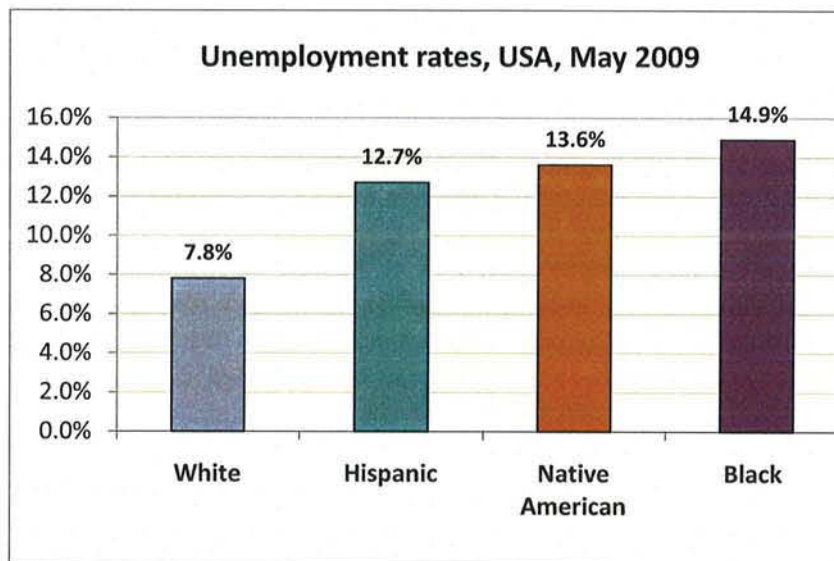


Source: Author's calculations using data from American Community Survey, 2008. This chart compares each value for Multnomah county with the USA levels, showing the benefits or costs of living here compared with the national data. Note that "all households" is not an averaging of the other bars, but rather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

## Unemployment rates

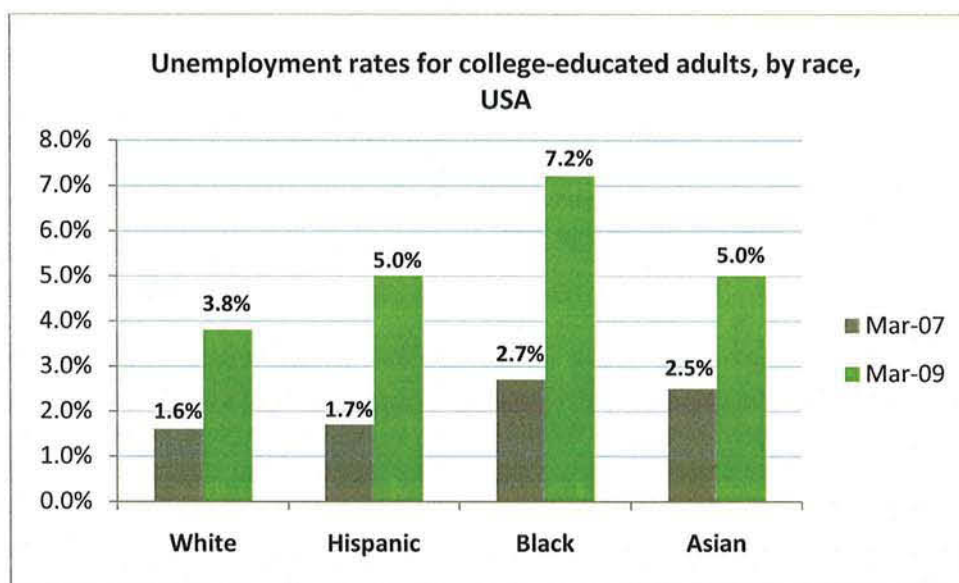
Unemployment rates are one reason for low incomes among people of color, who fare considerably worse in unemployment levels. While the rates are not yet available by race and ethnicity at the local level, these national data are extremely troubling, as the May 2009 rates for communities of color average 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).<sup>51</sup>

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.

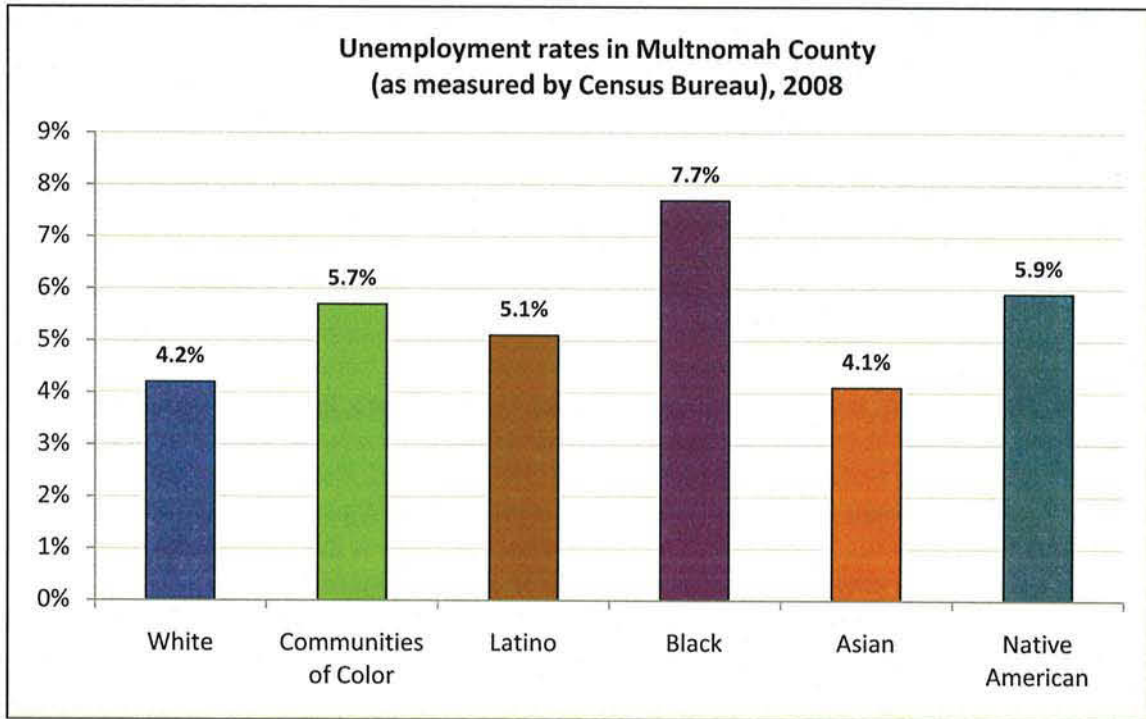


Source: Austin, A. (2009).<sup>52</sup>

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%.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> 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<sup>55</sup> 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%.<sup>56</sup> 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

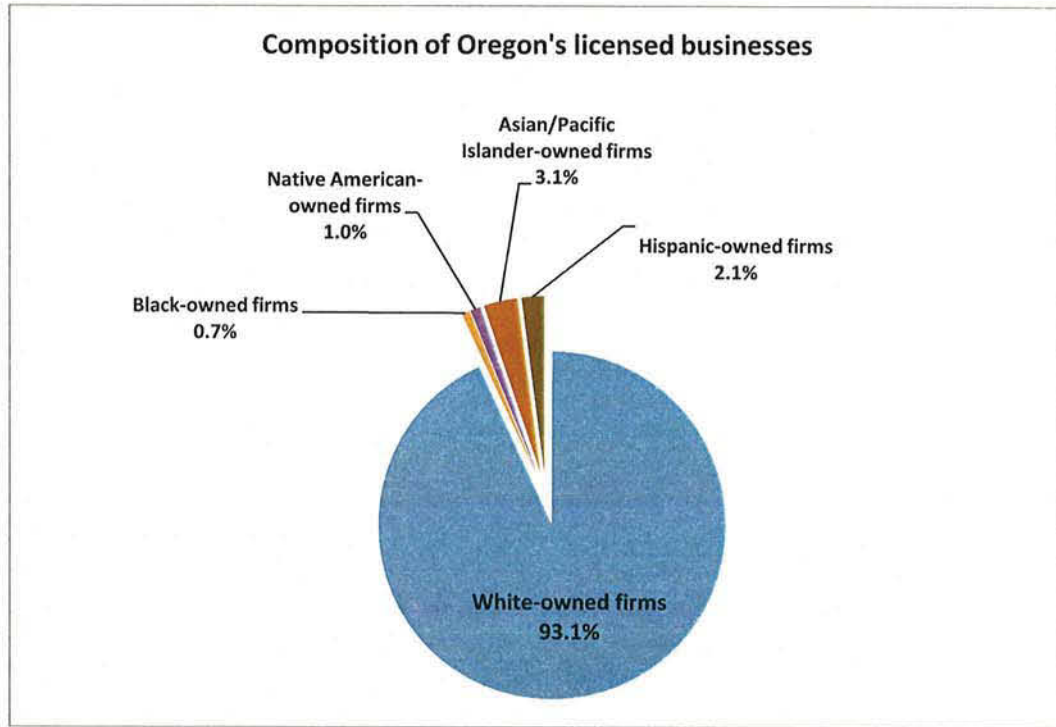
Governments are able to influence the employment landscape in a number of areas. The first is that they establish the landscape of practices for employers through an array of features such as land use planning, transportation networks, public goods and services such as sewage lines and roads, tax structures, 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).<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup>

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.<sup>59</sup> 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.

