Communities of Color in Multnomah County:
An Unsettling Profile

A partnership between Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University

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The Coalition of Communities of Color was founded in 2001 to strengthen the voice and influence of communities of color in Multnomah County, Oregon. Its mission follows:

> ***The communities of color unite as a coalition to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities. The Coalition will organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.***

Portland State University upholds its vision to: "Let Knowledge Serve the City." The academic partners in this research from the School of Social Work hold commitments to social justice and racial equity. The mission statement is:

> ***The School of Social Work is committed to the enhancement of the individual and society. We are dedicated to social change and to the attainment of social justice for all people, the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of those who are oppressed, the rights of all individuals and groups to determine their destiny, and the opportunity to live in cooperation.***

This report was prepared to ensure that the experiences of communities of color are widely available for:

- Policy makers interested in better understanding the issues facing communities of color and the agencies that provide services for them.
- Advocates wanting firm footing in detailing the disparities between communities of color and White populations.
- Researchers considering how to improve better assessment of services, data collection practices and expand beyond conventional measures to define experiences facing communities of color.
- Educators wanting to expand their resources.
- Grant writers seeking to statistically document trends and challenges.

The Coalition of Communities of Color gratefully acknowledges the assistance from the following partners:

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MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Multnomah County, Oregon
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Portland State UNIVERSITY

Coalition of Communities of Color

Dear Reader,

Existing data that informs decision making in Multnomah County inadequately captures the lived experiences of communities of color. Rarely do existing reports include dimensions of race and ethnicity. Much research has been undertaken without the involvement of those most affected by the decisions guided by the research. The impact is that communities of color are rarely visible at the level of policy. Data has been used to obscure and oppress rather than to empower communities and eliminate disparities. This is not acceptable, and leads to inequitable policy and devastating outcomes for people of color.

"Communities of Color in Multnomah County: *An Unsettling Profile*" is the first of a series of reports developed in partnership with Portland State University. The report documents the experiences of communities of color in Multnomah County. The subsequent six reports will be community-specific reports on the African American, African immigrant and refugee, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American and Slavic communities.

The results of the report are unsettling. But there is opportunity for creating a new policy environment that supports rather than harms communities of color. The report can arm communities of color with accurate data and advocacy methods needed to communicate effectively to change policies, and provide public agencies with the data necessary to reinvent systems in a fair and equitable manner. We aim to ensure that datasets are culturally sensitive and comprehensive, and to influence research development processes to empower communities and reduce disparities.

Advocating for policy decisions that improve outcomes for people of color is the top priority. We hold institutional and policy reform and the formation of a powerful racial equity advocacy coalition as central to improving outcomes. This report builds an important knowledge base from which to advocate and to educate. Educating our communities and the community at large about the disparities and inequities faced by communities of color is crucial to achieving racial equity.

We seek to unite people in collective action for the advancement of racial equity. It is time to act.

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Communities of Color in Multnomah County

Preface 6
Executive summary 7

Chapter 1: Setting the Context 13
Introducing Multnomah county 14
Service responses to the needs of communities of color 16
Training must not be a panacea for change 20

Chapter 2: Measuring the Size of Communities of Color 21
Population profile 22
Population profiles of students 26
Forecasting population growth using fertility rates 27

Chapter 3: Institutional Disparities 29
Educational attainment, achievement & discipline 30
Occupational profile 44
Poverty rates 45
Incomes 48
Unemployment rates 51
Income support programs 53
Employment & training initiatives 54
Household budgets 58
Income trends 60
Wealth, housing & homelessness 64
Health care & well-being 71
Crime & adult corrections 74
Juvenile justice 78
Early childhood education 81
Child welfare 82
Civic engagement & political participation 85
Participation in public service 89

Chapter 4: Community-Specific Profiles of Disparities 91
The Asian community 92
The Slavic community 93
Age of community 95
Education 95
Occupations 96
Income levels 98
Poverty rates 99
Unemployment 99
Housing 100
Closing comments on the Slavic community 101

The African immigrant & refugee community 101
Age 104
Education 105
Occupations 106
Income levels & poverty rates 107
Unemployment 110
Housing 110
Closing comments on the African community 111

Chapter 5: Comparative Findings 113
How does Multnomah county compare to King county? 114
Comparison table of disparities 115
Synthesis of disparities & definition of need 117

Chapter 6: Bright Spots & Challenges 119
Bright spots 120
Multnomah county needs a wake-up call! 122

Chapter 7: Affirmations, Recommendations & Conclusions 123
Policy affirmations 124
Policy recommendations 124
Conclusion 127
Prologue: Quality of data issues 127

Appendices 130
Appendix #1: Supplemental data notes 131
Appendix #2: Universal Declaration of Human Rights 132
Appendix #3: Multnomah County's philosophy and implementation of culturally-specific services 137
Appendix #4: Language definitions 139

References 143

Preface

This report centers the experiences of communities of color in Multnomah county, and the disparities that exist for our people. As a result, the text centers issues of inequality, inequity and injustice. For many people, this will be a tough read. Most of us would rather avoid this topic. While this may be an unsettling read, we believe that it offers a unique set of insights into one of the most devastating social dynamics in US history and into the present-day. It is intended to be a catalyst for action – to build far-reaching durable solutions that will provide our communities and our children the hope of a better future.

Many living in the USA today think the problem of racism is over. While progress has been made, most people overestimate the impact of this progress on the lives of people of color. The sad reality is that people of color continue to hold second-class status, resulting in lesser quality of life and reduced chances for success.

Discrimination is not an act reserved for people of color. Many people who are White have experienced injustices as Italian, Portuguese or Irish immigrants to the USA. Serious injustice was done to Eastern European immigrants in their settlement. Grave injustices have also been enacted through anti-Semitism. Our record of providing refuge for Jews persecuted around the world has been inadequate.

Injustice also exists for women or from having a disability or having survived child abuse or mistreatment in one's family. Many didn't have families and faced a life of foster homes. All of these life experiences are unfair and unjust. Life generates hardship in many shapes and forms.

Today in Multnomah county, people of color experience overwhelming hardship. As a group of people, too many people of color face severe social and economic exclusion. This report articulates these experiences.

One of the key research tools used in this research is to compare the experiences of communities of color with White communities. This reveals a set of differences in experience (called "disparities"). This selected methodology serves to highlight not only race, but also "whiteness" and doing so draws our attention to the privileges associated with being White. We are aware that this choice may bring discomfort for some – but know that racism does not exist without its corollary of White privilege.

It is difficult to alter racism and racial disparities. And yet, failure to do so means that the promise of equality and the promise that we might cross racial divides and "walk together as sisters and brothers" are shut down. We must offer all our communities real prospects for a positive future, well-being and community empowerment. Closing with the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we know the journey towards racial equity has been slow and we still have far to go, but we draw from his words of 1961 to guide our vision for the future:

> *A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where we will not take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few; a dream of a land where we will not argue that the color of a person's skin determines the content of their character; a dream of a nation where all our gifts and resources are held not for ourselves alone, but as instruments of service for the rest of humanity; the dream of a country where everyone will respect the dignity and worth of the human personality.*[1]

Executive summary

Communities of Color are a vital presence in Multnomah County. Our leadership has strengthened efforts to improve community health and well-being in many areas. Our roles have stretched from being a sounding board to policy makers, to sitting on philanthropic boards, to staffing committees and advisory groups on matters of importance like child welfare, community development, funding patterns and growing the green economy. Our voice is valued. Yet progress of our peoples is far from assured.

Communities of color are a growing portion of Multnomah County's population. Today, the official count is that communities of color comprise 26.3% of the County's numbers and this number is growing much more quickly than that of Whites, due to high fertility rates and migration. Yet we do not really know how large our communities of color really are.

Official measures to enumerate our community members are plagued by legacies of distrust and cynicism. They are also plagued by the whiteness that pervades all forms of data collection and interpretation. As a result, population measures chronically undercount our numbers. This is due to an array of factors such as ongoing invisibility for some communities of color – for the African immigrant and refugee community, and for the Slavic community, no data are routinely collected. Also at issue are survey question dilemmas, such as the failure to count the Latino community as a community of color, or outdated practices such as allowing only one racial identity to be selected. In addition, language accessibility renders participation impossible for the estimated 5.1% of the county's population who cannot communicate in either English or Spanish.[2]

Traditional research practices undermine our very existence as our experiences are omitted from routine data reporting in many areas. We have had to use up a significant amount of political capital just to collect the data in this report. A key message is that our communities of color have tolerated invisibility for long enough, and insist that research and reporting practices change sufficiently to make the data on all our communities routinely available in the public arena.

Our communities themselves contribute to the undercounting, as many are reticent to participate and to identify as a person of color. While the larger context for this shame or reticence may have been created by mainstream society, we have work to do inside the community to encourage prideful identification as a member of a community of color.

This project is the result of determination among many leaders in our communities, members of the Coalition of Communities of Color, who defined the need for expanded research, and asserted our leadership and capacity to define the reach, interpret the findings, and consolidate recommendations for change. This report, "*Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*" is the result of that determination. Before you today are the fruits, as sour and as bruised as they are, of the first two years of a research partnership with Portland State University.

This report documents the experiences of communities of color in Multnomah County. The results are indeed unsettling, as many key insights emerge from the data. **First,** disparities with White communities exist across all institutions addressed in the report. The magnitude of these disparities is alarming. Consider some of the data findings:

- Communities of color earn half the incomes of whites, earning $16,636 per year, while white people earn $33,095 annually. Disparities close to this magnitude exist regardless of one's family and household configuration.

- Poverty levels among our communities are at levels at least double those of whites. Our child poverty rate, collectively, is 33.3%, while that of white children is 12.5%.
- Educational attainment is stratified by race. While only 7% of Whites did not graduate high school, 30% of communities of color did not.
- Disparities exist at the preschool level. By the time children enter kindergarten, there is a disparity that, depending on the measure, averages between 5% and 15% in readiness for learning scores. Most children of color are unable to access preschool programs, though they are overrepresented in Head Start initiatives.
- One-quarter of public school students of color were racially harassed in a 30-day study period, either at school or on the way to school. The figure is constant for both students in grade 8 and grade 11.
- Educational disparities in our local public schools are deeply entrenched and gains made earlier in the decade have been lost, and the achievement gap is widening.
- The labor market is similarly bruised by disparities. Communities of color access management and professional positions at half the levels of Whites. One of every two Whites access such high status and high paid work, while less than one of every four people of color access these positions.
- Communities of color have unemployment rates that are 35.7% higher than whites.
- Health disparities, while unevenly distributed across communities of color, average out to result in significant disproportionality. Low birth weights among communities of color are 37% worse than for White babies.
- Child welfare disproportionately removes African and Native American children from their homes and places them in foster care. The longer children are in care, the much greater likelihood they are African American and Native American.
- Juvenile detention rates are much worse for children of color. They are 50% more likely to be held than released into the community once they engage with the police.
- Even systems designed to improve the challenges facing communities of color, such as the protected contracting practices at the City, County and Metropolitan levels fail to deliver sufficient benefits to our communities of color. Less than one-tenth of 1% of the City of Portland's contracting dollars goes to minority-owned businesses.[3]

In every system we looked at, there are significant disparities. The breadth and depth of these disparities is deeply unsettling. Our best understanding of this is that institutional, ideological, behavioral and historic racism intersect to create these harrowing results. Add to this dynamic that of whiteness and white privilege, and we create the one-two punch that leads to the horrors of racism coexisting with the privileges of whiteness. Undoing such inequities must occur at all levels of every system.

Second, communities of color in Multnomah county suffer more than similar communities of color nationally. In the measures explored in this report (incomes, poverty, occupation and education), communities of color have between 15% and 20% worse outcomes. It is more difficult to get ahead here in Multnomah County than it is more generally across the USA. When we tally the disproportionate "hit" or additional income losses for communities of color living in the county, the average tally of such costs is $8,362/year.

This inequity does not hold true for White people. On average, one's income is enhanced by living in Multnomah County. The average benefit to a White person living in Multnomah County is $689/year. While not a large benefit, it illustrates that the harms of being a person of color in the county is additionally disparaging when Whites have a correlated benefit.

Third, we looked to a local comparison group to see how communities of color here fared in relationship to those in a western nearby city. In comparison with King County (home to Seattle), we have worse disparities and worse outcomes on every measure examined: child poverty, those who get a university degree, incomes, occupation, and renters who pay more than 30% of their incomes on rent. In King County, the child poverty rate for children of color is 21.5%, while here it is 33.3%.

This must inform our thinking about what is possible. For King County to have better conditions for people of color, while having relatively similar concentrations of people of color (30.9% compared to ours at 26.3%), should spark our sense of possibilities.

Fourth, we wondered if local conditions were improving or deteriorating for communities of color. We examined disparities in two ways – generational changes in incomes, and a contemporary examination of the last two years of available data on a wider array of disparities. In the first instance, we found that the generational picture on incomes of White families and families of color has changed markedly. Only the wealthiest 40% of White families have gained significant ground over the last generation (at an average of $47,663/year) while that same grouping among families of color have lost income (facing an average loss of $1,496 per year). While it is not surprising that there has been a significant growth between rich and poor (as this fact has received considerable attention at the national level over recent years), it is disturbing that this growth between rich and poor is considerably racialized (meaning that benefits seen by White families are not shared by families of color). The net impact is that there is a significant decay of income equality between Whites and communities of color across the generation.

Our second view on changes across time was a thorough view of changes that occurred in the last year (from 2007 to 2008, as the most recent data available). In 26 measures, we found that 16 measures were worse, 6 were better, and 4 stayed the same. The crucial measures of incomes, obtaining a university degree, all poverty measures and health insurance had all deteriorated. Four of the positive gains (in home ownership, mortgage burden, unemployment and dropout rate) were due not to an improved situation for communities of color, but due to a more rapidly deteriorating situation for white people, thus narrowing disparities. We can thus conclude that there were clear gains in only two of the 26 measures – clearly demarking that current disparity reduction efforts are ineffective in achieving key positive outcomes for communities of color.

Fifth, we have learned an important lesson about our Asian communities. Many may know that these communities fare quite well in national studies, typically outperforming Whites on measures such as incomes, occupations, education, poverty and housing. That is not the situation for this community in Multnomah County. Here, the characteristics of the Asian community much more closely resemble those of other communities of color than they do of Whites.

Sixth, for the first time, two additional communities of color are profiled – the Slavic community and the African Immigrant and Refugee community. Separate sections of the report profile these communities. Overall, these two communities are very highly educated but are mostly unable to access occupations, incomes and reductions in poverty rates that are typically associated with high education levels. Within the African community, poverty levels parallel those of the African American community as the depths of racism, social exclusion, and inadequate income support programs result in more than 50% of children living in poverty. In the Slavic community, the employment barriers that prevent the community from accessing good jobs results in high levels of poverty, unemployment and income disparities among families.

Seventh, the need for expanded support for culturally-specific services is in evidence in this report. Our leaders and organizations have an array of effective services customized to meet the specific and unique needs of communities of color. The failings of mainstream institutions to address the needs of communities of color are abundant and must create the impetus to act, to act holistically, and to act under the leadership of communities of color who have the legitimacy and the urgency to remedy many of the shortcomings that besiege Multnomah County.

Eighth, we have determined that there is an undercount of youth in the 2007 American Community Survey that is in the magnitude of 4.8% and further that there is a miscoding of communities of color by an additional 14.9%. We derived these figures from the more robust and more comprehensive data from public school records (centralized at the Oregon Department of Education). This is the first "hard" evidence that there is an undercount issue within ACS. While we do not advocate modifying ACS figures with these numbers, we do highlight that counting our communities is riddled with challenges. As a solution, we are developing "culturally-verified community counts" that better reflect what we believe our accurate numbers to be.

Ninth, we affirm the following commitments and directives that aim to advance racial equity.

1. ***Affirm culturally-specific services funding.*** We affirm and appreciate Multnomah County's dedicated funding pool within the Department of Human Services, SUN Service System and seek to expand this commitment, urging all funding units in all levels of government to make such allocations a priority.

2. ***Support equity initiatives in existence.*** At the County-level, initiatives such as the Equity Council, Undoing Institutional Racism, and Multnomah County Health Department's Health Equity Initiative hold promise to reduce disparities.

Tenth, we make the following recommendations for addressing the needs of communities of color.

1. ***Expand funding for culturally-specific services.*** Designated funds are required, and these funds must be adequate to address needs. Allocation must recognize the size of communities of color, must compensate for the undercounts that exist in population estimates, and must be sufficiently robust to address the complexity of need that are tied to communities of color.

2. ***Implement needs-based funding for communities of color.*** This report illuminates the complexity of needs facing communities of color, and highlights that Whites do not face such issues nor the disparities that result from them. Accordingly, providing services for these communities is similarly more complex. We urge funding bodies to begin implementing an equity-based funding allocation that seeks to ameliorate some of the challenges that exist in resourcing these communities.

3. ***Emphasize poverty reduction strategies.*** Poverty reduction must be an integral element of meeting the needs of communities of color. A dialogue is needed immediately to kick-start economic development efforts that hold the needs of communities of color high in policy implementation. Improving the quality and quantity of jobs that are available to people of color will reduce poverty.

4. ***Reduce disparities with firm timelines, policy commitments and resources.*** Disparity reduction across systems must occur and must ultimately ensure that one's racial and ethnic

identity ceases to determine one's life chances. The Coalition urges State, County and City governments and school boards, to establish firm timelines with measurable outcomes to assess disparities each and every year. There must be zero-tolerance for racial and ethnic disparities. Accountability structures must be developed and implemented to ensure progress on disparity reduction. As a first step, plans for disparities reduction must be developed in every institution and be developed in partnership with communities of color. Targeted reductions with measurable outcomes must be a central feature of these plans.

5. ***Count communities of color.*** Immediately, we demand that funding bodies universally use the most current data available and use the "alone or in combination with other races, with or without Hispanics" as the official measure of the size of our communities. The minor over-counting that this creates is more than offset by the pervasive undercounting that exists when outsiders measure the size of our communities. When "community-verified population counts" are available, we demand that these be used.

6. ***Prioritize education and early childhood services.*** The Coalition prioritizes education and early childhood services as a significant pathway out of poverty and social exclusion, and urges that disparities in achievement, dropout, post-secondary education and even early education must be prioritized.

7. ***Expand the role for the Coalition of Communities of Color.*** The Coalition of Communities of Color seeks an ongoing role in monitoring the outcomes of disparity reduction efforts and seeks appropriate funding to facilitate this task.

8. ***Research practices that make the invisible visible.*** Implement research practices across institutions that are transparent, easily accessible and accurate in the representation of communities of color. Draw from the expertise within the Coalition of Communities of Color to conceptualize such practices. This will result in the immediate reversal of invisibility and tokenistic understanding of the issues facing communities of color. Such practices will expand the visibility of communities of color.

9. ***Fund community development.*** Significantly expand community development funding for communities of color. Build line items into state, county and city budgets for communities of color to self-organize, network our communities, develop pathways to greater social inclusion, build culturally-specific social capital and provide leadership within and outside our own communities.

10. ***Disclose race and ethnicity data for mainstream service providers.*** Mainstream service providers and government providers continue to have the largest role in service delivery. Accounting for the outcomes of these services for communities of color is essential. We expect each level of service provision to increasingly report on both service usage and service outcomes for communities of color.

11. ***Name racism.*** Before us are both the challenge and the opportunity to become engaged with issues of race, racism and whiteness. Racial experiences are a feature of daily life whether we are on the harmful end of such experience or on the beneficiary end of the spectrum. The first step is to stop pretending race and racism do not exist. The second is to know that race is always linked to experience. The third is to know that racial identity is strongly linked to experiences of marginalization, discrimination and powerlessness. We seek for those in the

White community end a prideful perception that Multnomah County is an enclave of progressivity. Communities of color face tremendous inequities and a significant narrowing of opportunity and advantage. This must become unacceptable for everyone.

Advancing racial equity depends on eliminating the multitudes of disparities profiled in this report. We aspire to catalyze an understanding of the challenges facing communities of color and to provide us all impetus to act, to act holistically, and to act under the leadership of communities of color who have the legitimacy and the urgency to remedy many of the shortcomings that besiege Multnomah county.

Chapter 1: Setting the Context

Introducing Multnomah county[4]

Multnomah County is home to people who come from all corners of the earth. This profile is in service to peoples of color who, as we shall see, experience very different and inequitable challenges to sustaining ourselves, our families and our communities. Threats to our lives are such that our collective ability to live in freedom, with dignity and worth, with equality, social progress and improved standards of living are compromised. If this language sounds familiar, these are concepts extracted from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that the United States ratified in 1948. Established to guarantee human rights and to preclude the horrors of genocide and holocaust, this international proclamation of the supremacy of human rights was intended to take precedence over the laws of the state.[5]

Flash forward to 2010. The language of human rights and the discourse on the entitlement of all members of a community to a life robust with dignity, equality and prosperity is a distant memory. Today, and indeed for the last 30 years, the public policy landscape has changed tremendously. The centrality of the needs of the people has been curtailed by the needs/wants of business, and economic considerations have surpassed the redress of human need. Other features of the policy landscape include the privatization of public services, the commercialization of need, and escalating economic polarization (also called the growing gap between rich and poor).

The major federal legislation in health care (passed in March 2010) and Oregon's earlier passage of voter referendums on tax increases for corporations and the very wealthy in January 2010 are possible signs of a rejection of the primacy of corporate interests. This said, the evidence in this report point to the need for much more income redistribution, stronger and more robust public services, and a change in the very way that public policy is developed, who is invited to the table, and who is in charge to do the inviting (and by extension, the uninviting).

Despite its sky-high unemployment rate (at 11.3% in January 2010), the Portland metropolitan area has a broad and deep reputation as an excellent place to live. It is an urban hub that many find attractive and, as the most affordable of the major west coast cities, has a growing population that outpaces the national average. The major county in the area, Multnomah, is home to the city of Portland and its suburban cities of Fairview, Gresham, Maywood Park, Troutdale and Wood Village. The population here was 715,000 in 2008.[6]

The region is perhaps best known for its ecological reputation, including land use conservation strategies that have preserved significant tracts of green spaces through the region as well as an emerging green reputation for residents. Intended consequences have been to limit development, while unintended consequences are to increase housing costs. In the profile below, the number of residents who are pay unreasonable housing costs is very high.

Ours is a city where 6.4% of the population cycles to work, and a city recognized as one of the USA's most bicycle-friendly cities (Bicycling Magazine), most sustainable city (SustainLane), cleanest city (Reader's Digest), and tops lists for being "green" (Popular Science). Portland is now the #1 bicycling community in the USA, topping the list of the largest 30 cities in the nation.

Socially, Multnomah County has a long-standing profile as being overwhelmingly White, particularly for a large west-coast city. Indeed, it ranks 5th Whitest in the 40 largest urban centers in the USA.[7] Typically, larger urban centers are less than 60% White whereas in Multnomah County's most recent official count (2008) is 73.7% White. But this naming of the county as "overwhelmingly White" serves to deeply marginalize and render almost invisible the more than 200,000 people of color who

live here. The visibility of communities of color is at the heart of equitable treatment – it is time for accurate data and appropriate portrayals of the strengths and challenges facing our communities. Simultaneously we call for the end to tokenistic recognition and visibility.

Politically, there is a strong democratic dominance in the county, and local democrats cite it as the "bluest" in the state.[8] Support for President Obama was profound leading up to the 2008 elections as it hosted the largest rally in the election campaign. We have found, however, that liberalism is not clearly tied to progressivity on equity issues facing communities of color. Racial progress in Oregon has been deplorable at various points in history and inadequate at other times. In 1844, Oregon banned Blacks from living in the state, and did not remove such laws from its books until 1927, and at one point was the sole state in the Union that legislated such exclusion. Not until the 1950s did Oregon legislators repealed prohibitions on interracial marriages, and equal access to public facilities and services. These advances, though desirable, were relatively late in the racial equity advances among states. Legislators themselves continue to be overwhelming White, and all corridors of power in the region sustain significant barriers to the advancements of people of color in the policy arena.

Defining economic features of the region include the absence of a sales tax and negligible corporate income taxes. Together, these two revenue choices result in excessive reliance on income taxes as the source for government expenditures, which results in a revenue profile that rises and falls as does the economy. Accordingly, when residents most need services as in today's economic era, the ability to provide them is most constrained. Add to this the Oregon tax rebate (called the "kicker"), and governments are impeded by their inability to prevent the crisis situation that today results in cuts to services when the populace most needs them. This kicker returns surplus revenues to residents when taxes collection exceeds official projections, curtailing an ability to "save for a rainy day." When this economic picture is combined with the state's moderate income profile (meaning we have a high percentage of workers who earn very moderate wages[9]), we are poised for incredible distress as unemployment rates skyrocket (currently at 11.3%, up from 5.5% in July 2008, a little more than one year earlier).[10]

The consequence of this disastrous economic convergence is massive social distress felt across Oregon: food stamp use is up by 38.2% over the last year,[11] and TANF cases are up by 21.2% for one- and two-parent families.[12] The largest portion of this increase is for two-parent families who are unemployed and underemployed, whose numbers have surged by 67.4% in the last year. Food bank use has also surged, with an increase of 13% across Oregon in the past year.[13] Increasingly, people who are employed need to turn to these supplemental supports to weather the economic storm. Today, almost ⅓ of food bank users have someone in the household working full time, whereas in 2000, only ¼ had a full time worker in the family.

Communities of color are tenacious and resilient. Suffering a legacy of racism and unequal treatment has imperiled our health and well-being. And still we keep our children in school, seek and retain employment, and manage to house and keep our families safe. We toil hard to make ends meet and to counteract the damage that racism has dumped on our children. Of interest is that communities of color are becoming more willing to stand and be counted in official data counts. Despite racism, racial pride is growing. More and more people are self-identifying as people of color, in ways that cannot be accounted for by population growth.

Organizing efforts have been legendary in working to hold services accountable for their equitable treatment of communities of color and to promote leaders from among communities of color – the

most famous of which is the election of President Obama in 2008. Today, there are significant efforts to redress numerous systems failures as institutional racism has flourished. Witness such efforts in child welfare, health, government procurement processes, juvenile and criminal justice, and education. While there has been profound disappointment in what has become known as "the adoration of the question"[14] (and failure to actually improve outcomes for people of color), there are revamped efforts that are poised with higher expectations and accountability demands.

As the reader journeys through this report, keep in mind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Appendix #2) and ask yourself if this is the type of widespread experience that the USA should tolerate or whether a real course correction is required. Placing human need at the top of our policy priorities is the only directive that we believe is acceptable. We believe this is attainable with sufficient resources, empowerment and a reallocation of our collective priorities.

The text of this report is the result of advocacy efforts by the Coalition of Communities of Color in Multnomah County to make our experiences visible and to advocate for our needs and priorities in the policy arena. It is the first of a series of reports on the issues facing communities of color. This report addresses the disparities facing communities of color in an integrated manner; the forthcoming six reports will profile each community of color separately. Look for these releases in the coming months and for their availability on the Coalition's website at www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.com.

Profiled here are the experiences of communities of color as an entirety as they experience marginalization, discrimination and profound inequality and disproportionality across all aspects of life. The report is primarily based on data drawn from official surveys and census documents. Since these data are rooted in mainstream data sources, they are vulnerable to racial dynamics of marginalization. A description of the weakness of mainstream data sources and recommended alternatives follows as a prologue to this report. Look for it in Appendix #1.

No profile of communities of color is complete without action steps. The report concludes with a set of policy recommendations designed to remedy the worst of the situations facing communities of color today.

Service responses to the needs of communities of color

Members of communities of color have the experience and understanding to identify the best and most promising responses to our communities' needs. Frequently the Coalition of Communities of Color is asked to advise mainstream service providers and funders on how best to adjust practices to improve outcomes with communities of color. Our core recommendation is to expand services that are developed and delivered by and for communities of color, in what has become known as community-based "culturally-specific services." Sharing the principles and unique dimensions of these services is helpful to understanding the importance of this alternative service delivery model, and the promise it offers to communities of color.

Communities of color have always known we are outsiders in mainstream services. Consider the practices that have been advocated under the guise of "helping" people of color through the horrors of colonization, the historic forced migration and residential schools to "kill the Indian and save the man." Today's "helping" avenues have a less obvious but still deeply harmful impact. Examples include:

- Expanded incarceration for youth of color because parental supervision is not available after school (we have more single parents and longer working hours).
- Therapy approaches that continually neglect how racism and discrimination influences one's health and well-being.
- Expanded requirements to use "evidence based practice" in most social service provision, which habitually have been designed and tested with White populations.
- Creation of a "poverty industry" whereby communities of color have no real claim to society's resources to address their needs – instead, the professionals who are mostly White hold the power to design, implement and evaluate programs.
- Tokenistic inclusion of communities of color, when mainstream organizations and initiatives "consult" communities of color instead of allocating majority power, influence and accountability to such groups. When one has been invited to the table on the good will of others, one must tread carefully or the penalty is that one will be uninvited.

With the "discovery" that racism is embedded in many institutional practices, mainstream society has learned what we have always known: that mainstream service providers continue to inscribe oppression and injustices on our communities of color. Whether it is through omission or commission, by intention or by neglect, the relationship between mainstream service providers and the communities of color who rely on their services is riddled with complexity, ambiguity and racism. And whether or not workers are able to unlearn their racial and cultural biases is an unanswered question – but we know this is not necessary when services are received in culturally-specific organizations.

Our pathways to effective practice lead us to prioritize service delivery that stretches far beyond the framework of "cultural competency" into "culturally-specific services." The leadership of the many service providers in the Coalition shares an understanding that mainstream services are unable to adequately respond to the complexity of needs facing communities of color. When mainstream services hire a worker or two who speak the language or translate their outreach materials into the local language, insufficient change has occurred. Similarly, when mainstream service providers take trainings in cultural competency, little real change is enacted.

We believe that culturally-specific services are best able to address the needs of communities of color. These services have the following unique features:

- *We provide respite from racism. People of color enter culturally-specific services as insiders instead of outsiders.*
- We hold the trust of our communities. Mainstream services do not, and relationships are instead marked by distrust. This supports our ability to respond to community needs and to work in solidarity with them to address larger injustices.
- We are accountability to the specific community of color for whom services are delivered.
- Our top leadership (Board of Directors or equivalent) are primarily composed of community members who share the same racial and ethnic identity. This means our organizational leaders have a lived experience of racism and discrimination and will give comprehensive attention to race and racism at all levels of practice.
- We are located in close proximity to the specific community of color that is being served and reflect the cultural values of the community throughout their services. Users of such services are likely to be welcomed and affirmed in their specific cultural context.
- Culturally-specific services are staffed and led primarily by those who share the racial and ethnic characteristics of the community. This means we have walked a similar path as those we serve, and have experienced the types of racism typically targeted against the

community. This provides deep and lasting commitments to eliminating racism in all its forms.

- Such services are typically involved in many advocacy practices, and are involved in challenging institutional racism in its many forms. Given this engagement, service users are more likely to have their needs better understood and more hopeful about prospects for change. As their organizations are involved in social justice efforts, this increases the social capital of the community and its members. [For more discussion of how to implement culturally-specific services funding, we have attached the County's values statement on such services in Appendix #3.]

Research backs this up. There is an emerging body of literature that shows the value of such services in meeting the needs of our communities, both in terms of improving individual health and well-being outcomes and also in terms of improving social capital by engaging in community development and systemic advocacy. Culturally-specific service organizations are more likely than mainstream organizations to have the following elements: hiring staff from the community and those who speak their language, include community practices in supporting the individual, engage in community development to increase cultural pride, decrease isolation and exclusion, encourage cultural consciousness, build power, address issues of racism, locate services in the community and offer holistic programming.[15]

The research illustrates that a "match" between the identity of workers and clients has a positive impact on client outcomes. This match creates fewer clients departing prematurely from services, making better use of services and improving mental health outcomes and life skills functioning. Additional research emphasizes their retention in services and staying involved for longer periods of time.[16] The research that resulted in such findings was robust, with one studying 54 service organizations over six years.

More research on the importance of this "match" shows that a history of hostile relationships between the client and worker serves to contaminate the work with tension and mistrust.[17] While the research was conducted on the impact of Chinese and Japanese therapeutic relationships, there is an obvious parallel between colonizer and colonized histories that demark most White/non-White social relations.

Moving beyond the issue of the "match," most instruments used by mainstream health and social services are culturally inappropriate.[18] Most tools set inappropriate norms among communities of color (such as excessive valuation of independence), and the tools do not have cross-cultural validity.[19] One profound example is that experiences of racism, when retold to the White practitioner, are likely to be perceived as unreasonable feelings of persecution or even self-grandiose beliefs. This creates a bias in the tools that leads to over-diagnosis of people of color. Practitioners do not understand the cultural and racial dimensions to these variables, and are more likely to show up as mental health illnesses. Failure to understand coping strategies serves to create over-diagnosis of communities of color. Spiritual beliefs and use of traditional healers are mistaken by White service providers as evidence of psychopathology.[20]

Language accessibility deepens the over-diagnosis problem. There is the persistent pattern of over-diagnosis of clients of color who do not have strong English language skills. When clients are not interviewed in their own language, they are likely to have more severe psychiatric diagnosis, and are more likely to not comply with the therapist's recommendations, and more likely to drop out of treatment.[21]

Culturally-specific services are also more likely to emphasize the larger context that explains the distress of individuals. Such services have less focus on individual "pathologies" to explain distress and are more likely to understand distress through challenges developed through racism, discrimination, unfair treatment and damaging ideas about our communities and our peoples. [22] In addition, communities of color prefer interventions that provide us with tangible supports to address immediate problems.[23] This is congruent with our reduced acceptance with interventions that pathologize the behaviors of our people and diagnostic assessments that aim to label us (albeit often to secure financing).

Even experts in the field of cross-cultural counseling miss the context of racism. When a leading expert suggests that people of color need assertiveness training to redress that they "still feel as though they are second class citizens,"[24] the unspoken framework is that it is irrational for people of color to "feel" such experiences exist, and this denies that there is a context of racism in which people of color live. Implied is that people of color "feel" they are second class citizens, rather than an affirmation that, indeed, we are still treated as inferior to Whites. Notice the injury that occurs in such an insensitive framing of issues, leading many scholars and practitioners, and indeed, the entire Coalition membership, to assert the importance not only of workers sharing backgrounds and identities, but also of the organization to be "owned" by the community it serves.[25] And also notice that the recommended intervention of "assertiveness training" can lead to internalizing the idea that it is our fault we are being discriminated against – for not standing up for ourselves. Additionally notice that such action could also, depending on the context, lead to getting fired, or being arrested by the police. There is utility in how people of color have adapted to racism: it is the responsibility of professional service providers to seek to understand the resistance and survival skills embedded within our practices.

A final dimension of this research shows that even the context of administering tests serves to influence outcomes. When Whites administer IQ tests to African Americans, their test scores fall.[26] In addition, interviewing conducted outside one's native language increases errors and diagnostic labels are accentuated.[27] While this serves as greater impetus for expanding culturally-specific services for communities of color, it also serves to punctuate the possibility that administration of surveys and census forms might be inappropriately conducted by Whites or by those who do not share the identity of the person being surveyed. By extension, this should make researchers wonder if people of color are more likely to self-identify our heritage accurately if these forms are administered in a culturally-relevant context (ie. In our own culture).

When combining the principles that communities of color adhere to in our service delivery system with the research literature, we can conclude that mainstream services can injure clients when they are marked by cultural insensitivity and a lack of understanding. They will also injure communities of color by failing to reach us – for issues of stigma, mistrust, cost, language, culture, and reputations of insensitivity precede mainstream services. In droves, communities of color are less likely to seek help from mainstream service providers. We also know that mainstream services are primarily White-centric institutions and this precludes the possibility of inclusion and equitable treatment of clients of color (even when it is unintentional). Such research shows that mainstream organizations do not and cannot offer this realm of services, and nor do mainstream services understand the complexities of racism.

Training must not be a panacea for change

While we applaud efforts of many large institutions (including government bodies) to embark on training initiatives to reduce institutional and individual racism, we are deeply cautious about the prognosis of such change efforts. At root of this direction is our belief that it is not enough to "unlearn" racism, and that training is an insufficient response to reform legacies of racism embedded in such institutions.

Our observation of many of these efforts is that they are well intentioned, but they are full of promises for reform that do not change the oppressive dimensions of the organization. While one can unlearn racism and reorient towards an anti-racism mission, we are not hopeful about training efforts to reform mainstream services which mostly operate towards "cultural competency." The current pattern of such training to avoid centering racism and White privilege means that power issues are on the margins of their attention. The central premise of the cultural competency movement is to center cultural differences as the root of culturally insensitive practices. This suggests that understanding of difference is the deficiency of mainstream services. Such a framework neatly sidesteps issues of power, oppression and privilege, to the grave injury inflicted on communities of color.

There are, however, advances beginning to be seen among institutions that are opting to center anti-racism sensibilities in their organizational change efforts. In such an approach, racism and whiteness become the central themes for understanding how institutional, cultural and behavioral racism are reproduced within particular organizational practices, discourses and structures. We hold most optimism for initiatives that combine individual learning about racism and whiteness (that catalyze an awakening to the issue as well as a shift in perspective in how one understands the organization's structures and practices) with concrete organizational reform initiatives. In such efforts, leadership at the executive levels is instrumental for establishing clear commitment to organizational change as well as the involvement of communities of color to provide insights into change practices most likely to result in real change for marginalized communities. A willingness to be accountable to such external groups is an important dimension of change efforts. Without external accountability, reform efforts are akin to the dubious contributions of an organization that aims to police itself – time and again, we have the experience of half-hearted, sporadic and inadequate reform initiatives. As one research report suggests, "good White résumés don't trickle down," meaning that such training efforts may serve to strengthen the *appearance* of change from White service providers, but little real change occurs.[28]

We are pleased to affirm that Multnomah County is embarking on their "undoing institutional racism" initiative within a robust anti-racism paradigm and are hopeful for its prospects.

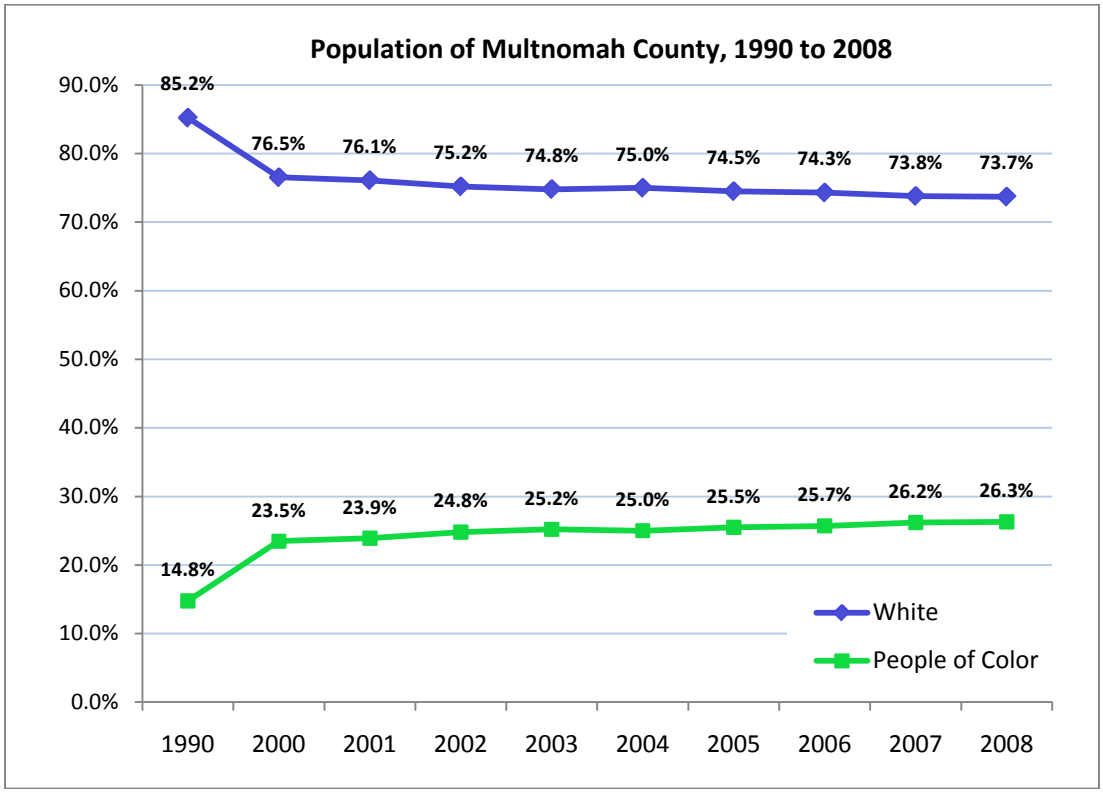
Experience has taught us to hold reservations about the likelihood of real institutional change efforts. We hold a space of suspicion about whether these training efforts will end institutional racism. We are even more troubled when such institutions espouse that they are doing everything possible to create change.

Know that there are viable alternatives and that these are rooted in culturally-specific services. Before us is a viable option to mainstream services. Our communities have the experience, the wisdom and the lifelong commitments to ending institutional racism, racist practices and the distress that flows from such identities. We have the seasoned leadership and creativity to expand our roles. Rather than continuing the path of hoping for change from mainstream services, we advocate for expanding the role of culturally-specific services.

Chapter 2: Measuring the Size of Communities of Color

Population profile

While communities of color may be smaller in Multnomah county than in areas of similar size across the nation, our numbers are greater than generally perceived. In total, people of color in 2008 (by traditional Census Bureau counts) comprise 26.3% of the population of the county. When we add the Slavic community to these data (which is conventionally counted as "White" in mainstream databases), the size of the community totals over 200,000 residents. This number is rising steadily and will accelerate more rapidly as numbers grow (and it quickly becomes a larger portion of the population), as the undercount problems are addressed and as fertility rates stay high.



Source: Author's calculations using data from Census Bureau & American Community Surveys, selected years

While the trend shows that communities of color are increasing in size, we can expect that there will again be a considerable narrowing in the years to come as this year is a census year, meaning that outreach efforts will increase the visibility of communities of color.

Of key significance to communities of color is our size. Size is associated with both power and visibility and, as one can imagine, there are concerted efforts to encourage a prideful identification as a person of color. We do this by working very hard to improve the turnout for Census 2010, participating in the Complete Count Committee, and committing our organizations to assist with outreach efforts, myth-busting the perceived dangers in participation, and encouraging one to identify their race and ethnicity in the forms. Yet, our efforts will not be revealed until 2012 when detailed population profiles for local areas become available.

While accurate counts of communities of color are deeply important to us, we also highlight how they impact all of us, regardless of racial identity. When people of color are counted by the Census, the financial consequences are large. It has been calculated that each person counted in Multnomah County brings in a cash value of $1,439/year.[29] Since the Census is conducted only every 10 years,

the cost to the county of each person missed is approximately $14,390. It is thus in our collective financial interests to build practices that promote the inclusion of all residents in the county.

We need to punctuate early on that Census 2010 efforts will not be enough to ensure a full count of our communities of color. The historic forces of marginalization are still with us, and not all people of color will self-identify in this way, out of a historic yet pervasive pattern of "desiring whiteness" which results in many of our community deciding not to reveal their status as people of color. In addition, the problems with finding all people of color (given language, poverty, housing instability and fears of recrimination) will not be solved despite the fullness of outreach efforts by our communities of color as well as the Census Bureau itself. Adding to this difficulty is the form itself – which continues to trouble us in very significant ways. While this is the subject of a much longer paper,[30] we can summarize the difficulties. First, in the Census, Latinos are identified as an ethnicity instead of a race, meaning that resulting data will be difficult to work with. Second, the African American community is identified by terms that include "Negro." We do not know how many residents will decide not to complete the form due to the offensiveness of this term. Third, the section for Native Americans to self-identify is easy to misconstrue. It appears to require registration in a particular tribe in order to self-identify as Native American. Finally, there is no clarity as to how many Native American tribal groups one is able to self-identify.

The Census Bureau's decision to drop the long form for Census 2010 will render two of our communities of color completely invisible: the Slavic community and the African immigrant and refugee community. These groups have previously been identified within items such as "ancestry" and "country of birth." Neither question is asked on the short form (that is the only form being administered in Census 2010), and thus these communities are being rendered invisible in this administrative decision.

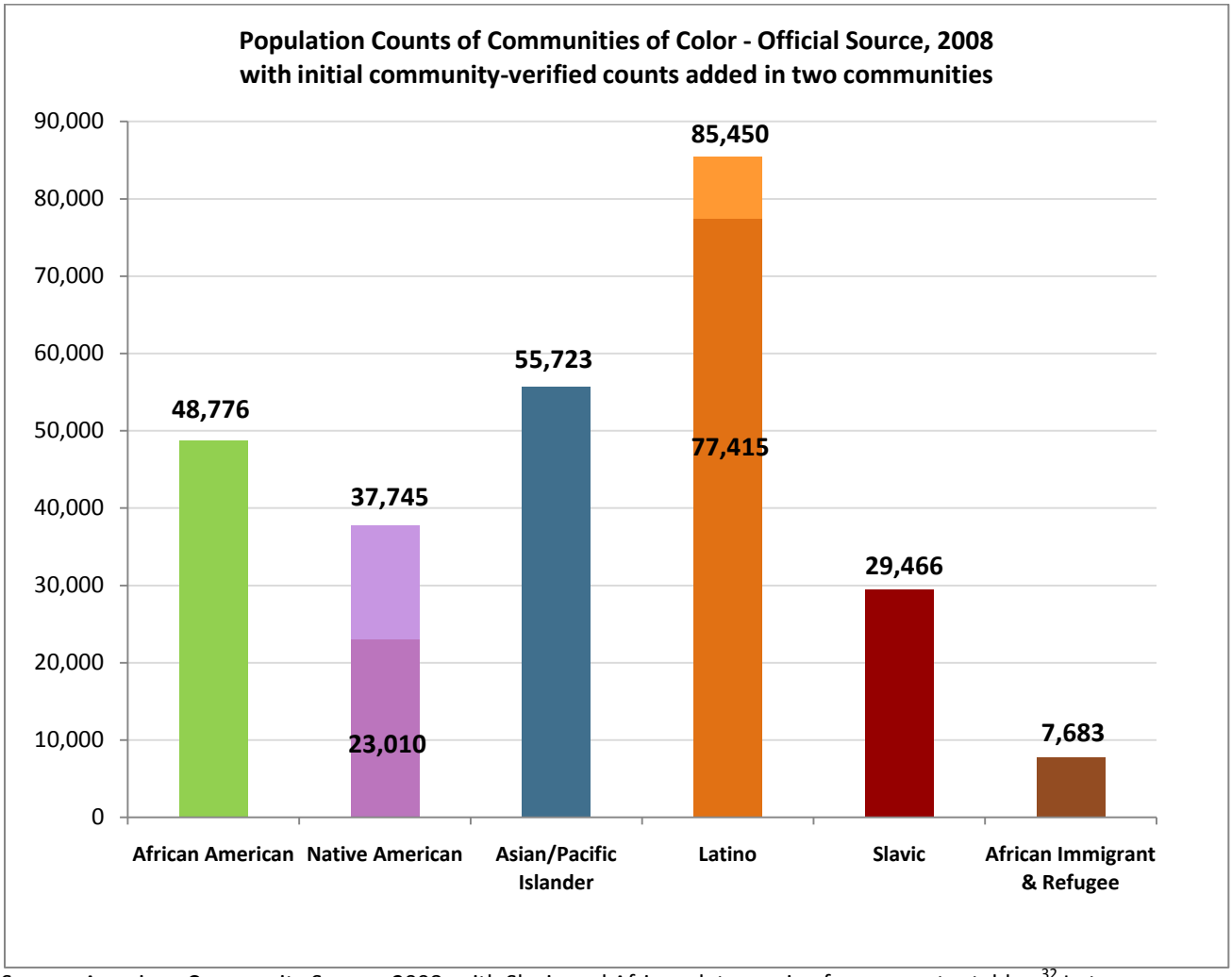
We thus believe that there will be a significant undercount of communities of color in Census 2010, as has been in existence throughout history. Recent survey results show that while communities of color typically value the Census more than Whites, there is a significant number who do not intend to complete and return the form. Among the communities of color identified in this survey, the confirmed intention to fill out the form is 52%, far lower than the 61% of Whites who say they definitely will fill out and return the forms.[31] Another third is likely to fill out the forms. Approximately 20% of the populace anticipates not filling out the forms. Distrust of government rated the third most common reason for not participating, behind being too busy and be uncertain about how to participate.

The undercounting problem reduces our ability and our willingness to rely on data collected through the Census Bureau (including the American Community Survey) as well as mainstream administrative data that use the race and ethnicity identification tools that were created by the Census Bureau and used in Census 2000 and 2010. Combine this knowledge of the dynamics of undercounting with two pieces of "hard" evidence of the existence of undercounting that we have uncovered. The first is the Census Bureau's own upward revisions of population counts – by 44,100 people in Oregon. These revisions were, however, rejected by the US Congress and subsequently do not appear in the Census or the American Community Survey (ACS) which relies on Census figures to stratify its sampling practices. The second piece of "hard" evidence comes from our own research work on the differences between the American Community Survey population counts and that of student enrollment figures collected by the Oregon Department of Education. Our work with these datasets show that there is an undercount of school-aged youth of approximately 4.8% in the ACS, and that these numbers are more pronounced among youth of color – as ACS undercounts students

of color by 14.8% while over-counting White students by 9.6%. Our communities believe that school board records are more likely to be accurate as they are collected via a "census" process that documents every school student (meaning that every student or parent fills in a record and all records are tabulated by ODE, instead of the sampling strategy used by ACS).

