The Slavic Community in Multnomah County:
An Unsettling Profile

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

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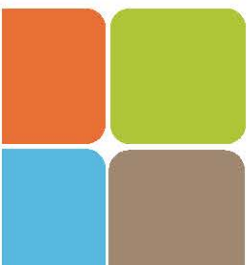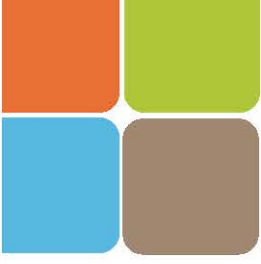
The Coalition of Communities of Color gratefully acknowledges the assistance from the following partners:

Thank You!

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present "The Slavic Community in Multnomah County: *An Unsettling Profile.*"

Several years ago, members of the Coalition of Communities of Color identified a common need to ensure that data adequately captures the lived experiences of communities of color. Data informs decision-making but that same data often excludes dimensions of race and is undertaken without involvement of those most affected by the decisions guided by the research. The impact of these practices is that the Slavic community, along with other communities of color, is rarely visible at the level of policy.

The Coalition of Communities of Color decided to embark on a research project in which data could be used to empower communities and eliminate racial and ethnic inequities. The Coalition of Communities of Color partnered with researchers from Portland State University, as well as local community organizations, to implement a community-based participatory research project into the lived realities of communities of color in Multnomah County. This report is the final report in a series of seven reports. The first report looked at communities of color in the aggregate followed by community-specific reports in the African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino and Native American communities.

This report details the experiences of the Slavic community in Multnomah County. The Slavic community is defined as those from the former Soviet Union. It is the largest refugee-based community in Oregon, with most arriving in the decade from 1990 to 2000. Conventional definitions of the Slavic community are to define them as White. In the vast majority of datasets, it is not possible to extract the Slavic community as ancestry or language data have not been collected. To address the shortage of data on the community, we included a qualitative research study to extend our understanding of the community's experience.

The data presented in this report begin to help us understand the challenges facing the Slavic community. While the results are indeed unsettling, there is opportunity to create a new policy environment that supports communities of color. Our main priority is to advocate for policy decisions that improve the individual and collective outcomes of the Slavic community and, in so doing, improve outcomes for all Oregonians. We hold an empowered racial equity coalition as central to addressing racial inequities. This report builds an important knowledge base from which to advocate and to educate. Educating our community and the community at large about the Slavic community is crucial to achieving racial equity.

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

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

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Executive Summary

The Slavic community is defined as those from the former Soviet Union. It is the largest refugee-based community in Oregon, with most arriving in the decade from 1990 to 2000. In 1988, then Russian 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 has slowed to a relative trickle with immigrants more frequently being family-class immigrants as families seek to repatriate their members.

It is a little unusual to consider the Slavic community as a community of color, for conventionally the community is considered White, and in all databases reviewed for this research, the community is included within the White community. So why this variation? The Slavic community has arrived in this part of the USA facing similar forms of discrimination and exclusion as did the Polish, Irish and Italians many generations ago. These communities struggled with language, employment, education and social exclusion. In much the same way, the Slavic community faces these barriers to parity and to equity. As a result, the Coalition of Communities of Color has formally recognized the Slavic community as a community of color. The experiences of the Slavic community have much solidarity with other communities of color. Earlier waves of immigrants from the former Soviet Union were known to achieve parity with other European immigrants to the USA within five years of arrival.[1] Today, parity has moved further out of reach despite the fact that the local Slavic community has resided in the USA for an average of 20 years.

What does the community face today? A plethora of challenges in both economic and social arenas, with key issues named below:
- Access to higher education is limited, with only 25.6% of the adult population holding a university degree compared with 43.1% of Whites holding degrees
- The achievement gap among high school students is pronounced: ¼ fewer Slavic students meet or exceed getting satisfactory scores in standardized tests in both math and reading
- One-in-five high school students report being harassed due to their language or ancestry
- Twenty-three percent of students report working while at school with ¾ of them finding that this becomes a barrier to academic success
- Fully 38% of high school students are looking for but unable to find part-time jobs
- Only ¼ of Slavic students report finding no barriers to impede their academic progress
- This is a rapidly growing community, holding the highest fertility rate among other communities of color, and with a rate that is triple that of Whites
- Some migration out of the area is occurring as families seek employment and affordable housing
- Youth are primarily hopeful for the future with 83% feeling they will succeed and create the life they want in the future
- More than one-in-five have no health insurance

- In every measure reviewed for this report, local Slavic community members fare worse than those in King County (home to Seattle)
- The economy has had a terrible impact on the Slavic community. Between 2008 and 2011...
  - Levels of employment in good jobs shrunk by about 50% while they doubled in service jobs
  - Incomes were decimated with the average household losing ¼ of their annual income. Married couple families lost, on average, more than $20,000 per year
  - Poverty levels got worse in every category. Child poverty rates surged from 16% to 30%
  - Unemployment more than doubled from 5.6% to 13.0%
  - More of the Slavic community lost their homes. Homeownership rates dropped from 57.6% to 54.4% and the average Slavic homeowner lost $100,000 of home equity over just three years; the White community lost $24,000
- In a total of 15 measures that we could track over time, disparities between Slavics and Whites widened in 13 categories while they improved in only two – but even for these two, progress did not occur. The disparities improved because Whites lost ground faster than Slavics.

In addition to the policy recommendations advanced by the Coalition of Communities of Color (and included later in this report), we identify ten Slavic-specific recommendations that reflect the priorities of the community.

I. ***Data Systems:*** We must be able to routinely and accurately know the levels of access our community has to important public services, philanthropy, not-for-profits and private industry. This is essential for moving out of the shadows. We must know the nature of barriers facing us in order to craft solutions and to build accountability measures to ensure our success.

II. ***Language Supports:*** Service access and equity depends on being able to be served. Improvements to the provision of translation and interpretation are essential to getting assistance, particularly in urgent and emergency situations. Telephone access for translation will be helpful. We also need improved access to English Language Learner programs across the lifespan: durable fixes to the ELL program in our schools are urgently needed, and so too ELL access for our adults who often simultaneously need childcare to participate are top priorities.

III. ***Naturalization:*** For the 12% of community members who do not yet have citizenship, getting naturalized is an important step that (since 1996) is a much stronger pathway for accessing income support programs, particularly for the elderly. Making these classes accessible to older Slavic people is of highest priority, along with finding subsidies for their application process to offset the $680 fee.

IV. ***Culturally-Responsive Services:*** The foundation for culturally-responsive services is to involve Slavic community leaders at policy and administrative tables – to inform the policy, the culture and the practices, with a heavy emphasis on accountability and transparency practices to ensure that disparities are measured, reforms given priority where disparities are measured, and that outcomes are made transparent to the Slavic community so that they can decide whether they want to make use of services that have differential outcomes for their community.

V.   *Health Care*: Navigating health care when one faces language barriers and when one is an outsider to the US health system is very difficult. Ensuring that health care systems become fully culturally-competent is of pressing priority. This includes language access, health literacy, staffing responsiveness, cultural understanding, accountability to the community, meaningful consultations with the community to ensure relevance of services and removal of barriers to services, adequate research practices so that disparities can be identified, and support for traditional healing customs.

VI.   *Employment:* Economic development investments need to be coordinated at all levels of government. Today's economic recession has been much more harmful to communities of color, and also to low income earners, to youth, and to those without strong English language skills. Economic development needs to give priority to job creation for those at low incomes, low education, and minimal English speakers. Recognizing foreign credentials and work experience continues to be of importance to the community. Today, most such experience is ignored and access to equivalency testing and training does not exist. The local community of immigrants and refugees does not have access to foreign credential programs. Such investments by universities, colleges and by local governments would be supportive of economic development for the entire region. Increasing public and private sector hiring of Slavic workers is an additional equity goal.

VII.   *Education:* Improvements are urgent to address the racial disparities that exist across the education system, including early learning, discipline, achievement, ELL, special education, attendance, graduation and success in higher education. Unfortunately we do not know the status of the Slavic community in most of these measures. We also urge our largest school boards to build alternative education programs for Slavic youth for whom the school system is not working. These programs must be culturally-specific so that parental engagement is possible, and so that building trusting relationships is possible. The depth of distrust that exists for Slavic parents with the school system is pronounced – mending that fence can best be achieved through the creation and support of culturally-specific interventions.

VIII.   *Housing:* Increasing the supply of affordable and subsidized housing, with a large number of bedrooms, is essential for reducing the housing burden that the Slavic community faces. It is also essential to end the misleading practices by mortgage companies – for there was story after story of discrimination and untruths told to members of the Slavic community to, essentially, steal their money. Rigorous protections from such practices needs to be provided immediately to the community.

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

X.   *Child Welfare and Human Services:* Slavic parents are disrespected and their childrearing practices undermined by practices at schools and in child welfare. Cultural responsiveness is a pressing need for these systems. Children, families and the entire community are best

supported by confident parents. Current discourse and messages to children about their rights serve to deplete the confidence of parents.

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 local Slavic experiences statistically.

What is new in this report? To begin, this is the largest collection of regional information on issues facing the Slavic community. Second, this is the first time that there has been an empirically-based effort to document the size of the undercount of the Slavic community. Third, we have conducted in depth research on the social and economic challenges facing the Slavic community using two new assessments of the community's experiences: the first is a customized extraction of microfile data on this community from the American Community Survey for 2008 and 2011. The second is a language-based disaggregation of school records showing performance scores of students in Multnomah county. Nowhere else are these data available. Fourth, by repeating the study of economic variables in 2008 and 2011 we are able to gather two important insights: the trends over time on the Slavic experience and the impact of this current economic recession on the local Slavic community. Finally, we have conducted original qualitative research to gather the insights of members of the Slavic community (service providers, community leaders and parents) on their experiences and to help make these data come alive with narratives. Part of this process was to survey a total of 66 Slavic youth to gather their experiences of school, employment, income, and hopes for their future.

This is important knowledge. Before one makes use of this knowledge for building programs or improving services, however, know that the Slavic community itself must have a place at the table. Time and again, we are reminded that our organizations and leaders of color are those that hold the trust of their communities. No written product can stand alone to represent the community. The Slavic community must be invited to those tables and recognized for their leadership role in knowing the needs of their communities and orchestrating responses to these needs. Remaining invisible in public policy is no longer adequate – it is what helped get us to this deplorable situation in the first place.

It is simultaneously time to remember, as elegantly stated by Coalition colleague Nancy Ramirez Arriaga from the Latino Network, "We are more than our disparities." We urge non-Slavic readers to remember this both in the reading of this report and in the future. The Slavic community is strong, resilient and mutually supportive. The community holds a love of life, a vitality to work, to study and to thrive. It is one marked by respect for its elders and for love of its children and one that is equipped with a deep understanding of its challenges and its needs.

All of us – Whites and communities of color – hold a "shared destiny."[2] Our progress as a region is held back when pronounced inequality exists. When our communities cannot access enough work, heavier use of income support programs result. When incomes are low, repressed by narrowed employment prospects, our public dollars shrink because our tax base is low. And when our labor force cannot be robust enough to catalyze new job creation, we all suffer. Ultimately, we all pay. Often our public services pick up the pieces when lives are torn apart by profound stress – and mental illness, incarceration and drug and alcohol use increases. This is costly, and when we track it back to the root causes of such distress, we find culprits of poverty, inequality, and narrow prospects for a promising future.

As we stated in an earlier report,[3]

> Prosperity for communities of color will build prosperity for all. Indeed, drawing from the United Nation's Human Development Index, across the USA, we hold the position of #4 in the world, but when inequality among the population is factored into human development (specifically in education, income inequality and life expectancy), the USA drops to position #12 globally, illustrating the well being of our most vulnerable communities brings down our overall vitality as a community.[4]

The notion of a shared destiny is important in pressing for racial equity. Know that the benefits of a thriving community are in all of our interests, and so too the costs of a community in distress. It is time to work together to build a more promising future for the Slavic community and indeed for us all.

Introducing the Slavic Community in Multnomah County

The Slavic community is officially counted as White, and its experience is fully subsumed in all measures of the White community so far in our research reports. Disaggregating the Slavic experience from the rest of the White community is the focus of this report. Despite this "official" recognition as White, the experiences of the Slavic community are best understood through a lens of racism and thus, from our understanding, it is a community of color.

The Slavic community is defined as people from the former Soviet Union, mostly who fled religious and political persecution and came to Oregon in several waves. The first is at the turn of the 20th century, when members of the Russian Orthodox faith moved to the area. Sustaining their identity was deeply challenging and the community lost its foundation. Resurgence occurred at the close of the Russian Revolution in 1922.[5] 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.

The former Soviet Union is comprised of the following countries: Russia, the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Ukraine, Belarus, Moldovia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, and the Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). Russian is the language spoken predominantly within the Slavic community.

Source: University of Texas at Austin, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

Migration into Oregon and California was primarily by Christian 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. It was not uncommon for entire church congregations to move to the USA. The strength of the evangelical lobby in the USA has secured their ongoing status as refugees despite the lessening of religious persecution that coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Though few in number, arrivals today are mostly as family-class sponsored immigrants as family repatriation continues.

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.[6]

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. Our Slavic arrivals are mostly evangelical Christians who faced persecution. Many were jailed because of their religious beliefs. They were unable to get jobs in Russian government or in offices. Often this persecution was not state-sanctioned, but rather masked by rhetoric: they were often accused of organizing against the government which would prevent any future work in government. To get a promotion, one had to be a member of the communist party. They were typically denied access to higher education.

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, low education levels, or if education credentials exist, they are not recognized here in the USA, and low 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," "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 reticence that the school system has to respond to their concerns. 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.

At the same time as the community struggles, it has pronounced strengths. This is a community with strong relationships and bonds between its members: "*we stick together as a community... people help each other and double up when someone loses a job. Family ties between generations are very important. Generations live together.... we take care of older people*."[7] This is a community with a strong backbone for harsh situations: "*People are strong, probably like every immigrant community. Maybe because of the limited English, people will take any job. We are hard workers and keep clean houses*." It is also a community that is replete with hospitality and faith, as there is "*respect for our religious leaders... and this is a way to reach people.*"

Transitions, of course, occur as the community is more influenced by US society. Disruption of culture is influencing family life, most painfully experienced by Slavic parents who lose their conventional status as those with control over their children.

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.

Community Undercounts & Community-Verified Population Counts

This section of the report contains three sections: first, we share with you the details of what is known about the size of the Slavic community. Second, we surface the challenges that exist within conventional databases for the Slavic community to participate and to self-identify as Slavic. Third, we work towards creating a "community-verified population count" meaning that the community has worked with the researchers involved in this study to develop an acceptable method to rectify the undercount and to create a community-accepted measure of the size of the Slavic community.

a. Conventional Population Counts

The Slavic community is conventionally counted as White. When surveys ask people to add their language or their ancestry, the community can be disaggregated from the larger population. That said, the USA's most recent census, Census 2010, failed to have these identifiers in what they call the "short form" that included only two origin-related questions: whether or not one held Latino identity (the only dimension of ethnicity that is obtained), and one's race (and here, Slavic is designated as White). Without language, country of birth and ancestry, the Slavic community disappears completely in the only survey that has robustly allowed it to be recognized – Census 2010.

So, how do we measure the size of the Slavic community? The first option is to use the American Community Survey and pull out the size of the community that identifies as having roots in any of the fifteen countries that were part of the former Soviet Union, and to see how many live in Multnomah county.[8] The second option is to identify those who define themselves as having Russian ancestry – but this can go way back to include those who moved here much more than a generation ago. Third, we can access some databases to see how many people identify as having Russian as their first language or the language they speak at home.

Using conventional counts disaggregated from Census 2000 and the American Community Survey, we find that the population of the Slavic community rose considerably from 2000 to 2008, but then fell slightly by 2011 – most likely the result of outmigration from Multnomah to elsewhere in Oregon to secure employment and affordable housing. The dynamics of very difficult local economic situations in Multnomah county (which will be detailed in the pages that follow) would explain the impetus for this change. Also shown on the chart is the impact of the undercount, as conventional counts illustrate the population is 17,894.

Slavic Population in Multnomah County

2000	**12,068**
2008	**20,129**
2011	**22,189** (top) / **17,894** (bottom segment)

Chart y-axis: 0, 5000, 10000, 15000, 20000, 25000
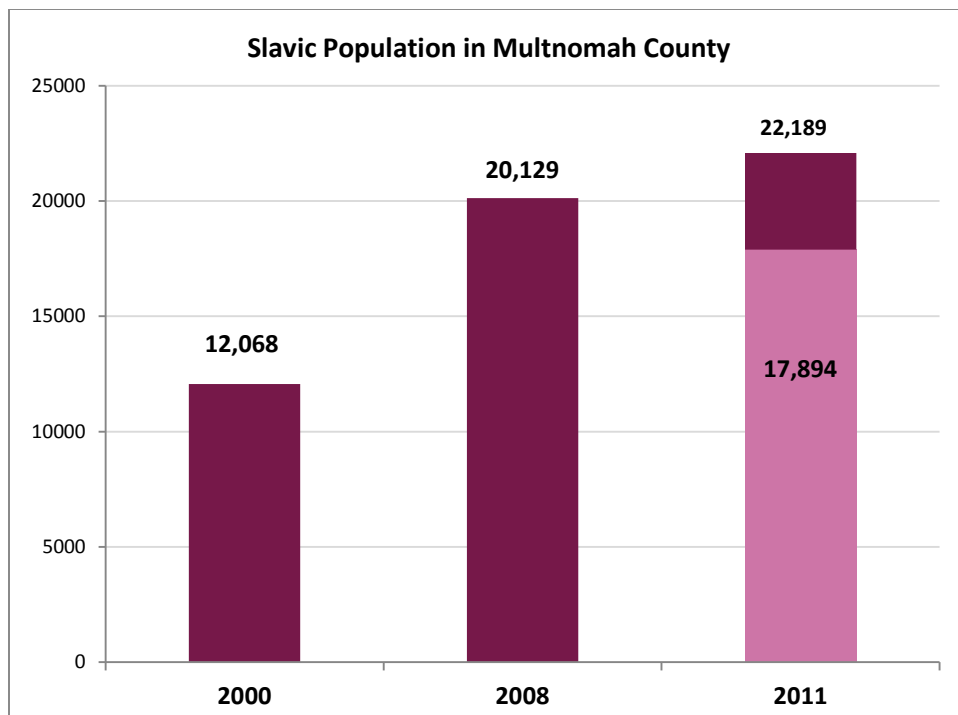
Sources: Census 2000, American Community Survey custom runs, and community-verified population count.

b. Describing the Challenge

There are pronounced undercounts of the Slavic community. Unfortunately, many in the Slavic community do not "appear" in our databases due both to non-participation and also due to inadequate collection of information about one's identity. The results of these barriers is that the community's size is deeply undercounted, and that becomes in itself an equity issue because visibility is narrowed (inequitably with Whites), funding is curtailed (as much funding is tied to population size), political voice is quieter (owing to the practice of tying legislative positions to the size of the population), fewer resources come into the region (as entitlement programs tie funding directly to population), and one's place at many policy tables is sacrificed if staff do not perceive accurately the size of the community affected by the issue at hand.

The Slavic community is undercounted for the following reasons:

- *Having a distrusting relationship with one's own government:* This is a community deeply reticent to self-identify to authorities, and there is pronounced suspicion as to the need for participation in government practices, including surveys. While much of this distrust is simply a carryover from their home country experience, it is also a rational choice given the nature of the deep seated animosity that exists between the former Soviet Union and the USA. Many in the community hold the following opinion: *"Slavic people believe that if there was a war in the future then the US government would know who was Slavic and deport them like they did to the Japanese."*
- *Having limited English language skills:* All surveys are conducted in English with a secondary offering of Spanish and far fewer in other languages. The level of those who speak English "less than

very well" is 9.2% in the county, and divided into 3.9% who are Spanish-speaking and 4.8% speaking another language.[9] We have a total population with 5.4% who cannot participate when surveys are conducted in English or Spanish. The most relied-upon survey for this research report is the American Community Survey and it is available in only English and Spanish. An interviewer might have an additional language to resource respondents but nothing is required of the ACS to ensure participation.

- **Without a telephone:** An estimated 2.2% of the White population of Multnomah County does not have a phone while 3.7% of households of color do not have a telephone, which results in more accurate data being collected from White households.

- **Having unstable housing:** Situations of homelessness, frequent moves and "couch surfing" will reduce participation as one needs an address to be "found" by most surveys. Being a renter (as opposed to owning one's home) dramatically increases the likelihood of not being counted: at 4.3% for renters instead of 0.1% for owners. When disaggregated by race, more pronounced differences appear.

- **Inability to read the surveys:** Most surveys are initiated by a mailed form. Without an ability to read, one does not understand the purpose, the instructions or the questions. And typically when people lack basic literacy skills, they avoid the surveyors who might follow up with a phone call or a visit to expand participation options. Looking at "less than grade nine" as a proxy for literacy (an imperfect proxy, we know, but such is the nature of available data), we know that 4.4% of the total population has not completed grade 9, but this number is not available disaggregated by race. The next best data point are those who have not graduated high school, which across the population is 11.3%, with the White population having a non-completion level of 6.5%, while 27.9% of people of color have not completed high school.[10]

- **Inability to be "found" by surveyors:** Even if housing, phone, language and literacy accessibility exists, sometimes community members still do not receive communications (although this number is likely to be small). We believe that the proxy for this dynamic is poverty as one may have precarious living and working conditions such that mailboxes might be shared or might not exist, forwarding addresses not completed, living where your neighbors do not know you to assist when canvassers come knocking, and busy irregular schedules that might result in someone not having the time and/or energy to respond to surveyors.

- **Missing the importance of participation and a culture of participation:** As communities acclimatize to the USA, a culture of participation develops to support practices such as surveys and censuses. Accordingly, newer communities will be less oriented to the importance of these practices and the ways in which participation matters. Newcomers are much more numerous among communities of color than among White communities: 26.8% of people of color arrived in the USA since 2000, while the equivalent figure for Whites is 2.1%.

- **Having a distrusting relationship with one's own government:** For refugee communities in particular, many communities have experienced persecution by one's own government in their home country. State bodies often persecuted Slavic Christians. Accordingly, keeping a low profile with the state was an act of self-preservation.

- ***Facing racism within the USA:*** When one experiences racism – whether it is institutional, cultural or individually-enacted racism – one is less likely to hold a prideful embrace of one's racial identity. Furthermore, there is research that illustrates that when surveys are administered by Whites, there is a lesser likelihood that one will identify as a person of color. The dynamic is both a combination of internalized oppression, and self-protective features whereby one wants to hold an identity that is similar to the "person in charge" such that one is less likely to be "othered" or otherwise marginalized by the institution conducting the survey.

- ***Having a family larger than six members:*** The Census short form has space for only six family members to be identified. The long form (discontinued in 2010) had space for 12 members of the household. The short form used in 2010 asked how many people lived in the household, but only sought details on the "first" six members of the household. While there are follow-up practices to ensure that larger families are included, inaccuracies have been reported about the robustness of this practice. Here are the data (available) for large households for some populations in Multnomah county:
    - ***Slavic* –** has 202 families with more than 6 people (2000 Census)
    - ***Russian* –** has 171 households with more than 6 people (2006-10 ACS) which equals 2.7% of all households
    - ***American* –** has 60 such households, which equals 0.51% of all households (from 2006-10 ACS)

As a result of dialogue with leading national demographers, we heard that the Census Bureau has had considerable issues in accurately collecting data from large households with more than six members. This issue tends to explain why there is a larger undercount of younger children, as typically the youngest family members will not make it onto the form. While the Census Bureau is supposed to follow up with those who are more than 5 people (in ACS) and 6 people (Census 2010), a respondent needs another form to submit (provided by the Census Bureau). While these forms are likely to have been collected, they may not be linked up with the original form, so they become categorized as different households.

We thus believe that there are many people from the Slavic community who did not participate in Census 2010, which holds a standard of gaining the participation of 100% of the population. If people did not participate, they are not factored into the counts. There is no imputation (meaning "fixes" for non-participation) added to the numbers of Slavic members in Census 2010. To address this undercount, the researchers worked with the Slavic community to develop its preferred manner for identifying the undercount of the Slavic community.

c. Community-Verified Population Count for the Slavic Community

The community opted to conduct its own survey of participation in Census 2010, asking people if they participated in Census 2010. For every person who states that they did not participate, we believe that this is an identification of someone who was not counted. While the Census Bureau does ask neighbors to provide information if they cannot contact a member of the household, we do not believe that

neighbors would share this information with a government representative. The nature of the community is such that sharing such information in this manner is universally rejected.

In the summer of 2011, community members who were attending local Russian churches were surveyed by a Slavic Coalition member as to their participation in Census 2010. The survey was administered in Russian, onsite at several local Slavic churches, with the sanctioning of the Pastors, and by someone known to those in the church. These conditions increased the likelihood of participation and the Slavic community member who conducted the survey believed that the community was willing to participate under these conditions. This method is equivalent to the one used by Dr. Enrico Marcelli when surveying Latino immigrants in Los Angeles and again in surveying Brazilian immigrants in Boston.[11] He asked if they participated in the Census, and also asked who recorded this in their Census form. His results have been accepted by the Department of Homeland Security in their estimations of the size of the community of undocumented residents.

In our study, one hundred adult community members were asked if they participated in this Census. Nineteen stated they had not participated, and a further 10 indicated that they were not sure if someone else had completed the report on their behalf. We estimated that 50% of these uncertain responders had actually been counted in a family members' Census return and that, thus, five had not. Thus we have a total of 24 participants who did not participate in Census 2010; this translates into an **undercount of 31.6%.**

No triangulation points are possible to create – for our data systems are not disaggregated by country of origin or ethnicity, meaning that we are unable to determine the convergence or divergence of our education data with the American Community Survey.

When factoring in the undercount, we estimate that the population of the Slavic community in Multnomah county is 22,189 people.

Demographic Profile

The majority of the Slavic community arrived in the USA as refugees in a ten-year period from 1990 to 2000. The numbers arriving in the USA are shown below, with Oregon taking a small slice of these numbers. Oregon has been a welcoming community for Soviet refugees, being in the twelfth rated metropolitan area for overall refugee acceptance in the USA between 1980 and 2004.[12] The pattern of refugees from the former Soviet Union is detailed below.

Soviet Union & Former Soviet Union Refugee Arrivals, USA, 1988 to 2011

Source: Department of Homeland Security, Statistical Yearbooks, assorted years.

When we look at the Slavic community and see how much of the refugee population comes from the former Soviet Union, we see a similar pattern of declining percentages, as other refugee-generating regions rise.