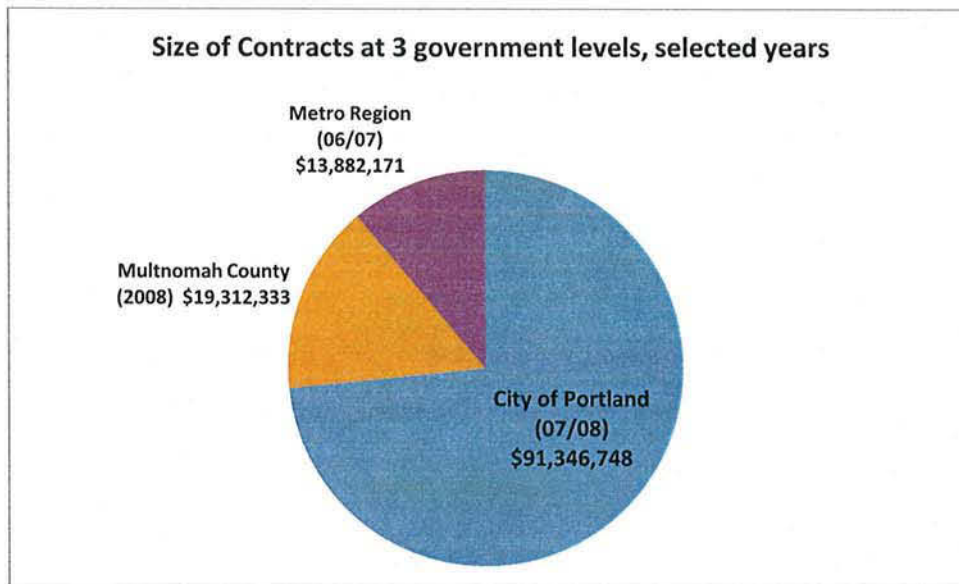
At the regional level, the Metropolitan government aims for a 17% target for traditionally marginalized groups (people of color, women and small emerging business owners). Neither the County nor the City has such targets, which could assist at all levels of decisions being made. If we were to use population 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.<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup>

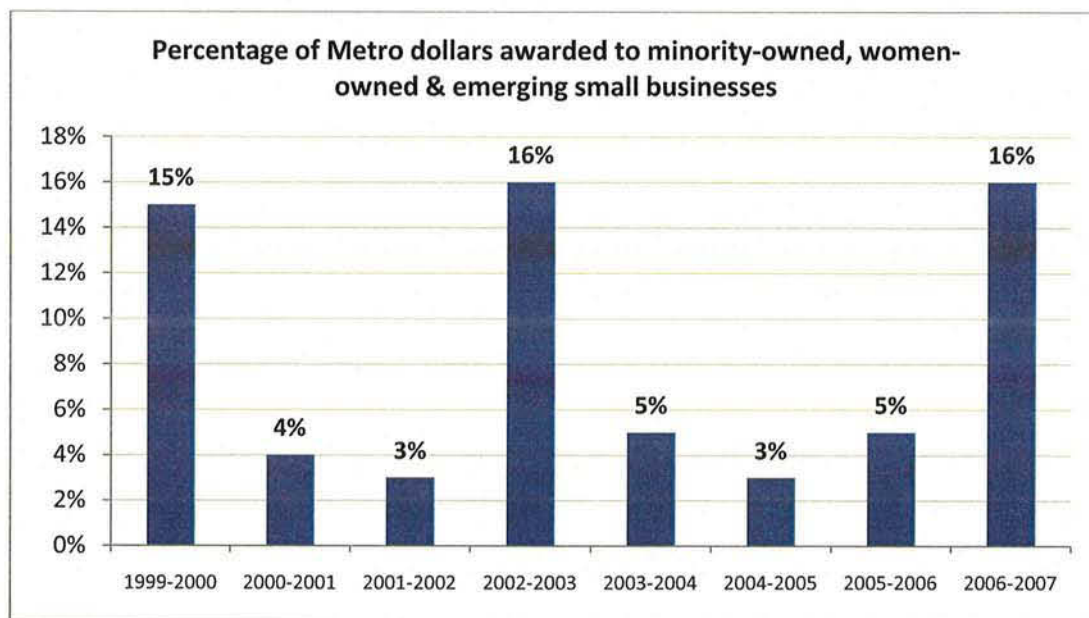
The profile of Oregonian businesses suggests how difficult it is to build a positive business environment for communities of color. These businesses then face challenges in being certified with the State of Oregon – while 20,677 minority-owned businesses operate in Oregon, only 3.3% of them are certified, 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.

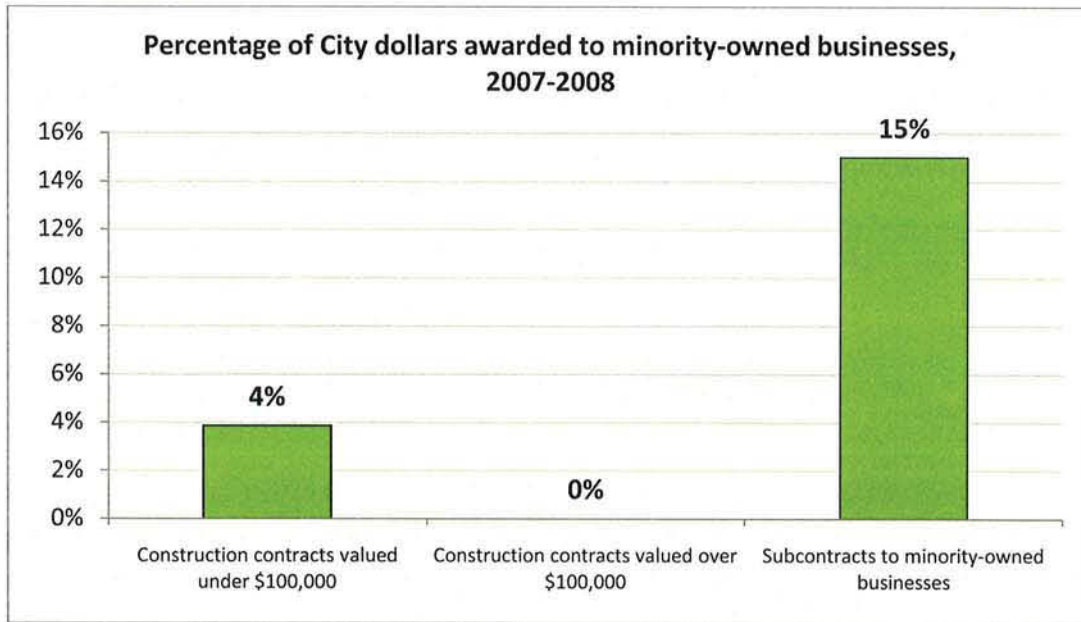
While we would like to applaud gains being made, and indeed procurement strategies seem robust across all levels of government, the results show that these policies do not ensure equitable outcomes, nor are the results improving. The pattern is tremendously uneven. Below are the patterns of the dollars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

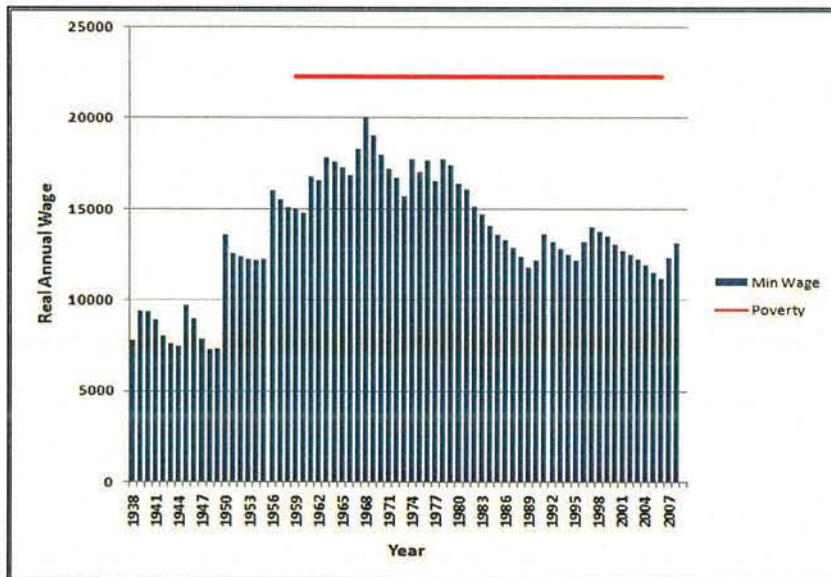
## Household budgets

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
<p><b>\$16,800/year</b> As calculated at rate of \$8.40/hour (which equals \$1,400/month)</p>	Family of 1 = \$10,830
	Family of 2 = \$14,570
	<b>Family of 3 = \$18,310</b>
	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.<sup>62</sup>

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

*Communities of Color in Multnomah County  
Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University*



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)
\$8.40/hour	<b>Subsidies = \$367</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible for food stamps = \$367</li> <li>• No earned income tax credit</li> <li>• Not eligible for free lunch</li> <li>• Eligible for reduced lunch</li> </ul>	Housing (1BR fair market rent)	\$809	
		Food	\$465	
or \$1,400/month	<b>Monthly taxes = \$387</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal income tax = \$210 (15%)</li> <li>• State income tax = \$70</li> <li>• FICA taxes = \$107 (social security @ 6.2%; Medicare @ 1.45%)</li> </ul>	Child Care (1 toddler @ \$7500/yr)	\$625	
or \$16,800/yr		Transportation (3 Trimet passes)	\$138	
		Telephone	\$30	
		Utilities (electricity)	\$75	
		Television	\$40	
		Health Care	\$288	
		Other Necessities	\$100	
<b>\$1,400</b>	<b>Net after subsidies &amp; taxes = \$1,380/month</b>	<b>Basic monthly costs</b>	<b>\$2,570</b>	<b>(\$1,190)</b>

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.

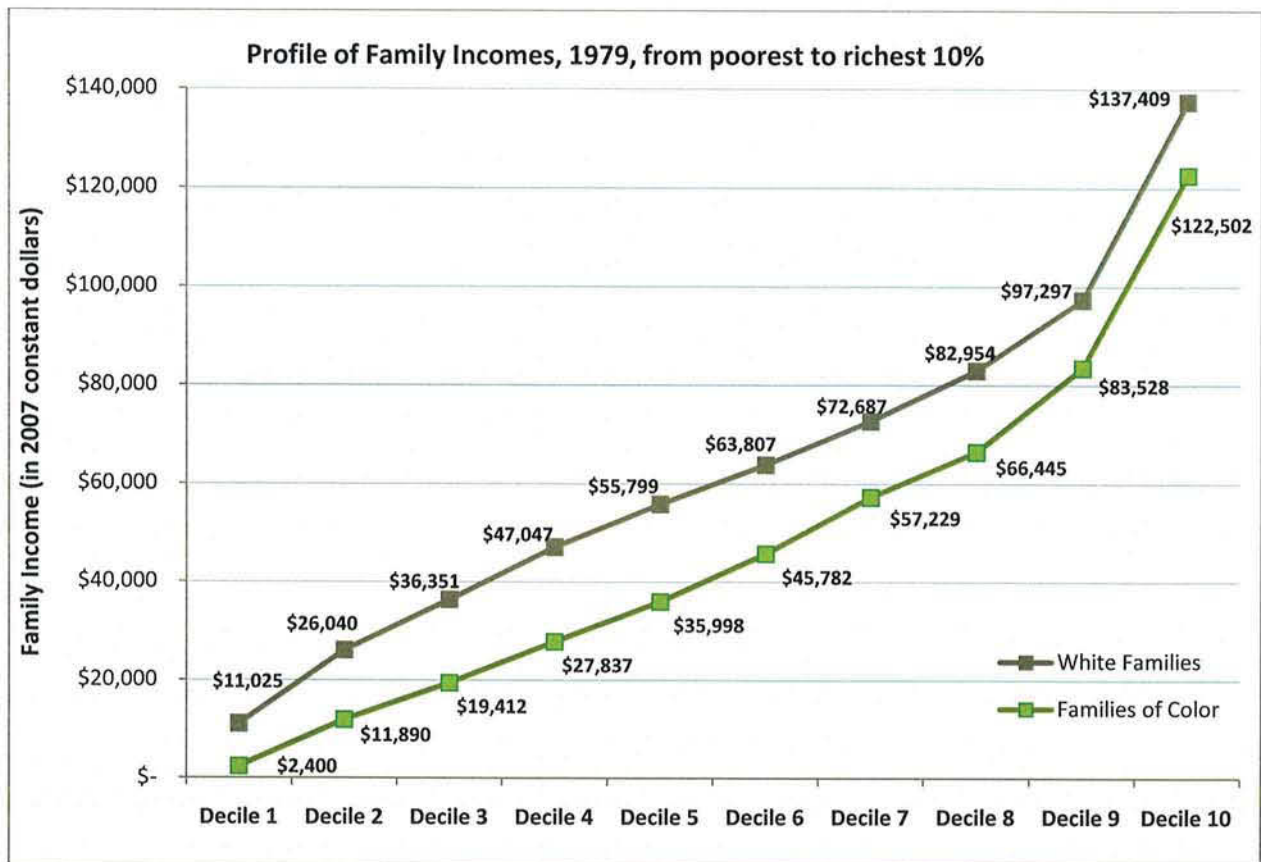
	Hispanic	African American	Native American
Food stamp use	15%	4%	2%
Disproportionality level	36%	100%	67%

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.

