



LEADING WITH RACE:

Research Justice in Washington County



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WELCOME LETTER

We are thrilled to present this report which represents the culmination of over two years of engagement and relationship building in Washington County. This report is the first in house research publication of the Research Justice Center of the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC).

In the summer of 2016, at the Beaverton Public Library, County and city government representatives and culturally specific community organizations based in Washington County convened for the first time. That meeting resulted in a unique, multi-stakeholder collaborative process informed by CCC's research justice vision that creates space for communities to be leaders and partners at all decision points of the research process.

We, the steering committee, share the desire to be proactive in bringing about racial justice in Washington County so that all our communities have the ability to flourish. We celebrate this coming together of community and government in equitable partnership in this research project. It has often been hard but as Audre Lorde said, "I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood."

Communities of color deliver three key messages in this report along with a call to action.

1. Communities of color have always lived in Washington County. Immigration and gentrification has brought more people of color to the area. They are a part of the fabric of the county and they strive to make this place their home.
2. Their reality consists of both experiencing oppression by racist institutions and practices and their resilience and resistance to that. They are made to feel invisible and hyper-visible.
3. Communities of color are experts in their lived experiences, and Washington County will be better by working together. This report shows us how to do that.

While this report represents the culmination of of our initial inquiry, we intend for it to catalyze dialogue and action to build the community we want. We seek to unite people and various stakeholders in Washington County in collective action for the advancement of racial justice. It is time to act.

COALITION OF COMMUNITIES OF COLOR WASHINGTON COUNTY

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“Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world.”

BELL HOOKS

**Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.**

EXCERPT FROM ‘STILL I RISE’,
MAYA D ANGELOU

“When we define ourselves, when I define myself, the place in which I am like you and the place in which I am not like you, I’m not excluding you from the joining - I’m broadening the joining.”

AUDRE LORDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

Introduction And Overview	8
Research Justice	12
Research Process	13
Call To Action	15

PART II

Native American Community In Washington County	19
African American Community In Washington County	61
African Communities In Washington County	97
Asian And Asian American Communities In Washington County	135
Latino Community In Washington County	193
Middle Eastern And North African Communities In Washington County	244
Native Hawaiian And Pacific Islander Communities In Washington County	279
Slavic/Russian Speaking Community In Washington County	313

PART III

Jurisdictional Snapshots Of Communities	335
Introduction To Beaverton Area	339
Introduction To Cornelius And Forest Grove	346
Introduction To Hillsboro	349
Introduction To Tigard, Tualatin And Sherwood:	353

PART IV

Data Notes	357
Glossary Of Terms	361
References	363

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The report is presented in four parts. First, we provide an overview and introduce the project by highlighting three key themes in the report, articulating our research justice approach and delivering the call to action by our steering committee members and community partners that implores readers to take recommended actions based on the findings of the report. The second part has eight narratives reflecting the lived experiences of eight communities of color living in Washington county. The third section has data snapshots of four jurisdictions in the county about some key socio-economic outcomes for communities of color living in those areas. Lastly, we explain our protocols and procedures for data collection and racial disparity methodology. We also have a glossary of terms used in this report.

Communities of color in Washington county deliver three key messages throughout this report.

People of color have always lived in Washington County. We are part of the economy and social fabric. It's our home and we like living here.

“Just think about this area—whose land are we on? There was a bunch of little tribes that have been wiped out and we have to learn who exactly they were and teach the kids that you are right here in this area where those tribes were.”

There is a popular refrain in Washington County articulated by elected officials, governments, community members including people of color—“Washington county is diversifying”. This adage has become such a part of the county zeitgeist that it whitewashes the history of the county, which is a narrative that reinforces the “White settler” history often thought to be the official history of the United States. It fails to acknowledge that the reason why the county has been so White and has been diversifying only recently is inseparable from the genocide of Native American tribes, historical “sundown” laws and redlining against Black people, and exclusionary policies that restricted immigration from countries other than Europe until the Immigration Act of 1965, and displacement of people of color due to gentrification. Communities of color have always lived in Washington



County and they strive to make it their home. This land is Native land stolen by White settlers. It was cultivated, industrialized and developed by Black enslaved labor, Latino and Japanese farm workers, Indian lumber mill workers and Chinese railroad workers. The Silicon forest cannot function without the intellect and labor of communities of color.

The Latino workforce is integral to the economy of the Silicon Forest and a driver of Oregon's agricultural productivity—results of the value placed on education. Immigrants and refugees from African and Middle Eastern countries are skilled professionals who like living in Washington County for its diversity, plentiful space and as a good place to raise and educate their kids.

Washington County is what it is today because communities of color were born here, moved here, refused to leave despite genocide and exclusionary laws, and have put down roots here.

Our reality consists of both experiencing oppression by racist institutions and practices and our resilience and resistance to that. We are made to feel invisible and hyper-visible.

Communities of color in Washington County, compared to their White neighbors, experience disproportionately negative outcomes in employment, income, education, community safety and health. In Washington county, Vietnamese and Filipino workers have lower incomes at similar levels of education as White workers; high income home loan applicants who are Black are 86% more likely and Latino applicants are 125% more likely to have their home loan application denied compared to high income White potential homeowners; Somali speaking students are 197% more likely than White students to be expelled or suspended from school; 68% of Native American single mothers with children are in poverty in Washington County, a higher rate compared to 48% of Native American single mothers in poverty in the US. These are the cumulative result of racist institutions and practices like immigration and criminal justice policies, opportunity and achievement gaps of students and mortgage lending practices. Racism is real, it's historical and it is practiced and sustained today. Across different communities of color, residents talk about being made to feel both visible and invisible in different ways. They are made invisible because of the size of their communities, immigration that pushes some into the shadows or disengages them from civic life (both



Vietnamese and Filipino workers have lower incomes at similar levels of education as White workers



High-income home loan applicants who are Black are **86%** more likely and Latino applicants are **125%** more likely to have their home loan application denied compared to high income White potential homeowners



Somali speaking students are **197%** more likely than White students to be expelled or suspended from school



68% of Native American single mothers with children are in poverty in Washington County, a higher rate compared to 48% of Native American single mothers in poverty in the US

documented and undocumented), systematic attempts of genocide and exclusion, data practices that are inappropriate, non-representative and not trauma-informed, and by perceptions that some communities are not even considered part of racial justice. On the flipside, racism, intersecting with xenophobia, Islamophobia and patriarchy, “see” communities in very stereotypical and harmful ways. Communities battle racial stereotypes about being illegal, criminals, terrorists, lazy, living off welfare, and "model minorities". Despite all of this, communities of color live, play, pray and work in Washington county. They build support networks, create small businesses to nourish their communities, organize around and advocate for dismantling racist barriers that will not only improve their lives, but will raise the quality of living for the entire county.

“I was talking to a White person at this restaurant I go to, and we had this discussion about race. He says to me, “you Asian people are not like the black people that leech off the system or these undocumented workers that come across the river and take all these jobs. I wish other minorities are just like you guys. This country would be even better.” I just sat there, and I was like okay, I will not be eating with you anymore.”

We are experts in our lived experiences, and Washington County will be better by working together. This report shows us how to do that.

Communities of color are experts on their reality and experiences. They are leaders. They must be part of removing barriers and dismantling deeply rooted racist institutions and practices.

No decisions about policies about their lives and outcomes can be just and equitable if it does not involve those most impacted.

Institutions, and schools particularly, need to value and promote the multitude of languages, cultures, and histories of Washington county residents. Communities possess experiential, historical and cultural knowledge which must be centered in any data research initiative. Accurate data—using community verified, equitable practices – gives businesses, local governments, police, courts and schools effective information and tools for their decision-making, and their effective engagement with families, students and Washington county residents.

“People think all Africans are the same; that we have the same problems, same culture, that we come from the same place. But that’s not true.”





RESEARCH JUSTICE

The CCC’s approach to designing and implementing this project is informed by our research justice vision that starts with the premise that research processes and practices are just and equitable in order for the outcome to be just and equitable. Mainstream research practices have reduced communities of color to "subjects" that are expected to reveal their thoughts and needs for the benefit of a historically White dominant racist and colonial state to "govern" them better (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017, Mamdani 2012, Tuhiwai-Smith 1999).

Research justice creates space for communities to be leaders and partners at all decision points of the research process. Between March 2016 and June 2018 CCC organized and convened *twelve meetings of a steering committee comprised of twelve community based organizations and twelve jurisdictional partners including local governments and school districts*. They broadly identified themes and priorities that needed to be in the research agenda, identified research project goals and principles and decided on the structure of the report. We recognized that a number of communities either did not have the capacity or could not participate in the steering committee for some of the same reasons that are obvious in the research findings—economic injustice, social isolation and dearth of culturally specific infrastructure. We partnered with many of them to *organize 15 focus groups and 65 hours of discussion across eight communities of color* telling

their stories through this report. These community conversations weren’t a needs assessment; rather they were organizing spaces to identify community priorities and begin strategizing solutions. That is transformative community engagement. We organized a community review process after drafting preliminary narratives to collect critical feedback and revision. Each community held their own review processes inviting back people who had participated in the focus groups and other community members. In total, approximately 75 people participated in focus groups and 56 people reviewed the report.

Community members who participated in the focus groups and community review process came from diverse heritages—China, India, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, the US, Cambodia, Pacific Islands such as Native Hawaiian and Tongan, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Chad, Nigeria, Somalia, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Liberia, Sudan, Russia, Ukraine, Mexico; they came as political nations—Pawnee, Alaskan Native and Tlingit, Northern Arapaho and Assiniboine and Sioux, Otoe-Missouria among others. They spoke as US citizens, immigrants and refugees, as renters and homeowners, as people who grew up on the "west-side" and as people who moved here.

RESEARCH PROCESS



First Phase

Relationship building and formation of steering committee of community organizations and local governments.

Second Phase

- Outline and finalize research agenda for the project
- Outline and finalize collectively agreed upon principles and broad goals of this research and framing of racial equity that informs research design
- Discuss and finalize structure of report as presented in the Table of Contents



Third Phase

- Collection and analysis of quantitative data including producing original data for communities of color made invisible by the US Census and mainstream data practices.
- Design, outreach, and convening focus groups among eight communities of color for qualitative content.
- Community verification of official data about themselves



Fourth Phase

- Jurisdictional partners preview and provide feedback on quantitative data analyzed.
- Community review processes provide feedback and revisions to first draft of the report.
- Jurisdictional partners review the first draft of the report.
- Steering Committee finalizes a Call To Action for the report





In terms of quantitative data, it is important to acknowledge that US Census data and data practices used by most governments and public agencies including law enforcement are structurally and deeply flawed for reasons ranging from erasing certain communities of color, misidentifying people's identities, not creating a trusting and supportive environment for people to self-identify themselves. Recognizing this, we produced original data from the US Census about communities of color that live in Washington County. Where possible, we pushed agencies providing us data to make it available in culturally appropriate and disaggregated manner. Focus group participants and community reviewers exercised the "right to know" by reviewing data analyses based on which decisions are made about their communities. We thought it necessary to do that since communities don't often have access to the data that exists about them, and carry a lot of trauma from data being misused or being out of context. Focus groups and the community review process has elevated what communities of color have known and felt—*they are skeptical of official data because this data was never meant for them; it was not collected to track equity; it has never before been analyzed in partnership with them. Our methods of calculating racial disparities are more closely aligned with the need to accurately track inequities in outcomes.*

After drafting the community narratives, we partnered with community organizations to implement self-determined community review processes in order to receive suggested revisions before publication. Government partners were also given two opportunities to preview and review research findings pertaining to their jurisdiction before publication.

In this region alone we have seen public policy planning around housing, environment, transportation and others consistently either exclude communities of color or confine their role to passive subjects of community engagement. Communities are not given much space to lead research that is about them. How do communities experience housing instability? How do communities use parks and recreation? How are we impacted by climate change? These experiences are continuously dismissed as anecdotal, while at the same time, policy practitioners remain puzzled about why policies are not having the desired equity impact. Communities of color have led this research and they have the right to be heard.

CALL TO ACTION

“There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures.”

bell hooks

We believe that Washington county is strongest when our communities thrive, where we are valued and respected, and the assets, strengths and resilience of our communities recognized. The following calls to action have emerged from this project. These are framed in a way that encourages various stakeholders such as local government, elected officials, public agencies, law enforcement, school districts, boards and commissions, private sector such as businesses, corporations and schools, to build power among communities of color to partner in racial justice change in Washington County. They are written in broad themes to give space for community-led, creative and cross-cultural solutions.

1. CROSS-SECTORAL CHANGE:

Communities of color experience institutional racism across systems of immigration, education, economic development, housing, health, incarceration and racial profiling and so on. Their experience in one system directly ties to their intersecting identities including documentation status and their experiences with other systems.

- a. Transformational change is cross-sectoral change and strategies should take into account the compounding effects of racism especially on undocumented immigrants and low income people of color.
- b. Public and private institutions should prioritize and use their power to call out and dismantle racism across sectors.

2. DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT:

Communities of color are re-defining equity, inclusion, diversity and leadership and leading strategies to bring about transformational change.

- a. Governments and public agencies should continue to emphasize the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion by including all communities of color in decision-making.
- b. Governments and public agencies should redress lack of representation and integrate communities of color into every fiber of public governance such as budgeting and procurement, and hiring and retention of employees of color.
- c. Governments should build partnerships and relationships with communities of color and not be transactional, by valuing the time, expertise and experience of our communities of color and addressing barriers to participation.
- d. Governments and public agencies should collaborate with one another to create and implement racial equity plans.
- e. Democratic government should form boards and commissions in partnership with communities of color that have decision-making power and to which they are accountable.

3. CULTURAL SPECIFICITY:

Communities of color have varied histories and lived experiences in Washington County.

- a. There should be increased allocation of public and private resources for culturally specific and trauma informed services and programs.
- b. There should be increased provision of culturally specific and trauma informed services and programming especially in education, social services and healthcare.

4. EDUCATION:

Communities of color see education an important pathway for economic empowerment, an important basis of community building and cultural identity development among youth.

- a. Educational institutions should value, nourish and promote the various histories, heritage and languages of the student body.
- b. Educational institutions should reform practices to be empathetic of the lived experiences of students of color especially from low income, immigrants and refugee families in order to foster access to high quality education.
- c. Educational institutions should address and dismantle barriers rooted in institutional racism to eliminate disparities in outcomes and experiences of all students of color.
- d. Educational institutions should be safe places for all students of color.

5. EQUITABLE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:

Communities of color contribute to the local and regional economy and seek to make Washington County their home.

- a. Public and private employers should ensure pay equity, opportunities for career advancement, workforce development and a safe and welcoming environment for employees of color especially for refugee communities.
- b. Both public and private institutions should dismantle discriminatory practices such as in financial lending practices, promote entrepreneurship among communities of color, recognize the aspirations, drive and talents of immigrants, and ensure affordable and fair housing.

6. POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

Communities of color not only have a large voting eligible population, they are also organizers, thought leaders, candidates for office, elected officials and members of boards and commissions.

- a. Elected and appointed officials in all government and public agencies should reflect the communities of color they serve.
- b. Those in positions of power should make space for communities of color to run, vote, be elected, and be appointed to decision-making positions at all levels of power.
- c. Those in positions of power should create structures of support for people of color in elected and/or decision-making positions at all levels of power.
- d. Civic engagement should be inclusive of all people whether they have the right to vote or not.

7. COMMUNITY BUILDING:

Communities of color live, play, pray/worship and work in Washington County despite centuries of racism and oppression.

- a. Their efforts to build community and connections to counteract isolation should be resourced and supported.
- b. There should be a culture of compassion and everyone should be respected and made to feel welcome.
- c. Washington County should celebrate its multiracial and multiethnic population.

8. RESEARCH JUSTICE:

Communities of color are experts in their own lives, possessing experiential, historical, and cultural knowledge. Mainstream research and data do not capture the full lived experiences of communities of color.

- a. Communities of color should be partners in research design, data collection, data ownership, and data analysis as experts in their experiences.
- b. Governments and public agencies should recognize community experiences, expertise, and knowledge as evidence in policy making.
- c. Public agencies including schools and law enforcement should track data about communities of color that is hidden in mainstream data practices in a culturally appropriate manner in order to accurately assess racial disparities and differential treatment.
- d. Both public and private institutions should be transparent and accountable to communities of color by including them in evaluation of impact of policymaking on racial justice transformation in Washington County.





NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

The Native American community narrate their history as resisting colonialism that at its worst sought to wipe them out and take their lands and resources, and at the very least sought to render them invisible by displacing them, criminalizing them, taking and assimilating their children, and robbing them of their traditions and heritage. *Indigenous resistance sees institutional racism as a modern manifestation of colonialism with similar goals.* It is important that readers carry this context with them as they delve into this section.

“As an invisible person, you know most of the time our people don’t even get mentioned in the conversations.”

Native American communities are countering every attempt to make them invisible with building political power. The first Native American from the Portland Metro area was elected to the Oregon legislature in 2017—Representative Tawna Sanchez. No Native American has yet been elected to office in Washington County, which is ironic considering that Five Oaks where Washington County held its first commissioners’ meetings was a historical meeting place of the Atfalati. They called it “Chatakuin”, meaning a place of the big trees. However, the Native community is young, one in three are under 18 and they are growing up in schools that will teach Native American history curated by their communities. *Oregon denied Native Americans voting rights until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was implemented. Now, approximately 6,562 Native Americans in Washington County are eligible to vote and run for political office.*

“The history of the United States is a history of settler colonialism. The founding of a state based on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft.”

ROXANNE DUNBAR-ORTIZ

“We are not just a racial/ethnic group in the United States. We actually have political status of nations.”



NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

“Just think about this area— whose land are we on? There was a bunch of little tribes that have been wiped out and we have to learn who exactly they were and teach the kids that you are right here in this area where those tribes were.”

The Kalapuya and Atfalati tribes were the first people to call Washington County home. They lived in modern-day Beaverton, Hillsboro, Mountindale, Forest Grove, the Wapato Valley (Gaston), and the Chehalem and North Yamhill Valleys (Newberg, Carlton, Yamhill). They were also clustered around Wapato Lake at Gaston, named after wapato, a Native staple food (Zenk, n.d). Unlike other Natives in the Northwest who engaged in salmon fishing and fur trading economies, the Kalapuya tribes lived off the land as hunters and gatherers. They numbered more than 15,000 around the time that the first White “settlers” arrived (Gray, n.d). The latter brought with them smallpox, malaria and influenza that decimated much of the Native community by 1830. By 1851, White colonizers had pushed and displaced the remaining small group of Native people to Wapato Lake. As the US government was displacing Native communities to reservations, violating treaties, banning Native faith traditions and stripping youth of their culture and community by forcibly removing them to residential schools, they refused to ratify a treaty that would make Wapato Lake into a reservation. Instead, the

Atfalati tribes were sent to Grand Ronde Reservation (Miller, 2016). Following this, the tribe’s population dwindled to 44 in the 1910 Census. They possibly intermarried with other tribes and communities making it difficult to ascertain the number of Atfalati members in Washington County. “The wild thing about us in the Portland Metro area is you might reach out and find someone [who is Native American], but there’s a very small likelihood they were indigenous from this place,” says David Harrelson, a tribal historic preservation officer with Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (Howard, 2017). Focus group participants and community reviewers were affiliated to the following identities: Pawnee, Tlingit, Northern Arapaho and Assiniboine and Sioux, Otoe-Missouria, Isle of Man and Creole, Choctaw from Mississippi, Peoria Tribe of Oklahoma, La Courte Oreilles Chippewa, Fond du Lac of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Chippewa, Cherokee, Yakama, Black Butte of Warm Springs, Cree, Metis (Canada), Modoc, Paiute, Karuk, Native Hawaiian and Klamath tribes.

For Native American communities, it is crucial that the colonization of Native Americans be taught in schools and to elected leaders and government officials.

“Every time that I bring up that there’s 100 million Native people that were massacred here in the United States people are blown away. People still don’t know that and it’s shocking to me.”

However, the legacy of oppression is not just a matter for the history books. Native Americans continue to be targeted by a wide-ranging spectrum of institutional racism, yet persist in rebuilding, nourishing and protecting the community despite that.

AT LEAST

10,437

IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Focus group participants and community reviewers were affiliated to the following identities: Pawnee, Alaskan Native and Tlingit, Northern Arapaho and Assiniboine and Sioux, Otoe-Missouria, Isle of Man and Creole, Choctaw from Mississippi, Peoria Tribe of Oklahoma, La Courte Oreilles Chippewa, Fond du Lac of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Chippewa, Cherokee, Yakama, Black Butte of Warm Springs, Cree, Metis (Canada), Modoc, Paiute, Karuk, Native Hawaiian and Klamath tribes

1 out of 3 under age 18



1 out of 3 Native families have children attending school



6,562 Native Americans in Washington County are eligible to vote and run for political office

10,178 students identified as Native Americans in 2015



60% of the community in Washington County is composed of biracial and multiracial people, due to a large extent to the cumulative impact of historical genocide of Native tribes

HOW WE COUNT?

The counting of a community is a deeply political issue – one that Native American communities feel deeply. Using our methodology described in the data notes section, we estimate that at least 10,437 Native Americans live in Washington County (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). 60% of the community in Washington County is composed of biracial and multiracial people, due to a large extent to the cumulative impact of

historical genocide of Native tribes. Policymakers, governments, school districts and the like do not take them into account when they use “Native American alone” category to determine the official size of the community. It is important to recognize that even estimates we report based on “alone or in combination with other races” likely represent a continued undercount of the Native community. Indigenous Latinx communities are also excluded

from Native American communities even though they are increasingly likely to racially self-identify as Native Americans along with their Latino ethnic identity (Decker, 2011). This is because coding practices of a number of public agencies grant primacy to the Latino identity, meaning that once someone is coded as “Latino,” that person fails to show up in any other subset of the data. That means that all Native Americans who are also Latino are coded as Latino and disappear from the Native American population (Curry-Stevens et al, 2011). We know from the Oregon Department of Education data, that there were 10,178 students that identified as Native Americans in 2015; out of that 8,885 students identified as both Latino and Native in Washington County. Roughly 870 immigrants from Central and South America identify as Native American in the US Census (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Between 2010 and 2015, according to both the American Community Survey and Oregon Department of Education estimates, the Native American population in Washington County declined (the only community for which we have available data that shrunk in population in that time period) as did students who identify both as Native and Latino. The American Community Survey estimates the decline rate to be 23% while Oregon Department of Education calculates a 5% decrease in the student population in the 2010-2015 time period. According to Metro’s population projections, by 2060, approximately 17-20% of the Native American population in the Metropolitan area will live in Washington County (this share of population is lower than Multnomah County but higher than Clackamas County).

We can’t conclusively say that the Native American community is shrinking in Washington County because the legacy of repression and colonization still influences how likely someone is to self-identify as Native American. “The penalties for coming to the attention of the state have varied widely over the years including everything from disavowal of tribal celebrations, to tribal terminations (including seizure of land), to having Native children removed by the Department of Human Services, and through the boarding school era. Coupled with ongoing discrimination and harmful stereotyping, many Native Americans still refuse to identify themselves as such to the array of canvassers, pollsters, and surveyors who come calling” (Curry-Stevens et al, 2011).

Research shows that Native Americans who are least likely to self-identify as such are more likely to be poor, less likely to be biracial/multiracial, and likely to

“I came here in 1971, as a college freshman, in Forest Grove. I never shared that I’m Native American. When I started talking more about my Native culture, people that have known me for many years asked why I never told them I was Native American. Maybe I was ashamed of my culture or maybe I did not want to say I am Native American because of the stereotypical reactions.”



The first Native American from the Portland Metro area was elected to the Oregon legislature in 2017 -

Representative Tawna Sanchez

have lower incomes (Nagel, 1997). Conversely, socio-political events that change awareness and heighten identity as Native American, the community's own community and cultural development efforts, and political and legal decisions (such as affirmative action, tribal recognition, or land claims settlements) that formalize one's identity as part of the community positively impact the way a person might change the way they self-identify over time (Eschbach et al, 1998).

“One of my neighbors told me that a teacher at Liberty High School was teaching a class on local Native history. Her daughter took the class and really completely completely changed her perspective about her community.”

In Multnomah County, we have calculated the size of the Native American population undercount to be 47.2%. This gives us a sense of the potential undercount of the community in Washington County. The lack of accurate demographic data has severe repercussions for “seeing” who is in a jurisdiction, policymaking and directing flow of resources towards equitable community outcomes. The Native American community is being penalized for the trauma that has been inflicted on them by colonial and racist institutions to begin with.

“I CONSIDER MYSELF A SUBURBAN INDIAN”

A strong and cohesive community is a public policy imperative—it is the basis on which youth, families, and community members can flourish in all aspects of their lives. Native focus group participants said they simultaneously like living in Washington County and feel disconnected from their own community. They explain their isolation in terms of a lack of what they call “racial awareness”, poor education about the history of colonization and genocide of Native Americans, no acknowledgement of local Native history, and lack of culturally specific nourishment and basis for community building and binding.

“I was taught that it happens but not the scale. It was portrayed that they came in, and were jerks who took away the land.”

Focus group participants from Native American communities overall enjoy living in Washington County. Some have had positive living experiences, and for others it’s more livable and less overtly racist than where they lived before.

“I’ve lived in Washington County since 1992, really most of my teenage years, and it hasn’t always been super positive. The strengths of Washington County I would probably say is that it is not Portland.”

“I moved here from Canada. The community that I’m from in Buffalo area, there is a lot of racism and people there are unashamed of their racism. This is the first time that I encounter people who had shame and who hid who they were. I will say, for the most part, [that] my experience has been either positive or at least neutral since moving here, at least compared to what I grew up [with], experienced.”

“It was a community of learning in Forest Grove in 1971. When we left the nice little knit [community] of Forest Grove and got on the bus and headed into Portland we noticed lots of changes. It felt a little more comfortable for us Hawaiian kids because it was very green out in Forest Grove. We would find apple trees.”

“I work in downtown Portland and I went to school up in the Northeast area at Concordia. I lived in the neighborhood for a while. I think the biggest difference I’ve noticed when I moved out to Beaverton, [is that] I really enjoyed that I can just go out and, for the most part, every day I just feel accepted. I feel like the people I come into contact with are nice on the street or in my apartment complex, people that I run into there or the grocery store. I feel I blend in and I feel like part of the community.”

“I moved about 12 years [ago], in 2005, maybe 2006. We were drawn to it because of Orenco Station and its walkable lifestyle and my husband works in Beaverton right off the max line so he can take the Max to work. it’s been really great I suppose being active, like in the Democratic Party here; the school district.”

“I moved up here from Eugene seven years ago. I first moved to Hillsboro and now I live in Aloha and one really nice thing is that there’s a lot of brown people, there’s a lot of brown people and I like that.”

In Washington County, Native and other communities of color describe the same tradeoff—they *have “positive” opinions about living in Washington County, but feel isolated from one another and don’t particularly feel part of a larger community.* The focus group participants really want to connect with one another. There is a desire for more spaces and opportunities like what the focus groups created by bringing people in the community together for a day, as well as other informal cultural connection opportunities.

“It has been good to meet people in my new community out here in Washington County and talking about what we want to do to move forward in the future with our children and education and bring our people help out here. It feels good.”

“Today, I feel like I’m not alone out here, which is how I feel most of the time living up here for about five years. It’s so exciting to meet you guys today. Thank you.”

“I just found the whole experience really enriching and it kind of reminded me of the strength in numbers. Sometimes I feel like I’m an individual and I can’t do anything. But we are all individuals that came here today it and it makes me feel less alone and more focused on our goal our common goal.”

“I moved here about seven years ago and I lived in Washington County my entire time. Coming from a community that was equally white and equally First Nations, I saw less of that when I first moved here, so I had to really search to make those connections, then I started to work.”

“It would be nice to have a ‘bow and arrow’ every Friday on the west side like they have at NARA on 123rd and Burnside. I think it would good for the Hillsboro community to have that because there are probably a lot more Natives than we realize in this area. We don’t realize there is a community here.”

“The Intel Indian community has not been activated. I think they can be an incredible asset because they are educated, and they have resources. They would be an incredible support system to the rest of the Native people and so I think activating them and giving them the space to interact [would be beneficial].”



Counter the lack of racial awareness and ignorance about Native Americans, and establish connections between modern land and Native American local history as pathways to community-building



Prioritize building culturally specific infrastructure along with expanding mainstream community resources that they currently rely on for their health and well-being

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC RESOURCES

FOR NOURISHMENT AND HEALING

Native communities emphasize healing and recovery and rebuilding their strength and community from the damages of oppression. Community members say that there is no infrastructure to gather the Native community in Washington County. There are facilities and amenities in the area that focus group participants said they liked and utilize, such as the Walters Art Center and a senior center in Hillsboro. Native participants want to advocate with Hillsboro's Downtown Partnership and the Cultural Coalition of Washington County for funding and space to center Native art. However, in terms of assets that are owned by the Native community or what makes one feel that there was once a thriving Native community and that Native Americans are now home, they had a hard time identifying places apart from a Native-owned food truck in Beaverton called Teepee's and the pow-wows in the Beaverton and Hillsboro school districts.

Community Resources



Native-owned food truck in Beaverton called Teepee's and the pow-wows in the Beaverton and Hillsboro school districts



Walters Art Center, Community Senior Center

Culturally specific service providers are also especially important in the Native community because of the importance of trust and relationships to heal from colonization

“There is nothing out here. If you kinda want to go somewhere you have to go to NAYA and that’s out on Columbia Boulevard. For such a small percentage of the population, there is really nowhere to go other than up in the mountains, you know, or a friend’s house. There is no Native family really, unless you’re with Intel or Nike which a lot of us aren’t.”

“There’s no space for people to gather and we just get absorbed into Western society more and more.”

“I don’t see a whole lot of programming per se pertaining to indigenous people such as where would indigenous people go if they are homeless or if they needed an actual community gathering space.”

Most of the priorities that community members identified in the focus groups related to establishing spaces and exploring opportunities to bring the community together.

1. Showcasing and supporting Native creative and literary art in Washington County.
1. Opportunities to make local Native connections
1. Safe space for the Native community
1. More widespread and frequent community cultural groups in Washington County.
1. Need for regular community meetings like bow and arrow
1. More Native support services in Hillsboro
1. Local Native community events and gatherings
1. Finding the history of people living here before the invasion by White settlers.

Community members utilized the focus groups to dig in and strategize solutions. Focus group participants felt that a community center would be valuable, but emphasized that it would have to be different considering the “suburban Indian” experience.

“Hillsboro is a good location for a central Native American space. Unlike Portland, Hillsboro has a lot of space. Hillsboro has an identifiable downtown, it has transportation and they have space.”

“Both Nike and Intel have Native employees associations that are large and active. We could work with them to direct us to resources like Nike’s N7 program.”

A number of community members, similar to other communities of color who critique the lack of culturally specific infrastructure in Washington County, find themselves on the road or the MAX going back and forth across the river. Whether they drive or take public transit, community members feel that the distance and time-intensive nature of connecting to a community miles away, as well as work and school schedules, are a deterrent to travel, which only exacerbates the loss of community for the Native community. Participants also express fear of taking public transit after the hate-related MAX attack in May 2017. Additionally, a number of Native health services are outside of Washington County particularly in Salem, which also becomes arduous for the community, especially those who are elderly.

“I’m all for public transit. But with people [who] are getting stabbed, racial slurs, and all sorts of craziness is happening, it is so scary. I would not let my kids take public transportation by themselves.”

“I work in Portland and then I come back to Aloha. It’s a huge undertaking and then when you have two little kids that I pick up all the way over here and then go the way over there, it’s too much.”

“If there was programming like, let’s say at NAYA at 4:30, there’s no way you are getting from here to there quickly, so you’re like, “no I’m not gonna go.”

“I consistently refer indigenous people to get specific types of assistance to Portland.”

ESTABLISH CONNECTION BETWEEN MODERN LAND AND NATIVE AMERICAN LOCAL HISTORY

Shawna Hotch, a Pacific University student who curated the Forest Grove Indian Training School exhibits at the university says: “As I grew up, I became the type of person who, instead of complaining about a problem, tries to find solutions for the problem. It then became my goal to get more Native students at the school and to educate as many people as possible about boarding schools and what it means to be a Native American in modern society. Through my own personal research I reached out to the ROOTs club, my Ethics teacher, and my Freshman Seminar Teacher. The ROOTs club helped sponsor a lot of ethnic diversity activities on campus. My ethics class was also a civic engagement class. For my civic engagement project, I devoted over forty hours to educating others on boarding schools and I worked with the Admissions Office, informing them of some better ways to recruit Native students. My FYS teacher told me to check with archives on information on the Indian Training School. I met with Eva and she told me she had wanted to start the Forest Grove Indian Training School project. Soon after I was hired to work on the project; It was the best thing that could have happened to me” (Hotch, n.d).



“I think for our Native youth and Native families, it’s really important to see themselves visibly in the community and I think that whatever could be done to facilitate that, would be great.”

“The genocide was so complete and so quick that many of our information was not preserved. We don’t have context for places because the people are gone. It would be great to add names of places that used to be.”

Former Oregon Congresswoman Elizabeth Furse, who led efforts by several Pacific Northwest tribes to win back federal recognition (including the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, of which Kalapuya tribes became a member), resides in Helvetia. *She says there has been a lot of heartache for the Native peoples, struggling to claim artifacts and sacred grounds important to their heritage (Smith, 2013).*

“Over by Highway 26 in Beaverton, it’s called Five Oaks that is some ancient meetings site for tribes in this area. It’s like a shopping center now.”

“I toured Pacific University with some of the football players from Chemawa who were looking at Pacific’s new football program, and I asked the staff leading the tour if she had any information on the Indian Training School. She had never even heard of it. The second time I toured I brought my parents and asked a staff the same question. He responded as had the previous person.”

“You go out north of Highway 26 and you see those little sentry farms, the original donation land farms and they all have little signs with their donation number on them.”

“There is a big plot of land on Scholls Ferry that is owned by a farmer. I heard that someone asked him if it can be renamed as Squamish Prairie because that’s what it was named when the Indians were in this area. So they made that concession.”

EDUCATION AND

“RACIAL AWARENESS”

Focus group participants prioritized “racial awareness” and combating ignorance about Native Americans. They are frustrated with the literal whitewashing of local, regional and US history that ignores the trauma communities carry over centuries. *Research about representation of Native Americans in the media found that stories about them were extremely rare and when they were represented, it was in stereotypical situations such as casino owners and workers* (cited in Marcus, n.d). Native people feel the brunt of stereotyping and implicit and explicit racist interactions in their everyday life that they opine stems from US history that is taught in an inaccurate and sanitized manner.

“It feels ignorant to not teach history accurately. I remember we would study very little in grade school about it. In high school we covered Trail of Tears for a couple of days and that was it. It doesn’t help non-Native people to know so little because it promotes ignorance.”

“I hear people say, ‘You don’t look like an Indian.’ They assume that we are the same.”

“I can remember an incident a lady that I used to work with. She told me about how her dad grew up in Oregon and how very close he was to all of these Indian people that he grew up with, that they were his closest friends and everything. The next question she asked me was, ‘Do they speak English?’ I was gonna ask, ‘Does your dad speak the Native language? But I didn’t because I was kind.’”

“We were invited to a graduation party. We were talking in a group and this young man was talking to me. He asked ‘Where you are thinking of moving?’ and I said, ‘To Sequim, Washington,’ and he said, ‘You don’t want to move there; the Indians will steal you blind.’ That’s his prejudice.”

“There was this woman who was wearing feathers in her hair. She was not prejudicial but she was not being very respectful to the culture.”



They want intentional support of Native creative and literary arts in Washington County, schools to teach more about who lived here, and why they are not here anymore, and for that to create a thoughtful awareness and acknowledgement of Native American history and current reality.

“You want to teach not only what happened from coast-to-coast but also what happened in Oregon with the tribes and all their struggles and all their battles and the gorge being invaded and all the salmon being taken and the dams going up. And the genocide ethnic cleansing and the small-pox that invaded everybody up here.”

“I have a wonderful and thoughtful friends who are not aboriginal. They don’t realize that they are allowed to come to powwows and stuff. Until we have better education in our schools that is one tool that they can learn more about our cultures. We can advertise events that they can come to that they know they are welcome.”

“I get asked the most: ‘Are you Latina? What are you?’”

“People have to know because they really don’t know anything about us and the history of the area. We’ve become invisible. There are books available that could be required reading in schools.”



The community wants intentional support of Native creative and literary arts in Washington County schools to teach more about who lived here, and why they are not here anymore, and for that to create a thoughtful awareness and acknowledgment of Native American history and current reality.

EDUCATION JUSTICE

For Native American communities the idea of education equity is rooted in re-dressing and healing from the role of residential schools and education in the decimation of families and forcible assimilation of Native children into mainstream society. *Education equity is the desire for schools to recognize and break that legacy and becomes spaces where children thrive, and for education curriculum to be the starting point of dismantling negative stereotypes and ignorance about their community.*



Pacific University in Forest Grove stands on the grounds of an Indian training school where young children had been “civilized,” both in terms of appearance and what they were taught

Pacific University in Forest Grove stands on the grounds of an Indian training school where young children had been “civilized,” both in terms of appearance and what they were taught. Says an 1882 article published in Harper’s Weekly about the Forest Grove school, “they came to the school from the prairies and the mountains, dressed in blankets and moccasins, with uncut and unkempt hair, as wild as young coyotes. When they return to their homes they may be properly fitted for life’s struggles, and will infuse new ambitions into future generations, and be missionaries of the higher life of order, labor, and civilization” (Indian Schools in Oregon, n.d). That school was one of many in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to place Native children who were forcibly removed from their families following federal policies that sought to assimilate the tribes. These Indian training schools propagated dominant values while also keeping children away from any influences imparted by their families (Marr, n.d).

During the community review of education outcomes of Native children and youth, focus group participants brought up two milestones: (1) the passage of Senate Bill 13, which requires that curriculum instruction about sovereign tribal nations and tribal histories developed by nine tribes in Oregon become part of K–12 school curriculum throughout Oregon, and (2) the state-level ban on schools using Native American mascots, with an exception for school districts who got approval from local tribal communities (Haugen, 2017).



“At a meeting, we were talking about that bill (Senate Bill 13) and how great it is that they got funded and it passed. Now the curriculum is going to have to get written for it. That’s so huge to write curriculum for K through 12th grade.”

“It would be really great to have a meeting in Hillsboro to have someone come and explain the tribal education bill and how it would impact schools.”

In its ban on Native American mascots, the state Board of Education had cited studies that showed Native American mascots had a negative impact on Native American students’ self-esteem and social identity development and undermined the educational experiences of all students in a school.

“Imagine if the only time you saw a white man was as a Viking. Like you never saw them in any other way - not as president of the United States, saving the world in a Hollywood movie. You go to Powell’s bookstore and not a single book features the white male experience or maybe two books. What is the first thing you would say if you saw a white man you would say “where is your Longboat? Where are your horns?” Because that’s all that you pigeonhole and that is all you know of that person that you imagine this is our actual lived experience.”

These issues matter a lot to Native communities considering the long record of schools in perpetuating both ignorance and stereotypes and assimilation, and for creating an environment that does not foster Native excellence. “Unfortunately, for many of our Native American youth, the decision seems to be between being a mascot and being invisible. It is our job to ensure that those aren’t the only choices. We also have to ensure that we are teaching all of our students not only about Native American history but also about contemporary Native culture. It is all about the students and them feeling comfortable in their schools and communities” (Oregon Department of Education).

“They change the logo in itself but that’s not a perfect solution. There is a lot of work to be done and we keep having this conversation.”

“There is a certain amount of coping that goes on. You devote energy to coping with this and that. It could be directed somewhere else like to their self-esteem and so of course Native youth and Native people have the worst outcomes of any group in the country.”

“Teachers are scared of anything Native American. We saw teachers in responsive pedagogy workshops were challenged to break outside of their norm with what they were taught about Indigenous people. But then that same teacher corrects my child on how to pronounce her own tribe name correctly!”

Approximately 1 out of 3 Native Americans in Washington County is younger than 18, and one-third of Native families in Washington County have children of school-going age (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Focus group participants appreciate the data analysis on test scores, expulsions and suspensions, dropout rates, and other educational disparities, while also cautioning the readers to understand this data in the context of the impact of a single negative student experience on the small Native student population in Washington County. They also think its necessary that audiences consider *the legacy of schools as sites of racism that continues to this date through whitewashed school curriculums, punitive disciplinary practices, factors that lead to chronic absenteeism from school, and a dearth of institutional support and resources to encourage Native students to articulate and live their authentic selves in schools.*

1 out of 3 under age 18 

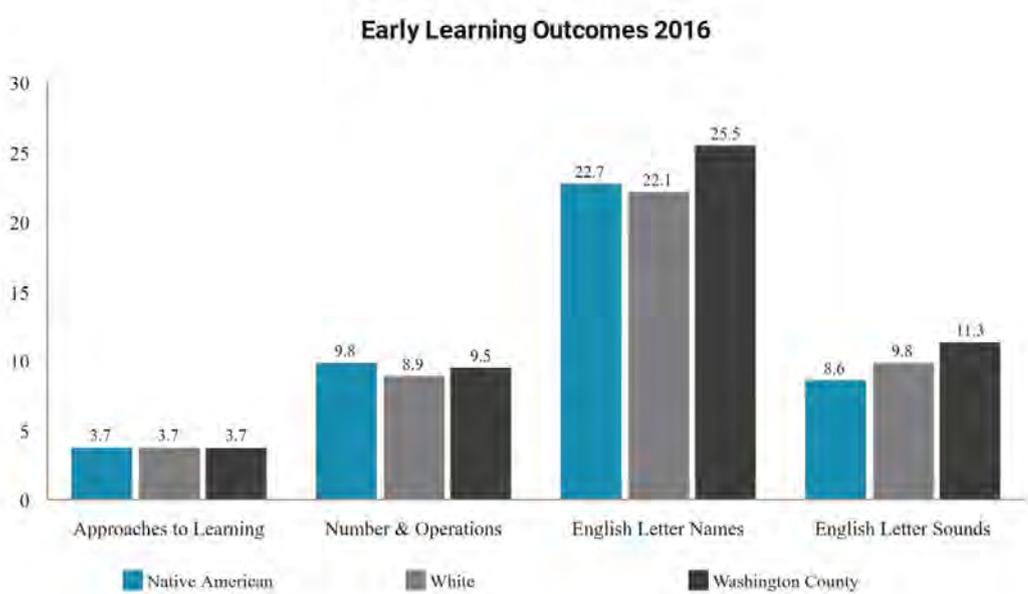
“We don’t even know how much racism is out there because often they don’t tell us to our face what they think.”

“Students are a minority amongst minorities so they are doubly isolated.”

What does the data say about how Native students in Washington County are experiencing the school system in Washington County?

EARLY LEARNING

Since 2014, Oregon has utilized a kindergarten assessment to gauge the readiness of incoming kindergartners by testing letter and numeric recognition and early approaches to learning that includes interpersonal skills and self-regulation. *Results from the assessment show Native children at par with their peers in characteristics that the Early Learning Hub considers key to academic excellence later in schools.* They also do well in mathematics but less so in early literacy measures that assesses “the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that precede learning to read and write” (Oregon Department of Education). The disconnect between Native children’s “early approaches to learning” and “early literacy” needs further community investigation.

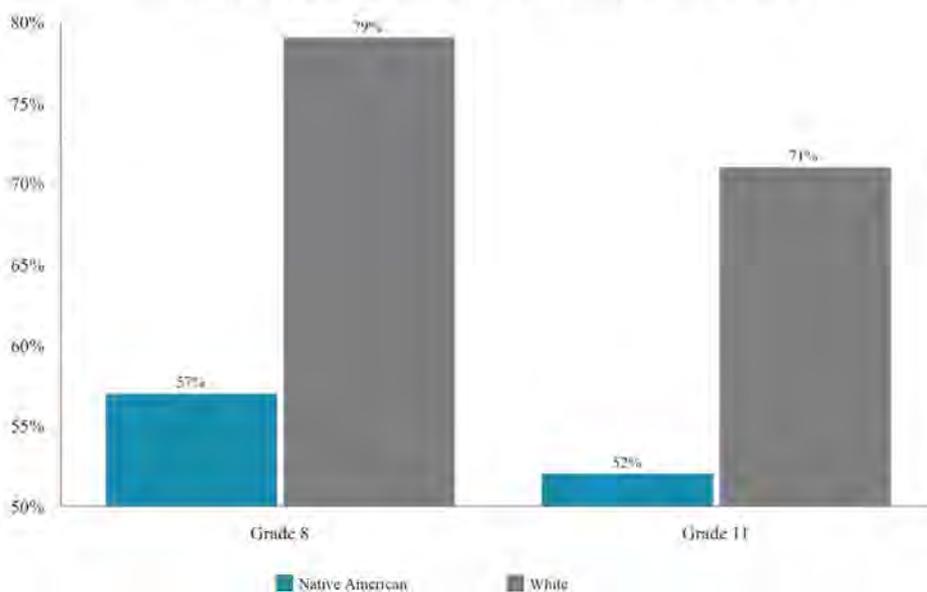


ACHIEVEMENT GAPS IN SCHOOL

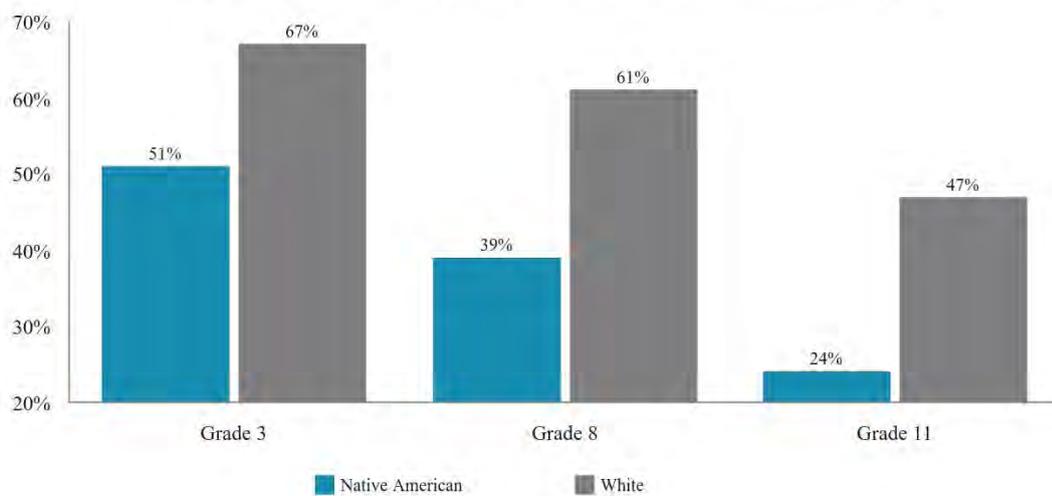
“Historically, Native people do excel as well or better than their White counterparts early on. But when they start talking about the evil people that were stopping these settlers from coming this way, we become bad people. Students all of a sudden say I’m not a good person after all, so why should I be anything better.”

Native children are evidently excelling in early learning metrics in Washington County but start getting left behind in K–12 schools. There are disturbing racial disparities between the proportion of Native students and White students excelling in standardized testing in mathematics, reading, and science at all grade levels.

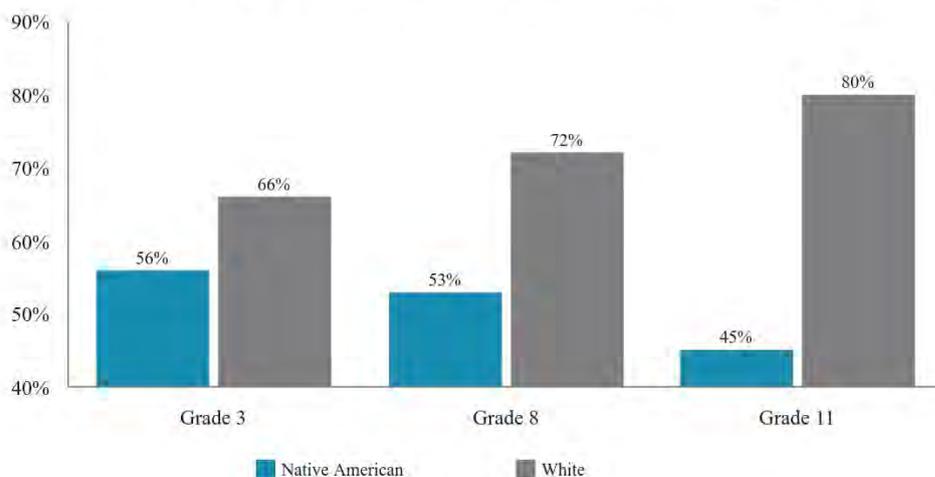
Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Science (2015)



Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Mathematics (2015)



Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Reading (2015)





Native students are **70%** more likely to be expelled or suspended compared to the overall student body and White students

For the Native American community, the reasons for these achievement gaps, particularly since they seem to occur in a K–12 setting, are obvious. They begin where mainstream conversations about achievement gaps stop—*how can Native students be supported in schools in a manner that encourages their academic excellence and also leads to healing, community cohesion, and deeper social change?* Answers to this question lie in reforms not just at the school level, but across all sectors.

EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL

Native students are being pushed out of the school system in Washington County. Native students are 70% more likely to be expelled or suspended compared to the overall student body and White students (Oregon Department of Education, 2015). Native community members opine that their youth are being punished for protecting themselves in institutions that perpetuate racist stereotypes and for “disrupting” instruction that does not represent their history in an accurate manner.

“Last couple of years with OIEA pushing for mascot removal, there has been lots of community teach-ins where young people have not only been understanding the issue but speaking out and going to Salem and being outspoken about it. Young people are more empowered to share their opinion if they hear something incorrect in classroom.”

22% of Native students in 2015 were “chronically absent” making them 30% more likely than the typical student and White student to be chronically absent.¹ Research has found that “chronically absent students have delayed achievement in early years with widening gaps over time, higher suspension and dropout rates, and decreased high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence” (Chief Education Office of Oregon).

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES

In 2015, 74.5% of Native first year students were on track to graduate compared to 86.7% of total first year students. *The graduation rate has improved since 2010.* Worryingly, between 2010 and 2015, the dropout rate for Native students increased as well. Harsh discipline, chronic absenteeism, low graduation rates and increasing dropout rates do not portend well for economic and social opportunities for students beyond their teenage years.

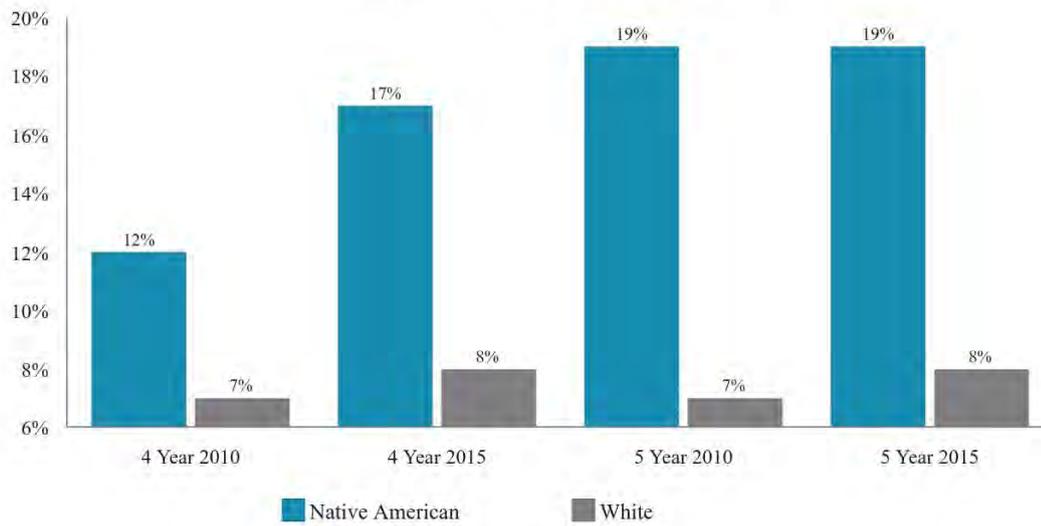
A community member who worked in the school system shared their experience:

“I was a student here. In high school, I would excel at courses that were culturally relevant to me. If they could integrate culture with art, science, and math it would be more interesting. There were so many times when you would have to choose whether or not to challenge teacher as [a] subject matter expert, especially in history.”

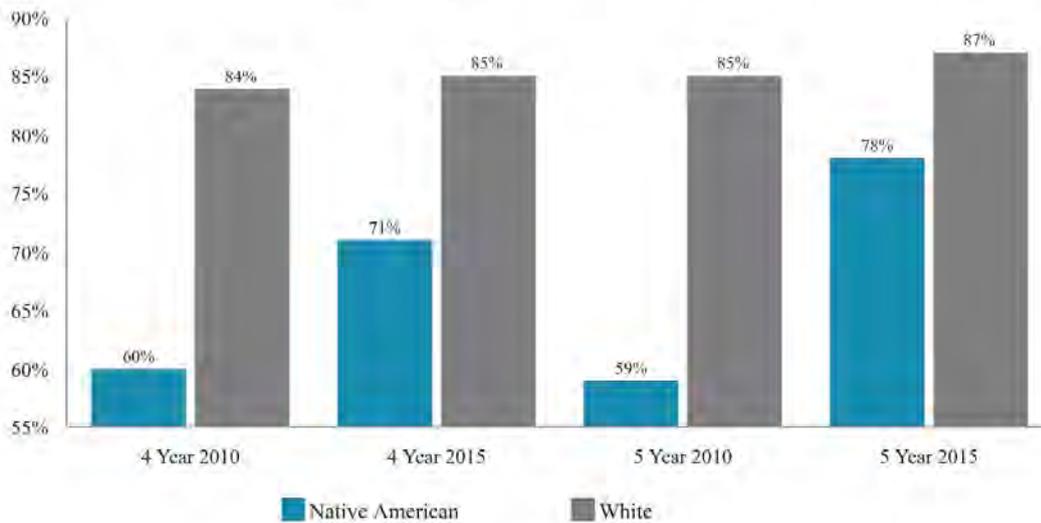
“I didn’t know how to advocate for myself growing up but my kids know how to do that—but it is considered misbehaving. My kid got upset when her class was reading Clifford the Big Red Dog and Clifford is dressed as an Indigenous person. Teacher thought it was a behavioral issue, but it’s my six-year old advocating for herself.”

“I would get calls from counselors when kids would drop out or when Native kids would come into the district. Families struggling was a constant. But it’s not the end of their lives; I would work with them to find out what path is uniquely theirs.”

Percentage of High School Dropout



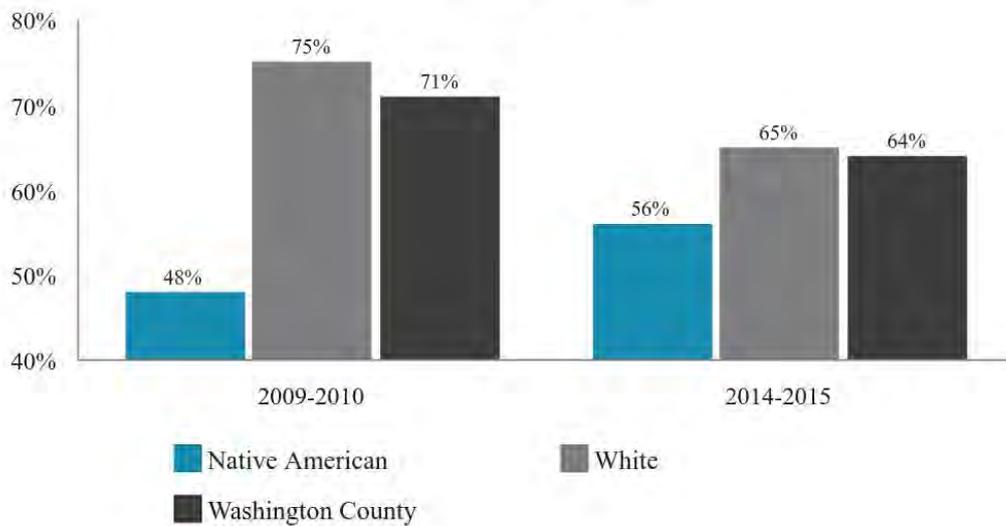
Percentage of High School Graduates



COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

There has been a gradual increase in Native high school graduates enrolling into colleges between 2009 and 2014.

Percentage of High School Graduates Enrolled in College (2014)



However, only approximately 16% of the Native community in Washington County has an Bachelor’s degree or higher.

Nearly 1 out of 2 Native Americans in the County stopped short of an undergraduate college degree. The reasons why Native college students may be leaving higher education without a degree are again rooted in similar issues of alienation and disconnect that follow them from their earlier educational experiences and a lack of support from higher educational institutions, along with financial constraints.

Shawna Hotch, a Pacific University student describes their experience:

“Within the first few days on campus I experienced a huge culture shock; Chemawa’s student body was all Native American and Pacific’s was definitely not. I became overwhelmed by the lack of diversity and quickly tried to find more Native students on campus. There weren’t as many as I had hoped and many were urban Natives who were not from the reservation. A majority of my friends or classmates had never “met a Native American,” or were uneducated about Native affairs. The idea of going to Native American boarding school seemed to have an attached stigma that I had been unaware of.”





Native parents in the focus groups also alluded to feeling disconnected from the school system.

“In a population that dwarfs us, we are still being excluded, suspension, expulsion rates are staggering for Indigenous people. They are not just in Washington County, but on a larger scale too. There’s a reason for that and that’s why there are parents who do homeschooling.”²

“My daughter goes to North Plains Elementary, which I feel it’s still pretty white but there is some brown in there which is nice. They pledge allegiance to the flag up here and I didn’t know that when I put her in the school. I just feel like it’s really old practice and I kind of am uncomfortable with it and am uncomfortable my child having to do it. For me, that flag represents genocide, that murder you know of my people.”

“This whole way of teaching children that we see is fairly new in human history and it’s also new for our families. My grandparents were traditional Navajos. They were raised in a family environment. I think that we have to actually challenge the whole way we have set up in the American high school system. I think in many ways it’s not functional and that’s the larger issue.”

When schools and programming gets it right, Native households feel the positive impact. They have had fewer negative experiences in schools with a diverse student population.



“I live in Aloha. My kids both look very different, they both have long hair and I expected for them to get harassed a lot more than they do. We have been going through the conversations throughout the years with them about what to say when that happens. But there are a lot of brown people here so it’s comfortable, it’s nice and I enjoy it.”

Focus group participants lift up the work of the Hillsboro School District and hope for these practices to be institutionalized.

“I was at Title VI meeting and we got to know that six Native students excel above their white counterparts here in Hillsboro in math and science, which is kind of an eye-opener for me.”

Schools are an important component of both Native and non-Native students' emotional and intellectual development. They have also been sites of violence against the Native community through whitewashed curriculums, racist mascot imagery, and punitive disciplinary practices. Education justice involves reforming instruction and making schools a safe place for Native students including a space for the community to come together.

CHILD WELFARE

Amongst Native American communities in the US, the child welfare system has a notorious reputation because it is linked to the forced removal of Native children from their homes and placement in Indian training schools. Placing children in foster and adoptive homes was part of the federally sanctioned physical and cultural genocide of the community.

“If you are Native, boarding schools have touched you in some way. We all know stories about who they were and how it went.”

The Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) surveys conducted in the 1960s and 1970s found that 25-35% of all Native children had been separated from their families and placed in foster or adoptive homes or in institutions (Unger, 1977). Child welfare bureaucracies were so rampantly removing children, particularly from Native communities that it led to the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978. In the words of one official in 1950, “If you want to solve the Indian problem, you can do it in one generation. You can take all of our children of school age and move them bodily out of the Indian country and transport them to some other part of the United States. Where there are civilized people..” (cited in George, 1997).

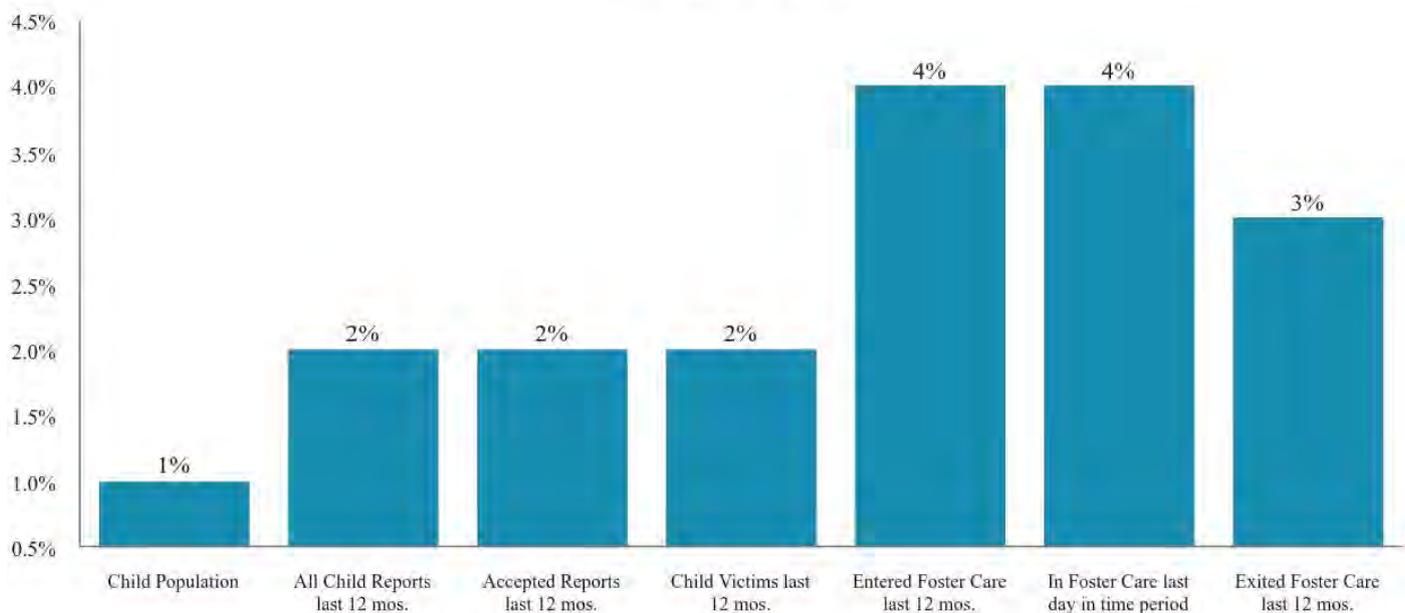
Despite the passage of the ICWA, Native American families and children both nationally and in Oregon have been caught up in the child welfare system. According to the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges, in 2015 the national foster care disproportionality ratio for Native American children was 2.6. Under Oregon's current standard, Native American children are overrepresented in foster care at a rate 3.25 times that of the general population (Department

“We have the Hillsboro education here in the community. It's really great space. They have weekly classes and events and singing and traditional songs. They also put on a powwow on every year at liberty high school. It's great because the parents get to know each other.”

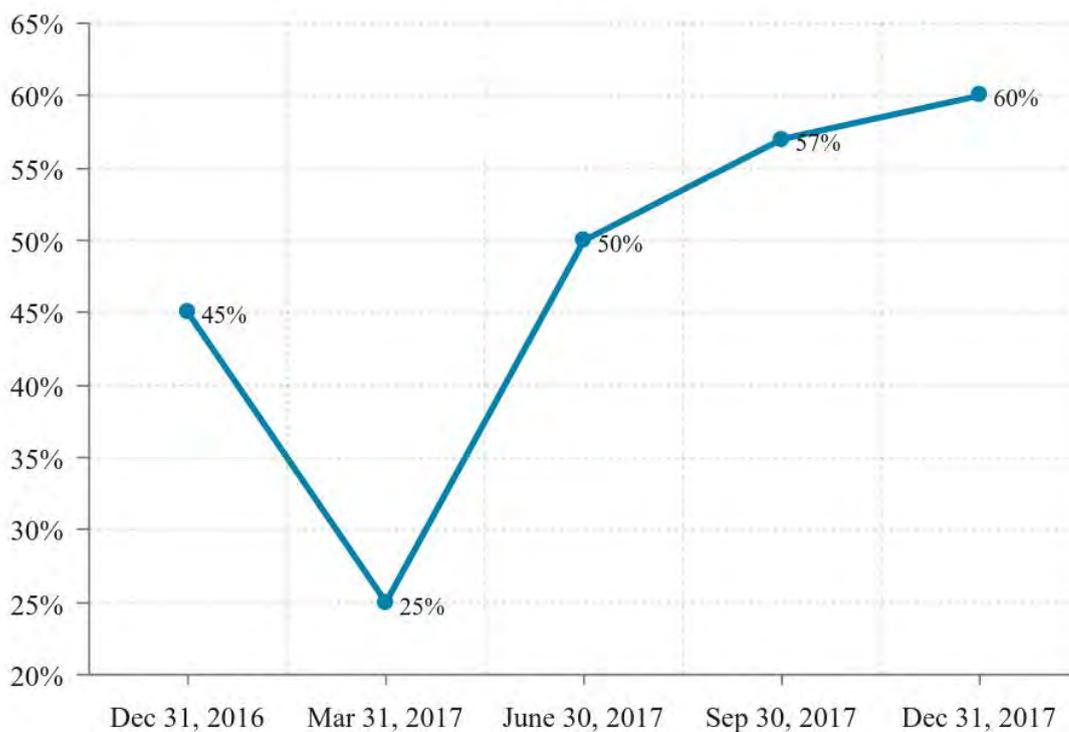
of Health Services, 2016). They are the most overrepresented in Oregon’s foster care population and in the population of children who age out of the system without a family. Oregon’s disproportionality ratio is the 44th worst in the country for Native American children. In 2009, Governor Kulongoski established a Child Welfare Equity Task Force charged with reducing racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. *In the 2018 Oregon legislative session, Representative Tawna Sanchez, the first Native legislator introduced House Bill 4009. The bill would have required judicial review for the removal of children who are not in dangerous situations and established a path to reestablishment of parental rights in situations where it is in the best interests of the child. The judicial review provision was ultimately removed but the reunification component passed.*

Through a review of the essential decision points in child welfare, we can study how institutional practices result in Native American families having different experiences in the system in Washington County. Native children are disproportionately present at each decision point of the foster care system ranging from being reported to child welfare, a worker deciding to investigate a claim of abuse or neglect, determining a finding of abuse or neglect, being taken into care, and remaining in care beyond the mandated limit of 12 months. According to Oregon Child Welfare data, in March 2017, they were 1% of the child population, but were steadily over-represented at each point of intervention in the foster care system. Although at first glance White children are also disproportionately in the system, they would include communities such as Middle Eastern and Latinos because of the nature of data collection about race and ethnicity.

Over-representation of Native Children in Child Welfare Decisions in Washington County, March 2017



**Native American Children Foster Care Rate of Not Met
(Permanency in 12 months)**



One of the key child welfare measures is whether a child is moved into a permanent setting within 12 months of foster care. This is a federal requirement. A longitudinal view of Native American children in foster care shows that child welfare is getting worse in this measure.

The racial differences at decision points in the child welfare system exist because of institutionalized practices of who “refers” children to child welfare and the decisions of those involved throughout the system to place children in care and keep them in care. “Poverty, poor housing, lack of modern plumbing, and overcrowding were often cited by state social workers as proof of parental neglect and provided the grounds for initiation of child custody proceedings. *According to the House Committee*

on Interior and Insular Affairs report, few Indian children were removed from their families on the grounds of physical abuse. Many social workers and judges who assessed the Native family without cultural knowledge (imposing their own economic and cultural values, behavioral standards, and racial prejudices) interpreted the child’s best interests as served by removal from the Native family and culture. This was despite, in most instances, a tribal insistence that family preservation and tribal integrity were in children’s best interest” (Curry-Stevens et al, 2011). Native American families are 117% more likely to experience poverty than a White family in Washington County and 44% more likely than an average family in the county; Native American households run by a single mother are 172% more likely than a White single



mother to be in poverty. Both Native American renters and homeowners are more likely than the county average to be burdened by housing costs. In 2015, 351 Native students reported being “housing insecure” in the county. Native families are disproportionately penalized in the child welfare system for experiencing poverty and housing instability, which are systemic economic justice issues impacting the community. Community members propose Washington County use Home Safety Reunification Specialists (HSRS) who work with the ICWA unit in Department of Human Services to help the families to prevent children’s removal from home by providing different culturally specific services.

Community members say that they have known grandparents and family members care for children to prevent them from go-

ing into the system. According to research comparing outcomes for children involved in the child welfare system and those that remain with their families, the prospects are dire. Those previously in foster care are less likely than the general population to graduate high school and more likely to have health and emotional problems. The majority of them are likely to be houseless at some point, experience unemployment and pay inequities, and are vulnerable to being funneled into the incarceration system after exiting foster care (Allen, 2005). For Native Americans, child welfare continues the legacy of government sanctioned forced removal of children under the modern guise of child protection, and imperils children and youth by depriving them of their community and setting them on pathways away from economic security and overall well-being.



Community members propose Washington County use Home Safety Reunification Specialists (HSRS) who work with the ICWA unit in DHS to help the families to prevent children’s removal from home by providing different culturally specific services.



Community members say that they have known grandparents and family members care for children to prevent them from going into the system.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Native communities and cultures have been criminalized by colonialism and racism. *“Kill the Indian, save the man” went the adage as schools, as strategies shifted from genocide to assimilation and modern institutional racism.* The Center for Disease Control and Prevention in a 2014 report found that nationally, Native Americans were the most likely to be killed by law enforcement. They also reported that Oregon was one of top five jurisdictions where a Native person is most likely to be killed by law enforcement. The others in the top five are New Mexico, Nevada, the District of Columbia, and Maryland (Males, 2014). Nationally, Native American men are imprisoned at more than four times the rate of white men, and Native American women are incarcerated more than six times as often as white women (Hartney & Vuong, 2009). Their stories are not visible in the dominant narrative, a repercussion of the invisibility of the community that focus group participants identified earlier in the report.

Native Americans have the second highest incarceration rate in Oregon, with Black and Latino populations over incarcerated as well. They are also overrepresented in Oregon’s prison population, while the White population is underrepresented. 1 out of every 30 Native people in Oregon currently has some connection to the corrections system as a survivor or an offender.

According to data made available by the Washington County Sheriff’s office as well as the Vera Institute of Justice, Native Americans in Washington County are not disproportionately incarcerated. In 2015, they were also not disproportionately stopped by law enforcement. This is a positive indicator, but the explanations may not be simple and again surfaces the question of how the Native community is visible or invisible in Washington County. First, police record race/identity of the person they stop based on perception and there is a high probability of misidentification. Law enforcement recorded 8% of the stops they made in Washington County in 2015–2016 as “Unknown/Other,” i.e. people that they could not perceptibly categorize into a race/ethnicity box. Unpacking that number or minimizing it in the future will render a clearer picture of racial profiling. Many times Native Americans are mistaken as White. When people “look” Native or Brown, they may be more prone to disproportionate engagement. Community reviewers brought up “driving while Brown” experiences similar to those of Latinos.

“My brother looks brown. He was driving a Saab in Cornelius. He was pulled over because his tail light was out. They approached him speaking Spanish. The police put him on the ground and didn’t believe him even when he showed his ID. Dad had to come prove that they had the same name and had to prove that it was his son.”

Second, according to focus group participants, Intel and Nike employees comprise a large share of Native residents in Washington County. They are also more likely to have a “white collar” advantage that insulates them from the criminal justice system. To the extent that the US criminal justice system criminalizes poverty, the Native community is 125% more likely to live in poverty compared to White residents and are particularly vulnerable to incarceration (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Native youth feel the cumulative impact of disconnect from schools in part due to harsh disciplinary practices, a hostile learning environment that disregards indigenous history, lack of culturally specific support to encourage academic excellence, and the threat of the child welfare system. The Juvenile Justice Information System did not report on racial disparities impacting Native youth due to the small size of the community. The data that the Washington County Juvenile Department has made available records 59 referrals pertaining to Native youth between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2016, comprising 3% of the Native population between 10 and 17 years of age (based on the American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Compared to White youth of the same age (race marked as White, ethnicity is non-Latino, or other ethnicity either left blank or unknown), Native youth were 867% more likely to be referred to the juvenile system. Fortunately, no case that made it to court in 2016 resulted in confinement or was transferred to adult court.

A community member who is a parent said that they had to have “the talk” with their teenage son about wearing their baseball cap properly and being mindful of their demeanor while driving around in order to not be profiled and pulled over.

It is common knowledge and demonstrated through Bureau of Justice Statistics data that *nationwide, Native Americans are most likely to be victims of crimes perpetrated by somebody of another race.* There were no recorded cases of hate crimes and sexual assaults against Native Americans in 2017. Considering that these instances are vastly underreported for many reasons, including the lack of trust between law enforcement and communities of color, no conclusions should be drawn regarding how safe people feel in the county.

Another community member chimed in:

“As a brown Native man, I’m not sure if people can identify me as Native but I keep my hands on the steering wheel at all times.”



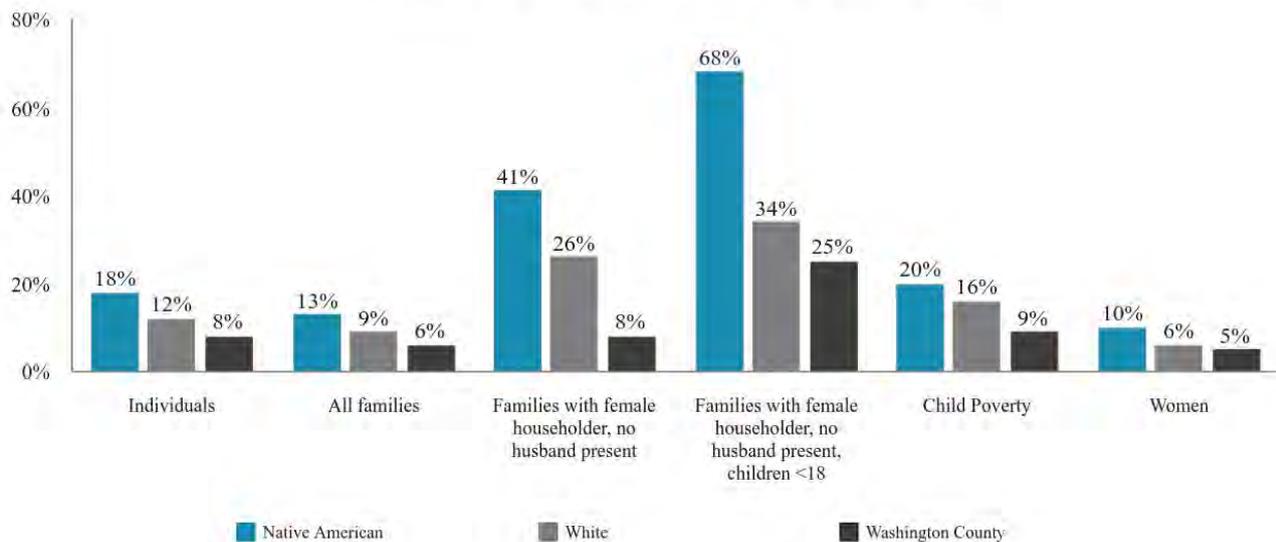
ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Native Americans living in Washington County are part of the approximately 72% of the national Native population who live in urban areas in the US. That is a result of the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, which forcefully relocated Native Americans from their lands to cities and urban areas to assimilate them into the mainstream economy and become ‘productive’ members of society. The Native community has been trying to rise above the challenges of being isolated from their communities, managing a high cost of living on low paying jobs and intergenerational poverty. Simultaneously, the community is building economic power. In 2012, there were approximately 500 Native owned businesses in Washington County that disbursed \$11 million in payroll and contributed \$47 million to the local economy.

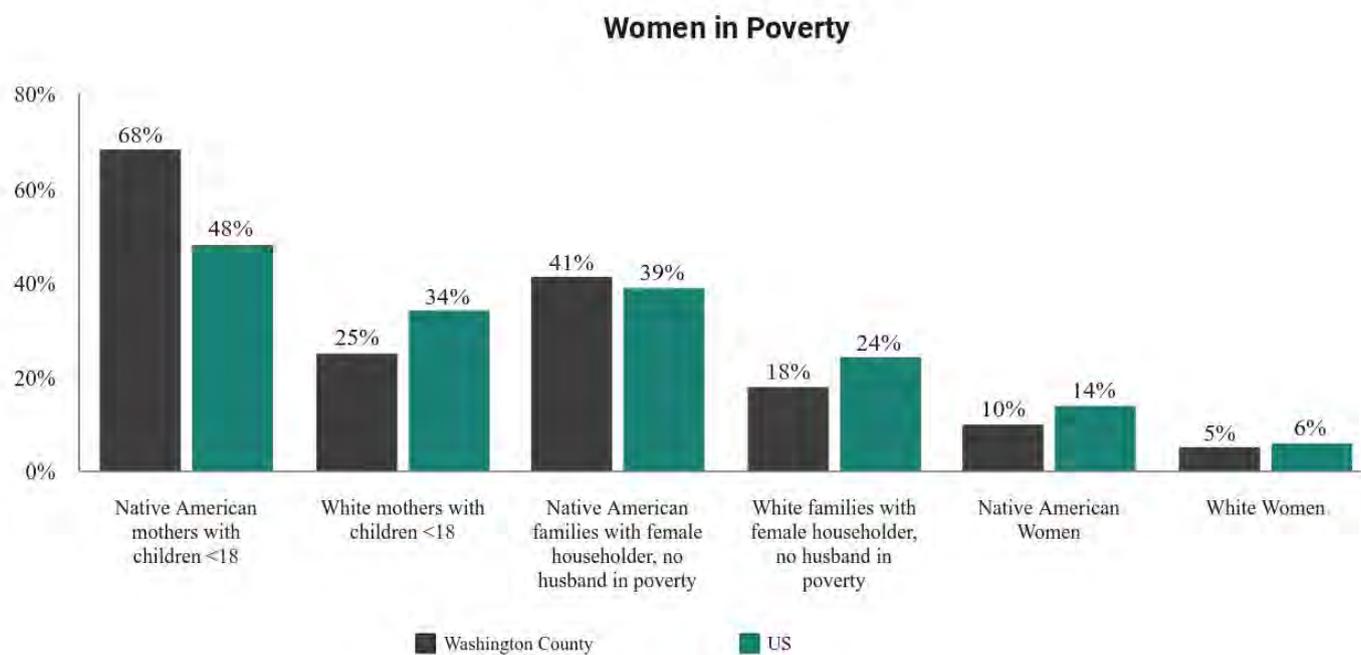
POVERTY

Poverty is the definitive economic justice issue of Native American life in Washington County and beyond. Poverty must be fully appreciated for its depth and reach. Native Americans—adults, youth, and families—were forced to assimilate into mainstream society and the economy through several federal government mandates. There was a forcible shift from communal and subsistence-based ways of living towards the monetary economy where, money is essential to purchase food, shelter, heat, transportation, healthcare, childcare, education, and economic security (Whittle, 2017). *Native Americans are a 125% more likely to experience poverty than a White person in the County and 50% more likely than a typical County resident* (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Native families experience a higher rate of poverty than White families and the average family in the county. The overall child poverty rate (those under 18 years old) for the Native community is 20%, compared to 9% for White children in the county.

Proportion of Population in Poverty (2011-2015)



Native women are the most impacted by poverty, especially if they are single mothers. 1 out of 10 Native women in Washington County experience poverty, compared to 1 out of 20 White women. More than 2 out of 3 Native single mothers live in poverty versus 1 out of 4 White single mothers and 1 out of 3 of all single mothers in the county. The graph below shows a startling trend—*Native American single mothers are more likely to be in poverty in Washington County than they are elsewhere in the country, while White single mothers are less likely to be poor.*



Consider these poverty levels in light of community members' feedback that income, employment, educational attainment, and homeownership levels in Washington County's Native population likely skews on the higher side because of the Native workforce at companies such as Intel and Nike. From their perspective, the county economy has created a class and income divide within the community, with low incomes pinching Native American single mothers and children.

However, poverty alleviation solutions sometimes fall flat. A community member who is a mother shares:

During the last decade, poverty rates in the Native American community in Washington County have declined, although Native American women continue to be impoverished at rates dismally higher than the national level (American Community Survey, 2006–2010 & 2011–2015).

When we consider what might get to the root causes of such poverty, and question how to deepen access to more permanent solutions, we turn attention to features of the landscape that are directly tied to poverty levels: incomes, education, occupations, and unemployment, which mean families struggle to afford needs such as housing and education.

“My kids were sent home with backpacks of food from their school a number of times. They were told, ‘You need to take this home.’ We never asked for it; they just assumed we were poor. They stopped after I spoke to the school.”

UNEMPLOYMENT

The federal government in the 1950s used the argument that most of the job growth was in cities to justify the implementation of the 1956 Indian Relocation Act.

Fast forward to 2015 in Washington County, 68% of the Native American community is either employed or is actively seeking employment.³ Native labor force participation is the lowest amongst all communities of color and is comparable to the White population and County level. However, *unemployment rate in the Native Americans community is 12% making them 71% more likely to be unemployed than a White resident* (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). In contrast, according to the Oregon Employment Department, in December 2017, the unemployment rate in Washington County was 3.4%, the lowest it has been in in 17 years.

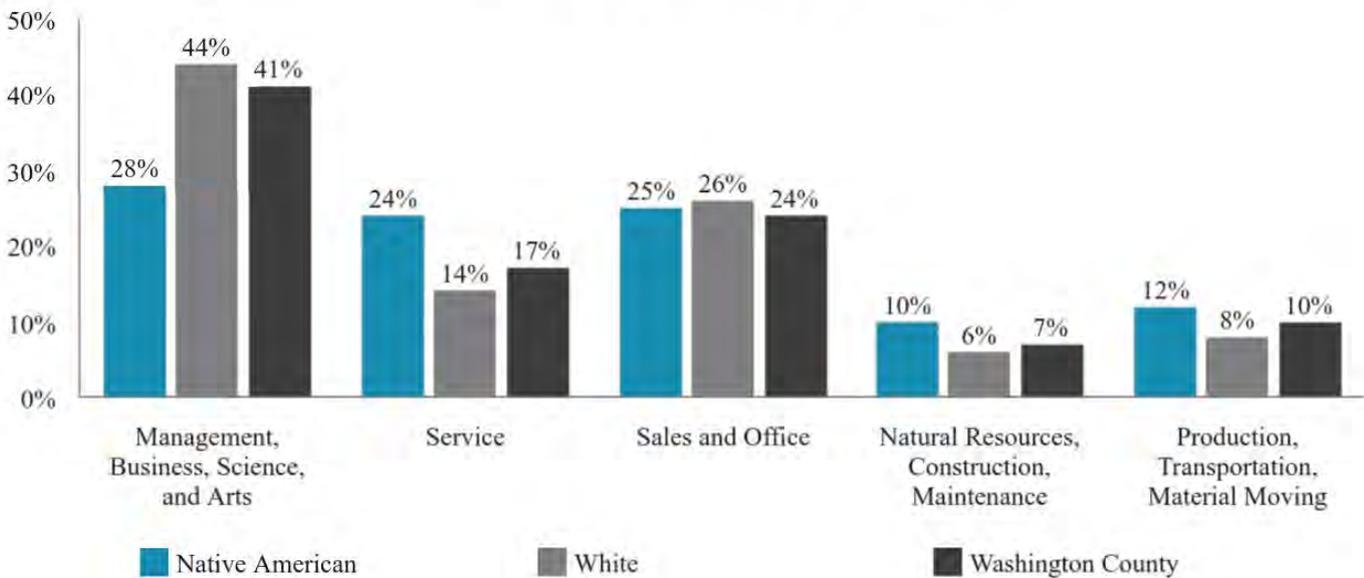
EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

Between 2011 and 2016, Washington County saw an increase in full time workers earning more than \$100,000 a year (Starbuck, 2018). The County had the highest annual average wage in the state at \$65,858 and the second highest wage growth on a net basis in the state in 2016 (Starbuck, 2017). In the Portland-Beaverton-Vancouver Metro Area, earnings have grown the most in high wage occupations (Policylink National Equity Atlas). How have Native Americans been involved in that economic prosperity?

Focus group participants caution that the presence of Intel and Nike skews data on income and employment higher and highlight the resulting economic gap within the community in the county.

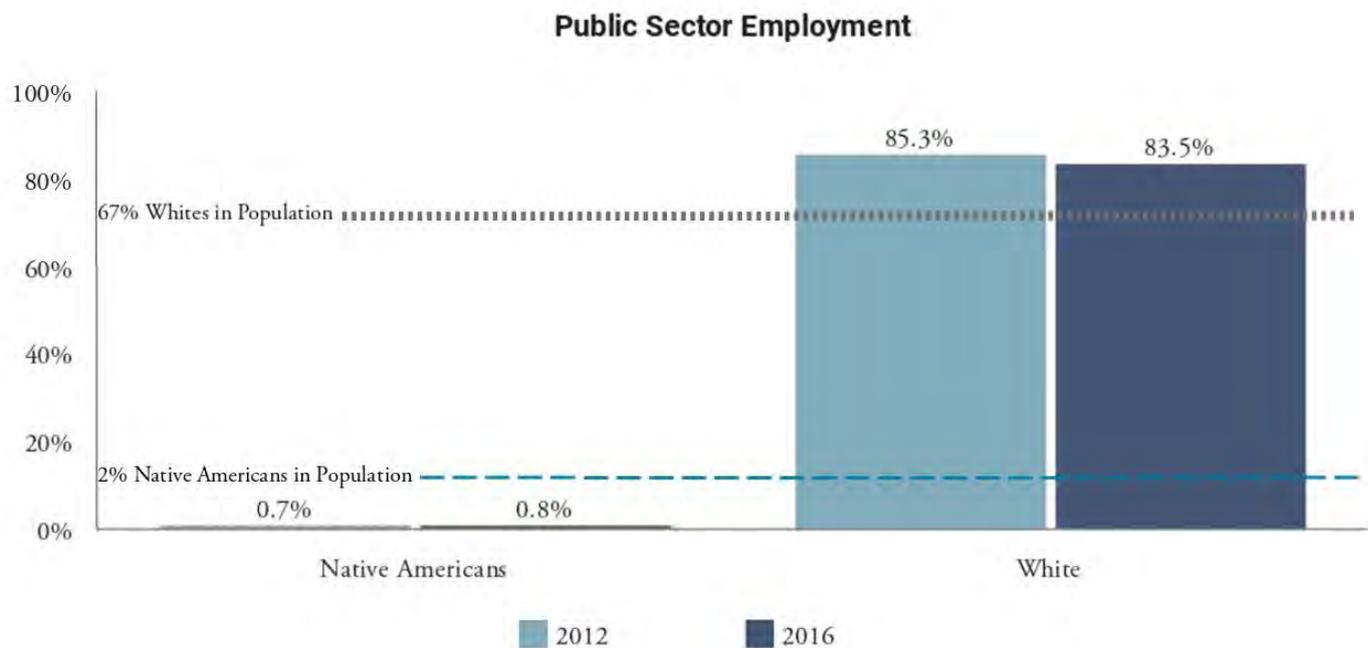
Native Americans in Washington County are underrepresented in high wage occupations and in public sector employment. They also earn less for full time jobs compared to White employees in all occupations, even when they have similar levels of education.

Percentage of Workforce by Occupation



In Washington County, Native Americans are 57% less likely to be working in management, business, science, and arts occupations that are typically considered high wage sectors. In fact, almost 3 out of 4 Native Americans are employed in occupations such as services and sales where earnings can vary widely.

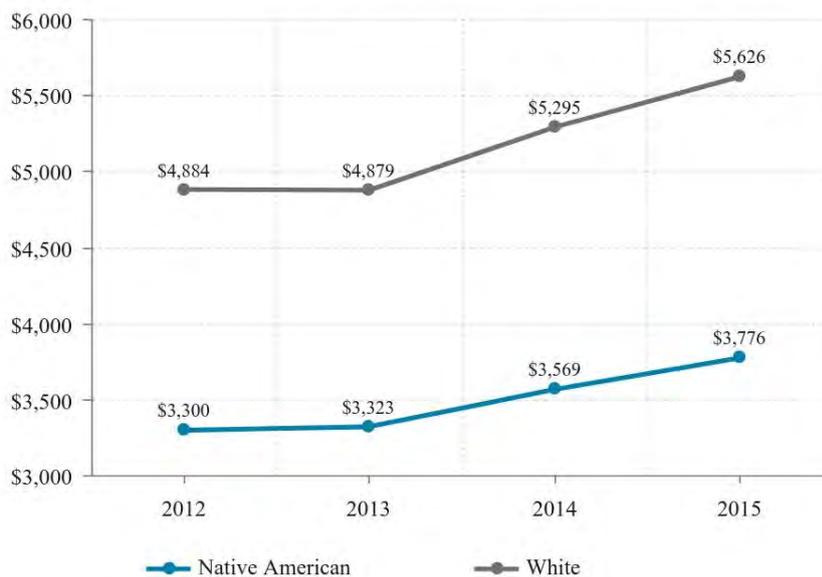
There is a similar pattern of employment across the Washington County public sector that involves all local government and public agency jobs. They were 0.8% of the public sector workforce but more than double that proportion in the overall county population. In contrast, White people are 83.5% of public sector employees, a stark overrepresentation of their population when compared to their share of the county population. This is despite the slight decline in White employees' share of the public sector workforce.



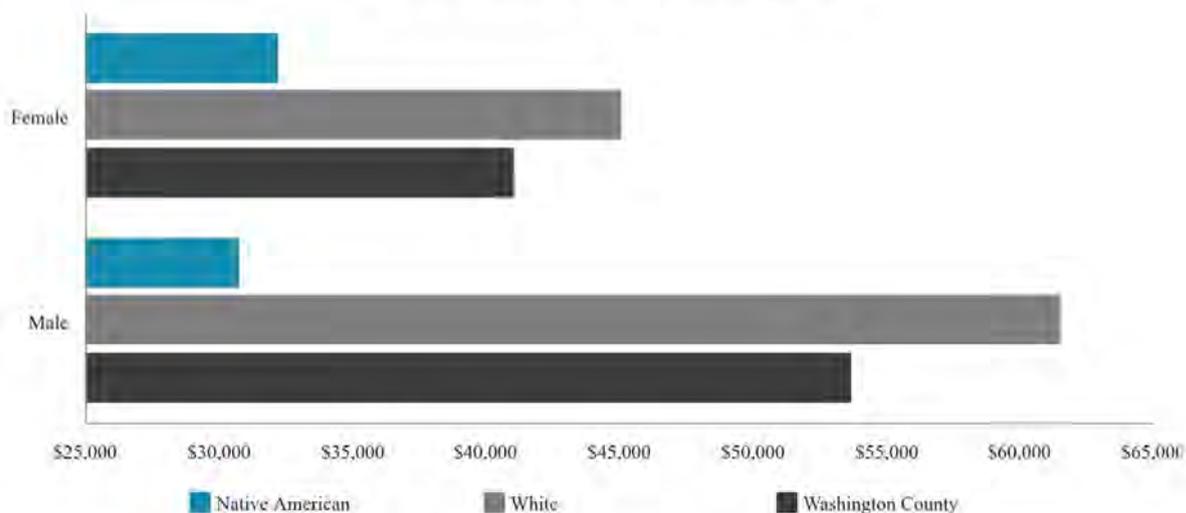
Focus group participants shared that they and most people they know in their community work outside Washington County. American Community Survey 2011-2015 estimates that approximately 28% of the community works outside the County. According to the community of the 72% that works in the County, Intel, Nike and farming labor make up most the employment opportunities.

As one can imagine, high poverty rates coexist with low incomes in general. The monthly earnings of a typical Native American worker in Washington county are \$3,776, while a typical White worker earns \$5,626 monthly in 2015. The annual income gap between the two is \$23,400, which more than enables a White worker to afford a home at the county's annual median rent of \$19,776 as calculated by Zillow. To put it another way, a White full time worker can afford to house themselves and have money left over with the difference in earnings vis-a-vis Native full time workers.

Median Monthly Earnings



Median Income for Full time Worker by Sex



Income inequality in Washington County is both racialized and gendered. Native American male and female full time workers earn less compared to White female and male workers.

Education is considered a pathway out of poverty and low incomes. Studies show that a bachelor’s degree vastly improves a person’s earnings. In the US, Native American communities have been excluded from that path. Almost half of the population left college without receiving a Bachelor’s degree (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Focus group participants repeatedly brought up their experiences with educational debt, being made to feel different in that environment because

of their identity and background, and for some, navigating college as a first generation student.

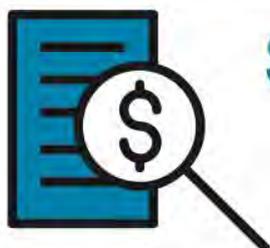
The Native American workforce earns less than their White counterparts and the general population with similar levels of education. *Colonialism decimated the Native community to the relatively small current population in Washington County. That prevents any definitive statistical conclusions about the exact extent of income disparities at different education levels.* The figure below broadly shows that Native Americans have a lower income compared to median White and county full time incomes for workers with the same level of education.

COST OF LIVING IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

The Economic Policy Institute calculates the monthly budget needed to afford a modest yet adequate standard of living. The 2017 calculator takes into account the cost of housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, other necessities, and taxes. The calculator does not include savings for retirement, education, or emergencies. For a two parent family with two children in Washington County, it costs \$8,334 per month (\$100,012 per year) to secure a decent yet modest standard of living.

Across different household types, Native Americans seem to be economically worse off compared to the typical White household and average county household. They support their households with fewer resources than White residents. Note these are median incomes, meaning that these are typical households being compared. These numbers are not skewed by a few extremely high-income earners, but rather reflect the income of the average “middle-of-the-pack” household.

At median annual costs of \$12,792, child care in Washington County is more expensive than in Oregon overall. Families may be spending as much as 39% of their income on child care. Even when Native American parents can afford childcare, Washington County has the fewest openings at child care centers out of all counties in the state (Women’s Foundation of Oregon, 2017). Combine this with the reality that housing costs are increasing faster than Native American full time earnings. Rising housing costs are impacting all residents in Washington County, but the cost burden is being disproportionately borne by Native Americans. To make matters worse, they carry the knowledge that the child welfare system has a history of removing their children and placing them in foster care due to reasons relating to poverty and housing instability.



\$56,347 Median Household Income for Native American

\$69,964 Median Household Income for White

\$66,746 Median Household Income for Washington County

Family Households
with Own Children



\$51,146 Median Household Income for Native American

\$91,213 Median Household Income for White

\$78,942 Median Household Income for Washington County

Family Households
without Own
Children



\$70,226 Median Household Income for Native American

\$86,109 Median Household Income for White

\$82,204 Median Household Income for Washington County

HOUSING JUSTICE

Housing justice for Native Americans envisions home in terms of re-building community from the ravages of colonialism and racism. It is therefore essential for Native American communities that the history of this country and Oregon acknowledge that they were the original inhabitants of the land we now know as the United States and that their lands were stolen from them through outright breaches of treaty laws (the US has broken over 500 treaties with Native tribes) (Burt, 1986). *In Oregon, the federal government terminated more than 60 tribes in 1953, revoking tribal sovereignty and government responsibilities to Native peoples, as well as claims to reservation land. Resource-rich lands have been removed from Native stewardship throughout the history of colonialism and Native Americans have been forcibly displaced from productive lands multiple times.* “Upon termination, approximately 864,820 acres of Indian trust land in Oregon was sold, about 35% of the lands sold under termination across the nation. Thus, while touted as “setting free” the Indian from second-class citizenship, termination meant Native Americans’ remaining resources were “set free” as well. Termination eased private access to Indian trust lands where some of the state’s remaining resources were located, such as the thousands of acres of virgin timber held by the Klamath tribe in south-central Oregon” (Curry-Stevens et al, 2011). The breakup and loss of Indian control over reservation land that followed termination resulted in the displacement of over 4,000 Native Americans in Oregon, fueling Indian migration to urban areas in Washington County and Portland.”

Currently, Native people in Washington County are positioned to lead culturally specific solutions to the housing crisis that is both disproportionately impacting renters and homeowners in the community. They envision redressing issues of economic inequity—scarcity of well-paid employment, wealth disparities, high cost of higher education and exclusionary mortgage and lending practices as means to protecting the community from displacement due to gentrification.

HOMEOWNERSHIP

Native Americans continue to face serious housing disparities as described here in terms of housing affordability, homeownership and access to lending, homelessness, and discrimination. *In a County where nearly 2 out of 3 White residents are homeowners, one out of three Native Americans own their homes (American Community Survey, 2 011–2015).*

Participants in the focus groups primarily emphasized reasons related to employment and intergenerational wealth that lead to differential outcomes in homeownership. Community members talked about how as Native people they are largely excluded from high wage employment opportunities, suffer from income inequity, incur debt especially due to college costs and lack a financial buffer due to intergenerational economic injustices making it hard for potential Native homeowners to afford a home. They are 71% more likely to be unemployed than White people; 28% of Native Americans are employed in high wage occupations compared to 44% of White residents and 41% of County residents; their median incomes are less than both the County and White median income at similar levels of education (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Native Americans in Washington County were hit hard by the recession and the number of applications for home loans were the lowest among the Native community in 2009 at 60 loans compared to those for whom data is available (Washington County Fair Housing Plan, 2012).