Percentage of Refugees from the Former Soviet Union, 1988 to 2012, USA
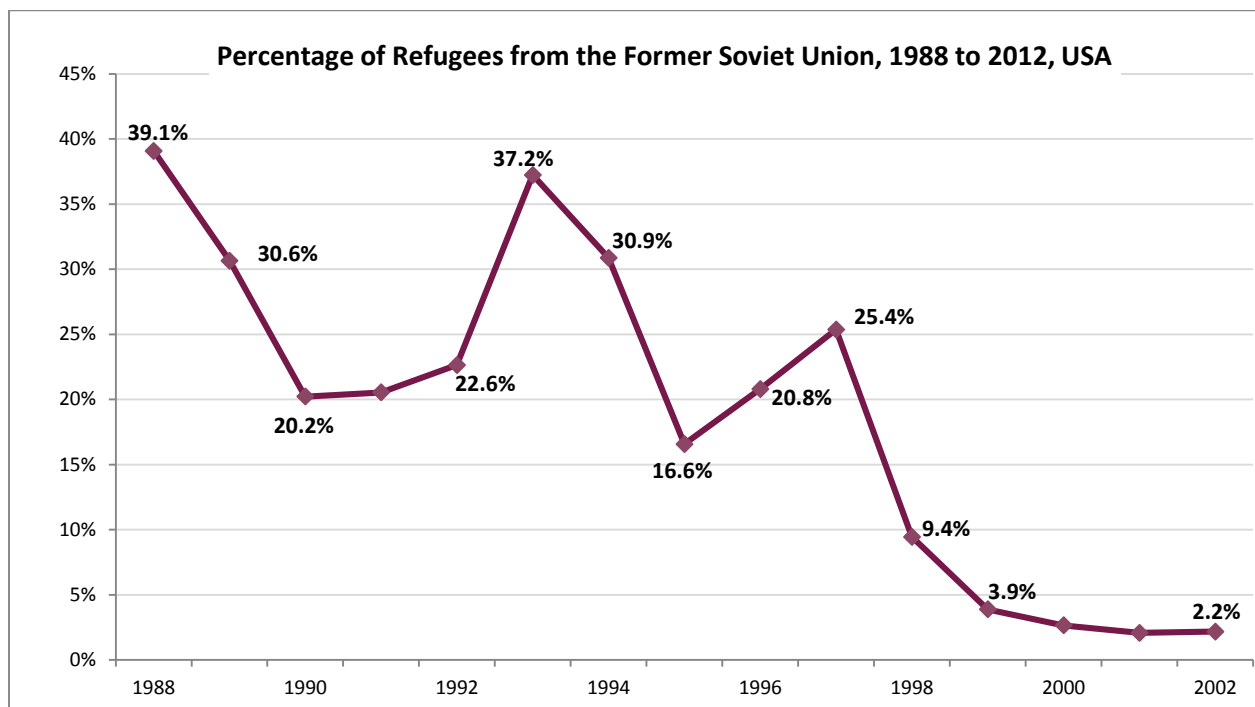
Source: Department of Homeland Security, Statistical Yearbooks, assorted years.

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.

This is a community that is rapidly growing though its immigration levels have decreased in size more recently. It has the fastest growth rate of any of the communities of color, and outstrips the White community by three-fold faster rates of growth.

Fertility Rate, Women from 15 to 50, Multnomah County, 2011

Community	Rate
White	4.7%
Slavic	13.8%
Latino	10.7%
African American	7.2%
Asian	3.7%
Native American	9.6%
African	7.6%
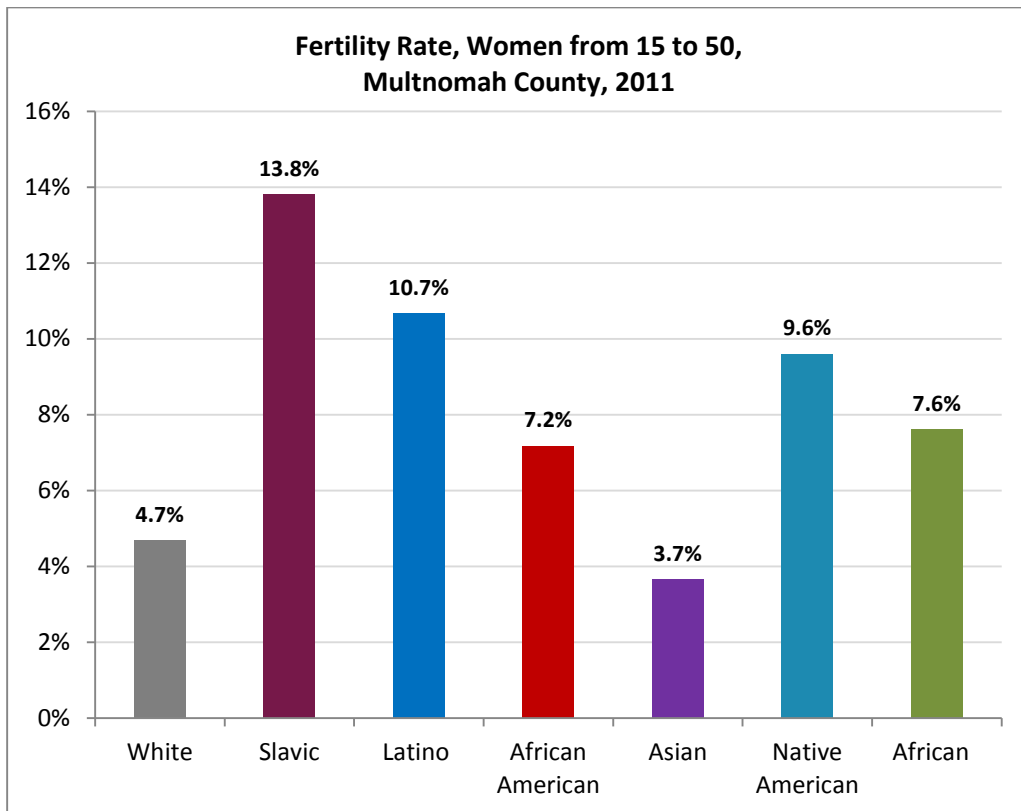
Source: Author's calculations from American Community Survey, 2011.[13]

As one can imagine, the Slavic community is thus relatively young. Almost double the size of the population is under 18 years, compared with Whites. Yet its elderly community is almost as proportionately aged, meaning that the issues facing Slavic seniors are important to address. Their economic situation is particularly precarious, especially as there is limited access to pensions and to Supplemental Social Security when community members have not obtained their US citizenship. A targeted initiative to assist this population is a pressing matter.
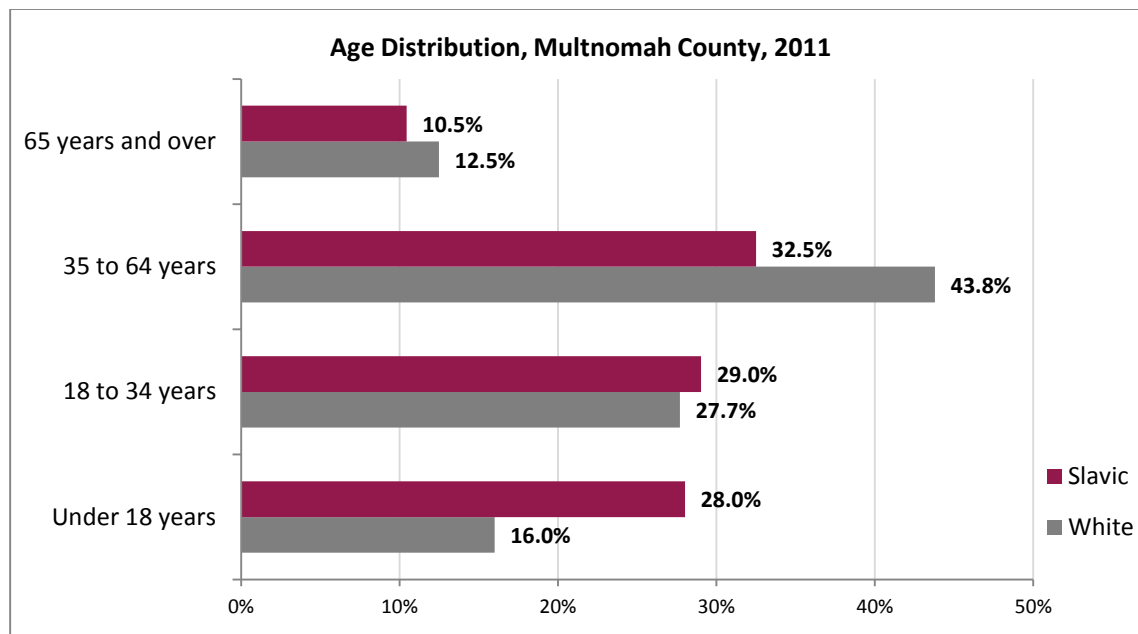
Age Distribution, Multnomah County, 2011

Age group	Slavic	White
65 years and over	10.5%	12.5%
35 to 64 years	32.5%	43.8%
18 to 34 years	29.0%	27.7%
Under 18 years	28.0%	16.0%

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

The community profile is primarily that of married couples, with a somewhat small section of the population being single parents. Single parenthood is never easy, but given that large family sizes are customary, these parents are likely facing a tough time socially and economically.
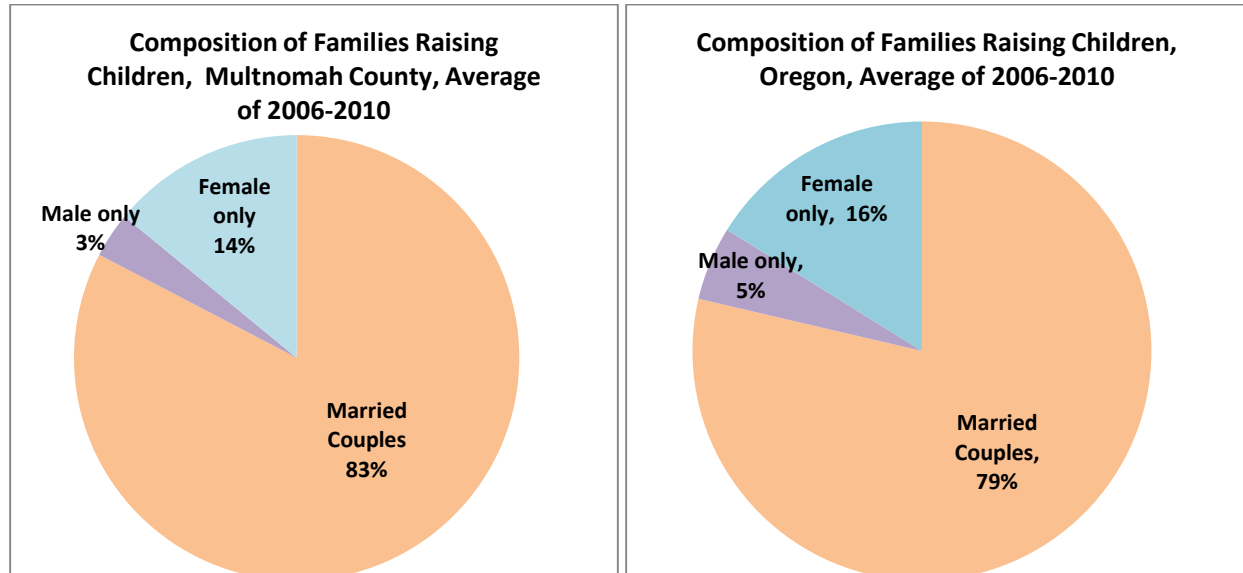
Composition of Families Raising Children, Multnomah County, Average of 2006-2010

- Male only 3%
- Female only 14%
- Married Couples 83%

Composition of Families Raising Children, Oregon, Average of 2006-2010

- Female only, 16%
- Male only, 5%
- Married Couples, 79%

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

We see a rise of the frequency of grandparents living with grandchildren recently, moving over the last three years from 2.3% to 3.2%, and a doubling of those grandparents who hold primary responsibility of providing care for their grandchildren. This shows how families are resourcing each other and providing both support and instrumental family benefits.
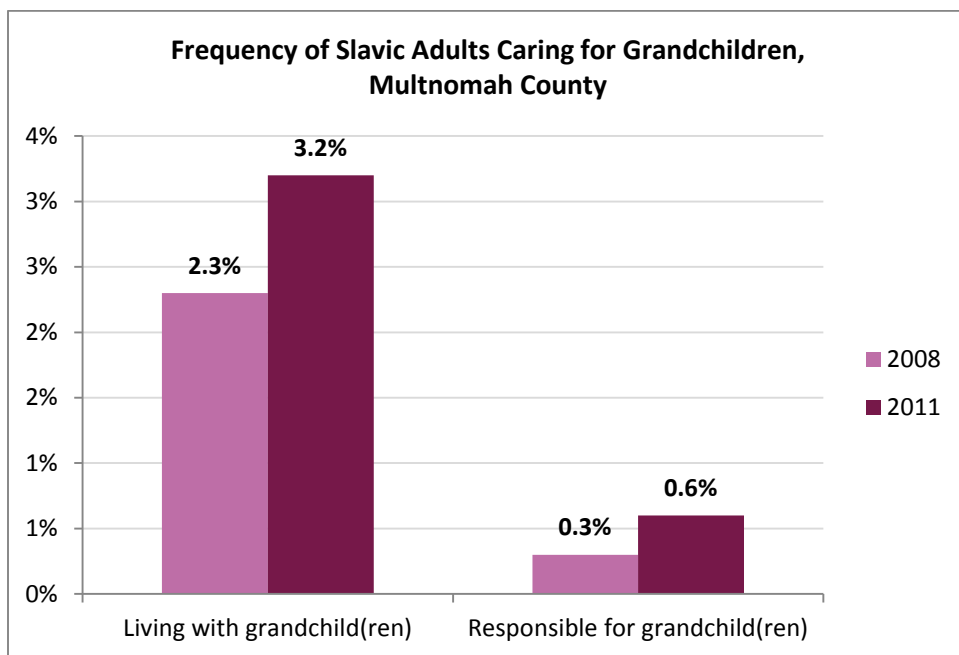
Frequency of Slavic Adults Caring for Grandchildren, Multnomah County

[Bar chart showing:]
- Living with grandchild(ren): 2008 = 2.3%, 2011 = 3.2%
- Responsible for grandchild(ren): 2008 = 0.3%, 2011 = 0.6%

Legend: 2008, 2011

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

The portion of the community who are native born is perhaps surprisingly large, for this is a community mostly arriving recently – over the last 20 years. But given the high birth rate, it is not surprising that the young Slavic population is growing rapidly.

US Citizenship Status, Russian, Multnomah County, Average 2006-2010

[Pie chart:]
- Native Born 69%
- Not a US citizen 11%
- Naturalized 20%

US Citizenship Status, Russian, Oregon, Average of 2006-2010

[Pie chart:]
- Native Born 79%
- Not a US citizen 12%
- Naturalized 9%
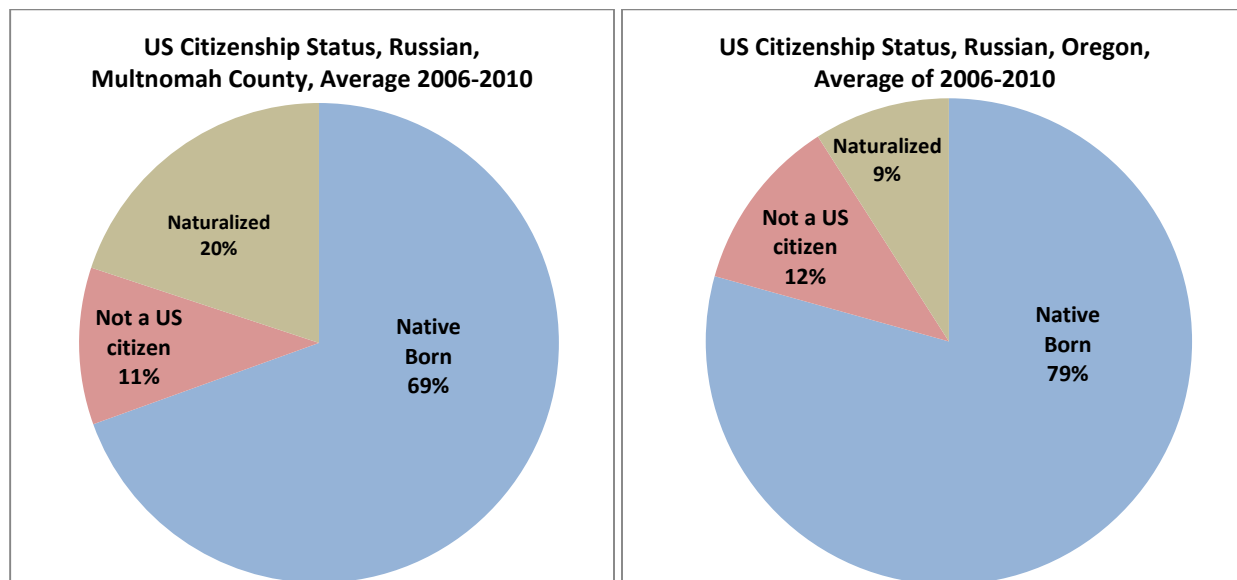
Source: Author's extractions from the American Community Survey, 2011.

We also see in the above chart that slightly more than 10% of Russians in both Multnomah county and across Oregon are not yet naturalized. This is of concern, as there is a growing pattern of non-citizens being denied income supports, particularly in their retirement years. Citizenship supports is essential to

help this community gain stronger access to the resources available to citizens. They are likely to have gained the proper requirements for citizenship, but the test and the $680 fee are the likely impediments. We see that the local Russian population (data not available for the Slavic population) is almost doubly likely to not be citizens, when compared with national data. This tells us that this issue will not be likely to be addressed at the national level; we will need a local solution as it is a local priority.

Citizenship Status, Russian, 2006-2010 average

Category	USA	Oregon	Multnomah
Native Born	83.3%	79.3%	69.5%
Not a US citizen	6.0%	11.6%	10.6%
Naturalized	10.7%	9.1%	19.9%
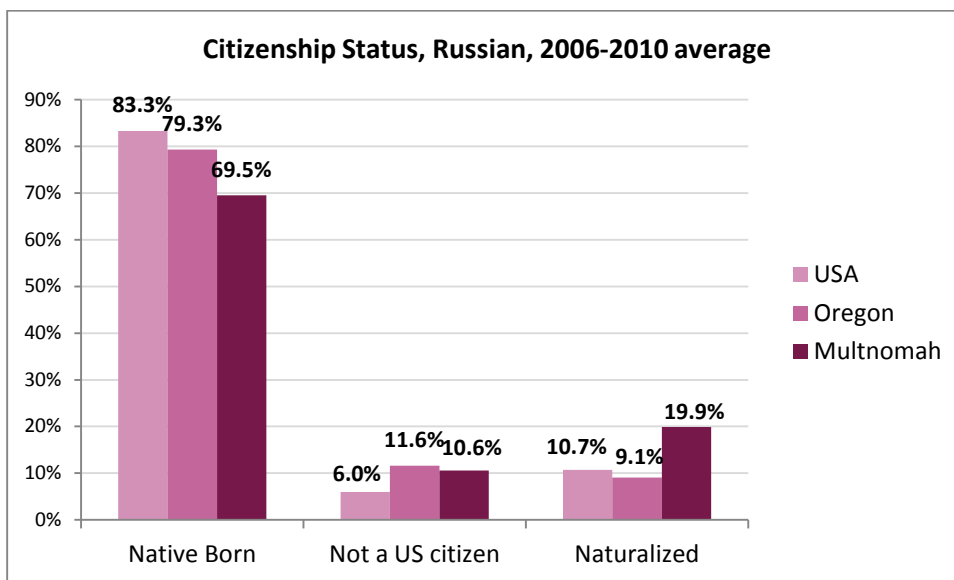
Source: Author's extractions from the American Community Survey, 2010.

We also see from the above data that the local Russian community (which makes up approximately ¾ of the total Slavic population) are, when compared to the national Russian community, more likely to be recent immigrants, meaning their length of time in the nation is much shorter than the national wave of Russian immigrants. The narrative tells us that the national community is more likely to have arrived as a result of the Russian persecution against religious minority populations: the pogroms against the Jews in the late 1800s, the 1970s lessening of constraints that allowed Russian Jews to leave, and the Christians who were allowed to leave after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. There was also a wave of more affluent Russians who fled as the Russian Civil War occurred, and the emergence of communism created an impetus for those with private wealth to flee. Russian persecution of political dissenters is legendary, and during the Soviet era, no one was allowed to leave. Some defectors were able to escape but numbers departing were relatively small.

We see below that more than one-in-five Russians speak English less than very well. While this number is much larger across Oregon (likely due to the increased isolation and absence of formal service supports), it is a signal of unmet needs, and the lack of sufficient and accessible language resources available to the community. This is of urgent concern to community members and a high priority for the policy agenda that is included at the close of this report.

Recent Arrival & English Language Level, Russian, 2006-10
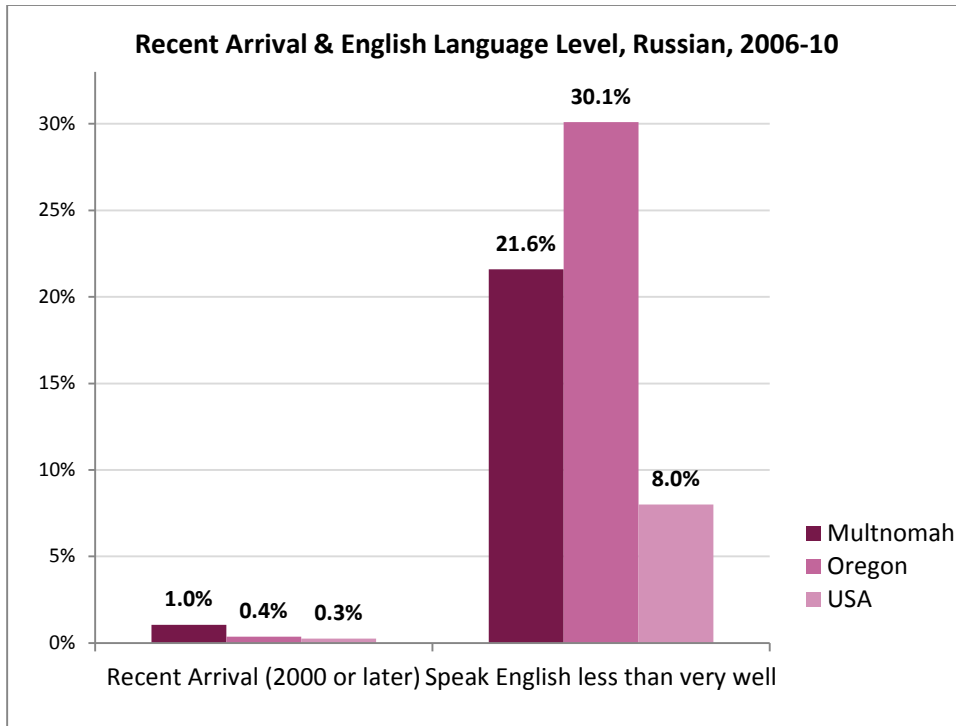
Source: Author's extractions from the American Community Survey, 2010.

In conclusion, the Slavic community is one that retains many of the disadvantages that being a refugee and an immigrant hold – low naturalization levels, high levels of limited English skills, and concern for seniors who have fewer supports. That said, the community is resourcing itself with extended family supports, as grandparents have relatively high levels of caring for children, and this number is growing quickly in recent years. The size of the community is also growing quickly, as the fertility rate outpaces other communities of color, although there is migration out of the region to elsewhere in Oregon as job and housing prospects are narrow for the community in the county.

Education

As we consider education, a good starting place is to consider the ways in which a strong education can benefit individuals, the community and society at large. While most people know that getting an education is an important pathway out of poverty, there are economic benefits for every level of education gained. We also know that education is tied to health, longevity, and happiness. Higher education levels lead to higher incomes and a stronger likelihood of being employed, and together the two impact self-reports on happiness.[14] One related dimension is that employment and education tends to improve one's self-confidence.[15] Below we see the magnitude of the financial benefits of gaining higher levels of education.

Lifetime Earnings by Educational Attainment, USA, 2009

Educational Attainment	Lifetime Earnings
Less than high school	$973,000
High school diploma	$1,304,000
Some college - no degree	$1,547,000
Associates degree	$1,727,000
Bachelor's degree	$2,268,000
Master's degree	$2,671,000
Doctoral degree	$3,252,000
Professional degree	$3,648,000
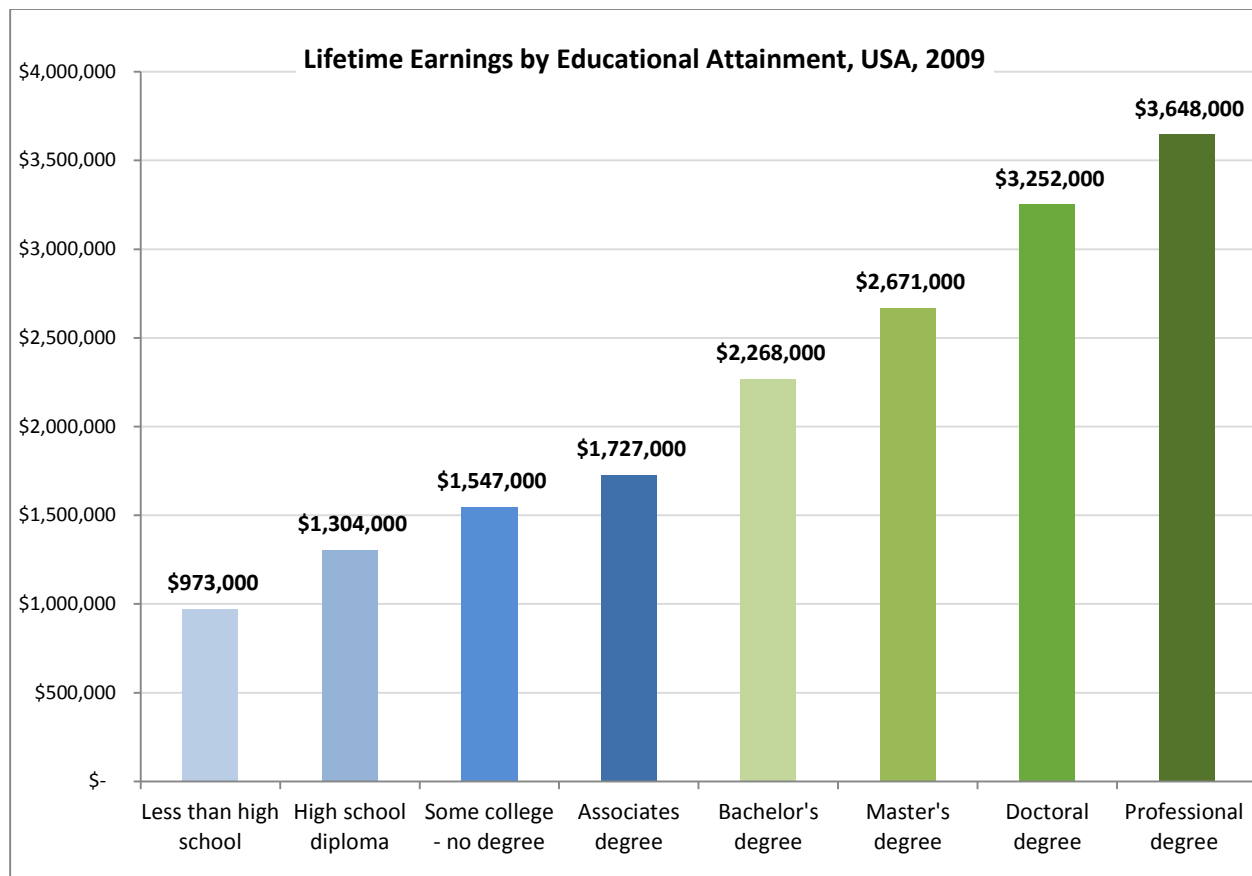
Source: Carnevale, Rose & Cheah, 2011.[16]

This is not to say that people with low incomes are going to be unhappy or living with poor health. But the challenges of addressing the stressors of daily living with low income, of worry for the future, and of narrowed and sometimes more risky employment present in lower waged work takes its toll. How is the Slavic community faring? While we would like to know each variable for the Slavic community, we continue to face access barriers to the full range of data that has been available for other communities. We do see the profile for our five communities of color (Latino, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Black) and the median annual income for communities at different education levels. Given what we will uncover in the full data contained in this report, there is little evidence to suggest that the situation facing the Slavic community will not follow that of other communities of color. The vulnerability shown below of those without a high school diploma is of very high concern as they are able to earn only $20,000 per year (on average). Getting through school is, by extension, of high priority for the Slavic community.

