the State of Black OREGON

Urban League of Portland

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Foreword

I invite you to read this presentation of various perspectives on the STATE OF BLACK OREGON. We are in defining times. We, as Oregonians, are being challenged on the economic front and by proposed changes in our health care system, education and human services, as we seek to provide greater opportunity with fewer resources.

Critical to this discussion is including all peoples, communities, individuals, households and their hopes and aspirations.

We face extraordinary challenges. At a time when many have to reassess the extent of their dreams, the extent of their resources and hopes, African Americans are often the first to be unemployed; the first to suffer from discrimination in a society that still struggles to break out of the legacies of segregation, Jim Crow, redlining of neighborhoods and exclusions from education.

At a time when the nation has elected our first Black president, more African American men are losing jobs than at any time since World War II. No single group is being hit harder by the deep recession. The unemployment rate for African American men age 20 to 24 has risen 17 percent since the late 1990s.

Fewer dreams are realized without a paycheck, a job or food on the table. Families are losing their homes to foreclosure at an alarming rate.

In our foster care system, today in Oregon, minorities are disproportionately represented. African American children account for 2.3 percent of Oregon's child population—yet these children make up 7.3 percent of Oregon's foster care population.

Many families and individuals courageously confront difficult decisions every day. STATE OF BLACK OREGON expresses through many voices a sharing of our pasts, our state at the present and proposed pathways for a common future.

Margaret Carter
Oregon State Senator

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Introduction

Marcus C. Mundy
President and Chief Executive Officer

"I want to talk about the first Northern urban generation of Negroes. I want to talk about the experiences of a misplaced generation, of a misplaced people in an extremely complex, confused society. This is a story of their searching, their dreams, their sorrows, their small and futile rebellions, and their endless battle to establish their own place in America's greatest metropolis—and in America itself."

Claude Brown
Foreword, Manchild in the Promised Land, 1965

Written over 40 years ago about Harlem, these words could have been written today about Oregon. What follows, in the Urban League of Portland's *State of Black Oregon* submission to the community, is a similar story of searching, dreams, sorrows, small and futile rebellions and an unceasing battle to establish place.

Seventeen years ago, the Urban League of Portland produced our last "state of the race" report. It identified challenges of the day; measured educational, employment, enterprise and advocacy attainment levels; and marked the baseline for African Americans in Oregon.

During the last eight years, the poverty gap in America has widened. It has been said that when America gets a cold, African Americans get pneumonia. If there's a poverty gap for Americans generally, the African American poverty gap widens to chasm proportions. The statistical data and stories in the current *State of Black Oregon* illustrate this disparity.

Since an African American has attained the highest office in the land, the nation is asking itself whether we now live in a post-racial America. Our history shows that many African American individuals have been able to transcend their condition. However, the reality, as our report shows, is that for our community as a whole, racial disparity and institutional barriers to prosperity and well-being persist.

This report is meant to provide a baseline of information for those who want to know the depth of the issues; a guideline for those who want to be part of their solutions or to learn what is working well so they can replicate success; and a timeline to bring the appropriate sense of urgency to circumstances kept on the sidelines far too long.

State of Black Oregon is modeled on the National Urban League's *State of Black America*. It echoes the principles outlined in the National Urban League's *Opportunity Compact: A Blueprint for Economic Equality*—the opportunity to thrive; the opportunity to earn; the opportunity to own; and the opportunity to prosper.

It is also a roadmap for action. Our report's policy action plan calls for proven, effective ways to eliminate the state's gaps in income, wealth, health, social progress and educational attainment—gaps that are too often defined along lines of race or socio-economic status. A similar roadmap, Tavis Smiley's *Covenant with Black America,* reminds us that such policies are not about "them" or "us," but about "we the people." And it reminds us that "now is the time to stop talking about our pain and start talking about our plan."

Tough economic times require policy-making to be focused, disciplined, pragmatic and data-driven. Eliminating racial disparity requires us to track the racial impact of programs and decisions. Programs that are competently managed and backed by rigorous evidence should be expanded. Programs that can't track spending, participation or outcomes should be improved or eliminated.

This is a bold policy agenda, unveiled in the depths of a severe recession. Some of the proposals are attainable in the near term if existing funding is more competently redeployed. Other initiatives may take time to realize fully.

The *State of Black Oregon* 2009 report examines seven key social and economic indicators. Limited space required some omissions. It does not review in depth the disparities faced by African American elders. Nor does it deal with the recent threefold increase in the percentage of Black Oregonians born outside the United States. Our community now includes growing numbers of immigrants and refugees from the African Diaspora, with 13 percent speaking a language other than English. We're committed to addressing these issues in future reports.

State of Black Oregon calls on policy-makers and other individuals to take specific measures to eliminate racial disparities. It reminds our community that we need to focus and organize ourselves in order to convince them to do so. Our history is testimony to Frederick Douglass' famous words, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

On a recent school trip to China, my two youngest children were the first in our group to reach the top of the Great Wall. As I reflected on our trip, I came to think of these two pre-teens as a symbol of Black America. They showed me what a determined mind and hard work could accomplish.

There is no good reason why our children cannot compete with White children in America—or White children in Amsterdam, or yellow children in China or brown children in India—if they have the tools, guidance and motivation. And there is no good reason why we adults can't do it, too.

We must empower all of our children here in Oregon with that knowledge and with the tools they need to put it to work. We must help them understand that their place—the place that Claude Brown talked about in 1965—is everywhere in the world.

Marcus C. Hendy

History in Oregon

"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to."

–Booker T. Washington

History

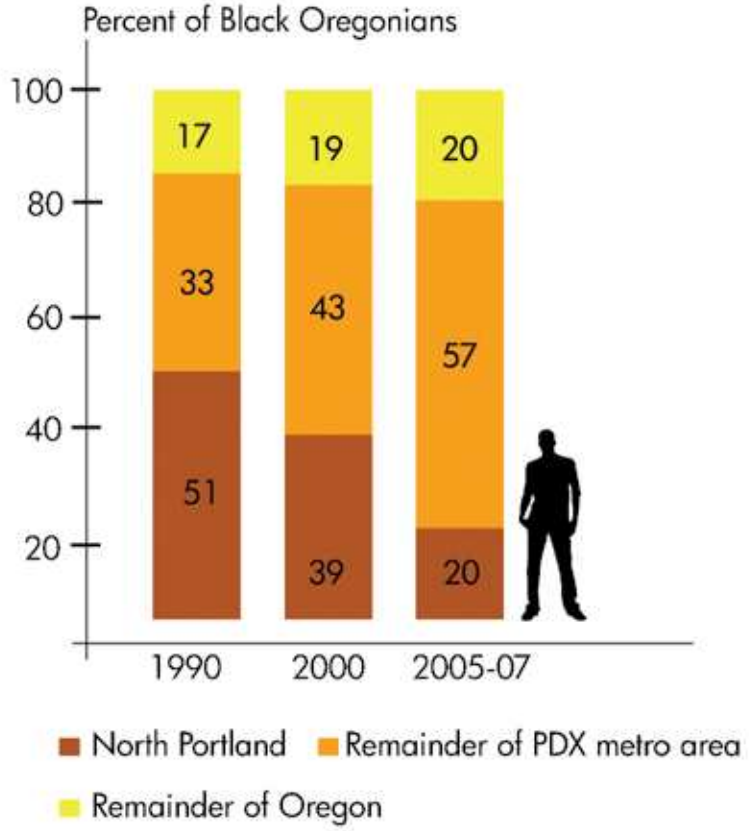
Diversity among Black Oregonians, 2005-07.
Percent of Black Oregonians

31% Report being Hispanic or multiple of races

Speak a language other than English at home **13%**

9% Not born US citizens

Geographic distribution of Black Oregonians in 1990, 2000, and 2005-07



*Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Geographic & Racial Diversity

- Today, 23 percent of Blacks live in North Portland; 55 percent live in the City of Portland; and 80 percent live in the Portland Metro Area (Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties).
- Blacks have been moving out of North Portland at a high rate. In 1990, 50 percent of Oregon's Black residents lived in North Portland. The share living in the metro area has remained stable at 80 percent.
- 31 percent of Blacks also report being Hispanic or one or more other races. During 2005-2007, one in ten Blacks was born outside of the United States, compared with about one in thirty Blacks in 1990. 13 percent speak a language other than English.
- African Americans are about 2 percent of the state's population, while Whites are 90.3 percent; Latinos are 10.6 percent, Native Americans are 1.4 percent, and Asians are 3.7 percent.
- 64 percent of Black Oregonians working age reside in Multnomah County; they are 4.8 percent of the County workforce.

Data courtesy of EcoNorthwest. Additional details available at www.ulpdx.org

African Americans

Plant Deep Roots in Oregon

By Dr. Darrell Millner
Professor, Department of Black Studies,
Portland State University

As early as 1579, Francis Drake's mixed race crew visited what would later become Oregon. However, the first *documented* African American reached Oregon in 1788 in the crew of American explorer Robert Gray. Named Markus Lopius, he was killed in an encounter with native inhabitants at Tillamook, although some local legends incorrectly claim that he survived.

The best-known African American explorer of Oregon was York, the slave of William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Early scholars used negative racial stereotypes in describing York. Later writings erred in the other direction, attributing more to his role than the evidence supports. Current scholarship takes a more balanced view of his contributions to the expedition.

During the fur trade era (1820-1840), many mountain men were African Americans. Despite its rigors, the western frontier was an appealing alternative to slavery in the South and harsh discrimination in the North and East.

One such mountain man was a member of Jedediah Smith's expeditions that opened an overland route from California to Oregon. In 1828, he was among those of Smith's party killed by Native Americans in the Umpqua Massacre in Oregon.

As the West opened up to settlers between 1843 and 1859, pioneers in the wagon trains brought with them the seeds of the race-based controversies that sprouted up in early Oregon life. African Americans as well as Whites arrived by wagon train. In fact, former mountain man Moses "Black" Harris was a well-known guide. And George Washington Bush helped settle what is now Washington state when negotiations with the British divided up the old Oregon Territory in 1846.

African American women were Oregon pioneers as well. For example, Rose Barlow arrived in a large box in 1850. She only got out of it at night because the Whites with whom she traveled were unsure of her status in the West.

Oregon laws try to keep the state White

In 1844, Oregon residents passed laws banning slavery and excluding African Americans. This dual step aimed to keep them out whether they were slave or free. A new exclusion law was

1788 1805 1844 1848 1854 1857 1859 1865 1866

historical timeline

Markus Lopius becomes the first person of African descent on record known to have set foot on Oregon soil.

adopted in 1849, when Oregon became an official U.S. territory. Its accidental repeal in 1853 launched a long debate over the status of African Americans.

When Oregon became a state in 1859, its original constitution included an article that banned African Americans from residence, employment, owning property or voting. Oregon supported the Union during the Civil War, but supplemented earlier laws with new ones that banned African Americans from juries, established a race-linked poll tax and forbade interracial marriages. The marriage ban was enforced until 1955.

The state maintains a delicate balance

This series of laws discouraged migration and kept Oregon's African American presence small until the eve of World War II. In the intervening years, a racial "accommodation" emerged that was generally understood and uneasily tolerated on each side of the color line. African Americans worked chiefly on the railroads and as domestic servants. They were relatively free from the overt racial hatred and violence found elsewhere as long as they kept within their assigned "place," as defined by Jim Crow policies of separation and limitation of opportunity. The Oregon Supreme Court recognized the legality of these practices in 1906, and they were common throughout the state until the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1950s.

An African American-owned business community emerged as the unintended result of such segregation. For example the Golden West Hotel, catering to African American railroad workers, was the largest such enterprise west of the Mississippi River.

The accommodation did not mean an absence of racial tension. In the 1920s, Oregon had the largest Ku Klux Klan movement in the West. The Klan paraded in full regalia, practiced terrorism and exercised significant political power—electing a member as governor in 1923. Because the state's African American population was so small, the Klan's primary targets were non-Protestant religions. By the 1930s, the Klan's influence in the state had declined due to internal conflict and financial fraud.

War brings jobs and an influx of people

In Oregon, World War II was the turning point in the African American experience. Thousands of African American workers were recruited and imported to work in Portland's Kaiser shipyards. From 1940 to 1943, the area's African American population grew ten-fold, from about 2,500 to more than 20,000.

During and after the war, the new population size and economic power in Oregon generated political activism that transformed African American life. The state passed laws concerning fair employment (1949), public accommodations (1953) and fair housing (1957). Oregon, however, continued to have a reputation for considerable private prejudice.

During the civil rights years of the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans in Oregon struggled like others around the nation for first-class citizenship. The most prominent local issue was the attempt to end de facto segregation in the Portland schools.

Opportunities grow for some, not others

In the last third of the 20th century, African Americans in Oregon moved along differing paths. Some people—through skill, circumstance, hard work and luck—rose to impressive heights of influence. Many were elected and appointed to important public positions. Others less fortunate continued to suffer from the legacies of earlier racial discrimination. Such as racial profiling and harassment.

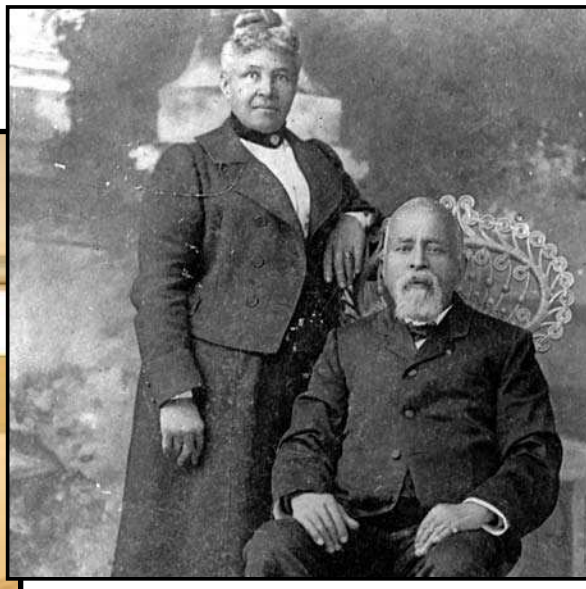
As the 21st century dawned, economic changes pushed by the gentrification of Northeast Portland dramatically transformed the dynamics of racial life in Oregon. Many African Americans left a close-knit community for the suburban fringes of Portland.

We've also seen a new wave of racial radicalism in the form of neo-Nazis and Skinheads, who identify Oregon as the future American White homeland. This brings us full circle, linking today with pioneer times in a cyclical continuum that pits progress against regression in racial matters.

CASE STUDY #1

Dick Bogle follows

The Pioneering Lead of His Family



Dick Bogle's ancestors, America and Richard Bogle.

Dick Bogle has been a pioneer all his life. He's a former police officer, journalist, city commissioner and jazz DJ. After working as a private detective for the legendary Pinkerton Agency, he joined the Portland Police Department in 1959. His score was in the top 10 of 600 applicants, and he was one of the few African Americans on the force.

But his first love was journalism. He had been sports editor of his high school paper, sports editor of *The Daily Barometer* at Oregon State University (OSU) and editor of *Vanguard* at Portland State University (PSU). In 1968, a chance encounter landed him an audition with Channel 2. He got the job and became the first African American TV news reporter in the Northwest.