Figuring out the exact size of communities of color is a difficult task and one that the Coalition names as a priority. To redress this issue, we develop two avenues to define the size of our communities of color. The first one uses the best-available measures of the communities that are available in conventional data sources. These data are from the American Community Survey 2008. The second method flows from our community-based participatory research methods, which places our communities of color in control of how to best measure their communities. Called "community-validated population counts," our communities work collaboratively with the input of our researchers to define community-determined methods to identify the undercounted populations and/or alternative measures. This approach to measuring our communities is the most comprehensive as in each community, our own leaders determine the most culturally-sensitive methods to determine the size of the community.

Method #1: The American Community Survey, 2008, as measured by those who self-identify as non-White. Below are the most recent data available, with each community including everyone who shares this identity. This is our preferred use of the official data counts, as it is the best answer to the question, "using official data, how large is each of these communities?" These are the figures available in the following format, "alone or in combination, with or without Hispanic."



Source: American Community Survey, 2008, with Slavic and African data coming from ancestry tables.[32] In two communities (Native American and Latino), our initial work on culturally-verified population counts is available. These are added to the upper levels of the specific population bar.

We recognize that this method results in some over-counting of community members, as the total tally is 7.7% too high (that communities of color appear to be over-counted by 7.7% of our total size).[33] This method is, however, the best "official" count of the size of each of these communities of color. We are not concerned that this over-counting adds some people in two categories, and reject the suggestion that this might result in too much flowing towards communities of color when we rely on these numbers. Given that the problem of undercounting continues, we believe that relying on these counts is appropriate in the interim, as we confirm the "community-verified" population counts.

Method #2: Community-verified population counts. Each community has a clear idea of how best to capture its own size. At this point in the research project, we are not ready to report of these findings, other than to present the initial findings for two communities – Latino and Native American. Population counts will be reported in each community-specific research report over the coming months. Here, however, we share some details of these processes.

In the Native American community, tribal registries have enrollment figures for the local region. These are owned and operated by the tribes and accordingly bypass the difficulties that the Census

Bureau has in obtaining complete counts due to issues of distrust and histories of violence. Our initial exploration of these numbers shows that there are a total of approximately 37,745 tribal members in Multnomah County. This is 64% higher than the "official" count within the American Community Survey (ACS) of 2008. This variance is accounted for in the following ways:

- Confusing question on the ACS to ask for Native American identity
- Ongoing fear of retribution and persecution from the state governing bodies
- Ongoing influence of whiteness that leave Native Americans less likely to be prideful and thus disclosing of their identity
- Poverty-related issues such as frequent moving, lack of a phone and homelessness that narrow possibilities to participate in such official surveys

In the Latino community, there are two established methods for measuring the undercounts. The first is used by mainstream organizations including the Department of Homeland Security and the Pew Hispanic Center, and these methods establish that the undercount would be 1,994. This method was developed with Census 2000, and is believed to itself be an undercount – because heightened levels of deportation will likely be increasing the amounts of non-participation in the American Community Survey.

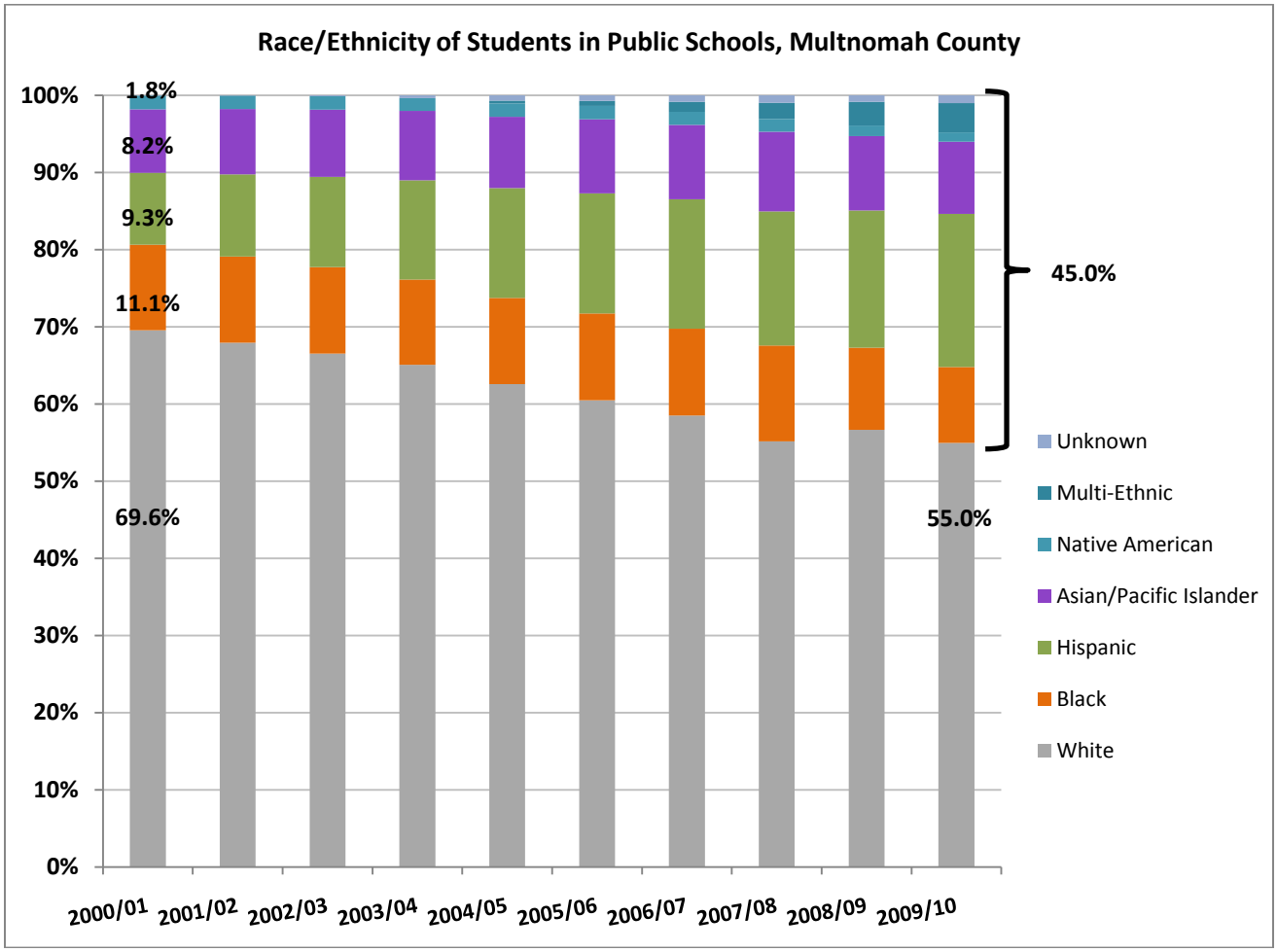
The second calculation uses a community-based participatory research method established by Marcelli (and recognized by organizations such as the United Nations Development Program and the US Government Accountability Office). Using his estimates, we calculate that the size of the undercount to be 14,076. In our preliminary interpretation of these data, we advance a conservative estimate that is the average of these two undercount methods, and reach an undercount of 7.9% which translates to 85,450 Latinos in Multnomah county. The dimensions of these undercounts include different measures for undocumented residents, for foreign-born documented residents and for US-born residents.

At this juncture in the report, we must lay aside our provisos of relying on conventional data sources. Such data must be relied upon for the remainder of the research (and re-centered again when we focus on recommendations). This is because conventional sources are abundant and typically the only source of data on the issues we want to address. Conventional databases are "as good as it gets" for documenting the experiences of communities of color when we aim to use quantitative data that are robust enough to be recognized as valid and reliable sources of experience.

As communities become more diverse, there are incredible opportunities for the region. Collectively, we expand our strengths and our resources – but only if we avoid stratification and denial of opportunity on the basis of race and ethnicity. Unfortunately, this report will reveal that we are poised to entrench quality of life on the basis of skin color and heritage. Taking these dynamics seriously, implementing ameliorative policies, and building structures to make progress accountable to communities of color offer pathways to greater racial justice and healing.

Population profiles of students

The speed of growth of communities of color is best illustrated among children. Today, students of color are quickly becoming the majority of students across the county. Growing rapidly from 30.1% of the population to 45.0% in the last ten years, the clarity of the chart below shows that the structure of our racial profile is clearly and quickly undergoing change.



Source: Author's calculations from Oregon Department of Education enrollment figures for Multnomah County public school students.

With this very large and growing population of students, education issues among communities of color are pronounced. The full range of concerns includes the achievement gap, differential dropout rates, graduation levels, access and success in post-secondary education, staffing within the education system and racial equity across all educational institutions are of heightened concern. If there is any dispute about the legitimacy of attention to these issues on the basis of numbers, certainly we have compelling evidence that these issues are significant and we need to hasten our claims to making racial equity in the education systems the top priority for our schools.

Forecasting population growth using fertility rates

The proportion of Whites to people of color is not static – it will narrow rapidly over the next 10 years. Fertility rates are currently high for communities of color. Wide variations exist, but most are significantly higher than White populations, with Hispanic communities growing fastest, and all communities of color outpacing the growth of White communities. The table below illustrates the percentage of women (aged 15 to 44) in each community who gave birth in the preceding year.

Female population who gave birth in last year	
USA – total (to age 50)	5.5%
Multnomah County	
Black or African American	7.8%
Hispanic	11.5%
American Indian/Alaska Native	6.8%
Asian	7.4%
Average for people of color	8.4%
White	5.8%

Source: Multnomah County Health Department, Feb 2009 and American Community Survey, 2007 (for USA total)

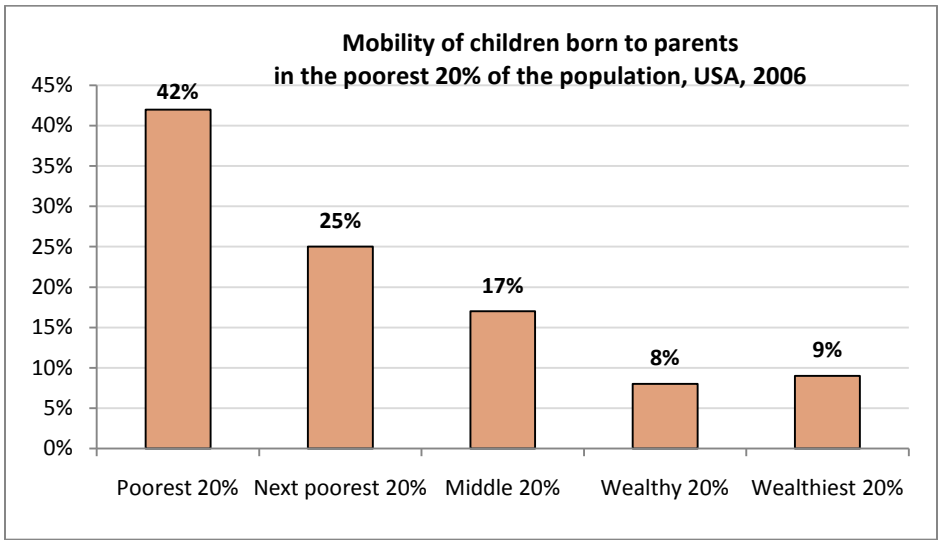
We see here that the proportion of communities of color will continue to grow, and the proportion of Whites will diminish. This illustrates, simply on the basis of official data counts, that our communities of color and our needs will command increasing attention from funders and policy practitioners. Now is the right time to support the leadership of communities of color. Recognizing the authority of people of color who are able to represent our communities, and allocate leadership roles at all levels of the policy and administrative processes will ensure that governments (including school boards) are poised to respond to rapidly changing demographics.[34]

Return your attention to the graph on page 20 and note the relative "spike" in the population of communities of color. Efforts during Census 2000 to document less visible communities are believed to be responsible for the relative surge in population. Efforts are again underway to reach out to those who are fearful of participation and those who are excluded from documentation efforts. We anticipate another such "spike" in the county and highlight that there will be a growing impetus to address the needs of communities of color. It is time for policy practitioners to get in front of this changing demographic rather than lingering far behind.

Chapter 3: Institutional Disparities

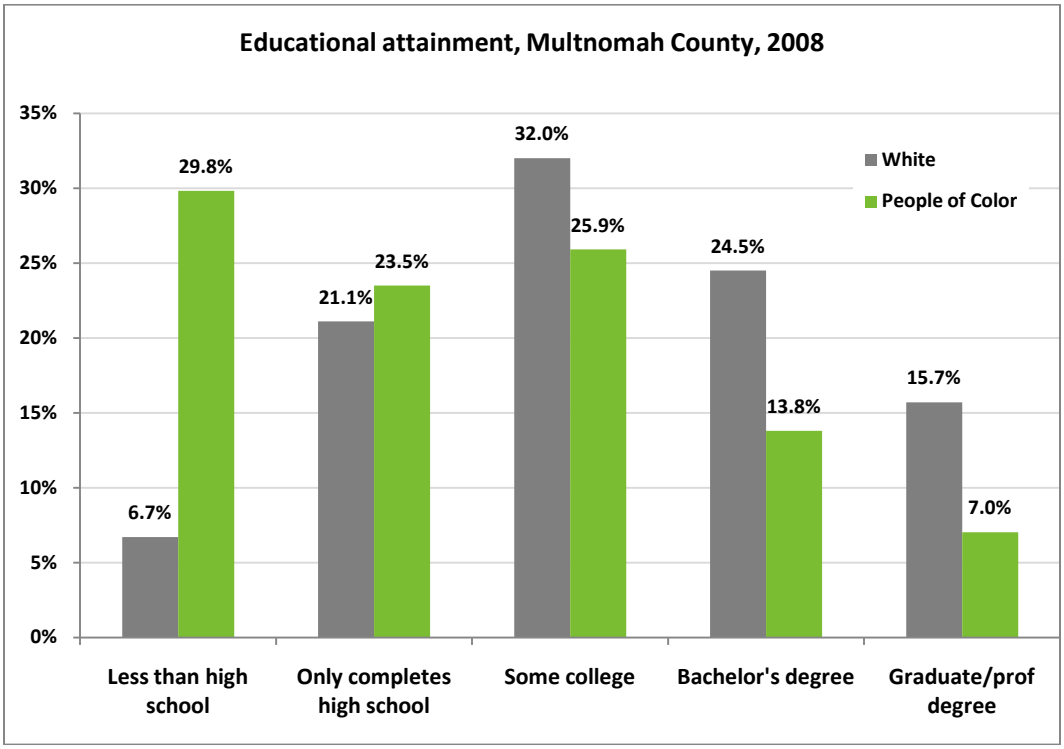
Educational attainment, achievement & discipline

There has been abundant research to illustrate that people of color fail to achieve similar academic standing as White communities. The reasons are numerous, and an abundance of local and state efforts aim to reverse these trends. But the achievement gaps are deep and the numbers of students of color who flee or are pushed out of schools are significant. Given that education strongly connects to access to good jobs, decent incomes and security for one's future, we should all be concerned with the ability of people of color to obtain excellent and complete education. And yet, concern with education reaches far beyond securing decent work and income. Education is the top priority of communities of color – we know that the future of our children depends on a robust education and high achievement. Educational success is a significant pathway out of poverty. And so too does the future of their generations to come. The single greatest predictor of one's income remains the incomes of one's parents. One example of this fact is the following chart that shows that there is little economic mobility when born to poor parents.



Source: Isaacs, Sawhill & Haskins (2008) from The Economic Mobility Project, using Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Census Bureau, with data averaged over 4 years.[35]

While this shows that being born to poor parents is likely to render one poor or low income, there is still some mobility upwards, but significantly less so into higher economic groups. This is clear evidence that one's rank on the economic ladder is strongly tied to that of one's parents. Similarly, though not shown here, is that being born into high income is similarly reinforcing and reproducing of class divides in an intergenerational manner. The racial dimensions of these patterns are even more profound – those most likely, over the course of a generation, to move up the economic ladder are White children, but those most likely to move down to poorer incomes are Black children.[36] While this research has not been conducted with other communities of color, it is expected that similar patterns exist across these populations.



Source: Author's calculations using data from American Community Survey, 2008.

Know that the total for all Whites is 100%, and so too for people of color. This translates into an experience such as the following: If you are White, you have only a 7% (or 1-in-14) chance of not having graduated high school, while if you are a person of color, you are much more likely to have not graduated high school – almost a 1-in-3 chance of not having a high school diploma.

When considering how these compare with the national levels, we can see that overall, Whites in this county are successful in bettering the national averages, meaning that our educational systems really help them attain educational advancement. How do these same institutions compare for people of color? Not nearly as well, as the national average is better for people of color than in our county. While this is accurate, there is tremendous variation in success in post-secondary education. What starts to emerge here is a pattern that will continue throughout this report (and be expanded upon in the Coalition's community-specific releases in the coming months): All communities of color fare significantly worse than White communities (on average 50% worse) and the disparities are worse in this local region than they are nationally, and that this level can be as high as 55% worse. Translating this to a lived experience makes these data come to life: Today in Multnomah county, if you are White, you are twice more likely to have a university degree than if you are a person of color.

Total of those with degree, 2008		USA	Multnomah county
White		27.4%	40.2%
People of Color		23.8%	20.8%
	Latino	12.7%	14.6%
	African American	17.4%	18.1%
	Asian	49.0%	34.9%
	Native American	15.9%	15.7%

Source: Author's calculations from American Community Survey, 2008, selected population profiles

The above charts reveal a troubling set of disparities that shows that, on average, other communities have significantly narrowed the inequities between Whites and people of color in obtaining a degree. Not so in our local region.

To look at more contemporary educational experiences (and excluding those who were educated decades ago, as in the above chart), we look to school achievement measures to see how the school system is currently performing.

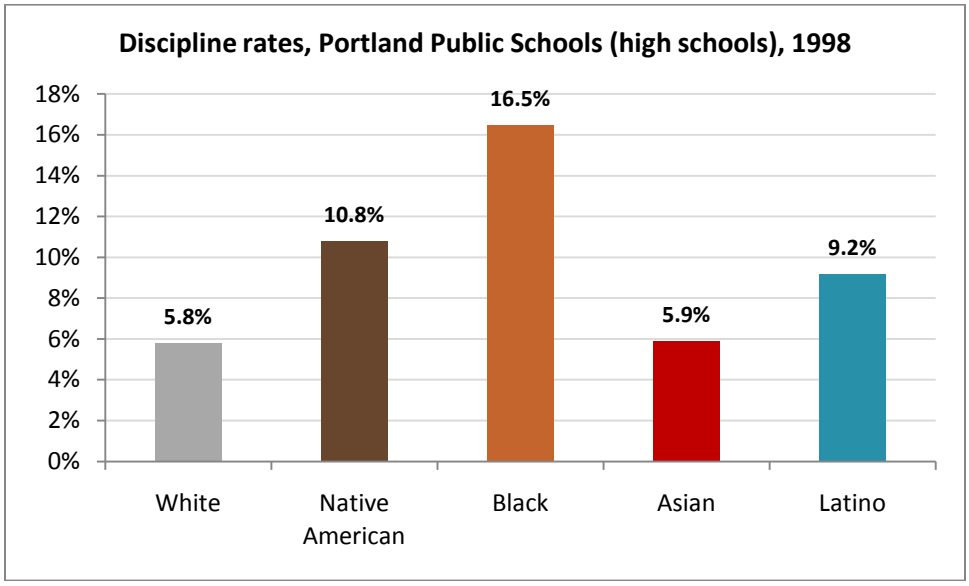
We begin with a review of the types of diplomas awarded to high school completers in 2007/2008. These data are currently only available for the totals in Oregon. Compiled below, we see that students of color lag about 10% behind white students in securing regular diplomas. The CIM designation was our State's effort to increase academic credentialing by testing students in more rigorous ways. These diplomas were awarded on a 2:1 basis to White students. We also see more students of color graduating with no diploma being awarded.

2007/2008	White	Students of Color	Black	Latino	Asian	Native American
All Completers	100%	100%	1,054	4,859	2,112	850
Regular diploma	88.5%	81.4%	830	3,849	1,811	725
with CIM	21.6%	12.6%	74	304	614	84
without CIM	66.9%	68.8%	756	3,545	1,197	641
Non-regular diploma	3.3%	4.1%	51	160	130	32
Honorary	1.0%	1.6%	4	40	102	1
Modified	2.3%	2.5%	47	125	28	31
No diploma	12.9%	14.5%	173	869	176	98

Source: Author's calculations of Oregon Department of Education's data on High School Completers, 2007-2008.

Note, however, that the chart above refers to students who begin grade 12 and complete grade 12. With no accounting here for those who do not get to the "completer" stage in education, we need to turn to other sources. More recent data shows that the magnitude of the drop out problem is higher than previously thought. Data released in June 2009 showed that only 68% of Oregon's students graduate from high school in 4 years. Worse still, Portland Public School graduated only 52% of students, Reynolds School District only 51% and David Douglas School District only 62% of students.[37] Data on the race and ethnicity of these non-graduates is not yet available.

One feature that is clearly tied to graduation is the experience of school discipline. Across the USA, students of color are suspended and expelled from schools at rates two to three times higher than White students.[38] This occurs despite the fact they are not more disruptive in class than White students – rather harsher discipline is given to students of color for the same or even less serious rule violations. At the local level, Portland Public Schools reported that in 1998 discipline rates for students of color were double those of white students – at 10.6% of students instead of 5.8% of white students. These numbers went as high as 16.5% for African American students in local high schools.

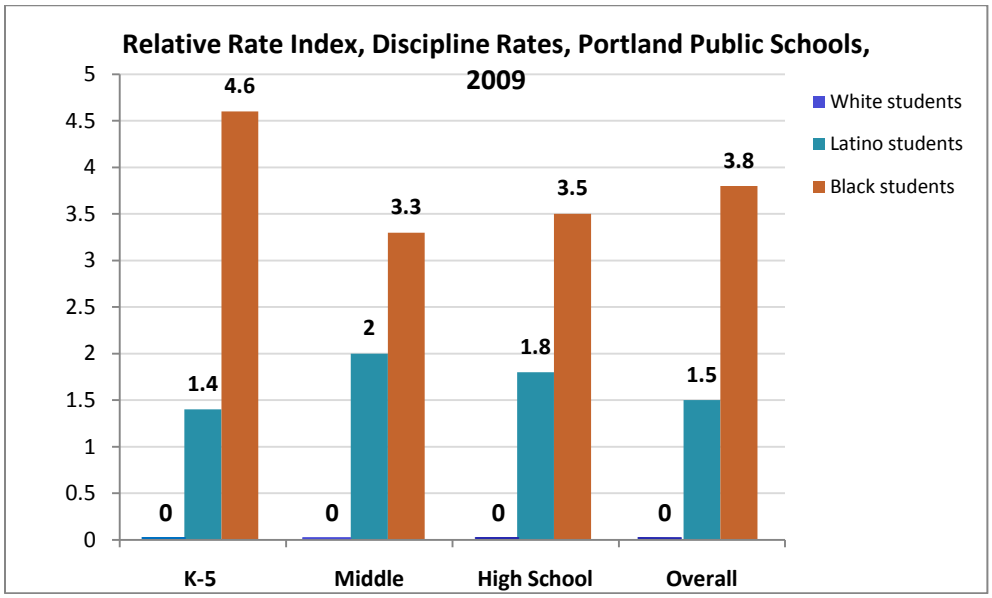


Source: Oregon Department of Education, High School Profiles, 1997-1998

Given that prior research illustrates that students of color are not more disruptive in class, we would expect similar discipline rates across all student groups. The data shows us that there is disproportionality among all students of color, although minimally for Asian youth. Here we believe that the prevailing discourse of Asian status as a "model minority" limits the disciplinary actions that might otherwise occur.

By 2007, one in four African American students in middle school had been suspended or expelled, while only one in fourteen White middle school students received such punishment. These findings existed regardless of the income level of the school.[39]

Current discipline data has been difficult to obtain. It is not publicly available. Portland Public Schools has provided discipline levels for Latino and Black students, revealing a deep problem with disparities, as illustrated below.

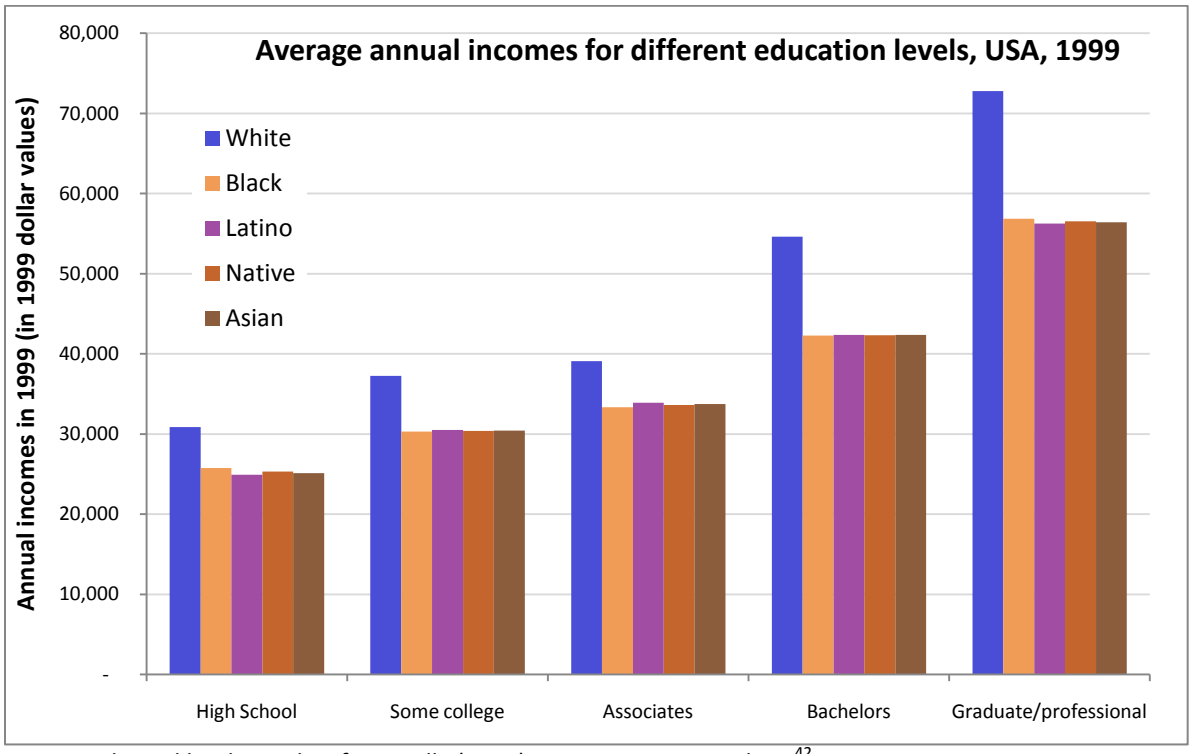


Source: Data released by the Research & Education, Data & Policy Analysis Department, 2010.[40]

While data on Native American students and Asian students is not available, we can see that discipline rates are at levels revealing the same pattern as in 1998, but worsening for African American students. We aim to secure access to these data across Multnomah county school districts to more fully understand disparities in discipline patterns.

Addressing dropout rates is essential for equity issues – keeping children of color in school longer increases their chances for improved incomes, employment, health and quality of life. Incomes for those who do not graduate have, on average in the USA, stalled out at about $20,000/year, and have not improved since 1975. Graduating high school increases incomes to about $25,000/year. On average, there are significant income improvements in obtaining higher education. For those who obtain a university degree, these incomes rise to an average of just over $50,000/year, while a graduate or professional degree takes one into levels that average $73,000/year.[41]

But when we look closer at these data, and separate out the income experiences of Whites and communities of color, we find that one's ability to "cash in" on higher education is modified by race. There is a premium in being white that allows one to access the highest of incomes in each educational group, as one can see below. When we average the incomes of communities of color, and compare it with the incomes of whites, we find a significant improvement (or "premium") in being White which results in an ability to benefit more fully from higher education. This premium varies from a "low" of 16% for those with an associate's degree, to a high of 29% for all degree holders (bachelors, graduate and professionals alike), meaning that people of color are likely to suffer significant barriers to actualizing the full value of their education. The chart below illustrates the universal depth of these disparities and the accompanying benefit in being white.



Source: Adapted by the author from Kelly (2005) using Census 2000 data.[42]

Despite the economic "hit" to people of color, the chart above also reveals the financial benefit of education.

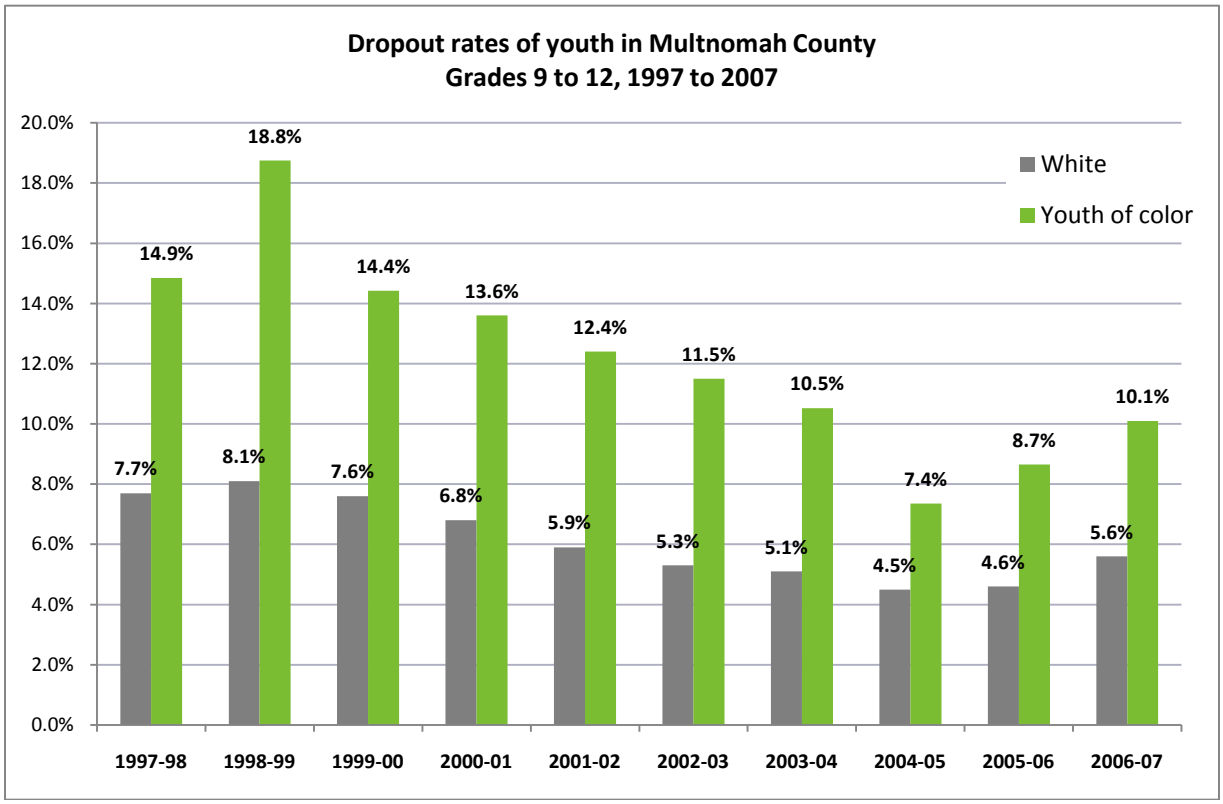
Staying in school longer lessens the likelihood of involvement in crime. Those benefits spread well beyond the lives of the individuals involved: research shows that "a 5% decrease in the dropout rate of male students across Oregon would decrease annual crime-related costs by $21 million and would increase the annual earnings of this population by $30 million."[43] In addition, the benefits of reducing dropout rates in the Portland metropolitan area are very large, leading to the suggestion of numerous local leaders that increasing high school graduation rates should be our number one economic development strategy. The specific benefits of reducing dropout rates by 50% in the local region are assessed to be:

- $38 million/year in increased earnings
- $25 million/year in increased spending and $9 million/year in additional investing
- $108 million in additional home sales for these graduates, and $4 million/year in vehicle purchases
- The creation of 300 new jobs
- $4 million/year in increased tax revenue
- 61% of these additional graduates would pursue higher education[44]

These figures are based on data that shows 27% of regional high school students do not graduate on time with a regular diploma, equaling 7,200 students in 2008.

Let's now turn our attention to more in-depth, specific measures of equity and performance in educational attainment: dropout rates for students, current academic achievement levels in Multnomah County schools and graduation levels in regional higher education settings.

The dropout level of students of color is persistently twice as high as for White students. For the last decade, we have failed to sustain students in schools at quite alarming rates, and we have failed students of color twice as badly. The variation within these rates is quite wide when one looks at the details of specific communities of color. Hispanic and Native American youth have dropout rates that are persistently almost three times worse than those of White youth.

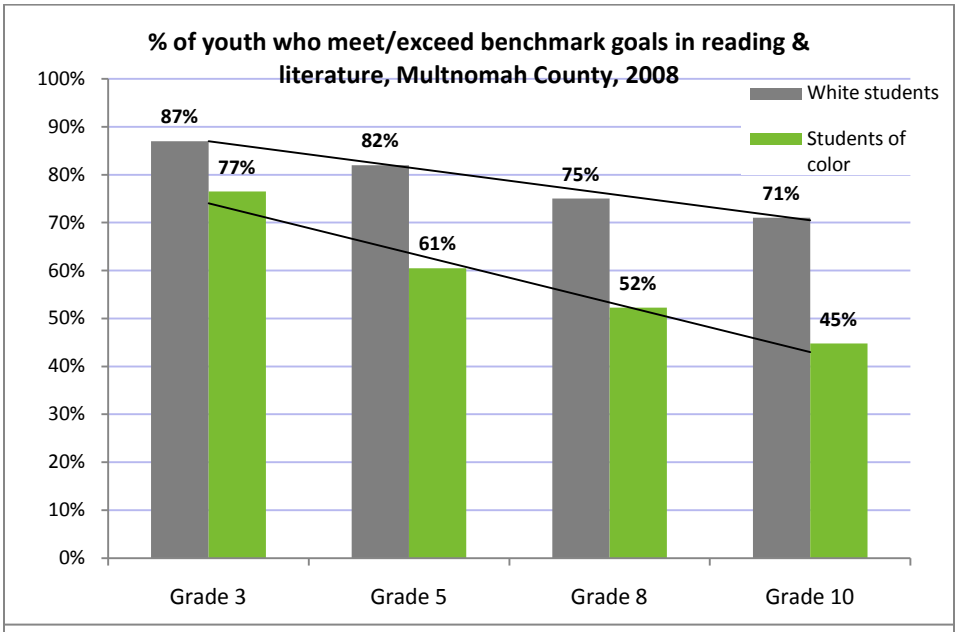


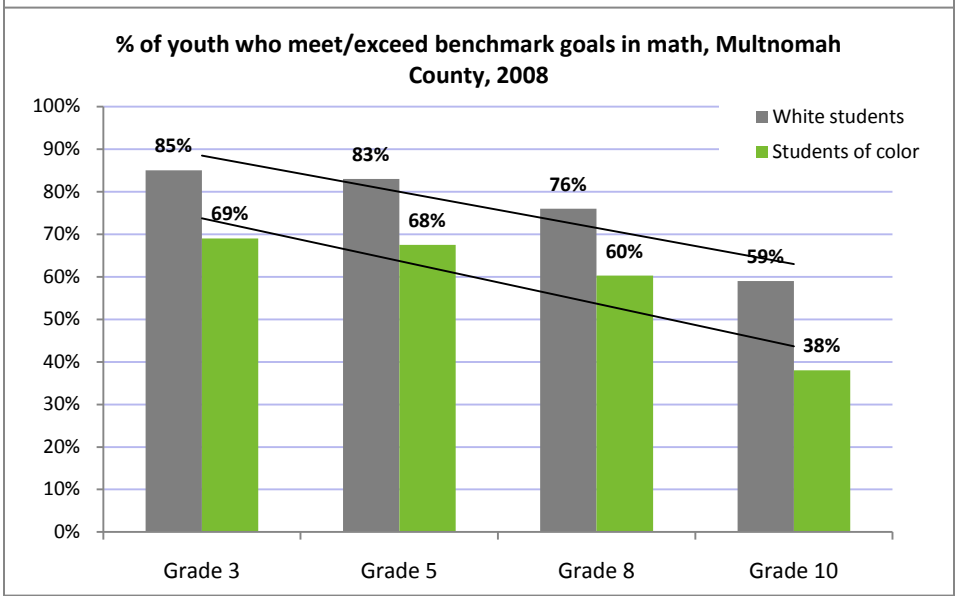
Source: Author's calculations from Oregon Department of Education, November 2008, tables by Pat Burk

Reading this graph belies the fullness of how we fail our children. Earlier we noted that in the three largest school districts in Multnomah county the graduation rates ranged between 51% and 62%. And yet, above we see that dropout rates average less than 10%. This incongruence calls for further review and explanation. For graduation rates to be approximately half of our students (and likely much worse for students of color), we must be losing an equivalent number of them throughout their educational experience.

While dropping out (or the often preferred term, "pushed out") is of significant concern, so too are the inequities in achievements. In every academic measure in grades 3 through 10, White students outperform students of color. The sole exception is Asian students in mathematics in grades 8 and 10. But lest we think that Asian students are faring well in the education system, we need to be aware that their overall educational attainment, occupational stratification, incomes and poverty rates very closely approximate those of other communities of color.

The two charts below display the most recent data available on student achievements (drawing on test scores from 2008), showing the disparities that exist between the achievements of White students and students of color.





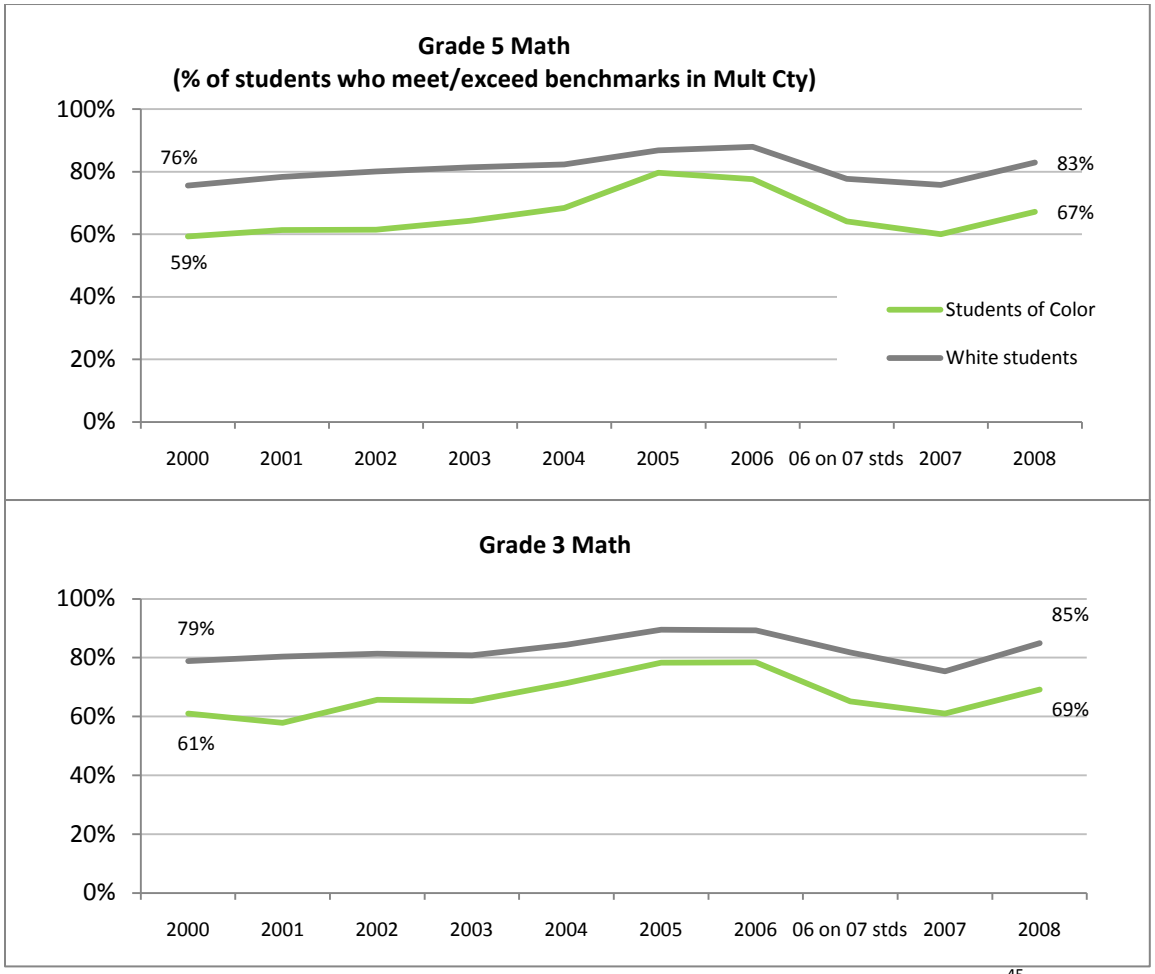
Source: Author's calculations from Oregon Department of Education data tallied by Pat Burk

What we see here is a significant slipping of performance scores from students of color. The gaps are pervasive across subjects and grades, and worsening as one gets older. The final Grade 10 results in reading are that less than half of students of color are at passing levels, and almost ⅔ are failing in math. Preparation for post-secondary education is compromised for most students of color. This indicates a high likelihood that the educational attainment profile for communities of color (as profiled in the second graph in this section) will not change in the years to come. While there may be post-secondary opportunities available through college, people of color are likely to be blocked from the choicest of jobs – management and professional positions.

Overall, the academic performance of our K-12 education system continues to fail communities of color. While researched heavily, outcomes continue to be disproportionately dismal.

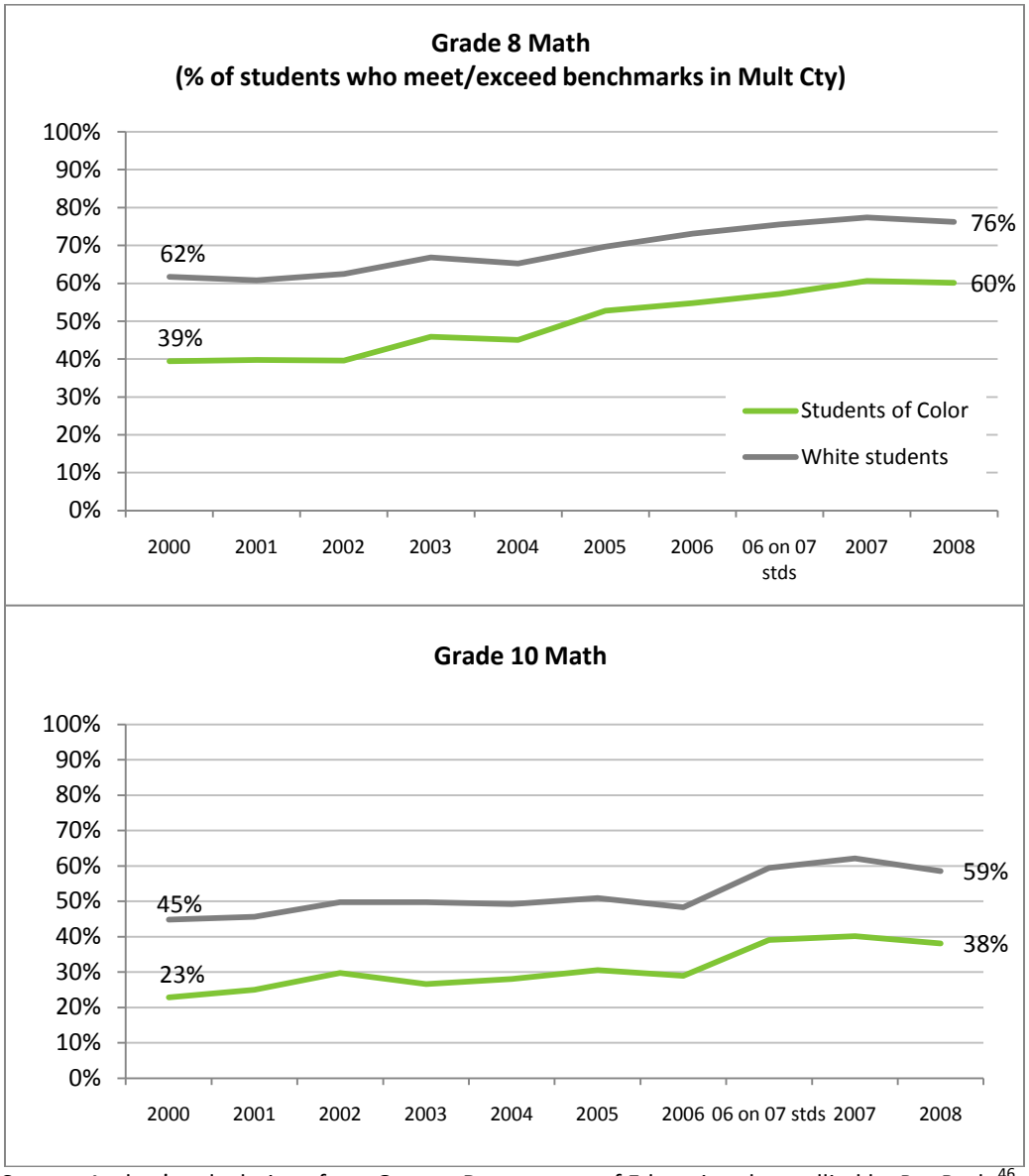
When one looks at these trends over time, however, there are some signs of improvement. These improvements are most pronounced in middle school, although the best narrowing of the gap

around 2006 has quickly unraveled. These disparities are best illuminated with the following graphs. We will look first at math performance and then turn to reading and literature.



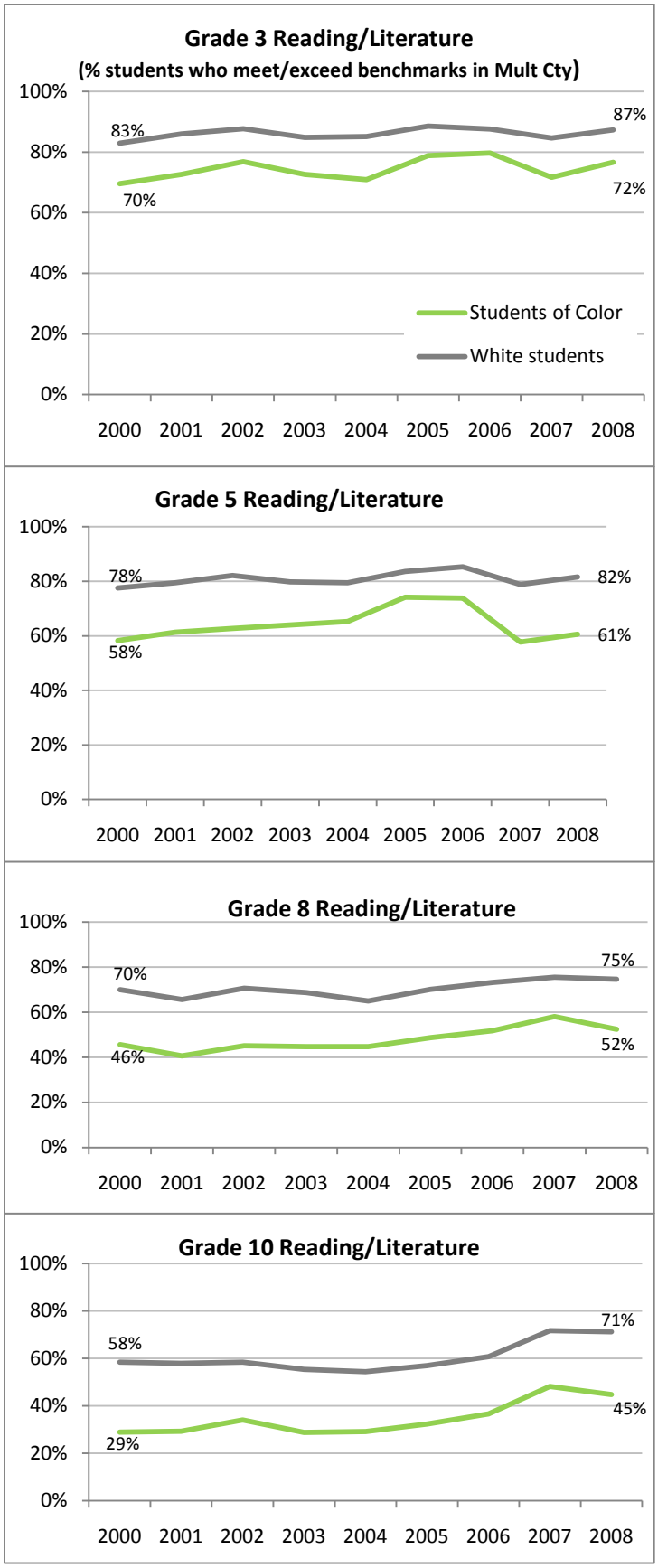
Source: Author's calculations from Oregon Department of Education data tallied by Pat Burk.[45]

The first observation is that the size of disparities is profound and only two-thirds of early grade students meet or exceed the "satisfactory" grades in standardized tests. The second feature is that in these lower grades, scores for students of color have improved, but they have not gained ground on white students, except for a brief period a few years ago. Widening inequality since 2006 is of tremendous concern to the Coalition. We are stuck in a pervasive achievement gap throughout the last decade. Let's turn attention to performances in higher grades.