Average Annual Incomes, Multnomah County, 2011 (median income for full-time workers)

- White
- Communities of Color

Less than high school: $33,001 / $20,180

High school and/or some college: $38,607 / $31,114

Associates Diploma: $42,385 / $40,283

Bachelors: $55,419 / $47,618

Graduate or Professional Degree: $72,135 / $69,283
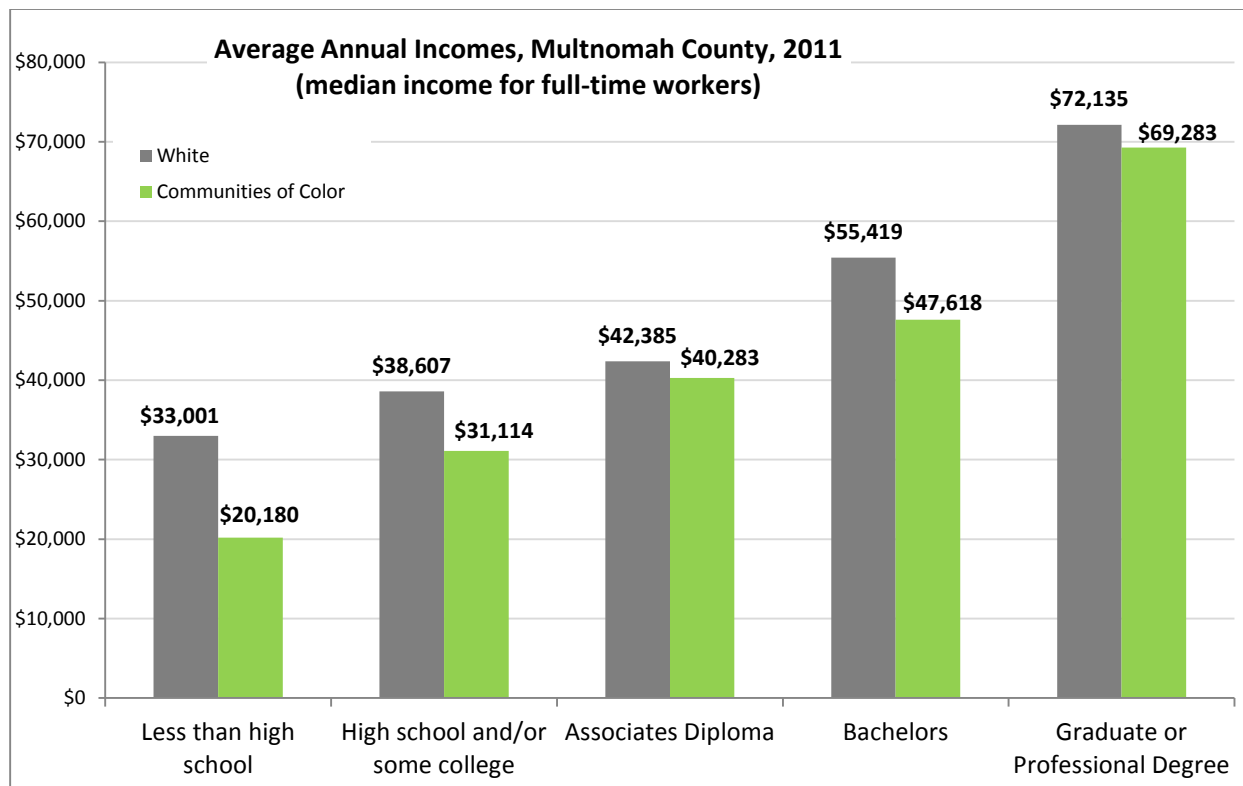
Source: Author's analysis of custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

The Slavic community is facing a rapidly deteriorating educational experience. While Russians typically are highly educated and were strongly supported by the Russian government in getting graduate degrees, Christian community members faced considerable discrimination and harassment both from the government and from wider society. It was not uncommon to be denied access to university or to be thrown out of a chosen occupation to make space for more preferred candidates. Lives were incredibly tough for the Slavic community of Christians and while literacy levels were high, education access was uneven.
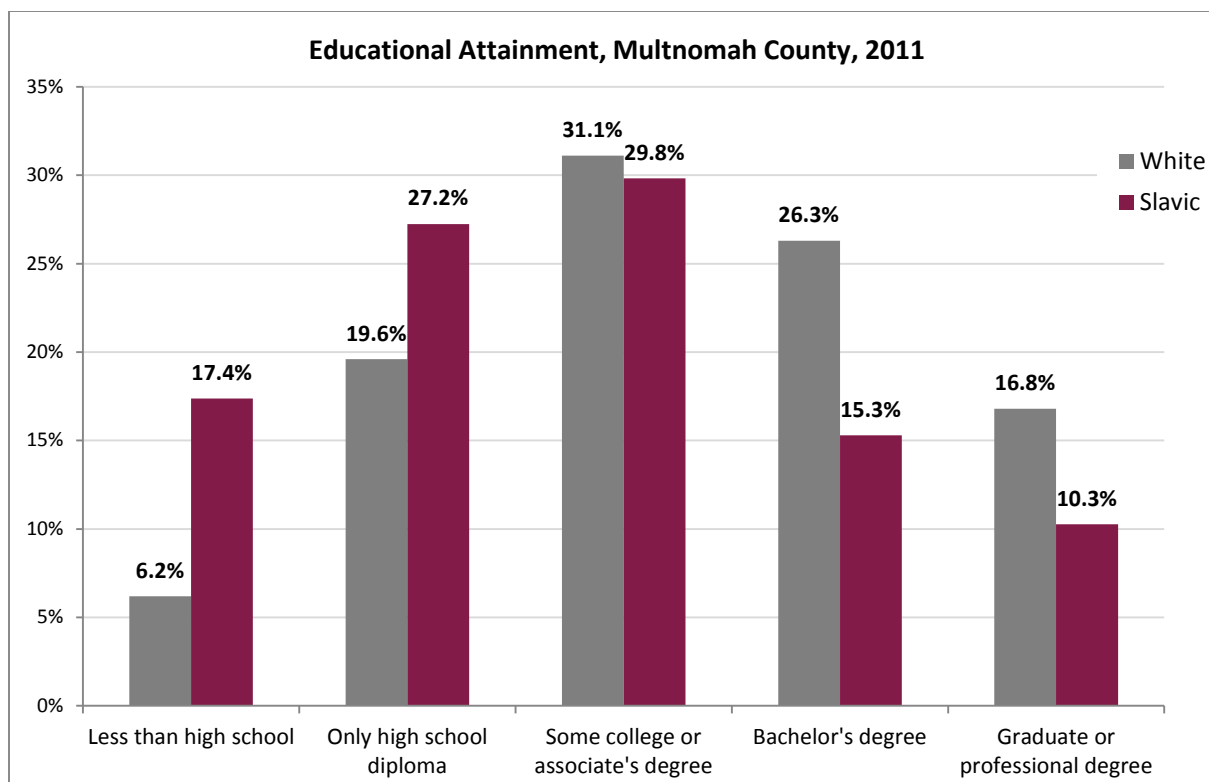
Educational Attainment, Multnomah County, 2011

Category	White	Slavic
Less than high school	6.2%	17.4%
Only high school diploma	19.6%	27.2%
Some college or associate's degree	31.1%	29.8%
Bachelor's degree	26.3%	15.3%
Graduate or professional degree	16.8%	10.3%

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

On arriving in the USA, English language knowledge plays a significant role in social inclusion and academic functioning. For students needing to be in English Language Learner (ELL) programs, there were very uneven experiences. For some, the absence of a teacher who could speak Russian made progress very slow. In these classrooms, primary emphasis is on recruiting teachers who speak Spanish as this is the majority of the students' foundation. The fact that school boards have been notoriously out of compliance with federal regulations for moving students adequately through their language achievement is now receiving renewed attention. The decision by Portland Public Schools to expand Russian dual language programs is an encouraging sign.

Students who lack strong English skills face deep challenges in successfully graduating high school. In 2010, Multnomah county graduated slightly more than one-in-three students who have limited English proficiency. Unfortunately, the data is not available by language or ethnicity so we are unable to break apart these results for the Slavic community. Most of these students are in fact Latino. We have no reason to believe, however, that our Slavic students perform any better than Latino students in these programs, and may in fact struggle harder because of the lack of Russian-speaking instructors.

Audits of English Language Learner programs are performed sporadically. The most recent one conducted in Portland Public Schools was in 2010. The Auditor reported that Portland Public Schools has been out of compliance with federal regulations in 13 of the past 17 years, and only one-third of

students who are in ELL programs for a five year stretch are able to communicate well in English.[17] These dismal results are key advocacy priorities for the Coalition of Communities of Color.

Cohort Graduation Rate, 2010, Limited English Proficiency

Legend: White (gray), Limited English Proficiency (green)

District	White	Limited English Proficiency
Multnomah County	58.7%	39.0%
Portland	53.6%	33.5%
Parkrose	57.9%	34.8%
Gresham-Barlow	64.1%	43.8%
David Douglas	61.3%	39.8%
Centennial	57.5%	46.2%
Reynolds	57.8%	35.7%
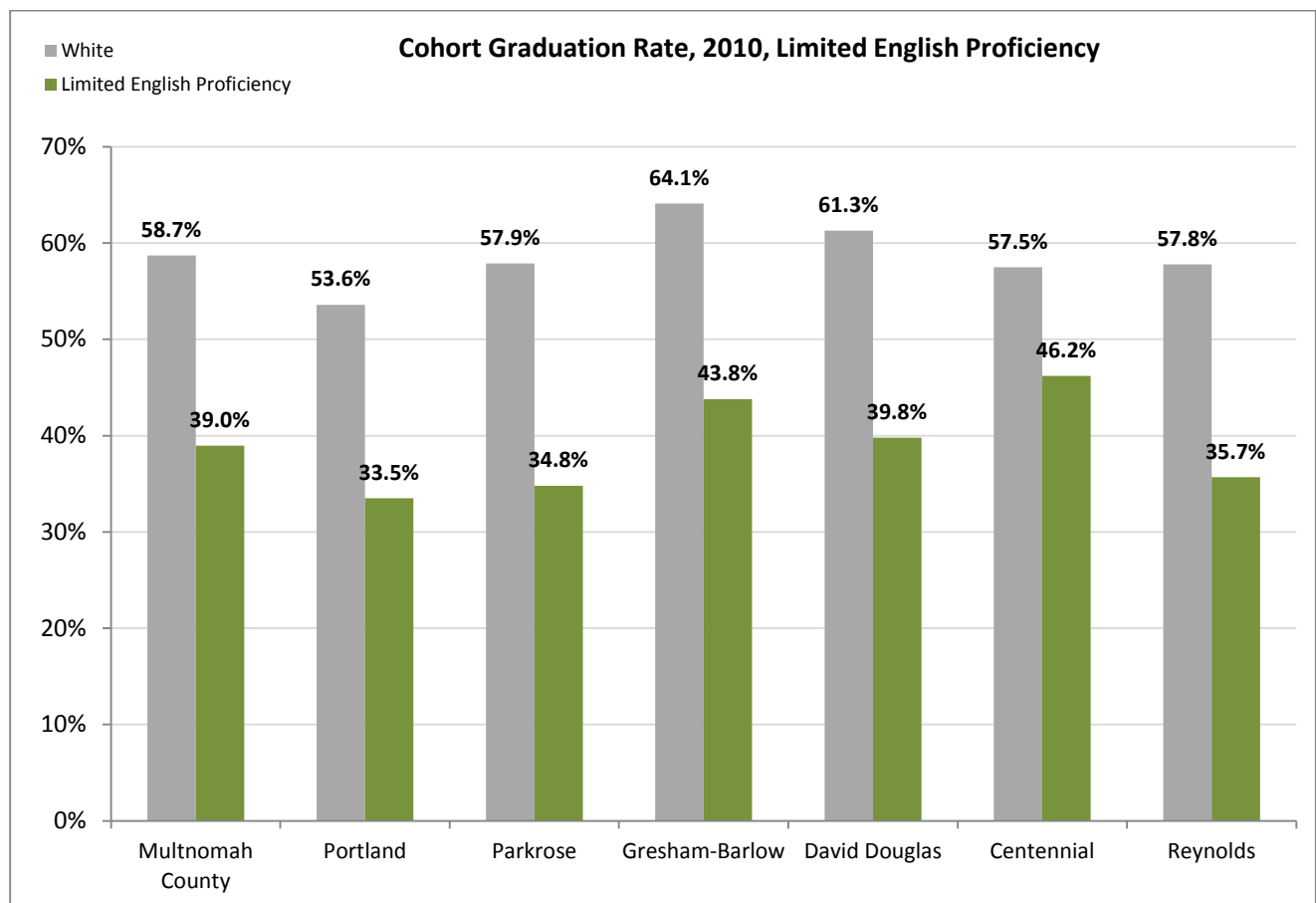
Source: Author's calculations from Oregon Department of Education data on cohort graduation rates (2006/07 to 2009/10 cohort).

Given how essential it is for Slavic children and youth to learn English, not only for academic success but also for future employment options, we asked parents about their experiences with English Language Learner programs. Their responses were mixed. Here is a sampling of these experiences:

> *We were one of the first Russian families who came to the USA. We had really wonderful teachers – they didn't speak Russian. But they were very supportive, enthusiastic in helping us. They were very animated in teaching us – acting out certain words so that we could get words for understanding.*

> *The teacher... would say, "there is the homework on the board, make sure you do it." And the next day you come in, she would say, "This is what your assignment should look like. Go up there and make a checkmark with a plus if you understood it. And if you don't understand it, check minus." Someone said to her, "Aren't you supposed to teach us?" She said, "No, I'm supposed to give you instruction and you are supposed to follow them." I was very taken aback – [the quality*

of your ELL success] depends on the teacher and their style... it was so shocking for me to have that experience.

We have been able to pull apart some current progress indicators by language spoken at home. In the below charts, we have identified students who "met or exceeded" the benchmark testing standards. The first chart looks at our students' math scores. Here we find that our Slavic students have varied results, with significant ancestry variations. Our largest community is Russian-speaking, and second largest Ukrainian. For these students, many are unable to pass the standardized math tests, with almost ½ failing these tests. Their disparity with Whites is 23%, meaning that on average, Whites have an advantage of almost ¼ in attaining math proficiency as measured by standardized test results.
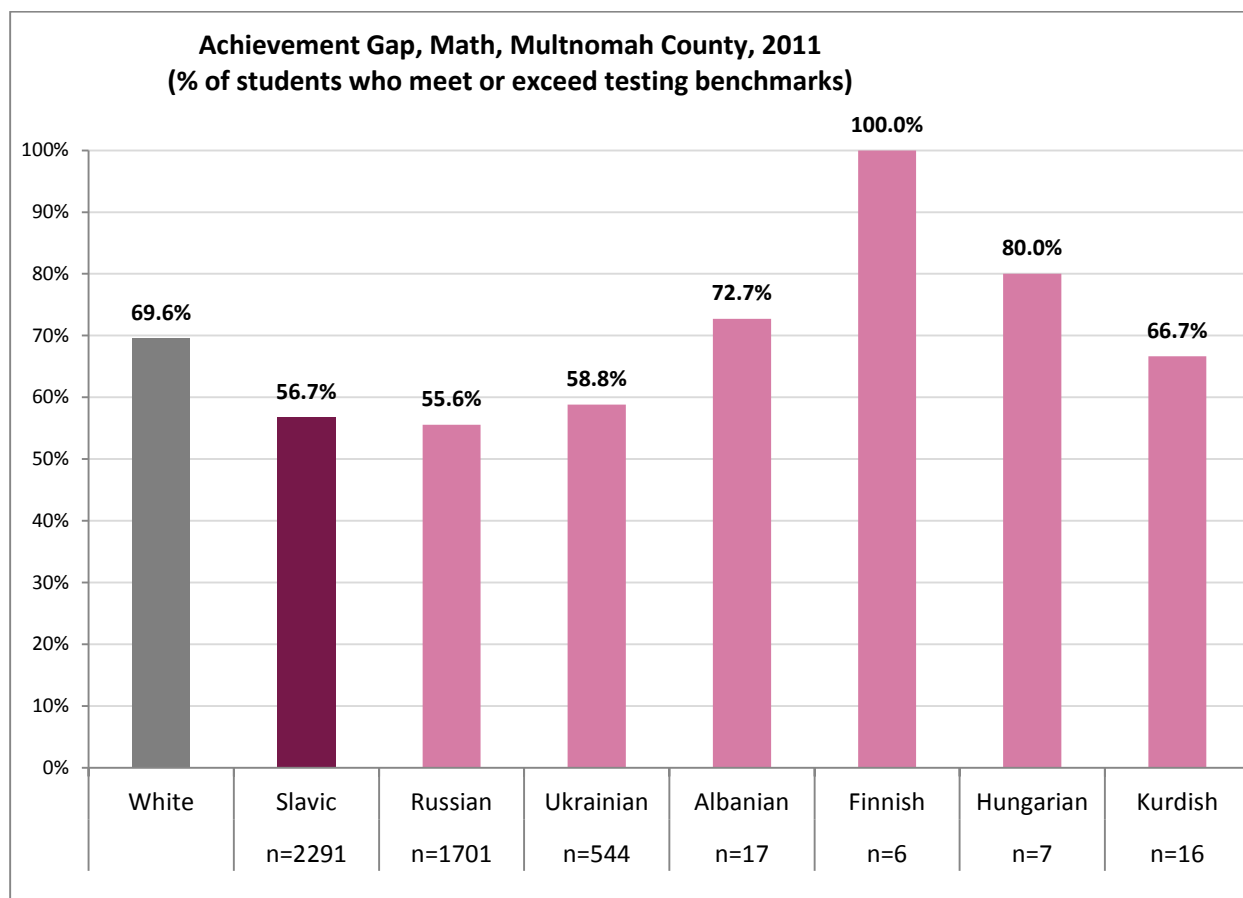
Achievement Gap, Math, Multnomah County, 2011
(% of students who meet or exceed testing benchmarks)

	White	Slavic n=2291	Russian n=1701	Ukrainian n=544	Albanian n=17	Finnish n=6	Hungarian n=7	Kurdish n=16
	69.6%	56.7%	55.6%	58.8%	72.7%	100.0%	80.0%	66.7%

Source: Data collected from six School Boards by Dr. Pat Burk, Portland State University, and tallied by Myste French, MSW.

In reading and literature, the same pattern exists: our Russian and Ukrainian students are struggling the most, adding Albanian students to groups who face disparities. This is distressing for while their performance may be better than the number passing math, achievement levels are still 25% worse than White students at passing standardized tests.
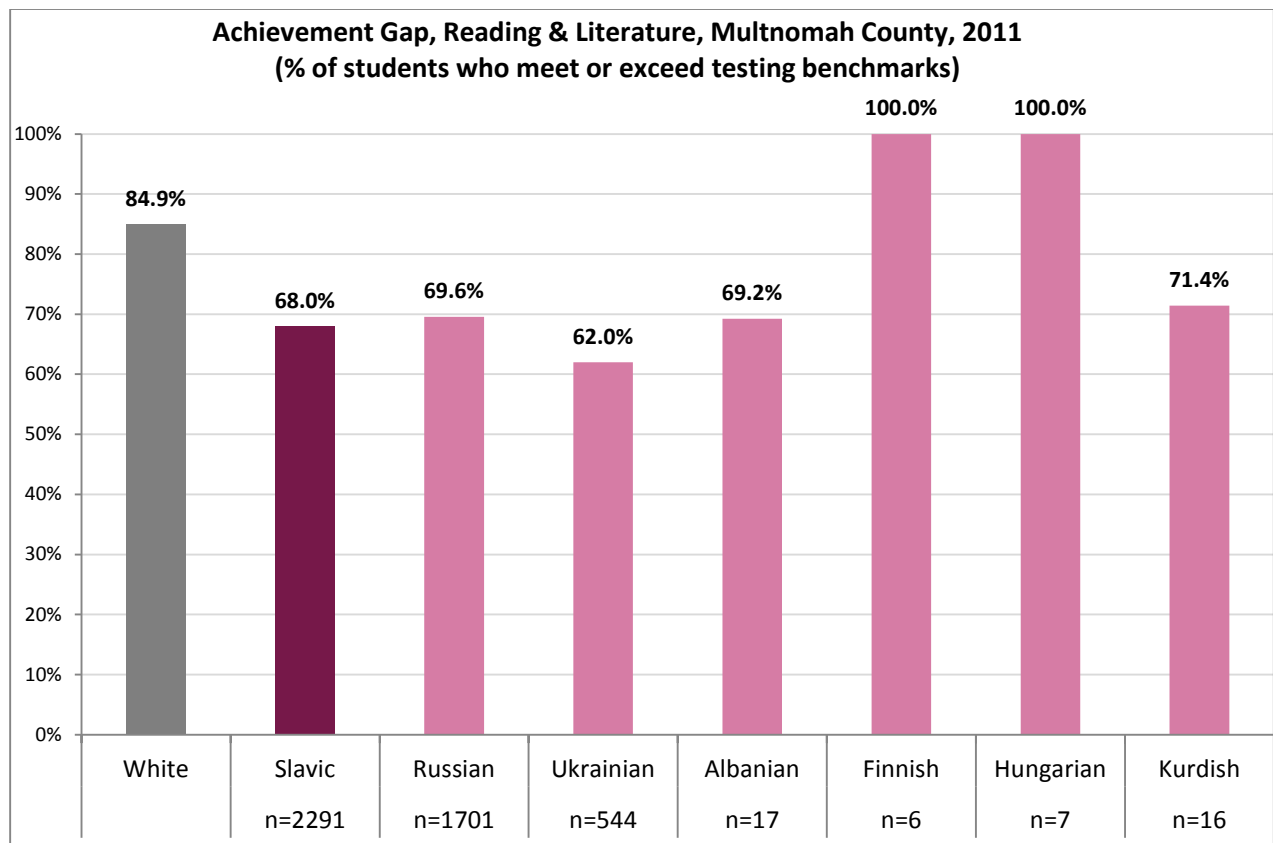
Achievement Gap, Reading & Literature, Multnomah County, 2011
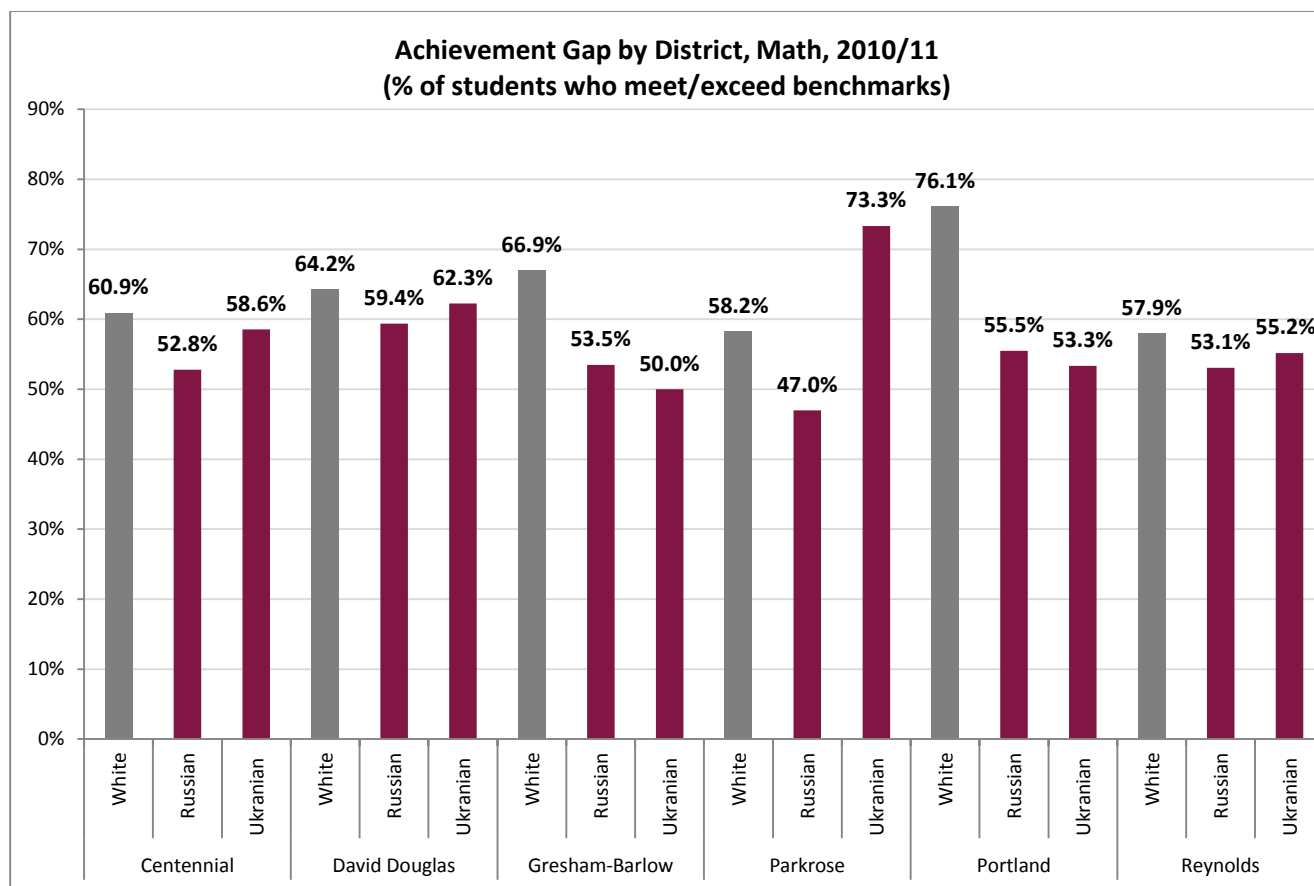**(% of students who meet or exceed testing benchmarks)**

Category	White	Slavic	Russian	Ukrainian	Albanian	Finnish	Hungarian	Kurdish
%	84.9%	68.0%	69.6%	62.0%	69.2%	100.0%	100.0%	71.4%
n		n=2291	n=1701	n=544	n=17	n=6	n=7	n=16

Source: Data collected from six School Boards by Dr. Pat Burk, Portland State University, and tallied by Myste French, MSW.