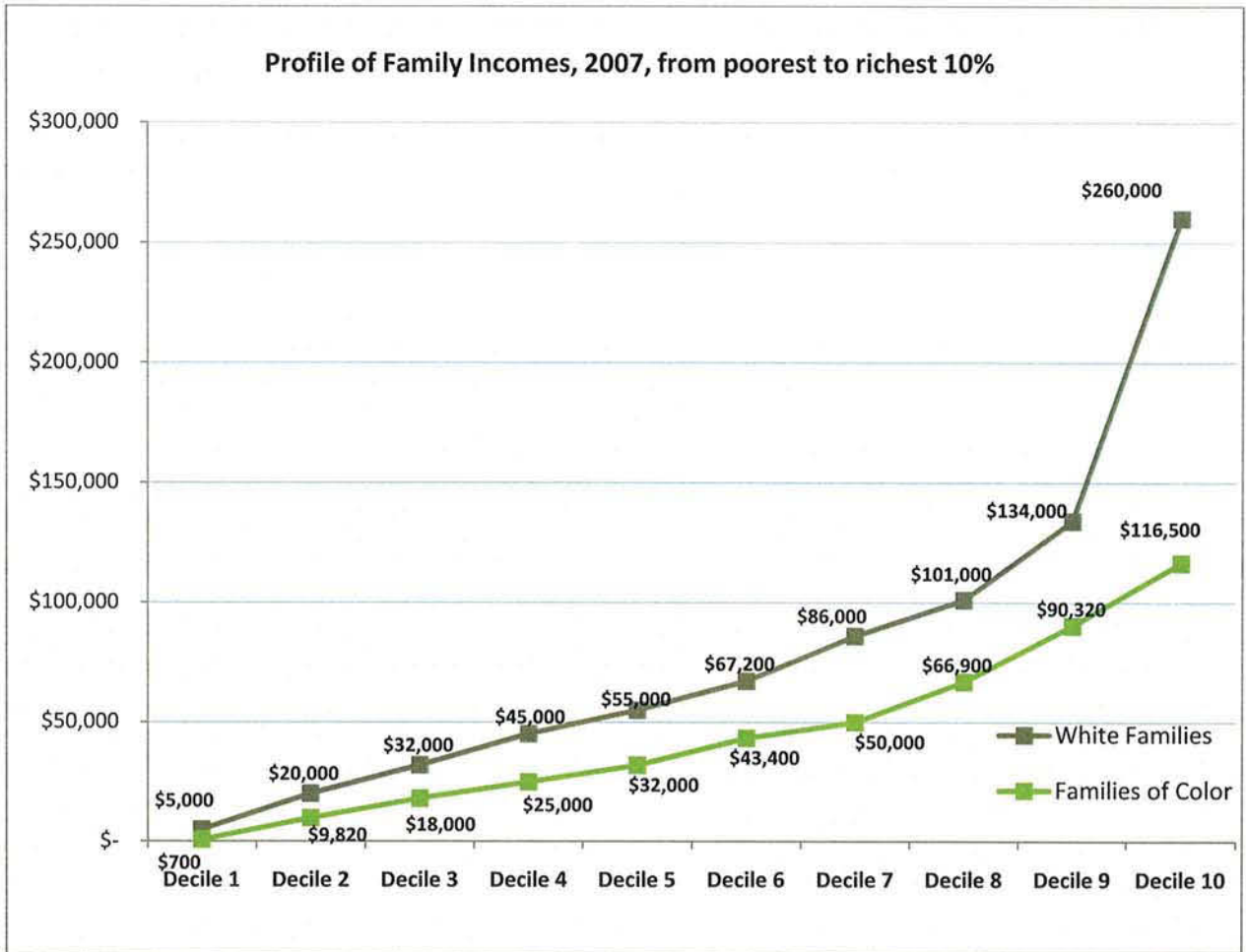


Source: Author’s calculations from PUMS datasets from Census 1980 and American Community Survey, 2007, with custom extractions by Joseph Buani-Smith. Decile 1 is the poorest 10% of families, and the value is their total annual income (the mean of all families in the poorest 10% of the population). Decile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

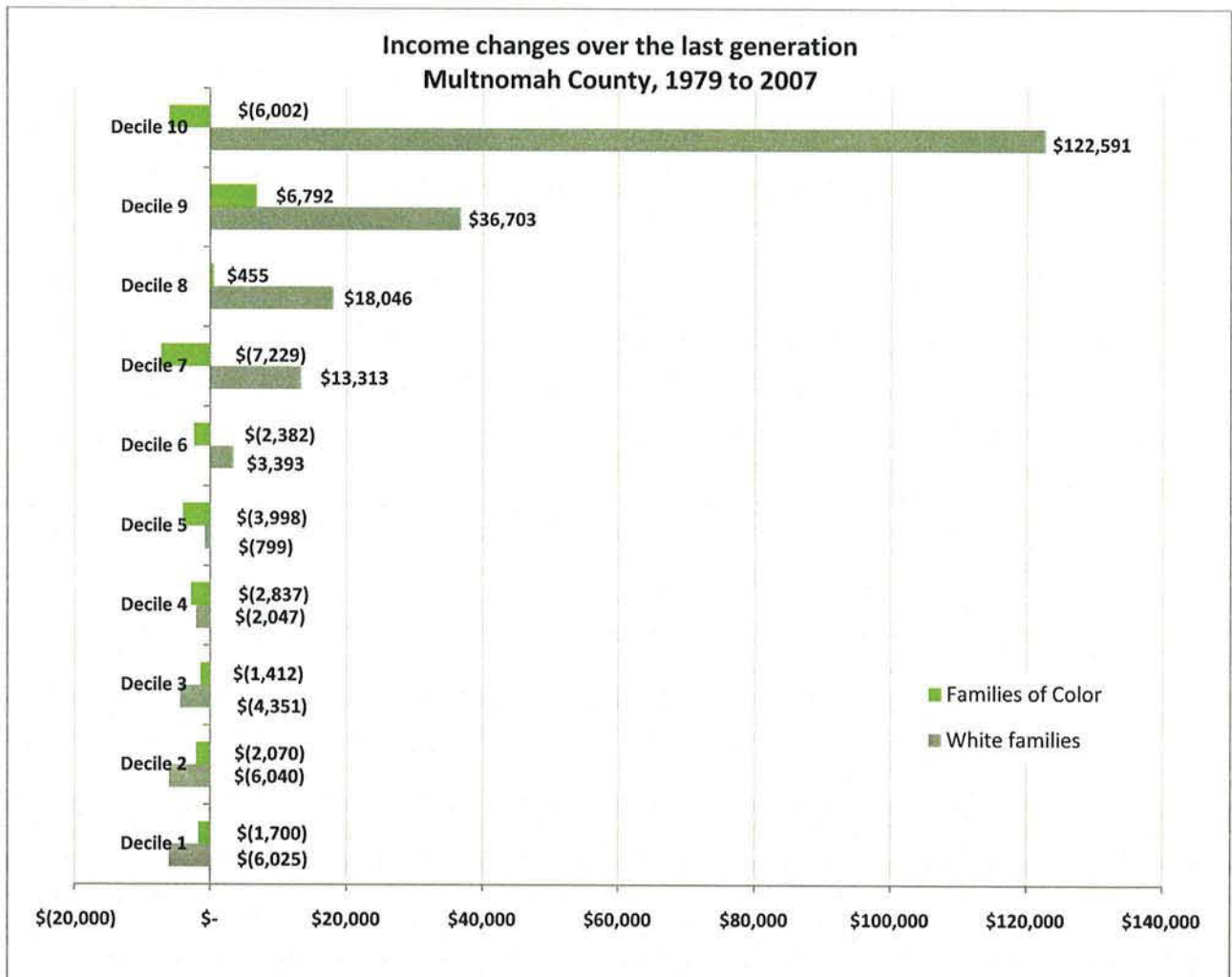
the 1979 figures to 2007 constant dollars. The size of this gap in 1979 was \$14,907 – not good to begin, but an outrageous 10-fold increase through the generation.

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.<sup>63</sup>

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.<sup>64</sup> 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

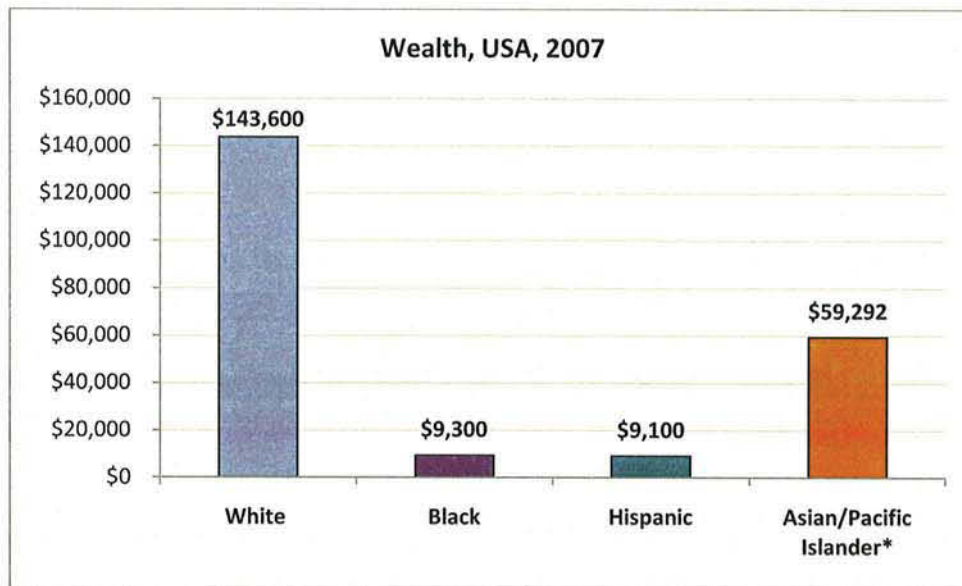
Communities of color have long been denied access to the largest wealth-creating system in the USA: homeownership. The legacy has been profound with the following dimensions:

- 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<sup>65</sup>

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.<sup>66</sup>

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.