Source: Author's calculations from Oregon Department of Education data tallied by Pat Burk.[46]

These scores show, again, that while improvements have been made, the magnitude of disparities remains relatively unchanged at the end of this decade as at the start. Grade 8 is, however, a place where some narrowing has occurred, and certainly tremendous gains have been made with students of color as their performance levels have risen from 39% meeting benchmark goals to 60% obtaining such successes. While the direction of student improvements has been positive, the grave situation of students of color in math is that only 38% of them are meeting the benchmark standards for achievement in math.



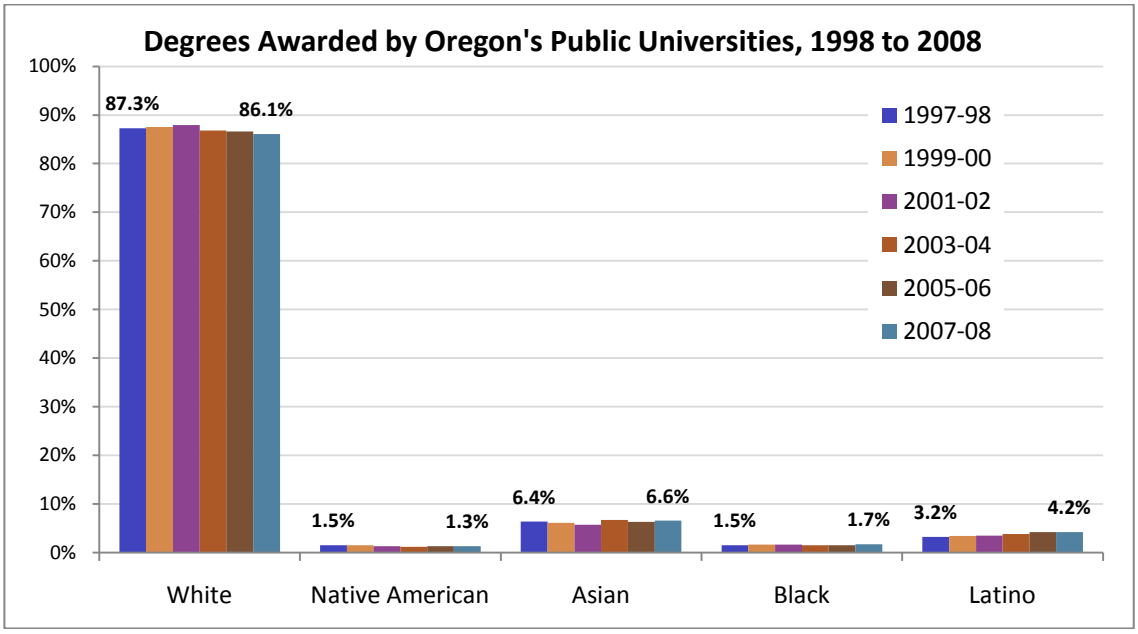
Source: Author's calculations from Oregon Department of Education data tallied by Pat Burk.

These charts show that there is a pervasive achievement gap stretching through the last eight years. While there have been significant gains, particularly in Grade 10, the gap is higher than it has ever been in the last eight years.

It is imperative that we as an entire community place the achievement gap at the center of our reform efforts. At the same time, we need to honor and affirm the efforts that charter and alternative schools like the ones at Self-Enhancement Inc., Native American Youth and Family Center and Azbuka Academy (serving the Slavic community). Similar models are encouraged for other communities of color to support the distinct social and academic needs of children of color, and to be embraced by a school that places their achievement as the highest goal of the institution. The failings of our schools to reduce disparities and successfully graduate more of our children means that our children are not prepared for the future and are thwarted from achieving the vision of becoming contributing successful members of society that we hold for them.

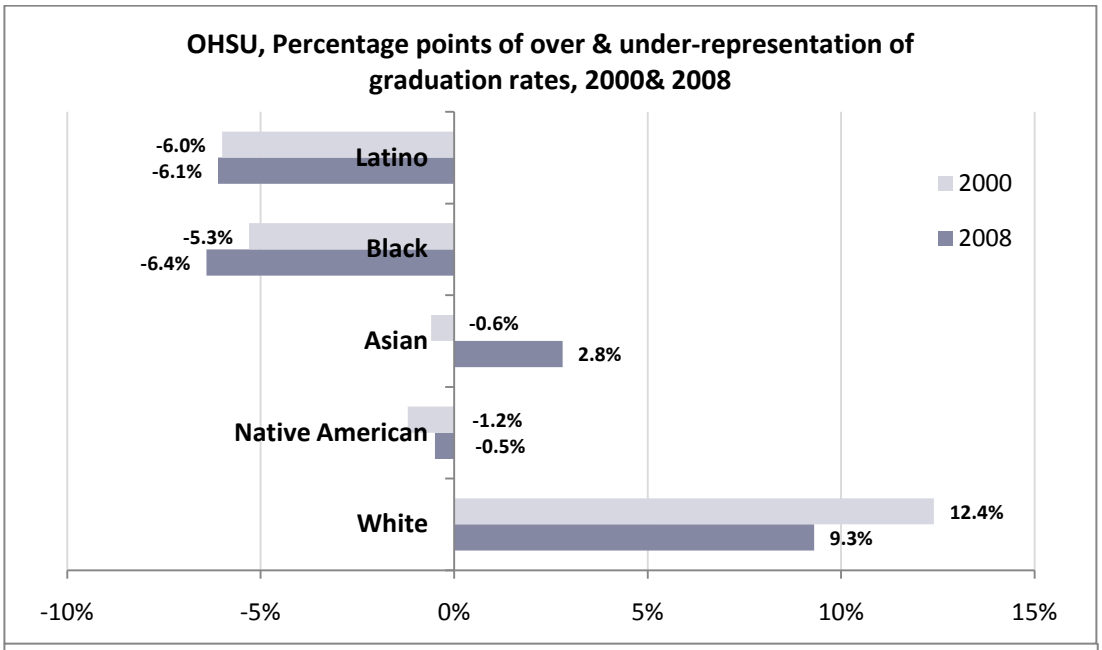
We must not let a generation go by on the hopes that it will just take more time to narrow the gap. We are stuck. The education systems and individual schools must work in partnership with communities of color to address the institutional racism that is reproduced in our schools. This includes everything from recruitment of teachers, their preparedness to practice congruently with anti-racism approaches, to increasing expectations for transparent and accountable schooling practices that will have zero tolerance for racism, and its corollary of whiteness. Reducing dropout rates, increasing graduation rates for students of color and reducing achievement disparities are the most urgent needs for educational reform today.

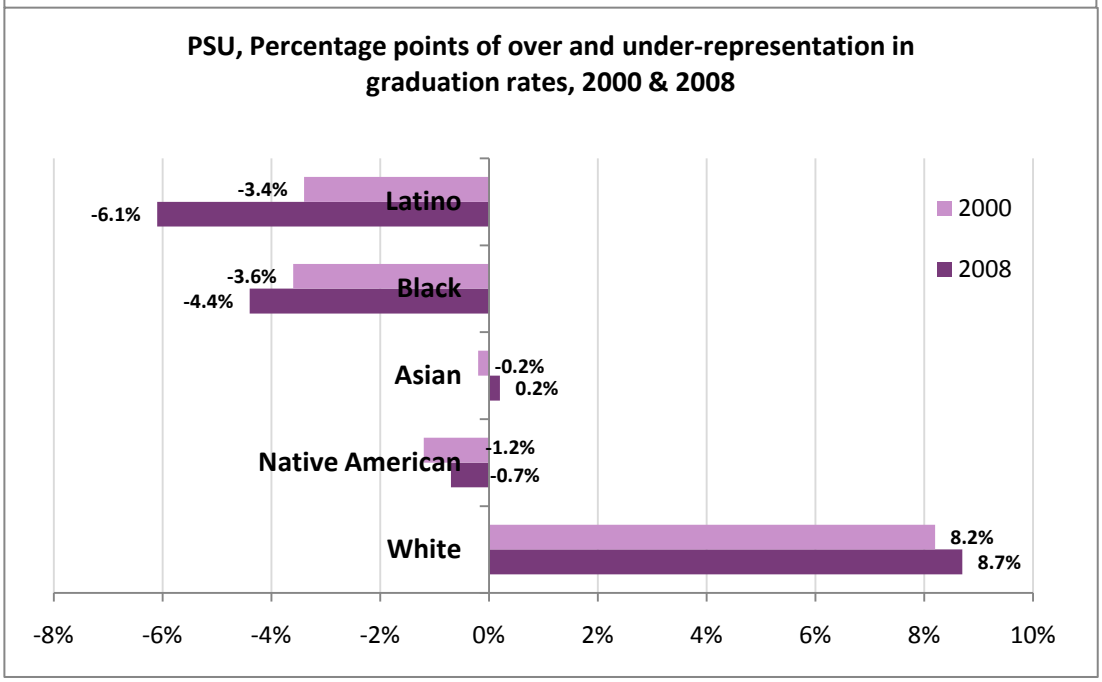
Turning attention to post-secondary education, we find that the performance of our state-wide institutions falls short on many levels. While there may be an improved array of recruitment and retention efforts for students of color, there has been no progress on changing the profile of students to better represent the population of the region. In the 10-year span profiled below, White students still make up the overwhelming majority of students graduating with degrees from public universities.[47] Their hold on these institutions has barely budged in the last decade. While raw numbers do look better, the proportionate access to higher education has stalled at dismally low levels.



Source: Author's calculations of data from Oregon University System Fact Books, selected years.

It is appropriate to narrow our assessments to local universities when considering the equity dimensions of higher education. We turn to look at admission and retention of students of color. The typical practice in assessing over/under representation is to use the geographic comparators in the same region. Two institutions in the Oregon University System are located in Multnomah county: Portland State University and OHSU. Narrowing the lens, the following graph illustrates the degree of over and underrepresentation of various communities of color and Whites across the last decade.



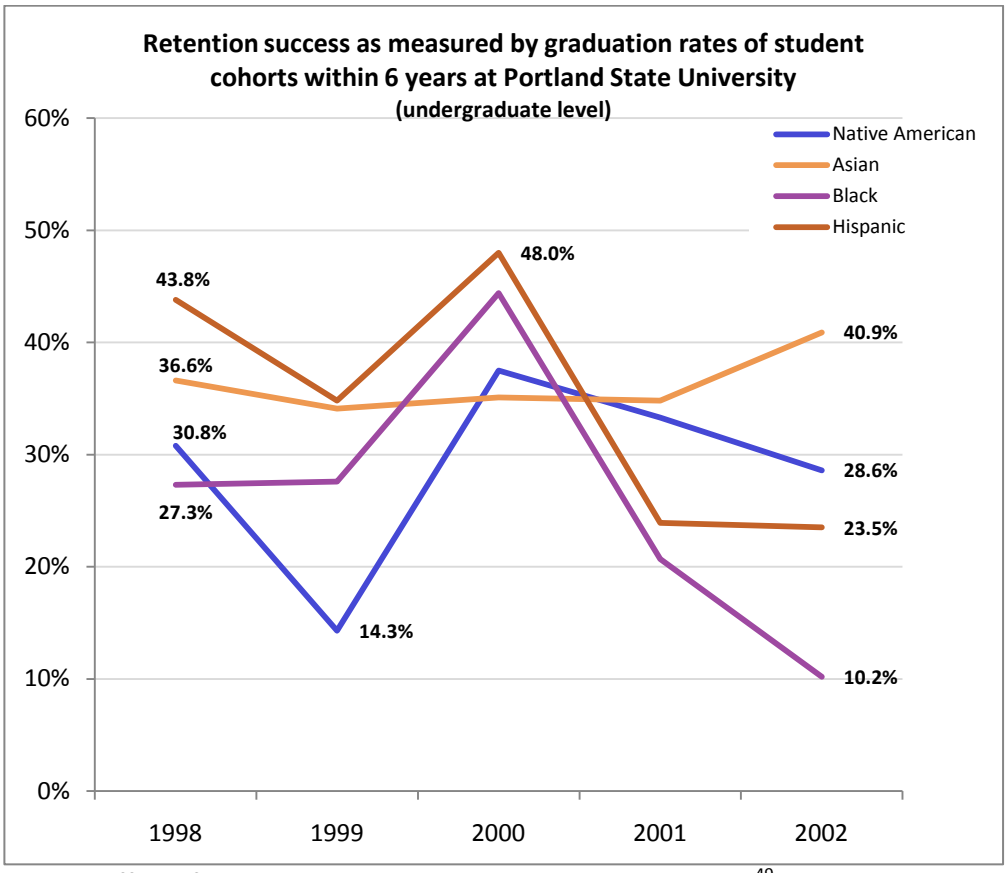


Sources: Author's calculations from Oregon University System Fact Books, selected years; Census Bureau statistics, selected years.[48]

The two graphs above illustrate the patterns of over and underrepresentation at PSU and OHSU in 2000 and 2008. They were calculated by comparing the numbers of graduating students in each category to the

population in Multnomah county of each community. There is only one community of color that has gained ground over the last eight years (Asian/Pacific Islander), and this pattern is true for both OHSU and PSU. Underrepresentation of all other communities of color continues. For those in the Hispanic and Black communities, their representation in these local higher education institutions has gotten worse, with deterioration at PSU particularly notable for Latinos and African Americans. We do recognize that there has been a significant improvement in lessening the Whiteness of the graduating body at PSU (not shown in the above graph, but evident in the original data), but when the growth of communities of color is factored in, the overrepresentation of Whites in the institution is still profound.

Turning to retention rates of students of color, we find the following patterns to exist at Portland State University.



Source: Office of Diversity and Equity, Portland State University[49]

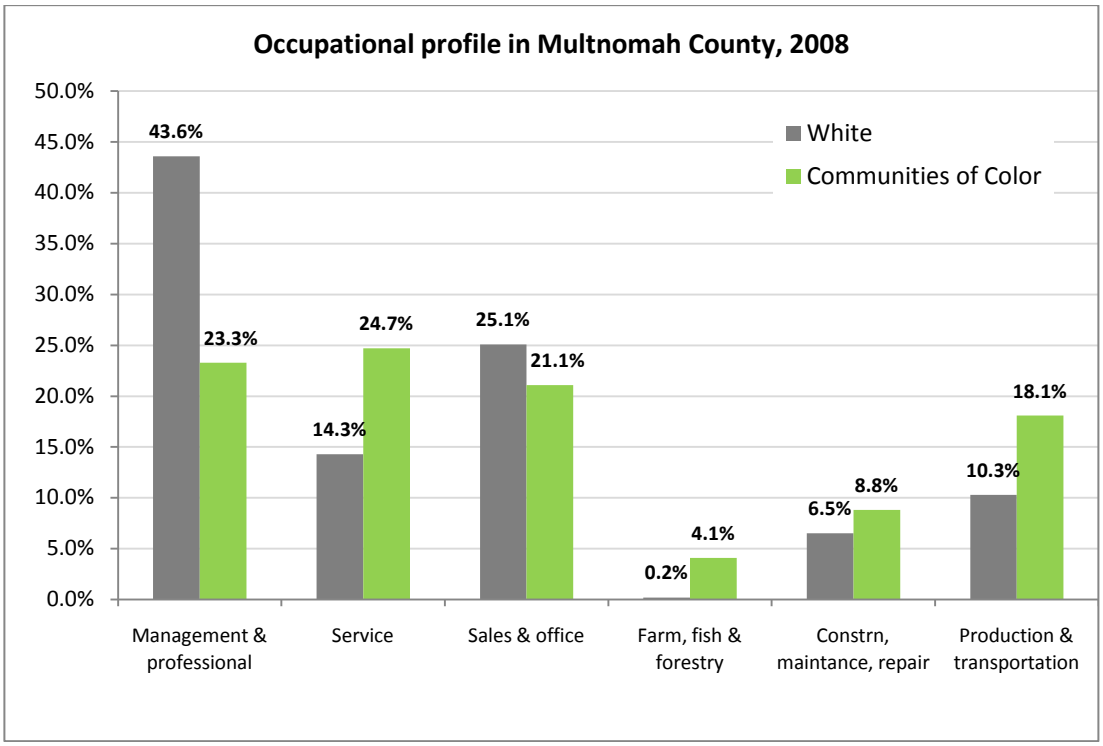
Students of color are clearly struggling to attain educational success at PSU. From a disastrous low of 10.2% of 2002 Black students who graduate within 6 years of entering, to a high of 40.9% of Asian students, we note the deterioration of graduation rates for most students of color. The levels of graduation are unacceptable and the deterioration of these rates is even more significant. The higher levels for most students who entered in 2000, show that better outcomes are possible.

Data are available that compares PSU with other institutions. The retention rates of students of color at both the University of Oregon and Oregon State University are markedly higher – PSU's composite rate (for graduates and undergraduates, transfers and non-transfers) is 37%, while the OSU is at 58% and the UofO is at 66%.

Whatever initiatives have occurred in higher education, they are inadequate to respond to changing local population conditions. While eligibility to higher education is conditional on secondary school success, equity initiatives are believed instrumental to attracting and sustaining students of color in higher education. The equity initiatives include affirmative action in hiring faculty and staff and in admitting students, retention practices that support students of color, lowering of fees to increase accessibility and scholarship/loan programs targeted at students of color, departmental and institutional equity plans to ensure that once students are admitted, the local programs do not push them out by tolerating a hostile educational environment (even if unintended). All of these initiatives need to be centered on the needs of students of color with the intention to improve educational outcomes for communities of color.

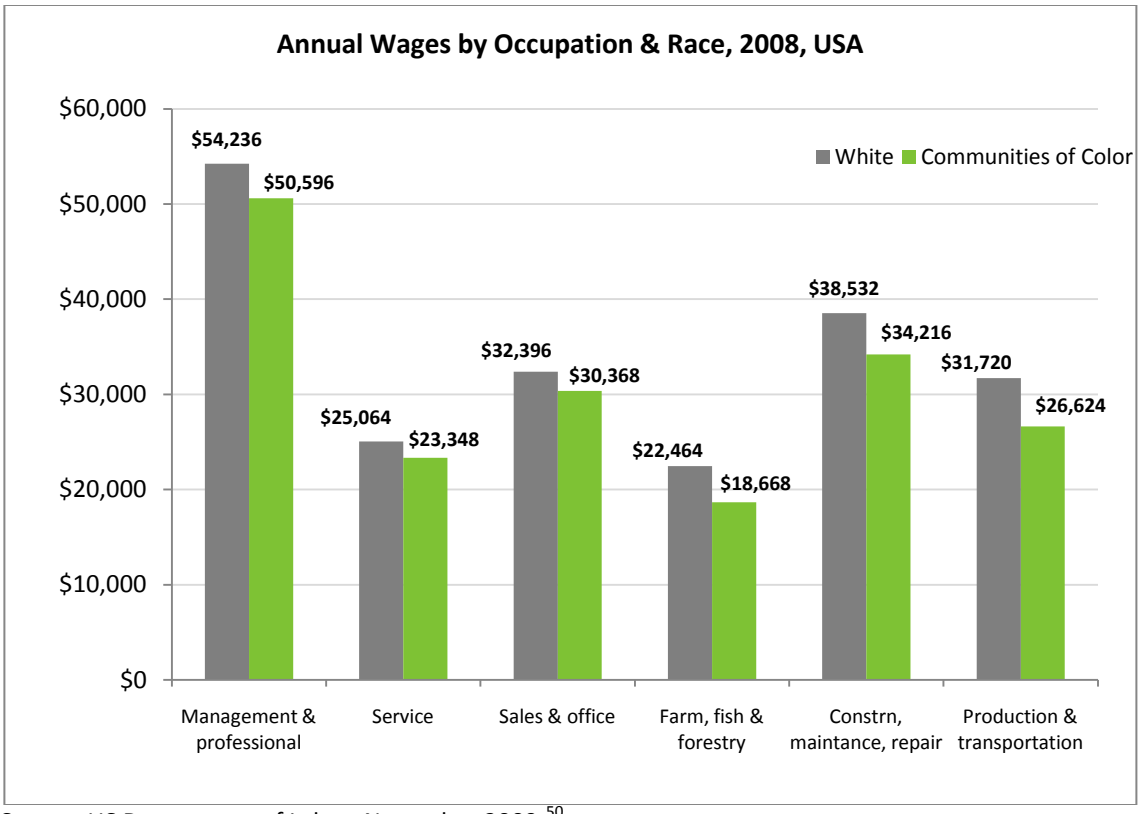
Occupational profile

The logical outcome of inadequate educational attainment is that employment opportunities shrink and access to better paying jobs, with better working conditions, is thwarted. Indeed, such is the result facing communities of color. From the sectors listed below, the "better jobs" in the county continue to be reserved largely for Whites. The distribution of our community's occupations follows traditional lines. This means that White people continue to be the bosses and the professionals, and people of color continue to serve Whites, as their overrepresentation in service occupations reveals. In addition, people of color continue to feed and house Whites, and move stuff around (usually of service to stores where Whites are better able to shop and consume, since they have better incomes).



Source: American Community Survey, 2008.

The average income in each occupation is available at a national level. What we can see below is that despite holding similar positions in employment, variations of about 10% exist between workers of different races. The variance in wages between categories of occupations serves to explain why management and professional positions are most desired and most held by Whites.



Source: US Department of Labor, November 2009.[50]

What are people of color more likely hired to do locally, compared to nationally? The results are troubling. We are much less likely to be the expert or the person in charge. Such people are more likely to be White here in Multnomah county than the USA average. This means that when you ask to speak to "the person in charge," you are much more likely to face a White person. Today in Multnomah county, almost one in every two White people will become managers or professionals. But less than one in every four people of color get such jobs. In the USA in general, these results are much more equal, with 38% of Whites getting to be the boss, while 30% of people of color access such jobs. This means the stratification of our labor market is deeper with greater access barriers that are connected to race and ethnicity than exist nationally.

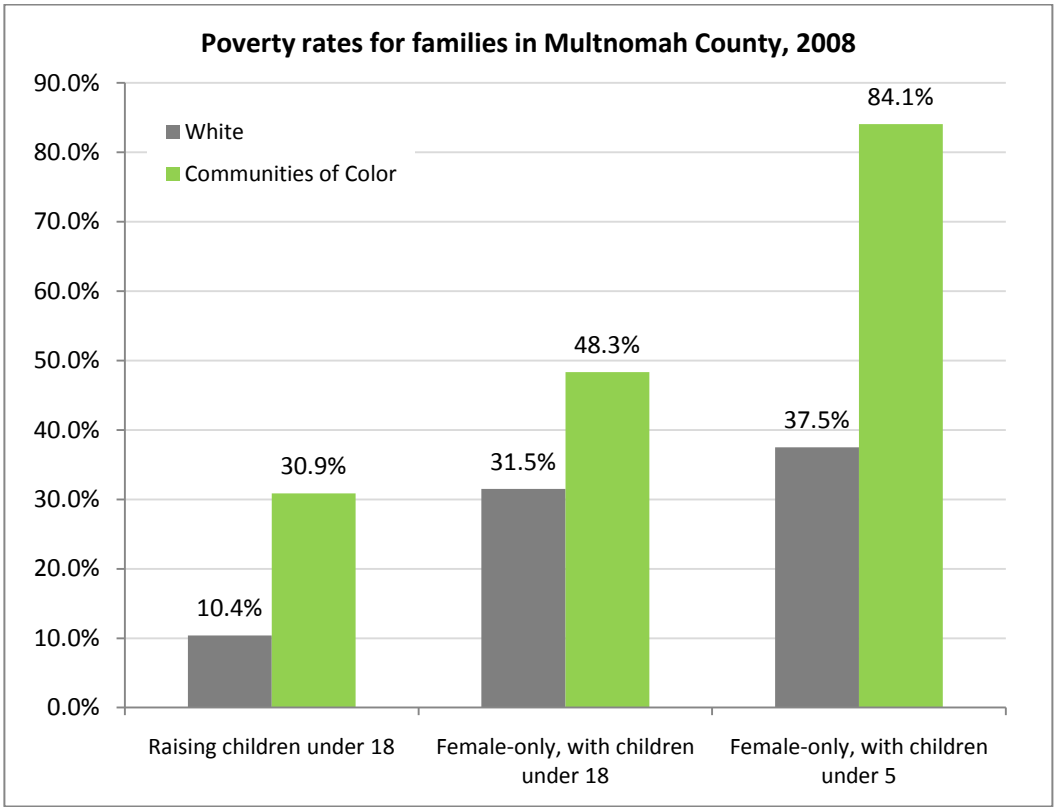
Occupation - 2008	White		People of Color	
	Multnomah	USA	Multnomah	USA
Management & professional	43.6%	38.3%	23%	30%
Service	14.3%	14.1%	25%	22%
Sales & office	25.1%	26.4%	21%	24%
Farm, fish & forestry	0.2%	0.5%	4%	1%
Construction, maintenance, repair	6.5%	9.3%	9%	9%
Production & transportation	10.3%	11.3%	18%	15%

Source: Author's calculations from American Community Survey, 2008.

Poverty rates

As one might predict given the education and occupation profiles shown above, those overrepresented at the lowest end of the income ladder are people of color. Poverty rates are a significant measure of

desperation, and an illustration of the failures of the economy to provide adequate incomes for the community at large. While most of us accept that some amount of poverty is a regrettable consequence of any economic system, the rates illustrated below show how the patterns of poverty reveal something more than a consequence of the economic system. If this situation was purely economic, then the racial composition of people in poverty would reflect the population distribution. Instead, people of color are vastly overrepresented among those who have inadequate incomes. The reader will also notice that this is more than "just" a consequence of low education because the chances of being a poor single parent depend more on gender and race than they do on education.



Source: Author's calculations from American Community Survey, 2008.

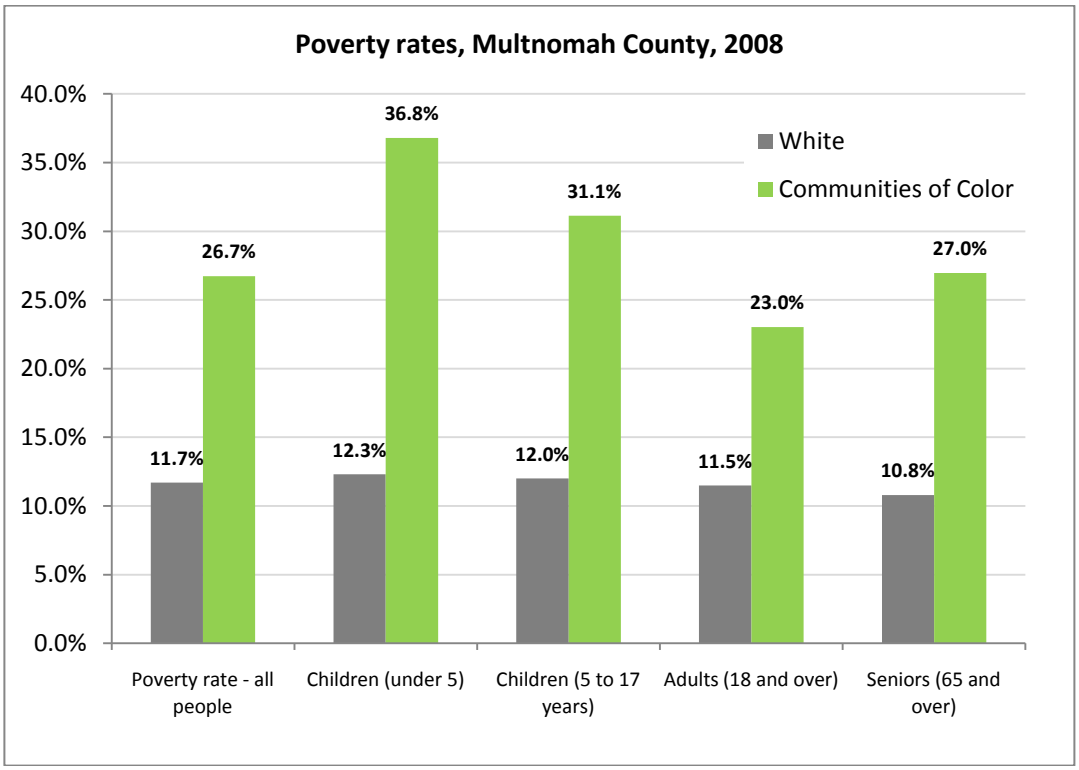
The dire situation facing families of color needs considerable and immediate attention. Consider the parenting predicament facing families of color, particularly single parent women-headed families. Imagine what it must be like to raise children and have to suffer the indignities of poverty. Poverty hurts – and harms children. Think of how many resources are tied to having money to pay for them. Today's school environment has few supplements, like sports, music and art. Housing is marginal and precarious, because poor families cannot afford safe and secure housing. And the expense of childrearing means children go without, adding stress, trauma and risk to vast numbers of families of color. No parent wants to raise their children in such conditions, yet we fail them year after year. These family poverty disparities are worsening over time (as illustrated in the later section "Summary table of disparities").

Turning now to individual poverty rates, we see that poverty rates are significantly worse for communities of color. The table below illustrates the poverty rates for various age groups, and the details for specific communities of color.

2008	White	Communities of Color	Hispanic/Latino	African American	Asian	Native American
Poverty rate - all people	11.7%	26.7%	27.0%	32.6%	12.9%	34.4%
Children (under 5)	12.3%	36.8%	33.3%	42.3%	15.9%	55.7%
Children (5 to 17 years)	12.0%	31.1%	34.5%	40.2%	9.9%	39.9%
Adults (18 and over)	11.5%	23.0%	22.3%	27.8%	13.2%	28.8%
Seniors (65 and over)	10.8%	27.0%	31.1%	30.4%	25.3%	21.0%

Source: Author's calculation of data from American Community Survey, 2008.

When we combine the poverty levels for all children, we find that while the child poverty rate for White children is a dismal 12.5% (equivalent to 1-in-8 children), and this figure deteriorates dramatically to 33.3% of children of color. This means that 1-in-3 children of color live in poverty. The chart below highlights the differences of poverty between Whites and communities of color, illustrating that poverty rates are 200% to 300% worse among communities of color.



Source: Author's calculation of data from American Community Survey, 2008.

Being White continues to serve as a protective factor for poverty. Child poverty means our children are housed precariously, change schools often, go hungry, and are denied access to the fullness of society's resources available to most children. Child poverty is probably the most reprehensible of society's practices, and it strangles our children and their future. Their health, wellness, academic success and capacity to prepare for the future are placed at significant risk.

While Multnomah county may be a county that prides itself on its liberalism, it holds a dismal record on child poverty, particularly for communities of color. Whiteness, while not a guarantee of living outside of poverty, is certainly a protective factor to protect one's children from poverty, as "only" one in every eight White children is poor.

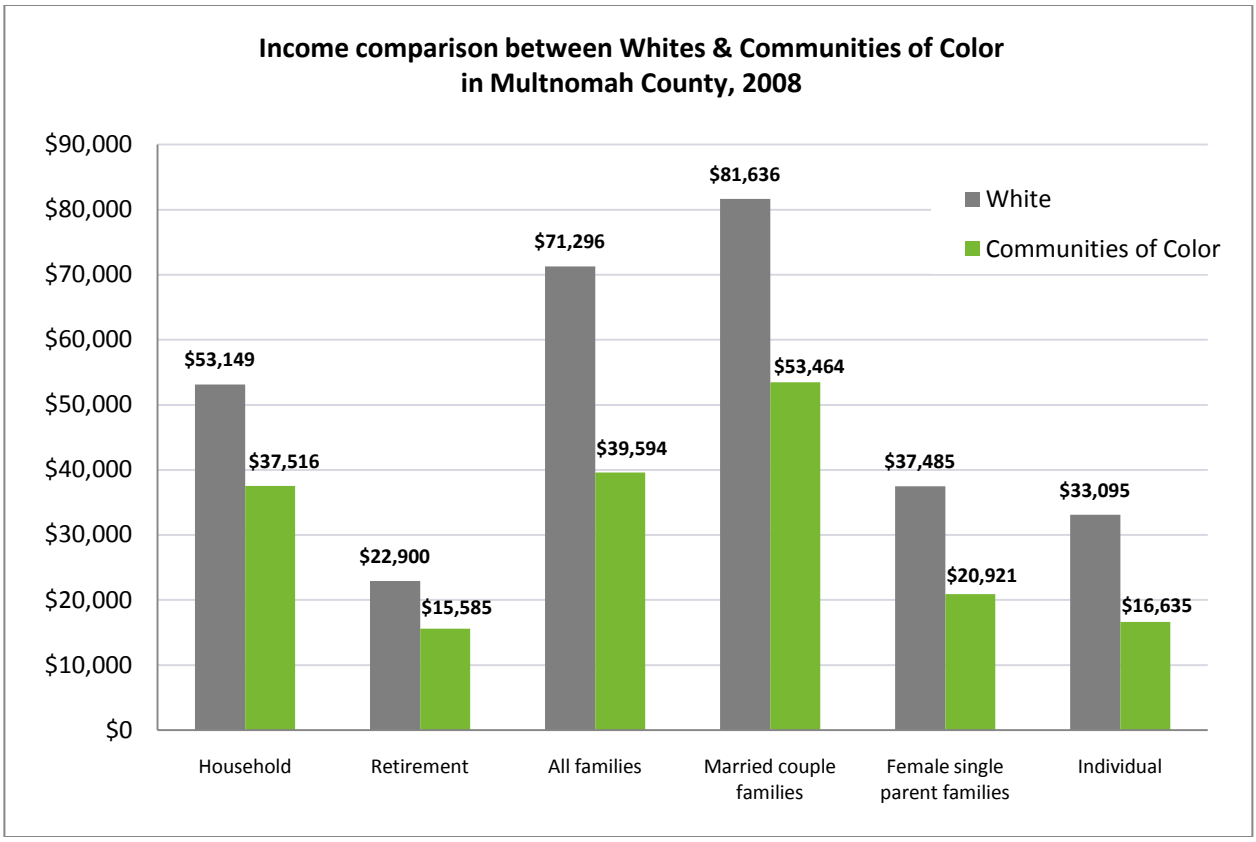
Every community of color suffers from child poverty at levels that are at least 12% worse than the national averages, and in one case (Native American) has 64% higher child poverty rates. Our collective pride in creating a niche of progressive practices must be held to account to ensure the lives of our children – all our children – are given top policy priorities. This comparison makes it possible to see that other pathways are possible, as the majority of children in the country live lives much less burdened by poverty. We can be heartened that there may be examples elsewhere in the country that do a much better job than we in the local region in keeping our children out of poverty.

2008		Under 18 poverty rate		% difference
		Multnomah County	USA	(local from national)
Child poverty rate (all children)		19.6%	18.2%	*7.7%*
	White children	12.5%	10.7%	*16.8%*
	Children of color	33.3%	25.1%	*33.0%*
	Asian	11.9%	10.6%	*12.3%*
	Black/African American	40.9%	33.7%	*21.4%*
	Hispanic	34.8%	28.0%	*24.3%*
	Native American	45.7%	27.9%	*63.8%*

Source: American Community Survey, 2008.

Incomes

Most national attention to the disparities reduction efforts have been in the institutional arenas of criminal and juvenile justice, child welfare and scholastic disparities. While essential, these efforts sustain focus on civil service workers who are obligated to work for the public interest. Notice, however, that non-public workers and institutions are left out of such a gaze. The most important omission is that of incomes and employment practices where, as we see below, communities of color are not sufficiently paid, and suffer massive inequities in incomes.



Source: Author's calculations using data from the American Community Survey, 2008.

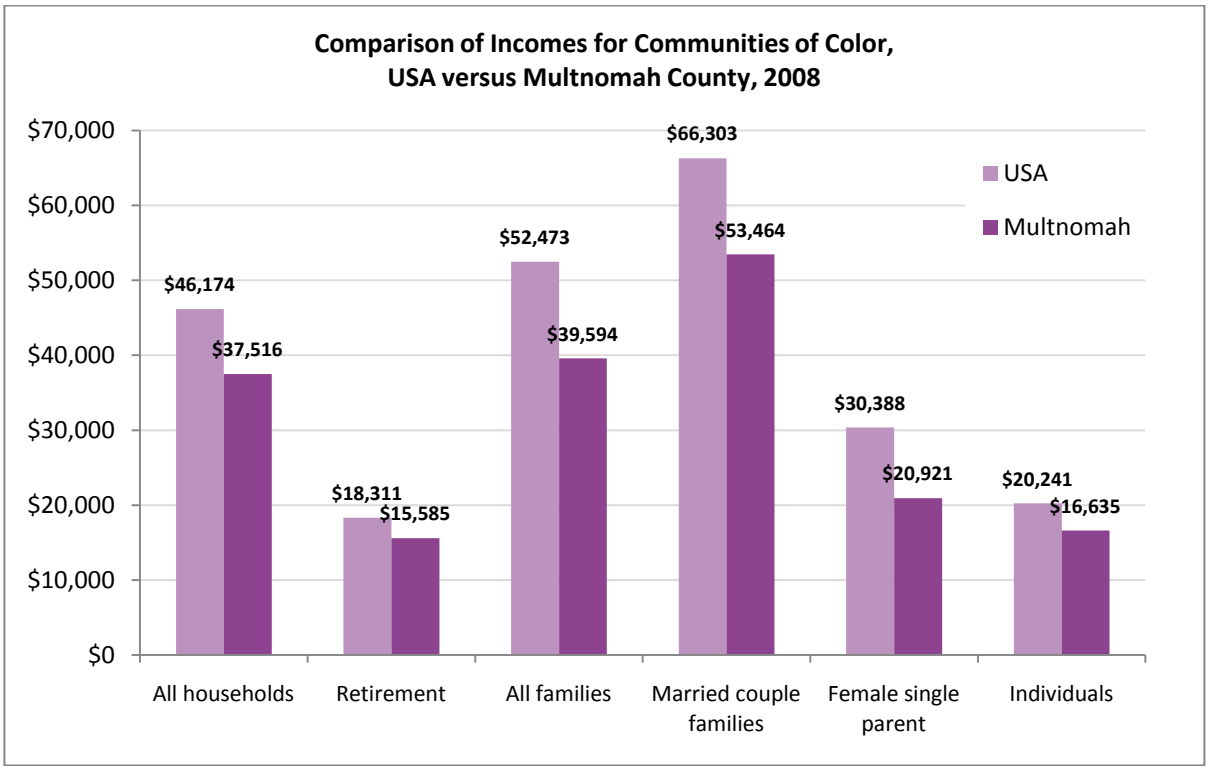
There is, however, a role for the state in the incomes of communities of color. Our elected officials need to add the elimination of income disparities to their racial equity objectives. Various levels of governments can leverage better jobs and better working conditions for communities of color. So too can they enact a policy environment that improves wages and benefits. Educational reform efforts that eliminate inequities facing communities of color are an essential companion dimension to this work, as education is an important pathway out of poverty.

As we have seen in the text until this point, people of color are disproportionately represented in poverty and low income, and relatively few in the ranks of upper income residents. Looking at the chart above, there is a significant variation in average incomes between Whites and people of color. The widest difference is for "all families" where the gap is almost $32,000. The largest percentage gap is for individuals where the penalty for being of color is that one makes 50% less income than Whites.

If one remembers only one detail from the graph above, let it be the individual average, where Whites earn $33,100/year while people of color earn $16,600/year. This is half, resulting in the "bonus" for being White at almost 100% income improvements.

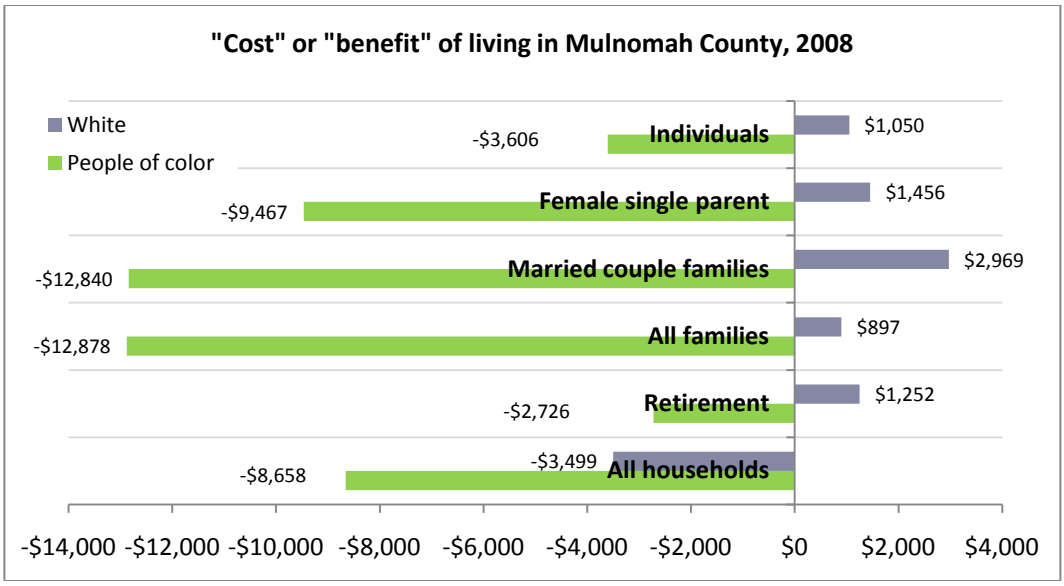
Incomes for people of color are a national disgrace. In today's era, one is shamed and demeaned for needing social assistance to survive. This spreads to children as well for they know hunger, envy and anger as they come into daily contact with those who have enough to thrive. Compromising the future of our children by shortchanging the parents' wages according to their racial identity should catalyze all of us to action.

There are dramatic comparisons between the local economic situation for people of color and the national averages for the same populations. Highlighted below are incomes for communities of color and their national equivalent. Here we see the marked fall for people of color who live in Multnomah county. Here we fare significantly worse than people of color in the rest of the nation. This "hit" is most dramatic for single female parents raising children. Here the "cost" of living in Multnomah county is 31.1%, up from 28.5% a year ago, meaning that such women of color are struggling much harder to raise their children than, on average, elsewhere in the nation and that this disparity is getting worse.



Source: Author's calculations using data from American Community Survey, 2008.

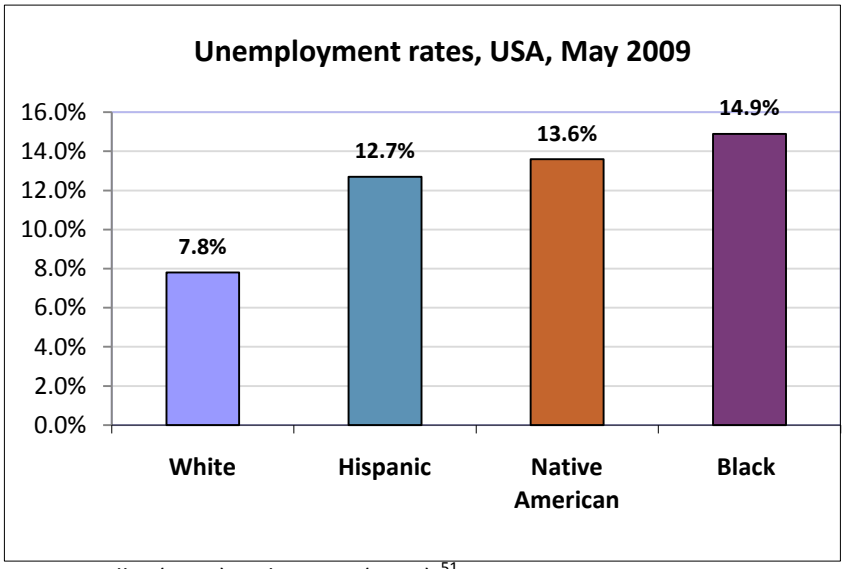
National comparisons on income levels for communities of color are terrible. Every income group in every community suffers by living in this region. Incomes for people of color are worse across every race and ethnicity than the national averages. The group that suffers most markedly due to their race are Asian families, whose local social and economic situation cause them to suffer a penalty of $20,946 that they would not likely face if they lived elsewhere. Notice, however, that the same is not true of White families – they have incomes at roughly the same level as the national situation.



Source: Author's calculations using data from American Community Survey, 2008. This chart compares each value for Multnomah county with the USA levels, showing the benefits or costs of living here compared with the national data. Note that "all households" is not an averaging of the other bars, but rather a compilation of all household units such as families, individuals, multi-family dwellings, rooming houses and units with several roommates living together.

Unemployment rates

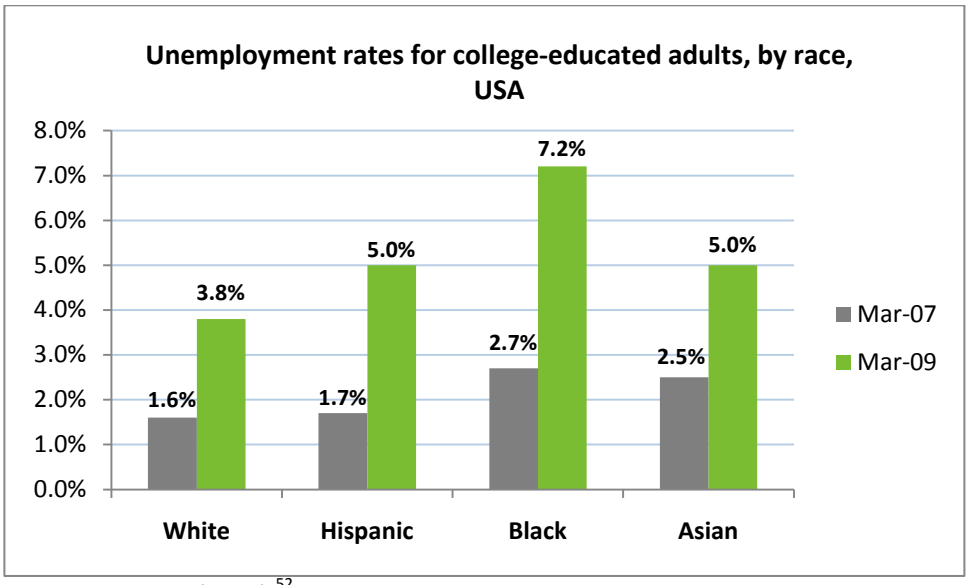
Unemployment rates are one reason for low incomes among people of color, who fare considerably worse in unemployment levels. While the rates are not yet available by race and ethnicity at the local level, these national data are extremely troubling, as the May 2009 rates for communities of color average 13.7%, which is 76% worse than Whites. Given the rapidly deteriorating economic climate through the last two years, it is important to provide as up-to-date data as possible. Current data by these communities of color are not available, even at the national level. These most recent data are illustrated below.



Source: Miller (2009) and Austin. (2009).[51]

While we anticipated that the "hit" to communities of color would be worse than for Whites, we did not expect it to be edging close to double. Earlier data for the local area showed a 31% worse rate. The damage to local employment for people of color is anticipated to be horrendous, particularly given that the local disparities are revealing a consistent pattern of inequities that are worse than the national averages.

There is a significant "caution" embedded in the unemployment data. When these data are broken down by education, it reveals that education does not protect communities of color from unemployment. While it buffers the impact, it provides no guarantee of employment rates that might approximate those of Whites. Furthermore, the data shows that communities of color have been much harder hit by the deteriorating economy, even when comparing similarly educated workers. Notice again that we have a data quality issue, as much national data does not report on the experiences of Native Americans.

