

## **Lake Champlain Sea Grant Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

### **June 23, 2020**

The staff of the [Lake Champlain Sea Grant](#) are shocked, angered, and saddened by the recent killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks, and others. We recognize that these lost lives are only the tip of the iceberg with respect to the institutionalized racism and systemic violence that Black people have endured since before the founding of this country. Racism has led Black people to have poorer health, fewer job opportunities, lower incomes, inequitable treatment in the courts and in housing, and greater rates of incarceration than white people. All of these injustices are compounded by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The trauma and anguish of the last few weeks must lead to systemic changes in American society and to an economy that offers fair and equitable treatment of Black people and of people from all of the diverse communities that make up the United States.

In the [Strategic Plan for Lake Champlain Sea Grant](#), we have expressed our intention to help breakdown the systems that have led to these injustices. However, recent events have painfully illuminated that as a group of mostly white, privileged individuals, we have benefited in ways that have been unavailable to others. We realize that our words must be backed with actions, or they are meaningless. We therefore commit, individually and as a group, to explore our biases more fully and to work openly and actively within our personal and professional networks to seek a more equitable and just society.