The Bogle legacy

Dick comes from a long line of pioneers, some of Oregon's earliest African American settlers. He says, "My great-grandfather, also named Dick Bogle, headed from Jamaica to new York when he was 12. He came here on a wagon train. He married America Waldo, daughter of the White slave owner Daniel Waldo, whose family had also arrived by wagon train. They settled in an area of Salem called Waldo Hills, and Daniel became a member of Oregon's first legislature."

"A Black man had been lynched just months before her arrival, so the racial climate was frightening."

Although Dick's great-grandparents married in Salem, they settled in Walla Walla to escape the restrictions of Oregon's racial exclusion laws. Dick says, "In Washington, my great-grandfather had a barber shop and a 200-acre wheat farm. He became wealthy and was one of the founding members of the Walla Walla Savings and Loan Association."

The Waldo side of the family grew to great prominence in Oregon. Waldo Lake, Waldo Hall at OSU and the Waldo Building in downtown Portland are all named for them. However, Dick says their slave ownership dissuades him from laying claim to that side of the family.

His mother, Kathryn Hall Bogle, was his main inspiration. Dick says, "She was the driving force in my life. She was beautiful, bright and very involved in her community. She was born in Oklahoma next to an Indian reservation. Her stepfather was a railroad man, so the family traveled the country. In Coos Bay, she was in school for a year and none of her classmates ever spoke to her. A Black man had been lynched just months before her arrival, so the racial climate was frightening."

Growing up in harsh times

Recalling his own early history, Dick says, "In the 1920s-1950s, Oregon was one of the most discriminatory states north of the Mason-Dixon Line. The very active Ku Klux Klan had their swearing-in ceremony in front of Civic Auditorium, right in downtown Portland. When the state legislature passed the law calling for equality in hotel and restaurant accommodations, it made such a difference to Black people here in Oregon. I remember for a long time before that, only Chinese restaurants would serve Blacks."

One early experience left a lasting impression on him. "When I was 10, I stopped in a store on the way home. The woman told me, 'We don't serve coloreds here.' I didn't understand. I told my mother what had happened. She cried because I'd had to face my first experience of racism alone."

A broader role in the community

Dick shares his ancestors' civic spirit. After leaving Channel 2 News, he won a race for Portland city commissioner. He remembers that when he was on the City Council, the chair of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners was African American, as were the editor of *The Oregonian*, the superintendent of Portland Public Schools and the conductor of the Oregon Symphony. He observes that there are currently no African Americans in similar positions.

Now that he's retired, Dick volunteers in many ways. He's a jazz disc jockey at the Mt. Hood Community College radio station and he writes a jazz column three times a month for *The Skanner*. He works with the Portland Police Cold Case Homicide Division. He's also on the editorial board of the Oregon Encyclopedia Project, an on-line Oregon historical encyclopedia sponsored by the Oregon Historical Society, Oregon Council of Teachers of English and PSU.

And his mother is still an inspiration. Dick says, "Although she was proud of her color and heritage, she enjoyed a mix of people and had friends of every race. She lived an inclusive life."

CASE STUDY #2

LaVerne Bagley Brown

Journeys from Injustice to Change

LaVerne Bagley Brown, born in 1929, is a first-generation Oregonian. When her dad, Donald Bagley, took a train in 1918 from Palatka, Florida, to Portland, the state of Oregon was less than 60 years old. "The fact that the Bagleys got all dressed up and came out West on a train is almost miraculous," says LaVerne. "It was certainly not the way my mother's family came here."

The James family left their farm in Meridian, Mississippi, via horse and buggy, a more common transport of the day for African Americans. They settled here in 1912.

Slavery had ended in America only half a century earlier. Although Oregon had not been a slave state, African Americans traveling to the Northwest did not receive a warm welcome. "We weren't supposed to be able to buy property," says LaVerne. "Even when we bought our property in Oregon City, the law said we shouldn't be there."

Despite the ban, both sides of the family found ways to purchase land. With seven children to feed, the Bagleys grew farm crops to supplement the father's wages from working as a janitor in Portland's theaters.

On New Year's Eve in 1934, while the family was visiting friends, their home was burned to the ground. "This was the middle of the Depression," says LaVerne. "I remember

that my father got a telephone call late that night to tell him our house was on fire. Our mother's wedding dress, our birth certificates and Christmas presents were all burned. There was no investigation. Black people's houses were often burned down by White folks."

In 1939, when she was 10, it happened again while her family was building a house at 185th and Halsey in Portland. "We had the Ku Klux Klan come to the house where we were living. They had pitchforks, axes and shovels. They're out there yelling at my folks; we're little kids standing behind our parents. We were scared to death and wondering why our

parents didn't say something. We were told, 'If you keep building that house, we're going to burn it down.' And a week later, they did burn that house down."

Education became the ladder by which the Bagley children began to climb out of poverty. "There was no segregated education," she says, "because there weren't enough Black folks to segregate. We went to Catholic school and got a good, solid education."

The family moved to Oregon City, where LaVerne and her siblings attended a one-room schoolhouse "I was the first and only Black child to graduate from Pete's Mountain Grade School."

LaVerne's 1943 graduation was especially memorable because of an encounter with discrimination that helped shape her future resolve. "We were all looking forward to our graduation luncheon in downtown Portland. The waitress said, 'We can't serve her.' She was pointing at me. You're all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, with your nice little dress on, all properly put together. It was very hurtful, but at that time you had to live with it."

Her class ended up having the grade school graduation luncheon in the new Greyhound bus depot at 5th and Taylor. The experience left a lasting impression. "I always felt injustice keenly, and still do. It was one of the reasons I went into social work. I wanted to make sure people had a proper chance."

She recalls the ordinary dreams that most teenagers had at the time, like finding jobs to help pay their way through college. "I just wanted a summer job—to be a salesgirl or an elevator operator, or wait tables. Nothing special, but all of those things were closed to us. There were a lot of things we couldn't do because of our color."

Other African Americans in Oregon were experiencing the same discrimination. LaVerne recalls, "We had very well-educated Black teachers come here in the1940s. They worked down at the railway stations and in the hotels. They had degrees and couldn't get teaching jobs. These very bright, capable people couldn't get jobs because of their color."

She remembers her grandmother, Sarah Campbell James, who worked as a cleaning woman in the train yards. "She worked like a slave. The work was hard, and her hands were all cracked from putting them in lye. I remember going with her after a long day's work to buy food in a restaurant that didn't allow Black people to eat there. My grandmother would go to the front door and insist on being served. They'd eventually give her food, but we took it home because we couldn't eat it there. The sign said, 'We reserve the right to serve whom we choose.' I came to understand that didn't include me."

After graduating from Marylhurst College, LaVerne became one of the first African American social workers in the Multnomah County child welfare department. While challenging discriminatory attitudes among her colleagues and clients at work, she became a social activist in the community.

She worked with organizations like the Urban League of Portland, and remembers when (Edwin) Bill Berry took it over. "We were so thrilled," she says. "He had enough brilliance and moxie to get White employers to understand the need for hiring African Americans. It was a very exciting time."

As a young Urban Leaguer, LaVerne registered voters along Williams Avenue when that was a completely African American community. Voting was the key to change. One hard-won achievement was getting the Exclusion Law repealed in 1952. "There were laws dictating that you couldn't live where you wanted to live, marry the person you wanted to marry or eat where you chose, even if you had the money. All those things were facing us."

In 2009, LaVerne Bagley Brown will celebrate her 80th birthday. Her energy and commitment to equality are undiminished. She is an active board member of the Urban League of Portland and volunteers in many community organizations, including Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.

Looking back, she expresses a quiet indignation about the inequities of the past and pride in what has been gained. She says there is still much to do to for African Americans to achieve equal opportunities in employment and equal treatment under the law. "I have worked against injustice for many years," she says, "but I always knew that we could change things. I still believe that we can."

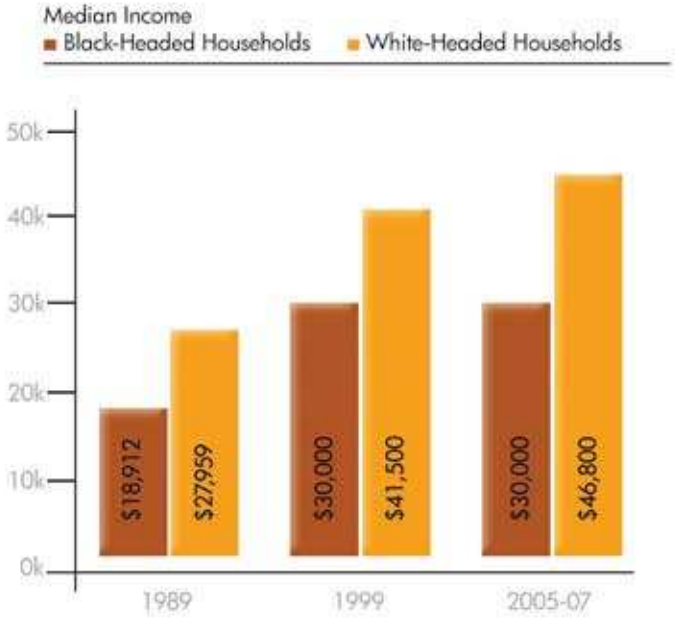
Economic Development

Minority Businesses and Employment

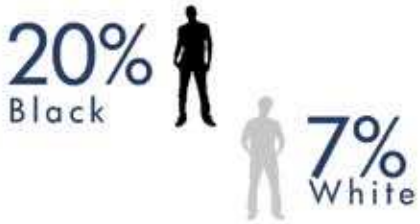
"There is in this world no such force as the force of a person determined to rise. The human soul cannot be permanently chained."

–W.E.B. Du Bois

Economic Development



Share of adults without a checking account, based upon percent of population



Share of children living in households with income below 200% of the Federal poverty level

- Median income for Black-headed households: $30,000; White-headed households: $46,800.
- Median household income of Black-headed households is less than two-thirds that of White-headed households—essentially unchanged since 1990.
- The Black male labor force participation rate is about 9 percentage points below that of White males. Black females are about 6 percentage points less likely to be in the labor force than are White females.
- 20 percent of Black adults have no checking account compared with 7 percent of White adults.
- 38 percent of Black children live in households with incomes below the poverty level; 60 percent live in households with income below 200 percent of the poverty level.
- African Americans are overrepresented in services occupations, office administration, production and transport.
- African American Oregonians are underrepresented in management professional occupations, sales and retail, construction, extraction, maintenance and forestry.

Where African Americans Stand in the New Economy

By Sheila Holden
Co-chair, Interstate Urban Renewal
Advisory Committee

As the U.S. economy struggles to climb its way out of recession, Oregon is among the states hit hard by the economic downturn. For example, the Oregon unemployment rate has been consistently one of the highest in the country. Historically, when unemployment is high in Oregon, it's even higher for African Americans. Today, the rates are shifting too fast for it to be useful to quote any specific month's figures, though currently, we have the second highest in the nation.

The firmest pathway to economic security is acquiring the skills needed to negotiate our new world economy.

The broader picture

Unemployment is just one part of the picture. In general, African Americans with jobs have lower household incomes than Whites. They have been hit harder by sub-prime mortgages, as described in another section of this report. And African American entrepreneurs, who have historically found it hard to obtain financing, have an even tougher task now.

The country and state will decide how to invest the $787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and any other economic stimulus funds that may be created in the future. In Oregon, the initial stimulus package is expected to save or create 44,000 jobs.[1] The goal is not only to kick-start the economy and repair crumbling infrastructure, but to invest in renewable energy projects that create jobs.

We must put into place specific programs to ensure that African Americans and other people of color acquire the skills necessary to compete for new energy and green collar jobs and business opportunities. One model for this is a law recently passed by the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles. It stipulates that new subsidized projects contain a strong local hire provision and that the jobs provide livable wages.

There have been numerous, but inconsistent, plans to develop a strong, economically vibrant African American community in Oregon. The Model Cities Program of the 1970s created job experience for some African Americans that led to private and public jobs, but not enough to meet the growing demand. Apprenticeship programs started by Model Cities switched over to the community colleges. To this day, few African Americans are getting in enough time as apprentices to make journeyman level in the trades.

Minority businesses face special challenges

During past program eras, African Americans found it very hard to get financing for business start-up and bonding to compete for public contracts. It's still hard. Even when state and local governments required all projects using public funds to jump-start full minority participation, little work was being awarded to African Americans.

For decades, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) ran the minority certification program and maintained the list. Many of the stimulus dollars will flow through ODOT infrastructure and transit improvements. ODOT has dropped its race-influenced program because its study said there were not enough firms to meet the capacity.

The Oregon Convention Center; TriMet's East, West and Airport Light Rail projects; Portland's $1 billion sewer project; and the Portland Housing Authority's New Columbia rebuilding project all signed on to diversity recommendations of groups like the North/Northeast Economic Development Alliance and the Interstate Urban Renewal Committee.

The results have been mixed, largely because the agencies controlling the funds did not sufficiently change their management culture and project management practices to ensure effective minority participation. Increased minority involvement was not among the key measures designed to gauge the success of their projects.

Potential prime contractors were not clearly shown how bids could be broken up to accommodate small contractors. They were also not shown how to mitigate participation hurdles like government bonding requirements for qualified sub-contractors. Nor were they required to provide meaningful on-the-job training hours for minority and women apprentices so they could advance to journeyman level.

Organizations like the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs and the Coalition of Black Men have established relationships with the region's top contracting firms. However, the results do not yet reflect a significant increase in

African American contractors' ability to grow and compete in the broader market.

TriMet's North Light Rail Project is a blueprint for how to implement a corporate cultural change effectively. The agency has worked to contract proactively with minority entrepreneurs and to build their capacity as an integral part of how it conducts business. TriMet has been held up as a national example because it committed to increased participation by minority contractors and increased minority hiring. Then it changed its business practices that had created unnecessary barriers to minority contractors. The agency met these commitments and still came in under budget and on time.

New opportunities and new challenges

Some elements of the current economic catastrophe could lead to renewed opportunity. For example, ARRA provides dollars for small business loans that could be used strategically to buy down interest rates on business lines of credit or guarantee a percentage of the loan to secure credit.

The firmest pathway to economic security is acquiring the skills needed to negotiate our new world economy. But the education system in Oregon is currently failing African American youth-seriously limiting attainment for employment and earnings growth. Parents and school administrators must determine what methods produce successful graduation rates. We need to inspire youth to pursue careers in the new green economy; partner with businesses to develop apprenticeships in both traditional jobs and the new sustainable industries; and promote higher education for African American youth through a loan system that allows costs to be offset by community service upon graduation.

(L to R)
Bethany Miller Belzberg and Simone and Sam Brooks of Brooks Staffing

Employment Patterns Among African Americans in Oregon

By Dr. Karen J. Gibson,
Associate Professor, Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning
Portland State University

Unemployment among African Americans in Oregon is unacceptably high. Today the country is gripped by the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, as indicated by bank failures, the frozen credit system, housing foreclosures and mass layoffs. If our double-digit unemployment rate is considered a crisis, then African Americans in Oregon have been living in crisis mode for years.

How many are working?