“When I talk to my friends who are White, they inherit a lot more; they have a lot more money in their family that is passed down from generations to generations. I don’t hear the happening to too many Native people or people of color.”

“A lot of people that I talk to around here come to work for Intel, which pays for their relocation, pays for their down payment for their house. They can live anywhere they want.”



Native American applicants were **41%** more likely than similar middle income White applicants and **149%** more likely than similarly low income White applicants to have their loan applications denied

These factors, reinforce the historical proclivity of financial institutions to deny home loans to potential homeowners of color and prevent them from homeownership. The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data analyses included in the Washington County Fair Housing Plan (2012) found that banks were 23% less likely to approve a Native American person applying for a loan. They were also 40% more likely than Whites to have their loan applications denied. Native American applicants' denial rates increased substantially from 2000 to 2009 (Native Americans and Latinos were the only communities to see county loan denial rates increase during that time period). The primary reasons cited in the HMDA data for denial for applicants of all races are too high of a debt to income ratio, lack of collateral, and poor credit history. Data to evaluate the extent to which these reasons hold isn't publicly available.

There is an unjust reality that Native Americans are excluded from homeownership and have their loans denied because of debt and low credit history. In 2007, high income Native Americans had a lower loan denial rate of all groups listed in the table below (Washington County Fair Housing Plan, 2012). However, Native American applicants were 41% more likely than similar middle income White applicants and 149% more likely than similarly low income White applicants to have their loan applications denied, demonstrating that home mortgage loan denial is not just a function of low incomes (Washington County Fair Housing Plan, 2012)



“There is a certain amount of discrimination in jobs. It’s documented by studies that White folks are more likely to get a job. To get paid more, even a little more, can make a difference in how you get by especially as it accrues over years and generations.”

“I think a challenge with my generation being a Native person is taking on more debt than other people may have to. I got to go where I wanted to go to college but to do that I had to take on so much debt. I was a first-generation college student. Neither one of my parents could help me pay for college education; they did their best and I’m super grateful.”

BURDEN OF HOUSING COSTS

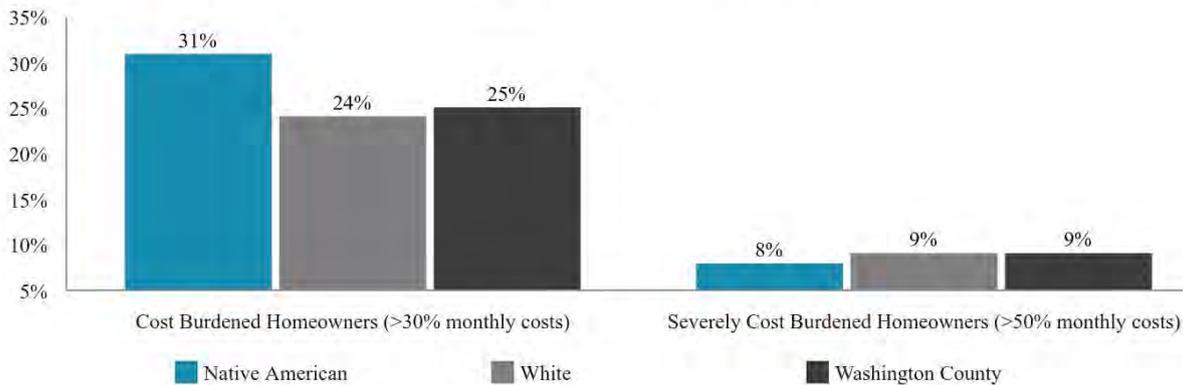
Community members are observing gentrification in Portland and the resulting community displacement, along with the rising housing costs in Washington County, with foreboding. Median rents in Washington County have increased by 37% between 2012 and 2015 (Zillow Rent Index). In the same time period, monthly earnings of the Native American community grew by 14% (Worksystems Inc).

“Housing not just a Portland issue. I see it a lot around the Washington County. Everyone is just getting pushed out further and further because the push has been happening from Portland out here in the rural parts. We are being affected by that.”

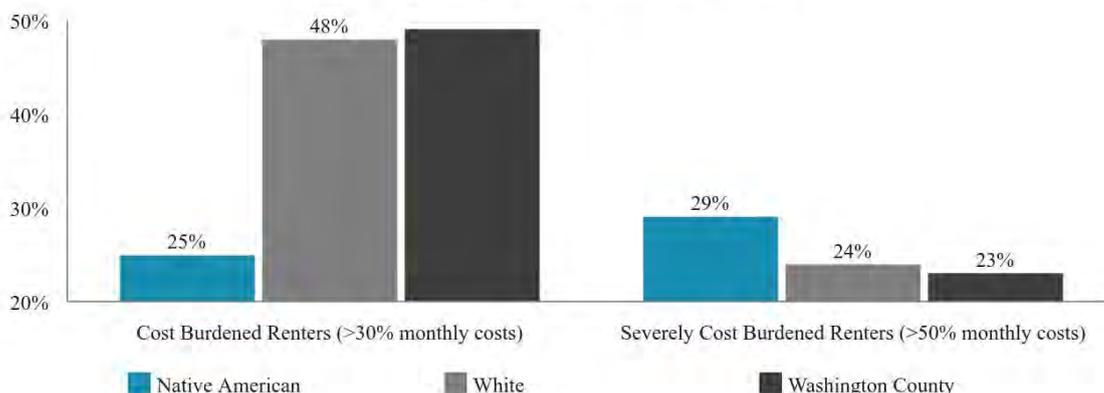
The confluence of high housing costs and low incomes requires many in the community to spend much more than advisable on housing. 39% of Native homeowners are spending at least a third of their monthly income on mortgage and related housing costs compared to a quarter of White homeowners and all County homeowners (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). This may be partially due to Native homeowners being led towards high price loans such as subprime mortgages that led to the housing collapse and the 2008 recession (Bayer, 2016). During the housing boom in Washington County in 2006, 23% of loans to Native Americans were high priced, which are often a more expensive and risky proposition. Even after lending activity declined in subsequent years, Native Americans continued to have higher rates of these risky loans (Washington County Fair Housing Plan, 2012).

“We see a lot of people in Portland who have had to move out here because of this issue and it’s starting to affect this area. The housing prices are definitely going up. It is ultimately going to affect the most invisible community on this continent and that’s us.”

Percentage of Homeowners Cost Burdened



Percentage of Renters Cost Burdened



FOOD INSECURITY AND

HOUSING INSTABILITY

Almost 2 out of 3 Native residents in Washington County are renters (American Community Survey, 2011–2015) and they are more likely to spend more than half of their income on rent -- 54% of Native renters are cost burdened compared to 49% of White renters. In 2015, the median rent according to the Zillow Rent Index was \$1,648. Based on their median income of \$54,228, Native American households should spend no more than \$1,355 of their income on rent to avoid being housing cost burdened (defined as spending more than 30 percent of household income on housing costs). The average monthly earnings for a Native American worker with a “stable job” was \$3,776 in 2015, meaning that this average worker would need to spend 36% of their income to afford the median rent.⁴ A Native American woman whose full-time median earnings are \$32,193, is on average spending more than 60% of their income on rent. Combine this with the reality that Native Americans across all household types experience poverty at higher rates compared to general population in Washington County. *Native women in particular negotiate the housing crisis since they are the most likely to be in poverty and earn the least compared to White men and women* (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). There was no data readily available about the number or percentage of Native Americans that are waiting for public housing or Section 8 vouchers.

One sees the implications of housing crises in at least two ways. The first is food insecurity. Research tells us that when housing costs rise, people who can no longer afford housing must reduce spending on other basic needs such as food and

healthcare. “Rent eats first,” as the saying goes. The increase in the share of Native American community on food stamps from 16.2% to 26.8% (American Community Survey, 2011–2015 & 2006–2010) demonstrates rising food insecurity in the community, meaning that families lack resources to afford enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life for all household members and must negotiate a tradeoff of basic needs such as housing, food, and healthcare. The second way the crises are manifested is in housing instability. According to the Oregon Department of Education, which defines housing instability in a way that more closely aligns with the experiences of communities of color, 351 Native students in 2015 were housing insecure, comprising 16 percent of said population. That means that they “lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” (Oregon Department of Education).⁵ In contrast, the official Points In Time Count (PITC) in 2015 recorded 16 sheltered and unsheltered homeless Native Americans who comprised 2% of those counted, roughly the same proportion of the Native community in Washington County. Housing advocates and researchers across the country critique PITC for inadequately capturing the experiences of communities of color with housing instability—they may be cycling in and out of homelessness, doubling up or couch surfing with family or community members (which in turn may make the hosting household vulnerable to eviction if they rent their home). PITC 2016 reports rent unaffordability is the most prevalent cause of homelessness among those counted in Washington County.

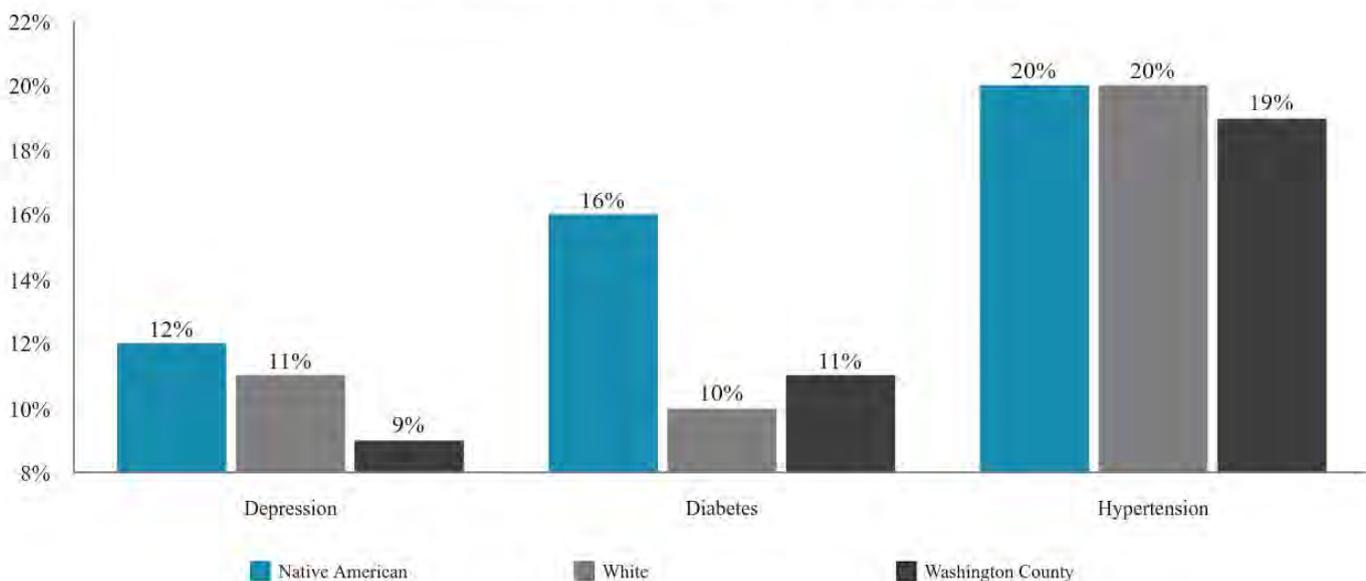
HEALTH JUSTICE

A racial justice lens to healthcare emphasizes “social determinants” as precursors to health, without which one is likely to suffer from illness, disease, and reductions in quality of life. Social determinants of health include income, employment, child care, employment conditions, environment, food, housing, health care, social inclusion, education, and access to a decent social safety net when these resources are not available. As is evident in Native American lived experiences in Washington County, they negotiate community isolation combined with disparate experiences in economic, housing, education and criminal justice systems. Less visible but repeatedly emphasized is the mental and physical toll of a community that is fighting and resisting centuries-long attempts to make them invisible by forcible physical displacement or assimilation.

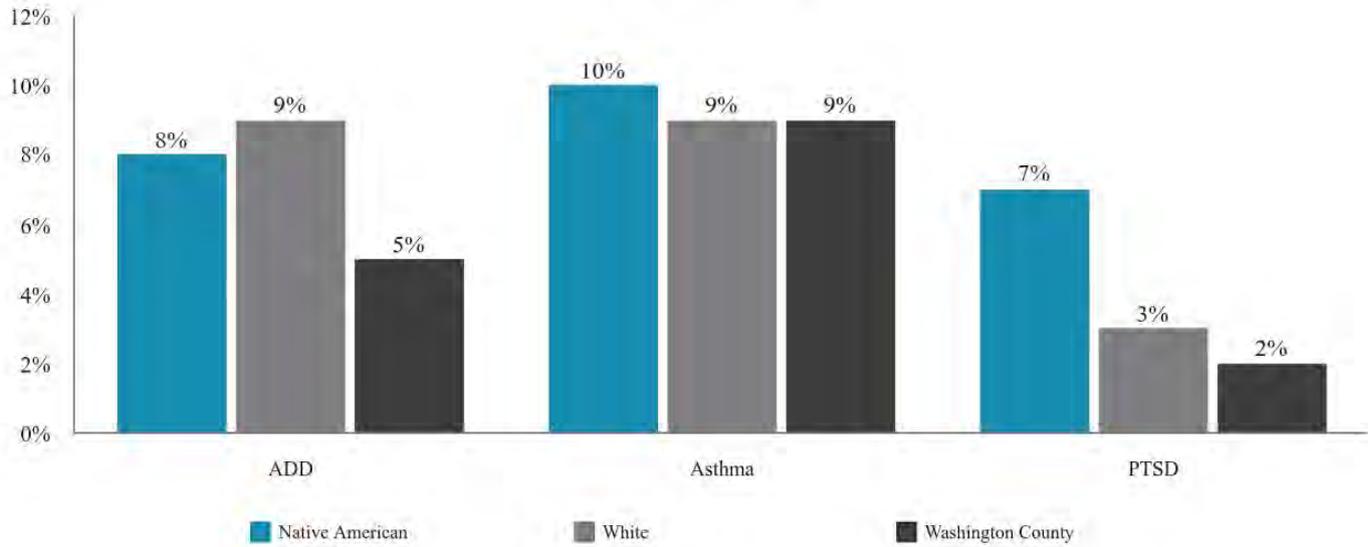
According to Washington County Public Health Department’s 2014-2015 analysis, Native Americans in Washington County (their analysis does not include indigenous Latino communities) have the highest rate of depression among all communities for which data is available in the County (Asian and Pacific Islander, Black, Latino and White). Community reviewers point out the scarcity of mental health services for Native Americans in Washington County. Native youth have the highest rate of post traumatic stress disorder diagnosis in the County compared to Asian and Pacific Islanders, Black, Latino and White youth, as well as the overall youth population in the County.

“That definitely ties into historical trauma and also the denial of our existence. People don’t grapple with what it’s like to be invisible. Speaking for myself, when I meet people the first thing they say to me is that I am the first Native person that they have ever met. I think the invisibility and denial has a price. I think that our youth, our people, we pay for it.”

Adult Medicaid Clients Top 3 Diagnosed Conditions

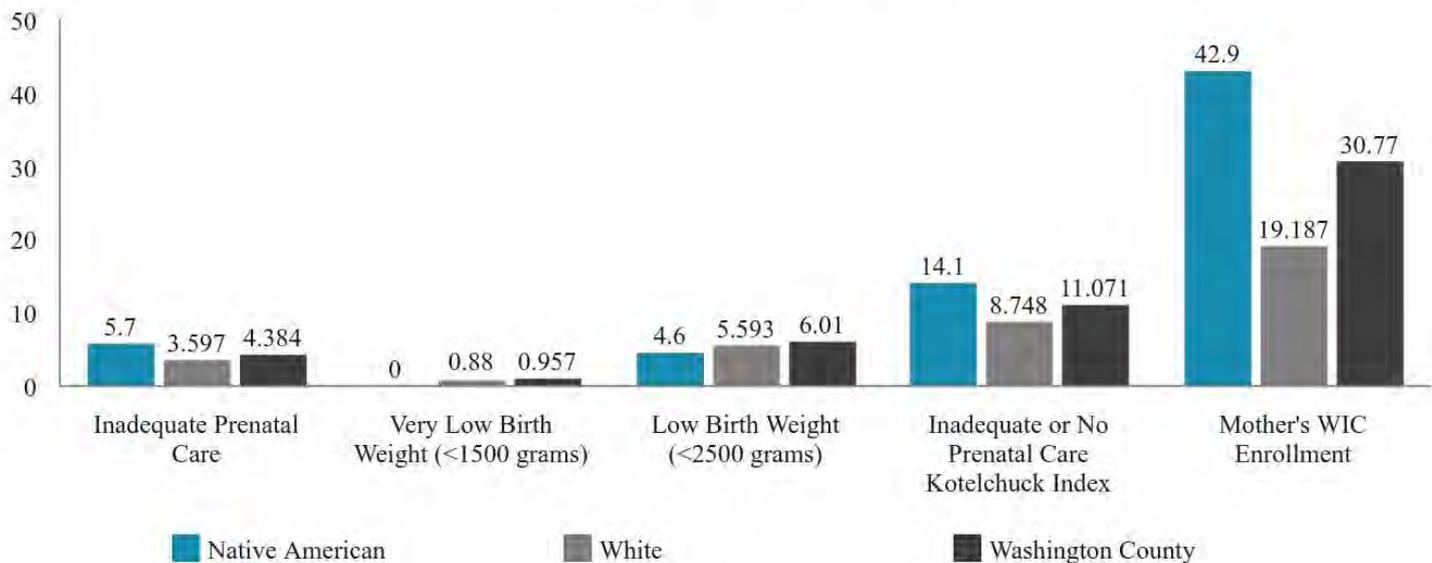


Youth Health Share and Family CCO Clients Top 3 Diagnosed Conditions (2014-2015 age adjusted)



In Washington County, data illustrates numerous dimensions of deeply troubling health experiences that face Native Americans. Analysis of birth risk factors data made available by the Washington County Public Health Department shows that there are significant barriers to Native women accessing prenatal care. Native women and single mothers are dealing with high rates of poverty and pay disparities and must manage the cost of childcare, housing and food on low wages. These are real economic justice issues impacting community health. Approximately 43% of Native women were enrolled in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food assistance program during pregnancy and were more likely than White mothers to not be able to adequately meet their prenatal care needs. No data is available about infant mortality rates in the Native community.

Birth Risk Factors (2011-2015)



There is scarce information available about the causes of death in the Native community in Washington County. That's primarily because the health department suppresses data about small communities because they are statistically unreliable. Although that methodology makes statistical sense, it is another way of making the Native community invisible especially since conversations about statistical significance and population sizes are completely disconnected from a historical understanding of why Washington County's Native community is relative small. The Native community in Oregon and the US continues to recover from is the forced sterilization of thousands of women. During the 1960s and 1970s, involuntary sterilization of Native American women was rampant. Legal in the early 1900s until 1983, the State of Oregon used involuntary sterilization as a condition of release from state institutions.

This procedure was routinely conducted in institutions where young Native women resided such as mental health, criminal justice and child welfare facilities. Research into the practices of Oregon's Board of Eugenics revealed that up until 1960 forcible removal of ovaries occurred for women when "procreation would produce children with an inherited tendency to feeble-mindedness, insanity, epilepsy, criminality, or degeneracy" (Sullivan, 2002). Additionally, recent national data shows that there is a 30% error rate on the death certificates of Native Americans (Center For Disease Control and Prevention). This means that Native American deaths are severely undercounted. Those misclassified are predominantly presumed to be White, thus making the White mortality rate worse than it actually is, and artificially lowering the Native American mortality rate. It is very likely that local data mirrors this trend and that there is actually a significant disparity in mortality rates between Whites and Native Americans locally.

Given the healthcare system's culpability in colonizing Native American communities, the community needs access to culturally specific healthcare, services they can trust. Focus group participants prioritized access to Native health care services in Washington County. Approximately 23% of the community in the County does not have health insurance and roughly 31% are covered by public insurance that includes the Indian Health Service (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Access to Native healthcare for the community is important in the context

of restoration of tribal sovereignty and a public recognition of their identity. When the federal government began "terminating" federal recognition of Native American tribes in 1954, more than 60 groups in Oregon had their governments abolished, lands taken and social services revoked. It also resulted in the loss of health care coverage under the Indian Health Services. Community members noted the improvements to the Indian Health Service were included in the Affordable Care Act in 2012 but noted that those services weren't available in Washington County.

"My first priority would be access to local holistic health care especially in mental health services, and that's coming from someone who is fortunate to have good health benefits. I've gone to Chemawa for dental health for decades and I am switching to use my provider here because it's just such a pain to travel to Salem."

"You have Indian Health Services even though you really don't here because it's hard to access."

"I have to drive to Salem to get access to healthcare. I think it would be a great plan to have Indian Health Services here. It's part of our treaty rights you know and we should have access to it."

The Native community's healthcare priorities and concerns are supported by the Tri-County Community Health Needs Assessment that was conducted in 2016. Native American participants in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties agreed that the five most important issues that need to be addressed to make the community healthy were homelessness/lack of safe, affordable housing, unemployment/lack of living wage jobs, mental health challenges (e.g. depression, lack of purpose or hope, anxiety, bipolar, PTSD, eating disorders), hunger/lack of healthy, affordable food and racism/discrimination. They listed access to a variety of healthcare, safe and affordable housing, healthy and affordable food, good schools, safe neighborhoods and a good family life as essential elements of a healthy community (Healthy Columbia Willamette Collaborative, 2016).

ENDNOTES

- 1 Oregon Department of Education measures chronic absenteeism as a student missing 10 percent or more of school days due to excused and/or unexcused absences and/or expulsion or temporary suspension from school.
- 2 This resonates with a Journal of Black Studies research finding that most parents chose to educate their children at home at least in part to avoid school-related racism. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0021934712457042>
- 3 An unemployed person is considered a part of the labor force only if they are demonstrably seeking employment. This figure does not capture people who have given up on finding a job or aren't actively looking.
- 4 Average monthly earnings of employees with stable jobs (i.e., worked with the same firm throughout the quarter)
- 5 "A homeless family could live in an emergency shelter or transitional housing unit, share housing with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship, reside in motels, or live in tents or trailers for lack of alternative, adequate housing."



AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

“A SMALL BUT GROWING COMMUNITY”

Good schools, affordable cost of living compared to Portland and safe neighborhoods attracted African-Americans to settle down in Washington County. As of 2015, there were *at least* 12,357 African-Americans living in the county, which is approximately 2% of the total population. It is widely documented and understood among demographers and community members that the US Census systematically undercounts communities of color. The small size of the community in Washington County is symptomatic of a Oregon’s problematic history and policies.

“Why Aren’t There More Black People In Oregon? A Hidden History” by Walidah Imarisha, comprehensively documents Oregon’s exclusionary laws and history of white supremacy that drove Black people out of Oregon.

“I would have people say, you are the first Black person I ever talked to. We started out in D.C. So when we got here we would drive around and count the Black people.”

“When we were looking for apartments when we moved here a couple of decades ago, in the apartment guide we saw multiple White families being represented in different pictures and the same Black family, same Black girl, same Black boy in every complex that we saw. Same picture. They only used one family. That was a running joke for us.”

That has changed a little bit according to longtime residents.

“If you see a Black person that we haven’t seen in the neighborhood we are like who is that? But we have seen more Black people in the neighborhood in the last five years or so.”

Let us imagine the reality we wish to see for Black Oregon—an environment where our children are engaged in the classroom; where the economy is bolstered by a well-equipped and sought-after Black workforce; where a strong community made up of generations of Black families can remain connected and stable in their homes and surroundings.

STATE OF BLACK OREGON 2015

“My family was the first Black family to move into our neighborhood in the Somerset West area.”

“Oregon is like a Confederate state that is in the wrong part of the country. That is how it feels to me.”

AT LEAST

12,357

IN WASHINGTON
COUNTY

African-American people have lived in the county for decades, some are newer residents; some left and moved back, some migrated from Portland, and some moved here from other parts of the country.



44% of African-Americans in Washington County are 18 years or younger.



African-American community identifies as youth, parents, family, LGBTQ, people of faith, connected to other communities living in Washington County

According to our calculations, the Black community has grown by 36% between 2005 and 2015. This includes African communities. There is little documented history of the community in this area but as we begin to document this history, we know that the African-Americans identify as youth, parents, family, LGBTQ, people of faith, connected to other communities living in Washington County. However, the focus group conversations indicate that some African-American people have lived in the county for decades, some are newer residents; some left and moved back, some migrated from Portland, and some moved here from other parts of the country.



“A SPECIAL TYPE OF ISOLATION”

The African-American community in Washington County seems to be at a point non plus—the overall feeling in the focus groups was that people like living in the area; however, they note that they don’t feel a sense of community in the county.

“My son used to play little league baseball in Hillsboro. For three years that he played there, there was not one Black kid on the team. I was the only Black mom.”

On the one hand, the number of Black people in the county has grown in the last decade (it is really difficult to gauge how much African communities are responsible for that growth; the African community roughly grew by 47% between 2011 and 2015); on the other hand, what hasn’t changed is the feeling of disconnection and isolation. There were no anecdotal stories in our focus groups such as “remember when we had this, or remember when there was this person...” Melissa Lowery in her movie *Black Girl in Suburbia* talks about a “special type of isolation” that African-Americans endure growing up in White suburbs. Lowery lives in Hillsboro and her movie reflects what participants shared in our conversations. In schools, neighborhoods, workplace, parks and recreation, they may still find nobody else who looks like them.

“In the 5-6 years I was a teacher, I had less than five Black children in the classroom.”

“We go to the parks around Progress Ridge and we are always the only Black family there. I only have one black girlfriend with a daughter the same age as my daughter.”

“I’m the only one left here in Oregon in my family. It’s hard to connect with the Black community because I don’t know where to go. We have talked about moving to Atlanta because I felt I would see more people that look like me and be more accepting.”

The history and White dominant culture is scary for people who move here, especially if they are not from Oregon or have moved here from cities with historically strong, Black communities, and they don't last very long.

“I was in an antique shop, I collect watches, so I was looking at watches. I saw these cards that portrayed African-Americans with the big lips, the watermelon, the chicken, the whole blackface thing. I was amazed to see that, out here in Hillsboro. A person came to me and said, ‘My, that is a great representation of your culture, don't you think?’ I said, ‘That is the most racist thing you can say for someone. That lets me know you really, truly don't understand African-Americans, you don't understand how demeaning that is to a culture.’” (Oregon Public Broadcasting, 2017)

“What I've learned is that my son is living a different kind of Black here than I'm living.”

“I didn't notice that when I was in high school and growing up here. But when I got back from experiencing Atlanta that is 80% Black, I started to see how different it is here.”

“We almost need a tool kit. I wish I had talked to a Black person before I came here. Life would have been easier in the first year.”



LACK OF REPRESENTATION

“We are not represented here at all. That is usually the first thing, who are the representatives, you know. I see an issue, I’m going to email them. What I find here is we are not represented—look at the Washington County board, look at the bios for the Washington County representatives.”

The community identifies building political power and redressing the lack of diversity in decision-making as a high priority for social change in Washington County. According to them, the lack of political, social and economic representation and Oregon’s history of exclusionary laws including the notorious “sundown laws” and the dominance of the KKK makes African-Americans feel that they are not a part of this state.

For the African-American community in Washington County, this disconnect continues today as they witness the lack of representation in local governments, in their places of work, schools, law enforcement and so on. An African-American person has never held elected office in any jurisdiction in Washington County. In 2015, only 2% of public sector employment in Washington County identified as Black and this includes seasonal/part time/contractual labor, which are disproportionately people of color (Worksystems Inc); in that same year, according to Oregon Department of Education, only 2% of public school teachers across school districts in the county identified as Black.

“Number of dominant culture folks doing equity work on our behalf is ridiculous.”

“I taught for two different preschools in the county and both places I was the only African-American or of African descent.”

According to community members, at the very worst, those institutions are spaces where they have experienced overt racism, or at the very least have been unresponsive to or never advocated on their behalf.

“I don’t think they are on our side. If the homeowners association comes in and asks me to take down the lights I have for Eid celebration, how is that fair? I don’t feel accepted, I don’t feel we have rights respected especially if your family practices Islam.”

“There is no analysis of systemic impacts in public agencies — our outcomes are still impacted by Exclusion laws and discrimination.”

“We had [diversity] training, and then I had my staff complaining to me and people yelling and saying why do we have to talk about Black people all the time? The Black person is saying, let’s not do diversity training in here at all. Don’t do it and take it out on us.”

“I’ve been a volunteer for the Beaverton School District for the past 18–19 years, and most of the time I have been the only person of color.”

“My modus around Washington County is how do I get around without having to interact with the government. Fortunately I haven’t had something happen that was so traumatic that I needed to turn the dial-up. Hopefully it will stay that way.”

“Just this morning when we were out for a jog an older White lady was like, I’m trying to get as dark as you all. Just random. She didn’t say hi. That is the only thing she said.”

The community doesn’t just want to diversify local government, the police force, the school board and local businesses; they seek to build political and economic power. The focus group participants were skeptical about hollow attempts at diversity and representation that does not change outcomes either for their community or for people of color on the whole.

“Even though Black persons hold positions, there’s protocol and procedures written by people who are not Black. They still have hurdles and obstacles and they’re the only voice. They don’t have the power. They may have the voice, but that voice is silenced.”

The African-American community is young and they are hopeful for the future. They view opportunities to come together through this research project as a sign of change to come.

“I think Washington County has potential. They say the area has turned over. So maybe ten years from now we will see representation and have a voice.”

“If you are part of a racist institution, you will perpetuate it.”

“It’s good we are having this discussion. Because there are people in the community that are entrepreneurs able to make a difference.”

Focus group participants innovated the following strategies to build more and better representation in political and economic decision-making processes.

- Learn about how to run for office.
- Organizing ways to recruit people to run for boards and commissions and positions in the county.
- Getting information on when voting takes place and information on candidates
- Be visible, have a seat at the table, show up.
- Handle differences and disagreements within and come together.
- Organize an African-American forum where candidates come to us.
- Join existing organizations.
- Political education.

LACK OF CULTURALLY-SPECIFIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Community members say that there is no infrastructure to organize the African-American population in Washington County. They compare their experiences in Washington County to Portland, Washington DC, Atlanta, Los Angeles and wonder how they can create a strong community here when there aren't many resources. They list obstacles such as lack of culturally specific organizations for African-Americans in the county, no community center, absence of an African-American museum or any initiative that elevates African-American history and cultures. Even though there are a couple of businesses, or places to recreate such as the Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation and the Hillsboro Public Library that people like, and feel a degree of safety in, with regard to Black community assets—assets that would make you feel like there was community - there are little to none.

“I know they are out here, but I don't know how to connect with them.”
And once connections are made, “there is literally no place within the county, public, you know, for you to like continue that.”

“I feel like we're on our own on an island and we have to do it ourselves all the time and I don't think that is fair. So that is something I would like to see changed.”

“Where is the place for communities of color to come together, number one, but also be represented as part of the community?”

Despite every attempt to drive African-Americans out of Oregon and obstacles to community building, community members have been resilient. That they are still here and advocating for themselves and their families, friends and community members is their biggest victory against racism. People in the focus groups gave plentiful examples of the ways in which they have advocated for themselves and shown up for the African-American community especially in encounters with law enforcement, their places of work and the education system. *Their stories showed a delicate balance of self-preservation and knowing their rights, a grit borne out of safeguarding themselves from centuries of racist oppression.*

“I'm at this point where I can't have it. If I see anything happening with Black people that doesn't look right, I'm stepping in. I hope someone would do it for me at this point.”

“Until you fix this thing (in a school) you are going to see me every day.”

“I go to the Northwest African-American Museum to find a community spot. But I would love to find a space down here where I didn't have to drive two and a half hours.”

“I go into the police department, the school districts, and whoever else will listen to me, and talk with folks to let them know that, hey, we are human just like your kids, just like your aunts and uncles. We have the same desires that we want to provide for our children and our families.”

They described themselves as being resourceful in generating opportunities to find community and diversity.

One of focus group participants declared that they were all “social entrepreneurs”, “creating assets where there are not any” and utilizing existing spaces and social and professional networks to connect with other African-Americans. They have founded African-American clubs in high school, a Black Moms group via Intel, a Nike employees group and so on.

“I speak to everyone, and I’m never giving up. I’m relentless. And if they don’t like me, that’s okay. But I’m always going to reach out.”

“At some point we have to build stuff on our own. We need to come together. If you want to be here, we need to make it.”

“It is a place I can go where I know I’m going to see Black folks, and I’m going to recognize things from our history. You’re always looking for commonality with history. How can I relate to you based on what I know all black folks have experienced universally as Americans?”

“A strong, cohesive community is more than just an ideal condition for families. Rather, it should be the foundation of strong local and state economic and health policies” (State of Black Oregon 2015). Focus group participants came up with the following strategies to gather community members for both social and community change.

- Utilize meetup sites.
- Create a listserv.
- Organize Black flash mobs.
- Provide childcare at events
- Create Washington County “chapters” of existing Black organizations or create liaisons to them such as Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF), Black Parents Initiative, Urban League, REAP and National Society of Black Engineers.
- Organize networking events and new arrival welcome events.
- Invite local officials to a Black gathering.
- Reach out to large employers to organize or resource gatherings.
- Establish a Black Saturday school.



EDUCATION JUSTICE

44% of African-Americans in Washington County are 18 years or younger (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Our focus group participants (most of whom were parents), prioritised the following issues: teachers and administrators should recognise issues faced by students of color and be trained to advocate for all students; more Black teachers in all grade levels; diversity in school district boards; ethnic studies curriculum for all students; mandatory African-American history course in K-12; after school activities. “For Black youth to succeed in school, they need the basics of good physical and mental health, a strong cultural identity, sufficient hours spent learning and positive teacher perception and expectation.” (State of Black Oregon 2015)

Community Priorities in Education



Teachers and Administrators should recognize issues faced by students of color and be trained to advocate for all students

More Black teachers in all grade levels

Diversity in school district boards

Ethnic studies curriculum for all students

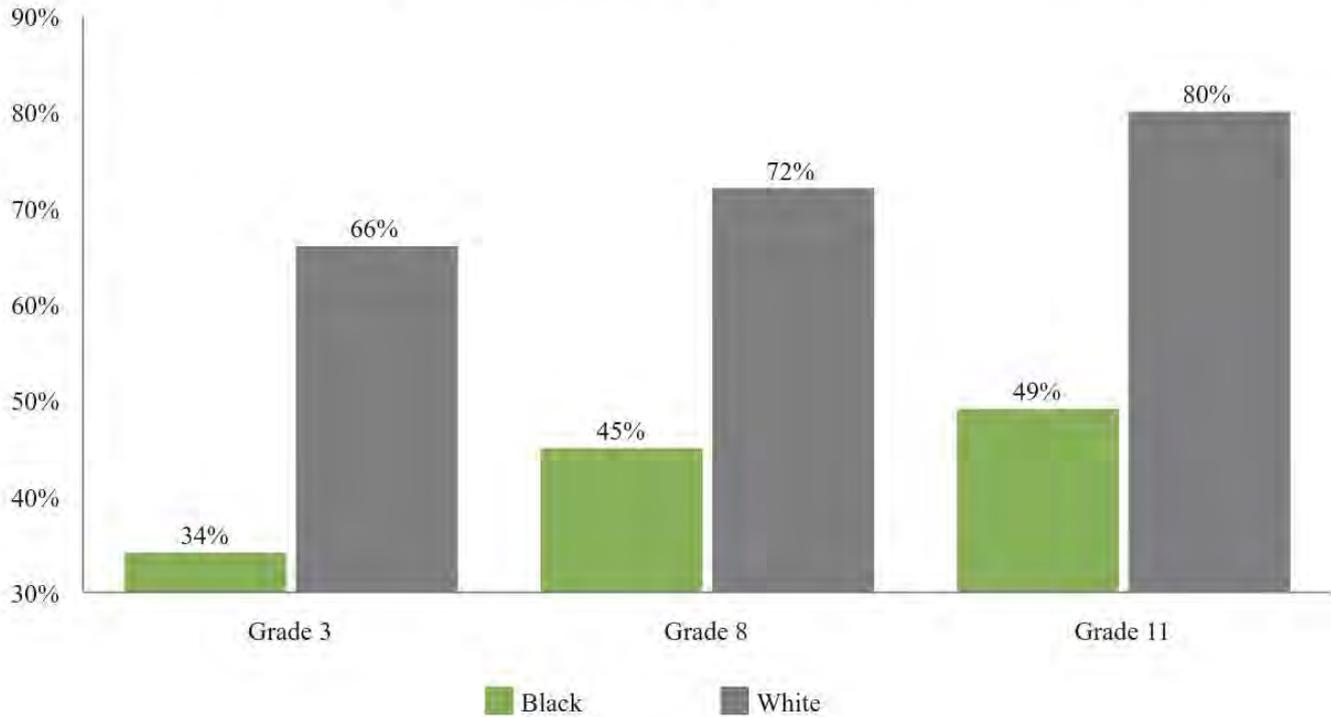
Mandatory African-American history course in K-12

After school activities

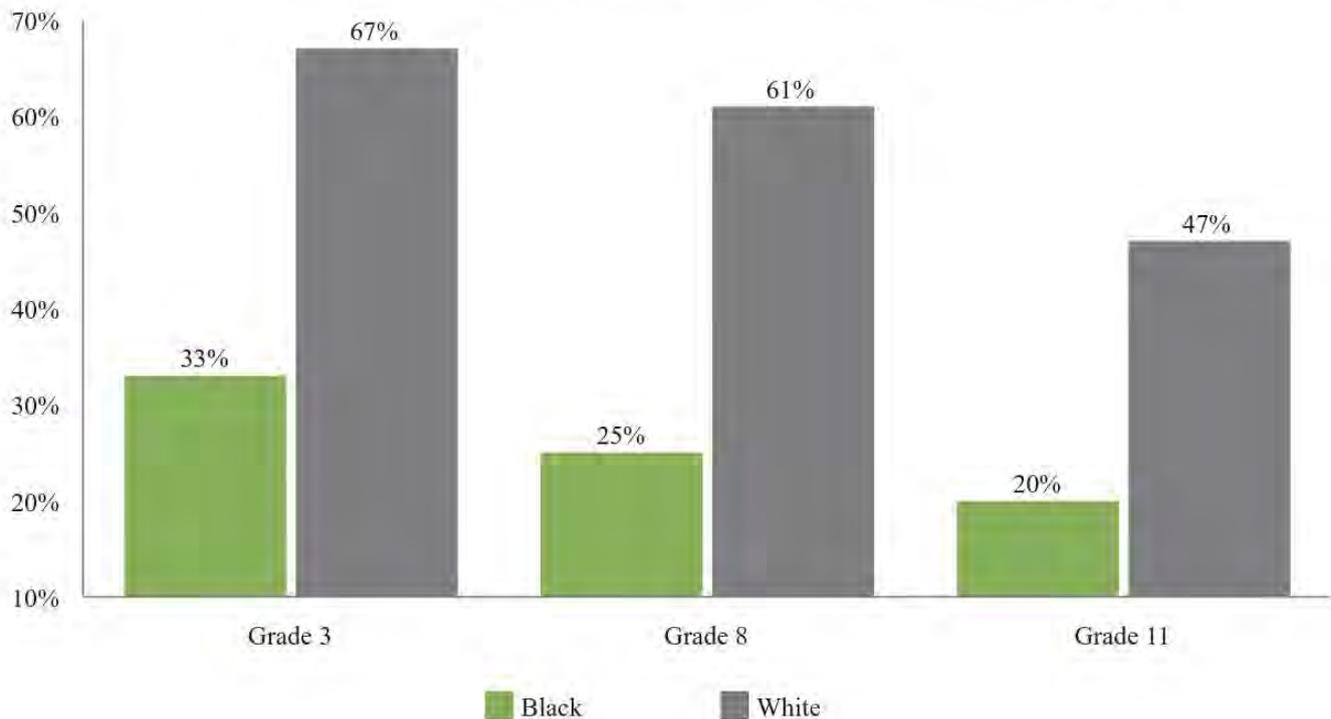
When we investigate the relationship between educational outcomes and race, these are the answers we typically find. First, in terms of the highest level of education attained in 2015, African-Americans are not nearly as likely to have a post-secondary degree as White adults or a Washington county resident. Just over 1 in 3 African-Americans have attended some college but dropped out (American

Community Survey, 2011–2015). Second, Black students (including but not exclusively African-American) across all grades, in reading, science and mathematics, lag behind their White peers. There is an “achievement gap,” which is defined as the difference in standardized test scores between students of different racial and/or ethnic groups.

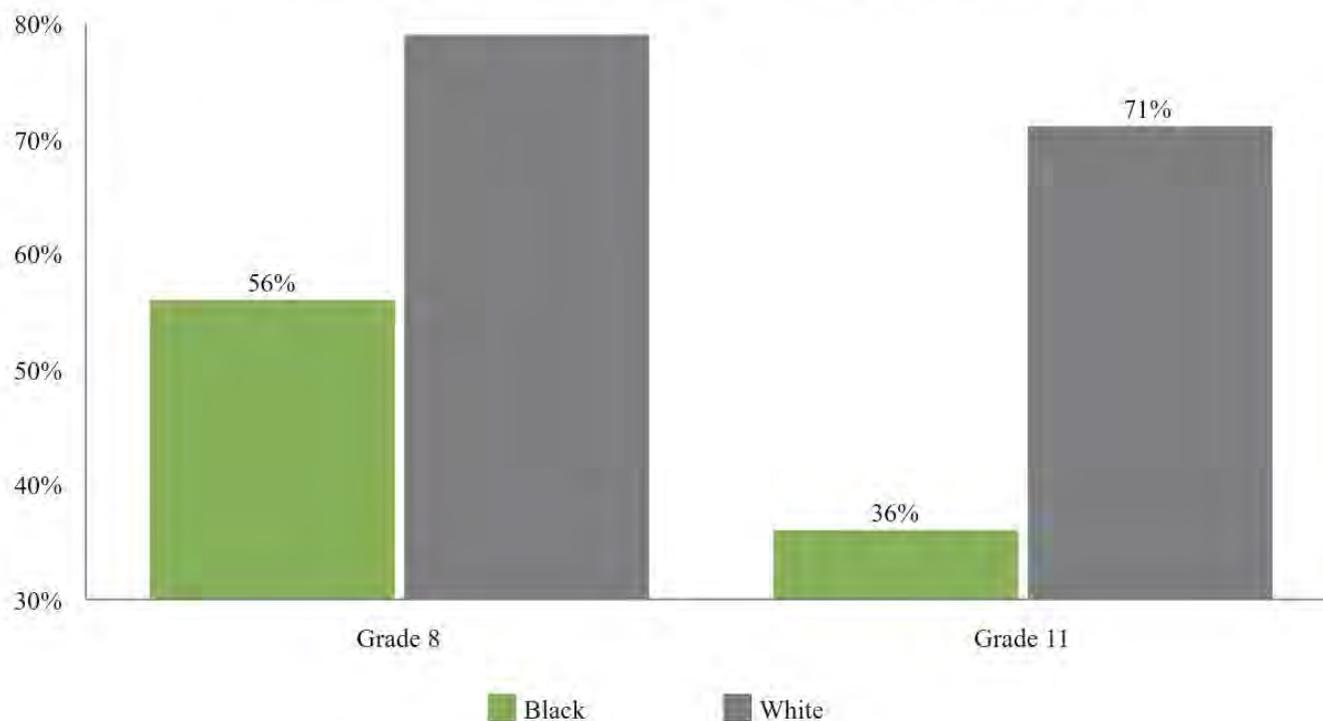
Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Reading (2015)



Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Mathematics (2015)



Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Science (2015)



The answers that we don't typically find and that the African-American community in particular knows to be true are that these statistics are symptomatic of rather than the complete reality. Although persistent "achievement gaps" in standardized test scores are correlated with race and class, it has produced a narrative of students that are "at risk," and an emphasis a solution to closing the achievement gap. *The Oregon Department of Education itself recognizes that achievement gaps are symptomatic of the larger inequities in opportunities to succeed in school. "Opportunity gaps" are better indicators of the impact of racism on "more fundamental questions about social and educational opportunity"* (Oregon Educational Investment Board, n.d). For many African-American parents and youth, schools are another institution that perpetuates racism by failing to identify systemic barriers and advocating for the success of Black students. Community members identify schools alongside the criminal justice system as sites of overt racism and lack of support.

"It is not appropriate to have one person working on diversity and equity for an entire school district. And what does diversity even mean? It doesn't include and is not responsive to the needs and concerns of our families and kids."

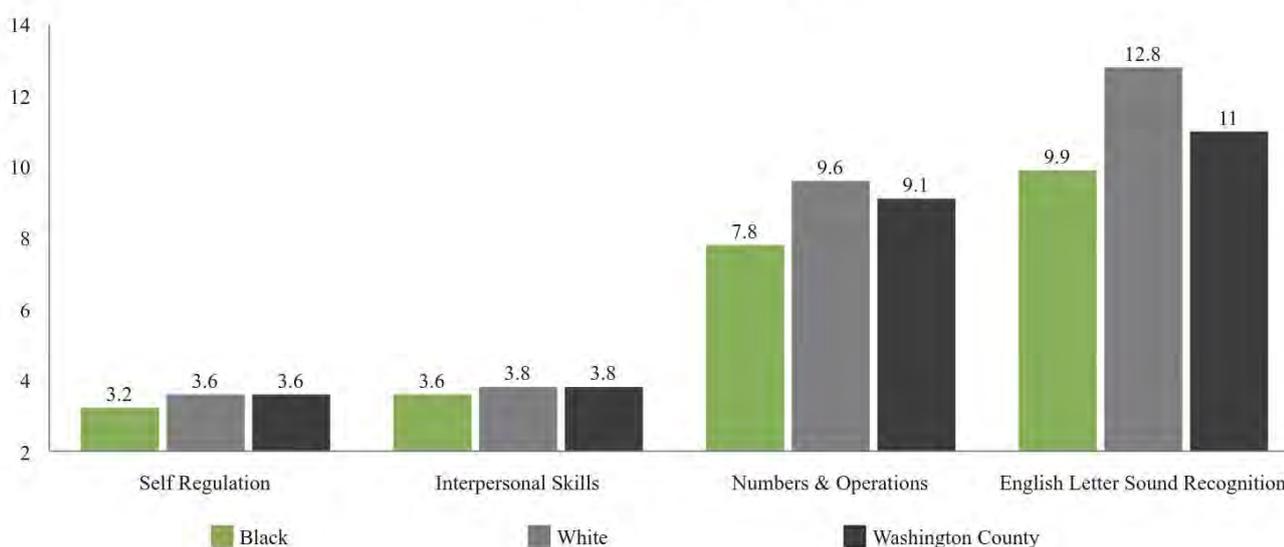
"Recently there was an issue at my daughter's school. A student showed up to school wearing the Confederate flag. There was a lack of knowing what to do was the thing that really pissed me off. Because if my kid had on crip colors that would be an issue."

OPPORTUNITY GAPS

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT

Since 2014, Oregon has utilized a kindergarten assessment to gauge the readiness of incoming kindergartners by testing letter and numeric recognition and self regulation. Results from the assessment show that Black children (including but not exclusively African-American) already lag behind White peers in readiness. These are the earliest roots of our opportunity gap, showing that African-American children are already disadvantaged by age 4. The disparity is widest in the assessment of skills about learning approaches and in fact Black children are assessed with the lowest scores the least compared to all other demographics.

Early Learning Outcomes 2016



Black students in Washington County schools are experiencing the same barriers that have been identified regionally and nationally: (1) unfair discipline practices (2) lack of teachers of color (3) feeling of isolation, and (4) lack of culturally specific programming and mentorship opportunities.

LACK OF REPRESENTATION IN EDUCATION

Although there has been a 29% growth in the Black student population since 2009, only 5% of the student body identified as Black in 2015. Schools and classrooms are one of the most visible places where African-American children and youth most viscerally feel different and isolated. Parents in the focus group and in the broader community talk about their children being the only Black student in the classroom. Pair that with the reality that in 2015 only 2% of school staff look like them, *both parents and children expect and often receive little support from schools and prepare for difficult experiences and conversations by themselves.*



2% of school teachers identify as Black

“Thomas and Mernahkem settled in the suburbs of Washington County rather than Portland. They like being closer to wineries and the coast, they preferred the Hillsboro schools. That choice means raising him in a place where he feels safer, but also where he will almost always be the only black kid in the room. Their son is one of just four black children in an elementary school class of more than 40.” (quoted in Oregon Public Broadcasting, 2017)

“Her older daughter was seven when she came home from school in Hillsboro in tears. “She was really upset because a girl had come up to her and asked her why her hair was different. She was the only brown girl in the class that didn’t speak Spanish,” Lowery says. “So all of a sudden she realized she was different.” (quoted in Silvis, 2014)

“Her (Forest Grove) school form, when they sent it home for me to check, they had ‘White’ on it. I came to the school—do I look White?”

DISPROPORTIONATE DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

For multiple community members, the lack of representation in education is connected to disproportionate disciplinary practices against Black students and prior research has found that students of color are not more disruptive in class.

Black students in Washington county schools are 100% more likely than a White student to be suspended or expelled (Oregon Department of Education, 2015). Furthermore, they are 25% more likely than a White student to be chronically absent from school—miss more than ten percent of their school days for reasons that may include being exclusionary disciplinary practices (Oregon Department of Education 2015). National research indicates that schools disproportionately use punitive methods to discipline African-American students across all genders and Black girls in particular are the most likely to be targeted (Crenshaw et al, 2015).

“I don’t feel like the school has ever advocated for my child. I always, I have to do the work, you know.”

“When all the teachers are White and they can’t see themselves in those students of color, they treat them as though they are the other, and that is devastating for a sense of self that is confident in knowing who you are. So I feel like that is a huge piece of what is missing for us is having that representation in education.”

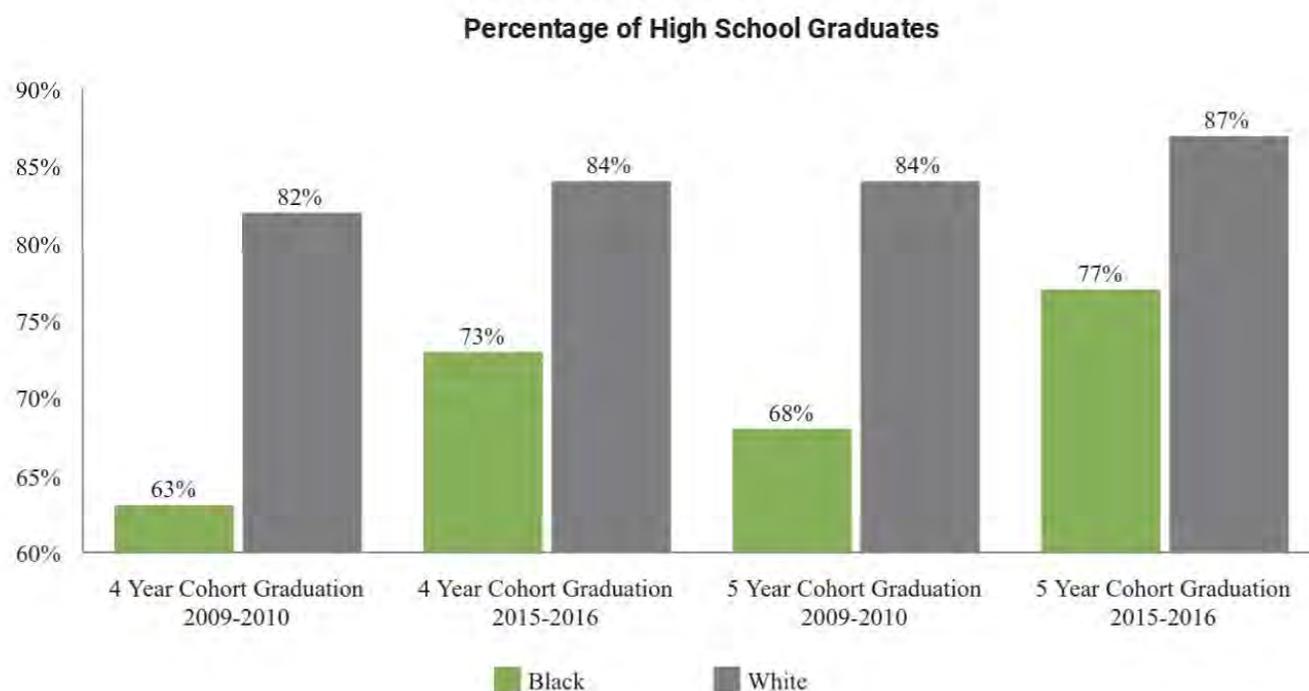


Black youth are **100%** more likely than White students to be expelled or suspended even though national research finds no evidence that they are more disruptive, overall, in classes than other students

Researchers have found that excessive suspensions and expulsions lead to various negative outcomes for students, including dropping out of school (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education, 2014) and studies have shown that high school dropouts are more likely to be incarcerated than those who graduate high school (cited in New York Times, 2009). These exclusionary discipline methods result in disengagement from school and exacerbate opportunity gaps. Dropout, on-time graduation, and school achievement are tied to school discipline. Students of color who have been disciplined unfairly tend to lose trust in administration and in turn are more likely to disengage with the entire school system (Adams, 2000).

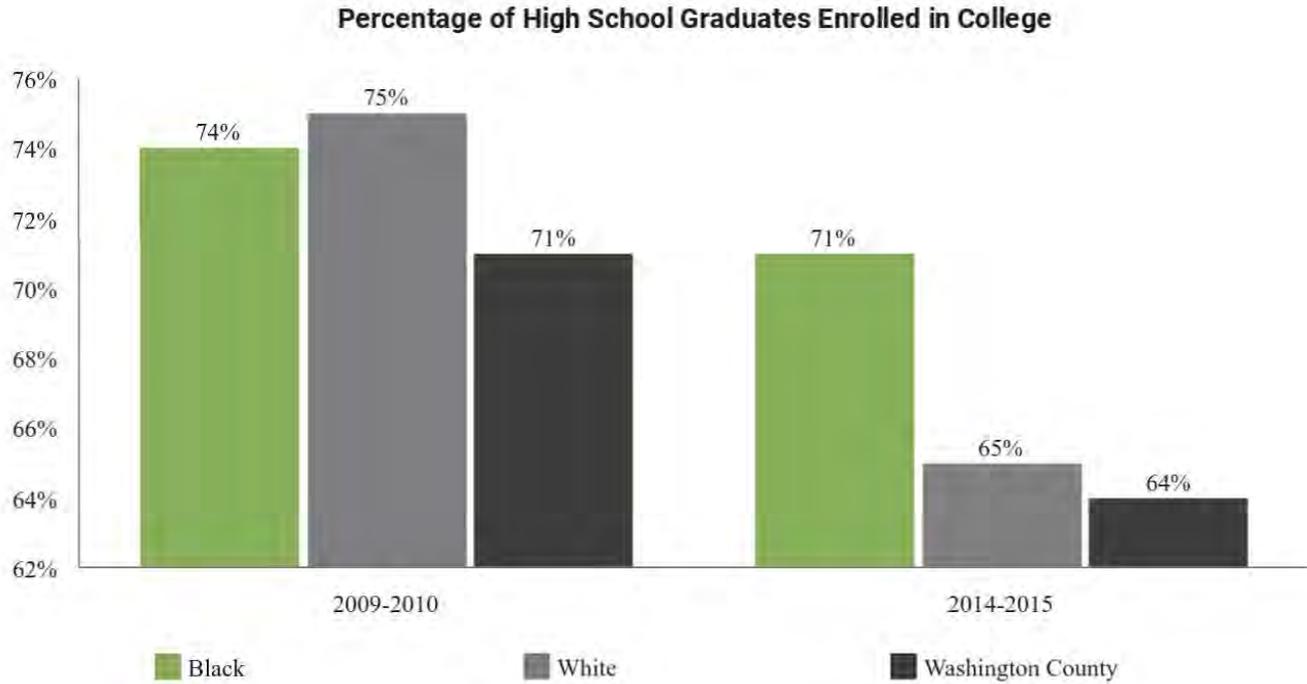
GRADUATION, DROPOUT AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

In 2015, 80% of Black first year high school students were on track to graduate compared to 91% of White freshmen students. *Graduation rates have improved for Black students in the 2009-2015 period.*



Racial disparity in successful graduation between Black and White students persist. In 2015, Black students also had the highest rate of completing a high school program without meeting requirements for a diploma. *According to the Oregon Department of Education, 71% of Black high school students enrolled in a college in 2014, at a rate higher than the county average.*

College enrolment rate for Black high school students declined in the 2009-2014 time period.



The fact that 1 out of 3 African-Americans in the county attended some college but did not get a degree is concerning for the extent to which opportunity gaps similar to those in the school system are impacting higher education.

Communities should consider schools and classrooms as assets to them—a place where their children and youth thrive and are supported to be their whole selves. Instead, African-American community members, many of whom take a proactive role in their school districts, talk about schools as sites of discrimination and isolation. The attention to education and achievement gaps over the past decade has not so far resulted in substantial improvements, suggesting new models that are culturally-specific and address institutional racism in the school system are needed.

Focus group participants prioritize training for teachers and school administration to advocate for all students.

- Administrative staff should lead engagement with community to have an inclusive curriculum.
- Accurate representation of black people’s history and presence in Oregon and redressing whitewashing of history.
- Establishment of African-American advisory committee.
- Teaching methods that connect with students.
- Diversity among teachers and school staff.
- Establishment of Self Enhancement Inc in Beaverton.
- Political representation in school administration.
- Hiring appropriate culturally competent teachers.



TRANSPORTATION

Some community members describe living a “commuter life” between their place of residence in Washington County and Portland. It was striking that most of the community assets defined as spaces or amenities that they felt is crucial to their happiness and wellbeing are not located in the county. Their community resources and spaces such as churches, restaurants, barbershops, culturally specific events and so on, which makes them feel part of the African-American community are in Portland. Which of course, those community building spaces are being eroded with the gentrification of traditionally Black neighborhoods in North and Northeast Portland and the displacement of the African-American community there.

Focus group participants also observed that either they themselves or African-American people they knew worked in Portland (for the city, Multnomah County or OHSU to name a few employers) and lived in Washington County. Although they didn’t share the specifics of their means of commute, it provides context to the American Community Survey, 2011–2015 finding that African-Americans in Washington County are the most likely of all communities of color and White County residents to use public transit and other options to commute to work.

This commuter life to access either places of work or community resources also impacts African-Americans’ interactions with the criminal justice system. According to a Portland State University analysis, *Black Trimet MAX riders are the most likely to be targets of punitive fare enforcement and they were more likely to be banned or excluded from public transit when local police was involved compared to Trimet fare inspectors* (Renauer, 2016). African-American drivers are also stopped by local police.

There was no data that was publicly available to this project that allowed an investigation of the extent to which racial disparities exist in behavior towards Black pedestrians in Washington County. A 2017 Portland State University research project has found racial disparities in the manner in which drivers stop or rather don’t stop for Black pedestrians in Portland, the quality of crosswalk notwithstanding (Goddard et al, 2017).

“I will always drive for Black people. I accepted that this is my life and I have to drive.”

“I have never in my life been pulled over until I moved to Oregon. I don’t know how many times I have been pulled over and ticketed for various things. I’m not a terrible driver. Same with my husband.”

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In a county where African-American people are small in number, feel isolated and try so hard to build connections and find community, this one wry joke made by a focus group participant says so much about an institution that has arguably contributed the most to the decimation of African-American communities, in Oregon and in the US. The *African-American community in Washington County deeply feels the criminalization of Black bodies, whether it is occurring to them or somebody in their community; whether it's in their city or county, in Portland or elsewhere in the country.* When asked what local government policies have made their lives worse, all the feedback related to law enforcement behavior including perceived pushback to reform, lack of understanding of the Oregon's racist legacy, and federal policies such as mandatory minimums.

“If you want to go somewhere and see Black people in Washington County, just go to the courthouse.”



- Black people in Washington County are **71%** more likely than White people to be stopped by law enforcement in 2016. Racial disparities have increased since 2015 when the disparity rate was 63%.



- **100%** more likely to be issued warnings by law enforcement compared to White population and 33% more likely to be given a citation compared to White people in Washington County.



- Although the Black population comprised roughly 2.4% of the county population in 2014, they were **7.8%** of the jail population in the same year.



- Black people also had the highest incarceration rate of all racial groups that year in the county – **662.3** people out of 100,000 were likely to be incarcerated compared to White incarceration rate of 190.5

Most participants in the focus groups had not been pulled over or arrested by local law enforcement. Nevertheless, they described their interactions with law enforcement in the county as negative. Underpinning all their anecdotes about local law enforcement is their instinct of self-preservation, knowledge of their rights and advocating for themselves when possible.

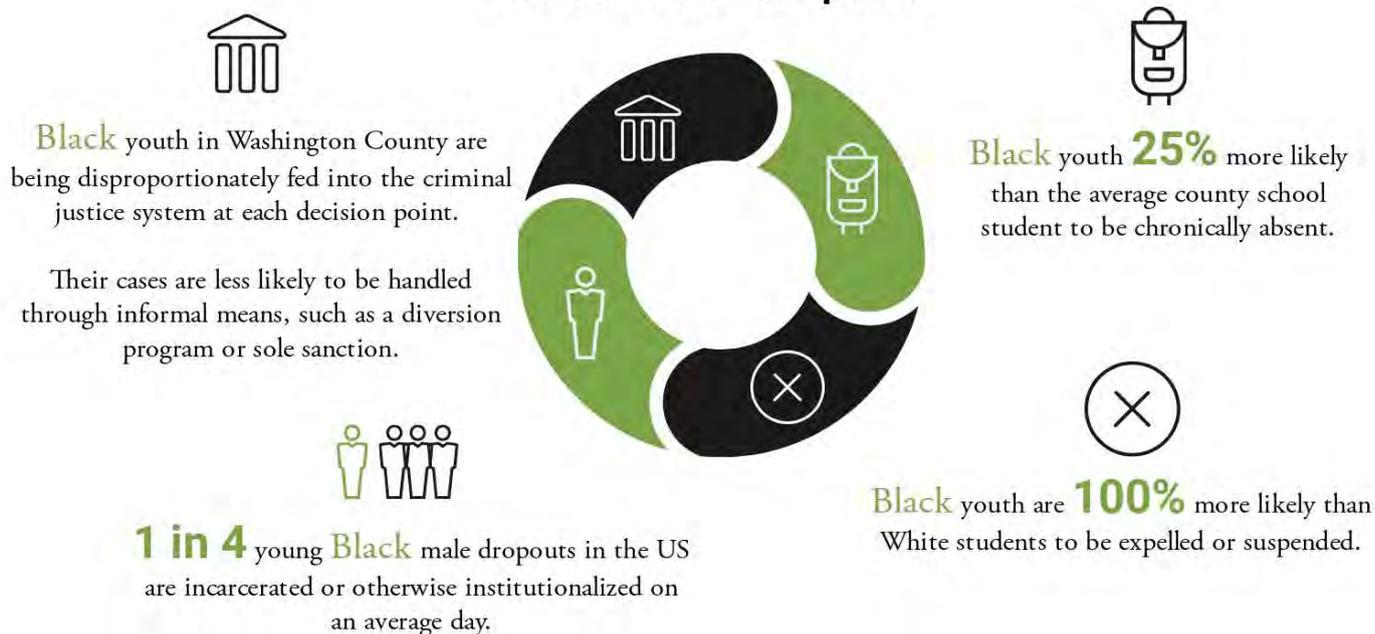
“We had a funny experience when we first moved here in 2004. There was a robbery in Tigard and on the news they said the suspect was African-American between the height of 5’10 and 6’2, black t-shirt and jeans. And I called up my partner and said ‘What are you wearing? Come home.’”

“I don’t mess with any of them now. I roll the window down about this much. As long as you get the driver’s license and registration I won’t roll it down anymore than that. Can you roll the window down? No, it’s broken.”

Criminalizing of Black bodies start young. The term “school to prison pipeline” describes the way in which harsh disciplinary practices in school intersect with law enforcement policies to funnel particularly Black youth into the incarceration system. In Washington county schools, Black youth are 100% more likely than White students to be expelled or suspended even though national research finds no evidence that they are more disruptive, overall, in classes than other students. They are also 25% more likely than the average county school student to be chronically absent, and their dropout rates are increasing as well. Studies have shown that at the national level, one in four young black male dropouts are incarcerated or otherwise institutionalized on an average day (cited in New York Times, 2009). According to the 2016 report of the Juvenile Justice Information System data about Washington County, Black youth are being disproportionately fed into the criminal justice system at each decision point. To make matters worse, their cases are less likely to be handled through informal means, such as a diversion program or sole sanction.

“I was washing my car and the music is on. I turn around and there’s a sheriff’s car sitting there. He’s been watching me. He sticks his hand out the window and he wants me to come over. I go stand in the doorway because if anything happens to me from here it’s their fault. He asked me to turn down the music or get a ticket. The music was not loud. It is not like 1 o’clock in the morning and people are trying to sleep. This has happened twice already.”

School to Prison Pipeline



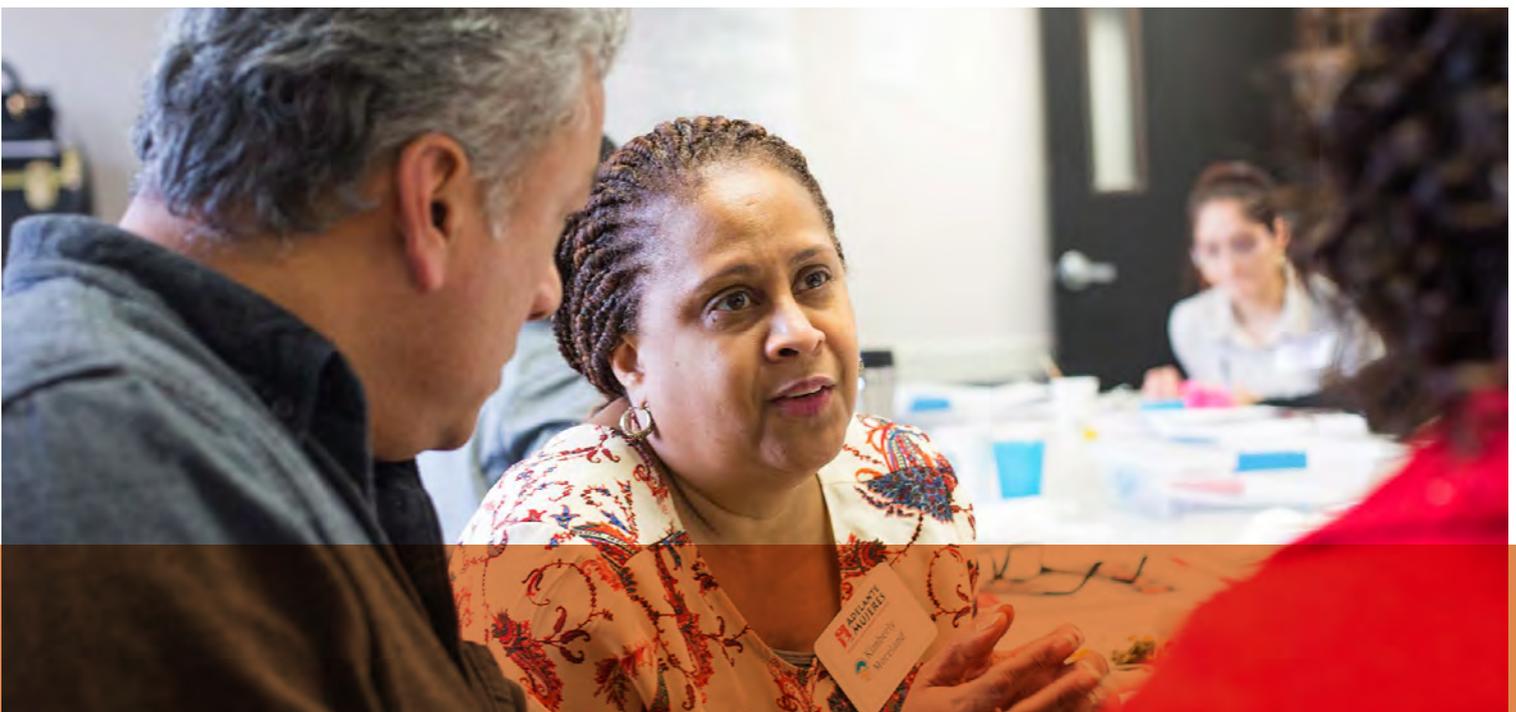
Focus group participants raised concerns about the overall level of ignorance about community safety. African-Americans are targeted by microaggressions in the way the community describes throughout this report, by hate crimes especially against those of the Muslim faith, and are survivors of crimes (Runyowa, 2015).

“We don’t put the same mandates on hate crimes being collected as sexual crimes, and so we suffer silently. I want to know if there’s a spike in hate crimes, I want to see data and a trauma informed response.”

There is no systematic data about microaggressions and based on both community experience and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) most hate crimes and bias-based aggressions go unreported to law enforcement (Langton & Masucci, 2017). Washington County Sheriff’s office showed that 1 anti-Black/African-American bias incident was reported to them in 2017. Nationally, according to 2011-2015 NCVS data, 48% of reported hate crimes were motivated by racial bias; about 54% of hate crime victimizations were not reported to police during 2011-15 (Langton & Masucci, 2017). *Considering the long history of racist policing against African-Americans and the racial disparities identified in this report, trauma and distrust dissuades communities most impacted by hate violence to not report them.*

Racial inequities in what is supposed to be a criminal “justice” system impacts Black individuals incarcerated, but also their families and communities. Adult conviction records follow them around for the rest of their lives—creating barriers to education, housing and employment. Economic instability leads to increased justice system involvement. Racially disproportionate incarceration leads to greater instability of Black communities. Research about parental incarceration shows that it widens the gap educational and housing outcomes between Black and White children and increases the likelihood of the former being incarcerated at some point in their lives as well (State of Black Oregon, 2015). *Although we don’t have the data to test these findings at the county level, in Oregon parental incarceration doubles the risk of homelessness for Black children and increases the racial gap for behavioral problems by 46%.*

“Who are the victims of crimes? Can we see that broken down by race? I would think African-Americans are more likely to be victims of violence, out here especially. But we don’t know that.”



HOUSING JUSTICE

Oregon's housing history is inextricably linked to the anti-Black racism - through Exclusion Laws of the late 1800s to keep African-Americans out of the state; into mid-20th century redlining and exclusionary zoning, to current urban renewal policies that have led to gentrification and displacement of people of color especially African-American people. Housing stability ensures not only shelter but also fosters communities that support families, social networks, and religious, social, and cultural institutions. *In Washington County, where African-Americans already report feeling isolated and seek to build community with one another, lack of affordable housing for them to rent or own and discriminatory housing practices prevent meaningful connections to their neighborhoods and natural environments. Affordable housing also ensures that African-American residents can invest in their healthcare, education and nutrition.*

Despite over fifty years of Fair Housing law, African-Americans continue to face serious disparities as described here in terms of housing affordability, homeownership and access to mortgages, homelessness, and discrimination. In a county where almost 2 out of 3 White residents are homeowners, less than half of the African-American community own their homes (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).



Less than half of the African-Americans in Washington County own their homes.

Very few Black people even attempt to purchase homes in Washington County; in 2009 only 69 loans originated from Black households.

High income Black people were the most likely (86%) to have their application denied compared to their White counterparts in the county.

According to Bates et al (2014), The reasons for these gaps include both current, ongoing discriminatory practices in lending and real estate—fair housing issues—as well as a legacy of historical discrimination in housing. Since the post-Second World War homeownership boom almost exclusively benefited White households, there is a persistent gap in the intergenerational transfer of wealth for people of color, who today have fewer assets to use as a down payment. The historical practice of mortgage redlining (refusing to make loans in certain neighborhoods) meant many Black households remained renters. Black owners who bought in declining or low-value neighborhoods due to segregation have not realized appreciation of their assets. There are also non-housing issues that affect the racial homeownership gap—historical and ongoing discrimination and differential outcomes in employment and education affect job stability, earnings, and wealth. Finally, in today’s mortgage crisis, Black homeowners have been disproportionately affected by subprime loans and foreclosure, causing homeownership (and wealth) to fall.

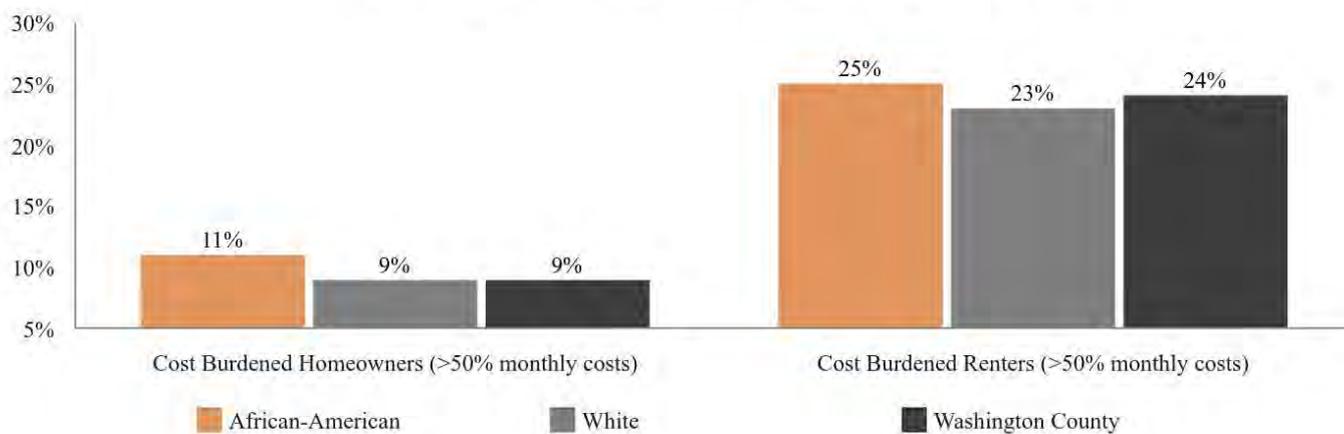
“We need better data about impact of racist housing practices.”

“We need a safe space to access legal information and resources to demand equitable treatment in housing.”

The Washington County Fair Housing Plan 2012 analysis of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data found that very few Black people even attempt to purchase homes in Washington County; in 2009 only 69 loans originated from Black households. Black home mortgage applicants were significantly more likely than White applicants in the County to have their application denied. In fact, at every income level (low, medium and high) they were not only more likely than White applicants to be denied home mortgage loans, high income Black people were the most likely (86%) to have their application denied compared to their White counterparts in the county. This indicates that home mortgage borrowing and lending for Black households are not just a function of low incomes in Washington County.

Housing is often the single largest expense for a household. Almost 1 out of 4 African-American homeowners spend more than a third of their monthly income on housing costs such as mortgages and taxes, and they are more likely than the typical homeowner in Washington County to be severely burdened by housing costs i.e. spending more than half of their income on those expenses. African-American renters face a similar predicament – 1 out of 4 renters spend more than 50% of their income on monthly rent. *Median rents in Washington County have increased by 37% between 2012 and 2015. In the same time period, monthly earnings of the Black community grew by 27%.*

Percentage of Community Severely Burdened by Housing Cost



Even though the housing cost burden seems comparable to the White experience in Washington County, African-American residents bear additional costs, such as travel to culturally specific resources and services.

According to available data, in 2013, 13.7% of the Section 8 voucher waiting list and 11.1% of the public housing waiting list identified as Black (Washington County Consolidated Plan, 2012). This when the Black community comprised roughly 3% of the County population in that time period.

‘Rent eats first’ goes a popular adage. In 2015, the median rent according to Zillow Rent Index was \$1,648. If median household income is considered (\$57,546), African-American households should be spending no more than \$1,439 per month on rent in order to not be burdened by housing costs. The average monthly earnings for a Black worker with a ‘stable job’ was \$4,581, therefore placing a 36% cost burden on that person.² If that person is a woman whose full-time median earnings are \$35,090, they are spending more than half their income on rent. Combine this with the reality that 1 out of 5 African-American residents of Washington County experience poverty. *African-American women in particular negotiate the housing crisis since they are the most likely to be in poverty and earn the least compared to White men and women and African-American men.*

“As a single mom, the struggle is real trying to afford a house on one income.”

In such cases, households tend to reduce their spending on food and healthcare in order to meet housing costs. Judging by the increase in number of Black residents in Washington County using food stamps or SNAP (from 15.5% in 2010 to 24.4% in 2015), almost 1 in 4 Black people are food insecure i.e. lack enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members. Food insecurity also indicates the extent to which a household is having to negotiate a trade off of basic needs such as housing, food and healthcare.



1 in 4 Black people are food insecure i.e. lack enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members

HOUSELESSNESS

Houselessness is another aspect of the way in which the Black community experiences housing injustice. It is very difficult to accurately count homeless persons, we can estimate based on annual counts in shelters and on the streets as well as Oregon Department of Education data. *According to the 2016 Washington County Points in Time Count (PITC), Black people comprised 11.4% of people in shelters and 5.4% of people on the streets or those who are doubled up with others.* This compared to the Black population’s 3% share of the county population including immigrant and refugee communities. The PITC recorded unaffordability of rent and unemployment as the top two reasons for homelessness, two barriers felt deeply in the African-American community. PITC notoriously and systemically under-counts people of color who are homeless and is even worse at identifying housing instability. According to the Oregon Department of Education, which defines homelessness in order to uncover the extent to which a student is ‘housing insecure’—“lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence”³, Black students were a 150% more likely to experience housing instability compared to White students in 2015. Between 2012 and 2015, the increase in housing insecure Black students outpaced the overall increase in houselessness among students in Washington County.



Black students were **150%** more likely to experience housing instability compared to White students in 2015.

Between 2012 and 2015, the increase in housing insecure Black students outpaced the overall increase in houselessness among students in Washington County

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

According to the Oregon Employment Department, in December 2017, the unemployment rate in Washington County was 3.4%, the lowest it has been in in 17 years, and between 2011 and 2016, the county saw an increase in full-time workers earning more than \$100,000 a year (Starbuck 2018). Washington County had the highest annual average wage in the state, at \$65,858 and the second highest wage growth on a net basis in the state in 2016 (Starbuck 2017). Is this economic prosperity inclusive of and benefit African-American residents of the county? Economic justice includes issues of equitable access to employment opportunities, stable and sufficient income and poverty alleviation that are integral to ensuring housing stability, educational attainment and healthcare.

EMPLOYMENT AND

OCCUPATION

African-Americans are ready and willing to join the workforce in Washington County -- 76% of the community is either working or looking for employment (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Yet, available data to compare unemployment rates indicates that not only are African-Americans more likely to be unemployed (10%) than White labor force (7%) of the county but that their unemployment rate is higher than the county (8%) (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). To put this data in context, *the African-American unemployment*

rate is higher than that of the county when its unemployment rate peaked during the 2008-2009 recession. It should be noted that the US Census formula for calculating unemployment rate excludes people who have given up looking for a job.

Urban League of Portland identifies a pattern of chronic unemployment among the African-American community because of the cumulative impact of racial discrimination and bias among employers and institutions, lack of sufficient transportation and access to job training opportunities, higher rates of criminal justice involvement, poor credit and poor health outcomes.

“There is a term I really hate right now, that term of cultural fit. I see that being used a lot to me as a way to keep people out of employment. Let’s get together and make sure you are the right cultural fit. Right fit for the team. That team is 80% White, you are a natural misfit.”

Employed African-Americans are less likely to be positions in high wage sectors (37%) such as management compared to the White workforce (44%) and the county workforce (41%) (American Community Survey 2011–2015).

What kind of a culture and environment do African-American employees experience in their workplace? Our focus group participants worked in various sectors—government, not for profit, corporations, education and so on, and they reported a range of experiences with racism in their private or public sector employment. One participant reported overhearing a government official in Washington County commenting to a Black woman about her hair.

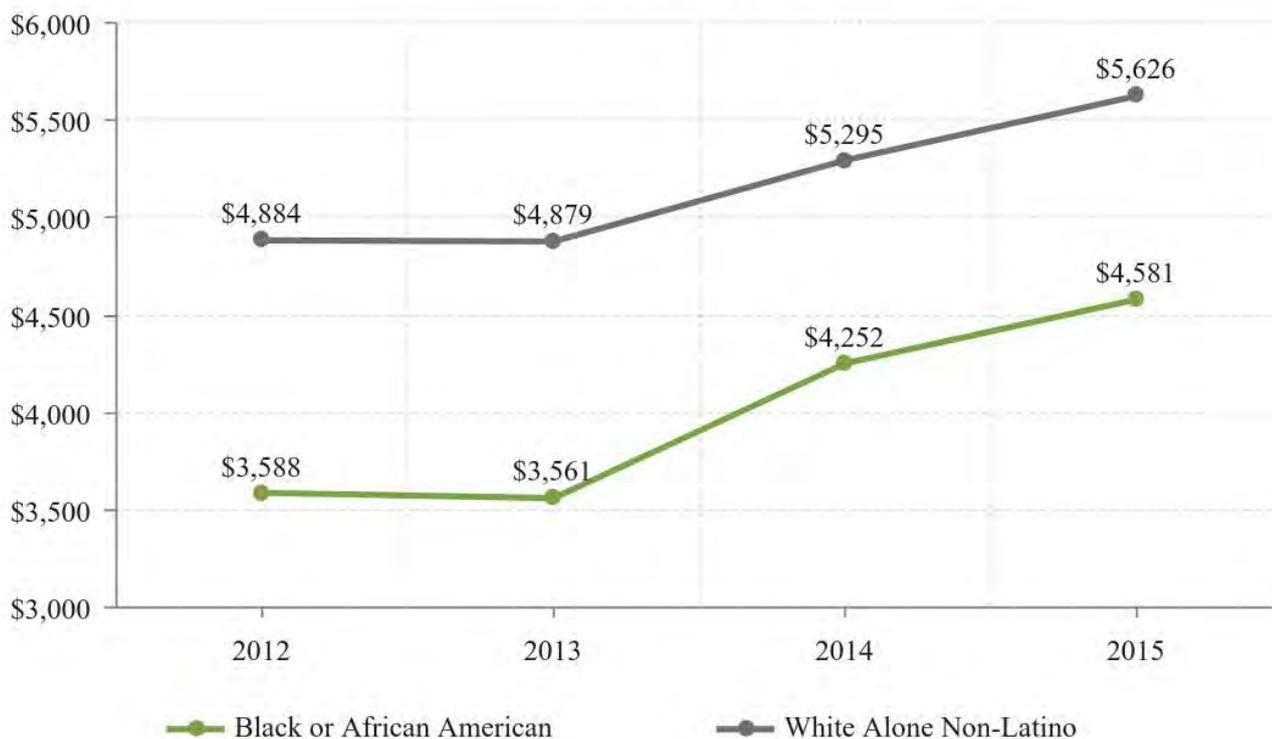
“I work at Nike and I am up for a promotion. I have had to put together, twice, a list of what I’ve done in the last year. The individuals who have already gotten promotions I know for a fact did not have to do that. I am the only African-American in my department. So it’s hard for me not to pull the race card, but I can’t say that because then I’m the angry Black woman. That is something I deal with on a daily basis, that nonsense.”

“A lot of times when I wear my hair out there is always this one person that wants to ask me a series of questions or touch my hair. And as a Black woman you don’t touch my hair.”

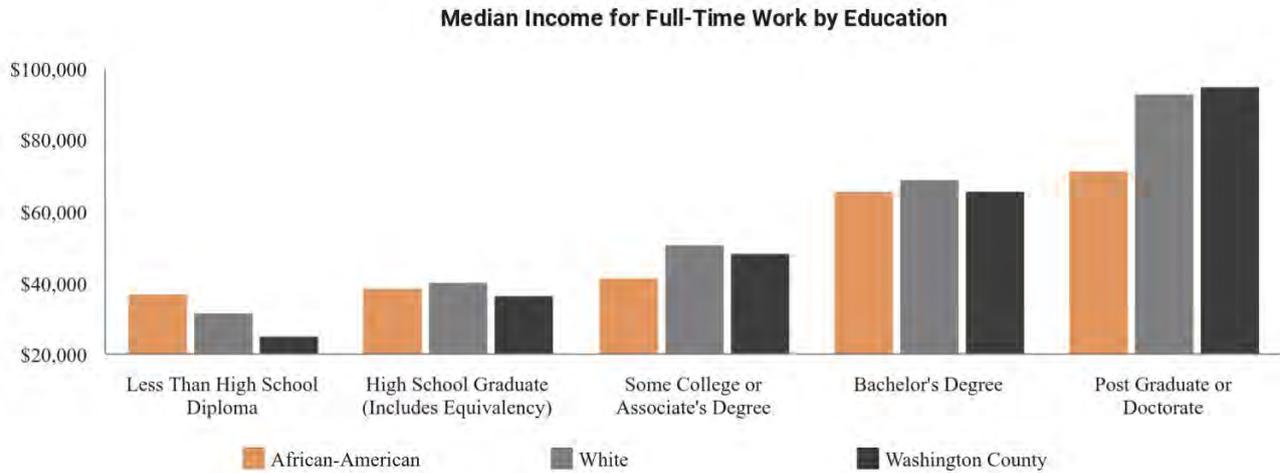
African-Americans also face employment barriers that include practices in hiring, workforce advancement, pay scale and earnings.

Given the differential occupational profile of African-Americans, it is no surprise that there are substantial income differences between Black and White workers.

Median Monthly Earnings

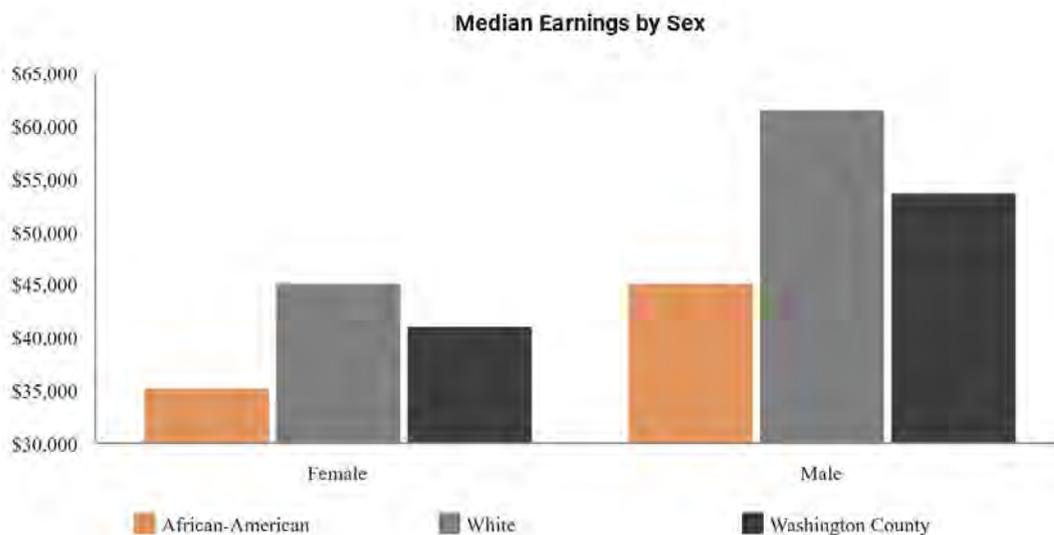


To make matters worse, their monthly income is lower compared to White people with similar levels of education. This indicates that either African-Americans are employed in lower wage occupations compared to their White peers who are similarly educated and/or they are ‘under employed’—not in jobs/positions compatible with their educational qualification and/or they are paid less for the same occupation as their White colleagues who have comparable educational qualifications.



Approximately one-third of the African-American population in Washington County reported attending some college and left without receiving a degree or certificate. This is part of a larger pattern of African-Americans stuck in an education limbo in part due to opportunity gaps, financial constraints and lack of support in higher educational institutions (Bates et al 2014). *Considering that having a bachelor's degree improves a person's earnings, there are barriers in the higher education system as well as wealth disparities that need to be addressed in order for African-Americans to contribute to and benefit from the economic growth of the County.*

African-American women are particularly pinched by the racialized earnings and income gap. They earn the least compared to White full time workers and African-American men while African-American men earn less than White men and similar to White women.



The Economic Policy Institute calculates the monthly budget to afford a modest yet adequate standard of living based on 2017 costs. The calculator takes into account the cost of housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, other necessities, and taxes. The calculator does not include savings for retirement, a rainy day, or college. For a two-parent, two-child family in Washington County, it costs \$8,334 per month (\$100,012 per year) to secure a decent yet modest standard of living. *Across different household types, African-Americans seem to be economically worse off compared to the typical White household and county household.* They run their households on fewer resources than White residents.⁴



\$59,795 Median Household Income for African American
\$72,698 Median Household Income for White
\$69,354 Median Household Income for Washington County

Family Households With Own Children



\$73,432 Median Household Income for African American
\$94,777 Median Household Income for White
\$82,026 Median Household Income for Washington County

Family Households Without Own Children



\$81,270 Median Household Income for African American
\$89,473 Median Household Income for White
\$85,416 Median Household Income for Washington County

African-Americans in Washington County are disproportionately poor compared to Whites. *Poverty rate among African-Americans is more than double that of Whites and one of every five African-American individuals live in poverty in this county, while only one of twelve Whites are poor (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).* Again African-American women are more likely to feel this deprivation, which in turn adversely affects their ability to thrive. This hurts African-American families and single mothers in particular. Child care in Washington County is more expensive than Oregon overall. Families maybe spending as much as 36% of their income on child care.



African American families may be spending as much as **36%** of their income on childcare

Combine this reality with the rate at which “fixed costs” such as housing are outpacing African-American earnings. Even for those who can afford childcare, Washington County has the fewest child care center slots open of all counties in the state (cited in (Women’s Foundation of Oregon, 2016).

“I make too much to get assistance, but I damn sure don’t make enough to afford child care. So I’m in that no man’s land and struggling.”

African-American families are under undue pressure. Working parents, especially mothers, may have to leave the workforce to care for their children (it also hurts their future earning potential). It also strains community capacity in a geography where few culturally specific resources exist. *It turns a cultural preference for multi-generational households into a coping strategy for unaffordable childcare where two-thirds of African-American grandparents who live with their grandchildren are responsible for childcare (American Community Survey 2011–2015).*

Through it all, Black people in Washington County are building economic power through entrepreneurship. In 2012, there were 719 Black owned businesses in Washington County, which contributed 143 million dollars in sales and receipts, and 12 million dollars in payroll to the local economy (Survey of Business Owners 2012).⁵ These businesses also play a valuable community building element as places to patronize and network in. Focus group participants exchanged knowledge about local African-American service providers or businesses to patronize.



In 2012, there were **719** Black-owned businesses in Washington County, which contributed **143** million dollars in sales and receipts, and **12** million dollars in payroll to the local economy. These businesses also play a valuable community-building element as places to patronize and network in.

Focus group participants repeatedly brought up lack of Black businesses to support as a community concern. Opening a business as well as a move to return to school (for the 1 in 3 people who left college without a degree) requires a financial cushion. *Institutionalized racism in housing and lending practices has deprived African-American communities in Washington County and at large, opportunities to build assets such as savings, homes and businesses.* This is an intergenerational disparity since it has curtailed the ability of resources to be passed down the generations and provide a buffer of economic security to African-Americans. Not only have African-Americans (even those with high incomes) been denied access to the housing market (the primary means of building economic security) in Washington County, the sub-prime mortgage housing bubble had a debilitating impact on them to the extent that the community hasn’t originated loans to pre-recession rates, let alone comparable to White residents (Washington

“We have three kids and we are not under the poverty line, but we are right there. We have no support or structure. I think there are more families like ours that are just making it, not because we don’t have a job, but it’s just us, no grandparents. It’s not poverty but I’m paying \$2500 a month in child care.”

“We need something like the Green Book.”

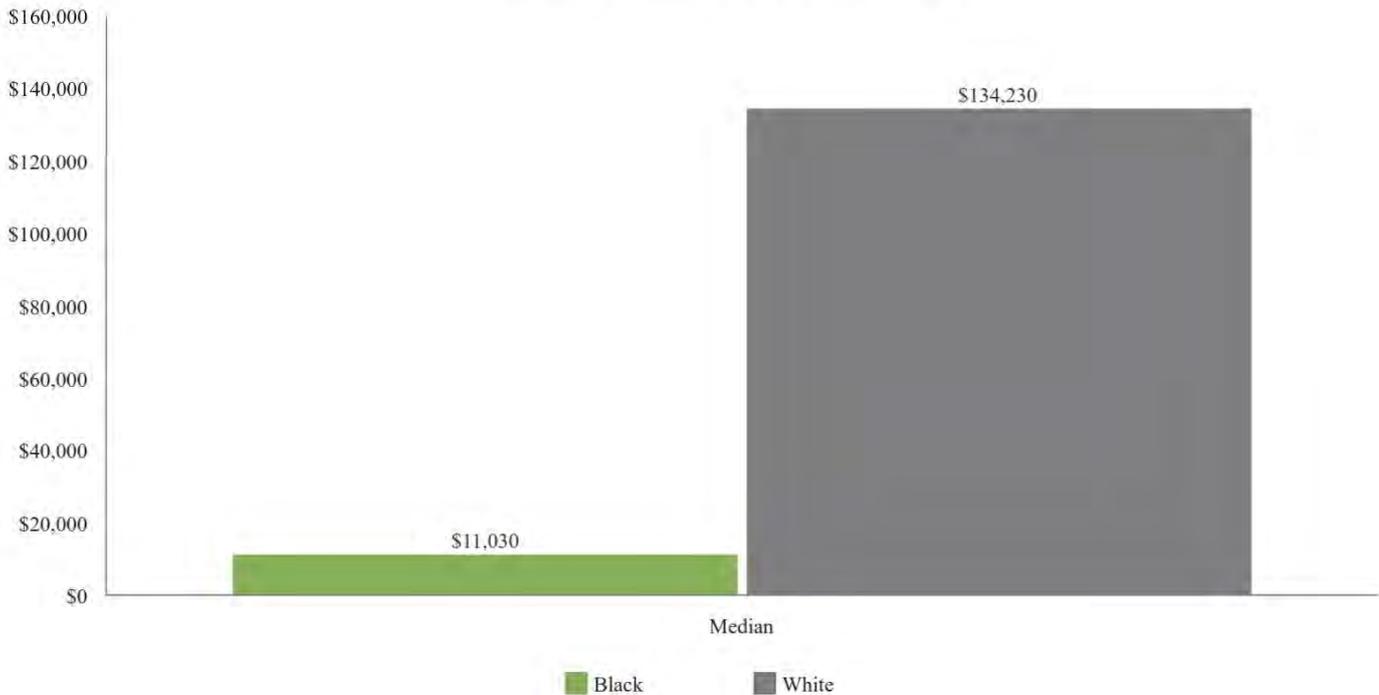
County Fair Housing Plan 2012). In the economic recovery phase when home values stabilized nationally, it has done so at an uneven pace along racial lines. Between 2007 and 2013, the median home value reported by White homeowners in the US declined 20.3%, compared to 37.7% for Black homeowners (Economic Policy Institute, 2013).



In the economic recovery phase when home values stabilized nationally, it has done so at an uneven pace along racial lines. Between 2007 and 2013, the median home value reported by White homeowners in the US declined 20.3 percent, compared to **37.7** percent for Black homeowners

Nationally, according to an Economic Policy Institute analysis (2013), “median White wealth was twelve times higher than median Black wealth. More than one in four black households have zero or negative net worth, compared to less than one in ten White families without wealth.” To make matters worse, some estimates project that it will take 228 years for the average Black family to reach the same level of wealth White families have today (Forbes, 2017).