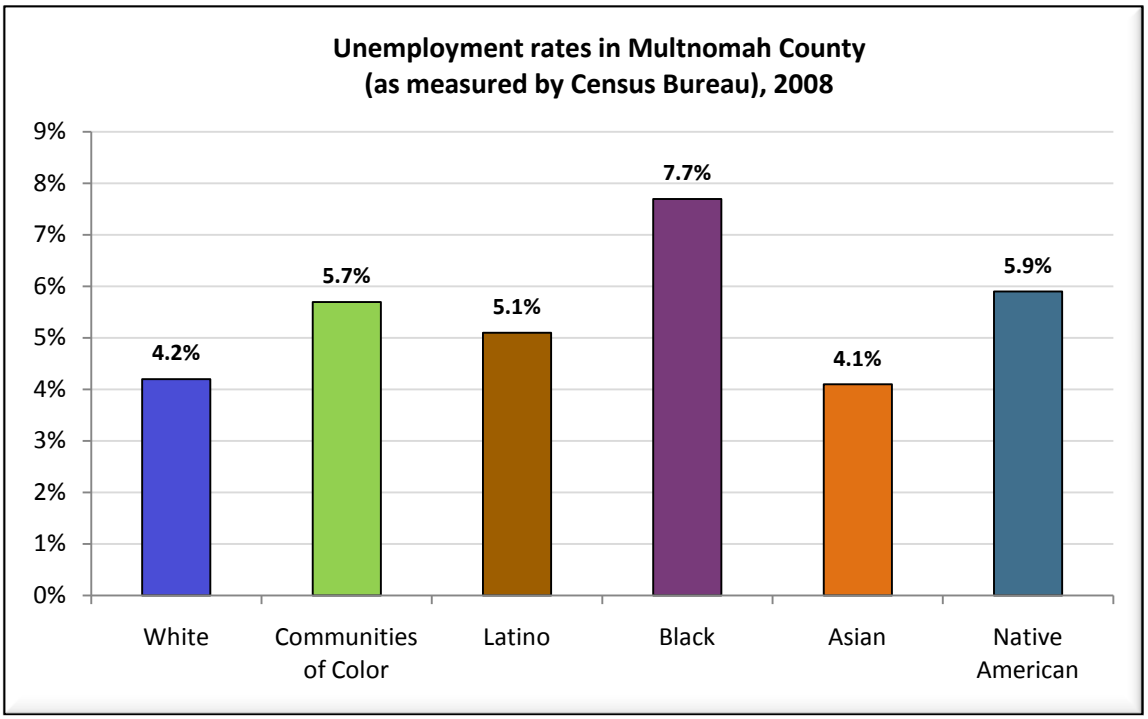


Source: Austin, A. (2009).[52]

One's income is also being shown to have a significant impact on unemployment. While only available at the national level, new data show that low income workers have an unemployment rate that is ten times higher than high income workers. The top-earning 10% of workers have an unemployment rate that is 3.2% while the lowest paid workers have an unemployment rate of 30.8%.[53] The same pattern exists with underemployment (workers wanting full time work who can only find part-time or temporary work). Today, the higher one's income is, the greater the likelihood that one is employed. This runs contrary to the recessions of the 1990s when mid-level managers were laid off and corporations restructured regardless of one's status in the organization. It seems that the new era of employment has returned to the power of the "pecking order" where those with more power economically are able to secure for themselves protections from a vulnerable economy. There is no reason to believe that this pattern is any different in our local region and among our communities of color. Indeed, it is likely these data are even worse, as Oregon has some of the worst employment figures in the nation, and the economic situation of our communities of color is radically worse than Whites.

The most up-to-date unemployment data are not available by race and ethnicity. Such data are, however, available through the Census Bureau's American Community Survey but are calculated in a significantly different manner than the customary national and state data that are released shortly after the end of the

month. In the ACS, we are able to see the variations among our communities of color and the significant escalation of unemployment levels for several of our communities.



Source: American Community Survey, 2008.

We can thus see that communities of color have significantly higher unemployment levels than Whites. This is a 1.5 percentage point increase, which translates into a 35.7% higher unemployment rate. This is unacceptable, revealing deep disparities in unemployment.

Income support programs

The dire economic times of 2009 have hit powerfully hard in Multnomah county, and the rest of Oregon. Two measures of this distress illuminate the extent of the emerging crisis for communities of color: food stamp recipient numbers and TANF numbers. These data are not available disaggregated on the basis of race. Over the last year (August 2008 to 2009), there has been a 33.9% increase in those receiving food stamps. Today, there are more than 126,000 people receiving food stamps in Multnomah county.[54] Increases in TANF recipients are worse – two figures are available: one for single parents where increases of 18% were experienced last year, and the other for two-parent families where increases of 116.4% occurred last year in Multnomah county.

Given the stop-gap nature of both programs (as food stamps typically stretch only 2 week on average[55] and TANF fails to provide enough for families to meet their basic needs), it is not surprising that food bank use is rapidly rising (with use up by 13% over the last year). But Oregon food banks do not reach communities of color as effectively as Whites. In total, communities of color have poverty rates in Oregon of 32.4%.[56] Yet, according to the Oregon Food Bank Network's 2008 report, food bank use by people of color is only 26% of their users. Even among the most marginalized of remedial support services (our food banks), communities of color are unable to access our fair share of resources.

Employment & training initiatives

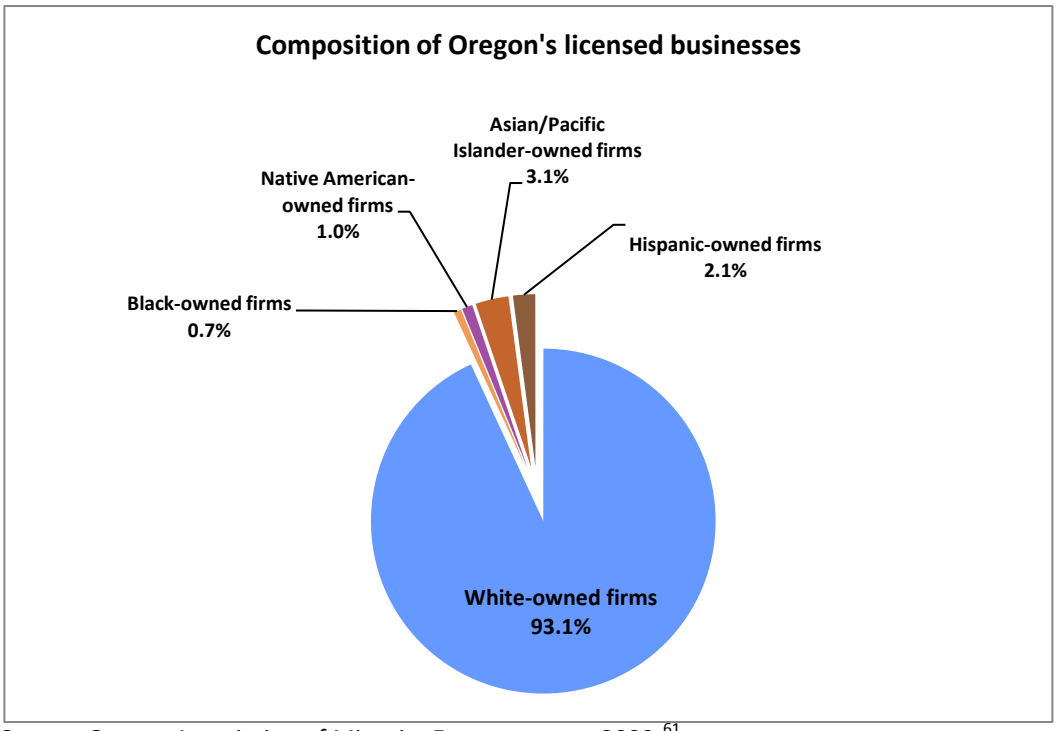
Governments are able to influence the employment landscape in a number of areas. The first is that they establish the landscape of practices for employers through an array of features such as land use planning, transportation networks, public goods and services such as sewage lines and roads, tax structures, and incentive programs to attract businesses. In addition, they have more direct influence over the wages and working conditions through minimum wages, living wage initiatives, affirmative action policies and labor laws. Furthermore, governments are responsible for training programs and for education at all levels, which prepares workers for jobs and helps them adjust to changes in the employment landscape. While employers ultimately have direct control over wages and working conditions, they operate in the frameworks established by all levels of governments.

The Coalition of Communities of Color gives priority to four areas of government influence over the employment arena. The first is to respond to the government contracting practices which continue to allocate public dollars to an overwhelmingly White set of contractors. In 2007-2008, the City of Portland allocated only 0.09% of its contracting dollars to minority-owned businesses (defined as businesses which are at least 51% minority-owned and operated).[57] At the same time, the city managed to designate more than ten times that amount to women-owned businesses, indicating a potential to respond more affirmatively to equity issues. In response to this inadequate pattern, the City of Portland has required that racial equity hold a greater priority in the allocation process where bids are evaluated and awarded. In the three-person teams (that can be larger) which review bids and award contracts, at least one evaluator of color must participate when decisions are not awarded by lowest price. These representatives must be vetted by the Alliance of Minority Chambers of Commerce. While this is a positive step in advancing equity practices as it changes the decision making process itself, such review practices may marginalize the voice of these minority members, as concrete targets for allocation decisions have been omitted from the new policy. A more robust solution could have been to set clear targets for reducing the inequalities in these contracting results. Even within the protected contracting practices, where there is an intention to increase the City's awards to communities of color, White men gain the lion's share of these dollars, etching out 51% of the awards for their own businesses.[58]

At the County government level, there is a similar sheltered contracting process that promotes contracting with minority businesses, women-owned enterprises and emerging small businesses. In this program, contracts to minority-owned businesses were 12 of 120 contracts in 2008, and 10 of 109 contracts in 2009 which is a slippage of 0.8 percentage points. The dollar value of these awards for 2009 grew more than $200,000 to $1.1 million.[59] We are troubled by the very low amount of contracting dollars that flow to minority-owned businesses, stagnating at a 3-year average (2007, 2008 and 2009) of 5.0% of total awards in this remedial program designed to increase access of historically marginalized groups to County contracts. Better performance is noted in the total contracting arena, where there is a three-year pattern of improved access for minority-owned business and a much larger allocation of 23.3% of total funds.

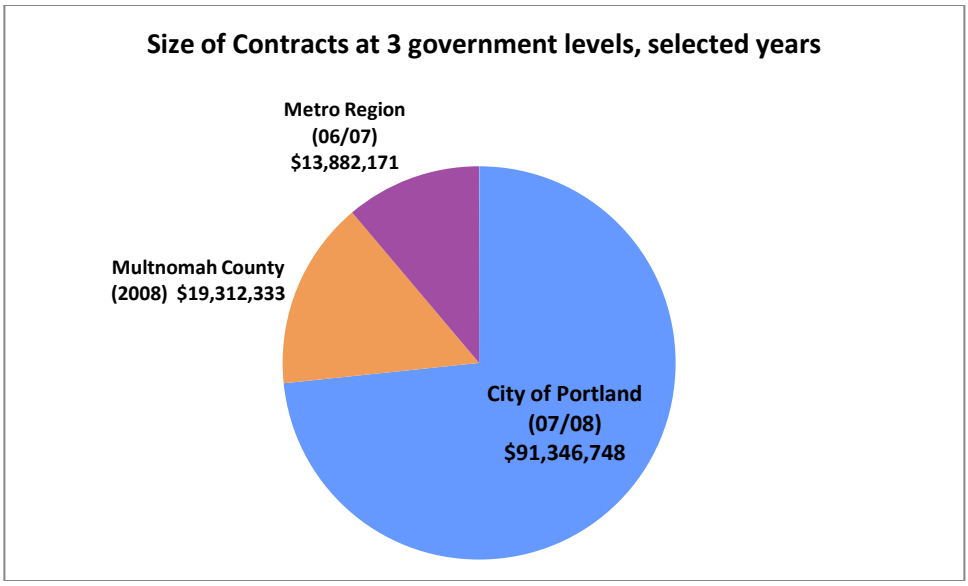
At the regional level, the Metropolitan government aims for a 17% target for traditionally marginalized groups (people of color, women and small emerging business owners). Neither the County nor the City has such targets, which could assist at all levels of decisions being made. If we were to use population counts as the benchmark, we would expect 26.3% of such funds to be allocated to minority businesses. But, as yet, issues such as lack of enough assets to access decent credit, insufficient mentoring, competitive bid processes that favor firms with lengthy state contracting experiences, insufficient help in the procurement process and lack of information about contracting options serve to create barriers for the emergence of minority-owned businesses and their success in the competitive process for public

dollars.[60] As we see below, only 7% of Oregon's firms are owned by people of color. If practices were barrier-free, both for the creation of businesses and for the contracting processes, we would expect that almost 30% of this funding to be available for communities of color.



Source: Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, 2009.[61]

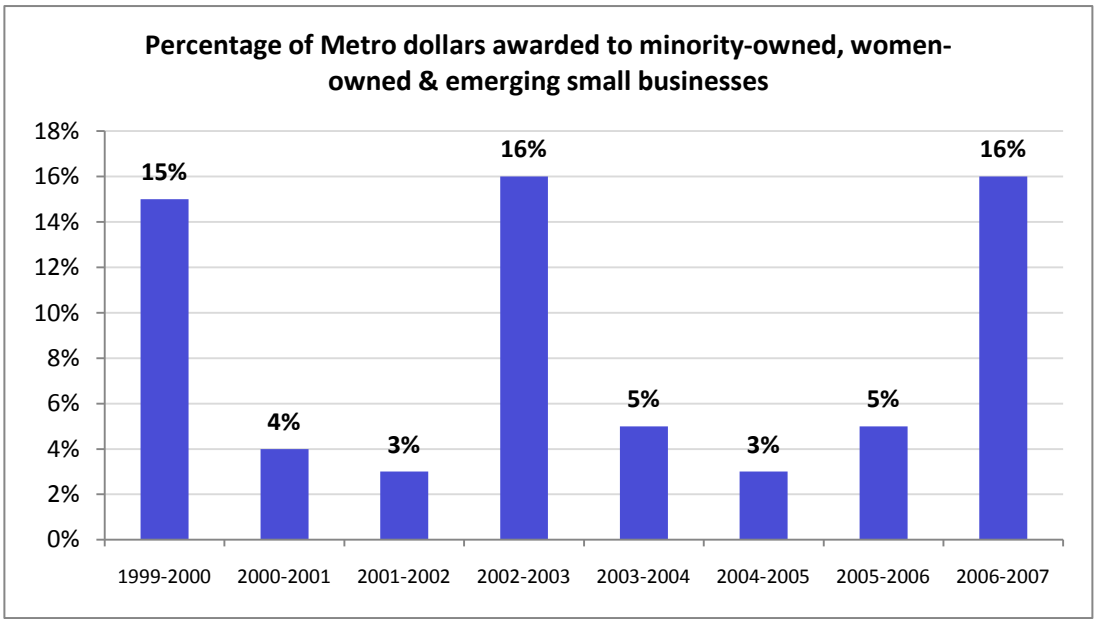
The profile of Oregonian businesses suggests how difficult it is to build a positive business environment for communities of color. These businesses then face challenges in being certified with the State of Oregon – while 20,677 minority-owned businesses operate in Oregon, only 3.3% of them are certified, and fewer still are certified as "minority-owned businesses" for procurement eligibility. Obtaining such certification allows them to bid on contracts and access technical assistance programs. At all three levels examined (County, City and Metro), the size of the sector is significant, totaling $124.5 million, as divided below.



Source: Author's composite of data from annual reports from three governments.

In addition to these funds, the County annual report indicated that there is another set of contract awards for rehabilitation services totaling over $34 million, and another set of contracts worth $145.5 million are awarded outside this process altogether (since they are for government agencies, non-profits, utilities and for work or services unavailable for such certification by the State of Oregon). A sampling of services provided includes building maintenance, food services for correctional facilities, bridge repairs, regional parks, recycling, software services, and the Oregon Zoo upgrades.

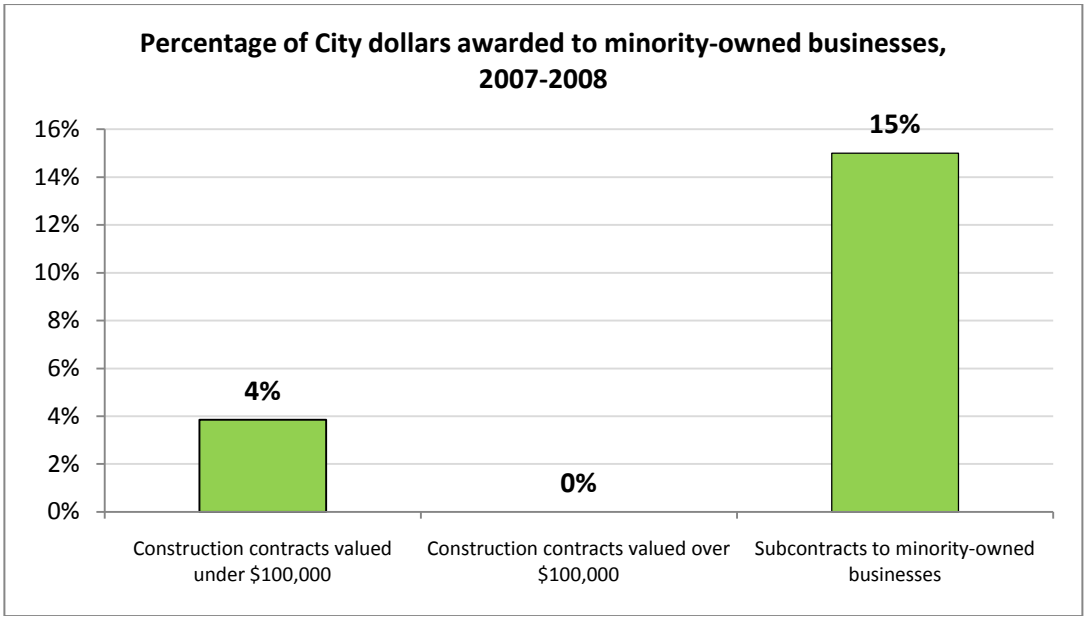
While we would like to applaud gains being made, and indeed procurement strategies seem robust across all levels of government, the results show that these policies do not ensure equitable outcomes, nor are the results improving. The pattern is tremendously uneven. Below are the patterns of the dollars awarded by Metro.



Source: Metro MWESB Annual Report FY 2006-07.

Data are not available to extract the minority-owned data separately. These data suffer from inappropriate aggregation, where minority-owned businesses, women-owned and emerging small businesses are lumped together as a category. We want to ensure that such reporting is modified in order to see how communities of color are faring at all levels of governments in the next round of annual reports. This amalgamated reporting problem exists for Metro, the County, and the State.

The City of Portland does separate out the data for minority-owned businesses, and the situation is troubling. Of the $91 million in construction project dollars awarded, only $80,749 was awarded to minority-owned businesses, equivalent to 0.088% or less than one tenth of one percent.



Source: Bureau of Purchases, 2007-2008 Annual Report.

Better outreach and supports are needed to expand certification practices. In addition, the broader environmental context which thwarts the emergence of minority-owned businesses needs to be addressed. When people of color have few assets, are impoverished and face social exclusion and discrimination on a regular basis, they are not likely to take risks and build their own businesses. Efforts to change the macro context are essential to improving our economic prospects.

The second priority is the absence of equity goals in training dollar allocations. While "Workforce Training and Hiring" programs exist to advance the needs of communities of color, reporting on the equity achievements of these programs does not occur.

The third is a more robust affirmative action initiative that ensures removal of all employment barriers to the full workforce participation of people of color. Employment patterns in the City of Portland and Multnomah County reveal the presence of ongoing barriers to the hiring of people of color and the presence of traditional patterns that show greater constraints to employment the higher one moves in the hierarchy of the organization. Details of these patterns are in the section, "Participation in public service."

The fourth is to advance equity concerns in development agendas at all government levels. Development plans are typically undertaken with only tokenistic participation of leadership from communities of color. Given the dismal economic profile facing communities of color, this must change and it must change

immediately. Economic development planning is urgent to redress inequities in poverty rates, incomes, employment, occupations and education. Without the region's utmost efforts going to improve the economic prospects for communities of color, the county will lose a generation of youth as they do not see decent prospects for their hard work. Offering youth hope for a positive future must include an improved economic environment for communities of color.

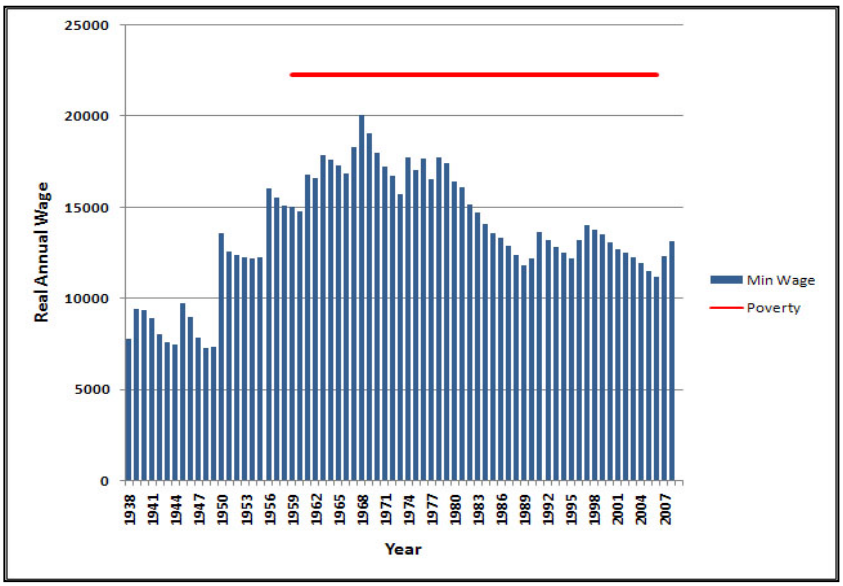
Household budgets

Looking at household budgets helps tie together a range of issues about both incomes and expenditures. Full time wages are increasingly not enough to pay the bills. When working full time at the minimum wage of $8.40/hour, an Oregonian earns $16,800 – an amount that is $1,510 **less** than the federal poverty line for a family of three. When family size grows, minimum wages are less able to cover living expenses, and the depth of poverty deteriorates. Full-time wages are thus officially poverty wages, even when Oregon's minimum wage is more generous than most.

Minimum Wage Income (Oregon, 2009)	Annual Federal Poverty Line
$16,800/year As calculated at rate of $8.40/hour (which equals $1,400/month)	Family of 1 = $10,830
	Family of 2 = $14,570
	Family of 3 = $18,310
	Family of 4 = $22,050
	Family of 5 = $25,790

Source: Federal Poverty Lines and Oregon minimum wage data.

Know that minimum wages have never taken working people to the poverty line. In the historic view of minimum wages below, this shortfall is highlighted.



Source: Profile of the federal minimum income, adjusted to 2007 to enable cost comparisons. Oregon State University.[62]

When one calculates realistic costs for basic living, we build a budget for a family of three (below) and find that the family needs $30,840 (or $2,570/monthly) to survive. This is an annual shortfall of $14,280. No one can survive on minimum wage when raising a family. Nothing exists for emergencies, renter's

insurance, or entertainment. And if one was so unfortunate as to have debt, repayment is not considered a basic expenditure, so debts would continue to grow under this scenario.

Below are the specifics of this calculation, drawing from local real costs, and tallying the expenditures needed to survive.

Family Budget, with single parent working at minimum wage, two children (1 toddler)

Annual Income (full time, minimum wage)	Subsidies & taxes	Basic cost expenditures	Costs (monthly)	Shortfall (monthly)
	Subsidies = $367 • Eligible for food stamps = $367 • No earned income tax credit • Not eligible for free lunch • Eligible for reduced lunch	Housing (1BR fair market rent)	$809	
		Food	$465	
		Child Care (1 toddler @ $7500/yr)	$625	
$8.40/hour		Transportation (3 Trimet passes)	$138	
or $1,400/month	**Monthly taxes = $387** • Federal income tax = $210 (15%) • State income tax = $70 • FICA taxes = $107 (social security @ 6.2%; Medicare @ 1.45%)	Telephone	$30	
or $16,800/yr		Utilities (electricity)	$75	
		Television	$40	
		Health Care	$288	
		Other Necessities	$100	
$1,400	***Net after subsidies & taxes = $1,380/month***	***Basic monthly costs***	**$2,570**	**($1,190)**

Source: Adjusted from Economic Policy Institute with local 2009 data.

What are some of the coping strategies families will use to survive? They will use food banks, food stamps and charity. They will also live in overcrowded spaces and substandard housing. Our single mother will find a second job, if she can in this economy. That may leave her children with lack of supports to succeed at school and may result in complaints being made to child welfare. She won't fill doctor's prescriptions and no one will get medical care until it is urgent. They will be in arrears on rent and will move frequently. Such moves result in reduced school achievement for students and escalating chances of dropping out of school.

And still, we haven't yet added race and ethnicity to our analysis. When we do this, the precariousness of communities of color is more profound. Remember the income profiles of communities of color in the income section and that most recently, people of color earn half of the wages of White people. We also know that child poverty levels are at 33.3% in Multnomah county, while that of Whites is at 12.5%. Couple this with escalating inequality, and a lessening of claim on the public purse and we are poised to plunge communities of color into deep economic despair. When our economic data become available on the basis of race and ethnicity (not until next year in the fall), we anticipate seeing a crisis of profound dimension.

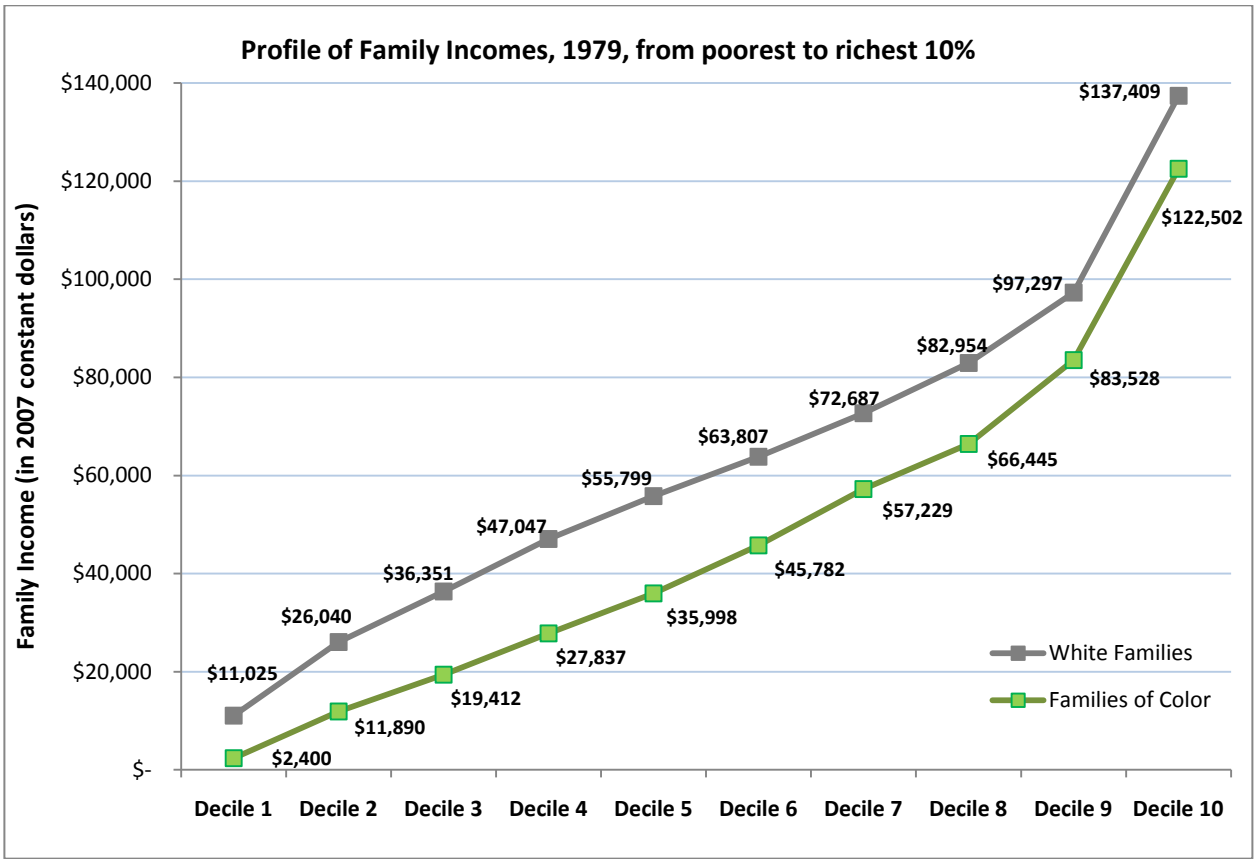
	Hispanic	African American	Native American
Food stamp use	15%	4%	2%
Disproportionality level	36%	100%	67%

Source: Department of Human Services, Oregon, as cited by Michelle Cole, The Oregonian, September 11, 2009. These three communities were the only ones reported.

It is not surprising that communities of color have to use food stamps at a rate deeply disproportionate to their numbers. Worse poverty, lower incomes, and higher unemployment all contribute to greater vulnerability and increased need to depend on state services. At the "low" end, Hispanics "only" face a 36% disproportionality level, while African Americans are forced to use food stamps at rates double those that their numbers warrant.

Income trends

Today, there is greater likelihood of people of color being born poor and staying poor throughout their lifetimes. The longstanding promise that "a rising tide will lift all boats" is a proven failure to equitably distribute the benefits of economic growth, first across the economic spectrum, and second across all racial identities. Witness the graphs below to see how time has deepened economic inequality and how the economy has failed to deliver on any semblance of equality and racial justice.

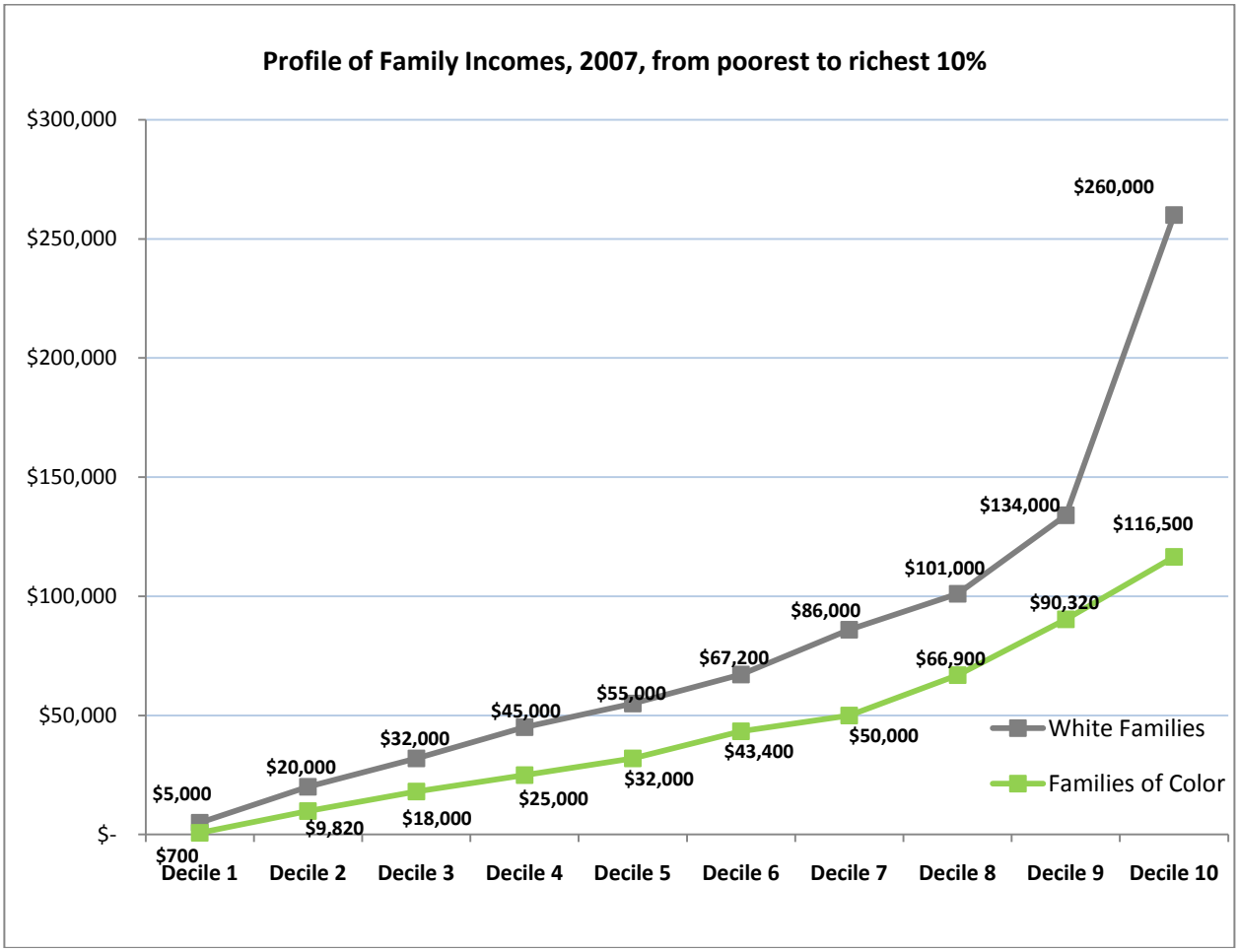


Source: Author's calculations from PUMS datasets from Census 1980 and American Community Survey, 2007, with custom extractions by Joseph Buani-Smith. Decile 1 is the poorest 10% of families, and the value is their total annual income (the mean of all families in the poorest 10% of the population). Decile 10 is the wealthiest 10% of families and the mean annual income of those in the decile.

This chart shows that a generation ago (in 1979) there were significant income disparities between White families (raising dependent children) and families of color across the income spectrum. The gap between these two lines is fairly constant, with a typical middle class income gap (at Decile 5) being $19,801 per year. Among our poorest 10% of families, there was a gap of $8,625 and an annual income of $2,400 for families of color. The gap between families of color and White families was of a similar magnitude among the wealthiest of our families – the richest 10% of families had a disparity gap of $14,907. Please know

that these figures have been changed to "2007 constant dollars" meaning that they have been adjusted by inflation rates to ensure that they can be equivalently compared with the most recent data of 2007 which appear below.

Fast forward to 2007, and examine the same data for families today. The first thing to notice is that the lines change in shape and in separation, particularly at the high end. But please also notice that the scale on the left vertical has changed, in order to accommodate the very high incomes for our richest White families.



Source: Author's calculations from PUMS datasets from Census 1980 and American Community Survey, 2007, with custom extractions by Joseph Buani-Smith.

Let's compare a few specific incomes to see what is occurring. The first is to consider middle class families (at Decile 5). Today, the gap is $23,000, which is a significant growth from 1979 when it was $19,801. At the low end, the gap is $4,300 – an improvement over 1979. But the direction of this disparity reduction is not the desired increase of the income of families of color, but rather a significant decrease of incomes for White families. This is not the direction that any of us seek in disparity reduction efforts, particularly among the poor. Notice too, that the incomes of our poorest families of color (Decile 1) have dropped by $1,700 through his generation.

Turning our attention to incomes at the high end of the range (Decile 10), we see a massive gap of $143,500. Remember, we have already adjusted these incomes to ensure their comparability by changing

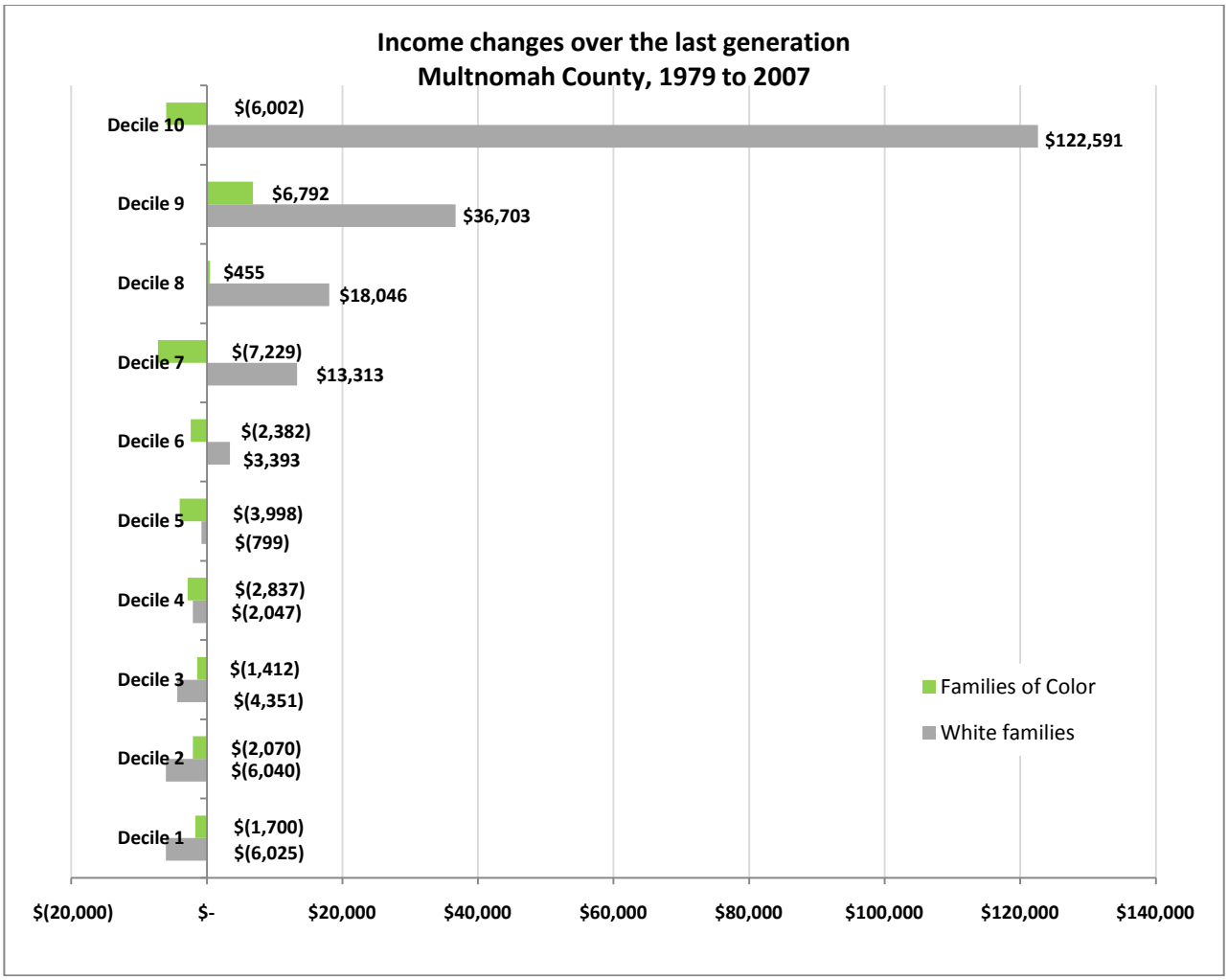
the 1979 figures to 2007 constant dollars. The size of this gap in 1979 was $14,907 – not good to begin, but an outrageous 10-fold increase through the generation.

In summary, the incomes of Whites and people of color are diverging. We had greater income equality between Whites and people of color at the start of this generation, and now have burgeoning income inequality in today's era. This generation has been marked by a policy environment that has gutted the common good through avenues such as privatization, deregulation, inadequate social programs, minimum wages that do not keep pace with costs of living and increasing reliance on corporate solutions to income support programs, health and infrastructure. Coupled with expansion of free trade agreements, pro-corporate interests have significantly surpassed that of the average worker. People are increasingly framed as "tax payers" first and residents with entitled claims on public resources last.

The conclusion of this growing gap is that the beneficiaries of the changed economic landscape are, in this region, deeply racialized – meaning that one's racial identity (as White or as person of color) prescribes the likelihood of reaping the benefits of a changed economy and altered economic policy, or bearing its brunt.

Notice, however, that these incomes will not accurately reflect one's real living conditions. Expenditures on health care, child care and housing have escalated rapidly. Individual debt is currently at all-time high levels, and bankruptcy is spiraling out of control. These issues are felt most deeply for those at the middle and low ends of the income spectrum. The most recent financial crisis (as those institutions setting the terms of our indebtedness set the stage for imperiling millions of homeowners) has led to record foreclosures, recession and global capital crises. Given the shifting income distribution between Whites and people of color, and the differential impact of how these costs are shouldered (more heavily by lower income earners), we will have an even worse economic scenario than the above figures capture.

Turning once again to the data in the above charts, we have reconfigured these data to show the net results of last 28 years on different families in Multnomah county. We have taken incomes at the close of the generation and subtracted those at the start (1979) to highlight the changes. The wealthiest families are at the top of the chart and the poorest are located at the bottom (continuing to work in 2007-constant dollars).



Source: Author's calculations from PUMS datasets from Census 1980 and American Community Survey, 2007, with custom extractions by Joseph Buani-Smith.

Only the wealthiest 40% of Whites have gained significant ground over the last generation. Top income earners among families of color have, overall, lost ground in that same period. Among these top 40% of families (Deciles 7 through 10), the average loss is $1,496 annually, although there are variations among this range as can be spotted above. The same average for the top 40% of White families is an average gain of $47,663. Clearly, the changes on the economic landscape over the last generation are having a profoundly different impact on incomes on the basis of one's race.

Often when we discuss these trends, readers are interested in seeing where they fit in the income spectrum. Below are the income levels for each group within the 10% slices of each set of families. One explanatory note – while the poorest of White families have lost $6,025/year, their incomes are still, on average $4,300/year higher than those of families of color.

2007	Thresholds for Deciles, 2007	
	White families	Families of Color
Decile 1	0 to $14,999 (average = $5,000)	0 to $5,199 (average = $700)
Decile 2	$15,000 to $26,849	$5,200 to $15,099
Decile 3	$26,850 to $37,599	$15,100 to $20,39
Decile 4	$37,600 to $49,999	$20,400 to $28,299
Decile 5	$50,000 to $59,999	$28,300 to $37,399
Decile 6	$60,000 to $73,999	$37,400 to $48,809
Decile 7	$74,000 to $92,399	$48,810 to $54,999
Decile 8	$92,400 to $115,049	$55,000 to $76,599
Decile 9	$115,050 to $160,999	$76,600 to $103,599
Decile 10	$161,000 to $778,000	$103,600 to $320,670

Source: American Community Survey, 2007, PUMS datasets, with custom extractions by Joseph Buani-Smith.

The current economic crisis is causing a reexamination of the policy trend towards greater corporate-preferred priorities. While financial deregulation is most under scrutiny, so too are policies that have resulted in elite and corporate incomes thriving while the majority have stalled or deteriorated (as we see above). Voices are increasingly demanding an end to policies that undermine the well-being of workers, and increasingly, those of workers of color:

> G20 leaders must ensure that there is no return to 'business as usual'. While this crisis was precipitated by the collapse of the housing bubble in the U.S. and propagated by reckless financial speculation, the underlying causes lie in fundamental economic and governance imbalances that are the direct result of three decades of neo-liberal economic policies, with the effect that the fruits of growth have not been distributed to workers. Now is the time to learn the lessons of this crisis and build a more sustainable and just future.[63]

Economic trends are deeply racialized and there are deepening disparities between Whites and communities of color. The hyper-valuation of those at the top of the income ladder co-exists with benefits being denied to people of color. This deepening economic separation between rich and poor and between Whites and people of color simultaneously translate into increased social distance.[64] This challenges us with the social impacts of economic separation: collective investments in equity, equality and the common good deteriorate with the social distance of the Whites elites from the majority of the population.

Wealth, housing & homelessness

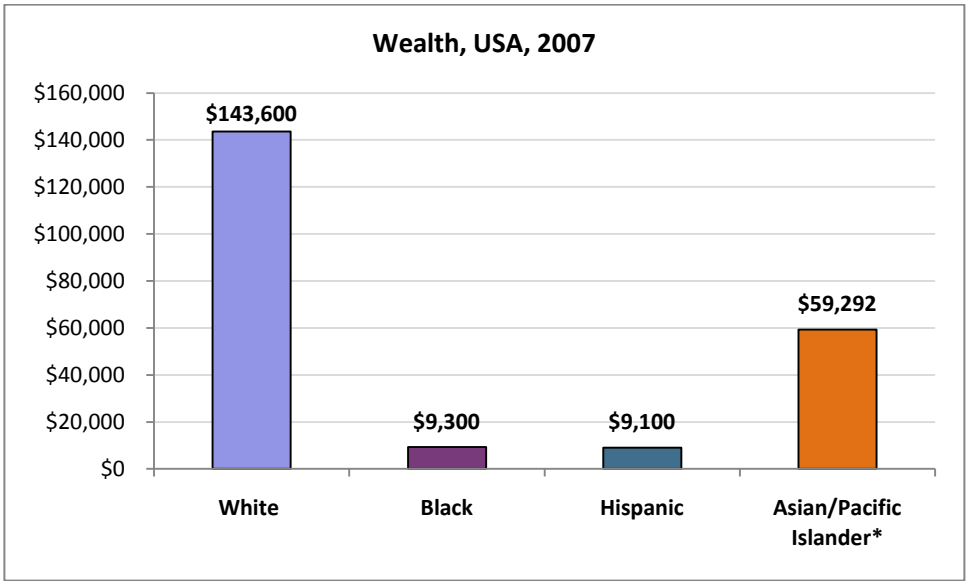
Communities of color have long been denied access to the largest wealth-creating system in the USA: homeownership. The legacy has been profound with the following dimensions:

- Differential access to free land, as Oregon permitted all Whites to get 320 acres of land, but denied people of color this access (circa 1850)
- Outright banning of Blacks as homeowners (legislated in Oregon between 1857 and 1926),
- Refusing African Americans and Chinese the right to live in Oregon
- Redlining policies by real estate groups and insurance companies (which, despite their banning in 1948, continued until the 1980s)

- Federal homeownership loan programs (between 1933 to 1948, officially, but extended unofficial discrimination until the 1980s) which people of color were denied, as they were in "riskier" neighborhoods
- Exclusion from the GI housing bill after WWII[65]

Further deepening poverty was the state-imposed tax on all residents of color in Oregon between 1862 and 1926. This cost $5/year in 1862, and has an approximate value of $807/year today.[66]

These policies, coupled with the deeper poverty and lower, less stable incomes of communities of color have resulted in their significantly lower levels of wealth (which is the total value of all one's assets, minus the value of their debts). The national profile illustrates how disadvantaged communities of color are according to wealth.



Sources: Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer Finances (for 2007, first three elements), US Census Bureau (for Asian/Pacific Islander data, 2002 figures). Native American data are not available. *Note that the A/PI value is for 2002, and at this time the White equivalent was $87,056.

Placing the above data in simpler terms, for every dollar of wealth that White people have, Blacks have 6 cents, Hispanics have 6 cents, and Asian/Pacific Islanders have 68 cents (using the 2002 equivalents). There is, however, reason to believe that the local picture (in Multnomah county) is much worse, given that our typical economic experience is much worse than the national average, and Oregon's damaging history in land and housing practices.

Wealth creation is a feature of assets that rise in value, savings and inheritances. As one can imagine, they are closely tied to income and one's ability to purchase items that are likely to increase in value. They are also tied to intergenerational wealth inside a family, as inheritance is a feature of how one's kin were able to accumulate wealth. Some studies suggest that only 25% of one's wealth is tied to income and savings, while up to 75% flows from inheritance and what is called the "propensity to save" that flows from behavioral patterns in a family.[67] The historic treatment of most communities of color that forbade many of us to own land, to vote and to even work, and also our historic discrimination in the labor market has resulted in generations of families of color being unable to accumulate wealth, and subsequently endow it to the current generation.

Coupled with this legacy is the current demise of personal savings across the USA. While trends in saving were about 8-10% in the 1960s, and rising to 10-12% in the 1970s, and then falling to about 5% in the 1980s, the savings rate has deteriorated to about zero today. The chart below shows the national rates of savings averaged across the population. As one can imagine, the bankruptcy trend has risen precipitously, causing Warren & Tyagi (2003) to uncover that families are now more likely to go bankrupt than they are to divorce.[68]

Source: US Department of Commerce (2008).[69] These data are not available disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

Know, however, that this pattern is not equal across the population. Poor and low income people, of whom communities of color make up a disproportionate share, are stretched financially in covering the bills. In our "Household budgets" section there was a budgeting profile for a single parent working at the minimum wage. Covering costs was not possible working 40 hours/week as she got into debt at a rate of over $1,000/month. Low income people have never been able to accumulate savings and this is similarly true for many within communities of color.

Homeownership is dramatically tied to increasing one's assets, as one accumulates value in home equity instead of paying rent to someone else. To punctuate this point, data from 2004 show the median wealth of owners is $184,560 while that of renters is only $4,045.[70] This is an almost 50-fold higher wealth level for owners compared to renters. Unfortunately these data are not available for the local level or for communities of color.

Housing values are, however, available for the local region. Housing values are one of the three key factors that create wealth. The first is inheritance, the second is income and the third is housing values. In each area, there is lack of parity between people of color and Whites. While we do not have access to local wealth data at this time, we do have an understanding of incomes (earlier in this report), housing values, and homeownership rates.

2008	Multnomah County	
	White	Communities of Color
Median house value	$291,400	$244,050
% owners	62%	45%

Source: American Community Survey, 2008.

Communities of color have lower homeownership rates than Whites and have lower median housing values, by almost $50,000 in Multnomah county. We also have significantly lower homeownership levels (45% instead of 62% - almost 40% lower levels of owning one's own home). This significant driver of wealth creation is deeply limited among communities of color. We have also made comparisons in homeownership rates with the national level. Ownership levels are 53% nationally, while only 45% in the county. Again, as in all the comparative examinations we have done with the national data, these numbers come close to a 20% worse situation.