The official unemployment rates show that African American males are twice as likely to be unemployed as their male counterparts overall. The decennial census shows that African American male and female unemployment rates have been at their current level (roughly 15 and 10 percent respectively) since the late 1970s.[1]

Yet even these figures do not capture the real level of employment distress. The official unemployment rate only includes those in the government's monthly survey who report looking for a job in the prior four weeks. It does not count marginal workers (who searched for a job in the recent past), or discouraged workers (who want to work but have given up looking) or part-time workers who'd rather work full time. The Bureau of Labor Statistics includes these groups in its "underemployment rate." In the most recent data for Oregon, 19 percent of African American women were underemployed, and 27 percent of African American men.[2]

How much are they earning?

Having a job is no guarantee of a livable wage, or of a wage that matches your neighbor's. "Occupational segregation" (or "occupational crowding") helps explain lasting patterns of lower median household incomes for African Americans in Oregon. This "crowding" most often reflects gender, but race remains a strong factor in the segregation of particular occupations. For example, African American women did not break into office occupations in a meaningful way until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s opened up employment opportunities.

1805 **1844** 1848 1854 1857 1859 1865 1866 1867 1868

historical timeline

Slavery is declared illegal in the Oregon Country and the original exclusion law, called the "Lash Law," is passed.

Because management and professional occupations provide the highest earnings, under-representation in these jobs can explain a significant part of the racial disparity in earnings. Even when studies hold differences in educational levels constant, African American workers tend to be under-represented in most management and professional occupations, especially within private employment.

When workers are crowded out of one category, such as management and professional occupations, they are crowded into another, such as sales, service or office jobs. Significant racial differences are found especially in production, transportation and material-moving occupations, where African American males are much more likely to work than males overall. This is partially explained by their under-representation in construction, extraction, maintenance and repair occupations.

Some workers can't compete for certain jobs because of their lack of education and skills. In Oregon, 19 percent of African Americans have a bachelor's degree, vs. 28 percent of all Oregonians. In Portland, the disparity is greater—15 percent vs. 38 percent.[3]

Others lack the work experience to compete. Portland's Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods found that lack of work experience played a major role in preventing young adults from attaching to the labor market.[4]

On the other hand, some qualified workers may not find employers who will hire them. For example, unions have historically kept African Americans from moving into skilled labor occupations in precision craft employment, such as carpentry, plumbing and construction. The last AFL-CIO affiliate erased "Whites only" provisions from its bylaws and constitution in 1964.[5]

African American contractors face barriers gaining access to government contracts because of racial bias, as documented in the Oregon Regional Consortium Disparity Study, conducted on behalf of 10 government agencies during the mid-1990s.[6] And the effect trickles down; African American contractors are more likely to hire workers of color, so a barrier to the contractor has a broad impact.

How can we change these patterns?

To reduce these disastrously high levels of unemployment, first we have to recognize that they're a problem. Some Oregonians seem to be in denial about the institutionalized racism that has truncated access to opportunity. Yes, many African Americans have achieved their dreams here. But we must recognize that the historical legacy of housing, school and occupational segregation has resulted in a pattern of "cumulative causation" that perpetuates the cycle of unemployment, poverty and low educational attainment.

African Americans in Oregon have long challenged disparate treatment in the school system and job market. During World War II, they fought segregation in the shipyards when the Boilermakers' Union tried to force them into a separate "auxiliary," where they paid dues but had no voting rights. Bill Berry, the first Urban League director in Portland, wrote that "boilermakers' thinking" permeated Portland and that its methods of racial adjustment were used widely by civic and social groups.[7] For example, a Portland Teachers' Association group recommended a segregated and non-voting PTA for African Americans.

Forty years ago the City Club of Portland documented systematic racial discrimination in our institutions of employment, schooling, housing, welfare, recreation and police in the 1968 "Report on Problems of Racial Justice in Portland." The report concluded that the common thread among all problem areas was "governmental neglect of citizen involvement."[8]

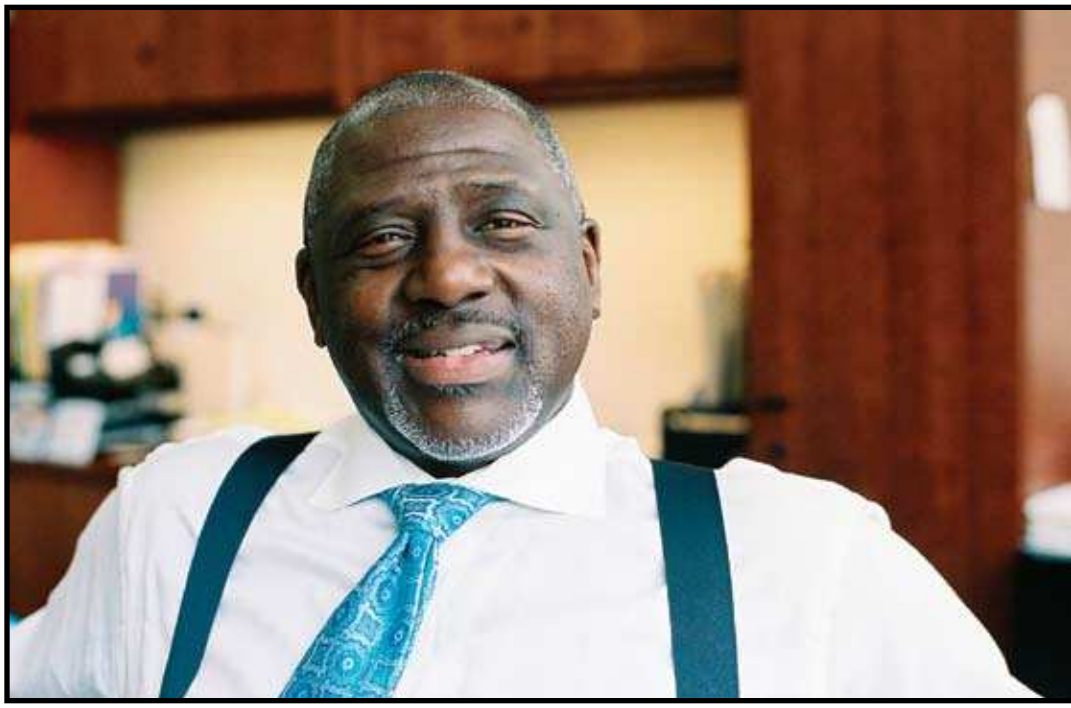
Today, despite many good intentions, top-down planning that does not adequately address the needs and concerns of residents remains a problem. Real public involvement empowers community members to define issues and solutions and doesn't just placate them. Genuine, sustained efforts for more and better jobs require a critical mass, a momentum that is hard to attain because of the small size of the African American population and its historic isolation within spatial boundaries.

The difficulty is compounded in the current economic crisis, which is raising unemployment rates among all workers. But it is an urgent task that can no longer be put off if we are ever to achieve equality of opportunity *and* results in our society.

African American workers tend to be under-represented in most management and professional occupations, especially within private employment.

CASE STUDY #1

Bruce Feathers Shares What Minority-Owned Businesses Need to Grow and Thrive



Ten years ago, **Bruce Feathers,** founder and CEO of Featherlite Enterprises, came away from Burger King with more than a hamburger. After watching employees on their feet for long periods of time in a fast-paced environment, he had a "Eureka!" moment. His idea was to combine the comfort of athletic shoes with the steel-toed safety of work boots. Since then, he has piloted his company from an idea into a multi-product business with sales of several million dollars per year.

Featherlite Enterprises produces and sells disposable gloves to food industry giants like McDonald's, Burger King and Outback Steakhouse. Featherlite probably produced those parking meter stickies you affix to your car window. And Featherlite still makes those safety boots. "For many minority businesses," Bruce says, "diversity is a safety mechanism. I didn't purposely set out that way, but the more you can do that is efficient and profitable—you do."

This philosophy has helped grow the company into one of the few minority-owned businesses of size in the state. "Financing is the biggest barrier for minority businesses," Bruce says. "It's hard for them to get bank loans, equity financing and venture capital. It's always a problem. You cobble together financing the best you can. Every story is different, but it's usually by hook or by crook."

Community banks and community reinvestment programs were set up to address some of the disparity in lending, but have had only limited success. "Funding is an issue in the beginning," Bruce says "and at the point of growth, development and expansion. Businesses don't make it unless they grow, and in order to grow you need working capital."

The limited availability of growth capital for minority businesses also makes it difficult to attract minority business talent. Graduates with degrees from business institutions tend to be recruited into large corporations and majority-owned firms.

Despite these obstacles, Featherlite has successfully grown by forging strategic alliances. "Minority business owners who lack adequate capital should focus on strategic alliances to get them to the next level," he says, "even though it may mean giving up some of the profit. It takes millions of dollars to import container loads of gloves from China or Malaysia. I could never get that kind of capital from banks, despite our profitability status."

As its importer, Featherlite used a majority-owned company with a $3 million line of credit at the bank. "We had to give up some of our profit, but those are the decisions you make. Through those partnerships we have been able to go from a local business to securing national customers. Getting 70 percent of something is better than 100 percent of nothing. And minority business owners must be able to look at the markets strategically and grow the best way they can."

Where public policy fits in

One way to aid growth is ensuring more support for *large* businesses in public and private lending policies and economic development strategies. Public financing organizations use most of their funds to finance start-up businesses. "We need a clear distinction between financing start-up companies and financing businesses of size," Bruce says. "They play different roles in the marketplace."

Bruce argues that start-up businesses tend to be in service or retail. They do not create jobs on a large scale or contribute to economic development the way minority businesses of size can do. Larger firms need targeted programs to help spur growth.

Supplier diversity programs are another way to help minority businesses gain in market share. Supplier diversity demonstrates the commitment of corporate America to do business with minority-owned enterprises. Many Fortune 500 companies have supplier diversity programs on some level. That commitment to reach out to minority enterprises usually extends to their prime contractors. The aim is to increase procurement from certified minority businesses each year.

Bruce points out that in the 21st century there is a strong business case for supplier diversity. "By 2050, United States communities will be 50 percent people of color. This brings access to growing markets and a diverse labor pool. It also makes available the cultural creativity and tenacity of people who know how to beat the odds."

In the public sector, recent legal challenges to affirmative action have made cities, counties and states more cautious about diversity programs. Some such programs have been dismantled. Those that remain usually have few or no enforcement mechanisms. However, partnerships of minority business advocates and non-profits may produce results in promoting supplier diversity.

Such collaborations encouraged the City of Portland to review its procurement practices for goods and services. The aim was to examine its relationship with certified minority-owned firms. Bruce was in the group that conducted that review. "We were able to cherry-pick some successful elements of the best supplier diversity programs, and the city adopted them. Portland is in a two-year process of rolling out that program. It shows that there are things that the public sector can do."

A positive measurement would be a marked increase in the number of contracts currently held by minority firms, and in the use of small minority businesses by the city's "first tier" suppliers. Bruce says, "Public agencies in Oregon need to learn from the private sector and implement key items of their programs to the best of their ability. We would like to see standardized programs in our state, cities and counties that become the norm for procurement-the rule rather than the exception."

Looking back over his 10 years of entrepreneurship, Bruce shares a few of his top business tips for minority businesses just starting out:

- Find financial partners. You must be able to attract venture capital and equity investors to get the attention of local banks.
- Establish major international partners. The marketplace is global and you must look at your business that way.
- Create family wage jobs. Generate wealth, but bring some folks along the way.
- Support the non-profit community. Most minority entrepreneurs remember their own roots, but sometimes they don't know how to give back. Always contribute to the quality of life in the community. It's important to keep community organizations afloat and successful.

"You cobble together financing the best you can."

CASE STUDY #2

Quandray Robertson

Provides More Than Just Trim

Tucked around the corner of Salem's Union and High streets, in an unremarkable parade of shops that's easy to miss, is the heart and soul of the city's African American community—Q's Corner Barbershop, owned by Quandray Robertson.

Even at 10 in the morning the place is bustling. Two barbers keep up a steady stream of chatter with customers in their barber's chairs. Young men shoot pool in another corner under a gallery of boxing photos. Children play in other parts of the shop while their moms or dads catch up on the news.

1854 **1857** 1859 1865 1866 1867 1868 1870 1872 1914

historical timeline

A new exclusion law is added to the state constitution's Bill of Rights: African Americans can't reside, own property, work or vote in Oregon.

African Americans in Salem, including day commuters who work in the capital but live in Portland, acknowledge the shop as the hub of their small community. "The barbershop is our get-away spot," says William J. Williams, one of Q's barbers. "People come here to hang out, laugh and talk about anything and everything."

It's especially the place for boxing fans to follow the sport. Quandray, a former welterweight boxer, coaches local youth and opens the shop to the community to watch the big matches.

Getting started

Q's Corner Barbershop would not exist without the determination and creativity of Quandray Robertson and the support of his family and friends. "I moved here from Portland 10 years ago," says Quandray. "I wanted to have a slower pace and a focus on family life. I applied for loans from several banks to open my shop and was turned down by all of them."

Like many other African American small business owners, he raised the money from his family and friends instead of a bank loan. He also invested his boxing prize money in the business. He says, "I could say that race was a factor, but I was determined to succeed in spite of it, not fail because of it."

Since then he has become an advisor and mentor to others who are trying to start their own businesses. Salem doesn't have enough support or resources available to minority entrepreneurs. A lot of them don't know where to go for start-up information, like the Small Business Association.

Quandray says, "I've become sort of a 'go-to' man for Blacks, Latinos and Whites in our neighborhood who are interested in opening a business. I pass on information that people need if they're going to be successful."

He's one of the most familiar faces in Salem, and he advises anyone starting a business to get out from behind the counter, speak directly to the community and see what's on people's minds. "That's worked for me and my business. I found my niche here, and I'm proud of what we've been able to give back to the community."

CASE STUDY #3

Eleza Faison Launches onto Rough Economic Seas

Coffee shops and baristas are part of the Portland landscape. But before Eleza Faison established AJ Java in 2003, very few, if any, were owned by African Americans.

Eleza grew up in North Portland and wanted to start an upscale community space for old hands and newer residents to get together and re-build a sense of neighborhood. She left a lucrative corporate job to start the business, and in the first few years opened at two locations. She was asked to open a third location in the New Columbia housing development, and in 2008, a fourth store was opened in Southwest Portland.

Like every business owner, Eleza has an eye on the economic downturn and worries that many businesses like hers may not survive. However, her smart business practices have left AJ Java well set up. The diversity of providing coffee to stores, co-op markets, restaurants and coffee shops throughout the country has let AJ Java balance its fiscal burdens better than most.

Since its opening, AJ has fostered community involvement. Eleza works with groups that have the community's best interests at heart, such as the African American Chamber of Commerce, Rosemary Anderson Alternative School and Rigler Elementary School. She says, "My mission was not only to build wealth for my family, but also to build capacity for people of color in Portland. I'll continue to donate my goods and services to help these and many other organizations in benefiting the community. Unfortunately, the realities of the current economy have forced us to limit what we can do."

At present, AJ Java has already been forced to close two locations due to the economic downturn. Eleza is relying on diverse revenue sources and a great reputation as a community establishment to get AJ Java through whatever lies ahead.

1859 **1865** 1866 1867 1868 1870 1872 1883 1914 1926

historical timeline

The 13th Amendment, banning slavery in the United States, passes by referendum in Oregon.