The importance of these test results cannot be understated. For while we do not have data on graduation rates disaggregated for the Slavic community, we do know that students who do not pass standardized tests have much greater difficulty graduating. One study shows that low scores on standardized tests in grade 9 resulted in a 54% greater likelihood of not graduating high school on time, regardless of whether this weakness occurred in English or math.[18]

There are considerable variations across school districts on how our Russian and Ukrainian students are faring. The worst results in math have occurred in Parkrose for Russian students, but Ukrainian students are actually performing best in that district (compared with the other five). As a composite, Gresham-Barlow has the worst outcomes for our two largest Slavic communities.

**Achievement Gap by District, Math, 2010/11
(% of students who meet/exceed benchmarks)**

District	White	Russian	Ukranian
Centennial	60.9%	52.8%	58.6%
David Douglas	64.2%	59.4%	62.3%
Gresham-Barlow	66.9%	53.5%	50.0%
Parkrose	58.2%	47.0%	73.3%
Portland	76.1%	55.5%	53.3%
Reynolds	57.9%	53.1%	55.2%

Source: Data collected from six School Boards by Dr. Pat Burk, Portland State University, and tallied by Myste French, MSW.

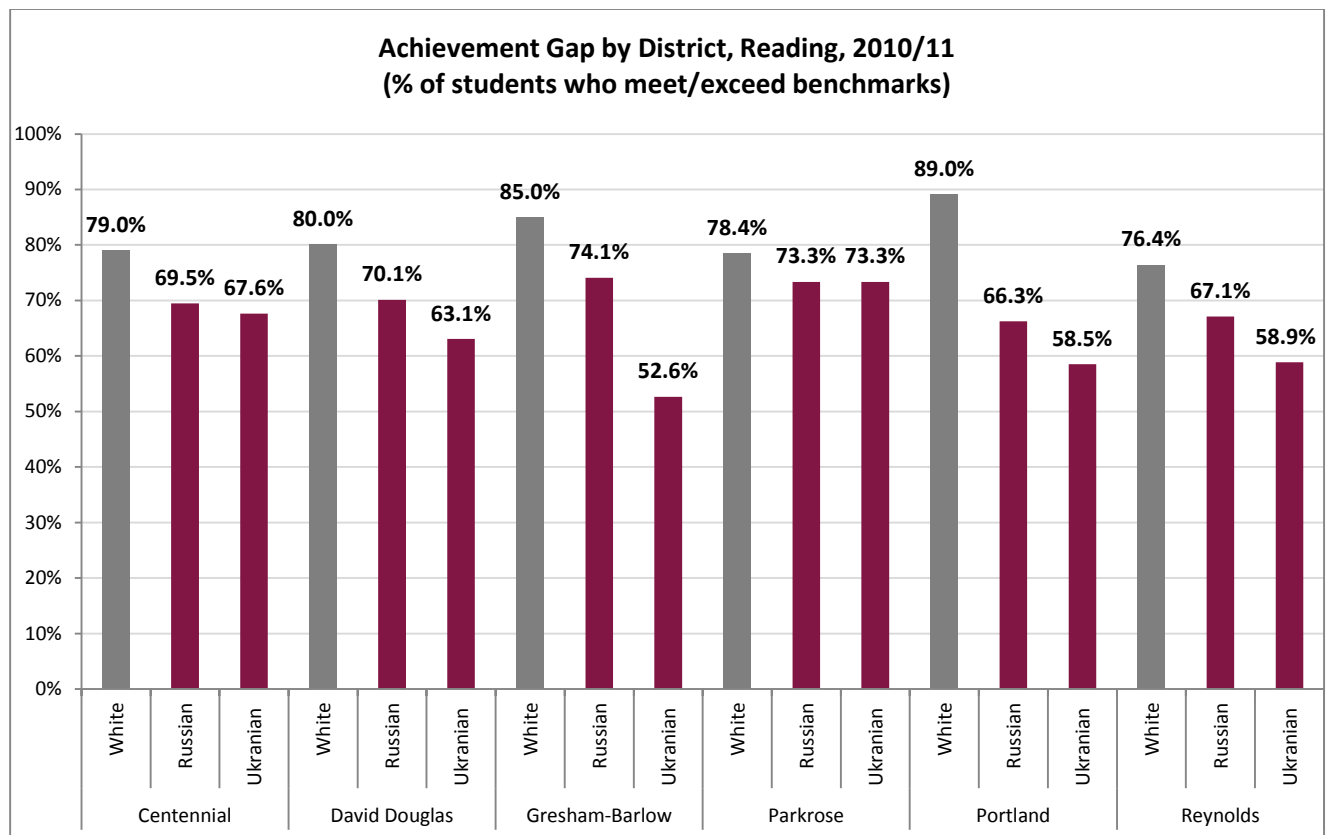In turning to reading scores, we again find varied results. Here, Portland Public Schools has the overall worst performance with Slavic students, particularly troubling when it has the highest performance for White students. This disparity warrants further exploration.

Achievement Gap by District, Reading, 2010/11
(% of students who meet/exceed benchmarks)

District	White	Russian	Ukranian
Centennial	79.0%	69.5%	67.6%
David Douglas	80.0%	70.1%	63.1%
Gresham-Barlow	85.0%	74.1%	52.6%
Parkrose	78.4%	73.3%	73.3%
Portland	89.0%	66.3%	58.5%
Reynolds	76.4%	67.1%	58.9%

Source: Data collected from six School Boards by Dr. Pat Burk, Portland State University, and tallied by Myste French, MSW.

In response to challenges in the conventional school system, many Slavic parents home school their children. We do not know the data on how many parents do this. It is estimated (though without hard data to back this up) that about ¼ of students are home schooled, due in part to high expulsion levels among the community and reticence from parents to send their children to mainstream schools.

Another short-lived school held considerable promise to work with the Slavic community, much in the same way that NAYA Early College Academy and SEI Academy serve specific communities of color in Multnomah county. Slavic parents rallied in 2008 to create a Russian-centered school. Azbuka Academy was the first and only culturally-specific public school aiming to serve the Slavic community, centering Russian language and culture. In operation for two years, it was a valuable addition to the educational opportunities available to Slavic students. We heard from former staff of the Academy who shared that, *"of the 50 students [grades 9, 10 and 11] who were in the first year of Azbuka's operations, 42 are not returning to the public system."* Unfortunately, it was not afforded enough time to improve student performance and its charter was withdrawn by the Oregon Department of Education in 2010. Appeals to have it reinstated have not been successful.

In addition to the academic challenges facing their children, the Slavic parents we spoke with voiced concerns about the social environment of schools. The culture of schools in the former Soviet Union is
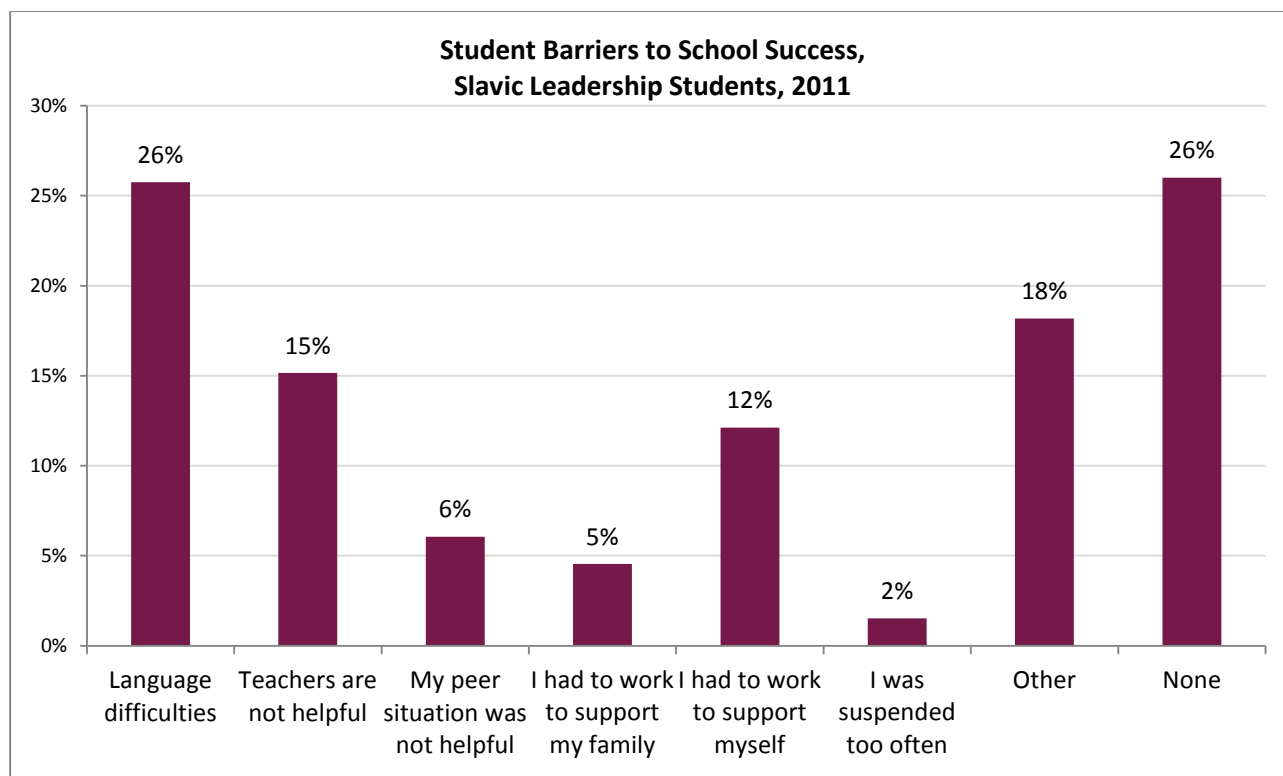
very different than here, "*the school system here is way more lenient. It used to be more disciplined and students feared the teacher... children leave school because they are given too many choices*."

Parents universally believe that it would be helpful to have more Russian speakers employed in the school system, "*it is nice to have Russian teachers because they would understand our culture. If you do something – they understand – because they know our culture... they can step into your shoes and understand where you are coming from. And have more patience with us*." Relatively few of the parents we spoke with, however, want such occupations as they are fearful of a school environment where teachers are not well respected and where they will not be able to control students, particularly in high schools. And at the same time parents recognized the importance of excellent teaching, and many had examples to share, with the following being a success story we would like to see repeated more often:

> *I was a little bit scared to send [my daughter] to school. Because she didn't understand anything. But teacher said, 'believe me – after one month she will speak English and everything will be good.' And exactly for after one month she spoke English and now she's the best student. I think that the teacher did a very good job.*

We had the opportunity to seek input from high school students in the preparation of this report. Surveys were designed and distributed to students in the Russian Youth Leadership Conference that is run every year in the region. While it includes students from outside of Multnomah county, the vast majority are from the local county. We asked them an array of questions about the challenges they face at school, their economic situation, harassment experienced, engagement with the police, and their overall hope for their own positive future. A total of 66 students responded to the survey, about ¾ of the surveys distributed. These are students who self-identify as emerging leaders and thus likely to be students who tend to be more affluent and more conventionally successful than average. Their results provide some further insights into issues facing Slavic youth.

Continuing the above focus on barriers to educational success, students shared information on the types of barriers that exist in their school success. One-quarter experienced language challenges, and close to one-in-six found teachers not helpful enough. An additional 17% (one-in-six) experienced economic challenges significant enough to interfere with their school success.

**Student Barriers to School Success,
Slavic Leadership Students, 2011**

| Category	Percentage
Language difficulties	26%
Teachers are not helpful	15%
My peer situation was not helpful	6%
I had to work to support my family	5%
I had to work to support myself	12%
I was suspended too often	2%
Other	18%
None	26%

Source: Slavic Student Survey, 2011.

Looking a bit more fully at the economic situation, we are able to fill in some of the blanks of what is not known about families struggling to the degree they are in need of food stamps. Below we find that 35% of the high school students in this study were in families that received food stamps, with potential for this to increase to 40% if the students who did not know were actually to be receiving food stamps. This level of food stamp use is high, particularly considering that a total of 18.9% of Oregonians used food stamps in 2011.[19] This number will, however, be moderated by the fact we are surveying students – and typically more than one-third of food bank users are students. We have not been able to disaggregate these data for the Slavic community to date, so this level of involvement provides important first insights as to the number of Slavic community members who are living at or below 185% of the poverty line (the eligibility for food stamps in Oregon).

**Slavic Leadership Students
whose family receives food stamps, 2011**

Don't know,
5%

Yes, 35%

No, 60%
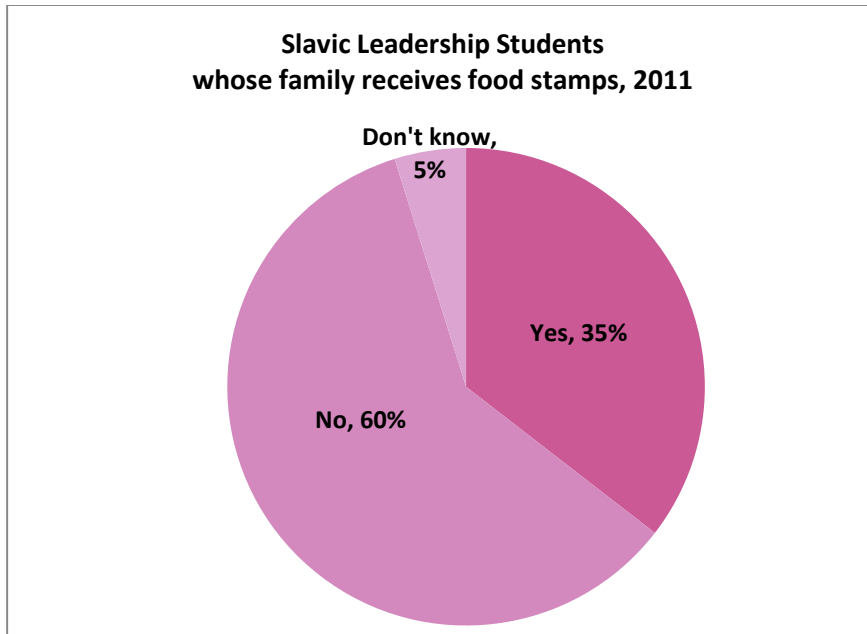
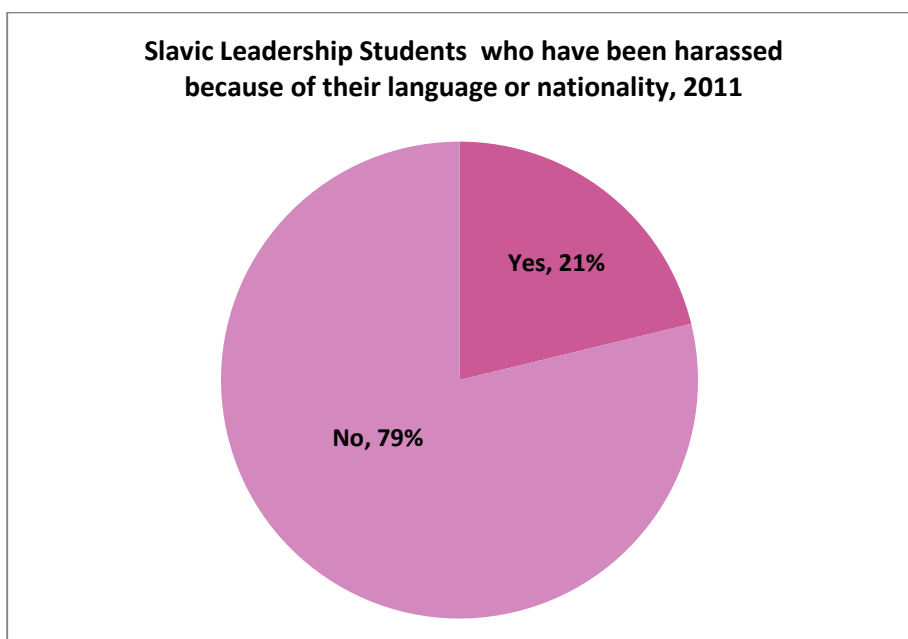Source: Slavic Student Survey, 2011.

Economic challenges are further illustrated by the levels of our students who are employed or looking for work. Above we found that 17% of students find their education hampered by needing to go to work, and now we are able to see how many of them are employed. Twenty percent are employed part-time and 3% are working full time. Kudos to the 5% students who are working and do not find that their employment interferes with their learning! That said, ¾ of working students indicate that their work is a barrier to academic success.

Slavic Leadership Students' Employment Status, 2011

Full time, 3%

Part time, 20%

Not looking for
work, 39%
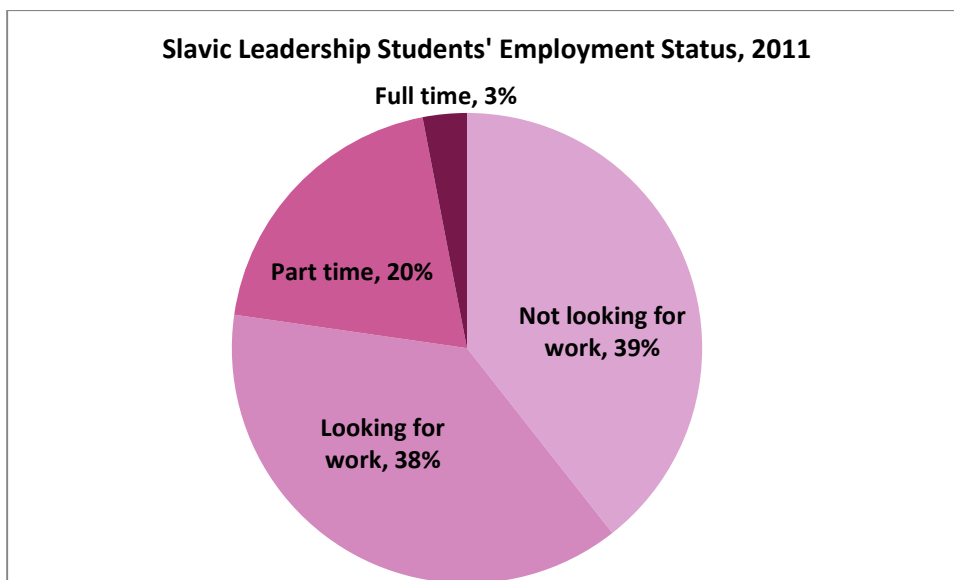
Looking for
work, 38%
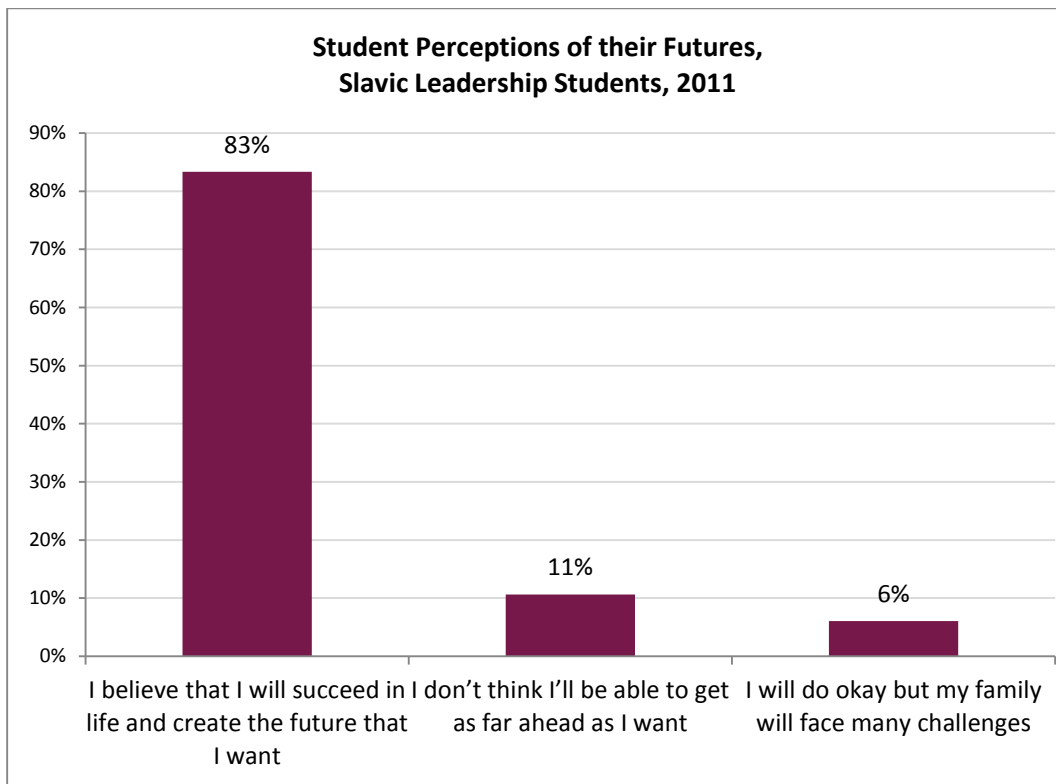
Source: Slavic Student Survey, 2011.

We also find that more than one-in-three students are looking for, but cannot find, work. While high school students are typically not included in unemployment figures, this is a concerning level of thwarted efforts to gain employment. We do know that this economy is having a disproportionate impact on communities of color,[20] on low wage workers[21] and on youth.[22] Between 2007 and 2010, employment levels among youth aged 16-19 dropped by 9 percentage points, and among those aged 20-24 dropped by 8 percentage points. These are the highest levels of decline for any age group, and levels that are close to double those of middle aged workers. Further distressing news is that even college graduates are earning less money than their peers did in better labor markets – earning almost ⅛ lower wages upon graduation.[23]

Harassment also interferes with learning. 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.[24] This number falls only slightly when surveying grade 11 students – to 24.7%. Our survey of Slavic students reported only slightly lower levels of harassment – at 21% of students. We did not ask them to indicate the recentness of their harassment or its location. But more than ⅕ of our Slavic students have been harassed due to their language or nationality. It is incumbent on school administrators to include the Slavic community in their attention to bullying and harassment.

Slavic Leadership Students who have been harassed because of their language or nationality, 2011

Yes, 21%

No, 79%

Source: Slavic Student Survey, 2011.

Despite these barriers, our Slavic students still hold tremendous hope for a prosperous future. A total of 83% of those surveyed in the leadership conference indicated the following, "I believe that I will succeed in life and create the future that I want." A much smaller number had reduced hopes for the future with 11% stating that, "I don't think I'll be able to get as far ahead as I want" and 6% issued concerns for their family.

**Student Perceptions of their Futures,
Slavic Leadership Students, 2011**

Source: Slavic Student Survey, 2011.

Occupations

Getting enough hours of work at decent enough wages to pay the bills is tough for the community. While most members of the community have solid experience and decent education, these were most gained in the former Soviet Union, and are not recognized in the USA. Add to this challenges with English, and pronounced barriers to living wage work becomes the norm. In the past, many Slavic men have been hired in the construction industry – not because this was highly desirable work, but rather because it was work that did not require much English and was accessible through community friendships. That number is slipping as the economy shrinks. While 10.1% of the Slavic community is employed in construction, this is a drop from 12.6% in 2008.
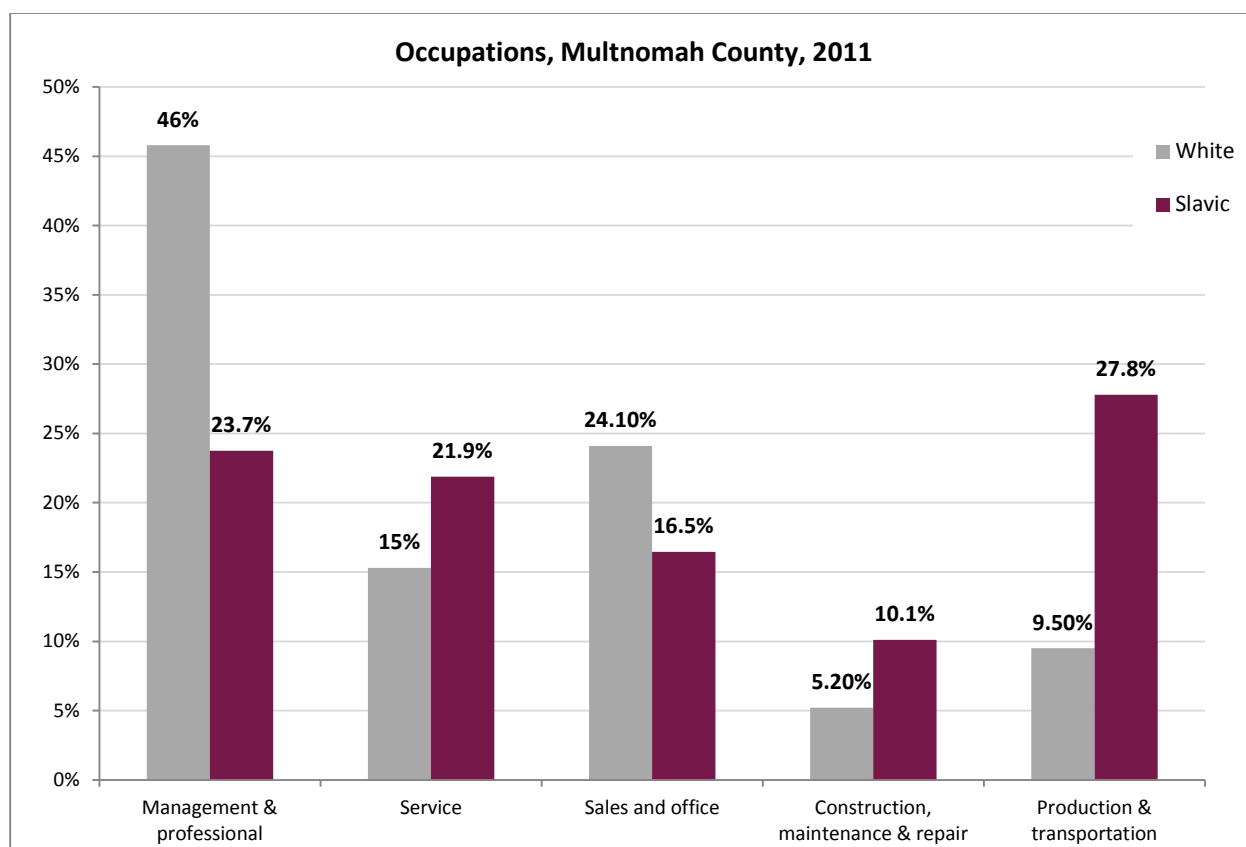
Occupations, Multnomah County, 2011

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

Where does the Slavic community get more than their fair-share of jobs? In badly paid service jobs, and in the construction, production and transportation sectors. 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.

