesses from entering and thriving in the organic marketplace. By connecting members to resources, peer networks, and national visibility opportunities, the Council helps build a more resilient and equitable organic supply chain—one small business at a time.

## Council Highlights | 2024

Provided 22 scholarships for members to attend key industry events, including Organic Week, SupplySide, and Expo West.

## Council Priorities | 2025-2026



- Expand outreach and speaking engagements to reach new potential members.
- Participate in key events such as the Small Farms Conference to connect with small farmers and universities. We delivered a keynote on the organic opportunity to more than 450 faculty and extension agents at Prairie View A&M University and are scheduled to participate in the Small Farms Conference later this year in collaboration with small farmers and universities in Alabama.
- Advance the **ROOTS Regional Opportunity for Organic Transition Strategy** to tailor program offerings to region-specific challenges and opportunities.

## Why participate?



- Amplify the voice of small and emerging organic businesses within OTA.
- Gain access to scholarships, technical assistance, and visibility opportunities.
- Shape programming that addresses the unique challenges faced by under-resourced farms and brands.
- Connect with peers, mentors, and regional networks through the ROOTS strategy.
- Play an active role in building a more resilient and equitable organic supply chain.

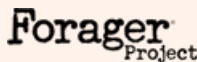
## COUNCIL MEMBERS



Change Your Food - Change Your Life!™ Inc



Dark Beauty Java



Good JuJu Brands



Goodness Gracious Food Cooperative (GGFC)



Ironhorse Homestead



Karlin Strategic Consulting, LLC



Oyster Bay Farm



Plant Odyssey



Staley Farms LLC



Sun and Soul Farms



Kellee James (Argus Media) serves as the Chair of the SBA Council, alongside Carla Balen (Organically Grown Company) as Vice Chair. Stephanie Jerger, OTA's Vice President of Operations, is the staff liaison to lead its work. To join the SBA Council, please contact Stephanie (sjerger@ota.com).