Median Wealth by Race in the US (2013)



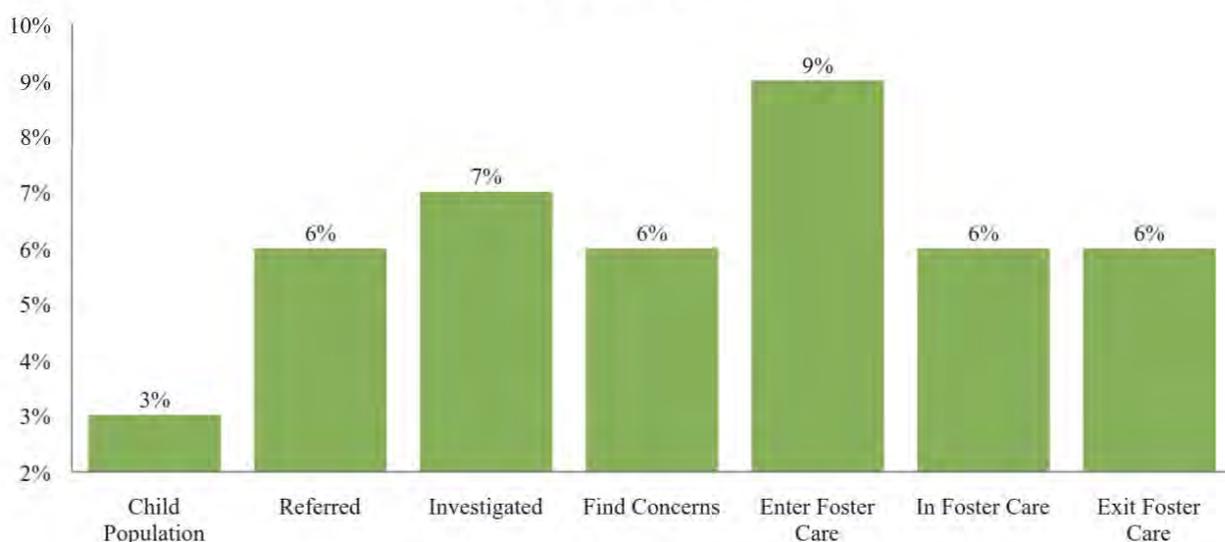
Evidently, the African-American community has not only not been able to access the county’s low unemployment rate, high wage growth and intergenerational wealth accumulation to buffer from economic insecurities and resource education, entrepreneurship and homeownership. Rather, there seem to be institutional barriers in accessing employment opportunities, creating equity specifically through homeownership, and educational attainment that is preventing them from releasing their economic potential and secure better outcomes for themselves and their communities.

CHILD WELFARE

African-American families and children both nationally and in Oregon have been caught up in the child welfare system that the New York Times (2017) recently labelled the “New Jane Crow”. Under Oregon’s current standard, African-American children are overrepresented in foster care at a rate 1.8 times that of the general population (Child Welfare Data Book, 2016). In 2009, then Governor Kulongoski established a Child Welfare Equity Task Force charged with reducing racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. In the 2018 Oregon legislative session, the first Native American state legislator from the Portland Metro area, Tawna Sanchez introduced House Bill 4009 at the legislature to reform certain child protection laws. Through a review of the essential decision points in child welfare, we can study how institutional practices lead African-American children to have different experiences in the system in Washington County.

Black children are disproportionately present at each decision point of the foster care system ranging from being reported to child welfare, a worker deciding to investigate a claim of abuse or neglect, determining a finding of abuse or neglect, being taken into care, and remaining in care beyond the mandated limit of 12 months. *According to Oregon Child Welfare data, in March 2017, Black children were 3% of the child population, but were steadily over-represented at each point of intervention in the foster care system.*

Disproportionate Representation of Black Children in the Child Welfare System in Washington County, March 2017



African-American families are reported to child welfare much more frequently than White families. Bias can arise in reporting, whether from the excessive scrutiny of African-American families by various service providers, or the biases of White investigators.

“My daughter and I normally keep our arms and body covered because we are Muslim. Her school in Forest Grove called Child Protective Services on us because they thought she may have been abused because she wears long sleeves or long pants. The CPS worker said this happens a lot with Black families. She told me to move or go have a very stern talk with the school. We moved.”

This particular family was fortunate—their child was not removed from their home and the family moved to another city in the County. **9% of children entering foster care in Washington County are Black** compared to 3% of the County’s child population. Black children in foster care are also increasingly unlikely to be reunited with their families or be placed in a permanent setting within 12 months of entering foster care. In March 2017, 29% of Black children in foster care in Washington County had not been discharged to a permanent home, a deterioration in standards from 17% in June 2016 (Oregon Child Welfare data).



In March 2017, **29%** of Black children in foster care in Washington County had not been discharged to a permanent home, a deterioration in standards from 17% in June 2016

Even short-term removals that are reversed can have lasting developmental effects on children. African-American families and children negotiate the child welfare system in conjunction with managing high costs of child care on incomes that are not equitable compared to their White peers, advocating against punitive disciplinary practices in schools, and protecting themselves from the criminal justice system.

HEALTH JUSTICE

“Our surroundings mold our development, significantly impacting our physical and mental health and shaping our life’s path from a very early age.”

STATE OF BLACK OREGON 2015

Health practitioners and advocates have realized what communities of color have been saying for a long time—that there are social determinants of the physical health of the community and that they need to attend to structural explanations of racial disparities in a range of health indicators (American Pub-

lic Health Association, n.d). Economic security, stable housing, healthy surroundings, food security and addressing racism-inflicted trauma and stress African-Americans experience have real consequences for chronic disease, maternal and child health and mental health. These social determinants are at the root of health disparities that need to be addressed in order for individual level health solutions to have effect. Even with the expansion of health insurance coverage after the Affordable Care Act was passed, an estimated 14% of the African-American population in Washington County lack any health insurance coverage (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). They are more likely than the White population and the average county person to not be covered by public or private health insurance. Lack of health insurance can lead to delaying treatment, not receiving treatment at all, and not managing chronic diseases.

Health Justice



- Chronic experiences with race-based discrimination, actual or perceived, locally or nationally, direct or indirect, can also induce a physical response.



- Black adults in Washington County had the highest prevalence of hypertension compared to all other racial groups for which data is available between 2012 to 2015. Cardiovascular diseases were the leading cause of death in the African-American community in Washington County between 2011 and 2015.



- Along with meeting material needs, they deal with the toxic stress of dealing with racist behavior against themselves of being treated as an ‘angry Black woman’ or having their hair touched or against their children in schools, in child welfare or in the juvenile justice system to name a few.



- Black babies are more likely to be of low birth weight

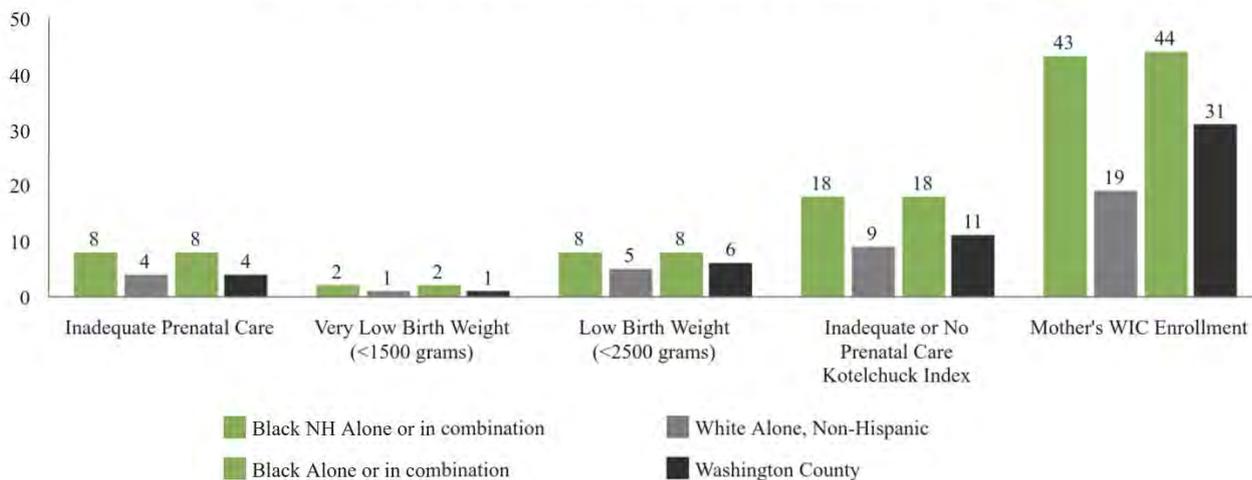
Black women are more likely to be in poverty than White women and the county’s female population; they earn less than their White counterparts and conceivably more acutely experience the cost burden of childcare, housing and food. Black women were more likely than White mothers to not be able to adequately take care of their prenatal care needs (Washington County Public Health department data).⁶ Along with meeting material needs, they deal with racist behavior against themselves of being treated as an ‘angry Black woman’ or having their hair touched or against their children in schools, in child welfare or in the juvenile justice system to name a few. This toxic stress is important to understand and redress as we consider the disparity in infant mortality rates in Washington County and that Black babies are more likely to be of low birth weight (Washington County Public Health department data). They have a much greater risk of death and short-term and long-term disability than those born at normal birth weight.

There is a growing body of literature suggesting racism is a stressor that affects health from prenatal stages through adulthood (Mays et al, 2007). There is a mental racial fatigue of that “special type of isolation” that the community experiences in Washington County and the daily labor of negotiating predominantly White institutions and building community in the absence of culturally specific resources. There are the daily threats

or acts of perceived aggression against African-American adults or youth, either locally or nationally, the stresses of which Dr. Joy DeGruy calls “Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome”.

Chronic experiences with race-based discrimination, actual or perceived, locally or nationally, direct or indirect, can also induce a physical response. The John Henryism theory shows that the physical exertion that African-Americans expend in order to survive racist institutions and have autonomy can cause health repercussions (James et al, 1992). For example, hypertension and high prevalence of cardiovascular diseases (Roberts et al, 2008). According to the Washington County Public Health analysis of Medicaid data, Black adults in Washington County had the highest prevalence of hypertension compared to all other racial groups for which data is available between 2012 to 2015. Cardiovascular diseases was the leading cause of death in the African-American community in Washington County between 2011 and 2015. The second prevalent chronic condition among African-American adults on Medicaid in Washington County is diabetes.⁷ Black youth have the highest prevalence of asthma compared to all other racial groups for which Medicaid data is available. *A health equity approach to understanding physiological issues point to an investigation of access to green spaces, walkable neighborhoods, food security and in particular nutrition.*

Birth Risk Factors (Percent of Births for which Birth Risk Factor is Present)



ENDNOTES

- 1 This is not meant to be an exact estimate but rather points to a further query. Considering that law enforcement similar to typical data collection practices is prone to conflate Middle Eastern and Slavic communities in the White category, we don't know how many victims of crimes are White.
- 2 Average monthly earnings of employees with stable jobs (i.e., worked with the same firm throughout the quarter)
- 3 "A homeless family could live in an emergency shelter or transitional housing unit, share housing with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship, reside in motels, or live in tents or trailers for lack of alternative, adequate housing."
- 4 Inflation adjusted to January 2017 from Jan 2015.
- 5 This data includes all nonfarm businesses filing Internal Revenue Service tax forms as individual proprietorships, partnerships, or any type of corporation, and with receipts of \$1,000 or more.
- 6 Kotelchuck Index uses two crucial elements obtained from birth certificate data-when prenatal care began (initiation) and the number of prenatal visits from when prenatal care began until delivery (received services).The Kotelchuck Index does not measure the quality of prenatal care.
- 7 Washington County Public Health analysis of Medicaid data of diagnosis between March 31, 2012 and March 31, 2015.



AFRICAN COMMUNITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

“The end goal here is a self-sufficient community moving forward as a contributing part of our society.”

ABDI MUSE,
THE OREGON SOMALI FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER

African communities in Washington County are varied and diverse—they are rich in cultural and linguistic diversity, in life experience as citizens, immigrants and refugees; as youth and elders, as working professionals and as students. *They like living in Washington County for its diversity, plentiful space and as a good place to raise and educate their kids. They also miss the community they left behind and want opportunities and spaces to build community here.* They call attention to institutionalized racism in schools, employment, workplace culture and criminal justice, which constrains them from contributing their full potential to Oregon. They call for policies and actions against xenophobia, Islamophobia, and cultural and language barriers. Many community members find the label “African” problematic because it masks the diversity of experiences in the community and is connected to frustrating mainstream racialized stereotypes of Africa as a monolithic identity. Recognizing their diversity and differences in lived experiences, focus group participants strive to stay true to their experiences and authentically represent the lived realities of their families and friends.

They urge readers and policymakers to take the experiences they share as a starting point. They want to be partners in bringing about transformational change in Washington County.

“People think we are all the same; that we have the same problems, same culture, that we come from the same place. But that’s not true.”

“We crossed the Atlantic Ocean. We want to succeed. We do a lot here based on few resources. There needs to be institutional support for our success.”



AT LEAST

4,524

IN WASHINGTON
COUNTY

Many community members find the label "African" problematic because it masks the diversity of experiences in the community and is connected to the frustrating mainstream racialized stereotypes of Africa as a monolithic identity.

Community has grown by approximately **47%** between 2006 and 2011



2 out of 3 members of the Sub-Saharan African community living in Washington County are US citizens by birth and approximately half of them are Oregon-born



83% of Sub-Saharan African immigrants in Washington County came from **Eastern and Western Africa**

Community advocates urge local governments to partner with them to conduct a trauma-informed community count in Washington County

A DIVERSE AND GROWING COMMUNITY

Washington County is home to a growing number of African communities. There are *at least* 4,524 people in the county who identify sub-Saharan African countries as their ancestry or place of birth in the American Community Survey (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). According to our calculations, the community has grown by approximately 47% between 2006 and 2011 and has propelled the growth in the Black community in

Washington County, which has grown by 36% between 2005 and 2015. *Community feedback indicates that the Somali population in Washington County is under counted because Somali refugees who were born or spent a long time in refugee settlements may not identify their place of birth as Somalia even though they are Somali.* Community advocates urge local governments to partner with them to conduct a trauma-informed

community count in Washington County for a couple of reasons. First, the US Census and state and local jurisdictions subsume these communities under the Black/African-American race category. Second, communities of color are systemically undercounted in official data. The community may not participate in official population surveys because of weaker English skills or a distrustful relationship with the state or a lack of understanding of the purpose of the surveys and may avoid answering demographic questions not knowing how they can be of benefit.

Washington County's African communities are diverse in terms of their citizenship status, immigration histories and pathways and their countries of origin. An estimated two out of three members of the Sub-Saharan African community living in Washington County are US citizens by birth and approximately half of them are Oregon-born (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Similar to national migration patterns, approximately 83% of Sub-Saharan African immigrants in Washington County came from Eastern and Western Africa with Somalia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Kenya and Nigeria being the top countries of origin in that order (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Both current immigrants and ancestors of residents born in the US are part of a steady flow of immigration to the US since at least the 1980s and are skilled professionals, individuals seeking reunification with relatives, and refugees and asylum seekers from war-torn countries.

There is a great depth and breadth of lived experiences in these communities that should be acknowledged and respected. For example, Oregon ranks among the top recipients in the country for refugees from Somalia, whereas many Nigerians and people from Togo in Washington County moved here for education and employment opportunities. However, for many Oregonians, all Black people are monolithic. While they inhabit linguistic and cultural diversity and even some inter-community tensions carried forward from their home countries, government agencies, schools, data systems and society at large lumps them together as Black and treats them accordingly.

“Especially now in this political climate, no matter whether you grew up here or came yesterday, you are lumped in a group. Growing up here, the way my parents raised me, ‘of course, you are from Africa, but you are part of this community.’ You are a refugee, but you are part of the community.”

“When you are here, people do not care if you are African-American or Black immigrant/refugee, they only see you as a Black person. As a youth I have seen Somalis being expelled or suspended from school. I have seen many young men profiled by the police, and I have seen many youth without jobs or prospects of achieving economic mobility. They treat us like African-American youth, but when I go back home, I have to deal with the additional struggles that my parents face because they do not speak English, nor do they understand how to navigate their new country's cultural and racial dynamics” (State of Black Oregon, 2015).



COMMUNITY BUILDING TO COUNTER ISOLATION

The people that participated in this project said that they like living in Washington County—it is safe, it is a good place to educate their children, and they identify the diversity in Washington county as a big asset.

“Washington County is still growing. You initially you have acceptance issues but there are also so many good people who want to learn, who are happy to see the changes.”

“I like Washington County especially Beaverton. Compared to Portland, we are not crowded. We have much space.”

Residents really value community building grounded in a connection to identity and history.

“I have noticed with my niece who is 7—she goes to a school where there are a lot of White kids and South Asian kids. But she doesn’t get the sense of being African. Of course we teach her at home. You are African. This is where you are from. Keep it in your heart. Learn the language but know your roots, because it’s when you know yourself and where you live, that gives you strength.”

However even in a place the size of this county, focus group participants talked a lot about invisibility.

“I noticed in the Tanasbourne area where my family lives that you will briefly see people of color or mainly White people but there’s not a lot of Africans that you see. You don’t really find your community unless you go to the other side of Portland.”

“We may not visibly be seen on the streets and walking but we have so many that people are just on their own. I am on my own.”

“I don’t know a lot of Africans out here, other than the friends that I know from back home who are here.”

Long time residents of the county note the level of development in the region, but it has done little to build community and has rather had a deleterious impact on the environment.

“I think it’s good there are other communities around here. I grew up somewhere where nobody really understood me because I was the African kid. So I had to assimilate. They may not be from the same country or continent as you, but it’s a strength to have diversity.”

“If you want to live safely and to educate your kids, you live here. That’s how I consider Washington County.”

“I have been living near Maryville in Beaverton since 2009. We are becoming more and more developed but we are losing the forest around us. And if community is about being social, I still feel isolated.”

Frustrated by the lack of equity and inclusion in both Oregon and Washington County, community members advocate for themselves and reach out and build relationships. They think about what they see elsewhere that they would like to see in the county and those are spaces “that connect you to your own people and reach out as a community.”

“I don’t see anything that allows me to be inclusive in the county.”

“When I moved to where I live I was not welcomed. Everybody around me was White except one guy who’s an Ethiopian. He thought I was an Ethiopian, he came running. I was so happy. He told me everything about the area. He said he lived there for three years all lonely.”

“It was fortunate for me and my family because by good luck at Kmart we met a nun from Tanzania. That’s how we started. Later on we found that we have a community. Little by little we are discovering that.”

“I moved from Portland to here. I knew two, three people from my community and I asked them what’s going around here? Who lives here? I met so many Tanzanians, Kenyans. I believe if I don’t do it who is going to do it.”



CULTURALLY SPECIFIC RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

Community Resources



Oregon Somali Family Education Center (OSFEC) and Somali Bantu Citizen Group



Partnerships with culturally specific organizations in East Portland such as Center for African Immigrants and Refugees Organization (CAIRO) and IRCO-Africa House



Pan African Festival of Oregon

Community members have stepped up to support people in their networks as well as establish culturally specific resources and organizations such as the Oregon Somali Family Education Center (OSFEC) and Somali Bantu Citizen Group. There are some incipient partnerships with culturally specific organizations in East Portland such as Center for African Immigrants and Refugees Organization (CAIRO) and IRCO-Africa House. They argue that there should be more systemic efforts made by local governments to provide resources and support. Whether they were born here, are immigrants or refugees, African county residents talk about the dearth of culturally specific assets that enable them to live their life in an authentic way. They specifically identify scarcity of resources and services for new arrivals in the county especially for refugee communities.

“When you land on Portland airport they take you to the east side. There they tell you what services you need, where to go. They guide you. We don’t have that service in Washington County to guide the new arrivals about how to find the grocery, where to bring kid to school, how to ride the bus.”

Focus group participants think that a community center with resources for recent arrivals as well as know your rights training, professional networking and mentorship events, programming that promotes intercultural understanding, and is also youth friendly would be very helpful in Washington county.

“I discovered a Congo family that were totally lost. I was the one helping them to know how to catch the bus, where to catch the bus, how to get to Tigard, things like that.”

Anecdotally, community members share that there are a number of Somali owned businesses in Washington County, many of whom participate in the Pan African Festival of Oregon. *They urge governments to support small business creation in the community because they play a valuable community building element as places to patronize and network in.* There is tremendous interest in different African communities for such community assets that sustain and nourish well-being.

“I wish I could get a lot more of my foods. I wish there were African shops in the area.”

“They hold a responsibility to us just as to our White neighbors to understand the places we come from and how we are trying to live. It’s a give and take. We add to the community and the community adds to us.”

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

African communities in Washington County are diverse—some of them were born in the US; the majority of the community came to the US and Washington County because of employment and education opportunities in the Portland Metro Area, or through refugee settlement and asylum programs. This leads to huge variations in the community’s lived experiences in Washington County. *Community review of reported economic indicators alerts the reader to treat the data with caution because it collapses the contrasting experiences of immigrants and refugees, US-educated and those limited by lack of recognition of their foreign credentials, those with job security and those juggling multiple jobs.* Workforce development, income and pay equity, a safe workplace and poverty alleviation are crucial to ensuring positive outcomes in housing, education and healthcare as well.

The African community is ready and willing to join the workforce in Washington County. 77% of the Sub-Saharan African population is either already working or is actively looking for employment (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Yet unemployment in the communities is 11.2% compared to that of the county (7.6%) and White unemployment rate at 7.2% (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). *Sub-Saharan African unemployment rate now is higher than when unemployment in Washington County peaked during the 2008 recession.* It’s important to know that US Census calculations of unemployment rate do not take into account people who are not actively seeking employment in the previous month. Thus, it’s really hard to gauge the extent to which employment barriers have forced some people to give up on finding a job.



Employed or actively looking for a job.

“When you apply and do all those things, you are always looked over. You don’t get the opportunity. And then you do it, you do it over time, what will happen? You give up because you don’t have support. You know that’s not going to work.”

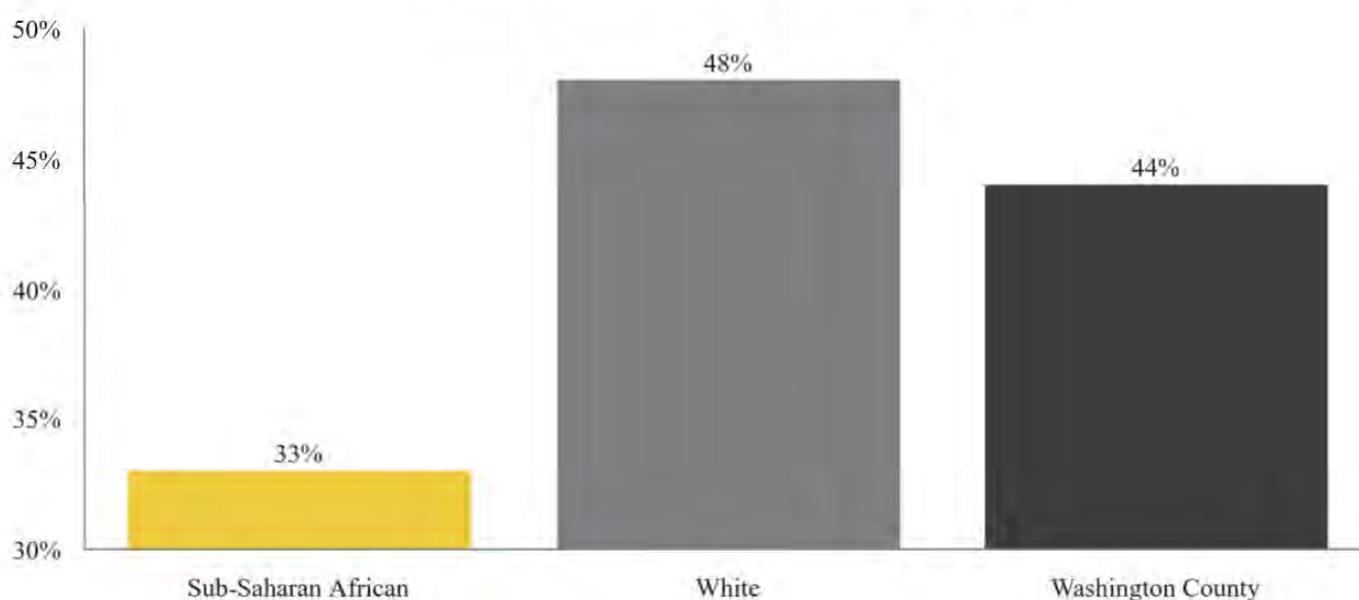
Washington County leads in employment, income, and wage growth indicators in Oregon. Overall, similar to most communities of color living in Washington County, the Sub-Saharan African workforce is less likely to be employed in high wage sectors and work in occupations that are typically low to middle wages compared to the White workforce in Washington County (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). In 2015, only 2% of public sector employment in Washington County identified as Black and this includes seasonal/part time/contractual labor, which are disproportionately people of color (Worksystems Inc); in that same year, according to Oregon Department of Education, only 2% of public school teachers across school districts in the county identified as Black.

Who makes up 33% of the Sub-Saharan African workforce and where are they working? According to the Migration Policy Institute (2017), Nigerian and South African immigrants are the most highly educated among Sub-Saharan immigrants in the US and they are also most likely to work in management-type high wage occupations. Community reviewers echo similar dynamics in Washington County pointing to the employee workforce at Intel and in the medical field.

The high-tech sector, companies such as Nike and Columbia and educational institutions such as Pacific University pull well-educated talent of African descent to Washington County. On the flipside, some households especially refugee families have had limited access to high wage employment.

Community members talk about finding work outside of the county in cities such as Portland. Additionally, focus group participants and reviewers underline the need to bridge the disconnect within the community created by differential workforce profiles, which exacerbates social isolation.

Percentage of Workers in High Wage Occupations

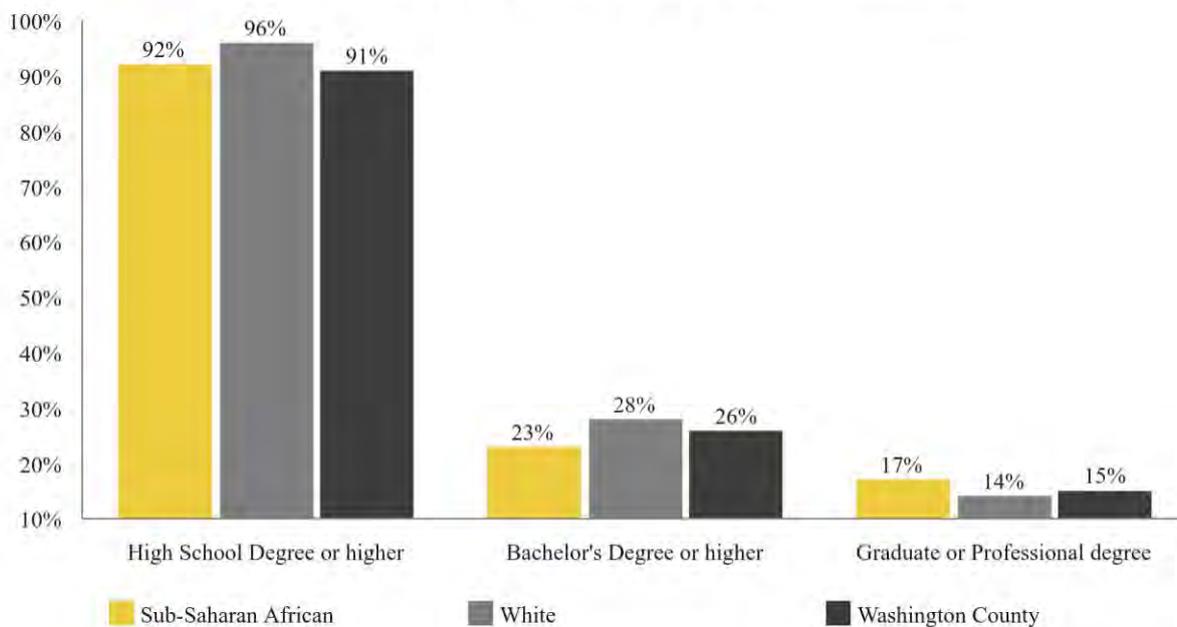




Focus group participants and reviewers underline the need to bridge the disconnect within the community created by differential workforce profiles, which exacerbates social isolation

Sub-Saharan Africans in Washington County are more likely to have graduate and advanced degree than the White and overall county population (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Educational attainment does not explain high unemployment rates in the community and their over-representation in low-middle wage sectors.

Percentage of Population by Highest Level of Education



For some groups in the community such as Nigerians employment patterns may track with educational attainment, but many community members especially those who came here as refugees and asylum seekers take up jobs that they are overqualified for in order to eke out a living.

“When I go to Portland area and apply for a job they are used to us because they have seen us, they know about our scarves and they know what our religion is.”

“My dad was educated in Africa and Middle East as a computer engineer. When he came to the country he should have been in the engineering field. They made him do one year of school so he could be just where everybody else was.”

Underemployment wherein people with high skill levels and postsecondary education are working in relatively low-skilled, low-wage jobs, can be at least partially resolved by recognizing foreign credentials and reforming licensure procedures.

They also prioritize the need for networking events that can both build community and connect job applicants to employment opportunities.

“We need to network and share opportunities and advise each other on what you can do to get in the private sector or public sector. Even when you know of opportunities, I don’t know a lot of people of color that I can tell that to because we are not connected.”

There are strategies communities can devise for themselves and there are structural barriers that keep some community members in a cycle of low wages and inequitable access to employment, which need to be dismantled. No matter their education and immigration status, focus group participants and reviewers emphasize the need to dismantle racial discrimination in hiring practices, recognize experiences and skills of immigrant and refugee communities and reform the impact of interactions with law enforcement on the economic prospects of youth. Community members in the focus groups advocate for these barriers to be dismantled to unleash their economic potential in Washington County.



Focus group participants and reviewers emphasize the need to dismantle racial discrimination in hiring practices, recognize experiences and skills of immigrant and refugee communities and reform the impact of interactions with law enforcement on the economic prospects of youth

“Most of us, we come with two years degree or bachelor’s, Master’s, and few with PhD. But when you go into the work field with a Master’s degree, your White counterpart with an Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree has that better title or is making more money than you.”

“There is no way I can explain myself in English as well as a White person. That is the only language he knows. It is impossible.”

“I have seen a number of youth who were arrested for one reason or the other. It’s a one-time thing. But that remains in the system or on his record. It affects their employment.”

“We take a position that pay us just survive. We have a family. I cannot leave my job. I am not happy in my position, but I cannot leave it.”

What kind of a culture and environment do employees experience in their workplace? Our focus group participants and community reviewers worked in various sectors—for the state, in the private sector, almost all of them in Washington County.

“I speak three languages and am doing my Master’s. My boss is over-the-moon excited I took that job because I’m way over-qualified. Why did I take that job? Because there’s no way to get the jobs I deserve in this county. I have applied to the county, so you start applying to those jobs so you have a better chance.”

They reported a range of experiences with racism and Islamophobia and advocate for workplaces to be welcoming and safe in order to retain employees of color.

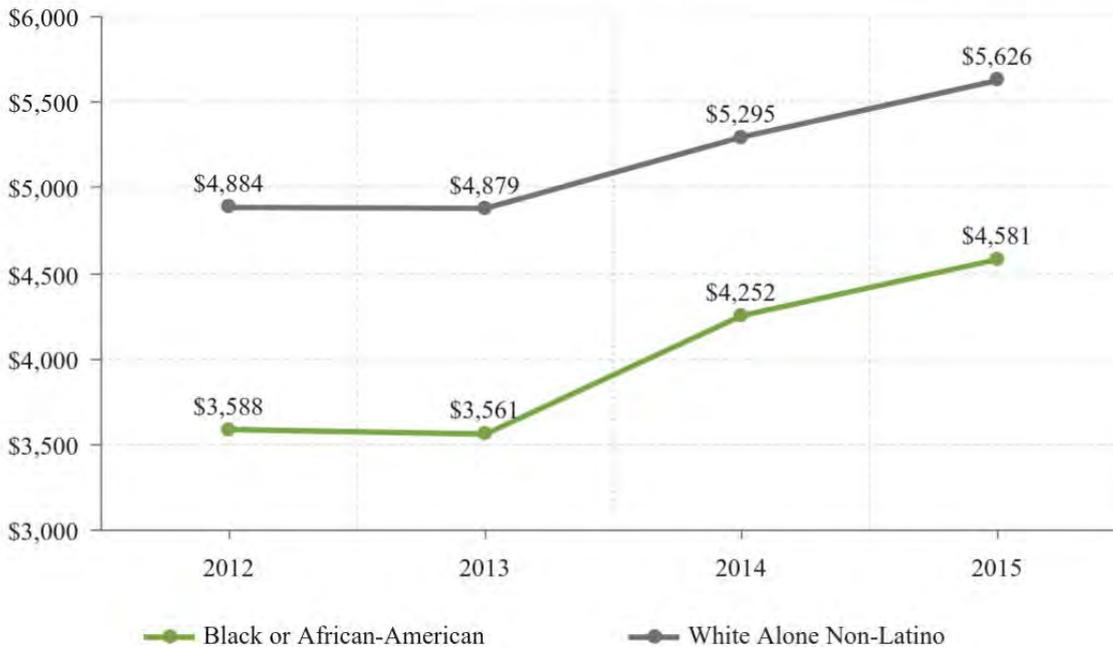
“Going above and beyond the inclusion and thinking about ways that can make the work environment culturally safe for people who end up making it to employment here is very important. Even if the employers are inclusive, the work culture itself drives people away.”

“I wore a scarf one day. Regardless of how well I speak or my education, someone came to me and said, you’re a terrorist. They had the audacity to go to my boss and make a complaint about me making them uncomfortable.”

“We are taking the initiative to educate ourselves, but then the work force is not recognizing those.”

Community members, despite their different work profiles, may also face employment barriers that include practices in workforce advancement, pay scale and earnings. There are substantial earnings differences between Black and White workers in the county. Black people in Washington county have lower earnings compared to their White counterparts (Worksystems Inc).

Median Monthly Earnings

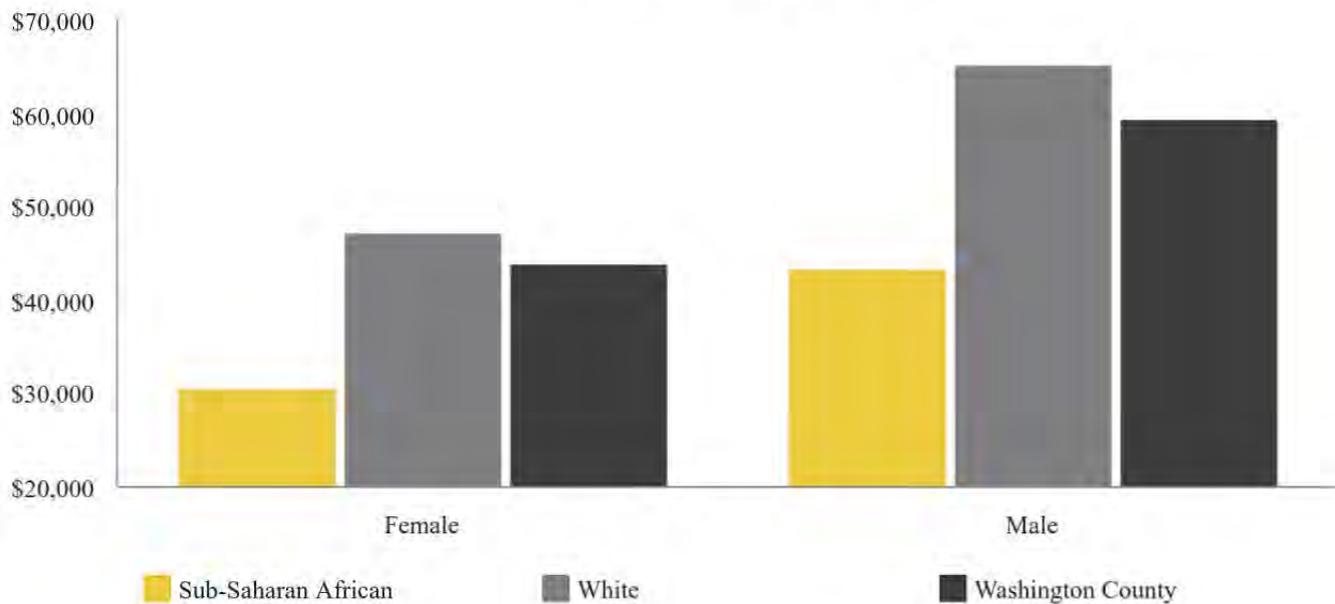


Sub-Saharan African women are particularly pinched by the racialized earnings and income gap. They earn the least compared to White male and female full time workers and Sub-Saharan African men (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

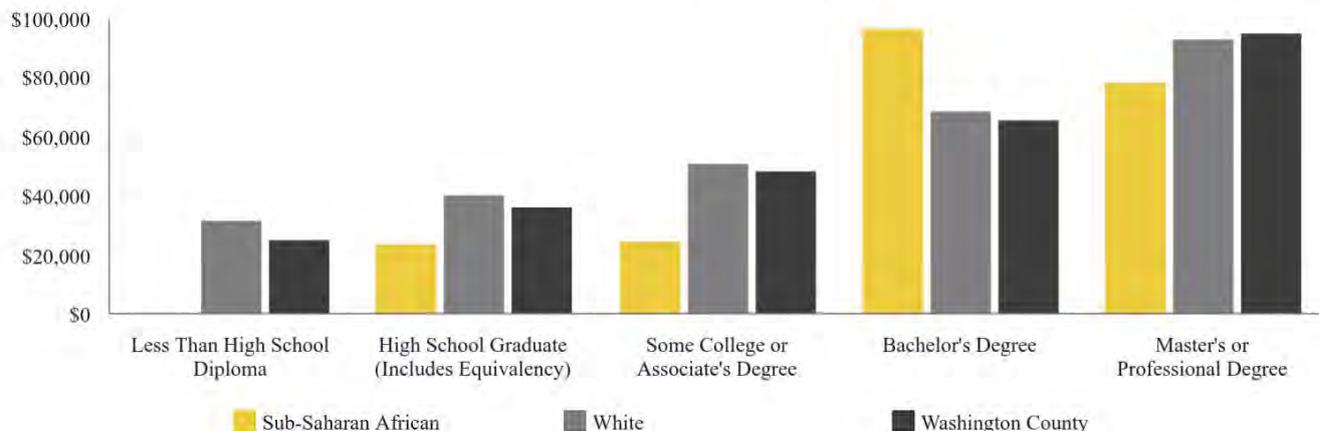
Community members try hard and work hard to get good jobs but inequitable access to employment is a product of institutionalised racism. Education does not seem to have the same positive effect on earned income for Sub-Saharan African workers as they do for their White counterparts and the county at large (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).¹

“If you have a Bachelor, you move to Master. If you have a master, you move to PhD. We stay overnight to study and take a shower and go to work. We excel in our job. That’s what I do every day in my experience.”

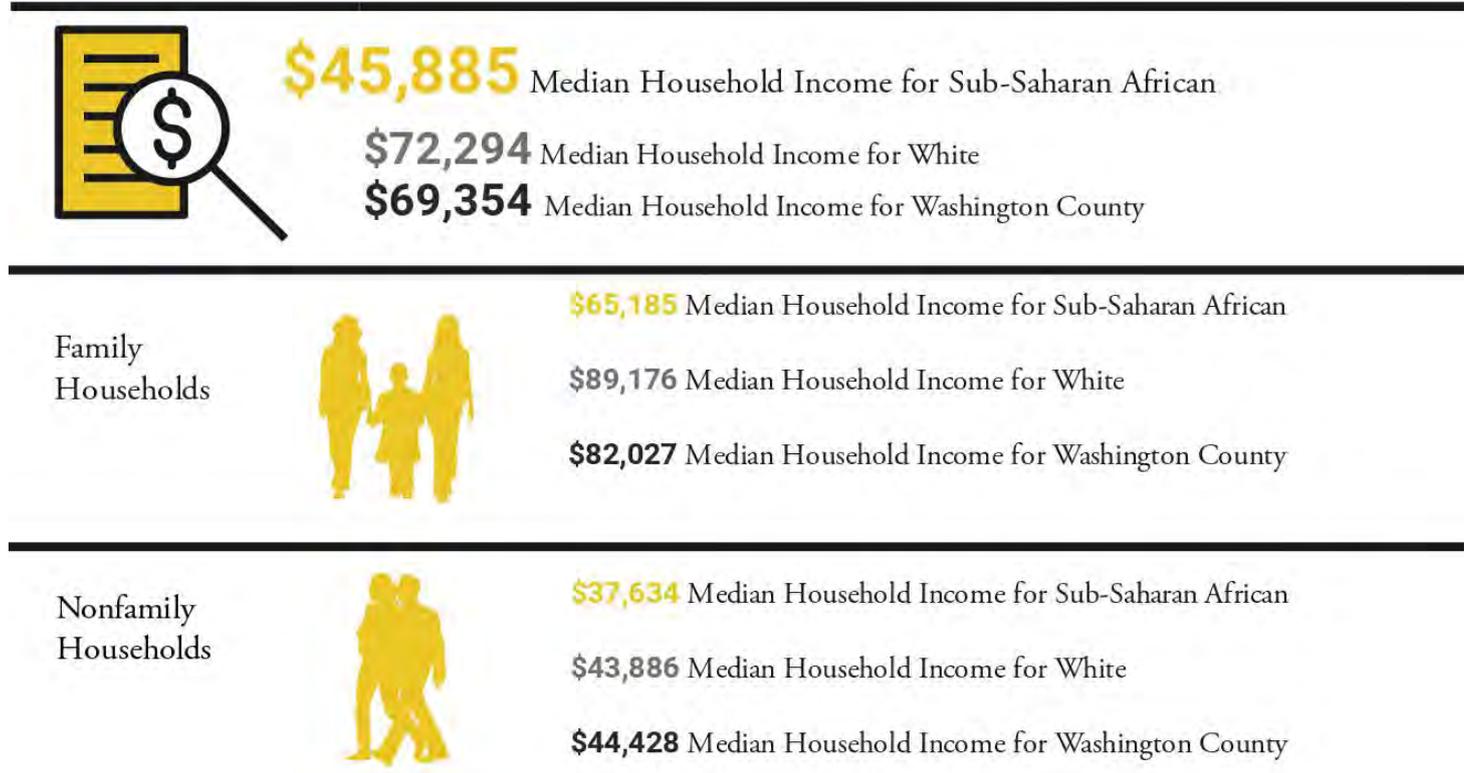
Median Earnings by Sex



Median Income for Full time Work by Education



The Economic Policy Institute calculates the monthly budget to afford a modest yet adequate standard of living based on 2017 costs. The calculator takes into account the cost of housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, other necessities, and taxes. It does not include savings for retirement, a rainy day, or college. For a two-parent, two-child family in Washington County, it costs \$8,334 per month (\$100,012 per year) to secure a decent yet modest standard of living (Family Budget Map, 2018). Across different household types, Sub-Saharan African families and households are managing on fewer resources than White residents while facing barriers in accessing or advancing in their employment.²



Poverty rate among Sub-Saharan Africans, therefore, is high. *Families are 317% more likely than White families to live in poverty in this county (American Community Survey 2011-2015). One out of four Sub-Saharan African individuals are in poverty compared to one out of twelve White people in poverty.* Women are more likely to negotiate this because of lower earnings and income, which in turn adversely affects their ability to thrive.

Child care in Washington County is more expensive than Oregon overall. Even for those who can afford childcare, Washington County has the fewest child care center slots open of all counties in the state (as cited in Count Her In, 2014).

Families may be spending as much as 37–50% of their income on child care. Working parents, especially mothers, are pressured to leave the workforce to care for their children (which also hurts their future earning potential). It also puts pressure on family elders and/or community networks in a county where culturally specific services are lacking to substitute for childcare and after school activities.

Community members try to build savings and assets to buffer from economic shocks such as the 2008 economic recession, they attain high levels of education or attempt to find compatible jobs, open their own business or attempt to do so; but racist lending practices and similar barriers that have stymied intergenerational wealth generation in African-American communities constrain these residents as well. Some estimates project that it will take 228 years for the average Black family to reach the same level of wealth White families have today (McCarthy, 2017). Through it all, they are making economic contributions both to Washington County and to their countries of origin. In 2012, there were 719 Black owned businesses in Washington County, which contributed 143 million dollars in sales and receipts, and 12 million dollars in payroll to the local economy.³ According to the World Bank, remittances to Sub-Saharan African countries via formal channels have risen nearly tenfold since 2000, reaching \$35 billion in 2015 (Zong & Batalova, 2017, “Remittances”).



- In 2012, there were **719** Black-owned businesses in Washington County, which contributed **143** million dollars in sales and receipts, and **12** million dollars in payroll to the local economy.



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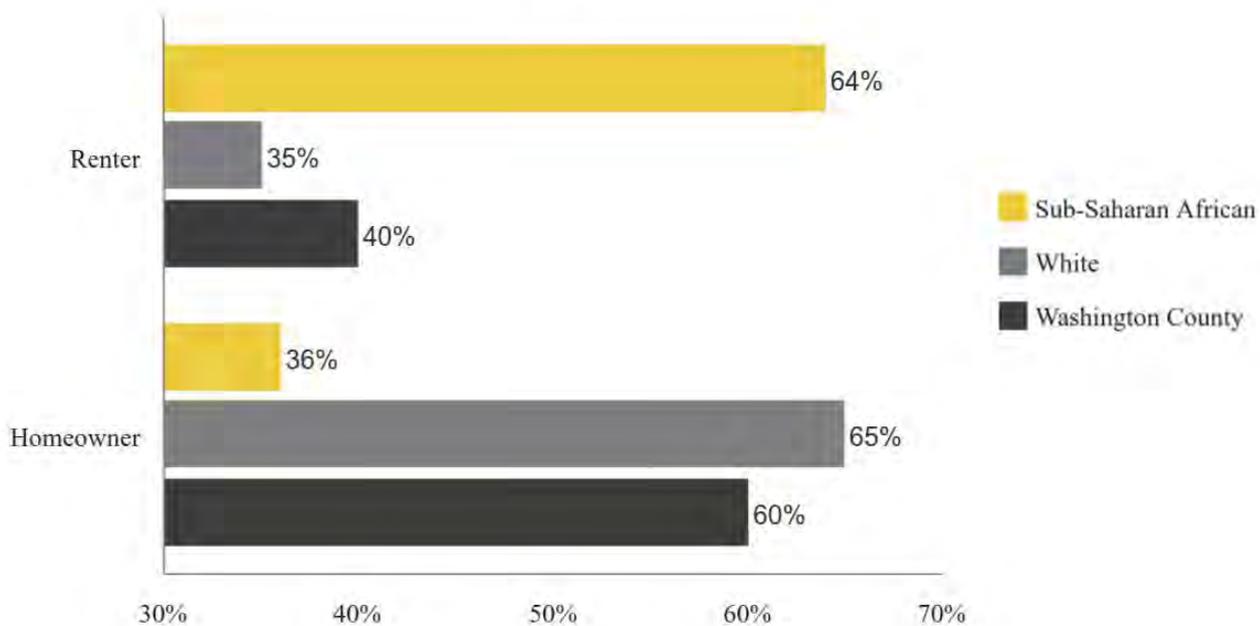


HOUSING JUSTICE

Home should be a place of refuge and protection, a source of security and stability for families, a stable basis to build community in a neighborhood with resources that enables people to thrive. *For African communities housing justice means ensuring pathways to employment and economic prosperity, affordable housing especially of larger family homes, and redressing houselessness.* The lived experience of African communities with housing tells a different reality.

Similar to other communities of color, African communities are significantly more likely to be renters than homeowners in Washington County. Whereas 65% White residents own homes in the county, only 36% of Africans are homeowners (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Share of Homeowners and Renters in the population



Focus group participants identify numerous barriers to homeownership in the community. Financial institutions are reluctant to provide homeownership loans to potential homeowners because (a) they are Black, and (b) they may not have

credit history even if they have good income. Although data is not available for how banks and lending practices treat African loan applicants, we can observe their loan behavior towards Black people in general. Home mortgage borrowing and lending for Black households are not just a function of low incomes in Washington County. At every income level (low, medium and high) they were not only more likely than White applicants to be denied home mortgage loans, high income Black people were the most likely (86%) to have their application denied compared to their White counterparts in the county (Washington County Fair Housing Plan 2012). In 2009, only 69 loans originated from Black households indicating that very few Black people even attempt to purchase homes in Washington County.

For those of Islamic faith, the Quran prohibits interest rates on loans. That can also restrict Muslim community members from homeownership. To redress that issue, community members point to Islamic banking that offers mortgages and traditional loans in compliance with Islamic faith. Some banks in the US have started offering Islamic banking services (Mohammed, 2016).



Community members point to Islamic banking that offers mortgages and traditional loans in compliance with Islamic faith.

Differential outcomes in employment, income and earnings also affect the homeownership gap.

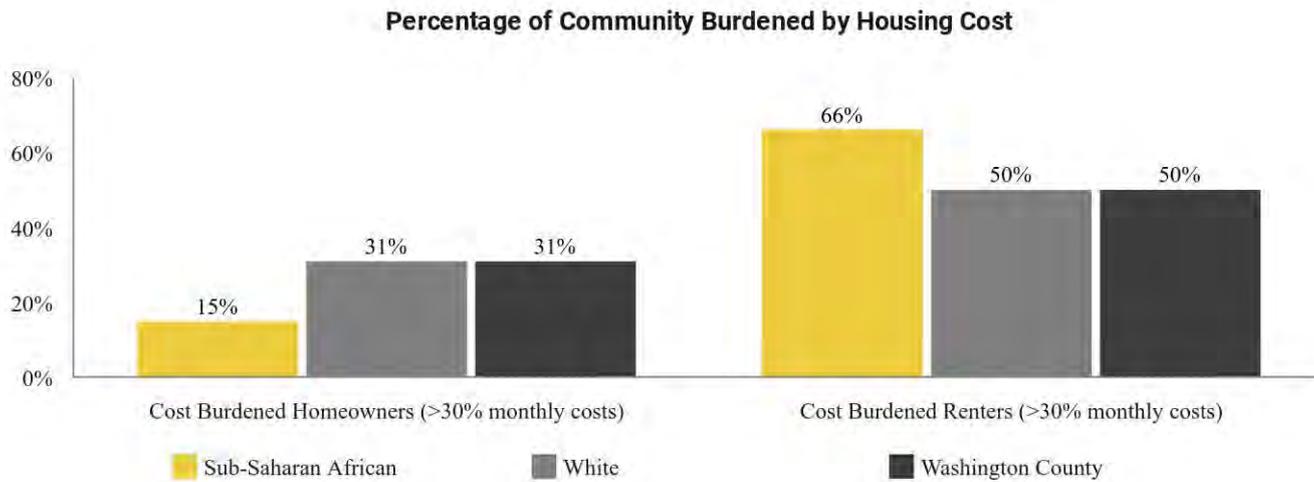
“The key to have a house you have to have a good income. To have a good income, you have to have a good job. If we don’t have a job, even if you have good credit and go to bank, if you cannot make this down payment, we are not giving you a loan. Our income is very low. It all comes back to the job.”

“In this county, speaking about my own Somali community, some of us here have more education, and many of them work in the tech sector. A lot of them own homes but there are many barriers for others.”

Those who are well-paid, especially immigrant labor brought in for the local high-tech economy, can afford homes. This would help explain why the Census data shows that majority of African homeowners are not cost burdened (spending

“It is hard for a Black person to get approved for a home loan. Credit is a barrier too. Homeownership is even harder for those of us that come here without that credit history, even if they have the income.”

at least 30% of their income on mortgage and housing costs). It should be noted that *while the data suggests that fewer African homeowners are generally less burdened by mortgage etc, they bear additional costs, such as travel to culturally specific resources and services.*



The vast majority of the community are renters. Issues of unaffordability, gentrification, overcrowding risks destabilising and displacing over half of the community that are renters in Washington County. Two-third of renters in the Sub-Saharan African community in Washington County pay more than one-third of their monthly income on housing costs (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). While the core problem is increasing rents (median rents in Washington County have increased by 37% between 2012 and 2015), inadequate incomes and unemployment make it difficult for Africans to pay the single biggest expense in a typical household budget and keeps them in poverty. Between 2012 and 2015, overall Black monthly earnings grew by 27%, not keeping pace with rent increase in that time period.



Between 2012 and 2015, overall Black monthly earnings grew by **27%**



Median rents in Washington County have increased by **37%** between 2012 and 2015

Sub-Saharan African families are roughly 317% more likely to be in poverty compared to a White person and 167% more likely than families in Washington County to be in poverty (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Focus group discussions on housing also indicate how finding affordable housing for large sized African families can be difficult and expensive. This is especially true for refugee families to start from low paying jobs in their first years in the US, leading some to pursue Section 8 vouchers.⁴ In 2013, when the Black population was roughly 2–3% of the County population, 13.7% of the Section 8 voucher waiting list and 11.1% of the public housing waiting list identified as Black (Housing Market Analysis, 2014, tables 3-36–3-37). Their initial rent assistance may not cover large enough homes to accommodate their families, which again destabilizes their home environment.



In 2013, when the Black population was roughly 2-3% of the County population, **13.7%** of the Section 8 voucher waiting list and **11.1%** of the public housing waiting list identified as Black

“Gentrification is happening. I work for a housing agency and I know that the housing industry is not building big homes to rent. Four bedrooms are not a thing anymore because they don’t make money from that.”

“I’ve seen people go homeless. They lose their housing vouchers because you can’t find places to rent that are big enough.”

In 2015, the median rent according to Zillow Rent Index was \$1,648. If median household income is considered (\$34,326), ***African households should be spending no more than \$858 per month or half the median rent in the county in order to not be burdened by housing costs.*** This has severe repercussions for homelessness and food insecurity. Unaffordable housing increases the risk of homelessness in the African community and families and networks cope with it by providing shelter to those who have been evicted or displaced.

While these communities may have a cultural preference for intergenerational and large family living, rising housing costs and lack of housing units in their rental limit, turns it into a coping strategy for housing instability.

“The qualifications right now when you are renting you have to have three times your income. Who can have that income?”

“Our communities, we take each other in. So you won’t see a lot of people on the streets. Even if a family is experiencing homelessness, another family might take them in.”

“We don’t let our own blood to go to street. We just suffer together. Doesn’t matter how tough it is.”

That puts households and families further at risk of eviction for overcrowding in a state with limited tenant protection laws.

“I actually worked with a family recently who was evicted from their housing and was told—they were over-housed, meaning there were over occupancy. This family could not speak good English and could not communicate their needs that were working with them. They literally moved out of state because they could not find a big enough space.”

Considering that African families provide shelter to houseless community members, we should be careful about the conclusions we draw from the official Points in Time Count (PITC) of homeless people. PITC disproportionately undercounts houseless and housing unstable people of color. Given that, it is alarming that in 2016, PITC in Washington County showed that Black people comprised 11.4% of people in shelters and 5.4% of people on the streets or those who are doubled up with others, when they make up only 3% of the county population.

People tend to reduce food and healthcare expenditure in order to pay housing costs that are fixed and non-negotiable. Considering that the median rent in Washington County is double the rent that an African should be paying to not be cost-burdened based on their average household income a larger segment of the Sub-Saharan African population in Washington County (30%) is using food stamps/SNAP in 2015 compared to 2010 (American Community Survey, 2011–2015 and American Community Survey, 2006–2010). Although this measure doesn’t specifically measure food insecurity—dearth of enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members, it is indicative of the extent to which African families are having to negotiate a trade off of basic needs such as housing and food.

Women in the community in particular negotiating the housing crisis. On average they earn the least compared to White women and both White and African men. Although it is statistically hard to estimate the exact median income given the small size of the community, combined with the fact that African women are more likely to be in poverty in their community, we can reasonably conclude that they are spending a considerable portion of their earnings on rent.

“I’m a single mom. I have to work and provide food for my kid and have to follow everything that’s going on with their life.”



TRANSPORTATION JUSTICE

Residents of African descent, similar to some other communities of color in Washington County describe a commuter life. *They travel across the river to access employment opportunities as well as culturally specific resources such as grocery stores and services for newly arrived refugees.* Many of the focus group participants and community reviewers who live in Washington County do not work there and they shared that that was a pattern in the community.

“If we can have a services or programming where we can just walk in and feel like it’s home. It would be nice to have it in Washington County.”

“I work in Portland but I could find a better job here and save my gas and mileage. But everywhere I go to apply for the job they never accept it.”

OSFEC partnered with Trimet to raise awareness amongst newly arrived Somali families about public transit options and teach them how to use the system. Apart from that, there are either no services or none that community members know of similar to that in the county that teaches the newly arrived how to use the public transit system. Combined with limited MAX and bus services between Washington County and east Portland where African culturally specific resources for refugee communities are located, Washington County’s new residents don’t have a lot of support.

“We have people living here and the agencies are on the other side. You live in Washington County but your case manager is in Multnomah County.”

“There are always late for their appointments. They have kids and you have three or four children all the way in the MAX from MAX to bus. It’s inconvenient.”

Commuting to work or traveling to Portland for community resources is not without risk. They are targeted for being Black, for being refugees, for being Muslim, for wearing a headscarf.

“When you walk down the street you are afraid that somebody is going to mistreat you.”

“Especially with being an immigrant, there are a lot of issues. Even though you work through the rights to be here, now people have the ability to question that.”

Similar to African-Americans, Africans feel the full brunt of the criminal justice system for “driving while Black” or “traveling while Black.”

“I have had police officers follow me for 15 minutes for no reason as I’m following every law. When I stop and [they] hear me talk they’ll leave me alone because I speak proper English.”

Law enforcement and Trimet only sees and collects demographic data about Black people and it shows significant disparities in the rate at which Black drivers are stopped by the police and Black Trimet passengers are banned or excluded from public transit for fare violations (Renauer, 2016). Furthermore, *a Portland State University study found racial disparities at the rate at which cars “see” and stop for Black pedestrians compared to others (controlling for quality of crosswalk), thereby making them more vulnerable to accidents (Kahn, McMabon, Goddard, & Adkins, 2017).*

For the community the solutions to their “commuter life” lie in removing obstacles in their way of joining the workforce in the county, providing more services to new immigrants and refugees, and developing culturally specific infrastructure in Washington County.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

“Police target people, for example, I have been cited, but it wasn’t right. If you are coming from outside, and you are different, they watch you, how you interact, how you do daily activities.”



From law enforcement data, it is hard to disentangle how African communities are impacted by the system separate from the African-American experience because the system sees them and treats them as they would an African-American.

From law enforcement data, it is hard to disentangle how African communities are impacted by the system separate from the African-American experience, because the system sees them and treats them as they would an African-American.

According to data procured from the Washington County Sheriff’s Office, racial disparities have increased since 2015 and Black people in Washington County are 71% more likely than White people to be stopped by law enforcement in 2016. In that year, they were 100% more likely to be issued warnings and 33% more likely to be given a citation compared to White people in Washington County. The Black population comprised roughly 2.4% of the County population in 2014, they were 7.8% of the jail population in the same year (Vera Institute for Justice). *They had the highest incarceration rate of all racial groups that year in the County – 662.3 people out of 100,000 were likely to be incarcerated compared to White incarceration rate of 190.5 (Vera Institute for Justice).*

“Police stopped my son while I was driving behind him coming back home from Washington Square Mall. He had just come back home from college. My son told me later that the cop asked him where he was from, where he was heading. He looked around the car. He said, ‘you young people are troublemakers, I just want to make sure.’ He stopped him because he’s a black boy and just assumed that he is troublemaker.”

Families are concerned about their kids getting caught up in the juvenile justice system and the impact it has on their future economic opportunities. They have seen their children and youth being funneled into the “school to prison pipeline”—Somali students are 197% more likely than White students to be expelled/suspended from school (Oregon Department of Education, 2015). Black students, generally, are withdrawing or are being pushed out of school—they are 25% more likely than the average County school student to be chronically absent, and their dropout rates are increasing as well. Studies have shown that at the national level, one in four young black male dropouts are incarcerated or otherwise institutionalized on an average day (Dillon, 2009). Juvenile Justice Information System data about Washington County supports concerns of African parents. Black youth are not just disproportionately fed into the criminal justice system at each decision point, they are inquitably excluded from having their cases handled through non-punitive means such as diversion programs (Juvenile Justice Information System, 2016).



‘School to Prison Pipeline’ -- Somali students are **197%** more likely than White students to be expelled/suspended from school (ODE, 2015)

“I have worked with some youth who were caught up in the system. They didn’t necessarily do something wrong. As a Black kid you are seen as being as a problem. Even if their friends who are White did the same thing and were in the same situation, usually they pay the price.”

“I have seen some kids with drug issues, and the parents have no support system. We are not connected to rehab centers. How can we help our communities and how can the government help us help our community around that issue?”

“When the the younger African generation comes to United States they don’t know the system. I’m suggesting giving opportunity to younger generation to clear up their record and to be able to apply for police officers.”

African communities can feel unsafe in Washington County. They are targeted by microaggressions in the way the community describes throughout this report, by hate crimes especially against those that are visibly of the Muslim faith, and are survivors of crimes (Runyowa, 2015).

“If I go out and wear cultural clothes I get dirty looks.¹
I have had people tell me go back to where I’m from.”

The community is lacking systematic data about microaggressions and most hate crimes and bias-based aggressions go unreported to law enforcement. There was one reported anti-Black/African-American bias incident in Washington County in 2017 (Langton & Masucci, 2017). This when nationally according to 2011–2015 NCVS data, 48% of reported hate crimes are motivated by racial bias and about 54% of hate crimes were not reported to the police in that time period.

Considering the long history of racist policing against Black people in general, a distrust of state institutions carried forward from their home countries especially by refugee populations, language barriers, and lack of culturally specific and trauma informed resources may make African communities reluctant to report crimes perpetrated against them.

Racial inequities in the criminal justice system, evidently impacts prospects of achieving economic mobility. It also impacts housing stability, which is already precarious for those in the African community that use Section 8 vouchers. Some focus group participants shared their worry that parents may lose Section 8 housing if their kids who may have been indicted for drug offenses are living with them.



HEALTH JUSTICE

A health equity approach requires us to look at the extent to which there is access to economic security, stable housing, healthy surroundings and food security.



When we consider a community's physical and mental health, a health equity approach requires us to look at the extent to which there is access to economic security, stable housing, healthy surroundings and food security. Many in the community face significant barriers to employment and economic mobility, their education notwithstanding; they have to advocate for themselves in institutions that are ignorant of their culture, and they don't have convenient access to African food stores and other culturally specific resources necessary for their well-being. All this in a political climate that pointedly targets those among the community that are refugees and Muslims, exacerbating stress levels and growing concerns for physical safety.

Focus group participants brought up mental health as a concern for both African youth and adults. Nationally, immigrants and refugees experience depression at a higher rate than the general population, with it being the most prevalent among refugees (Rew, Clarke, Gossa, & Savin, 2014).

“A big concern, especially for the youth, is a higher level of depression. Where we grew up, nobody sits and says today was such a bad day. But that is an issue for kids growing up in this community. They are managing their life at home and outside. They are carrying a lot of responsibility.”

People become refugees because they fear for their life. They carry the trauma and stress of being forcibly displaced from their homes, the violence of conflict, the loss of loved ones and community. Refugee settlement and transition in the US can add additional stress such as navigating unfamiliar systems, worrying

about their children’s education, unemployment or underemployment, and social isolation. African refugees experience these stressors along with the culture shock of racial discrimination on the basis of being Black in the US.

“Especially growing up here, you are trying to fit in between two worlds. Kids have one world at home and then friends. We grow up with these struggles and have to tell them we have that background for them to go forward.”

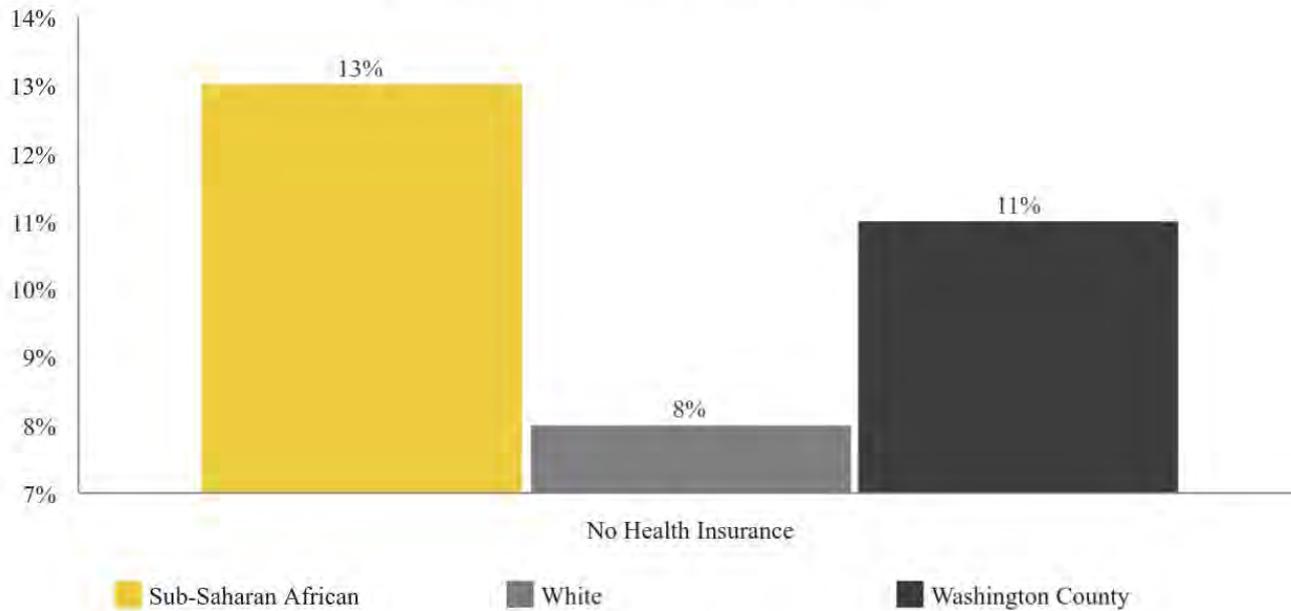
“We come here as refugees or immigrants. Our first priority is to bring our kids to the school. And when they go to the school, the first thing they face is bullying from their classmate.”

African communities in Washington County are less likely to be covered by health insurance than White residents and the overall county population (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

The refugee population is provided with the Oregon Health Plan, and a Medicaid plan that covers all expenses. After 8 months, this assistance ends and refugees are left on their own to become self-sufficient. *For focus group participants, limited access to health insurance links to pervasive unemployment in the community as well as dearth of awareness of rights related to health-care coverage and resources.*

Recent immigrants and refugees face additional obstacles accessing healthcare such as unaffordability, bureaucratic challenges of navigating the US’ complex healthcare system, language, and cultural barriers such as stigma about mental illness (Curry-Stevens & Sinkey, 2016). According to American Community Survey (2011-2015), at least 30% of the African population in Washington County have limited proficiency in English, which in the absence of culturally specific services, can severely constrain them from accessing healthcare. It also places undue responsibility on African youth (who are more likely to be multilingual) to be intermediaries and interpreters for their families and service providers.

Proportion of Community Without Health Insurance



At least **30%** of the African population in Washington County have limited proficiency in English, which in the absence of culturally specific services, can severely constrain them from accessing healthcare. It also places undue responsibility on African youth (who are more likely to be multilingual) to be intermediaries and interpreters for their families and service providers.

Their access to healthcare is further complicated by dynamics of disrespect and impatience experienced by Black women in general as well as those of African descent. They can get caught between racist, classist and anti-refugee forces that assume all African women to be on public assistance and a burden on the system. Women get tagged as “welfare queens”, the same racist label that has been applied to African-American women since the 1970s.⁵ It is no surprise that *research about African and African-American women’s experiences of giving birth in Portland hospitals revealed that only 19% of participants had no negative experiences at the hospital (International Center for Traditional Childbearing, 2011).*

For these communities, White health professionals being trained in cultural competence is an inadequate way of ensuring accessible and trustworthy health services. They echo the findings of Washington County Public Health department’s 2016 Community Needs Assessment. For them, the issue is connected to lack of representation in the systems they interact with on a daily basis.

“I don’t go into an office and think I’m going to find somebody who reminds me of me and where I come from.”

Without being well connected to health providers, and without having culturally responsive and culturally specific health care, the community remains disconnected from services that are needed for them to take care of themselves and thrive.

“I accidentally once met the director of the health department. I was talking about this issue with her. I didn’t know who she actually was. I pointed out how discriminatory and non-inclusive this county is. She said we’re trying. I said try harder. Seriously.”



EDUCATION JUSTICE

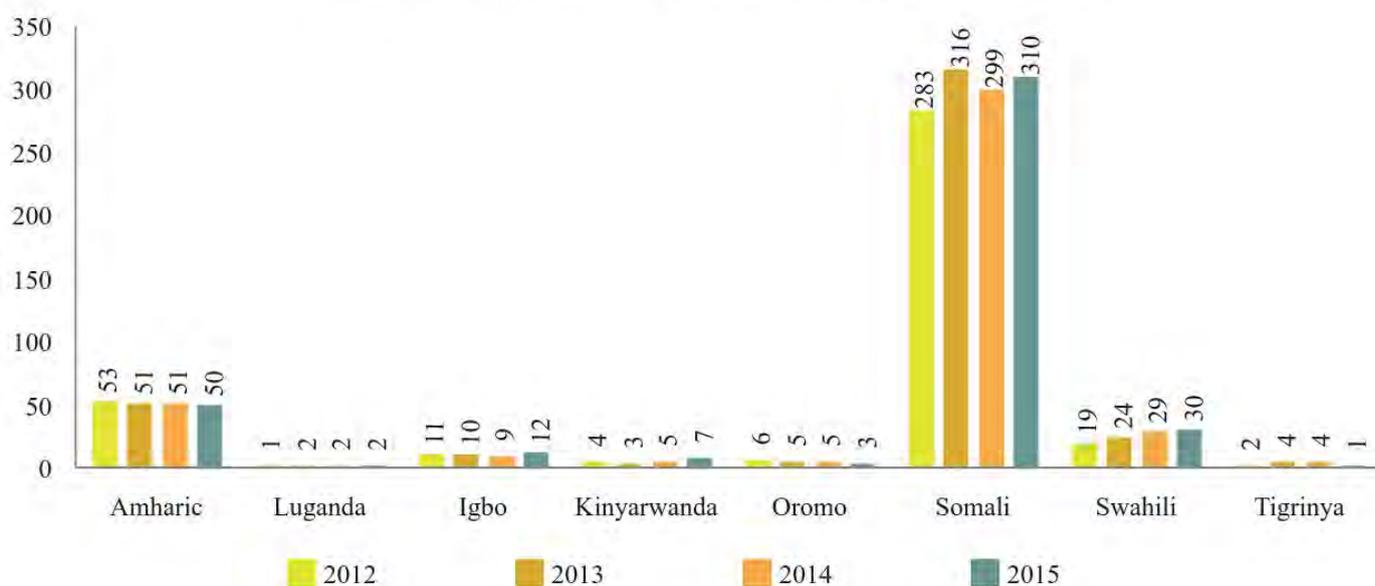
Education is an essential pathway to economic prosperity and valuable for critical thinking and civic engagement. In the US, parents often times choose where to live on the basis of what furthers their child's education and well-being. *In their transition to the US and the refugee settlement process, African families should see schools as institutions where their children and by extension the parents build connections with their new community.* In contrast, the school system becomes another space where parents and children experience the culture shock of anti-Black racism, lack of support to parents to surmount language, cultural and economic obstacles that limits their engagement, and the current inability to view the linguistic and cultural diversity that African students and students of color bring to schools as an asset.

Approximately two out of five African households have school going children (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). *The Oregon Department of Education does not collect or make available data on students of African descent that is distinct from Black students.* In order to gather quantitative data about educational outcomes such as student performances in mathematics, science and reading, high school graduation and dropout rates, and the extent to which African students are targeted by harsh disciplinary practices, we had to rely on a student's first language and language spoken at home provided by the Oregon Department of Education. It is important to remind readers that language and a person's identity are not perfectly correlated—Somali students may speak multiple languages or languages based on where they were raised. Students may also list English as the only language spoken at home.⁶ The graph below shows the estimated number of students by languages spoken at home. According to community advocates, Somali students are undercounted in the data especially those who belong to refugee families. They may have been born outside of Somalia and may speak languages such as Swahili that is different from their native tongue.



According to community advocates, Somali students are undercounted in the data especially those who belong to refugee families

Estimated Student Population by Languages Spoken at Home



Diverse as they are in their heritage and countries of origin, school districts immediately assign African children and youth the “Black/African-American” label and treat them accordingly. The reality is that it’s hard to even gather data about the experience of these students in the Washington County school system because they are all identified as ‘Black/African-American’.

Similar to African-American youth, school administration and faculty seem to disproportionately target African students with suspensions and expulsions. According to our analysis of the Oregon Department of Education language data, Somali students are particularly targeted—at 197% they are twice as likely as a White student to be punitively disciplined in school (Oregon Department of Education, 2015). Exclusion from school, unaffordable recreational activities for youth and the absence of strong gang prevention programs makes African youth particularly vulnerable to being caught up in the juvenile justice system and the adult incarceration system.

“We might have talented children and say kid likes soccer, kid likes basketball, but we don’t have a place. Whereas in Portland there are free areas that kids can go and play. On this side there’s nothing. So if you don’t have that money, it means the talent in your kid, it’s demolished.”

“What I see is a need for advocacy, representation, trauma-informed response. Some of the kids that come here have been in traumatic situations. Behavioral issues that stem from trauma are punished, and then that perpetuates the situation.”

In their experience, neither them nor their children feel welcomed and encouraged to excel.

“What about this kid who just arrived here and doesn’t have any way to think, doesn’t have the language to seek an adult in the school who will help him or her?”

The school system is one of the first sites where African families encounter racism. Parents describe their children being teased or bullied, an experience made more traumatic by the fact that there aren’t many African students in school and less than 2% of school teachers identify as Black.

 **2%** of school teachers identify as Black

“If we can get teachers who can at least try and accept these kids and see something in them that it’s not only just to look for an excuse.”

Parents observe little support and understanding from the school administration and faculty even when they don’t have language barriers (at least a quarter of the community is bilingual including English) and know the school enough to advocate for themselves.

“They don’t pay attention to your requests. I speak English and I’m not accepted. What about other African brothers and sisters who they don’t speak the English? How do you perceive them?”

“My daughter attended Tigard High School and by nature she is quiet. She doesn’t talk, just let it go. So I figured out that she’s not getting the advice from the counselor, the support from the school. The education is good but in terms of acceptance and terms of social engagement and being one of the community, it’s not.”

Recent immigrants and refugees feel even more constrained by language barriers and limited knowledge about US school systems and their parental rights to be able to effectively advocate for their children. At least 30% of the Sub-Saharan African population in Washington County is not proficient in English (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

“For newcomers, schools need to partner with the community to help the parents learn what the system is like so they can help their kids. The parents don’t understand the system or the language and the children are expected to perform.”

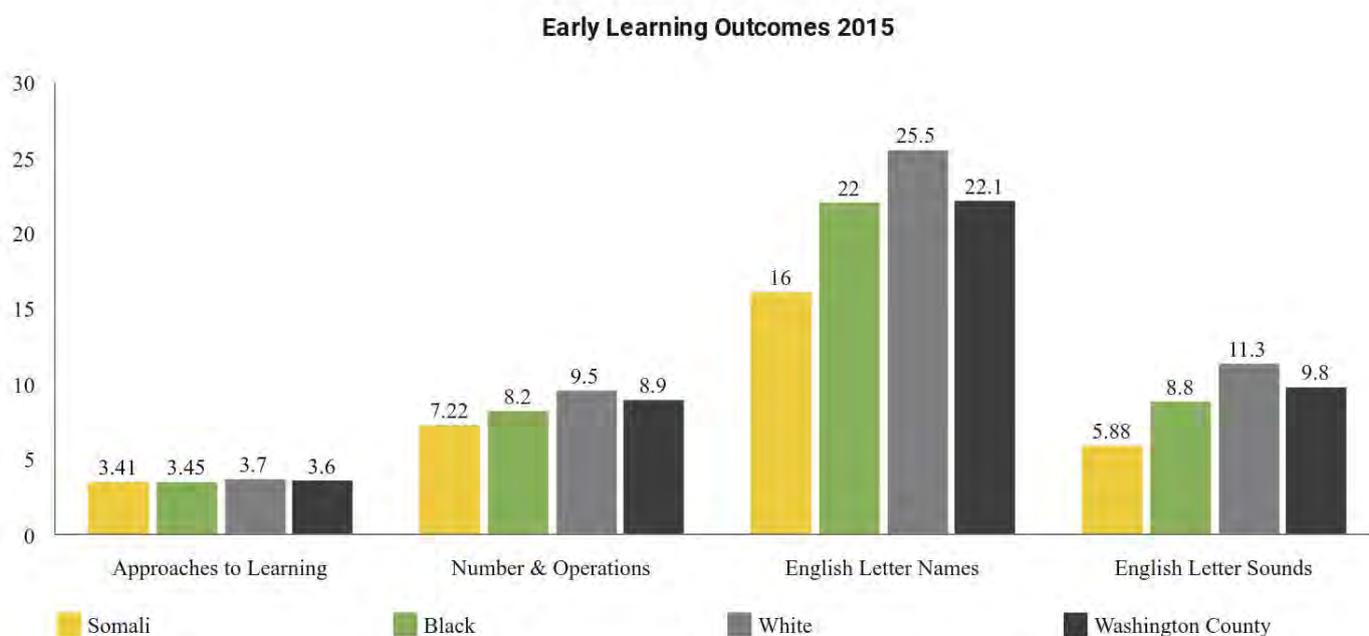
“I’m a teacher. When I have kids in the school I don’t expect all kids to have parents who have been educated. Some parents were born during the war, like, my own experience.”

Readers need to keep these experiences in mind as we consider students’ academic outcomes in schools. We have been able to investigate gaps of opportunity to excel in school on the imperfect basis of languages of origin or languages spoken at home. The data produced by languages of origin or languages spoken at home shows that certain student populations such as Igbo, Oromo, Kinyarwanda, Tigrinya speaking students are really small and community reviewers advised not to report outcomes about them. Available data makes it impossible to tease out the outcomes of students who list only English as language spoken at home.

“I pulled my son out of the school because I couldn’t bear the way he was treated. When he was bullied, he wasn’t heard. When kids were telling him he looks like a chocolate bar, instead of taking that opportunity to teach those kids to be sensitive to other kids and to teach them that it’s not okay to bully people for their skin color, the teacher’s response was to tell him ‘it’s because you’re sweet.’”

“If we can become teachers, I think that is one way we can solve the problem. We can understand and that would make a difference.”

Some parents find their children being assessed with lower scores starting from an early age. Data from the Early Learning Hub presents a complex picture. Black children overall are given the lowest scores in kindergarten assessment of their learning approaches specifically ‘self regulation’ and ‘interpersonal skills’. Based on 2015 language data, we see that Somali students are assessed unfavorably compared to White students in both early literacy as well as approaches to learning.⁷



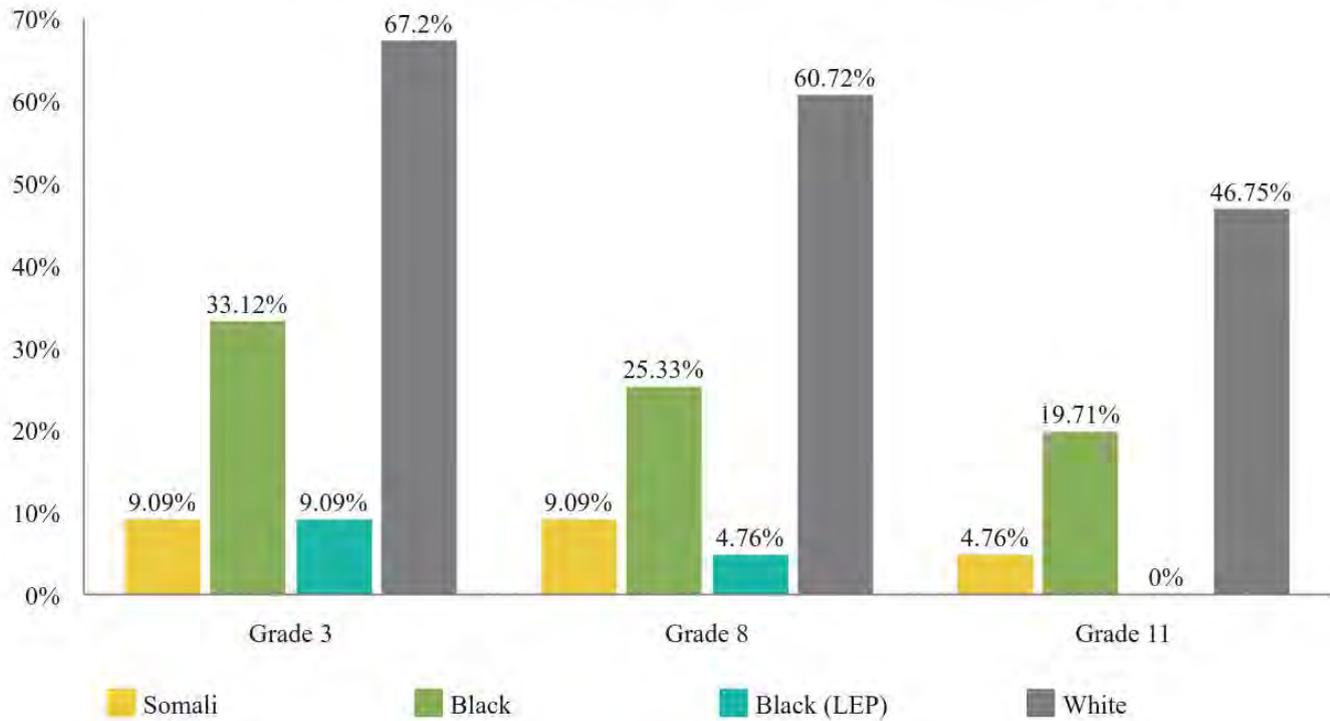
Research about educational outcomes of immigrant children find that the same tendency of teachers to view Black children’s behavior in school as problematic applies to Black immigrant children as well (Crosby & Dunbar, 2012). In these families, the extent to which they experience economic injustices with respect to inequitable access to employment and pay inequities while having young children, is also worrying.

“As a parent who had kids in primary school here, my kids were the only Black kids in their school. So it was not fun for them. I think the problem is the school districts are not culturally competent.”

Grade 3 English reading has been found to be a good predictor of graduation rates since most curriculum is currently delivered in English. Somali students lag in reading scores across grades.⁸ Limited English proficiency is barrier to educational success for Black students.

“I have a little kid and when my kid comes home with a scratch, I assume it’s just kids playing. He fell down or something. I will not go to school and raise the issue and have the other parent be summoned. So your kid looks like he’s the bad one. He’s rough.”

Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Mathematics (2015)

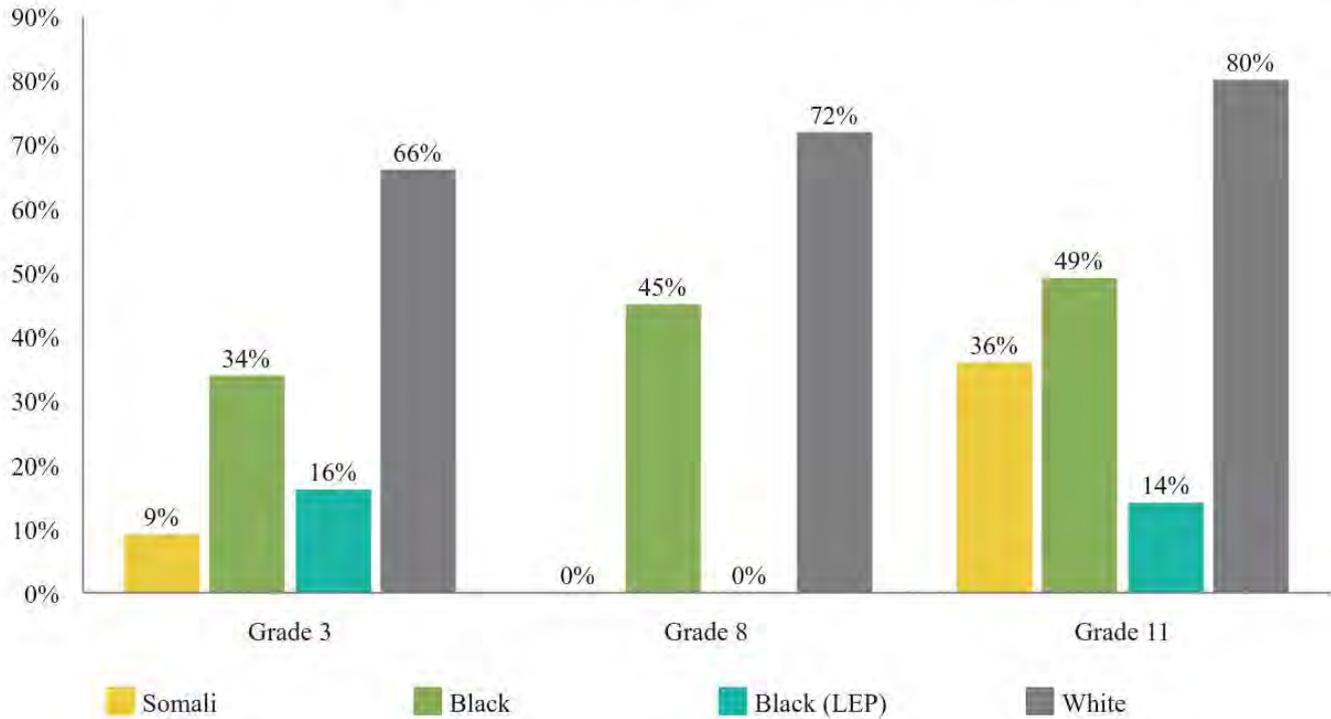


Somali students and Black students with limited English proficiency are performing at levels far worse than White students.

“Our kids are not doing good in mathematics and physics. English is the issue. If we can have a budget set like Portland—if they can have classes and after school programs that that will make the students improve.”



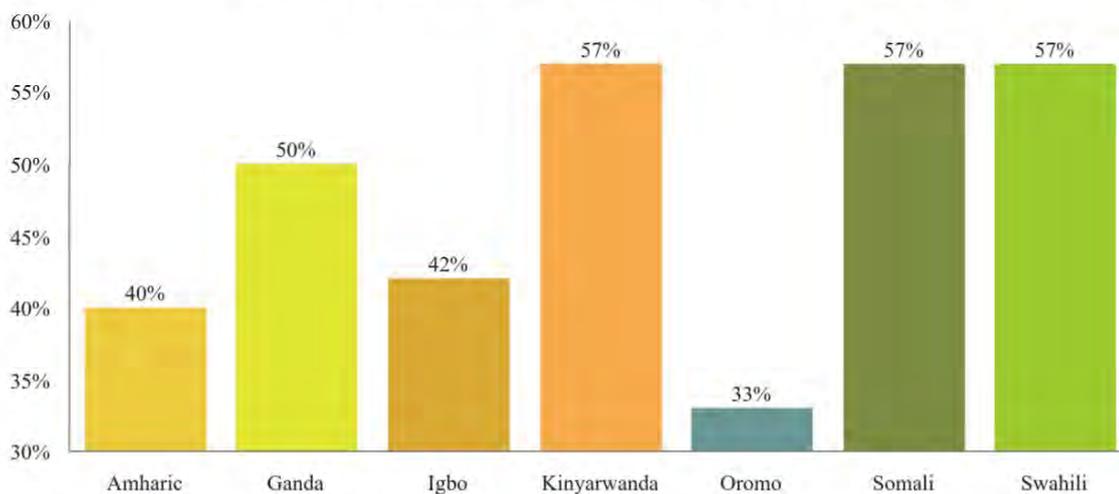
Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Reading (2015)

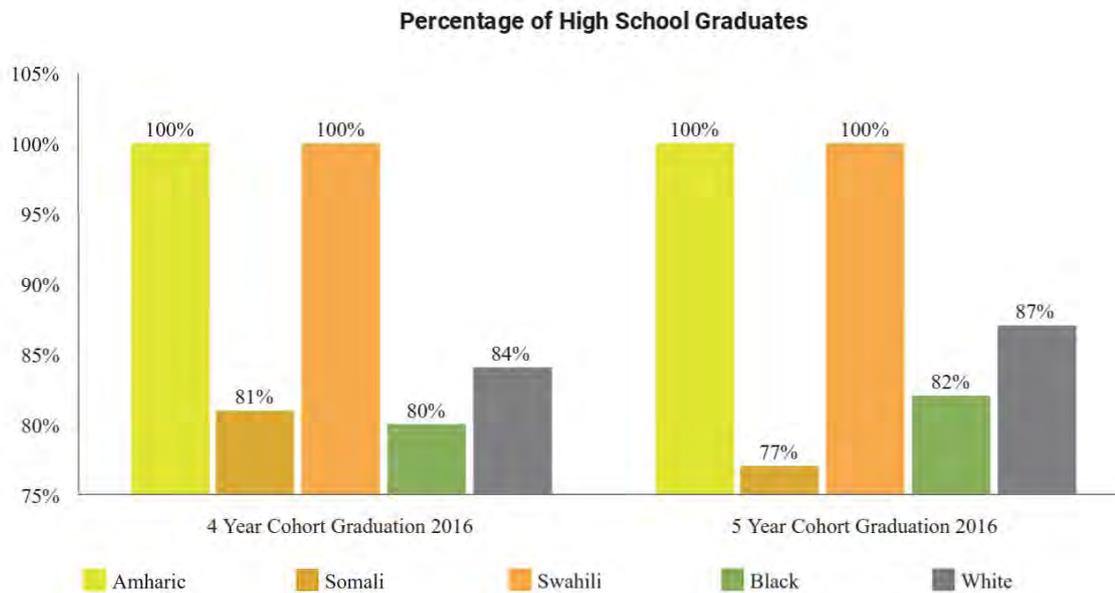


A significant proportion of this student population are assessed to have limited English proficiency. Community members would like to see ESL programs reformed and dual language immersion programs expanded to include their languages.

“We need more people in the system that speak our languages.”

Percentage of Students with Limited English Proficiency (2015)





GRADUATION, DROPOUT AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

83% of Amharic and 70% of Somali speaking ninth-graders are on track to graduate from high school. Schools are remiss in fostering their success compared to White students, 91% of whom are on track to graduate high school.

Despite punitive disciplinary practices, dearth of support for their academic excellence and lack of empathy for linguistic barriers and economic injustices that maybe deterring parental engagement, many students have high graduation rates. The gap between graduation rates of Somali speaking students and White students is closer than when they were in ninth grade, and although the number of Amharic and Swahili speaking students in high school are small, they are all graduating.

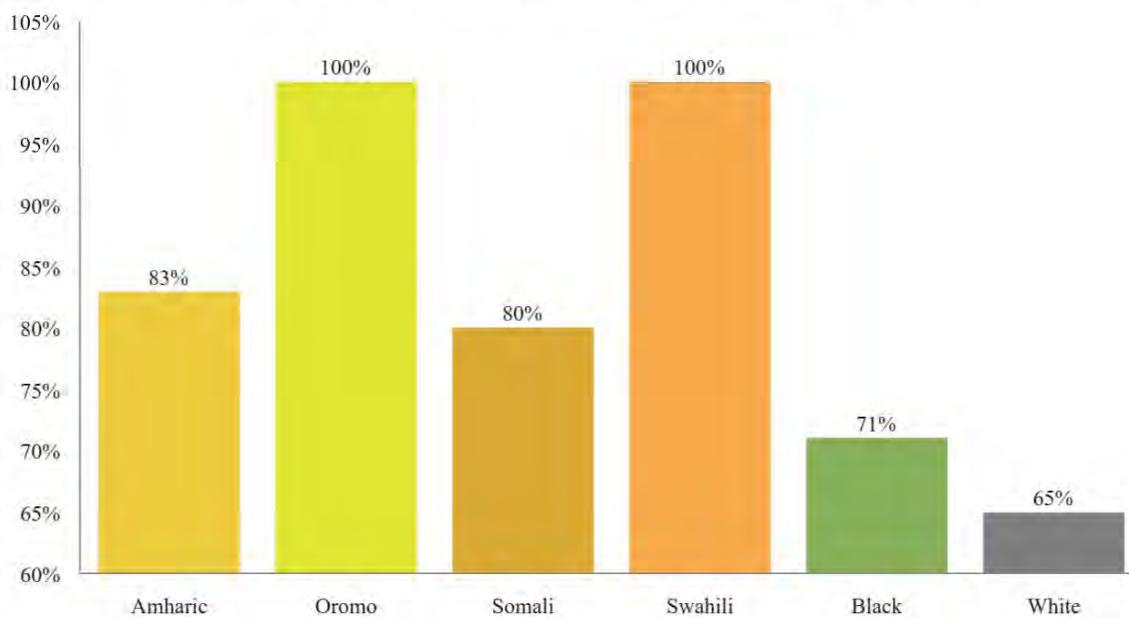


Despite punitive disciplinary practices, dearth of support for their academic excellence and lack of empathy for linguistic barriers and economic injustices that may be deterring parental engagement, many students have high graduation rates.



It's encouraging that although African students are graduating in smaller numbers than White students, they are enrolled in college in higher proportions than White students.

Percentage of High School Graduates Enrolled in College (2014-2015)



African families prioritize children's well-being in schools and educational success. But schools, instead of nourishing African children and youth, get so caught up in discussions about closing achievement gaps in standardized testing that less attention is paid to the challenges that both African students and parents may face that impact the child's educational performance.

REPRESENTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POWER

African communities are motivated by the lack of representation in elected offices, in government, in schools and among service providers to seek a seat at decision-making tables and build political power.

“The most important resource we need is a representative that speaks on our behalf.”

“I go to meeting after meeting in the context of my work, and I have been to meetings where I’m the only Black person there. I’m sometimes the only person of color at meetings that make big decisions around this county. It’s not enough to be on the table because sometimes when you’re on the table and you don’t have that decision-making power, it does nothing.”

“If there’s an election, invite our youth to be part of that. When you do the outreach, when an elected official is doing outreach, involve our community so they can participate and become part of that election.”

The community is not merely talking about a seat at the table and diversity initiatives. They want to build power that enables them to achieve better outcomes for their communities. The African community is growing in Washington County. Many African immigrants and refugees are on the pathway to citizenship. Approximately 70% of the community are US citizens either by birth or naturalization, and roughly 64% of the community are eligible to vote and hold leadership positions, elected or appointed (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Focus group participants want resources such as leadership development programs that IRCO-Africa House and Unite Oregon offers to educate people about local government, facilitate civic engagement and create pathways between the community and leadership positions including elected office.

“Our kids need to see someone that looks like them in schools and county offices and in the police force. We need someone at the table. Somebody said if you are not at the table you are part of the menu, so we need to really start working on that.”

“The government doesn’t accept you and officials don’t see you even though you participate. You write your name and say hello, they say hello for the moment, but they don’t even try to know you. Those kinds of things make us not included.”

ENDNOTES

- 1 Given the small size of the community, we cannot make any specific conclusions from the data about income disparities between African and White workers with similar levels of education beyond that.
- 2 Income was inflation adjusted using Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator. <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl> (Income set at January 2015 and adjusted to inflation in January 2017).
- 3 Survey of Business Owners (2012). This data includes all nonfarm businesses filing Internal Revenue Service tax forms as individual proprietorships, partnerships, or any type of corporation, and with receipts of \$1,000 or more.
- 4 They are federally required to accept the first job they are offered even if it doesn't match their education and qualifications.
- 5 A 'welfare queen' is a racist depiction of Black women on public assistance who supposedly steals money from taxpayers and does not contribute anything to society.
- 6 We identified these languages based on our existing research *The African Immigrant and Refugee Community in Multnomah County: Unsettling Profile* and IRCO-Africa House's community knowledge about languages spoken by African communities in the region. Community reviewers recommended excluding Arabic language considering the civil conflict and ethnic cleansing in Somalia.
- 7 Based on community review, we omit outcomes of students whose population size is less than 5.
- 8 Community reviewers recommended not reporting out language groups that are too small (less than 5).



ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

“If white, as it has been historically, is the top of the racial hierarchy in America, and black, historically, is the bottom, will yellow assume the place of the racial middle? The role of the racial middle is a critical one. It can reinforce white supremacy if the middle deludes itself into thinking it can be just like white if it tries hard enough. Conversely, the middle can dismantle white supremacy if it refuses to be the middle, if it refuses to buy into racial hierarchy, and if it refuses to abandon communities of black and brown people, choosing instead to forge alliances with them.”

MARI MATSUDA

The Asian community in Washington County is a community of contrasts—different histories, different immigration processes, different socio-economic realities. They ask community members, policymakers and readers to (a) acknowledge the multitude of lived experiences within the Asian catch-all identity, (b) understand the history of racialization of Asian people in the US and its current manifestation in Washington County, and (c) envision a role for Asian and Asian American people in the pursuit of racial justice in the region.

“ASIAN AMERICANS ARE NOT ONE PEOPLE BUT SEVERAL.” (CHIN, 1974)

The US Census defines “Asian” race as anybody belonging to East, South and Southeast Asia. By their count, there are at least 73,701 Washington County residents who identified as Asian in 2016 and they comprised 13% of the county population (American Community Survey, 2016). Official population counts have always been politically fraught for communities of color.

The founders of the Asian American movement in the US understood that the very idea of an ‘Asian’ race was a racist Oriental depiction of huge swathes of people of different nationalities, histories, languages, class, religion and so on.