The key current issues in housing data are that of the subprime lending crisis, and its disproportionate damage done to communities of color. Discrimination has continued in the home lending industry, with people of color being denied access to loans from prime lenders. Look at the data below for borrowing decisions in the local region (Portland area).

		Home Ownership Rate			Loan Application Denial Rate		
		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
White		77%	58%	48%	7%	10%	11%
People of Color		62%	47%	33%	12%	16%	15%
	Native American	62%	50%	29%	13%	20%	16%
	African American	67%	45%	33%	15%	19%	18%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	60%	58%	34%	9%	11%	11%
	Latino	57%	33%	34%	10%	12%	13%

Source: Housing and Community Development Commission, City of Portland, 2004.[71] Definitions for the terms used are:

Tier 1 = households with incomes more than 95% above the median income (wealthiest)
Tier 2 = households with incomes 80-95% over the median income (mid-range)
Tier 3 = households with incomes 50-80% over the median income (poorest homeowners)

This graph shows that even when comparing borrowers within the same income range, communities of color have mortgage application rates that are about 50% more likely to be denied than Whites.

Instead, many people of color turned to the subprime market for loans. These loans are predatory as they have the impact of placing homeowners at the mercy of unscrupulous lenders who, even while aware of the damages caused by these loans, continued to target them at people of color and the poor.[72] People of color are three times more likely to have subprime loans than Whites, with 55% of subprime loans going to people of color while only 17% of such loans go to Whites.[73] Note that many of these loans would have succeeded in the less expensive prime lending arena – with estimates of up to 50% of all subprime loans likely to have been eligible for prime loans.[74]

The impact of this disparity is profound, with a total loss of wealth estimated for people of color to be approximately $200 billion across the USA, making this the largest loss of wealth in US history for these communities.[75] Perceived as the new form for housing discrimination, it marks a significant loss of the homeownership accomplishments for communities of color that will take decades to regain.

Further evidence shows that the configuration of housing difficulties is not just a result of poverty. Communities of color face high levels of discrimination in securing housing. In a national paired testing study of discrimination in metropolitan housing markets, Native American renters were significantly more likely to be denied information about available housing units than comparable whites. Discrimination against Native American renters averaged about 28.5% in the study, a disproportionately high rate even in comparison to other communities of color.[76]

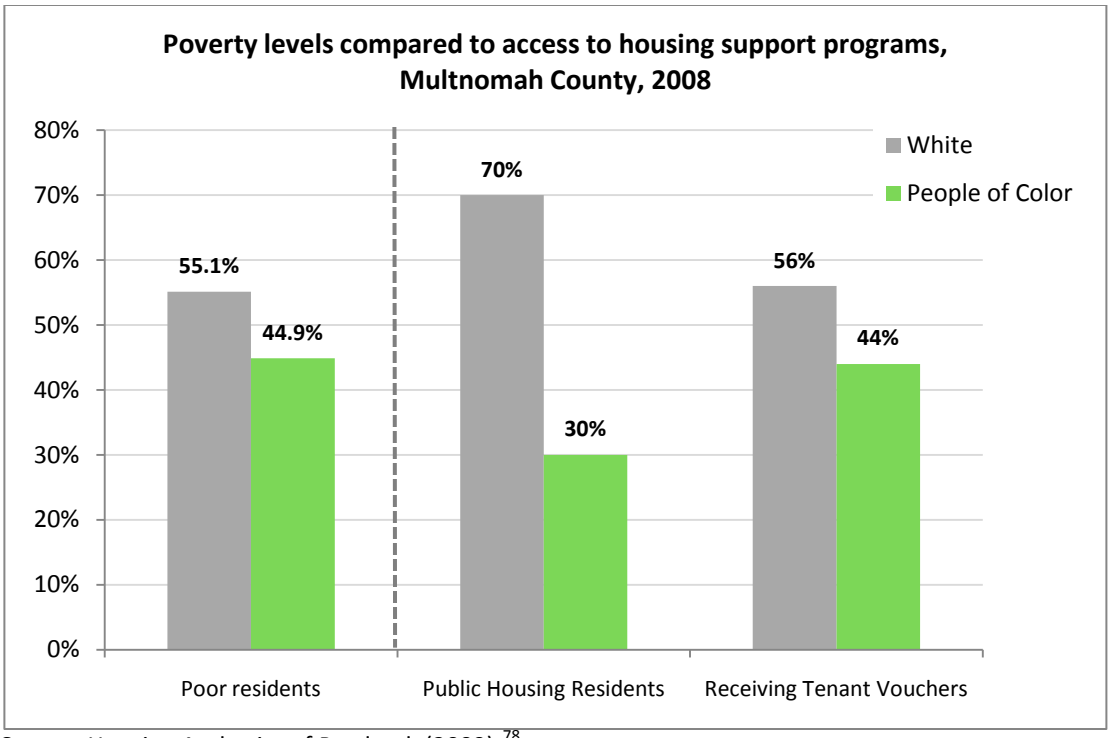
In our local region, housing discrimination is still rampant. Although research has been conducted outside Multnomah County (in Beaverton), discrimination against Latinos was found in 4 of 8 cases (50% levels of discrimination), and against African Americans in 7 of 9 cases (rates of 78%).[77] The forms of discrimination experienced by the testers included the following: being told a unit was already rented (yet still available to Whites), quoted higher rents for a unit, required to make higher deposits, shown less desirable units or being denied information about specials. The prevalence of such discrimination is anticipated to lead to expanded testing into Multnomah county next year. While this is a small set of tests to draw from, the heightened levels of discrimination that exist lead us to contemplate that there may be extraordinary barriers to housing for many of our communities of color.

Housing costs continue to threaten families of color. When people spend more than 30% of their income on rent or mortgage costs, they are typically unable to cover the remainder of their expenditures and are subsequently considered "at risk of homelessness." While it is unacceptable for 49.6% of American renters to be so imperiled, rates of communities of color are considerably higher at 57%. The disparity in vulnerable owners is significantly higher, with the numbers going from 41% among Whites to 54% among communities of color. While housing costs in the region are high, the movement of several communities of color to the suburbs has largely been necessitated to secure affordable housing. These data show that even this is not enough. The region's approach to land use planning needs rapid and considerable attention.

2008	Paying more than 30% of income on rent	
	Renters	Owners
USA - all	49.6%	37.5%
Multnomah county	52.1%	42.9%
White	49.9%	40.6%
People of Color	56.9%	54.1%

Source: American Community Survey, 2008.

Public housing is one avenue to respond to homelessness and the lack of affordable housing. Residents pay a percentage of their income as rent, instead of paying market rents, which have skyrocketed in this region over the last ten years. Note that we have combined data from both the public housing program (where the Housing Authority owns and operates the project), and the affordable housing program (where the Housing Authority owns the property but subcontracts operations), and cite these figures below in the "public housing" category. Tenant vouchers (Section 8 housing) are a subsidy program that operates in the private housing market to support tenants who are in need of housing supports, and is an avenue for governments to avoid actually building or owning housing but instead to make housing affordable within the private market. Access to housing support programs is more difficult for communities of color than for Whites, as we interpret the graph below. Access for communities of color is particularly limited in public housing. If no barriers to participation existed, we would expect the same levels in the two programs as those who are poor.



Source: Housing Authority of Portland. (2009).[78]

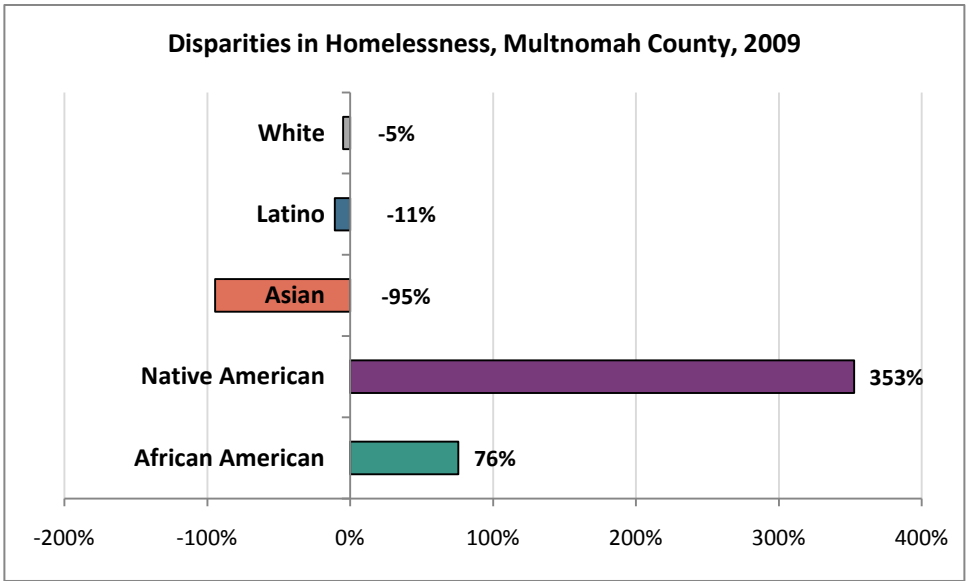
In public housing (the responsibility of the Housing Authority of Portland, and serving the whole of Multnomah county), disparities are deeply pronounced with Whites vastly outnumber people of color in receiving these supports. The Housing Authority of Portland which delivers these programs need to review the existing disparities, identify their causes and dismantle the barriers to these resources.

After housing costs become too draining and people cannot secure housing and housing support programs, homelessness results. Documenting the homeless is a difficult task. The federal housing bureau (Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD) requires each community that receives Homeless Assistance Funding to conduct an annual homeless census. Revealed are a growing number of people who are homeless.[79] These numbers are subject to significant undercounting as the tallies are done on one night and they miss many people who sleep on friend's couches or in overcrowded motels. The result is to document those served in official service organizations and those who are outside for the night. We report these data with significant concerns about their undercounts. Reported in the city of Portland in 2009 were 2,483 people sleeping outdoors or in shelters, up 13% from the prior year.[80] The racial breakdown of these data appears in the following chart, and after it, the degree of disproportionality that exists between those who are homeless and the population overall.

2009	Identity of those who are homeless
African American	11.6%
Native American	8.6%
Asian	0.4%
Latino	9.1%
Communities of Color	29.7%
White	70.3%

Source: City of Portland Bureau of Housing & Community Development (2009).[81]

The above chart reveals that there are wide variations among the homeless, and supplement these data with the below chart to illustrate the disparities (by calculating how these numbers are modified by the community population figures).



Source: Authors' calculations from City of Portland Bureau of Housing & Community Development (2009).

Here we see that there is heightened homelessness among Native Americans and African Americans, and relative under-representation among Asians, Latinos and Whites. We are not sure why these disparities exist, but one does need to ask if the shelter service system has cultural barriers to the inclusion of other races and ethnicities. Many of the homeless in the above study are contacted through homeless shelter service organizations. Above, we have seen similar evidence in two housing support programs. We do know that those in the Asian and Latino communities believe that homelessness is a deep problem, but that cultural norms are such that they rarely uses the shelter system, as neighbors and family reach out to house people in such distress.

We are pleased that the City of Portland has decided to include those who are precariously housed in their homelessness survey this year. We anticipate that this will allow more of our communities of color to be visible in the homelessness community.

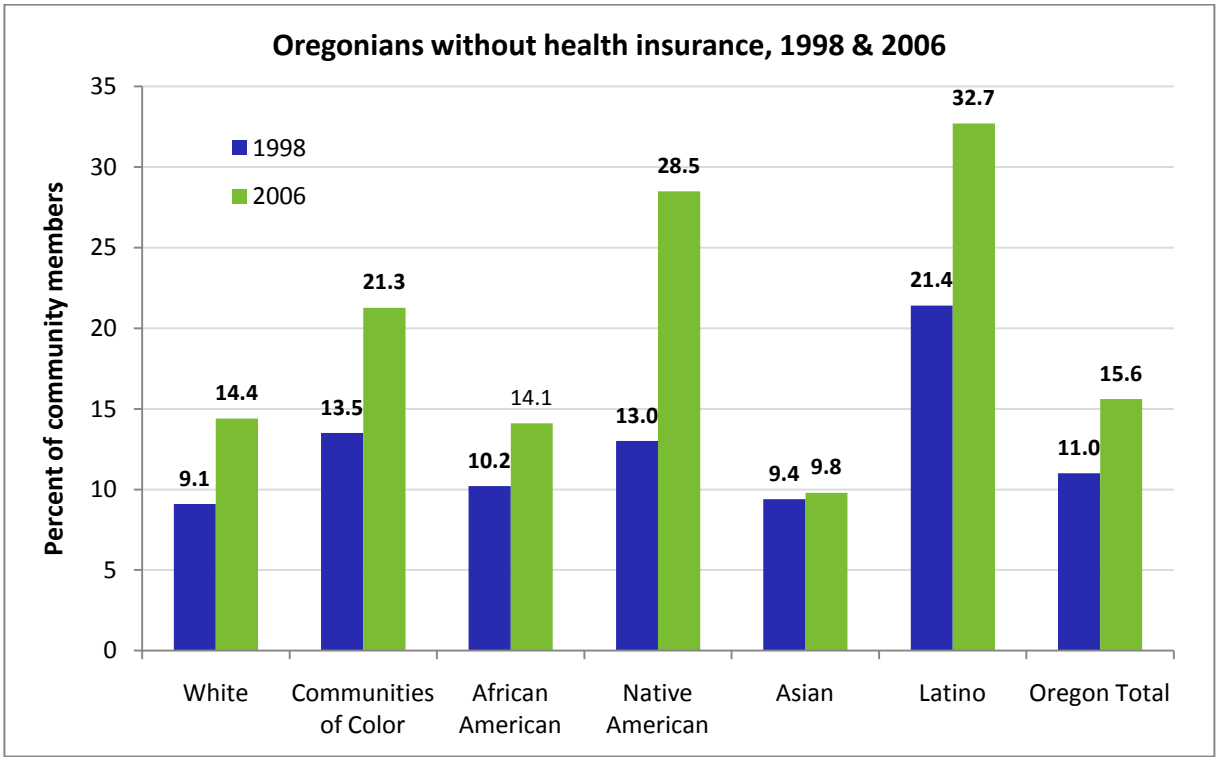
Given the rising crisis of unemployment (now at 11.3% in the Portland metropolitan area), we would increasingly expect people to lose their homes. One indicator is the surging numbers of homeless public school students, which in September 2009 totaled 2829 such youth in the county.[82] This is 14% higher than the prior year, and up 122% since such reporting began in 2003.

Helping the homeless find housing is a difficult challenge. The failure of the private market to develop affordable housing is deplorable, and the equivalent failure of all levels of government to step in and expand the supply of public housing serves to fail all our low income residents. Today in Multnomah County, waiting times to get into public housing is typically "3+ years" with lesser numbers at the "one or more years" timelines, and all waiting lists are currently closed. One cannot even get onto a waiting list for public housing. When lists become open for new registration, they are only open a couple of days and then they close again. For people not plugged into the social service system, informal networks will not provide such information.

Health care & well-being

Health coverage is a vital dimension of well-being, as child rearing and one's capacity to look for, secure and attend work are direct consequences of health and economic success. While the debate rages about possible reforms to health care, the horizon may hold significant improvements in health care as the Oregon legislature significantly expanded the Oregon Health Plan in 2009. While this will undoubtedly cause greater numbers to be insured, the legislature's focus on children will result in their parents remaining unable to secure coverage. While it is great that many more children will be covered, the family's economic and well-being prognosis is severely compromised if the adults do not have health care coverage. The deteriorating pattern illustrated below will undoubtedly worsen in the forthcoming years. Recent data releases of the national profiles of the uninsured show that employer-sponsored health care continues its plummeting path and dropped from 59.3% of the population in 2007 to 58.5% in 2008. Overall, there are 683,000 more uninsured Americans in 2008 than in 2007.[83]

The racial dimensions of health care coverage are profound, as all communities, including Whites, face worse coverage than in 1998. The average "no coverage" population among communities of color is 21.7% while for Whites it is 14.4%. Variation is high, with those in the Native American and Hispanic communities reaching about 30%. While the child dimension of coverage may improve (due to recent policy measures), it will likely worsen for their parents. This means that child rearing is compromised, particularly when parents are unable to seek their own coverage, delay care, and must take time from work as their patterns of illness typically escalate without medical care. Remember that these are likely people without decent working conditions and are likely precariously employed, and they will be carrying worries about staying home sick if it means they will be docked pay and at higher risk of losing their jobs.



Source: Author's calculations using data from Oregon Population Survey, 1990-2006. Recent data from the American Community Survey, 2008, shows that the total of those in Oregon without insurance has risen from 15.6% to 16.2%.

Not having health insurance means people don't seek care when they are sick and if they do, they don't likely have the money to fill prescriptions. Those without insurance are 40% more likely to die than those with insurance.[84] And we are just discovering that even when children have health care, if their parents don't also have insurance, they are less likely to be taken for health care when they themselves are sick.[85]

In Multnomah county, health disparities have been identified in numerous dimensions of health. The most troubling of these for communities of color are shown below. People of color have a significant amount of precarious health conditions, although these are not uniform and in several dimensions their experience is much better than White people. One such example is in life expectancy where Hispanics and Native Americans outlive Whites, while African Americans die three years earlier.

		Low Birth weights % less than 5.5lbs	**Teen birthrate** % of 15-17 giving birth per 1000 teens	**Infant mortality** deaths per 1000 live births	**Death from diabetes** deaths per 100,000
White		5.9%	11.7	4.9	29.5
People of Color		8.1%	34.2	7.3	40.8
	African American	11.4%	31.5	8.6	70.8
	Asian	6.9%	13.3	6.0	21.1
	Native American	8.4%	20.6	9.8	36.5
	Hispanic	5.6%	71.5	4.9	34.7

Source: Multnomah County Health Disparities Project, 2008.[86]

It is unfortunate that we do not have the data on stress levels, high blood pressure and the extent of illnesses that are stress related. At the national level, researchers are finding that the stress of racism is taking its toll on the body in significant ways. The funding of such research might be a sensible priority, but giving priority to addressing racism as a determinant of health is necessary without such "evidence."

Being a victim of racial harassment and violence is an important dimension of health. We know that the stressors of living with racism influence blood pressure, birth weights, heart disease and mental health.[87] Some researchers are beginning to frame it as "premature ageing."[88]

Many of our students of color experience harassment, with 26.5% of grade 8 students in Multnomah County reporting that they had experienced "harassment about your race or ethnic origin" at or on the way to school in the prior 30 days.[89] This number falls only slightly when surveying grade 11 students – to 24.7%. This is a startling high figure, yet not unexpected. Other research shows that 65% of military personnel of color experienced racial harassment while adults and at their place of employment.[90] There is no exact science for measuring racial harassment. Some indicators based on attitudinal surveys reveal a troubling state of affairs: only 9.6% of Americans believe that Blacks can access housing without discrimination. That figure is 11.9% for Hispanics and 17.1% for Asians.[91] This means that about 87% of the US population believes that racism interferes with people of color accessing housing. When we turn our attention to getting jobs, the numbers are even worse: discrimination is perceived to exist for Blacks (91.0%), Hispanics (91.6%), and Asians (84.9%).

Health risk behaviors are not yet available by race and ethnicity for the county. They are, however, available at the national level. Like other health behaviors, health risk factors among youth are uneven. Youth of color are taking part in risky behaviors, although participation is uneven by race and often White youth are at higher risk. Locally, we know less at this time. Children here face these similar risks, but their experiences cannot yet be separated between White youth and youth of color. We do know that, as shown in the chart below, their risk levels approximate those at the national level, although for the local

data we have drawn upon behaviors from Grade 11, instead of the older cohort reported in the national study. This national study reports on children up to Grade 12.

	Obese	TV	Sexually active	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Methamphetamine
	top 5% of BMI level	watch 3+ hours/day	4+ partners	use in last 30 days	episodic heavy use	ever used
White youth (USA)	10.8%	27.2%	11.5%	23.2%	29.8%	4.5%
Black youth (USA)	18.3%	62.7%	27.6%	11.6%	12.5%	1.9%
Hispanic (USA)	16.6%	43.0%	17.3%	16.7%	26.8%	5.7%
Multnomah (all youth)	11.0%	22.5%	11.2%	17.5%	26.2%	3.2%

Source: USA data drawn from the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007. Multnomah county data drawn from the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, 2007-2008.[92]

We have a "window" into the mental health of our youth through the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, but these data are not available by race and ethnicity. In the aggregated data, we see that there are some troubling signs of mental health distress among school-aged youth in Multnomah county. When asked if they "ever felt so sad or hopeless every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing usual activities" 17.6% of our Grade 8 students and 17.8% of our Grade 11 students said "yes." Signs of deeper trouble appear when se see that 14.5% of our Grade 8 students and 12.6% of our Grade 11 students have seriously considered attempting suicide in the last 12 months. We then find that 7.5% of our Grade 8 students and 5.6% of our Grade 11 students have gone on to attempt suicide in the last 12 months. At the Grade 11 level, this translates into 177 youth, of whom 66 then required medical attention as the result of injury, poisoning or overdose. Among our Grade 8 students, 94 of them subsequently needed the same medical attention following an attempted suicide.

Stressors that are understood to lead to suicide include various forms of self-recrimination, self-hatred and fear and worry about the future. While, again, these data are not available by race and ethnicity, we are concerned about the mental health of our children of color. Worry abounds about the future as our children face deeply diminished economic opportunities. They also face institutional racism, cultural racism and internalize racism, some of which is difficult to resist and self-hatred emerges. For the many of our children who encounter child welfare and juvenile justice, uncertainty, fear and worry co-exist.

While data on mental health disparities does not exist at the local level, we know that White people have much more rosy futures ahead of them than people of color. If one has a rosy future, or reasonable prospects for a good future, one becomes much more able to make sacrifices today for benefits tomorrow. We urge health practitioners to recognize this as they advance health and health interventions. Providing people of color with improved futures must be the top priority for all health and social service providers, and indeed for all of us.

A final dimension of well being addressed in our research was the prevalence of disabilities in our communities. While we expected disability levels to be higher among communities of color, this did not exist within available datasets. In fact, the American Community Survey (ACS) showed that Whites have higher rates of disability than communities of color. The same pattern holds true at the national level. When we explored the reasons for this variation, the lived experiences of communities of color suggest that, in fact, this measure of disability is likely flawed. There are three significant reasons to expect higher disability levels among communities of color:

- Jobs are more precarious and "back breaking" outside of management and professional jobs
- Far fewer people of color have health insurance

- Poverty levels are higher among communities of color thus precluding an ability to prevent injury, stay home and rest following initial injury, and provide needed supports to accommodate disabilities

Why, then, are disability rates lower among communities of color? Our best interpretation is that people who answered this question interpreted it to mean a "diagnosed" disability and/or a disability for which they received income support. Under these conditions, it is understandable why communities of color would have lower disability levels. We do know that students of color are over-represented in special education programs at the national level,[93] and expect that these same patterns will appear when such data becomes available at the local level. Again, the lesser disability rates in ACS are surprising, particularly given that special education programs have an over-representation of students of color. We look forward to a more robust examination of these data as they become available.

Crime & adult corrections

Our review of the correctional system begins with policing, then turns to a caseload review of the Department of Community Justice, and concludes with local insights of communities of color on the fair treatment by the police system.

As a starting place, we highlight the 1994 Supreme Court of Oregon's audit of racial bias in the justice system. It concluded that, "people of color are more likely to be arrested, charged, convicted and incarcerated, and less likely to be released on bail or put on probation."[94] The existence of racial disparities thus has been in evidence for more than 15 years and it continues today, as will be evidenced below.
The most heated and topical issue facing communities of color and the justice system involves the use of deadly force by the police, which in recent months has resulted in outrage over policing violence and the death of Aaron Campbell (2010). Protests have led to reforms in police oversight. A new police review board will be appointed by the Auditor (instead of the Police Chief), have the ability to subpoena witnesses (except police officers, which would need permission from the police union), and the mandate to oversee all reviews of officers where complaints have been laid. Limits on such reviews continue to exist, as only closed cases are subject to such review, meaning that lengthy delays may occur. It is seen as a strong starting point for more effective policing reforms on disparities.

A review of the data on police shooting deaths and deaths in custody of the Portland Police Bureau over the last ten years shows that 26 people have been killed through the use of deadly force. Of these 26, eight were people of color.[95] This translates into 44.4% of the deaths, and a disproportionality level of 68% over the level one would expect to occur if no race-related impacts on such deadly use of force were to occur. The majority of these deaths are African American. This translates into a disproportionality level almost 6 times (5.89 times) the level expected should race not factor into police practices.

One of the precursors to the police use of violence is that of racial profiling by the police, which refers to "the inappropriate reliance on race as a factor in deciding to stop and/or search an individual."[96] It is through these initial engagements that people of color come into contact with the justice system. The scope of racial profiling in the local region led the Portland Police Bureau in 2006 to officially confirm that racial profiling existed within the police force. Numerous community dialogues have occurred in the last ten years, with a major initiative being undertaken in 2006, leading to a set of demands which included having the Portland Police Bureau release its own plan to address racial profiling. Released in 2008, the

report issued commitments to diversify its workforce, to upgrade the skills of officers, to build trust and understanding with communities of color and to research police stop data more accurately and reliably.[97]

Racial profiling is in evidence in the local region. Drivers of color are stopped at disproportionate levels compared with White drivers. They are then searched more often, yet are found to possess contraband at lower levels than Whites.[98] If drivers of color were found to have more contraband, then a defense of this practice would exist – suggesting that police officers were able to astutely interpret risk and were stopping "riskier" drivers effectively. Given, however, that drivers of color actually are less likely to be posing a risk to the community, this practice is a strong indicator of racial profiling. The specifics of this pattern are that in 2005, drivers of color were 32% of those stopped, while they composed only 21% of the population (at the time of the research).[99] This reflects evidence of racial profiling, as the police decisions to stop drivers of color more frequently suggests bias interferes with their practice. Further research shows that there is a geographic variance to this practice, with drivers of color being stopped much more frequently when they are in primarily White neighborhoods. The racial identity of the drivers thus bears considerable impact on policing practices.

One remedial reform is to diversify the race and ethnicity of the police department. The very identity of police officers can catalyze reform from the inside – for an overly White police force is more likely to tokenize adequate responses to concerns from communities of color and to tolerate racial profiling on the basis of internalized superiority and negative beliefs and biases about people of color. Police hiring practices lead to the hiring of too few people of color, with White officers holding 86% of the jobs, while making up (in 2006) only 77.9% of the population. For equity to be achieved in this police department, an additional 65 people of color (of a police force numbering approximately 900) would need to be hired.[100]

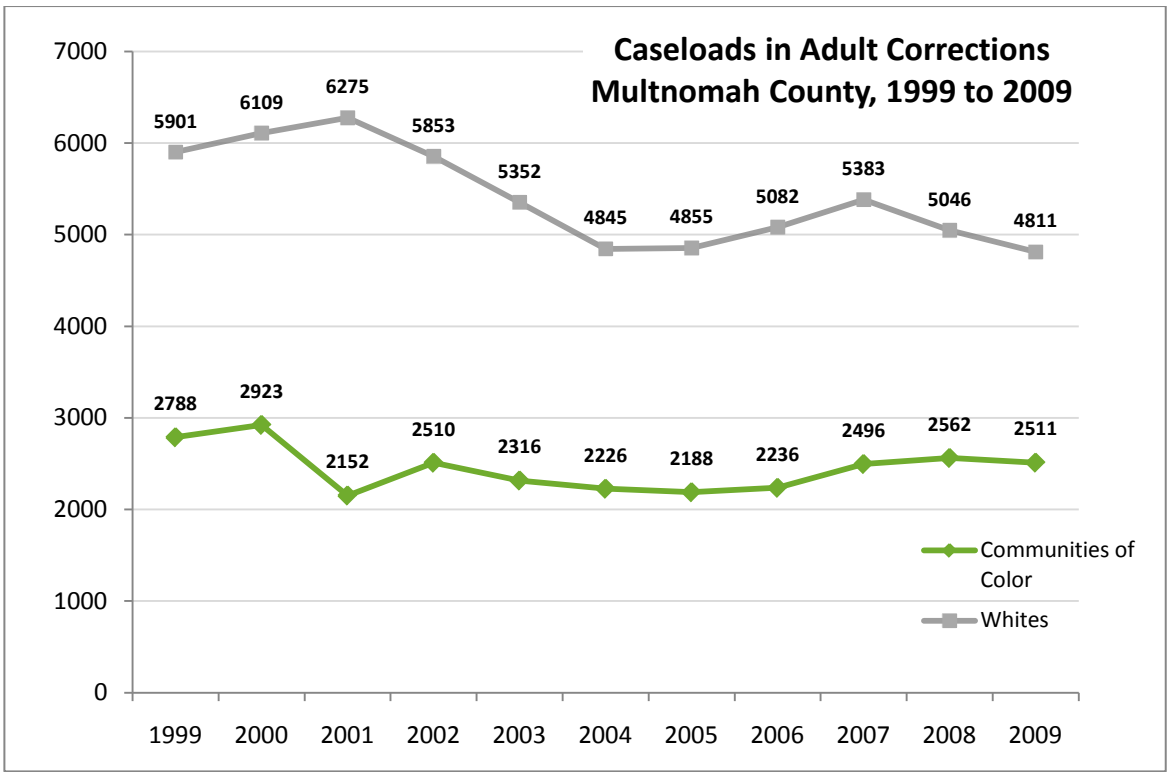
Turning now to the treatment of communities of color once they engage with the justice system, we explore sentencing, caseload and detention experiences. Across the country, the justice system continues to treat people of color more harshly than Whites. Termed "disproportionate minority contact" or more concisely "disproportionality," this problem has been under study for the last 20 years. While sentencing trends improved after limiting the discretion among judges (by requiring adherence to sentencing guidelines in federal cases), the decision in 2005 to provide federal judges greater latitude has served to again increase disparities.[101] No differences existed for a short time period between 2002 and 2005, but these again have widened with Black men receiving sentences 23% longer than Whites, and Latinos receiving sentences 7% longer. The removal of strict sentencing guidelines has served to reintroduce considerable bias in sentencing meted out by judges.

Locally, concern led to local efforts to assess this problem and figure out whether there was biased decision-making and treatment of minorities in the system, looking specifically at patterns of arrest, prosecution, sentencing and supervision.[102] In late 2000, they reported that for arrests, over-representation of racial/ethnic minorities permeated most crime categories. There were variances within some specific crimes, but these did not account for the entire difference. For example, African Americans had the highest degree of over-representation for drug crimes, but they were over-represented in most other crime categories as well. While rates of prosecution, dismissal, and guilty verdicts were fairly consistent across groups, harsher sentences were more often applied to people of color. In addition, disparity existed in terms of supervision. African Americans were assessed at high risk to re-offend more often than Whites. Whites were more often assessed at limited risk to re-offend than other groups.[103]

Similarly, a Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ) evaluation in early 2000 showed that while African Americans made up less than ten percent of the population of Multnomah county, they accounted for 21.7% of the Justice department's active adult caseload. African Americans in the County

were over 3 times more likely to be represented in the Justice system than they were represented in the population as a whole. Whites were slightly under-represented.[104]

Do we have reason to believe these proportions have changed? The graph below shows the Oregon Department of Corrections community population profile for Multnomah County from 1999 to 2009.[105] On a positive note, despite population increases in communities of color, the numbers of people of color in the Department of Corrections community population have held relatively steady. The graph, however, also indicates that people of color are increasingly making up a larger proportion of those in the Department of Corrections community population.



Source: Oregon Department of Corrections' Community Population Profile (Biannual Profiles: January 2010).

When we examine at greater depth the variation in the last two years for communities of color, and factor in the size of these two groups in the general population, we find that people of color are reducing their likelihood of becoming involved in the Department of Corrections, but that Whites are more quickly having their numbers reduced (after factoring in the greater population growth for communities of color).

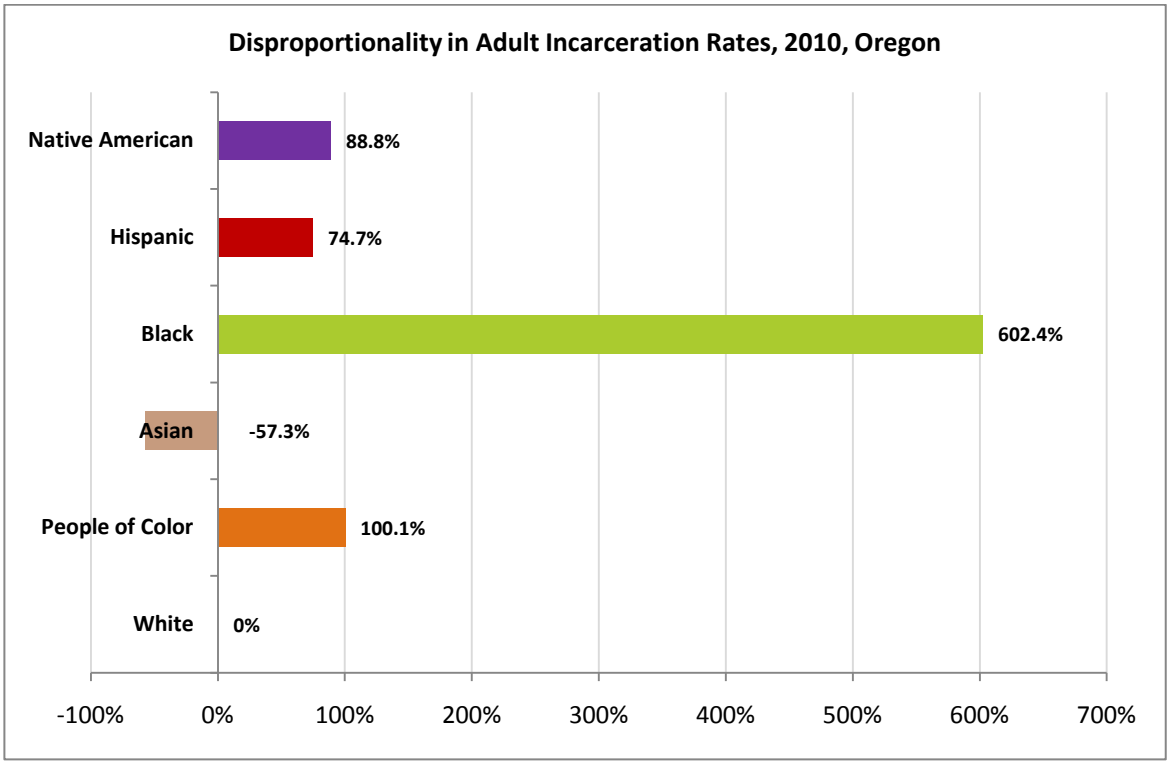
	% of the population involved in non-incarcerated corrections	
	2008	2009
White	1.17%	1.13%
People of Color	2.15%	2.03%
Disparity	84.3%	79.3%

Source: Authors' calculation of Oregon Department of Corrections' Community Population Profiles (2008 and 2009)

As a result, the level of disparity between Whites and people of color involved in the justice system in Multnomah county (non-incarcerated only) is lessening slightly between 2008 and 2009, although a disparity level of about 80% remains constant.

African Americans still bear the brunt of over-representation. In August of 2009, African Americans made up 25% of the Oregon Department of Corrections population in Multnomah County[106] while constituting less than 10% of the county population as a whole.[107] Further, African Americans were represented in the Corrections population at a rate 4 times that of Whites (with a Relative Rate Index, or RRI of 4.1).[108] In addition, African Americans were represented in the state inmate population at a rate 5 times that of Whites (RRI = 5).[109]

When we turn our attention to those incarcerated, we need to examine Oregon-wide data, as the absence of correctional facilities in the county means our residents are spread over the whole state and into other states as well. In the chart below, we would aim to see that communities of color have a 0% level of disproportionality (as does the White community). But, instead, there are unsettling patterns in how adults are incarcerated in the state.



Source: Author's calculations of data from Oregon Department of Corrections, Inmate population profile for 04/01/2010.[110]

In Oregon, there is tremendous variation among communities of color. The net impact on communities of color is double the level that numbers warrant. All but the Asian community reports deep levels of disproportionality, with the Black community profoundly damaged by high levels of incarceration. This is evidence of unequal treatment in the patterns of incarceration, and would lead us to consider that the system is ripe with institutional racism that has its roots in a combination of over-policing, over-charging, inequities in being held in detention plus inequities in how probation officers make recommendations and how judges adjudicate a case.

It is little surprise, then, why African Americans in Portland surveyed as part of a police bureau assessment were much more likely to perceive unfair treatment by Portland police officers regarding "race, skin color, or national origin" than the general population. They were also significantly more likely to report that a member of their household has been stopped by the police (10%) than the general population (4%). The results of the survey showed that African Americans' average rating of fairness was 7.1 (where 0 is virtually never unfair and 10 is routinely unfair) while the general public's rating was 5.3.[111]

This pattern is similarly troubling at the national level. Racial profiling is believed widespread among 59% of the US population. When results are broken down by race, it is not surprising that people of color indicate it is more widespread, with 85% of Blacks saying it is widespread while only 54% of Whites state the same.[112] This number has been increasingly divided (from 1999 to 2003) between Whites and Blacks, rising from 77% of Blacks perceiving racial profiling as widespread in 1999. In addition, there is an income impact of this trend, with 93% of higher income Blacks (above $45,000/year) declaring racial profiling to be widespread. This pattern seems best explained by the experience of middle class Blacks who experience institutional racism and don't have their poverty to account for their mistreatment. They likely come to the conclusion that their racial identity best accounts for the barriers they face as they encounter the justice system. In 2004, Gallup began to share details on results that included Latinos as a separate category (Asians and Native Americans are still invisible within these surveys), and similarly found Latinos believed racial profiling to be more widespread than Whites thought it to be.

Juvenile justice

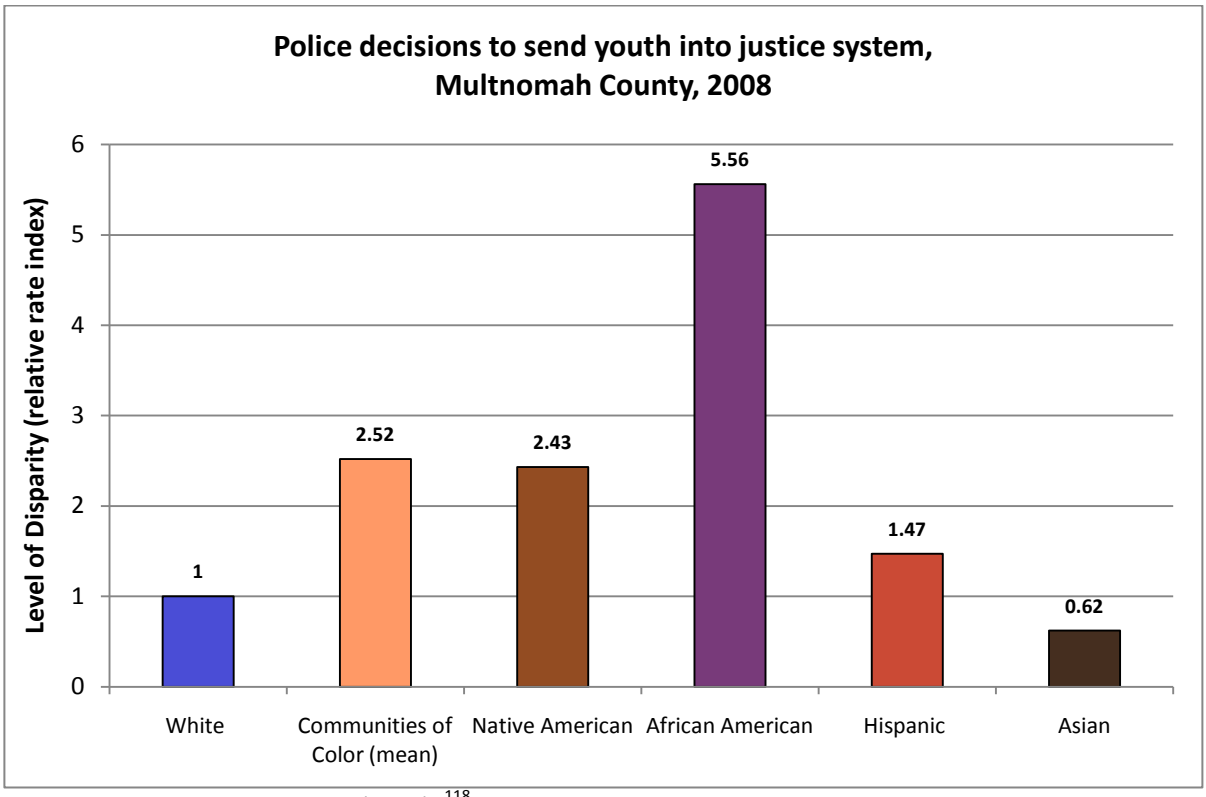
Overall, the crime rate in Multnomah county has been dropping among our youth. Despite being besieged by poverty, school failure and narrowed employment prospects, our youth are largely staying away from crime. Crime has decreased steadily since 1998 with the following particulars from 2002 to 2007[113]: drug offenses were down by 51.5%, person offenses were down by 11.9% and property offenses were down by 0.6%. Weapons offenses were up by 46.5% but they were the smallest of the categories of offenses and represented an increase of 40 such offenses over the 5 year period. Please notice that these figures were not adjusted for population growth. When such growth is added, the improvements in crime reduction are more significant.

While the frequency of crime is on the decline, we recognize that there are significant patterns of disproportionality within these systems on the basis of race and ethnicity. Overall, there continues to be a pervasive and troubling "halo" effect[114] for White youth in the juvenile justice system. They are less likely to be arrested, more likely to be released upon arrest, less likely to receive stiff sentences, and much less likely to be transferred to adult court for serious offenses. This "halo" effect is not extended to youth of color, resulting in significant patterns of disproportionality in juvenile justice. At every turn, Whites are given greater leniency and presumption of lesser risk than our youth from communities of color. The ultimate impact is what has become known as the "cradle to prison pipeline."[115]

Over-representation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system is an issue of particular concern. Multnomah County's Department of Community Justice (DCJ), in examining representation issues in juvenile justice, has confirmed that the experience of minority youth in the justice system differs from their White counterparts. The most recent analysis of juvenile minority representation undertaken by DCJ revealed that for most youth of color, the proportion of youth referred to the criminal justice system was greater than the proportion residing in the county. The situation was worst for African American youth, for whom the proportion of youth referred to the criminal justice system was 3 times greater than their proportion in the county population. In comparison, the proportion of White youth referred to the

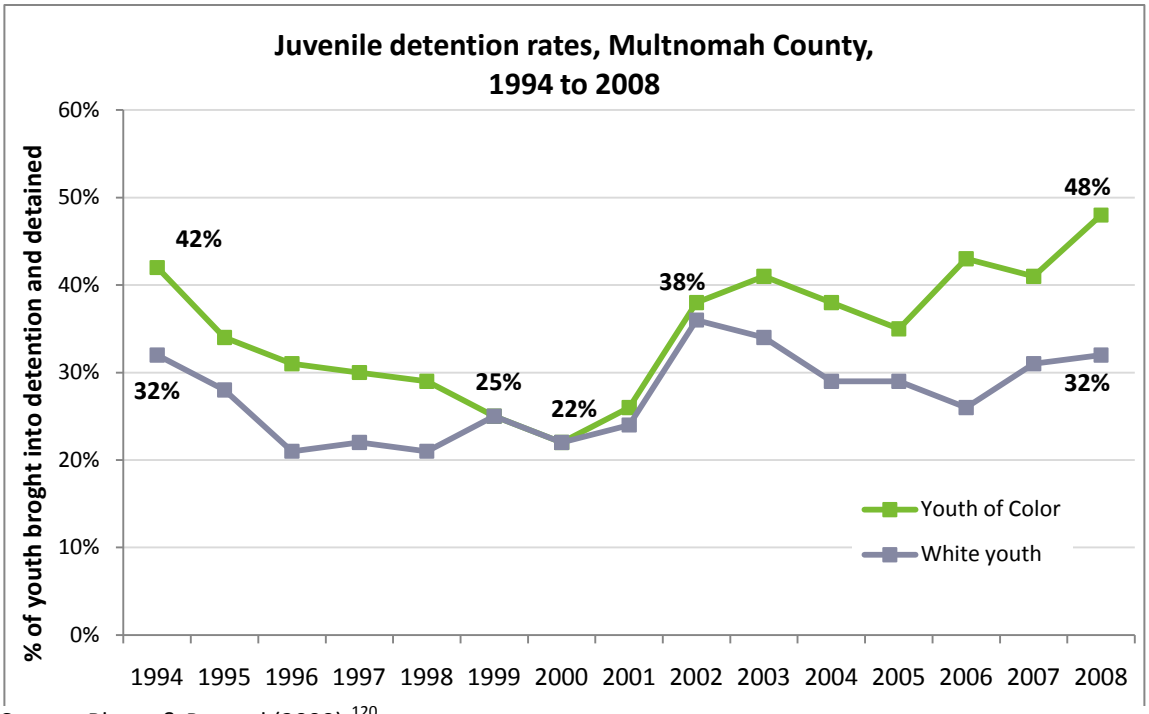
criminal justice system was about three-quarters of what would be expected given this group's population size.[116]

Another method DCJ has used to look at disproportionate contact of youth of color with the juvenile justice system has been to compute a Relative Rate Index (RRI) for various decision points. This index is a measure of the rate of referrals for youth of color as compared to White youth. The baseline for the RRI is the occurrence of the event: in this case, referral of a White youth to juvenile justice. An RRI above a value of 1 denotes over-representation, a value below 1 under-representation. For 2008, the RRI for criminal referrals for youth of color were; African American, 5.56; Hispanic, 1.47; Asian .62; and Native American 2.43. Therefore, African-American youth are referred at a rate that is 5.56 times higher than White youth. Native Americans are referred at a rate almost two and a half times higher than White youth.[117] The graph below illustrates the disparities visually.



Source: Source: Rhyne & Pascual (2009). [118]

African-American youth (20.3%) are brought to the detention facility quite a bit more often than White youth (14%). Other youth of color were about as likely to be brought to detention as White youth. However, all youth of color were more likely than Whites to be detained if brought to a facility; White youth were the most likely to be released (68.3%). African-American youth (48.8%) were the least likely to be released.[119] The graph below shows the detention rate of youth of color and White youth from 1994 to 2008. After narrowing for several years, the gap in detention between White youth and youth of color are widening once again, and even reaching levels higher than existed in 1994.



Source: Rhyne & Pascual (2009).[120]

The above data shows that efforts at disparity reduction achieved success in the late 1990s and early 2000s. But the loss of gains post-2002 highlights the need to sustain and continue to resource disparity reduction efforts even once disparities have been eliminated.

A youth can be assigned to various dispositions after being referred to DCJ for a criminal offense. The three main pathways are "closed/dismissed," "diversion/informal," and "adjudication." Adjudication is the pathway leading to the deepest involvement with the criminal justice system. Adjudication outcomes include commitment to a youth correctional facility, probation, and court dismissed.

Youth of color were all more likely to be adjudicated than White youth in 2008. African-American youth (24.6%) were the most likely of all groups to be adjudicated. African-American (21.7%), Hispanic (19.6%), and Native American (18.2%) youth with adjudicated criminal referrals were more likely than Whites (12.9%) to receive a "committed to youth correctional facility" disposition. More than 50% of total commitment dispositions were incurred by African-American youth referrals. Adjudicated Whites were the most likely to receive probation.[121]

In terms of recidivism, in 2007, most youth of color (excluding Asians) were more likely than Whites to be charged and found guilty of re-offending with 1-2 offenses, as well as being more likely to become part of the chronic re-offender sup-population. African American youth comprised the largest racial group of recidivists in the juvenile system (40.2%), as well as the largest racial group of the chronic offender sub-population (53.5%).[122] Since 2004, there has been an increase in the number of African American recidivists. African American youth were the majority of Ballot Measure 11 recidivating youth in increasing numbers from 2004 through 2006.[123]

Many factors contribute to minority over-representation in the justice system. Inadequate preventative social services, lower socio-economic status, law enforcement practices and policies, statutory mandates,

communication barriers, inadequate cross-cultural training, lack of culturally appropriate resources, placements, and services, and bias of decision makers are all factors creating disproportionate minority contact with the justice system.

Early childhood education

Across Oregon, White children are accessing preschool educations at rates much higher than children of color. In 2008, an estimated 61.2% of all students have some type of early childhood education experience. Access to these programs is unevenly available to children of color. While almost ½ of White children attend preschool, only 16% of Hispanic children, 27% of Native American, 41% of Asian and 32% of Black children have such access.[124]

When we include Head Start figures in these data, we find that more children of color are included. Roughly half of all early childhood programming occurs through Head Start for children of color, while less than 20% of such educational experiences occur for White children.

In addition to accessing preschool programs, inequities exist in how ready children of color are for their kindergarten education. In the chart below noticeable variations exist as children enter school.