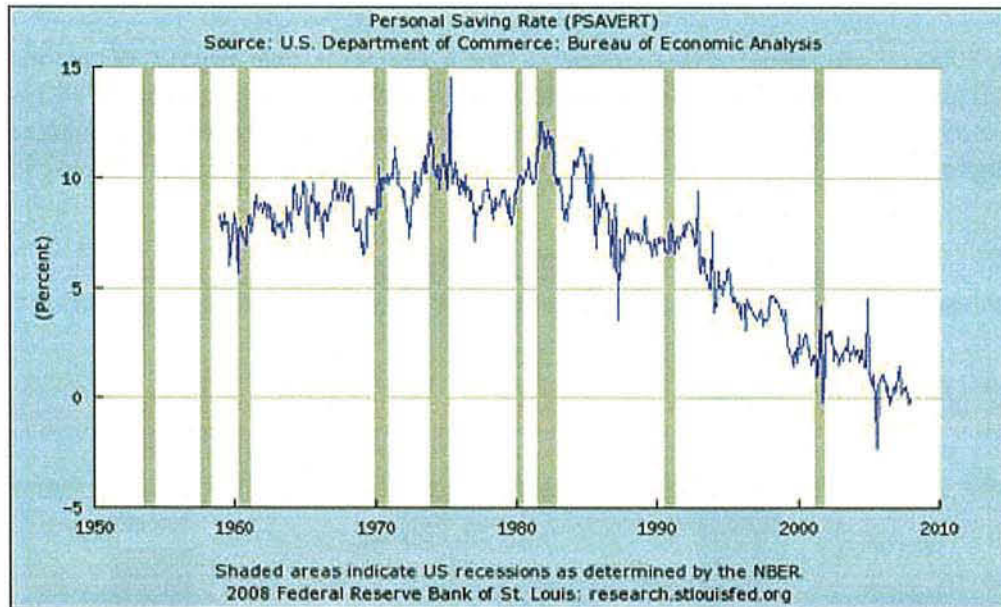


Sources: Federal Reserve Board’s Survey of Consumer Finances (for 2007, first three elements), US Census Bureau (for Asian/Pacific Islander data, 2002 figures). Native American data are not available. \*Note that the A/PI value is for 2002, and at this time the White equivalent was \$87,056.

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.<sup>67</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup>



Source: US Department of Commerce (2008).<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup> 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.<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup>

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.<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup>

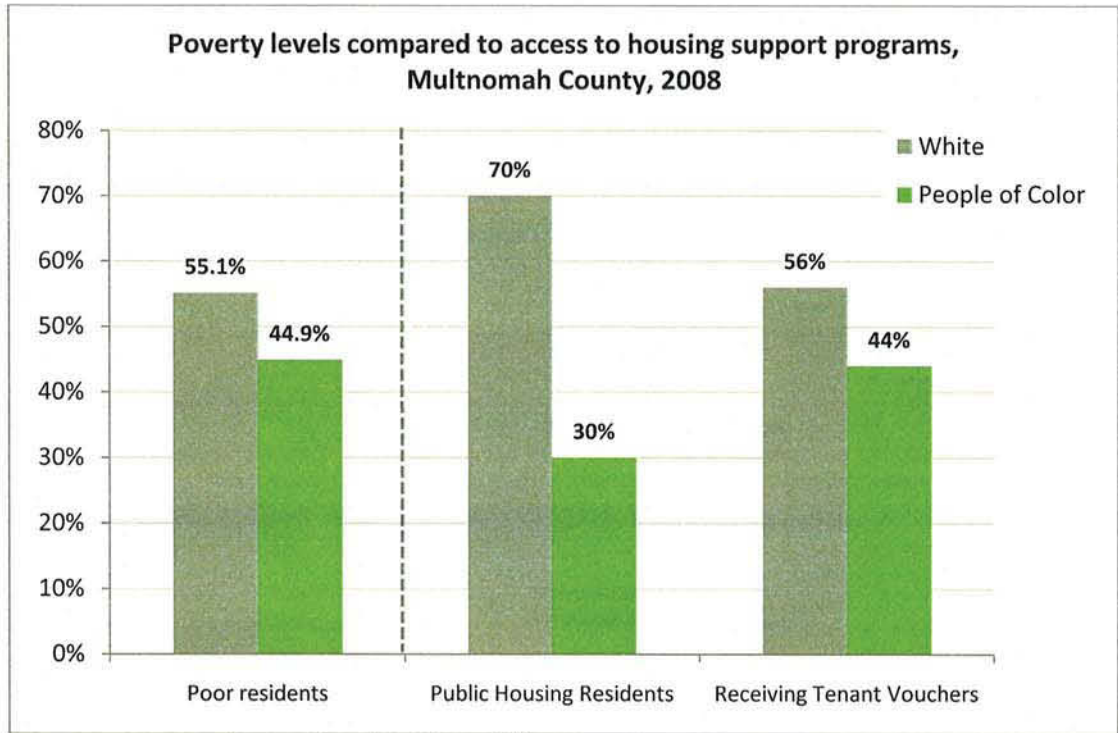
In our local region, housing discrimination is still rampant. Although research has been conducted outside Multnomah County (in Beaverton), discrimination against Latinos was found in 4 of 8 cases (50% levels of discrimination), and against African Americans in 7 of 9 cases (rates of 78%).<sup>77</sup> 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).<sup>78</sup>

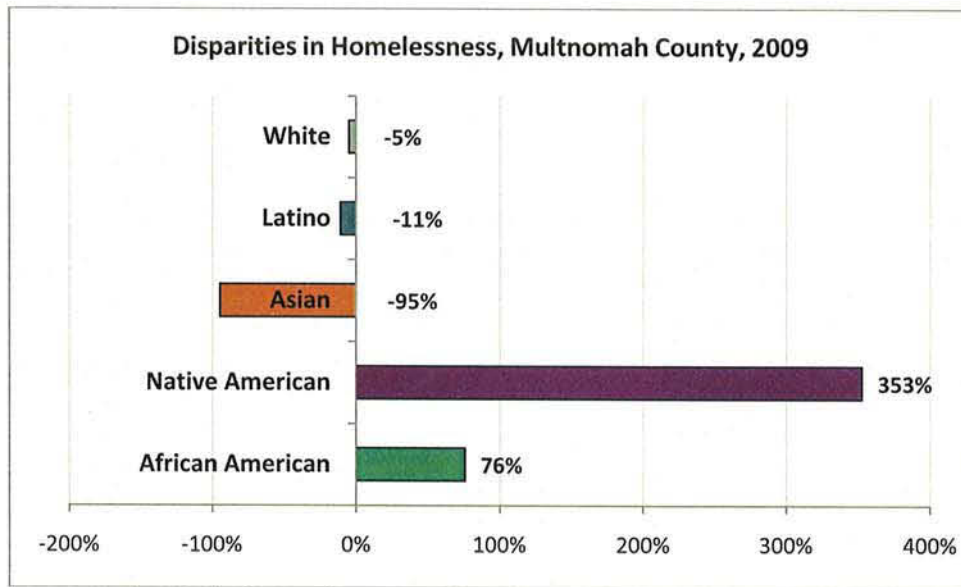
In public housing (the responsibility of the Housing Authority of Portland, and serving the whole of Multnomah county), disparities are deeply pronounced with Whites vastly outnumber people of color in receiving these supports. The Housing Authority of Portland which delivers these programs need to review 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.<sup>79</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup> 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).<sup>81</sup>

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 use 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.

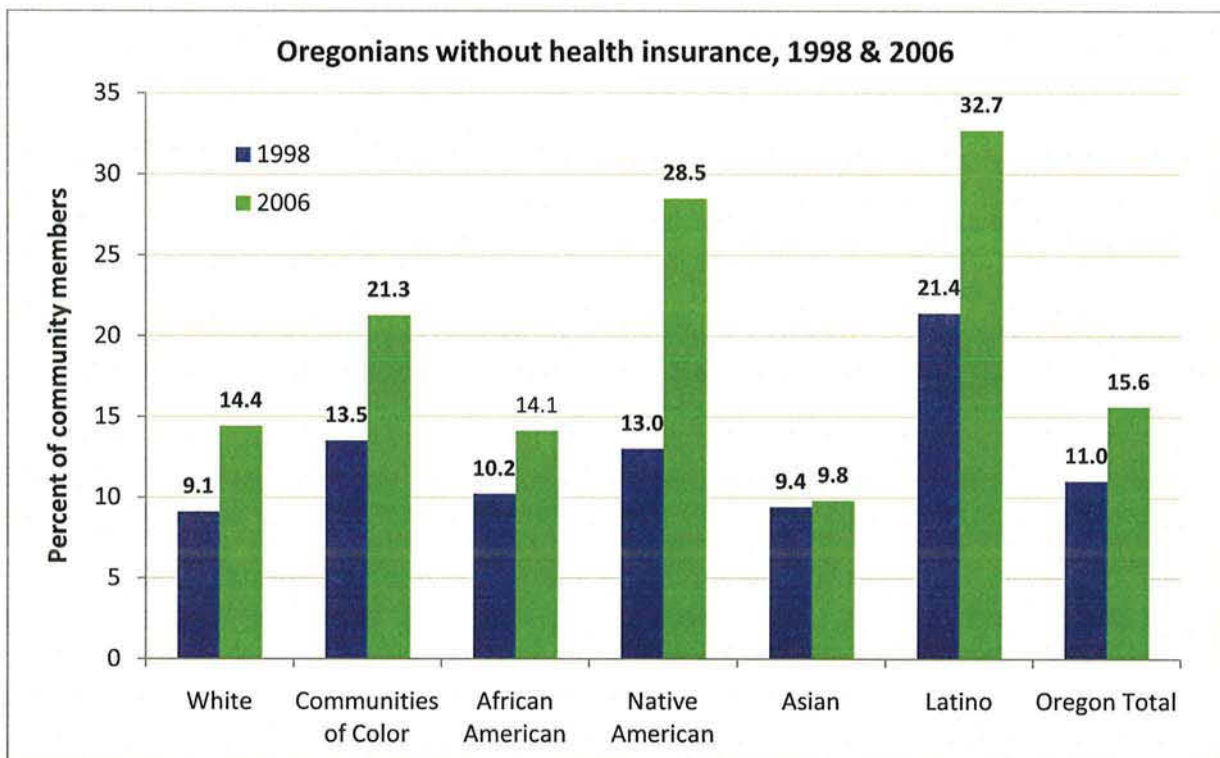
Given the rising crisis of unemployment (now at 11.3% in the Portland metropolitan area), we would increasingly expect people to lose their homes. One indicator is the surging numbers of homeless public school students, which in September 2009 totaled 2829 such youth in the county.<sup>82</sup> This 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.<sup>83</sup>

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.<sup>84</sup> 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.<sup>85</sup>

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.