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*

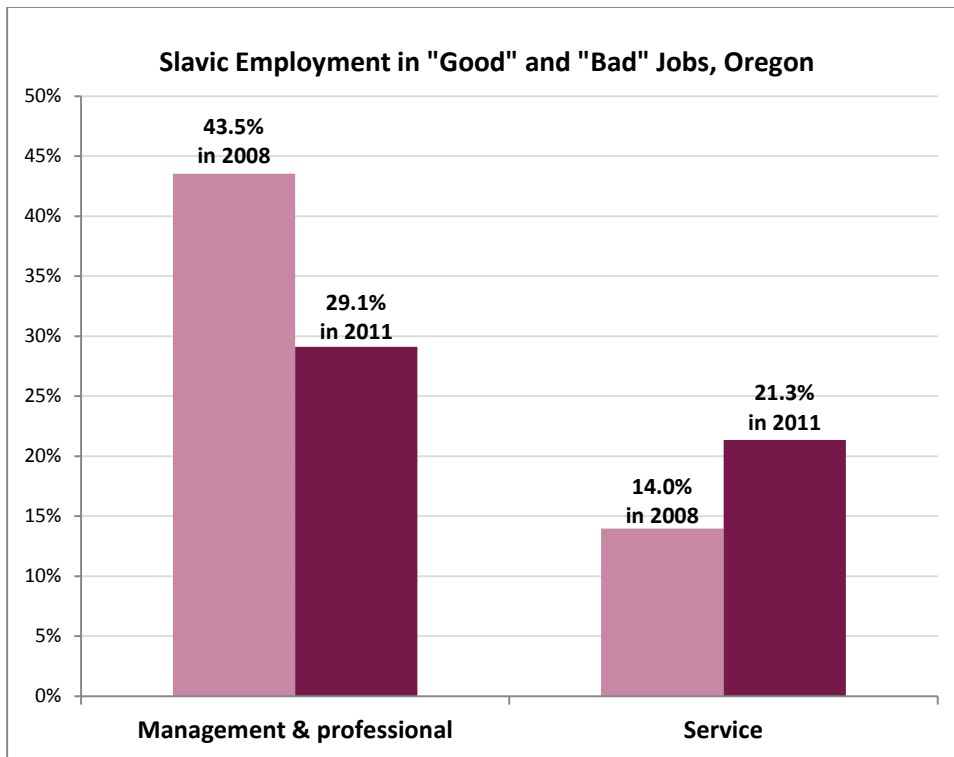*workers experienced a work-related injury and illness rate that was higher than the national average.*[25]

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.

Other pronounced shifts have occurred in the last three years. Below we see that the Slavic community has lost a considerable foothold in the economy losing half of its access to good jobs and doubling its presence in "bad" (service sector) jobs. This reworking of employment is not experienced by White workers, who in fact gain an even stronger hold on good management and professional jobs and only a slightly more prolific presence in the service industry.
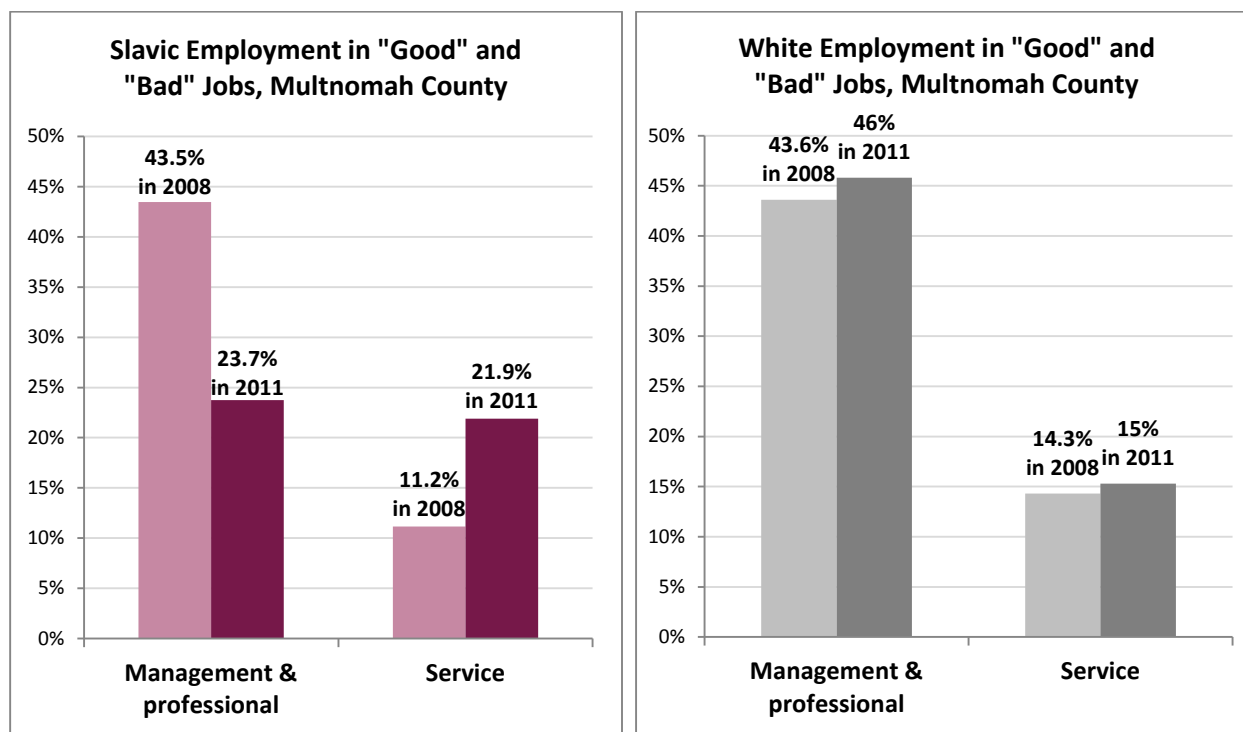
Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008 and by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

Across Oregon, the same shift is experienced for the Slavic community though to a slightly lesser degree. These employment trends are more expansively being felt across the state though more deeply affecting the Slavic community in Multnomah county.

Slavic Employment in "Good" and "Bad" Jobs, Oregon

Management & professional
- 43.5% in 2008
- 29.1% in 2011

Service
- 14.0% in 2008
- 21.3% in 2011

Source: Custom data extractions by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, from the American Community Survey, 2008 and by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

Why is this pattern happening? It is likely attributable to the "last hired – first fired" dynamic of shrinking economies hitting newly hired workers hardest. But it is also likely a feature of racial bias that shows when companies feel vulnerable, they become more conservative and retreat from retaining employment for anyone who is perceived to be a more "risky" employee. In this case, this means employees with limited English or with strong accents. It may also be the result of blatant discrimination of firing or laying off workers of color and preserving White workers. A final variable is likely to be the shrinking educational attainment of the adult population. More and more Slavic community members are not being successful at school and this may be resulting in the adult population growing, but more being ineligible for better jobs – and thus giving the appearance of a job loss that might in fact be a rebalancing of a larger workforce. Unfortunately the quality of our long-term data does not allow us to be more definitive.

Whatever the reason, the Slavic community is certainly losing its economic security and being funneled into worse jobs which come with much lower pay and worse working conditions.

Narratives from community members show the nature of the challenges faced: *"In America, employers look for experience but you cannot get experience because no one hires without experience. This is especially true in the current economy. It doesn't matter how good of a worker you are."* Other narratives show an inability to get work in one's occupation of choice: *"I was a bookkeeper back home,*

but because of my limited English, I am a childcare worker in the US." Furthermore, fear can set in of being discovered to not have the English capacity that an employer desires:

> *Companies are unwilling to work with people without English skills. It would take time and patience from companies and coworkers to work with people with limited English. Companies may also have policies that require written English skills, People are afraid of being terminated based on their limited ability to write English and well as speak.*
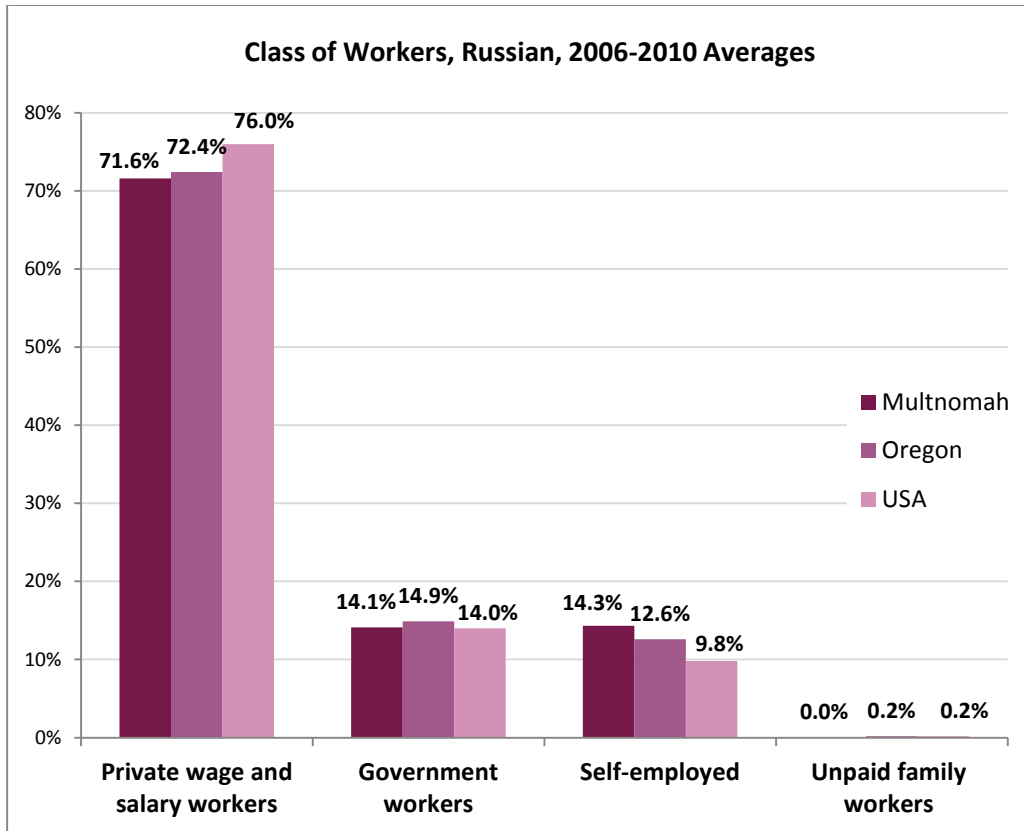
This dynamic is particularly troubling for older community members. There were several instances where community members approaching retirement made pleas for help: *"It is hard to learn and pay the bills. Back in Russia, I received money from the government because my husband passed away but here I cannot receive any assistance beyond food stamps because my husband didn't die here."* Another works but has nothing saved for retirement:

> *I worked back in my country. Here I wasn't working because I don't have language skills… I face retirement. I don't know what I am going to do next and how I am going to eat. This is my question for you. I work cleaning offices. It's nothing. I cannot give anything back to my family in the Soviet Union. I don't have money. Nothing saved for retirement.*

Many want training programs to increase their job prospects, but like other wage-dependent communities, they cannot take time away from work to access what is currently available: *"One cannot go get an education because you have to pay for it and you have to pay your bills."*

Lack of recognition of foreign credentials is problematic. Nursing degrees do not translate well into the US labor market and neither do medical degrees. There is a fundamental difference of health beliefs and reliance on old-world remedies and generally outdated technology. Teachers cannot get work in the USA due to language difficulties. We also heard from parents that few want to become teachers as they do not hold the respect or the control over students that they did in Russia.

In addition to the types of jobs held, we are able to gain a glimpse into the class of jobs held locally compared to those held across Oregon and across the USA. Again, we need to turn to the somewhat challenging data source that draws from 5-year averages and focuses on the Russian community. Self-employment is relatively low in Multnomah county and private wage and salaried workers relatively high. Among government workers, Multnomah county hires approximately the same level of Slavic community members as the rest of the country. We do not know, however, the details of these jobs in terms of their status or wage.

Class of Workers, Russian, 2006-2010 Averages

	Private wage and salary workers	Government workers	Self-employed	Unpaid family workers
Multnomah	71.6%	14.1%	14.3%	0.0%
Oregon	72.4%	14.9%	12.6%	0.2%
USA	76.0%	14.0%	9.8%	0.2%

Source: American Community Survey, 2006-2010.

Self-employment in the Slavic community has historically been strong. This work has been valuable for setting one's own conditions of work and in being less vulnerable to the exclusion that faced them as employees. More than 400 businesses in the Portland, Oregon-Vancouver, Washington metropolitan area were (in 2005) owned by Russian-speaking entrepreneurs. Many of the businesses are in the construction industry.[26]

A final look at the local employment of the Slavic community lets us examine what are known as "industry" profiles. This means we are able to see the industrial profile but without the further disaggregation of the type of jobs within this sector. For example, one might be hired in the education sector but as a janitor or as a high school principal. Both would be included in the education industry but at vastly different pay levels and job responsibilities.

Industry of Workers, Russian, 2006-2010 Averages

Other
- USA: 3.9%
- Oregon: 4.2%
- Multnomah: 3.6%

Public administration
- USA: 4.3%
- Oregon: 5.2%
- Multnomah: 5.4%

Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food
- USA: 7.5%
- Oregon: 8.2%
- Multnomah: 8.9%

Education, health care and social assistance
- USA: 26.5%
- Oregon: 24.0%
- Multnomah: 23.8%

Professional, scientific, management, management services
- USA: 16.2%
- Oregon: 12.6%
- Multnomah: 16.7%

Finance, insurance, real estate
- USA: 9.3%
- Oregon: 5.4%
- Multnomah: 4.5%

Information
- USA: 3.9%
- Oregon: 2.4%
- Multnomah: 2.9%

Transportation, warehousing, utilities
- USA: 3.1%
- Oregon: 4.0%
- Multnomah: 6.6%

Retail trade
- USA: 9.9%
- Oregon: 10.0%
- Multnomah: 8.3%

Wholesale trade
- USA: 3.2%
- Oregon: 2.1%
- Multnomah: 1.3%

Manufacturing
- USA: 7.4%
- Oregon: 11.8%
- Multnomah: 9.0%

Construction
- USA: 3.9%
- Oregon: 8.7%
- Multnomah: 8.7%

Agriculture, forestry fishing, hunting, mining
- USA: 0.7%
- Oregon: 1.4%
- Multnomah: 0.3%

Legend: USA, Oregon, Multnomah

Source: American Community Survey, 2006-2010.

So why are these data important? They hold the potential to show patterns across time – although more than this time period does not exist for this community. They also hold the potential to see where opportunities might exist in the future. For example, across Oregon, 11.8% of the Slavic community is hired in manufacturing, but only 9% in Multnomah county. We could thus reasonably consider that investments in the creation of manufacturing jobs might benefit the Slavic community as they seem to be able to create a more solid footing in such an industry in Oregon – we might expect the same locally. While not definitive, these data could reasonably get us started on a more precise economic development initiative that could be of benefit to the Slavic community.

Remember, too, that there are significant income variations associated with these occupations. 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 we can see the economic impacts of a community being excluded from higher wage jobs.

The employment situation is concerning. The Slavic community seems to have lost its footing in better jobs and been redirected into the service industry. Paying close attention to the policy recommendations of the community are essential to returning this community to a more prosperous path and to providing for its children a more hopeful future.

Pressing Economic Issues: Income, Poverty and Unemployment

a. Income Profile

The profile of incomes among communities of color, compared with Whites, is dismal. At levels where it is not uncommon to reach only half the incomes of Whites, communities of color face disparities that are completely unacceptable. How do those in the Slavic community fare? This is particularly salient for their well-being and ability to raise their children, and also for their ability to save for their retirement and to continue remittances to their families in the former Soviet Union who will likely be struggling more deeply. We find that the Slavic community faces anywhere from an 8% lesser income than Whites to a high of 63% difference (for married couple families). This is a profile that looks very similar to other communities of color.
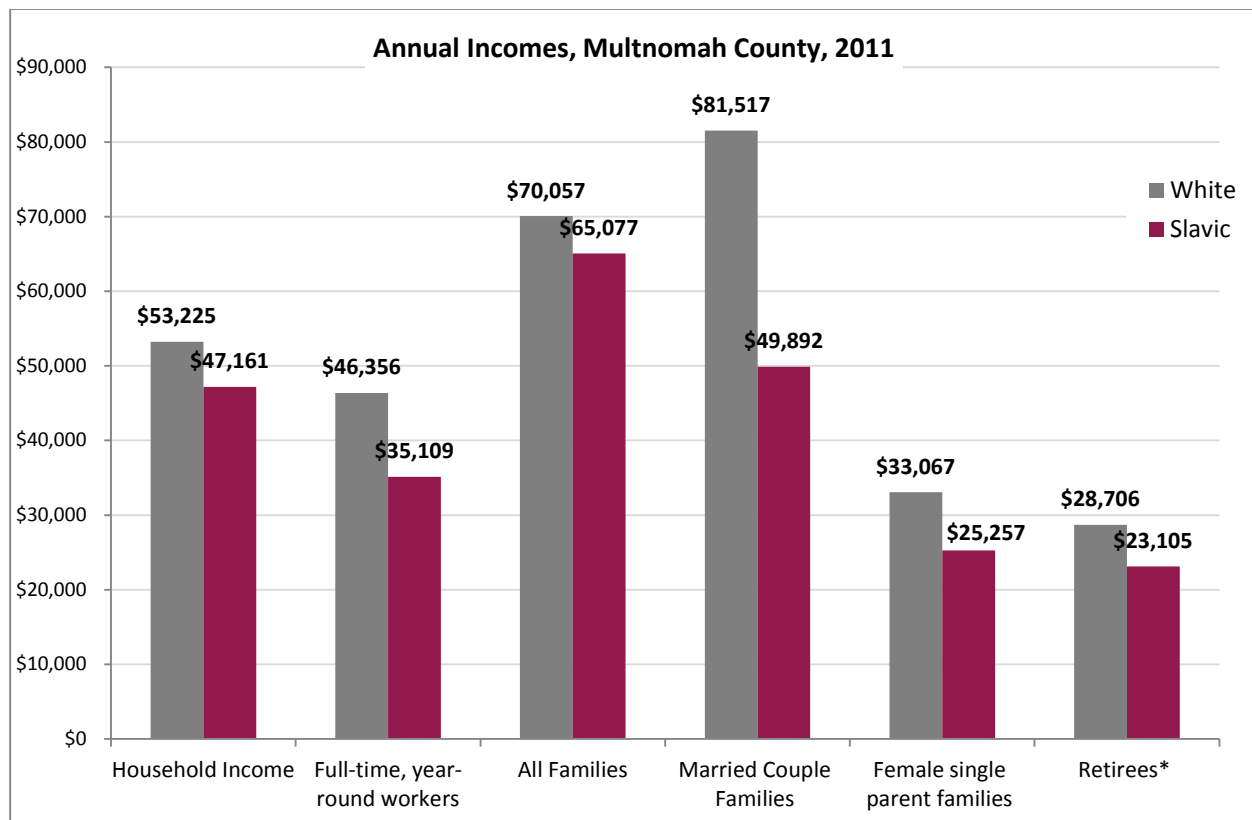
Annual Incomes, Multnomah County, 2011

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011. *The "retiree" incomes were only available as an average for the 2006 to 2010 years and are to be used with caution as they include both eras of economic progress and recession.

Of significant concern is that full-time, year-round workers are earning ⅓ less money than White workers, indicating that when community members are able to get full-time work, they are unable to earn equivalent wages. Finding ways to bring up this base amount is key to economic security. Collectively, we as a society need to ensure all the barriers to economic progress are removed – from graduating high school, to getting a university degree, to college success, to English language training, job training and to recognizing foreign experience and foreign credentials (and more) – we need to ensure that all are able to participate well in the labor market. Such success will benefit our entire community.

When we look at how these full-time, year-round workers are doing compared with others around the state and the nation (in the chart below), we find that the Slavic community is doing much worse locally, taking a hit of almost $20,000 annually while local wages for Whites are equivalent to their national counterparts. This is deeply troubling. Part of the answer lies in the demographics, with local Slavic community members being more likely to be immigrants or refugees (at 31% locally compared to 17% as USA averages). At the national level, the Russian community is more likely to have high incomes, education and low poverty rates. Such is not the case locally. Were there promising signs that the local Slavic community was gaining ground, we would hope for a similar profile in the coming decades. There

are, however, few signs of the Slavic community gaining ground as it establishes long-standing presence in the region.

Annual Incomes for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers, 2011

White: $46,097 USA, $43,600 Oregon, $46,356 Multnomah

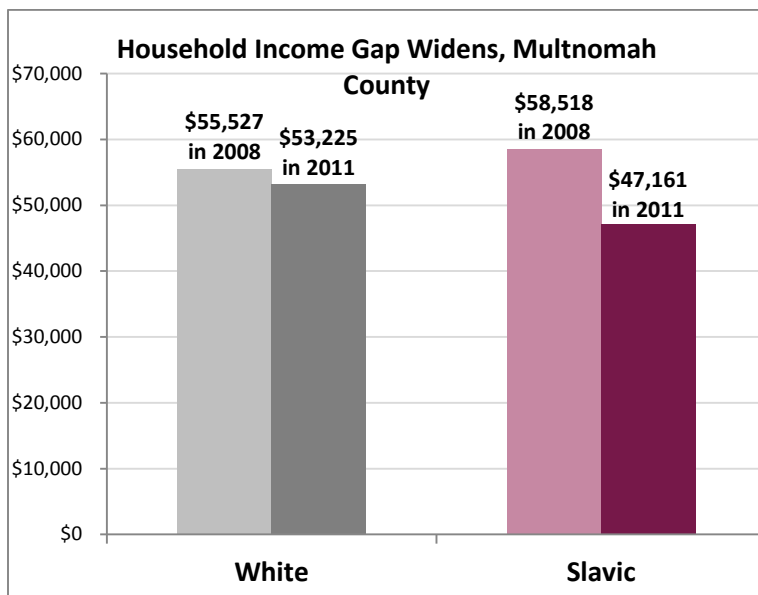Slavic: $54,487 USA, $37,729 Oregon, $35,109 Multnomah

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

For our most vulnerable families – female headed single parent families – the challenges facing them are pronounced. Earning just $25,257 annually (on average, with some trying to get by on much less) will be a profound struggle. Retirees are also struggling, losing an important source of income when drastic cuts were made to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in 1996. These changes limiting the access to social security income have hit the elderly Slavic community hard. No longer are immigrants who arrived after 1996 eligible for income support if they are not citizens of the USA, although some exceptions can be made; in other situations, seniors without citizenship (such as refugees) may be eligible but only for a maximum of seven years. Here is where the intersection with access to naturalization programs is important: currently (as noted in an earlier section) 11% of the Russian community in Multnomah county is not a US citizen, and only ⅔ of those not born here have become citizens. This makes for a large community who has not yet accessed citizenship. Given the narrowing of SSI, citizenship becomes more important. Naturalization application fees are about $680, and courses range from online at $50 to free at local libraries. Given the large numbers who have not become US citizens, additional supports are clearly warranted. Fees are likely to be a significant barrier.
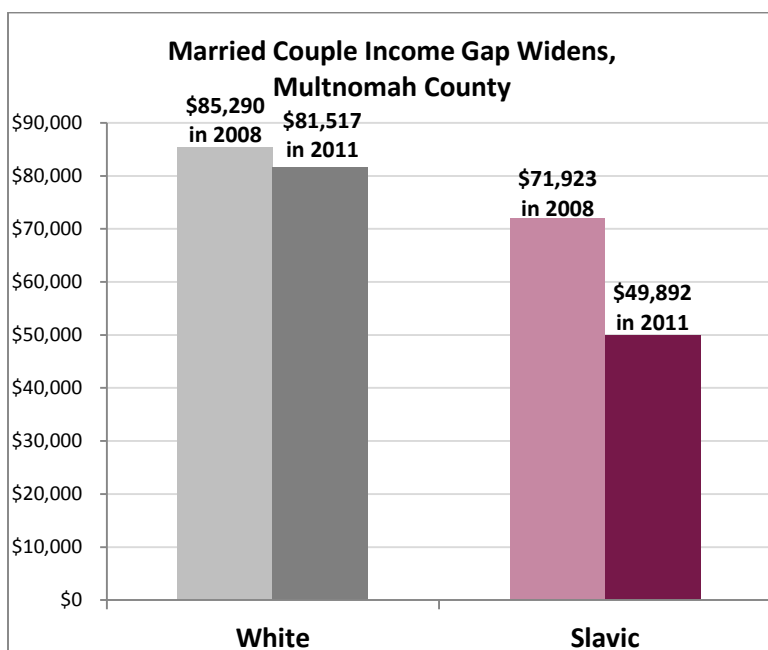
Deterioration of incomes has come fast and furious over the last three years. Below we see that that the local Slavic community has lost more than $11,000 annually in this time period, equaling 24% of their

salary. While the loss in the White community is also of concern, the magnitude is much more moderate (at 4%).

Household Income Gap Widens, Multnomah County

White: $55,527 in 2008, $53,225 in 2011

Slavic: $58,518 in 2008, $47,161 in 2011

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest for the 2011 data from the American Community Survey and by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, for 2008 data.

When we look at the losses faced in just three years by married couple families, the loss is more than $20,000/year (equaling 44% of a family's salary). Again the impact of this recession is not felt with anywhere near the same magnitude by White families who lose just 5% of their salaries.

Married Couple Income Gap Widens, Multnomah County

White: $85,290 in 2008, $81,517 in 2011

Slavic: $71,923 in 2008, $49,892 in 2011

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest for the 2011 data from the American Community Survey and by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, for 2008 data.

Another economic question is often to wonder about the distribution of salaries, seeking to understand how many people make how much money. This gives us some insights about the numbers at different income levels and the challenges that might be faced in moving up the economic ladder. Here we see that families in Multnomah county have very few high incomes that their counterparts across the USA hold. They are over-represented among those with low and very low incomes, holding slightly more of these jobs than their national counterparts. It is interesting to see that local and statewide Russians have very similar economic profiles. Both vary considerably from the national Russian population, with an absence of high incomes, more very low and low incomes, and a relative abundance of those with working class incomes. It is at the high end that the variation becomes extremely divergent.

Family Income, Russian, 2006 to 2010

Source: Author's calculations of data from American Community Survey, 2006-10.

While we might attribute the recentness of immigration status as the reason for Slavic constraints in the labor market, research elsewhere indicates that newer immigrants to the country face intolerably long times to "catch up" to Whites.[27] 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 are believed to 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.