CASE STUDY #4

Richard Harris

Balances Two Jobs - CPA and Role Model

Richard R. Harris, PC, is one of just a handful of Oregon CPA-licensed accounting agencies with an African American owner. The firm offers everything from audits to tax preparation services. It also provides the community, especially African American youth, with a strong example of the kind of business one can develop with work and dedication.

The company has remained profitable while keeping pace with the increasing complexity of tax laws and ever tougher standards for providing auditing and accounting services. Even so, the cold economic climate has caused Richard to lower fees to stay competitive. He hopes to avoid any more major adjustments to survive the current economic slump.

Like any other accountant, Richard could benefit from policy changes that help small business. He says, "Business income tax is a particular burden on small businesses, and more should be done to relieve some of that burden."

But it's his customers that Richard believes will get him through hard times. "It's the loyal clients of small businesses like this one that speak volumes about a firm's merits and stability."

1865 **1866** 1867 1868 1870 1872 1883 1914 1926 1927

historical timeline

Oregon's citizens do not pass the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship to African Americans, and the state's ban on interracial marriages is extended.

CASE STUDY #5

Just as Jeana Woolley

Finds Her Niche, the Funds Dry Up

Jeana Woolley rises to meet her challenges—and there have been a few. After leaving her job in real estate development at Pacific Development Inc., a subsidiary of PacifiCorp, she decided to strike out on her own in 1991 as a developer and development consultant. The time was ripe, given the city's reinvestment in Inner-Eastside Portland.

But the first challenge was finding the start-up funds to launch her business. She took some money out of her pension fund and started to market her community economic development, planning and real estate skills. Jeana says, "I prayed that I could start making a living at it before my start-up resources ran out."

During her first years in business, Jeana did economic development and predevelopment consulting work. She later went on to complete her first big fee development project. Neither was the pathway to wealth and security. She says, "You get a one-time development fee, but you may work three years to get the project financed and under construction. You collect the bulk of your development fee at the very end of the project."

Jeana found her niche as an independent developer. "But without any savings or capital to work with, I've had to compete to do projects that were in the public arena for the most part, where there's public financing available to help get things done. I've also had to rely on credit to survive the period before the payday."

As a developer, Jeana has more often followed her heart than the big dollars. Her portfolio includes a low-cost senior housing complex, Allen Fremont Plaza, and the award–winning, sustainable commercial condominium project, Vanport Square, that she developed with business partner Ray Leary.

Jeana says, "I love what I do because the projects provide economic benefits for the community. What would otherwise be profit gets reinvested back into the project to accomplish those goals."

The economic downturn has stalled her current project in development. She urges the federal government to ensure that the remaining stimulus funds to shore up the banking industry are pushed down to American consumers and small businesses. "Small developers are completely sidelined. We don't have the capital to play in this marketplace, and banks aren't lending."

1867 **1868** 1870 1872 1883 1914 1926 1927 1929 1931

historical timeline

The 14th Amendment passes in Oregon.

CASE STUDY #6

Marco Shaw's Restaurant Starts Well, but the Economy Forces Changes

Marco Shaw, owner and manager of Fife Restaurant in Portland, and his wife moved from Santa Fe six years ago. This seemed an ideal place to start a business. It was smaller and more affordable than a bigger city like San Francisco, and the Fremont area, where he set up Fife, seemed ripe for new restaurants. Fife was one of the first higher-end restaurants in that neighborhood.

It was also one of the few Portland restaurants owned by an African American. When Marco started Fife, he was really on his own. He didn't receive much technical or financial assistance. In fact, in the first two years, the main ingredient of his success was his customers' word of mouth. The word spread and the business thrived.

Over the years, Marco has had to rely on the expertise he gained before arriving in Portland to develop and maintain his business. And despite his solo efforts, he's worked to put down roots in his adopted neighborhood by using his restaurant for local school and non-profit fund-raisers.

Although Fife was once one of a handful of restaurants in its neighborhood, it's now one of many, all vying for customers. And in such hard economic times, many of the challenges that Marco overcame at first are beginning to re-emerge. The increased competition, rising permit costs and taxes have made Fife begin to feel the effects of the economic downturn. Marco is no longer able to offer his employees health insurance benefits, and most of his charitable giving is on hold for the time being.

Marco believes that more could be done to support business in minority communities. For example, he feels inner city development money could be better directed. He says, "Development funds have been channeled into parts of Portland, like the downtown area and the Pearl District, that don't need it as badly as North/Northeast Portland."

Marco wants to see an economic initiative that can help the African American population, including more small business loans for minorities and women. He advocates for tax breaks to businesses that provide new jobs. He says, "When it comes to opening a business in this city right now, it's as if you're on an island."

Since this interview, Marco has closed Fife and moved to Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, where he will be head chef at a new restaurant. Marco says he wants to raise his kids in a more diverse community and closer to other family members.

1870 **1872** 1883 1914 1926 1926 1929 1931 1933 1941

historical timeline

As a result of William Brown's struggle for equal access to public education, the Portland school district votes to include African American schools in the public school system.

CASE STUDY #7

Bernadette Artharee

Weathers Economic Storms

Coast Industries is one of the oldest minority-owned businesses in Oregon. Bernadette Artharee is president of this family business that provides commercial and government building maintenance and security services in several states. Her son, Hasan Artharee, serves as vice-president of sales and operations.

Her father, Henry D. Scott, started the company in 1957 as a part-time business. Over time, he invested more into it with the help of his large family, who relocated to Portland in the 1940s. The company expanded quickly, and in the early 60s, Coast joined the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Bernadette says, "My father always wanted to build a business that would create security for the family and ensure that all company employees received a living wage with health care benefits."

Today, Coast Industries employs 140 people nationally. In addition to Portland, Coast has worked extensively in New Orleans at the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility, where it's provided site services to NASA for 15 years. Coast has also served as a core business in its community, with 90 percent of its workforce being African American. It also partners with 10 other minority- or women-owned firms.

The company has been able to provide competitive wages, health benefits and long-term training. Despite hard economic times, Coast Industries has continued to support various non-profits that serve the community.

However, the changing economic landscape has certainly affected Coast Industries. While the company showed a profit in 2008, Bernadette is concerned about the future. She remains optimistic: "This company has been successful for over 52 years. We have the gift of time and experience on our side as we face current economic conditions. Having survived financial times like these before, we fully intend to weather this storm. Customers always want what we offer, which is value in price, quality and service."

During the recession of the 1980s, Coast was one of the few companies to grow in revenue due to the expansion of government contracting, and they will be focusing on this market again. She says, " Now more than ever, minority businesses need to be competitive. Low-interest loans, lower health care costs and access to short-term capital will bring expanded opportunities."

1883 **1914** 1926 1927 1929 1931 1933 1937 1941 1945

historical timeline

The Portland chapter of the NAACP is founded– the oldest continually chartered chapter west of the Mississippi River.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Insert equity into economic recovery.** The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has made billions of dollars available for Oregon to invest in infrastructure, education, transportation, renewable energy and the jobs these represent. The state's economic stimulus strategy must be transparently accountable. It must ensure that job creation, training and support services connect low-income people and minorities to jobs, including non-traditional ones where African Americans and women are under-represented, such as construction and "green" technologies. A good model to study is Chicago's Climate Action Plan, which provides escape routes from poverty for the most underprivileged populations in the city.

- **Increase access to capital financing;** it's essential for a healthy business environment. Policy-makers and regulators must recognize that barriers to such capital undermine the viability of minority entrepreneurship. African American firm owners are less likely to have bank loans of any kind, and they are often charged higher interest rates. Financial institutions must be encouraged to develop and monitor equity financing for these businesses, whether small start-ups or those seeking to expand. Cities must also commit to keeping economic development dollars in the budget, even in these economically hard times, and to distributing them in a way that assists minority businesses.

- **Strongly enforce contracting opportunity goals** at the federal, state and local levels to ensure greater minority participation. Review the goals' compliance and effectiveness and proactively match contracting agencies with potential minority contractor firms of various sizes. Agencies should make RFPs easier to access and operate a transparent bidding process. They should conduct ongoing disparity studies with the viewpoint that increased minority involvement is a measure of a project's success. Legislation such as SB894, 894 and 896 in the 2009 state legislature, calling on the state to adopt a diversity plan for on the job training, and construction contracting, should be supported.

- **Make work pay.** When Oregon and national policy-makers ushered in welfare reform in the mid-1990s, they called for personal responsibility and a return to work. Rather than fund a permanent income transfer program, government promised to help low-income families with children find and keep living wage jobs.Oregon has not kept up its side of the bargain. For our most vulnerable families, a transition from welfare to work comes with very high marginal tax rates. Increase your earnings and food assistance declines, tax credits turn into tax liabilities and childcare co-payments spike. For too many, it simply doesn't pay to work.

- **Expand the Oregon Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** to remedy these work disincentives. Passed with bipartisan support in 1997, the Oregon EITC is set at only 6 percent of the federal credit. Increasing the credit to 18 percent would cut taxes for one in seven Oregon households and smooth the transition out of poverty and into work.

- **Improve the affordability of childcare.** The state's Employment Related Day Care program is one of the least generous in the nation. Oregon should guarantee childcare help to families with incomes up to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

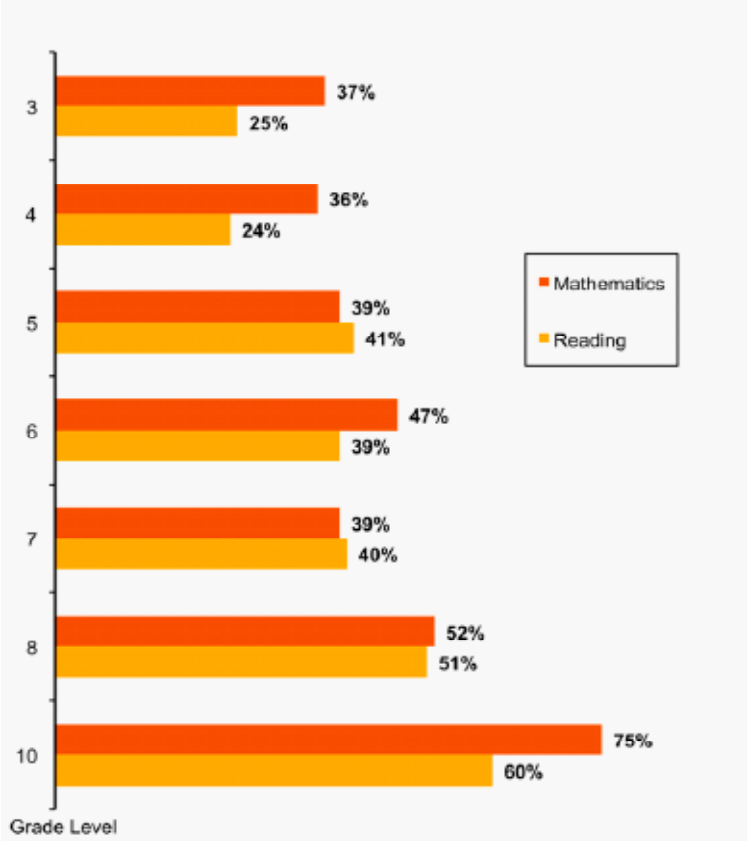
Education

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

–Nelson Mandela

Education

Percent of African American Students Not Meeting the Oregon Standards in Mathematics and Reading 2007 - 2008



Source: Oregon Department of Education (2009a). Statewide report card 2007-08: An annual report to the legislature on Oregon public schools

According to 2007 -2008 State report card, by the time African American students reach the 10th grade:

- 60 percent do not meet reading standards.
- 75 percent do not meet mathematics standards.
- 63 percent do not meet writing standards.

- During the 2006-2007 school year, Black high school students were nearly twice as likely as White students to be expelled or suspended.

- The Black-White difference share of students meeting or exceeding state benchmarks grows dramatically with grade level. For example, in 2006-07, 74 percent of Black students met or exceeded the third grade reading benchmark compared with 88 percent of White students—a 14 percentage point difference. By 10th grade, only 38 percent met or exceeded the benchmark compared with 68 percent of White students— a 28 percentage point difference.

- 68 percent of Black students graduate on time compared with 85 percent of White students. For the 2006-07 school year, ODE recorded a dropout rate of Black students that was about twice the rate for White students (7.1 percent vs. 3.6 percent).

- 32 percent of the Black graduating class of 2006 have enrolled in an Oregon public university or college (through Spring 2008); compared with 47 percent of White students have.

The African American Experience in Oregon's System of Public Education

By Joyce Braden Harris
Co-chair, African American Alliance

In his inaugural address, President Barack Obama summed up the reality of this country's public education: "Our schools fail too many."

For years, African Americans have struggled to achieve educational equity. Oregon is no exception. Far too many Africa American youth are at risk academically for a variety of reasons, including uneven exposure to high quality instruction and low expectations. They're over-represented in special education and under-represented in advanced placement classes and programs for the talented and gifted. They experience bias in disciplinary actions and have high dropout rates. They have less access to college and inadequate preparation for it.

Are African American youth in an educational crisis?

As of the 2007-2008 school year, 3 percent of Oregon public school students were African American.[1] The *2007-2008 Statewide Report Card: An Annual Report to the Legislature on Oregon Public Schools* developed by the Oregon Department of Education tracks the number of students who met or exceeded Oregon standards. The chart shows first the percentage of African American students who did not meet or exceed the standards in reading, mathematics, and writing, followed by the percentage who did meet or exceed the standards.

1914 **1926** 1927 1929 1931 1933 1937 1941 1945 1947

historical timeline

Oregon repeals its exclusion law, amending the state constitution to remove it from the Bill of Rights.

These academic disparities using "meet or exceed" benchmarks increase as students progress by grade level.

In the 2006-07 school year, 7.1 percent of African American students in grades 9-12 dropped out of school, vs. 4.2 percent of all students.[5] In that year, the graduation rate for African American students was 68.1 percent, down from 69.1 percent in 2005-06.[6]

The school experiences of African American males have placed them at great risk of failure throughout the educational pipeline. Schools are often not welcoming, supportive and engaging environments for them. They are disciplined more harshly and frequently than Whites. Many have said that they were "pushed" out of school.[7]

These persistent achievement gaps and other disparities have grave consequences. Dropping out of school leads to a future of unemployment and underemployment. Differential treatment in the criminal justice system, decreased access to health care and limited access to college all combine to limit the prospect of a prosperous, successful future.

How can we make a difference?