	<b>Low Birth weights</b> % less than 5.5lbs	<b>Teen birthrate</b> % of 15-17 giving birth per 1000 teens	<b>Infant mortality</b> deaths per 1000 live births	<b>Death from diabetes</b> 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.<sup>86</sup>

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.<sup>87</sup> Some researchers are beginning to frame it as "premature ageing."<sup>88</sup>

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.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup> 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.<sup>91</sup> 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
<b>White youth (USA)</b>	10.8%	27.2%	11.5%	23.2%	29.8%	4.5%
<b>Black youth (USA)</b>	18.3%	62.7%	27.6%	11.6%	12.5%	1.9%
<b>Hispanic (USA)</b>	16.6%	43.0%	17.3%	16.7%	26.8%	5.7%
<b>Multnomah (all youth)</b>	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.<sup>92</sup>

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 we 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,<sup>93</sup> 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.”<sup>94</sup> 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.<sup>95</sup> 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.”<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup>

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.<sup>98</sup> 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).<sup>99</sup> 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.<sup>100</sup>

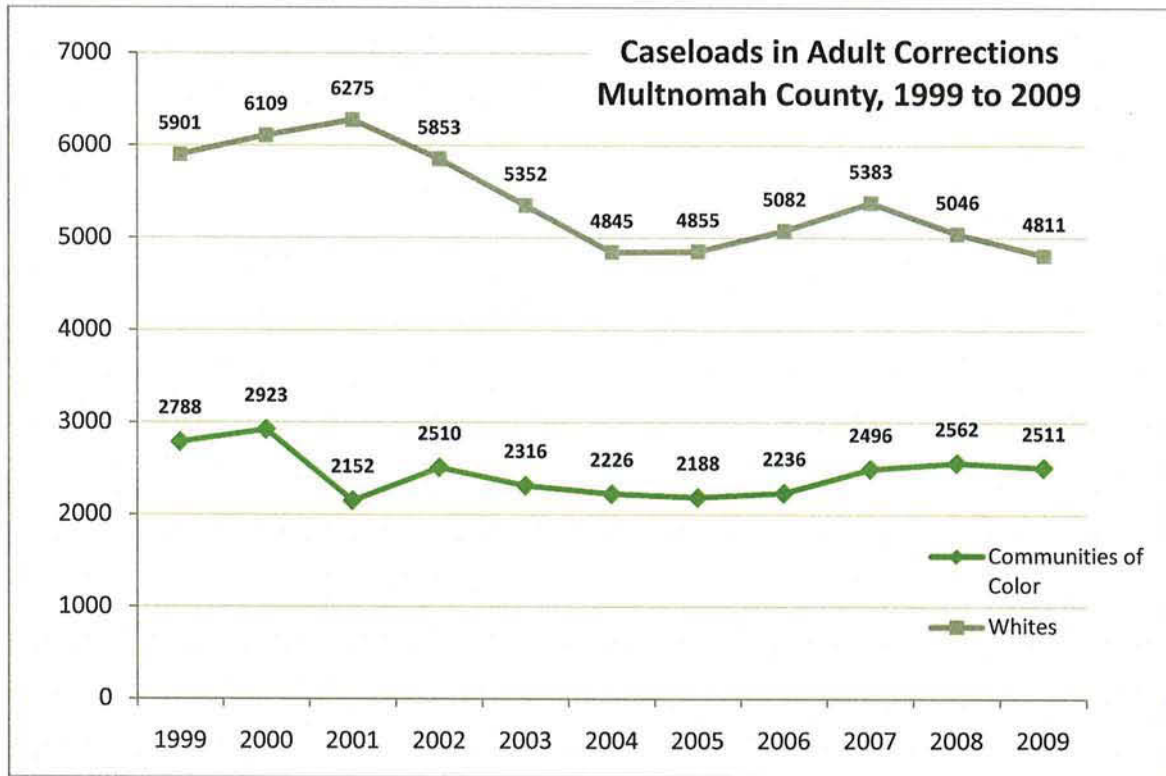
Turning now to the treatment of communities of color once they engage with the justice system, we explore sentencing, caseload and detention experiences. Across the country, the justice system continues to treat people of color more harshly than Whites. Termed “disproportionate minority contact” or more 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.<sup>101</sup> 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.<sup>102</sup> 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.<sup>103</sup>

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.<sup>104</sup>

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.<sup>105</sup> 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).

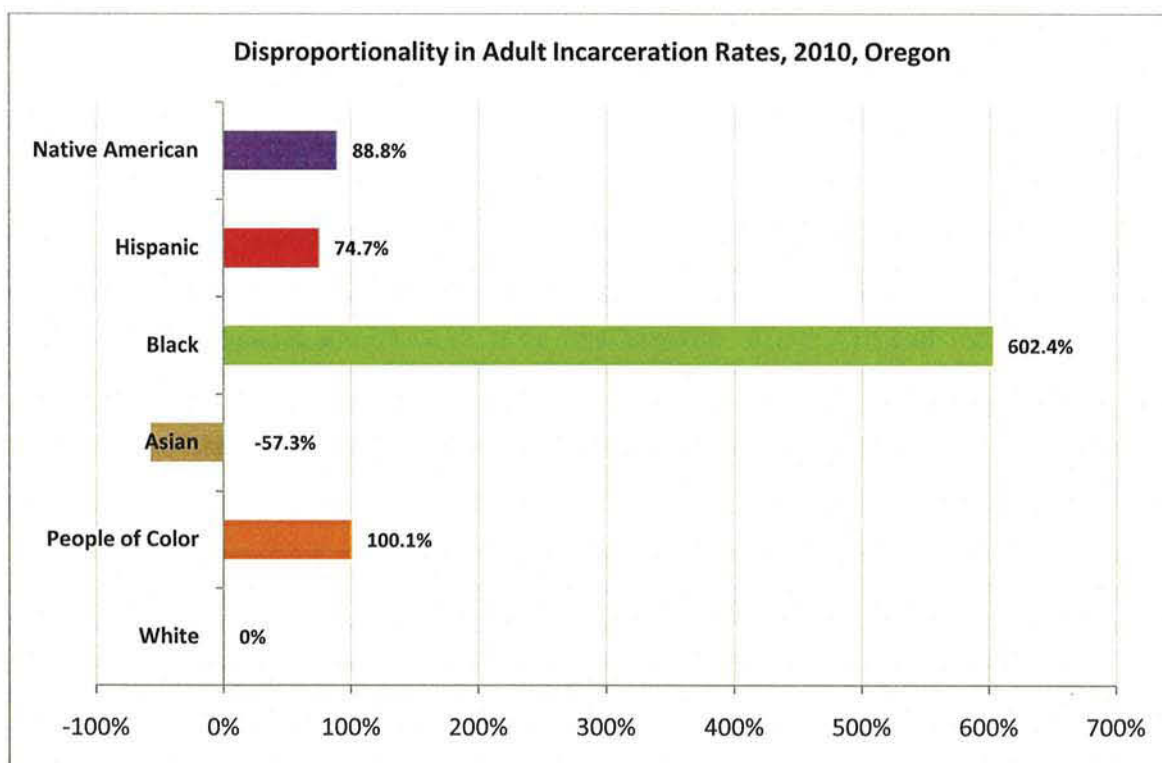
	% of the population involved in non-incarcerated corrections	
	2008	2009
White	1.17%	1.13%
People of Color	2.15%	2.03%
Disparity	84.3%	79.3%

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<sup>106</sup> while constituting less than 10% of the county population as a whole.<sup>107</sup> 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).<sup>108</sup> In addition, African Americans were represented in the state inmate population at a rate 5 times that of Whites (RRI = 5).<sup>109</sup>

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.<sup>110</sup>

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.<sup>111</sup>

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.<sup>112</sup> 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

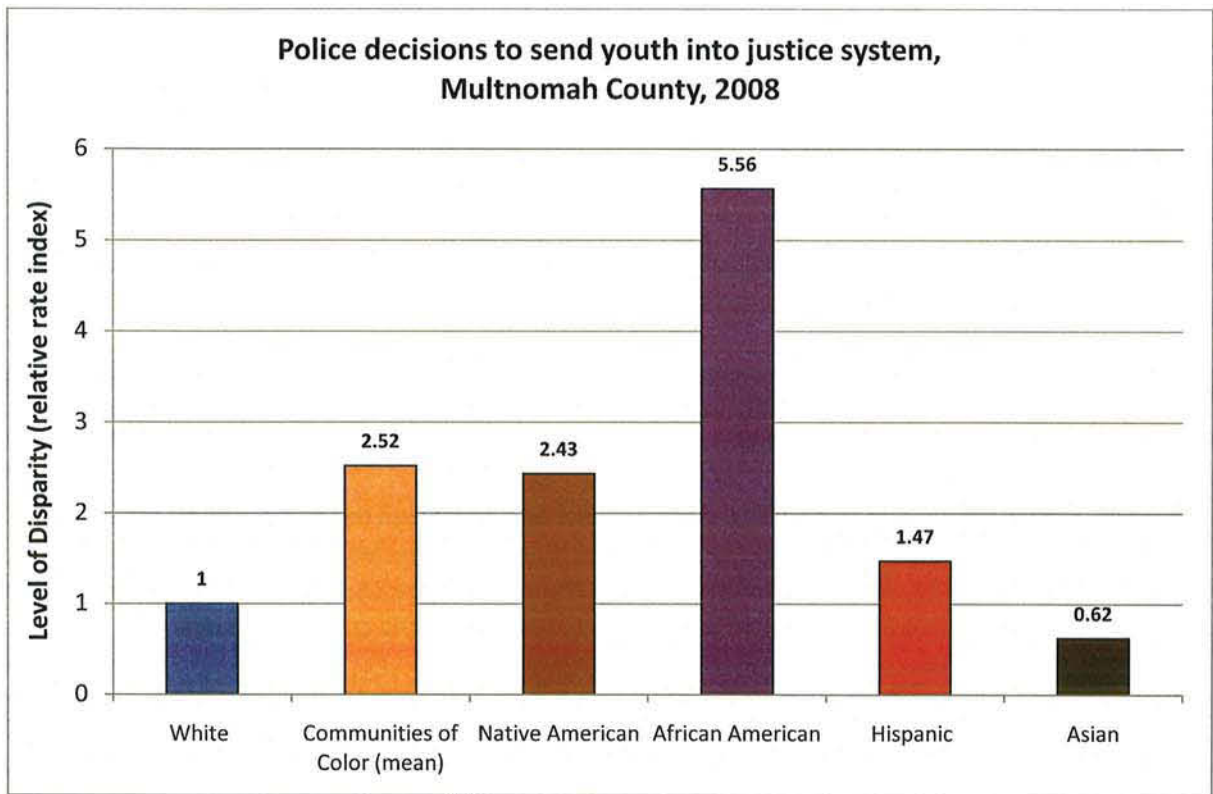
Overall, the crime rate in Multnomah county has been dropping among our youth. Despite being besieged by poverty, school failure and narrowed employment prospects, our youth are largely staying away from crime. Crime has decreased steadily since 1998 with the following particulars from 2002 to 2007<sup>113</sup>: 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<sup>114</sup> 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.”<sup>115</sup>