It is time for economic development strategies to integrate a racial equity objective. No longer do race-neutral policies benefit communities of color to a substantive degree. Investments need to be targeted in ways that benefit the Slavic community and other communities of color. Such investments need to be focused on community skill sets, value our language capacity and draw upon communit knowledge to create public spaces, housing and services that will be of benefit to and used by our communities.

b. Poverty rates

Poverty levels within the Slavic community are very high, are worse than national levels, and are rapidly deteriorating across time. Almost one in every three Slavic children lives in poverty – double the level of White children. One-in-five Slavic community members live in poverty, compared with one-in-seven White people. Among families raising children, there are levels of poverty roughly equivalent to Whites. This is not to say these families are not struggling, for all indicators covered so far tells us that Slavic families are struggling – but at the very lowest of incomes, numbers of total families in poverty are equivalent.
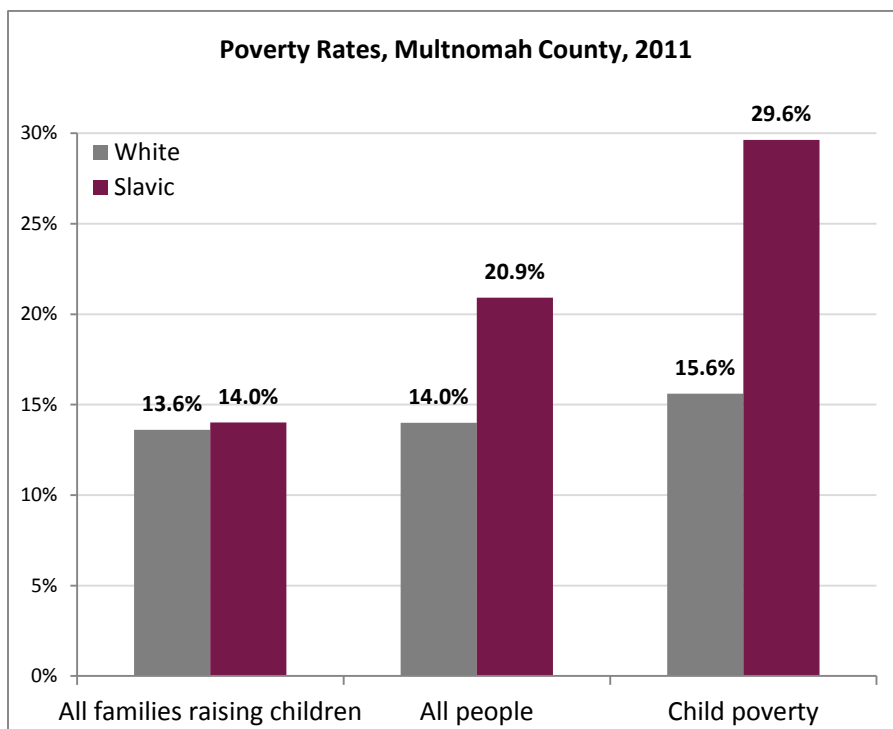
Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

While this level of poverty is alarming on its own, look below to see how rapidly poverty levels are worsening. Poverty in the Slavic community has grown from between ¼ worse (families), to ⅓ worse (all people) to almost double worse for our most vulnerable group – our children.
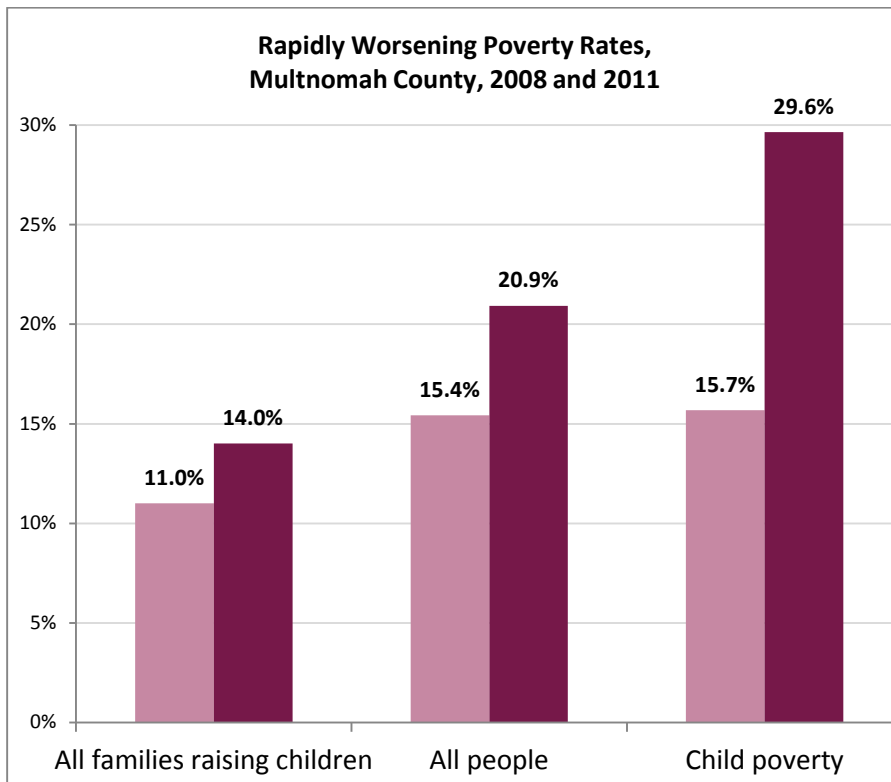
**Rapidly Worsening Poverty Rates,
Multnomah County, 2008 and 2011**

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest for the 2011 data from the American Community Survey and by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, for 2008 data.

This is alarming, indicating that the burden of this economic downturn is being carried by our most vulnerable community members. It is a pattern that needs to be brought to the attention of our most senior policy makers – at the federal level where their reach is greatest. Economic policy must be shaken up, and rather than protecting the incomes of those at our highest levels, we need to ensure that the needs of those at our lowest levels are tended to. Responses such as minimum wage, living wage and progressive tax reform can ensure our government resources are sufficient to sustain and expand income support programs to meet the needs of our children in poverty – and their parents.

Looking at the regional distribution of poverty among the Slavic community, we find that the local situation is more dire than both the national and statewide situation. The closer one gets to Multnomah county, the worse our children are likely to be doing. The same pattern does not hold for White children where the rates of child poverty are roughly equivalent.
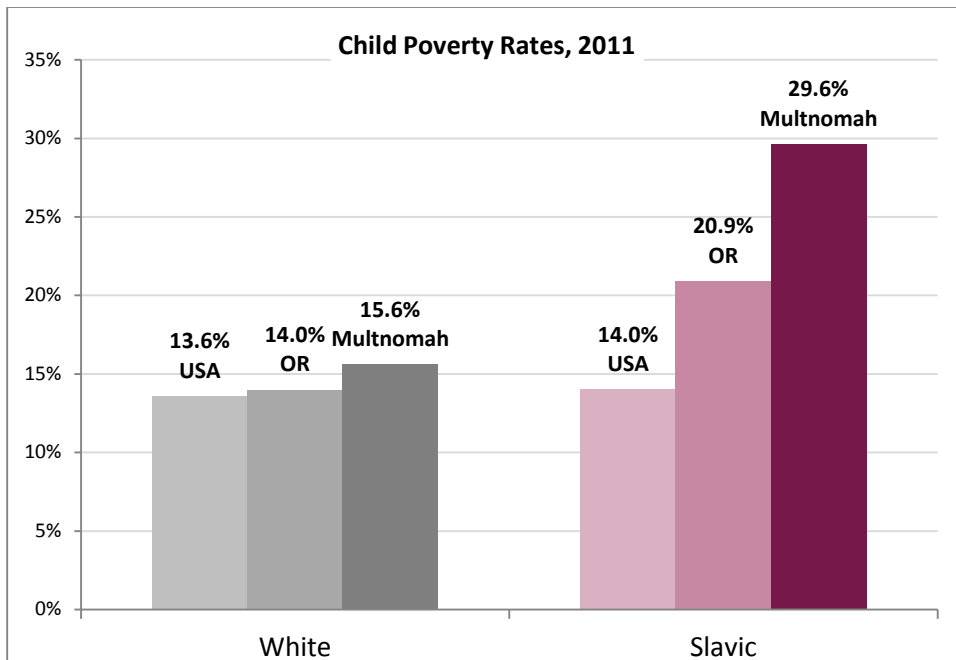
Child Poverty Rates, 2011

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011. The USA data was retrieved from the Census Bureau's Fact Finder website.

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 support networks to meet one's health and human service needs.
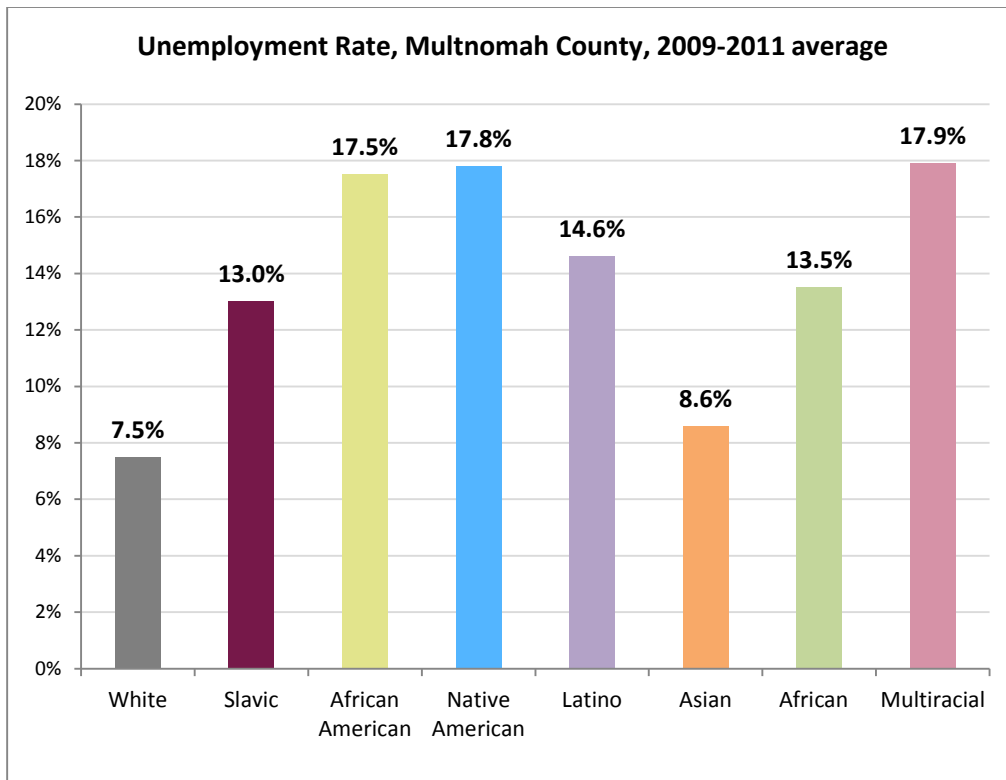
c. Unemployment

Unemployment levels among this community are very high, and have deteriorated significantly over the last three years. The disparity with the White community is also deteriorating with the gap more pronounced than it was three years ago. While the unemployment rate averaged 11.6% in 2011, there are huge variations by race and ethnicity. Here we see that being White is a significant protection against unemployment.
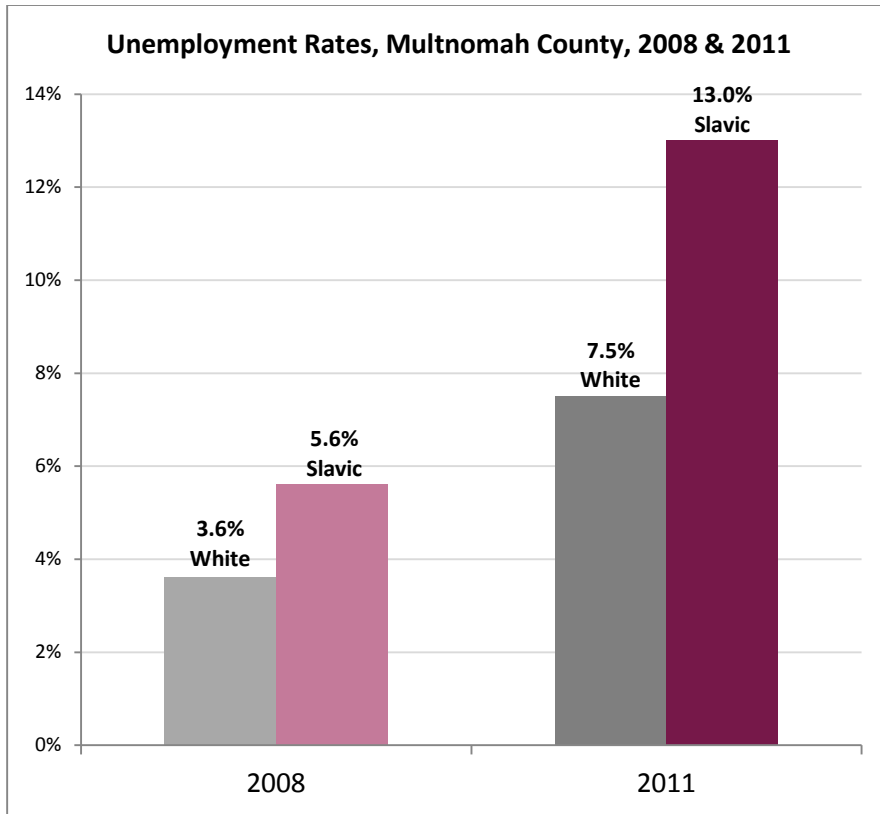
Unemployment Rates, Multnomah County, 2008 & 2011

Source: Custom data extractions by ECONorthwest for the 2011 data from the American Community Survey and by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, for 2008 data.

Unemployment levels within the Slavic community are almost double that of the White community (they are 73% worse off). 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.

In the chart below, we see the spread of how much worse communities of color fare than Whites in the labor market. Chances of being unemployed deteriorate when one is minority racialized. This is an economy in recession, and one that is being disproportionately carried by communities of color – the Slavic community included.

Unemployment Rate, Multnomah County, 2009-2011 average

Category	Rate
White	7.5%
Slavic	13.0%
African American	17.5%
Native American	17.8%
Latino	14.6%
Asian	8.6%
African	13.5%
Multiracial	17.9%

Source: American Community Survey, 2009 to 2011, with custom data extractions by ECONorthwest for the Slavic community.

In summary, the economic situation facing the Slavic community is very similar to that of other communities of color, despite being counted officially as White. The myth that one simply needs to spend enough time in the USA for one to eventually achieve parity with US-born Whites is unfolding to be a myth. Today, the Slavic community is facing a wretched economic situation – with income losses pronounced, poverty rates escalating, unemployment deteriorating and decent jobs evaporating from one's grasp. This is a community shouldering an incredible burden of this economic recession. Its needs are urgent.

Housing

Housing challenges are numerous among the Slavic community. To begin, discrimination is pronounced in two areas: those who cannot speak English and those who are seeking to use their Section 8 housing vouchers. The community is taken advantage of not infrequently, with almost everyone we spoke with having an example of being misled. One story portrays this well:

> When we found a house, I called them and asked about "how much money is it to rent this house?" They say it is $1000. And then they say, "each person pays three times more." I will not see this house. Three thousand dollars per month… where can I get this money? These people

say, "I'm sorry, then you cannot rent." But they say this house costs $1000 per month and now
they ask for $3000. I have to earn $3000 for my wife and for me.

While many might read this story and think there is simply a misunderstanding occurring, we ask such readers to consider that in fact this is a not uncommon example of blatant discrimination by jacking up the price which landlords think they can practice with impunity. In the area of Section 8 housing choice vouchers, landlords refuse to rent to those who are Section 8 eligible:

A lot of homeowners don't want section 8 people living in their housings and they are kind of
stuck in moving into bad communities or worse areas where their children fall through the
cracks. It is very, very sad to see.

The recent legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of holding a Section 8 voucher is a positive step, but will only be as protective if information is made available about such protections, and if violations are prosecuted.

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.
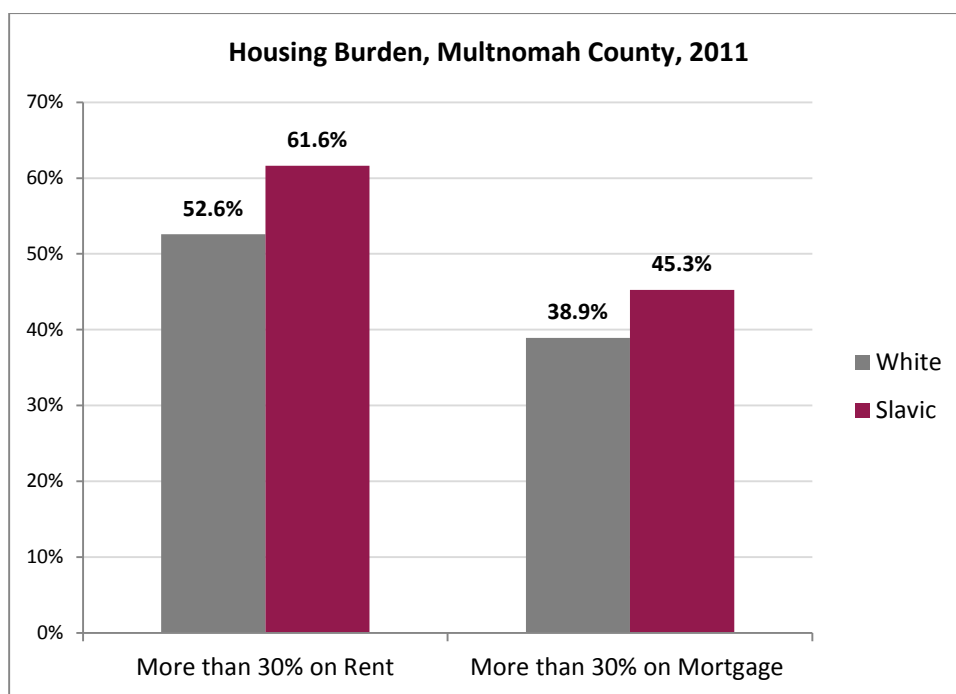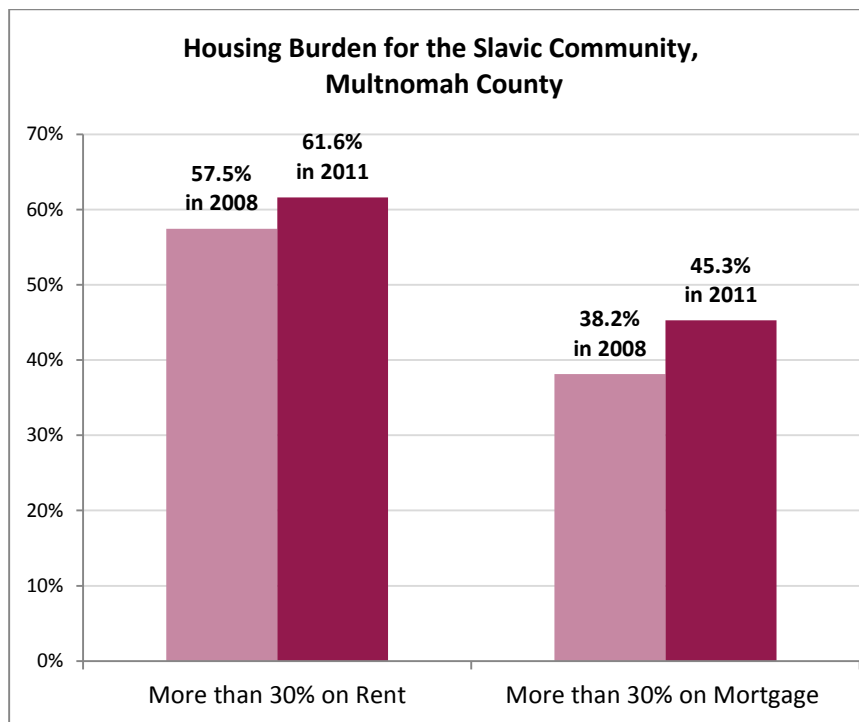

Housing Burden, Multnomah County, 2011

Source: Author's calculations of custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

One's ability to pay the bills each month depends on an array of factors including incomes and expenditures. The largest of expenses is housing. When this chews up a majority of income, it is very difficult to pay the rest of one's bills. Housing for this community is further troubled by the very high number of people who spend not "just" 30% of their income on rent and mortgage but 50% or more on

such costs. Among renters who spend more than 30% of income on rent, almost half (46%) spend more than half of their income on rent. Among those who pay mortgages and are already imperiled by paying much of their income on housing (45.3%), close to half of them (42%) pay more than 50% of their incomes on housing costs. This is a sign of deep vulnerability for a large portion of the Slavic community.

And this vulnerability in being able to afford housing is deteriorating. The chart below shows that more Slavic families are housing burdened compared with three years ago.

Housing Burden for the Slavic Community, Multnomah County

Source: Author's calculations of custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011. Data for 2008 were generated by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, also from the American Community Survey, 2008.

Other features of housing are home ownership levels and housing equity. For those in the Slavic community, home ownership rates are similar to those of Whites, at 54.4% while those of Whites are at 60.3%. This translates into an 11% lower rate of homeownership.
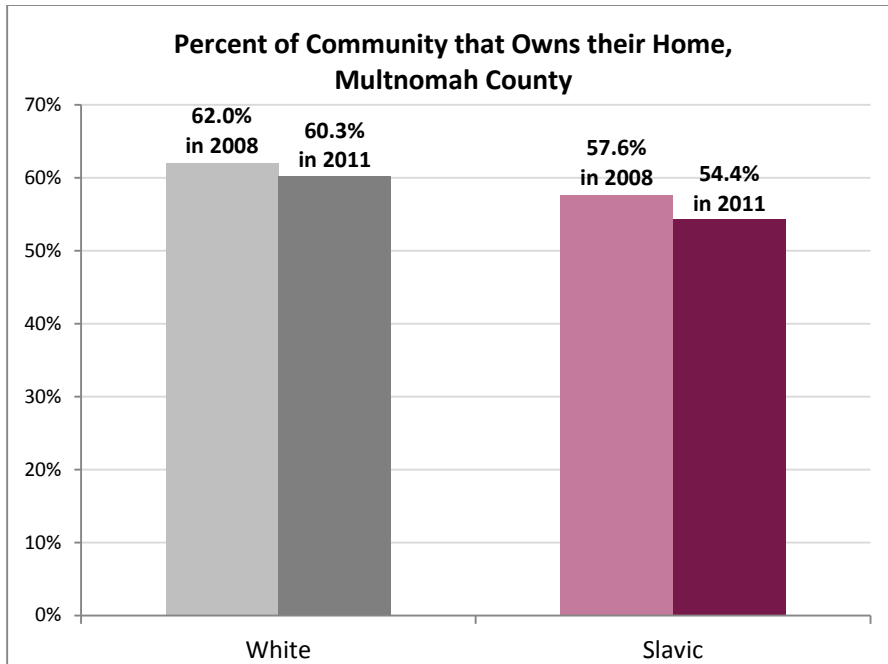
**Percent of Community that Owns their Home,
Multnomah County**

Source: Author's calculations of custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

The value of one's home used to be significantly higher than Whites across the Slavic community – just three years ago. But this economy has created a much harder hit for Slavic homeowners as they have lost, on average a total of $100,441 on every home owned. This is four times higher than the losses suffered by White homeowners who average a loss of $24,142 per home.

**Value of Owned Homes, Multnomah County
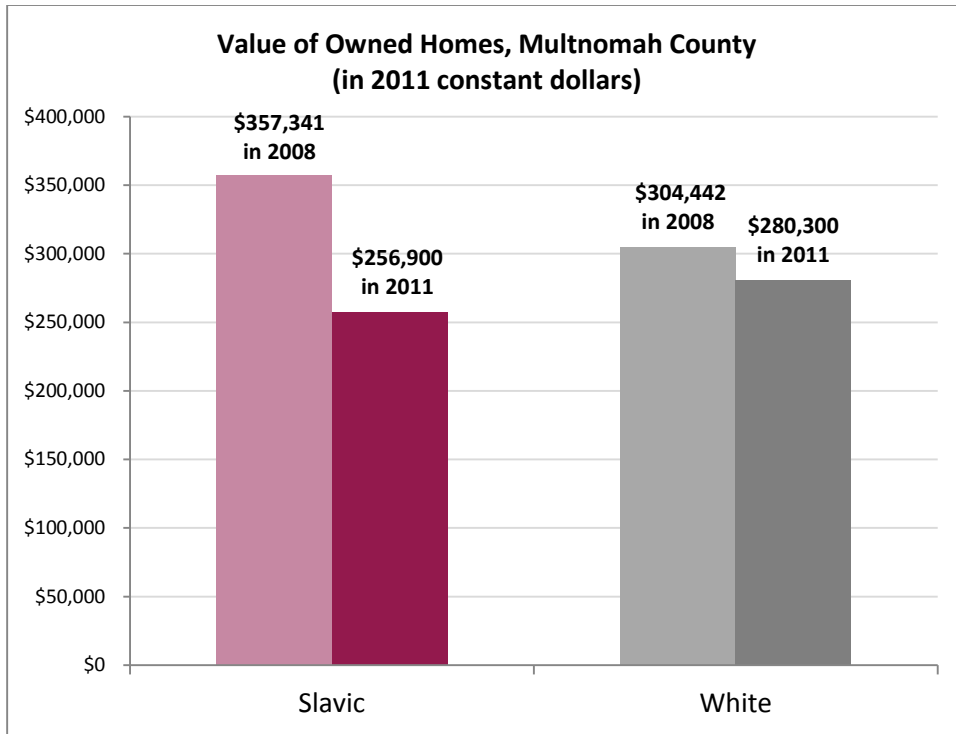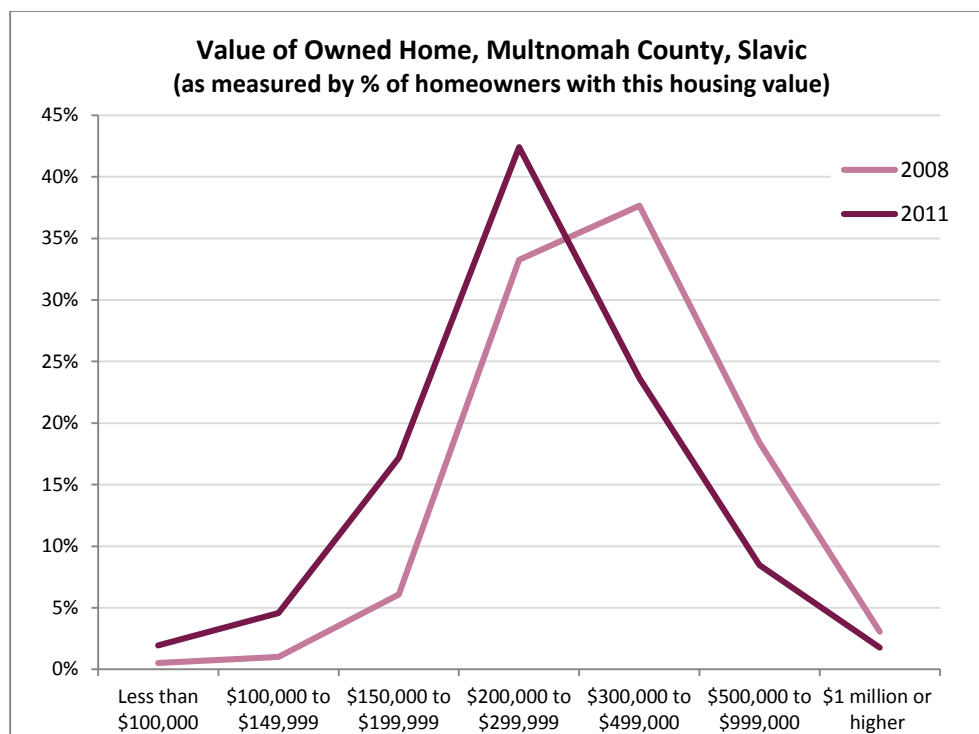(in 2011 constant dollars)**

Source: Author's calculations of custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011. Data for 2008 were generated by the Population Research Center, Portland State University, also from the American Community Survey, 2008.