African American students can perform well academically when they have school environments similar to those of traditionally high-achieving students. A recent longitudinal study examined academic outcomes in mathematics for low-income, middle school African American, Latino and White students. Regardless of race, these students did well due to greater engagement in academic activities; an internal locus of control; positive school attitude; and positive self-esteem.[8]

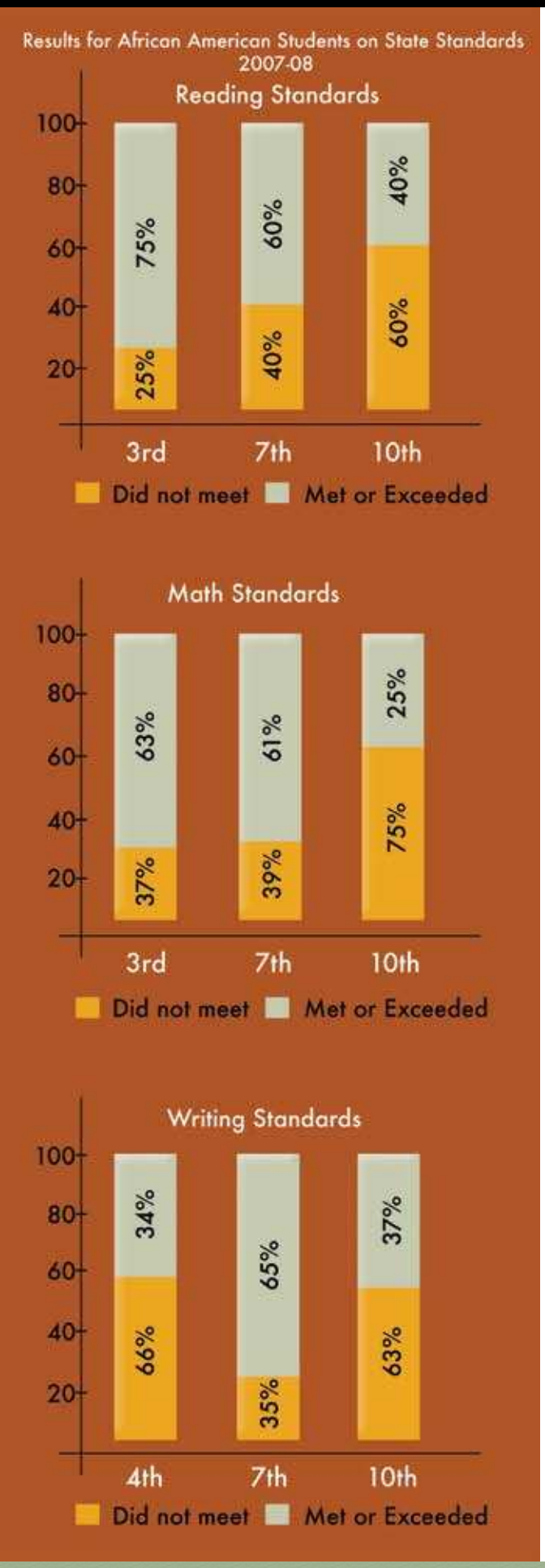
School characteristics that contributed to their academic resilience included: caring and supportive teachers; a safe and orderly school environment; positive expectations for everyone; opportunities for productive and meaningful engagement in school; and partnerships between the school and family. These characteristics of effective schools appeared to be more important for African American students than for other racial groups.

Historical context of education for African Americans in Oregon

Since Oregon became a state, African Americans have had to fight for their right to a quality, non-racist public education. In the 1800s, Oregon courts ruled against parents who tried to appeal the practice of segregated schools. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in its Brown vs. Board of Education decision that racially segregated schools denied children equal education and were inherently illegal. But eight years later, most of the schools in Northeast Portland were still racially segregated.

Portland Public Schools (PPS) started a one-way busing program that placed an unequal burden on African American students. When the community asked for *two*-way busing, the federal Office of Civil Rights ruled that the existing program complied with the law.

During the 1970s, the Black United Front (BUF) formed to address the inequitable treatment and achievement gaps of African American students in Portland. The BUF led school boycotts, protested at school board meetings, and trained parents as advocates.



One BUF achievement was the hiring of pre-eminent educator Dr. Asa G. Hilliard as PPS' chief desegregation consultant. Another was the creation of Harriet Tubman Middle School in Northeast Portland to serve students living in the area.

Another BUF milestone was the Simon-McWilliams Report, a blueprint that identified strategies to help all students reach their highest potential. The PPS board accepted the Simon-McWilliams Report in 2001.[9] The adoption resolution called for curriculum aligned with standards, frequent student progress assessment, reports to the community, and the recruitment and retention of culturally competent staff. PPS would also identify teachers with demonstrated success in teaching low-performing students and use them to help develop curriculum and effective educational strategies.

The district developed an action plan in 2003 and assessed the challenges it faced.[10] These included existing achievement gaps; lack of leadership, communication and district-wide targets; and unique needs of high-priority schools.

Many of these challenges still exist today and are not unique to PPS. All districts should assess how they have met these challenges and what the academic outcomes have been for African American students.

And there are additional challenges. For example, the University of Oregon announced in February 2009 its decision to raise the GPA requirement for freshman enrollment to 3.4 and to include a writing sample in its admission requirements. Currently, a lower percentage of African American students enroll in college than Whites. Given existing disparities in academic achievement, this new policy will make it even harder for them to earn a college degree.

Where do we go from here?

Hard-won changes are not sustained or comprehensive without ongoing advocacy and civic engagement. We must continue to educate the public, involve families and enlist support from a broad range of business, faith-based, government and community organizations. As William H. McClendon wrote, "We must remain in a perpetual state of resistance and involved in an eternal quest for justice and liberation."[11]

Achievement Gaps in Oregon's Results on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress

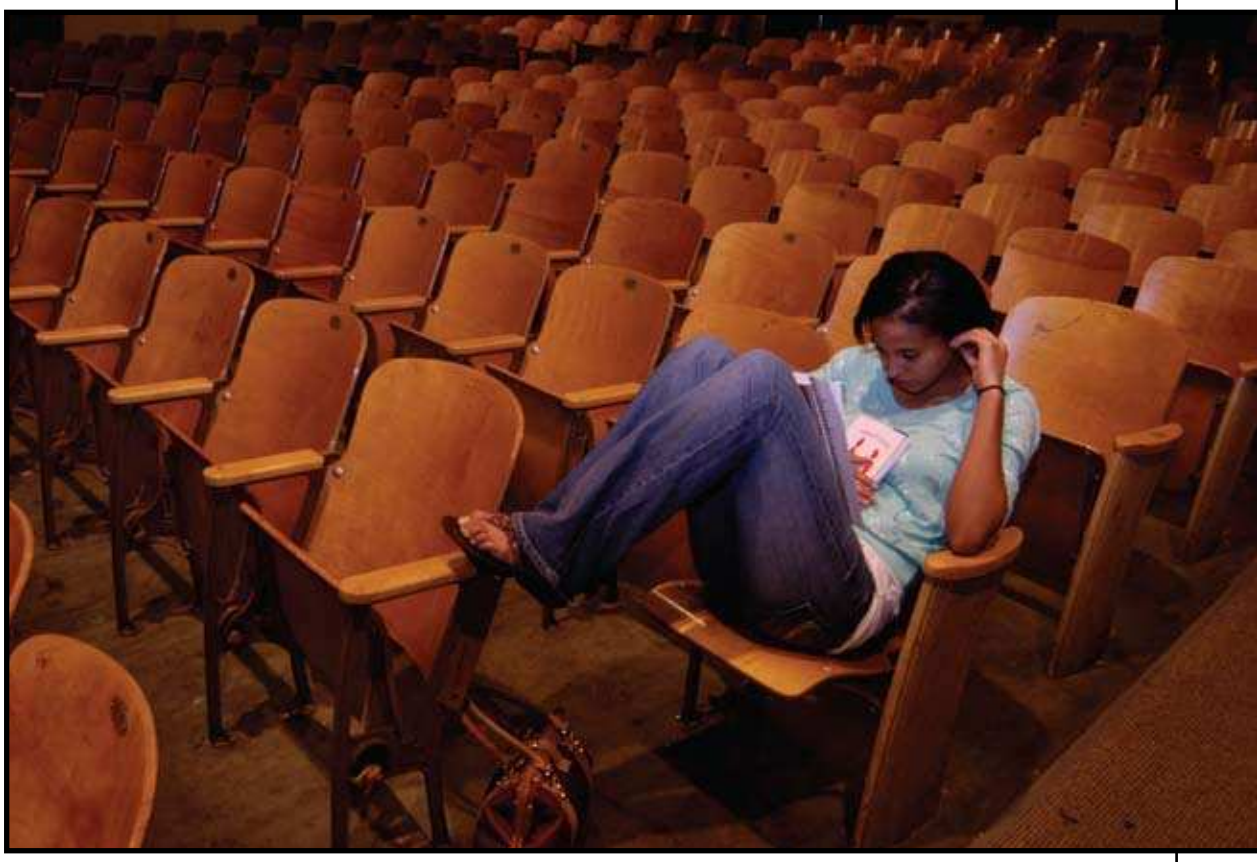
• In 2007, Black students in the 4th grade had an average reading score that was lower than that of White students by 25 points. In 1998, the average score for Black students was lower than that of White students by 25 points.

• In 2007, Black students in the 8th grade had an average reading score that was lower than that of White students by 20 points. In 1998, the average reading score for Black students was lower than that of White students by 30 points.

• In 2007 the achievement gap in math between African American and White students in 4th grade was 22 points. According to NAEP this is a "large gap."

• In 2007 the achievement gap between African American and White students in 8th grade math was 17 points. According to NAEP this is a "mid-sized to large gap."

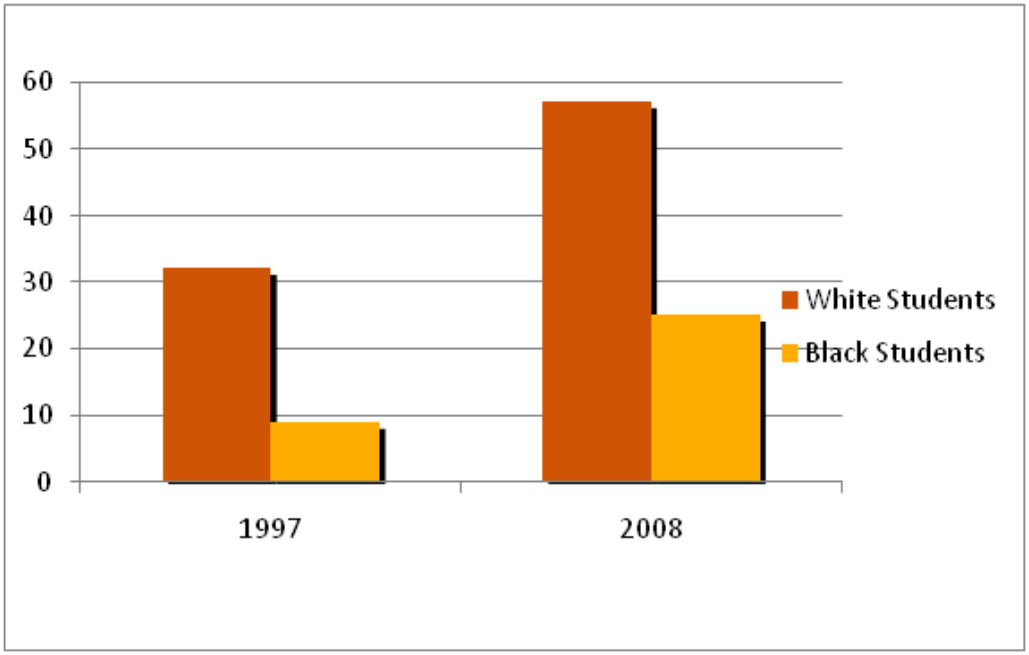
"Achievement gap is a difference in what distinct groups of students know and can do in important subjects such as math and reading." (National Assessment of Educational Progress, U.S. Department of Education)



A Call to Eliminate Disparity in Achievement

Carolyn Leonard, Compliance Officer, Portland Public Schools

Education is key to resolving all other issues that African Americans face—employment, housing, incarceration rates, quality of life, self-sufficiency, etc. Over the course of the last decade, we have made little headway in eliminating the disparity in achievement. When controlling for demographic characteristics including race, an achievement disparity between African American students and White students persists.



Percent of Black and White students meeting state benchmarks in Math, 1997 and 2008.

The disparity in achievement as measured by a single State test administered once each year hardly relays how grave the problem of under-education is for African American students. Further, there is a fundamental flaw when one uses only multiple choice test items to measure learning. To eliminate the predictability of the achievement disparities between different racial groups, there must be a call for a new pedagogy and multi-dimensional measures that allow schools and the greater society to honor and value what students bring to the learning environment. We must move beyond the sole objective that African Americans need to "catch up" to White students. Oregon standards currently fall below those of many other states, and the United States standards are below those of other industrialized nations in the world.

African American students at all levels must be able to access Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. They, like their White peers, must have experienced teachers who are culturally competent and can successfully teach diverse student populations. All inequities, including lower expectations for African Americans, over-identification for special educations and under identification for Talented and Gifted (TAG) must be addressed and subsequently eliminated.

Community Colleges Provide

A Middle Path to Success

By Dr. Algie Gatewood
President, Portland Community College:
Cascade Campus

It's well known that most living-wage jobs require at least some education beyond high school, if not a professional certification or a two-year degree. It's also common knowledge that community college is the fastest and most reasonably priced path to such jobs.

In the Oregon university system, growth in minority enrollment has not kept pace with the growth of minorities as a proportion of Oregon residents. From 1998 to 2007, their enrollment in the Oregon university system grew from 12 to 14 percent, while the state's overall minority population grew from 14 to 18 percent.[1]

Among minority groups, African Americans are the exception, with an enrollment percentage that matches their overall representation in the population.[2] As of the fall of 2008, there were 1,707 African American students in the system, about 2 percent of the total student population.

Contrast this with the Oregon community college system, where in 2006-2007, African Americans enrolled at a rate that was 145 percent of their proportion in the general population. This trend held true across the major ethnic categories—124 percent for Asian Americans, 130 percent for Latinos, and 171 percent for Native Americans.[3] As of the fall of 2008, Oregon community colleges had 6,481 African American students, just shy of 2.9 percent of those students who disclosed their ethnicity.[4]

Since Oregon's four-year colleges and universities are recognized for the quality of their programs, much of this enrollment difference is likely due to their significantly greater cost. This can be an especially heavy burden for minority families. But cost isn't the only factor; non-mainstream students also choose community colleges for their flexible scheduling, skill-set training and diverse culture.

1926 **1927** 1929 1931 1933 1937 1941 1945 1947 1948

historical timeline

The Oregon State Constitution is finally amended to remove a clause denying African Americans the right to vote.

Community colleges offer unique advantages

On average, young people from non-mainstream backgrounds face more obstacles to higher education than White students. Many bright and capable minority students feel pressure to postpone college and start working right after high school. Or they have to combine work and school. For them, evening (and sometimes weekend) classes at community colleges can mean the difference between going to college or not.

Likewise, community colleges offer the simplest, most direct route for students whose primary goal is quickly entering a specific field, such as nursing. Many community colleges offer streamlined or condensed programs that lead straight to a professional certification or two-year degree in a career that a student knows is in demand in the workplace.

However, such students don't have to end their education after two years. The flexibility of a community college offers a "middle path" to a living-wage position that can broaden their future educational options, such as a transfer to a four-year program.

In the current time of economic duress, when jobs and stability are in short supply, the reasons to choose community colleges are stronger. The need to acquire skills and gainful employment quickly now cuts across all lines of race, gender and class. The role of community colleges as engines of workforce development has never been more essential.

How to reach more families with more focused educational programs

What should we do to ensure maximum access to community colleges for minority students? First, we need a concerted effort to remove as many financial barriers to enrollment as possible. Tuition and fee increases should be limited as much as is feasible. Despite dire budget predictions, the state should make more scholarship, grant and loan funds available to current and prospective minority students.