Many people who check the “Asian” box in forms do not self-identify as Asians in their everyday lives; they relate more to countries of origin (Karunanayake, 2016). Additionally, Asian communities continue to negotiate the tricky balance of wanting to be counted (since US Census estimates design public policy) and who is doing the counting. Groups that have a history of state-based persecution in the US or their country of origin, that face discrimination, have high poverty, and/or English language challenges are less likely to engage with the US Census and be under counted. Considering that *the US Census was involved in the roundup and internment of Japanese-Americans at the onset of American entry into World War II, laws were passed that prohibited Asians from owning land or becoming citizens for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, one should expect that American Community Survey estimates of the Asian population are an under count (Holmes, 2000).

AT LEAST

73,701

IN WASHINGTON
COUNTY

1 out of 5 Asians in Washington County identify as bi/multiracial,
and it is crucial that their experiences count



of Asian communities in
Washington County are immigrants



13,252 students that identified as
Asian or Pacific Islander in 2015

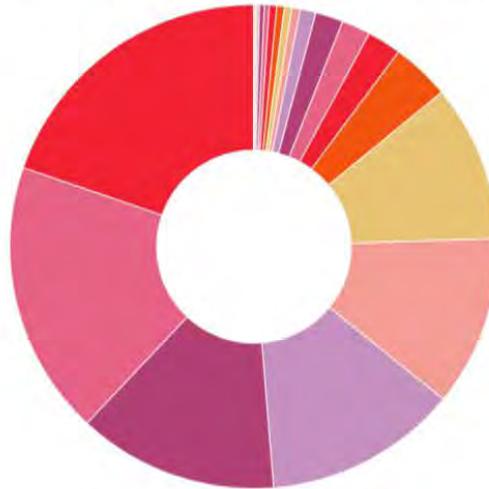
Asian communities in Washington County mostly originate from **Cambodia,**
China, India, Japan, the Korean peninsula,
Philippines, and Vietnam

Asian communities in the US have demanded disaggregation of data to better understand and advocate for themselves. Focus group participants in Washington County indict local governments, school districts and public agencies for their continued use of categories such as “Asian,” “Asian alone” and “Asian Pacific Islander” that have little utility in understanding the lived experiences of communities that live in Washington County. In asking for data disaggregation, they echo the demand of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders in the region that the “Asian Pacific Islander” category needs to be parsed out.

Many people who check the 'Asian' box in forms do not self-identify as Asians in their everyday lives; they relate more to countries of origin

Focus group participants in Washington County indict local governments, school districts and public agencies for their continued use of categories such as 'Asian,' 'Asian alone' and 'Asian Pacific Islander' that have no meaning and little utility

Composition of Asian Communities in Washington County



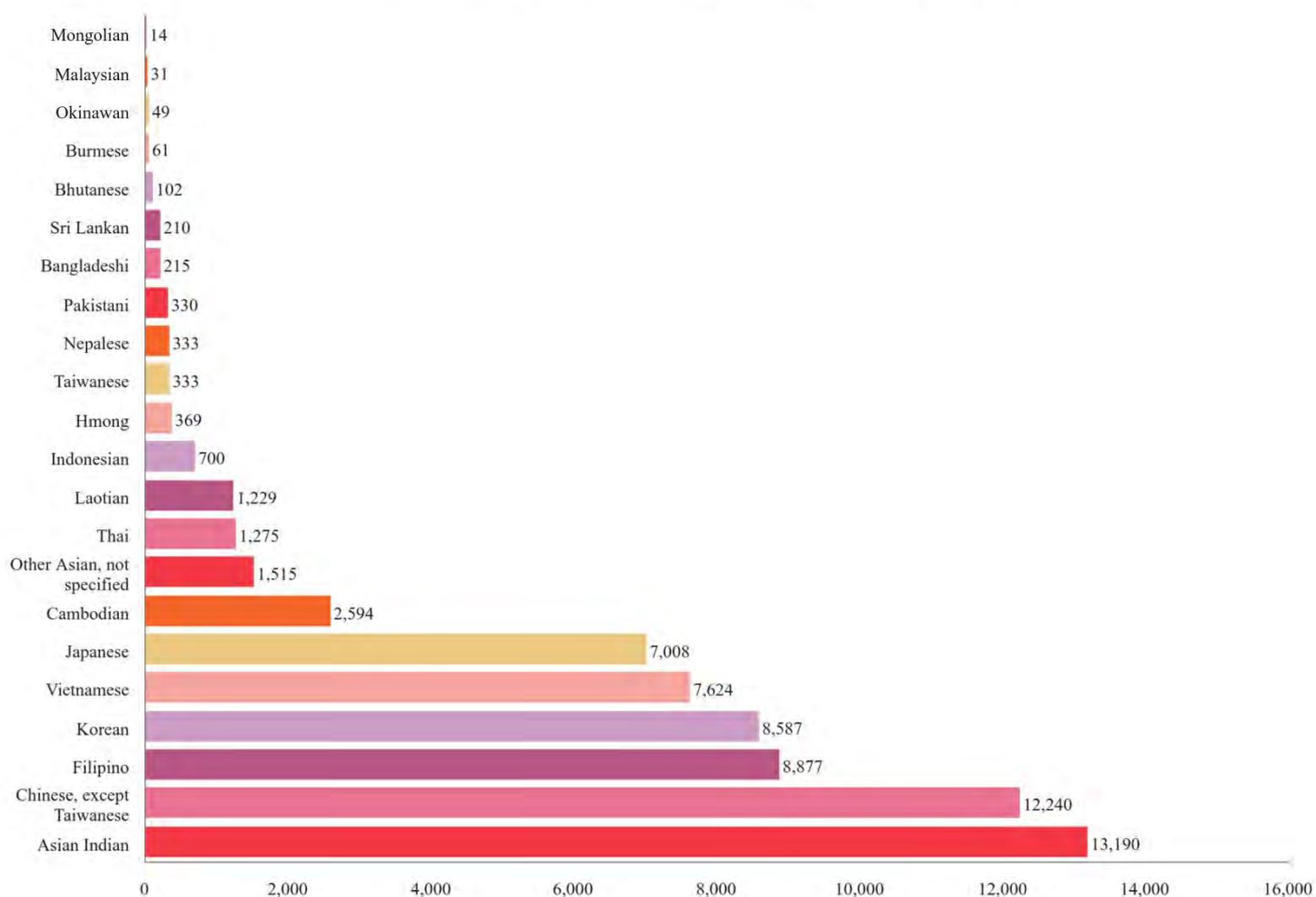
● Mongolian	14	● Malaysian	31
● Okinawan	49	● Burmese	61
● Bhutanese	102	● Sri Lankan	210
● Bangladeshi	215	● Pakistani	330
● Nepalese	333	● Taiwanese	333
● Hmong	369	● Indonesian	700
● Laotian	1,229	● Thai	1,275
● Other Asian, not specified	1,515	● Cambodian	2,594
● Japanese	7,008	● Vietnamese	7,624
● Korean	8,587	● Filipino	8,877
● Chinese, except Taiwanese	12,240	● Asian Indian	13,190

Biracial and multiracial people of color including in Asian communities continue to be overlooked in official population estimates because policy-making discussions focus only on "Asian Alone" numbers. One out of five Asians in Washington County identify as bi/multiracial, and it is crucial that their experiences count (American Community Survey, 2016). They are included in the population estimate reported in this section.

The American Community Survey estimates that Asian communities in Washington County mostly originate from Cambodia, China, India, Japan, the Korean peninsula, Philippines, and Vietnam.

The stories of Asians and Asian Americans in Washington County are stories of migration. Some have lived in Oregon and the US for generations and some are recent arrivals; some are

Composition of Asian Communities in Washington County (2011-2015)



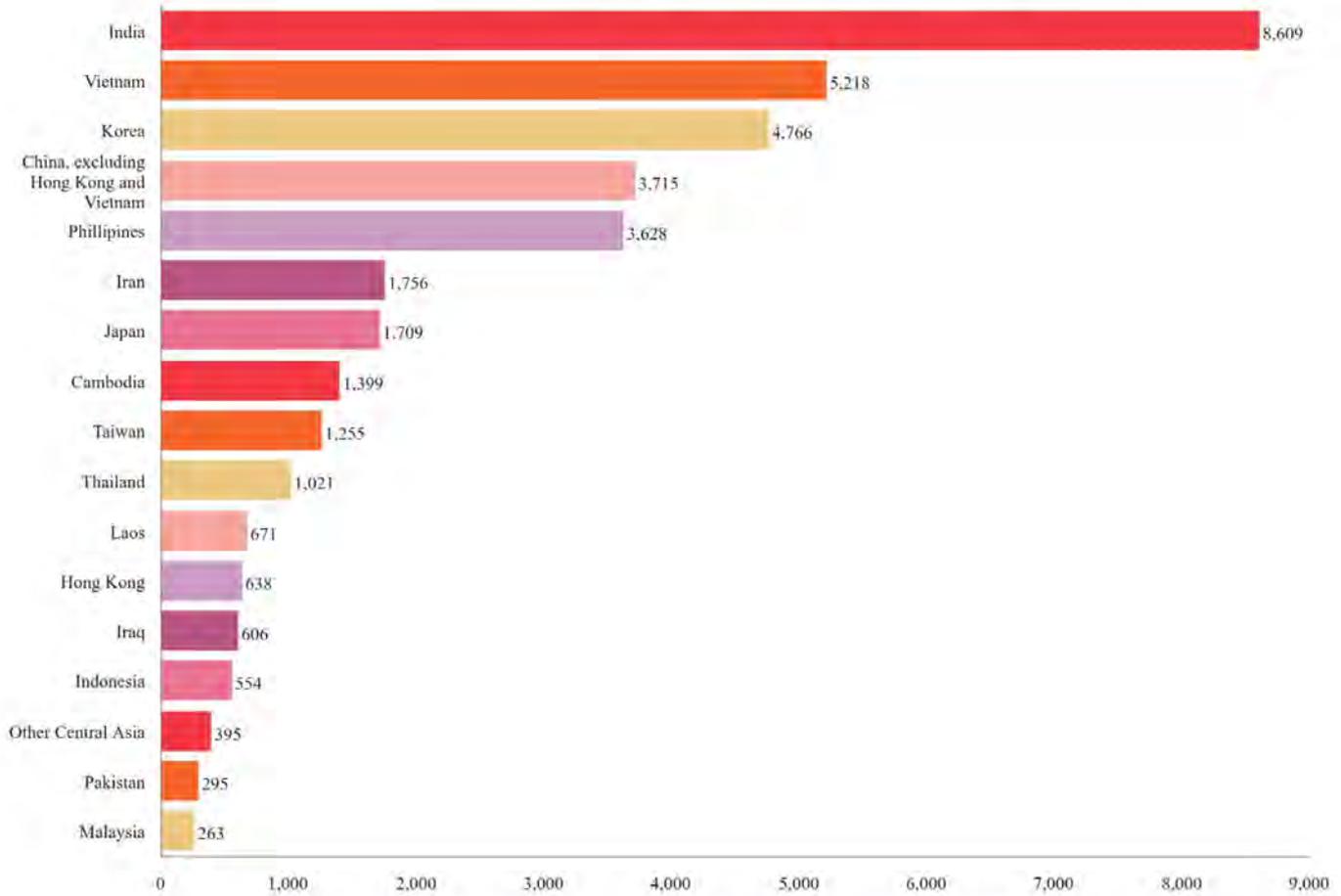
immigrants, some are children of immigrants. Their reasons for immigration range from employment to education, from family reunification to refugee resettlement and asylum seeking. Asian communities in Washington County ask readers to acknowledge the variation in their histories and arrival stories and to realize the impact of immigration on their lives.

According to official counts, in 2016 57% of Asian communities in Washington County were immigrants in the US (American Community Survey, 2016). The counts are at par with national numbers, where immigrants comprise 58% of Asian communities in the US. One out of two immigrants in Wash-

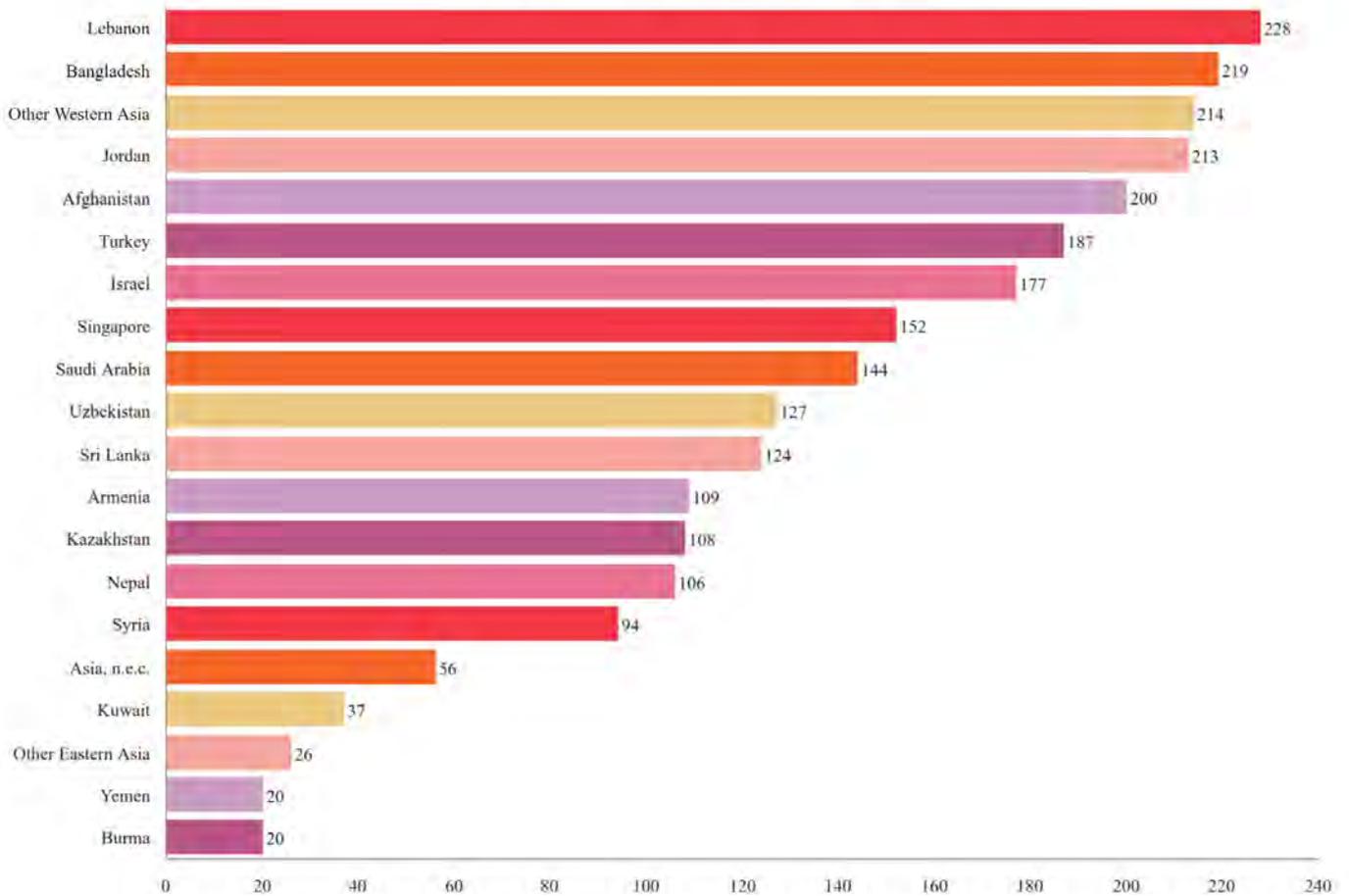
ington County identifies as Asian in the American Community Survey in 2016, whereas even two years prior two out of five immigrants said they were Asian (US Census Bureau).¹ 58% of Asian immigrants in Washington County arrived in the US between in 2000–2016 period (American Community Survey).

Similar to country-wide trends, the top origin countries for Asian immigrants in Washington County are India, Vietnam, Korea, China and the Philippines.

Place of Birth of Immigrant Population in Washington County



Place of Birth of Immigrant Population in Washington County





Immigrants from Asia have moved to the US and Washington County through different pathways. The presence and size of Asian groups that live in Washington County are a direct outcome of the Immigration & Nationality Act of 1965 and US Cold War politics in Southeast Asia. The 1965 Act reversed previous restrictions on immigration, mainly from Asia, Caribbean, and South America and replaced them with a preference system that focused on immigrants' skills and family relationships with citizens or US residents. This law positively impacted immigration from Asia particularly those who were well educated. Large numbers of people arrived in the US from South Asia, the Philippines and Korea. By the 1970s, the United States was fighting wars in Southeast Asia, which generated refugee flows to the US as well. Fleeing Cold War conflicts, Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians and other Southeast Asians settled in the US under the Refugee Act of 1980.

When we disaggregate immigration data by the community, we find a diversity of immigration experiences. Indians, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Chinese have larger shares of immigrants in their communities than the aggregate Asian experience. In contrast, 24% of Japanese and 44% of Filipinos in Washington County are immigrants, which is significantly less than the 55% of immigrants in Asian communities overall (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Mainstream discourse about Asian communities is blind to those nuances, which in turn leads to willful ignorance of the manner in which Asians are racialized in Washington County. There is little recognition of the history of Asian immigration to the US that used these communities for their cheap labor, villainized some of them to the extent of excluding them from the country and brought them back in when needed. This myopic lens also overlooks the concerns of Asian immigrants who settled in the region as refugees.

MODEL MINORITY MYTH

Communities lumped under the Asian racial identity have varied histories and current realities, a fact that mainstream discourse as well as public policy-making, continuously ignore. Aggregating different communities into a catch-all category has perpetuated the myth that all Asians (a) agree to identify as such and (b) have similar socio-economic experiences. Aggregate analyses showing that Asians are performing at par if not better than White people have excluded them from racial justice conversations. It has also resulted in systemic practices that pit communities of color against each other. Asians, overall, are propped up as “model minority”—people of color who are seen as well-educated and high income, law-abiding and assimilating into American society, against African-Americans and Latinos who are vilified as not being able to “pull themselves up by the bootstraps”, being ‘riven’ with crime, and “refusing” to assimilate into the mainstream. Data analyses that inform policy-making have also often-times clubbed Asian and White populations together as the baseline to compare the performances of other communities of color. Asian and Asian-Americans consider these to be extremely harmful because it both prevents them from articulating the manner in which institutional racism impacts them and marginalizes them from participating in bringing about transformational change in their region.

“I think that perception still there about us where they think that Asians are minorities, but we are the good minority if there’s such a thing.”

“When I talk to some Caucasian people, they assume our kids are good at the spelling bee or something like that. There is something racial, but it’s not in your face.”

“I was talking to a White person at this restaurant I go to. He says to me, “you guys are not like the Black people that leech off the system or these undocumented workers that come across the river and take all these jobs. If other minorities are just like you guys, this country would be even better.” I just sat there, and I was like okay, I will not be eating with you anymore.”

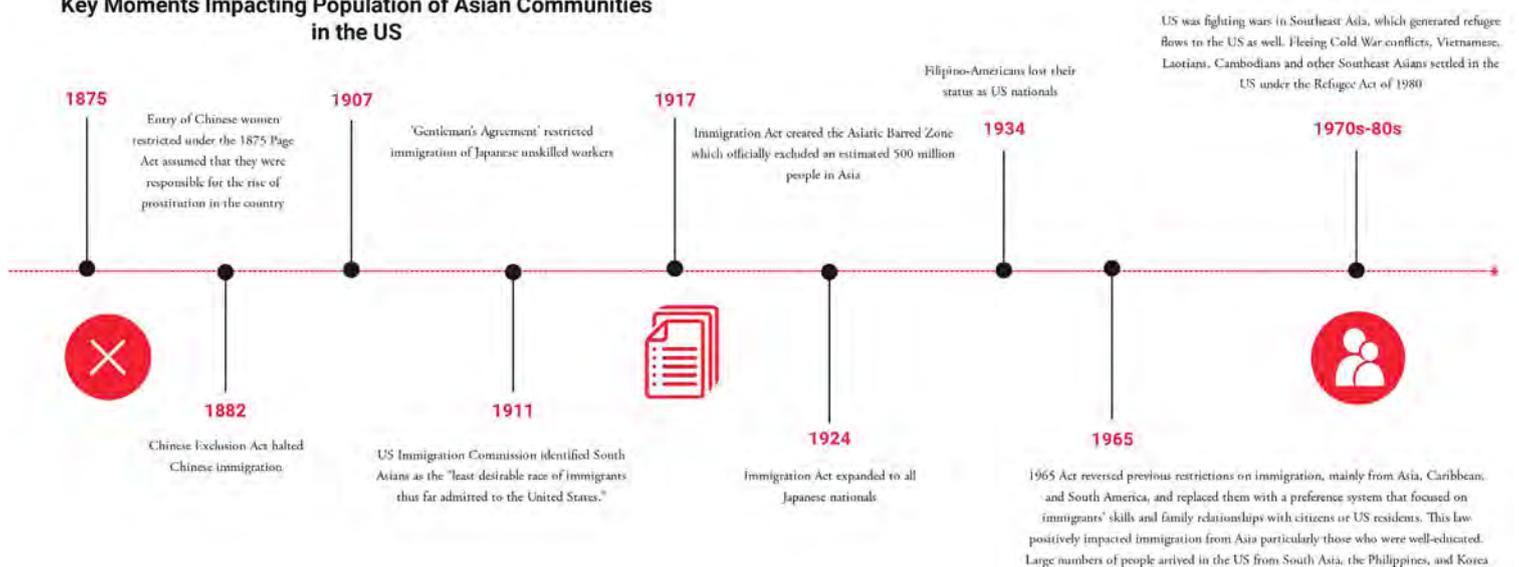
IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS AND POPULATION GROWTH

Asian populations in Washington County have experienced significant growth. Between 2009 and 2015, the county’s Asian population grew by 29% (American Commuy Survey). 57% of the county’s population growth was because the Asian population grew by 6,971 people between 2014 and 2016 (American Community Survey).²

It is important to remember that as much as conversations in Washington County are about keeping up with rapid demographic shifts in which Asian population growth has played a considerable role, that wasn’t always the case. The tremendous growth of Asian communities in Washington County, Oregon, and the US has happened relatively recently. Asian and Asian American population in the Pacific Northwest and the West Coast remained pretty small due to federal, statewide and local laws on immigration, citizenship, marriage, property, and labor aggressively that discriminated against Asian people.



Key Moments Impacting Population of Asian Communities in the US



IMMIGRATION AND "PERPETUAL FOREIGNER" STEREOTYPE

Asian communities are racialized not only as “model minorities” but also as “perpetual foreigners” in the US. “The assumption that ethnic minorities do not fit the definition of what it means to be American may manifest itself in subtle, covert marginalizing incidents, such as questioning an individual’s home-town, complimenting his/her command of the English language, or mistaking him/her as a foreigner. These behaviors comprise a contemporary form of racism called racial microaggression, whereby racism is disguised in supposedly benign behaviors and comments (e.g., Where are you from?) that convey strong messages of exclusion and inferiority. Even when the intent of perpetrators, who can be of any ethnic or racial group, is not malicious or racially motivated, it is in these seemingly harmless occurrences that ethnic minorities hear that they are somehow less American than European Americans.”(Huynh, Devos, & Smalarz, 2011)

 **43%** of Asian-identifying population in Washington County in 2016 was born in the US. There was a 10% growth in second, third and later generations between 2014 and 2016

This is true in Washington County as well where the dominant narrative about Asian communities is that they are immigrants who moved to the region to work for the Silicon Forest, a term used to describe the cluster of high-tech firms in the area. It ignores the 43% of the identifying Asian population that has been born in the US in 2016 and the 10% growth in the second, third and onward generation between 2014 and 2016 (compared to 11% growth in the immigrant population). No matter how long Asians have lived in the US, they are considered outsiders, with dire ramifications for them. The education justice section describes the double impact of being perceived as a model minority and a perpetual foreigner on youth and students, most of whom in Washington County are born in the US. It potentially has a dampening effect on civic engagement activity if they are not considered part of the polity. It underscores community concerns about safety, especially among Muslim, Sikh and brown-skinned Asians.

Fear of foreigners fueled the Chinese Exclusion Act and Japanese internment camps. After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, South Asians emerged as “the other” and faced a large backlash (Prashad, 2000).

This “[results] in the marginalization of the Asian American community in social, academic, and political realms” (as cited in Murjani, 2014).³

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Asians and Asian-Americans appear in mainstream discourses as economic success stories who persevered through immigration exclusion, poverty and racial discrimination, and Japanese internment to clamber up the socio-economic ladder, all through sheer hard work, family cohesion and investing in their children's education. A step further, Asian communities are propped up as “model minorities” - an example of how people of color, especially African-Americans and Latinos can conduct themselves to also “pull themselves up by their bootstraps.” A cursory look at the data supports that depiction. Taken as a whole, Asians have higher levels of education and incomes in the US compared to the total population, White people and communities of color for whom data is available. This discourse particularly lands in a region like Washington County where Asian communities have grown significantly, in part to populate the workforce of Silicon Forest. They come up in the Washington County zeitgeist as a homogenous group with similar histories and as recent immigrants brought in by Intel and other trees of the Silicon Forest. There is little demonstrable understanding of immigration as the force shaping different Asian communities' employment, earnings and poverty levels. There is also little acknowledgment, at least in data practices of the diverse lived experiences of Asian communities.

In this section, as with the whole report, Asian and Asian American communities in Washington County build a counter-narrative that highlights their varied histories and experiences, contextualizes economic outcomes in immigration imperatives, and creates space for them to be a part of racial, justice.

There is considerable diversity in Asian communities and that leads to significant variations in the community's lived experiences in Washington County concerning economic indicators. One sees both high incomes and high poverty rates (especially among seniors), high workforce participation and high unemployment, and high earnings and limited opportunities for professional advancement. This section further emphasizes the need to stop generalizing about Asian communities in Washington County and take action based on the diversity among various groups.

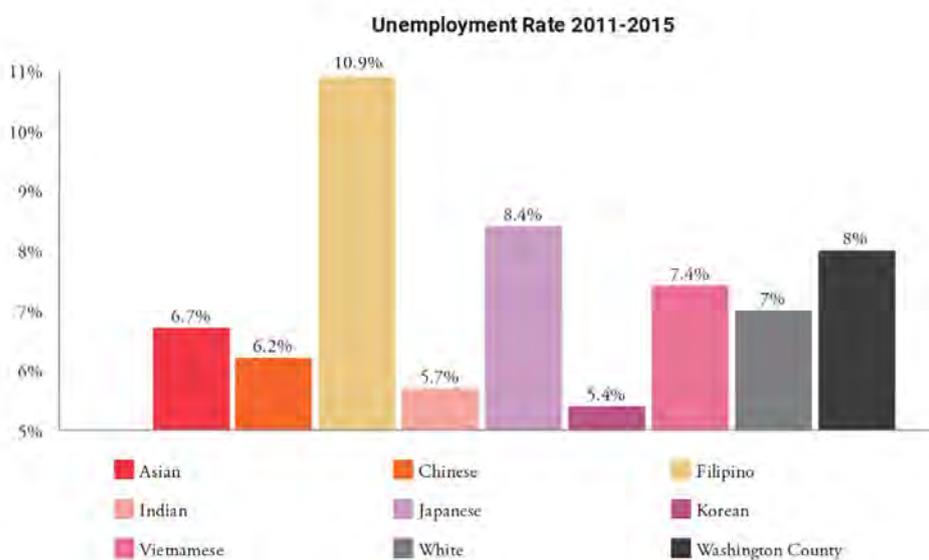
UNEMPLOYMENT

There are a lot of misconceptions and stereotypes about the Asian and Asian-American workforce. Many assume that because of the high numbers of college graduates within the communities, there are no problems of employment.

At the surface, Asians participate in the labor force at similar levels to Whites and county levels. When we dig deeper, Cambodians, Filipinos, Laotians, Thai, and Vietnamese have the highest rates of labor force participation in American Community Survey 2011–2015 estimates.⁴ These communities may have high labor force participation because those who were refugees had to accept the first job offered, they may be doing jobs that are incompatible with their educational qualifications, holding down multiple positions, or have jobs that aren't full time and stable. On the flipside, Chinese, Indians, Japanese and Koreans are employed or looking for a job at rates either at par or lower than the White and county average. That means that they are not looking for a job or can't find a job and have given up. Possible reasons for low labor force participation are students working without pay, immigration restricting legal work opportunities, limited English proficiency, high childcare costs, and elderly retirees who are no longer looking to work or who can't find jobs.

When we look at unemployment rates, aggregated Asian unemployment is misleading. When actively seeking employment—taking some action such as completing an application, sending out a resume, contacting an employment center, and so on, Filipino, Japanese, and Vietnamese applications are shunned, leading to higher unemployment rates than White applicants.

Some Asian groups predominantly work in the cash economy, with other members of the household holding out for jobs that come with health benefits. National advocates also reason that some Asian groups lack the networks or language skills to find jobs outside their community or industry.



EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION

Immigration has shaped the presence and size of various Asian communities in the US and Washington County. It has directed Asian immigrants towards specific industries and jobs throughout US history. *The more recent waves of immigration from Asia have brought in highly educated immigrants, which has reinforced the “model minority” myth of Asians being well educated and high earning success stories for other people of color to emulate.*

In the 19th century, Asians were lumber mill workers, railroad labor, ditch diggers, launderers and miners in Oregon. They were pushed into low wage jobs doing work that White workers didn't want to do. Leland Stanford reported to Congress in 1865, “a large majority of the white laboring class on the Pacific Coast find most profitable and congenial employment in mining and agricultural pur-

suits than in railroad work. The greater portion of the laborers employed by us are Chinese, who constitute a large element of the population of California. Without them it would be impossible to complete the western portion of this great national enterprise, within the time required by the Acts of Congress.” (Stanford University, 2018).⁵ At the same time, they were viewed as unassimilable, dangerous cheap labor out to steal American jobs. Anti-Asiatic leagues and associations formed all along the Pacific Northwest including Hood River organizing violence against Asian workers. A 1908 article called “The Foreign Invasion of the Northwest” talks about Indian workers “wandering” in Eastern Oregon after being driven out of Bellingham and Puget Sound, Washington by White riots in September 1907 (Moorhead, 2013). The purpose was to “move [the Indian workers] on, to get them out of town, and scare them so badly that they will not crowd white labor out of the mills.” (Lieb, 2006).

“Beginning in the late 19th century and really through the 1940s and ‘50s, there was what we can call a regime of Asian exclusion: a web of laws and social practices and ideas designed to shut out Asians entirely from American life.” (Wu, 2015). It is this context in which one sees the rise of ethnic clusters such as Chinatown, Koreatown, etc. As the need for their labor declined, and as their vilification expanded to restrict their access to citizenship, land ownership, wage protection, marriage, between 1917 and 1965, different Asian groups were banned from immigrating to the US. Those who lived in the US were separated from their families in their home countries, were economically and socially segregated and pitted against other groups in a downward competition for cheap labor. Their employment was restricted to industries where White people wouldn’t have to work with them, or they had to find work through self-employment. Places like Chinatown became economic hubs for the community; many Indians invested in the motel trade, buying downtrodden hotels sometimes from interned Japanese (Dhingra, 2012).

Scholars of Asian-American history in the US point out a shift in racial attitudes towards Asian-Americans during and after the Second World War that affected their economic lives. The “model minority” myth originated from a combination of Cold War imperatives to not appear racist as the US globally fought for democracy, and strategies by primarily Chinese and Japanese communities to combat racism by portraying themselves as “good Americans” capable of assimilating into mainstream culture. Anxieties about the Civil Rights movement caused

White populations to invest in the image of the hard-working Asian who can find success as people of color. Research about wage gaps at that time show disparities between Asian and White workers narrowing as racial prejudices against the former soften (Hilger, 2016).



Key Moments Impacting Economic Justice of Asian Communities in the US

1800s-1900s: Low wage labor and Discrimination

- In the nineteenth century, Asians were lumber mill workers, railroad labor, ditch diggers, launderers and miners in Oregon.
- Anti-Asiatic leagues and associations formed all along the Pacific Northwest
- A 1908 article called “The Foreign Invasion of the Northwest” talks about Indian workers “wandering” in Eastern Oregon after being driven out of Bellingham and Puget Sound, Washington by White riots in September 1907

1900s-1950s - Economic Segregation and Rise of Chinatowns

- Beginning in the late 19th century and really through the 1940s and ‘50s, there was what we can call a regime of Asian exclusion: a web of laws and social practices and ideas designed to shut out Asians entirely from American life.
- Places like Chinatown became economic hubs for the community; many Indians invested in the motel trade

1950s onwards - shift in racial attitudes

- Cold War imperatives to not appear racist as the US globally fought for democracy.
- Chinese and Japanese communities to combat racism by portraying themselves as ‘good Americans’.
- Anxieties about the Civil Rights movement caused White populations to invest in the image of the hard-working Asian who can find success as people of color.

It’s around this time and informed by Cold War and economic imperatives, that in 1965, the Immigration Act that overhauls existing laws and removes restrictions on immigration from countries outside of Europe, is passed. The basis of the 1965 Act is that immigrants should be selected by how they can contribute to the economy along with family reunification. High skilled labor from Asian countries arrives in the US for educational and work opportunities, further solidifying the model minority narratives as they fulfill technology and related needs of the US economy. Fleeing Cold War conflicts, refugee populations from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam arrive in the US in the 1970s into this landscape wherein they are compelled to take up the first job offered and cobble together sustenance.

Readers are urged to keep this immigration context in mind as we explore economic outcomes of Asian communities in Washington County. One sees the impact of the 1965 Immigration Act that recruited a particular set of highly skilled immigrants as a part of the Silicon Forest workforce. We also see communities performing different roles and occupations in the Washington County economy, to a large extent informed by their immigration pathways. We can see both the impact of the “softening of racial prejudices” as well as persisting earnings disparities between different Asian-identifying and White workers.

We see in the community’s concern about immigration and stories of stereotyping and hostility that White fear of “foreign labor” continues today. We see in communities’ showing up for one another, for banding together into cultural associations, supporting new immigrants, concern for small businesses, the continuing value of self-subsistence that have helped them prevail all this time.

INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION

One sees the generational impact of immigration on the distribution of labor across sectors in Washington County. The 1965 Immigration Act allowed mostly high-skilled labor from Asian countries; refugee populations had to pick up whatever job they could find to be economically self-sufficient as per the Refugee

Act of 1980. The White workforce in Washington County distributes across industries similar to the overall County workforce, Asian communities are over-represented and under-represented in specific industries compared to share of County’s workforce in that sector (Asian Community Survey, 2011–2015). For example, among Asian communities for whom data is available, all but Koreans have a higher share in the manufacturing industry compared to the proportion of the County workforce in that sector; Koreans are most likely to be working in retail as are Filipinos, and recreation, accommodation, and food services as are Vietnamese.

“In Washington County, when I go outside of my community, they are going to assume that I work for Intel. It used to be a hotel owner or a motel person, but now it’s assumed I work for Intel because i’m Indian.”

In those industries, different groups execute different types of work. We see the generational impact of immigration and model minority mythology. More than half of the Chinese, Indian, and Japanese workforce—a higher share than aggregated Asians, White and Washington County workforce, are in high skilled positions in management, business and science type occupations owing to 1965 immigration laws that (re)allowed their entry into the US (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). In contrast, *more than half of Cambodian, Thai, Laotian, Korean and Vietnamese workforce are involved in occupations such as sales, service, production, and transportation. There’s tremendous variation in the kind of work Asians do in the industries that employ them.* Even though some Asians are mainly working in occupations sought after for high wages and economic mobility, focus group participants bring up issues of racial discrimination

regarding lack of advancement in the workplace, systemic and interpersonal hostility directed at their labor, and lack of representation in government employment. Focus group participants brought up the “bamboo ceiling” as a concern in their workplace. Bamboo ceiling, similar to the “glass ceiling” refers to obstacles in the way of career advancement rooted in the organization’s perceptions and stereotyping of a particular community’s skills and traits.

“Bamboo ceiling” points to the lack of representation of Asians in senior positions in the private or public sector. A study of five Silicon Valley companies (Google, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, LinkedIn, and Yahoo) employee data of 2013 revealed that Asian-Americans are least likely to be promoted into managerial and executive ranks; White men and women are twice as likely as Asians to hold executive positions. The glass ceiling is holding back Asian women while White women are breaking through it (Gee, Peck, & Wong, 2015).

The 2016 National Asian American Survey found that only 51% of Asian-American employees indicated that they had led a meeting at work, compared with 68% of White employees. The situation was worse among women, with Asian-American women 25 percentage points less likely to chair a meeting when compared with White women (Russell Sage Foundation, 2017). Why is that the case? First, “Stereotypes about Asians being highly competent can make Asians appear threatening in the workplace, and stereotypes about Asians lacking social skills make them seem unfit for leadership.” (Johnson & Sy, 2016). They are expected to be deferential according to their cultural values but are also stereotyped as “tiger moms” and “dragon lady” if they aren’t. Second, while the so-called positive stereotype about Asians as “smart, high-achieving, hardworking, and deserving” enhances the academic performance of Asian-American students, “the same stereotype reproduces new stereotypes that hinder them as they pursue leadership positions in the workplace.” (Zhou & Lee, 2017). Those “positive stereotypes” match up with good qualities expected of workers especially in corporate America but not masculinist traits that are seen valuable in leadership such as sociable and charisma.

Asian communities are under-represented in the public sector workforce in Washington County. According to Worksystems Inc, in 2016 4% of the public sector workforce identified as Asian. This data excludes biracial and multiracial

“If I look at the Indian community especially the tech workers you know it takes a such a long time for labor certification. They are in limbo for ten years. Nobody knows what it’s going to happen.”



employees and does not disaggregate by groups. It also doesn't differentiate between full time, seasonal, part-time employment. With all those caveats, Asian communities continue not to be hired in the public sector workforce compared to their 13% share of the county population in 2016. Although their representation increased slightly between 2012 and 2016, White employees continue to be vastly over-represented in public sector employment.

For over a century, Asians have been seen as “perpetual foreigners,” threatening to take away jobs by providing cheap labor. On the one hand, they are ushered in through U.S. immigration law seeking to fill gaps in the US economy and portrayed as “model minority,” and on the other, their labor is not valued both in society and in policy. Focus group participants emphasize this point in different ways.

“In my neighborhood community, somebody who identified openly as being White said that Asian people like you take good jobs away from hard working people like my husband.”

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERSHIP AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Many Asian groups opened their businesses and generated self-employment because racial discrimination limited their access to other employment opportunities. Now, it shows up as a community strength.

When focus group participants were asked to identify strengths of their community, across different ethnic groups, people noted the way they show up for each other and their community whether it is welcoming new immigrants, cultural gatherings to combat isolation, patronizing businesses owned by their ethnic group and so on.

Asian communities have coped with and fought racism and its effects by congregating in clusters and supporting each other through social connections and financial resources.

The table below shows the last available data about Asian owned businesses in Washington County. Considering their value and role as community assets, focus group participants ask for institutional support to ensure that small businesses in their communities can provide living wages and healthcare to their employees and stay afloat in the County.

“How do we support small businesses and sustain vis-a-vis giant corporations? It may have to shut down or cut staff. How do we stay involved and stay connected with our community if it's not there?”

Survey of Business Owners 2012

	Number of Businesses in Washington County	Sales and Receipts	Annual Payroll
Asian	3640	\$1,189,207,000	\$238,869,000
Chinese	849	\$290,843,000	\$64,322,000
Indian	534	\$299,957,000	\$63,643,000
Japanese	319	\$80,315,000	\$13,567,000
Korean	727	\$326,893,000	\$69,896,000
Other Asian	217	\$90,072,000	\$13,386,000
Vietnamese	768	\$67,417,000	



EARNINGS

Significant variation in employment profiles of various Asian groups leads to differences in earnings and income levels as well. It is meaningless to report aggregated data on economic indicators considering the variation in experiences in the “Asian” category. Although one assumes that Asian workers outpace all their colleagues in earnings, the truth in Washington County is complicated. When we compare median earnings by education in 2015 (Worksystems Inc), Asians earn below the median earnings of a Bachelor degree holder even though they are 64% more likely than a White person and 73% more likely than a County resident to hold at least a Bachelor’s degree (American Commu-

nity Survey, 2011–2015).

Next, we look at the overlap between racial disparities in earnings with gender-based pay inequities. There are racial disparities within men and women—Asian, Cambodian, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese women earn less than White Women. Cambodian, Filipino, Korean, Laotian, Thai and Vietnamese men earn less than White men (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Additionally, there are pay gaps between Asian men and White women (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese men earn less than White women. Cambodian, Filipino and Thai female full-time workers are particularly experiencing the brunt of income disparities (American community Survey, 2011–2015).



Asian, Cambodian, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese women earn less than White Women.

Cambodian, Filipino, Korean, Laotian, Thai and **Vietnamese** men earn less than White men.

Additionally, there are pay gaps between **Asian** men and White women.

Cambodian, Lao, and **Vietnamese** men earn less than White women.

Cambodian, Filipino and **Thai** female full time workers are particularly experiencing the brunt of income disparities.

Relatively high incomes of Chinese and Indian communities and narrow wage gaps are noted.

Research about the economic mobility of Asian-Americans in the US demonstrates that reduction in labor market discrimination against Asians in the post Civil Rights movement era is the primary cause of the decrease in wage gap with White workers. Improvement in wages and their subsequent economic mobility happened as a result of that rather than Asian/ White differences in schooling, labor force participation, entrepreneurial and agricultural employment, English proficiency, enclave activity, and foreign-born parentage (Sanders & Duleep, 2012).

It was the result of Asians finally receiving better opportunities — eventually earning equal pay for equal skills and equal work (Higler, 2016). Who the Immigration Act of 1965 allowed into the US and into what kind of jobs also exercises a selection effect on the high earnings of particular groups. As laid out earlier in the section, both the shift in racial attitudes towards Asians (partly to vilify African-Americans) happened along with the influx of highly skilled labor from Asian countries, led to Asian communities having more access to opportunities. Sociologists have found that many Asian communities narrowly focus on academic success as a strategy to counter anticipated bias and discrimination in employment.⁶ Mainstream narratives too hold up Asian communities as proof that education pays off regardless of one’s race. The table below shows otherwise. It compares the median income of Asian, Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese and White full time workers with similar levels of education with county median incomes at that education level. White employees earn more than the county median income for full time work at all levels of education but post-graduate degree. Asian workers only earn higher incomes at the lowest and most advanced educational levels; Vietnamese and Filipino workers are the most impacted by racialized income disparities. Education does not seem to be an active pathway to better earnings for them.

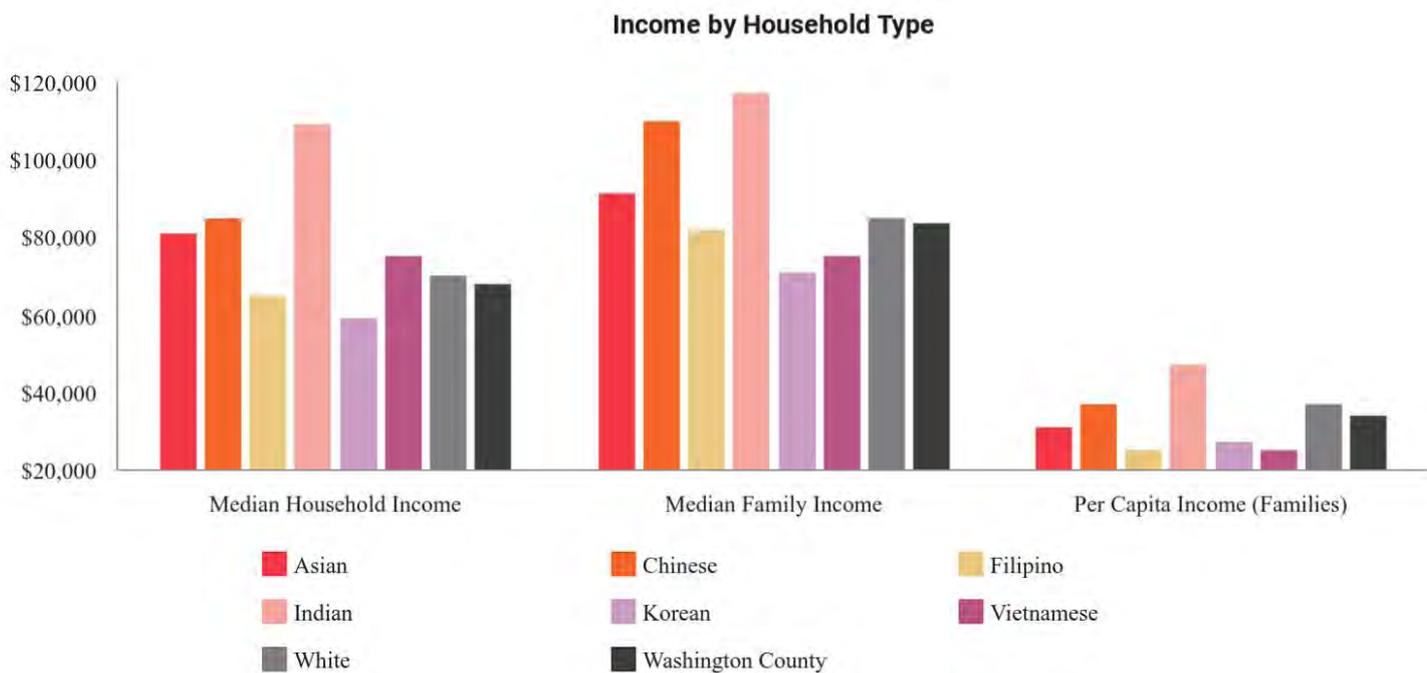
Communities that earn below the County Median Income (Full time Work) at Similar Levels of Education

Less than GED	High School Degree/GED	College, no degree	Associate's	Bachelor's	Post-Graduate or Professional Degree
Filipino	Asian	Asian	Asian	Asian	Filipino
Vietnamese	Filipino	Filipino	Filipino	Chinese	Vietnamese
	Indian	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Filipino	White
	Vietnamese	Korean		Vietnamese	

INCOMES AND POVERTY

In fact, Korean and Filipino families and households earn less than County and White median household income. Along with Vietnamese families, they earn less than median county and White family incomes as well. All three communities have family and household sizes that are larger than county and White households, which means two things. (1) These multigenerational households are eking out a living in Washington County on fewer resources, and (2) they have a lower income despite potentially having multiple earners in the family. Per capita income, which takes into account size of the community, also underscores the racial income disparity pattern that Korean, Filipino and Vietnamese families are managing the cost of living in Washington County on lower incomes than the average county and White family.

“They think that all Asians who live in Washington County are wealthy.”



In contrast, Chinese and Indian families and households, a significant proportion of whom are in high wage occupations due to selective recruitment of their immigrant labor into specific sectors, out-earn both county and White households and families. The gap narrows because Indian and Chinese family sizes are larger than county and White families.

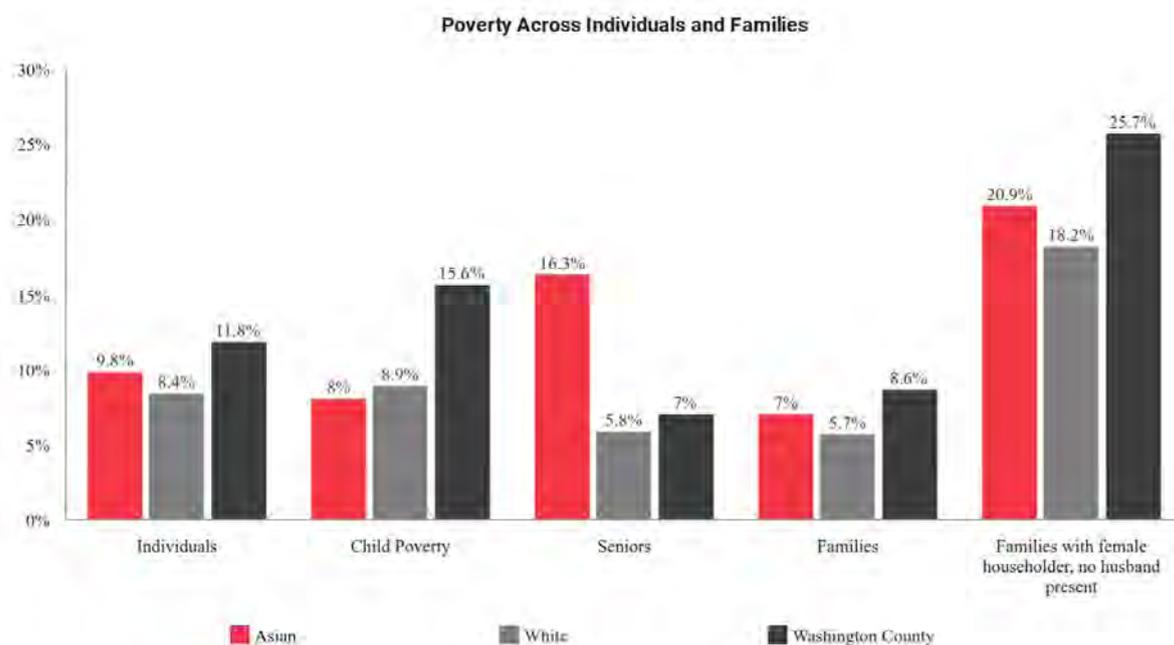
Furthermore, national research indicates that perceived income gaps between Asian and White households narrow if not disappear when cost of living is accounted (Guo, 2016). Following immigration imperatives, employment recruitment, and historical patterns of settlement, Asian communities tend to settle down in urban areas, which have a higher cost of living. In contrast, White communities are spread out over rural areas as well, which tend to be cheaper and less impacted by rising housing costs and gentrification.

It is telling that focus group participants, from different ethnicities, concurred on affordable housing as both a crucial public policy concern and as a community priority in Washington County. Furthermore, the median rent in Washington County has increased by 37% between 2012 and 2015 (Zillow) while aggregate median earnings for Asian full time workers has only increased by 11.5%.

The Economic Policy Institute calculates the monthly budget to afford a modest yet adequate standard of living based on 2017 costs. The calculator takes into account the cost of housing, food, child care, transportation, healthcare, other necessities, and taxes. The calculator does not include savings for retirement, a rainy day, or college. For a two-parent, two-child family in Washington County, it costs \$8,334 per month (\$100,012 per year) to secure a decent yet modest standard of living. Most Asian families are running their households on very few resources.

Readers can see the impact on poverty levels and reliance of communities on food stamps. Some Asian communities more than others are negotiating tough decisions between paying for housing, and costs related to food, childcare, and healthcare. Asian individuals and families, seniors and single women households have higher poverty rates than their White counterparts. High margins of error prevent us from reliably reporting disaggregated poverty data, but

American Community Survey 2011–2015 estimates that Korean and Vietnamese elders are particularly impoverished. Korean focus group participants supported this finding when they prioritized elder care in their community concerns.



HOUSING JUSTICE

As homeowners and renters, Asian communities in Washington County are essential participants in housing justice conversations.

When asked about what messages they have for elected officials and what feedback they would give to their city and County government, focus group participants repeatedly prioritized affordable housing and urged policymakers to do the same.

At different times in US history, Asian people of various ethnicities and nationalities were excluded from living here or leasing or owning land and have been impacted by discriminatory housing policies in the 20th century such as redlining. Japanese homeowners came back to ransacked, burglarized and defaced homes when they returned to Oregon from internment camps after the end of World War II (Cool, 2017). By the time the war ended, they had held title to only 25 percent of the land they had owned before incarceration (Collisson, 2018).



By the time World War II ended, Japanese homeowners held title to only

25%

of the land they had owned before incarceration in internment camps.

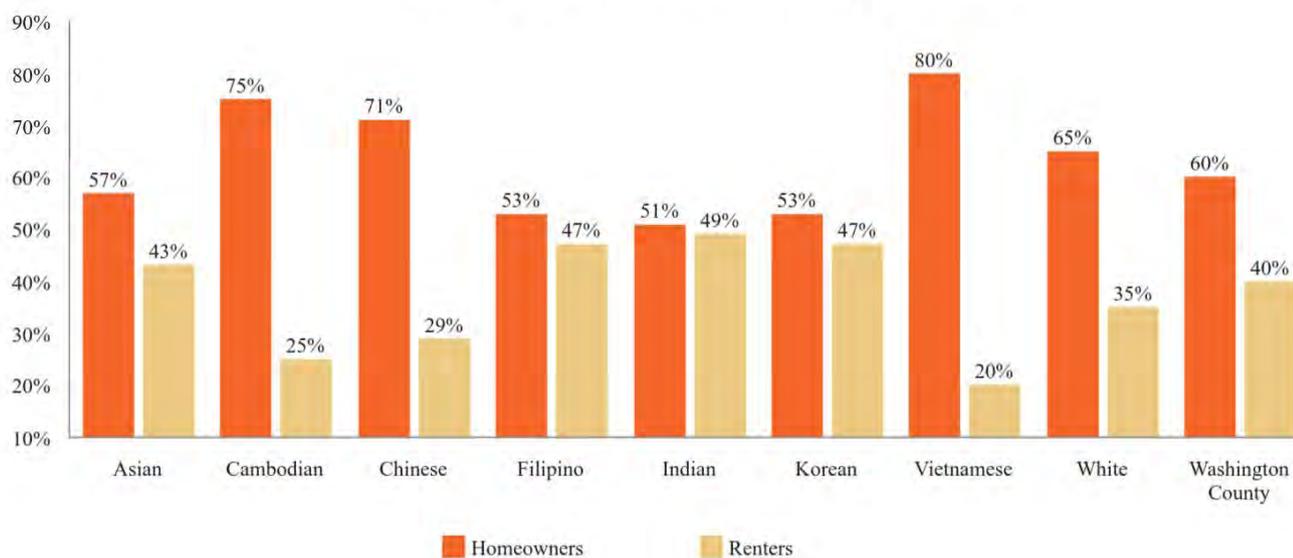
HOMEOWNERSHIP AND

HOUSING COST BURDEN

High housing costs and lack of affordable housing remain challenges for most Asian groups. At the aggregate level, Asian homeownership rate is lower than White homeownership and the county homeownership rate (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Different Asian communities have different experiences with homeownership.

The Washington County Fair Housing plan analyses show no significant disparity in mortgage denial rates between Asian and White loan applicants. This may partially explain high rates of homeownership among some Asian communities.

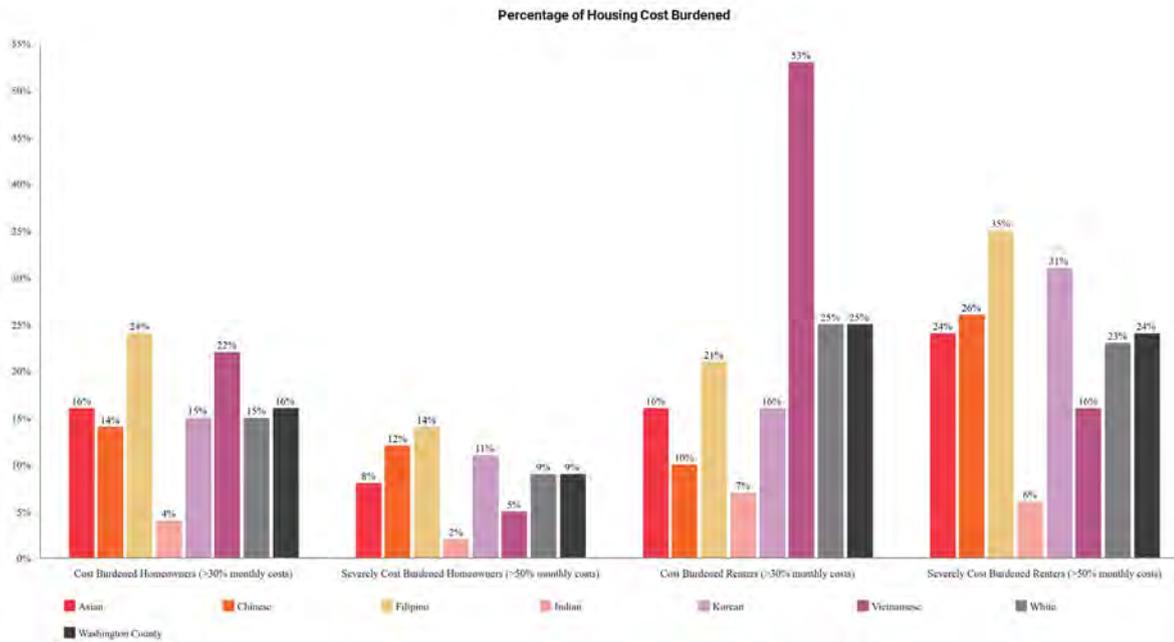
Percentage of Homeowners and Renters By Population



Focus group participants share growing up in communities that emphasize homeownership as a value, as well as a basis for putting down roots and feeling at home. Families and households in different Asian communities are multigenerational and are larger than the average White and county household, which also shapes preference for homeownership.

However, both homeowners and aspirants to homeownership in Asian communities are concerned about affordable housing. Even though Cambodian, Chinese and Vietnamese communities are more likely than White people to be homeowners in the county, they are also more likely to be spending a significant portion of their income on mortgage and related housing costs. Housing experts caution that paying more than 30% of one's monthly income indicates a burden on a homeowner or renter. Vietnamese homeowners are 47% more likely than White homeowners to spend at least a third of their income on housing, and Chinese homeowners are 33% more likely than White homeowners to spend at least half of their income on housing costs. *One out of three Filipino homeowners are burdened with housing costs, and although Koreans are less likely to be homeowners than renters, they experience the burden of housing costs at higher rates than White homeowners.*





The Housing Mortgage Disclosure Act data analysis aggregates the Asian experience and does not shed light on how home loans and lending practices may be differentially impacting different Asian communities.

However, national housing advocates are concerned about Asian home loan applicants pushed towards higher interest loans or “non-conforming” loans that don’t require a credit check. Focus group participants urge community credit unions and to lower mortgage rates to alleviate the cost burden on homeowners.

“It’s tough for the young generation to buy a house even you try to save up. How can you save on renters costs to make a down payment?”

Community members like Washington County because of its green spaces and its school system but but are not able to afford to own a home. Overall focus group participants point to rising rents limiting their community’s inability own their homes. Community members face a quandary—on the one hand, they view homeownership as a strategy to save money on rent, that has increased by 37% between 2010 and 2015; on the other hand, as renters, high housing costs prevent them from saving enough to afford a home. Rapidly increasing rents in Washington County are severely impacting Asians overall and Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean and Vietnamese renters. 1 out of 4 Vietnamese renters and 1 of 2 Cambodian renters are spending at least a third of their income on rent compared to 1 out of 4 White renters in the county. Chinese, Filipino and Korean renters, are more likely than White renters to be spending more than 50% of their monthly income on rent.

Although overall median incomes for Asian communities are higher than White median household income and particularly of the Indian population, immigration comes up as a significant barrier to homeownership. Over 70% of Indians in Washington County are immigrants that came to the US after the 1965 Immigration Act opened up the country to hire highly educated labor from India

through the H1B visa process. Approximately 1 of 2 Indian residents in Washington County are not citizens of the US and the average wait time for Indian citizens that are H1B visa holders to get permanent residence status in this country is 12 years (and longer for citizenship).

Long immigration wait times leads large portions of the Indian populace in Washington County to see themselves merely as a labor force for the US economy thereby disconnecting them from the broader community, and putting them in a limbo that dampens their willingness to commit to a significant financial investment.

HOUSING INSECURITY

Homeowners and renters alike are incredibly concerned about the affordability of housing in Washington County. Despite the perception that all Asians are wealthy, Asian communities overall are 25% more likely to be in poverty than White residents in the county; Chinese residents are 13%, Koreans are 63%, Vietnamese are 75% and Laotians are 88% more likely to be in poverty compared to White people in the county. Rising housing costs, debt, and stagnant incomes increase the risk of displacement and eviction (Desmond, 2015). *In 2012 and 2015, Korean and Vietnamese students were primarily reporting being housing insecure—not having a permanent nighttime residence in the ODE data.*

Although it may seem from the data that houselessness is not much of a concern for the numerous Asian communities living in Washington County, that would be a misleading conclusion. Asian and Asian American residents in Washington County, whether they are high income or belong to communities that have high rates of poverty, are extremely concerned about housing. National analyses indicate that Asians tend to cluster around urban and metropolitan areas (because of historical and immigration-related reasons) that also tend to have a higher cost of living, while White people are more spread out and also tend to live in rural parts of the country where the dollar goes a long way. Once the cost of living is accounted the overall earnings advantage held by Asians disappears (Guo, 2016).

Focus group participants push back against the mainstream notion that people of color don't have any role in broader public policy discussions beyond its immediate impact on their community. They propose the following strategies and solutions to ensure housing security:

- Create incentives for increasing density of housing.
- Build or support co-op type living spaces that save housing costs
- Encourage community credit unions, and influence banks to lower mortgage rates.
- Increase renter protections such as preventing landlords from drastically increasing rent over a specific period.
- Local organizations should provide vouchers to subsidize costs such as rent and utility.
- Multiple local organizations should combine resources to purchase a property to be community housing with affordable rent.
- Language translation and interpretation for tenants who are not proficient in English.

EDUCATION JUSTICE

Asian and Asian-American residents of Washington County envision schools as institutions that recognize varied histories and backgrounds, have curriculum and teachers that are representative of the diversity and facilitate and support academic and psychological well-being by not targeting students with contradictory and harmful “model minority” and “perpetual foreigner” stereotypes. Focus group participants talk about support towards their kin as a strength of their community and view the increasingly diverse student population as a space to build solidarity with different communities of color. Considering that “model minority” stereotypes have pitted Asian communities against African-Americans and Latinos, this is crucial.

“I think youth are actually around other people of color in schools in sports or whatever, whereas my parents were a lot of the times more isolated from particular types of people just because they didn’t interact with them as much.”

They join Middle Eastern and North African, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, African and African-American communities in a call for better and disaggregated data about student experiences in schools to better direct investment in improving educational outcomes for all students. Similar to other communities of color, they demand that school curriculum and instruction be representative of the histories and experiences of its diverse student body. They also draw attention to improving higher education opportunities in Oregon to retain young potential in the county and state and alleviate the cost of out-of-state college tuition.

“Children are spending a lot of time educating the teachers and other students, and it takes a toll. We should be focusing on studying versus trying always to explain why we dress the way we dress or why we want to speak our language.”

“One talks about courts and public spaces. I think schools are most public institutions and our kids have to be safe there. There have to be teachers that are culturally competent and look like the students that they are teaching.”



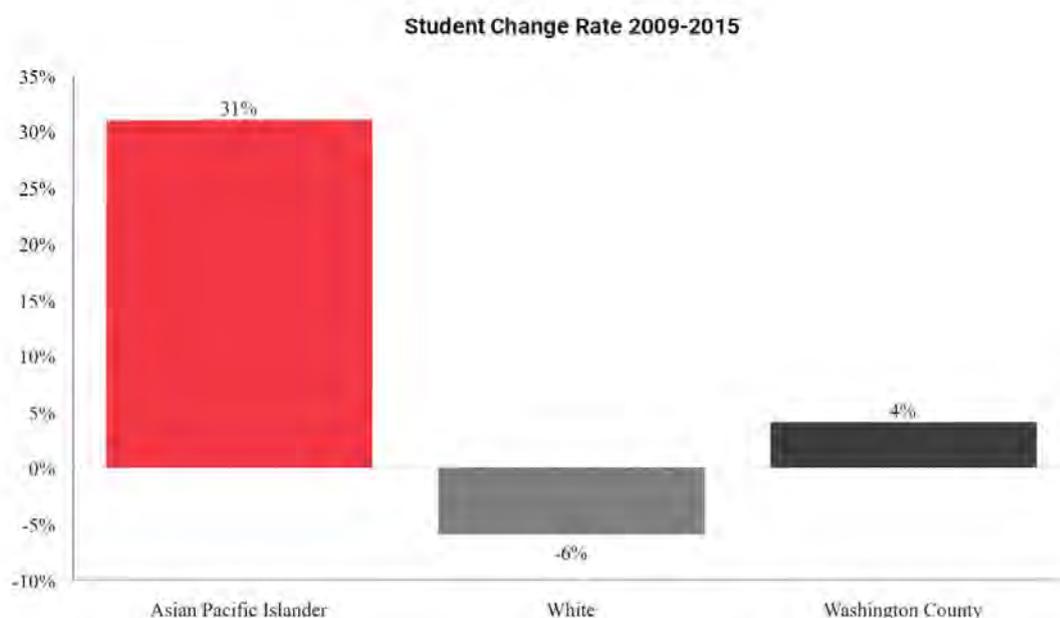
Focus group participants talk about support towards their kin as a strength of their community and view the increasingly diverse student population as a space to build solidarity with different communities of color.

INVISIBLE STUDENTS

The significant growth in the Asian population in Washington County due to the removal of exclusionary immigration laws and refugee flows during the Cold War is reflected in classrooms in Washington County. Approximately 46% of Asian households in Washington County have children younger than 18 (American Community Survey, 2016). There were approximately 13,252 students that identified as “Asian Pacific Islander” in 2015. The “Asian Pacific Islander” body grew by 31% between 2009 and 2015, faster than the overall increase in the student body.



13,252 students identified as Asian or Pacific Islander in 2015



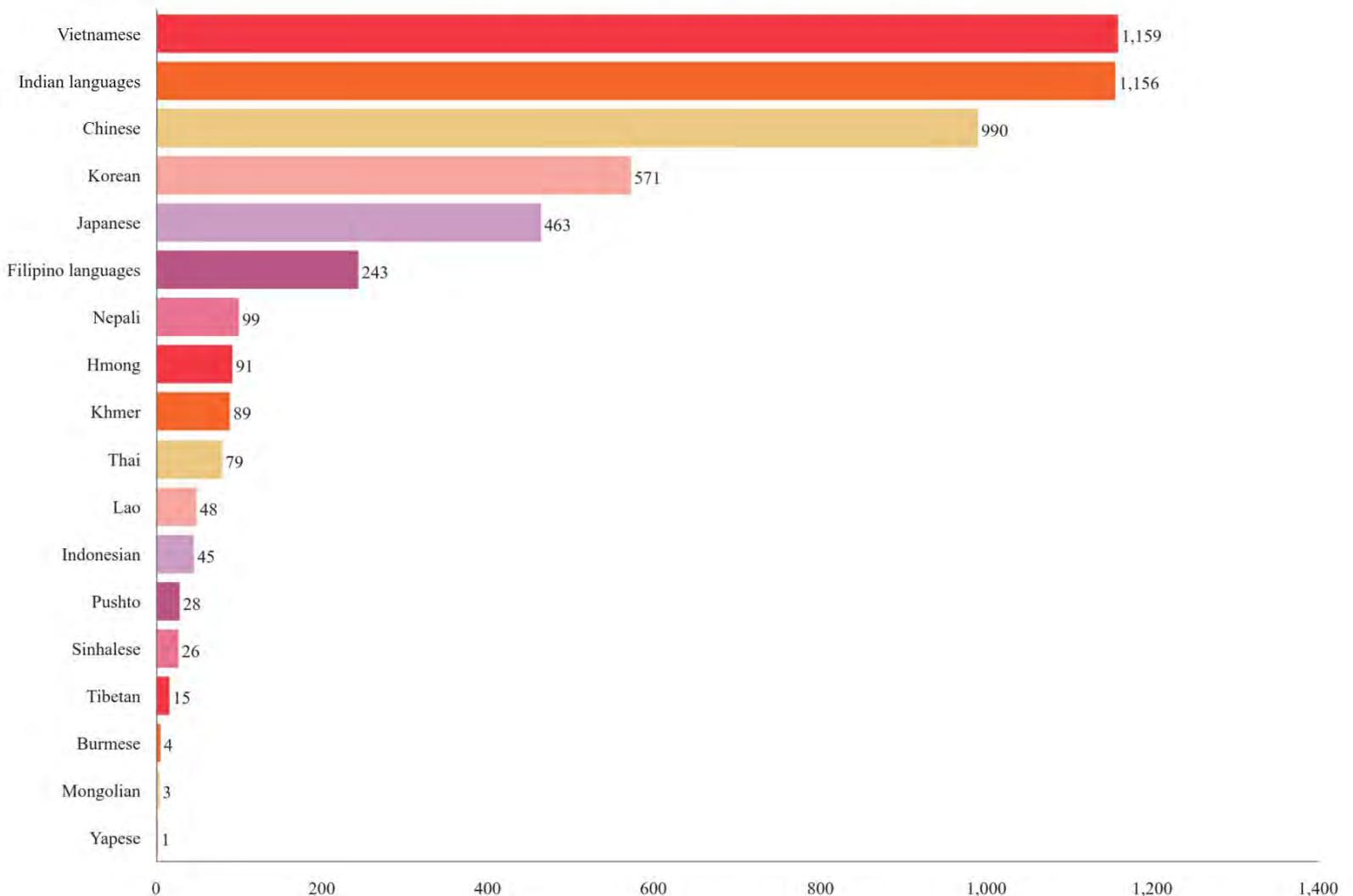
Look at the different stories and histories of migration in Asian communities in the appendix of this section and think about whether that is reflected in the graph presented above. Oregon Department of Education does not disaggregate data about Asian and “Asian Pacific Islander” students. Both in data and in practice, Asian students can feel invisible. Schools and teachers assume that all groups under the Asian umbrella share similar histories and a similar set of circumstances and resources.

When asked for their thoughts on policies that have made life worse for their communities, focus group participants pointed out to public education system aggregating their experiences under the ‘API’ umbrella.

Consequently, we examined first language and language spoken at home data by Oregon Department of Education from the list of languages the Coalition of Communities of Color pulled together in the *Unsettling Profiles* series.⁷ This strategy has some limitations. One, it assumes a perfect correlation between language and ethnicity/nationality when in fact many countries may speak the same language. For example, Tamil is both spoken in India and Sri Lanka; Punjabi and Urdu spoken in India and Pakistan. Second, it misses students of Asian descent that note English as their only language. One-third of Asians in Washington County only speak English. Within limitations of available data, procuring disaggregated patterns of gaps in achievement and opportunity from kindergarten to high school graduation based on a language of origin is a good start.

The graph below shows the Asian student population broken down by a language of origin.⁸ Again, it is important to note that this is an under count of the actual number of students of Asian descent in schools. It is impossible to figure out how many Asian students are from English-only households in the Oregon Department of Education data.

Number of Students by Language Spoken at Home



Evidently, the Asian student population is extraordinarily heterogenous—they belong to communities such as Chinese, Filipino, Indian and Japanese who have histories going back to the nineteenth century in Oregon and whose numbers ebbed and flowed on the basis of the needs of the US economy and related immigration laws; they are of Southeast Asian descent especially Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong and Vietnamese who fled to the US in the wake of Cold War conflicts destabilizing their home countries.

Do schools recognize this diversity, include these histories in their curriculum, acknowledge students' lived experiences and accordingly provide support and encouragement? Focus group participants and the community at large answer in the negative.

“Education is of high value in my community, but lack of diverse education inhibits achievement and continues disparities and discrimination.”

“Many Cambodian students inherit previous generations trauma and is reflected in their achievement.”

They, therefore, celebrate the passage of House Bill 2845 in 2017 that “directs the Oregon Department of Education to convene advisory groups to develop ethnic-studies standards into existing statewide social-studies standards.”(June, 2017).

Communities celebrate the passage of **House Bill 2845** in 2017 that “directs the Oregon Department of Education to convene advisory groups to develop ethnic-studies standards into existing statewide social-studies standards.”

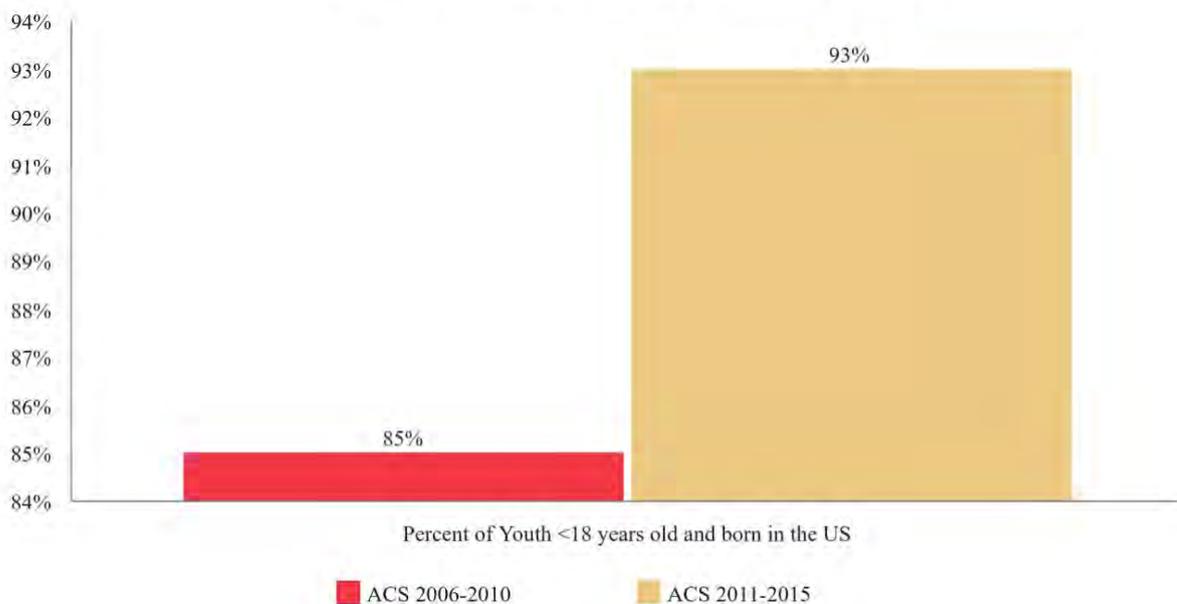


PERPETUAL FOREIGNER

A crucial part of understanding the lived experience of Asian students overall is that they are more likely to be born in the US in 2015 than at any time in the past. They are descendants of immigrants but are increasingly second and third generation.⁹ Nevertheless people of color especially Asian-Americans and Latinos are not only asked “where are you from?” pretty frequently, they are often more likely to be asked follow-up questions like, “No, where are you really from?” or “I meant, where are you originally from?” (Huynh, Devos & Smalarz, 2011).

satisfaction” (Huynh, Devos & Smalarz, 2011). *Combined with the pressure of attaining and maintaining high academic standards expected by the “model minority,” national research has found that Asian-Americans college students are more likely than White American students to have had suicidal thoughts and to attempt suicide (Hijioka & Wong, n.d.).* They are less likely to seek help for their emotional or mental health problems than other racial/ethnic groups (Meyers, 2006). When they do reach out, they find mental health services are not a good fit.

Immigration Status of Asian K-12 School Aged Youth



No matter whether they were born in the US or how long their communities have lived in the region, Asians are viewed as “perpetual foreigners;” still outsiders; still the “other.” This continual questioning and being viewed as “the other” can have a detrimental impact on people of color (Devos & Banaji, 2005). This kind of racial bias can be particularly harmful to self-esteem as well as cultural identity development of adolescent Asian youth. It may lead them to reject their heritage and language to appear more “American” and disassociate with other students of their community particularly those who are new to the country. Research has found that “awareness of the perpetual foreigner stereotype was a significant predictor of identity conflict and a lower sense of belonging to American culture” among Asian-American college students and was related to “lower levels of hope and life

MODEL MINORITY

Conservative commentators frequently point to Asian economic mobility to argue that the reason they out-earn everyone else is that “their families are intact and education is paramount” (O’Reilly, 2014). In this reasoning, Asians in the US become “living examples of achievement in spite of the persistent color line and because of their racial (often coded as cultural) differences.” And this in turn “undergirded contentions that African Americans’ cultural deficiencies were the cause of their poverty—assertions that delegitimized blacks’ demands for structural changes in the political economy and stigmatized their utilization of welfare state entitlements.” (Wu, 2015). Even if one (inaccurately) assumes Asians as a monolithic community, recent

research about the role of education in propelling Asian economic mobility has not found that to be the case. Instead, it is the softening of racial prejudice against Asian communities that are related to their apparent economic prosperity (Hilger, 2016).

For most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Asians in the American imagination were seen to be threatening, exotic and degenerate. However, by the 1950s and 1960s, the idea of the model minority had begun to take root both in White dominant mainstream narratives as well as Asian communities that sought to portray themselves as “good Americans” to survive in a “New Jim Crow” society that restricted their social and economic mobility opportunities (Wu, 2015). Chinese and Japanese people especially were being glorified as hardworking, obedient and law-abiding citizens who value education and family life. The improving image of Asian Americans especially pitted against racist attitudes towards African-American communities, dovetailed with the 1965 Immigration Act that opened the gates to high skilled immigrants from Asia. That further cemented the stereotype of Asians as studious and being unique amongst people of color for valuing children’s education.

Focus group participants say that the school system has perpetuated instead of dismantling the model minority myth in the public education system. Asian communities are targets of stereotypes that may seem positive—such as that they are natu-

rally gifted and that they primarily work high-paying jobs. This stereotyping starts with children and their treatment within the public education system and extends to adulthood to undermine their values and experiences. It also ignores high educational attainment value in some Asian communities in Washington County and the impact that has on children and youth. First generation immigrants and seniors carry the intergenerational trauma of being marginalized and villainized as “foreign aliens” stealing jobs and “encouraging vice” in society (Ahmad, 2008). *They value education “because they come from countries where education is one of the only paths for mobility. And, as non-white immigrants in the United States, Asian immigrant parents fear that their children will experience discrimination in their careers. So parents shepherd their children into conservative, high-status professions in which they become shielded from potential discrimination by employers, customers, and clients.”* (as cited in Lee, 2014)

“Education is of high value in Korean society, and other important things such as civic engagement or financial literacy/management is ignored.”



“Young people who don’t “make it” are made to feel like failures and under-achievers, often leading them to isolate themselves from their ethnic communities and reject their ethnic identities. These “underachievers” told us that they “don’t feel Chinese,” “aren’t like other Asians,” or have become “the black sheep” of their families because they haven’t met what they perceive to be the expected levels of achievement for Chinese Americans.”(as cited in Lee, 2014) Positive stereotypes of Asian students is harmful at a time when schools should ideally provide support and tools for students to counter the social image of what is expected. Research has found that that also impacts the kind of support they perceive receiving from teachers (Cherng & Liu, 2017).

Schools view them as being a model minority student and expect them to be high achievers without regard for potential differences in resources and opportunities rooted in economic justice issues of income, poverty and housing stability.

“Stereotypes about Asian students excelling, particularly in math or science, can mean parents and teachers overlook a student’s academic struggles or fail to recognize good—but not perfect—achievement.”(Sparks, 2017).

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

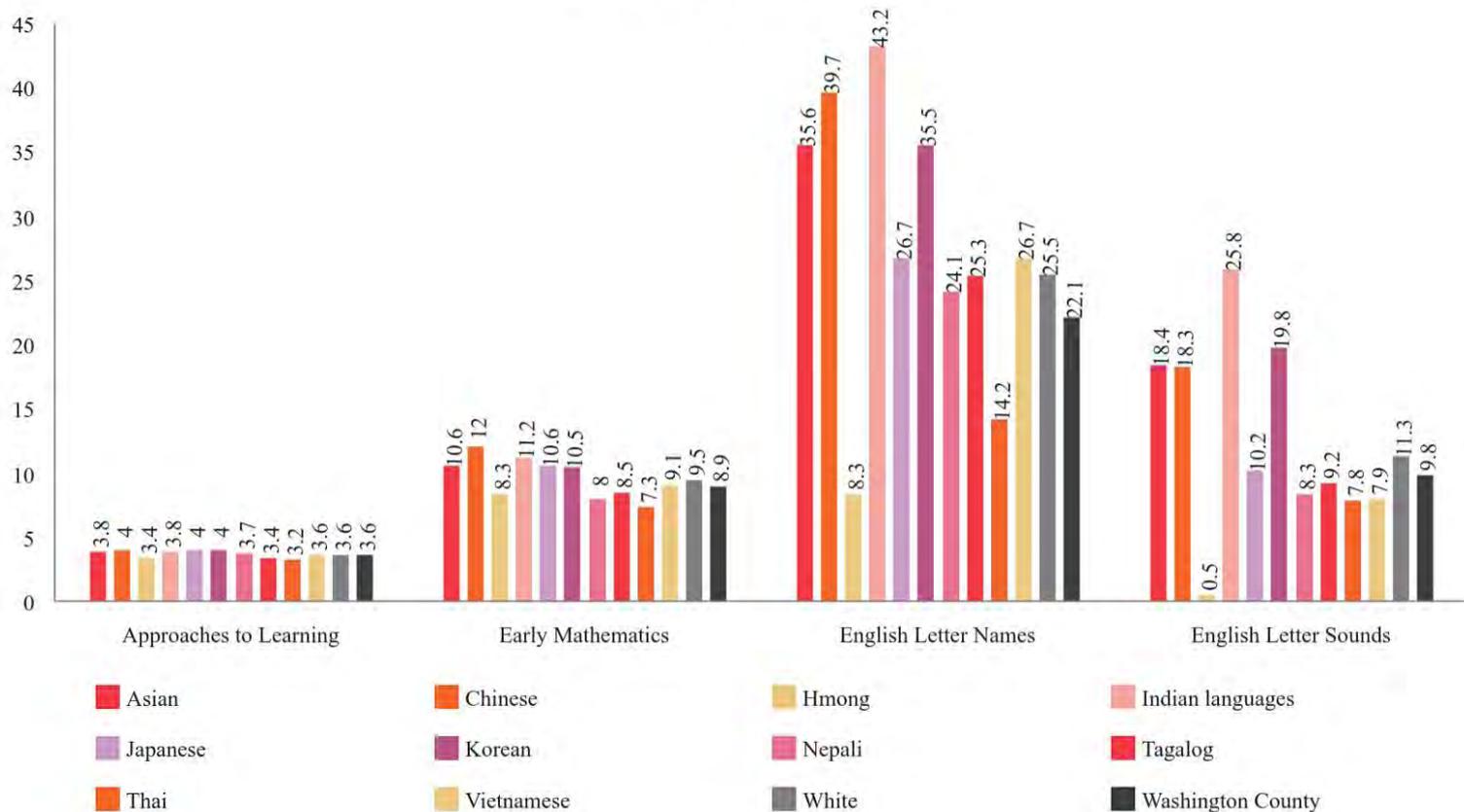
OF ASIAN STUDENTS

Disaggregated analyses (where possible) of educational outcomes of different groups within the Asian identity shows as much as it hides. It supports Asian communities’ assertions that they have different experiences in the education system; only focusing on aggregate Asian student outcomes prevents schools and communities from supporting certain groups of students that need it. Simultaneously, it conceals the racial context in which Asian students of different ethnicities and nationalities operate. To understand educational outcomes of Asian students displayed below, the expectations imposed by the model minority myth and internalized by students has to be recognized. Also, the impact of being a ‘perpetual foreigner’ on identity development and mental health, and the erasure of experiences and needs of the diversity of students that are masked by aggregate data should be understood. If done otherwise, focus group participants caution it will only continue the invisibility of their communities from racial justice conversations.

EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Early childhood learning is foundational to a child’s development and linked to readiness for school and academic success. Data from the Early Learning Hub depicts a complicated picture. There is considerable variation among groups under the Asian umbrella especially concerning early mathematics and literacy outcomes. Hmong, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese speaking children are lagging behind in all domains of early learning.

Early Learning Assessments 2015



OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN K-12

The table below lists student groups by language that are underperforming in standardized tests in Reading compared to White students in 2015. Only Chinese and Indian language speaking students outperform White students across grade levels in Reading. Note that the number of Asian groups that are not hitting standardized testing benchmarks is higher in Grade 11 than in elementary school.

Student groups that do not succeed in tests at the same rate as White students (2015)

Grade 3 Reading	Grade 8 Reading	Grade 11 Reading
Asian Limited English Proficiency	Asian Limited English Proficiency	Asian
Filipino languages	Filipino languages	Asian Limited English Proficiency
Hmong	Hmong	Filipino languages
Indonesian	Japanese	Hmong
Japanese	Khmer	Indonesian
Lao	Lao	Japanese
Nepali	Nepali	Khmer
Pusho	Pusho	Korean
Thai	Thai	Nepali
Urdu		Thai
		Vietnamese

Regarding student performance in mathematics, there are three notable trends. First, more groups of students (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Urdu speaking, Vietnamese and Indian) consistently outperform White students across all three grade levels. Second,

Hmong, Nepali, and Filipino language speaking students are consistently not able to succeed in standardized testing in mathematics. Third, similar groups of students are both performing well and are not succeeding in mathematics as they are in reading.

Student groups that do not succeed in tests at the same rate as White students (2015)

Grade 3 Math	Grade 8 Math	Grade 11 Math
Hmong	Asian Limited English Proficiency	Khmer
Indonesian	Hmong	Lao
Lao	Nepali	Nepali
Nepali	Pusho	Thai
Pusho	Thai	Filipino languages
Thai	Filipino languages	
Filipino languages		

Across grades 8 and 11, there is a lot of variation in groups that perform better or lower compared to White students in science. The language of origin identifies a small number of students in most communities taking standardized tests in science and that may be causing fluctuations in gauging achievement gaps. Chinese (19), Japanese (12) and Vietnamese (49) were the largest Asian groups by language taking science tests in 2015. Chinese and Japanese students consistently performed better than White students across both grade levels in science.

It is clear that the mainstream notion that Asians excel in academics is obscuring students from specific groups such as those Hmong, Lao, Vietnamese, Thai, Nepali and Japanese languages of origin.

Student groups that do not succeed in tests at the same rate as White students (2015)

Grade 8 Science	Grade 11 Science
Asian	Asian Limited English Proficiency
Asian Limited English Proficiency	Filipino languages
Filipino languages	Khmer
Hmong	Thai
Indian languages	
Japanese	
Lao	
Nepali	
Thai	
Vietnamese	

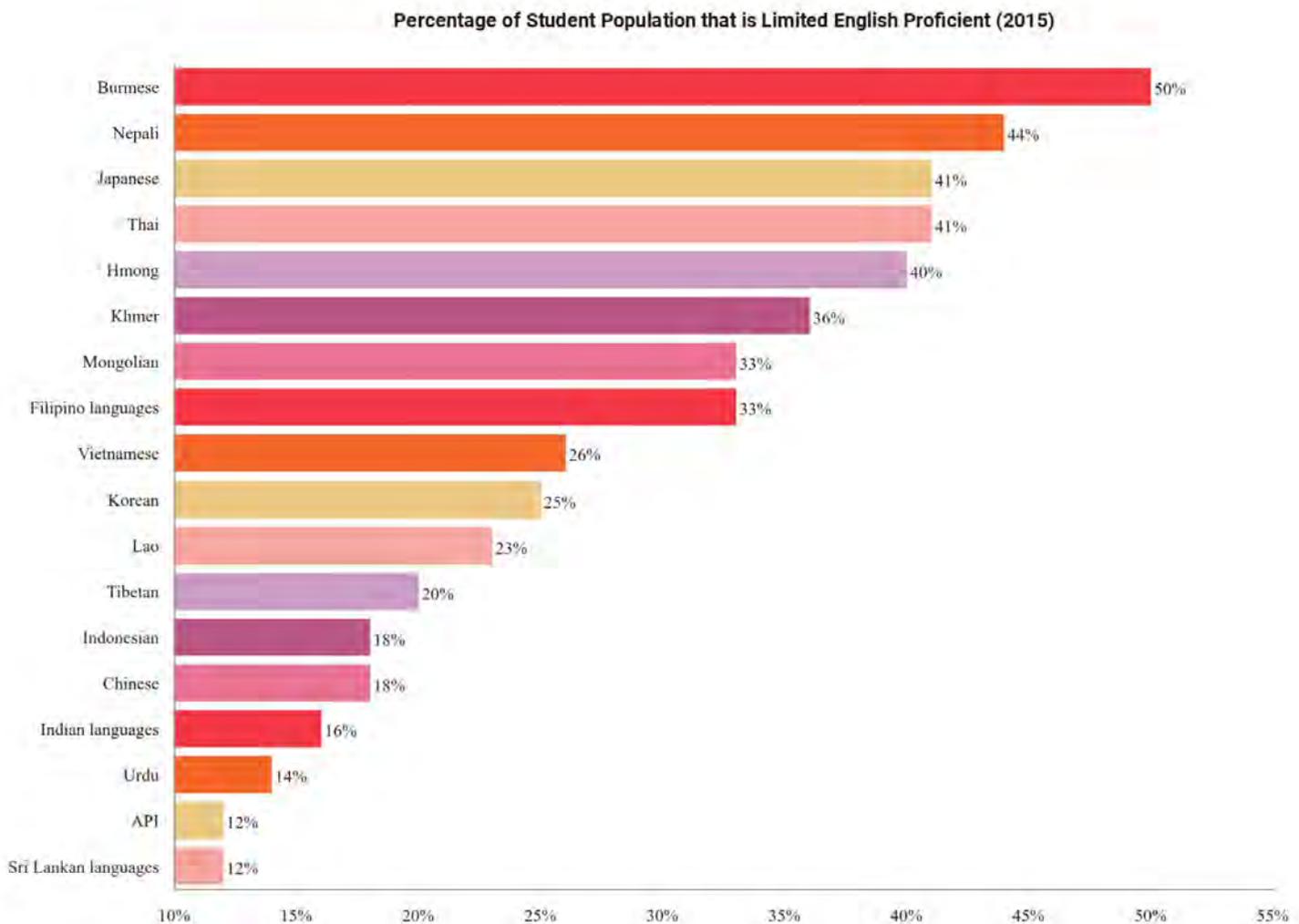
Although this section has provided what we think is the first comprehensive disaggregated analysis of Asian students in the Washington County school system, it would be myopic only to consider gaps in student performance on standardized testing. Achievement gaps do not provide answers but create new questions. Standardized tests measure how well students perform on tests, and while correlated with race and class, they are not indicative of that student's intelligence, knowledge or capabilities. Educational justice means considering factors in a student's socio-economic environment and their school environment that impacts their academic performance.

According to available American Community Survey 2011-2015 estimates, Lao, Vietnamese and Thai communities are more likely to be in poverty and less likely to be employed in high wage occupations compared to the White population. Lao, Hmong, and Vietnamese communities largely immigrated to the US as refugees, which also affect their educational attainment and their income levels. They are also more likely to be at the cusp of housing insecurity because housing pressure burden a higher proportion of their home owning and renting households, (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Oregon Department of Education disaggregated by student's language of origin shows in its limited

way that Korean and Vietnamese students have particularly experienced housing insecurity—lacked a stable night-time residence in 2015. However because schools perpetuate the model minority myth and do not acknowledge varied student experiences in the process of aggregating Asian student experiences, they are unable to provide targeted resources and support to specific student groups.

It is also evident that students of Asian descent, designated as having limited English proficiency (LEP), are struggling with standardized testing in reading, science, and mathematics. Oregon Department of Education identified 1,588 Asian Pacific

Islander students with limited English proficiency in 2015. Although that number has declined since 2009 along with the overall decline in the LEP student population in Washington County, the proportion of “Asian Pacific Islander” students has increased from 13% to 14% (Oregon Department of Education). *In fact, when broken down by language, most Asian groups have proportions of LEP students that are larger than the 12% of “Asian Pacific Islander” students that are LEP of the total Asian Pacific Islander student population.*

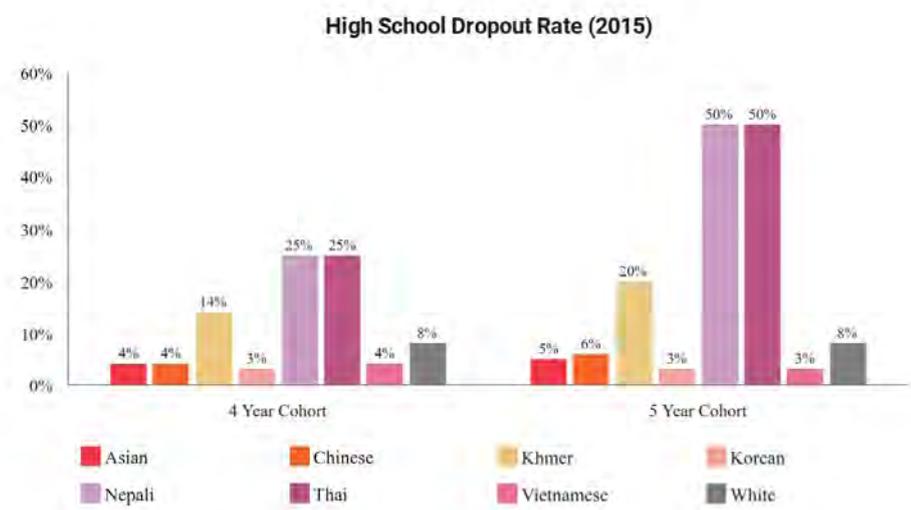


11% of the “Asian Pacific Islander” student population in 2015 were chronically absent from school, which means that those students were missing 10 percent or more of school days due to excused and/or unexcused absences and/or expulsion or temporary suspension from school (Oregon Department of Education). Research has found that “chronically absent students have delayed achievement in early years with widening gaps over time, higher suspension and dropout rates, and decreased high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence” (Chief Education Office). Oregon Department of Education data collapses Asian student experiences with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities which makes it impossible to understand who is missing school and disengaging from the curriculum and for what reasons.

Focus group participants who were former students in the Washington County school system primarily recall witnessing their African-American and Latino peers being expelled or suspended. In their recollections, the “model minority” perception that Asian students abide by the rules and are studious, informed their interactions with teachers. When we disaggregate expulsion and suspension data by the language of origin, we find that Chuukese speaking and Vietnamese students are the primary targets of punitive disciplinary practices. *Considering that many Asian students come from English speaking households, it is impossible to figure out which student experiences analysis of suspensions/expulsions is missing.*

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES

Graduation rates for Asian students taken as a whole have remained steady at 91–94% between 2011 and 2016. When one explores high school dropout rates broken down by the language of origin, there are incredibly diverse experiences. Khmer, Nepali, and Thai students have higher dropout rates than White students. These communities are also small in number so rather than depending on specific dropout calculations, the graph below is illustrative of patterns in graduation and dropout.



COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATES

Oregon Department of Education data about college enrollment rates in 2015 show that several Asian high school graduates of different ethnicities and nationalities attend college at higher rates than White graduates as well as county graduates.

“Because immigration policies after 1965 favor individuals with higher levels of education and professional skills, many Asian immigrants are highly educated when they arrive in the United States. They bring a specific “success frame,” which is strictly defined as earning a degree from an elite university and working in a high-status field. This success frame is reinforced in many local Asian communities, which make resources such as college preparation courses and tutoring available to group members, including their low-income members”(Zhou & Lee, 2017).

They do so because elite credentials are seen as a safeguard against discrimination in the labor market(Wu, Garcia & Kopelman, 2017).

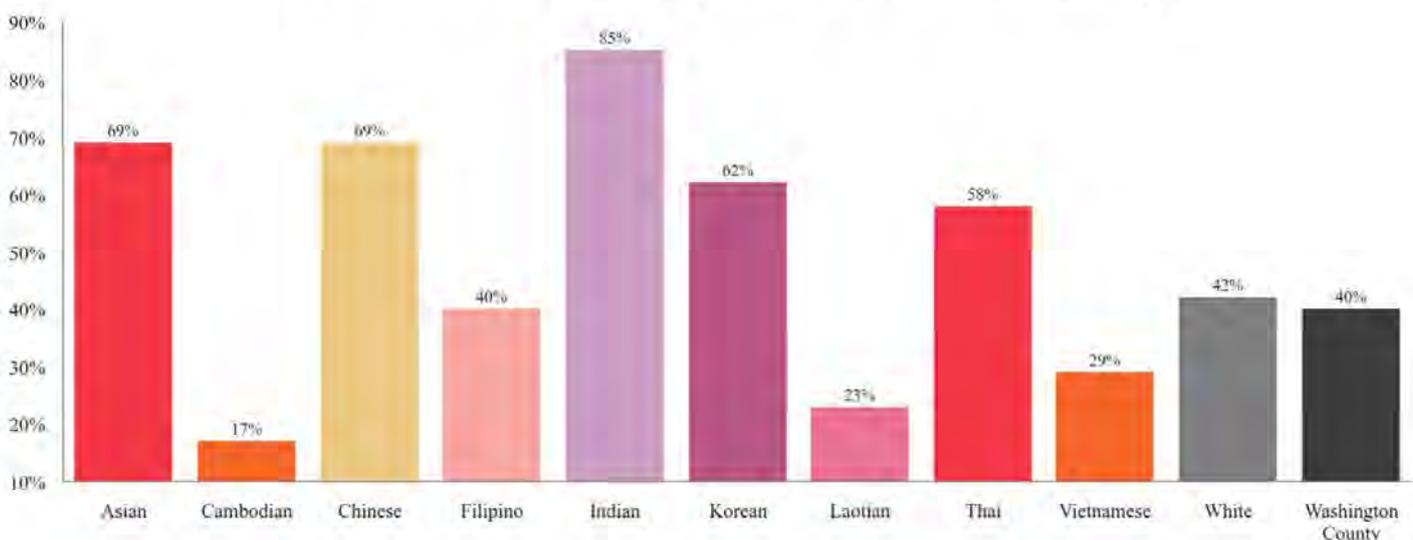
However, Hmong, Urdu, Lao and Thai speaking high school graduates were enrolling in higher education institutions at lower rates than White students and Washington County students overall in 2014 (Oregon Department of Education). This is another situation in which disaggregating data shows the breadth of outcomes that “Asian Pacific Islander” label hides.