Think of the devastation this is causing for the families involved. Home ownership is the largest asset-creating engine for the middle class, meaning that it the primary way that middle class families build a nest egg for retirement, for passing onto their children as inheritance and/or for securing loans for going back to school or starting a business. Disappeared is a third of the value of one's largest asset – gone into thin air almost overnight. Coupled with shrinking incomes, skyrocketing poverty, diminishing education levels, and curtailed access to income supports in retirement, this is a community that is losing its fragile hold in the economic ladder.

The details of this shift in the values of owned homes are shown below. We see an erosion of higher value homes and a rise in home values at the lower end. Remember, too, that the overall homeownership rate has dropped considerably to just 54%.

Value of Owned Home, Multnomah County, Slavic
(as measured by % of homeowners with this housing value)

Source: Author's calculations of custom data extractions by ECONorthwest from the American Community Survey, 2011.

Community members voiced abundant concerns about housing. Families are large in the Slavic community and needing five bedrooms is the norm rather than an exception. Many families have been pressured into home ownership when there is little ability to pay for it. Many promises were made to families that their mortgages were affordable when indeed they were not. But still it is frequently the only route to get enough bedrooms for family members. So, attention to this issue is pressing. Access to affordable rental housing is also constrained by lack of enough supply. This is coupled with fear of losing one's housing if found to be violating residency expectations, and there is fear of being in unsafe housing conditions because one has had to opt for lousy accommodations driven by financial need. Coupled with a pervasive language struggle, and (as noted earlier) not infrequent incidents of discrimination and intentional violation of equal housing rights, access to safe and affordable housing is an immediate need.

Child Welfare and Parenting

Parents make a wide array of choices in raising their children. There are an abundance of cultural variations across communities. We will share the perspectives of parents in this section. Parenting is very difficult in the USA for parents who expect their voice to be respected by their children. Respect in this context is automatic – one that is afforded to parents by their children. Unfortunately, dominant patterns of parenting in the USA are ones that emphasize children's choices and rights. For parents, they

find that messages given to children by the media and by school teachers undermine their control and discipline over their children. Parents expect to be respected, and expect that their voice is heeded – if it is not, then corporal punishment may result. Community service providers told us that *"physical punishment is common in the community."*

There is a dominant discourse in the USA that Slavic parents are unable to control their children who have had their tastes for independence fostered by exposure to the American way of life. Framed as a "culture clash... Slavic kids find freedom to go astray... and some parents don't want to assimilate or learn English... they isolated themselves to sustain their faith and survive."[28] Such discourse of the unruly child and the floundering parent is one that angers the Slavic community. Missing from this telling of the narrative is that US society has stripped Slavic parents of their capacity to discipline and control their children, and it is this diminishment of parental control that is to blame for high levels of youth misbehavior rather than an inadequacy of parental skills to control their children.

Numerous parents told us of their fear in both losing control of their children, and also their fear of having the police and child welfare notified and being investigated. Parents are deeply frustrated with teachers who, in their opinion, are telling their children that they can't be touched by their parents: *"rights-based education in the schools is problem"* says one parent. A further description of the dynamic helps us to understand how parents have been undermined:

> *Russian families raise kids to help family and then you go to school here with very different attitude which leads to cruelty charges. Government agencies misunderstand the discipline as abuse. This is a big problem in the community and children are removed from their families. Families in Russia brought up to assist, especially elders, not to talk back, were very disciplined. The whole community was watching so kids were more mindful, and misbehavior had consequences. Parents here are not in control... children don't listen anymore.*

One of the unfortunate consequences of this dynamic is that many in the Slavic community are less likely to want to become teachers: "*they are scared to go for teaching. They can fire you. Students can do anything to you.... teachers would be on the side of the students. That's why our people won't go teaching.*" Some have an openness to teach young children, but "*once they get to high school, it is almost a safety issue. You have to risk your life to be there. Nothing that you say is... they don't abide by that...*"
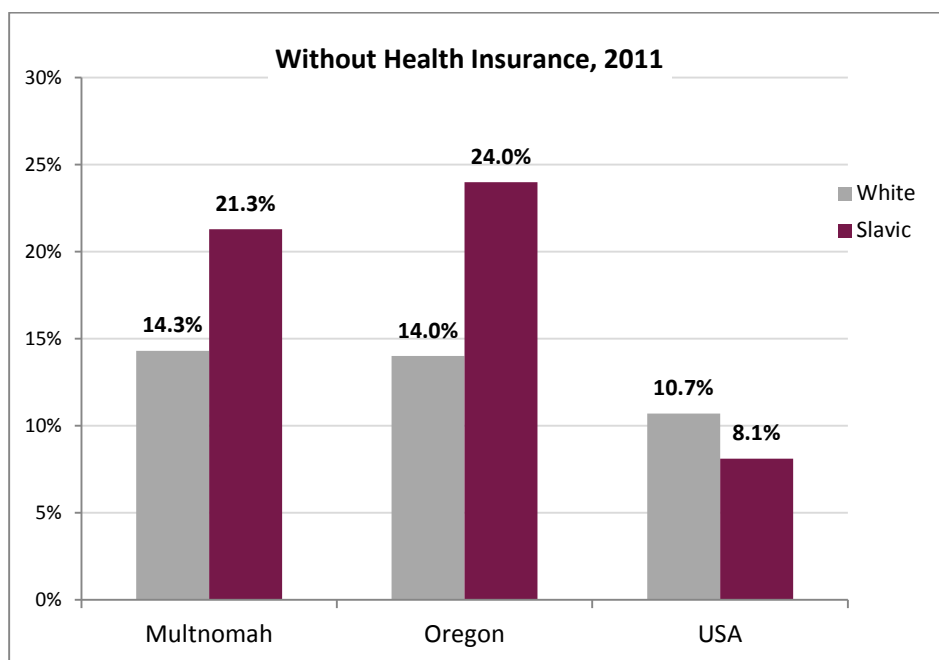
Challenges face young men in their emergence into adulthood. One service provider shared that parental and community expectations exist for male youths to "*explore, to try out different things, and to do stupid things... and then to learn and grow out of it. They are seen as a little wild.*" Such is a typically pathway into adulthood and one that in US culture can be devastating for their future. In the USA, there are few exceptions made for behaviors such as fighting, reckless driving, drinking and driving, or challenging authority figures. These can lead to job loss, criminal involvement and being suspended and expelled from school, despite the fact that such behavior is perceived to be a normal developmental pathway for male youths.

Add to this undermining of parenting practices the histories of life in the USSR. Child welfare experiences in the former Soviet Union were universally terrible. Some older families in Multnomah county have sometimes suffered the permanent loss of their children to state welfare systems in Russia with children being placed in orphanages until they were old enough to leave. And the accentuated fear of contact with government officials – and a history of traumatic engagement with the state – and we have what could be called a "perfect storm" for distrust and very few options for engagement about parenting , parents' rights and the protection of children.

Much distrust must be unpacked if the Slavic community is to be supported in their parenting. Confidence in one's own parenting skills is essential for children's wellbeing as well as community health and resilience. They have effective tools to do so and must be respected for their use of corporal punishment as it is an essential ingredient in their parenting skills. It takes a rare advocate willing to tell parents that they are safe in using non-injurious forms of punishment.

Health and Health Care

Getting care when one is sick or injured is essential for health. More than one-in-five in Multnomah county lack the ability to get health care, and across Oregon that number deteriorates to one-in-four. This represents narrow access to health care, at levels that locally are 50% worse than Whites, slipping to 70% worse when we consider the whole of Oregon.

Without Health Insurance, 2011

Location	White	Slavic
Multnomah	14.3%	21.3%
Oregon	14.0%	24.0%
USA	10.7%	8.1%

Source: Author's calculations from American Community Survey data extractions by ECONorthwest. The USA data points are drawn from the ACS for the Russian community.

Despite the fact that Oregon is a leader in providing health care for children through its Healthy Kids initiative, abundant numbers of Slavic parents are deeply suspicious of the program. When parents are told that it is free, they do not believe that it will not cost them anything. They fully anticipate being approached in six months or a year and being told they now need to repay the costs of care. From their perspective, *"in America, after all, nothing is free."* The chance of getting Slavic children enrolled will increase with Russian-speaking workers from the community who can answer questions and debunk myths of this type of health insurance.

How many Slavic children are enrolled in Healthy Kids? No one knows, because data on language and ethnicity is not collected by the Oregon Health Authority's Healthy Kids program.

It is essential to expand the data collection practices in health services. Significant advocacy efforts were undertaken in 2012 and 2013 to gain support for expanded requirements to collect information on the racial, ethnic and linguistic identify of those who use health and human services. The passage of House Bill 2134, "Race, ethnicity, language and disability data standards and collection" aims to improve our ability to understand the ways disparities are experienced in health and human services. At present, intake forms typically only ask if one is a member of the following communities: Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, African American and White. No other marginalized racial identities are identified, nor even if clients are better served by another language.

Several members of the Coalition of Communities of Color participated in the Rules Advisory Committee to help craft the details of data requirements in this new Bill, and Slavic identify and language preferences were integrated into the Rules, although the final version still needs to be enacted into law. It is time to ensure that a full set of racial and ethnic identifiers be used, in addition to preferred language of communication, as well as one's refugee status. Refugee status indicates important connections to mental health challenges. While much of the Slavic population is now born in the USA (69% as cited earlier in this report), almost ⅓ of the community are likely to have arrived as refugees. And we know that the impact of refugee experience lives on in families and it can have a continued impact on their mental health and family functioning. Examples include having painful memories, continued trauma, desire to forget the past coupled with a desire to reclaim a more ideal time, loss of family members and extended family supports, and a new dependency on children for translation and for news of their lives and the broader social world.[29] For the many in the Slavic community who have left Portland to find work and/or affordable housing outside of the urban area, few supports exist and alienation tends to deepen. This is especially true for families who leave their kin behind. Kinship ties within the Slavic community are a major dimension of both instrumental and emotional support for immigrants and refugees.[30]

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates 10% of refugees have chronic mental health issues, another 10% face deep social challenges, and the rest experience significant distress and suffering.[31] The WHO says fully half need mental health supports.[32] Mental health challenges exist in every population, but the stress of having lived under the violence, persecution and discrimination as a Christian in the

former Soviet Union has taken its toll on the community. Mental health challenges are enduring.

When speaking of Slavic patients, one health care provider in northern California states:
> The patients grew up under Stalin. They know forced labor and torture as well as folk medicine, superstition and domestic violence. They are at risk for heart disease, diabetes, high-blood pressure and obesity. They aren't likely to venture far to seek medical care and need a place that understands their special needs.[33]

But what happens when our Slavic community seeks health care in conventional settings? In the vast majority of situations, they enter health care settings as outsiders and receive care that is primarily formulated to meet the needs of the mainstream population that is White, English-speaking and able to communicate in English. Entering these doors as outsiders to this norm is daunting, with poor outcomes. The US Surgeon General says most health services are ripe with mistrust, stigma, too high costs, and clinician bias when they serve communities of color. [34] This means our health providers serve White people better, and a worse job serving people they do not have much in common with. To address these shortcomings, support for a Bill that integrates cultural competency in health care was advocated by a sizable number of local advocacy groups, including the Coalition of Communities of Color. Success was achieved in the 2013 legislative session, with the policy details likely to include annual training requirements. The Office of Equity and Inclusion (within the Oregon Health Authority) has similarly successfully advocated for cultural competency to be at the heart of the new Coordinated Care Organizations being used to implement the Affordable Care Act. The degree of adherence to such requirements remains to be demonstrated. These are promising signs of legislative initiatives to improve health equity.

What do we know about health outcomes for people who communicate in English as their second language? Consider these challenges: describing your symptoms is tough, and so too is asking questions and understanding instructions. Consider too the challenges with filling out forms, understanding consent documents, reading the labels on medications, accessing health promotion and prevention guides, keeping appointments, and even finding the right locations to receive services.[35] Not only will this limit the adequacy of health care received, but it will create conditions ripe for misdiagnosis, mistreatment and reluctance to return for more services.

Sometimes the Slavic community rubs up against assumptions that they will be demanding and aggressive. While this is the edge of a damaging stereotype about Russians, there is an element of truth that illustrates cultural norms as described here: "It was so hard to get something from the government or the authorities (in the former Soviet Union). It influenced our personalities too."[36] And yet, such stereotypes must be guarded against for they can impede service providers' willingness to take comments as they are intended. As one community member voiced, "I don't like to have extra x-rays – we are from Chernobyl. I tried to explain, and I couldn't communicate it."[37]

Research on health care and health disparities faced by the Slavic community is very limited. We can

predict, however, that disparities are pronounced and that culturally competent care is lacking. Understanding the culture and the history of the Slavic community is the first step in providing culturally competent care. In the USA's first federally qualified health center to address the health needs of the Slavic community (in Sacramento, CA), the following helps provide the beginnings of knowing that context:

> Like most immigrants, those from Russia and other Eastern European countries come to the region in search of better opportunities for their families, but unlike most others, many come to escape religious persecution and government oppression. Children as young as ten and eleven were frequently relegated to forced labor. Dissent or minor infractions led to the disappearance (often permanently) of beloved family members. Ten and twenty year periods of forced labor and isolation in the gulags were all too common, and the resulting survival mechanisms for these families include maintaining a very insular mentality. The old country fear of authority and anything associated with "the State" still permeates everyday thinking. The backbone and main support for this society is their church affiliation. On average, church members attend church services a minimum of 15 to 20 hours a week. Church leadership is consulted on all matters relating to family, and integration into mainstream America has often been secondary to more traditional values.[38]

Health screenings are underused by the Slavic community. While a few studies have confirmed this, narratives are pronounced about the absence of a supporting culture in early detection. The Slavic community rarely participates in screenings for breast cancer, pap smears[39] and colorectal cancer.[40] There are some age differences being noted among young women who are more inclined to get screenings.[41] But as a primarily evangelical Christian community, there is a pronounced belief that "*things are in God's hands... and even with a breast cancer diagnosis, Christian women will pray instead of seeking medical treatment.*"

As outsiders, the Slavic community tends to make few visits to existing health clinics, even if they have insurance.[42] What is surprising, however, is the myth that suggests they overuse such services, but this was mostly debunked when reviewed in the literature.[43] The existence of culturally-specific services, however, has been found to increase clinic visits among the Slavic community.[44] Given that the Slavic community is our largest refugee-based community in Oregon, creating a culturally-specific health service to address their needs would be an important addition to the service landscape. At the very least, improved cultural responsiveness and cultural competency must be added to existing services. Added to existing services must be expanded translation and interpretation services that must exist from start to close of health service encounters, so as to ensure that access is maximized, communication with health providers understood, instructions and follow up directions clearly comprehended, signage on site understood, prevention materials translated and follow up activities also being rooted in health literacy and accessibility.

Without health literacy, the following patterns exist: lower use of prevention services, reduced ability to understand medication, decreased health, increased use of emergency care, higher rates of

hospitalization, increased mortality rates and heightened racial health disparities.[45]

Additionally, health providers need knowledge of and support for traditional healing approaches of the Slavic community, mental health services where the Slavic history is deeply understood, and deeper cultural appreciation to the characteristics of the community. Within the Slavic community, heavy reliance on home remedies is valued in conjunction with western medicines.[46] Cultural norms include profound distrust of the state that manifests, among other things, in reluctance to share personal identifying information, and this logically extends to health providers as well. Delivery of services by members of the Slavic community is important, though perhaps less important for our youth.[47]

Without Russian-speaking providers, without culturally-responsive services, and with low levels of health insurance, community members are known to turn to self-diagnosis and self-medication. Not infrequently do people "*bring medicine back from Russia.*" So too there are *"underground Russian medical practices… and many medical professionals work underground."* Rather than being treated warily, the community asks for such doctors (certified in Russia but not recognized as a doctor in the USA) to be supported in achieving legitimacy in the USA health care system: *"Can we create a law that would allow these doctors to provide official services to those who want his service because they understand Russian medicine?"*

Attention to recruitment of the Slavic community into health professions is of equivalent need. Health providers at all levels need to include this community as staff, clinicians, teaching faculty, administrators, advisors, policy makers and organizational leaders and developers. Suggested recruitment paths include promoting health careers as early as the 4th grade, cultivating candidate pools to include the Slavic community, and expanding the supply of internships, residencies, and mentoring support to emerging Slavic health professionals. [48] So too the recognition of foreign credentials is important to diversifying our health provider workforce.

We can expect that health equity will improve across Oregon as two important requirements have been integrated into the Oregon Health Authority's contracts with Coordinated Care Organizations who will provide health care for many newly insured Oregonians. The first is that that actions and policies cannot have a negative impact on a group of people, and the second is that all patients are to have equal access "regardless of language, disability, culture."[49] For services that are funded federally, there is an additional requirement under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act that says, "No person on the basis of race or national origin shall be denied access to federally-funded programs." Secondly, we are also optimistic about the gains that the two Bills on improved data collection and cultural competency will create for health equity. Ensuring that Slavic identification is incorporated into these Bills is essential for the Slavic community to be visible and its disparities, strengths and challenges identified.

Finally, we urge those in health and human services to invite Slavic leaders to the table. It is community leaders who hold the most important insights into what policies and practices will work with the Slavic community. Increasingly, this is becoming a "best practice" for building culturally-responsive services.[50]

Human and Social Service Engagement

An abundance of family stressors exist for the Slavic community in their engagement with systems of authority. To begin, as an immigrant community, the Slavic community has lost their cultural knowledge of how to navigate human service systems. Word-of-mouth is the most frequent pathway to assistance, along with the existing service supports from Immigration and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), Russian Oregon Social Services, and Lutheran Community Services Northwest. Significant supports are also provided through the Slavic churches, and an abundance of resources are made available, including some emergency income supports. That said, this is a community made vulnerable by poverty, unemployment, difficulty in accessing better jobs, housing burden and limited language proficiency in English.

The impact of ongoing fears of dealing with government authority figures and systems is a feature of engagement with civic institutions that cannot be understated. Slavic community members do not want to come to the attention of authorities, and this compounds difficulties with understanding issues facing the community.

This section of our report would typically be full of systems-related issues such as patterns of disparities in the juvenile justice system, the criminal justice system, food bank use and access, lending institutions such as banks, public housing access levels, homelessness numbers and more. But given that these systems do not track or even identify what is happening for the Slavic community, we have nothing to report. Even at the national level, we were not able to find reports on these issues.

It is unfortunate that we have meager data to share in this section. But such is the status of our institution's research practices.

A small but important minority of Slavic students have been stopped by the police in the past. One-in-eight have been stopped by the police. Again, we have no data from our youth and adult justice systems on this issue, and this data gives us only the most minimal of starting points to bringing the Slavic population into focus.

**Slavic Leadership Students
who have ever been stopped by the police, 2011**

Yes, 12%

No, 88%
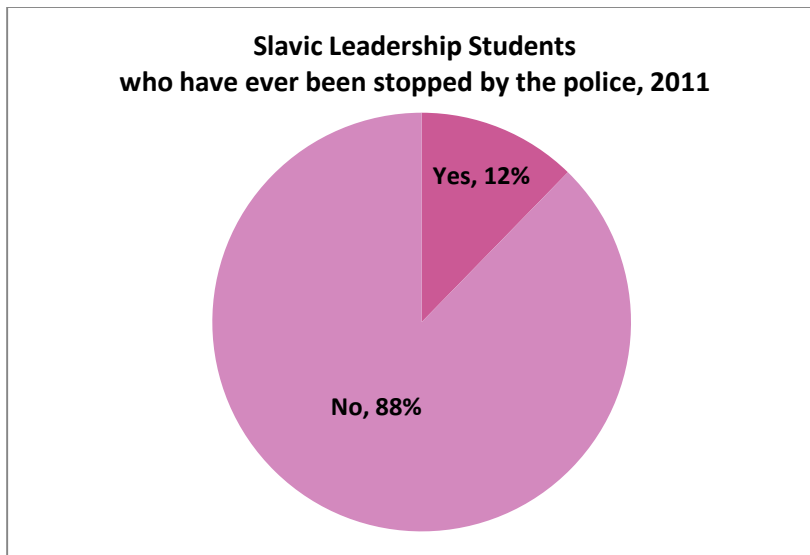
Source: Slavic Student Survey, 2011.

We have heard from service providers that they believe a large percentage of Slavic men are incarcerated. But nothing was able to be confirmed in this area.

We also have no data on the hiring practices in our human service sector or an understanding of whether or not the Slavic community is attaining a semblance of parity or if disparities are narrowing or widening.

It is essential that data intake forms allow for the Slavic community to be identified and that standard research practices be improved so that the Slavic community can become visible as a community seeking to be equitably served by our public services. We also ask for the same to exist where public dollars are contracted and subcontracted out. Accountability for serving the community is essential.

Civic Engagement

While no hard data is available to detail levels of civic engagement, the Slavic community views itself to be relatively disengaged from civic participation. Former Mayor Tom Potter called the community the "sleeping beast" as a result of the large numbers in the community and the potential it holds to have a political impact. At present, community members *"don't believe my voice will be counted."* Accordingly, participation levels are low.

In our interviews with community service providers, this issue is understood in terms of the history brought over from the former Soviet Union. The dominant culture is one of compliance and a stance of being fearful of the state. There is a deep and fundamental distrust of all things political and all things run by the state. When one is persecuted for being politically active, repression of political engagement occurs.

More optimism, however, exists when considering Slavic youth. There is hope for the potential of youth to be more engaged, with the following sentiment expressed, *"our youth are not so repressed. They are braver… they have less history of gulags and concentration camps."* One such manifestation is the annual Russian-speaking youth leadership conference held in Portland. In its 17th year, this conference draws together more than 250 students and is the largest such conference in the USA. Its goal is to support pride in students' native language and culture, to develop leadership skills, and to promote community development. Add to this the Slavic Leadership Development program run by the Coalition of Communities of Color (and financed by Meyer Memorial Trust) and engagement can be redefined as "emergent" instead of "sleeping."

The church is a site for leadership to be expressed. With a community that is estimated to be in the range of 90% being church-going members, the church becomes akin to a community center that can provide financial support for those in dire need, a site for community education on issues of importance, a place for language instruction and an organizing structure for youth to get involved in camps. The church becomes a huge support for families and it is likely, over time, to play an increasing role in connecting the Slavic community to external resources and supports.

Comparison with King County

In this report, we continue the tradition of comparing how a neighboring jurisdiction fares to that of Multnomah county. This allows us to determine the degree of specificity that is likely to exist in the challenges facing the Slavic community. If similarly challenging situations were to exist in a nearby region, we would wonder if the problem was more of a regional feature and less of a county-specific problem. What do we find for the Slavic community? In every measure, the Slavic community is doing worse locally than in King county. Locally, the Slavic community is more rent burdened, more unemployed, less able to access management and professional jobs, less likely to have a university degree, and its children are more likely to be poor – in fact, double child poverty rates exist in Multnomah county (both for Slavic children and white children) than in King county. And the community that own homes are likely to own less valuable homes.
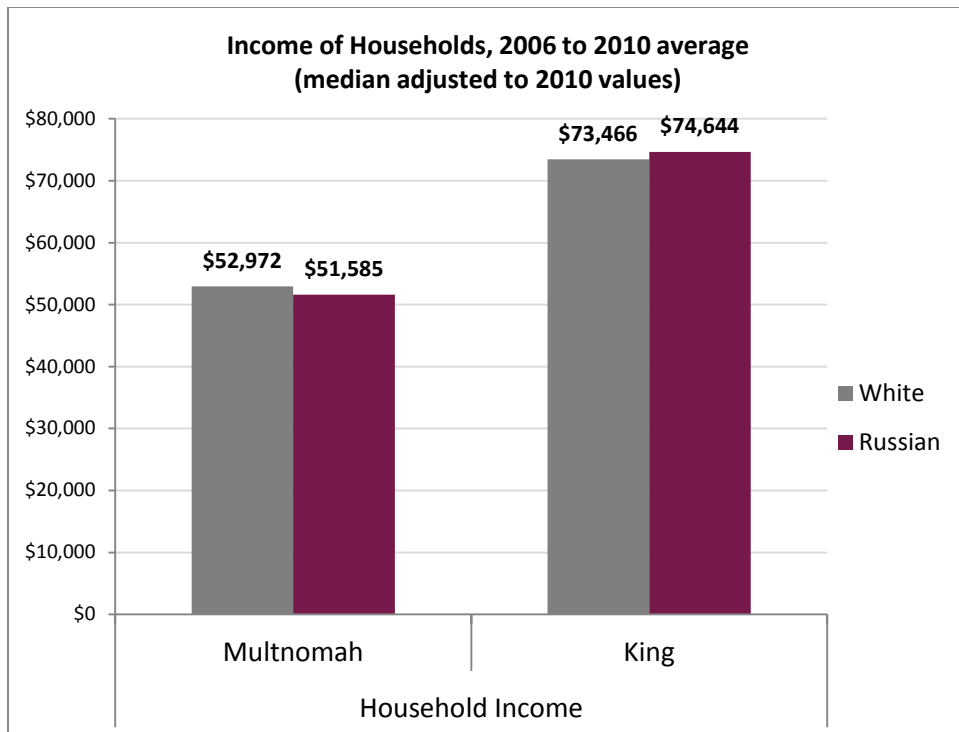
What of the levels of disparities between Slavic and White communities? In all but one measure, disparities are worse locally than in King county. The lives of Slavics and Whites are more separate occupationally and economically. They are narrower in terms of holding a university degree with the gap reduced to 5½ percentage points instead of 11 in King county. But this is not really good news because attainment of a university degree is universally perceived to be positive – so the Slavic community in Multnomah county has not much surpassed the White community while in King county the Slavic community much surpasses that of Whites. Remember as well that when we narrow our lens on more current data (earlier in this report), the Slavic community has lost its advantage in this area. Please note that this variation cannot be explained by citizenship status, for in fact Multnomah county has more native born Russians than King county. This defuses a possible explanation that more immigrants and

refugees could explain the differences. Multnomah county has fewer immigrants and refugees than King county.