The state's community colleges should mount an informational campaign designed specifically to inform students of color (and their parents/guardians) about these resources. According to a recent study, nearly 75 percent of African American parents and 67 percent of Latino parents did not identify scholarships as a source of financial aid, compared with 53 percent of White parents. And nearly 50 percent of all low-income and ethnic minority parents strongly indicated a need for more information about how to pay for college.[5]

Second, we should clearly identify and promote those two-year degree, workforce training and economic development programs at Oregon's community colleges that fit directly into President Obama's infrastructure re-investment plan. A clear line connects these programs with the president's plan to invest in transportation, energy and "green infrastructure."

Community colleges should meet with local contractors to determine which specific skill sets are needed to undertake the president's plans—then change or expand their curricula to meet these needs.

Finally, Oregon's community colleges should continue the laudable work they've done toward creating a culturally competent and inviting educational environment for minority students. This includes continuing to recruit faculty and staff of color, as well as continuing to build diversity into curricula across the academic disciplines. These efforts haven't been flawless; indeed, much work still remains to be done. However, we should applaud the progress that has been made and encourage it to continue.

Now more than ever, community college is one of the best post-secondary options for students of color in Oregon. We should also take steps to make these programs even stronger. Community colleges may be crucial in how quickly and effectively our state can move beyond the current economic difficulties toward a place of stability and prosperity for all.

CASE STUDY #1

Jesse Finds a Path

through Bias and Isolation

Jesse was born in 1988 to a White teenage mom and an African American father. As a child, Jesse lived mostly with his mom. They moved several times within Northeast Portland.

An extremely shy and hard-working boy, Jesse enjoyed school, especially math and science, and didn't mind traveling across town to attend an elementary school in Southeast Portland. Although he was biracial, he didn't identify with one race more than the other. Race didn't dictate who his friends were or how he acted. He got along well with his classmates and teachers and maintained As and Bs in school. By sixth grade, when he shifted to middle school, Jesse had decided he wanted to become a doctor.

1929 **1931** 1933 1937 1941 1945 1947 1948 1949 1950

historical timeline

Due to the Great Depression, most African American-owned companies closed by 1931, making it even harder for African American people to find work.

Jesse's world starts to change

By the time Jesse entered high school, race began to set him apart. His skin color impacted his life on a daily basis. Jesse says, "People either had Black friends or White ones, not both. Black students said I wasn't Black enough. And there were strains with White kids who didn't already know me. Some people would use the word 'nig-gah' in front of me—not cool."

He started to rely on factors that were outside his school environment to drive his ambition—especially his mother. She considered education priceless, and Jesse could see first hand the importance of school in her life.

He says, "Even though my mom was a teen parent, she was able to turn her life around by going to school and getting a degree. This let her get a job, and we always had food and the other things we needed. On top of that she always told me, 'You can do anything you want to do.' "

Jesse struggled to find a social niche and racial identity while simultaneously focusing on his academic performance. One teacher in particular made his life more difficult. "My science teacher was losing the papers I turned in and giving me zeros for work that I had done. It wasn't just me, though; this happened to other Black kids too. When I questioned her about it, she said she didn't have the papers. So I went to my counselor and got him involved."

A meeting was set up for everybody to discuss the issues. "I'll never forget it," he says. "When my mom and counselor were questioning her, my science teacher just walked out. She said that she wasn't dealing with it. In the end, she did change my grade from a D to a B. But I still had to go to my counselor again at the end of the term because the biology teacher wouldn't sign off for me to take a chemistry class as a sophomore that was harder than another class. She said I wasn't ready for it—but I wound up getting a B in chemistry."

High school became an evolving life lesson in racial dynamics as they play out in expectations, perceptions and isolation. Jesse says, "I rarely raised my hand in class because I felt everyone was waiting for me to mess up. I never really felt comfortable in class. Teachers never asked much of me. They always just asked me the easy questions. I definitely felt like they didn't expect that much."

Turning things around

Jesse says his turning point came only when his guidance counselor convinced him to take an African American studies class with Mark Jackson's Reaching and Empowering All People Inc. (REAP) program. "For the first time I was in a class where most of the kids were Black and people really thought of me as smart. I started to speak up in class and all the shyness I'd had as a kid seemed to go away. I felt like what I said mattered and I really fit in. Every school needs a Black studies class." Today, Jesse is a proud graduate of Grant High School and a sophomore at the University of Oregon. He admits his first college year was tough, but he knows he has what it takes to reach his goal of becoming a doctor.

"Mark Jackson, my counselor and my parents really helped me appreciate the importance of education. Black kids *see* that importance, but it's another thing to grasp it. It's easy for them to get turned off and have no one to help them get turned back on. But that's not fair. It shouldn't have to be like that. They don't see successful people who look like themselves, like I was able to do through Black studies. They don't see their options. Every school needs a leadership program like REAP."

CASE STUDY #2

Antonio Thrives in an Alternative School Environment

Raised by single parent, Antonio is a 17-year-old student who could have been another casualty of our public education system. Antonio had difficulties in elementary and middle schools, but he managed to complete his early education successfully. High school was a different story; neither of the two traditional high schools he attended seemed to work for him.

Fortunately, the encouragement he got at home made a huge difference. Antonio says, "My family has always been involved in my education and believed that I can be successful."

Their concern for his future led them to explore more supportive school options. Antonio has now been enrolled in an alternative high school for just over a year. In that short time, he has recovered credits from his freshman year and is on target to graduate.

Critical factors: smaller classes; supportive teachers; a sense of community

For Antonio, who had been rated "below average" and who struggled with focus, class size was a major factor. In a traditional class of 20-30 students, if one of them needed more details on an assignment, he'd be directed to the Internet or classmates. Antonio says, "In my new school, classes are smaller. If we need extra help, teachers make themselves available before and after school."

Previously, teachers would sometimes verbalize their interest and support, but more often, their inactions did the talking. At the new school, he feels that teachers work harder at building a relationship. "It's like having more parents. If you're having a bad day, they work with you to make sure that you complete the day's assignments. They make school feel like family."

Planning for college and a career

Antonio says he never before got the sense that his teachers believed in college being a possibility for him. He says, "At *this* school, teacher expectations are high for all the students. They tell us college is possible and push us to excel."

Antonio recently participated in a two-day field trip to Oregon State University, where he sampled campus life and interacted with freshmen and sophomores.

He's also participated in a mentoring program. He meets his mentor weekly and receives help with homework and learning job skills. He's interested in graphic arts or animation. Antonio says, "My mentor has taken me on tours of different jobs that interest me. That exposure to career options has been a big benefit. And knowing what my goals are has helped me be more focused." Antonio has college firmly in his sights. As he navigates the final years of his alternative school, he relies on his family and teachers to challenge him and to encourage his growing confidence.

CASE STUDY #3

Shannon Warren Wants

Consciousness on Campus

Creating a diverse learning environment is a challenge for all Oregon universities. Encouraging college-bound African Americans to remain here and recruiting students of color from other states depends on their perception that Oregon's campuses are multicultural and welcoming and embrace diversity. When that perception is unrealistic, racial tensions, as much as academics, may play a significant role in whether African American students succeed in Oregon's universities. Shannon Warren came to Oregon State University (OSU) from Anchorage, Alaska. Although used to living in a city with few African Americans, she wasn't prepared for what she describes as cultural insensitivities on the part of her fellow students. "When I was a freshman, total strangers would come up to me and touch my skin or hair. They'd ask me if I'd ever been in a gang or why Black people love chicken. I even had someone ask why the palms of our hands are white—things like that. I was just amazed. You would think that people who are 18 years old and in college would know better."

In Shannon's senior year, the university was shaken by racial controversies. Students wearing blackface and a mock hanging polarized the campus. The incidents echoed on other campuses around the country.

Efforts had already begun

OSU administrators responded by meeting with African American students and mediating their open discussion about racial issues with White students. But the university's major emphasis has been long-term planning. Edward J. Ray, who became OSU's president in 2003, says one of his first priorities was developing a 10-year plan to promote diversity. He says that short-term crisis plans are usually "just wasted effort."

Under OSU's 10-year plan, completed in 2006, every academic unit on the campus had to come up with a strategy for promoting diversity and closing race-, ethnic- and gender-based gaps in its retention of students and employees. Each is also expected to conduct periodic self-inventories. Every school within the university is expected to offer courses dealing with discrimination.

The university is trying to raise $100 million to endow scholarships that promote diversity. It has also planned to rebuild the four minority cultural centers. It supports the Ujima Education Office, coordinated by Earlean Wilson Huey. "This is specifically for African American students and helps them to empower themselves," she says. "Our main goal is to make sure that Black students are successful. Retention is a key issue. Financial assistance is a big part of that, but so is cultural and social support. We work to raise the consciousness of students about who they are. We help them to mobilize, and we support them in the changes they have to make to get what they want."

OSU's commitment to promoting diversity on campus received a national "best practices" award for college programs from Minority Access Inc. This non-profit in the Washington, D.C. area works to expand minority involvement in education, employment and research.

Among the initiatives that secured the award were:

- The Differences-Power-Discrimination class required of all OSU undergraduates;
- A "vibrant" international students program;
- Expansion of OSU's undergraduate study abroad program;
- The "Voices Project," which helps students have dialogues about diversity;
- And one of Oregon's largest Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. college celebrations.

Part of the way down the path

"The 'best practices' award gives validity to our past efforts and direction to our future," says Terryl Ross, director of the university's office for diversity. "While it's good to be in the same room with programs that are considered diversity leaders from across the country, I don't go to bed thinking about how great we are. I go to bed thinking about what we need to do better. The challenge is to be more proactive in our offices and classrooms. Too many people on this campus still feel marginalized."

Shannon, who now works in OSU's Department of Ethnic Studies, agrees that there is much more to be done. The Black Student Union submitted its own 10-point diversity plan to the university administration. This plan includes more scholarships for current and prospective African American students; more assistantships for graduate students of color; aggressive recruitment of African American faculty; requiring all students to complete six credits of black studies or ethnic studies courses as part of their baccalaureate core courses; and cultural awareness training for all student organizations, including fraternities, sororities and the editorial staff of the school newspaper. So far, these changes are still on the drawing board.

Both Shannon Warren and Terryl Ross agree that for OSU students to succeed after their university experience, they must be prepared to enter a world that is far more diverse than the one they've known before. "We have to help them see diversity as a critical life skill rather than as a politically correct issue," Terryl says. "As Oregon's only land grant university, we should look like Oregon, and we should be its most inclusive and welcoming campus. The big unknowns here are how long it will take for such efforts to improve the campus climate noticeably, and whether the racial controversies that pop up along the way will derail the process or move it forward."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Attack the achievement gap before it starts.** The evidence is clear: the academic achievement gap between African Americans and Whites is established before children take their third grade tests, and it persists throughout their education.

- **Invest aggressively in pre-kindergarten interventions.** The evidence on what works is unequivocal. As federal and state investments expand in Head Start, Early Head Start and Oregon Pre-Kindergarten, local policy-makers must ensure that African American children have proportional access to the services, and that the early childhood education models are culturally relevant and effective and culturally for them.

- **Require all school districts to develop equity plans** based on disaggregated student data, drawn from research on existing populations.

- **Assess student progress frequently and intervene at key stages,** such as fifth grade to ninth grade. Within three years of adopting a program, measure its impact on students of color and students who live in poverty.

- **Provide the best teachers to the students with the greatest learning needs.** Our data show that African American students are more likely to have teachers who are new to the profession or new to their school. District policies and collective bargaining rules do little to encourage or reward the state's best teachers to work with low-performing students. Identify teachers with demonstrated success in teaching these students and use them to develop better core curriculum and more effective teaching strategies.

- **Ensure that staff is culturally competent.** The Legislature, the Oregon Department of Education and Teachers Standards and Practices Services (TSPC) should work together to ensure that all licensed administrators and teachers move toward cultural competency and proficiency. K-12 school districts, colleges and universities throughout the State should seek funding to support local, regional and state initiatives that promote equity and cultural competency.

- **Ensure that students stay in school.** Almost a third of African American high school students do not graduate on time. Making progress in this area will require a full partnership between educators and parents. The ODE and local school districts must also disaggregate and report achievement and dropout data by race and gender to closely monitor the status of African American males.

  The Urban League also calls on school boards to identify effective retention approaches, implement them and use strong tools to evaluate them. One approach proven to reduce dropout rates is Minnesota's Check and Connect program, which uses one-on-one monitoring of at-risk students. This program or others closely modeled on it should be implemented and evaluated in Oregon.

- **Make classes more engaging and relevant.** Otherwise, monitoring attendance makes little sense. Career Academies are part of the solution. These programs combine college preparatory work with technical and occupational courses in small learning environments. They've boosted graduation rates and increased the post-school earnings of their participants. In a multi-site evaluation, the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation reported that Career Academies significantly reduced dropout rates (32 percent to 21 percent).

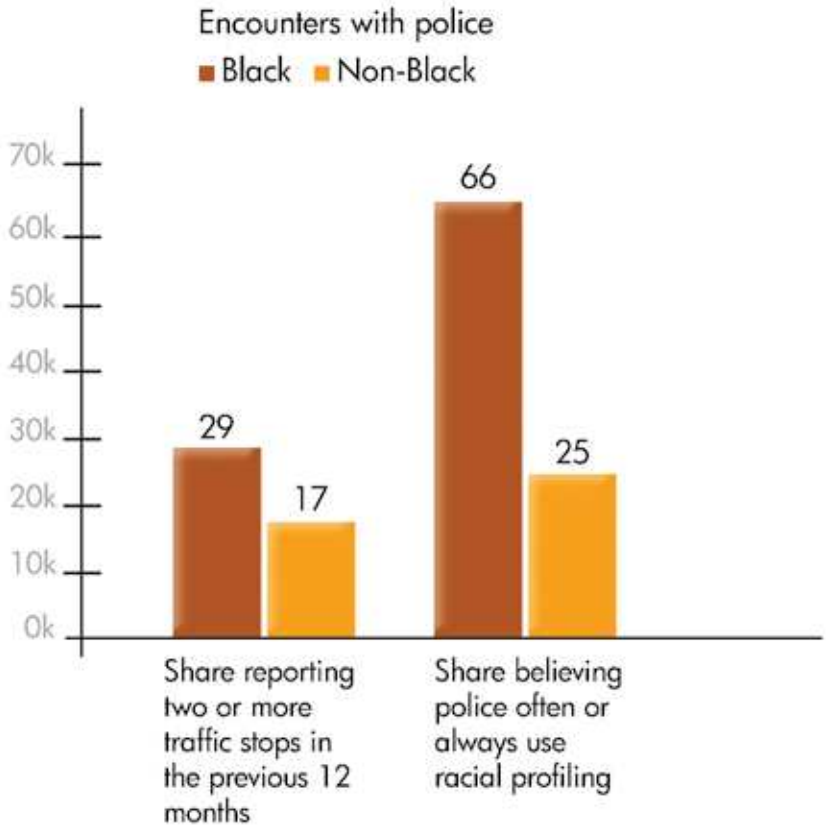
- **Support and expand education initiatives that work for African American students.** Programs such as Self Enhancement Inc have a proven track record in increasing achievement for African American students. Increase the number of African American students using AVID, a rigorous college preparatory program.