Focusing on “Asian Pacific Islander” college enrollment rates being higher than White and county rates makes institutions also overlook the Khmer, Vietnamese and Nepali speaking student experiences that are enrolling in colleges at lower rates than the overall API category.

According to Karthick Ramakrishnan, a public policy professor at the University of California, Riverside, Southeast Asians typically get lost in the numbers even though they have lower levels of educational attainment. The graphs below show the wide variation in educational attainment among Asian communities.

It, therefore, becomes essential to ask where are they attending, whether they graduate and what are their college experiences. Research points to two different trends. Robert Teranishi, a professor of education at UCLA and the director of the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) says that the largest concentration of Asian-American students (about 50%) attend community colleges and that’s where enrollment of Asian Americans is increasing the fastest (Hung-2017). In contrast, another body of research finds that Asian Americans are more likely than

Proportion of Community in Washington County with Bachelor Degree or higher



other groups to believe that attending an elite university—and preferably an Ivy League one—is a necessary step to a successful career (Wu & Garcia & Kopelman, 2017). They would rather be a below-average student at a top-ten school than an above-average student at a top 100 school.

No matter which college, Asians are treated as a homogenous group. “They’re generally overlooked and underserved when it comes to college opportunity programs, college access, or even student services or programs on campus and really, it’s rooted in this model-minority myth. There’s not a lot of understanding about their actual experiences or outcomes.” (Hung, 2017).

According to Shanni Liang, a counselor for a mental health hotline in New York City, “usually the model minority [label] does cause a lot of anxiety in a lot of the second-generation children. We do get a lot of callers that have their first mental health breakdown in college.” (Fuchs, 2017). In 2011, two-thirds of Southeast Asians in the US didn’t have any form of post-secondary education, half of those who entered college dropped out (“The Relevance of Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders in the College Completion Agenda”, 2011).

Asian and Asian-Americans in Washington County enter the education justice conversation from a unique vantage point. They are both propped up as a “model minority” to judge other students of color, and treated as a “perpetual foreigner.” Their immigration experiences have swung from being considered exotic, alien and degenerate to being viewed as law-abiding, studious people ready to assimilate into mainstream US society. Schools who presume that Asian American students are smart, disciplined, and studious, provide them with extra help leading to better academic performances. That combined with communities valuing education as the only path to economic and social mobility and countering racial bias. However, the same schools also lump all students of Asian descent into one category and do not recognize or support different lived experiences. There may also be little support for students’ mental health arising from having to keep up with “model minority” standards as well as their identity development, which is under onslaught from being a “perpetual foreigner.”



COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

During the focus groups, community members reviewed incarceration rates in Washington County from 1990 to 2015. Black and Latino communities are over-represented in the prison population compared to their share of the county population, and fewer incarcerated White and Asian/Pacific Islanders compared to their county population (Vera Institute of Justice).

In fact, APIs in Washington County have the lowest incarceration rate at 32.1 per 100,000 residents age 15-64; Black and Latino residents in the county have the highest incarceration rates.

In their review of the data, focus group participants brought up three issues. First, they juxtaposed their experiences as Asians in the US with experiences of African-Americans with law enforcement in the country. Two, they brought up concerns about the type of data law enforcement record about whom they stop and imprison and questioned the type of experiences aggregate data may be hiding. Three, they emphasized issues of community safety especially related to hate violence that isn't adequately captured or addressed by their government and law enforcement.

MODEL MINORITY AND ANTI-BLACK RACISM

During and after the Civil Rights Movement, Black people were told: “if they can succeed despite centuries of racism through their hard work, why can't you?”. Both Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon ran campaigns in the 1960s on “law and order” platforms that conflated race with crime and hinged on ideas of Anti-Blackness. In the words of scholar Naomi Murukawa, “The U.S. did not confront a crime problem that was then racialized[;] it confronted a race problem that was then criminalized.” It was in this context that the *model minority myth emerged, casting Asian Americans as law-abiding and hardworking, and implicitly enforcing the permanent criminalization of Blackness*”(Jung, 2012).

Under-representation of Asians, taken as a whole, in the criminal justice system has meant that Asian-American experiences with different types of law enforcement have not been studied much. Nevertheless, there is a small but significant body of research shows that Asian-American youth, and adults, are less likely to be incarcerated or sentenced and/or punished similarly to White offenders compared to their Black and Latino peers because law enforcement and sentencing processes attribute them with model minority traits. Law enforcement does not target or punish Asians and Asian-Americans the same way they do Black people (Kitano, 1969; Nopper, 2014). This, in turn, reinforces both mainstream and intra-community notions that they are the “good minority” vis-a-vis “bad” people of color. According to the 2016 report of the Juvenile Justice Information System data about Washington County, Asian youth (aged 10-17) are less likely to be referred to juvenile court compared to White youth, and their cases are more likely to be handled through informal means, such as a diversion program. In their article “Asian and Pacific Islander Youth Victimization and Delinquency: A Case for Disaggregated Data,” Thao N. Le and Isami Arifuku state

that the current means for collecting and accessing data on API juvenile justice issues are inadequate (cited in Nopper, 2014). That may reinforce the common stereotypes of Asians as the “model minority.”

CRIMINALIZATION OF SOUTHEAST

ASIANS AND INCARCERATION-

DEPORTATION PIPELINE

Focus group participants lament the lack of good data to understand who in the big Asian box is impacted by law enforcement and how. The criminal justice system in Washington County uses inconsistent measures to count race in a way that confuses any inquiry about particular criminal justice experiences. Washington County Sheriff's Office has the following racial/ethnic identifiers.

People in Jail	Traffic Stops
Asian	Asian
Black	Black
Hispanic	Latino
Indian	Native American
Unknown	Other
White	Unknown
	White

They use the “Asian” label but considering that the boundaries of that identity itself are not fixed and because they may be identifying Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders in the same box, it’s impossible to drill down to specific community interactions with the criminal justice system. The invisibility of Asian communities in the policy imagination or ahistorically lumping them together inhibits further inquiry because they are not seen as being impacted by incarceration. National level data suggests that that is not the case. First, research shows that Southeast Asians are particularly impacted. “In the years following the mass resettlements caused by the Vietnam War, imprisonment of Southeast Asians ballooned.” (Yam, 2018). The Asian-American and Pacific Islander prisoner population increased by 250 percent in the 1990s (Jung, et al., 2014).

Second, it shows the intersection between incarceration and deportation.

The Korean American Coalition of Oregon organized around Adam Crasper's detention and deportation in 2017. Crasper, a Korean-American and former Hillsboro resident is a Korean adoptee to a family that chronically abused him and failed to file his naturalization papers. Adam had a criminal record that began with him "stealing" his belongings after he was kicked out by his abusive family. Like Adam, Southeast Asians, particularly those of Cambodian and Vietnamese descent who had come into contact with the criminal justice system in the past have been funneled into immigration detention since 2017 in the US, (Yam, 2018).

Southeast Asian immigrants are three to four times more likely to be deported for old criminal convictions compared to other groups of immigrants in the country (Jung, et al., 2014).



Although many are legal residents with green cards in the US, at least

15,000

Southeast Asians have received deportation orders over the past two decades.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HATE VIOLENCE

On February 10th, 2016, Abdul Jamil Kamawal, a 68-year-old Afghani-American man, was bludgeoned to death with a shovel in Metzger, unincorporated Washington County. On February 22nd 2017, a man shot and killed an Indian engineer and injured another while shouting at them to “get out of the country” in Olathe, Kansas. On May 26th 2017, a White supremacist killed two people in Portland when they stood up against his harassing two Brown women, one of whom was wearing a hijab. South Asians in the United States experienced a spike in hate violence and rhetoric during the 2016 presidential election similar to levels seen the year following the September 11, 2001 attacks (South Asian Americans Leading Together). Southern Poverty Law Center reported that Oregon experienced the highest per capita hate incidents in the US in the month after the 2016 presidential elections. The number of reported anti-Muslim hate crimes spiked in 2015, growing by 66%, according to FBI’s annual “Hate Crimes Statistics” report (FBI, 2016). Likely an undercount since it’s basis is on voluntary self-reporting, and generally, the lack of trust and confidence between communities of color and law enforcement leads to under-reporting. Asians, especially those of South Asian and Southeast Asian descent, are extremely concerned about their personal and community safety.

“I always felt that Washington County, Beaverton, and Portland were diverse but even in here there are pockets now where I don’t know about going there.”

Focus group participants opined that the local government has not undertaken any measures to address hate violence, and identify their public safety especially against racist hate violence as a top priority.

“Positive stereotypes don’t protect us and keep us safe.”

Consequently, community members feel less safe in public and develop coping strategies accordingly.

“I’m watchful. At the same time, I guess I don’t put myself at risk. I don’t take the MAX as much I used to.”

“In August there is a big festival in downtown. It’s called the India Festival, and a lot of people dress up at home and take MAX. There is a lot of fears about becoming a target for violence because of our attire.”

These kind of fears are not new for Asian communities, especially Muslims, Sikhs and Brown Asians. Memories of the post-9/11 backlash against Muslim or Muslim-passing Brown Asian populations are vivid and recent in community history as they are again targeted by what Jaideep Singh calls “Islamophobia” (Singh, 2016). It “comprises a structure of Muslim-hating, demonizing as anti-American a visibly identifiable “other” stigmatized by its racial and religious distance from society’s presumed “norm.” This burgeoning racism sharply limits the safety and freedom of Muslim Americans, and those perceived as Muslim.” (Singh, 2016). Asian communities overall also share experiencing daily microaggressions stemming from the “perpetual foreigner” stereotype. Asian Americans are continuously “otherized” them as foreigners, and are targeted with a daily barrage of microaggressions that question their identity (“No, no, where are you *really* from?”; “You speak really good English”).

Focus group participants propose the following solutions to increase community safety, and combat racism fuelled hate in the county:

- Culturally responsive education to promote intercultural understanding.
- Cultural responsive support staff at schools.
- Community organizing and rallying community leaders to advocate around this issue.
- Build a database of hate crimes that community trusts to report as a basis for advocacy.
- Education of and collaboration with law enforcement.

HEALTH JUSTICE

Focus group participants gave positive feedback to local government for their public health policies. At the same time, they are curious about the extent of racial disparities in the healthcare system because their community is always lumped with other groups in the “Asian” or “Asian Pacific Islander” box.

They want to push public agencies to do better by getting a more nuanced understanding of health outcomes of the different groups that are clubbed together under the Asian label.

The Washington County Public Health department has data available about mortality, birth risk factors and infant mortality for Asian communities but it's problematic due to the inappropriate amalgamation of all those within the Asian communities. Available health data on Asians are of limited value because of the attempt to encompass the enormous diversity among groups under the Asian umbrella. That practice has obscured communities' health status. Without disaggregating the data, it is impossible to detect broad variations in health status among Asian populations, hiding serious health problems between subgroups. For example, while a study showed that Asian and Pacific Islanders have incidence rates of cervical cancer similar to White women in the U.S., this trend does not hold true of all Asian groups in this country. Vietnamese-American women have rates of cervical cancer five times higher than Whites (Lema, et al., 2006). Vietnamese-American women also have a cervical cancer incidence rate that is 7.4 times the incidence rate of Japanese-American women (43 vs. 5.8 per 100,000 women) (Lema, et al., 2006). In many states, Vietnamese women have the highest rate of cervical cancer of any ethnic group (Do, et al., 2007). Therefore, *readers are urged caution on presumptions of equity when no disparities have been found or when data shows that Asian communities are doing well.*

HEALTHCARE CONCERNS

LIVED ENVIRONMENT

Focus group participants are concerned about their lived environment impacting their health and of county residents at large. They like living in Washington County because of “plentiful green spaces” including recreational opportunities at Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation and commend their jurisdictions for environmental sustainability initiatives. Communities are however extremely concerned about traffic congestion, pollution, inadequate public transit infrastructure, and food deserts in Washington County. They caution that these environmental issues have a disproportionate impact on the health of communities of color.

They propose that public agencies consider reforming transportation infrastructure to encourage the use of public transit, carpooling and biking. They advise public transit be made affordable for low-income communities, for affordable housing to develop near transit hubs and farmer’s markets.

In addition to public health concerns, mental health and elder care are prominent healthcare priorities for Asians and Asian-Americans.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health rises as a significant health concern for Asian communities and focus group participants expressed a strong need to destigmatize the issue.

“It’s a cultural taboo. You know coming from Asia you’re not mentally ill, you’re just a little different, your family is going to take care of you, they’re going to isolate you, they are going to do what they need to do. We are getting there, and we are slowly catching up.”

Breaking the cultural silence around mental health issues uncovers a varied range of experiences for refugees, youth, and LGBTQIA peoples.

Many Asian communities, particularly Southeast Asian, arrived here as refugees. The refugee experience is one that has been closely tied to significant mental health challenges. While economic supports are provided for refugees for a period of eight months, and those with families are eligible for the TANF program, there is considerable encouragement to take the first job one is offered, even if the wages cannot support the family and even if it is a position considerably below the professions in which one is experienced and credentialed. As a result of this underemployment and ongoing issues of racial discrimination and social exclusion, coupled with the health challenges of being a survivor of dislocation and violence, Asian refugees are at considerable risk for mental health challenges such as depression and social isolation (Curry-Stevens, 2011).

Asian youth are concerned about mental well-being as they negotiate the dual impact of the “model minority” stereotype of the high academic achiever and being considered a “perpetual foreigner,” which can harm self-esteem and identity development.¹⁰ In addition, focus group participants talk about the impact of bullying and hate incidents on youth.

“I can’t imagine being in high school right now in an environment where hate crimes are happening in schools. How does that impact your overall well-being? We really need to try to address them as quickly as possible and as thoroughly as possible. We know the data suggests that Asian Asian youth have one of the highest rates of suicide in the country.”

Asians who identify as LGBTQIA negotiate the cultural, generational and societal sanctioning, which can take a toll on mental health as well.

“In my personal family, my sister is gay and just dealing with that growing up just seeing the community reactions to that... I think that affects mental health. That is an experience that you carry with you forever..if your community rejects you in some ways.”

Asian-Americans are less likely than other communities to reach out to mental health services. However, when they do

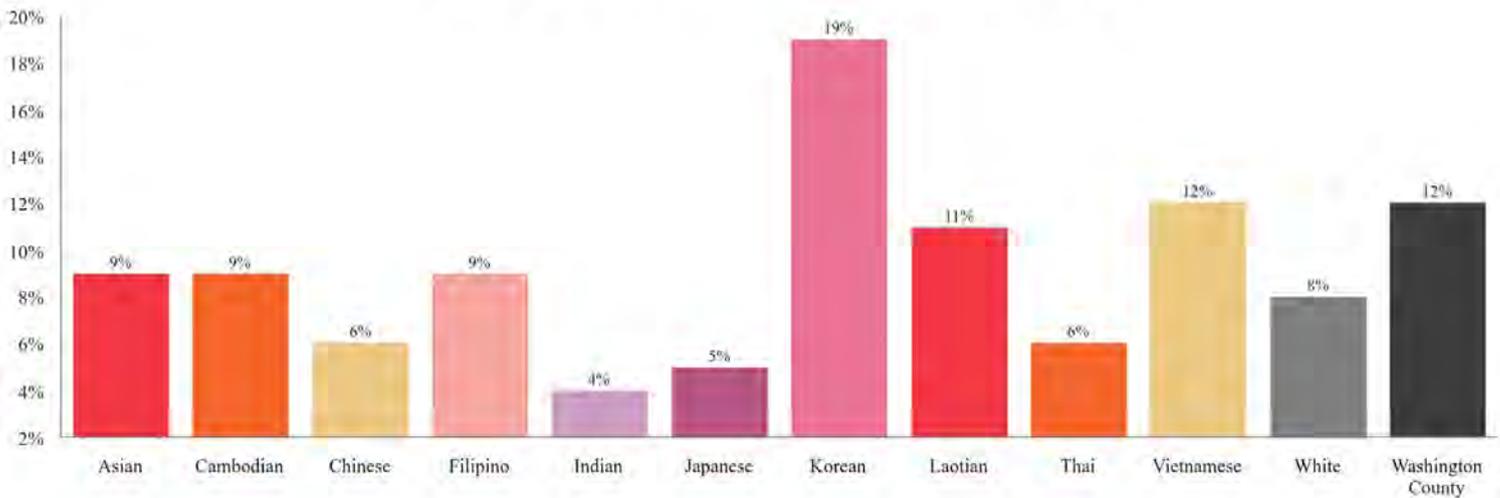
reach out, they don’t find services that work for them. What people who seek care “are telling us is that they don’t think that psychotherapy, which is designed for white Americans, really works for them,” said Hyeouk Chris Hahm, an Associate Professor at the Boston University School of Social Work (Gorman, 2015).

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Health insurance coverage is typically used to evaluate access to healthcare. By that measure, while there is seeming equivalence between Asian and White people in Washington County, Koreans, Vietnamese and Laotians have larger segments of their populations who do not have access to healthcare. In fact, *after Latinos and Native Americans, Koreans have the lowest rate of health insurance coverage in Washington County.* Focus group participants pointed out that Korean seniors especially may experience social isolation and poverty, which combined with the unavailability of services in their language makes health care access difficult. Indians have the highest rate of health insurance coverage. Considering that a majority of them came to the country as high skilled labor under the 1965 Immigration Act, their jobs in Washington County assure them health coverage.

Data disaggregated by group shows disparities in healthcare coverage. However, the above data doesn’t say anything at all about the quality of healthcare and community experiences with the system.

Percentage of Population Without Health Insurance (2011-2015)



“Being “covered” does not mean those people are healthy or receiving benefits.”

49% of people sampled across different Asian groups in a 2016 national survey of Asian-Americans said care for elderly was a serious concern (Ramakrishnan et al, 2017). In Washington County, focus group participants prioritized health services for seniors especially those with limited English language proficiency. The Korean and Southeast Asian communities in particular shared issues of poverty and social isolation among their seniors. They call for workforce diversity in healthcare services, attention to cultural specificity, and interpretation and translation in Asian languages.

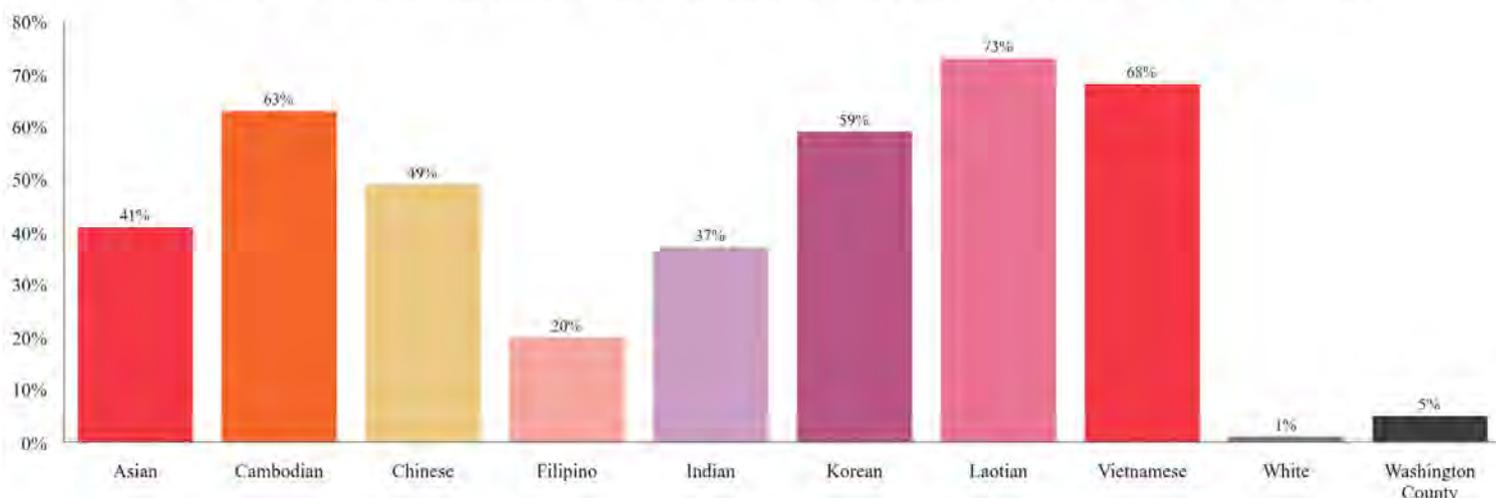
“Older generation of Koreans are still suffering from language barrier and less resources, which results in less access to services such as healthcare.”

“Older Asians are using family and friends if language is a barrier. If no one is there to help they will do without.”

Focus group participants also brought up the cost of healthcare as a barrier to access and provision. Rising healthcare costs have impacted the ability of Asian small businesses to provide healthcare as well as ability of even those covered to afford healthcare. In the 2016 national survey of Asian-Americans, respondents identified the cost of healthcare as a serious problem facing the community (Ramakrishnan, Wong, Lee, & Lee, 2017). In 2012, Asian Americans in Oregon didn’t have access to a regular doctor to a rate higher than average; less likely to have had a routine checkup and hadn’t seen a doctor in a year (Asian Americans Advancing Justice, 2015). According to a 2016 national survey of different Asian groups, cost of medical care and debt due to medical costs came up as a serious concern for Cambodian, Hmong, Bangladeshi and Indian respondents among others (Ramakrishnan et al, 2017).

An equity lens to healthcare emphasizes environment, social inclusion, education, food and similar social determinants as precursors to health. Asian communities in Washington County emphasize a holistic understanding of health that addresses the experiences of the youth, elderly, refugee and LGBTQIA people in their communities.

Percentage of Seniors >65 years with Limited English Proficiency (American Community Survey 2011-2015)



BUILDING POLITICAL POWER AND REPRESENTATION

Whether it was identifying top priorities for their communities in Washington County or providing feedback to government officials and messages to local elected officials, focus group participants again and again emphasized representation as a big component of the change they want to see in Washington County. In 2015, only 3.8% of public sector employees in Washington County identified as Asian when they comprised 12% of the County population that year. In contrast, 84% of the public sector workforce was White when they were 67% of the population.

“We need to actively recruit and encourage people of color to hold and have government positions.”

They appreciate initiatives such as those by the City of Beaverton to institute a Diversity Advisory Board and actively welcoming to LGBTQIA, Muslim and other traditionally minority/under-represented communities. However, community members feel that “there is no real power even if there are diversity boards.” Ultimately they want to see a diverse roster of elected officials and local government employees that reflect the communities they serve.

“We are not well represented in our local government. We are never presented in our Capitol. You go and look at our legislators and see the posters of all the faces. There are no Asians out there so who’s speaking for us.”

According to focus group participants, civic engagement in their communities is the best way to bring about that change. At the same time, they are conscious of political apathy among their communities and strategize about how to counter it. Community members cite immigration status, language issues, lack of civic engagement education and distrust of government as some of the barriers they see occurring in their communities. They offer solutions to spur civic engagement accordingly.

Focus group participants brought up immigration as shaping their communities’ political engagement in various ways. The American Community Survey (2011–2015) estimates that 57% of Asians in Washington County are immigrants, whether they have lived in the US for a long time or are recent arrivals. Considering the manner in which immigration laws excluded immigration from Asia for a long time, many of those who were born in the US or Washington County, are descendants of immigrants. Both South and Southeast Asian focus group participants brought up skepticism stemming from their home country as

“We need to be involved and let the government know, let our legislatures know what we need before any policies are made. We have to go out and be part of the government.”

“How can we trust our current elected officials to improve representation in our city when they refuse to yield power and their incentives don’t always align with our diverse communities?”

affecting their community’s civic engagement especially if they are immigrant and older. Southeast Asians primarily immigrated to the US as refugees fleeing from the ravages of the Vietnam War, Khmer genocide and Cold War upheaval in that part of the world. As refugee communities, there is a strong inclination to distrust government as well as doubts about one’s ability to influence those in power. South Asians, especially Indians had a different immigration process to the US. Indian immigrants, whether in the nineteenth century or after 1965 Immigration Act allowed their entry, came to the US primarily as economic migrants. Their skepticism about politics originates from democratic pessimism about the manner in which they perceive politics at home.

“We come from India and in India, our politics are dirty and corrupt. I think we assume that it’s the same thing here. Politics here is not as bad as back home but people think ‘why get involved in the mess?’”

Research about political participation of Indian and Vietnamese immigrants in Texas finds that there is a strong connection to “homeland politics” in both communities, meaning that there is an interest and involvement in politics in their home country (Brettell & Reed-Danahay, 2012). Focus group participants noted the same trend among immigrants especially those who are older in Washington County and opine that that probably tempers interest in US politics. Community members also observe an immigration-generational divide.

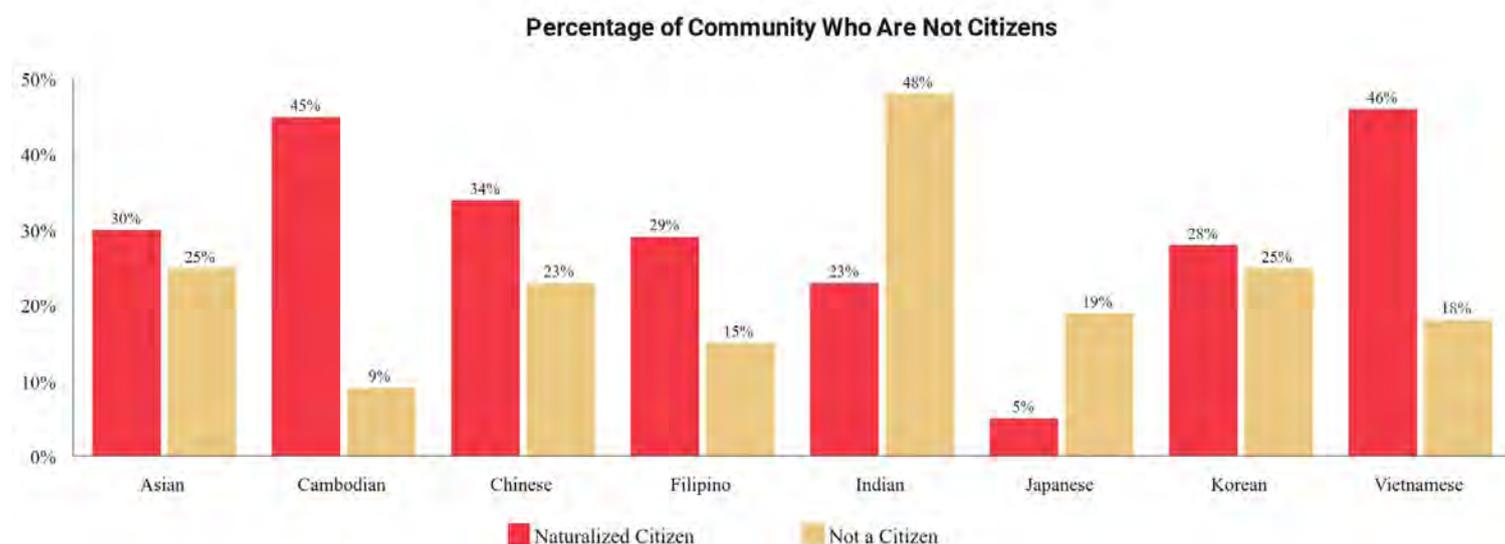
Asian-American youth, especially insofar as they are born in the US or

are third, fourth generation immigrants, are more engaged civic life in formal (voting) ways as well as informal (active in community organizing and advocacy).

Ramakrishnan (2008) found that length of time a community has spent in the US is significant when predicting political and civic engagement among Asian Americans. As immigrant populations spend more time in the U.S., they are also more likely to be exposed to political and civic institutions, have a deeper understanding of political information, and have an increased stake in both local and national politics (Ramakrishnan, 2008).

Immigration also dampens civic engagement in communities that have low rates of citizenry.

Community members reiterate the importance of expanding definitions of political engagement beyond exercising the right to vote and thinking about opportunities to engage those who can’t vote. Consider the variation in communities about rates of naturalization and non-citizenry.¹¹



Loosening of US immigration laws in 1965 opened the doors to highly skilled Indian immigrants who are performing well in terms of socio-economic and academic indicators. However, almost half of the community are not citizens. Caught in long waiting times for permanent resident status and/or citizenship may leave them in a limbo that on the one hand encourages them to build networks of support and community, and on the other hand makes them apathetic to institutional US politics.

“We raise lots of dollars for our own community needs. Indians are very active giving to nonprofit organizations, we started temples and stuff like that. When it comes to politics, we don’t have a voice.”

This is a community that founded the Ghadar party in Oregon in solidarity with the Indian independence movement against the British, and whose member sued the US government to be granted the right to citizenship in the US in the 1920s (PBS, 2000). They challenge themselves and local government to offer opportunities to engage communities such as theirs that don’t have voting eligible populations but are an integral part of society and economy.



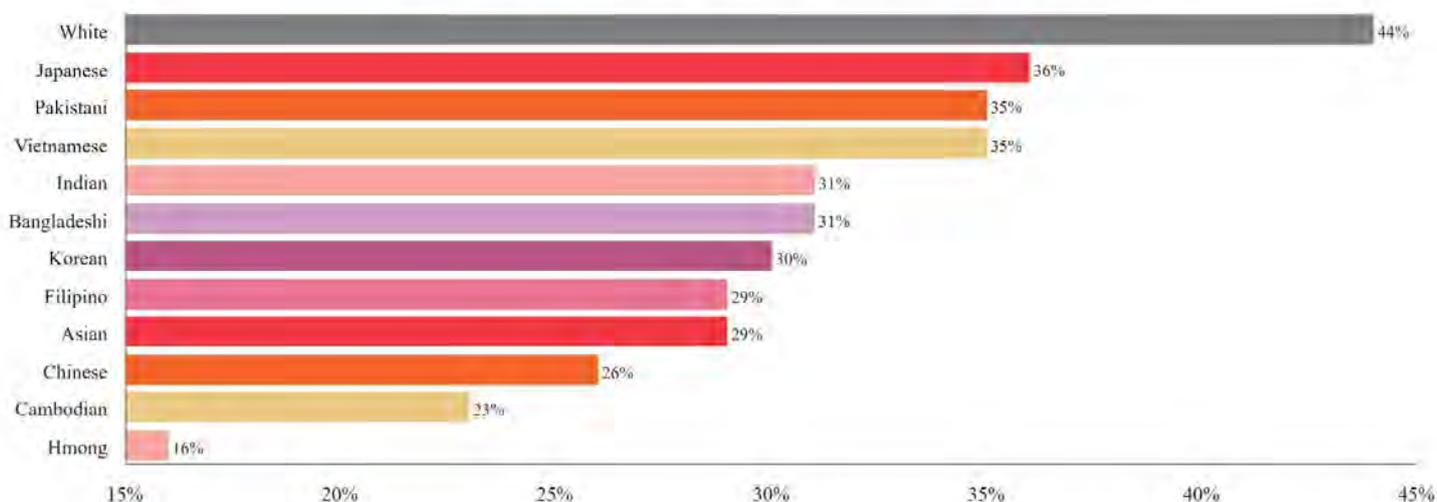
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Apart from the current impact of immigration on certain communities’ engagement in civic life, Asian populations in Washington County are combatting the lingering legacy of immigration restrictions in the 19th-20th centuries and historical disenfranchisement of Asian-American populations. Focus group participants mention a common refrain in the community—“does my vote count?” especially among elders. The perceived political apathy can be understood in the context of the multigenerational disenfranchisement of Asian-American populations and being marginalized from political influence as a “perpetual foreigner.”

Due to various exclusionary laws stymying Asian communities from settling down in the US, mainstream discourse treats them as ‘perpetual foreigners’ who are not part of the body politic. The Chinese Exclusion Act and Japanese internment camps are two stark reminders of how much the US and Oregon feared and persecuted Asians as foreigners. Lien (2001) says that Asians and Asian-Americans are depicted as “superachievers in the socioeconomic sphere, underachievers in political participation, and perpetual outsiders to the mainstream culture.”(Lien, 2001).

“I was out registering voters. I encountered a lot of misperceptions like “Oh you can’t vote, you’re not a citizen”. I also encounter this perception about Asian people that “you don’t vote, you don’t care, you’re not civically engaged, none of you guys run for office.”

Political Party Contact by Group Pre-November 2016 Elections



In fact, in 2016, Asian Americans posted their biggest gains ever in voting, with more than 1.1 million new voters. Between 2000 and 2012, the average increase in each presidential cycle was about 620,000 voters (Ramakrishnan et al, 2017). In Washington County, 68% of Asian communities are eligible to vote and hold leadership positions in government, i.e., adult and citizens. However, the post-November 2016 Election National Asian American Survey found that Asians on the whole as well as by group were the least likely to be contacted by any of the major political parties to campaign in the run-up to the election.

Asian-American immigrants have been silenced in electoral politics for a long time. Those who were settled in the US were prohibited from becoming naturalized citizens during the late nineteenth-early 20th century. Accordingly, being “alien[s] ineligible to citizenship,” Asian immigrants could not participate in elections when the right to vote was restricted to citizens. This disenfranchisement continued until the civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century. Asian-Americans did not gain full citizenship until the legal reforms of the late 1940s. In 1959 Oregon voters finally ratified the Fifteenth Amendment, nearly ninety years after its official ratification by the United States in 1870. It wasn’t until 1975 amendments to the Voting Rights Act

that jurisdictions were required to provide election-related information to communities including Asians in languages other than English (Henderson, 2016).

They see a lot of potential in mobilization amongst youth. Focus group participants say that the strength of their communities lies in the value they place in bringing people together whether it is over food, at cultural associations and gatherings or faith institutions. They view those strengths as opportunities that can be tapped into for political education and civic engagement.

Community Members identify their church groups, existing calendar of cultural events as spaces to create public forums, conduct voter registration and education in their languages. They view schools as opportunities to conduct voter education, events such as the Beaverton night market and cultural community events as spaces to invite elected officials to engage with their communities.

They also emphasise the need for collective action with other communities of color and for a multi-community space in Washington County to gather and organize with them.

- It wasn’t until 1975 amendments to the Voting Rights Act that jurisdictions
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- Asians in languages other than English

BRIEF COMMUNITY HISTORIES EXTRACTED FROM UNSETTLING PROFILES SERIES IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

CHINESE

The Chinese community holds standing as the oldest Asian immigrant group of the region. Chinese immigration into Oregon begins in the 19th century. As early as 1822, state representative John Floyd urged Congress to settle 2,000 Chinese laborers to the region. Despite opposition from white settlers, Chinese laborers migrated, mainly looking to make money so they could return to China and provide for their families. These sojourners, immigrants who planned on returning to their native country, were hired to do manual labor: mining, railroad construction, laundry, fish canning, and cook. Some men started small businesses to serve the growing Chinese community. Similar to Chinatowns in other west coast towns, the early Chinese community in Oregon was made up predominantly of men; an 1870 population statistic lists Chinese male population at 3,232 in contrast to the Chinese women at 98.

Tensions often rose between white and Asian laborers, as employers often pitted the two groups against each other in an effort to drive down wages. This pattern of racial tension rising from native-White groups viewing immigrants as a labor threat is one that was experienced by Kanakas earlier and repeats itself often in American and Oregon history. Although Chinese immigrants played a critical role in building the railroads, white workers physically prevented the Chinese from attendance at the ceremonial driving of the golden spike, the symbol of joining of the two railroads. In 1856-57 the Oregon Territory Legislature approved a \$2 per month tax of all Chinese miners (equivalent to \$50.70 today, or \$608/year). This taxation is noted as the first formal discrimination of the Chinese in Oregon. Reflecting anti-Asian sentiment in the Country at large and the West in particular, there would be a number of other Anti-Asian legislation passed over the next two centuries.

After passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, federal

legislation banning the Chinese from entering the US, Chinese communities throughout Oregon migrated towards Multnomah County, where they found employment as cooks, barbers, laborers, and business owners. Following the Civil War and the end of slavery, when many were working towards granting civil rights to African-American citizens, Oregon passed its miscegenation law, prohibiting intermarriage between whites and “negroes, Chinese, Kanaka, and Indians.” Other states carried their own miscegenation laws, but Oregon’s was noticeably different in its inclusion of Chinese, Kanaka, and Native Americans. In fact, Oregon had already passed a previous law (in 1862) prohibiting the marriage between Blacks and Whites. Oregon’s miscegenation law was finally repealed in 1951 while Washington’s miscegenation law had been repealed in 1868.

In 1887 more than 30 Chinese miners were massacred in Hells Canyon in northeast Oregon. The massacre and the cover up by the local community are reflective of the hostile environment that existed in Oregon for Chinese residents. Chinese miners were paid $\frac{1}{4}$ of the wages of White workers, yet animosity from White workers was still directed at Chinese workers, due to racial prejudice and also because they were often hired before White workers were hired.

Despite the fact that Chinese in Oregon experienced enormous discrimination and hostility, there have been success stories over the last two centuries. For instance, from 1880 to 1910 Portland’s Chinatown was “second only to San Francisco’s”. The Kam Wah Chung Museum in John Day, on the National Register of Historic Places, reminds visitors of the once-thriving Chinese community in this town. From 1887 to 1948, two of John Day’s most prominent citizens were Ing “Doc” Hay and his partner, Lung On. Dr. Hay treated both Chinese and White clients in his medical practice.

FILIPINO

Filipino immigrants have a long history along the west coast of the USA. Recognized as having four waves of immigration, their history began here as early as 1587, with settlements built to support the Spanish galleon trade routes from Manila to Acapulco, forcing Filipinos into such service. Their residency in the USA was the result of flight from Spanish ship captains. The second wave of immigration was the result of the US colonization of the Philippines and the US-Filipino War from 1898 to 1902 that resulted in the deaths of more than 2 million Filipinos. American colonizers expanded the spread of English and US culture. In 1903, 103 elite Filipinos were allowed to leave for the USA to attend university. Other Filipino men left for farming and fishing employment, seeking a better life for themselves – with the goal of returning to the Philippines as rich men. Unfortunately the low wages available to them trapped them in the USA and even the return home was out of reach. Laws that outlawed their marriage to White women, coupled with an absence of Filipino women in the USA resulted in this community never gaining a strong foothold in the USA. In the post-war era of 1945, the US opened its doors to Pacific immigrants and permitted their inclusion in the military. The fourth wave of immigration began in 1965 with expanded immigration opportunities. While expanding immigration numbers and removing limits on specific countries, it has served as a “creaming” process of the most educated and most highly trained professionals in the Philippines. Known popularly as the “brain drain,” this final wave of immigration continues today and continues to appeal to doctors, lawyers, nurses, engineers and those from the military.

We thus have a Filipino community in this region of the USA that is a composite of those who have been here for generations, those who arrived in the post-WWII era of surging incomes and opportunities, and those who arrived later, who have brought their assets including high levels of education with their arrival.

JAPANESE

The first recorded Japanese settler, Miyo Iwakoshi, came to Oregon in 1880. Her arrival marked the beginning of a small but steady flow of Japanese settlers who sought to flee economic conditions in Japan which included few opportunities for moving out of a peasant class of workers. By the 1890s, noticeably after the Chinese Exclusion Act (and the shrinking of the supply of Chinese laborers), large number of Japanese immigrants came to Oregon. Many of these immigrants found employment on the railroads and in the work that the Chinese and Kanakas were no longer welcome to do. In the early 20th century, a number of Japanese immigrants sought employment on farms, particularly on the eastern side of Multnomah County. By 1905, the railroad labor force was 40% Japanese. Much of the tension between Japanese and Whites in Oregon centers on Whites’ perceptions that the Japanese were displacing them as landowners and farmers.

Early on, many of the Japanese immigrants who cleared land for farmers, particularly in the Hood River area, received payments of undesired land – “stump or brush land”. The Japanese first cultivated strawberries, a crop that White farmers did not care to grow, because it required stooping. During WWI, the Japanese expanded their farming to include apple and pear orchards. One year, the Japanese farmers bought land in equal quantity as White farmers in the region. Fears of being under-priced by Japanese farmers led to anti-Japanese sentiments deepening, with the culmination of the formation of the Anti-Asiatic League in 1919. The primary goal of the League was to prevent the Hood River Japanese community from purchasing or leasing any more land. Farmers in Crook and Deschutes counties had passed resolutions with the same intent around 1917. Finally, in 1923 the Oregon legislature passed the Alien Land Law forbidding non-citizens (i.e., all non-Whites, but the timing and social context of this passage directs the law at Asians in general and the Japanese, in particular) from purchasing land. As is often the case, the fear of an immigrant takeover proved greater than the actual threat: in Hood River in 1920, the Japanese owned only 2% of the land. Although some Japanese immigrants were able to still remain on their property, many lost their farms when they were forcibly removed from homes, farms, schools and jobs following the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

In 1925, the “Toledo Incident” involving a mob of over 50 White men forced the evacuation of Japanese laborers and their families from Toledo, Oregon.¹⁶⁶ This followed the 1904 Oregon State Federation of Labor placing restrictions on Japanese employment. In 1907, the Oregon Bureau of Labor asked that restrictions be placed on Japanese immigration, indicating that “Japanese immigrants were bringing a lower standard of living into the state.” In 1941 the US government implemented one of its most infamous racial policies, “Executive Order 9066” that led to the incarceration of an estimated 120,000 Japanese Americans, of whom $\frac{2}{3}$ were US citizens. City councils, elected officials and civic organizations across Oregon, by early 1942, joined the call for the removal and imprisonment of the Japanese. Early that year, 75 to 80 community leaders were arrested by the FBI and before the close of the year, the Oregonian boasted the forced removal of the Japanese community: “Portland to be the first Jap-free city.” Portland’s city council rescinded all business licenses issued to Japanese in Portland.

At the time of the evacuation, beet farmers in Malheur County recognized their labor shortage and pressured state and federal authorities to consider evacuating the Japanese to eastern Oregon to assist in the beet fields. Beet sugar was in large demand by both the alcohol industry and the government – beet sugar was used in ammunition production. The Oregon Plan divided the state into 3 zones. The first two zones were made up of Japanese-Americans who were sent to internment camps. 4,500 Japanese Oregonians were imprisoned in camps, typically no better than sheds, horse stalls and tents. The Japanese in Zone 3 were housed in barracks but were allowed to earn wages working on beet farms and other “public works” venues. A number of Japanese Oregonians voluntarily evacuated to Malheur County, the center of Zone 3.

In all, 33,000 Japanese Americans from Oregon, Washington and California participated in the Oregon Plan, exchanging imprisonment for paid labor, and were placed in Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and Utah. In December 1944, the government rescinded the internment orders, and in January 1945, Japanese Americans were allowed to return home.

The return home was not, however, easy. The return was marked by:

...vigilante violence and the agitation of pressure groups to keep out Japanese Americans permanently. Homes, farms and businesses left behind were occupied by people unwilling to return these properties to their rightful owners. Some homes were razed and decimated, and Japanese Americans were targets of terrorist shootings. More acts of violence and terrorism were committed against Japanese Americans at the end of the war than the beginning.

Approximately half of Oregon’s Japanese chose not to return to Oregon. Among those who returned, many resettled in Ontario and developed a small but thriving Japanese community.

KOREAN

Koreans began immigrating to Oregon in the early 1900s to work on the railroads, in mines, and similar low-skilled labor as the Chinese, Japanese, and Kanaka immigrants before them. The Korean immigrant community was mostly male until Korean “picture brides” (matchmaking based on pictures of possible brides in Korea and family recommendations) started to migrate to the state between 1910 and 1924. Another increase in the migration occurred following the Korean War, between 1951 and 1964, when wives or children of American servicemen came to the region. Much of the migration since 1965 is a result of the family reunification clause in the Hart-Cellar Act. The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 opened the doors for the “new” immigrants. This policy replaced the previous quota system that privileged certain sending countries. The Act of 1965 set to allow for more equality in immigration. Additionally, the Act included a family reunification provision.

Koreans also arrive in the region as adoptees, as large numbers of Korean infants and children have been adopted into the USA since the end of WWII, with numbers growing significantly at the end of the Korean War in 1953. Such children are typically orphans, mixed-race babies, and more recently, the children of unmarried mothers. Official recognition and supports for such international adoptions were established by Korea in 1954. The numbers of Korean children adopted into the USA are estimated to be approximately 100,000 between 1955 and 1998. Korean adoptees are the largest contingent of international adoptees, although annual patterns have changed with China and Russia surpassing Korea by 1990. Today, fewer than 2,000 Korean children and infants are adopted into the USA annually. Emerging research is showing that adoptees experience an array of issues with inclusion into their new families and new home: racism, discrimination, stereotyping, loneliness, loss and hurt in being “given up,” defeated hopes for a better life, and sometimes joy with the new life.

THAI

Most Thais have come to this country as immigrants. There was a large group of refugees from refugee camps in Thailand in the 70’s, but these were not ethnically or culturally Thais though sometimes mistakenly identified so. Many have been drawn to the Salem area due to the presence of a Thai Buddhist monk who works at a nearby temple in Turner, OR. This is the only Thai Buddhist monk in Oregon and this person holds considerable influence and authority in the Thai community in Oregon. The vast majority of local Thais are practicing Buddhists (estimated by the community to be about 90%).

Generally, there is a perception that many Thai immigrants are doing quite well economically, but there is an on-going smaller group of Thais who continue to struggle economically. Some of this is due to low educational levels of Thais coming here. Many Thais in Portland come as students. Others have come because of family reunification, and also because of business opportunities.

INDIAN

There have been two waves of immigration from India. First during the late nineteenth-early twentieth century, primarily Sikh men immigrated to the Pacific Northwest offering manual labor at lumber mills, railroad etc. They were subjected to the same xenophobic ire and violence directed against other Asian immigrant labor. They were not allowed to become citizens, own land and were targeted with anti-miscegenation laws as well. Ultimately immigration from India was banned until the 1965 Immigration Act overhauled laws restricting their entry. Since then, Indians have immigrated to the US in large numbers on student and work visas. Many, especially women, have immigrated to the US through marriage and face restrictions on employment access. Many residents in Washington County came to the US on work visas, which means they can stay in this country only as long as the employment lasts.

INDONESIAN

Over 300 years (beginning in the 17th century) the Dutch colonized Indonesia and controlled social, political and economic life. The geographic location led it to be a key economic powerhouse in Southeast Asia. The Indonesian independence movement began in 1949 and was won in 1949; in the midst of this effort, the Japanese occupied the country during three years of WWII. Its incumbent ruler, however, mismanaged the economy and conditions worsened. Social and economic turmoil contributed to a form of civil war, with a quarter of a million people killed through the region in the mid to late 1960s. It was this violence and economic distress that catalyzed significant emigration among Chinese Indonesians – but short as peace was returned and the US limited immigration numbers.

There continues a small but steady trickle of immigration from Indonesia into the USA: sustained by students seeking an American education and, for many, the chance to become US citizens, and those who are seeking greater economic opportunities.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants makeup a significant number of post-1965 immigration. In Oregon, this includes people from Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, Burma and the Hmong community. Over the last few decades an even greater number of Southeast Asian immigrants have settled in Portland as part of a secondary migration, many coming from California and other parts of the US. Immigration from this region commences just prior to and directly following the fall of Saigon and the subsequent passage of the Indo-China Migration and Refugee Resistance Act. **Cambodians** fleeing from the Khmer Rouge also arrived on Oregon soil in 1975. In 1976, following the passage of the Immigration Act of 1976, Laotians began immigrating to Oregon. Refugees from **Laos** arrived shortly after the first Vietnamese in the mid-1970s, with some coming directly from refugee camps in Thailand while others participated in a secondary migration from California in order to reunite with friends, families and the larger Laotian community. The **Burmese** community is one of the smaller Asian commu-

nities, but the 2010 Census marked a turning point in outreach to the Burmese community. A high concentration of the local Burmese community live in east Portland and most members of the community are newcomers or former refugees. The Karen are recognized as a distinct Burmese community.

SRI LANKAN

Formerly a British colony, early years of immigration to the USA occurred with employers bringing laborers to work as farm workers. Indenturing practices left the community vulnerable to exploitation and most were powerless to move out of their obligations to their employers. Independence from Britain was secured in 1948 and the community, for several decades, generated few immigrants. In times of peace, Sri Lanka is a prosperous nation with relatively high per capita incomes. In 1983, civil war began as hostilities between the ruling Sinhalese and the marginalized Tamil escalated into violence. There was a significant exodus over the next 25 years, as many sought to escape the violence. Often paying exorbitant fees to traffickers, a small but significant number of Sinhalese ended up in Oregon.

VIETNAMESE

Vietnamese immigration into Oregon began shortly following the fall of Saigon in 1975 when 1600 Vietnamese arrived. All of these immigrants arrived with refugee status. Divided into two waves, the earlier refugees left early after the fall and were generally able to exit Vietnam due to their relative affluence, education and English language skills. The later arrivals (post-1978) fled first into refugee camps or faced tremendous persecution. Many in this wave faced the horrors of torture, starvation, malnutrition, assault, rape and robbery, often with children being witnesses. The level of trauma has been profound, with heightened mental health problems resulting, impeded and/or interrupted education experiences, and difficulties in seeking supports upon arrival. The majority of Vietnamese arrived as part of the group that faced trauma and persecution. Although the majority of Vietnamese reside in the core metropolitan area, more and more are moving further out to the suburbs as cost of living and housing increases.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The US Census defines the ‘Asian’ racial group as identity related to the ‘Far East’, Southeast Asia and the ‘Indian subcontinent’ (South Asia). It excludes people from West Asia and codifies them as White.
- 2 American Community Survey 2014 and 2016 one year estimates
- 3 Original quote by Mamta Motwani Accapadi, 2005
- 4 The US Census defines ‘labor force’ as people (16 years and older) who are employed or those who are looking for work. It includes part-time and temporary work as well as ‘unpaid family workers’ who work without pay in a family-owned business. It excludes people such as retirees and parents who stay at home.
- 5 From work by the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project at Stanford University
- 6 This is discussed in detail in the education section.
- 7 Some languages such as Arabic, Middle Eastern and North African communities have in common with African people in Washington County and it is impossible to statistically disaggregate that student group.
- 8 ‘Indian languages’ include languages such as Bengali, Tamil, Oriya, Malayalam, Urdu, Punjabi. ‘Sri Lankan languages’ are Sinhalese and Tamil. ‘Filipino languages’ are Tagalog, Philippines (other) and Filipino.
- 9 Second and third generation are defined as children and grandchildren of immigrants to the US.
- 10 The education justice section has a detailed discussion of this issue.
- 11 Non-citizenry includes permanent residents, international students, visa holders and undocumented immigrants.

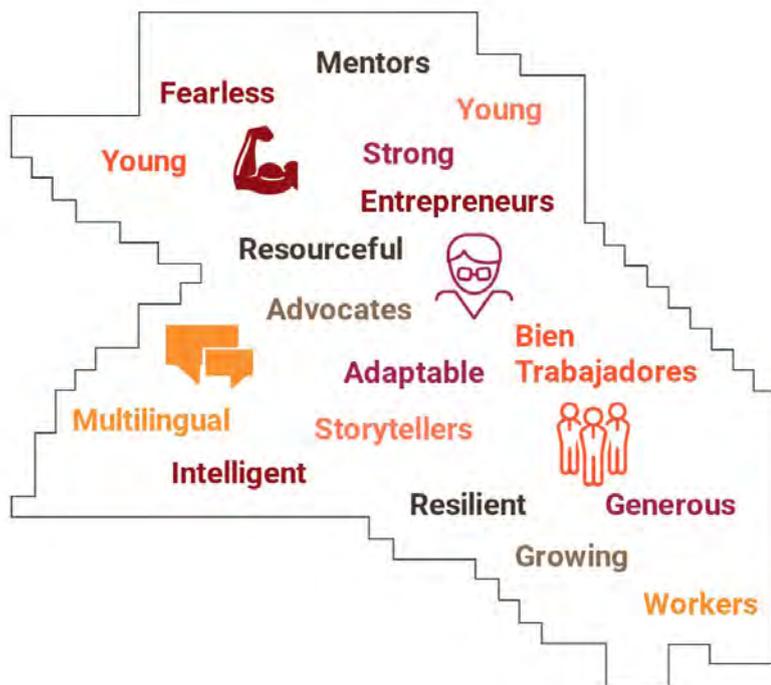


LATINO COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

“WE DIDN’T CROSS THE BORDER; THE BORDER CROSSED US.”

Latinos have a long, rich history as residents of Washington County. They are a critical political, social and economic driving force in Washington County and their community organizations such as Adelante Mujeres, Bienestar, Centro Cultural and Virginia Garcia, providing valuable services and support to both Latinos as well as the population at large.

When community members were asked about their strengths, they identified the following:



The vitality that the community sees in itself is being blocked by poverty, low income, occupational segregation, inadequate education, housing crisis, lack of access to healthcare, all of which are rooted in structural racism including immigration policies that delegitimizes their very presence in the US.

Latinos from the time that they first came to Washington County as seasonal farmworkers, have built community and infrastructures of support to counter the isolation, exclusion and marginalization effects of racism including continuing immigration policies.

While immigrants have served to support the economic growth of the US, and been laborers for economic expansion, they have not been granted the regard and legitimization of becoming documented. In the following narrative, readers will see both the persisting intergenerational impact of exclusionary immigration policies and economic marginalization, as well as the creative and resourceful ways in which the Latino community has endured and pushed back against structural racism.

“We are here. We care. We are here to listen, and we have a voice. Whenever we seek or have that opportunity to speak, we are going to speak, and you are going to hear what we think. And we are going to fight for that equality that we are talking about.”

SHORT HISTORY OF LATINOS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

The Oregon that Latino families migrated and settled in was meant to be a “White utopia”. When the state entered the union in 1859, Oregon was the only state to explicitly forbid Black people from living in its borders; it had the highest per capita Ku Klux Klan members in the country (Imarisha, n.d.). Of course, even prior to that Oregon was already being built on stolen Native land by White settlers using Asian and primarily Chinese labor.

The first Latino families to settle in the county year round in the 1960s were migrants from Texas. Mexicans had been working in the area at least a couple of decades prior though, brought in through the *bracero* program to fill labor shortages for farm owners caused by World War II. Many Americans at that time left agricultural manual labor for new employment opportunities after the war ended. Mexican labor through the *bracero* program often times organized protests and strikes around unpaid wages, hazardous working conditions and poor treatment. Partly because of that, the program ended in 1947 and hoping to avoid labor disputes, farm owners started recruiting entire Mexican families from Texas and other states to work in Oregon. Soon after the *bracero* program ended, the notorious “Operation Wetback” in 1952 summarily rounded up Mexican labor and deported them. It was a brutal replay of a similar roundup and mass deportation

of the so-called “Mexican Repatriation” of the 1920s and 1930s as a response to rising unemployment during the Great Depression, which ironically created labor shortages that led to the *bracero* program during World War II.

Tejano families began settling down permanently in Washington County for several reasons including better working conditions compared to Texas, geographical landscape and being unable to afford to leave. The community was living in de facto segregation and was invisible in a White dominant county. By 1970, the Chicano movement was underway in Oregon. Migrant worker issues, along with concerns about access to higher education, affirmative action in non-agricultural employment, reforming the criminal justice system and protesting the disproportionate number of Chicanos serving in Vietnam were issues of concern. This period of political mobilization gave rise to the establishment of community organizations such as Centro Cultural and later Virginia Garcia as a basis for community building and celebration and to provide services that were otherwise inaccessible to their community. Bienestar was established in 1981 to provide affordable housing and Adelante Mujeres, founded in 2002 to provide opportunities specifically for low-income Latinas (women) and their families.





Immigration policies and the county's agricultural economy's search for cheap labor brought more Latinos to Oregon and Washington County. Over the last two decades, patterns of migration shifted with there being a surge in immigrants from regions with larger indigenous populations in Michoacan and Southern Mexico and Central America, as well as refugees from the latter. This has primarily because of economic and political unrest partly caused by the impact of North American Free Trade Agreement and civil conflicts in the region.

AT LEAST

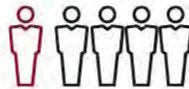
96,034

IN WASHINGTON
COUNTY

17% of Washington County population



Comprise **1/3** of population growth in the county between 2007-2016



1 in 5 people in the Latino community are of Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Central and South American origins.

8,885 students in 2015, identified as Latino and Native American



Population of people of Central American (excluding Mexican) origin in Washington County is larger than in Multnomah County

Over **2/3** of children and youth in the 5-17 age range are bilingual



LATINO COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY TODAY

Today, the Latino community in Washington county is large, growing, young and diverse. We know official numbers and government data sources undercount the Latino community. Facing ongoing discrimination and fearing harassment, many Latinos

may refuse to identify to the array of canvassers, pollsters and surveyors who come calling. All communities of color face such problems (particularly as they are much more likely to be urban, poor, and in less stable housing arrangements); the rise of an-

ti-immigrant rhetoric, and heightened immigrant enforcement activities generate real fear and distrust of the government in this community. Latinos may be reluctant to share information with the Census Bureau or official canvassers because of concerns about how their information will be used or how they will be treated, even when they are US citizens. Furthermore, for many Latinos, race and ethnicity can be complex and multidimensional issues.

According to a 2015 survey conducted by Pew Research Center countrywide, 67% of Latino adults say that being Hispanic or Latino is part of their racial identity, and 56% say that it is part of both their race and ethnic background. While some Latinos identify simply as Hispanic or Latino, others define their race and ethnicity by their family’s country of origin.

Given all these considerations that impact how Latinos may identify themselves, we estimate *at least* 96,034 Latino residents of Washington County in 2016 (American Community Survey, 2016). At 17% of the county population, they are the largest community of color of all the communities reflected in this report. The Latino community has grown by 25% between 2007 and 2016. They are growing at a pace faster than the county population but slower compared to Asian, Black, and Native Ha-

waiian and Pacific Islander communities in Washington county. Nevertheless, Latinos comprised one-third of population growth in the county between 2007 and 2016.

A DIVERSE POPULATION

The Latino community in Washington County, is really diverse—a fact that community members feel is overlooked in mainstream discourses. Approximately 80% of the Latino population in Washington County is of Mexican origin (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). 1 in 5 people in the Latino community are of Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Central and South American origins. In fact, the the population of people of Central American (excluding Mexican) origin in Washington county is larger than in Multnomah county. There is also a strong indigenous Latino community in Washington county. According to the Oregon Department of Education, in 2015, 8,885 students identified as both Latino and Native American. Roughly 870 residents who identified as Native Americans to the US Census Bureau were immigrants from Central and South America (American Community Survey, 2011–2015)

Composition of Latino Communities in Washington County by Origin

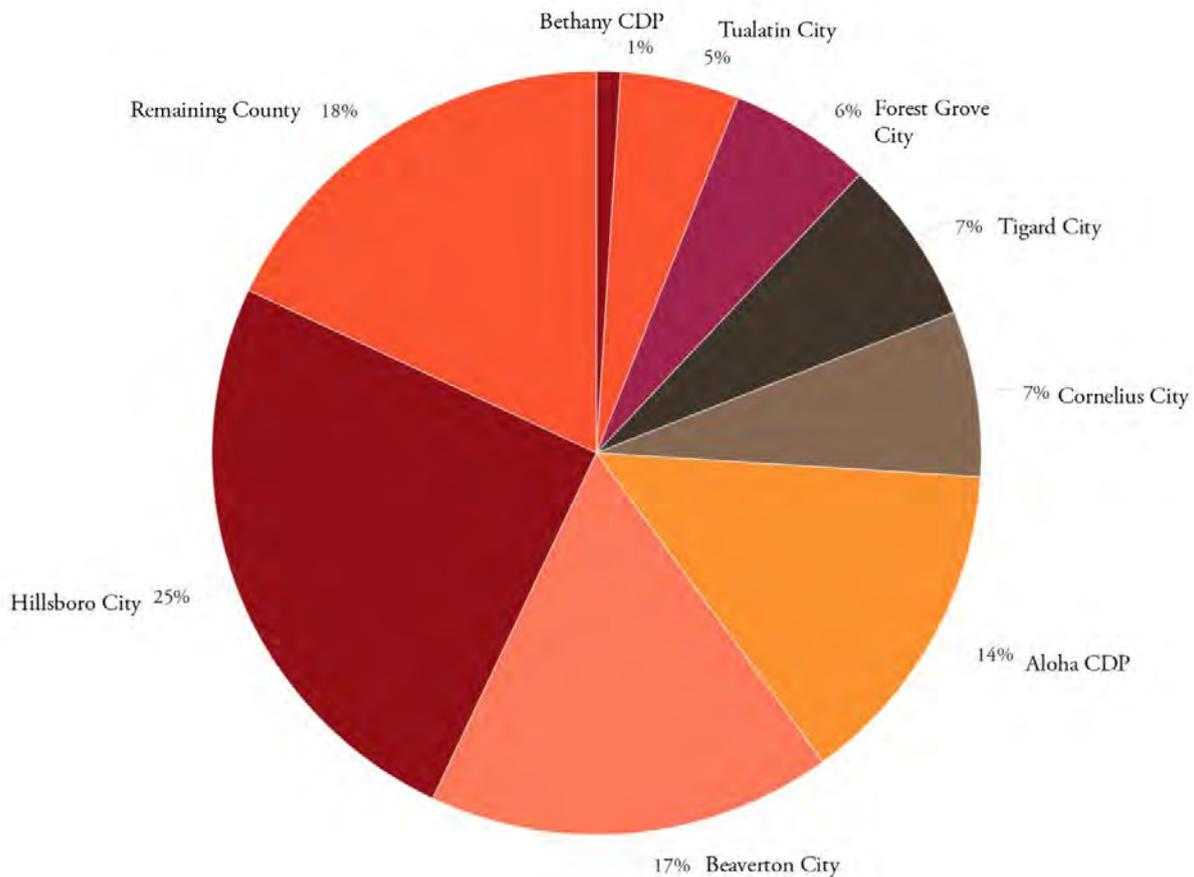


A SLOWLY DISPERSING POPULATION

According to Metro’s population projections for the tri-county area, 34–40% of the Latino population in the MSA region will live in Washington County in 2060. The growing population lives all over the county 38% of the community lives in western Washington County (Hillsboro, Cornelius and Forest Grove). That area has been the historic nucleus of the community, where *Tejano* families initially settled down in Washington County and where Latinos established organizations such as Centro Cultural, Virginia Garcia and Adelante Mujeres.

“In the early 70s, families organized themselves to collect money to help families of the deceased move the bodies back to their home. There was a lot of willingness to help one another. Now that we are thousands and thousands, it’s difficult to organize ourselves. But we have to find creative ways of doing it.”

Where Latinos Live in Washington County



Clearly, Latinos in Washington County are drawn from many walks of life with varied histories and experiences. *The history and current reality of Latinos in Washington County is inextricably linked to the evolution of dynamics between groups of various national origins, organizing and building connections amongst an expanding population increasingly spread out over a large geography.* Earlier generations of *Tejano* families and Mexican immigrants had found community building imperative as they organized to retain their culture while living alongside a population largely unfamiliar with, and often hostile or unsympathetic toward Latinos. Although they are bigger now, community building is even more imperative due to the diversity of history and cultures within the Latino identity.



A YOUNG POPULATION

Focus group participants highlight Latino youth activism and potential as a tremendous strength of the community. Latino median age is 26 years compared to 41 years for the White population. According to Oregon Latino Agenda for Action, Washington County is in the top five counties with the fastest growing Latino student populations in Oregon (Mize, 2016). In 2016, a higher percentage of Latinos (60%) in Washington county lived in family households with children under 18 years of age than White residents (26%) (American Community Survey).

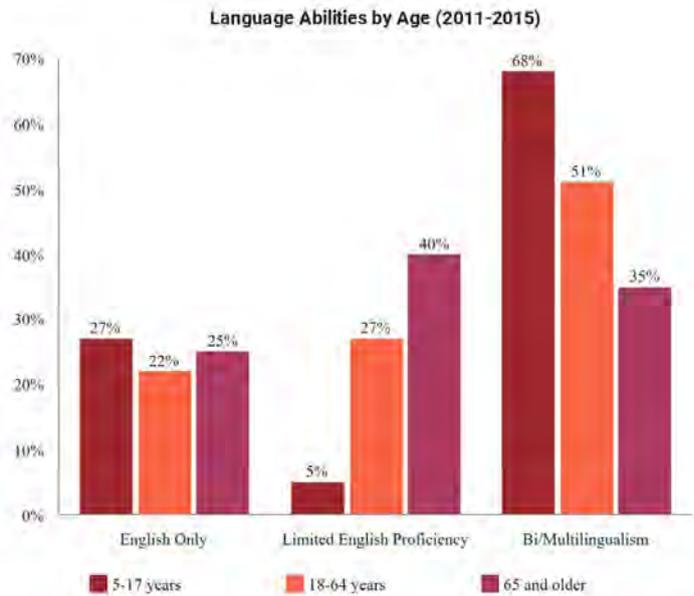
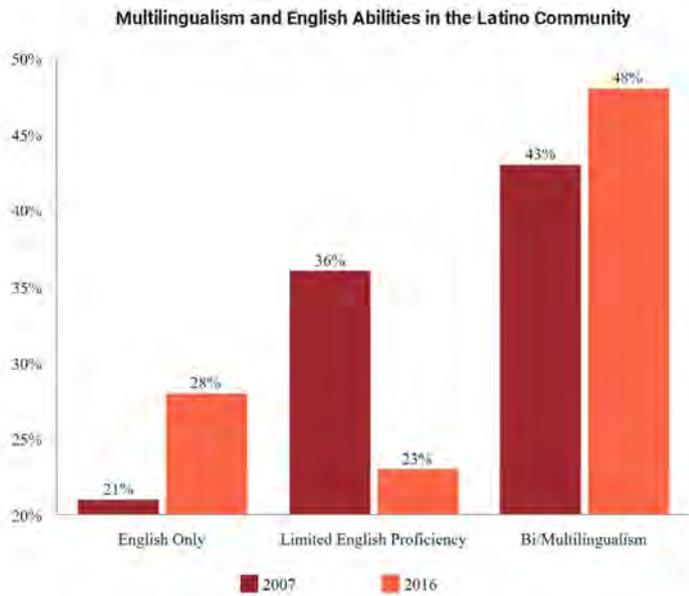
Therefore, support for students in schools, the impact of racial profiling, civic engagement and leadership development, and the impact of exclusionary immigration policies on mental well-being especially of DACA youth are big priorities for Latinos in Washington County.

BILINGUALISM, ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE AND POLITICS OF ASSIMILATION



Latino community members involved in this project talk about bilingualism and multilingualism as an important cultural and economic asset.

Latino community members involved in this project talk about bilingualism and multilingualism as an important cultural and economic asset. They consider it an important part of identity development, of communicating across generations, and of their heritage. There has been an increase in the proportion of bilingual and multilingual Latinos in the county between 2007 and 2016, and over two-thirds of children and youth in the 5-17 age range are bilingual.



What is worrying for the community is the rise in Latinos who only speak English at home, as well as those in the community who have limited English abilities.

On the one hand, limited communication abilities in English, especially for immigrants and seniors, is a barrier in a variety of ways including access to services such as healthcare, academic excellence in English only methods of instruction, civic engagement and awareness. It has also been used as a basis for racial stereotyping. On the other hand, mainstream solutions to those concerns have hinged on English-only solutions that aim at assimilating Latinos into White dominant society rather than emphasizing bilingualism as an asset in employment and service provision.

Latino children and youth experience the cumulative impact of this in at least two ways (1) bilingual youth are expected to liaison between their community and services as translators/ interpreters (2) they may disconnect from their community’s languages. *Latino county residents wryly observe the irony of mainstream economy and institutions devaluing bilingualism as an asset of their community, while appreciating it as a strength among White people.*

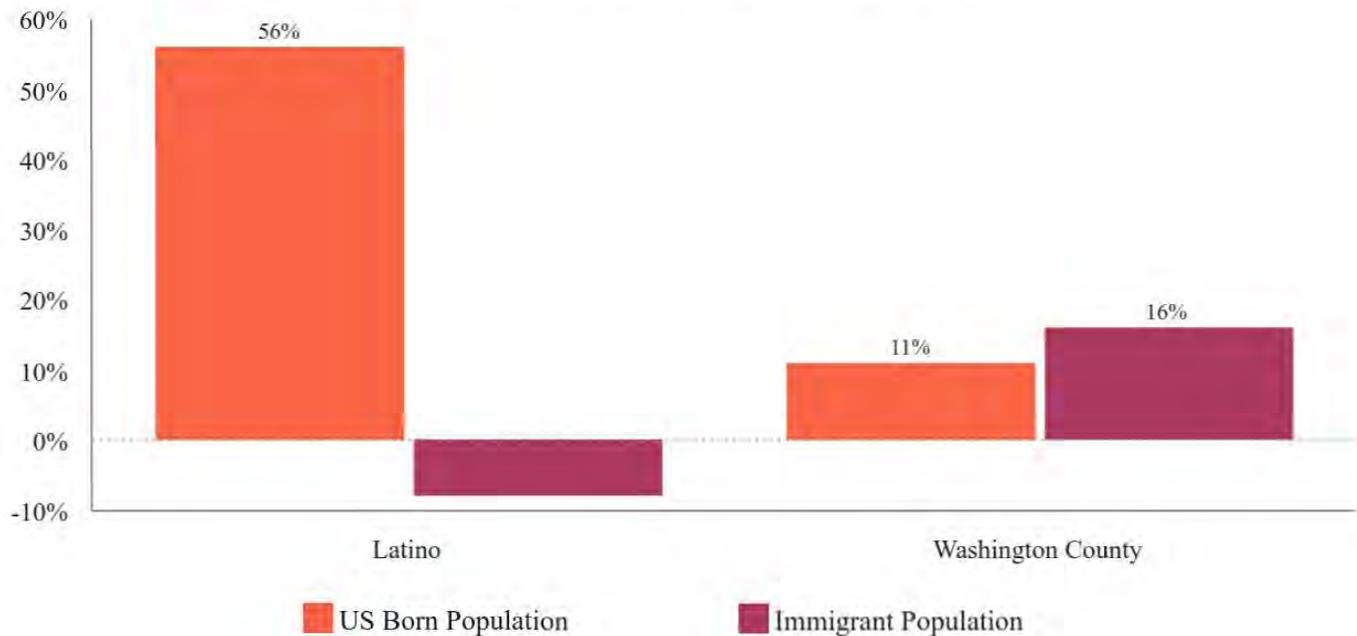


DECLINING IMMIGRATION

 **2 out of 3** Latinos in Washington County are citizens

Immigrants are 36% of the Latino community in Washington County in 2016. 80% of Latino immigrants hail from Mexico, with Guatemalans and Salvadorans being the next two largest immigrant groups. The graph below shows the nationalities of other Latino identifying immigrants. *Much of the growth in the community in Washington County has been driven by children and youth born in the US.* Only 7% of Latino immigrants in Washington County in 2016 arrived in the US after 2010. Approximately 63% immigrated to the US before 2000. As the graph below shows, the Latino immigrant population in Washington County has declined as those born in the US has increased. This is reflective of national trends that has seen the Latino population growth slow down in the US.

Population Growth in Immigrant and US Born Populations in Washington County (2007-2016)



The Latino community is strong and resilient but they are also being pulled and pushed by immigration and economic forces that are racist in only seeing their value as labor. The community largely pushes back against the stereotype that all they care about is immigration; they also emphasize that immigration intersects with their daily reality in the county.

Many in the community are restricted from obtaining driver's licenses, which limits their mobility and access, for example to to employment and green spaces; undocumented immigrant adults are not covered by public health insurance and are more likely to work for employment that does not provide those benefits or have fair labor practices. Fear of being asked about citizenship status, ICE raids and detentions forces Latinos into the shadows of public and civic life. Latino focus group participants put out a call to action to the community to continue helping and supporting each other, organizing and raising awareness about rights and resources.

“Children don't know if their mother or father are going to be home when they get home. If I don't come home, go to your tia. All this education is being done.”

“I think we should go back to our organizations, whether it's a church, a school, small agencies, non-profit agencies, for example. If a family decides to go into the Virginia Garcia clinic and say, I'm in fear of ICE, I want to live here; this is a place where I wouldn't be deported. How can we help Virginia Garcia say to that family, yes, you can stay here?”

“In a perfect world we should have a resource list that's updated and practical and affordable for anybody about where you can go and get the resources you need.”

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

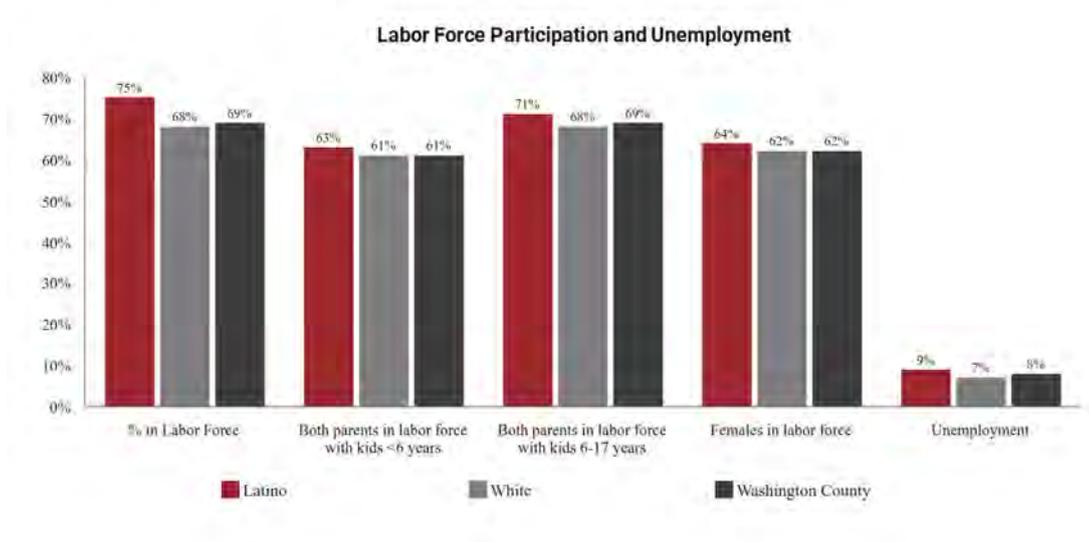
Washington County’s Latino community says that their strengths lie in their youth, hard work, resilience, entrepreneurship, resourcefulness and their ambition to move forward as a economic and political force in the region. Latino workforce are crucial to Oregon’s agricultural productivity, and they are integral to the economic maintenance of the Silicon Forest—the high tech corridor of Washington County. Latino owned businesses are increasing rapidly as well, sustaining community connections as well as contributing to trade between the US and Central America.

Despite being such a vital economic force without whom both the agricultural and high-tech economies could not sustain itself for long, the Latino community feel like they are being held back from realizing their full potential in Washington County. Institutionalized racism in the form of limited employment opportunities, low wages, inadequate workforce training for the knowledge economy and unfair labor practices particularly vis-a-vis agricultural workers have contributed to intergenerational poverty and economic insecurity. Immigration laws have made matters worse, inhibiting their ability to access economic justice.

There is a stark contrast between the vitality that Latinos see in themselves and the manner in which institutionalized racism either makes them invisible or stereotypes the community as uneducated and undocumented.¹

EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION

Latinos in Washington County participate in the labor force at higher rates than White residents as well as the overall county population. Latino children and youth are more likely to grow up in households where both their parents are in the labor force. What does this indicator mean? It shows that 75% of Latinos (including women) and 64% of Latinas in Washington County are either employed or are looking for a job.²



It is highly likely that this measure underestimates the community's labor force participation because Latino farmworkers in Washington County are systematically under counted in the data source. The seasonal nature of agricultural employment may not be captured. Also, “among factors that affect the outcomes of enumeration are worker mobility, type and supply of local housing, the worker’s relationship with his employer, crew chief, or local service agencies. The worker’s undocumented status, illegal employment, and their use of overcrowded, uninspected, and often illegally subdivided housing, are among the most important reasons for avoiding authorities. First time undocumented migrants, with little knowledge of the English language or American society, and who are isolated from the mainstream by having an indirect relationship with the grower through a crew chief, and frequently moving between work sites and scattered camp housing, are least likely to be counted.” (Smith, 1995).

Community reviewers of this data share that high levels of labor force participation are not just a function of a relatively young Latino population and older White population. *The Latino workforce increasingly comprises a range of expertise—management, professional, service and agricultural.* There also people holding down multiple low wage jobs, agricultural labor deprived of basic workplace rights and multiple household members working or looking for employment to keep up with rising cost of living in Washington County. As much as Latinos are working or actively seeking employment, they are more likely to be unsuccessful compared to White and county applicants.³ Latinos have an unemployment rate of 9% in Washington County. Community members see high unemployment rates as a reflection of discriminatory hiring practices, “racism of low expectations” in schools that doesn’t support educational advancement of Latino youth, and inadequate programs to train the Latino workforce to successfully navigate opportunities of a changing economy. Oregon also restricts driver’s licenses to citizens and documented immigrants, which prevents undocumented immigrants from accessing certain job opportunities.

“At one point we have witnessed prejudice and biases that has hurt us for promotion and even a job. As a youngster I was told I am not going to hire you because you are Mexican. I know you work hard, but I can’t trust you. You are always stealing.”



Community members see high unemployment rates as a reflection of:

- Discriminatory hiring practices
- ‘Racism of low expectations’ in schools that don’t support educational advancement of Latino youth
- Inadequate programs to train the Latino workforce to successfully navigate opportunities of a changing economy
- Oregon restrictions on driver’s licenses to citizens and documented immigrants, which prevents undocumented immigrants from accessing certain job opportunities as well.

“If my last name is Gonzales and I put my resume along with John Smith and Jennifer Hammill in a company, guess what? Gonzales goes to the bottom. Right there we’re not being equal just because of my name.”

OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY

Whereas the White workforce in Washington County is largely distributed across industries similar to the overall county workforce, Latinos are over-represented in certain industries compared to share of County’s workforce in that sector.⁴ For example, there is a higher share of Latino labor compared to the county workforce in agriculture, construction, professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services, and arts, recreation, accommodation and food services (American Community Survey, 2016). Taken by themselves, *the industries where most Latinos work are (1) arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services, (2) professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services, and (3) manufacturing.* The latter two industries also employ the largest share of White labor force in Washington County as well. What kind of work do Latinos perform compared to the average White worker and County worker?

Less than 1 out of 5 Latinos in Washington county are performing management type roles in the industries they work in, whereas almost 1 out of 2 White workers are in high wage positions. Almost 1 out of 3 Latinos are in service occupations, and the vast majority (82%) of the Latino workforce perform the type of work that is essential to the functioning of both the agricultural and technology economy of Washington county, but where incomes and benefits and job stability fluctuates.

According to the State of Oregon Employment department, “The highest paying industry sectors in Washington County are management of companies and enterprises (\$159,054 annually), manufacturing (\$111,503 annually), and information (\$86,639). The lowest paying sectors are leisure and hospitality (\$19,548 annually); agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (\$31,298); and retail trade (\$32,130).” A comparison with the industry and occupational profile of Latino workforce demonstrates that they are primarily working in low paying sectors or don’t have access to high wage jobs in the highest paying industries.

“A lot of times our professional workforce aren’t given opportunities in Washington County and they work in Portland or elsewhere. There are also times that we are doing skilled professional labor, but job titles don’t match our responsibilities.”

“Workforce development centers require people to physically come to institution to receive help, but many are working during hours that the center operates, or have other barriers preventing them from coming.”



According to Worksystems Inc, in 2016 **9%** of the public sector workforce identified as **Latino** compared to 84% White workforce.

Latinos are under-represented in the public sector workforce in Washington county as well. According to Worksystems Inc, in 2016 9% of the public sector workforce identified as Latino compared to 84% White workforce. These employment numbers are out of step with county demographics wherein Latinos were 17% of the population in the same year. These numbers include seasonal and part-time employment where Latino workers are disproportionately represented. Data for full time employment by race/ethnicity was not available but community conversations suggest that those numbers for Latinos would be low.

In fact, school districts seem to be the largest public employer of the Latino workforce. Even there we see huge disparities in employment, with teachers largely not representing the student body, wherein 28% of students are Latino.

Mainstream discourse typically cites low levels of educational attainment as blocking Latino access to better employment opportunities and higher wages. Such narratives ignore the impact of immigration on the community that intentionally directed Latino workers to perform agricultural and service roles in the economy’s division of labor and provided and removed immigration protections at will depending on the need of the economy. Latinos also counter this narrative by citing how the “racism of low expectations” in schools leads to students not feeling supported in their educational pursuits, which also impacts their future academic progress and access to employment.



SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESSES

Latinos in Washington County are problem-solvers and resilient in the face of inequitable employment opportunities. *Faced with high unemployment rates and labor market discrimination, many in the community have opened their own businesses.* In 2012, there were 3,571 Latino owned businesses after a 28% increase in Latino small businesses in Washington County between 2007 and 2012. Similar trends in states such as Arizona and Florida suggest that sectors and occupations where Latinos primarily work, were hit hard by the 2008 recession, and small business creation emerged as a strategic solution for the community. In Washington county, Latino businesses have played an important role in building community and place-making with initiatives such as Adelante Mujeres' Forest Grove Farmer's Market, and M&M Marketplace in Hillsboro.



In Washington County, Latino businesses have played an important role in building community and place-making with initiatives such as **Adelante Mujeres' Forest Grove Farmer's Market, and M&M Marketplace** in Hillsboro.

This has happened despite the fact that a Stanford study about Latino businesses across the US found that they have the lowest rate of financing via bank loans, the traditional funding mechanism for small businesses (Orozco, Oyer & Porras, 2018). The same study found that *more than 70% of Latino businesses use "internal" funds such as savings or loans from family and friends to start their business (similar to Asian and Black-owned businesses) while White businesses were the most likely to be funded through bank loans.* Credit history, limited English proficiency, limited collateral value, lack of culturally friendly or linguistically appropriate services at local institutions, fear of government institutions especially in light of anti-immigration attitudes deter Latinos from approaching banks for loans. Although, Latinos derive their strength in solidarity and support from their community, it can stretch the capacity of their networks to provide sustained support to keep businesses afloat.

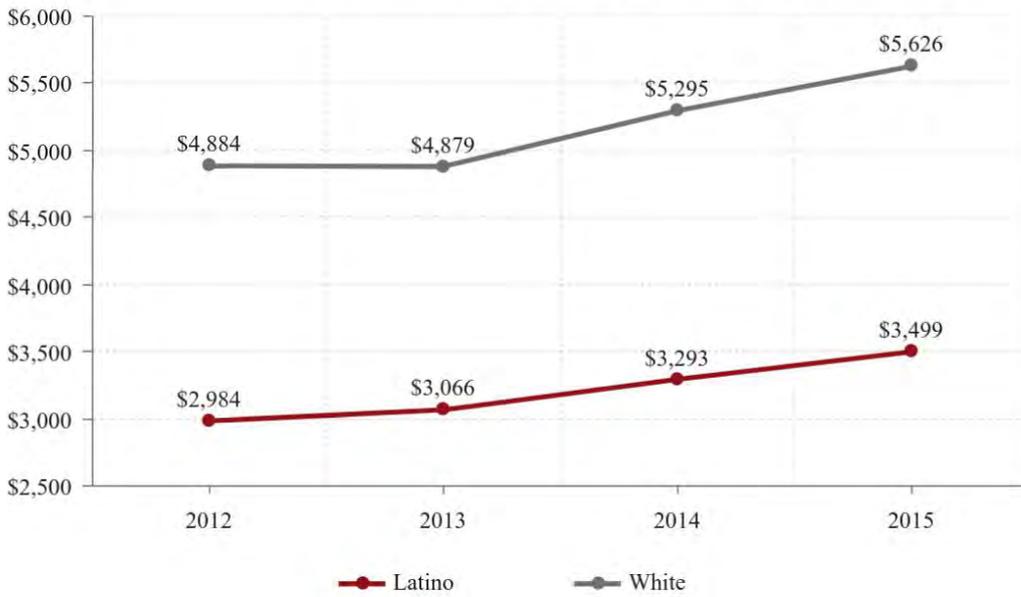
Latino communities have been organizing and creating solutions for their needs for a long time. Faced with economic injustices, the community became entrepreneurial and created job opportunities for themselves. Local Latino organizations such as Adelante Mujeres have small business development programs that offer networking opportunities, financial and logistical support to potential business owners. Communities survive and counter marginalization and discrimination at every turn and ask institutions to address and dismantle those practices and build solutions.

“We should note that Latinos living in Washington county run businesses in other jurisdictions for example, many run food carts in Portland because of barriers here. As laws change in Washington county, we anticipate people will open businesses here.

EARNINGS AND INCOME

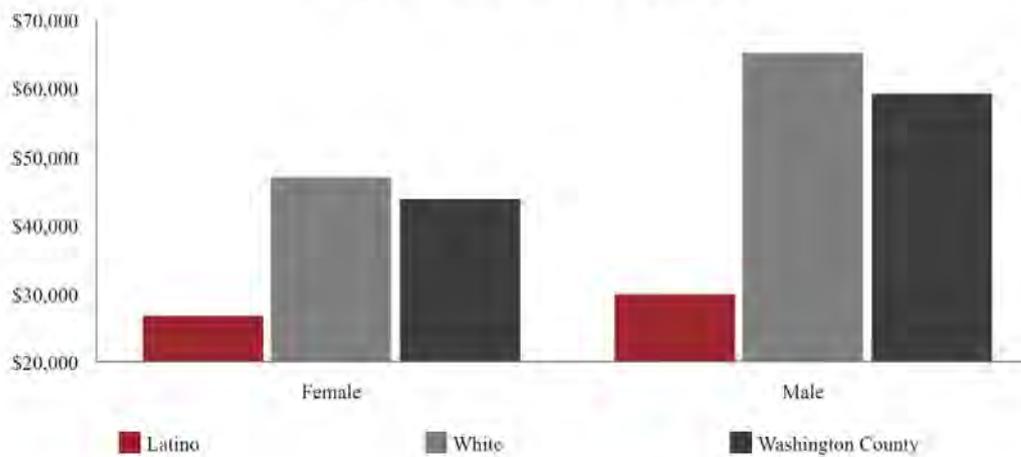
The data below is procured from Worksystems Inc. and shows wide disparities in monthly earnings of Latino and White workers in full-time and “stable” jobs—where employees worked with the same firm throughout a quarter period.

Median Monthly Earnings in 'Stable Jobs'



Income inequality in Washington county is both racialized and gendered. Latino female full time workers earn the least compared to White male and female full time workers and the county male and female median earnings; Latino men earn less than White women workers. Income disparities such as displayed below reinforces community members’ shared experiences about people being stuck in low-wage jobs.

Median Income for Full time Work by Sex

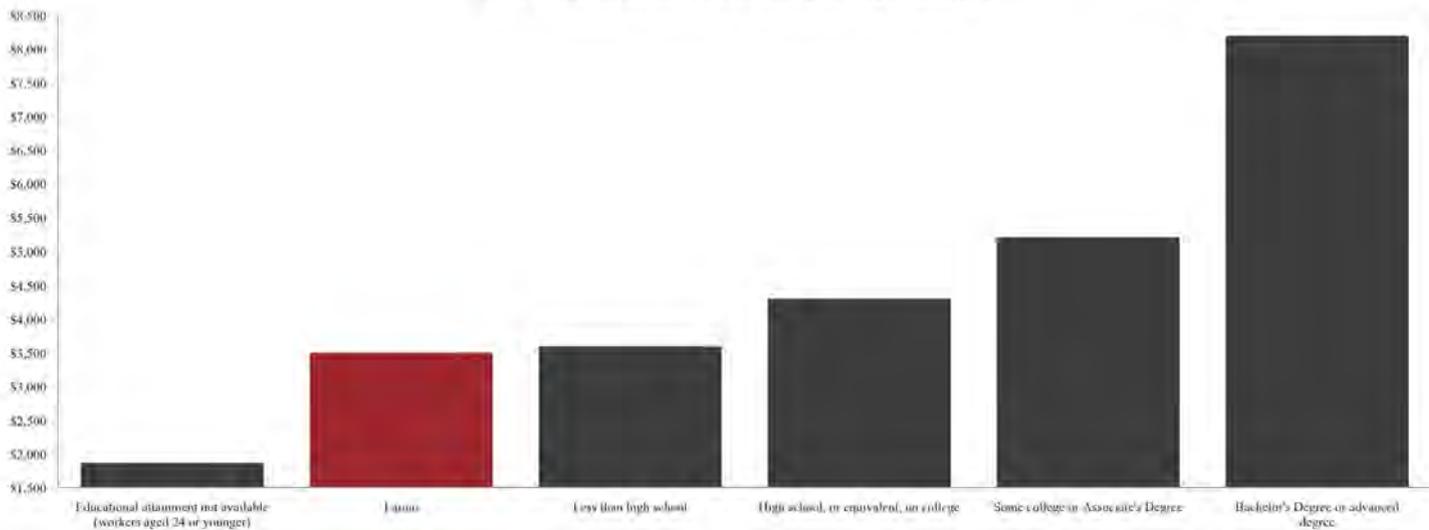


It should be concerning to readers that oft-peddled solutions of education as a pathway to upward mobility are not working in the community's experience. Education is considered a pathway out of poverty and low incomes. Studies show that a Bachelor's degree vastly improves a person's earnings in the US. Latinos, however, have been excluded from that path. When one considers the highest education attained by the Latino community in Washington County, 86% did not even make it to college. Community members and extant research alike hold schools culpable for not fostering academic success and being apathetic to immigration and economic impacts on academic achievement. *Latinos on average earn less than monthly earnings of someone with less than a high school degree in Washington County. This when 60% of Latinos in Washington County have a high school degree or higher in 2015 (Worksystems Inc, 2015).*

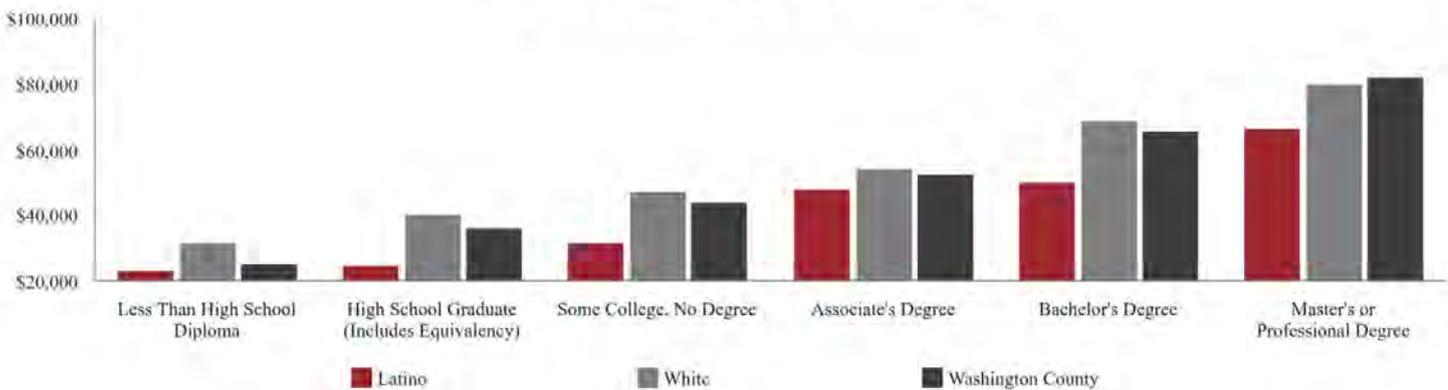
At similar levels of education, Latinos are earning less than White workers for full time employment. Latinos are either being denied similar employment as similarly educated White people or are being paid less for the same job or both.

Racialized and gendered earnings disparities between Latino and White residents in Washington county feeds into income disparities between them as well. Washington County, between 2011 and 2016, saw an increase in full time workers earning more than \$100,000 a year (Starbuck, 2018). It had the highest annual average wage in the state, at \$65,858 and the second highest wage growth on a net basis in the state in 2016 (Starbuck, 2017). Evidently, Latinos have not been part of that prosperity. *Only 22% of Latino households are above the county median income compared to 47% of White households.*

Latino Monthly Earnings Compared to Monthly Earnings by Education (2015)



Median Income for Full time Work by Education

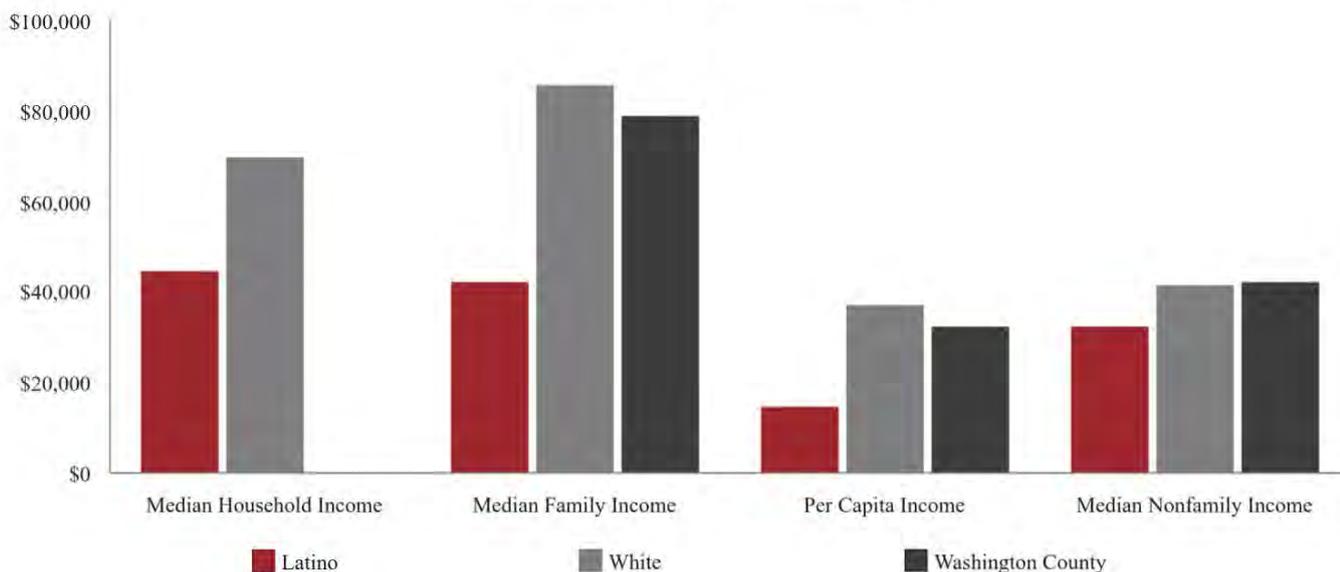


Obviously, incomes and earnings impact the ability of Latino households and families to sustain decent quality of living in Washington county. Latino families and households earn less than county and White median household income, family incomes and per capita incomes. Latino family (4.0) and household (3.6) sizes are larger than county (2.6) and White (2.4) households and county (3.2) and White (3.0) families. This means two things. *(1) These multigenerational households are eking out a living in Washington County on fewer resources, and (2) they have a lower income despite potentially having multiple earners in the family.* Per capita income, which takes into account size of the community, also underscores the racial income disparity pattern that Latinos are managing the cost of living in Washington county on lower incomes than the average county and White family.

American Community Survey between 2006–2010 and 2011–2015 estimates that the proportion of White households and overall County households earning more than \$100,000, increased from 28% to 32% and 27% to 30% respectively, whereas percentage of Latino households at that level remained the same at 11%.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Department of Urban Studies and Planning has created a Living Wage Calculator for states and counties as “the hourly rate that an individual must earn to support their family, if they are the sole provider and are working full-time (2080 hours per year)” (Living Wage Calculator, 2018). According to that a single adult with one child in Washington county needs to make at least \$26.68 per hour (equivalent to \$55,494 per year) to adequately meet basic living expenses. This living wage estimate is almost triple the Latino per capita income in Washington county.