Comparison with King County, 2006-2010 Averages
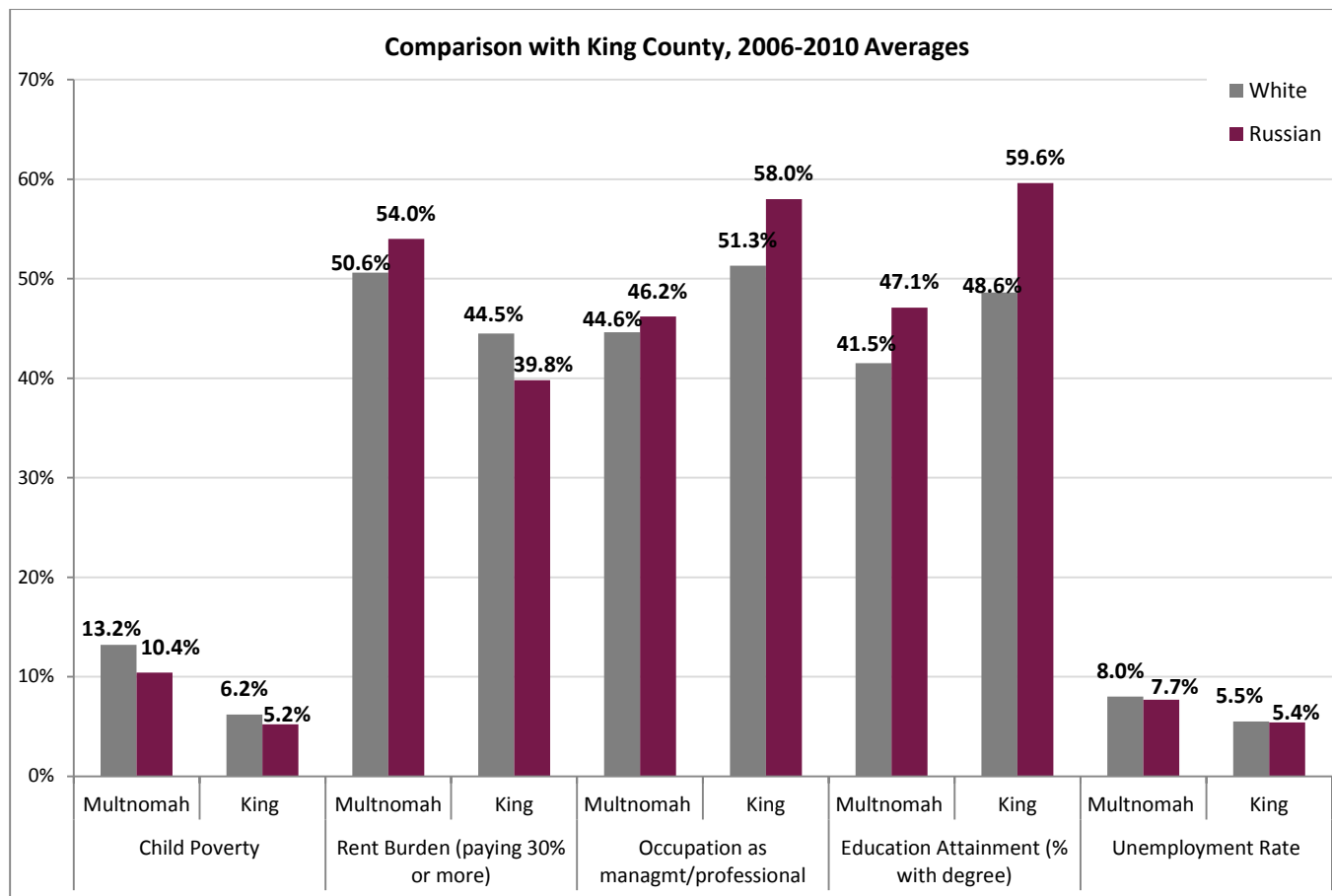
Source: Author's calculations of data from the American Community Survey, 2006-2010.[51]

Below we see the household incomes of the Russian and White community. While there are very small disparities in both groups, the direction of the difference is inverted. Russian households in Multnomah county earn less than those in King county, and the gap between the two regions is larger in Multnomah county (as a percentage of the value of income).

**Income of Households, 2006 to 2010 average
(median adjusted to 2010 values)**

	Multnomah	King
White	$52,972	$73,466
Russian	$51,585	$74,644

Household Income

Source: Author's calculations from American Community Survey, 2006 to 2010.

Over the last few years since the release of our first report, *"Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsetting Profile"* we have frequently been asked to explain why conditions facing communities of color are worse in Multnomah county than in King county. Here is the Coalition's response: Multnomah county faces considerable challenge to naming racism and identifying institutional racism, and its corollary white privilege. Partly the cause is its progressive identity – for if we are such an exemplary region, then we can't possibly be racist, discriminatory or inequitable. It is erroneously believed that our abundant goodwill and progressive politics buffers us from such outcomes. So, as a region, we rarely went looking for these data. In the case of the Slavic community, this is the first time such data have been collected. Second, we are a state that has a dreadful history of institutional racism for many communities of color. While this does not explicitly address the Slavic community, the depth of inequities has historically failed to raise either attention or commitment to reform. Third, in comparison with King county, Multnomah county has not sufficiently invested in the creation of and support for culturally-specific services. Communities of color continue to be primarily served by mainstream organizations and their status as outsiders to these organizations remains today.

As a result, the Slavic community faces a dominant discourse that sustains its invisibility and marginality, and a service and institutional context (including education and employment) that continues to ignore inequities and disparities. Community members remain as outsiders to mainstream society and suffer the consequences of services and institutions that are not ready to take issues of racism and exclusion seriously. This neglect serves to increase bonds of attempted self-sufficiency within the community. People try to take care of each other and are able to make their money stretch far, supplemented by

frequent growing of small gardens. The community is resourceful, trying to patch together enough resources and supports to take care of all Slavic people. In today's economic times where the Slavic community has suffered massive losses, this is an act of necessity.

Synthesis of Disparities across Time

While too little data makes a full review possible, we are able to share the changes facing the community between 2008 and 2011. The results are troubling. In fifteen measures, disparities have worsened for thirteen, and the remaining two have had disparities narrow, but not for the reasons that we desire – these narrowed disparities are due to a more rapidly deteriorating situation for Whites. The picture is thus universally dreadful and this economy has created much worse outcomes for the Slavic community in all areas we were able to investigate.

		Size of Disparity 2008 % worse for Slavic	Size of Disparity 2011 % worse for Slavic	Direction of Change from 2008 to 2011
Occupation				
	Management & professional jobs	0.2%	94.1%	⬇
	Service jobs	27.7%	43.1%	⬇
Poverty				
	All Individals	31.6%	49.3%	⬇
	Child poverty	25.6%	89.7%	⬇
	Family poverty, kids <18	5.8%	10.3%	⬇
Housing				
	Rent Burden	6.2%	17.2%	⬇
	Mortgage Burden	-6.0%	16.4%	⬇
	Homeownership	2.8%	5.9%	⬇
	Home value (owners only)	-26%	6.4%	⬇
Education				
	Attainment of a university degree	2.3%	68.4%	⬇
Incomes				
	Households	-5.1%	12.9%	⬇
	All families	9.6%	7.7%	⬆
	Married couple families	18.6%	63.4%	⬇
	Female single parent	73.2%	30.9%	⬆
Unemployment				
	Unemployment rate	55.6%	73.3%	⬇

⬆ Indicates disparities are improving but due to more rapid deterioration for Whites

Policy Recommendations

This section contains two sets of policy recommendations. The first are those policy elements that flow from the above set of concerns and disparities identified in this report and that are specific for the Slavic community. Following this set of recommendations, we repeat the recommendations being advocated for by the Coalition of Communities of Color and advance our support for these reforms.

a. Slavic-Specific Recommendations

Data Systems

As the reader is sure to have noticed, we give priority to ensuring that data systems are improved so that Slavic experiences – disparities and achievements – are visible. Current practices render the community invisible.

We urge all levels of government, foundations, not-for-profits, and private industry to do one of four things:
1. Add "Slavic" as a racial category to "identifying information" forms
2. Broaden the ethnicity category to include "Slavic" alongside the Latino identifiers typically included in that section
3. Routinely use an "ancestry" question that will collect information about the origins of those who use such services
4. Use a language category and ask people to identify their first language or language spoken at home. This will capture most of the community.

Our preferred solution is to add "Slavic" as a racial category. We also amplify the Coalition of Communities of Color policy recommendation #8 (Research practices that make the invisible visible) and #10 (Disclose race and ethnicity data for mainstream service providers) to ensure that funding reaches the community and that sufficient depth of research is conducted so as to be able to examine the equity issues attached to public dollars.

Language Supports

Navigating education, employment and health care without strong English language skills places one at risk for an abundance of negative outcomes, including early death. The magnitude of the impacts cannot be overstated. The following are needed policy- and programmatic-level improvements:
- Ensure that language translation and cultural interpretation is available for members of the Slavic community to access essential services.
- Expanded interpretation support (beyond merely language translation) needs to be available when there are urgent needs for eliminating language barriers. Effective phone-based systems are an important step to ensure that Slavic community members can be understood when engaging with both emergency and non-emergency needs.

- Solve the effectiveness of English Language Learner programs in all our schools, and comply with federal regulations across all school districts.
- Provide ELL programs in local neighborhoods with childcare supports so that Slavic parents and the elderly are able to access top quality programs. Adults – particularly mothers with child-rearing responsibilities – need to be able to continue providing for their children while engaged in such programs. The current emphasis on delivering language training and citizenship programs through the libraries is not sufficient.

Naturalization
A sizable portion of the Slavic community has not received US citizenship. Outreach to this community is important, particularly to ensure that they have access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to protect their wellbeing in retirement years. Finding subsidies to lower the barrier that the $680 application fee creates is a companion requirement.

Culturally-Responsive Services
While community-specific services are the preferred model of service delivery, the majority of services used by the Slavic community happen in mainstream environments. While we do not know the specifics of disparities in institutions such as justice, child welfare, health, higher education, early childhood education, banking and more, we suspect the disparities in evidence in this report will be experienced in those systems as well.

It is time to ensure that institutions cease to function as sites for whiteness and white privilege to be inscribed. The foundation for culturally-responsive services is to involve Slavic community leaders at policy and administrative tables – to inform the policy, the culture and the practices, with a heavy emphasis on accountability and transparency practices to ensure that disparities are measured, reforms given priority where disparities are measured, and that outcomes are made transparent to the Slavic community so that they can decide whether they want to make use of services that have differential outcomes for their community. Community input is simultaneously essential for validating the usefulness and appropriateness of service-level interventions. These types of collaborations are one of the cornerstones of becoming culturally-responsive.

Language accessibility is essential for the Slavic community. Translation into Russian and Ukrainian (the two top languages in the Slavic community) in all points of service (web-based and print communications, engagement with service providers, take-home print communications and follow-up services).

Additional organizational reforms include:
- Adopt racial equity policies that commit the organization to cultural responsiveness and racial equity
- Conduct routine self-assessments of barriers to effective service use and service outcomes, including stakeholder satisfaction surveys

- Ensure the workforce includes Slavic community members in both staff and governance structures
- Ensure workers are equipped to effectively serve the Slavic community, and held accountable to high performance standards
- Data systems ensure the visibility of the Slavic community, the disparities faced in services, and that such metrics are used to inform continuous quality improvement.

A publication is forthcoming from the Center to Advance Racial Equity and the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) to establish standards for culturally-responsive service delivery. Look for it to be published on the CCC's website by mid-2014.

A final dimension of culturally-responsive services needs to be specified for the Slavic community. The community is in need of rights-based information, as well as service knowledge. Abundant information on available resources and information on how to navigate an array of services is needed. When one has not grown up in the area, knowledge about rights and resources needs to be shared more intentionally and more effectively with Slavic community members. Priorities include legal rights, health care navigation, and parenting rights and responsibilities.

Health Care
The above priorities to expand culturally-responsive services extend to health care, and the importance of effective and readily available translation supports are key parts to this goal. While community members who we spoke with did not voice concerns about the price of co-pays for the insured, they did in other venues. In a gathering of Slavic seniors, there was an emphasis on expanded physical and mental health supports and explicit requests to have service providers decrease co-pays for eye and dental care.[52]

Navigating health care when one faces language barriers and when one is an outsider to the US health system is very difficult. Ensuring that health care systems become fully culturally-competent is of pressing priority. This includes language access, health literacy, staffing responsiveness, cultural understanding, accountability to the community, meaningful consultations with the community to ensure relevance of services and removal of barriers to services, adequate research practices so that disparities can be identified, and support for traditional healing customs.

Employment
Economic development investments need to be coordinated at all levels of government. Today's economic recession has been much more harmful to communities of color, and also to low income earners, to youth, and to those without strong English language skills. While we do not have explicit data of its impact on immigrants and refugees, we do know that the Slavic community faces devastating economic conditions in this economy. Economic development needs to give priority to job creation for those at low incomes, low education, and minimal English speakers. While typical economic development strategies have historically focused on high tech jobs and jobs in the sustainability

industry, the Slavic community needs jobs at the lower end of the economic ladder, along with job training supports for moving up the ladder. Job training supports are inaccessible if they are unpaid, or even costly, or if they are not made available through employers. If one must leave a job to secure training, workers will be unable to afford the income loss.

Recognizing foreign credentials and work experience continues to be of importance to the community. Today, most such experience is ignored and access to equivalency testing and training does not exist, and when it does, it is subject to discourses that suggest foreign education is inferior to that of the USA. The local community of immigrants and refugees has very limited access to foreign credential programs. Such investments by universities, colleges and by local governments would be supportive of economic development for the entire region.

Finally, although the community is not included within Affirmative Action requirements, workforce diversity must ensure that Slavic community members are present in schools, in health care, in social services and in job training programs. Public services and private sector employment opportunities must open to Slavic workers to ensure integration within US society.

Education
It is deplorable that we do not know how our Slavic children and youth are faring in education in measures other than standardized test scores. Indicators that are available are troubling, with concerns being voiced that as many as 84% of students who began Azbuka Academy did not return to the public school system after the school closed. And we also heard that many youth face barriers to gaining a high school degree (as high as ¾ of students face strong barriers). The results in our educational attainment profile is troubling, as the community faces high disparities with Whites and with 43% not meeting basic proficiency in math, and 32% not meeting standards in reading. Improvements are urgent to address the racial disparities that exist across the education system, including early learning, discipline, achievement, ELL, special education, attendance, graduation and success in higher education. Unfortunately we do not know the status of the Slavic community in most of these measures.

Better data systems are obviously warranted so that we can identify key challenges and identify solutions.

We also urge our largest school boards to build alternative education programs for Slavic youth for whom the school system is not working. These programs must be culturally-specific so that parental engagement is possible, and so that building trusting relationships is possible. The depth of distrust that exists for Slavic parents with the school system is pronounced – mending that fence can best be achieved through the creation and support of culturally-specific interventions.

Housing
Increasing the supply of affordable and subsidized housing, with a large number of bedrooms, is essential for reducing the housing burden that the Slavic community faces. It is also essential to end the

misleading practices by mortgage companies – for there was story after story told of discrimination and untruths told to members of the Slavic community to, essentially, steal their money. Rigorous protections from such practice needs to be provided immediately to the community. The community has suffered deeply in the recent housing market and has lost both homes and abundant home equity. Protecting the community is a pressing need.

Community Center

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

Child Welfare and Human Services

Slavic parents are disrespected and their childrearing practices undermined by practices at schools and in child welfare. Cultural responsiveness is a pressing need for these systems. Children, families and the entire community are best supported by confident parents. Current discourse and messages to children about their rights serve to deplete the confidence of parents.

b. Recommendations from the Coalition of Communities of Color

The community-wide policy recommendations that the Coalition of Communities of Color has developed and endorsed will advance the needs of the Slavic community.

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

- Annual updates must be conducted and the results available to the general public.

2. ***Expand funding for culturally-specific services.***[53] Designated funds are required, and these funds must be adequate to address needs. Allocation must recognize the size of communities of color, must compensate for the undercounts that exist in population estimates, and must be sufficiently robust to address the complexity of need that are tied to communities of color. Recognizing the complexity and depth of need that exists for communities of color requires that we are provided with a higher funding base in recognition of the urgent need for ameliorative interventions. Culturally-specific services are the most appropriate service delivery method for our people. Service providers within culturally-specific services must be involved in establishing funding formulas for such designations.

   Culturally-specific services are best able to address the needs of communities of color. These services have the following unique features:
   - *We provide respite from racism. People of color enter culturally-specific services as insiders instead of outsiders.*
   - We hold the trust of our communities. This supports our ability to respond to community needs and to work in solidarity with them to address larger injustices.
   - Accountability to the specific community of color for whom services are delivered.
   - Top leadership (Board of Directors or equivalent) are primarily composed of community members who share the same racial and ethnic identity. This means they have a lived experience of racism and discrimination and will address these at all levels of practice.
   - Located in the specific community of color that is being served and reflect the cultural values of the community throughout their services. Users of such services are likely to be welcomed and affirmed.
   - Staffed and led primarily by those who share the racial and ethnic characteristics of the community. This means we have walked a similar path as those we serve, and have experienced the types of racism typically targeted against the community. This provides deep and lasting commitments to eliminating racism in all its forms.
   - Such services are typically involved in many advocacy practices, and are involved in challenging institutional racism in its many forms. Given this engagement, service users are more likely to have their needs better understood and more hopeful about prospects for change. As their organizations are involved in social justice efforts, this increases the social capital of the community and its members.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. ***Research practices that make the invisible visible.*** Implement research practices across institutions that are transparent, easily accessible and accurate in the representation of communities of color.

Draw from the expertise within the Coalition of Communities of Color to conceptualize such practices. This will result in the immediate reversal of invisibility and tokenistic understanding of the issues facing communities of color. Such practices will expand the visibility of communities of color.

Better data collection practices on the race and ethnicity of service users needs to exist. Self-identification is essential, with service providers helping affirm a prideful identification of one's race and ethnicity as well as assurances that no harm will come from identifying as a person of color. We also want people to be able to identify more than one race or ethnicity, by allowing multiple identifiers to be used. The Coalition of Communities of Color then wants research practices and usage statistics to accurately and routinely reveal variances and disproportionality by race and ethnicity. The Coalition will consult with researchers and administrators as needed on such improvements.

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

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

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

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

Closing Comments on the Slavic Community

These data begin to help us understand the challenges facing the Slavic community. We see a community deeply challenged in their ability to create the economic situation that they and their families have so invested in. We also see a resilient community that has survived terrible forms of violence and repression in the former Soviet Union and arrived in the USA with very few supports. The community survives and at times it flourishes. It is incumbent on all of us across the entire region to remove the barriers to their social and economic success.

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

Appendix A: Data Notes

The Slavic community is comprised of people from the former Soviet Union.

Conventional definitions of the Slavic community are to define them as White. As a result, when we look at the data for the White community in this report, it actually incorporates the Slavic community data. So in fact, all the Slavic data for this report is actually a subset of the White community data, rather than a different community. The impact of definition is that the White non-Slavic community is actually performing better than we report here, because the performance is being negatively impacted by incorporation of the Slavic experiences. In the vast majority of datasets, it is not possible to extract the Slavic community as ancestry or language data has not been collected. Disaggregation was impossible for almost all public institutions including child welfare, juvenile justice, policing, hiring and retention in public service, adult justice, higher education, early childhood education, political participation and civic engagement. So too it was impossible to find data on debts, lending patterns, wealth and assets (with the exception of housing). In other data situations, it was cost prohibitive to conduct a separate data run on the White community to withdraw the Slavic community from the White data. This was true for the ACS and education data that form the basis for this report.

When we turn to the data that was available for the community, here are the ways in which we disaggregated some datasets for the community. We have used two processes. The first was to use the language identifiers in our six local school districts. Here we used the languages of Russian, Ukrainian, Albanian, Finnish, Hungarian, Kurdish, Estonian, Albanian, Armenian, Georgian, Latvian and Lithuanian. Only the first six languages had enough students to share publicly, and the latter six languages had a total of just 15 students across the six school boards. Accordingly, these numbers were not included in the education section of the report.

Secondly, we used a range of data from the American Community Survey. Here is the definition we used for these custom runs:

> The Slavic community includes all individuals who:
> 1. Identify as of a single ancestry and for whom the ancestry is a Slavic group; OR
> 2. Identify as of multiple ancestries and both are specific Slavic groups; OR
> 3. Were born in the USSR or one of the former Soviet republics: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

The American Community Survey did not report the following populations:
- Those born in Tajikstan, Turkmenistan, or Kyrgyzstan
- Those who have Kazakh, Moldovan, Uzbek, Turkmen, or Kyrgyz ancestries. They were coded in a large "other groups" category and we were unable to deconstruct this group

To address the shortage of data on the community, we embarked on a qualitative research study to extend our understanding of the community's experiences. To that end a total of four focus groups were held with service providers (between 2009 and 2011), two with parents and two supplemental

interviews were held with Slavic service providers. This has allowed us to add more narrative experiences to this report and to share insights on the community. These gatherings have also supported the development of policy priorities that are essential to improve the wellbeing of the community. We also conducted a survey of students attending the Russian Youth Conference in 2011, and received a response rate of about 75%, gathering 66 survey responses to twelve questions about barriers to education, poverty, employment and hopes for the future. These data provide an important window into the experiences of the community.

Details on the Slavic community are thus difficult to find. We have been able to conduct custom runs of the American Community Survey (ACS) twice for this report: the first time period is the 2006-2008 dataset. The Census Bureau decided it could keep costs low by surveying a smaller number of people three times in each of the three years of this time period and report out one data point that is the average of these three years. This allowed them to reduce the "margin of error" that results from small sample sizes because experiences were confirmed over a three-year period. Such occurred for most of our communities of color, including the Slavic community. We call this data point "2008" in our report as it is overly confusing to indicate that this is actually the average of a three-year time period. We again ran these data using the American Community Survey's 2009-2011 dataset, and again report it to be "2011" data. This data reporting holds true for the ACS data for Multnomah County, Oregon and the USA.

The shortfall in available data means that we have needed to fill in a number of gaps with "best available" datasets. When we compared local with national-level data, and with data from King county, we needed to use the 2006-2010 dataset. Even though we had local data that were better, we were unable to conduct the same analysis in these two geographies due to costs. So, the 2006-2010 data was used when we compared Multnomah county with King county, and when we looked at income profiles at the local, state and national level. This has allowed us to look at more concrete economic issues, such as how do we compare with these other regions, and the comparison is what is emphasized in this analysis. As the reader knows, there has been significant local deterioration in recent years, so we ask the reader not to emphasize the raw numbers in these situations but rather the comparison dimensions of the data.

Appendix B: Multnomah County's philosophy & implementation of culturally-specific services

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix C: Language definitions[54]

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

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

Communities of color: Identity-based communities that hold a primary racial identity that describes shared racial characteristics among community members. The term aims to define a characteristic of the community that its members share (such as being African American) that supports self-definition by community members, and that typically denotes a shared history and current/historic experiences of racism. The term also defines community in ways that are outside of the White/non-White relativist framework that tends to deepen discourses of "non-White" communities as being inferior to White communities, even if this is unintended. An older term for communities of color is that of "minority communities" which is increasingly inaccurate given that people of color are majority identities on a global level. That term has also been rejected for its potential to infer any inferior characteristics. The community may or may not also be a geographic community.

Given that race is a socially-defined construct, the definitions of these communities are dynamic and evolve across time. At present, in Multnomah County, communities of color are defined by the Coalition of Communities of Color to include Native Americans, Latinos, Asian and Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Africans, Middle Eastern, and Slavic communities.

Note that there is some tension in whether Latinos are a racial or an ethnic group. Most databases define them as a separate ethnic group, as opposed to a racial group. In Multnomah county, we define Latinos as a community of color and primarily understand the Latino experience as one significantly influenced by racism. We include the Slavic community as a community of color as their experiences are similar to those of other communities of color, and include marginalization, powerlessness, and dominant discourses that prevent their fair treatment and inclusion. Such communities face challenges similar to the experiences of the Irish, Polish and Jewish communities when they arrived in the USA – communities at one time were clearly minority racialized but that have, in sociological frames, become White. It remains to be seen as to whether or not the Slavic community will attain whiteness over their time in the USA.

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

ability to become more culturally competent: valuing diversity; having the capacity for cultural self-assessment; being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact; having institutionalized cultural knowledge, and; having developed adaptations to service delivery and reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity (Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1989).

A significant critique is emerging about the capacity of "cultural competency" to address racial disparities. The basis of this critique is that it idealizes the ability of mainstream service providers to work outside their own cultural context and provide services to communities of color. As a response to racial disparities, cultural competency fails to generate the comprehensive reforms needed to promote racial equity. So too this "movement" fails to legitimate the urgent needs of communities of color and the requisite funding of culturally-specific organizations.

Cultural proficiency: See "cultural competence"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mainstream services: These are large service organizations that are largely devoid of specific services for communities of color, or having minimal or tokenistic responses to the specific needs of these communities. They operate from the presumption that service needs are independent from racial and cultural needs, and that staff can be trained in "cultural sensitivity" or "cultural competence" to ensure delivery of quality services regardless of clients' race and ethnicity.

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

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

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

Privilege: "Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do. Access to privilege doesn't determine one's outcomes, but it is definitely an asset that makes it more likely that whatever talent, ability, and aspirations a person with privilege has will result in something positive for them" (McIntosh, 1988).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tokenism: "A dominant group sometimes promotes a few members of an oppressed group to high positions, and then uses them to claim there are no barriers preventing any member of that group from reaching a position with power and status. The people promoted are tokens, and the process is called tokenism. Tokens can also be used as a buffer between the dominant and oppressed groups. It is harder for the oppressed group to name the oppression and make demands when members of their own groups are representing the dominant group" (Bishop, 1994, p.136).

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

Whiteness: Whiteness refers to the social construction of being White that coexists with privilege in all its forms, including being on the privileged end of history, including colonization, slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. It also includes being the beneficiaries of institutionalized and systemic racism,

dominant discourses, internalized racism and individual acts of discrimination and micro-aggressions of racism in everyday life.

White Privilege: "White privilege is the other side of racism. Unless we name it, we are in danger of wallowing in guilt or moral outrage with no idea of how to move beyond them. It is often easier to deplore racism and its effects than to take responsibility for the privileges some of us receive as a result of it…Once we understand how white privilege operates, we can begin addressing it on an individual and institutional basis" (Rothenberg, 2002).

Appendix D: References

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[8] Please note that we use the lower case "c" to denote the geographic region of Multnomah county. When we use the upper case "C" for Multnomah County, we are referencing the level of government and services provided by Multnomah County government.

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[10] This figure draws from the 2010 data from the American Community Survey.

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