Criminal Justice

"Where there is no vision, there is no hope."
–George Washington Carver

Criminal Justice

Incarceration per 100,000 population



- Black incarceration rates (2,763:100,000) are six times those for Whites in Oregon. The rate is similar to the U.S. average for Blacks.
- 29 percent of Black adults report a traffic stop one or more times in 2007, compared with 17 percent of non-Blacks.
- 66 percent of Blacks perceive frequent racial profiling, compared with 25 percent of Whites.
- Although African Americans make up 7 percent of Portland's population, 45 percent of Portland's Homicide Victims are African American and 35 percent are White, according to 2005 Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- In the Juvenile Justice system, 23 percent of African American youth referrals are dismissed, not petitioned or not adjudicated compared with 54 percent of White youth as reported by Oregon Youth Authority's 2008 data.

The Color Line Clouds

Criminal Justice in Oregon

By Dr. Robert D. Thompson Jr.
Oregon State University
Department of Ethnic Studies

African Americans make up about 2 percent of Oregon's general population and about 10 percent of Oregon's prison population. While 458 of every 100,000 White Oregonians are behind bars, the rate for African Americans in Oregon is 2,763 per 100,000.[1] Decreasing the disproportionate representation of African Americans in Oregon's justice system will require all of us to acknowledge that the problem is systemic. As with any institutional flaw, finding long-term solutions requires a new lens.

Statistics alone do not adequately highlight the disproportion of African Americans in the Justice system. Numbers overlook many important factors, often dismissed as "soft data," such as prejudiced policing policies or economic circumstances.

Additionally, without the right analysis, it is easy to overlook differences in rates of arrest, indictment and incarceration as you compare Whites and African Americans. For example, according to the White House Office of Drug Policy, while twice as many Whites were arrested for federal drug-related crimes, only 24.3 percent of those sentenced were White, compared with 29.5 percent for African Americans.[2]

We have a responsibility to deconstruct these numbers and the roots of justice involvement and community justice policies. This is the only way to address the underlying issues that plague our justice system today.

How did we get to this point?

Law enforcement, especially the "war on drugs," has historically focused its attention on low-income, predominantly minority urban areas. These already poor neighborhoods have been hard hit by economic shifts, such as the 1994 implementation of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). The resulting movement of jobs out of the already economically depressed inner city areas left these communities reeling.

Even before then, the spread of crack cocaine in the early 1980s increased fear in

1937 **1941** 1945 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953

historical timeline

The Portland Housing Authority is established to address housing shortages after WWII wartime shipbuilding efforts boost African American population tenfold.

nearby richer neighborhoods. Poor urban African Americans are readily perceived as dangerous. It was no surprise in 1994 when Oregonians passed Ballot Measure 11 "in an effort to clean up the streets of Portland."[3]

Ballot Measure 11 mandated longer prison sentences for specific crimes and circumstances—lengthening the average sentence from 16 months to 40 months. Since the new law took effect in June 1995, the number of inmates has nearly doubled.[4]

In the 1990s, the term "prison industrial complex" was coined for a view that sees prisons as solutions to social, political and economic problems.[5] Ballot Measure 11 and several others can be seen as reflecting this view. Ballot Measure 17 (1994) and Ballot Measure 49 (1997) required all able Oregon prisoners to work 40 hours per week, with the state using this labor directly and marketing it to private employers. For example, a call center for the Department of Motor Vehicles is run out of an all-female prison in Oregon.

The irony of prison costs

The Oregon Department of Corrections consistently uses a large share of the state's budget. In this zero sum game, without tax increases there is less money available for education, health care, job training and infrastructure.

In a speech on June 12, 1996, former Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber prophetically said, "Let me give you a stark example. Next biennium, while school districts cut hundreds of teachers, we will be hiring almost 1,000 new prison guards—many at youth correctional facilities. So, we won't be teaching your kids—but we'll be able to guard them well."[6]

What if we spent as much on social services as we do on prisons? How many crimes could we prevent? We could focus on education and generating meaningful jobs instead of sequestering as many African American men, women and juveniles as possible in our prisons for longer and longer stretches of time—employed in a system of quasi-bondage.

And what if we spent our government funding in new ways, changing every part of the criminal justice system? We need to resist increasing mandatory minimum sentences and explore prison alternatives instead. We need to: improve the cultural competence of corrections staff; beef up education programs for prisoners; help their families remain supportive; try new parole policies; and ease their way back into the community.

We can and must take creative steps to change the terribly high human and economic cost Oregonians are now paying via the criminal justice system.

EXCLUSION ZONES HIGHLIGHT DISPARITY

In recent years, a new crime management tool has been used in Portland. Exclusion zones for drugs or prostitution let police arrest people without a later trial and possible conviction. Police can simply arrest you, then exclude you from being in that zone for 90 days. During a five-month period in 2006:

- Half of those arrested in drug exclusion zones were African American.
- Police issued exclusions for 60 percent of the Whites they arrested in the zones.
- Police issued exclusions for 100% of the African Americans they arrested there.[7]

CASE STUDY #1

Lonnie Jackson

Stops the Revolving Door of Crime and Prison

Lonnie Jackson directs the Office of Minority Services for the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA). He talks about African American kids in juvenile detention with the passion of one who has walked in the same shoes as the youth he serves, and who knows that he had a narrow escape. "I see a lot of similarities with my own experience growing up in Los Angeles. But there are also real differences. Crack cocaine changed everything. Crack devastated neighborhoods and families, and many kids bought into the gang-banging lifestyle."

Lonnie connects the rise in youth crime and gang culture with a state of mind that sees little hope and few options. He says, "These kids don't often see any form of success except getting money through illegal activity. There are few

1941 1945 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954

historical timeline

The Urban League of Portland is established with Edwin C. Berry as its first director.

"When you're deep in the game, **it's hard to turn your life around.**"

role models and many one-parent families. I was fortunate to have a mother who set me straight, because once you get caught up in the system, it's really hard to get out."

The making of an innovator

After graduating from Willamette University with a degree in social work, Lonnie chose to work at McClaren Youth Correctional Facility in Oregon. Here he found his passion. "I became extremely frustrated," he says. "I saw that the existing programs weren't changing the underlying mentality. A lot of these guys would get out and continue to commit crimes. Some of them would get killed or come back to us. This was a vicious cycle, not fair to the youth or to the community."

Lonnie became an advocate for programs that would specifically address the needs of youth of color. He convinced the OYA administration to let him set up a program on his own time called Minority Youth Concern. "You can't make young people change; they have to see the need to do that themselves. Deep down nobody really wants the options of a gang lifestyle: continuing incarceration; dying at a young age because you don't have any job skills. You're going to be useless to yourself, your family and your community. Once this was clear, guys started clicking."

Some of these young people are in a structured environment for the first time in their lives. Lonnie says, "For the first time, we can teach them what the true realities are with their choices. They catch that one beef (what we call a conviction) and one choice they made puts them into the adult system for a long time—or worse."

Many approaches are needed

What began at one OYA institution has now become a movement in facilities across the state and has developed national prominence. It's expanded into the statewide Office of Minority Services, the only office of its type in the country for juvenile offenders.

Among other ways to share ideas, Lonnie participates in the annual Governor's Summit on Disproportionate Minority Contact in the Juvenile Justice System. In 2008, the 10th such summit drew more than 700 professionals to Portland from 15 states.

Lonnie says, "Reducing minority overrepresentation in the closed custody system will take multiple measures. A lot of folks, including lawmakers, want to moonwalk away from the problem because it's so complex. In school, poor achievement, dropout and suspension rates for youth of color are greater than for Whites. There are decisions about prosecution; judicial issues, like the potential bias in sentencing; and factors concerning law enforcement. You have to look at the discretion police officers have when making arrests, and whether racial profiling comes into play."

Lonnie calls his reduction strategy PIES: Prevention, Intervention, Education and Suppression. It's a combined strategy of programs and services to break the cycle of violence and support young prisoners when they move back into society.

Collaborative community initiatives and early intervention are essential. Agencies with a stake in the juvenile justice system need to brainstorm together about solutions, root causes, what the research shows and what young people themselves are saying.

Lonnie knows that he can't salvage everyone who passes through the juvenile justice system. But he's driven because so many salvageable youth are lost when the system lets them down. "We need to give these kids opportunities to succeed. When they get to us they've pretty much bombed out in everything else. When you're deep in the game, it's hard to turn your life around. The lifestyle, your homeboys—the temptations don't go away."

Getting one chance to break the cycle

Rob's story shows how hard it is to break away from the revolving door of recidivism and incarceration. Lonnie says, "When he was first released on parole, he started out really well. But because there were few support systems in place, he got pulled back into his old lifestyle. Rob got caught up in an attempted murder charge and wound up doing 13 years in the adult system."

When he got out, Rob came to see Lonnie, and was given a challenge: stay out of trouble for one year without any parole violations; not hang out with the wrong people. And at the end of that time, Lonnie would help him find a job.

It was a hard year for Rob, but he did it. "He stayed away from his homeboys, took temp jobs without benefits and came back to me a year later."

A potential employer called Lonnie for a reference. "I told him, 'You're in a unique position. Someone has to take a chance on this young man—give him an opportunity. He's proven that he wants to be productive and take care of his family. If we don't give him a chance we're going to lose him. We have so many guys who are capable that we lose because there just aren't enough options.'"

Rob got the job and rose quickly to a responsible position in the company. He's one of the success stories, but Lonnie points to hundreds more who fall through the net. Attempts to patch that net have led to new programs, such as Gangbusters, which has been replicated around the country as a model for tackling gang crime. The OYA Office of Minority Services has also taken the lead on cultural competency training for all staff working with youth of color.

But Lonnie is keenly aware that one agency can only do so much. "This work is one of our most serious challenges and needs to be addressed at the highest level of state government. It's not easy. Our work is cut out for us. But at least we're still trying to bring people together, trying to be innovative—trying to make a difference."

CASE STUDY #2

Arnecia Turns

Her Life Around

In October 2008, Arnecia Ross was released from prison after serving 15 months for violating probation. Her story is laced with many of the challenges facing African Americans today that can add up to prison time. Many factors led Arnecia into the justice system. She was led out of it by hope, education, smart choices, helpful policies and supportive programs.

Arnecia grew up in Northeast Portland. The justice system didn't play a role in her life until her teenage years. She says, "My mom, she hasn't ever been in prison. And my grandmother, she's a Christian. But I started running with the gangs in high school."

1945 **1947** 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1959

historical timeline

Federal postwar housing mortgage insurance program issues maps using red ink to indicate bad risk areas, including NE Portland.

Starting on a downward spiral

Arnecia says, "It all started with a friend. We went up to North Portland for the first time when I was 15. I saw how fun it was and started meeting new people. They were doing what they wanted to do and I thought it was cool. After a year or so, I started getting jumped. That was when I was like, 'OK, I see how this is working.'"

Gangs also introduced Arnecia to drugs and alcohol. "As a kid or teenager, there's a lot of peer pressure. They'd say, 'Don't you wanna do this?' I'd say, 'No.' And they'd say, 'Come on, just try it.' In the end, I started drinking and I liked it."

Arnecia eventually grew up and had seven children of her own. In her early adult years, she was arrested on many occasions, mostly on domestic violence charges related to alcohol. For the most part, her jail time only lasted a couple of days. But charges added up and a violation of curfew eventually landed her in prison for 15 months. This time, Arnecia decided to break the cycle she was in. "I said to myself, 'If I can't get motivated in here, I can't do it out there.' It was up to me to get up and do it."

Finding a new self

In her 15 months in prison, she took 19 classes, ranging from anger management to parenting skills. After six months, Arnecia also got to see her children through a program called Evenstart, where parents teach their kids literacy through homework and reading. This program is one of the few that let children visit their parents in prison.

Like so many other newly released prisoners, Arnecia was immediately faced with two challenges—how to get a job and how to find a place for her whole family to live. However, she never lost sight of the emotional issues that, when ignored, often lead to recidivism. She's worked hard to break the destructive cycles that defined her younger self. "I would hold things in," she says. "If I'd been in a better situation, I could've known how to ask for help instead of stuffing it inside."

She started taking self-help classes, including one on domestic violence. She also participates in the supportive African American Program. "It helps a lot of Blacks who got into trouble and had nowhere to turn," she says. "They'd get judged on their criminal background and then couldn't get a job. They'd get upset and have no support and go right back to criminal thinking. The African American Program tries to stop that. A lot of people from the community volunteer their support because you really need a lot of support out here."

Arnecia says her greatest support right now is her probation officer. "She's very helpful and open-minded. She doesn't sugarcoat anything. You wouldn't think a person coming from prison would be happy to talk to their probation officer, but she's a fantastic woman."

Arnecia currently attends a local workforce training program. She's working toward eventually becoming a gang counselor. She says, "I'd teach kids and parents how to be healthy and recognize red flags in the family. Some people are scared to love. They bring their past into a new relationship and that starts the cycle of self-defeat. A lot of people don't know how to ask for help; I was one of them."

CASE STUDY #3

Gerard Whitecalf Prepares for Life Outside Prison

Gerard Whitecalf grew up in a family and neighborhood thick with drugs, alcohol and gang violence. When he lived in Eugene, he and his brother constantly heard racial epithets from schoolmates and police. Gerard learned to harbor anger and developed what he calls a "criminal mindframe." He always expected to end up in prison, even to die behind bars.

Gerard says, "It's a song that's been sung before. You can let it be your downfall, or you can make a remix of your song."

Gerard grew up mostly in Northeast Portland at a time of growing social unrest. He says, "Crack hit in the late 80s; then the gangs hit. That's when it got ugly around here."

Family members shaped his childhood environment through their drug and alcohol use and gang involvement. Gerard says, "When I found out my mother was on crack, that really messed me up. I just stopped caring about everything. When I was about 13, my older brother and cousins started me selling drugs. I could make $50 a day, even $100. So that's what I did until I went to prison when I was 27."

Gerard wasn't directly involved in gang activity, and he didn't use the drugs he was selling. He saved his money and avoided the law as best he could. The birth of his first child gave him a new reason to keep his act together. "My kids inspired me—not enough to get a real job, but enough to stay out of trouble."

Ironically, the charge that sent Gerard to prison had nothing to do with drugs. One night, he was set up by some people who wanted to rob him. They jumped him, a shot was fired and he was charged with robbery. Everybody close to him urged him to take the stand and fight his case. But Gerard decided that his past had caught up with him. "I'd committed crimes all my life, and my conscience was

1947 **1948** 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1959 1961

historical timeline

On Memorial Day, the Columbia River overflows and floods the Vanport community, displacing 5,000 African American Oregonians.

eating me up. I thought about all the mamas I'd sold drugs to, and their kids who were just like me when I was young."

The judge threatened him with more jail time if he didn't take a plea. Gerard settled for 70 months in prison.

Choosing a new song for the rest of his life

When Gerard went to prison, his young son shut down emotionally—the same way Gerard had shut down when he learned his father was using drugs. Gerard became determined never to return to prison once his term was up. "I knew that meant I couldn't be involved in any crimes. For a long time, I wasn't sure how I was going to manage that."