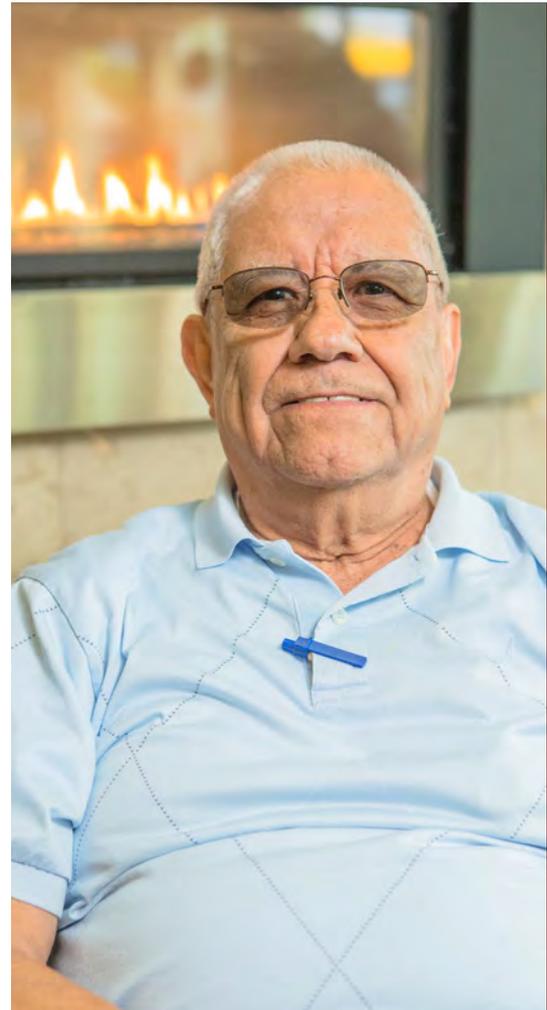
Median Income by Household Type



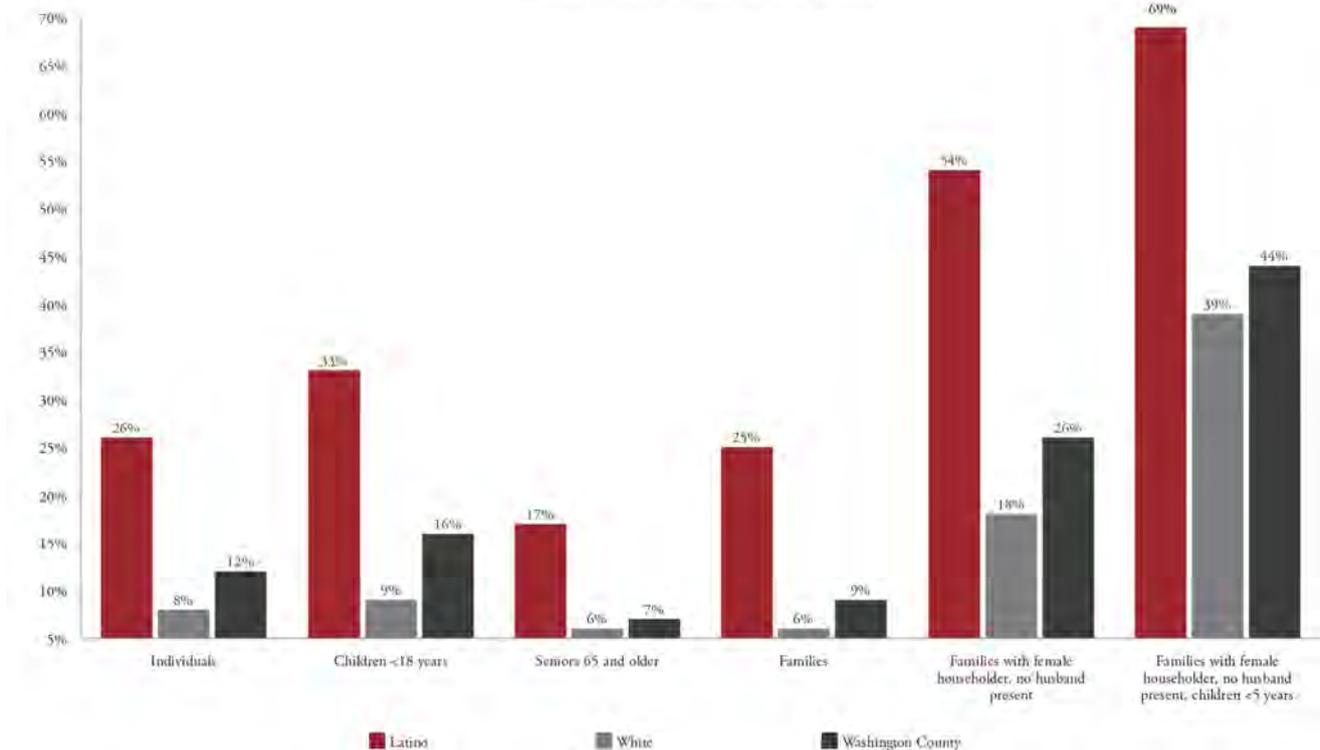
The monthly earnings of a typical Latino worker in Washington county is \$3,499 while a typical White worker earns \$5,626 per month in 2015. The annual shortfall between the two is \$25,524, which more than affords renting a home at the annual Zillow median rent of \$19,776 in Washington county. To put it another way, a White full time worker can afford to house themselves and have money left over for other costs or as savings with the annual earnings differential. Meanwhile, Latinos on a median household income of \$44,544 have to spend at least 44% of that income to afford the \$19,776 annual median rent cost. If they were to spend no more than 30% of their income on housing (as advised by post housing advocates), Latino households could save at least \$6,413 annually or put it towards childcare, food and other expenses.⁵

Community reviewers point out that this has led to residential segregation in Washington County wherein Latinos, even those with middle and higher incomes, are predominantly living in historically disinvested neighborhoods.

Low-income and unaffordable living costs combine to create impoverished conditions for many Latino community members. Latino children, seniors, families, single-mother households especially those with young children, are all highly likely to be in poverty in Washington County.



Poverty Across Individuals and Families





In such cases, households tend to reduce their spending on food and healthcare since housing costs are fixed. Judging by the increase in number of Latino residents in Washington County using food stamps or SNAP, almost 1 in 3 Latinos are food insecure —lack enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Food insecurity also indicates the extent to which a household is having to negotiate a trade off of basic needs such as housing, food and healthcare.



Predominantly Latino residing neighborhoods have been found to be "childcare deserts" in the US

Poverty also impacts Latino children and youth well-being. According to the (American Community Survey, 2016) Latino kids are more likely to be in kindergarten but less likely to be enrolled in preschool programs compared to White children in Washington County. Predominantly Latino residing neighborhoods have been found to be “childcare deserts” in the US.

Latinos see their collective spirit and family orientation as strengths—they help each other by providing their resources and homes to community members. That, however, stretches community capacity to problem solve without any formal help being available.

HOUSING JUSTICE

“In Oregon, the propaganda when the farmers go to Texas is you’ve got washing machines, you’ve got toilets, you’ve got beautiful cabins, the scenery and everything. And we got here and it was one room. You have a stove in the corner and you have two bunk beds over on the other corner and you have toilets also that you have to go out and walk. The only heat you have is from the stove.” (Sprunger, 2015)

Evangelina Sanchez, moved to Washington County in 1967.

Housing stability ensures not only shelter but also fosters communities that support families, social networks, and religious, social, and cultural institutions. Lack of affordable housing to rent or own and discriminatory housing practices prevent meaningful connections to their neighborhoods and natural environments. Affordable housing also ensures that Latino residents can invest in their healthcare, education and nutrition.

“In the early 70s, families organized themselves to collect money to help families of the deceased move the

bodies back to their home. There was a lot of willingness to help one another. Now that we are thousands and thousands, it’s difficult to organize ourselves. But we have to find creative ways of doing it.”

In a county where almost 2 out of 3 White residents are homeowners, a little over 1 out of 3 Latinos own their homes (American Community Survey 2011–2015). Two out of three Latino residents in Washington County are renters. Racial differences in loan denials, low incomes, expensive home loans and a systematically higher risk of foreclosure are some of the reasons for differential Latino, White and county homeownership rates. In fact, as the table below shows, at every income level (low, medium and high) Latinos were more likely than White applicants to be denied home mortgage loans in Washington County. This indicates that home mortgage borrowing and lending for Latino households are not just a function of low incomes in the county.



In a County where almost 2 out of 3 White residents are homeowners, a little

over **1 out of 3** Latinos own their homes



Upper Income Home Loan Denial Disparity Rate (Latino-White) **125%**

Middle Income Home Loan Denial Disparity Rate (Latino-White) **151%**

Lower Income Home Loan Denial Disparity Rate (Latino-White) **78%**

The sub-prime mortgage housing bubble had a debilitating impact - 4% of total loan applications in 2009 compared to 13% in 2007.

Between 2007 and 2013, the median home value reported by White homeowners in the US declined 20.3%, compared to **25.8%** for Latino homeowners in Washington County, during the housing boom, nearly half of loans to Latino households were high-priced

*Not only have Latinos been denied access to the housing market (the primary means of building economic security) in Washington County, the sub-prime mortgage housing bubble had a debilitating impact on them to the extent that the community hasn't originated loans to pre-recession rates, let alone comparable to White residents (Washington County Fair Housing Plan, 2012). The Washington County Fair Housing Plan 2012 analysis of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data found that loan applications from Latino households have trended downwards ever since the recession (Washington County Fair Housing Plan, 2012). In 2009 their share was 4% compared to 8–13% between 2004 and 2007 right before the recession. In the economic recovery phase when home values stabilized nationally, it has done so at an uneven pace along racial lines. Between 2007 and 2013, the median home value reported by White homeowners in the US declined 20.3%, compared to 25.8% for Latino homeowners. Most Latinos therefore tend to rent in the county—2 of 3 Latinos are renters, compared to a little over 1 out of 3 White residents of the county. Housing is often the single largest expense for a household. **Median rents in Washington County have increased by 37% between 2012 and 2015. In the same time period, monthly earnings of the Latino community grew by 17% (Wilson, 2014).***

Almost 1 out of 4 Latino homeowners spend more than a third of their monthly income on housing costs such as mortgages and taxes, and they are 33% more likely than the typical homeowner in Washington county to be severely burdened by housing costs—spending more than half of their income on those expenses. *One study of seven metropolitan areas in the US between 2004–2007 found that even after controlling for credit score and other key risk factors, Latino home buyers were more likely to have high-cost mortgages for home purchases.* Researchers attributed that to differential exposure of Latinos to high-risk lenders combined with the differential treatment by these lenders towards Latino, Black and White home buyers (Bayer, Ferreira, & Ross, 2016). In Washington County, during the housing boom, nearly half of loans to Latino households were high-priced (Washington County Fair Housing Plan, 2012).

Latino renters face a dire predicament—58% of them spend more than 30% of their income on monthly rent. According to available data, in 2013 21.6% of the Section 8 voucher waiting list and 16.4% of the public housing waiting list identified as Latino (Housing Market Analysis & Needs Assessment, 2014, tables 3-36 & 3-37). This when the Latino community comprised roughly 16% of the county population in that year.

“Landlords are increasing the rents, and we would like to know what is our rights as tenants. Then we can say, no, you can't increase the rent in the middle of my contract or something like that. We need to know our rights in order to advocate for ourselves.”

Latino community members are wanting to mobilize around tenant rights and raising awareness among the community around it.

‘Rent eats first’ goes a popular adage. In 2015, the median rent according to Zillow Rent Index was \$1,648. If median household income is considered (\$44,554), Latino households should be spending no more than \$1,114 per month on rent in order to not be burdened by housing costs (at most 30% of their income). The average monthly earnings for a Latino worker with a “stable job” was \$3,499, therefore placing a 47% cost burden on that person. If that person is a woman whose full-time median earnings are \$26,759, they are spending much of their income on rent. *Latinas in particular negotiate the housing crisis since over half of single Latina households are in poverty especially ones with children. The housing crisis is impacting Latinos at both low and middle income and class levels.*

In such cases, households tend to reduce their spending on food and healthcare in order to meet housing costs. Judging by the increase in number of Latino residents in Washington County using food stamps or SNAP (from 19% in 2010 to 31% in 2015), Latinos are negotiating a trade off of basic needs such as housing, food and healthcare in Washington county.

HOUSING INSECURITY

Community members share the benefits of families living together—strengthened relationships, affordable daycare, transfer of language and culture. It is enshrines values of collectivism in contrast to homeownership as an individualistic measure of success. However, legal restrictions to number of people living in residence, rising rents, inequitable earnings, immigration-induced fear has put a lot of pressure on Latino communal and financial resources. Community members talk about homelessness and families and households extending themselves to support those in need.

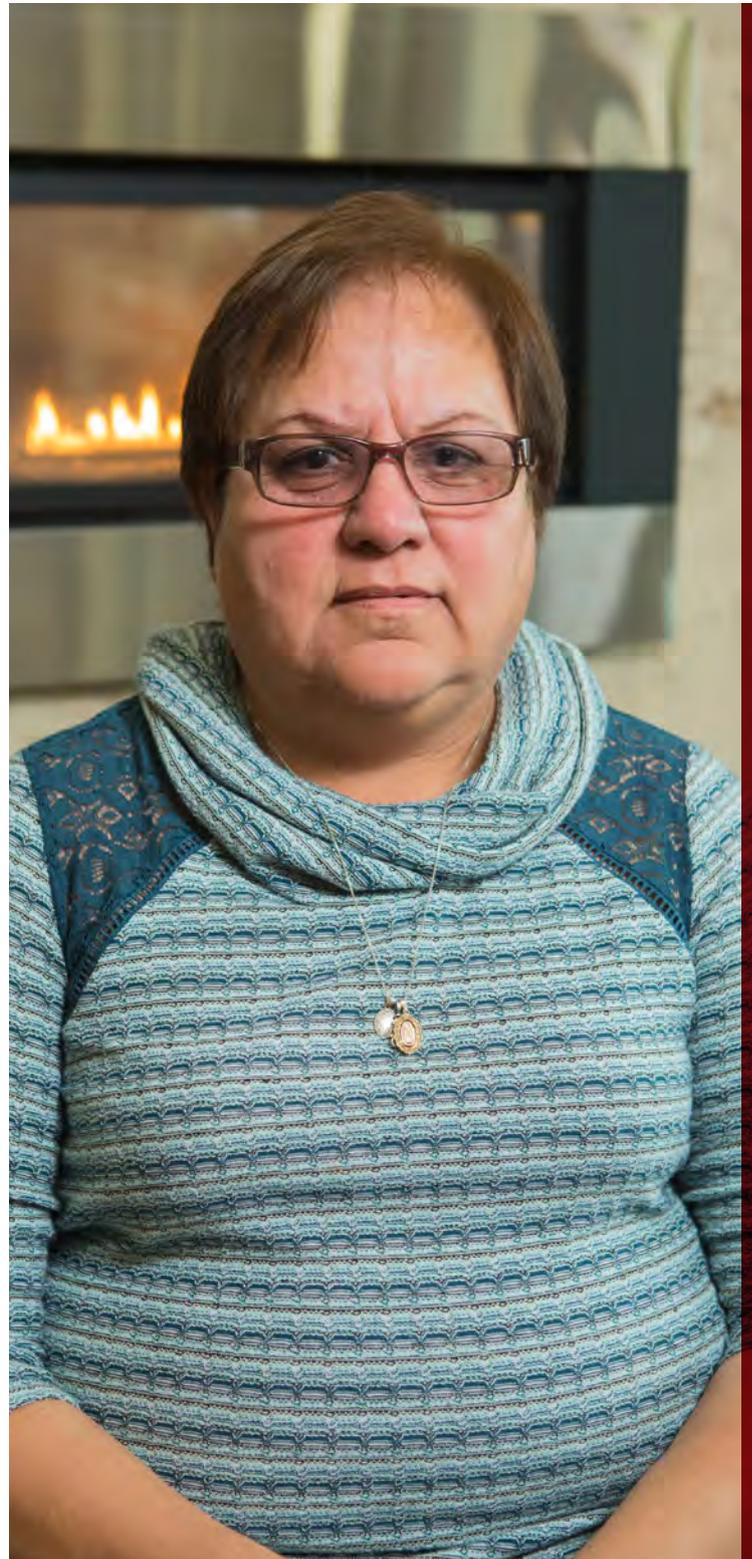
“We are seeing more families becoming homeless. When parents don’t have the opportunity to work, they can’t afford the rent. They stay with family or community who want to support them. But sometimes they are not able to have more people in their apartment.”

Economic and housing injustices have made large households into a coping mechanism. Overcrowding (measured as more than one person per room) puts the family at risk of eviction given the current state of tenant rights. Community members also talk about the proliferation of studio and one-bedroom housing developments that are out of step with the needs of communities of color. 17% of Latino households are “overcrowded” compared to 1% of White households (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Houselessness is another aspect of the way in which the Latino community experiences housing injustice. It is well documented that Points In Time Counts methodology under counts houseless people in general, and people of color in particular (Bayer, Ferreira, & Ross, 2016). The latter is because volunteers may not be adequately trained to ask race/ethnicity questions to houseless people and because

“Just because we value multigenerational living, doesn’t mean we don’t need affordable homes. There is a difference between choice and necessity.”

it doesn't capture certain types of houselessness such as "doubling up" and couchsurfing, which are primarily experienced by communities of color (Coalition of Communities of Color, 2017). Oregon Department of Education's housing insecurity data for Latino and White students that uncovers the extent to which a student is "housing insecure"—"lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence", Latino students were 100% more likely to be houseless compared to White students in 2015; housing insecure Latino students grew by 8% between 2012 and 2015, the same growth rate as the Latino student population in that time period.



EDUCATION JUSTICE

In May 2016, primarily Latino students in the Forest Grove High School led a school walkout and demonstration in protest of a “Build A Wall” banner hung at their school (Crombie, 2016). During the focus groups, community members praised their organizing actions as illustrative of the strengths of their community — “empowered”, “self-advocates”, “survivors of oppression” and “agents of change”. Yet, schools, which should be sites of nourishment and development for Latino youth are largely failing them. Community members talk about the “racism of low expectations”, lack of representation in teaching staff and administrators, curriculum that doesn’t honor their history and punitive disciplinary practices as factors in the school environment that impact Latino student experiences in schools. Schools may also fail to recognize and innovate solutions around barriers to parental engagement especially as they arise from the economic injustices and cultural and language issues. Apart from that, students need to feel cared for in light of challenges they and their families may face from immigration, racial stereotyping, poverty and language barriers. Community members lift up initiatives such as AVID and dual language immersion programs and urge school districts to foster a safe and flourishing environment for youth and children.

The Latino community urges readers to not fall for racist tropes that stereotype their communities as disengaged from education, but rather recognize that they consider youth empowerment and leadership as a big strength in Washington County.

They see the interlinkages between education, employment, poverty and immigration and envision education justice as reforming not only schools but holistic and cross-sectoral change.

According to American Community Survey (2016), *at least* 26.6% of the Latino population is between 5 to 17 years old. Latino students formed 28% of the student population in 2015 (Oregon Department of Education). The Latino student body grew by 11% between 2010 and 2015, outpacing the overall increase in the student population. It is no surprise that schools are crucial to racial justice in the county for the Latino community. How well are schools doing by their Latino students?

EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Early childhood learning is foundational to a child’s development, and is linked to readiness for school and academic success. The Oregon Department of Education assesses school readiness through the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment. Data from that depicts a complex picture. Latino children entering kindergarten have similar skills compared to their White and county peers between the ages of 3 and 6 related to “approaches to learning”. This domain “incorporates elements of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulation (focus attention, control emotions and manage thinking, behavior and feelings) under a single umbrella to guide practices that support the development of these skills” (Oregon’s Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines, 2015). In contrast, they lag behind in early assessments that test their familiarity with numbers and basic calculations. Latino kindergarteners excel in assessments of their knowledge and skills of Spanish letters but fall behind on early English literacy.

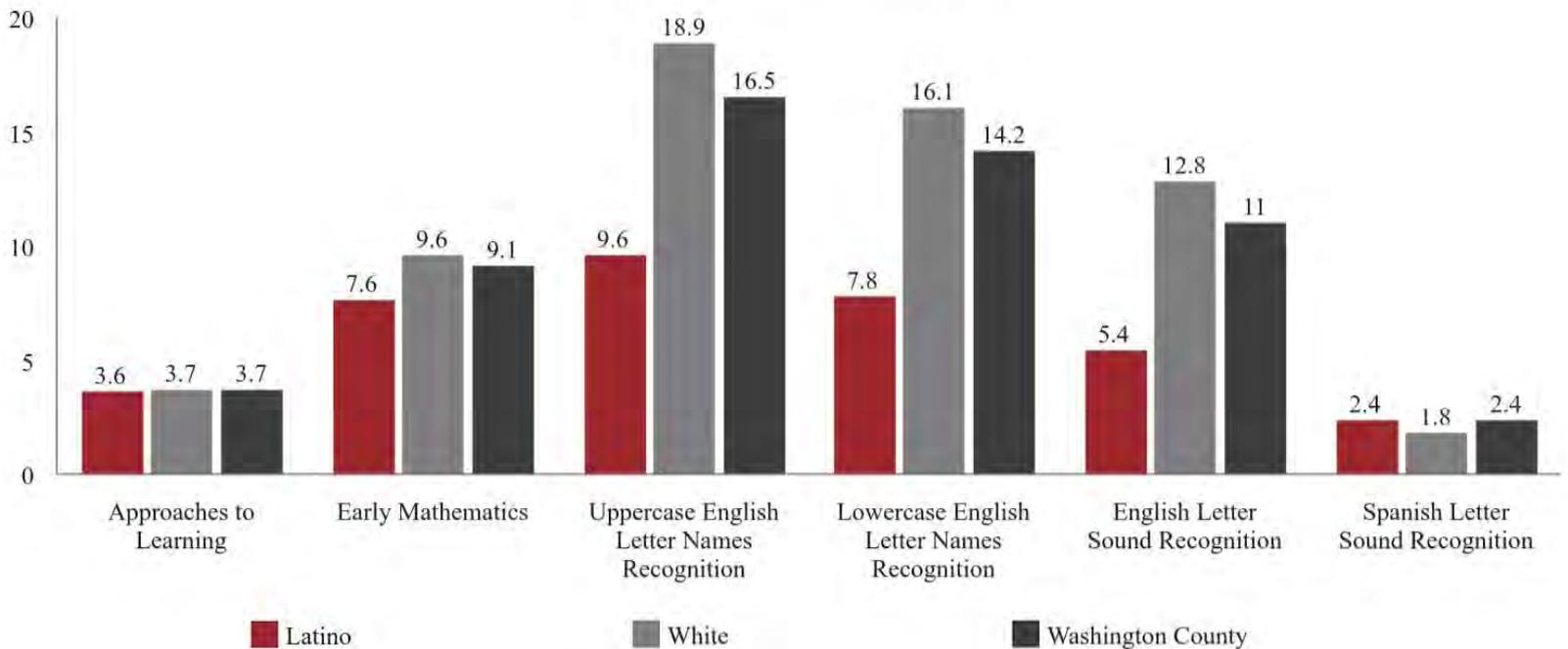
Community reviewers of this data observe that lack of access to high quality early learning are causing these disparities in early learning outcomes (Philips, et al., 2017). They echo the now widespread consensus in research that not only are high quality



pre-kindergarten programs good for young children and their families, Latino children benefit the most in their school readiness outcomes.⁷ In Washington County, while Latinos are 43% more likely to be in kindergarten compared to Whites (because the Latino population is overall younger), White kids are more likely to be enrolled in pre-school compared to Latinos (American Community Survey 2016).⁸ Nationally, about 40% of Latino kids participate in preschool programs compared to 53% of White kids in the US (Ramirez, 2017). There are numerous reasons for this. First, are economic barriers in Washington county.

Latino children are 267% more likely to be in poverty compared to White children below the age of 18; Latino families are 317% more likely to be poor and single-mom households with children under 5 are 77% more likely to be in poverty compared to their White counterparts (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Second, is a potential dearth of early care and education centers. Research has found that 42% of Latino kids live in “child care deserts” with no or overfull early care and education centers in the US (Ramirez, 2017). This pattern tends to be correlated with poverty and Latino identity—child care deserts have pre-

Early Learning Outcomes 2016



dominantly Latino residents (Malik & Hamm, 2016). *Although some research also points to a community preference for family or relative care, a growing body of findings show that expansion of publicly funded programs and use of targeted outreach efforts may be reducing the disparities in early care and education access (Crosby, Mendez, Guzman, & Lopez, 2016).*

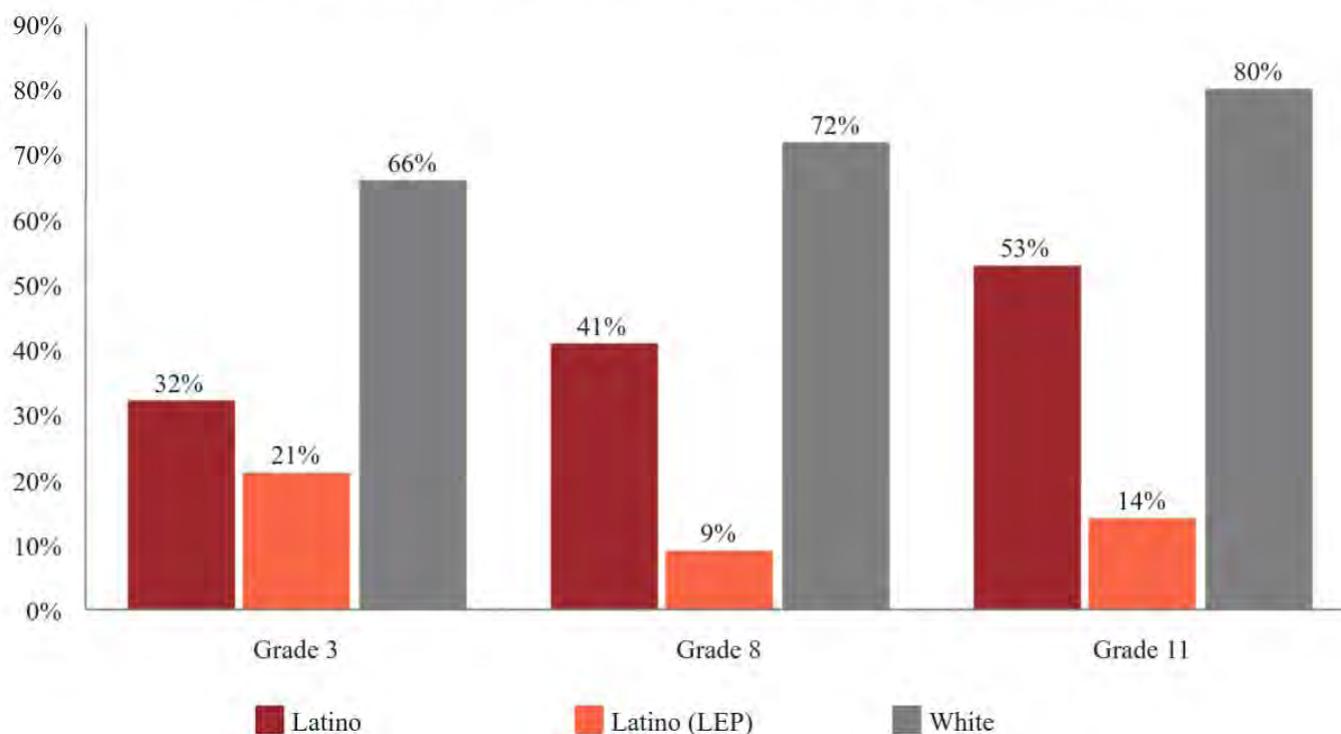
“I work in the school district and I know that it is really hard for families to access pre-school services—there is a long waitlist. Cost is also an issue—I am seeing families at that edge where even fieldworkers are earning more than what qualifies them for low-cost services but enough to afford children programming on their own.”

Economic justice issues such as low income, poverty and housing insecurity (Latino students were 100% more likely to be housing insecure in 2015 according to the Oregon Department of Education), also affect a Latino child’s health, development, academic performance, and overall well-being. Focus group participants desire better outreach and programming by parks and recreation to Latino children. The same economic imperatives may also keep Latino parents and families away from their home and children thereby limiting their ability to invest in their children’s identity and intellectual development.

OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN K-12

Those early disparities in school readiness indicators and their causes persist in the K-12 system as well. When Latino and White student performances on standardized testing of reading (English), mathematics and science are analyzed, Latinos on average are lagging behind their White peers. In 2015, just less than one-third of Latino test-takers and 1 out of 5 Latino students with limited English proficiency in Grade 3 met or exceeded the reading standards, compared to 2 out of 3 White third-grade students.

Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Reading (2015)

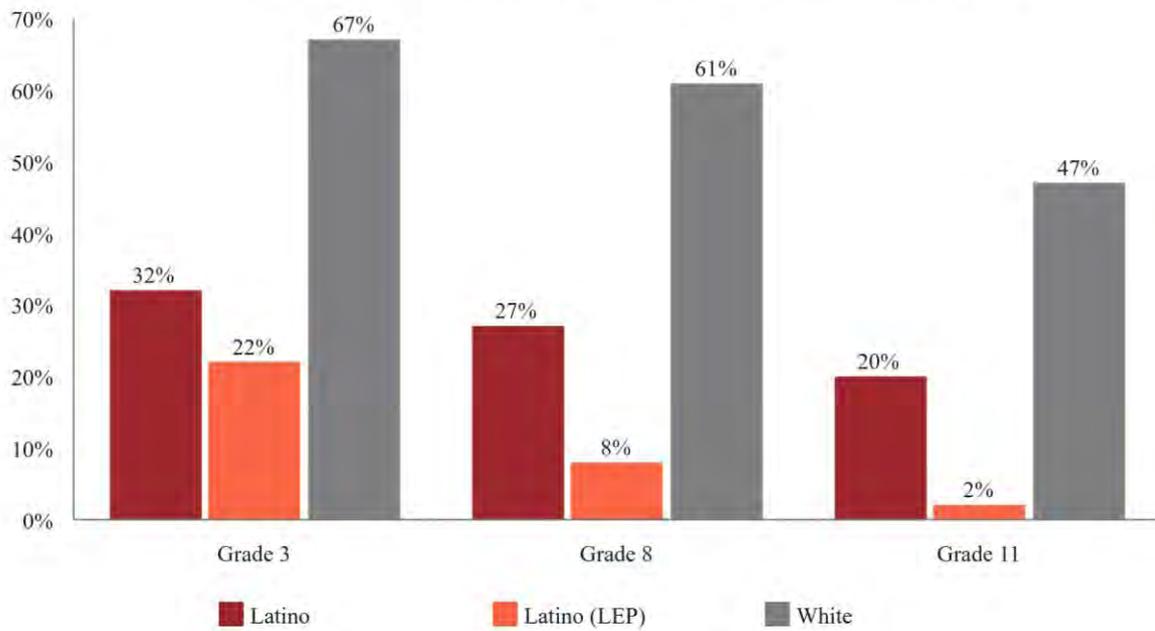


To the extent that curriculum is taught in English and standardized tests are delivered in English, they could start to fall behind in other academic areas. Third-grade reading proficiency can also be a predictor of high school graduation.

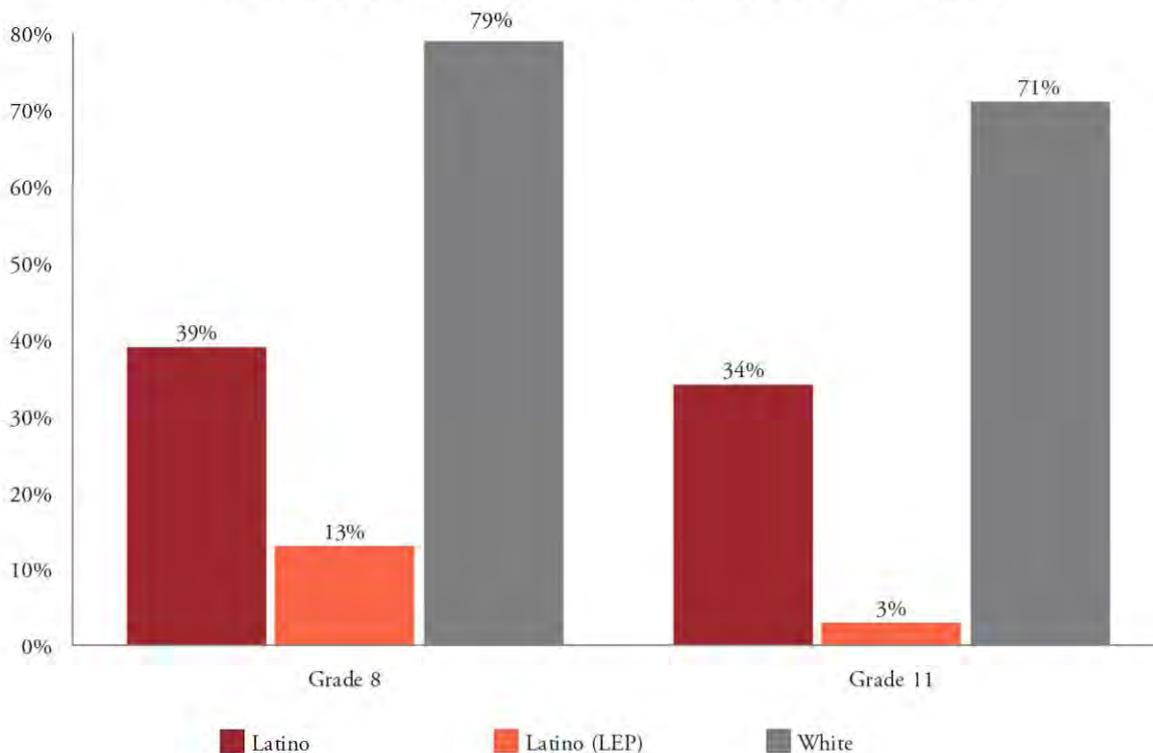
Only 1 out of 5 Latino test-takers in Grade 11 excel in mathematics compared to almost half of White test-takers. Latino students with limited English proficiency are performing worse across all grades.

There are achievement gaps between Latino and White students in science with limited English proficiency students doing worse. Only 3% of Latino students with limited English proficiency and 24% of Latino test-takers in Grade 11 met or exceeded science standards compared to 71% of White students.

Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Mathematics (2015)



Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Science (2015)



Public discourse stops here. Persistent “achievement gaps” between Latino and White students combined with comparatively lower levels of educational attainment among Latinos in Washington County leads to overt and subtle messaging that education is not important for Latino families. Community members question the extent to which Latino students feel encouraged to excel in their schools and whether schools empathize with the lived experiences of Latino communities in Washington County that are under economic and immigration stress.

When community members reviewed data related to Latino outcomes across grades and subject matter, they came up with two categories of explanations that work in tandem. First, was around parental engagement in schools. The second set of explanations said that schools in Washington County largely do not foster a learning environment for Latino students.

I. LATINO PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Latino community members seek to build a partnership with schools that fosters academic success of their children and youth. In doing so, however, they push back on how schools have traditionally thought of as parental engagement, and urge them to be empathetic to immigration, economic and language barriers facing Latino parents.

Harris and Goodall’s (2008) empirical study demonstrated that parental involvement in education was an essential factor in increased levels of achievement. Schools have used findings such as this to emphasize active engagement of parents as crucial to student’s current academic performance and future plans. This has had two implications—(1) that families are the primary source of a student’s expectations of academic success and therefore, achievement gaps can be closed and Latino educational outcomes improved by targeting parental engagement, and (2) schools have defined partnerships with parents in the education of children as participation in “formal activities, such as school events or meetings, or volunteering at the school”, indicating a more traditional or formal partnership (Marshall, 2006). Both community members and research argue that those policy out-

comes miss the mark for a few reasons. One, research has found that schools, more than parental support, affect Latino student engagement. “Social support from teachers is an important factor in affective and behavioral aspects of school engagement. Specifically, teachers exerted an important effect on school engagement, beyond the effect of parental support” (Brewster & Bowen, 2004). As is discussed below, factors such as “racism of low expectations”, punitive disciplinary practices against Latino students, lack of teachers of color and culturally competent staff affect the extent to which Latino students feel set up for success in schools. Second, narrowly defining parental engagement is limiting for Latino families. Issues such as language, child care, how Latinos define a home and school partnership, and respect for the profession of a teacher in Latino culture need to be taken into account (Poza, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014). Additionally, schools in Washington County have to consider and be accommodating of economic barriers that constrain parents from investing time in their own educational advancement as well as their children.

“The parents are so busy working just trying to keep their home and keep food on the table. The parents don’t speak English and there’s nobody that can speak to them at school. They’re not going to go to the school and talk. They’re going to sit there and say, what am I doing here? I don’t understand.”

Some community members also push back against the implicit bias in the narrow focus on parental engagement as a path to academic excellence — that because Latino parents don’t engage in the type of formal partnerships schools envision, they are not vested in their children’s education. Poza, Brooks, and Valdés (2014) suggested that Latino parents are indeed involved and concerned about their children’s education. Latino parents consider engagement in the education of their children as participating in home based activities outside of the school that assist students, and not necessarily on the traditional model of engagement such as fundraising, school activities, and PTA membership (Poza, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014). In many instances, this takes place within the community and at home, away from school and gets overlooked by school personnel (Auerbach, 2007; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012).

II. SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY LARGELY DO NOT FOSTER A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR LATINO STUDENTS

When youngsters are encouraged to see themselves as smart and expected to achieve academic excellence, they are more likely to have higher aspirations and see their identity as closely connected to school (Gándara et al., 2001). On the contrary, *Latinos in Washington County say that neither students nor families “feel welcome, included and understood in schools”*. This is manifest in various ways.

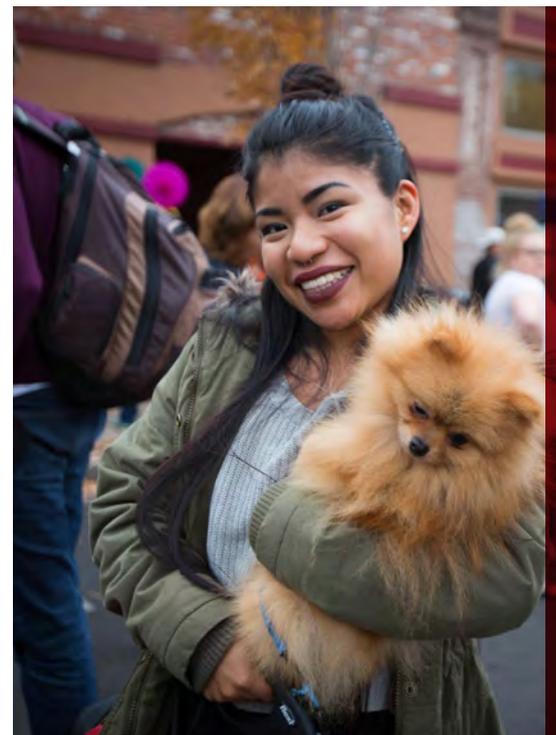
LACK OF REPRESENTATION OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN SCHOOLS

On the one hand, community members like the advent of biliteracy initiatives and dual language immersion programs in Spanish, and on the other, they are concerned about systemic lack of appreciation for multilingualism, and whether Latino students are the ones benefiting from those initiatives. According to Pew Research Center surveys, nearly 9% of self-identified Latinos say that it’s important for their future generations to speak Spanish. However, in reality, there has been an increase in Latinos that only speak English and 27% of Latinos between 5–17 years of age are monolingual English speakers. For Latinos in Washington County, language between generations is an important way to pass along cultural values and norms. However, economic and immigration imperatives limits the family’s role in doing that.

“What is our culture, our worth? We’re probably not passing that too well to our kids, new generation. Not because we don’t want and not because it’s not important to us. It’s because we as parents, work so much and there’s so much going on right now, that we don’t have the time to sit down..”

For community members, schools are implicated in the structures that don’t honor diverse cultures and that teach from assimilative lens of English as the primary language. A historic focus on English as the primary language of instruction has meant that Latino kindergarteners who excel in early Spanish literacy aren’t able to build on that potential. It also means that Latino students with limited English proficiency are assigned to English As Second Language (ESL) classes, where they continue to fall behind in educational outcomes. Additionally, lack of representation or distortion of Latino history also affects student’s identity development and their kinship with their language and culture. Schools are also sites of racism against Latino students, which may also influence them to reject their language and culture in order to fit in.

“If you are putting history in books or stories in books, they have to have some truth to it. Otherwise, we are going to end up believing what they tell you as a child.”



LACK OF TEACHERS OF COLOR

10% of teachers in Washington County in 2015 identified as Latino compared to 28% of the student body; 84% of teachers were White. *Lack of teachers who share their cultural identity impacts teacher's interactions with students, consequently affecting student performances in schools.*⁹ Extensive research has found that “students assigned to a teacher who shares their race and gender are more likely to say their teacher pushes them to work hard, requires them to explain their answers, not to give up when the work gets hard, and accepts nothing less than their full effort” (Egalite & Kisida, 2016). Students of color particularly those living and attending schools in disadvantaged settings benefit in their academic success from seeing adult role models in a position of authority. Recent research found that students, race notwithstanding have more favorable perceptions of teachers of color versus White teachers (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). Finally, research about disparities in disciplinary practices in schools indicate harsher punishment for similar conduct against students of color could be based in part on teacher interpretation of student behavior (Goldhaber, Theobald & Tien, 2015).

RACISM OF LOW EXPECTATIONS

AND SCHOOL TO FIELDS PIPELINE

Community members talk about the “racism of low expectations” implying that teachers and schools on the whole do not expect academic excellence from their Latino students, which affects student perception of their abilities to do the same. They talk about the “school to fields” pipeline—an internalized institutional expectation that the future of Latino students is limited to manual labor. Schulz and Rubel (2011) interviewed Latino high school students about their high school experiences and found that negative expectations were set up for them by school personnel that inhibited their engagement in the academic process. Halx (2014) found that perceptions of negativity can provoke students to stop trying, to lose hope in their educational possibilities and to underperform as they perceive is expected of them.

A longtime resident of Washington County recalled to Oregon Historical Society that at the time she attended Forest Grove High School, she had received no counselling from the school on how to pursue higher education despite her stellar academic record and strong interest in attending college. The same resident recalled that in 1977, Latino students filed a complaint with the state superintendent's office alleging poor treatment of migrant and Latino children by teachers and other students in Forest Grove.

At the schools if they can find one adult who cares, one person who that student can make a connection with. I think knowing there's somebody at school that's going to talk to them and say, your child is doing great. They can go to college. Instead of earning \$12 they are going to earn \$40 an hour if they go to college.”

“My niece, who is single mom, had her first baby at 14 or 15. She didn't want that for her son. She wanted her son to go to college but didn't know how to apply for college. The counselor at the school said, ‘Why do you want to go to college? You can work at the gas station.’”



Latino students were **54%** more likely to be targeted by expulsion or suspension that would send them out of school than White students in 2015.

This disparity has gone down from 88% in 2010. According to community reviewers, narrowing of racial disparity is due to restorative justice practices.

HARSH DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

In addition to the “racism of low expectations” and related to “school to fields pipeline,” community members identify harsh disciplinary practices against Latino youth as perpetuating racism and distancing students from schools. According to calculations based on Oregon Department of Education data, Latino students were 54% more likely to be targeted by expulsion or suspension that would send them out of school than White students in 2015. Community reviewers share that the narrowing of racial disparities have happened due to successful restorative justice practices in schools.

Research shows a negative relationship between the use of school suspension and expulsion and school-wide academic achievement, even when controlling socio economic status demographics. A survey of 400 elementary and middle schools from across the country found that African-American and Latino students received harsher punishments for similar misbehavior than their White peers (Ski-ba et al., 2011). Students of color are disproportionately disciplined for subjective offenses, such as disrespect, while their White peers are disproportionately disciplined for objective offenses such as smoking (Cregor & Hewitt, 2011).

“My son had an accident. He called me. Mom, the police are here. The other person was a kid, a White kid. He was gone by the time I got there and the police kept my son there asking questions. I said why is he still here? Why is the other person not here? We are leaving, we are done.”

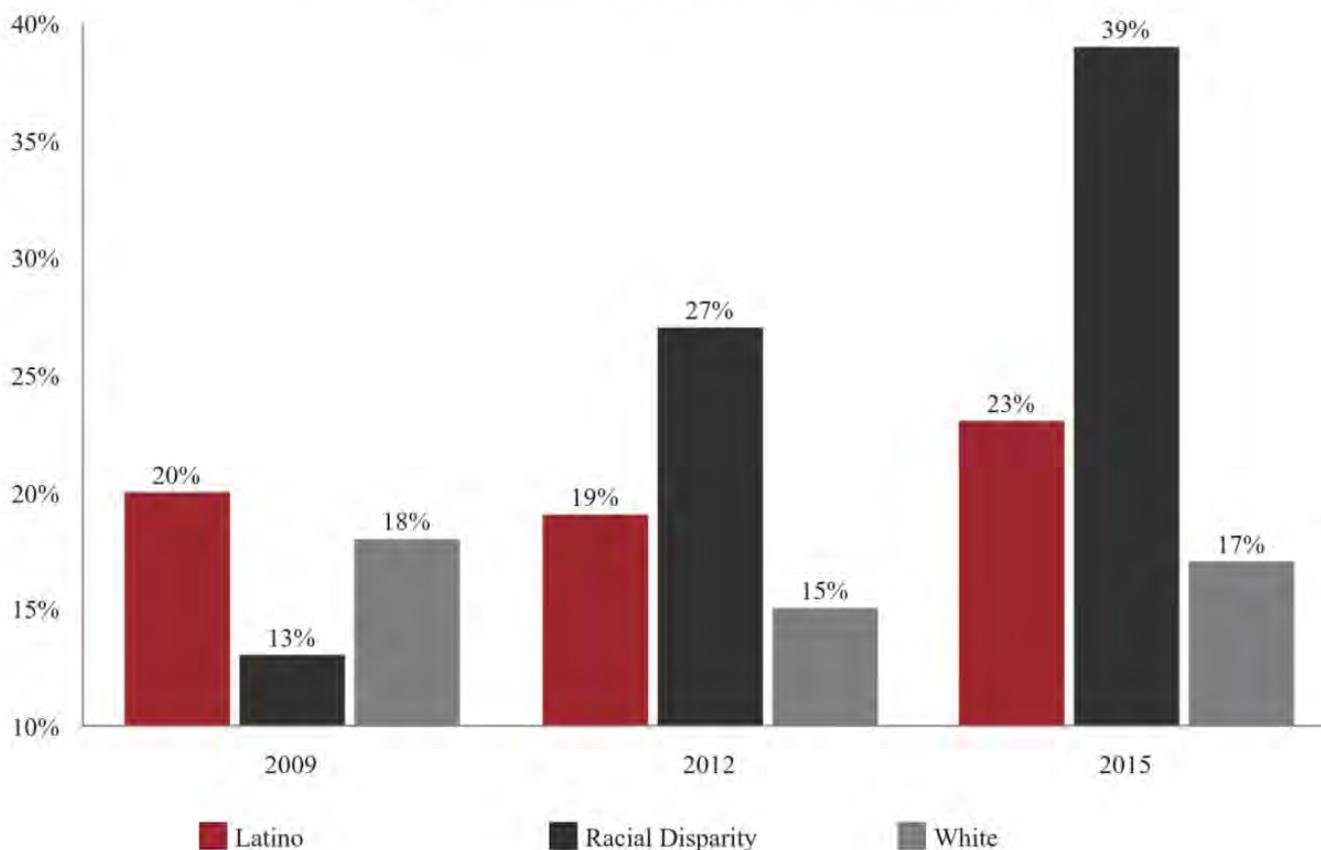
“Any time a Latino child does anything, anything in the schools or outside, they are punished. My nephew, he was 14 years old. During the summer he wrote his name and date on some school property. What happened? The police came. He gets tagged from that time. He is fine now, but think about all the years he missed and the trauma.”

School suspension is the top predictor of contact with the criminal justice system for students who become incarcerated by the ninth grade (Sallo, 2011). The American Academy of Pediatrics found that suspensions and expulsions not only jeopardize children's health and safety; they also may exacerbate academic failure (cited in Cregor and Hewitt, 2011). For children of color, particularly Latinos and African-Americans, the effects associated with zero-tolerance policies multiply the barriers to academic and career success that are already present in their lives. Students who have experienced suspension or expulsion are more than eight times as likely to be incarcerated as those who graduate (Sallo, 2011).

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Oregon Department of Education measures chronic absenteeism as a student missing 10 percent or more of school days due to excused and/or unexcused absences and/or expulsion or temporary suspension from school (Chronic Absenteeism, n.d.). Chronic absenteeism among Latino students has increased between 2009 and 2015. This is of concern since research has found that “chronically absent students have delayed achievement in early years with widening gaps over time, higher suspension and dropout rates, and decreased high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence” (Chronic Absenteeism, n.d.).

Percentage of Student Population that is Chronically Absent



Latino students maybe missing school due to a variety of reasons. Firstly, students may disconnect from school because of lack of support for success manifest in the racism of low expectations or because the curriculum either doesn't represent or distorts their histories. Secondly, students maybe deliberately excluded from school by punitive disciplinary practices. Thirdly, community members talk about Latino youth pitching in to help families that are holding multiple jobs with childcare support and English interpretation and translation to facilitate access to services. Fourthly, is immigration.

Although this data doesn't include the impact of ICE raids on the community, focus group participants talked about fear deterring children from attending school.

“There’s so much going on - racism, immigration, macho culture. Just think about us being in our country and being a teenager going to school. We didn’t have to deal with everything our kids have to deal in here.”

Poverty and housing insecurity are also crucial factors outside of the school environment shaping Latino students’ academic experiences. As was mentioned earlier in this section, Latino children and youth are more likely to be in poverty than their White peers. There has also been an 8% increase in the number of Latino students who report being housing insecure—lack a stable night-time residence, between 2012 and 2016. The growth in housing insecurity among Latino students was similar to their overall growth in the student body. Nevertheless, they comprise 4% of the total Latino student population in 2016.

Despite all these structural barriers embedded in schools, immigration and economic justice factors, Latino students are graduating from high school at higher rates than in the past. In 2015, 74% of Latino ninth-graders were on track to graduate high school. In 2016, 72% and 78% of Latino students graduated high school along with their four and five year cohorts respectively. Of concern is the



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plateauing of dropout rates of Latino students at 15–18% making them at least 88% more likely to dropout of high school than a White student (Oregon Department of Education, 2016).

Again, community members remind schools to design policies in partnership with community that recognizes the lived experiences of Latino students and their families.

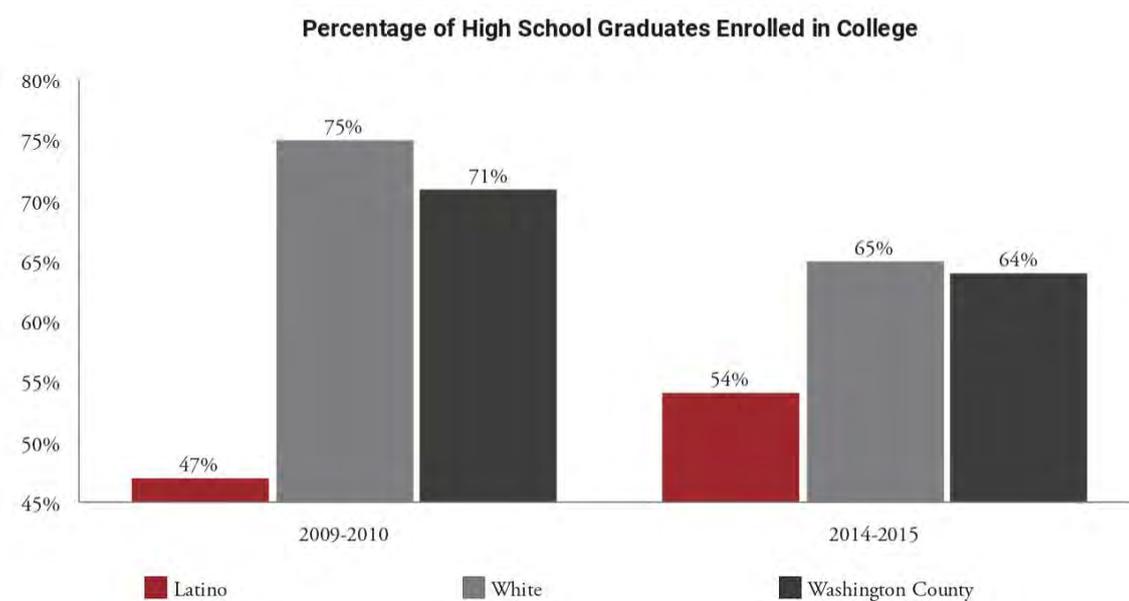
Latino high school graduates are enrolled in college at higher rates at a time when overall college enrollment rates are declining.

In 2016, 23% of Latinos in Washington County identified their education level as having gone to college but not receiving a degree (American Community Survey, 2016). People tend to leave college without a degree due to financial constraints and/or due to lack of support in higher educational institutions. Community members advocate for support and resources for college aspirants many of whom maybe first generation college students and single mothers.

“I work with single moms who are managing households with children and also pursuing education. We need to give them resources and support.”

“There are families at a level where we don’t have enough money to pay for college education, but we don’t qualify for low income either. We need more opportunity for those students to go on to college so that we can have more people in leadership.”

Latino high school graduates are enrolled in college at higher rates at a time when overall college enrollment rates are declining.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Latino community in Washington County, like their kin in other parts of the country have become extremely worried about law enforcement. Racial profiling and differential treatment of Latino youth have been long-standing concerns for the community. At least since the presidential elections in 2016, incarceration-deportation pipeline threatens to separate Latino families and community in Washington County. In their hunt for “criminal aliens” and skirting sanctuary city initiatives, ICE has detained numerous Latino community members at the Washington County Courthouse, often times punishing parking ticket violations with arrest and deportation (Pursinger, 2017).

According to the data made available by the Washington County Sheriff’s office, there were no disparities between the rate at which law enforcement stopped Latinos, White people and County residents in 2015—law enforcement identified stopping 8% of the Latino population in the county and 8% of White population in the county.¹⁰ In 2016, Latinos were 14% more likely to be stopped by police than the overall county population and White people in particular. Both *community members in Washington County who reviewed this data as well as criminal justice research opine that disparities in police stops are either higher than what available official data records or masks racialized behavioral patterns occurring during the cop-community member interaction.*

Stanford University researchers have found evidence that Black and Latino drivers face a double standard in that police require far less suspicion to search them than their White counterparts (Open Policing, 2018). Focus group participants share their experiences with racial profiling in Washington County to critique official data that there have been either no or negligible racial disparities in the manner in which law enforcement stops Latinos.

“You are going to be stopped at any time because of your skin color. They see five Brown bodies and they are going to make you stop.”

“I’ve been in Hillsboro 17 years. I get scared when a cop car is behind me. I got pulled over for no other reason to check my driver’s license and insurance.”

Another reason why community members and researchers are skeptical of official data showing negligible racial disparities is because of the data itself. Racial profiling is based on racist stereotypes about a community including how they look. *Research has found that those in the community who fit who law enforce-*

“I volunteered in the police department a few years ago. They know what type of car Latinos drive. Profiling is in place.”

“My husband used to drive a nova—those long cars that sit low, right? He sits low. He had us in the car. My kids are in the back. The police followed us all the way through till we got to the house. Why? Because we are Brown and drive this car. Nothing wrong with the car.”

ment perceives as Latino—Brown-Skinned are easily targeted (Diepenbrock, 2017). In fact, a Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander resident of Washington County shared in the focus group that they were misidentified by the police as a Latino. Scholars have pointed out data practices to appropriately and accurately collect information about Latinos in the criminal justice system may not be consistent and valid (Urban Institute, 2016). That is because law enforcement agencies may have inconsistent ways of collecting and reporting race and ethnicity (Latino is considered an ethnic identity not a race) and may be misidentifying white passing Latinos as White. For example, a review of Texas Department of Safety database of police stops in 2015 showed inaccurate reporting of Latino driver's race as White (Chen, 2015). The total number of Latinos stopped increased manifold once those stopped were accurately identified.

Even if we take the data at face value as an accurate reflection of law enforcement's behavior patterns, national research has found that among stopped drivers, after controlling for age, gender, time, and location, Black and Latino drivers are more likely to be ticketed, searched, and arrested than White drivers, and the bar for searching Black and Latino drivers is lower than for searching Whites.

According to the Vera Institute of Justice, Latinos, after the Black community, are more likely to be incarcerated in Washington County than White people. According to Vera Institute of Justice, Latinos comprised 15.8% of the Census estimated county population but were 21.7% of the jail population in Washington County in 2015. In contrast, White people were 65.5% of the jailed population in 2015 when they were 69% of the total county population. **266.4 Latinos versus 183.3 Whites per 100,000 residents age 15-64 were incarcerated in Washington County in 2015.**

Latino youth can get implicated in the racial profiling and carceral system early on. *According to the 2016 report of the Juvenile Justice Information System data about Washington County, Latino youth are being disproportionately referred to juvenile courts compared to White youth.* They are also disproportionately “held in a county juvenile detention facility, per statute, for pre-adjudication holding, as a sanction for an adjudicated offense, or for a probation violation” compared to White youth (Juvenile Justice Information System, 2016). School suspension is the top predictor of contact with the justice system for students who become incarcerated by the ninth grade (Juvenile Justice Information System, 2016).



In Washington county schools, Latino students are 54% more likely to be disciplined through punitive expulsion or suspension punishments compared to White students (Oregon Department of Education, 2015). Latino students are meted out harsher punishment than White students for similar misbehavior, and they are expelled for “subjective offenses”—where the school had discretion in defining the misbehavior that occurred (Skiba et al., 2011). Education scholars through numerous studies have shown that active teacher engagement has a stronger effect on Latino student success even after controlling for parental involvement involvement (Brewster & Bowen, 2004). Community members find school systems lacking in fostering a positive learning environment for Latino children and youth and encouraging positive identity development among them by honoring Latino languages and histories. Considering that chronic absenteeism among Latino students has increased between 2009 and 2015, community members note a lack in empathy towards students and families and institutionalized lack of understanding about the impact of lived experiences outside of school on students disconnecting from school. They advocate for holistic solutions that redress economic, housing and education injustices to improve Latino youth outcomes and as a basis for gang prevention in the community.

It is also important to explore the question of community safety. Our estimates based on the Washington County Sheriff's Office data finds that the Latino community is second largest racial group targeted by crime (unsurprising given that Latinos and Whites are the largest populations in the county). *Latinos are less likely to report crimes to the police than Whites, which maybe deflating the number of reported crimes against Latinos including hate violence (Rennison, 2007)*. Both community members and law enforcement have also noted a “chilling effect” on the Latino community reporting crimes against them. In a survey conducted in Chicago, Latinos said they would be hesitant to report being a victim of a crime for fear that the police would question their immigration status or the status of someone they knew (Theodore, 2013); respondents to a national survey noted that they had avoided reporting a crime to the police because they didn't want to be asked about their citizenship status, and the share was larger among Spanish-dominant Latinos than English-dominant Latinos (Sanchez, Pedraza & Vargas, 2015). Even before the November 2016 elections, Pew Hispanic Center's National Survey of Latinos found that 42% of Latino immigrants and 18% of those born in the US cited “fear of repercussions” from the police as a reason for not reporting even a violent crime (Lopez & Livingston, 2009).

“You can get tagged as a Latino. Your whole four years of high school, that officer is always behind you because of something you did in your freshman year. That's unfair.”



Although many Latinos organized and advocated for sanctuary city resolutions (successfully in Beaverton, Hillsboro, and Washington County but not in Cornelius and Forest Grove), they are concerned about the way in which immigrants in their community are being criminalized just for being immigrants.

Community stories about being racially profiled by law enforcement, disproportionate rates of incarceration and research findings that Latinos, especially immigrants are wary of interacting with police even to report crimes show that Latinos view law enforcement as one of the biggest threats to their safety. 36% of the community in Washington County are immigrants, and some are likely to have undocumented immigrants in their families and households. Oregon does not allow undocumented immigrants procuring a driver's license and community members narrate how they have been stopped by cops just to check their driver's license.

“Every time I see the police I get scared they are going to follow me. My car is perfect, but I’m still scared. Think about our families. Driving around wondering if they are going to get stopped. That’s the fear we have because of our color.”

As the discussion earlier indicates, this type of racial profiling already came at a price—higher likelihood of being ticketed, searched or arrested, since November 2016, particularly, Latino families are under threat of being separated by immigration detention and deportation. Although many Latinos organized and advocated for sanctuary city resolutions (successfully in Beaverton, Hillsboro and Washington County but not in Cornelius and Forest Grove), they are concerned about the way in which immigrants in their community are being criminalized just for being immigrants. Latino immigrants who even slightly brush up against the criminal justice system, such as being convicted of a misdemeanor, can find themselves subject to detention for an undetermined period, after which they are expelled from the country and barred from returning. There is an incarceration to deportation pipeline that is funneling Latino immigrants under the slightest pretext of being “criminal aliens” to detention and eventual deportation. *Furthermore, even though immigration detention is supposed to be in the civil rather than criminal domain, “in practice, detained immigrants lacking many basic constitutional protections find themselves in facilities that are often indistinguishable from prisons and jails. Immigration prisons are in fact punitive, “lawless spaces” where penal oppression is exercised.”* (Longazel, Berman & Fleury-Steiner, 2016).

HEALTH JUSTICE

In 1975 Virginia García, a six year old child of a migrant family stepped on a rusty nail and developed an infection. At one hospital, she was denied treatment because the family didn't have health insurance. At St. Vincent Hospital, her parents were not given medical instructions in Spanish on how to nurse their daughter. Virginia García eventually died from a disease contracted by the infection (Sprunger, 2015). This galvanized the Latino community in the county into action once again and Centro Cultural members, with support from St. Vincent Hospital and Tuality Community Hospital, founded the Virginia García clinic. (Patler & Laster Pirtle, 2018).

The Latino community, per their history and strength of organizing and creative problem-solving, centered health justice in the founding of Virginia Garcia. *Health justice realizes that a person's lived environment—housing, neighborhood, employment, poverty, immigration impacts their mental and physical well-being (Raphael, 2009); personal health is tied to community health; poverty and racism narrows one's health prognosis (Wilkinson, 2005).* It also surfaces structural barriers to access to healthcare. Virginia Garcia had emerged because Latinos in Washington County at that time couldn't adequately access or receive quality service because it wasn't available for Spanish speakers and those who didn't have insurance and couldn't afford to pay medical bills.

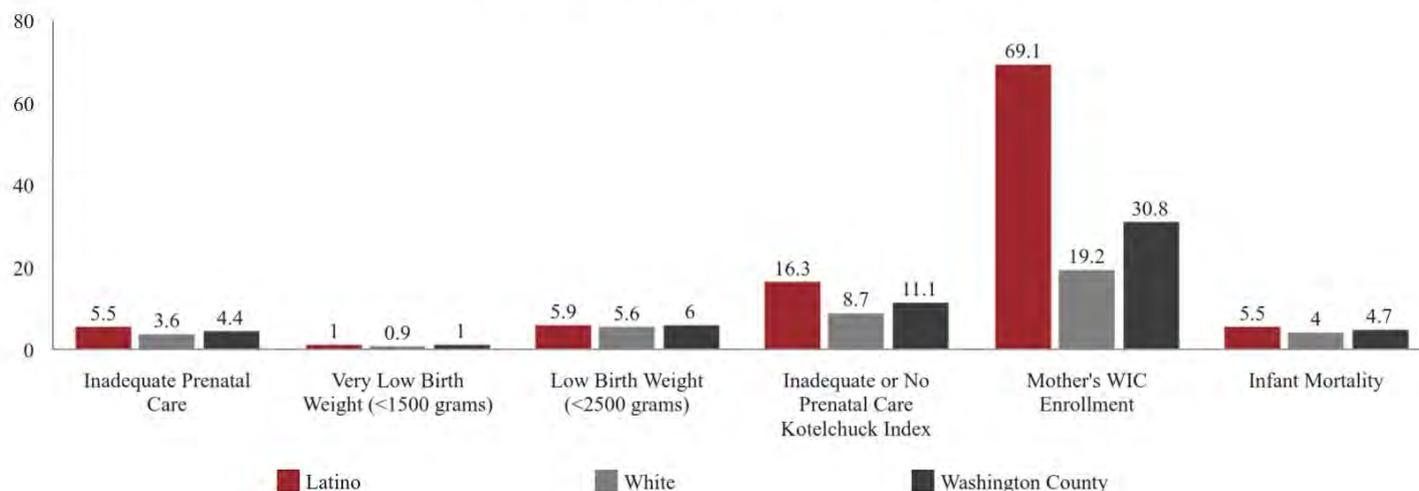
HEALTHCARE CONCERNS

Structural racism including exclusionary immigration policies take a physical and mental toll on community vitality that Latinos in Washington County consider to be their strength. Due to residential segregation, low income and poverty, occupational characteristics, Latino people are highly likely to end up living in areas with little access to health care and healthy food. They are less likely to live in healthy neighborhoods—with access to clean air, safe streets and social services. Focus group participants talk about their children not being able to fully access parks and recreation in the county. This has negative effects on their physical health symptomized by asthma, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases. Driver's license restrictions on undocumented immigrants also prevents them from accessing healthcare, green spaces and nutrition. According to the Washington County Public Health department data, Latino youth experience asthma as a chronic condition at a rate higher than the overall county county (Community Health Needs Assessment, 2016). Diabetes is the most prevalent cause of death among Latinos compared to the White and county populations. Cardiovascular diseases are the most cause of death across populations Washington County Public Health department, 2011–2015).

Readers can also see in the graph on the next page that the fewer Latino community members receive adequate prenatal care in Washington County, a factor associated with negative health outcomes for babies such as low birth weight and infant mortality. *Almost 1 out of 3 Latina mothers are enrolled in Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs implying that Latinas are protecting their maternal health from economic injustices such as high poverty levels and food insecurity.*

Preliminary research has also found a relationship between undocumented immigrant status and poor health outcomes (Vargas, Sanchez & Juarez, 2015). Exclusionary immigration policies, as a form of structural racism causes physical and mental distress. On the flipside, there are positive emotional consequences of transitioning out of undocumented status for immigrant young adults.

Birth Risk Factors and Infant Mortality (2011-2015)



“Many of the young people reported improvements within a year of obtaining DACA. They were able to get drivers licenses, jobs, education and health care, and fulfill other basic needs that relieved some of the distress and negative emotions they commonly experience. However, although DACA status improved several outcomes related to psychological well-being, it did not lessen young people’s worry about other family members being deported” (Patler & Laster Pirtle, 2018).

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Proportion of Latinos covered by some type of health insurance has improved in Washington county—from 75% in 2013 to 87% in 2015 (Oregon Health Authority). It, however, remains lower than 96% of White population that has health coverage in Washington County. *Latinos in general are less likely to be provided health insurance by their employer (Monheit & Vistnes, 2000)*. Especially Latinos who are undocumented and with limited English proficiency are unlikely to work for employers who provide health insurance as a benefit of employment. Healthcare has a multitude of impacts, with everything from an ability to keep one’s job, to risking debilitating disease because one is reluctant to seek both preventative care as well as early intervention, to going to work/school while ill, and being unable to stay home and recuperate properly. Without health insurance coverage, many people find health care unaffordable and forgo care even when they think they need it.

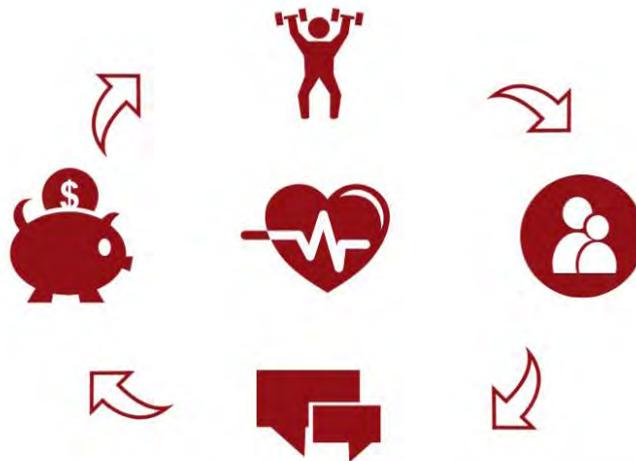
ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES

At the same time that more immigrant families can receive health care coverage, especially all children residing in Oregon through Cover All Kids that was passed in 2017, the immigration policies of President Trump have had a “chilling effect” on immigrants, documented or otherwise, seeking services. Even when children have healthcare, if their parents don’t also have insurance, they are less likely to be taken for health care when they themselves are sick. Oregon does not allow undocumented immigrants to get a driver’s license, which also prevents them from accessing healthcare services.

National Latino Health and Immigration Survey surveyed 1,505 Latino adults from January 29, 2015, to March 12, 2015. 9% of people surveyed said they don't go to healthcare providers because they do not want to be bothered or asked about their citizenship status status (Sanchez, Pedraza & Vargas, 2015). Among them Latinos who primarily speak Spanish were more likely to avoid going to the doctor because of citizenship status than English speaking Latinos. Latinos report systematically fewer visits to health providers (Sanchez, Pedraza & Vargas, 2015). Language and cultural barriers are in the way of the community accessing quality healthcare (McGlade & Dahlstrom, 2001). Translation and interpretation services facilitate access but according to some community members who do that work in Washington County in healthcare, the system can still be tedious and overwhelming for many Latinos.

“I do help a lot of our patients to fill out forms in Spanish. They may not understand those medical words. It's confusing. And it's so long, the application. I help them to make appointments.”

“I work in health care. So what we are seeing is that people are not coming for their appointments, not bringing their children in for fear of being caught. We are calling, trying to reassure them but coming to the clinic or going back and forth is what they fear.”



Health outcomes of the Latino community are at the intersection of immigration, economic justice, language and health policy. The physical and mental well-being of the Latino community in Washington County can be improved by supporting community access to culturally specific health service provision that is not predicated on English language delivery, immigration status, and insurance coverage. It also requires policymaking that ensures Latinos live in healthy neighborhoods and have equitable access to employment and earnings that allow them to access healthcare even if they are covered by health insurance.

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POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND POWER

“If you don’t have a voice at the table, you’re not on the menu of discussion. Until we start changing leaderships, school boards, city councils, commissioners, that’s the way it’s going to be.”

At least since the then small set of families started building a community in Washington County in the 1960s, Latinos have organized and mobilized to establish organizations and resources to support their social, cultural, health and economic needs. As the community has grown in the region, representation in leadership and decision-making tables have not kept up. Latinos in Washington County are increasingly coming out of the shadows that they were forced into by fear of anti-immigration policies and economic injustices, and prioritizing civic engagement and building political power. They are observing, as one community member put it—a “cultural caste system” that is taking away their power in a way that they don’t trust a White well-intentioned leadership to resolve.

“One time I was at Fred Meyer. There was a Hispanic family in line and other people put their groceries on the belt. A White woman gets in front of them and starts putting their stuff. Time out. What are you doing? They’re in line first. It did not occur to her. I had to pull her back. That never happened before.”

“I think there are a lot of people that care and they try. But at one point you don’t see yourself there. You don’t see somebody who you can represent you. That’s hard. We always want to see somebody like us up there. And if we don’t see that, then we don’t trust that.”

Communities of color, including Latinos, are not just seeking political representation in Washington county; they want to redefine leadership. Conversations with community members, some of whom are longstanding organizers in Washington county, demonstrate how much Latinos in the region build on their legacy. Organisers and advocates are learning from what has worked in the past and celebrate successes in gaining political representation.

“In Hillsboro with Olga Acuña in the council, the community had a person of color on the council. After Olga left we actively went out and asked people to apply for that position. We worked with Olivia Alcaire. And she was selected, which was great. Now we have that voice there.”

“Tigard city council had a discussion on bringing the MAX down 99. Community members who showed up were all White..kind of like the city leadership. About all of them were able to talk for 3 minutes. Now we are talking about sanctuary cities, and there are a bunch of Brown people at the event. Now, everybody only has 90 seconds to speak. That’s the kind of leadership we see.”

“We have to listen to our history and make sure it doesn’t happen to us. Now we are more educated; we’re not going away. Now is the time.”

“Portland Community College president now is a Japanese-American whose grandparents were interned in the Japanese camps in the 40s. So he has a clear picture of the attitude that the White community has against immigrants. He told his board we are going to make a sanctuary campus. He took it upon himself. At that time the vote went 5-2. 2 against. One retired within a week. The other said I’m going to let my term end and I’m out. So, again, there was another opportunity for a voice. So we went out and looked for who can represent the community of Portland Community College. Out of nowhere came a person of Muslim faith born in Yemen and he is now sitting on the board. It’s a great unexpected opportunity. If you don’t advocate, you’re going to miss those opportunities.”

There is tremendous leadership and voting potential in the Latino community in Washington county. At least 28,043 Latinos in Washington county are 18 years and older and citizens (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). That makes them eligible to hold elected office and vote. In addition, there are approximately 6,657 adults from Mexico, 1,189 adults from Central America and 645 adults from South America and the Caribbean in Washington county who have obtained permanent residence status that are eligible to naturalize but haven’t yet become citizens.¹¹ They will add 5.2% to the Citizen Voting Age Population in Washington county. 91% of Latinos children and youth under 18 years in Washington county are citizens. They are 35% of the Latino community who will be next generations of leaders and voters in search of leadership development opportunities.



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Simultaneously, community members identify numerous structural challenges to civic engagement and building political power. To the extent civic engagement is typically conceived as the extent to which a population votes, number of elected officials and appointments from a particular group, financial contributions to electoral campaigns, 49% of the adult Latino population in Washington County who are not citizens are ineligible to engage in those activities. Immigration reform at the federal level remains the long-term aspiration for this community; *at the local level it means being creative about unlocking the leadership and civic potential of Latino immigrants and Latino young citizens who are not yet eligible to vote.* Oral histories of Latinos in Washington County indicate that organizations such as Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) has contributed to community building and activism, and has chapters in Beaverton, Hillsboro, Tigard, Tualatin and Forest Grove schools. Community members also identify economic insecurity in the form of poverty and inequitable employment experiences as structural barriers in the way of the community. If individuals and families are pressured to hold down multiple jobs and disproportionately earn lower wages, they may not have much time to participate in civic activities. The community feels that there needs to be more education about rights especially since fear about immigration keeps many Latinos out of public life.

Moreover, city and county governments do not do much to encourage civic participation.

“The local government should take the lead in uniting organizations such as representatives from churches, nonprofits, and community members so that there is one united event. This would help also to make sure that the information that is distributed is correct and that resources are not wasted.”

“I am often at these events and I see there’s a lack of attendance. They should find a better strategy to target the Latino community. I feel it’s not being marketed right. These events are organized at 5:00 p.m but Latino families work late. Latino families for the most part do not have calendars for scheduling. They need constant reminders the day before the event and the day of the event. Motivate families, perhaps with food or gifts, raffle tickets—value their knowledge.”

Latinos in Washington County have been creative and resilient in the face of structural racism and xenophobia. They have built community organizations such as Centro Cultural, Virginia Garcia and Adelante Mujeres. High school youth organize around racial justice including through MEChA. Latinos have mobilized to support candidates for institutions such as school boards, city councils and parks and recreation board. Since 2016 they see their kin in the state legislature advocating not only on behalf of their communities but building cross-cultural agendas. *They envision sustained pathways of leadership development and voter engagement under the long term shift towards immigration reform to bring about equitable political representation and power to communities of color.*

ENDNOTES

- 1 We asked community to identify how “they see themselves” and “how they see us” during the focus groups.
- 2 A person is seen as actively seeking a job if they applied or looked for employment for a month. It includes community members who are part-time, full-time, seasonal, contractual, holding one job or multiple, doing jobs that are compatible with their educational qualifications or underemployed. It includes ‘unpaid family workers’ who work without pay in a family-owned business, and excludes people such as retirees and stay at home parents.
- 3 Unemployment rate calculations by the federal government exclude people over 16 years who are not looking for a job and/or have given
- 4 The White workforce in finance and education sectors is marginally higher at 1% than the share of the county workforce in those sectors.
- 5 $197776/44544 = 44\%$. $[(19776) - (30\% \text{ of } 44,544)] = \$6,413$.
- 6 The education justice section discusses the implications of poverty on Latino children’s education.
- 7 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement-final.pdf> https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2594430
- 8 We can’t calculate the exact disparity since the margin of error of Latino enrollment in pre-school is too high to be reliable.
- 9 This link gives a comprehensive literature review of research on the impact of teachers of color on student life in schools.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2016/08/19/the-many-ways-teacher-diversity-may-benefit-students/>
- 10 Disparities are calculated based on % share of a community impacted (denominator is total community population in a given year).
- 11 <https://dornsife.usc.edu/csii/eligible-to-naturalize-map>
The methodology involves estimating the undocumented population in the American Community Survey, and assuming that the bulk of the remainder of non-citizen foreign-born residents are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs). Criteria are then applied to that group to determine LPRs eligible to naturalize.



**MIDDLE EASTERN
AND
NORTH AFRICAN
COMMUNITIES
IN WASHINGTON
COUNTY**

MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN COMMUNITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

The phrase ‘Middle Eastern’ has little cultural relevance in the communities that are lumped under it. The term originated European geopolitical strategizing to counter perceived Russian ascendancy in the early twentieth century (Koppes, 1976). It arose from American and European geopolitics that in viewing the world from its imperial vantage point designated China as the ‘Far East,’ Turkey as the ‘Near East’ and the land in between as the ‘Middle East.’ The Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) community is a diverse group of people of varying skin tones who speak various languages from different geographic places—from the northern tip of Africa in Morocco to Iran. There has been some national effort and little local energy directed towards providing opportunities and space for communities that originate from that part of the world to discuss how they want to present their identities in the US.

The Middle Eastern communities in Washington County in Washington County is diverse as well—varied histories, immigration status, housing status, lived experiences in Washington County. Despite their rich intellectual and cultural potential, they are hyper-visible and invisible in the US mainstream in harmful ways. *A long history of US involvement in the Middle East including the wars in Iraq, post 9/11 Islamophobia, the Syrian refugee crisis and Trump administration’s ban targeting Muslims from that part of the world, makes Middle Eastern communities appear and be treated as an omnipresent threat to US society. At the same time, domestically, little public policy attention is paid to how these communities are faring in the country.* We see this report as a beginning rather than a definitive illustration of the complexities of the diverse Middle Eastern and North African communities in Washington County. Although the data does not separate the lived experiences of immigrants, refugees and people that were born in the US, we lead with what community members shared in the focus groups and their context and critique of data about their communities in the US Census, Oregon Department of Education and other data sources.

We see the Middle Eastern and North African communities’ aspirations to chart their cultural paths while becoming part of a broader community, cultural and linguistic heritage and economic potential recognized and supported through housing stability and equitable employment, for refugees not to be seen as burdens, and voices to be included at decision-making tables in a county where almost 1 out of 5 residents are immigrants and 1 out of 3 are people of color (American Community Survey, 2016).

“We cannot live as foreigners in isolation. We cannot live in assimilation. I think it is very important for Washington County to have positive integration.”

AT LEAST
9,300
 IN WASHINGTON
 COUNTY



1 out of 2 community residents in the County has at least a Bachelor's degree, a higher share than both the White population and the county on the whole.



Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum seekers



1,221 K-12 Students



Over **3/4** of the community are eligible to vote or hold elected office

“HOW DO WE COUNT?”

The US Census and many organizations that imitate its data collection practices do not have an explicit Middle Eastern and North African race or ethnicity category or an obvious way in which these communities can identify themselves. The only way to cull out data about Middle Eastern and North African communities is on the basis of “ancestry”, which the US Census defines as a person’s ethnic origin or descent, “roots,” or heritage, or the place of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States.” (US Census Bureau). Community advocates at the national level argue that

relying on the “ancestry” question alone means that Middle Eastern and North African community is undercounted. They estimate the number of Arab Americans to be 3.7 million. Counting other non-Arab Middle Eastern and North African populations such as Iranians, Turks, Chaldeans, and Armenians would bring the number up to 5 million. According to our calculations using a person’s reported ancestry in the American Community Survey 2011-2015, there are *at least* 9,300 Middle Eastern or North African community members in Washington County, making up around 2% of the county population.¹

Demographic data can help in gaining a better understanding of the community's experiences and in allocating government resources and priorities. It is the clearest signal of whether and how policymaking institutions "see" communities of color and how they matter in public policy. Middle Eastern and North African communities have only appeared in policy consciousness as hyper-visible, as refugees, foreigners, and threats to US society. However, how people of color are counted in the US Census and governments and agencies that follow the same data practices are fraught with risk and trauma of misidentification for people of color.

The US Census considers and advises people from the Middle East to check the White option under the race question (US Census Bureau). The world, however, does not treat them as White. Islamophobia, racial profiling, no-fly lists, hate violence, stereotyping, anti-refugee xenophobia, having to prove your worth and value to this country, and everyday microaggressions such as being asked "where are you from?" ensures that. People of Middle Eastern and North African descent are invisible if they present themselves as 'other' as the only alternative to misidentifying themselves as White. Generic categories such as 'other' and 'two or more races' are of little use to community advocates and policymakers. According to American Community Survey 2012-2016, more than 90% of Washington county's population that was born in West Asia (the geographic equivalent of the Middle East) identified their race as White and the second largest racial group was 'two or more races.'²

"I think the misunderstanding that is in data keeps happening in all the documents. We are considered White."



Middle Eastern and North African communities talk about their dilemma of being either lumped together with White people even though they are not treated like them or alternately being categorized in a non-monolithic "Middle Eastern and North African" category. The community wants to be counted and feel the need to coalesce around the Middle Eastern and North African identity that has been handed down as the only way in which they can self-identify their racial and ethnic identity in the US. In 2015, when the Census Bureau tested potential new categories, including Middle Eastern and North Africa, it found that people of Middle Eastern or North African descent would check off the Middle Eastern and North African box when it was available; when it wasn't, they'd select White.

In January 2018 the US government rejected a push by Arab-American advocates and organizations to add a Middle Eastern and North African category to the US Census, meaning that people from this region will be counted as White for at least another twelve years.

Collecting accurate demographic information is crucial since data gleaned from Census forms affects funding for services such as voter protections or English as a second language programs in schools, and also is included in research on topics like housing discrimination, minority business contracting and so on. Focus group participants in Washington County brought up support for local entrepreneurship as a community priority in the county. Being classified as White prohibits the Middle Eastern and North African community from taking advantage of the benefits that come with minority status—including local, state and federal programs that give a leg up to minority-owned businesses in awarding government contracts. Community members opine that such data limitations also prevent the estimation and recognition of the financial strength and economic contributions of the community.

An extensive review of data sources find that to date there are no institutions related to employment, income, workforce, small businesses, education, law enforcement, health, child welfare, housing and so on that collect or report information related to the experiences of Middle Eastern and North African communities in Washington County. Focus group participants critique the inherent limitations of available data and the stories it fails to capture—both of the tremendous potential and vitality of the community as well as barriers constraining them especially refugee communities. *They advocate for the data presented in this report to be a launching point to build community capacity to research and collect data that genuinely captures both their concerns and their strengths and contributions to the county.* They emphasize their forbearance and resilience and raise a call to Washington County and city governments and officials to treat them as partners and build community capacity to be leaders.

“Growing up there were four options, white, Latino, African or other—and Native American. I was always told to put white. I was told to put white, but I was never treated white. It is Middle Eastern.”

COMMUNITY COMPOSITION AND IMMIGRATION

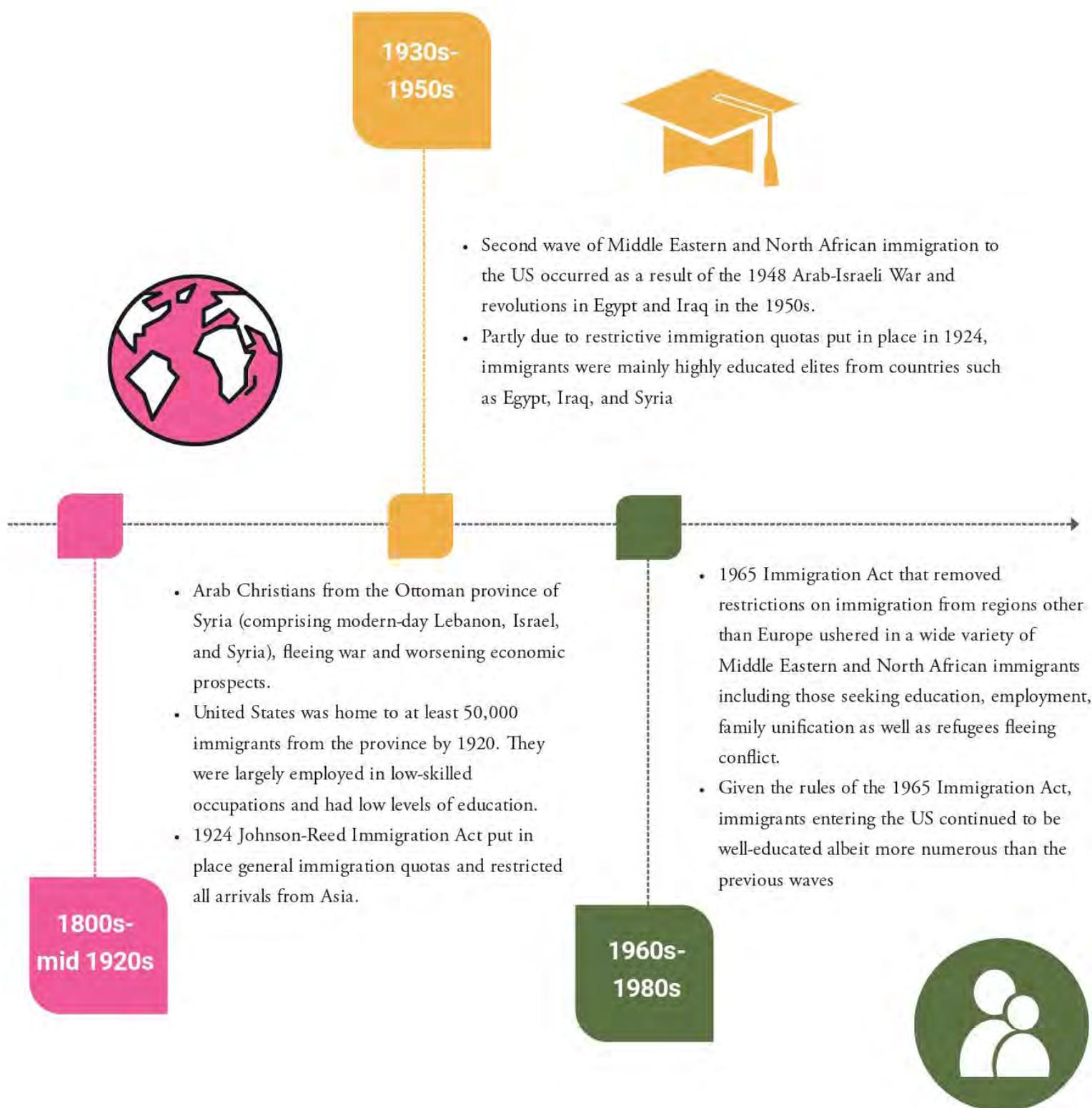
Approximately 57% of the community are immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Our focus group participants are people who were born in the US, migrated here for education and work opportunities, came through refugee and asylum-seeking processes and identified their countries of origin as Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Palestine (by way of Jordan), Liberia, Sudan, and Afghanistan.³ Some moved to Washington County two years ago, and some have lived here since the 1970s. For some, this is their first place of residence in the US, and for others, their refugee settlement processes took them to different parts of the country before settling down in Washington County.

Middle Eastern and North African immigrants and refugees are part of a larger immigration wave from the Middle Eastern and North African region to the US. Primarily driven by political turmoil in the region and economic opportunities abroad, in

2016, nearly 1.2 million immigrants from the Middle Eastern and North African region lived in the United States, accounting for roughly 3% of the country’s approximately 44 million immigrants. In Washington County, many of them face various obstacles such as English language barriers, a lack of community support and a lack of knowledge about how to become citizens. They also face a massive challenge of building and solidifying their community, bridging generational culture gap with youth, and becoming part of a larger community without assimilating and losing their heritage and identity (Curry-Stevens & Sinkey, 2016). Middle Eastern and North African communities in Oregon at large and in Washington County have invested their resources and energy towards establishing culturally specific spaces and resources such as the Muslim Educational Trust, Iraqi Society of Oregon, Muslimahs United, Bilal Masjid, Islamic Center of Portland, etc.



WAVES OF MIGRATION FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



POSITIVE INTEGRATION

Whether they came to Washington County by choice or through refugee settlement, whether they were born here or not, people in the focus groups enjoy living in Washington County today. They note the increased presence of people of color in the county, a more cohesive Middle Eastern and North African community coming together in the aftermath of 9/11 provoked Islamophobia and several faith-based community spaces from which to build community.

“I remember in 2005 when I moved from Liberia to Beaverton, I used to be, like, am I the only black person here? And some days I would walk for miles and miles and miles, and I would not see any other person of color. But now if you look around Washington County, it has the most diversity than when I first got here.”

“Iraqi community is growing. And we have more relation with each other, supporting each other.”

“I came here 20 years ago. I would be the only one with hijab. And now I see it everywhere.”

“There isn’t any public school that doesn’t have kids that are immigrants.”

“Those (Islamophobic) violations, we don’t see them as we used to see them when I first came. I was here in the 70s, went back and then migrated here after in 1991.”

Middle Eastern and North African community members offer a model of “positive integration” that envisions a Washington County that recognizes, respects and represents their culture and heritage, that has pathways for all people in their community to have a good quality of living, accessing services without feeling alienated, and become integrated into the larger community without feeling pressured to assimilate and lose their language and identity.

“I find people are friendly. I meet many families in my kid’s school. They contact me, and I don’t know where they get my number. They text me and they say we’re supporting you guys. Even my neighbors came to me after the election and said if you have any issue, we support you guys.”



“We have a huge concern about how to raise our kids. We take the good things from American culture and the good things from Arabic culture and mix it. So if they go back to visit their relative or family they will not feel they don’t belong in that culture. And here they can live with the culture because they already know the culture.”

“I think it is essential for Washington County to have positive integration. How to welcome the newcomers? How do the Chamber of Commerce of Hillsboro or Beaverton or Tigard integrate minority businesses to be part of this? How do health services get sophisticated enough to create that cultural competency and doctors and nurses understand the cultural need? How can communities become positively integrated in a way that the larger community can benefit?”

Middle Eastern and North African communities envision Washington County as a place to both strengthen intra-community ties and become part of a broader community.

“I came here in 2006 for a visit and 2009 for a visit also, a small visit here in Washington County. And I came in 2015 as an immigrant. What I felt at that time when I came here, my sister was struggling to find a shop to buy Halal, but when I came as an immigrant, it is everywhere now. And you can find that the schools they are translating all their forms. When I came in 2009 to give birth to my son, I couldn’t find a form in Arabic so I can understand what is written. But now you can find it everywhere. So I feel like it’s easier now to live here for myself, and if I didn’t understand something in English, I can find it in Arabic or ask for a translator.”

However, they face and seek to surmount certain obstacles.

LACK OF CULTURALLY SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SERVICES

“I speak with many people. They are in high positions. Even they don’t know the difference between immigrant and refugees. So those people need training. We need to reach them to let them know what the difference is between immigrant and refugee, Muslim, non-Muslim because I believe they don’t know.”

“Social Security Office is a big challenge that we have at least in our 17 or 18 years existing here in Washington County. We have intervened on behalf of new immigrants, you know.”

“A kid fell at night. His mom thought he was okay and took him to the hospital the next day. He had a concussion. The DHS charged her with child abuse. DHS is very strict with immigrants and minorities. They take kids away without understanding.”

“Refugees get some benefits, but they don’t get the education. And this is a gap between the refugees and institutions. So the good thing is they provide the benefits. The shortcoming is they don’t provide the education that goes with these benefits. So the refugees fail to understand that those benefits are time sensitive and they’re going to be left behind after some time if they don’t help themselves. So when the time comes for them to help themselves, here, you face catastrophic situations.”

“DHS or the police departments are not patient enough with immigrants and refugees. This happens all the time.”

“They should invest in creating a call center. A simple, like a service, like a 211 for immigrant or refugee. A central number that anyone can call and it gets dispersed to different communities. Like I need a grocery store or service to help me pay for power bill or housing help. So this central service would have a list of all the resources, and they could be the one to give them direction. That way it is across all cultures, all immigrant types.”

“Often when you will walk into one of those local offices, and they say where are you from? Or how are you enjoying our country? There is not that emotional intelligence. You don’t assume just because a person is looking a certain way or dressing a certain way. How do you approach and talk to anyone regardless if they don’t look like the majority.”

“If you are having an occasion or a problem, I can share with you, and I can help you. But everyone has a border here. I don’t know, is it that they are afraid to break these borders or they say well, let everyone have their own life?”

SOCIAL ISOLATION AND MENTAL HEALTH

“I have been living here for two years. I feel like I’m missing a social life here. My neighbor’s son graduated, so I made a cake and took it to them and said congratulations. I felt like she appreciated that but thought it was strange.”

“I left my history there, my memories and my friends, so it is hard for me. It is hard for us at this age when we move from another place. We are struggling.”

“Sense of identity is being lost. We don’t know what to expect. We don’t know what to do. And that is something I’m struggling with on a personal level.”

“When refugees resettle in the US, they are confronted with many challenges and barriers to leading healthy lives. These barriers include a starting point of being already psychologically traumatized due to their experiences from areas affected by poverty, violence, and war, and they are physically unhealthy due to these conditions or/and by deprivation of living in refugee camps. This is exacerbated by the cultural and language barriers and challenges from culture shock and acculturation stress.”

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC RESOURCES THAT HAVE YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Community members credit organizations like the Muslim Educational Trust (MET) for their role in building and strengthening connections both within and across people in the region.

They see it as a model of how culturally specific community spaces can help people celebrate and practice their culture together, while also strengthening the larger community. They propose the local governments supporting the establishment of a multicultural center led by people of color and women of color, which provides space for community gatherings and reflections on culture, and has multiracial and multiethnic cultural programming.

“No one culture represents what you left. So one thing we did is bring our kids to this center. One thing I remember from growing up in my culture is being among my other Arabic friends and reference the same things we are talking about. So bringing them into this culture, community, they hear what their parents talk about their culture, Iraqi culture, and they start getting interested in their own culture. How is it where you grew up? So being among kids like them inspires interest in their own culture because all the kids bring something from home to the center.”

Community priorities related to culturally specific resources and positive integration are:

- Create positive integration programs or opportunities for new immigrants to become contributors to the county.
- Creating opportunities to invest in professionals and experts among immigrant and refugee communities.
- More representative police, social services, health providers, teachers, etc.
- Create a budget/funding for multiracial/multiethnic cultural festivals.
- Opportunities for communities to reflect their cultures. Community gatherings
- Multicultural center with a steering committee with enhanced representation of women and people of color.
- Refugee cultural coordination body
- Safe places to be accepted regardless of religious affiliation
- Fostering successful education of our students
- Opportunities for youth to learn and engage with civil/professional organizations/ law enforcement.
- Know your rights for people who are not familiar with rules/procedures.
- “Show me where to go when I need help” for people who are not familiar.

“I haven’t seen anything like the Muslim Education Trust anywhere in Oregon or the west coast even. So to have something that is from the ground up that we can have sessions like this, and it has community engagement. I think it is unique to Washington County.”

Focus group participants offer the following suggestions for positive integration of refugees and immigrants:

1. “We need to prioritize that there is more common ground than things that divide us.”
2. “Trying to build bridges of understanding and reaching out to other community centers whether it’s the different mosques or churches or different community centers.”
4. “Develop integration programs that are community-driven, not like designs and offices with people who are not from our communities.”
4. “Support the grassroots organizations that we need to do with the integration of our people.”

POSITIVE INTEGRATION: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Middle Eastern and North African communities prioritize civic engagement, leadership development and leadership opportunities for their communities and people of color in the County. They celebrate the elections of Mohamed Alyajouri to Portland Community College board, Erica Lopez to the Hillsboro School District and Felicita Monteblanco to Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District board and see that as the future.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Over three-quarters of the community are eligible to vote or hold elected office (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

“We were oppressed for long enough in our countries. We don’t have a voice. Political voice means a lot. Because if you have your political rights, then you can participate in everything in this society because you are heard.”

“When you come here you need to be trained because it takes you a while until you understand that you have the right to vote. Many people don’t vote here in this country because they’re not used to voting. So you have to teach them that.”



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND VOICE IN POLICYMAKING

Middle Eastern and North African communities visualize integration into political institutions beyond civic engagement and limitations of citizenship on their political voice. *They want serious engagement with government and elected leaders about policymaking, recognition of their expertise and the power to define their narrative.* They want government and elected officials to recognize that immigrants and refugees and people from different backgrounds and cultures make up a significant share of their jurisdiction and that they need to take actions to educate themselves about diversity and inclusion.

“We need more engagement from the officials to the community.”

“Diversity training in the state offices and government would be hugely, and in local government, would be hugely helpful.”

“We have a lot of seniors in city government, in county government. How can we bring this expert that happens to be an immigrant and encourage them to take leadership? It’s about how we define our narrative.”

“We need more programs like this BOLD program for training leadership and refugees.”

“If they will not believe in our communities then we need to change that. If you have the authority, they should at least respect the diversity we have.”