2008	White	Children of Color	Black	Latino	Asian	Native American
Approaches to learning	72.4%	66.0%	66.0%	61.2%	71.7%	65.0%
Social & personal development	71.7%	66.3%	60.5%	65.6%	70.9%	68.1%
Physical health & motor development	74.9%	71.1%	67.4%	69.2%	77.5%	70.2%
General knowledge & cognitive development	68.7%	58.3%	59.1%	46.9%	64.3%	62.7%
Language development	66.8%	56.8%	57.3%	47.1%	64.2%	58.5%

Source: Oregon Department of Education's Kindergarten Readiness Survey, 2008.

These values have dropped significantly from the 2006 studies when White children had readiness scores in the low to mid 90% range. For children of color, their scores have similarly plummeted, from scores typically 3 to 5 percentage points lower than White children, to the dismal levels in the above chart. Most disturbing is that the reports do not comment on these significant declines, other than to say that caution is to be used in comparing results as these data are the results of surveys.

What is most clear, however, is that even when children are involved in early childhood education, the preparedness for public school is inequitable. Disparities in performance scores exist even for children five years old. This said, we must consider the impact of conducting such tests at the kindergarten-level. As it is not possible to test these students in a standardized manner, the results include both student performance and teachers' perceptions and thus vulnerable to their biases, assumptions and stereotypes. It is reasonable to presume that these teachers embrace the culture and bias of whiteness, and thus perceive White children to be more capable than students of color. We actually may be testing the cultural of early years education in this survey more than the performance abilities of children of color – those it is likely as combination of the two. Even if this "test" more accurately reflects the teacher's perceptions than student capacities, it is similarly troubling as an academic culture of low expectations and differential treatment in the classroom is damaging to children of color.

While most educators want early childhood education to be made much more widely available, we must increasingly pay attention to the fact that even these programs result in disparities that will plague our communities of color through our educational experiences.

While equity and investment in child learning is persuasive through a values perspective (of helping every child attain the best chance to have academic success), it is similarly persuasive on the basis of economic return on investment. Every dollar spent on preschool education returns between $7.16 and $10 in later savings through having to pay for medical care and criminal justice system care.[125] Long term studies show these savings exist primarily in criminal justice savings, as early childhood education serves to help children stay in school, have a higher IQ, adopt better educational skills, and have better jobs at higher incomes.

Child welfare

Child welfare systems are vulnerable to disproportionality. Be it from the excessive scrutiny of families of color by various service providers, or the biases of White investigators, families of color are reported to child welfare much more frequently than White families. Then once investigated, our children are removed from their homes, placed and kept in foster care at rates disproportionate to White families. Children of color make up 58% of the children across this nation who are in the child welfare system although they make up only 29% of the children in the country.[126] This is a rate that is twice worse than White children, despite the fact that parents of color are no more likely to abuse their children.[127]

There are many ways to support the challenges of raising children. Removing them from their families and placing them into foster care is the most drastic avenue. Yet, in our local region, we use this tool much more heavily than other regions do. Across the USA, 6.3 of every 1000 children are in foster care. In Oregon, this rises to 10.2 of every 1000 children. This level places us among the worst performers at 46th worst in the nation with only four states performing worse than Oregon.[128] In Multnomah County, 15.2 of every 1000 children are placed in foster care.

Such ratings are available for the last 8 years, and Oregon has always been among the five worst performing states.

When we highlight the core findings about how frequently families of color are losing their children to child welfare, we find the following:

- 7.4 of every 1000 Hispanic children are in foster care
- 4.7 of every 1000 Asian children are in foster care
- 32 of every 1000 African American children are in foster care
- 218 of every 1000 Native American children are in foster care[129]

A deeper look at the child welfare data for children and families of color shows how race and ethnicity influences these experiences in Multnomah County.[130] The situation illustrates that there is considerable disproportionality facing communities of color, particularly for Native American and African American communities. Through a review of the essential "decision points" in child welfare, we can study whether or not, and by how much, decisions are made that discriminate against children of color.

This text will highlight some of the features of these decision points, as we "walk" through the child welfare system and review data on decisions made along the way. To begin, researchers reviewed the more than 15,500 calls made to the Child Protective Services (CPS) hotline in 6 months during 2008/2009.

Native American, Black, and Hispanic families were reported to the hotline at higher rates than White families. Native American and Black families were particularly hard hit, with Native families reported to CPS at rates nearly four times those of Whites, while Black families were reported at rates three times higher.[131] Over-representation of minority families at this stage of the child welfare continuum is very important, because it determines the "pool" of people who will now potentially enter the child welfare system. Remember again, that parents of color are no more statistically likely to abuse their children than white parents.

Once a report has been made to the CPS hotline, a worker receiving the call uses set screening criteria to decide whether the report warrants a full assessment/investigation. At this stage, Native American and Black families in Multnomah County were referred for an assessment at similar rates to Whites, while Asians and Hispanics, were more likely to be referred than Whites.[132]

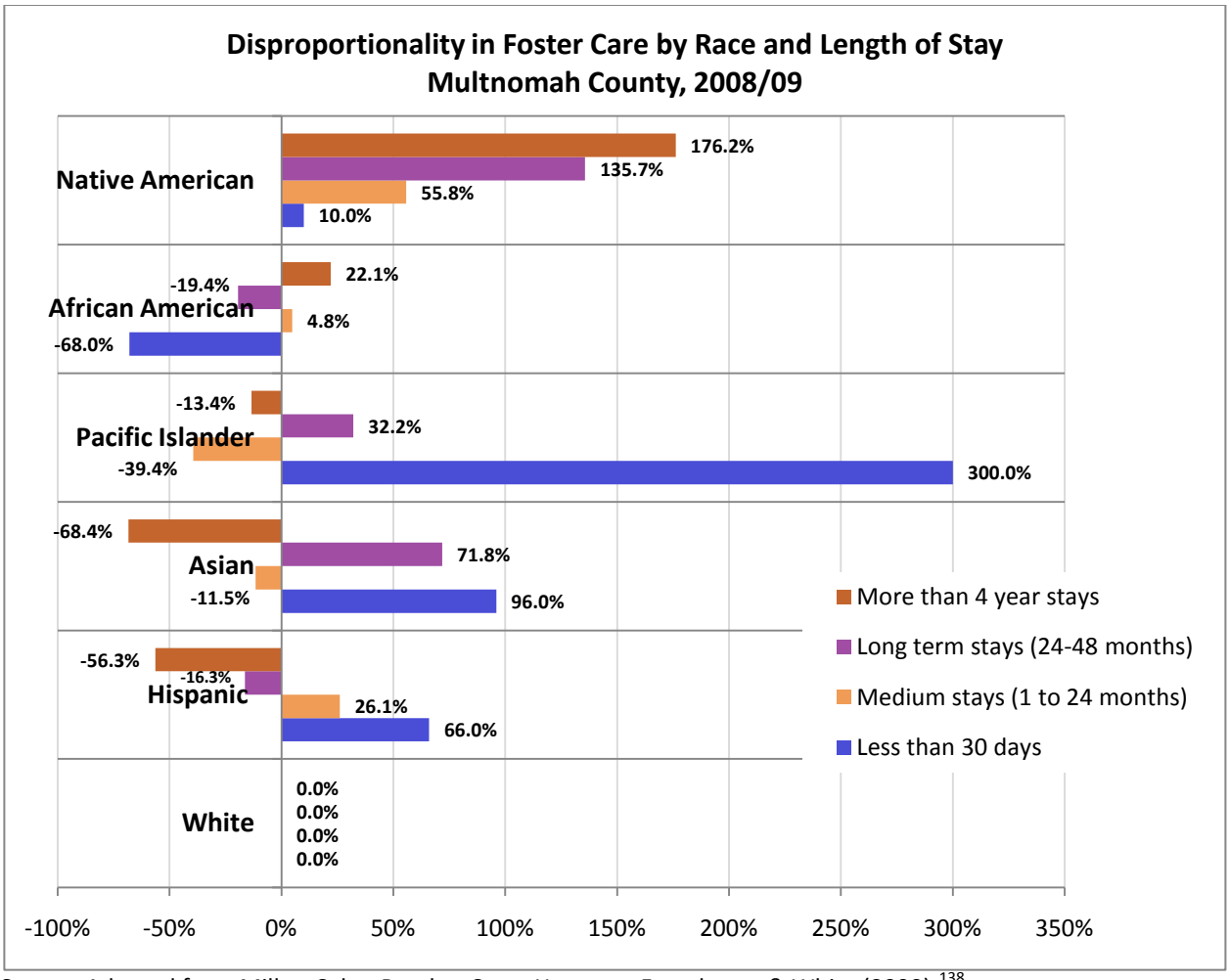
At the point on the child welfare continuum where an assessment gets conducted, workers make a decision about whether a reason exists to be concerned for the safety of the children in the home. In Multnomah county, Native American and Hispanic families were more likely than Whites to have founded dispositions, or rulings that lead to greater involvement with the child welfare system for these families. Black and Asian families had similar percentages of founded dispositions to White families.[133]

When children are removed from their homes, they enter foster care. Native American and Black children were in foster care at much higher rates than White children. Black children were in foster care at rates more than 3 times those of Whites. Even more stunning was the rate Native American children are in care – at a rate 26 times that of Whites! Other children of color were under-represented in the foster care system.[134]

Once a child is removed from the home, it is important to see how quickly the child is reunited with family.[135] Thus an important measure is how long children stay in care. Of all the children who were in care during the six-month period,[136] Native American, American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA eligible, and Asian children were in long-term foster care (of 2-4 years) at higher rates than White children. Asian children were the most likely of all races/ethnicities to experience foster care 2-4 years. A high percentage of American Indian/Alaskan Native (27.2%), American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible (36.6%), and Black children (28.2%) had also been in foster care *over 4 years* at the time the sample was drawn. Comparatively, 23.1% of White children had been in foster care over 4 years.[137]

In the below graph, we reproduce some of the disproportionality data reported in the above text. The first chart shows how each community fares in stays of various lengths. For example, among Hispanics, they are over-represented in shorter stays but underrepresented in longer stays. For whites, their rates of concentration in foster care, at each length of stay, are taken as the benchmark of 1 (recalculated to 0 for this graph to highlight areas of over and underrepresentation easily).

What this graph does not illustrate is the size of our communities of color involved in the child welfare systems, and these data are highlighted in the graph on disproportionality (that follows the one below).

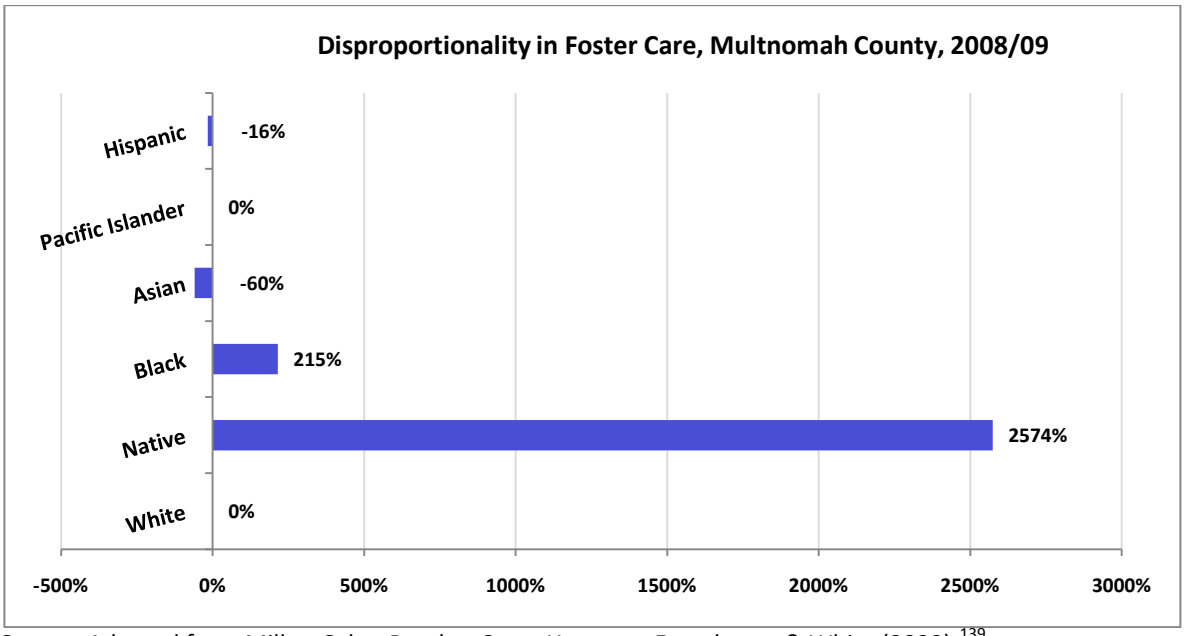


Source: Adapted from Miller, Cahn, Bender, Cross-Hemmer, Feyerherm, & White (2009).[138]

In the above chart, we calculate the degree to which children of color are in various length stays of foster care at levels higher or lower than White children. The level of length of stay is thus compared with White children, with such children being set at a zero-level of length of stay. If no disparity existed, every value for every community would be 0%. These data show, however, that there are significant variations for the differential levels at which children of color remain in foster care. For the Hispanic community, children are placed into foster care for short lengths of time at levels higher than White children, but then are underrepresented in longer stays. The pattern here appears to illustrate that there is a dominant pattern of short stays with more rapid repatriation into their families before their stays stretch beyond 2 years. At the other end of the chart, we see that Native American youth are always over represented in the foster care system but at worsening levels as they remain in care. We also see for African American children that they are held in care at higher levels than other groups of children at the longest stays in care. The pattern for other groups of children is more variable, with certain lengths of stay being particularly disproportionate (such as short term stays for Pacific Islander children and Asian children). Remember again that parents of color are no more likely to abuse their children than White parents.

These data clearly show how children from each racial and ethnic group are held within foster care for different lengths of time. The "more than four year stays" are the most egregious of experiences, as such children have been removed from their families and are "languishing" in foster care, without a plan for permanency of guardianship and residency. Below, we use an aggregate of the above data to determine how

significant the disparities are between White children and children of color in foster care (with any length of stay).



Source: Adapted from Miller, Cahn, Bender, Cross-Hemmer, Feyerherm, & White (2009).[139]

In the above chart, we calculate the disproportionality level according to the numbers of children that exist in the under-18 child population. In this calculation, we are gaining insight into how pronounced the level of disproportionality is for each community of color, compared to the White community.

Above, we see that there are significantly different removal rates for Native Americans and for African Americans in the child welfare system. While some family removal levels might reasonably be expected to fluctuate by plus/minus 10% in a given year, the heightened values of 215% for the African American community and 2574% for the Native community warrant immediate investigation.

The consequences of this excessive removal of children of color from their own homes, and keeping such children apart for longer times than White children are significant. They are more likely to encounter the criminal justice system, lower academic achievement, and higher dropout rates. Such children are also more likely to suffer post-traumatic stress syndrome as young adults (at rates five times the national average).[140]

Civic engagement & political participation

People show they care about their communities by becoming involved. Their core contribution is to help the community, rather than themselves. Frequently called “civic engagement,” (and also “civic health” and “social capital”), this idea emphasizes public good (instead of private gain) and is one indicator of community well-being. Civic health and social capital have well-established connections to issues such as crime, education, public health, and democracy.[141] For example, retirees who volunteer are healthier and happier; students who volunteer in their communities are also engaged and successful in school; and cities with higher levels of civic engagement have better schools and other public institutions.[142]

Measuring this involvement is one key to understanding community assets, which could be strengthened if resourced and supported effectively. Voting and volunteering are the most frequently measured forms of civic engagement, but political voice—things people do to express their political or social viewpoints, such as holding a political office, writing to an elected official, or protesting—may also be considered ways individuals contribute to public life.

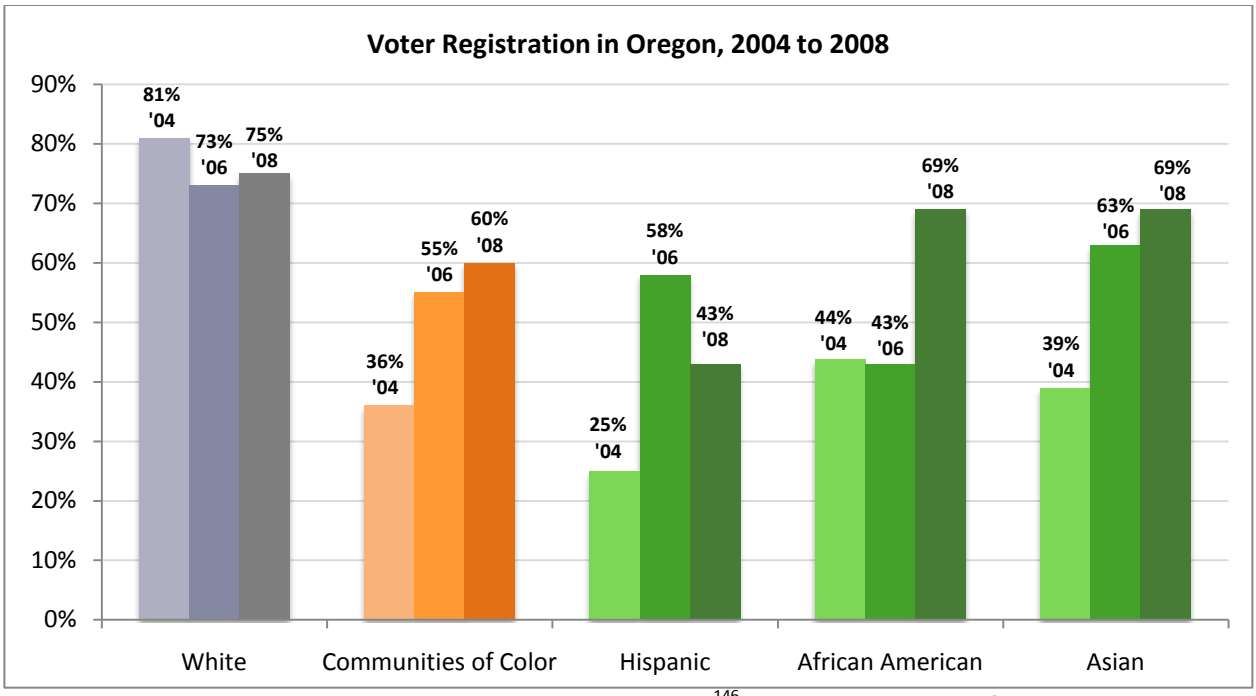
Voting data shows that for some communities of color the 2008 presidential election brought about increased levels of voter registration and turnout. This was not true for all communities of color in Oregon. Even with increasing levels of involvement among some communities in the recent election, people of color continue to show lower levels of engagement than Whites in the state.

While some have called this "apathy,"[143] the more current interpretation is that people do not vote when they perceive their elected officials failing to address their priorities and needs. This better explains the disenfrancishised Hispanic community in terms of voter registration and voting. Particularly, the dominant theme of deporting residents without official documentation will serve as a significant impetus to disengage from the political process.

There are two sets of data available to illustrate political engagement. The first is "voter registration" (which is a stronger form of engagement as it signals a lasting form of intention to participate) and "voter turnout" (which is the actual numbers of people who vote). Both will be explored in turn.

Native American voter data are not available in any traditional survey data. There are, however, reports that suggest they have been an influential voting bloc in the elections of two state senators in Washington and in South Dakota, and in the nomination of a gubernatorial candidate in Arizona.[144] The community is becoming more engaged and a potential force at all levels of politics. Native Americans faced the longest prohibition on voting rights, and ongoing barriers exist today to participating in electoral processes, including voter suppression tactics, restrictive identification practices, and distant poll locations. While these do not exist in Multnomah County, they interfere with the Native American community's national presence on the electoral scene with ripple effects stretching out to all areas of the country.

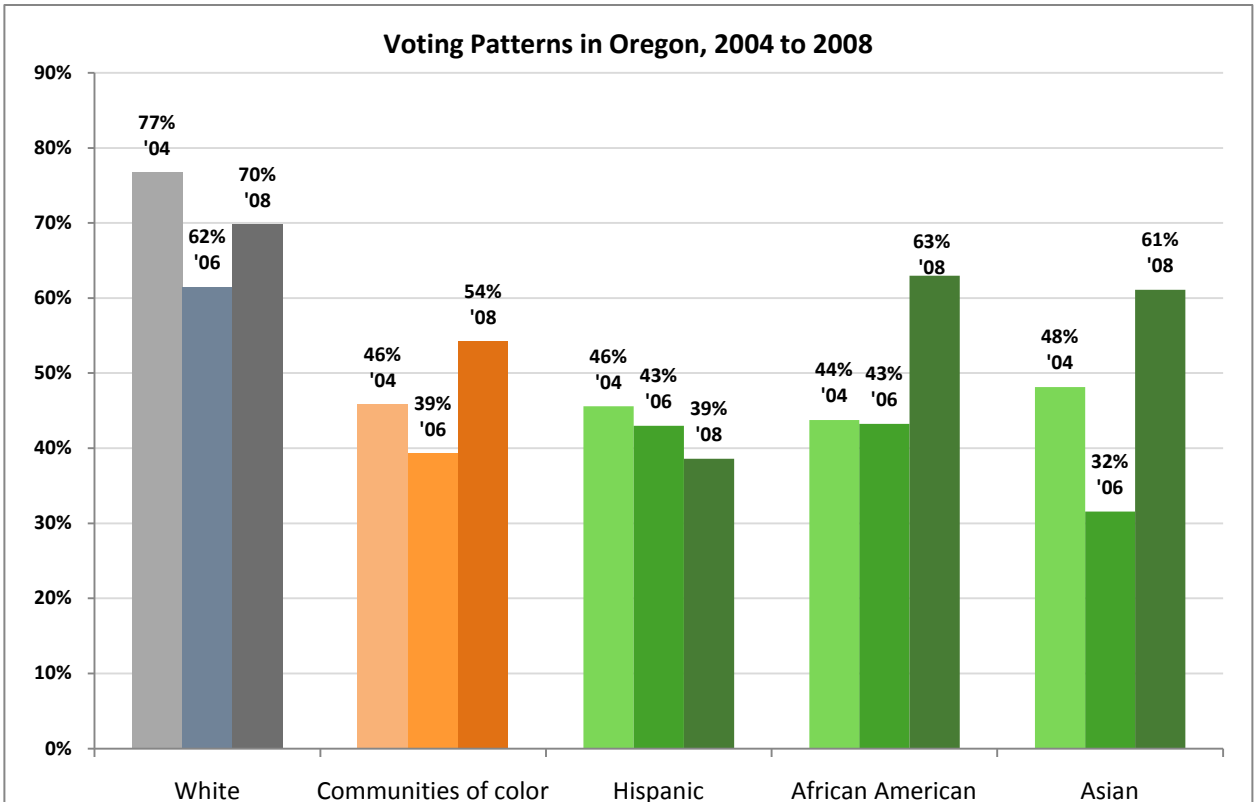
As the table below illustrates, in Oregon in 2008, levels of voter registration among Blacks and Asians reached similar levels to Whites. This is in contrast to voter registration levels in the previous presidential election year (2004), when levels of registration among Blacks and Asians lagged significantly behind Whites. Levels of voter registration among Hispanics in 2008, however, remained significantly lower than for Whites, and were also lower than for Blacks and Asians. Unfortunately, data were not reported for other groups.[145]



Source: November Current Population Survey 2004, 2006 & 2008.[146] Data are not available for Native Americans.

In reflecting on the above patterns, we generally can see a rise in the intention to vote (with the exception of the Hispanic community in 2008, but this is still a significant improvement over the 25% level in 2004. The overall trend is towards civic engagement and signals an important positive trend to illustrating a shared investment in selecting governing bodies for political office. There is still much to be achieved, however, as Whites outnumber communities of color in their intention to participate.

Turning to actual voter turnout, we see a pattern that illustrates, again, an overall positive direction in participating in the political process. The overall direction is upwards, although Whites are more likely to participate than communities of color.



Source: November Current Population Survey 2004, 2006, and 2008.

Nationally, the 2008 presidential election saw a significant increase in voter turnout among Blacks and Hispanics. This trend in Oregon, however, only held true for Blacks. With voter turnout at 63%, Blacks in Oregon turned out at rates similar to the national average (65%). With voting levels above 60%, Asians in Oregon also turned out at higher levels than the national average (49%) for their racial group.[147] In addition, levels of reported voting among Blacks and Asians in Oregon increased in 2008 from the previous presidential election year (2004).[148]

Voter turnout levels among Oregon's Hispanics in 2008 did, however, drop this past year and were lower than the two previous election years, remaining significantly lower than for Whites, Blacks and Asians.[149] In addition, with only 39% of Hispanics reporting having voted in the 2008 election, Oregon lagged behind the national average of 49% voter turnout among Hispanics.[150]

The 2008 election showed declining levels of civic engagement among Oregon's Latino population. Voter turnout among Oregon's Hispanics was half that of Whites. While participation in the 2008 election showed improvements in civic engagement for Blacks and Asians (with more than 60% of Blacks and Asians reporting voting in the 2008 election), Blacks and Asians still lagged behind their White counterparts in terms of voter turnout in the state. Fully 70% of White Oregonians reported voting in 2008.

One key dimension of the above data shows that engagement levels peak when a member of one's own race runs for political office. The significant burst of both voter registration and voter turnout within the African American community can be attributed to President Obama's role in raising the visibility of the election and its importance for the African American community. We encourage candidates of color to become more engaged in political processes, and perceive that this is a significant avenue for civic

engagement across communities of color. In addition, we support the expansion of programs designed to encourage such engagement, akin to the City of Portland's Diversity and Civic Leadership program.

Voting, volunteering, and other forms of civic engagement—such as participating in community meetings, membership in community associations, and writing letters to the editor—are linked to differences in education, family income, and race. Higher levels of income and education predict higher levels of civic participation. Given this, it is no surprise that Whites tend to have higher rates of civic engagement than Blacks, Hispanics or Asians, and they also have lower attrition out of civic activities from one year to the next.[151]

However, a national survey on civic engagement recently found that although people of modest means are less likely to volunteer than affluent Americans (29% vs. 50%), they are more likely to give food, money or shelter (24% vs. 21%). When looking specifically at those who do not participate in traditional forms of volunteering, 39% of those making less than $50,000 helped in other ways like providing food and shelter, versus only 27% of those in higher income brackets.[152]

The current economic recession seems to be taking a toll on civic engagement. *America's Civic Health Index* for 2009 found that 72% of Americans cut back on time spent volunteering, participating in groups, and doing other civic activities in the past year.[153] However, while rates of volunteering among Whites remained roughly the same, levels of volunteering among Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics rose slightly from 2006 to 2009.[154]

Participation in public service

When we turn attention to those working in public office (as opposed to elected and appointed positions), we find that, while improving slowly, they are still disproportionately White. Instead of occupying at least 24.3% of the positions in the County workforce, people of color occupy just 21% of these positions.[155] These data are likely to deteriorate over the next few years, because while new hires are more likely to be people of color (at 28% in 2008 and then dropping to 26% in 2009), they make up a very large portion of those laid off – at 36% in 2009. While this translates into just 12 people, such a pattern narrows the possibility of improving parity objectives in the County workforce. A subsequent trend is that higher levels of County employees are more likely to be white than lower levels, forming a glass ceiling in employment in public service.[156]

At the City level, the City of Portland hires an even smaller percentage of people of color. They hire (as of December 11, 2009) a fulltime workforce that is 16.6% people of color, while hiring parity would instead be at 23.3% people of color.[157] Non-fulltime workers are closer to racial equity at 22.2% people of color. The trend, however, is actually likely to deteriorate as new hires are increasingly White, as people of color make up only 15.6% of the new permanent fulltime hires. Layoff composition was not made available in these data. The pattern of access to higher job categories also follows that of the County, where people of color face (with some exceptions) more limited access to jobs the higher one moves in the organizational structure.

There has been progress made over the last ten years when in 1999 the workforce in the City of Portland was only 13.4% people of color. Progress, as we see it, is slow. Given that the pace of growth of communities of color is much more rapid than Whites, unless the City improves its hiring practices, the overall composition is likely to move intolerably slowly towards racial equity.

Shifting our attention up the power ladder towards those who have more influence, we look at the composition of those who are elected or appointed to public office. Targeted initiatives are required at all levels of governance in Multnomah County to ensure that the overwhelming whiteness of those elected to public office reverses trend. In 2000, when the state of Oregon was 86.6% White, the elected officials were 97.5% White.[158] City councilors and mayors are the whitest group with County councilors being better representative. When one focuses on the State representatives who were both elected and appointed, again there is inequity. The Latino community suffers the deepest lack of representation.[159]

When we consider these data together with data on the participation of communities of color in federal elections (as voters), we interpret that increasing the diversity of candidates (away from overwhelmingly White to proportionately people of color) will increase the civic engagement of our communities. This will, in turn, increase the vitality and creativity of governance processes and capacities. In our estimation, this will improve the likelihood of robust and durable commitments to reducing disparities and improving quality of life for all.

Chapter 4: Community-Specific Profiles of Disparities

The Asian community

While this report is a composite profile of the disparities challenging communities of color, we take time now to profile the situation facing the Asian community. Our findings about this community have been so significant that it is imperative that we alter the dominant discourse (or myth) about Asians in the USA today and the inconsistencies of that discourse here in Multnomah County. An Asian-specific community report will be released in the coming months – here we present a key feature of these findings.

Profound differences exist for the local Asian community than elsewhere in the USA. For the reader who is familiar with the national trends, the situation is, overall, promising. At the national level, Asian incomes, occupations, education, poverty rates and other well-being measures are typically at or above the levels of Whites. Not so in Multnomah county.

Locally, the Asian community bears a much more similar resemblance to other communities of color than to Whites.

2008		Multnomah county	
		Whites	Asian
Educational Attainment			
	Less than high school	6.7%	22.0%
	Bachelor's degree	24.5%	23.4%
	Graduate/professional degree	15.7%	11.5%
Occupations			
	Management & professions	43.2%	35.2%
	Service	14.3%	20.2%
Incomes			
	Family median	$71,296	$57,807
	Married couples raising kids	$81,636	$63,871
	Female raising kids	$37,485	$28,789
	Individuals	$33,095	$22,070
Poverty rate			
	All families raising children	10.4%	13.1%
	Married couple families	3.1%	7.3%
	Child poverty	14.4%	22.5%
Rental burden (paying more than 30% of income)		45.8%	49.9%
Mortgage burden (paying more than 30% of income)		33.6%	40.6%
Housing value (median)		$290,400	$249,000

Source: American Community Survey, 2008.

In these data, we see that those in the Asian community do not have a similar profile to Whites. Educations are disparate, occupational access is stratified, incomes are deeply unequal, poverty rates vary widely and housing values (a major engine of wealth creation) diverge significantly.

While a thorough interpretation of "why" these results exist will be contained in the community-specific report, early analysis suggests that there are likely two reasons for divergence from the national situation. First, the specific composition of the local Asian community accounts for some of the variance. In reality,

the Asian community is composed of deeply varied groups – from Vietnamese, Chinese and Filipino to Hmong, Burmese and Bhutanese. Recent immigrants to this region likely account for a greater composition of the community. As well, one's country of origin and the recentness of one's landing will factor into the profile of the community. Secondly, we are uncovering that Multnomah County has a particularly toxic form of racism and institutionalized racism that renders experiences of communities of color worse than their national comparisons. We believe that it is likely that a combination of these two factors results in the worse outcomes that the Asian community faces in Multnomah County.

The importance of this finding needs underscoring. Asians are held up as a "model minority" across the USA as a community that has "made it" in attaining equality with Whites and even surpassing them on most of the above criteria. This has served to suggest that other communities of color just need to work as hard as Asians do to achieve success. Such an argument has, correspondingly, served as an excuse to not center whiteness and racism in understanding the struggles that communities of color face in attaining economic and educational success.

The Slavic community

So far in this report, the experiences of two of our communities of color have been subsumed under other groups. It is time to extract them and place them in the spotlight. The first is the Slavic community and the second (the focus of the next major section of this report) is the African immigrant and refugee community. The Slavic community is officially counted as White, and its experience is fully subsumed in all measures of the White community so far in this text. Disaggregating the Slavic experience from the rest of the White community is the focus of this section of the report. While a Slavic-specific report will be released in the coming months, nothing of the Slavic community has yet appeared in this report. To compensate for its exclusion, we dedicate a section in this report to a detailing of the issues and disparities facing this community. Despite this "official" recognition as White, the experiences of the Slavic community are best understood through a lens of racism and thus, from our understanding, it is a community of color.

The Slavic community is defined as people from the former Soviet Union, mostly who fled religious and political persecution and came to Oregon in several waves. The first is at the turn of the 20th century, when members of the Russian Orthodox faith moved to the area. Sustaining their identity was deeply challenging and the community lost its foundation. Resurgence occurred at the close of the Russian Revolution in 1922.[160] The third and most significant wave occurred as the Soviet Union began to unravel. In 1988, then President Mikhail Gorbachev allowed some religious minorities to leave the country. Numbers grew when in 1989, the USA eased immigration laws to permit Soviet immigrants. With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Slavic community arrived in large numbers.

Migration into Oregon and California was primarily evangelical groups, bringing histories of religious persecution and deep connections to fundamentalist churches. Helped with sponsorships by Christian church congregations, and recognition by the US government that their experiences were sufficient to warrant status as refugees (due to persecution for their religious beliefs), Slavic numbers grew to where they now are the largest refugee group in Oregon. The strength of the evangelical lobby in the USA has secured their ongoing status as refugees despite the end to religious persecution that coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Settlement has been facilitated by a network of social service organizations and refugee assistance groups with capacities to work with the Slavic community. Eased by the Oregon climate that resembles the

Russian homeland, the community is strong although troubled by numerous issues. To address the community's unique needs, there is a deep desire to expand Slavic-specific organizations. Written five years ago, this text portrays how the Slavic community needs to develop its own services:

> *As a community with values, language and norms that differ from the American raised community, we need to offer ethnically-culturally-attuned services. Along with the other communities, we envision services where a member of our community can walk in and feel understood, affirmed, and their needs appropriately addressed. We believe that this is best achieved for us through our collectivist values that hold the group responsible to the individual and vise versa. Another aspect that binds us is the resourcefulness that has helped us survive the times of repression and lack. We have faced these times with coping mechanisms that are understood among us and we have jokes and proverbs, history, and other bonds that all form a shared cultural context. There are deeply ingrained values for cooperation and kindness. The most often repeated teaching that Slavic parents give their young is, "byt dobrm—"be kind". These nuances are hard things to articulate but are necessary for a service setting to effectively serve Slavic people. Our group values and resourcefulness would be the fulcrum that we would use to lift our community to its potential if we have control over our service design.*[161]

Today, the Slavic community continues to wrestle with issues that typically challenge refugees. A traumatic past exists universally among refugees who need to flee persecution and violence. This history, along with deep distrust of the government, combines with difficulties encountered in one's new country. Such experiences include acculturation, language challenges, and issues such as poverty, isolation, education either low or failing to be credentialed here in the USA, and lack of current and historic involvement in civic life.

Additional challenges are presented by the school system. Children face ridicule due to their language difficulties and the ongoing ripple effects of the Cold War. Popular culture challenges how others understand this community. Stereotypes of "gangsters" and "mobs" and "Rambo" challenge the community internally and externally. For those who notice, and of course for the Slavic community itself, these discourses can be seen in abundance throughout the popular media and popular culture. Beyond these damaging discourses, discrimination is profound. Consultations in the community for this project illustrated how parents are challenged by the stereotypes their children have to resist, and the minimization that they find of their concerns within the school system. Parents are not prepared for the advocacy roles they must undertake on behalf of their children and are not resourced or supported in doing so. Anti-immigrant sentiments deepen the isolation they experience.

Geographically, the community is moving east into Gresham, David Douglas, Centennial and Reynolds school districts. Language difficulties deepen as service providers have less experience with this community than with others. The culture of non-involvement with the state and with service organizations means parents are less likely to be involved and be effective advocates for their children.

The Slavic community summarizes its priorities for action as follows:

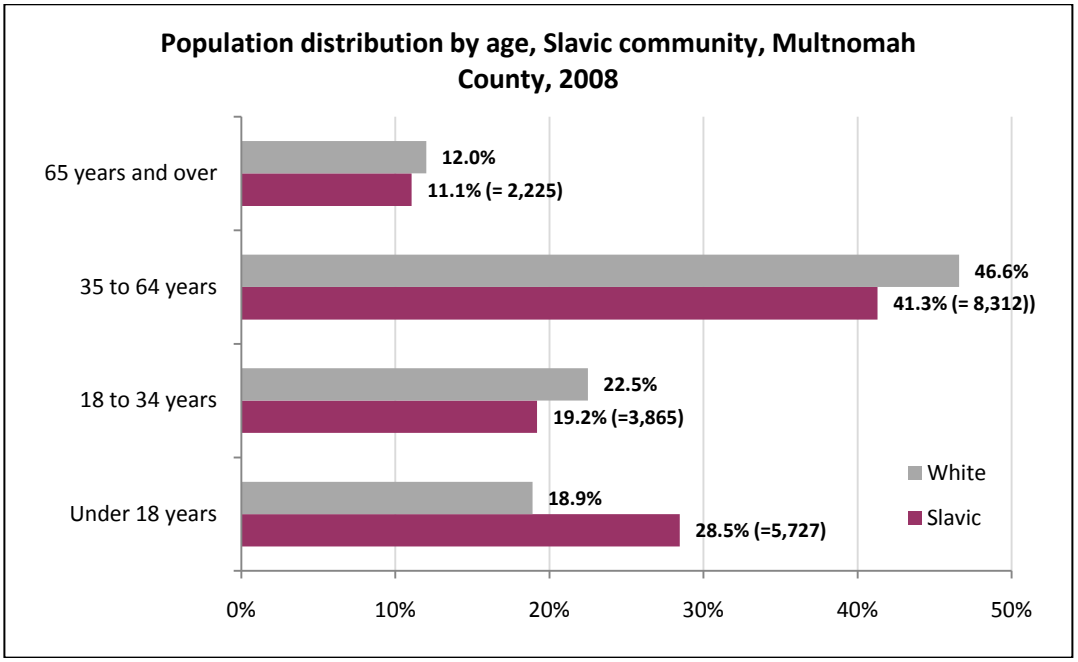
- Youth face difficulties with school success, the law, and mental health, due to acculturation pressures and a lack of safe, accepting settings for support and guidance for the family unit.
- Many families face poverty, housing, and immigration-related legal issues.
- The elderly are isolated and lack meaningful opportunities to share their skills.
- The community has no centralized place, outside of churches, to meet, give help, and to preserve the heritage the Slavic community holds dear.

The problem of being a non-traditional community of color is that you are invisible. No government database reports on the experiences of the Slavic community. No administrative database does such reporting either. In addition, the decision to drop the long form from Census 2010 means that the most expansive and expensive data collection effort in the USA has decided to render the Slavic community invisible. Nothing exists in the public arena about this community. We want this practice to change and advocate, as the reader will observe in our recommendations, that local research practices on equity issues need to expand to include both the Slavic community and the African community. What now follows is our first effort to profile these experiences statistically.

We have conducted a customized extraction of microfile data on this community with the American Community Survey for 2008. Nowhere else are these data available.

Age of community

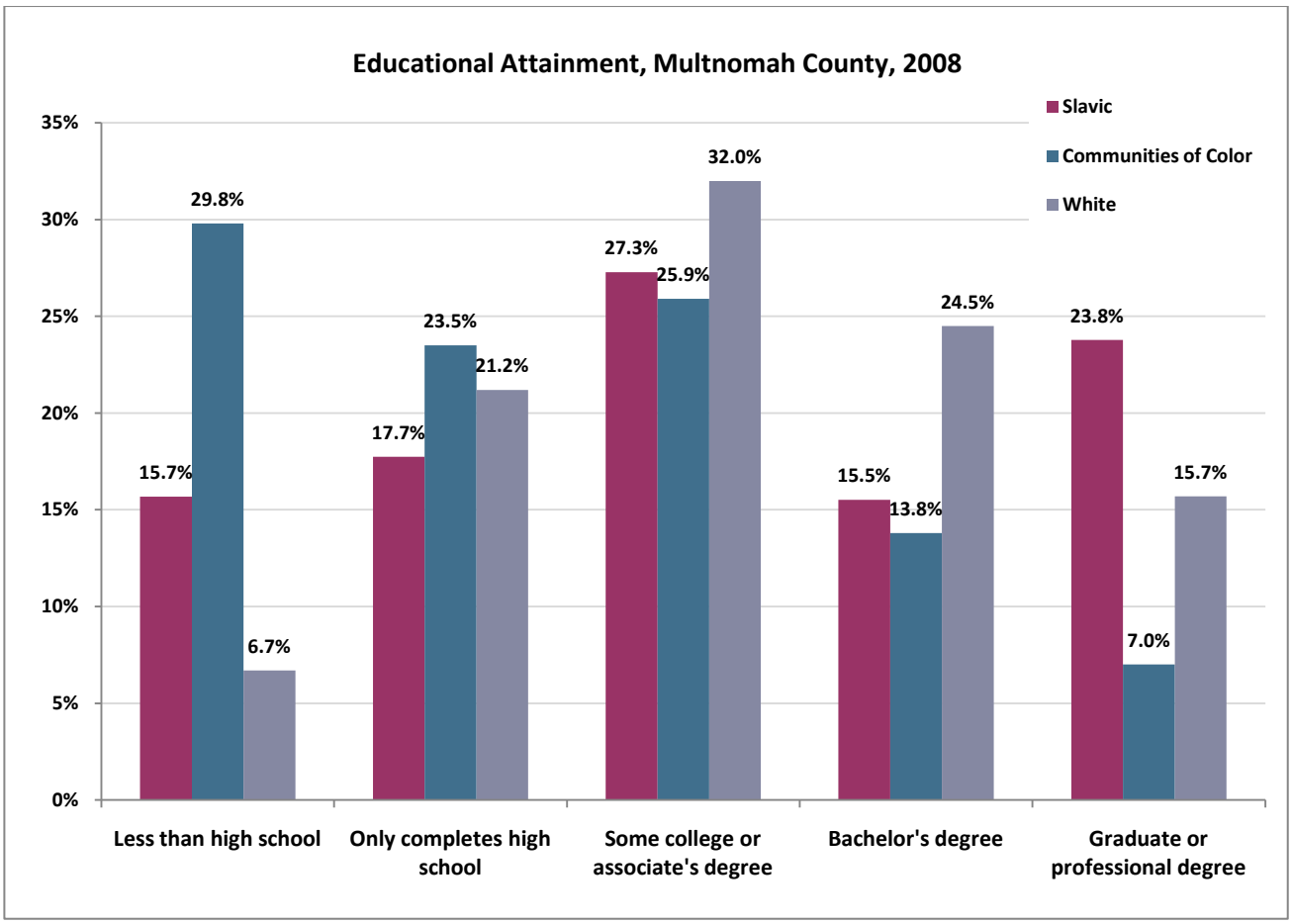
The community is a youthful one, with significantly more children and youth in it than White communities. This suggests that issues of education (retention, graduation, disparities, language) will be pronounced among the community striving to improve the likelihood that their children will obtain decent wages, good and steady work and prospects for a long and healthful life.



Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

Education

The Slavic community is highly educated. With almost ¼ of its residents having a graduate degree, it is the mostly highly educated of groups. That said, it also has a high number of those who do not graduate high school, particularly compared with Whites. This is a marked distribution issue, with a bi-polar range of educated and not educated community members. While deeper exploration of this will occur in the community-specific report, early analysis shows that may degrees have been awarded outside of the USA, and thus having them recognized for employment and professional certification is deeply challenging.



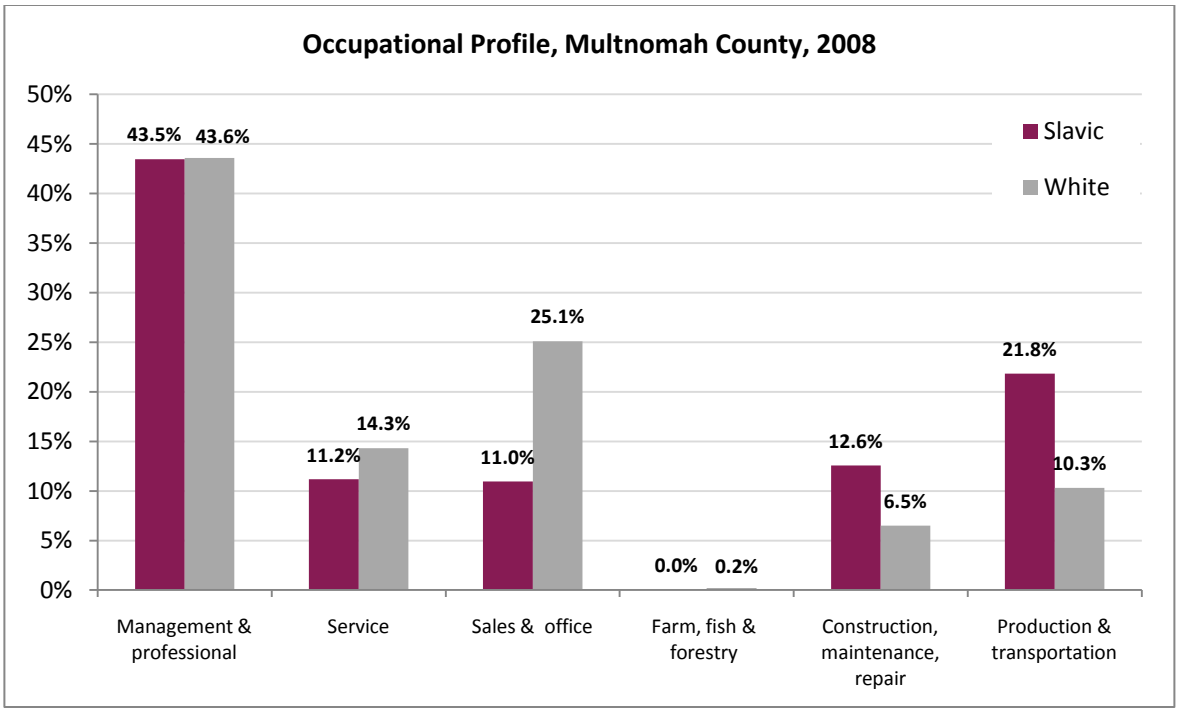
Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

Let's turn our attention to the occupational profile to see if these highly educated Slavic people are able to turn their educations into quality jobs.

Occupations

If the Slavic community were able to effectively turn their very high education levels into corresponding occupation levels, we would see their profile as much better than Whites. In fact, they hold occupations at a level parallel to whites (with the exception that they are not given jobs in "sales and office" at corresponding levels), not higher. This is counter to what we would expect and anticipate that issues related to inadequate recognition of foreign credentials is hampering success.

Where does the Slavic community get more than the expected allotment of jobs? In construction, repairs, production and transportation. In short, they have strong employment in areas which construct the infrastructure on which the rest of us depend, and in the moving around of "stuff" which we consume. In short, while this community is very highly educated, their role in the community is more marginalized than warranted.



Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

Remember, too, that there are significant income variations associated with these occupations. On page 38 of this report (or thereabouts), we highlighted the average wages associated within each occupation, broken out by race. Here we are reminded that the average wages in construction are about $38,000/year, and the average incomes in production/transportation are about $30,000. Compare these to the average wage of about $54,000 in management, and you see that the Slavic community is being kept from higher wage jobs, despite their outstanding education levels.

Some in the Slavic community have turned to self-employment to set their own conditions of work and to be less vulnerable to the exclusion that faced them as employees. More than 400 businesses in the Portland, Oregon-Vancouver, Washington metropolitan area are now owned by Russian-speaking entrepreneurs. Many of the businesses are in the construction industry.[162]

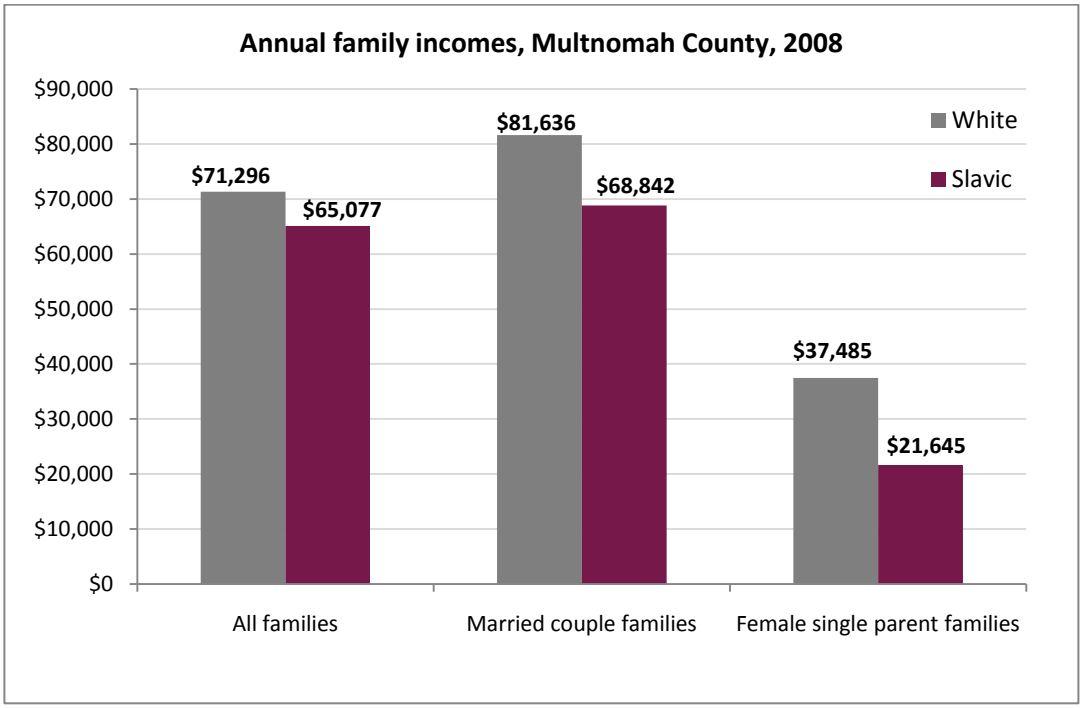
While construction industry jobs are better paying than those in the service industry (which are at about $23,000/year for communities of color), they are marked by body-challenging conditions and high injury rates that means such workers are likely to lose their jobs as they age, and more likely to be injured. The following profile of the construction industry by the federal government illustrates the working conditions facing construction workers:

> *Workers in this industry need physical stamina because the work frequently requires prolonged standing, bending, stooping, and working in cramped quarters. They also may be required to lift and carry heavy objects. Exposure to the weather is common because much of the work is done outside or in partially enclosed structures. Construction workers often work with potentially dangerous tools and equipment amidst a clutter of building materials; some work on temporary scaffolding or at great heights. Consequently, they are more prone to injuries than workers in other jobs. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that many construction trades workers experienced a work-related injury and illness rate that was higher than the national average.*[163]

Fatalities are also a feature of the industries where the Slavic community is over-represented: transportation and construction. These two industries have the highest number of fatalities in all occupations. These features of danger, bodily harm and limited longevity in employment are characteristics of the jobs where our Slavic community is over-represented.

