

Communities of Colors Report Overview

Communities of Color in Multnomah County
“An Unsettling Profile.”

- **Disparities**: Are differences between population groups in the presence of any form of incidence or outcomes, including access to services. Disparities include both acceptable and unacceptable differences. (Adapted from Multnomah County Health Department, Health Equity Initiative)
- **Disproportionality**: where outcomes or conditions don't match their incidence in the occurrence population i.e., 12% of the population represent 30% of all those incarcerated.

Definitions

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

Definitions

- Education (Attainment, Achievement gaps, inequitable application of discipline)
 - If you are White, you have only a 7% (or 1-in-14) chance of not having graduated high school, while if you are a person of color, you are much more likely to have not graduated high school almost a 1-in-3 chance of not having a high school diploma.
 - *School administrators are much more likely to discipline our Black youth with suspensions and expulsions – at levels 3.5 times of those of Whites. This pattern exists despite studies that reveal our children do not misbehave more frequently than White students.*

The “Misery” Index

- *Even when higher education is achieved for African Americans, it does not assure access to decent work and good incomes. There is a 24% premium for Whites who hold university degrees that is not available for African American degree-holders.*
- *Today, the African American community holds 6 cents for every \$1 in wealth held by Whites.*
- *We have been forced into the subprime lending market due to present-day racism and historic racism that leaves us with fewer assets to act as collateral, even when we have incomes equivalent to Whites. We are almost three times more likely to be in the subprime market than White borrowers. The subprime lending fiasco is devastating our community and needs urgent attention.*

The “Misery” Index

- Unemployment
 - the national data is extremely troubling, rates for communities of color average 13.7%, which is 76% worse than Whites. Given the rapidly deteriorating economic climate through the last two years.
- Low Income/Poverty
 - People of color are disproportionately represented in poverty and low income, and relatively few in the ranks of upper income residents.
 - *Incomes are at levels less than half those of White communities, with the disparities greatest among families, with White families holding a 124% income premium over African American families.*
 - Poverty rates: Whites 17%; Communities of Color 26.7%; Latino 27%; AA 32.6%; Asian 12.9% NA 34.4%
 - *Child poverty rates are 40.9% for the African American children compared with 12.5% for White children.*

The “Misery” Index

- *In child welfare, our children are three times more likely to be taken away and placed in foster care than White children. Once in foster care, we are likely to stay in care much longer than White children.*
- Across the USA, 6.3 of every 1000 children are in foster care. In Oregon, this rises to 10.2 of every 1000 children. This level places us among the worst performers at 46th worst in the nation only four states performing worse than Oregon.
- In Multnomah County, 15.2 of every 1000 children are placed in foster care. Such ratings are available for the last 8 years, and Oregon has always been among the five worst performing states.

The “Misery” Index

- When we highlight the core findings about how frequently families of color are losing their children to child welfare, we find the following:
 - 7.4 of every 1000 Hispanic children are in foster care
 - 4.7 of every 1000 Asian children are in foster care
 - 32 of every 1000 African American children are in foster care
 - 218 of every 1000 Native American children are in foster care

The “Misery” Index

- Despite being besieged by **poverty, school failure** and **narrowed employment prospects**, our youth are largely staying away from crime. The crime rate has fallen 51% since 1999.
- There is a “**Halo Effect**” for White youth in the juvenile justice system. They are less likely to be arrested, more likely to be released upon arrest, less likely to receive stiff sentences, and much less likely to be transferred to adult court for serious offenses.
- This “halo” effect is not extended to youth of color, resulting in significant patterns of disproportionality in juvenile justice. The ultimate impact is what has become known as the “**cradle to prison pipeline.**”

Racism = Misery

- *In adult corrections, we are 5 times more likely to be incarcerated than Whites. A vast number of our men are behind bars today in Multnomah county.*
- *Black youth are 5.56 (NA 3x; Latino 2x) times more likely to be charged with a crime than White youth, 62% more likely to be held in detention, and 68% more likely to receive a custody sentence than Whites.*

Racism = Misery

- Disparities with White communities exist across all institutions addressed in the report. The magnitude of these disparities is alarming.
- Communities of color suffer more than the national levels for similar communities of color.
- In the measures explored in this report (incomes, poverty, occupation and education), communities of color have between 15% and 20% worse outcomes. It is more difficult to get ahead here in Multnomah County than it is more generally across the USA. When we tally the disproportionate “hit” or additional income losses for communities of color living in the county, the average tally of such costs is \$8,362/year.