“There are more opportunities now for immigrants to serve on several committees within the cities of Washington County and Metro government. Several of us served on different committees. The south corridor, the MAX coming from downtown to Tigard to Tualatin and other cities in Washington County. So we have at least three people serving now in different planning capacities in the technical aspect and the non-technical. Mayors are reaching out and creating advisory boards to (Beaverton, Tigard, and Hillsboro) the three of them creating advisory to advise them in inclusion and equity on the city government.”

“Washington County never engages the community. I know that Multnomah County has the Civic Citizens Engagement Office. I’m not even aware that Washington County has such kind of office. They don’t do outreach.”



Create a pool of leaders by building leadership development and training programs at MET and Iraqi Society of Oregon.



Quotas on boards and commissions for immigrant and refugee communities.



Create alliances that understand we have to work together and get endorsements from other people of color.

EDUCATION JUSTICE



1 out of 2 community residents in the County has at least a Bachelor’s degree, a higher share than both the White population and the County on the whole.

Middle Eastern and North African communities place a strong emphasis on education. 1 out of 2 community residents in the County has at least a Bachelor’s degree, a higher share than both the White population and the county on the whole (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

When asked to list issues and priorities for which they would want data, community members in the focus groups wanted to know about student outcomes and experiences in the education system. School districts in Washington County do not intentionally collect data about their Middle Eastern and North African students. Consequently, we examined first language and language spoken at home data by Oregon Department of Education (ODE) by the list of languages our focus group participants, Muslim Educational Trust and Iraqi Society of Oregon pulled together.⁶ Within limitations of available data that forces parents and students to classify themselves in one of the standard race/ethnicity categories, procuring an approximate estimate of the size of the student population, patterns of gaps in achievement and opportunity from kindergarten to high school graduation based on the language of origin is a good start.

Approximately 43% of Middle Eastern and North African households have children (American Community Survey, 2011–2015), and there were approximately 1,221 students of Middle Eastern descent in 2015, a 48% increase from 2011. Students from Arabic and Hebrew speaking households have contributed to much of that growth.

“With regards to cultural identity and my kids feeling like they can see other kids that look like them when they’re not at school on the weekends, we spend our time in Northeast Portland or Southeast Portland, so they see more of that diversity.”

ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Early childhood learning is foundational to a child’s development and is linked to readiness for school and academic success. Data from the Early Learning Hub depicts a complicated picture. In 2015, Arabic, Hebrew, and Kurdish speaking children score lower in “approaches to learning” than both their White and county peers between the ages of 3 and 6. This domain “incorporates

Estimated Student Population by Languages Spoken at Home



elements of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulation (focus attention, control emotions and manage thinking, behavior, and feelings) under a single umbrella to guide practices that support the development of these skills.”(ODE).

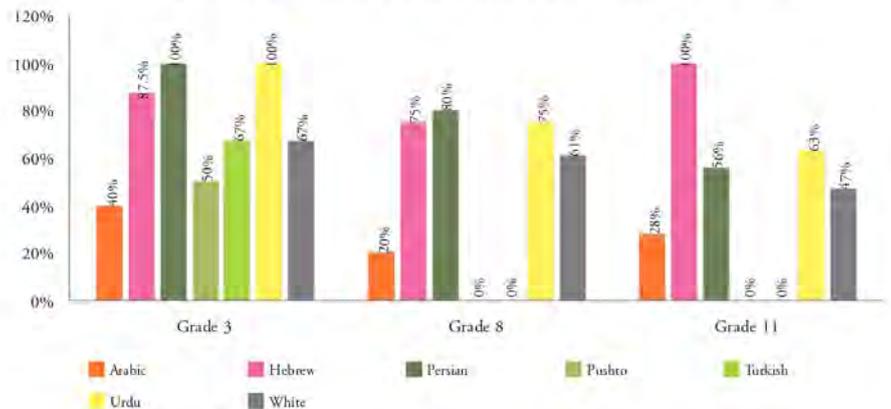
Early literacy measures “the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that precede learning to read and write” and “early mathematics” their burgeoning familiarity with numbers and basic calculations. Looking at early learning outcomes related to early mathematics and early literacy, Arabic, Hebrew, Kurdish, Push-to speaking children are doing worse than their average county peers and Persian, Turkish and Urdu speakers are doing better in assessments conducted in 2015.

Arabic, Kurdish and Pushto students continue to fall behind in school. Arabic speaking students are the largest group among the Middle Eastern and North African student population. They consistently lag in standardized tests of reading, science, and mathematics across grades. The graphs below show the percentage of students who exceed benchmarks in reading, mathematics ,and science tests (Oregon Department of Education, 2015). It shows evident achievement gaps between White students and students of Middle Eastern and North African origins.

Number of Students Taking Mathematics Test (2015)

	Grade 3	Grade 8	Grade 11
Arabic	60	56	50
Hebrew	9	4	2
Persian	8	16	88
Pushto	2	2	0
Turkish	5	0	1
Urdu	2	4	8
White	3,373	3,878	3,177

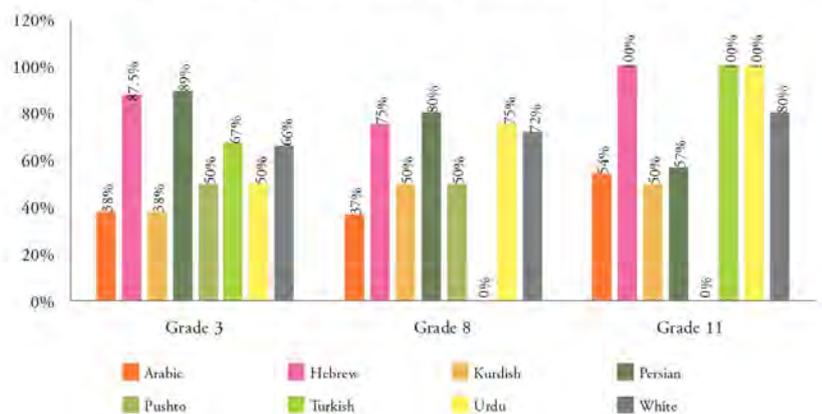
Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Mathematics (2015)



Number of Students Taking Reading Test (2015)

	Grade 3	Grade 8	Grade 11
Arabic	65	40	48
Hebrew	8	4	2
Kurdish	8	10	4
Persian	9	10	21
Pushto	2	2	0
Turkish	3	0	1
Urdu	2	4	8
White	3,373	3,878	3,177

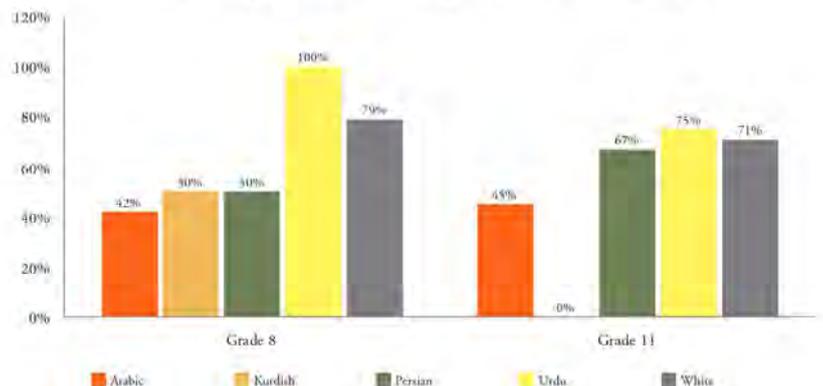
Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Reading (2015)



Number of Students Taking Science Test (2015)

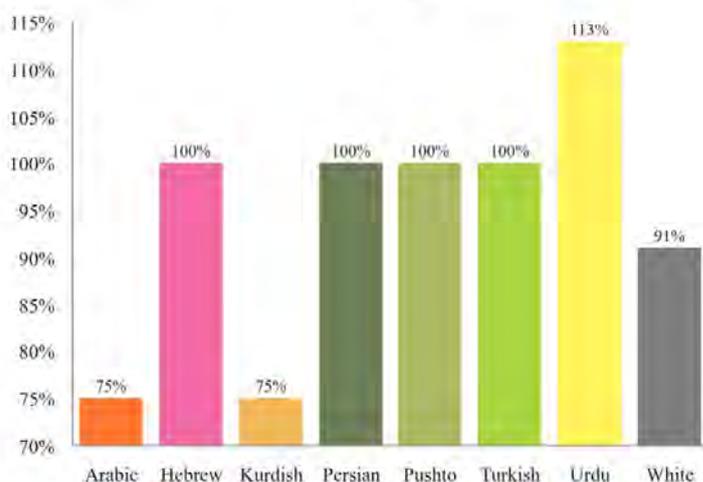
	Grade 8	Grade 11
Arabic	24	11
Kurdish	4	0
Persian	2	0
Urdu	2	4
White	2,411	2,862

Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Science (2015)



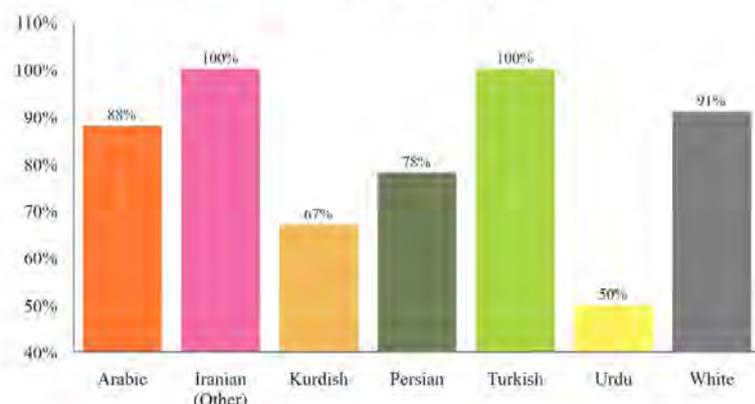
Although this section has provided what we think is the first comprehensive look at Middle Eastern and North African students in the Washington County school system, it would be myopic only to consider gaps in student performance on standardized testing. Achievement gaps do not provide answers but create new questions. Standardized tests measure how well students perform on tests, and while they are correlated with race and class, they are not indicative of that student’s intelligence, knowledge or capabilities. “Test score gaps often lead to longer-term gaps, including high school and college completion and the kinds of jobs students secure as adults” (National Education Association). Compared to the graduation rate among White students, Arabic and Kurdish speaking freshmen are less likely to be on track to graduate (ODE, 2015).

Percentage of Freshman on Track to Graduate (2015)



Although Arabic speaking students are slipping through the achievement gaps at an early age, they are more likely to be enrolled in college than White students. The number of Middle Eastern and North African high school graduates enrolled in college is expected to be larger than what is captured by language data since it doesn’t capture students from English-only households.

Percentage of High School Graduates Enrolled in College (2014)



“I remember growing up when I first started going to school. I would try the hardest to show I am not a refugee because I would get made fun of I didn’t want to be tested for ESL. For the longest time, I would not want my parents to come to school. Once done with school, I realize I should have been proud of who I am and show how I speak.”

“When they went to one of the elementary schools here in Beaverton there were times when the kids would stick pencils in my middle child’s hair because his hair is different. He didn’t complain, but it was embarrassing for him that his hair looked different. So I like to take him to areas of Portland, so he doesn’t feel like he looks different.”

Percentage of Student Population with Limited English Proficiency

	Number of Students (2011)	% of Population (2011)	Number of Students (2015)	% of Population (2015)
Arabic	230	55%	420	58%
Hebrew	30	57%	70	64%
Kurdish	21	36%	42	49%
Persian	44	28%	39	25%
Pushto	20	95%	7	25%
Turkish	15	54%	8	31%
Urdu	18	21%	12	14%

It is important to note that persistent achievement gaps point to larger issues that must be explored in terms of “more fundamental questions about the social and educational opportunity.” According to a report by the Center for Advancing Racial Equity at Portland State University about Iraqi refugees in the region, Iraqi refugee children can potentially struggle in schools. “Being behind schedule in one’s educational path can be harmful to self-confidence. Alignment may also be a barrier as some students may have learned different content with different pedagogies in Iraq. As well, there is a social appeal to fitting in, and some students begin to believe that everything about the United States is far better than what they had in Iraq, which can be the start of a loss in interest about their home country’s heritage. Although adopting the culture of a new country is a way to integrate into American society, losing interest in their home country can create conflict and tension between parents and children. In addition, some refugee high school students may drift towards negative peer groups, often turning to away from schooling both for push-out factors (such as lack of inclusion and relevant curriculum) and for social challenges that might result from unintended trauma, discrimination and racial bias, and acculturation difficulties. Participating in an unfamiliar classroom, listening to a teacher that speaks in an incomprehensible language, and communicating with classmates that they have little similarities with them can increase children’s level of stress and anxiety.”(Curry-Stevens & Sinkey, 2016).

A significant proportion of the Middle Eastern and North African student population are assessed to have limited English proficiency.

They constituted almost half of the student population with limited English proficiency. Arabic, Hebrew and Kurdish speaking students were more likely to experience English language barriers in 2015 than they did in the past. Until students become capable in speaking, understanding, reading, and writing English, they are significantly disadvantaged in the US education system which is not adequately prepared for immigrant and refugee children.

At the same time, according to American Community Survey 2011-2015, roughly 43% of Arab youth between 5 to 17 years in Washington County are bilingual including English. Efforts should be made about reforming ESL programs and expanding dual language immersion programs that have demonstrated their effectiveness in improving outcomes for students. Focus group participants pointed to ESL resources at Portland Community College as a valuable resource. *Community members also shared that just providing English language support resources without an empathetic understanding of students’ histories and cultures does not suffice. Schools are one of the first places where children of color realize that they are different — either because of their identity vis-a-vis their peers and/or because their teachers don’t look like anybody from their community.* Given available data limitations, we cannot estimate how many school staff are of Middle Eastern and North African descent; in 2015-2016 84% of the staff was White and that no one in our focus groups was or knew anyone from the Middle Eastern and North African communities that worked in the school districts (ODE).



43% of Arab youth between 5 to 17 years in Washington County are bilingual including English

“Students who immigrate to the US with their families at an older age need attention to their specific needs, including linguistic support. Helping Arabic-speaking teachers with degrees and experience from other countries could help meet this gap. Recognizing their credentials will both provide trained professionals jobs and fill a need in schools.”

Community reviewers offer a solution to resolving language barriers to students’ academic excellence and parental engagement in the school system and academic support for their children who are in primarily English language curriculum.

The anti-refugee and Islamophobic rhetoric can also be stressful for children of the refugee community, which in the backdrop of a White dominant county and state can lead students to disconnect from their communities.

“The next generation that is younger than me, they are losing part of their cultures as time goes on.”

“It would be nice if teachers or administrators early on or at the county level, state level teach the students, refugee families that it’s okay to be proud of who you are and not be shy or embarrassed of who you are.”

Although very few focus group participants reported recent hostile experiences that involved them or their children in schools, they remembered how it used to be. They advocate for their child’s mental and physical safety and emphasise the role of teachers in protecting their kids and ensuring their well-being in school. They also ask for accountability from schools.

“My kids went through a lot of incidents at school where kids were so violent against them, and they had to stand for themselves. There were so many times when I had to go to schools and talk to principals.”

“My son... he was stopped in the line to get food. He was in elementary school. And other kids tried to take his position in the line, in the cafeteria line. And my son refused, and the other kids were angry, and they said you need to go back to Iraq so they can bomb you. And the good thing the teacher was there, so she listened to that. Imagine if the teacher was not there. What would happen? And I’m so proud of my son because he didn’t respond for him. And the principal, she called me and let me know what happened. I don’t know what happened after that because they didn’t let me know, and they didn’t even give me the other name for the other family. They thought I would do something bad to the other family. This is one thing that happened that we know about. And I know there are many things happen that no one talk about it.”



“Challenges that kids face in public school—Islamophobia. We do get reports from students in public schools that they get harassed by their fellow peers. But nothing happens.”

“My voice has been the biggest strength for me when I found it. And having people ask me questions or I explained earlier with my son, we talked to the teacher, and the teacher had a session on where he was from, and this is this, and the kids had an understanding.”

Community Priorities related to education justice are:

- Safe places to be accepted regardless of religious affiliation
- Educational success of our students
- Recognition of religious holidays, dietary restrictions for students
- Youth involvement and especially how to engage in today’s society without being scared.
- Ending police harassment
- End profiling
- End discrimination in various policies
- Address Language barriers
- Mandatory diversity and inclusion training for local leadership, public school administrators and teachers.
- Mandatory diversity and inclusion class for all public school students in their curriculum.
- Washington County authorities need to understand that population of the county come from different backgrounds and cultures and religions.
- Washington County authorities need to be educated on religion especially Islam.
- More representative police, social services, health providers, teachers, etc.
- Create a budget/funding for multiracial/multiethnic cultural festivals.
- Opportunities for communities to reflect their cultures.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Middle Eastern and North African communities in Washington County are diverse—**40% of them were born in the US**; the majority of the community came to the US and Washington County in particular because of employment and education opportunities in the Portland Metro Area, or through refugee settlement programs (some of whom don't have a choice of destination). This intra-community diversity leads to considerable variations in the community's lived experiences in Washington County. Community review of reported economic indicators alerts the reader to treat the data with caution because it masks refugees experiences with unemployment and poverty. Some Middle Eastern and North African families and households have been able to access and benefit from economic opportunities that Washington County offers. The endeavour for economic justice continues until all County residents have equitable access to pathways to stable and sustainable quality of living in the county.



Employed or actively looking for a job.



EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION

Even though Middle Eastern and North African communities, according to American Community Survey 2011–2015, are on average older than the median age of the county, more than 70% of them in Washington County are employed or actively looking for a job. However, ***the potential Middle Eastern and North African workforce are stymied by a 15% unemployment rate (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). They are 114% more likely than a White county resident who is looking for a job to be unemployed and 87.5% more likely to be unemployed than the average job-seeker in the County.*** The Unemployment rate does not take into account people who were not actively seeking employment in the previous month making it difficult to evaluate the extent to which employment barriers have forced some people to give up on finding a job.

Approximately 32% of Middle Eastern and North African workforce are employed in high wage occupations compared to 44% of the White workforce and 41% of the county workforce overall (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

According to focus group participants, Middle Eastern and North African refugees in the workforce are likely to be over-represented in the low-middle income wage sectors. On the flipside, Middle Eastern and North African professionals in the technology and medical sectors and entrepreneurs in the county earn high incomes.

Education levels in the Middle Eastern and North African community help explain why almost 1/3 of the workforce is employed in the management, business, science and arts sector but it does not explain rampant unemployment in the community. *The Middle Eastern and North African community is overall more likely to have a Bachelor's or an advanced degree compared to the White county population.* That is partly a function of the imperatives of the US and local economy that draws in highly skilled, well-educated people from around the world including the Middle East. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act put in place general immigration quotas that allowed only highly educated elites to migrate to the country and the 1965 Immigration Act also allowed several highly educated immigrants from the Middle Eastern and North African region to work in the US. In stark contrast to the value attached to highly skilled Middle Eastern and North African labor that was probably credentialed in US educational institutions, is the pronounced challenge facing the same community of having one's foreign-earned credentials recognized. Focus group participants talk about the stigma associated with the word 'refugee', lack of recognition of their degrees achieved in non-US institutions, underemployment i.e. doing low wage jobs that are not compatible with their skills and education, and lack of work experience in the US as main barriers of not only unemployment but income inequities.

"I had a bachelor degree in computer science. When I came here, they refer me to a resource so I can find a job. All the jobs were not in my major. And when I'm telling them, she said, well, you need to start with something. Okay, I accepted that. I need to start with something, but I need to start with something in my major so that I can go further in my major. So when I applied for a job, it was like a negative thing that you don't have any references here. You don't have any experience here. So I need to build that. Then I will be in a job that I wish to be."

"That's a challenge, lack of understanding what this means. If you have Ph.D. from Iraq in engineering, the person in the system should know it's the same as here."

"I think it's very important for the county, for government to be able to

"The word refugee and the way it is defined is very negative. So regardless, a refugee can be a PhD, can be an MD in his country, but because he is a refugee he has to study more to get the same degree. Some people can't go through that. They have family and other reasons why they can't go through all of the hassle of it. They don't get the same respect, you know. That is something that I can relate a lot too because I have suffered a lot from that."

recognize engineer certifications through programs of positive integration. And then getting them up to speed.”

“We (refugees) can hardly get entry-level jobs or maybe a little higher than an entry-level job.”

Professional licenses are a huge issue for the community at large. Many people with extensive education and experience are shut out of skilled employment opportunities if they haven’t been educated in the US. This severely impacts teachers and doctors, as well as other professions like architects. Given that the community prioritizes bilingual educators in the school system, community members opine that removing barriers to receiving licensure would be immensely helpful for increased access to teaching professions, thus addressing both employment and educational concerns.

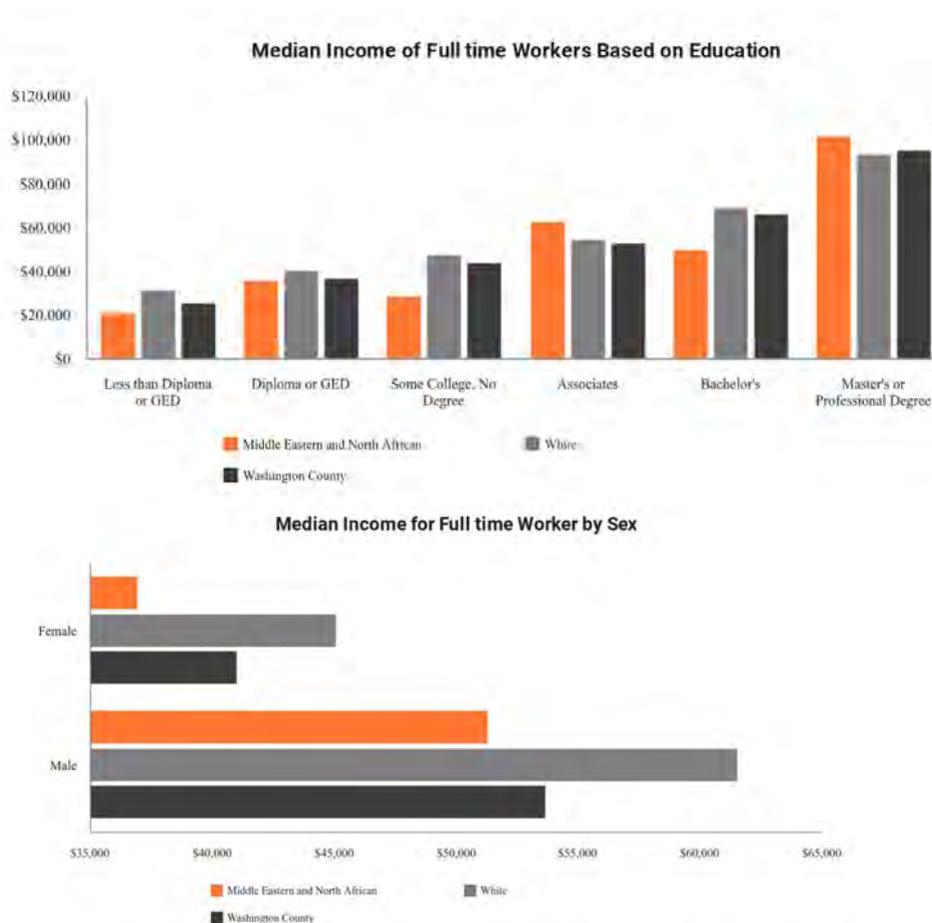
Community reviewers of the report who came to the US as refugees also state that there needs to be greater awareness about existing job placement programs such as Job Plus at the Department of Human Services. *They consider it unfair that there is limited awareness or funding for employment programs that target refugees, which leads to xenophobic perceptions of refugees living off social services.* They advise that beyond providing information about basic services, public agencies recognize the intellectual and cultural potential of refugee communities and guide them through the search for employment.

We observe a similar range of lived experiences both within the Middle Eastern and North African communities and between them and the White workforce in terms of the impact of education on income. Some highly educated Middle Eastern and North African adults have been very successful, and there are many others, particularly refugees, for whom their education does not translate to a compatible job and income.

It should also be noted that except the highest level of education, whether the Middle Eastern and North African worker is a well-educated immigrant, refugee or citizen, they earn less than a White person with a similar level of education.

It is no surprise that there are substantial income differences between Middle Eastern and North African workers and White workers given the differential occupational profile of Middle Eastern and North Africans vis-a-vis the White workforce, high probability of underemployment among refugees, being “stuck” in low-middle wage occupations and pay inequities.

Pay inequities are even starker when we consider how much less Middle Eastern and North African women are paid for their full time labor compared to men and White women.





\$65,082 Median Household Income for Middle Eastern and North African
\$69,964 Median Household Income for White
\$66,746 Median Household Income for Washington County

Family Households with Own Children



Includes **43%** of Middle Eastern and North African with a Median Income of **\$81,474**
 Includes 28% of White with a Median Income of \$91,213
 Includes 33% of Washington County with a Median Income of \$78,942

Family Households without Own Children



Includes **34%** of Middle Eastern and North African with a Median Income of **\$73,000**
 Includes 36% of White with a Median Income of \$86,109
 Includes 34% of Washington County with a Median Income of \$82,204

Community reviewers reason that:

The Economic Policy Institute calculates the monthly budget to afford a modest yet adequate standard of living based on 2017 costs. The calculator takes into account the cost of housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, other necessities, and taxes. The calculator does not include savings for retirement, a rainy day, or college. For a two-parent, two-child family in Washington County, it costs \$8,334 per month (\$100,012 per year) to secure a decent yet modest standard of living. Across different household types, Middle Eastern and North African communities seem to be economically worse off compared to the typical White household and County household. They have larger households (families: 3.5, households: 3.1) than White people (families: 3.0, households: 2.4) and they run their households on fewer resources than White residents (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

At the lower end of the income spectrum, families especially refugee households are trying to make ends meet. Their low incomes are primarily a result of under employment, and they have additional expenses that others in the county don't have to bear. For example, *community reviewers brought up the issue of families paying back their \$1,200 per person airfare to the US for many years. If families are not on the Oregon Health Plan, health care costs are also a burden.*

Middle Eastern and North African community members are therefore 50% more likely to be in poverty rate while one of twelve White residents are poor (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Middle Eastern and North African women feel this deprivation especially since their full-time monthly incomes are both low and least compared to

“Skilled immigrants and refugees are working in healthcare, childcare, food, transportation, even though they’re qualified for much more. For immigrants and Arabic speaking immigrant women, the husband usually tries to get a job that supports the whole family, while the wife tries to get a “supplemental” job that often ends up being in childcare or healthcare which pay very low wages.”

White female and male workers. It adversely impacts their ability to thrive particularly so for mothers. Childcare in Washington County is more expensive than Oregon overall. Families may be spending as much as 35% of their income on childcare (as cited in, “Count Her In: A Report about Women and Girls in Oregon”, 2016). Women are placed in the uncomfortable predicament of exiting the workforce to save childcare costs, which in turn hurts their future earning and employment prospects.

\$12,792



Median Annual Childcare Cost in Washington County

Through it all, Middle Eastern and North African communities invest their financial resources in building culturally specific resources such as mosques, Islamic centers like the Muslim Educational Trust, small businesses such as grocery stores that nourish and cater to the whole county. However, being lumped together with White business owners prevents current and potential entrepreneurs in the community to access state and county support for minority businesses and have their contributions to the local economy recognized and encouraged.

When asked what data or information they would want to see collected that enables their community advocacy, a number of focus group participants emphasised the need to document the cultural, economic and intellectual contributions of the community to Washington County.

“Our communities, we are trying. We’re trying to do our best. Like, for example, when I came, there was only one Mediterranean store out on Farmington/ Canyon. Now there are four or five grocery stores. Businesses are growing. Now we have two or three restaurants, delis, bakery. The bakery was just two years ago.”

Focus participants identified the following community priorities in Washington County related to economic justice:

- Opportunities to invest in professionals and experts among immigrant and refugee communities.
- Dismantling employment barriers faced by new immigrant/refugee communities
- Qualification requirements of opportunities need to change so they are available to immigrant and refugee communities.
- Good job opportunities with good income.
- Small business licenses for immigrants and refugees
- End discrimination in various policies
- Youth involvement and especially how to engage in today’s society without being scared.
- Educational success of our students
- Safe places to be accepted regardless of religious affiliation

HOUSING JUSTICE

Similar to other communities of color living in Washington County, Middle Eastern and North African communities, especially those that came to the US as refugees, are concerned about affordable housing and being able to establish a stable living situation for themselves, from which to build community. Issues of housing justice especially ability to afford a home without risk of displacement is intrinsically linked to economic inequities especially pertaining to employment barriers and poverty.



Middle Eastern and North African communities are concerned about being able to establish a stable living situation for themselves, from which to build community.

Similar to communities of color living in Washington County, Middle Eastern and North African communities are less likely to be homeowners than White residents and the county homeownership rate (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Conversely, *they are more likely to be renters than the average County resident and their White counterpart and have to worry about disruptions such as rent increases, delayed repairs, or no-cause evictions.*

Community members that reviewed this homeownership and renter data critiqued it for masking stark disparities within the Middle Eastern and North African communities between refugees on the one hand and immigrants and people that were born in the US on the other. Therefore, we refrain from calculating more specific disparity rates. According to community feedback, high-income community members are driving the homeownership rate observed in the data.

“Most of our community that own houses are mid to high-income families. They work in the high tech. They work as professionals. I’m speaking about the immigrants, not refugees. I’m speaking about professionals that live in Washington County.”

Focus group participants identify numerous barriers to homeownership in the community. Some point to home loan interest rates being incongruous to the Islamic faith.

“Most [homeowners] are professionals, immigrants, that have been recruited by the high tech or they are the second generation born to immigrant families that are physicians or whatever capacity of being a professional. They’re mostly middle to high income.”

“They might not have the resources to buy a home. They also might not agree with the methods available to purchase a home because it involves interest, which is haraam in Islam. So I think it does make sense that most people are renting versus buying.”

Others opine that financial institutions are reluctant to provide homeownership loans to potential homeowners because they may not have a credit history and what the banks would consider a satisfactory stream of income and employment. This particular issue impacts the Middle Eastern and North African refugee population. Unfortunately, there is no available data about home loan denial rates to potential Middle Eastern and North African homeowners or even the number of loan applicants from the community. Even if that information was available, financial institutions have not disclosed data about prospective borrowers’ credit history and overall debt-to-income ratio for any community anywhere in the US, limiting any rich racial disparity analysis of homeownership (Glantz & Martinez, 2018).

“Not having credit is something that’s a barrier to purchase a home. Even if they go beyond the banking discussion, they can’t. They don’t have established credit to buy a home.”

“They don’t know there are resources to learn about how to establish credit. We are talking about having classes that talk about how to build your credit.”

“We are conducting a training session for how to build your credit and your financial stuff. We have a good number of people in attendance, which we are proud of because people are looking for the knowledge. They’re willing to learn to get the benefit.”

“If you’re not established and don’t have a community that’s established, you can’t buy a home. It’s difficult.”

“When you look at White people, most of the time they’re going to own homes, but they’re the third or fourth generation, several generations. I own a home today, but I’m the second generation. My parents, there’s no way. They didn’t know the resources. They didn’t have the job. They immigrated here in 1990. They’re educated, but they didn’t have the credit history.”



1/3 of Middle Eastern and North African homeowners spend more than a third of their monthly income on housing costs such as a mortgage and utilities.

Housing is often the single largest expense for a household. More than one-third of Middle Eastern and North African homeowners spend more than a third of their monthly income on housing costs such as mortgages and taxes, and they are more likely than the typical homeowner in Washington County to be severely burdened by housing costs, i.e., spending more than half of their income on those expenses.

“Washington County is expensive whether it’s Bull Mountain, Cooper Mountain, Bethany. All of this area is expensive by nature, not because they want to buy expensive houses.”

At least half of Middle Eastern and North African renters spend more than 30% of their income on monthly rent (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).

Solutions to economic inequities that manifest in barriers to employment especially for refugee populations, inadequate incomes due to underemployment and resulting poverty are the pathways to housing stability along with dealing with the problem of increasing rents (median rents in Washington County have increased by 37% between 2012 and 2015), lack of affordable housing and weak tenant protection laws. Inadequate incomes, unemployment, and poverty make it difficult for some Middle Eastern and North African community members to pay the single biggest expense in a typical household budget. In 2015, the median rent according to Zillow Rent Index was \$1,648. If we consider the Middle Eastern and North African communities’ median household income (\$65,082), Middle Eastern and North African households should be spending no more than \$1,627 per month or not to be burdened by housing costs. ***Considering community feedback about the data that indicates income disparities within the Middle Eastern and North African population in Washington County, one can conclude that refugees and low-income community members are disproportionately experiencing the housing crisis.***

Community members also point to the shortage of rental housing that meets the needs of families. Gentrification in the form of new development of unaffordable and unsuitable housing units, specifically along the Southwest corridor is concerning Middle Eastern and North African renters. According to a community advocate in Washington County:

“Our families are struggling to find units that can adequately house large families since most rental units are studios, one bedroom, or two bedrooms. Families must often double up due to housing costs, leading to even greater overcrowding. This puts families at risk of eviction. Even affordable housing developers don’t recognize the need for units with more than three bedrooms, despite the experiences of Middle Eastern communities.”

This has potentially severe repercussions for homelessness and food insecurity. Unaffordable housing increases the risk of homelessness in the Middle Eastern and North African community and puts pressure on familial and communal networks to provide support during housing instability. That puts households and families further at risk of eviction for overcrowding in a state with limited tenant protection laws. According to Oregon Department of Education, approximately 15 Arabic students reported being housing insecure in 2015, i.e., “lack a fixed, reg-

ular, and adequate nighttime residence.”⁵ Although this number appears small, housing insecurity rate among Middle Eastern and particularly Arabic speaking students has increased by 87.5%, outpacing the 7.7% increase in housing insecurity between 2012-2015 in the student body. Middle Eastern and North African students’ share in the houseless student population increased as a result.⁶

0.7% of Middle Eastern and North African Student Population is housing insecure



Overall Student Body Housing Insecurity Growth rate 2012-2015



Arabic Students' Housing Insecurity Growth rate 2012-2015

“Rent eats first,” and research shows that people tend to cut back on food and health care costs in order to first pay for housing. Approximately 12% of the community is living in poverty and judging by the increase in number of Arab residents in Washington County using food stamps or SNAP (from 6.3% in 2010 to 21.5% in 2015), around 1 in 5 Arab people are having to negotiate a trade-off of basic needs such as housing, food and healthcare. Middle Eastern and North African women are more likely to bear the brunt of this cruel tradeoff. They earn almost half the amount of White male full time workers and earn the least compared to men in the community as well as White female and male full time workers (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).⁷

Given the Zillow median rent in Washington County (\$1,648), women in the community are spending \$725 per month more than what housing experts would advise for affordable rent on that income.



12% of the Middle Eastern and North African community lives in poverty.



Community priorities related to housing justice in Washington County are:

- Dismantling employment barriers faced by new immigrant/refugee communities
- Qualification requirements of opportunities need to change so they are available to immigrant and refugee communities.
- Good job opportunities with good income.
- Small business licenses for less-educated immigrants and refugees
- End discrimination in various policies
- “Show me where to go when I need help” for people who are not familiar
- Know your rights for people who are not familiar with rules/procedures.



“Show me where to go when I need help” for people who are not familiar



End discrimination in various policies



Affordable Housing



CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Middle Eastern and North African communities in Washington County have mixed experiences with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. *Some community members who identify as Black have been stopped or profiled; some are hyper-aware that since 9/11 their communities have been subjected to surveillance and Islamophobic profiling, and others have found the police helpful and friendly.*

A Black identifying Middle Eastern and North African community member said:

“I don’t need to tell you how police treat me in my community. How they treat black people. In the first place, they see a black man and, they get suspicious of him. September before the Fall started and I just bought my car and driving down the street, bright sun, and I got pulled over by the cop, and I was like, what did I do? Your lights are not on. I said, are you kidding me? They said your lights are not on. Can I see a piece of ID? And he had to go to the car and do a background check and all these things. So I try to tell people if they see a black man driving a very nice car and he looks clean, and the first thing that comes to their mind is he’s dealing drugs, that is why. And I drive for Uber, how many times I get pulled over at night just because I’m driving a 2015 red Chrysler and I have to convince the people that I am working. That is why I try not to go to places I shouldn’t go. I pray before I get into my car. I say, just in case a cop shoot me. I don’t want to be in a situation where I get pulled over by a cop for nothing, and I get shot.”

Another community member said:

“Thanks to extensive relationship-building by the community, relations are generally good with Beaverton and Tigard police. Tigard and Portland police proactively reached out to MET to check on them during ‘Punish a Muslim Day’ in April.”

Other community members emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the rules and laws of the city and county among new arrivals.

“Some international students, if I remember correctly, they would get pulled over by the police. They would have an international license. The police officer will give them a ticket of driving without a license. And then pulled over again, driving while suspended. They don’t know the rules. So the courts will push those tickets out and a year passes by, and they have to pay \$3,000 in tickets. It’s those types of things, to give a chance to somebody who just came in and don’t have all the benefits or the resources to find out where they are.”

Law enforcement and police departments are currently not mandated to collect data on who they stop or pull over. Moreover, Middle Eastern and North African communities are lumped into the White race box in current law enforcement data practices. Focus group participants prioritize data collection about police profiling and stops.

Middle Eastern and North African communities also see a role for law enforcement to ensure their safety and have taken personal and institutional steps to build relationships with local police departments.

“Law enforcement in Washington County, they need to integrate people, you know, of multiple ethnicities in their force. The better they will serve us. So when someone from African background is driving, he won’t be stereotyped. Or a lady with a headscarf, they will not be stereotyped.”

“Two months ago I graduated from Citizenship Academy in Beaverton Police Department. It is six weeks. One day every week for five or six hours. They accepted me, and I went through and did a security check. And they tell us about the recruiting people. It is not easy.”

“There are more opportunities now for immigrants to serve on several committees within Washington County, within the cities of Washington County. Like the hiring of the Tigard police. Then the sheriff of Washington County is more open. He sponsored several cultural competency trainings. He’s serving in our Building Bridges community with Muslim Educational Trust.”

On February 10th 2016, the Washington County Sheriff’s office arrested Michael Troxell for the murder of Abdul Jamil Kamawal, a retired survey technician from Washington County’s Land Use & Transportation department. His neighbors and community felt that Kamawal’s death was the result of a hate crime against his Islamic faith (Woolington, 2016). Considering the hyper-visibility of Middle Eastern and North African communities after 9/11 and in light of the Trump administration’s anti-refugee rhetoric and policies, focus group participants expressed safety concerns.

“People felt safer as time passed after 9/11. After the 2016 election, they feel much less safe. The uncertainty in the political environment means people are worried whether they will continue living in the US at all. Islamophobia is on the rise. Women have removed their hijabs so that they are not identified as Muslim for their safety. Some feel safer in Beaverton because there are more hijabis.”

“Single mothers or single ladies, they are in their 60s and 70s. They get harassed and they get questioned while they’re looking for food stamps if they are supporting ISIS or something like that.”

They want to know systemic data about how their communities are impacted by hate violence and are victims of crimes. Available law enforcement data from Washington County Sheriff’s office cannot answer those queries. No hate crimes were logged in their system in 2017 where the motivation for the crime was religion or Islam, and data practices don’t distinguish between White, Other and Middle Eastern victims of crimes. This when we know from national 2011-2015 NCVS data that 54% of hate crime victimizations were not reported to the police in that time period (Langton, Ph.D & Masucci, 2017). In the meantime, community members are taking proactive steps to protect themselves.

Middle Eastern and North African community members also advise law enforcement and human services to adopt a culturally specific lens to issues of domestic violence and child welfare. They also suggest that classes should be offered to help parents acclimatize to norms in the US about parent-child interactions.

“I left my country and I came to U.S. looking for safety. With the current president, because I wear hijab, again I am afraid. Yesterday I met some woman who works with police who is doing self-defense training especially for Muslim women. I want to take this training. When I finish this training I will teach women defense on herself because I don’t want people to come to U.S. and be afraid.”



End profiling and police harassment



Collect data on hate crimes, violence, and victims of other crimes



Provide opportunities for youth to learn and engage with civil/professional organizations/ law enforcement



Washington County authorities need to understand that population of the county come from different backgrounds and cultures and religions



Know your rights for people who are not familiar with rules/procedures



More representative police

“When it comes to domestic violence and child abuse and these things, there is no cultural lens to that. We don’t want domestic violence, but there must be a different approach. This is lacking. Our tendency is to keep it in the family to resolve, not their way of separating and destroying families. ”



HEALTH JUSTICE

A higher proportion of the Middle Eastern and North African community does not have access to affordable healthcare due to lack of insurance coverage. **14% of community residents have no health insurance compared to 8% of the White population** (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Considering the wide variation in income and earnings within the community, health care costs can be prohibitive even when insurance covers the ailing community member. Additionally, English language barriers and a dearth of culturally specific services can be barriers to accessing health care.

Washington County Public Health Department nor other mainstream health data systems collect and report on health conditions of the Middle Eastern and North African communities. In the absence of data, a social determinants of health approach points to the impact of housing insecurity, poverty, Islamophobia and refugee experiences on the physical and mental well-being of many community members. Post-traumatic stress disorder is associated with depression, anxiety, poor concentration, sleeping difficulties, nightmares, and survivor’s guilt. A large number of refugees from Iraq suffer from these conditions. Refugee children tend to suffer significantly from PTSD, with one study showing that every child continued to show post-traumatic reactions 4 to 5

“Often, the institutional response to this challenge is to carve off smaller pieces of the need and do what can be done with what resources exist, and this does not meet the needs of refugees. The refugee community needs a holistic approach that brings healing, adjustment and community organizing in one process.



Culturally specific health services



Collect data on health conditions of community



A holistic approach to community healthcare

years after a traumatic experience (Curry-Stevens & Sinkey, 2016). They may come with physical wounds, amputations, and traumatic brain injuries from torture and violence. Others may suffer from a large number of physical complaints that require an extensive workup, some of which are untreated medical conditions. Many have a significant fear of stigma from mental health challenges, which may be exacerbated by disruption of family and communal ties and social isolation in the US and acculturation stress.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Respondent identified one of the following ancestry or places of birth as their own. **Ancestries:** Algerian, Egyptian, Moroccan, North African, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Lebanese, Syrian, Armenian, Turkish, Yemeni, Palestinian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Mideast, Arabic, Arabic, Other Arab
Places of Birth: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Unspecified Northern Africa
- 2 Table S0505 American Community Survey 2012-2016
- 3 If they self-identified with the Middle Eastern and North African community, they could participate in the sessions.
- 4 Some languages such as Arabic, Middle Eastern and North African communities have in common with African people in Washington County and it is impossible to statistically disaggregate that student group.
- 5 “A homeless family could live in an emergency shelter or transitional housing unit, share housing with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship, reside in motels, or live in tents or trailers for lack of alternative, adequate housing.”
- 6 The Washington County Points in Time Count, similar to Census modelled data collection practices, does not collect data about the number of houseless people that are of Middle Eastern and North African descent.
- 7 Extended analysis and description of data is in the ‘economic justice’ section.



**NATIVE HAWAIIAN
AND
PACIFIC ISLANDER
COMMUNITIES
IN WASHINGTON
COUNTY**

NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

*“We should not be defined by the smallness of our islands but
in the greatness of our oceans.*

We are the sea; we are the ocean. Oceania is us.

*We must wake up to this ancient truth and together overturn all hegemonic
views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically.*

*It is time to create things for ourselves, to create established standards
of excellence that match those of our ancestors.”*

Epeli Hau'ofa

To understand the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities is to understand their strong sense of cultural identity. It is critical to realize at the outset that institutional racism in the US makes Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities negotiate a visibility/invisibility trade-off. On the one hand, they have historically been put into “Asian/Pacific Islander” or “Asian Pacific Islander” racial identifier. On the other hand, people grouped together under the “Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander” umbrella feel ambivalent about that label as well. It lumps groups with distinct identities, cultures and languages into one category. As Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities strive and advocate for issues that impact their lives and greater visibility and representation in public policymaking, they emphasize the need for more refined ways to tell their own stories. National advocacy efforts for disaggregated data to make visible the community’s experiences culminated in the US Census separating the ‘Asian’ and “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander” identities. However, Washington County, city governments and public agencies including law enforcement erase Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities by continuing to use the “Asian Pacific Islander” rule in data collection practices. Readers should consider the diversity of lived experiences in the groups gathered under the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander identity that can get masked in aggregate data.

“We have a lot of goals that we would like to accomplish once we get data. Education, poverty, areas we live in, smoking rates, diabetes—without the data, there is no way for us to move forward.”

**PACIFIC ISLANDER
COALITION, 2018**

AT LEAST

5,538

IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Identity encompasses at least **20** distinct communities, including **Chamorros, Chuukese, Fijians, Marshallese, Native Hawaiians, Samoans, and Tongans.**

Fastest growing community (for whom data is available) both in the US and in Washington County -- they have grown by approximately **60%** between 2010 and 2015.

Polynesian communities such as **Samoans** and **Tongans** are the largest sub-group numbering around **3,719** people in Washington County.

51% Biracial and Multiracial People



71% English only Households



Approximately **2,761** Native Hawaiian residents and fewer than **1,000** people of **Micronesian** descent

1 out of 10 are immigrants



90% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are US citizens by birth



“WHO ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE? HOW MANY ARE WE?”

The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander identity encompasses at least 20 distinct communities, including Chamorros, Chuukese, Fijians, Marshallese, Native Hawaiians, Samoans and Tongans. It is also important for readers to be cognizant of the impact of US political control and policies on Hawaii and the Pacific Islands.

They have experienced a legacy of colonization and political control by the US including being the site of nuclear weapons testing starting in 1946. That adversely impacted their social structures, health outcomes and ways of life.

Washington County has the second largest Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community after Multnomah County (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). In both counties, they comprise approximately 1% of the total population. They are the fastest growing community (for whom data is available) both in the US and in Washington County—they have grown by approximately 60% between 2010 and 2015.

POPULATION SIZE

After including the oft-ignored biracial and multiracial people, as of 2015, American Community Survey estimates that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in Washington County are at least 5,538 strong. It is likely that this is a population under-count. All communities of color face problems of being under-counted by the US Census, particularly as they are much more likely to be urban, poor, and in less stable housing arrangements. In addition to these poverty-related causes, there are barriers to participation in being counted for other reasons. Community members may be reluctant to share information with the Census Bureau or official canvassers because of concerns about how their information will be used or how they will be treated. Fear and distrust can be patterns of relationships with the state that affect US Census population size estimates.



COMMUNITY COMPOSITION

The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in Washington County are diverse—many of them were born in the US primarily in Hawaii, Oregon and western US.¹ American Community Survey estimates that as of 2011–2015 the Polynesian communities such as Samoans and Tongans were the largest subgroup numbering around 3,719 people in Washington County. There are approximately 2,761 Native Hawaiian residents and under 1000 people of Micronesian descent.

90% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are US citizens by birth (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Melanesians, Micronesians and Polynesians immigrated to the US for a variety of reasons such as educational and employment opportunities, political uncertainty and family unification. The Compact of Free Association agreement between the US and the three Pacific Island nations of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau facilitated that process as well.

An estimated 1 out of 10 in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are immigrants and according to focus group participants more likely to experience housing insecurity and economic injustices. English language barriers and lack of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander people in government and social services makes it hard for them to access these spaces. Focus group participants also bring up fear in some communities about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detentions, further keeping them away from government or service institutions.

“Some of these agencies, they don’t want to invest in us. We’re not high priority. We do have issues but we are knocking on the door every single day.”

“If I know DHS has a translator that speaks my language, I will go there. If I know there’s no Tongan translator, I’m not going to go. There are too many White people there. I’m intimidated and feel inferior. They think we are just here to get free stuff. Forget it. Then I struggle. Then I do not get services.”

LANGUAGES

29% of the communities speak their native languages at home. Many community members are at least bilingual considering that only 7% of the population has limited English proficiency. 71% are English only households. The community however highly prioritizes translation services into their languages (especially Chamorro, Samoan and Tongan) in spaces related to safety, health and schools. Some groups in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander umbrella such as the Samoan and Tongan communities identify English proficiency limiting access to services and employment.

“When Pacific islanders come in their 20s..they speak native tongue. They do speak English but it’s limited.”

“We need services to teach people how to speak English when they get here especially English as a second language.”

Many in the community link English proficiency with civic engagement and a means to raise community awareness about their rights in the region. It is quite literally connected to communities having a voice and the language to be able to advocate for themselves in front of city councils and school districts, and to be able to stand up for their rights when they are threatened.

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander people want a balance between English language classes as a means to enhance their employment prospects, and culturally specific programming that grounds the community and its youth in their indigenous languages.

“Native languages are slowly disappearing amongst many indigenous communities. Cultivating indigenous languages is so important as there is a very strong connection between language and culture.”

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Over and over again, focus group participants brought up their value systems based upon communal living, collective sharing and families that take care of seniors. Community elders are held in high respect and are thought leaders in the community. *Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in Washington County seek to break the isolation imposed on them by their invisibility under the “Asian Pacific Islander” identity and the small size of their community spread out over a seemingly large geography.* They are already creating and offering programming and resources to their community members and seek to give it some permanence by building infrastructure in the county.

“We need a place that we can call our home base. And then we can network together and help each other. You need that. You need a place to belong.”

Their quest echoes Epele Hau’ofa description of the people of the Pacific traversing a “sea of islands” rather than being “islands on a far sea”(Hau’ofa, 1994). “Theirs was a large world in which peoples and cultures moved and mingled unhindered by boundaries of the kind erected much later by imperial powers. From one island to another they sailed to trade and to marry, thereby expanding social networks for the greater flow of wealth. They travelled to visit relatives in a wide variety of natural and cultural surroundings, to quench their thirst for adventure.



Pacific Cultural Center



Financial literacy for community members unfamiliar with the US system



Thoughtful and culturally appropriate approach to resolving English language barriers

Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Rotuma, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Futuna and Uvea formed a large exchange community in which wealth and people with their skills and arts circulated endlessly.”(Hau’ofa, 1994).

Focus group participants prioritize two aspects of culturally specific infrastructure that need to be built or supported to enable community well-being in the county. First, they want support for ongoing grassroots efforts to launch or sustain cultural programming in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities.

“We try to offer a little Hawaiian language. The difficulty comes back to paid staffing because it’s always volunteers who have a family to support. But there’s no funding.”

“It has been hard. It’s been a rough road for us. We need financial support that you’re saying. Because our people can’t do it for free. You don’t tell white people to do it for free. You can’t expect our people. And we work hard.”

Community members emphasize that these kinds of classes and programming aren’t trivial or about economics; they are essential to retaining and nurturing their community identity. Consequently, they deeply feel their absence.

“For kids who grow up here whose parents are from the Pacific Island, they don’t have a lot of touch with their own cultural roots except what they can get from people who visit and from their own parents.”

“I couldn’t find classes, unless I actually paid for classes, to learn Hawaiian. I couldn’t learn Hula. I don’t even think PSU even offered stuff like that.”

“So to get that cultural identity, to learn it from your own people, to learn it from people who are fluent in it...”

“It’s also about cultural appropriation. My daughter danced Hula for ten years up here. It’s hard to find authentic people who want to teach values. That’s where it comes down to. Our people are about values. So when we talk about all this kind of stuff, for Americans it’s a dollar sign, but for us it’s about family. It’s about where we bring our children. It’s about their education, you know. And yet keeping that cultural tie, that authentic cultural tie.”

“What we try to do, and we’ve been doing this for ten years, we bring our *ke kumu* from Hawaii. We fly them up here. It’s only for three days but it’s something.”



They also prioritize a Pacific cultural center where all the different islands are represented; a place that can make them feel like a “sea of islands”.

“I only got to talk about what I know. If I were a new Korean immigrant, my Korean community would scoop me up. And they would show me the ropes. My community. I wouldn’t have to go find them. They would find me. That’s what they do. They go out and find their people and show the ropes. We do not have that community. Probably because we don’t know where we are. So I think it starts with we need a center. This is where we start. This is where we start.”

They think about spaces outside Washington County that they want to recreate in close proximity.

“Portland State has their Native American hall. It’s beautiful—it’s all open. You can open it all up. And they invite and allow other people to use it. But what’s beautiful is they always open with a prayer. They always open with a prayer thanking for being on this land. Again, it all goes back to what our roots are and what our values are.”

“Vancouver has Esther Short Park, which is a huge park that has a large bandstand where all our different groups gather. It’s in the heart of Vancouver. We need to be in the heart of Washington County.”

HOUSING JUSTICE

Housing justice ensures not only shelter but also fosters communities that support families, social networks, and religious, social, and cultural institutions. *Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities deeply cherish community building and view a stable place to call home as integral to that.* They see rising housing prices, low-wage jobs, inequitable income, lack of literacy about US financial systems such as credit management, and appropriate educational qualifications, limiting their ability to stabilize a “home base,” counter their isolation and make meaningful connections with their neighborhoods and environment. It also makes them extremely concerned about the impact of housing insecurity on their children’s well-being, especially in school.

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are more likely to be renters than homeowners—a pattern in stark contrast with their White neighbors and the overall County population, the majority of whom are homeowners. Only 1 in 3 community members own their homes compared to roughly 2 out of 3 White residents who are homeowners (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).



1 in 3 community members own their homes compared to roughly two out of three White residents who are homeowners.

Focus group participants prioritize financial literacy for community members unfamiliar with the US system. *They talk about the US financial system being broken and fundamentally different from the communal and collective values of their heritage.* The Washington County Fair Housing Plan 2012 analysis of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data found that very few Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander people even attempt to purchase homes in Washington County; in 2009 only 60–69 loans originated from Hawaiian households (Washington County Fair Housing Plan, 2012).

“I’m thinking about the biggest struggles I had when I moved here.

Mind you, my first language is English. I have noticed that credit is a big issue here. There wasn’t a whole lot of discussion, especially when I was going to high school, of credit, what it means to have credit and how you use it to your advantage.”

The data also shows a steady increase in the number of refinance loans taken out by homeowners in the community between 2004 and 2009. This is worrying because of the extensive involvement of subprime mortgage lenders in that market. The extent to which Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander homeowners are taking out refinance loans is not clear from the Fair Housing Plan analysis because it curiously groups them together with Native American homeowners. However, it needs to be flagged in light of the expressed concern of the community, and the fact that 1 in 4 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander homeowners are cost-burdened i.e. spending at least 30% of their monthly income on housing expenses such as mortgages. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander homeowners may also be targeted by high

- Very few Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander people even attempt to purchase homes in Washington County; in 2009 only 60-69 loans originated from Hawaiian households
- Steady increase in the number of refinance loans taken out by homeowners in the community between 2004 and 2009



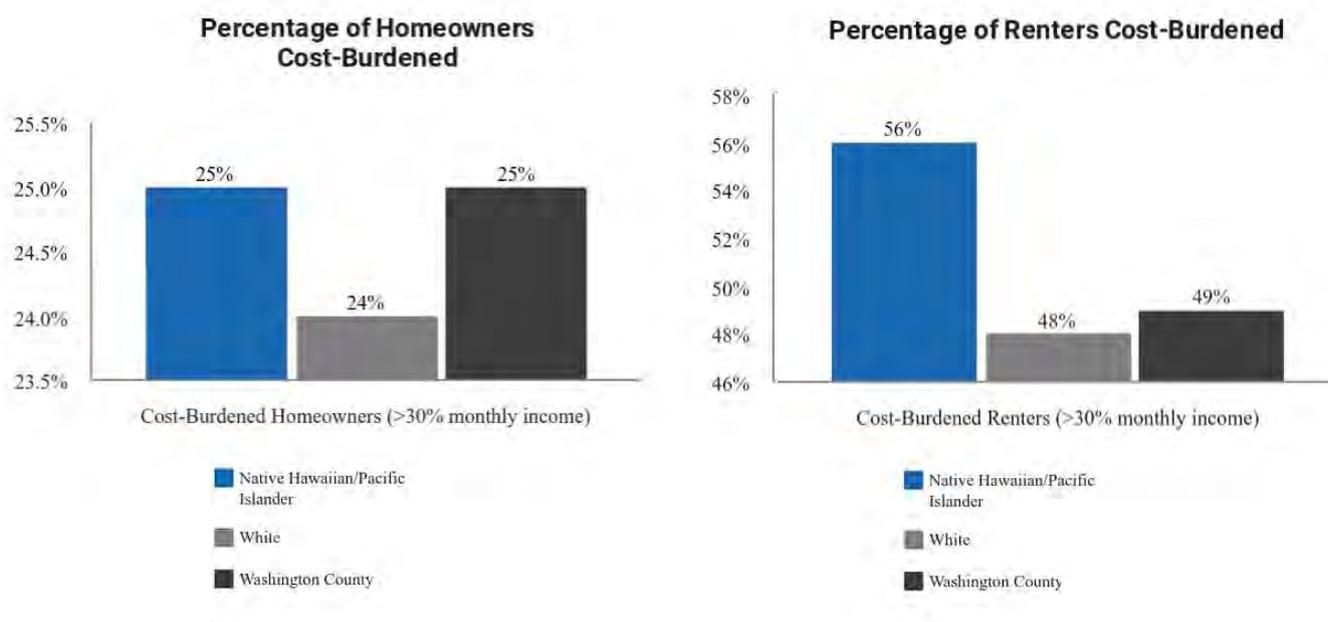
priced borrowing. During the housing boom in Washington County in 2006, 29% of loans to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander borrowers were high priced, which are often a more expensive and often a risky proposition. Even after lending activity declined in subsequent years, they continued to have higher rates of these risky loans.

Washington County High-Priced Loan Originations by Race/Ethnicity (2004-2009)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Hawaiian	15%	27%	29%	16%	12%	2%
White	10%	18%	20%	12%	5%	1%

BURDEN OF HOUSING COSTS

Evidently, there is a housing crisis in Washington County that is especially impacting renters in the region—almost half of those who rent in the county are spending at least a third of their income on rent. It is also clear that renters in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are particularly jeopardized. 56% of renters and 25% of homeowners spend more than the 30% threshold that housing experts advise should be apportioned to housing costs (American Community Survey 2011-2015).



Although that difference might not appear to be a big deal at first glance, consider this: Only 17% of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workforce is employed in high wage sectors compared to 44% of White labor; they earn less than their White counterparts with similar education levels; and they have lower household incomes compared to White households (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). The median level of education in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities is some college either without a degree or an Associate degree, but their monthly earnings for full-time work are lower than the average monthly earnings of a person with a high school degree but no college in the county (Worksystems Inc 2015).



The median level of education in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities is some college either without a degree or an Associate's degree, but their monthly earnings for full time work are lower than the average monthly earnings of a person with a high school degree but no college in the county.

According to Worksystems data, median earnings of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander employees in a stable, full-time job has increased by 19% between 2012 and 2015 while median rents have increased by 37% during that time.

In 2015, the median rent according to Zillow Rent Index was \$1,648. If median household income is considered (\$55,224), Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households should be spending no more than \$1,381 per month on rent in order to not be burdened by housing costs. They could be investing their annual \$3,204 savings on housing costs on their personal, familial and community well-being. Instead, they are 62% more likely to be in poverty than White people in the county. Women in the community are making hard decisions in particular. A full time female worker earns a median income of \$41,538, the lowest compared to White male and female workers as well Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander males. They should ideally be spending no more than \$1038/month on housing cost.

“Rent eats first”—people prioritize housing expenses over nutrition, healthcare and other well-being essentials in their budget. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, especially women, are spending between \$3,204–\$7,320 on renting their living situation that they should be spending on food, healthcare, childcare etc. There has been an increase in the share of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities receive SNAP/food stamp benefits indicating the extent to which Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are making a trade-off basic needs such as housing, food and healthcare (American Community Survey, 2010–2015). Focus group participants draw attention to the fear among immigrants in the community about US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities in Washington County that is deterring them from accessing even those benefits.

“People in my Tongan community would not go and renew their food stamp benefit. Because they’re afraid that ICE will be there because of the immigration status we have. So they’re not going and renewing their TANF and so forth. The good thing is our parks are having free lunch this summer for kids. That’s a good thing.”

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households cope with the housing crisis, when they can by moving from place to place or “doubling up” with other families. That kind of forced displacement impacts the ability of a community to establish a home, a community, a support network in a county that is already sparse in culturally specific infrastructure for the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population. Having seen their community, especially children being impacted by gentrification in Portland, community members are nervous about the situation in Washington County.





“Two bedrooms were going to high \$600s, \$700s and now you’re paying 13. Family cannot afford to stay. But they cannot afford to move. So what do you do? You invite another family to come in. Six months later everybody gets kicked out when the landlord find out.”

“Just between 2011 and 2015, that’s when housing in Oregon just skyrocketed. Lack of affordable housing means the family moved from this district to that district just within Portland, Reynolds District, Portland Public Schools, David Douglas, that’s just within the 4 years. So the kid does nothing but catch up.”

“I’ve had to teach a couple of my friends the gist of when you move here, make sure they have enough for three months’ rent so you don’t find yourself kicked out.”

To make matters worse, their coping strategies of communal living put them in danger of eviction and further displacement.

The official federal and local count of houseless people called the Point in Time Count (PITC) systemically undercounts houseless people of color, and does not adequately capture the “doubling up” type of housing unstable experiences that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are sharing. Even the flawed PITC data shows that in 2017 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders comprised 4% of sheltered and unsheltered houseless people in Washington County, a gross over representation considering they comprise 1% of the County population (Point in Time Count, 2017). White people comprise 75% of the PITC houseless count in 2015, but they were 0.1% of the total White population in the county. In light of widespread criticisms of the PITC’s inability to accurately identify houseless people of color, let’s turn to the Oregon Department of Education data. There were 162 Asian and Pacific Islander students that reported being “housing insecure” in 2015 in Washington County. That means that students “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”² *It represents a 26% growth in housing insecurity among Asian Pacific Islander students from 2012, at a time when the total Asian Pacific Islander student body only grew by 11%.*



API Student Body Growth Rate 2012-2015



API Students' Housing Insecurity Growth Rate
2012-2015

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Economic justice includes issues of equitable access to employment opportunities, stable and sufficient income, and poverty alleviation that are integral to ensuring housing stability, educational attainment and healthcare. For the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, it also means a thoughtful and culturally appropriate approach to resolving English language barriers that goes hand in hand with strengthening community ties.

EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION

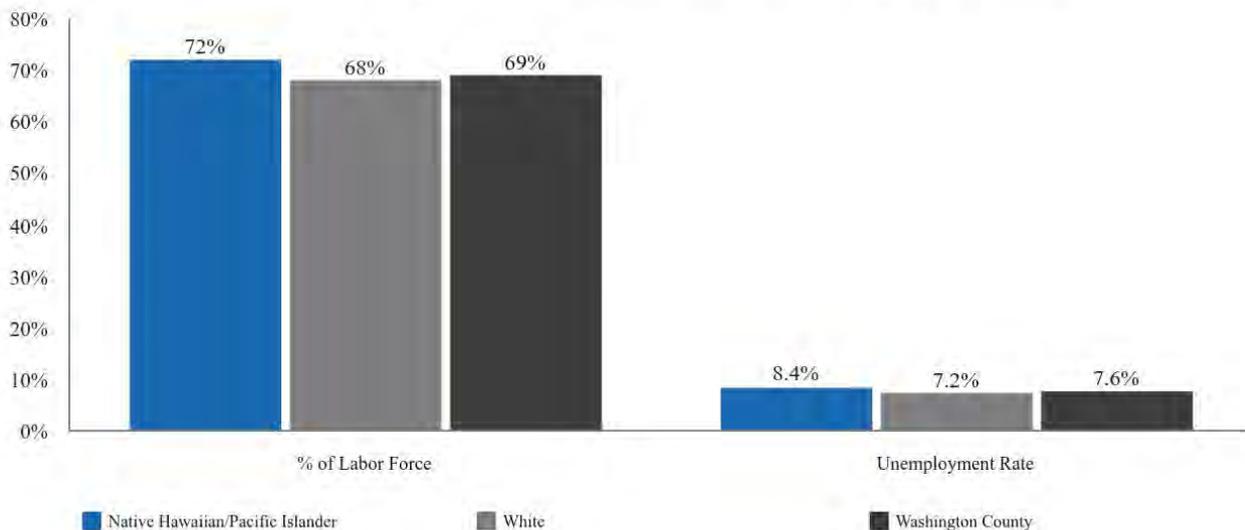
The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workforce is young with a median age of 28 compared to the average White person in the county. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are more likely to be either employed or actively seeking job opportunities and 17% more likely than White job applicants to be unemployed.

“We need language services to facilitate a smooth transition to—I don’t want to use the word fitting in, but being able to be independent and providing for your family when you move here. But also sustainability and strengthening your culture rather than being lost because you’re overwhelmed by other cultures.”



Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workforce is young, with a median age of 28

Percent of Population in the Labor Force and Unemployment Rates



Focus group participants contextualize this seeming parity in employment experience—it's not only important to think not only about *whether* people are employed but *where* people are employed. 30% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander people are employed in high wage occupations such as management and sciences in contrast to 48% of White workers in those sectors (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). *Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workforce, when employed, are disproportionately working in occupations where wages vary widely, where jobs may be contractual and/or may not have stable benefits (American Community Survey 2011-2015).*

In 2016, the public sector in Washington County employed 70 people who identified as Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander out of 23,752 employees (Worksystems Inc). They comprised 0.3% of the workforce whereas they are 1% of the county population. In contrast, White employees are over-represented in the public sector workforce. They are 84% of the workforce although they are 67% of the county population.

For Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, as with communities of color overall, employment barriers to government jobs are not only economic justice issues; it's an issue of representation and whether their government reflects the communities they are supposed to serve. Focus group participants repeatedly shared how government needs to revise their definition of "diversity" to include communities such as the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander that is invisible in public policy decision-making tables and data gathering.

"By making sure the diversity includes us, Pacific Islanders, we have a better chance of being included in a seat at the table."

What kind of a culture and environment do Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander employees experience in their workplace? As one focus group participant put it:

"At work we just had a tropical day. We were doing theme days. And everybody was kind of, what is it, like Hawaiian day? Someone asked me, 'Why aren't you dressed up?' Are you kidding me? I'm from the tropics. I'm tokenized already. We don't dress up all the time in Hawaiian print shirts."

Between 2011 and 2016 Washington County saw an increase in full time workers earning more than \$100,000 a year (Starbuck, 2018). It had the highest annual average wage in the state at \$65,858 and the second highest wage growth on a net basis in the state in 2016 (Starbuck, 2017). Evidently, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workforce is not part of that prosperity. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander peoples have settled in Washington County for a variety of reasons; *they do not seek to assimilate but to retain and nourish their languages and cultures here. Pathways to equitable access to high wage employment opportunities and job security should take that into account.* Focus group participants emphasize the difference in value systems and economic structures between their way of life in the islands and the US mainstream economy. They highlight the need for workforce training and English language classes especially for those who have recently moved here and for older people. They advocate for improved public transit options between their places of residence and work to enable access to increased and better employment opportunities.

"Where we come from, we are communal. Grow your plant, take your boat to the ocean, come home and you have your meal. Here we don't have the skills. We take the job that's minimum wage or a little above that and it's never stable. So we hop from job to job, and we do not have job security."

"You're not going to come here and go fishing and make a living. Back home, we grow and we raise what we consume. That's our basic need. So we did not need to have job skills to meet our basic needs."

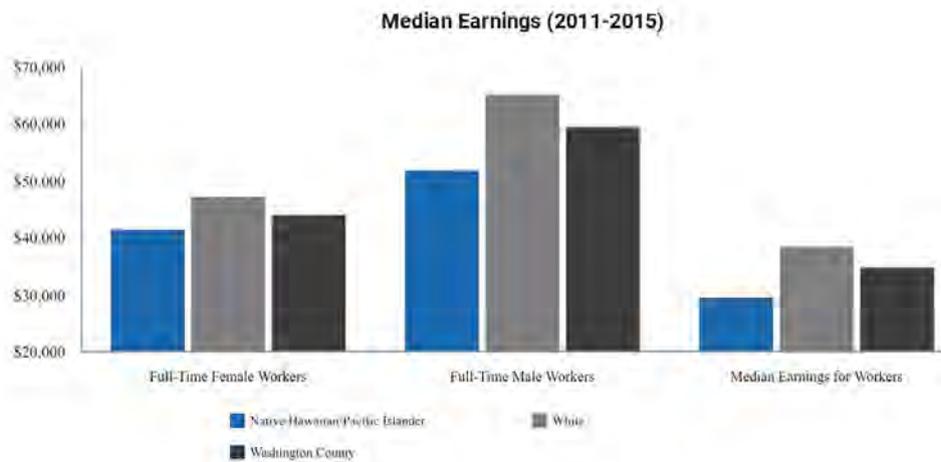
"If there's a way to bridge that with what PCC is already offering or community colleges are offering. Instead of developing a whole new program..."

"What I was noticing in terms of where I live in Hillsboro—some areas don't have bus services on weekends. Lack of transit limits our accessibility to jobs that are available on the weekends, especially those that are new moving in and trying to get on with a lot of the jobs."

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workforce also face employment barriers that include pay scale, and earnings. Income inequity in Washington County is both racialized and gendered. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander female full time workers earn the least compared to White male and female full time workers and to the county male and female median earnings. This reinforces community members’ shared experiences about people being stuck in low wage jobs.

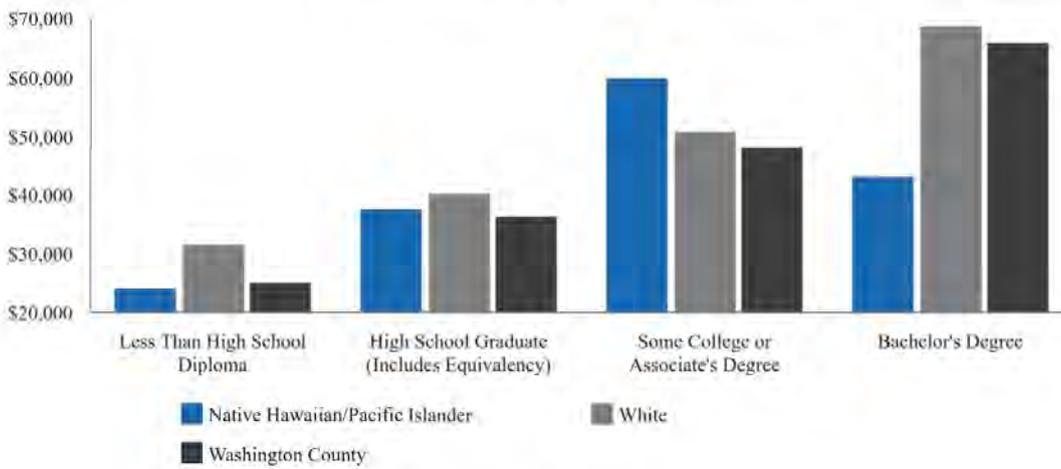
Considering that focus group participants brought up lack of job security, the extent to which pay inequity exists when Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander employees have a “stable” job, i.e. worked with the same firm throughout a quarter period warrants attention. Data from Worksystems Inc. shows an earnings gap there as well.

Education is considered a pathway out of poverty and low incomes. Studies show that a Bachelor’s degree vastly improves a person’s earnings in the US. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, however, have been excluded from that path. When one considers the highest education attained by the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community in Washington County, one-third of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population left college without receiving a Bachelor’s degree and almost 30% of the population has a high school degree (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). *The community demands that their children be prioritized and data be made available about their experiences in schools so as to build better pathways from high school to college.*



Given the small size of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, one cannot make definitive conclusions about the impact of education on improving the earning potential of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. Overall we see that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workers are not earning as much as their White and county counterparts with similar levels of education. The variation in income levels by education is also the result of over-representation of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander workforce in occupation sectors that have really varying incomes.

Median Income for Full time Work by Education



COST OF LIVING

Obviously, incomes and earnings impact the ability of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander household and family to sustain decent quality of living in Washington County. The monthly earnings of a typical Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander worker in Washington county is \$3,917 while a typical White worker earns \$5,626 per month in 2015.

The annual shortfall between Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander and White monthly earnings is \$20,508, which more than affords renting a home for a year at the annual Zillow median rent of \$19,776 in Washington County. A White full time worker can afford to house themselves and have money left over with the annual earnings differential *vis-a-vis* a Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander fulltime worker.

Focus group participants draw the connection between low wage jobs, lack of workforce training and housing instability. Raised in a communal and subsistence type economy and culture, families help each other by providing their resources and homes to community members. That, however, stretches community capacity to problem solve without any formal help being available, and leaves them vulnerable to eviction and displacement.

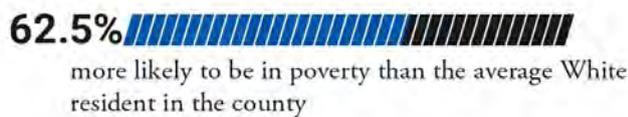
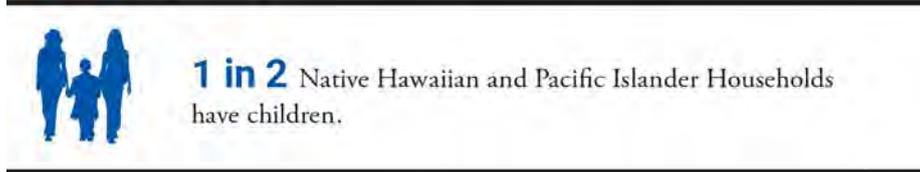
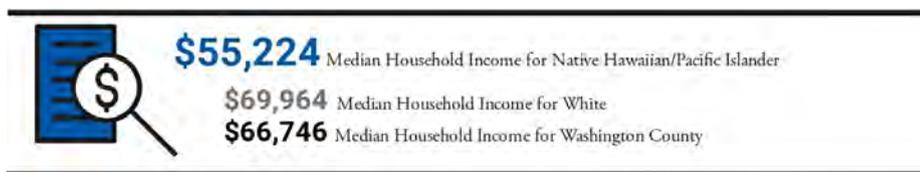
“If you have money, you share with your neighbor. That’s what you learn on the island. Here, you share with the neighbor and you get kicked out next week.”

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander families and households are larger and are sustaining a living in Washington County on fewer resources than White residents. Their median household income is \$55,224 compared to a White median household income of \$69,964 and the county median household income of \$66,746 (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). One in two Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households have children and the average household size in the community is 3.0 compared to White household size of 2.4.

“We chose to live here. We chose to live here rather than moving back to Hawaii. We chose specifically because our kids would have a better education here. We always want our kids to have better than what we have.”

Low incomes and unaffordable living costs combine to create impoverished conditions for many Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community members. They are 62.5% more likely to be in poverty than the average White resident in the county. Statewide, nearly half of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander are low-income and nearly one-quarter of them live in poverty. About one-fifth (21%) of Native Hawaiians live in poverty in Oregon (A Community of Contrasts, 2011).

“Other than kids, in our culture, *kupuna* are our seniors. We take care of both.”



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Community members in the focus groups repeatedly advocated for two overarching ideas: (1) redefine mainstream and institutionalized meanings of diversity, inclusion and representation to include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, and (2) the need for data specifically pertaining to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander lived experiences (to be gathered in a culturally appropriate and equitable manner) in order to advocate for improved outcomes for their community. Applied to the criminal justice system in Washington County, the implementation of those two ideas would reveal the extent to which Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities feel the pain of incarceration and racial profiling.

“Police came up on me and my brother-in-law. We were walking to the store. They jumped out and said you look like a suspect we’re looking for, Victor Lopez. He was like, I’m Pacific Islander.”

The criminal justice system in Washington County uses inconsistent measures to count race in a way that particularly erases Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. They are sometimes counted as “Asian,” perpetuating the Asian Pacific Islander homogenous myth; other times they are classified as “Other,” following the Bureau of Justice Statistics praxis or misidentified as another race. Any of these practices hides Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander experiences with incarceration.

The Washington County Sheriff’s Office has the following racial/ethnic identifiers. It is not obviously clear how one can analyze Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities’ incarceration rates or the number of times they are stopped by law enforcement in Washington County.

Washington County Sheriff’s Office Racial/Ethnic Identifiers

People in Jail	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Unknown	White	
Traffic Stops	Asian	Black	Latino	Native American	Other	Unknown	White

The invisibility of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in the policy imagination and the ahistorically grouping of them with Asian communities inhibit further inquiry because they are not seen as being impacted by incarceration. Vera Institute of Justice calculations based on government data about “Asian/Pacific Islander” population in Washington County shows that Asian/Pacific Islander, similar to the White population are underrepresented in the incarceration system and are unlikely to be incarcerated or pulled over compared to other communities of color. Such conclusions have historically been used to criminalize African-American populations by perpetuating the notion that *some* communities of color are “good” and law-abiding.³

Where data has been disaggregated and made available, it gives clear insights into racial disparities as well as clarity about needed policies. For example, using state and 2010 Census data, the Prison Policy Initiative found that the incarceration rate of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander people in Hawaii was four times higher than that of non-Hispanic Whites (Incarceration Rates in Hawaii, 2010). In San Francisco County, juvenile justice data shows that Samoan youth are disparately impacted even though at an aggregated level Asian/Pacific Islander youth do not seem to be in the juvenile justice system (Esthappan & Hu, 2017).

Meanwhile, focus group participants are extremely concerned about their communities’ interactions with the criminal justice system. Particularly for Samoan, Tongan and immigrant people in their communities. They seek to build relationships with local law enforcement and want to see the police department be representative of their communities of color. They want to see translation services in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander languages especially Samoan in courts. They are concerned about the threat of ICE raids deterring community members from accessing social services.

“The police bureau should come visit the Tongan community because we are afraid of the police. We are intimidated by the police.”

“With people of color in general and law enforcement, these are scary times right now. Everybody’s afraid.”

“The police force should reflect the community. So their number of hires of people of color should be representative, especially in the police department.”



EDUCATION JUSTICE

Consider the way Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander focus group participants talk about their vision for schools and for children and youth in them.

Are Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children, youth and families finding schools fulfilling their vision? Are schools “hubs of community” and academic excellence for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students? Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities want to know the answers through these questions and seek holistic solutions that take into account the impact of housing, income inequality and criminal justice on educational outcomes and consequently transform student experiences in schools.

The reality is that it’s hard to even gather data about the experience of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students in the Washington County school system because *the Oregon Department of Education does not consistently collect or make available data relating to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students for many indicators distinct from the Asian Pacific Islander category*. Where disaggregated data about Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander student experiences weren’t available such as data on expulsion and suspensions, housing insecurity and chronic absenteeism, we had to rely on a student’s first language and language spoken at home provided by Oregon Department of Education. It is important to remind readers that language and a person’s identity are not perfectly correlated.⁴ The analyses in this section likely unintentionally omits some languages or can’t parse out data about Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students/families who list only English as their home language. That communities have to rely on imperfect methods to make themselves visible strengthens their demand for better data using equitable practices.

“The school should be the hub of the community. It’s a natural hub of the community.”

“They need time to bond socially. And we have to be sure they’re educated well so they can go on to whatever they choose.”

STUDENT POPULATION

Oregon Department of Education estimates that there were 13,252 students of Asian Pacific Islander descent in Washington County in 2015. The Asian Pacific Islander student body grew by 31% between 2009 and 2015, at a time when the White student body declined by 4%.

Using data on the student’s first language and/or language spoken at home, *there are roughly 264 students that speak languages spoken by Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups in 2015, signifying a 60% growth rate since 2009.*

Student’s first language and language spoken at home (ODE)

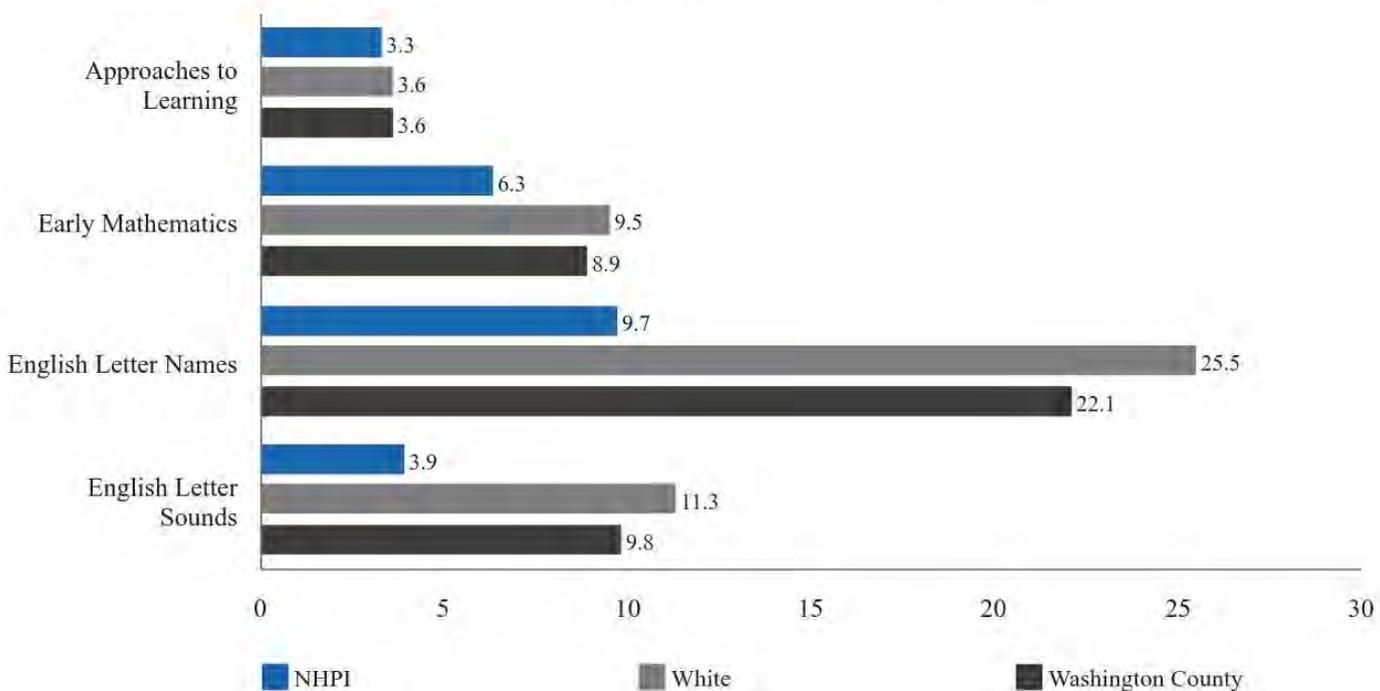
	2009	2012	2015
Austronesian	2	3	7
Chamorro	17	27	17
Chuukese	68	88	113
Creoles and pidgins (Other)		3	3
Creoles and pidgins, English-based (Other)	1	1	10
Creoles and pidgins, French-based (Other)			1
Hawaiian	2	1	3
Marshallese	51	71	61
Palauan	5	2	1
Pohnpeian		1	5
Samoan	10	16	16
Tonga (Tonga Islands)	9	18	21
Yapese		1	1

EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Early childhood learning is foundational to a child’s development, and is linked to readiness for school and academic success. Data from the Early Learning Hub presents a complex picture. *Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children between the ages of 3 and 6 are being scored the lowest in kindergarten assessments of their learning approaches compared to all racial groups (Asian, Black, Latino, Native American and White) as well as the county average.* This domain “incorporates elements of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulation (focus at-

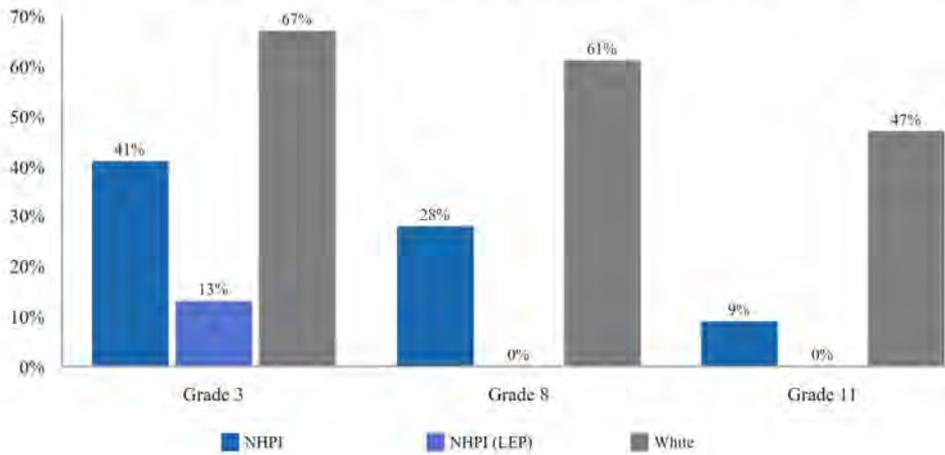
ention, control emotions and manage thinking, behavior and feelings) under a single umbrella to guide practices that support the development of these skills.” (Oregon’s Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines, 2015). The assessment gap really widens in “early literacy” that measures the “the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that precede learning to read and write” and “early mathematics” that assesses their burgeoning familiarity with numbers and basic calculations. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children score the lowest in these domains as well.

Kindergarten Assessment (2015-2016)

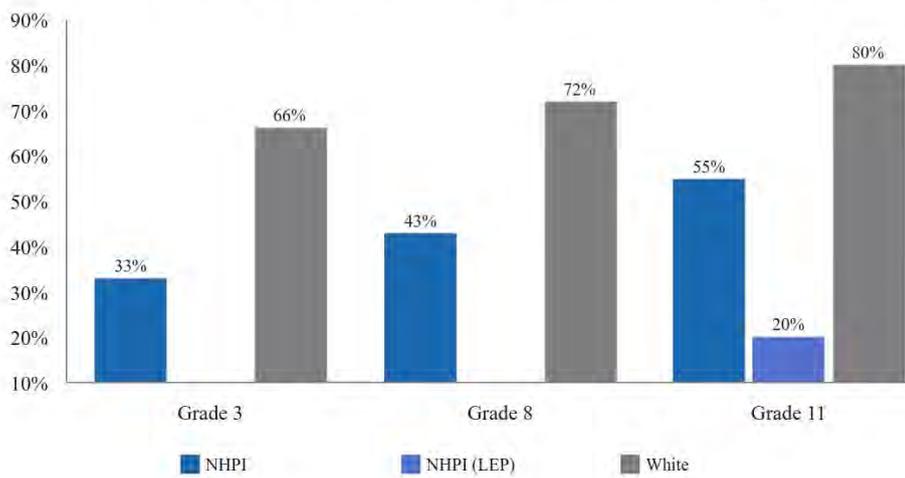


These “achievement gaps”—differences between performance in standardized testing between groups of students in different subjects—persist in K–12 education as well. Across grades Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students perform at levels lower than White students in reading, science and mathematics. *Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students with limited English proficiency lag behind even more in standardized testing.*

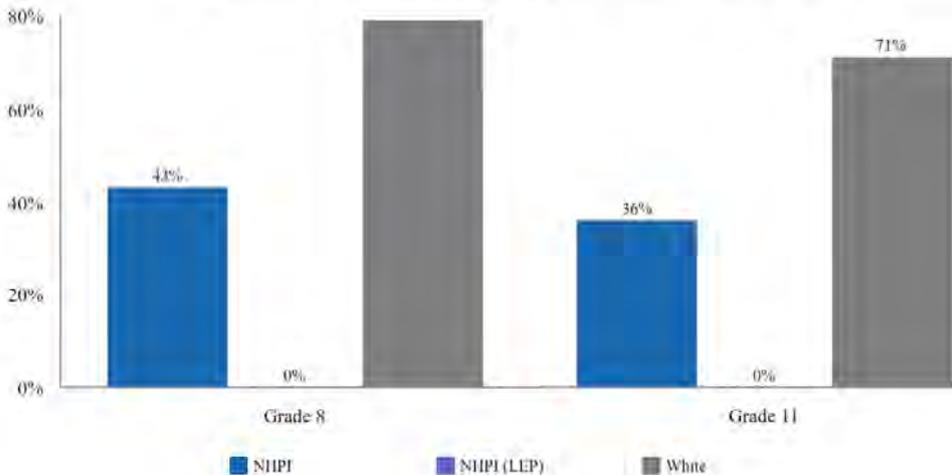
Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Mathematics (2015)



Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Reading (2015)



Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Science (2015)



“We need to give them a solid education so they can get the better life. Right? We always want our kids to have better than what we have. They’re not going to get it if they don’t get that good education. So what are the schools doing to support our students? And how are our families supporting students?”

Although this section has provided what we think is the first comprehensive look at Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students in the Washington County school system, it would be myopic to only consider gaps in student performance on standardized testing. Achievement gaps do not provide answers but create new questions. Standardized tests measure how well students perform on tests and while they are correlated with race and class, they are not indicative of that student's intelligence, knowledge or capabilities. One has to consider other factors that are adversely affecting their learning environment.

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children and youth are coming to a school environment characterized by isolation, lack of teachers of color or from their communities and harsh disciplinary practices that exacerbate their experiences already marred by social isolation. These factors contribute to chronic absenteeism including housing instability and lack of culturally specific infrastructure. In schools, their test performances lag behind their peers, which in turn negatively affects their graduation rates, employment, and earning potential.

FEELING ISOLATED

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students are likely to feel isolated in school as well as in their neighborhoods and cities. They are only 0.3% of the student population; they find themselves being the only Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander person in their schools or social circles. Focus group participants talk about parents working multiple jobs, which limits parental presence and involvement in their children's education as well as the youth's cultural identity development. Subsequently, it is no surprise that *focus group participants prioritize culturally specific programming and infrastructure in Washington County particularly around cultural development.*

“Our students need someplace even in the school that they can feel safe to gather after school and have that community time.”

LACK OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER TEACHERS OR TEACHERS OF COLOR

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students are unlikely to interact with any teacher or staff who look like them (84% of school staff in 2015 was White). In addition to exacerbating their feeling of isolation in school, a lack of teachers who share their cultural identity impacts teacher interactions with students, consequently affecting student performance in schools.⁵ Extensive research has found that *“students assigned to a teacher who shares their race and gender are more likely to say their teacher pushes them to work hard, requires them to explain their answers, not to give up when the work gets hard, and accepts nothing less than their full effort.”* (Egalite & Kisida, 2016) Students of color, particularly those living and attending schools in disadvantaged settings, benefit in their academic success from seeing adult role models in a position of authority. Recent research found that students, race notwithstanding have more favorable perceptions of teachers of color versus White teachers (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). Finally, research about disparities in school disciplinary practices indicate that harsher punishment for similar conduct against students of color could be based in part on teacher interpretation of student behavior (Goldhaber, Theobald, & Tien, 2015).

DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

Aggregate data about disciplinary practices for perceived misconduct masks the experiences of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students. At first glance, school faculty are less likely to expel or suspend Asian Pacific Islander students in ways that exclude them from attending school. Some focus group participants in Asian communities in Washington County remember being able to fly under the radar because teachers expected Asian kids to be obedient and academically inclined. When the data is disaggregated by a student’s first language or language spoken at home, we find that Chuukese speaking students are 238% more likely than White students and 208% more likely than a typical student to be punitively disciplined in school (Oregon Department of Education 2015).

HOUSING INSECURITY

Focus group participants brought up the actual and potential impact of housing instability on student’s academic life. They have seen gentrification destabilize their students in Portland, making them move across school districts as their families get displaced. Rising housing costs combined with predominantly low wage employment in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities means less time for parental involvement in their children’s academic and cultural development. According to data made available by the Oregon Department of Education, while fewer “Asian Pacific Islander” students experience housing instability, Chuukese and Marshallese speaking students are more likely to be housing insecure, meaning they “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”

“The Chuukese have been here the last 10 to 15 years. They’re still in survival mode trying to adjust to everything. Not knowing the school system, being in a brand-new environment, it’s a culture shock. Services is there, but not knowing where to get services. And then doubling up, tripling up with families and everybody getting kicked out once the landlord find out. And when the parents are working to put food on the tables, that’s when the kids start playing because there’s no communication.”

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

The Oregon Department of Education measures chronic absenteeism as a student missing 10% or more of school days due to excused and/or unexcused absences and/or expulsion or temporary suspension from school (Chronic Absenteeism, n.d.). Research has found that “chronically absent students have delayed achievement in early years with widening gaps over time, higher suspension and dropout rates, and decreased high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence.” (Chronic Absenteeism, n.d.). Oregon Department of Education data collapses Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander student experiences with Asian communities and estimates that 11% of the Asian Pacific Islander student population in 2015 was chronically missing school. Given what this report has presented so far in terms of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth experiences with isolation in school, cultural isolation at large, being targeted by punitive disciplinary practices, *missing school to help their seniors in institutions that don’t provide culturally specific services or language assistance*, housing instability, and interactions with criminal justice that are still hidden from data, readers should be wary of relying on the figure below.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

All these factors potentially influence Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students experiences in terms of their graduation rates and college enrollment rates. Those in turn are valuable (though not as much as it is for White people according to our data) for access to stable employment and higher income.

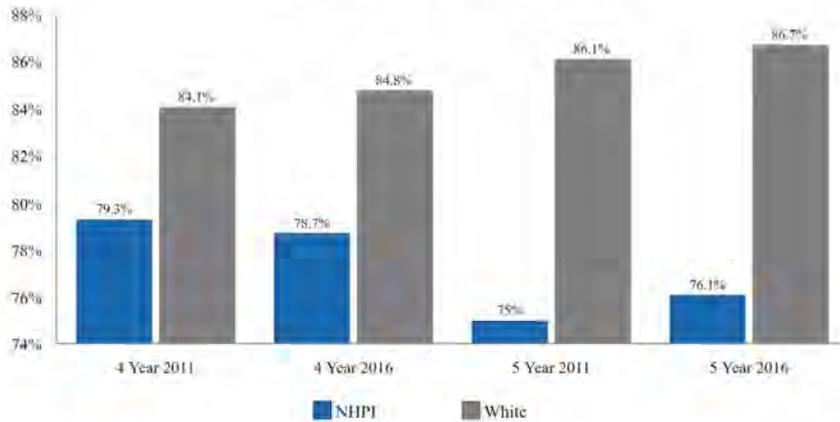
“They’re going to be behind on their wages. They can’t afford that housing. They can’t move out. We need to be sure they succeed. The school needs to tell us specifically, every district within Washington County, what are you going to do to address our students differently? Because our kids deserve it.”

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students are graduating in four years at a slightly lower rate in 2016 as they were in 2011, but there has been an increase in their graduation rates when they are in 5 year cohorts.⁶

Families are concerned and demand action from school districts to better treat their students, prioritize their academic excellence, and cultivate parental engagement.

According to focus group participants, school districts need to be cognizant of economic justice barriers such as lack of job security and low wages that may leave parents little time to be present in schools in the way other families are. For Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, schools need to play a bigger role in providing a safe communal space for learning.

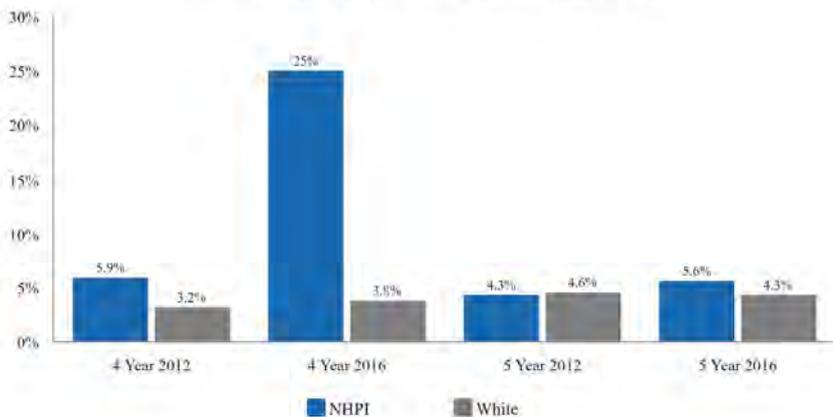
Percentage of High School Graduates



It is concerning that there has been an increase between 2011 and 2016 of the proportion of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students who have completed their high school program but did not meet requirements for a high school diploma.

“Part of what schools are supposed to do is improve parent participation rate. Schools have to reach out and build that community, build that safe space.”