Income levels

The profile of incomes among communities of color, compared with Whites, is dismal. At levels either half, or close to half, communities of color face disparities that are completely unacceptable. How do those in the Slavic community fare? This is particularly salient not only for their well-being and ability to raise their children, but also for their ability to "cash in" on their education. Such is the promise of higher education that higher degrees will correlate with higher incomes.



Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

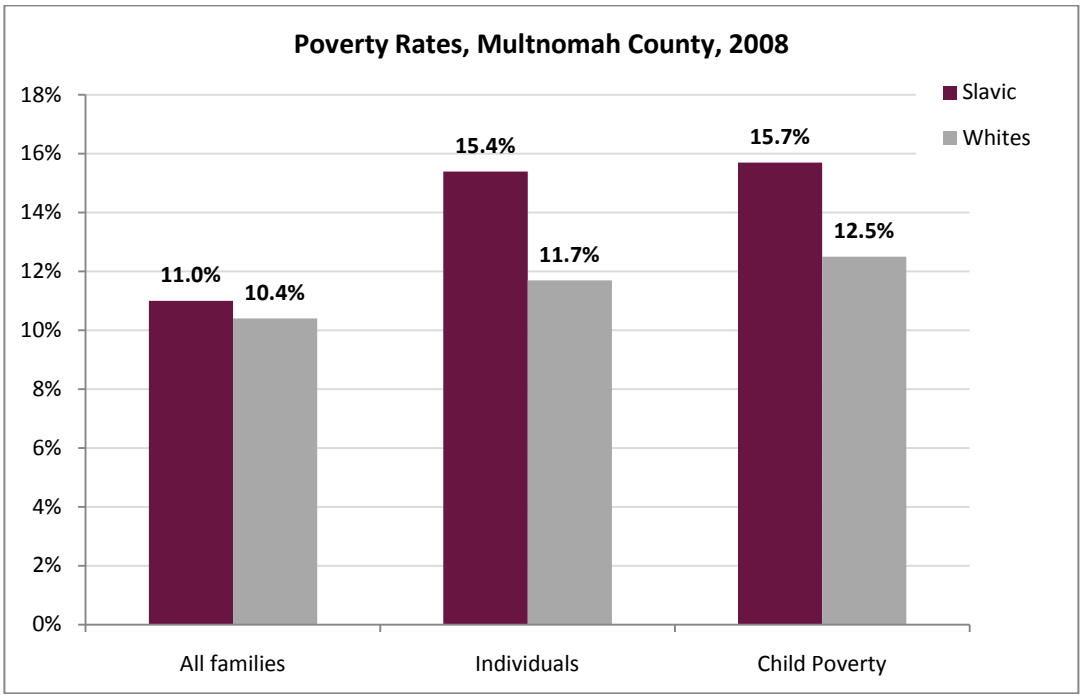
Slavic families have incomes The Slavic community fares better than communities of color, on average, in most areas of income, except for female single parent families. In this type of family, no education is able to help bring Slavic women to incomes that approximate White female-led families. The Slavic community is not able to cash in on its sky-high education levels.

While we might attribute the recentness of their immigration status as the reason for their constraints in the labor market, research elsewhere indicates that newer immigrants to the country face intolerably long times to "catch up" to Whites.[164] Rather than an explanation of acculturation to suggest that over time immigrants and refugees will make progress and approximate the incomes of Whites, a lens of racism and social exclusion account for the snails-pace of progress that is made. And as witnessed in the text of this report, incomes of communities of color never catch up, even when the duration of their time in the country is not an issue, such as the Native American and African American communities.

We won't hold our breath about the prognosis of waiting to be able to get good jobs that reflect our education levels. Both anti-racist action and an end to institutionalized racism are needed to improve our quality of life. Without it, Slavic youth are likely to continue their dismally low graduation rates.

Poverty rates

Poverty levels within this community are high. Poverty levels are between one-in-six (15.7%) and one-in-nine (11%) and are unacceptable. In every category, they are higher than whites.



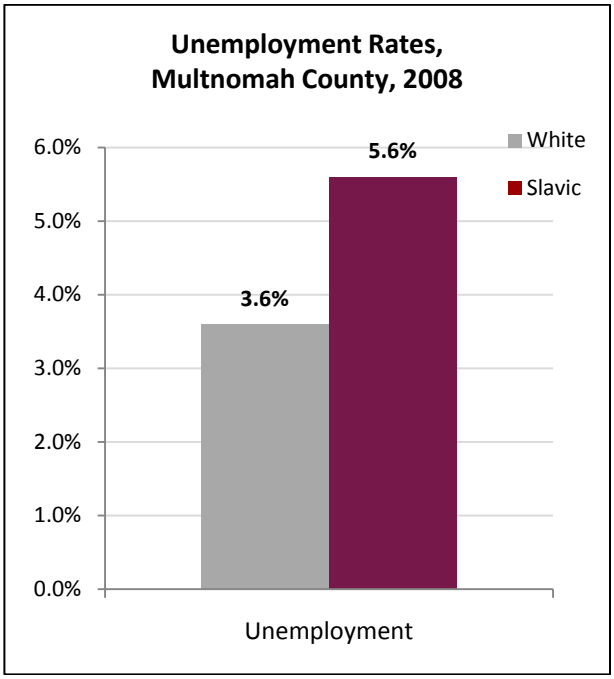
Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

With the risk of the reader being overwhelmed with the reliance on numbers and data, let's remember the impact of these numbers and what it means to live in poverty. Poverty results in a massive curtailing of possibilities. For children it narrows ability to succeed at school, to be ready and able to learn, and to fit in with the rest of the children. Poverty is correlated with higher rates of learning disabilities, and dropping out of school early. Someone born into poverty is more likely to become a poor adult and have weak employment prospects. In each measure, the Slavic community has poverty levels higher than Whites.

Adult experiences of poverty are similarly heartbreaking. Poverty makes one unable to find safe and affordable housing. With unsafe housing, health and well-being is compromised. So too one cannot take advantage of programs and services reliably. Transportation is costly and even job training programs are hard to access, particularly when English language skills are low, and when one's self-esteem has been harmed by years of exclusion and inadequate social support networks.

Unemployment

Unemployment levels among this community are high. The level of unemployment today will be much worse. The disparity with the White community is anticipated to continue and deepen as the economy today is much worse than in 2008.

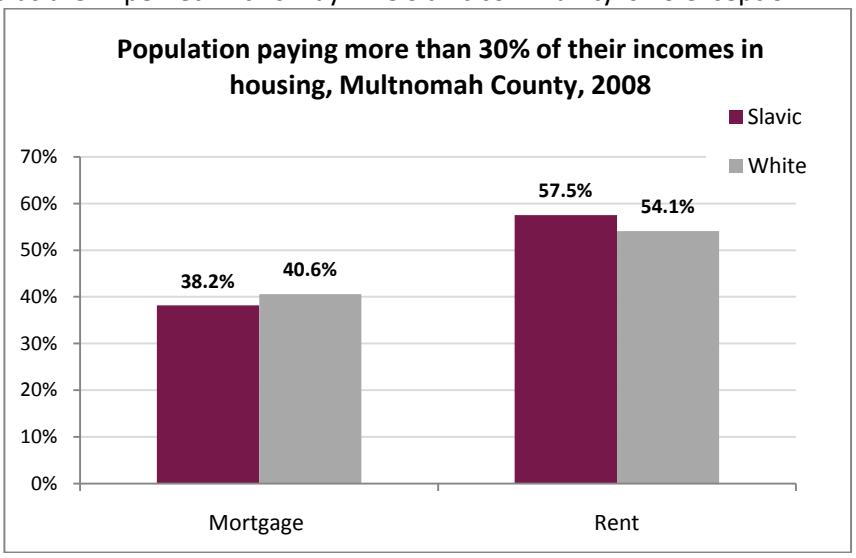


Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

Unemployment levels within the Slavic community are 55% higher than in the White community. While higher education levels typically protect people from unemployment, such dynamics do not occur in the Slavic community. Barriers faced by this community include lack of recognition of foreign credentials, foreign employment experience, language barriers and dimensions of racism in the hiring process.

Housing

When one pays more than 30% of their income in housing, one is said to be vulnerable. This is a significant issue in Multnomah county as housing prices are steep and a very significant percentage of households are imperiled in this way. The Slavic community is no exception.



Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

One's ability to pay the bills each month depends on an array of factors including incomes and expenditures. The largest of expenses is housing. When this chews up a majority of income, it is very difficult to pay the rest of one's bills. Housing for this community is further troubled by the very high number of people who spend not "just" 30% of their income on rent and mortgage but 50% or more on such costs. Among renters who spend more than 30% of income on rent, 31% spend more than half of their income on rent. Among those who pay mortgages and are already imperiled by paying much of their income on housing (38.2%), 46% of them pay more than 50% of their incomes on housing costs. This is a sign of deep vulnerability for a large portion of the Slavic community.

Other features of housing are home ownership levels and housing equity. For those in the Slavic community, home ownership rates are similar to those of Whites, at 60.3% while those of Whites are at 62%. The value of one's home is actually significantly higher among the Slavic community, reaching an average housing value of $342,033. This value may not, however, illustrate the cost of the home. Many in the Slavic community are employed in the construction industry and may have considerable sweat equity in one's home. We do not believe that the value of one's home, for this community, is a sign of its affluence (although they will reap such benefits at a time when they are able to cash out the value of this equity).

Closing comments on the Slavic community

These data begin to help us understand the challenges facing the Slavic community. We see a community deeply challenged in their ability to create the economic situation that they and their families have so invested in. The capacity of this community to secure employment in fields which reflect their high education levels is currently thwarted. While the causes are not fully clear, we can assume it is connected to racism and long-term problems of the USA failing to recognize the credentials and experience of those from overseas.

One ongoing priority for the Slavic community is its own community center. Such an addition to the community would be an impetus to establish a prideful local identity and to resource the networks of service providers and informal supports that exist interspersed throughout the community.

The biggest threat to this community is its invisibility and the marginalization that flows from the lack of data on their experiences in many walks of life: the school system, child welfare, criminal and juvenile justice, health and social services. The fact that no data are collected on this community in mainstream institutions is deeply troubling and needs to be remedied immediately. This community is the largest of our refugee groups in Multnomah county. We must serve them better – the journey begins with documenting and rendering visible their experiences.

The African immigrant & refugee community

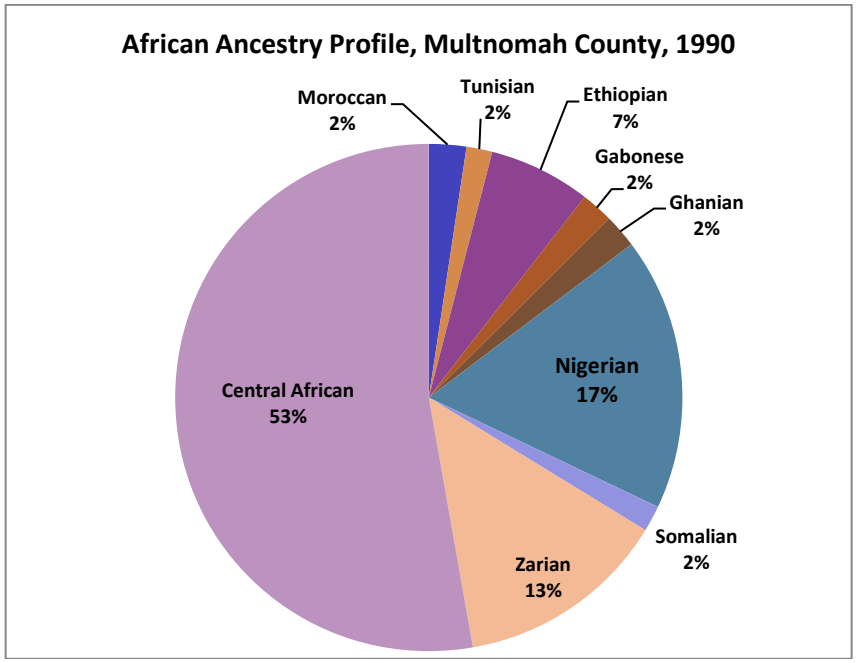
To date, no research has been conducted on the experiences and challenges facing the African immigrant and refugee community in Multnomah County. Our belief is that the community is deeply imperiled and faces challenges that often place it in the most marginalized of all communities of color. While this is only a beginning review of the experiences in the community (and will be profiled more expansively in a community-specific report to be released in the coming months), our fears about the challenges facing this community are borne out. We take the time in this integrated report to highlight some of these experiences as they are not yet visible in the prior text. This is because all data sources for this report have conflated this community within the African American community data. While the African immigrant

and refugee experience is revealed to some extent in the African American data, additional challenges emerge due to the recentness of immigration, the trauma of refugee experience, and the language barriers that impede progress of this community at all age levels. Let's turn now to the patterns of how this community has entered Multnomah County.

Beginning in the early 1980s, refugees fleeing war and persecution arrived in Portland from African countries. People from Ethiopia or present-day Eritrea arrived first, followed by people from Sudan, Somalia, Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Sierra Leone, and Togo.[165] Estimates from 2003 suggest that African immigrants make up 2% of the foreign-born population in the Portland Metro (tri-county) area. Nearly half (45%) of the tri-county area's African foreign-born population is from eastern Africa, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.[166]

The African community in Multnomah county includes refugee arrivals, secondary migrants, and non-refugee immigrants. Since 1975 African immigrants and refugees have been arriving in Multnomah county. African immigrants and refugees now represent the fourth largest immigrant community in Multnomah county, after Latino, Asian, and Slavic immigrants. The African community here is incredibly diverse in its make-up, with 28 different African countries and numerous ethnic groups represented. Recent community-based research shows that the largest concentration of African refugees and immigrants in Multnomah county are Somalian, Ethiopian, and Oromo (data on this community may be contained within the numbers from Ethiopia and Kenya). Additional immigrant and refugee men, women, and children are from Eritrean, Sudanese, Sierra Leone, Angolan, Malian, Liberian, Togolese, Chadian, Nigerian, Rwandan, Mozambique, and Congolese communities.

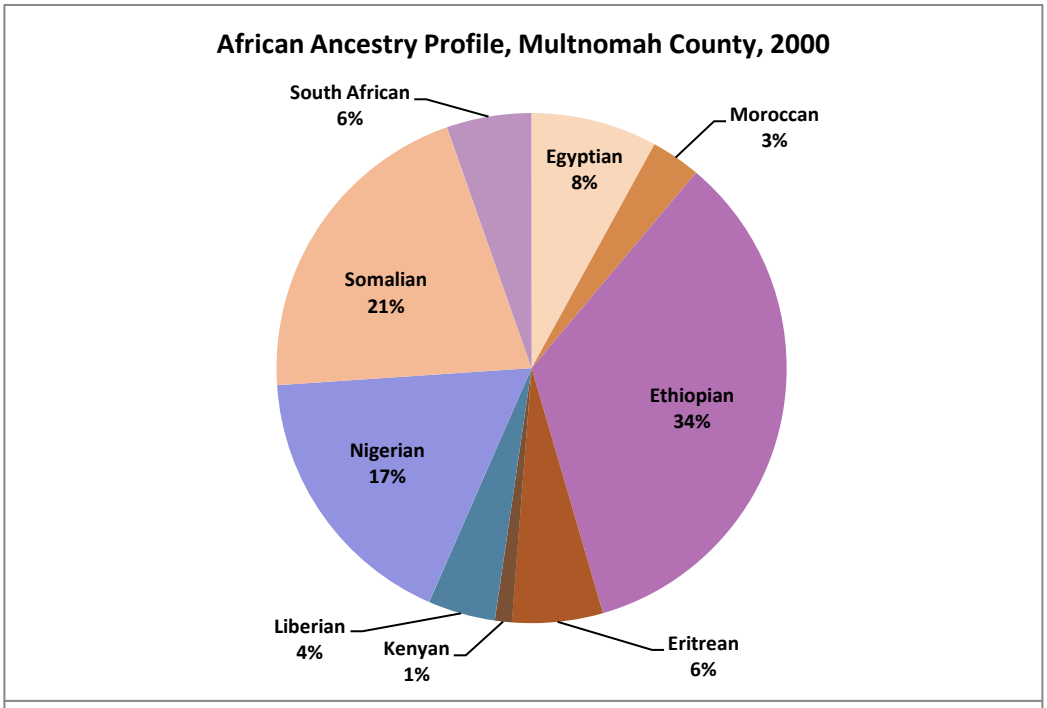
While we know that the official data sources are flawed for this community, we use these data to begin our understanding of this community and how it has changed over the last 28 years. Below are the ancestry profiles contained in official sources from the Census Bureau.

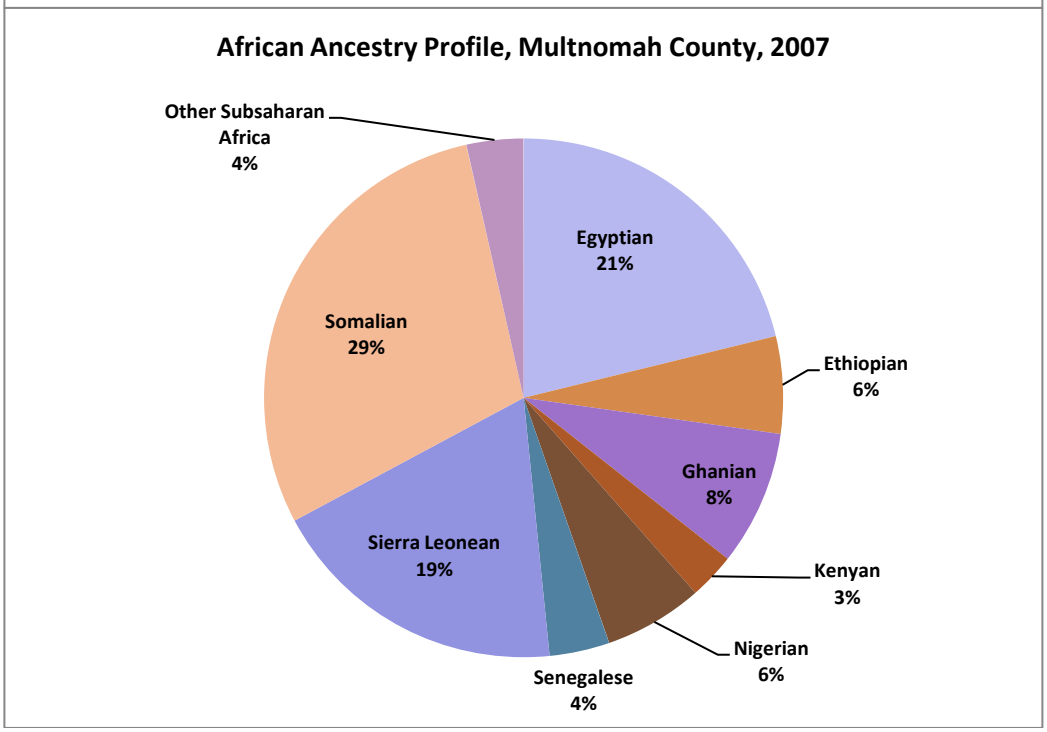


Source: Census 1990, drawing from customized data extractions by Joseph Buani-Smith, PSU.

More recently, the 2000 and 2008 data show a shifting pattern of African immigrants and refugees. Today we have an increasing concentration of the African community coming from Somalia, Egypt and Sierra

Leone. There is a diminishment of the portion of the community from Nigeria and Ethiopia (as a portion of the entire African community). This does not mean, however, that their numbers are shrinking.





Source: Census 2000 & American Community Survey, 2007, drawing from customized data extractions by Joseph Buani-Smith, PSU.

The recentness of immigration and immigration status is profiled below. We can see that almost ½ of Africans are not yet citizens and that this group is the most recent arrivers to the USA. This

shows us that length of residency is tied to becoming a citizen and that the bulk of our newer arrivers can anticipate becoming citizens.

USA Citizenship of those from Sub-Saharan Africa		
	USA	**52.30%**
	Entered 2000 or later	8.20%
	Entered 1990 to 1999	26.30%
	Entered before 1990	17.80%
	Not USA	**47.70%**
	Entered 2000 or later	25.00%
	Entered 1990 to 1999	16.20%
	Entered before 1990	6.50%

Source: American Community Survey, 2008.Sub-Saharan origins removes Africans from the data who are from Egypt and Morocco.

Related issues are the ability to communicate in English. Among those Africans born in Africa (and thus not claiming it as an ancestry of their forefathers), more than one-third do not speak English very well (36.5%). Languages are versatile and 82.7% speak a language other than English.

Turning again to the social situation facing this community, the situation facing African Immigrants and Refugees is dire. As refugees, many experienced deep trauma, violence and retain these experiences in their bodies. The following words of this community were prepared in 2003 by the Coalition of Communities of Color and retain their power and significance today:

> *Before coming to the United States, many African youth and families spent years in refugee camps living in unthinkable conditions. Many have been profoundly affected by the civil war, have lost family members, and now suffer from related adjustment and psychological disorders. Here in Multnomah county, African youth now find themselves in an unsupported environment faced with significant cultural and language barriers. For example, some African girls are negotiating around what they see as restrictive roles in the traditional family structure. Many youth are illiterate in English and their native language, are dealing with newly broken homes, and have accents that set them apart from the mainstream. African Coalition members unanimously agree that we have reached a crisis point with our youth. Recently, the school and criminal justice systems have expressed difficulty dealing with African youth ages 13-21. Many African juveniles are already imprisoned in Oregon. With this growing reality, the community is in a state of shock.*[167]

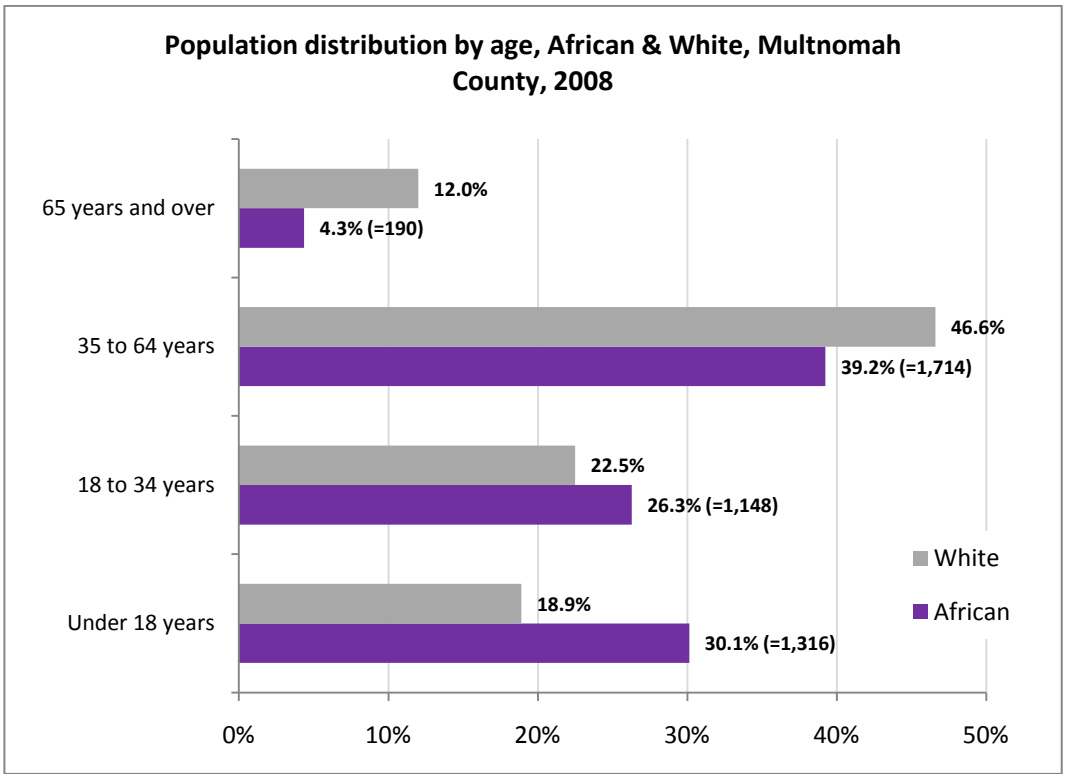
The needs of this community are deep and profound. While only a slice of data are available today on the experiences of this community, these will help launch us into a deeper study of the community. Community-specific reports will be available that will reveal more information in the coming months.

Geographically here today, African immigrants are mostly clustered in northeast Portland, though like other low income communities of color, are spreading further west in search of affordable housing.[168]

Age

The African immigrant and refugee community is very young, and there are very few elderly community members. While this is a feature of the recentness of their arrival to Multnomah county, it is also a feature that helps explain lower incomes and higher poverty rates (as illustrated later in this section). As

community members age, they typically accumulate housing equity and savings, and these assets are passed to younger members of the community through inheritance and gifts. Without this legacy, the community will take a long time to build equity. This is particularly true as we integrate knowledge about the USA in the current era. Savings rates are negligible in today's era where typical savings during the past 20 years have deteriorated to zero. The chart in the "wealth, housing and homelessness" section shows how patterns of savings have changed over the generations. Today, we look back and highlight how lucky families were when they were able to save significantly. Today, saving income is near to impossible, particularly for newcomer communities who have few elderly to pass on inheritances to them, and where high poverty rates and unemployment negate their ability to save.



Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

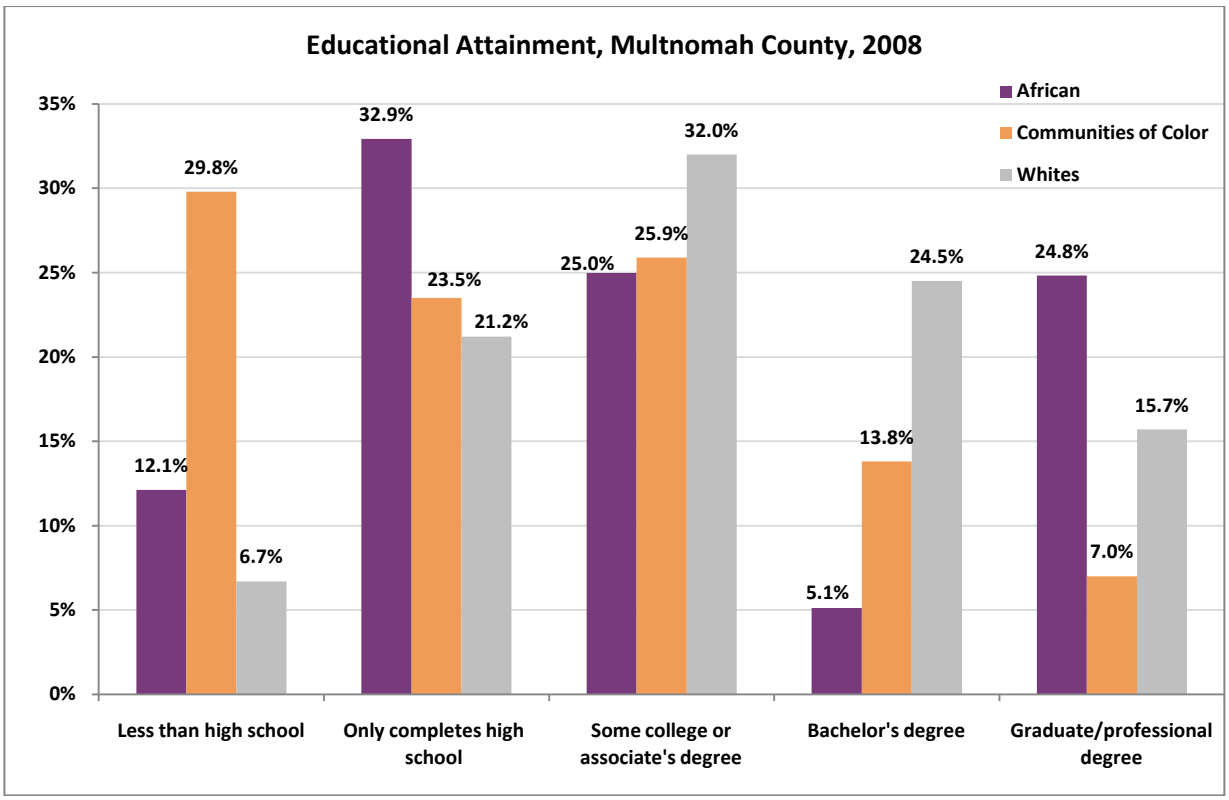
The net impact of these characteristics is that African immigrants and refugees are likely to remain unable to accumulate wealth and unable to fortify their children through passing on of such assets – the same challenge faced by other communities of color that have kept their wealth levels low, but deepened by absence of elder people who have been able to accumulate some assets through their lives. The recentness of this community's arrival to the USA, coupled with a very youthful age profile means that the community will face deep threats to wealth creation avenues.

Education

Education is deeply valued among this African community, as it is with all communities of color. Indeed, on average, the African community has very high levels of accomplishment in education. Akin to the Slavic community, it is likely that they came to the USA already credentialed and academically accomplished. Again, like the Slavic community, they have double the rates of Whites of those who did not complete

high school. Whether this experience is due to difficulties within the USA education system (as our youth experience it) or whether these education difficulties existed for adults in their home countries is not yet clear. Either way, there is a polarity growing among the community of those with high educations and those with very little.

Africans are a community that has attained the highest level of education at the Masters and professional degree levels, including Whites. Their post-graduate and professional degree levels more than double that of those in the local Asian community who had been anticipated to have the highest levels of education among communities of color.

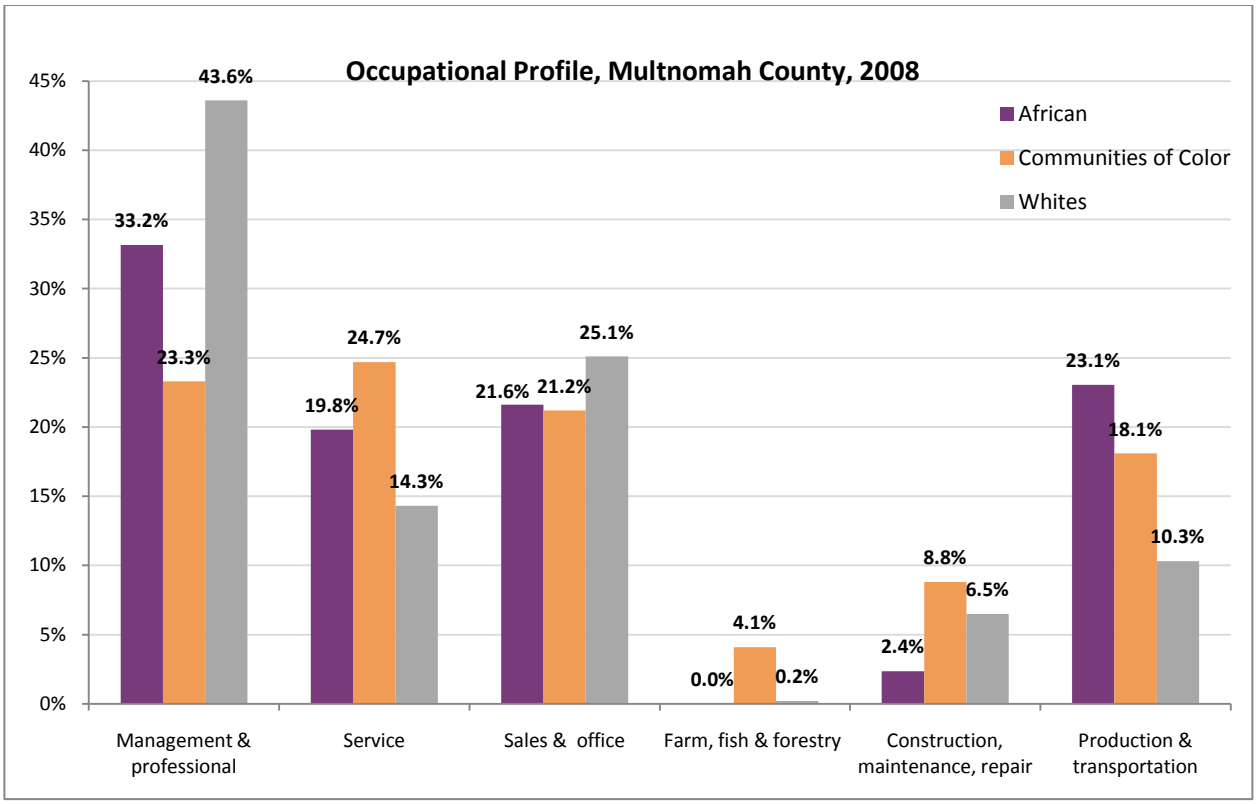


Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

From this profile, one would expect the highest of incomes and occupations among communities of color and perhaps even surpassing Whites.

Occupations

Such expectations are, however, thwarted when we look at the data below.

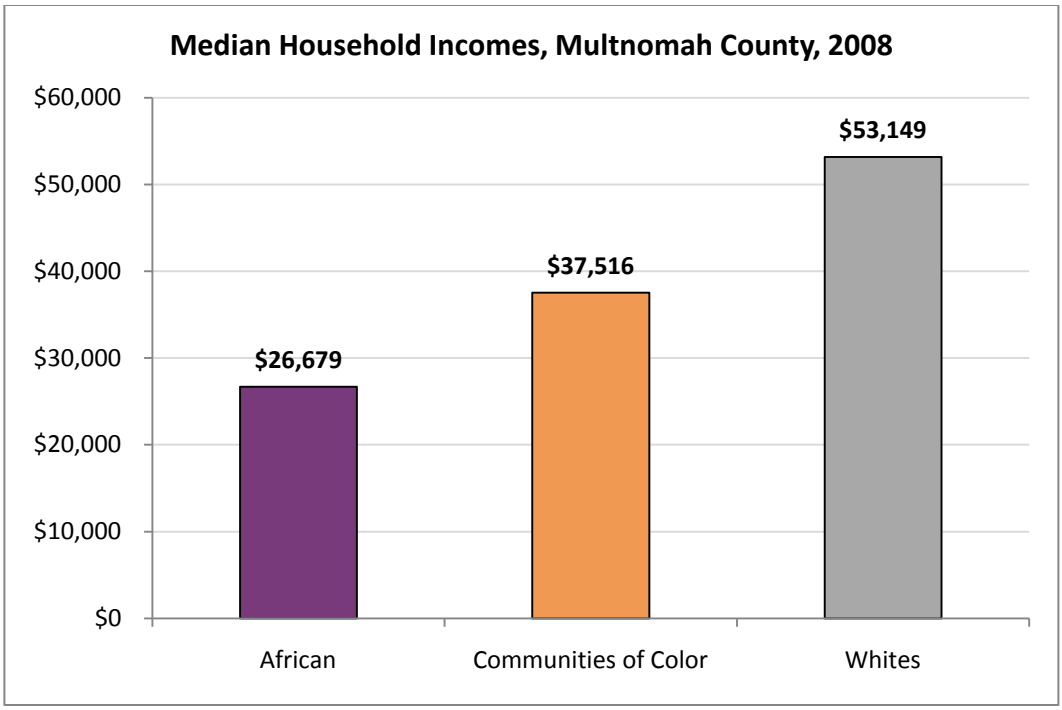


Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

What we see is that there is some access to the management and professional jobs arena, but this access falls far below that of whites. While our educations poise us well for high job profiles, few of us are able to get there. Again, recall that incomes are highest in the management and professional arena and second lowest in the service industry. And while numbers are high in the transportation arena, know that many of these will be driving taxis where incomes are uneven and working conditions very difficult.

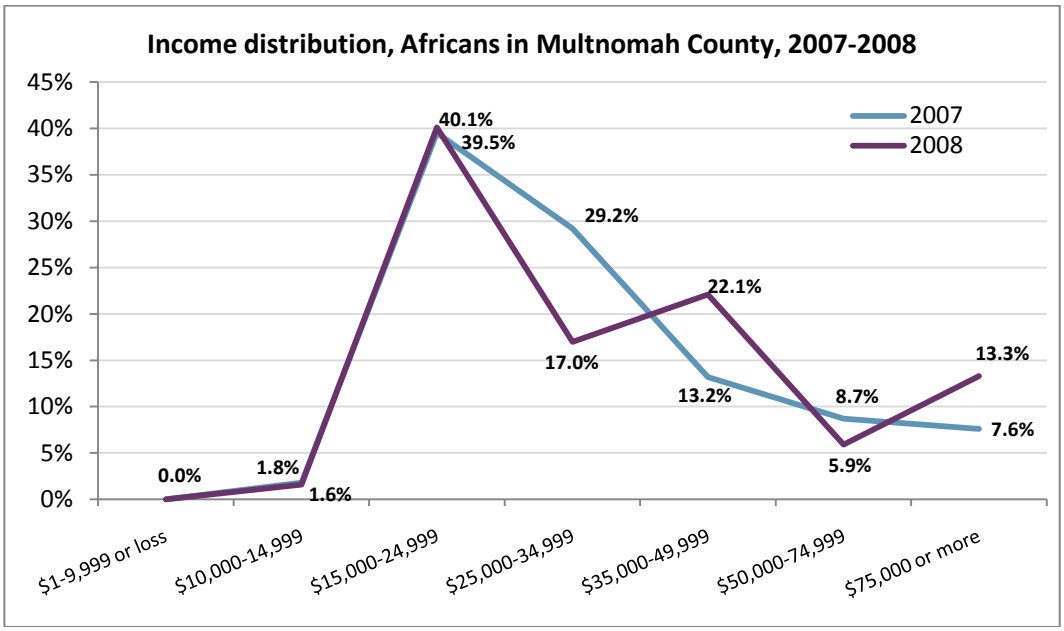
Income levels & poverty rates

The small size of this community (particularly in official databases) means that many times it is impossible to extract desired data. This said, we do have an indicator that this community is not able to secure incomes equivalent to whites and even to other communities of color. We suspect that issues of language, recognition of foreign credentials and international work experience intersect with issues of racism to deny our African community access to decent paid work. While household incomes offer us a glimpse into such dynamics, more complete income measures that are not (and likely will never be) available would help us confirm these insights. This is because of the decision by the Census Bureau to drop the long form of data collection in Census 2010. Now, there is no avenue for the African American community data to be disaggregated by their country of origin and length of time in the country.



Source: American Community Survey, 2008, Selected characteristics of the foreign-born population.

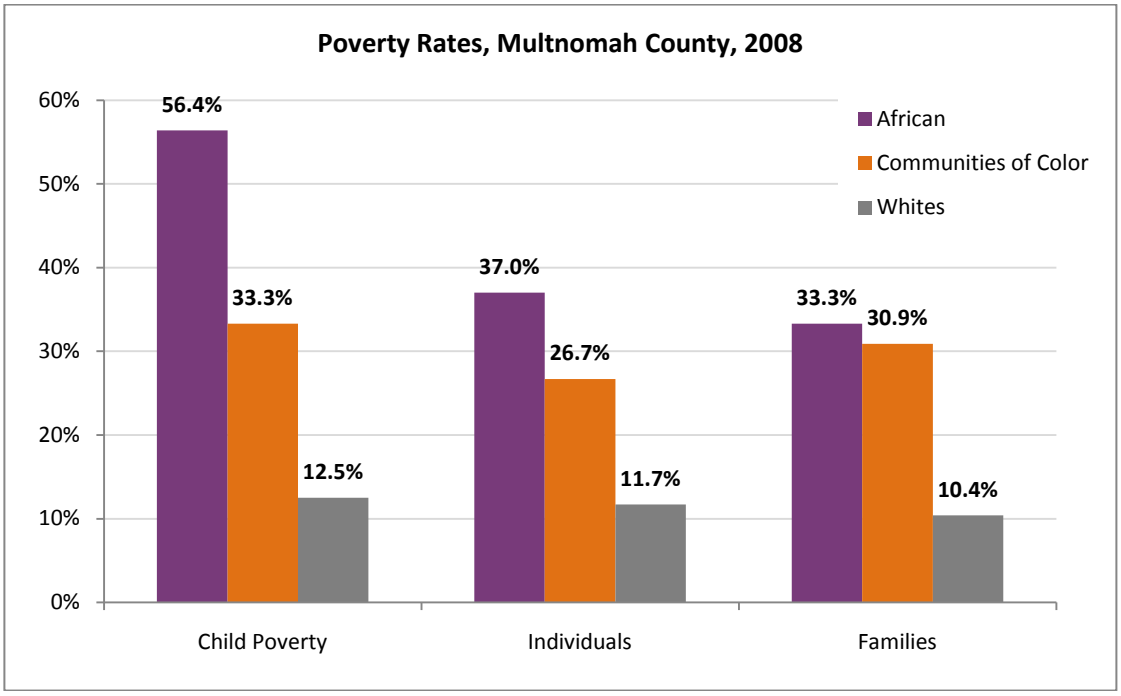
While data on specific family types and individuals is not available, we do have indicators of income patterns among full time, full year workers. In the below chart, we can see that poverty levels did not improve this year for this group, though there was some considerable change at upper income levels. A larger portion of workers is at higher incomes ($75,000 or above) and there are fluctuations at levels between $25,000/year and $75,000/year. The percentage of workers firmly in these middle class and lower middle class ratings is shrinking, moving from 51.1% of workers in 2007 to only 45.0% of workers in 2008. We emphasize these data as they are all that are available for this community – longer term reviews of income are not possible given that this community "disappears" in conventional datasets.



Source: American Community Survey, 2007 & 2008, Selected characteristics of the foreign-born population.

Like income polarization across the mainstream (white) population in the USA, with the corresponding hollowing out of the middle class, we are similarly seeing such patterns in Multnomah county among Africans. This is a troubling feature of what looks at first glance to be an improvement in the income profile of African workers. While this is "only" a one-year change in income distribution, this can be interpreted as a potential early indicator of a hollowing out of the middle class within the African immigrant and refugee community. It potentially signals further income disparities within the community may be emerging.

Poverty rates within the community are where we find the most disturbing story. Below you can see the tragic situation facing our African communities. African immigrants and refugees have poverty levels higher than the average among communities of color, and have a child poverty rate where more than ½ of all African children live in poverty.

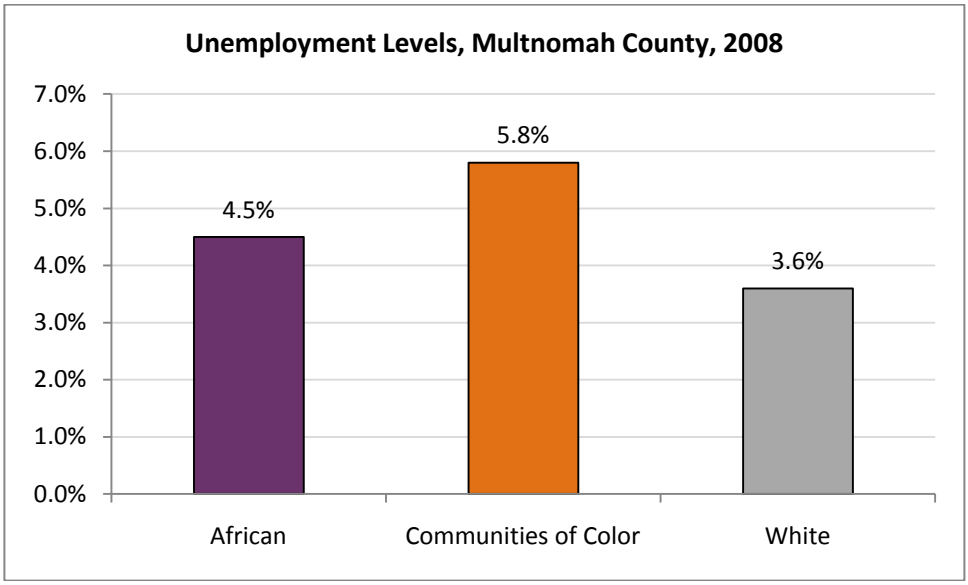


Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

Consider what the depths of poverty mean to the community. This is a very highly educated community, with many refugees who have often fled genocide, persecution and/or deep vulnerability. Many from this community then encounter a period of intense distress with the high likelihood of staying in a refugee camp for an extended period of time. Then they arrive in the USA, often without evidence of education or work experience, and typically with little more than the clothes on one's backs. Whether one arrives as an immigrant or a refugee, Africans moving into Multnomah county are settling in what is portrayed as an idyllic and progressive region in the USA. Disillusionment settles in quickly as one learns of the American versions of racism that manifest in job limitations, lack of recognition of foreign experience, deeply flawed income supports, housing discrimination and system after system that does not respond to their needs with attention nor resources. Collectively, we have the potential to do much better.

Unemployment

Unemployment levels are higher among Africans than among Whites, at levels that are 25% higher. Such disparities suggest they are facing discrimination in the rates at which they are hired, laid off or fired from their jobs. For a newcomer community, the concept of "last hired, first fired" will influence the way in which African residents are vulnerable to downturns in the economy.

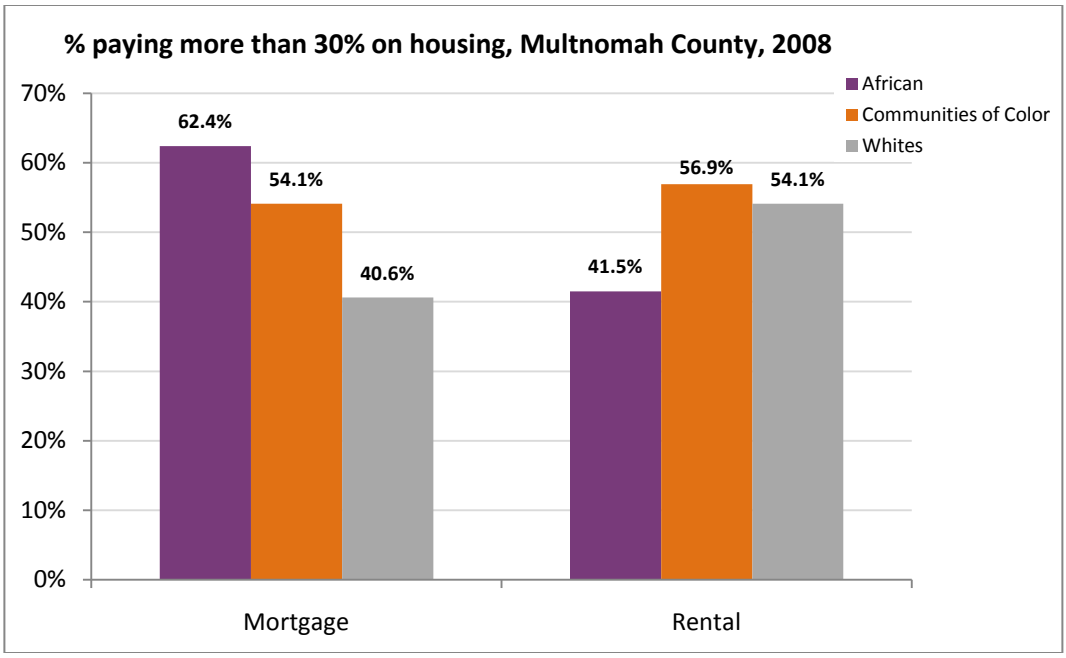


Source: American Community Survey, 2008, Selected characteristics of the foreign-born population. Please note that these unemployment figures are not current, but are the best available for the local area by race & ethnicity.