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

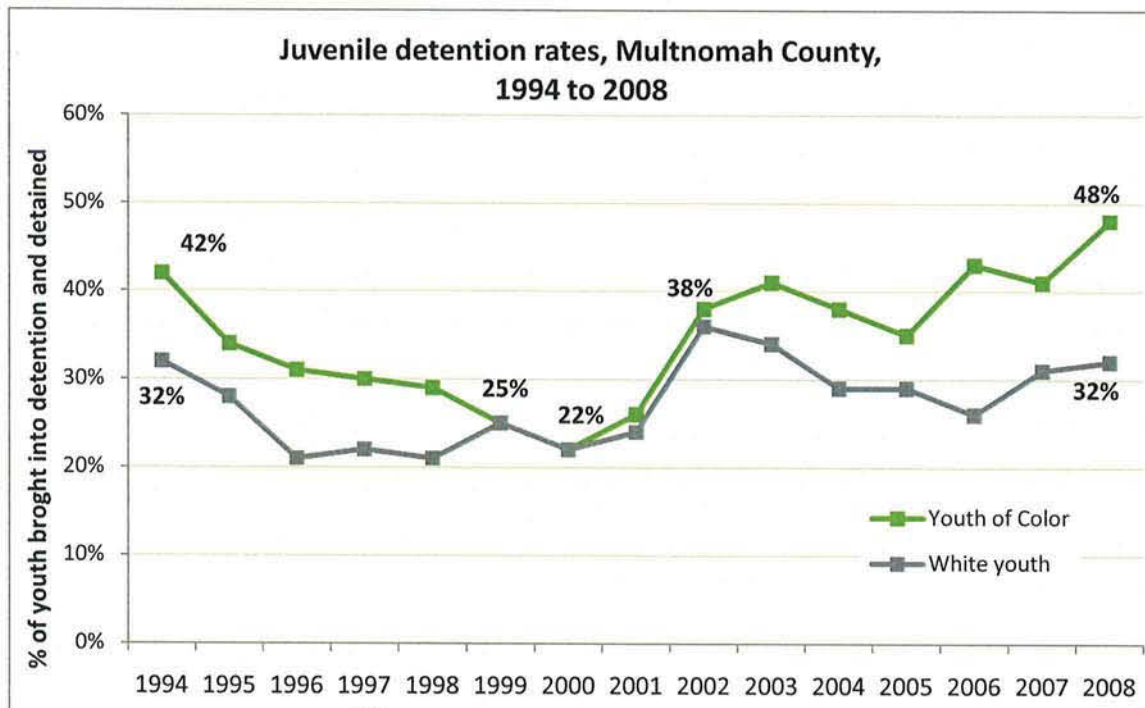
criminal justice system was about three-quarters of what would be expected given this group's population size.<sup>116</sup>

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.<sup>117</sup> The graph below illustrates the disparities visually.



Source: Source: Rhyne & Pascual (2009).<sup>118</sup>

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.<sup>119</sup> 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).<sup>120</sup>

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.<sup>121</sup>

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%).<sup>122</sup> 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.<sup>123</sup>

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.<sup>124</sup>

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.<sup>125</sup> 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.<sup>126</sup> 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.<sup>127</sup>

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 46<sup>th</sup> worst in the nation with only four states performing worse than Oregon.<sup>128</sup> 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<sup>129</sup>

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.<sup>130</sup> 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.<sup>131</sup> 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.<sup>132</sup>

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.<sup>133</sup>

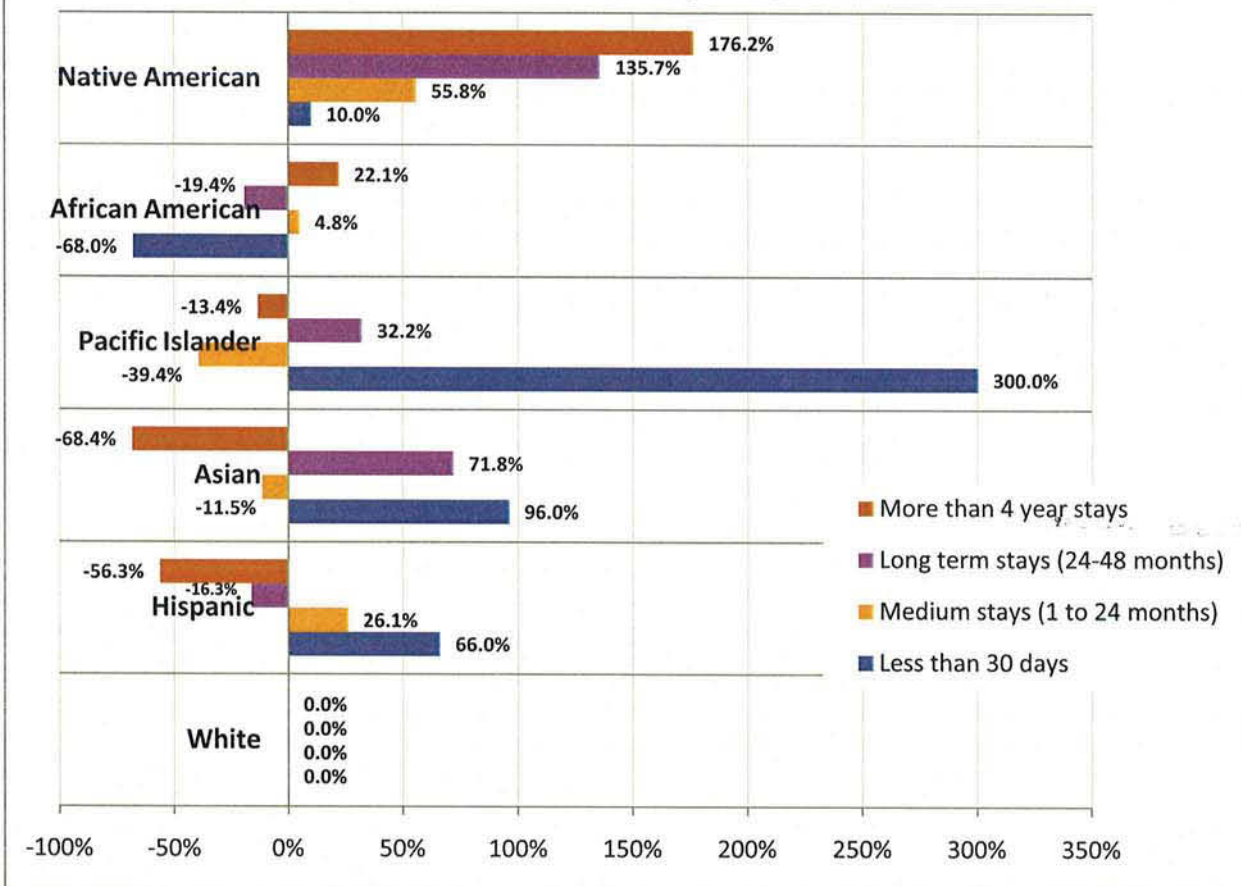
When children are removed from their homes, they enter foster care. Native American and Black children were in foster care at much higher rates than White children. Black children were in foster care at rates more than 3 times those of Whites. Even more stunning was the rate Native American children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

Once a child is removed from the home, it is important to see how quickly the child is reunited with family.<sup>135</sup> Thus an important measure is how long children stay in care. Of all the children who were in care during the six-month period,<sup>136</sup> 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.<sup>137</sup>

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).

### Disproportionality in Foster Care by Race and Length of Stay Multnomah County, 2008/09

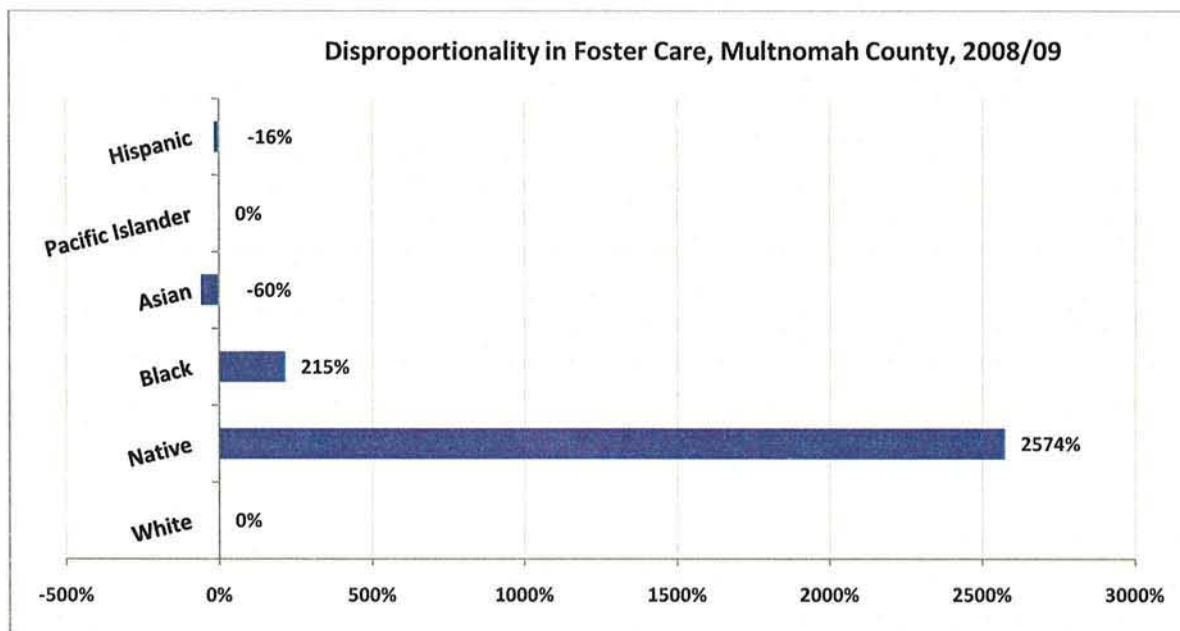


Source: Adapted from Miller, Cahn, Bender, Cross-Hemmer, Feyerherm, & White (2009).<sup>138</sup>

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).<sup>139</sup>

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).<sup>140</sup>

## 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.<sup>141</sup> 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.<sup>142</sup>

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.