Multnomah County

“An Unsettling Profile”

- This inequity does not hold true for White people. On average, one's income is enhanced by living in Multnomah County. The average benefit to living in Multnomah County is \$689/year. While not a large benefit, it illustrates that the harms of being a person of color in the county is additionally disparaging when Whites have a correlated benefit.
- We looked to a local comparison group to see how communities of color here fared in relationship to those in a western nearby city. In comparison with King County (home to Seattle), we have worse disparities and worse outcomes on every measure examined: child poverty, those who get a university degree, incomes, occupation, and renters who pay more than 30% of their incomes on rent. In King County, the child poverty rate for children of color is 21.5%, while here it is 33.3%.

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- Four of the positive gains (in home ownership, mortgage burden, unemployment and dropout rate) were due not to an improved situation for communities of color, but due to a more rapidly deteriorating situation for white people, thus narrowing disparities.
- We can thus conclude that there were clear gains in only two of the 26 measures – clearly demarking that current disparity reduction efforts are ineffective in achieving key positive outcomes for communities of color.

Multnomah County

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

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

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

Multnomah County

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- ***Name racism.*** Before us are both the challenge and the opportunity to become engaged with issues of race, racism and whiteness.
- Racial experiences are a feature of daily life whether we are on the harmful end of such experience or on the beneficiary end of the spectrum.
- The first step is to stop pretending race and racism does not exist.
- Racism is institutionalized; if we do nothing, nothing will change
- We can't keep doing the same things and expect different results.

Recommendations for a Better Future

- **Disaggregated data.** The city of Portland should require that all service providers and the city itself to provide data that is disaggregated. We also so want qualitative and qualitative data that helps us understand who is being served, how they are being served, and what outcomes are being achieved.
- ***Disclose race and ethnicity data for mainstream service providers.*** Mainstream service providers and government providers continue to have the largest role in service delivery providing services to communities of color.
 - Accounting for the outcomes of these services for communities of color is essential. We expect each level of service provision to increasingly report on both service usage and service outcomes for communities of color.

Recommendations for a Better Future

- ***Expand funding for culturally-specific services.*** Designated funds are required, and these funds must be adequate to address needs. Allocation must recognize the size of communities of color, must compensate for the undercounts that exist in population estimates, and must be sufficiently robust to address the complexity of need that are tied to communities of color.
- Competent Culturally Specific services providers should be the first option of providing services to communities of color.
- Through the eliminating disparities collaborative has developed an organizational assessment tool related to racial equity, many organizations have committed to using it or have already used including: All Hands Raised, United way, all of the school districts in Multnomah County, and more.

Recommendations for a Better Future

- Ann-Curry Stevens, PSU School of Social Work, Care institute and been working with the CCC to develop the Culturally Responsive Protocol which measures cultural distance to cultural responsiveness.
- Cultural Distance is the main culprit in disproportionate discipline in schools, disproportionate numbers of children of color in foster care, as well as justice issues where member of communities of color are arrested and convicted of crime, where the incidents of committing these offenses are no higher than their white counterparts.

Recommendations for a Better Future

- **Contract with Communities of Color businesses.** The government purchases millions of dollars annually for goods and services with very little going to businesses from the communities of color.
- Creative options need to be developed that will enable the resources to flow communities of color.
- **Equity should be reflected in your budget.** If equity is not clearly reflected in your budget, you don't mean it.

Recommendations for a Better Future