Compared with the average for communities of color, we find unemployment levels are actually relatively low for this community. When we considered the poverty levels within the community, we expected much higher unemployment levels. Our best explanation is that this is a community of people trying to meet the needs of their family and placed in very difficult conditions because they are often ineligible for unemployment insurance and other income support programs (once their five-year period of support under TANF as a refugee expires). In addition, we believe that many who find work in areas such as babysitting or house cleaning may be very minimally and temporarily employed, but consider themselves successful in finding employment and thus do not self-report as unemployed. These experiences will render the community precariously positioned in employment. Our best explanation is that many in this community (and other communities of color) are deeply underemployed and unable to find full year and/or full time work.

Housing

As with all communities of color (and many Whites), a tremendously high percentage of the African community is vulnerably housed. While the core problem is high regional housing costs, inadequate incomes, and disparities in poverty rates make housing costs very difficult for Africans to pay.



Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

Deepening these difficulties is the reality that not only do many in the African community pay close to or more than one-third of their incomes in housing, but a significant portion pay more than half their incomes on housing. For homeowners, more than one-in-three pay more than 50% of their incomes in mortgage costs (5.2%). For renters, one-in-four (24.9%) spend more than 50% of incomes on housing.

Other housing features worthy of highlighting are home ownership and median income values. Within the African immigrant and refugee community, smaller numbers own their own homes than among other communities of color. Here, owners number 38.3% of the community, while the level for Whites is 62%. Access thus, to the greatest feature of wealth creation, is very limited for this community. When Africans are able to purchase homes, the median home value is $282,343, lower than the value of White-owned homes at $291,400.

Closing comments on the African community

The complexity of issues facing the African immigrant and refugee community commands attention. While this is a highly educated group, particularly in post-graduate education, the community is not able to access jobs that reflect these qualifications. Our best understanding of this is that the intersection of facing the imperialism of the US diminishment of foreign credentials and work experience intersects with language difficulties and institutional racism that leads to underemployment and unemployment. Poverty levels within this community parallel those of the African American community as the depths of racism, social exclusion, and inadequate income support programs render more than 56% of our children living in poverty.

This is the first time that African-specific data has been brought to light. Mainstream societies do not think to consider the experiences of minority groups among communities of color. In fact, our databases across systems do not report on this community. All institutions fail this community, from education to child welfare, to health and even health equity initiatives. Researchers need to build capacity in bringing

an anti-racism lens to their work, questioning whether or not they have the data on the diversity of communities of color, and working to modify research and data collection practices in order to make the invisible visible.

Hopefully this report will begin to shake the complacency of mainstream researchers and policy makers alike. Communities of color must no longer be invisible and their needs overshadowed by more dominant groups.

Chapter 5: Comparative Findings

How does Multnomah county compare to King county?

As we conclude the profile of disparities facing communities of color in Multnomah county, we see before us a wide and deep slate of unsettling data. Making sense of these data was a troubling process about facing the fullness and depth of challenges facing communities of color, while White communities were, in comparison, free from the institutional racism and relatively advantaged by the inequities facing people of color. In order to interpret the regional dynamics of these disparities – such as whether the challenges facing communities of color was a function of being in the northwest of the USA – we decided to compare the findings for Multnomah County with a local comparator.

Selecting a west coast comparison was easy – Seattle and its county seems a good choice to compare the conditions facing people of color. So how do we compare? Terribly, with the results profiled below.

2008	**Child Poverty**		**Rent Burden (paying 30% or more)**		**Individual median Income**		**Occupation as management/professional**		**Education attainment** (with university degree)	
	Multnomah	King	Multnomah	King	Multnomah	King	Multnomah	King	Multnomah	King
White	12.5%	6.0%	49.9%	43.9%	$33,095	$45,237	43.6%	50.5%	40.2%	47.7%
Communities of Color	33.3%	21.5%	56.9%	46.7%	$16,635	$24,053	23.3%	33.9%	20.8%	28.7%
Asian	11.9%	8.4%	49.9%	42.8%	$22,070	$31,169	35.2%	47.1%	34.9%	48.5%
African American	40.9%	35.5%	67.9%	41.8%	$15,234	$20,748	25.2%	30.5%	18.1%	21.6%
Hispanic	34.5%	21.1%	53.9%	47.1%	$13,759	$20,103	16.5%	21.3%	14.5%	20.8%
Native American	45.7%	21.1%	56.0%	55.1%	$15,477	$24,192	16.6%	36.7%	15.7%	24.0%

Source: American Community Survey, selected features from 2008, some with author's calculations.

On every measure that we examined, people of color in our region compare significantly worse than those in King county. While the data in King county is troubling (notice that people of color have a child poverty rate four times higher than Whites), our local profile is much worse. Again – on these significant measures, people of colors' lives are more imperiled than our neighbors to the north.

When discussing this finding across numerous communities, some question whether the social demographic profile is markedly different than in Multnomah county. It is not. The population in King county is 30.9% non-white, while in Multnomah county it is 26.3%. This is not a significant variation to account for variations of this magnitude.

Highlighting these findings is important. Below we see a summary of the variance between Multnomah county and King county, located only 170 miles to our north:

Child poverty	54.7%	worse
Rent burden	21.8%	worse
Individual incomes	30.8%	worse
Better occupations	31.3%	worse
University degrees	27.6%	worse
Average "worse"	***33.2%***	

Source: Author's calculations of American Community Survey, 2008.

And this value is worse than the prior year. Our communities of color are faring proportionately worse than those in King county from last year to this year. This must begin an immediate dialogue about how and why the same regional conditions are affecting us disproportionately worse than in King county.

This is a crucial finding because it highlights the importance of the local policy environment – and we must simultaneously know that we can do better. If one local region has created a much better environment for communities of color, then we too can aspire to create change. We have agency to create change since a neighboring community is able to build conditions that more closely approximate the national averages than we are in Multnomah county.

Several significant features of King county may account for its more positive experience. First, communities of color began organizing there in the 1970s and pressed for and secured funding for culturally-specific services. Their local advocacy work was pronounced and much more funding has been leveraged for communities of color. Communities of color are more likely to have their needs addressed in culturally-specific organizations in King county than in Multnomah county.

Second, the tax base for King county revenues is more robust. The sales tax in Washington affords the local region to build more stable and generous array of services and resources that tend more carefully to the needs of communities of color. Third, there is heightened attention to economic development and it has a larger role in the local policy environment. Since jobs and incomes are significant features of misery and impoverishment, figuring out how to assure that communities are color get our fair share of decent work, and how to expand the quality of jobs must surely rise to the top of the local policy agenda.

Comparison table of disparities

A thorough review of disparities between 2007 and 2008 was undertaken and summarized below. This allows us a window on the current trends in disparities across twenty-six measures. In total, sixteen measures are worsening, four remain constant, while six are improving. In the discussion that follows, an interpretation of the "improving" categories shows that, in fact, only two reveal a positive experience for communities of color. Thus we have an improving situation for only 7.7% of experiences, and deteriorating situations in most of the remainder.

To calculate the disparity measure, we returned to the relevant part of this report, and compared the experiences of Whites and communities of color. In the situations below, we also had the data available for the 2007 year (which in most cases was not reported on in this text, as we preferred to highlight the current situation) and made the calculations in the following manner:

- $\frac{\text{(frequency of experience for White people)} - \text{(frequency of experience for people of color)}}{\text{(frequency of experience for people of color)}}$

The measure thus reveals a comparison between the experiences of people of color as measured against those for White people, thus showing how much "worse" or "better" the experience is. Values for each year were calculated and the direction of change interpreted and highlighted with the arrows at the far right of the chart.

		Size of Disparity 2007 % worse for people of color	Size of Disparity 2008 % worse for people of color	Direction of Change from 2007 to 2008
Occupation				
	Management & professional jobs	46.1%	46.5%	↔
	Service jobs	35.0%	42.1%	↓
Family Poverty				
	Family poverty, kids <18	62.2%	66.3%	↓
	Female single parent, kids <18	32.6%	34.8%	↓
	Female single parent, kids <5	32.8%	55.4%	↓
Poverty for individuals				
	All individuals	53.8%	56.2%	↓
	Children under 18	60.0%	62.5%	↓
Housing				
	Rent Burden	11.5%	14.0%	↓
	Mortgage Burden	48.4%	33.3%	↑
	Homeownership	30.5%	27.4%	↑
	Home value (owners only)	12.7%	16.2%	↓
Education				
	Attainment of a university degree	90.6%	93.0%	↓
	Drop out rate	46.8%	44.6%	↑
	High School graduation rate*	24.6%	24.8%	↔
	Academic test scores in Math**	23.5%	22.6%	↔
	Academic testing - reading/literature	24.2%	25.6%	↓
Incomes				
	Individual	49.8%	49.7%	↔
	Family	43.0%	44.5%	↓
	Retirement	10.4%	31.9%	↓
	Female single parent	40.0%	44.2%	↓
Health				
	Health insurance***	36.9%	47.7%	↓
Unemployment		61.8%	35.7%	↑
Criminal & Juvenile Justice				
	Frequency of juvenile detentions	32.3%	50.0%	↓
	Correctional caseloads (adult)****	84.3%	79.3%	↑
Civic Engagement				
	Voter turnout	37.1%	22.9%	↑
Comparison with King County (composite)		32.1%	33.2%	↓

*Please note that these rates are for the prior two years (2007 & 2007)

**A drop of more or less than one percentage point is deemed to have remained constant

***Data for 2004 and 2006 were used for these two time periods

****Data for 2008 and 2009 were used here

Among those measures that have improved, the disparity reduction has occurred for the following reasons:

- Mortgage burden – The disparity reduces due to an increase of Whites paying more than 30% of their incomes on mortgage costs (note that communities of color are also worsening, but not as quickly as Whites).
- Homeownership rates – There is an improvement in homeownership rates among people of color (from 43% to 45%) that did not occur for Whites (remained at 62%).
- Dropout rates – The dropout rates for both communities worsened in 2008, but the rate deteriorated faster for White students than for students of color, thus serving to reduce the disparity between the two groups.
- Unemployment rates – Between 2007 and 2008, the unemployment level for communities of color stayed constant, but deteriorated for Whites (from 3.6% to 4.2%), yet this was still significantly better than the rate for communities of color (at 5.7%). Due to the sizable deterioration of employment for Whites, the size of the disparity actually reduces.
- Adult correctional caseloads – Between 2008 and 2009, there is a drop in how many people of color are likely to be an active non-incarcerated case in the adult corrections system. The rate went from 21.5 per thousand people of color, to 20.3 per thousand. The rate for Whites also dropped – going from 11.7 to 11.3 per thousand White people. This serves to reduce the disparity, but it remains approximately 80% different.
- Voter turnout – This is the best news of all these indicators. The reduction of disparities is due to a more robust improvement of the numbers of people of color who voted in 2006 compared with 2008.

In total, the disparity improvements over the last year (or most recent equivalent) that were noted in six areas are not uniformly "good news." Of the six measures, only two are truly the result of improved outcomes for communities of color in comparison with Whites. For the other four measures, disparity reductions occurred due to a more rapidly deteriorating condition for Whites, thus pulling disparities lower but not because of improvements occurring for communities of color. This is not the type of disparity reduction we aim for.

The Coalition of Communities of Color aims to expand dialogue on how best to assess movement on disparity reduction efforts. The above chart is one such possibility. We seek to work with City, County, School Board and State officials to establish a benchmark process to measure progress across important dimensions of racial equity.

Synthesis of disparities & definition of need

In the above section, we have highlighted that disparities are primarily getting worse over time. We turn now to examine, in a concrete way, the net impact on people of color. There is a magnitude and complexity to need that is embedded in the fullness of this report. We now aim to synthesize these data as a composite, as we simultaneously consider how we might conceptualize "need" in numeric terms. As the reader is likely to know, funding and visibility follows numbers. This is why so much attention was given in the initial sections of this research report to defining most accurately the size of our communities of color.

Numbers alone will not, however, yield sufficient resources to tend to the scope and depth of need of our communities. Funding must be sufficiently robust to address the complexity of need that are tied to

communities of color. We must end relying on numbers alone to define funding allocations – incorporating need is required.

In the below chart, we have selected important dimensions of communities of color experiences, ranging from income and child poverty, to racial discrimination and over-involvement in the justice system. The items were selected for their importance, but also for their unique contributions. For example, we did not include unemployment because of its overlap with income. Similarly, we did not include incarceration rates or youth justice system involvement but did include caseloads within the adult corrections system.

On each item, the disparity is measured between Whites and communities of color. Our finding is that there is an average disparity level across systems in the amount of 64.5%.

2008	Child Poverty	Dropout rate	Health Insurance	Rent Burden	Housing Value	Income	Managemt & profession jobs	Average school achievmt	Incidence of racial discriminatn (g.8)	Low birthweight	Justice system involvmnt
	Mult	Mult	Oregon	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult
White	12.5%	5.6%	14.4%	49.9%	$255,000	$33,095	43.6%	77%	0%	5.90%	0.91%
Communities of color	33.3%	10.1%	21.3%	56.9%	$222,675	$16,635	23.3%	59%	26.50%	8.10%	1.35%
Disparity	166.4%	80.4%	47.9%	14.0%	14.5%	98.9%	87%	30.5%	100%	37.3%	32.6%
Average disparity	**64.5%**										

Source: Author's calculations from tables used in this report, various sources.

We highlight that the "costs" of living with the full range of institutional racism that exists widely across this county can be translated into a net worsening of the challenges of these life experiences – and that this amount is 64.5%.

Accordingly, immediate attention to equitable funding will require that need is understood to exist in this magnitude – that funding rates provide a supplemental equity allocation of 64.5%. Funding formulas for services provided to communities of color need to be upwardly adjusted to be able to address this complexity and magnitude of need. We assert that these are costs not incurred by White communities as holding a White identity serves to protect one from these disparities. To give us a fighting chance to address the disparities that are an integral dimension of the lives of people of color requires a significant funding increase. We urge funding bodies to understand that meeting the needs of communities of color (either collectively or as individuals) cannot be achieved with the same funds provided for White service users.

We understand that an increase of this magnitude is not likely to unfold in the coming years. We do, however, expect funders to understand the complexity of needs that exist, and begin to dialogue with us about establishing benchmarks to include measures of need in funds for culturally-specific services.

Chapter 6: Bright Spots & Challenges

Bright spots

While there is profound misery embedded in these data gathered on the experiences of communities of color, we also acknowledge that good efforts and some promising advances offer us a source of "brightness" as we reflect on the full landscape of issues facing communities of color today. These are profiled below.

1. ***Funding for culturally-specific services***

   Multnomah County's Department of Human Services led the way locally for funding to be dedicated to culturally-specific programs within its anti-poverty initiatives in the public schools. With the input from the Coalition of Communities of Color, the County's SUN Service System reserved 25% of its funding for culturally-specific services. This funding allocation was made on the basis that culturally-specific services were the most appropriate service framework for reaching children and youth of color. This commitment allows communities of color to lead service provision efforts in these anti-poverty programs and to deliver programs that embody the commitments we outline in Appendix #3. Holding the needs of communities of color central to all service provision is a significant step in the right direction. Since the SUN Service System embarked on this initiative, 65.6% of service users are of color.[169]

   In prior years, the Department of Community Justice was able to eliminate disproportionality in juvenile detention. The elimination of disparities between 1999 and 2002 is understood by the Coalition to be attributed to the provision of culturally-specific services and sufficient funding for programs that provided alternatives to detention.

   There is a current intention for the State's domestic violence services to adopt a similar practice. As well, many Head Start programs are culturally-specific, but they do not adopt a formal funding formula to preserve this practice.

2. ***Coalition of Communities of Color***

   The Coalition of Communities of Color has been tenacious in its 9-year history, working without funding and staffing for the first six of its years. With funding for the last year, and confirmed (though minimal) funding for the next two, the Coalition is able to build a unified voice of advocates from within culturally-specific service providers. Our efforts and capacity for working with consensus and inclusion allows us to build profile and reputation. We now are attaining increased profile and inclusion at numerous policy tables and have been able to press forward with a voice that speaks loudly with communities of color. We look forward to a continued role of advancing anti-racist equity efforts at multiple levels to improve the health and well-being of our communities of color.

   The financing of the research and advocacy efforts (that led to this report, and the community-specific reports that will follow) by Multnomah County, the City of Portland, the Northwest Health Foundation and Portland State University have enabled this research to be conducted and to assist the Coalition's efforts to build impetus for change.

3. ***Improvements on the policy front***

   The policy priorities of the State of Oregon and Multnomah County are shifting towards the needs of marginalized peoples. The 2009 legislative gains that expand the Oregon Health Plan for children and the new program that makes health care more affordable for families making between 200% and 300% of the poverty line will help families of color. Similarly, the expansion of the food stamps program has supported the deteriorating situation for poorer families, who have experienced an increase of 38.2% in food stamp use this past year. We also applaud the passage of Measures 66 and 67 which while it does not ensure robust state funding for services on which we depend, at least preserves them from further cuts.

4. ***Work on disparities being funded and receiving attention***

There are significant efforts underway to address disparities and advance equity in numerous public institutions. Of highest profile is the excellent work undertaken by the Health Equity Initiative in Multnomah County's Health Department. Attention to health disparities, along with the broad dissemination of the film, "Unnatural Causes" has served to increase an understanding of the poverty and race dimensions of health across our communities. We also applaud the efforts of the Department of Human Services at the state level to study and take action on disproportionality in child welfare. The Task Force on Disproportionality in Child Welfare is poised to lead reform efforts.

One effort of Multnomah County's Department of Human Services has been to improve the caliber of data collection on communities of color receiving child welfare services, and allowing PSU researchers to significantly reduce the "unknown race" category in the administrative data. This transition has been positive and will enable a better understanding of disproportionality in child welfare. We hope that similar changes in research practices across the County will help bring disparity issues to light in a timely and transparent manner.

The existence of protected contracting practices at all levels of government is similarly valued for its intention to ensure that communities of color have access to contracting dollars that are disseminated. That said, we are deeply concerned that few benefits are going to minority-owned businesses.

5. ***Movement on disparities***

Despite the unsettling picture that this report highlights, there is some positive movement on disparities. While disparities remain deep between Whites and communities of color, there is a slight narrowing of the dropout rate of high school students, in the unemployment rate, and in the caseloads within adult correctional services. See the next section of this report for further details. Voter turnout in the presidential election served to mobilize and engage many more communities of color, likely as excitement built about an African American candidate, but also likely due to organizing efforts that sought our inclusion in the electoral process.

While the current disparities in public school education are mostly either stalled or headed in the wrong direction, there was a marked narrowing of disparities in the early 2000s that we want to draw attention to and hold out the possibility that actions to narrow disparities are possible and are in our living memory. So too we affirm the significant narrowing and even temporary elimination of disparities for youth of color being held in detention prior to their hearings. The Coalition credits the practice innovations of the juvenile justice system, along with adequate funding for alternatives to detention for youth of color. We continue to hold hope in the prospects for disparity elimination across systems and institutions.

6. ***Research environment in governments***

Through the course of the last two years of this research project, we have been pleased with the openness that many administrative systems have been in their receptivity to our questions about equity issues, and in many cases, their willingness to collect such data and distribute it to us. There is an openness to considering equity issues in most agencies and institutions which serves as a sign of hope and promise for moving ahead with an anti-racist, disparity reduction effort. That said, there has simultaneously been considerable frustration in gathering data for this project as race and ethnicity have often been excluded from data gathering processes, or coded in ways that make analysis difficult, or ignored in traditional data dissemination practices. We look forward to action on this issue such that communities of color will become a standard and valued dimension of our collective experience, rather than ignored, hidden and invisible.

Multnomah county needs a wake-up call!

Consider the fullness of what this report has revealed. Our child poverty rates average 33% higher than the national averages for the same communities. Occupations are highly segregated and educational outcomes are deeply unequal. These are institutions that people control, and can, if rigorous, eliminate the elements of institutional racism that permeate all levels of practice. Addressing the pervasive dimensions of institutional racism is required in every walk of life.

Self-congratulation occurs in the region each time our city reaches the "top 10" lists of good places to live in the USA. The data in this report suggests we are deluding ourselves to think that this is universally an excellent place to live.

Many features of the county's experience are worse than national averages. This is true for housing burdens, poverty rates, educational attainment, incomes and occupational profiles. Communities of color universally have worse quality of lives here in this liberal county than the USA averages. This must truly be a wake-up call for us all.

Chapter 7: Affirmations, Recommendations & Conclusions

Policy affirmations

1. **Affirm culturally-specific services funding:** We affirm and appreciate Multnomah County's dedicated funding pool within the Department of Human Services, SUN Service System. We seek to expand this commitment and urge all funding units within Multnomah County to make such allocations a priority. We seek to expand these commitments, urging all funding units in all levels of government (Multnomah County, the City of Portland, the State of Oregon and the County School Boards) to make such allocations a priority.

   Culturally-specific services are best able to address the needs of communities of color. These services have the following unique features:
   - *We provide respite from racism. People of color enter culturally-specific services as insiders instead of outsiders.*
   - We hold the trust of our communities. Mainstream services do not, and relationships are instead marked by distrust. This supports our ability to respond to community needs and to work in solidarity with them to address larger injustices.
   - Accountability to the specific community of color for whom services are delivered.
   - Top leadership (Board of Directors or equivalent) are primarily composed of community members who share the same racial and ethnic identity. This means they have a lived experience of racism and discrimination and will address these at all levels of practice.
   - Located in the specific community of color that is being served and reflect the cultural values of the community throughout their services. Users of such services are likely to be welcomed and affirmed.
   - Staffed and led primarily by those who share the racial and ethnic characteristics of the community. This means we have walked a similar path as those we serve, and have experienced the types of racism typically targeted against the community. This provides deep and lasting commitments to eliminating racism in all its forms.
   - Such services are typically involved in many advocacy practices, and are involved in challenging institutional racism in its many forms. Given this engagement, service users are more likely to have their needs better understood and more hopeful about prospects for change. As their organizations are involved in social justice efforts, this increases the social capital of the community and its members.

2. **Support equity initiatives:** We support equity initiatives at the County such as the Equity Council, the Undoing Institutional Racism initiative, and the work of the Health Equity Initiative. At the City level, we affirm the work of the Human Rights Commission and the Diversity and Civic Leadership program. At the State level, we affirm the emergence of affirmative action and diversity initiatives from the Office of Multicultural Health and Services.

Policy recommendations

1. ***Expand funding for culturally-specific services.*** Designated funds are required, and these funds must be adequate to address needs. Allocation must recognize the size of communities of color, must compensate for the undercounts that exist in population estimates, and must be sufficiently robust to address the complexity of need that are tied to communities of color. Recognizing the complexity and depth of need that exists for communities of color requires that we are provided with a higher funding base in recognition of the urgent need for ameliorative interventions. Culturally-specific services are the most

appropriate service delivery method for communities of color. Service providers within culturally-specific services must be involved in establishing funding formulas for such designations.

2. ***Implement needs-based funding for communities of color.*** This report illuminates the complexity of needs facing communities of color, and highlights that Whites do not face such issues or the disparities that result from them. Accordingly, providing services for these communities is similarly more complex. We urge funding bodies to begin implementing an equity-based funding allocation that seeks to ameliorate some of the challenges that exist in resourcing these communities.

3. ***Emphasize poverty reduction strategies.*** Poverty reduction must be an integral element of meeting the needs of communities of color. A dialogue is needed immediately to kick-start economic development efforts that hold the needs of communities of color high in policy implementation. Improving the quality and quantity of jobs that are available to people of color will reduce poverty.

   Current economic development initiatives and urban renewal activities do not address equity concerns nor poverty and unemployment among communities of color. Protected initiatives to support access of minority-owned businesses to contracting dollars, along with small business development initiatives must ensure equitable distribution of resources and the public benefits that flow from such investments.

4. ***Reduce disparities with firm timelines, policy commitments and resources.*** Disparity reduction across systems must occur and must ultimately ensure that one's racial and ethnic identity ceases to determine one's life chances. The Coalition urges the State, County and City governments, including school boards, to establish firm timelines with measurable outcomes to assess disparities each and every year. There must be zero-tolerance for racial and ethnic disparities. Accountability structures must be developed and implemented to ensure progress on disparity reduction. As a first step, plans for disparities reduction must be developed in every institution and be developed in partnership with communities of color. Targeted reductions with measurable outcomes must be a central feature of these plans. Elements of such an initiative would include:
   - Policies to reflect these commitments are needed to ensure accountability exists in legislation.
   - Accountability structures must be developed and implemented to ensure progress on disparity reduction. As a first step, plans for disparities reduction must be developed in every institution and be developed in partnership with communities of color. Targeted reductions with measurable outcomes must be a central feature of these plans.
   - Disparities must be understood institutionally, ideologically, behaviorally and historically. Institutional racism must be a major feature of disparity reduction work.
   - Effectively resource these initiatives and place control of these initiatives in the leadership of communities of color who will lead us to real solutions.
   - Accountability and transparency must feature across all institutional efforts.
   - Annual updates must be conducted and the results available to the general public.

5. ***Count communities of color.*** Immediately, we demand that funding bodies universally use the most current data available and use the "alone or in combination with other races, with or without Hispanics" as the official measure of the size of our communities. The minor over-counting that this creates is more than offset by the pervasive undercounting that exists when outsiders measure the size of our communities. When "community-verified population counts" are available, we demand that these be used.

6. ***Prioritize education and early childhood services.*** The Coalition prioritizes education and early childhood services as a significant pathway out of poverty and social exclusion, and urges that disparities in achievement, dropout, post-secondary education and even early education be prioritized.

   Significant reductions in dropout rates of youth of color, improvements in graduation rates, increased access to early childhood education (with correlated reductions on disparities that exist by the time children enter kindergarten) and participation in post-secondary education and training programs is essential for the success of our youth.

7. ***Expand the role for the Coalition of Communities of Color.*** The Coalition of Communities of Color seeks an ongoing role in monitoring the outcomes of disparity reduction efforts and seeks appropriate funding to facilitate this task. Disparity reduction efforts will include the following:
   - Establishing an external accountability structure that serves an auditing function to keep local and state governments accountable. This leaves the work less vulnerable to changes in leadership.
   - Creating annual reports on the status of inequities on numerous measures, similar to the disparity tally included in this document.
   - Continuing to work with mainstream groups to advise on changes in data collection, research and policy practices to reduce disparities, undercounting and the invisibility of communities of color.

8. ***Research practices that make the invisible visible.*** Implement research practices across institutions that are transparent, easily accessible and accurate in the representation of communities of color. Draw from the expertise within the Coalition of Communities of Color to conceptualize such practices. This will result in the immediate reversal of invisibility and tokenistic understanding of the issues facing communities of color. Such practices will expand the visibility of communities of color.

   Better data collection practices on the race and ethnicity for service users needs to exist. Self-identification is essential, with service providers helping affirm a prideful identification of one's race and ethnicity as well as assurances that no harm will come from identifying as a person of color. We also want people to be able to identify more than one race or ethnicity, by allowing multiple identifiers to be used. The "multiracial" category is not helpful because no information about one's identity is possible. The Coalition of Communities of Color then wants research practices and usage statistics to accurately and routinely reveal variances and disproportionality by race and ethnicity. The Coalition will consult with researchers and administrators as needed on such improvements.

9. ***Fund community development.*** Significantly expand community development funding for communities of color. Build line items into state, county and city budgets for communities of color to self-organize, network our communities, develop pathways to greater social inclusion, build culturally-specific social capital and provide leadership within and outside our own communities.

10. ***Disclose race and ethnicity data for mainstream service providers.*** Mainstream service providers and government providers continue to have the largest role in service delivery. Accounting for the outcomes of these services for communities of color is essential. We expect each level of service provision to increasingly report on both service usage and service outcomes for communities of color.

    Data collection tools must routinely ask service users to identify their race and ethnicity, and allow for multiple designations to be specified. These data must then be disclosed in an open and transparent manner. The Coalition of Communities of Color expects to be involved in the design of these data collection tools. Outcomes by race and ethnicity need to be publicly available on an annual basis.

11. ***Name racism.*** Before us are both the challenge and the opportunity to become engaged with issues of race, racism and whiteness. Racial experiences are a feature of daily life whether we are on the harmful end of such experience or on the beneficiary end of the spectrum. The first step is to stop pretending race and racism do not exist. The second is to know that race is always linked to experience. The third is to know that racial identity is strongly linked to experiences of marginalization, discrimination and powerlessness. We seek for those in the White community to aim to end a prideful perception that Multnomah County is an enclave of progressivity. Communities of color face tremendous inequities and a significant narrowing of opportunity and advantage. This must become unacceptable for everyone.

Conclusion

The community-based organizations of color that make up the Coalition of Communities of Color have an intimate and lived experience of the realities profiled in this report. Evidence of institutional racism is embedded in this document, and in many cases unabated and worsening. Regardless of the intention of service and systems providers and policy practitioners, outcomes are profoundly disparate for communities of color. Continued failure to act or tokenistic responses will certainly imperil communities of color for generations to come. We advocate for developing shared resolution to the issues facing us.

The most powerful solution is widespread diminishment of racism and its ideological, systemic and behavioral dimensions. Simultaneously, White privilege (and its composite dimensions) must be deconstructed. We affirm the potential for allies across all levels of government and institutions to be moved by the damage done through disparities and to respond to the urgent need for change. Robust racial equity initiatives are needed throughout all areas addressed in this report. We also urge those in nearby regions of Oregon to anticipate that disparities of a similar magnitude will be very likely to exist.

Mainstream services and institutions do not have to do it alone – standing poised to deliver recommendations and insights are leaders within communities of color. We are willing to share wisdom, understanding of and external accountability advice to racial equity movements.

The challenge facing us is one that is probably the most compelling of our generation. We need each and every one of us to make intelligent, ambitious and compassionate change efforts now. Lives depend on it. The future of our children depends on it.

Prologue: Quality of data issues

The data relied upon in this paper draws mainly from conventional database sources including the Census 2000 and the American Community Survey. These sources chronically undercount the size of communities of color, particularly those where residents are poor, under-housed and move frequently. They depend on voluntary self-disclosure of one's personal information, and this is compromised where there are historic relationships with the government (that of the USA or in other countries where one has resided) that are exploitive and/or imperial. In addition, disclosure of information is rendered much more difficult when one does not receive a regular pay check, use a bank account, or pay the same rent on a monthly basis, or has other barriers to information sharing such as comfort and trustworthiness. Finally, actually connecting with people to gather their information is also compromised by accessibility of physical availability, language and literacy. This means that these conventional databases will have undercounts and inaccuracies that may compromise the integrity of the data.

One's race and ethnicity is a particularly contentious data collection issue. Who fills out such forms? If it is a service delivery person, on what do they base their responses? The appearance of the person and their skin color? We know that there are huge error rates when others fill in these forms for a person of color. In the case of death records, whoever accompanies the body fills out the form. The error rate is known here to be as large as 21% for Native Americans. Even when people of color fill out such forms, there can be misclassifications. What boxes are available to fill in? What happens to data that is entered outside the official box? Then these data are coded and entered into a computer system. Again more problems arise – how is a multiply identified person "coded?" Are multiple identities retained or are they collapsed into a "multiracial" category? Then when these databases are available to researchers to extract, can they do so by the features they want to extract? In the case of Native Americans in Multnomah county, their community profiles cannot be shared unless 20,000 of them answered the specific race question that year. Unfortunately, the budget for this survey will stay constant. As the population grows, fewer communities will be reported on each year, and the quality of data will deteriorate for the remaining communities.

When we anticipate the data available for White communities and communities of color in the years to come, the size of White communities will be sufficient to retain visibility and accuracy. For smaller communities, the shrinking funding base for survey administration coupled with undercounting and ongoing marginalization poises our communities of color to face ongoing challenges in visibility and understanding.

A subsequent round of difficulty is created within the surveys themselves. Identification as a racial minority has been confusing and the categories have changed often, such as the introduction in 2000 of the ability for Census 2000 respondents to enter more than one racial category. While an improvement, it has resulted in difficult coding and interpretation issues. Also, some institutions have been slower to adopt to practices which has posed problems for comparison of data across institutions.

In addition, we have another problem because policy has been developed within institutions that reproduce dominance and marginalize and keep powerless people of color. The identity of policy makers themselves and researchers are White, and practice with an ethos of "Whiteness," meaning that they do not and cannot easily spot the biases in their practices that continue to favor White racial identities and subjugate the identities and experiences of communities of color. The data drawn from mainstream institutions such as the Department of Human Services, the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon University System, the Oregon Employment Department (and others) are vulnerable to the influences of Whiteness and must be treated with some skepticism.

Our belief is that the sum total of these data issues would make the data worse! So we advocate that the reader understand that while s/he may be troubled by the statistics and trends presented, it may even be worse. We aim, as part of this project, to work with mainstream institutions to improve the accuracy of their data and become more robust and responsive to data issues facing communities of color. One such example is that local unemployment figures are not available by race and ethnicity. Given the information in this report, who do you think is likely to be suffering most in this prolonged recession? Why is not such data available?

Finally, we have been thwarted by a lack of transparency and availability of data in many situations. For example, we would have liked to find data on the admissions to OUS universities by race and ethnicity and to see what the retention and successful graduation has been for specific cohorts. We would also like to see full revelations of the school discipline data across school boards. To date, these have not been made

available. But we know that these data are available, because we know the types of inputs on many datasets. As researchers and community partners, we typically wonder what they might be hiding. Or has Whiteness so infused their practices that they don't even think people would be interested in such data.

We would also like to ensure that data becomes much more robust in terms of breaking down experiences by race and ethnicity, and by income. Making these data publicly available is an essential requirement. When organizations receive public funds, there should be public reporting of results, and the frameworks for establishing what counts as results should increasingly involve communities of color. For example, service providers and their funders must look at and disclose service performance issues such as who is served, how much service they get, what results occur from participation, what satisfaction level participants have, and composition of those who leave the program, are referred elsewhere, or do not even enter the building.

In summary, data are created by those who conceptualize, implement, tally and report on it. Each step of this path is influenced by Whiteness and with some resistance to transparent, community-accountable and robust measuring of the race and ethnicity dimensions of experience. The Coalition of Communities of Color and their research partners at PSU look forward to joining with our mainstream agencies and institutions in discovering and implementing new ways to end the invisibility of communities of color in Multnomah county.

Appendices

Appendix #1: Supplemental data notes

Reporting levels are problematic. For data that draws from the American Community Survey the following notes are needed.

1. Given that these data are drawn from a sample, and in order for the Census Bureau to provide fuller reporting, they have amalgamated the results of three years into one data set. This occurs in the following time periods: 2005-2007 and 2006-2008. The authors of this report have aimed to be as clear as possible in their rendering of the data, and giving a three-year name to a single data point is needlessly confusing. Accordingly, we have named the data sets "2007" (for the 2005-2007 range) and "2008" (for the 2006-2008 range).
2. Data for some communities is not available. This is true for the Pacific Islander data which is usually combined with the Asian data. It was not, however, available for the American Community Survey data for Multnomah county and for Oregon. We have thus excluded it from the Asian figures. Exceptions for this are those figures from administrative datasets that include Pacific Islander communities within the Asian figures. These include Oregon Department of Education, Department of Human Services (Multnomah County) and the Department of Community Justice (Multnomah County). Local surveys such as the Oregon Population Survey include the Asian/Pacific Islander communities, which we have called "Asian" in this report.
3. A second place where specific data were not available was for the Native American data "without Hispanic or Latino" multiracial persons. This dataset thus uses the Native American data "with Hispanic or Latino" in Multnomah county. To provide some consistency across the report, the same report on the Native American community is used at the Oregon and USA levels.
4. To make the naming of data categories more accessible, some abbreviations have been used.
    a. White = White alone, non-Hispanic
    b. Native American = American Indian and Alaska Native, alone or in combination with other races, including Hispanic or Latino. To understand the size of this possible "double counting," please look at the data in the population counts section of the report.
    c. Black = African American or Black, alone or in combination with other races, non-Hispanic
    d. Asian = Asian alone or in combination with other races, non-Hispanic
5. When we present data that are "communities of color" composites, we accomplish this by averaging the figures of the four traditional communities of color (Latino, African American, Asian and Native American). These figures are not weighted by the size of the community. In many cases, data was not available on the size. When we present data on "people of color," these figures represent the average for all people of color, and are not averages of the communities.

Appendix #2: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

- Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

- Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

- No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

- No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

- Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

- All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

- Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

- No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

- Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

- (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
- (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

- No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

- (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

- (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

- Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

- Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

- Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

- Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

- (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
- (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

- Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Appendix #3: Multnomah County's philosophy and implementation of culturally-specific services

Philosophy of Culturally Specific Service Delivery:
Multnomah County believes that funding should follow the client and not the other way around. In the business world, this is known as "customer choice." Over years of service delivery to communities of color it has been made clear that consumer choice for people of color and ethnic communities is based on three dimensions: comfort, confidence, and trust. These dimensions are strongest in an environment where the organizations and/or institutions providing the services reflect the values, histories and cultures of those being served. Agencies which hire one or two culturally specific staff members do not provide an environment where comfort, confidence and trust are maximized for clients. Communities of color are characterized by significant language and cultural differences from the majority culture of the United States. One of these characteristics is a personal or relational way of interacting with service providers, rather than an impersonal bureaucratic way of interacting with service providers, which is more common in mainstream culture. This fact makes it important that the overall "feel" of an organization be familiar and comfortable to the client receiving services. While the specifics of these characteristics vary in the African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Slavic and the many African and Refugee cultures in Multnomah county, all of these communities share the need for a culturally specific style of personal interaction, language, and organizational culture.

Indeed, in our experience not only do members of the various communities of color prefer to seek services from culturally-specific providers, but there are many issues that clients may not have the trust to openly discuss and confront outside a culturally-specific context. Some of these issues include but are not limited to domestic violence, drug and alcohol addiction, gang involvement, financial hardships, youth sexuality, and family and relationship problems. Thus, culturally-specific services are not only the preferred service provider for many people of color and immigrants, in many cases they may be the only provider in which individuals and families will feel comfortable asking for and receiving appropriate services.

Values Statement:
Multnomah County values and celebrates the rich diversity of our community. Through diversity comes a sense of community. Community provides a wealth of experience and different perspectives that enriches everyone's life. Communities in Multnomah County have a long tradition of supporting each other through families, churches and community organizations. Cultural minorities are more likely to engage individuals and organizations that are intimately knowledgeable of the issues of poverty and minority disproportionality facing the community today, and further, whose services are culturally specific, accessible and provided with compassion. Therefore, we are committed to providing a continuum of culturally specific services including prevention, intervention and anti-poverty services throughout Multnomah County that ensures the welfare, stability and growth of children and families who are part of at-risk, minority populations. By so doing, these individuals will be able to contribute and participate in the civic life of our county.

Criteria for Culturally Specific Service Providers:
The following section identifies specific criteria that Multnomah uses to identify and designate organizations which have developed the capacity to provide culturally specific services. The following criteria should be used in Request for Proposals, contracting, and other funding processes to determine the appropriateness and eligibility of specific organizations to receive culturally specific funding. Both geographic hubs and culturally specific service organizations should be required to meet these criteria in order to receive funding from the resources that are dedicated to culturally specific service provision. These agency characteristics are expected to be in place at the time the organization applies for culturally specific services and not be characteristics or capacities that the agency proposes to develop over a period of time after contracts are signed. The criteria include:

- Majority of agency clients served are from a particular community of color: African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Latino, African and Refugee, and Slavic.
- Organizational environment is culturally focused and identified as such by clients.
- Prevalence of bilingual and/or bicultural staff reflects the community that is proposed to be served.
- Established and successful community engagement and involvement with the community being served.

Contracting Implementation:

Steps will be taken throughout all phases of the Request for Proposals process to ensure that Multnomah County contracts are given to organizations that have the capacity to provide the best culturally specific services. Those steps include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Refer to the definition of culturally specific service providers when reviewing funding applications.
- Create and implement an effective process to validate the accuracy of an organization's claim that they're a culturally specific service provider using the aforementioned definition and eliminate applications that do not meet the criteria.
- Include a requirement to submit past performance documentation regarding County contracts to ensure contracting with the most qualified providers and to achieve the highest quality of service delivery.
- Verify with partnering organization(s) that the relationship(s) referred to in an application exist and that the scope of work is targeted toward the work Multnomah County is supporting.
- Include representation from the communities that are proposed to be served on committee and review panels for their respective communities.

Appendix #4: Language definitions[170]

Ally: "A member of an oppressor group who works to end a form of oppression which gives her or him privilege. For example, a white person who works to end racism, or a man who works to end sexism" (Bishop, 1994, p. 126).

Anti-Oppressive Practice: a person-centered philosophy; and egalitarian value system concerned with reducing the deleterious effects of structural inequalities upon people's lives; a methodology focusing on both process and outcome; and a way of structuring relationships between individuals that aims to empower users by reducing the negative effects of social hierarchies on their interaction and the work they do together. (Dominelli, 1994, p.3)

Communities of color: Four communities are traditional recognized as being of color – Native American, African American, Asian and Latino. To these four groups, the Coalition of Communities of Color also recognizes and includes two communities: Slavic and African immigrant and refugee. Note that there is some tension in whether Latinos are a racial or an ethnic group. Most databases define them as a separate ethnic group, as opposed to a racial group. In Multnomah county, we define Latinos as a community of color and primarily understand the Latino experience as one significantly influenced by racism.

Cultural competence: A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. The goal is to build skills and cultures that support the ability to interact effectively across identities. The word **culture** is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group. The word **competence** is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively. Five essential elements contribute to a system, institution or agency's ability to become more culturally competent:

1. Valuing diversity
2. Having the capacity for cultural self-assessment
3. Being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact
4. Having institutionalized culture knowledge
5. Having developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity (Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1989)

Cultural proficiency: See "cultural competence"

Discourse: "A set of assumptions, socially shared and often unconscious, reflected in the language, that positions people who speak within them and frames knowledge" (Ristock & Pennell, 1996, p.114).

Discrimination: "The prejudgment and negative treatment of people based on identifiable characteristics such as race, gender, religion, or ethnicity" (Barker, 1995, p.103).

Disparities: Are differences between population groups in the presence of any form of incidence or outcomes, including access to services. Disparities include both acceptable and unacceptable differences. (Adapted from Multnomah County Health Department, Health Equity Initiative)

Diversity: "Diversity refers to the broad range of human experience, emphasizing the following identities or group memberships: race, class, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age marital status, political belief, religion, mental or physical disability, immigration status, language and linguistics." (Portland State University, 2009)

Dominant discourse: Refers to the prevailing discourses that typically consolidate a set of myths about particular groups of people and then reproduce these myths through language, images, and generalized beliefs about who such people are and what they are capable of. These discourses are created by those with privileged identities and serve the function of maintaining oppressive systems such as racism, thus becoming an act of oppression themselves. When these characterizations are reproduced widely, they become the accepted way of speaking about and understanding particular groups of people. An example is the dominant discourse around "Black" and all this implies, and the corollary of "White" and all this implies.

Ethnicity: Refers to arbitrary classifications of human populations based on the sharing common ancestry including features such as nationality, language, cultural heritage and religion.

Exploitation: "When a person or people control another person or people, they can make use of the controlled people's assets, such as resources, labor, and reproductive ability, for their own purposes. The exploiters are those who benefit, and the exploited are those who lose" (Bishop, 1994, p.129-130).

Individual racism: "The beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can occur at both an unconscious and conscious level, and can be both active and passive" (Wijeyesinghe, Griffin & Lowe, 1997, p.89).

Inequities: Are disparities that result from a variety of social factors such as income inequality, economic forces, educational quality, environmental conditions, individual behavior choices, and access to services. Health inequities are unfair and avoidable. (Adapted from Multnomah County Health Department, Health Equity Initiative).

Institutional racism:

- "The network of institutional structures, policies, and practices that create advantages and benefits for Whites, and discrimination, oppression, and disadvantage for people from targeted racial groups. The advantages to Whites are often invisible to them, or are considered "rights" available to everyone as opposed to "privileges" awarded to only some individuals and groups" (Wijeyesinghe, Griffin & Lowe, 1997, p.93).
- Institutional racism consists of those established laws, customs and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities… whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have racist intentions (Jones, 1972, p.131).
- Institutional racism is understood to exist based on the experiences of people of color, rather than intention to create inequities. One does not need to "prove" intent to discriminate in order for institutional racism to exist. Institutional racism exists by impact rather than intention.

Internalized Dominance: Occurs "when members of the agent group accept their group's socially superior status as normal and deserved" (Griffin, 1997, p.76).

Internalized Oppression: Occurs "when members of the target group have adopted the agent group's ideology and accept their subordinate group status as deserved, natural, and inevitable" (Griffin, 1997, p.76). Furthermore, "oppressed people usually come to believe the negative things that are said about them and even act them out" (Bishop, 1994, p.131).

Mainstream services: These are large service organizations that are largely devoid of specific services for communities of color, or having minimal or tokenistic responses to the specific needs of these communities. They operate from the presumption that service needs are independent from racial and cultural needs, and that staff

can be trained in "cultural sensitivity" or "cultural competence" to ensure delivery of quality services regardless of clients' race and ethnicity.

Marginalized/margins: "Groups that have a history of oppression and exploitation are pushed further and further from the centres of power that control the shape and destiny of the society. These are the margins of society, and this is the process of marginalization" (Bishop, 1994, p.133).

Power: "A relational force, not a fixed entity, that operates in all interactions. While it can be oppressive, power can also be enabling" (Ristock & Pennell, 1996, p.116).

Prejudice: "An opinion about an individual, group, or phenomenon that is developed without proof or systematic evidence. This prejudgment may be favorable but is more often unfavorable and may become institutionalized in the form of a society's laws or customs" (Barker, 1995, p.290).

Privilege: "Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or
failed to do. Access to privilege doesn't determine one's outcomes, but it is definitely an asset that makes it more likely that whatever talent, ability, and aspirations a person with privilege has will result in something positive for them." (*Peggy McIntosh)*

Racialized: "Process by which racial categories are constructed as different and unequal in ways that have social, economic and political consequences" (Galabuzi, 2006, p.251).

Racism: "A system in which one group of people exercises power over another or others on the basis of social constructed categories based on distinctions of physical attributes such as skin color" (Galabuzi, 2006, p.252).

Relative Rate Index (RRI): Is a methodology for measuring rate differences between groups to estimate disparity of a phenomenon. It involves calculating the occurrence rate of a reference and a second group and comparing the resulting ratio to 1. For a more in depth discussion of RRI and methods for calculating, see U.S. Department of Justice (2006). *Disproportionate Minority Contact Technical Assistance Manual, 3rd Edition*. Washington D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Social justice: "Social justice is both a process and a goal that (1) seeks equitable (re)distribution of resources, opportunities and responsibilities; (2) challenges the roots of oppression and injustice; (3) empowers all people to enhance self-determination and realize their full potential; (4) and builds social solidarity and community capacity for collaborative action." (Portland State University, 2009)

Stereotype: "An undifferentiated, simplistic attribution that involves a judgment of habits, traits, abilities, or expectations and is assigned as a characteristic to all members of a group regardless of individual variation and with no attention to the relation between the attributions and the social contexts in which they have arisen" (Weinstein & Mellen, 1997, p.175).

Systemic racism: "Refers to social processes that tolerate, reproduce and perpetuate judgments about racial categories that produce racial inequality in access to life opportunities and treatment" (Galabuzi, 2006, p.253).

Tokenism: "A dominant group sometimes promotes a few members of an oppressed group to high positions, and then uses them to claim there are no barriers preventing any member of that group from reaching a position with power and status. The people promoted are tokens, and the process is called tokenism. Tokens can also be used

as a buffer between the dominant and oppressed groups. It is harder for the oppressed group to name the oppression and make demands when members of their own groups are representing the dominant group" (Bishop, 1994, p.136).

White: Refers to the racial identity as Caucasian, regardless of ancestry or ethnicity. While conventional definitions of being White can include being Latino as well, we exclude such a definition from this text. In our situation, being White means having the racial identity as Caucasian, without being Latino.

Whiteness: Whiteness refers to the social construction of being White that coexists with privilege in all its forms, including being on the privileged end of history, including colonization, slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. It also includes being the beneficiaries of institutionalized and systemic racism, dominant discourses, internalized racism and individual acts of discrimination and micro-aggressions of racism in everyday life.

White Privilege: "White privilege is the other side of racism. Unless we name it, we are in danger of wallowing in guilt or moral outrage with no idea of how to move beyond them. It is often easier to deplore racism and its effects than to take responsibility for the privileges some of us receive as a result of it...Once we understand how white privilege operates, we can begin addressing it on an individual and institutional basis." (*Paula Rothenberg)*

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[4]As noted in reference 3, the use of the term "Multnomah county" refers to the geographic region rather than the political body that is "Multnomah County."
[5] The "state" refers to the political bodies that have authority over those who live in a geographic region to set rules and policies. Here we refer to the federal, state, and local governments.
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[46] Again, two data points are entered for 2006 to acknowledge changing standards.

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Table 4b Reported voting and registration of the total voting-age population, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin, for states: November 2006 retrieved January 20, 2010 from:
www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2006/tab04b.xls.
Table 4b Reported voting and registration of the total voting-age population, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin, for states: November 2008 retrieved January 20, 2010 from:
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