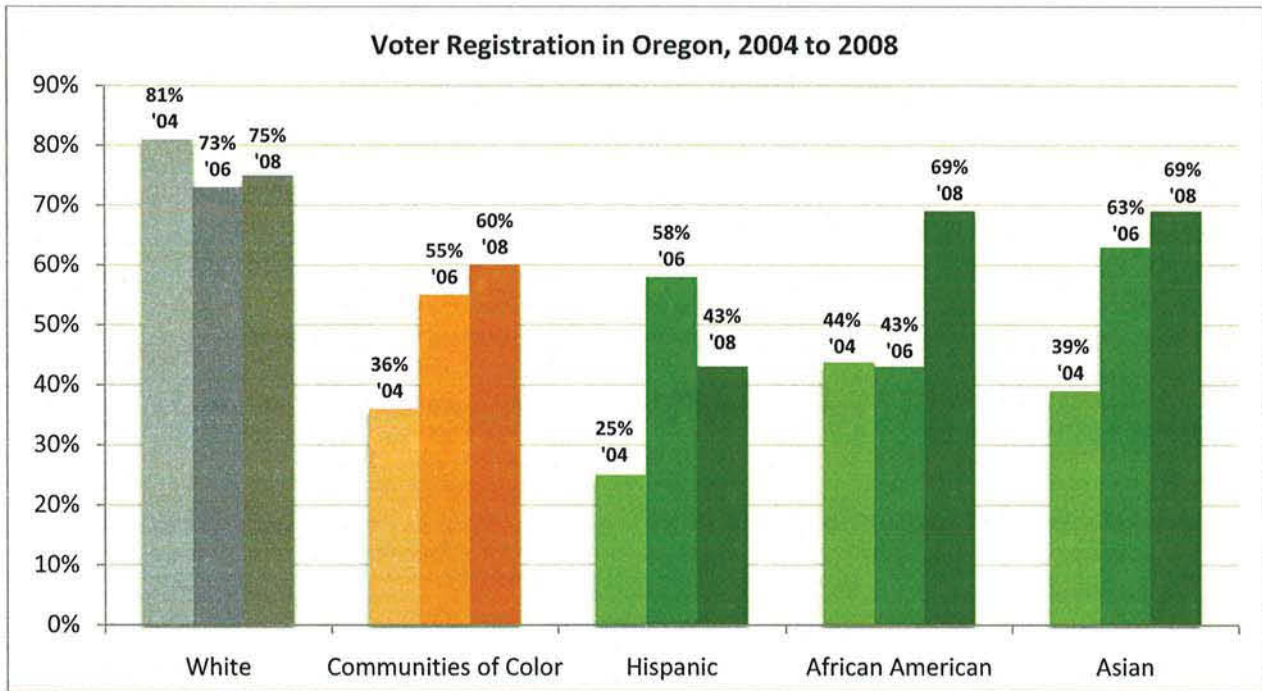
Voting data shows that for some communities of color the 2008 presidential election brought about increased levels of voter registration and turnout. This was not true for all communities of color in Oregon. Even with increasing levels of involvement among some communities in the recent election, people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

While some have called this “apathy,”<sup>143</sup> 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 disenfranchised 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.<sup>144</sup> 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.

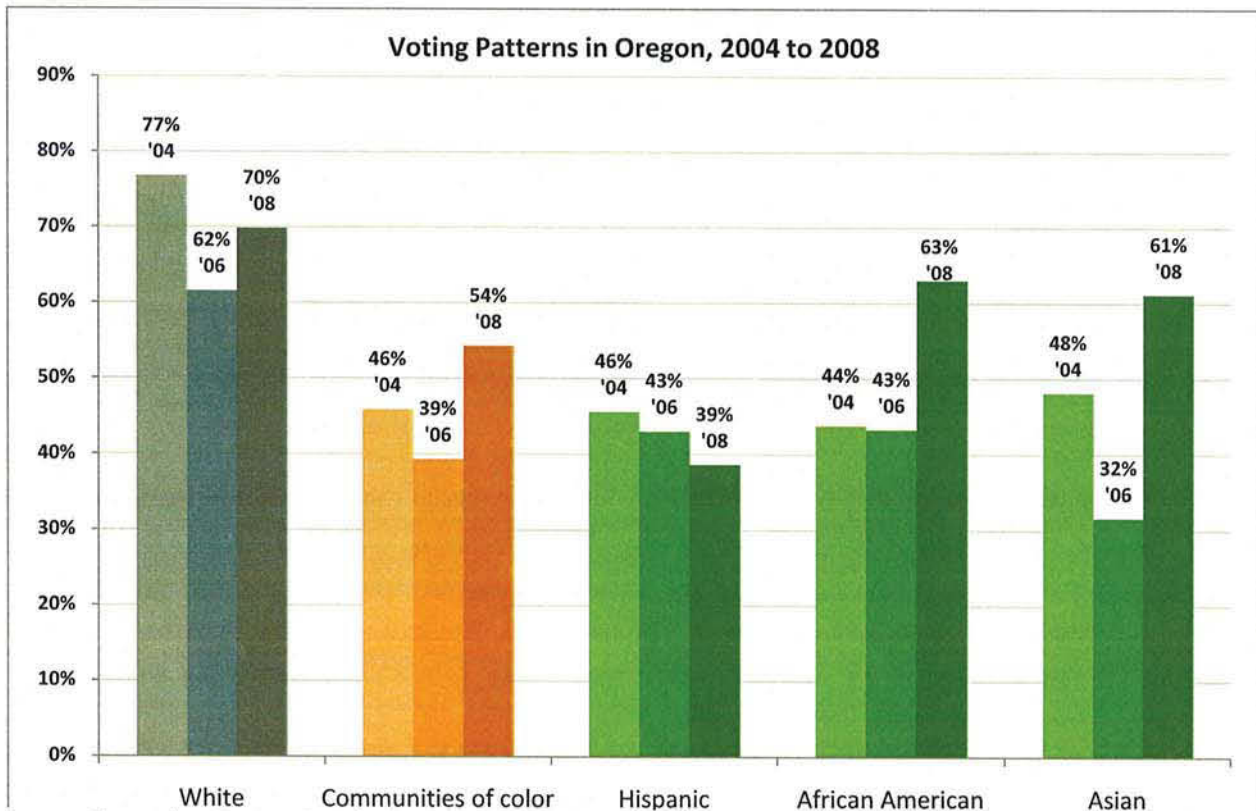
As the table below illustrates, in Oregon in 2008, levels of voter registration among Blacks and Asians reached similar levels to Whites. This is in contrast to voter registration levels in the previous presidential election year (2004), when levels of registration among Blacks and Asians lagged significantly 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.<sup>145</sup>



Source: November Current Population Survey 2004, 2006 & 2008.<sup>146</sup> 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.<sup>147</sup> In addition, levels of reported voting among Blacks and Asians in Oregon increased in 2008 from the previous presidential election year (2004).<sup>148</sup>

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.<sup>149</sup> 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.<sup>150</sup>

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.<sup>151</sup>

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.<sup>152</sup>

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.<sup>153</sup> 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.<sup>154</sup>

## 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.<sup>155</sup> 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.<sup>156</sup>

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.<sup>157</sup> 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.<sup>158</sup> 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.<sup>159</sup>

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>160</sup> 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 vice 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.<sup>161</sup>*

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:

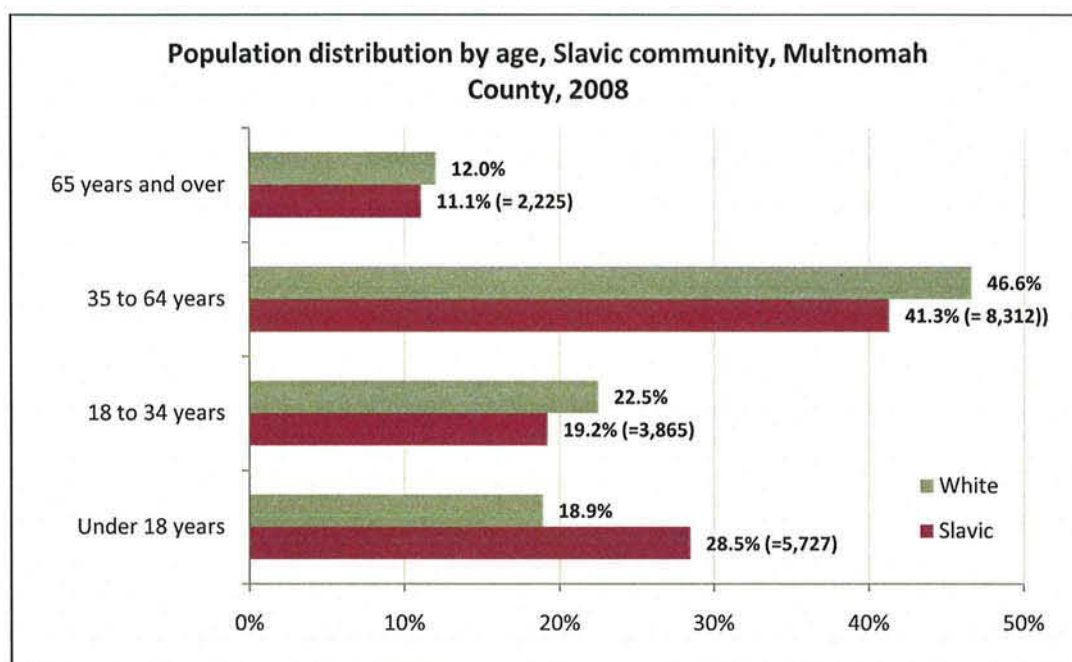
- Youth face difficulties with school success, the law, and mental health, due to acculturation pressures and a lack of safe, accepting settings for support and guidance for the family unit.
- Many families face poverty, housing, and immigration-related legal issues.
- The elderly are isolated and lack 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

