This is what was found by the URGE Eclogite Pod at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

Pods may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions. Consider this in the summary document and focus on capturing responses that are representative of the range in your pod.

Preface:

Our pod conducted an initial survey of all three URGE pods within our department, posing the questions provided in the sample deliverable. We are currently consulting with members of our department display committee as well as the Minnesota Geological Survey (associated with our department). Responses below reflect pod survey results, but we intend to distribute the survey more widely within our department, to all faculty, researchers, post-docs, and graduate students. Additionally, we are compiling resources on working with communities of color, in both field and laboratory projects. These resources will be made publicly available on our department webpage.

- Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:

This audit is divided into four categories: 1) field interactions; 2) involving communities of color in research; 3) designing projects, distributing data and acknowledging work done; and 4) education on topics relevant to communities of color. A short list of projects described by the survey respondents follows these four categories.

1. Field interactions
One of our survey respondents indicated that they have not interacted with communities of color in the course of their research. This is because they rarely participate in field-based research. Of the respondents who involve field work in their research, approximately half (three people) have found it difficult to identify and involve local collaborators, for either unspecified reasons, due to current coronavirus pandemic, or because their collaborators are currently limited to environmental staff at the county government level or from the local geologic survey.

The remaining three respondents whose research involved communities of color all include local collaborators as coauthors on papers. Two projects included collaborators beginning early in the proposal-writing process. The last project did not involve local
collaborators until later on (largely for language help and for field assistance), and the collaborators were from the majority-white geological survey.

For those working with communities of color, at least one project may not yet be at the stage where long-term relationships are present. Efforts in that case are ongoing. A separate project notes that much of the early stages of the project were spent developing trust and building connections with local communities. A pod member who is employed by the Minnesota Geological Survey (MGS) notes long standing relationships with major state universities, but acknowledges that more work could be done to work with smaller colleges in the rural counties in which mapping occurs. Similarly, the MGS forms connections with the environmental staff in the country in which they are mapping, but they do not currently extend this service to tribal nations. The degree of MGS-community interaction varies depending on the geologist, and in all cases is limited to the duration of the mapping project.

2. **Involving communities of color in research**

Responses to the question about actively seeking to include local students in research range widely. One respondent has not sought local students due to a restrictive funding structure and lack of time needed for a mentoring relationship. Similarly, a second response indicates that limited time, language barriers, and inadequate prerequisite coursework are barriers to student participation. Another respondent is open to the idea of involving local students, but is still learning about the logistics/best ways to reach out to such students.

Four respondents mention past or future efforts to involve local students. One has budgeted for paid student field assistants in a proposal, and three describe ways in which local students were included in research. The implication is that such students are tremendous assets to projects given their deep connection to the research and research outcomes.

3. **Designing projects, distributing data, and acknowledging work done**

Of the field projects described that involve communities of color, only one acknowledges considering and prioritizing research questions that meet the needs of local communities. Although not explicitly related to communities of color, the geologic maps produced by the MGS (of which a pod member is an employee) are mostly used for watershed management, and are therefore naturally valuable to Minnesota citizens.

Concerning a question on broader impacts, two of the five respondents indicated that they have not meaningfully included local communities in their broader impacts, either because their work does not have a field component or because they haven’t yet had the opportunity to do so. Two of the remaining respondents indicate that they have included local communities in their broader impacts in a meaningful way that builds on the community’s identified needs and concerns.

With regard to data distribution, three survey respondents indicated that their data are available to local communities. Data are made available either by request, shared in the form of less technical reports, or housed as part of the MGS. The MGS makes presentations at the county level and makes some (not all) documents available in multiple languages.
Local communities are acknowledged in research results by two respondents. The remaining three respondents to this question either stated ‘no’ without elaboration or noted that their projects are not yet at a stage where results are being presented.

4. **Education on topics relevant to communities of color**
   Overwhelmingly, survey respondents indicated that they have spent time educating themselves about the local politics, culture, customs, and knowledge of the local communities in their field areas. One response notes increased attention to this matter after some missteps in an early field season. Three respondents feel that time constraints, either unspecified or due to early-career responsibilities, limited the amount of learning they could do about local topics.

Our pod members conduct research in a variety of settings. Those who work predominantly or exclusively in lab settings typically have had little to no engagement with communities of color while those who conduct field work and/or teaching have had a range of interactions with communities of color. Some examples are outlined below:

- Field work conducted in New Caledonia, where indigenous people have been exploited by the mining industry.
- Teaching field courses that take place on the traditional lands of a variety of Native American tribes.
- Using lab materials and standards sourced from Native American sites.
- Recruiting/attempting to recruit students of color for lab-based positions and research opportunities.

● **What worked well in these interactions?**

- Researching the history of field sites and cultures of communities living there well before conducting field work.
- Including land acknowledgements and acknowledgements of local/indigenous communities and community leaders in all publications of work conducted on these communities’ land.
- Including information about the human history and cultural significance of lands visited by field courses and field trips.

● **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**

- Sending out general advertisements for student positions/opportunities and hoping students from communities of color would apply. A better way to reach these students is to reach out to these communities more directly and utilize existing programs for engaging students and communities of color in STEM.
- Not asking for permission before conducting field work on private, traditionally significant, or community-owned land. Extensive research and direct communication should be completed well ahead of field work to ensure researchers have permission
from landowners and local community leaders to be on the land and make sure the customs and wishes of the communities are being respected.

- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
  
  - For projects where field work has already been completed, researchers can ask what products of their research might be useful for communities living in the field area (e.g. maps, drone imagery) and how the results of the research can be communicated to these communities.
  
  - Field courses and research projects with multiple field seasons in the same locality would greatly benefit from establishing and nurturing relationships with local communities and community leaders.

- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**

  Our organization currently does not have a centralized location for storing and maintaining guidelines and resources for working with communities of color. To correct this shortcoming, our URGE pod is working on a document stating our department’s support of collaborative, mutually beneficial research with historically marginalized groups. The document will contain links to publications and exemplary project webpages (e.g. [https://manoominpsin.umn.edu/](https://manoominpsin.umn.edu/)) that can serve as guides for researchers developing or working on projects that involve communities of color. An important part of this document consists of information on regional organizations that can potentially connect STEM students from communities of color with our lab-based researchers; making the document useful to all researchers in our department. Our resource page will be publicly available, hosted on the UMN Department of Earth & Environmental Science website. We are also working on a more specialized document with requirements and expectations regarding respecting tribal sovereignty during field and other work that impacts these communities, in Minnesota and in other states.