Percentage of Completion Without Graduation

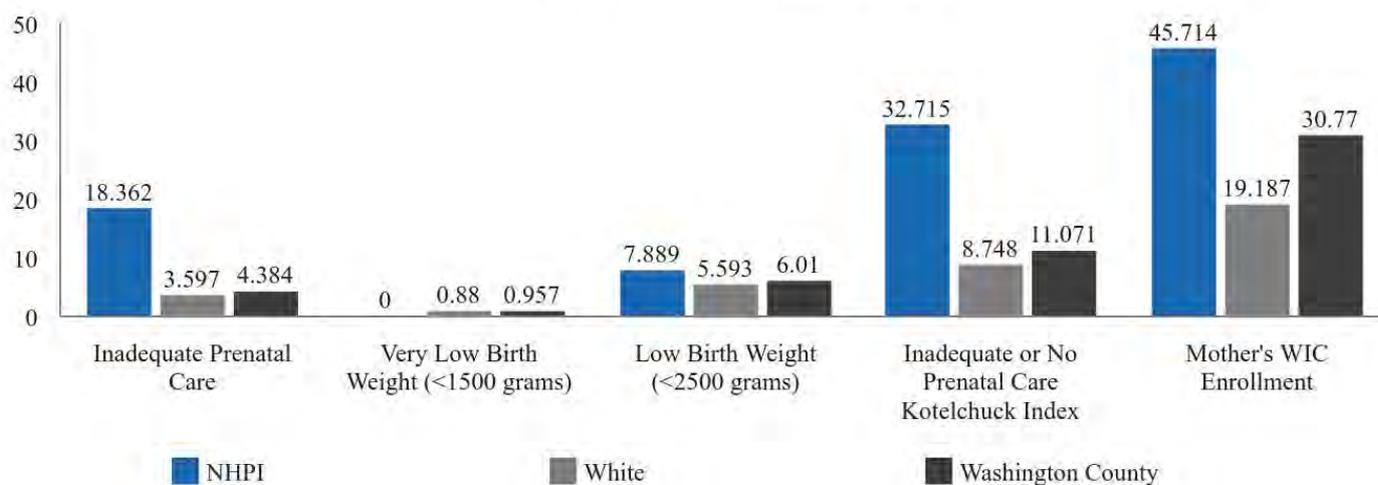


HEALTH JUSTICE

Typically, healthcare data practices have combined Asian and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander categories, thereby minimizing health disparity realities faced by all the communities grouped together and limiting the ability to create and implement targeted and culturally relevant interventions. Fortunately, the Washington County Public Health Department disaggregates data about birth risk factors for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander babies and mothers and causes of mortality in the community.

Analysis of available data on birth risk factors emphasizes the concern of community advocates that their communities' well-being is impacted from a very early stage by economic inequity, housing instability and community isolation in Washington County. There are stark racial disparities in health outcomes especially maternal health and prenatal care. In addition, low birth weights are correlated to an assortment of troubling physical conditions including learning disabilities, failure to thrive, increased hospitalization, and a host of emotional, cognitive and social conditions such as delays in social development and shyness (Fletcher, 2011). In adulthood, those who were born at low weights are at higher risk for unemployment and low earnings, (Fletcher, 2011) as well as high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease.

Birth Risk Factors (2011-2015)



Many community members face serious health issues. Due to the small size of the community the Washington County Public Health department suppressed data for some mortality factors. *Suicide and cardiovascular diseases are the primary causes of death in the community in Washington County.* Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are more impacted by chronic health conditions associated with heart disease compared to White residents and overall county population. The fact that suicide emerged as a leading cause of death in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community merits deep investigation into socioeconomic and environmental factors impacting community well-being. Focus group participants conceptualize their physical and mental well-being in the context of overall health of their community.

“Back home we’re used to all that sun and the vitamin D. And then you move to somewhere like the Northwest where 7, 8 months of the year you don’t get that, depression does become a factor.”

12% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander people in Washington County do not have any health insurance, which is comparable to the share of the overall county population without coverage, but higher than 8% of White residents that are uninsured. “Even when the community does have health insurance, conventional health services have several shortcomings in their services to communities of color, particularly in terms of issues of mistrust, stigma, cost, and clinician bias in service delivery. Some additional features of cultural bias includes lack of sufficient attention to the religious and spiritual frames with which different Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities understand health and disease, lack of attention to folk and traditional health practices, differences in nonverbal communication, lack of knowledge of dialects (even when translation is provided), and family inclusion in treatment plans” (Curry-Stevens & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2012).

“Both my parents have dementia. And why does that happen? One of the reasons that can cause dementia is lack of social interaction. For our seniors my mission is to create cultural lunches that are culturally appropriate meals.”

“Lack of finding food, affordable housing, all those services and your children are not doing well in school, that’s bound to exacerbate whatever proneness one has to mental issues.”



of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander people in Washington County do not have any health insurance, which is comparable to the share of the overall county population without coverage, but higher than 8% of White residents that are uninsured



Contributing factors to poor health outcomes for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities include language barriers, which is why focus group participants identified translation services in healthcare especially for the Chamorro, Samoan and Tongan languages as a high priority. Doing so alleviates the pressure that disproportionately falls on multilingual people in the community especially the youth, to be an intermediate interpreter between families and the healthcare provider. “Many older Tongans in Portland do not speak English. Since Tongan adults usually work during the days, if Tongan seniors have meetings or appointments to visit doctors, social security services, etc., students are pulled out of school to act as translators for their elders. This can cause students to miss several days of school each month.” (Curry-Stevens & Sinkey, 2016).

It is commendable that the Washington County Public Health Department collects and makes available data about health outcomes of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. They however collapse Asian and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander identities into a singular category for issues that matter most to the community including the prevalence of diabetes and depression. By their own admission, their 2016 *Washington County Community Health Needs Assessment* “failed to list Pacific Islander as an option for race.” (Community Health Needs Assessment, 2016). To the extent that current policymaking frameworks simultaneously only consider hard data to be legitimate evidence, and exclude the needs and experiences of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, it becomes really hard for community advocates to advance health equity forward.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING POLITICAL POWER

60% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are eligible to vote and hold leadership positions, elected or appointed (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). They are emphatic in their call—County and city governments, school boards and city councils, police departments and social service providers have to take a hard look at how they define inclusion and diversity and who they exclude and erase in their definitions. When they are included, the community feels tokenized. Instead, they call on decision-makers and government bureaus to start a relationship with them, for representatives to come to “their house” and build from there. For example, The Tongan community in the southwest congregates at the Tigard United Methodist Church and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Hillsdale Highway in Beaverton. They strongly advise diversity training for local government and elected officials with culturally specific curriculum that should be built and taught in partnership with communities.

“Possibly they don’t have the education. So they don’t think they’re seeing as many, but in reality, they’re actually seeing more of us every day.”

“They need to be sure to include us in their calendar, on the calendar. We should be on the calendar.”

“The mayor of Beaverton has visited our Tongan church here in Beaverton. That was because I made contact with the mayor. Because of my contact with the mayor, he came over to visit. Then he found out we have a church in Beaverton. So he came over and visited. That’s a good thing.”

They want their government to support and encourage civic engagement.

“They all think they’ve done something, every city government. There are things that are already there that supposedly reach out to us, but we’re not feeling it. We’re not feeling that love.”

“City of Beaverton, they have all these committees. There should be islanders on those committees. There should be.”

“The city and the county should reach out to us. They should walk us through the budget hearing and telling us what to say in those 2 to 3 minutes in a budget hearing.”

Focus group participants view building relationships with local government and resourcing civic engagement as a part of a bigger culture shift that is inclusive of their identities and experiences. It also lays ground for small communities such as theirs to feel that their votes matter, for collaboration and solidarity with other communities of color to vote in representative leaders, and for youth in their communities to realistically see themselves holding elected office.

“What is diversity to government policymakers? If you look at the definition of diversity, is it all-inclusive? Does it include us? By making sure that definition includes us, you can work with the policies as it’s being drafted and implemented, and hold them accountable to that definition of diversity.”

“Another thing is to have the city bureaus visit our centers, our churches. Say I’m with the City. I am with the County. I’m here to break bread with you. Go to their luaus and functions. We need a relationship that matches on paper, face-to-face.”

ENDNOTES

- 1 'US Census lists West states as https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us_regdiv.pdf
- 2 According to the Oregon Department of Education, "A homeless family could live in an emergency shelter or transitional housing unit, share housing with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship, reside in motels, or live in tents or trailers for lack of alternative, adequate housing."
- 3 The rise of the "model minority" myth in conjunction with criminalization of Black people is discussed in the Asian communities narrative.
- 4 We identified these languages based on our existing research in the *Unsettling Profiles in Multnomah County* series.
- 5 This link gives a comprehensive literature review of research on the impact of teachers of color on student life in schools.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2016/08/19/the-many-ways-teacher-diversity-may-benefit-students/>
- 6 An analysis of the number of first year students on track to graduate in the appendix.



SLAVIC/RUSSIAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

SLAVIC/RUSSIAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

This report details the experiences of the Slavic/Russian-speaking community in Washington County. The Slavic/Russian speaking community is defined as those from the former Soviet Union. *Russian is the third most spoken language in Oregon* (Greenstone, 2016). *It is the largest refugee-based community in Oregon, with most arriving in the decade from 1990 to 2000.* They live and work in the County, but few locals realize they are here. According to Tatiana Osipovich, a professor of Russian at Lewis & Clark, the reasons for the invisibility of the Slavic/Russian speaking community are their appearance as White Caucasians and their preference to live in tight-knit communities.(Binder, 2013b). There is also a lack of data on their experiences in many walks of life: the school system, child welfare, criminal and juvenile justice, health and social services. Conventional definitions of the Slavic/Russian speaking community define them as White. In the vast majority of datasets, it is not possible to extract the Slavic/Russian speaking community as ancestry or language data have not been collected. To address the shortage of data on the community, we conducted focus groups with community members in Washington County and implemented a community review process.

In this section, the community highlights their presence in Washington County and their strengths—they are well-educated, have strong familial relationships, and are invested in their culture, language and faith.



POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION

In Washington County, population of Slavic/Russian speaking descent is at least 11,587. We say “at least” because the Slavic/Russian speaking community is conventionally counted as White and only when the American Community Survey asks people to add their language, ancestry or place of birth, can the community be disaggregated from the larger population. Because the American Community Survey is a sample estimate and because people may not answer all the questions, community population disaggregated from that should be considered an under count. Additionally, factors such as a historically ingrained distrust of government, limited English language skills, an absence of a culture of participation in surveys and censuses, and poverty have been found to influence the count of Slavic/Rus-

AT LEAST
11,857
 IN WASHINGTON
 COUNTY



of Slavic/Russian speaking adults in Washington County are citizens either by birth (70%) or by naturalization (20%).



66% of Slavic/Russian speakers in Washington County are in English-only households

487 Estimated K-12 Students



Community members say there is a higher proportion of immigrants in the community than the official estimate of



sian speaking communities. (Curry-Stevens, A. & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2014). Community reviewers also caution that those who identify themselves as Slavic/Russian speaking for Census purposes might not identify themselves as Slavic/Russian-speaking ethnically.

Slavic/Russian speaking immigrants were historically attracted to Oregon because of its farmland. Slavic/Russian speaking immigrants were able to grow most of their native crops in the Northwest climate and it was comforting to be able to eat traditional food so far away from home (Binder, 2013a). Since then, many have preferred to settle down in the county because the community has put down roots in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Focus group participants shared that they really liked living in Washington County. Washington County has provided jobs (many work at Intel) and resembled their home countries so that immigrant

groups were able to establish their own communities. Focus group participants shared that some settled in Washington County to be closer to their children and families as well.

“We have a wonderful place, great apartments, great location, and a 15-minute walk to my daughter’s. I became a citizen and now try to be independent financially.”

“We love our Beaverton. We like Portland but we love Beaverton more. It’s interesting to walk the city, see the busy streets and explore. We love the metro area.”



Tatiana Osipovich, a professor of Russian at Lewis & Clark, identifies four waves/groups of immigration to the US:

1. The first wave of Slavic/Russian-speaking immigrants arrived after Alaska was sold to the United States in 1867. “These Russians were traders, laborers, missionaries or escaped convicts. The largest earlier group of Russians or Russian-speaking Aleutians arrived from Alaska after Russia sold it to the United States in 1867. One of these Alaskan Russians, a simple laborer named Lavrenty Chernoff, built the first Russian Orthodox Church in Oregon.”(Osipovich, n.d.). “A new chapter in the history of Russian Orthodoxy in Oregon began with the arrival of new immigrants from post-revolutionary Russia in the early 1920s. Most of these newcomers had fled the Bolsheviks and the Civil War by moving first to the Russian Far East and then to China.”
1. The second wave was of Jewish immigrants as part of a large-scale movement of Jews from Eastern Europe to the United States between 1881 and 1910. Many of them settled in New York City initially before coming to Oregon (mostly Portland) after the

Industrial Removal Office was created in 1901 to address overcrowding in the Jewish quarter of New York City. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought in another wave of Jewish immigrants.

1. The Old Believers arrived in Oregon in the 1960s having heard about the state from other Russian-speaking immigrants that they met in California on their way from China to Brazil. Many of them settled down in Woodburn.
1. Russian-speaking evangelical Christians began arriving in Oregon in the late 1980s and early 1990s after an emigration policy change in Russia. The US secured refugee status for many Russian Baptists and Pentecostals, and a well-organized system of refugee resettlement placed many of the immigrants in the Pacific Northwest (Binder, 2013a). The strength of the evangelical lobby and the religious right in the US has secured their ongoing status as refugees despite the lessening of religious persecution that coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union (Hardwick, 2009).

Family reunification is a top priority of US immigration policy. Although many Slavic/Russian-speaking immigrants are entering the US through refugee programs, they are mostly migrating for family reunification and for improving their economic prospects (Jordan, 2017). The numbers of new arrivals continued to grow with the arrival of the parents, children and other family members of these post-Soviet era refugees. 70% of the Russian population in Washington County immigrated to the US between 1990 and 2009 (American Community Survey 2011–2015).

Professor Susan Hardwick at University of Oregon states that an estimated 90% of Slavic/Russian speaking refugees remain in the area after their initial settlement in the region because of the support provided by refugee resettlement agencies, church networks, and family and friends from home (Hardwick, 2009). Focus group participants observe that Washington County has also seen a number of people of Slavic/Russian speaking descent reside in the county due to employment opportunities at companies such as Intel.

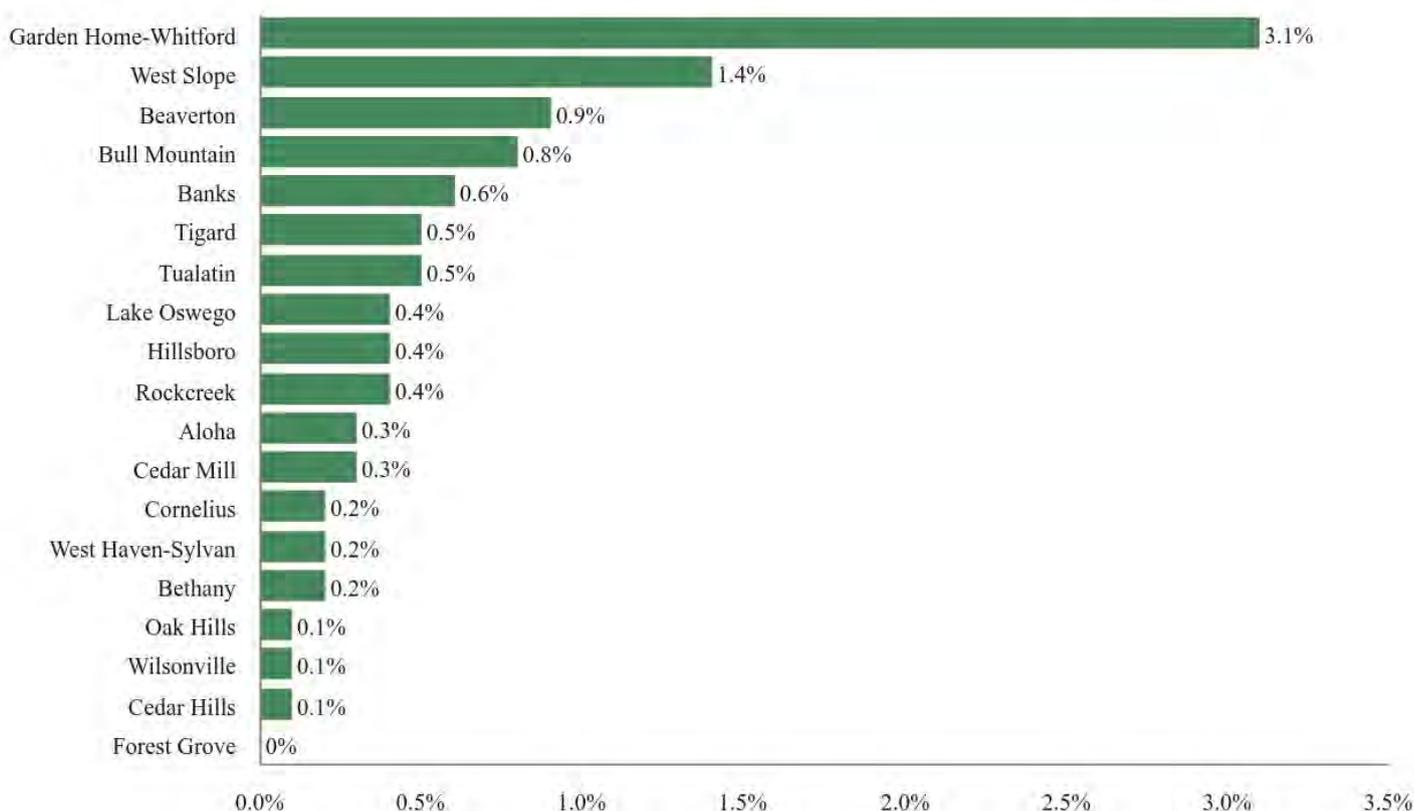
Community reviewers, focus group participants and school district personnel are skeptical of US Census data that estimates that 73% of Slavic/Russian speaking residents in Washington County were born in the US, with just over one out of four Slavic/Russian speaking people are immigrants. They opine that there is a higher proportion of immigrants in the community in Washington County than the official estimate of 27%.

Community members say there is a higher proportion of immigrants in the community than the official estimate of



The graph below shows the proportion of Slavic/Russian speaking (including Russian) households by different places in Washington County based on the American Community Survey (Languages in Washington County, Oregon, n.d.). Beaverton actually has the largest Russian speaking population; Garden Home-Whitford and West Slope have the highest clusters of the community.¹

Percentage of Russian Speakers by Place in Washington County



LANGUAGE AS MEANS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ACCESS

With many in the community, especially children and youth, born in the US, language and cultural heritage preservation is important to the Slavic/Russian speaking population in Washington County. 66% of Slavic/Russian speakers in Washington county are in English-only households (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). *Community members opine that a larger proportion of the Russian speaking county population experience English language barriers than the 8% calculated by the US Census.* They argue that people may indicate that they speak English very well in US Census surveys because they have basic proficiency, but in practice communicating in English to access services, to engage with schools and in civic life is still difficult for the community especially immigrants and seniors.



Create a multigenerational community space to bring families and children together to celebrate their heritage and pass on the language



Information about services provided for immigrants and seniors to be in the Russian language



66% of Slavic/Russian speakers in Washington County are in English-only households.

Focus group participants advocate for a multigenerational community space for them to bring families and children together to celebrate their heritage and pass on the language.

“It worries me that our traditions are disappearing and I want them to be preserved. The Orthodox Church does a lot but I believe Washington County needs its own Russian Language Cultural Center. So we could pass along our culture and knowledge to our future generations that will take our place.”

“At first with the grandkids, ages 1, 2, 6, 7, and we tried to teach them the Russian language, offered them presents, we played cards with them. When they grew up they thanked us many times over. The oldest one finished university, Columbia University, as a medical doctor. And she tells us that she is able to talk with everyone all the time using both languages.”

Some members highlight community building work they are already doing in the form of regular social gatherings such as “Loyal Friends” and a monthly Russian book club that has been ongoing for 15 years. They advocate for the local governments to support the maintenance of such programming, which so far has been volunteer-driven.

“Organizing a celebration or event once a month works like great medicine for people. People would be able come and let it be for people of all nationalities.”

Many community members talk about attending English classes in Washington County. However, they advocate for information especially in services, particularly those for immigrants and seniors to be provided in Russian as well. They also see language as a barrier to civic engagement. 90% of Slavic/Russian speaking adults in Washington County are citizens either by birth (70%) or by naturalization (20%). They feel the disconnect from civic engagement deeply. They advocate for voter pamphlets to contain Russian translations.



of Slavic/Russian-speaking adults in Washington County are citizens either by birth (70%) or by naturalization (20%).

“We need voting pamphlets in Russian so that we can see what is happening in the community, decide who and what can we vote for. As citizens of the USA we should have access to this information just like everyone else.”

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The Slavic/Russian speaking population are more active in the workforce compared to the average White and county residents. 72% of Slavic/Russian speaking county residents are either employed or actively seeking employment (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). This data is not informative of employment itself (type of employment, job stability, multiple jobs) or barriers to employment opportunities.



Employed or actively looking for a job.

Historically, barriers faced by this community included lack of recognition of foreign credentials, foreign employment experience and English language barriers. Focus group participants talk about being underemployed in the past, meaning taking up jobs that they were educationally over-qualified for from their home countries.

“I had worked in a university there for 10 years before coming here. When I came I washed floors.”

The Slavic/Russian speaking community now has lower unemployment rates (6%) compared to White (8%) and county unemployment (7%) (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Some community reviewers critique this data as conservative and for some, there is optimism in the labor market.

What kind of work do Slavic/Russian speaking residents of Washington County do? Just over half of the community are employed in management type roles that are typically considered to be high wage work (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Compared to the White and county workforce, there’s a smaller proportion of the Slavic/Russian speaking and Russian speaking workforce in occupations such as service and sales where earnings and benefits can fluctuate substantially.

Their occupational profile is congruent with their educational qualifications. The Slavic/Russian speaking community in Washington County is on average well-educated. *60% of them have a Bachelor’s degree or a Master’s/professional degree compared to 42% of the White population and 40% of the county population (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).*

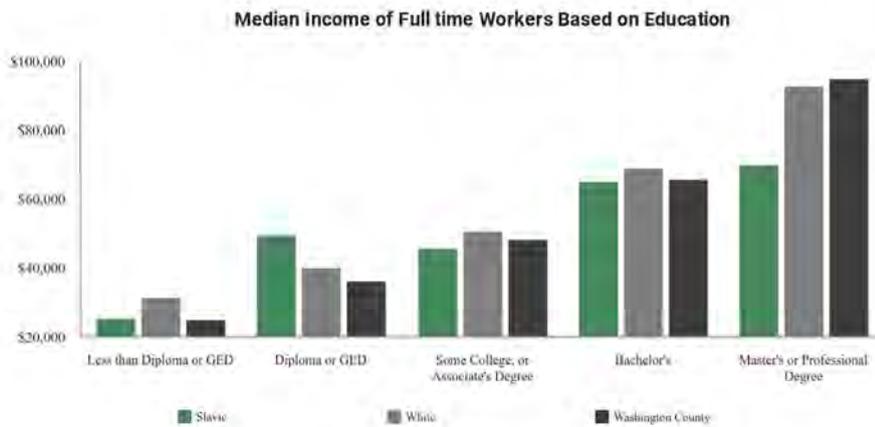
“The most important thing for a person is to have a job. 15 years ago it was hard to find a job. IRCO helped me achieve my diploma in working with cars. I was able to find a job and work. Now there are many more jobs here in Beaverton. I see ads asking for people to work.”

“The people who moved here are highly educated. They have a high level of education and thanks to their hard work, they have good jobs and can reach higher. They work as engineers, programmers.”

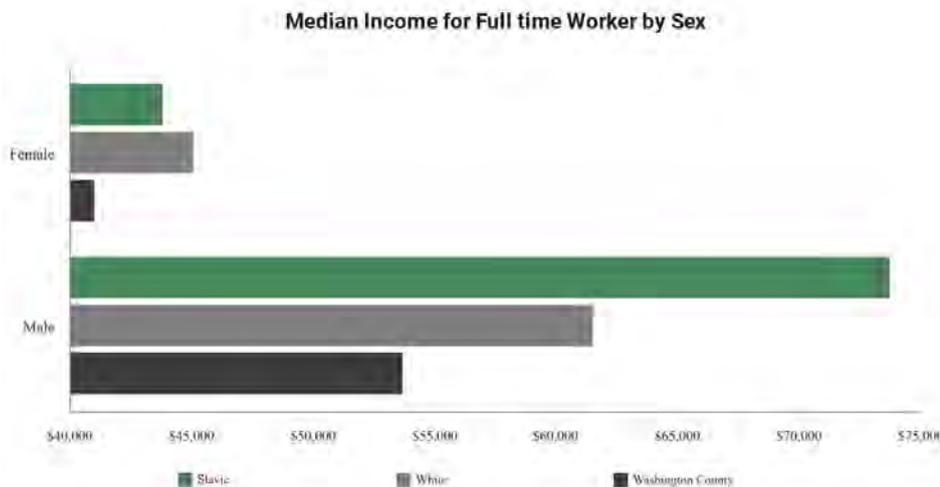
“In Washington County, our community especially those in their 30s have been able to build good careers because no one prevented them and they are used to working hard to get their way.”

Although Slavic/Russian speaking communities are more likely to have a college degree, they are not earning as much as White workers with the same education for full time work. In fact, the disparity in median income is the widest at the most advanced level of education.

Community members and reviewers explain that if higher education was received abroad, their degrees do not translate to commensurate jobs due to barriers in recognizing foreign credentials and the tedium and expense of training and recertification here.



The graph below shows that the Slavic/Russian speaking female workforce feels the income disparity the most. Slavic/Russian speaking female full-time workers have the lowest income of White men and women and Slavic/Russian speaking male workers, although they earn more than the median income for all women workers in the county.



The Slavic/Russian speaking community in Washington County has both high income as well as high levels of poverty. On the one hand, they have higher levels of income than both their White and County counterparts across all household types except family households with children (they also on average have a smaller family size, which may explain the income gap). On the other hand, Slavic/Russian speaking individuals are 38% more likely to experience poverty compared to their White counterparts in the county (American Community Survey, 2011–2015).



\$74,729 Median Household Income for Slavic/Russian-speaking
\$69,964 Median Household Income for White
\$66,746 Median Household Income for Washington County

Family Households with Own Children



\$89,348 Median Household Income for Slavic/Russian-speaking
\$91,213 Median Household Income for White
\$78,942 Median Household Income for Washington County

Family Households without Own Children



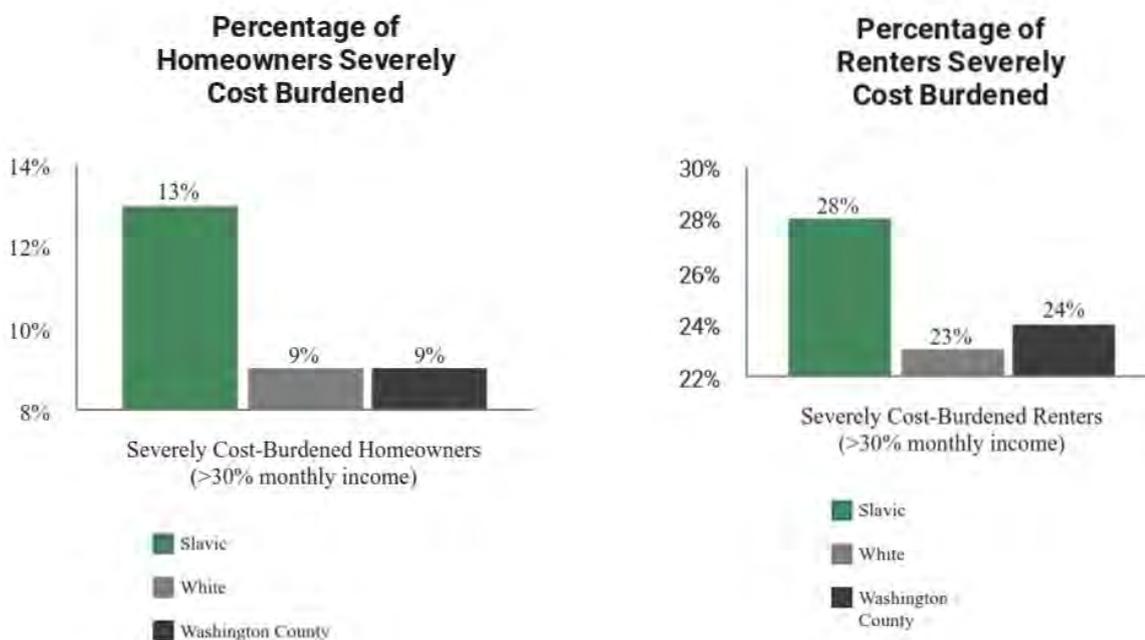
\$98,272 Median Household Income for Slavic/Russian-speaking
\$86,109 Median Household Income for White
\$82,204 Median Household Income for Washington County

Housing costs have especially impacted Slavic/Russian speaking renters and homeowners. Homeowners are 44% more likely than White homeowners to be severely cost-burdened, meaning they spend at least half of their income on housing costs. Similarly, renters in the community are 22% more likely to be severely cost burdened by rent compared to White residents. Housing costs particularly hurt seniors in the community who are on fixed incomes. 14% of Slavic/Russian speaking impoverished community are children, 71% are between 18 to 64 years old and 14% are seniors (American Community Survey 2011–2015). Poverty is a pervasive issue for Slavic/Russian speaking seniors compared to the White and general county populations.

HOUSING JUSTICE

Are Slavic/Russian speaking residents in Washington County homeowners or renters? This query is a starting point for exploring the community’s experiences with housing. The Slavic/Russian speaking population in Washington County is 8% less likely to be homeowners and 14% more likely to be renters compared to White residents.

Housing advocates caution that households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs such as mortgage and rent makes them vulnerable. The graph below shows that Slavic/Russian speaking homeowners are more likely to be spending at least 30% of their income on mortgage and other housing expenses. *They are 44% more likely to be severely cost-burdened, with at least half of their income spent on housing. Similarly, renters in the community are 22% more likely to be severely cost burdened by rent* (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). Zillow Rent Index estimates that median rents in Washington County increased by 37% between 2012 and 2015 and Slavic/Russian speaking renters have evidently been impacted by that. Focus group participants also observe that utility costs have increased over time.



Focus group participants, especially seniors and those on fixed incomes, share their worry about rising housing costs.

“When we first arrived we paid \$650 and now we pay \$1,150. Imagine how much more expensive this is. And where we live, it’s considered cheap. Typically it is \$1,200 or more around here.”

“We tried to fulfill the American dream worked hard to buy our home. We worked low paying wages then both went on pension. So we receive additional support from the government with supplemental security income. Our home is far from new and all our income is pension and SSI, it hasn’t changed. But property tax has greatly increased. Last year we paid over \$3000. How are we people, whose income stays the same, supposed to afford these large price increases. And it will likely increase this year. In addition, the house isn’t new, so we will need to pay for maintenance and fixing, so the roof doesn’t leak, and fix the piping. For water it has increased a lot, 3 times as before. Yes others can tell us, sell the house so you don’t have to pay property tax, but people who did that say do not do that under any circumstances, or else you will be living in ruins and you will pay monthly rental costs and you will have to move.”

They advocate for rent regulation, tenant rights and for awareness about that in Slavic/Russian languages.

“The landlords decide that they want to raise the price and will. Before they would maybe raise it 5 or 10 dollars. Now if they decide to raise it \$200 they can. It should be based on a percentage of some sort, maybe 5% or 10%. The government must regulate the price increases for apartments. Because it is impossible to live like this with their price increases.”

“Managers have too much control over our apartments and complain about us. You have rights, but you don’t know your rights. That’s it. If we had a Russian Center where you could learn then this would be easier to resolve.”

“I’m a housing advocate and from my work I know that Russian-speaking community needs more housing edu-

cational outreach in general—both home ownership and rental, they need to know their rights and duties, both for free market and government assistance programs.”

A number of focus group participants live in public housing in Washington County and are concerned about poor living conditions especially air conditioning and ventilation. This has health impacts for elders and people with disabilities in a disproportionate manner. Concerns about ventilation and air conditioning in housing is prophetic of upcoming housing concerns emerging from climate change and rising summer temperatures.

“There needs to be central air conditioning because people who live on the second and third levels simply suffocate especially those who are ill.”

“I have had three heart attacks. My company health care provided me an air conditioner, one that is in my room. I can’t do anything, like cook, because I don’t have a central air conditioner. Air conditioner for me, it is the number one problem.”



Better living conditions in public housing such as better ventilation and air conditioning



Rent regulation and tenant rights’ information in Russian



TRANSPORTATION JUSTICE

Similar to typical county behavior, the Slavic/Russian speaking workforce also primarily relies on driving as their method of commute to work (American Community Survey, 2011–2015). They are however more likely to choose alternative means of transit than the average County resident.

Focus group participants, like other residents who live in the area, are concerned about traffic congestion, safety on public transit since the MAX attacks, and concern about pedestrian safety.

“The city is growing and transportation is becoming an issue. To get somewhere on a car is a problem for many people now.”

“In Cedar Hills there is an exit where there are so many car accidents. How many times have they almost hit me! Public transit stops around there but everyone just goes regardless.”

Seniors in the community are most likely to use public transit and feel a sense of social isolation because of sparse infrastructure. They love living in Washington County because of its greenery the recreational opportunities at Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation but feel constrained from accessing those spaces.

“We ladies don’t have our own wheels, our feet are our wheels. So it’s hard to go to far away events or activities. At least once a month, if there are opportunities or subsidized transport to drive us to the museum, go to the park, because this is very important...”

Interestingly, Slavic/Russian speaking community members report having good interactions with transit fare enforcement. This is in stark contrast to the differential treatment meted out to Black Trimet riders.

“There is very good police especially on transit. They never insult you even if they see you don’t have a bus pass.”

According to a Portland State University analysis, Black Trimet MAX riders are the most likely to be targets of punitive fare enforcement, and they were more likely to be banned or excluded from public transit when local police were involved instead of Trimet fare inspectors (Renauer, 2016). This merits further investigation by racial justice advocates.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

There is no data collected about the experiences of Slavic/Russian speaking youth and adults with the criminal justice system and there is dearth of research at the regional and national level investigating that interaction as well. Conversations with focus group participants indicate that they have had good interactions with law enforcement.

“My experience with the Chief of Police is good. He is a normal guy; you are able to talk with him easily all the time and he will come to meet you.”

Focus group participants tended towards wanting more strict law enforcement, an option that contrasted with those of other communities of color in Washington County.

“The police is very restrained within their rights, the rights they have in Washington County. I mean, the police can stop things, can do things about it but they don’t. The police is scared and very restrained with their rights. They are put within these tight boundaries that they are afraid to step too far to the right or left.”

This subset of focus group experiences points to a different interaction with law enforcement in Washington County than other communities of color. A racial equity approach to this issue asks why there has been differential treatment of different communities living in Washington County.

Community members also talk about needing more community outreach around domestic violence issues, concerns that are unaddressed both because of taboos within the community as well as lack of data.

“Domestic violence, sexual assault to a spouse, and sexual harassment only recently (just a few years ago) started to be considered crimes in many of the countries of the former Soviet Union. So many of the Russian speaking immigrants might still consider it as a family matter but not a crime. More outreach is needed in this area.”



“The Slavic/Russian-speaking community, being considered White, have little understanding of the injustices and the racial profiling in the country. Slavic/Russian speaking communities are either ignorant and sometimes condescending to movements such as Black Lives Matter, which highlights the injustices of police towards people of color. Being a tight-knit community the Slavic/Russian-speaking community does not often associate with other people of color. It is important to educate the Slavic/Russian-speaking community, at least mention the underlying reasons for the protests for justice and the disparities of people of color in leadership positions of companies and industries.”

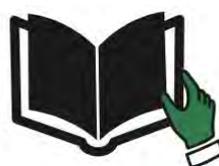
EDUCATION JUSTICE

The Slavic/Russian speaking community in Washington County is better educated than the White and county populations—the median level of education among them is a Bachelor’s degree.

There is no school data collected about educational outcomes of students of Slavic/Russian descent. We rely on language of origin and language spoken at home provided by Oregon Department of Education to disaggregate the experience of Slavic/Russian speaking students. However, language and ethnicity are not perfectly correlated and with two-thirds of the community only speaking English, relying on language spoken at home, as an indicator results in an undercount of students of Slavic/Russian speaking descent. We may also be excluding languages spoken by Slavic/Russian speaking residents of Washington County. The data in this section should be seen as suggestive rather than a definitive illustration of the experiences of Slavic/Russian-speaking students.

Our analysis estimates 487 students who spoke Slavic/Russian

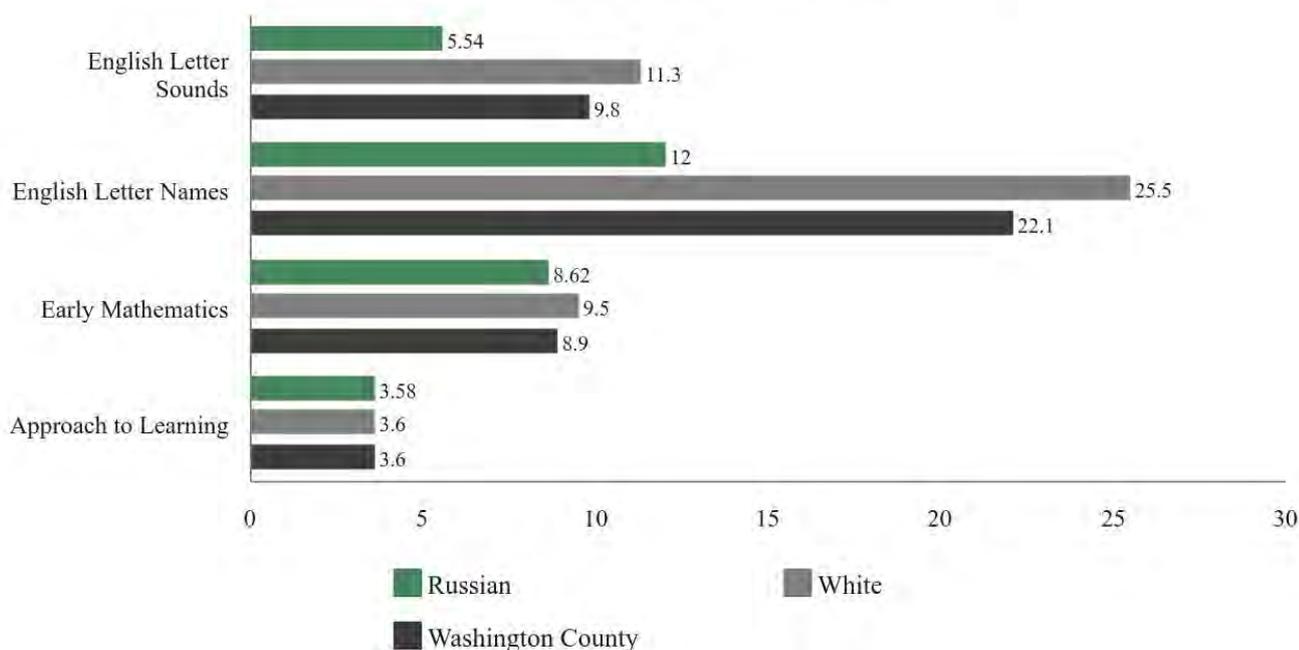
speaking languages at home in 2015. 70% of them speak Russian and the next largest group is Ukrainian at 7%.



487 Estimated K-12 students

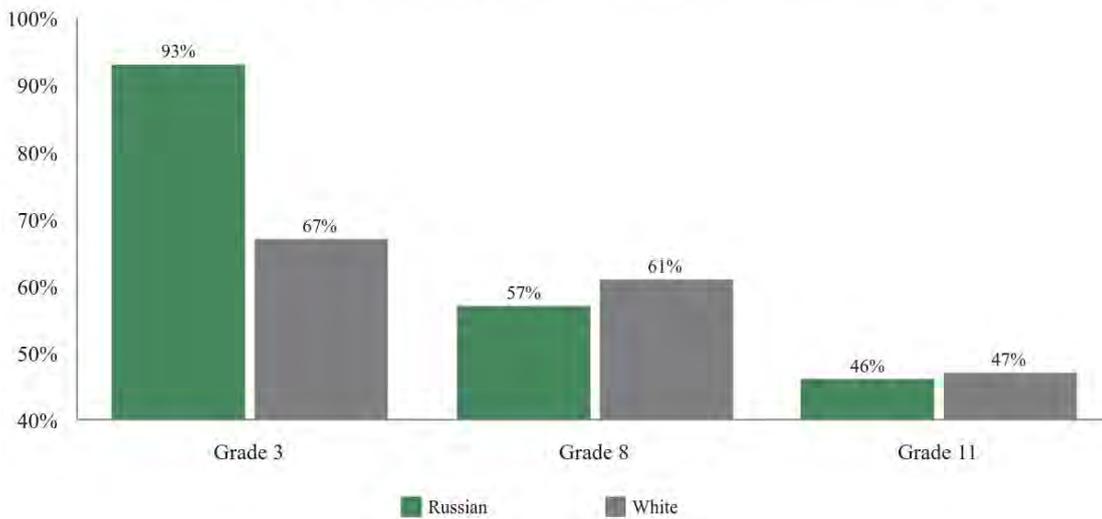
We have been able to pull apart some current progress indicators by language spoken at home. The graph below shows how Russian speaking kindergarteners perform in early learning outcomes, which are supposed to gauge children’s familiarity with numbers, English letters and sounds, interpersonal skills and related approaches to learning. To the surprise of some community members, Russian speaking children are lagging in early mathematics and English literacy early learning indicators compared to their White peers and children over 4 in the county.² They want to investigate these outcomes further with schools.

Early Learning Outcomes (2015)



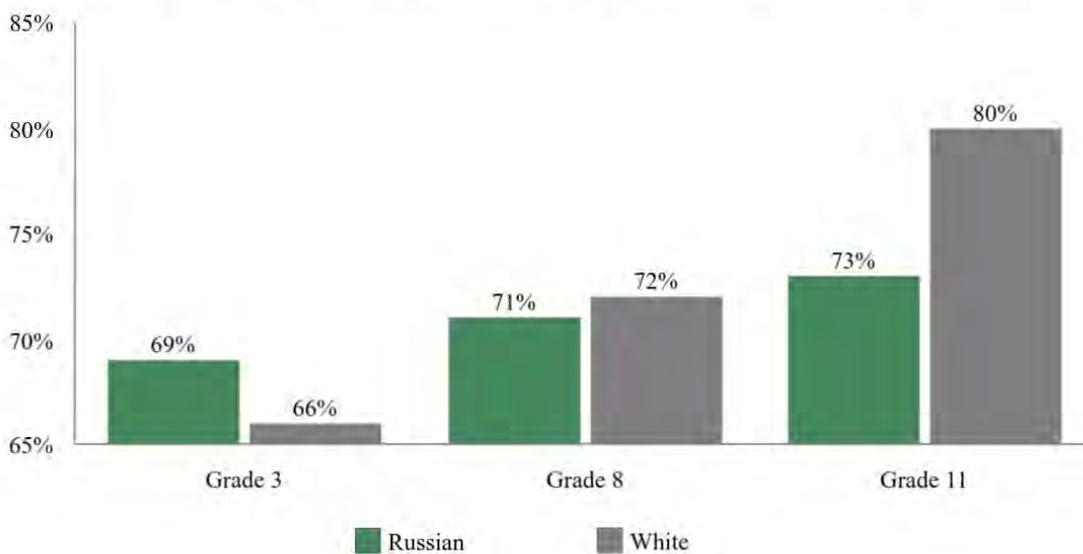
The community’s surprise at the gap in early learning outcomes merits scrutiny because 93% of the Russian speaking population in Grade 3 exceeds test benchmarks in mathematics. In the below charts, we have identified Russian-speaking students who “met or exceeded” the benchmark testing standards.³ The first chart looks at our students’ math scores. Russian speaking students start out strong in Grade 3 but disparities open up as they progress through school as smaller proportion of students exceed test benchmarks in mathematics.

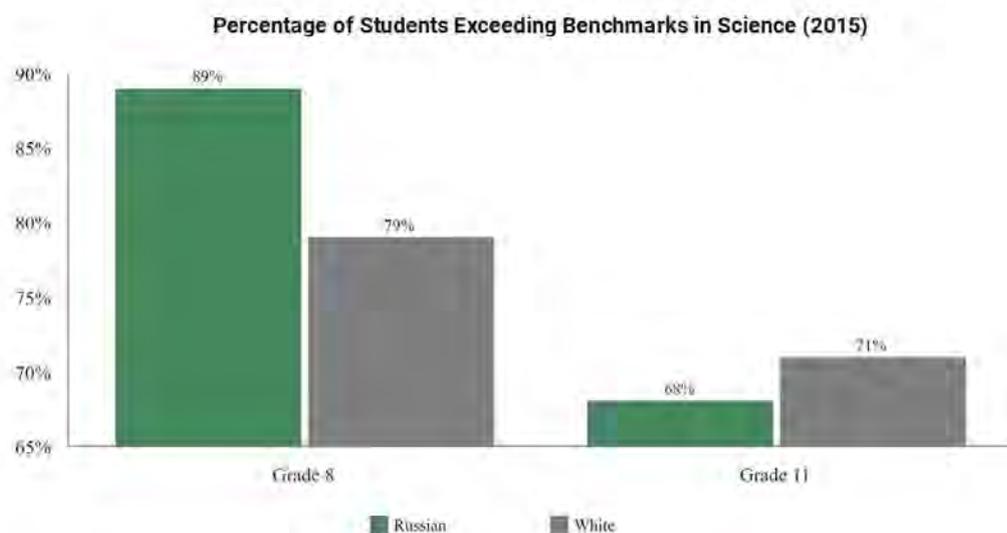
Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Mathematics (2015)



One sees a similar pattern in student performances in English reading tests as well. Research has found Grade 3 reading scores to be a predictor of high school graduation rates because English skills impact student learning in other subject areas as well. By that measure, 69% of Russian speaking students in Grade 3 are exceeding reading benchmarks compared to 66% of White students. However, again a disparity opens up in Grades 8 and 11.

Percentage of Students Exceeding Benchmarks in Reading (2015)





In science, only 11% of students were unable to pass the standardized test in Grade 8, lower than the 21% of White students who didn't pass, however Russian speaking students in Grade 11 were less likely to exceed test benchmarks than White students.

Families of students of Slavic/Russian speaking descent have varying feedback for what is not working in schools for their students.

"I'd like for our youth, our kids and youth to have, like in the Soviet Union, what are 'Technical Circles'. There are many who can lead these, in mechanics, in electronics and so forth. Students can attend and master something with their hands. They can get an idea of professions that will be needed in the future. This is weak part in America—there is this push for management and such but what is missing is these technical skills groups."

"We have kids that are very different in a classroom. There will be a student that understands everything being taught to him but in the fifth class they are still teaching him multiplication because next to him are kids from Mexico and Syria. Now he has to slow down his learning to their level. He has nothing to do and they tell him that he knows everything so he thinks he doesn't have to try any more."

Interviews with community members also indicate that dominant models that focus on formal parental engagement and parent advocacy on behalf of their children and youth do not culturally resonate with Russian speaking families. *They view schools as purveyors of education and academic support for their children and can feel frustrated by approaches that shift the responsibility of students' academic excellence on to parents' ability to advocate and engage with the school system.* For immigrant families, this can be particularly arduous since they don't know the system, educational expectations and jargon such as "school credit" and are still unaware of expectations of parental engagement. Community members also observe a certain "pride" and sense self-sufficiency that constrains families from asking for help. A school district official who is also a community member observed how few even accept interpretation and language services. They

"My child went to a school that had a low level of education. After 5th grade, we enrolled him into home school. It is a great free system on the computer. Every day I control what his lessons are, I see the level that he's working on and it's great. The parents have full control over their child's education."

may also tend to keep private if their students are not doing well and not seek external assistance.

Although English comes up as a potential barrier for immigrant parents, community members did not by and large see that adversely impacting Russian speaking students. They also do not observe much difference in outcomes for students who are immigrants vis-a-vis those who were born in the US.

“Students in general are good. They want to blend in and they blend in.



Limited English Proficiency in students has declined **20%** from 2009-2015 but there are still **113** Limited English Proficient students as of 2015.

They look American, they learn English fast.”

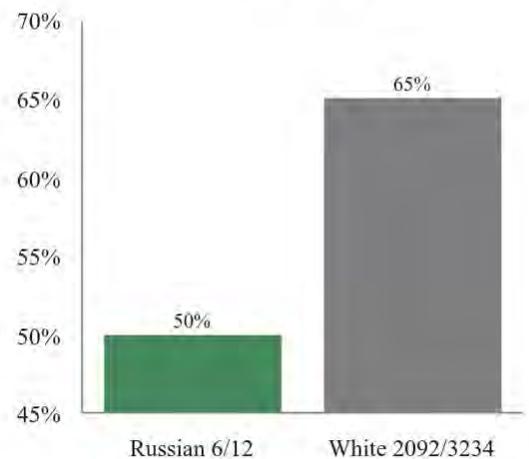
However, communication between teachers and students from Russian speaking families may still be challenging, especially if certain words and language do not culturally translate and if students feel like it is not in their power to advocate for themselves. This type of communication barrier is likely to impact educational outcomes that we see especially in advanced grades for Russian speaking students.

School faculty and staff should take note of the Oregon Department of Education data that suggests that students of Slavic/Russian speaking descent are not disproportionately targeted by exclusionary school discipline practices, such as suspension or expulsion, compared to White students. *Community members point out the relative ease with which their children and youth blend into the student body because of their White appearance. This is in stark contrast to the manner in which students of color, especially African American, Somali, Arabic, Latino and Chuukese speaking students are punitively disciplined.* Research has found that students of color are harshly disciplined despite engaging in similar offenses as White students. School staff and teachers should consider this disparity especially since suspensions and expulsions are a negative predictor of academic achievement outcomes.

Community members did not bring up economic justice issues such as housing and poverty as concerns about student performances, and Slavic/Russian speaking students do not report being housing insecure in the Oregon Department of Education data. However, there are both high levels of income and relatively high levels of poverty in the community and schools should be mindful of the lived



Percentage of High School Graduates Enrolled in College (2014)

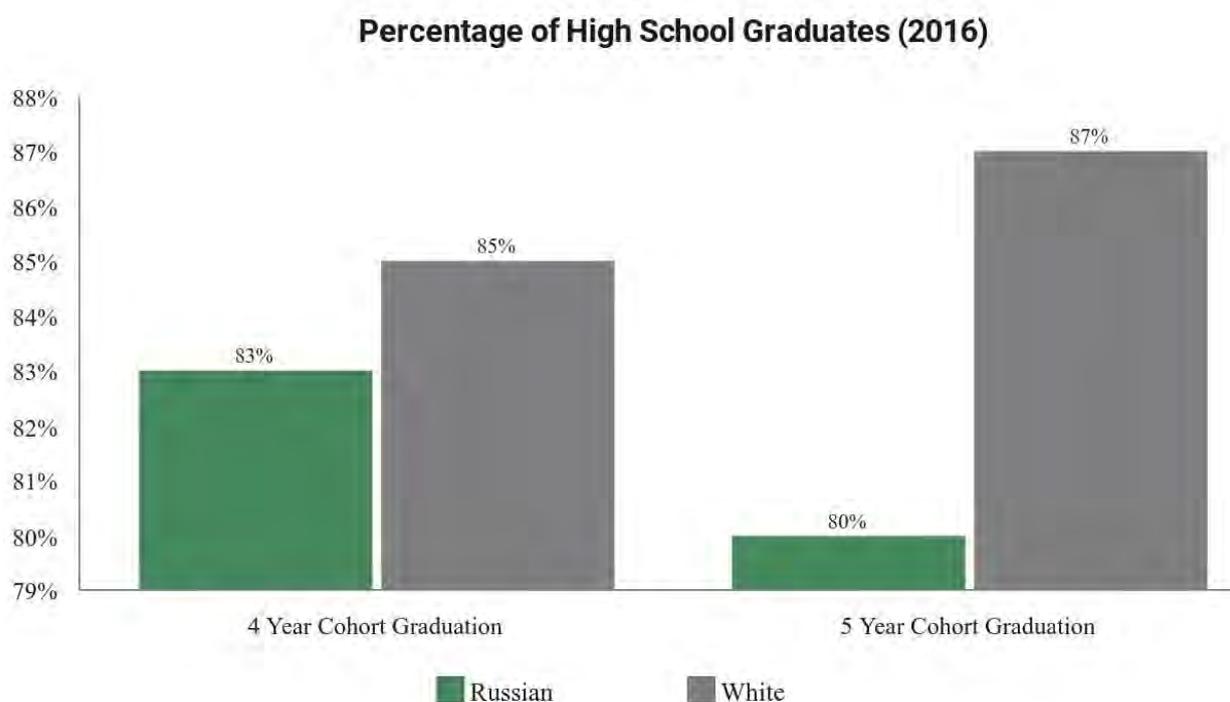


environments of students impacting their ability to succeed in school. This has differential impact on students of Slavic/Russian speaking descent as they progress through advanced grades in school. A smaller share of Russian and Kazakh-speaking ninth-grade students are on track to graduate compared to other students of Slavic/Russian descent and White students (Oregon Department of Education, 2015). Russian speaking students are less likely to graduate high school compared to White students and are more likely to drop out of high school (Oregon Department of Education, 2015). This is having a lingering impact on college enrollment rates of high school graduates. Russian speaking high school graduates were 30% less likely to enroll in college compared to White high school graduates.

Community members say that there is lack of clarity and guidance from the school about how to prepare and get to college; there is an emphasis on high school graduation and college enrollment but a lack of a step-by-step and thorough support of what is needed to achieve that as well as advice on financial aid and scholarships. Again, immigrant students or children of immigrants are likely to feel the brunt of this lack of support. Community members compare lack of guidance in the school system here especially in comparison to their home countries where the process seemed more clear cut.

A community reviewer noted:

“It is important to educate the Slavic/Russian speaking community about the college opportunities that exist for them after high school. That includes payment for college and scholarships as well as the importance of college admissions tests and High School GPA.”



HEALTH JUSTICE

Seven percent of the community is not covered by health insurance and face serious cost barriers to health care. Considering that the Slavic/Russian speaking community is more likely to live in poverty and be housing cost-burdened both as renters and homeowners, even those who have health insurance may find healthcare cost prohibitive. Community members share that although the Affordable Care Act has improved healthcare access, the biggest deterrent for visits to the hospital is the expense. The existence of culturally-specific services, however, has been found to increase clinic visits among the Slavic/Russian speaking community (Strumpf, Glicksman, Goldberg-Glen, Fox & Logan, 2001).

Add to that challenges of navigating a complex system with English as a second language especially for immigrants and seniors. Not only does that limit the adequacy of healthcare received, but it will create conditions ripe for misdiagnosis, mistreatment and reluctance to return for more services.

Research on health care and health disparities faced by the Slavic/Russian speaking community is very limited. We do know

that health screenings are underused by the Slavic/Russian speaking community. While only a few studies have confirmed this, narratives are pronounced about the absence of a supporting culture in early detection. The Slavic/Russian speaking community rarely participates in screenings for breast cancer, pap smears and colorectal cancer. There are some age differences being noted among young women who are more inclined to get screenings (Lipson, Weinstein, Gladstone, & Sarnoff, 2003).

We have no data about health outcomes of Slavic/Russian-speaking community in Washington County. 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 identity 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.

The existence of culturally specific services has been found to increase clinic visits among Slavic/Russian-speaking community.



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.



ENDNOTES

- 1 The data presented is from the 2010 census and 2009–2013 American Community Survey.
- 2 We does not report outcomes for other students because of the small size ($n < 5$) of these groups.
- 3 The size of additional Slavic/Russian speaking language student groups was too small at $n < 5$.



JURISDICTIONAL SNAPSHOTS OF COMMUNITIES OF COLOR IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The jurisdictional snapshots in this section aim to highlight key quantitative findings about socio-economic outcomes of communities of color in four parts of the county—(1) Beaverton area, (2) Cornelius and Forest Grove, (3) Hillsboro, and (4) Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood.

The first part of this section provides an introduction and a reader’s guide to understand the data collection, analyses and jurisdiction review process. The second part takes readers through key findings related to communities of color living in the four jurisdictions.

We know that communities of color live all over Washington County—in rural and urban spaces, in unincorporated areas, in low, high and middle income neighborhoods. *The four snapshots aim to illuminate the lived experiences of communities of color in their neighborhoods.* This can serve as a starting point for communities of color and local public and private stakeholders within and across jurisdictions and sectors to partner on policies that implement the collectively agreed on Call To Action and goals of the research project. *It serves as a basis of accountability for action.*

There are stories and priorities that communities of color and likeminded elected officials, public and private stakeholders want to tell about about the impact of institutional racism on lived experiences, and there are stories that we are limited to telling because of data constraints. Communities of color are resilient; they have persisted, survived, mobilized and advocated. They are still here in Oregon despite repeated systemic attempts of genocide, “sundown” laws, restrictive immigration policies that also extract their labor, Islamophobia and xenophobia. They continue to counter and push back on persisting racial inequities. However, mainstream data practices have either wilfully or unintentionally rarely captured this resilience. Most attempts at data collection and analyses have rendered communities even more invisible or inflicted more trauma. Let the stories that are missing be a call to action for research justice—to implement the right of communities of color to self-determine the type of data and research is conducted related to them; the right of communities of color to know and access data and research that is conducted about them; the right of communities of color to be heard and for their experiences to be considered evidence in policy making and not dismissed as anecdotal.

The research steering committee comprising of jurisdiction and community partners identified the following goals for this report:

- ***Establish baseline knowledge*** about communities of color and identify racial disparities in Washington County.
- ***Establish and promote a shared understanding*** of racial equity in Washington County.
- ***Improve public investment*** in communities of color in Washington County.
- ***Improve delivery of services*** to communities of color in Washington County.
- ***Review and improve acquisition and allocation*** of public and private resources to communities of color in Washington County.
- Advocate for ***review and improvement of existing policies*** and practices with implications for racial equity in Washington County.
- ***Build and improve opportunities for civic engagement*** between jurisdictions and communities of color in Washington County.
- ***Balance the power dynamic*** in the County by ensuring communities of color are involved in decision-making in Washington County.
- ***Build relationships and collaborations*** between jurisdictions, communities of color and community organizations in Washington County.

READER'S GUIDE

We urge readers to remember what communities of color in the narratives said again and again—

Official data such as the US Census is imperfect at best and systematically under counts people of color. Official and often used indicators frequently ignore the context of lived experiences. Therefore, the jurisdictional snapshots are not stand-alone analyses, but are meant to be considered after reading the community narratives.

We have categorized findings within each jurisdictional snapshot by themes such as ‘Population and Demographics’, ‘Economic Justice’, ‘Housing Justice’ and so on to sort and present data in a clean manner. Communities of color and people at large do not function in their lives in those siloed ways. As the community narratives tell us, housing justice is related to economic justice, and along with criminal justice impacts a student’s experience and outcomes in school. *We remind readers to read the jurisdictional snapshots by connecting findings across themes.* We have included all the data we could find from the US Census for the eight communities of color living in each of the four jurisdictions. There is a worrying disconnect between available data, good data collected and analyzed in a culturally appropriate and trauma-informed manner, and community priorities around housing insecurity, hate crimes and community safety, access to healthcare and so on, which is rooted in institutional racism.

We only report outcomes and indicators for communities of color who are large enough within each jurisdiction to

have low margins of error. This practice, however, excludes the same communities that due to their small population size have been fighting for visibility. This is the case especially for African communities, who are missing from all jurisdictional snapshots except for Beaverton area. We urge readers to read community narratives first so as to not ignore the lived experiences of any community, small or large.

We present data findings in a probabilistic manner using ‘more/less likely’, ‘larger/smaller’ language compared to outcomes of White residents in each jurisdiction language because small community sizes per jurisdiction makes it statistically difficult to draw specific conclusions. We base these findings on whether a smaller or larger percentage share of a community is experiencing an outcome compared to White residents. Mathematically, percentages are the best method to compare groups of different population sizes. Furthermore, In Oregon and in Washington County (67%), *where a vast majority of the population is White (non Latino), reporting raw numbers will always create the false impression that fewer people of color are impacted* by economic injustices of unemployment, poverty, low incomes, housing insecurity and so on.

We present both aggregated data for Asian and Black census identities as well as disaggregated data for communities subsumed in those identities where margins of error are small. For example, in the Tigard-Tualatin jurisdictional snapshot we include Asian, Chinese and Korean community data even though Chinese and Korean communities are included in the Asian identity. Presenting both aggregated and disaggregated community data allows us to make visible Asian communities that are statistically invisible, and comparing aggregated and disaggregated data illustrates the limits of the former.

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND REVIEW PROCESS

1. The steering committee identified eight communities of color living in Washington County - Asian, African, African-American, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and Slavic.
2. The steering committee identified four jurisdictions for snapshots - Beaverton area, Cornelius-Forest Grove, Hillsboro, Tigard-Tualatin-Sherwood.
3. CCC commissioned a demographer to gather US Census American Community Survey 2011-2015 data about various socio-economic and demographic indicators for the eight communities of color living in each of the four jurisdictions.
4. Data was gathered on the basis of PUMA boundaries that overlap with jurisdictional boundaries in the US Census. This was done because a number of communities for which we requested data are invisible in mainstream data practices and could not be found using traditional jurisdictional boundaries in the US Census. These include Asian communities disaggregated by ethnicity/nationality, African, African-American, Middle Eastern and North African and Slavic.
5. Jurisdiction stakeholders previewed and reviewed the data before publication.



INTRODUCTION TO BEAVERTON AREA

Beaverton and Aloha are located in the eastern part of Washington County. As of 2010 an estimated 140,000 people live in this jurisdiction. Historically, the Atfalati band of the Kalapuya Indians, who settled in what is now Beaverton, were the first peoples to inhabit Washington County. In December of 1868, the township of “Beaverton” was officially registered with Washington County by White settlers who brought disease with them into the Kalapuya land. In 1859 legislation was passed that forbade Blacks from living in the state of Oregon. The history of oppressive policies and pushing out of people of color still affect people today in Beaverton and Aloha.

“Beaverton's BOLD program is good. We need more leadership training programs like this for people of color, immigrants and refugees.”

DATA DESCRIPTION AND CAVEATS

- We present findings for Beaverton area in two parts—Central and East Beaverton, and Aloha and West Beaverton due to PUMA boundaries in the US Census from which data for communities of color living in the Beaverton area was derived.
- There is a Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community in Aloha and West Beaverton but the margins of error are too high to reliably estimate socio-economic outcomes.
- There is an African community in Central and East Beaverton but the margins of error are too high to reliably estimate socio-economic outcomes. We include findings for the Black community in our analyses since the African community in Beaverton area is too small for reliable estimates. Tracking Black community indicators along with African-American community indicators gives us some sense of the experiences of the African community that is invisible in this data.

CENTRAL BEAVERTON AND EAST BEAVERTON

1 in 3 in Central and East Beaverton
are People of Color

Estimated population sizes of communities of color in this jurisdiction are --

2,529 African-Americans
10,116 Asians
3,025 Black
1,901 Chinese
1,103 Filipinos
2,944 Koreans
16,095 Latinos
1,418 Middle Eastern and North Africans
2,063 Native Americans
987 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders
2,702 Slavic

POPULATION AND

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- An estimated 1 in 3 people in Central and East Beaverton are people of color.
- Estimated population sizes of communities of color in this jurisdiction are—2,529 African-Americans (included in Black aggregate as well), 10,116 Asians, 3,025 Black, 1,901 Chinese (included in Asian aggregate as well), 1,103 Filipinos (included in Asian aggregate as well), 2,944 Koreans (included in Asian aggregate as well), 16,095 Latinos, 1,418 Middle Eastern and North Africans, 2,063 Native Americans, 987 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and 2,702 Slavic.
- These communities' median age is younger than the White population of Central and East Beaverton.
- There is a large immigrant community consisting of

people who identify as Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Latino, and Middle Eastern and North African.

- More than half of the communities of color in Central and East Beaverton are bilingual. There are many speakers of Asian and Pacific Island languages and Spanish.
- All communities of color except for the Slavic community are less likely to have a high school degree compared to White population in the jurisdiction.
- Asian communities as an aggregate, Chinese, Korean, and Slavic communities are more likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to White population in the jurisdiction.
- African-Americans distinctly, Black population as a whole (including both Africans and African-Americans), Filipino, Latino, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders are less likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to White population in the jurisdiction.



Leadership and voting potential among communities of color in this jurisdiction.

More than half of all the communities are citizens and adults.

Approximately **43%** of the **Latino** community are adults and citizens.



Asians (in aggregate), **Chinese**, **Filipino**, **Koreans**, **Latino**, and **Middle Eastern and North African** communities in

Central and East Beaverton are more likely to benefit from alternative forms of civic engagement due to their status as immigrants without US citizenship.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

- There is tremendous leadership and voting potential among communities of color in this jurisdiction. More than half of all the communities are citizens and adults. Approximately 43% of the Latino community are adults and citizens.
- Asians in aggregate, Chinese, Filipino, Koreans, Latino, and Middle Eastern and North African communities in Central and East Beaverton are more likely to benefit from alternative forms of civic engagement due to their status as immigrants without US citizenship.



ECONOMIC JUSTICE:

- African-American, Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities have higher unemployment rates than the White community in this jurisdiction.
- A larger proportion of Asian, Chinese, Korean, and Slavic workforce are employed in management, business, science and arts occupations, compared to the share of White workforce in this jurisdiction. These occupations are considered high wage occupations.
- Native American men have the lowest median income for full time work in Central and East Beaverton.
- African-American, Asian, Black, Korean, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander female full time workers have a lower median income than White women in this jurisdiction and Washington County women overall.
- Amongst full time male workers, African-American, Black, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander men have a lower median income than White men.
- All communities of color in Central and East Beaverton except for Slavic households have lower median household income than the White population.
- Compared to the White population of Central and East Beaverton, African-American, Asian, Black, Chinese, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native American communities are twice as likely to be in poverty.

HOUSING JUSTICE:



More than half of **Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander** communities in Central and East Beaverton are cost burdened renters.

These communities spend more than **30%** of their income on housing.

- African-American, Black, Latino, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities overall in Central and East Beaverton are more likely to rent their homes than own.
- More than half of Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in Central and East Beaverton are cost burdened renters. These communities spend more than 30% of their income on housing.
- Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Slavic communities are more likely to be home owners than renters in this jurisdiction.
- Chinese and Slavic residents in the jurisdiction in particular are more likely to be homeowners compared to their White counterparts.
- Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Slavic homeowners are cost burdened at a higher rate than the White homeowners in Central and East Beaverton.

Most of the communities of color in Central and East Beaverton experience English language barriers, with the Asian, Korean, and Latino communities being the most impacted. This barrier affects how, when, and where communities access healthcare.

HEALTH JUSTICE:

- African-American, Black, Filipino, Korean, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are less likely to have health insurance than the White community in Central and East Beaverton.

WEST BEAVERTON AND ALOHA

1 in 2 in West Beaverton and Aloha
are People of Color

Estimated population sizes of communities of color in this jurisdiction are --

1,062 Africans
3,357 African-Americans
20,359 Asians
21,289 Latinos
3,201 Middle Eastern and North Africans
2,382 Native Americans
2,236 Slavic
4,971 Asian Indians
2,951 Chinese
2,431 Filipinos
3,801 Koreans
3,011 Vietnamese

POPULATION AND

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- An estimated 1 in 2 people in West Beaverton and Aloha are people of color.
- The population is estimated to consist of at least 1,062 Africans, 3,357 African-Americans, 20,359 Asians, 21,289 Latinos, 3,201 Middle Eastern and North African, 2,382 Native Americans, and 2,236 Slavic. Estimated population sizes of disaggregated Asian communities in this jurisdiction are—4,971 Asian Indians, 2,951 Chinese, 2,431 Filipinos, 3,801 Koreans, and 3,011 Vietnamese.
- Excluding Chinese, these communities' median age is younger than the White population of West Beaverton and Aloha.
- More than half of African, Asian, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Middle Eastern and North African, and Vietnamese communities are immigrants in West Beaverton and Aloha.
- All communities of color in this jurisdiction are bilingual. Many speaking Asian and Pacific Island languages.
- Filipino and Slavic communities are more likely to have a high school degree compared to the White population in the jurisdiction.
- Asian, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Middle Eastern and North African, and Slavic communities are more likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to White population in West Beaverton and Aloha.
- African, African-American, Latino, Native American, and Vietnamese communities are less likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to White population in the jurisdiction.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

- There is tremendous leadership and voting potential among communities of color especially among communities with large shares of naturalized citizenry in West Beaverton and Aloha.
- African, Asian, Asian Indian, and Latino communities are more likely to benefit from alternative forms of civic engagement due to their status as immigrants without US citizenship. These communities are estimated to make up over 25% of West Beaverton and Aloha.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE:

- African, African-American, Filipino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Slavic communities have higher unemployment rates than the White community in this jurisdiction.
- A larger proportion of the Asian, Asian Indian, Chinese, Korean, and Slavic workforce are employed in management, business, science and arts occupations, compared to the share of White workforce in this jurisdiction. These occupations are considered high wage occupations.
- Native American females are the lowest paid full-time workers in West Beaverton and Aloha.
- African, African-American, Filipino, Latino, Native American, Slavic, and Vietnamese female full time workers have a lower median income than White women in this jurisdiction.
- Amongst full time male workers, African, African-American, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Vietnamese men have a lower median income than White men.
- African, Filipino, Latino, and Native American households have lower median household income than the White community in this jurisdiction.
- It is estimated that there are more African, African-American, Filipino, Korean, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native American populations living in poverty than the White population in this jurisdiction.

HOUSING JUSTICE:



More than half of **African**, **Korean**, **Latino**, **Native American**, and **Slavic** renters spend more than **30%** of their income on housing and are therefore cost burdened.

This is more than the White community in West Beaverton and Aloha.

- Asian Indian, Latino, and Native American communities in West Beaverton and Aloha are more likely to rent their homes than own.
- African, African-American, Asian Indian, Latino, and Native American residents of West Beaverton and Aloha are more likely to be renters than White residents of the jurisdiction.
- Asian, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Slavic, and Vietnamese communities are more likely to be homeowners compared to their White counterparts in the jurisdiction.
- More than half of African, Korean, Latino, Native American, and Slavic renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing and are therefore cost burdened. This is more than the White community in West Beaverton and Aloha.
- African, Asian, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Vietnamese homeowners are cost burdened at a higher rate than the White homeowners in West Beaverton and Aloha.

Almost all communities of color in West Beaverton and Aloha experience English language barriers. This barrier affects how, when, and where communities access healthcare.

HEALTH JUSTICE:

- African-American, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Vietnamese communities are less likely to have health insurance than the White community in West Beaverton and Aloha.

INTRODUCTION TO CORNELIUS AND FOREST GROVE

Cornelius and Forest Grove are located in the western part of Washington County. As of 2016 an estimated 39,374 people live in Cornelius and Forest Grove combined. Washington County's population continues to grow at a high rate. In Cornelius in 2010, 50.1 percent of residents identified as Hispanic or Latino. The first Latino families to settle in this area were migrants from Texas. *These communities left Texas because of oppressive treatment, poor work, and financial prospects and established robust infrastructure in the region such as Adelante Mujeres, Bienestar, Centro Cultural and Virginia Garcia.* Pacific University in Forest Grove stands on the grounds of an Indian training school where young children had been "civilized," both in terms of appearance and what they were taught.

"It was a community of learning in Forest Grove in 1971. When we left the nice little knit Forest Grove and got on the bus and headed into Portland we noticed lots of changes. It felt a little more comfortable for us Hawaiian kids because it was very green out in Forest Grove. We would find apple trees."

DATA DESCRIPTION AND CAVEATS

- We collected the data from US Census Forest Grove-Cornelius Census County Division (CCD). According to the US Census Bureau a CCD is "a subdivision of a county that is a relatively permanent statistical area established cooperatively by the Census Bureau and state and local government authorities". They typically coincide with Census tract boundaries.
- The American Community Survey 2011-2015 estimates a small Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community in the jurisdiction. However, the margins of error are too high to report socio-economic outcomes of the community. We could not extract data pertaining to African, African-American, Middle Eastern and North African, and disaggregated Asian populations since the PUMA data boundaries for Cornelius and Forest Grove, which are the basis for customizing data for communities based on place of birth and ancestry, included Bethany and Oak Hills. The PUMA boundaries did not accurately represent the jurisdictional boundaries of Cornelius and Forest Grove.

Cornelius and Forest Grove

Estimated population sizes of communities of color in this jurisdiction are --

1,502 Asians

481 Black

11,829 Latinos

830 Native Americans

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

- Estimated population sizes of communities of color in Cornelius and Forest Grove are—1,502 Asians, 481 Black, 11,829 Latinos, 830 Native Americans,
- Asian and Native American communities are slightly more likely to have a high school degree or higher.
- Latino and Native American communities' margins of error are too high to determine their rates of obtaining bachelor's degrees or higher.
- Asian communities are more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher than the White community in Cornelius and Forest Grove.
- In Cornelius and Forest Grove, there is a higher share of immigrants from Asian and Latino communities than White. Over half came to the US before 1999.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- An estimated 71% of Asians, 30% of Latinos, and 79% of Native Americans, are 18 years and older and US citizens, which indicates the depth of leadership and voting potential among these communities.
- Simultaneously, immigrants in these communities need alternative forms of civic engagement beyond the right to vote.

- An estimated **71%** of **Asians**, **30%** of **Latinos**, and **79%** of **Native Americans**
- are 18 years and older and US citizens, which indicates the depth of leadership and voting
- potential among these communities.



Simultaneously, immigrants in these communities need alternative forms of civic engagement beyond the right to vote.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

- Latino communities are more likely to be unemployed in Cornelius and Forest Grove than the White community. Margins of error are too high to reliably estimate unemployment rates for Asian and Native American residents.
- Asian, Latino, and Native American children are more likely to have both parents in the labor force, which includes people currently working and those looking for work.
- Asians are more likely to be in management, business, science and arts occupations, compared to the share of White workforce in this jurisdiction. These occupations are considered high wage occupations.
- Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans compared to Whites in Cornelius and Forest Grove, have less per capita income.
- Latino women are the lowest paid female full time workers in Cornelius and Forest Grove.
- Latino men are the lowest paid male full time workers in this jurisdiction.
- Latino families and individuals are more likely to be in poverty than White communities in Cornelius and Forest Grove.

HOUSING JUSTICE

- Asians and Latinos are more likely to be renters than Whites in Cornelius and Forest Grove.
- Native American margins of error are too high to determine their housing status as renters.
- Latino and Native American communities are more likely to be homeowners than renters.
- Asian and Latino communities are less likely than White communities in Cornelius and Forest Grove to be homeowners.
- Native American margins of error are too high to determine their housing status as cost-burdened renters.
- Asian renters are more likely to be cost-burdened than White renters.
- Asian homeowners and Native American homeowners' margins of error are too high to determine their rates of being cost-burdened.
- Latino homeowners are more likely to be cost-burdened than White homeowners in Cornelius and Forest Grove.

HEALTH JUSTICE

- Latinos are more likely to not have health insurance compared to the White community in Cornelius and Forest Grove.

Latinos and Latino seniors in particular, are likely to experience English Language barriers in Cornelius and Forest Grove. This barrier affects how, when, and where communities access healthcare.



Latino homeowners are more likely to be cost-burdened than White homeowners in Cornelius and Forest Grove.

INTRODUCTION TO HILLSBORO

Hillsboro is located in the center part of Washington County. As of 2015 an estimated 102,000 people live in this jurisdiction. Hillsboro is home to Intel, a technology company, which is the largest private employer in the state. This jurisdiction is part of the Silicon Forest but a major part of the agricultural industry. Latino communities have called Hillsboro home as migrant workers and their descendants. During Depression, hard labor in the fields remained one of the few jobs many people refused to do, primarily because that form of labor had been racialized during the 1920s. This continues to be the case today.

DATA CAVEATS

- The PUMA boundaries in the US Census from which data for communities of color living in Hillsboro was derived can be found here.
- We include findings for the Black community in our analyses since the African community in Hillsboro is too small for reliable estimates. Tracking Black community indicators along with African-American community indicators gives us some sense of the experiences of the African community that is invisible in this data.
- In the Hillsboro jurisdictional snapshot we present distinct findings about Asian as well as disaggregated by nationality for whoever there is available data even though the latter are included in the Asian identity. Presenting both aggregated and disaggregated community data allows us to make visible Asian communities that are statistically invisible, and comparing aggregated and disaggregated data illustrates the limits of the former.

“We have Hillsboro schools in the community. They have weekly classes and events and singing and traditional songs. They also put on a powwow on every year at Liberty High School. It’s great because the parents get to know each other.”

2 in 5

in Hillsboro
are People of Color

Estimated population sizes of communities of color in this jurisdiction are --

- 2,778 African-Americans
- 13,335 Asians
- 3,324 Black
- 25,484 Latinos
- 1,415 Middle Eastern and North Africans
- 4,068 Native Americans
- 487 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders
- 2,724 Slavic
- 2,981 Asian Indians
- 2,192 Chinese
- 2,659 Filipinos
- 2,332 Koreans
- 1,925 Vietnamese

POPULATION AND

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- An estimated 2 in 5 people in Hillsboro are people of color.
- Estimated population sizes of communities of color in this jurisdiction are—2,778 African-Americans (included in Black aggregate as well), 13,335 Asians, 2,981 Asian Indians (included in Asian aggregate as well), 3,324 Black, 2,192 Chinese (included in Asian aggregate as well), 2,659 Filipinos (included in Asian aggregate as well), 2,332 Koreans (included in Asian aggregate as well), 25,484 Latinos, 1,415 Middle Eastern and North Africans, 4,068 Native Americans, 857 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, 2,724 Slavic, and 1,925 Vietnamese (included in Asian aggregate as well).

These communities' median age is younger than the White population of Hillsboro.

There is a large immigrant community consisting of people who identify as Asian, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Slavic, and Vietnamese. Immigrants are a higher proportion of their community populations in Hillsboro.

- Communities of color in Hillsboro are bilingual.
- African-American, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Slavic communities are more likely to have a high school degree compared to White population in the jurisdiction.
- Asian communities as an aggregate, Asian Indian, Chinese and Slavic communities are more likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to White population in the jurisdiction.
- African-Americans, Black population as a whole (including both Africans and African-Americans), Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Vietnamese communities are less likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to White population in the jurisdiction.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

There is high voting potential among communities of color especially among communities with large shares of naturalized citizens such as Middle Eastern and North African and Vietnamese communities in Hillsboro.

Asian, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Vietnamese communities are more likely to benefit from alternative forms of civic engagement due to their status as immigrants without US citizenship.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE:

- Filipino, Latino, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Vietnamese communities have higher unemployment rates than the White community in this jurisdiction. Unemployment data for Middle Eastern and North African residents of Hillsboro is not available.
- A larger proportion of Asian, Asian Indian, Black, Chinese, and Korean workforce are employed in management, business, science and arts occupations, compared to the share of White workforce in this jurisdiction. These occupations are considered high wage occupations.
- Latino females are the lowest paid full-time workers in Hillsboro.
- African-American, Asian, Black, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Slavic, and Vietnamese female full time workers have a lower median income than White women in this jurisdiction.
- Amongst full time male workers, African-American, Black, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern or North African, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Vietnamese men have a lower median income than White men.
- African-American, Black, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, and Slavic households have lower median household income than the White community in this jurisdiction.
- Latino and Vietnamese communities have the largest household sizes but Latino communities have the lowest median household income. The Latino community has fewer resources to spread across their households. Even with more earners in their household, Latinos are making lower incomes than the White community in Hillsboro.
- It is estimated that there are more African-American, Asian, Black, Chinese, Korean, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Slavic, and Vietnamese populations living in poverty than the White population in this jurisdiction.



More than half of African-American, Black, Filipino, Latino, and Middle Eastern and North African renters spend more than **30%** of their income on housing and are therefore cost burdened.

This is more than the White community in Hillsboro.

HOUSING JUSTICE:

- African-American, Asian Indian, Black, Chinese, Korean, Latino, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in Hillsboro are more likely to rent their homes than own.
- People in Washington County, African-American, Asian, Asian Indian, Black, Chinese, Korean, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native Americans, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Slavic residents of Hillsboro are more likely to be renters than White residents of the jurisdiction.
- Filipino and Vietnamese residents in particular are more likely to be homeowners compared to their White counterparts in the jurisdiction.
- More than half of African-American, Black, Filipino, Latino, and Middle Eastern and North African renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing and are therefore cost-burdened. This is more than the White community in Hillsboro.
- Asian, Filipino, Middle Eastern or North African, and Vietnamese communities are more likely to be homeowners than renters in this jurisdiction.
- African-American, Black, Chinese, Filipino, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African Native American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Slavic, and Vietnamese homeowners are cost-burdened at a higher rate than the White homeowners in Hillsboro.

HEALTH JUSTICE:

- African-American, Asian, Black, Filipino, Korean, Latino, Native American, and Vietnamese communities are less likely to have health insurance than the White community in Hillsboro.

Almost all communities of color in Hillsboro experience English language barriers, with the Latino and Vietnamese communities being the most impacted. This barrier affects how, when, and where communities access healthcare.

INTRODUCTION TO TIGARD, TUALATIN AND SHERWOOD:

Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood are located in the south east part of Washington county. As of 2016 an estimated 100,000 people live in this jurisdiction. The Atfalati band of the Kalapuya Indians, who settled in the basin of the Tualatin Valley some 10,000 years ago, were the first peoples to call Washington County home. In 1872, in what is now Sherwood, a white settler signed an agreement for his land to be used to build a railway. Thousands of Chinese laborers came to Oregon to build the railroad through the settlement. Communities of color have always been a part of Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood both as original inhabitants of the land as well as those who were brought here through immigration for exploitation of their labor.

“Thanks to extensive relationship-building, relations are generally good with the Tigard police. They proactively reached out to Muslim Educational Trust to check on them during ‘Punish a Muslim Day’. But our Somali community is finding it difficult with profiling and with gentrification in the Southwest corridor.”

DATA CAVEATS

- a. In the Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood jurisdictional snapshot we present distinct findings about Asian, Chinese and Korean communities even though Chinese and Korean communities are included in the Asian identity. Presenting both aggregated and disaggregated community data allows us to make visible Asian communities that are statistically invisible, and comparing aggregated and disaggregated data illustrates the limits of the former.
- b. We include findings for the Black community in our analyses since the African community in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood is too small for reliable estimates. Tracking Black community indicators along with African-American community indicators gives us some sense of the experiences of the African community that is invisible in this data.

1 in 3 ^{in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood} are People of Color

Estimated population sizes of communities of color in this jurisdiction are --

2,194 African-Americans
8,175 Asians
2,509 Black
13,414 Latinos
1,830 Middle Eastern and North Africans
1,569 Native Americans
2,670 Slavic
2,071 Chinese
2,450 Koreans

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS:

- An estimated 1 in 3 people in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood are people of color.
- Estimated population sizes of communities of color in this jurisdiction are—2,194 African-Americans (included in Black aggregate as well), 8,175 Asians, 2,509 Black, 2,071 Chinese (included in Asian aggregate as well), 2,450 Koreans (included in Asian aggregate as well), 13,414 Latinos, 1,830 Middle Eastern or North African, 1,569 Native Americans, and 2,670 Slavic.
- These communities' median age is younger than the White population of Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood.
- There is a large immigrant community consisting of people who identify as Asian, Chinese, Korean, Latino, Middle Eastern or North African, and Slavic.
- Compared to the White population in this jurisdiction, all communities of color are at least bilingual.
- All communities of color except for Latinos are more likely to have a high school degree compared to White population in the jurisdiction.
- Asian communities as an aggregate, Chinese, Korean, Middle Eastern and North African, and Slavic communities in particular are more likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to White population in the jurisdiction.
- African-Americans distinctly, Black population as a whole (including both Africans and African-Americans), Latino, and Native American communities are less likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to White population in the jurisdiction.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

- There is tremendous voting potential among communities of color especially among communities with large shares of naturalized citizenry.
- Korean and Latino communities are more likely to benefit from alternative forms of civic engagement due to their status as immigrants without US citizenship. These communities are estimated to include over 15,000 people in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE:

- African-American, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native American communities have higher unemployment rates than the white community in this jurisdiction.
- A larger proportion of Asian, Chinese, Korean, and Native American workforce are employed in management, business, science and arts occupations, compared to the share of White workforce in this jurisdiction. These occupations are considered high wage occupations.
- Black females are the lowest paid full time workers in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood.
- African-American, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern or North African, and Slavic female full time workers have a lower median income than White women in this jurisdiction.
- Asian, Chinese, Korean, and Native American female full time workers have a higher median income than female White full time workers.
- Amongst full time male workers, African-American, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern or North African, and Native American men have a lower median income than White men.
- Latino, Middle Eastern or North African, and Native American households have lower median household income than the White community in this jurisdiction.
- Latino and Middle Eastern or North African communities have the largest household sizes yet have two of the three lowest median household incomes in the jurisdiction. These communities have fewer resources to spread across their households. Even with more earners in their household, these communities are making lower incomes than the White community.
- It is estimated that there are more African-American, Asian, Black, Latino, Native American, and Slavic populations living in poverty than the White population in this jurisdiction.

HOUSING JUSTICE:



More than half of African-American, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native American renters spend more than **30%** of their income on housing and are therefore cost burdened.

This is more than the White community in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood.

- Latino, Native American, and Slavic communities in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood are more likely to rent their homes than own.
- People in Washington County, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native Americans, and Slavic residents of Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood are more likely to be renters than White residents of the jurisdiction.
- African-American, Asian aggregate, Black, Chinese, and Korean residents in particular are more likely to be homeowners compared to their White counterparts in the jurisdiction.
- More than half of African-American, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and Native American renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing and are therefore cost-burdened. This is more than the White community in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood.
- African-American, Asian, Black, Chinese, Korean, and Middle Eastern and North African communities are more likely to be home owners than renters in this jurisdiction.
- Asian and Slavic homeowners are cost-burdened at a higher rate than the White homeowners in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood.

Almost all communities of color in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood experience English language barriers, with the Latino community being the most impacted. This barrier affects how, when, and where communities access healthcare.

HEALTH JUSTICE:

- African-American, Asian, Chinese, Korean, Latino, Native American, and Slavic communities are less likely to have health insurance than the White community in Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood.

DATA NOTES

- Quantitative data sources for this narrative are—(1) American Community Survey 2016 one year estimate and 2011–2015 five-year estimates, (2) Survey of Business Owners, US Census (3) Oregon Department of Education, (4) Washington County public agencies including the public health department and law enforcement, (5) Vera Institute of Justice.
- Currently, official Census Bureau counts (including the Bureau’s American Community Survey) can be tallied for people who either mark one “race” box or people who multiply identify with more than one race. Figures for people who mark/choose only one racial identifier are reported under “alone” statistics, while people who choose more than one identifier are reported under “alone or in combination” figures.

We use “alone or in combination with other races” rule to collect data about all communities of color. This means that biracial and multi-racial people are counted as belonging to each community that they identify with.

For example, if a person identified their race in the American Community Survey as Native American and Asian, they will be included in the population count for both Native American and Asian communities; Latinos of any race are included in that community’s population size. American Community Survey estimates that in Washington county 60% of the Native American community, 35% of the Black communities including African-American and African, 20% of Asian communities, 51% of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders communities, 11.1% of the Latino community and 7.1% of the White population identify with more than one race. These biracial and multi-racial people disappear disappear when researchers and policy makers use our “alone” figures to define the size of our communities, and their experiences get obscured, rendered invisible, and denied.

- We adopt the same methodology in our data requests to all public agencies. Sometimes we were successful in procuring data along those lines; sometimes we weren't. We explicitly label "alone" categories when that was the only data available. We analyze Oregon Department of Education data on the basis of including all biracial and multiracial students in all their identified racial and ethnic communities except for White alone non Latino students.
- We examined Public Use Microfile Sample (PUMS) data from the US Census American Community Survey 2011–2015 to gain a better understanding of communities of color that are not represented in the US Census and as a result local jurisdictional data. These communities include African, African-American, disaggregated data for Asian communities, Middle Eastern and North African, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and Slavic. We use "ancestry" (ethnic origin, descent or place of birth of parents or ancestors) and "place of birth" to identify those communities in the data.
- Communities of color in the US Census:
 - African - sub-Saharan African ancestry (ethnic origin, descent or place of birth of parents or ancestors) or place of birth in the American Community Survey.
 - African-American - Black/African-American alone or in combination with other races in the US Census and was born in the US or was born to parents born in the US.
 - Asian and disaggregated data - Asians including biracial and multiracial people and groups disaggregated by nationality or place of birth.
 - Latino - Latino/Hispanic in the US Census irrespective of race.
 - Middle Eastern and North African - Either ancestry or place of birth is one of the following:
 - Ancestries: Algerian, Egyptian, Moroccan, North African, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Lebanese, Syrian, Armenian, Turkish, Yemeni, Palestinian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Mideast, Arabic, Arabic, Other Arab.
 - Places of Birth: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Unspecified
 - Northern Africa.
 - Native American - Native Americans including biracial and multiracial people
 - Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders - Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders including biracial and multiracial people.
 - Slavic and Russian speaking - Either ancestry or place of birth is one of the following or they record Russian as language spoken at home
 - Ancestry: Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Belarus, Ukrainian, Russian, Armenian, Georgia CIS, Slavic

Places of Birth: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Armenia, USSR, Georgia CIS, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Azerbaijan

- Any data or reference to the Black community includes both the African-American and African populations in Washington County. Most data sources do not disaggregate these communities.
- We use 'White Alone non Latino non Hispanic' US Census category to analyze outcomes for the White population. We exclude those who identified as "Latino/Hispanic" as their ethnicity and White as their race from the White population data. Recent research has shown that although these populations are racially considered White, they tend to fare much worse than their White counterparts in many measures. Data that was made available from public agencies are inconsistent in that

practice and include Latinos, Middle Eastern and North African and Slavic communities. To the extent that agencies do not create a safe space for communities to self-identify, the White population data also includes people who were mis-identified as White.

- Wherever data is available, experiences of communities of color are compared vis-a-vis the average/typical/median experiences of a Washington County resident. This allows us to gauge the extent to which county level successes are inclusive of communities of color, as well as evaluate whether they are disproportionately impacted by county level crises.



RACIAL DISPARITY

METHODOLOGY

What matters gets measured. The goal of racial justice research is to uncover racial disparities in data. Communities of color want to emphasize the magnitude of effect of institutional racism on their lives, not just to share that their lived experiences are different from White residents of the county. For some readers and stakeholders, the outlined method of estimating racial disparities may be dissonant from their established praxis. The intent to highlight how when used correctly, uncovers racial inequities not to reconcile mainstream data analyses with our findings.

We use two measures—disparities and disproportionality to compare outcomes for communities of color with the White population and the total population of Washington County.

a. **Disproportionality:** “The term “disproportionality” refers to the ratio between the percentage of persons in a particular group at a particular decision point or experiencing an event (maltreatment, incarceration, school dropouts) compared to the percentage of the same in the overall population. This ratio could suggest underrepresentation, proportional representation, or overrepresentation of a population experiencing a particular phenomenon.”¹ For example, if 85% of public sector employees in Washington county identify as White but they comprise 66% of the County population, there is disproportional representation of White people in the workforce.

b. **Disparity:** “The term “disparity” refers to unequal treatment or outcomes for different groups in the same circumstance or at the same decision point.”² In this project, similar to extant racial justice research, we calculate the likelihood of communities of color having certain experiences and outcomes compared to the White population and the overall county population. That allows readers and stakeholders to clearly grasp the meaning of findings.

We implement the following steps to calculate racial disparity between a community of color and White residents in Washington County:

1. Calculate the rate of an outcome for each population because we are interested in how prevalent a treatment/experience/outcome is in a community. For example, rate at which Latinos are stopped by law enforcement in Washington County and the rate at which White people

are stopped by law enforcement in Washington County.

$$\text{Latinos stopped rate} = \frac{\text{number of latinos stopped by law enforcement in a given year}}{\text{Total Latino population in Washington County in a given year}}$$

$$\text{Whites stopped rate} = \frac{\text{number of Whites stopped by law enforcement in a given year}}{\text{Total White population in Washington County in a given year}}$$

The data for the numerator comes from various official data sources, and the data for the denominator is primarily sourced from the US Census (excepting for educational outcome indicators).

2. Step 1 still does not give us a contextualized understanding of how much more or less likely are Latinos to be stopped by law enforcement compared to White residents of the county. Therefore, we conduct the following calculation to estimate how more/less likely is a particular community of color experiencing a different outcome compared to a specific baseline, which in our example here is the White population of Washington County. That percentage calculation of likelihood has more substantive meaning.

$$\frac{[(\text{Latinos stopped rate}) - (\text{Whites stopped rate})] \times 100}{\text{Whites stopped rate}}$$

There are stories and priorities that communities of color and likeminded elected officials, public and private stakeholders want to tell about about the impact of institutional racism on lived experiences, and there are stories that we are limited to telling because of data constraints. Communities of color are resilient; they have persisted, survived, mobilized and advocated. They are still here in Oregon despite repeated systemic attempts of genocide, “sundown” laws, restrictive immigration policies that also extract their labor, Islamophobia and xenophobia. They continue to counter and push back on persisting racial inequities. However, mainstream data practices have either wilfully or unintentionally rarely captured this resilience. ***Most attempts at data collection and analyses have rendered communities even more invisible or inflicted more trauma. Let the stories that are missing be a call to action for research justice -- to empower communities of color as experts of their experience.***

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AVERAGE:

The number found by dividing the sum of all values by the total number of values in a group (US Census Bureau, “Census Glossary”).

BILINGUAL AND MULTILINGUAL:

A person fluent in two languages or several languages.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. Civic engagement encompasses a range of specific activities such as working in a soup kitchen, serving on a neighborhood association, writing a letter to an elected official or voting (American Psychology Association, 2018).

DISAGGREGATED:

Disaggregated data refers to the breaking down population size based on certain characteristics such as nationality, ancestry and so on. ‘Asian disaggregated’ refers to distinguishing between various nationality groups within the population that identifies as Asian in the US Census.

FEMALE AND MALE:

Refer to binary concept of sex, which indicates biological differences between people. It is distinct from gender. Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships.

HOUSING COST- BURDENED:

Households who pay more than 30% of their monthly income on housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. Households who pay more than 50% of their income on housing are considered severely cost burdened (“US Housing and Urban Development”).

HOUSEHOLD SIZE:

The total number of people living in a housing unit (US Census Bureau, “Census Glossary”).

IMMIGRANT:

The US Census measures immigrant status as any one in the US who is born outside of the country to parents who are not US citizens. They include students, workers, green card holders, refugees, undocumented immigrants and so on.

“LESS LIKELY”:

When a particular outcome is less prevalent in a community compared to the White population. For example, if 39% of a community of color are homeowners and 65% of White residents are homeowners, we infer that the community of color is less likely to be homeowners in a jurisdiction compared to its White residents.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY:

People who note that they speak English not very well or not at all in the US Census.

MEDIAN:

This measure represents the middle value (if n is odd) or the average of the two middle values (if n is even) in an ordered list of data values. Median is the most stable measure of an “average” for any indicator that fluctuates a lot such as income and rent. The median divides the total frequency distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases fall below the median and one-half of the cases exceed the median. For example, the median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median, and the other having incomes below the median. The median for households, families, and unrelated individuals is based on all households, families, and unrelated individuals, respectively. The median for people is based on people with income (US Census Bureau, “Census Glossary”).

MEDIAN FULL TIME INCOME:

Median income is right in the middle and is the most reliable measure; it's not affected by extremely low and extremely high wages. The median income divides the income distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median, and other having incomes below the median (US Census Bureau, “Census Glossary”).

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

The median income divides the income distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median, and other having incomes below the median. A household includes related family members and unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit, is also counted as a household (US Census Bureau, “Census Glossary”).

“MORE LIKELY”:

When a particular outcome is more prevalent in a community compared to the White population. For example, if 65% of a community of color are renters and 39% of White residents are renters, we infer that the community of color is more likely to be renters in a jurisdiction compared to its White residents.

NATURALIZED:

Foreign nationals who become US citizens through the naturalization process.

NO HEALTH INSURANCE:

Those with neither public nor private health insurance.

OCCUPATION:

Occupation describes the kind of work the person does on the job. For employed people, the data refer to the person's job during the reference week. For those who worked at two or more jobs, the data refer to the job at which the person worked the greatest number of hours. Some examples of occupational groups shown in this product include managerial occupations; business and financial specialists; scientists and technicians; entertainment; healthcare; food service; personal services; sales; office and administrative support; farming; maintenance and repair; and production workers (US Census Bureau, “Census Glossary”).

POVERTY:

Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If the total income for a family or unrelated individual falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family (and every individual in it) or unrelated individual is considered in poverty (US Census Bureau, “Census Glossary”).

UNEMPLOYED:

All civilians 16 years old and over are classified as unemployed if they (1) were neither “at work” nor “with a job but not at work” during the reference week, and (2) were actively looking for work during the last 4 weeks, and (3) were available to accept a job. Also included as unemployed are civilians who did not work at all during the reference week, were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been laid off, and were available for work except for temporary illness (US Census Bureau, “Census Glossary”). Importantly, this definition excludes people who have given up looking for employment.

WORKFORCE:

People employed including all types of employment for pay, both seasonal and contract work, full time and part-time, and someone with one job and multiple jobs.

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