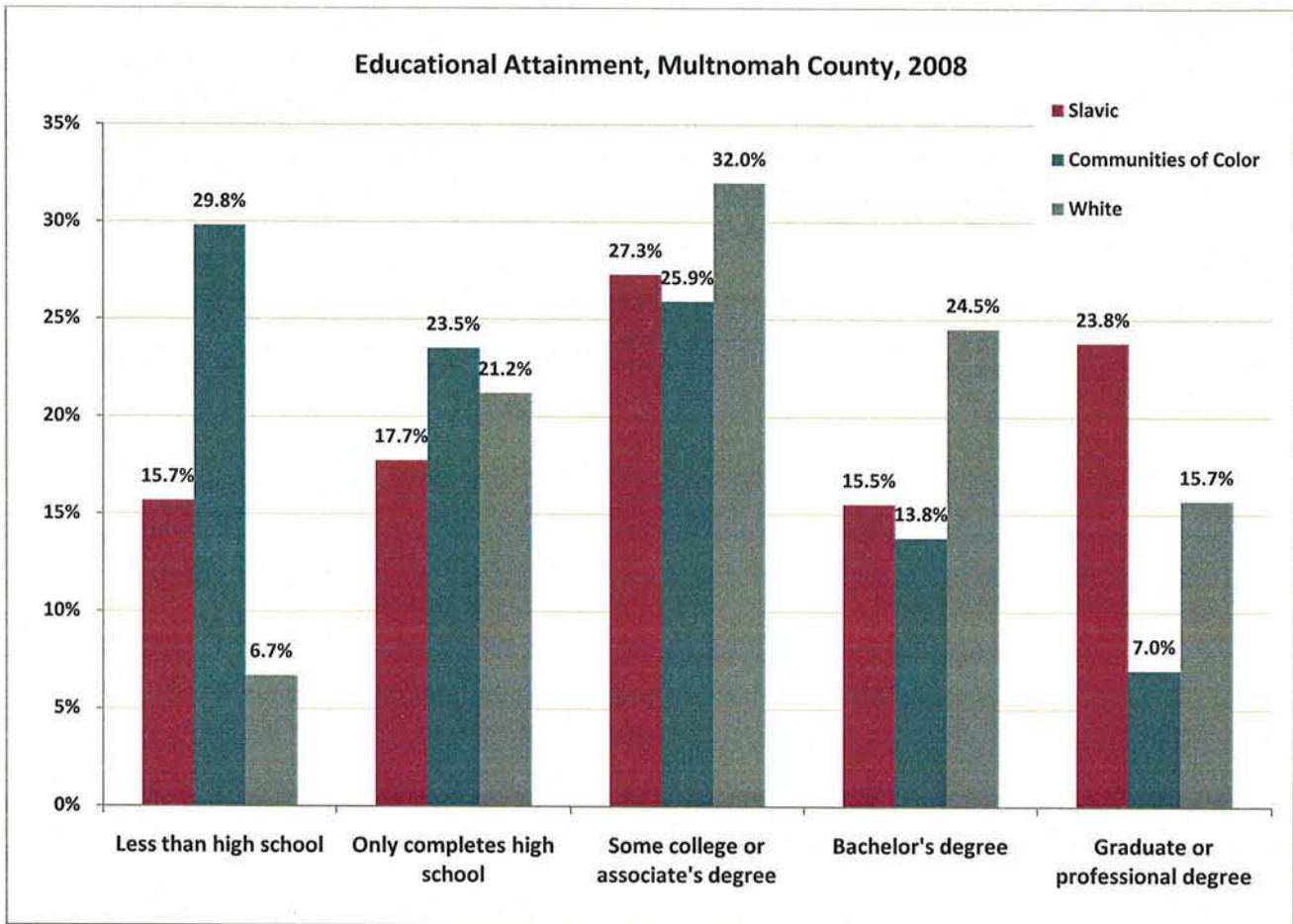
The community is a youthful one, with significantly more children and youth in it than White communities. This suggests that issues of education (retention, graduation, disparities, language) will be pronounced among the community striving to improve the likelihood that their children will obtain decent 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 many degrees have been awarded outside of the USA, and thus having them recognized for employment and professional certification is deeply challenging.



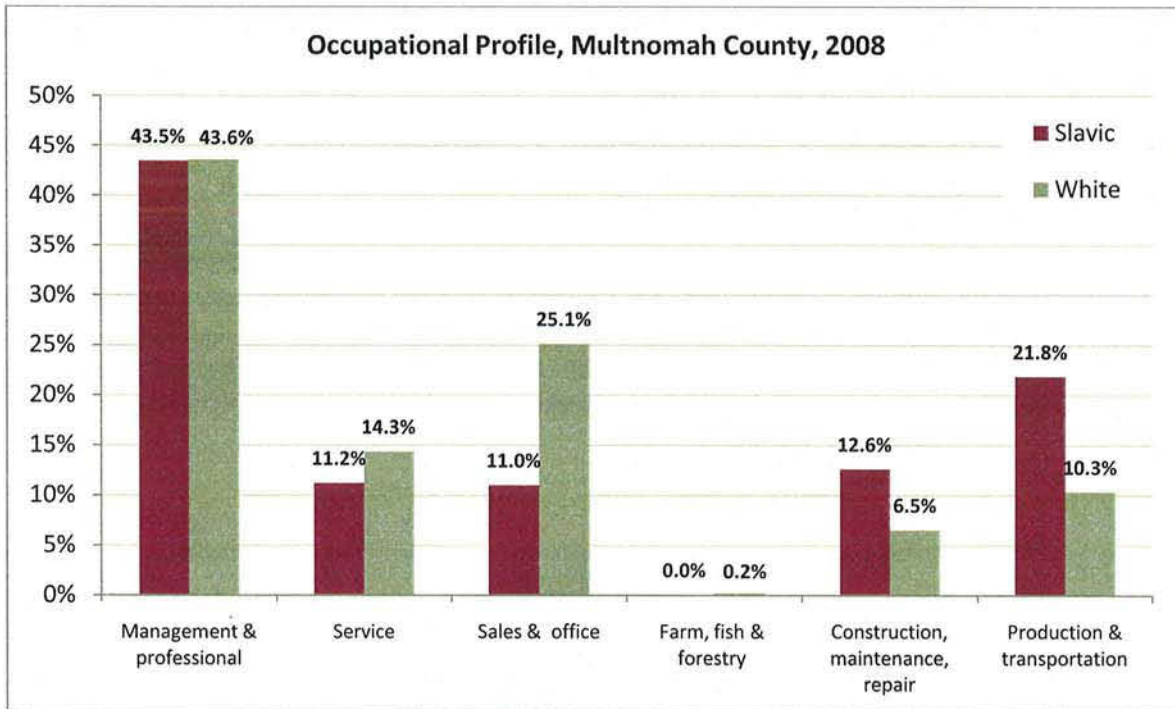
Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

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.<sup>162</sup>

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.<sup>163</sup>*

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.

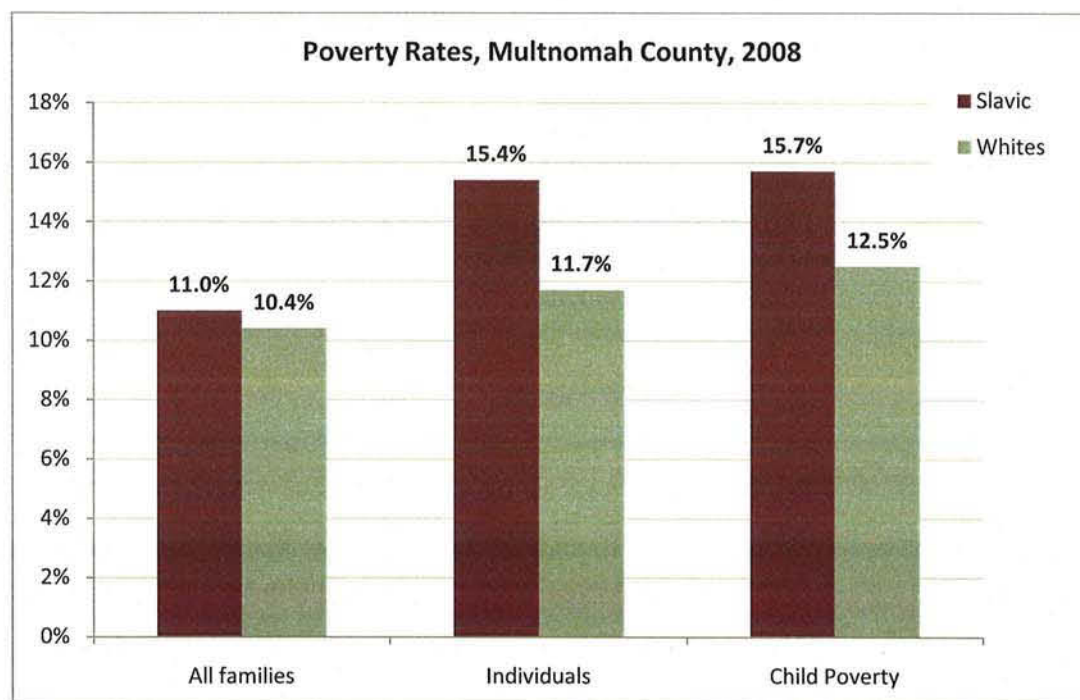
While we might attribute the recentness of their immigration status as the reason for their constraints in the labor market, research elsewhere indicates that newer immigrants to the country face intolerably long times to “catch up” to Whites.<sup>164</sup> Rather than an explanation of acculturation 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.



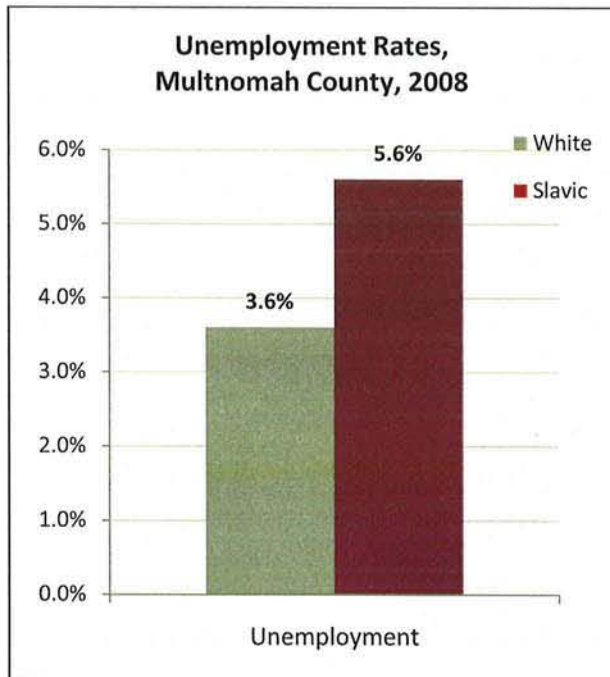
Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

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.

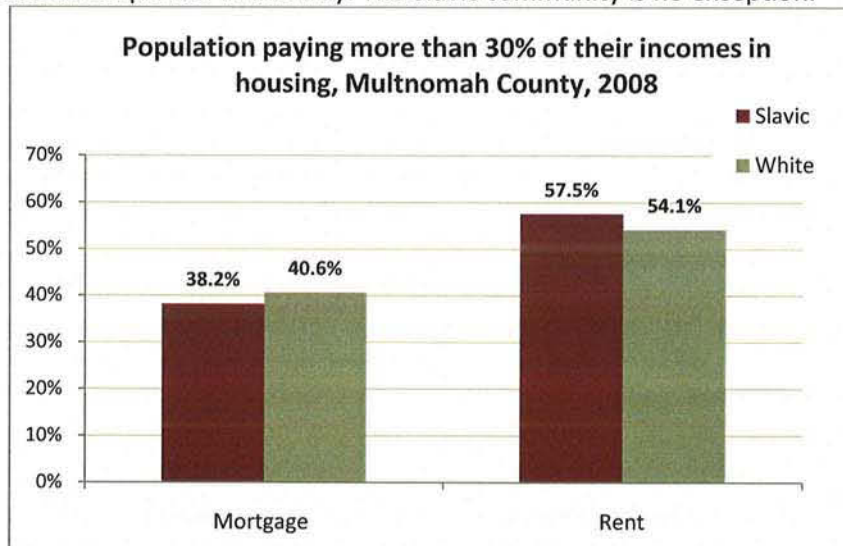


Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008.

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.