So Gerard went back to the beginning, to understand where he came from and why he had started selling drugs. He had to understand and own the anger he'd felt as a young man, so he could meet old challenges with a new attitude. When correctional officers used racist language, he responded in a civil manner. He devoted his next years in prison to religion, reading and other positive activities. He took a parenting class. He wanted to have all the tools possible for succeeding when he was released. "Most importantly," he says, "I had inside me the *want* to change."

Gerard knew he had to prepare for his release and have a plan. "If the people on the Titanic had known it was going down, don't you think they'd have gotten to those lifeboats faster? It's the same in prison; if you know you're gonna get out, and then you're gonna be hit with a whole lot of temptations leading you toward the criminal mindframe again, don't you think you'd better get prepared?"

The Going Home Program helped Gerard make this preparation while he was still in prison. The men in this group talked a lot about changing your mentality so that when you go home, you don't come back.

Gerard finds strength in numbers

Gerard also joined the African American Group, which provided him with a safe place to talk with folks who shared a similar background and struggle. He says, "People store different information in different ways. If I'm fresh out of prison and a counselor says something, it gets categorized in one part of my brain. But if I see somebody I knew in prison, who's been out for a bit and is still not selling drugs—I'm gonna give what he says more weight and keep it somewhere closer, where it hits me."

Today, Gerard is a role model for others. He's a proud father who spends time with his kids. He does landscaping work during the summer. He's a full-time student at Portland Community College, where he's studying to be a drug and alcohol counselor. Many people from Gerard's previous life have stayed in the same old rut. When he first got out, he tried to talk with some of them. "But you can't save everyone," he says. "I've got all I can handle making changes in myself. One guy I reached out to got killed in a gang shooting. I can't help but think that maybe if I'd spent a little more time with him, he might not be dead." But Gerard has to focus on the future. "To break these cycles, we have to surround our kids with positive influences. We have to let them know that it's OK to dream big, because it doesn't cost any more to dream big than it does to dream small."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Restore a balance between crime prevention and punishment.** Here, perhaps more than in any other area, policy-makers and voters have governed by emotion rather than pragmatism. Oregon's recent emphasis on prisons and minimum sentences is the wrong approach to public safety and adds a disproportionate number of African Americans to the criminal justice system. This approach must change. Policy-makers should reject efforts to expand the use of mandatory minimum sentences.

- **Disaggregate race ethnicity/data to identify points of differential treatment.** At every phase of the justice process, disaggregated race/ethnicity data must be collected and analyzed. Reform strategies like adequate and just alternatives to detention can reduce racial disparity in the prison system.

- **Reduce recidivism and increase cost-effective crime prevention through stronger non-prison and post-prison programs.** Oregon's Senate Bill 267 provides a solid framework for exploring which preventive measures are most cost-effective. Oregon should follow Washington state's lead in closely monitoring prevention investments. Additionally, drug and alcohol diversion court, community court and mental health court need greater financial support. When participants can successfully address treatment, housing and other issues while remaining in the community, the state ends up saving money. Texas and Kansas have found new ways to curb recidivism through parole polices that include non-prison alternatives for minor violations.

- **Support legislation and programs that enable people to successfully transition from prison to the community.** Enact anti-discrimination legislation that prevents employers from dismissing job applicants based solely on arrest and conviction history. Release state prisoners back to the communities where they have the strongest support systems, rather than the county where they were convicted. Remove employment and other re-entry barriers by supporting and expanding programs like "Project Clean Slate," which helps to navigate barriers by providing assistance with driver's licenses, job training, etc.

Housing

"The home should be the treasure chest of the living."

–architect Le Corbusier

Housing

Home Ownership
Percent of population owning home

20%
Black-Headed Households

68%
White-Headed Households

Share of households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing costs: Percent of households

55%
Black-Headed Households

35%
White-Headed Households

- 37 percent of Black households own their homes, compared with 68 percent of White households.
- 55 percent of Black households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, compared to 35 percent of White households. The disparity is greater for households with children (62 percent versus 37 percent).
- In 2007, Black applicants for home loans were 14 percentage points less likely to have the loan approved than were White applicants.
- Black-headed households with children are nearly twice as likely to have an unmarried head-of-household as are White-headed households.

A House Is More Than Brick and Mortar

By Victor Merced
Director, Oregon Housing
and Community Services

A home represents a safe haven, a center of family and civic life and the basis of well-being. Homeownership is also a foundation for building wealth. A recent Harvard study found that a typical American homeowner had 20 to 40 times the net wealth of a renter, regardless of age or race. A low-income homeowner had about $73,000 net wealth, while a renter with the same income had only $900.[1]

A history of disparity

Although much of our housing and economic policy encourages and rewards homeownership, non-Whites still face significant barriers to enjoying its benefits. In the 1930s, we took big steps toward increasing homeownership by creating the Home Owner's Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration. However, the discriminatory practice of redlining limited loans in minority neighborhoods. This kept African Americans from owning homes and building personal wealth.

Fair housing legislation of the 1960s outlawed redlining, but its effects still linger. Despite national policies aimed to end discrimination, African Americans continue to earn lower incomes and hold less wealth than their White counterparts.

A new threat to stability

Predatory mortgages have also affected African Americans disproportionately. The National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) has found that in many areas, African Americans are twice as likely to receive loans with high costs or high interest rates.[2] Over the lifetime of a loan, these higher costs can easily mean a loss of $50,000 to $100,000 for the household in the form of increased interest payments and penalties.[3]

High-cost loans not only slow wealth accumulation; they're at the center of the foreclosure crisis now sweeping the United States. Borrowers can't make mortgage payments when an initial teaser rate is followed by dramatically higher adjustable rate payments.

In a recent report, NCRC examined the proportions of African American, White and Latino borrowers of low-to-moderate income and middle-to-upper income who received high-cost loans. In the Portland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) for 2006, 38.2 percent of low-to-moderate-income African American borrowers received high-cost loans vs. 22.3 percent of White borrowers with similar incomes.

For middle-to-upper-income borrowers, only 19.4 percent of Whites received high-cost loans, compared with 40.4 percent of African Americans. In the Portland MSA, an African American borrower of any income faces twice the risk of receiving a high-cost loan than a low-to-moderate-income White borrower.

Reducing the significant gap between homeownership rates of Whites and African Americans will require better enforcement of government regulations to ensure equity in lending. More importantly, state and community leaders must support efforts that reach beyond regulation—toward creative responses that work outside traditional routes to homeownership and wealth accumulation.

Education

At Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), we encourage potential homeowners to attend home-buying classes conducted by 44 non-profit organizations across the state. Attendees leave the classes better prepared to negotiate the worlds of real estate and mortgage lending. The courses address how to choose a home, prepare for it financially, maintain it and protect the wealth it represents. Our hope is that class participants will understand hidden costs and be less likely to take a high-cost loan or face foreclosure.

Affordable loans

OHCS also offers affordable loan products to first-time lower-income homebuyers. In addition, they can often access low-cost down payment loans and other purchase assistance programs through OHCS. However, the reach of these loan programs is only as great as the reach of the lenders and borrowers who choose to use the department's programs.

Less conventional ways to become homeowners

Each of the following programs offers non-traditional ways for families with lower incomes or limited resources to build assets.

• **Individual Development Accounts** provide incentives to individuals who want to save toward purchasing a home or business or funding higher education. The accounts match that person's savings with as much as an additional $3 for every dollar saved. Over the course of a year, an individual who puts $1,000 into a qualified individual development account may receive matching funds up to $3,000. OHCS supports these efforts through the Neighborhood Partnership Fund and non-profit organizations statewide.

• **Community Land Trusts** let moderate-income borrowers begin building assets before they have the resources to purchase a market-rate home. The borrower purchases the home while a not-for-profit organization retains ownership of the land. This significantly decreases the purchase price while still offering the buyer the stability of owning a home instead of renting.

The owner builds assets through loan payments. When the home is later sold, the owner realizes a percentage of the home's appreciation and can then purchase another home at full market value. The original land-trust home remains affordable for the next homebuyer to begin building assets. In Portland, African American borrowers own 29 percent of the community-land-trust homes.

• **Habitat for Humanity** helps low-income borrowers purchase homes at affordable loan rates. Volunteers and prospective homeowners build Habitat homes, so homeowners invest both loan payments and "sweat equity." Because of this work, plus donated building materials, Habitat for Humanity can offer homes at cost.

Habitat turns around and invests homeowners' loan payments in developing additional homes. OHCS has committed loan resources to Habitat for Humanity with the goal of increasing non-White homeownership statewide.

African Americans still lag behind their White counterparts in homeownership and accumulating wealth. Oregon can do much to close this gap—and become a more prosperous state—through stronger regulation, affordable state-sponsored financing, education and the creative homeownership alternatives available in our communities.

* Since the time this essay was written, the 2009 One Night Homeless Count was conducted showing a 37 percent increase from the year before, including 1,227 homeless African Americans.

Foreclosures have continued to rise, especially for those with subprime loans. In the first quarter of 2009, the Mortgage Bankers Association data showed 11 percent of subprime loans in foreclosure compared with 2 percent foreclosure rate overall.

Predatory lending and high unemployment have resulted in - foreclosure among African Americans.

For more information on classes: http://www.ohcs.oregon.gov /OHCS/SFF_Homebuying_First_Time_Homebuyer_Training.shtml

For more information on loans: www.OregonBond.us.

For more information on Individual Development Accounts: http://ida.tnpf.org/

Gentrification Impacts

Northeast Portland's Rental Market

By Maxine Fitzpatrick
Executive Director, Portland Community
Reinvestment Initiatives Inc.

In Northeast Portland, gentrification has become the code word for large-scale displacement of working-class African American, Native American and Latino families by wealthier, primarily White homeowners. Gentrification is a way to renovate aging neighborhoods. It transforms deteriorating areas into more prosperous ones through remodeling and investment. The occupant of the "run-down" home is usually a renter with low or very low income—unable to buy the home. With access to capital, the investor purchases the building and then forces the renter(s) to vacate the premises.

Lacking resources, the renters are displaced, often relocating to less desirable neighborhoods. They move far away from family, friends, jobs and places of worship. The devastating trend of gentrification has dramatically decreased affordable rental housing in Northeast Portland.

The central location of Northeast Portland makes it close to many shopping areas and other community attractions. Historically, it has featured some of the city's finest real estate and lowest home sale prices. It was prime territory for gentrification.

Between 1998 and 2001, Northeast Portland neighborhoods experienced a wave of new residents and a major increase in housing prices. Speculators purchased single-family homes and apartment buildings en masse. Single-family homes were remodeled and sold for as much as possible, and apartment complexes were remodeled and converted to high-end condominiums. The city government welcomed such investments and did very little to combat the displacement they generated. Today there are very few vacant homes and affordable rentals in Northeast Portland.

Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area

When the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (URA) was created in 2001, displacement was one of the major topics discussed in public meetings. The city government made many promises at these meetings. Large-scale urban renewal projects had twice caused the major displacement of African-Americans, and the trauma from them lingered. At the meetings, citizens described the

harm urban renewal had caused them, such as redlining, condemnation of homes and loss of life investments.

This community outcry resulted in the establishment of the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Housing Strategy. Its goals included: preserve the existing housing stock; increase the supply of affordable housing for existing residents; increase opportunities for homeownership for existing residents; focus on housing for African Americans with very low or extremely low income.

It hasn't happened. Just look around the Interstate Corridor and you'll note that investments went instead into market-rate housing for new residents, and existing residents were forced out of the neighborhoods. The few housing units available to them in Northeast Portland were provided by community development corporations like Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives Inc. (PCRI).

To combat this problem, PCRI joined forces with two other minority-led community development corporations, Native American Youth and Family Services and Hacienda CDC, to form a new group, Housing Organizations of Color Coalition (HOCC). We advocate for the equitable distribution of housing resources for people of color. We're working to address the housing needs of African Americans, Native Americans and Latinos in culturally specific ways. In spite of our individual and collective efforts, the challenges faced in this struggle are monumental and expanding. The URA will produce $335,000,000 in debt capacity for Portland over its 20-year life; it is the largest of the city's eleven urban renewal districts.[1] To date, accommodations and investments have supported new residents, not existing ones.

As we look to the future, we must work more cohesively and in tandem with the City of Portland, the Portland Development Commission and the Bureau of Housing and Community Development to provide replacement housing for generations of Northeast Portland residents at risk of displacement.

CASE STUDY #1

Sharie Smith is Forced Out of Her Home in the Name of Progress

For six years, Sharie Smith has shared a one-bedroom apartment in Northeast Portland with her dog, Domino. The rambling old house, not far from Williams Avenue, had been turned into a fourplex after the original owner moved his family away from the neighborhood.

Although the apartment was small, it felt like home. After being priced out of a place downtown, Sharie found her new neighborhood affordable, friendly and safe. "I love this neighborhood," she says. "When I first moved here, you could still find affordable housing in this area. There was easy access to the MAX, and the neighbors were great. I feel like I've put down some roots here."

Affordability was a huge issue for Sharie. Fifteen years ago, she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Ever since, she's been living on a fixed monthly income of $700 in Social Security disability payments. The $450 monthly rent was tough, but she was able to manage if she supplemented her income by collecting bottles and cans.

When Sharie moved in, her landlord was one of the last African American property owners on the block. Two years ago, when he decided to sell it, the real estate agent who handled the sale decided to buy it himself as an investment property. The new owner immediately raised the rent to $600, an increase of 30 percent.

In view of the rent increase, Sharie and the other tenants asked for basic repairs. "The carpet was disgusting," she says. "The lino was old and cracked, and the kitchen sink leaked. I had to shut the water off several times because it ran into my downstairs neighbor's apartment. Not even the outside was kept up; the handrail was wobbly and needed to be replaced. He got a citation from the city, and still it was never fixed. The electrics in the house were also quirky; lights wouldn't turn off in the hallway, and the porch light didn't work at all. It was really dangerous."

Shortly after their complaints about the repairs, Sharie and all the other tenants received 30-day eviction notices. She says, "At the same time, the landlord was showing the building to a potential buyer to develop condos. I could hear him comparing our building to a similar one, two doors down, that had been converted into condos by a California builder."

A neighborhood unravels

Sharie is angry, sad and scared about her future—but not surprised. She has

watched the same thing happen to her neighbors over the past six years, and she's seen the neighborhood change around her. "I began to realize that I don't see the old neighbors anymore. A lot of them have moved to Gresham or farther out to where rents are cheaper. Once you get pushed out of your neighborhood, there's no place to come together. I don't know my neighbors and the community is not as connected as it once was."

The close-knit neighborhood and the relationships she once prized have broken down. Gentrification has whittled the African American majority in four Northeast Portland census tracts to just one.

Even if Sharie had the time and money to fight the "no cause" eviction, the law and the housing market are not on her side. There's no cap on the amount that landlords can raise the rent; and because of the rise in foreclosures, the scramble for rentals is pushing their prices up. Since her landlord waited until Sharie and the other tenants were gone to start converting the building, he doesn't owe them any compensation. "Renters have no protection," she says. "We need something to stabilize our communities."

No permanent answer in sight

Evicted in the heart of winter, Sharie said, only half-joking, "I'll pick a spot under a bridge and dig in. I'm trying not to panic, but no one has the answer for me."

Now that the tenants are out, the landlord has made the repairs that had been needed all along and is getting ready for the condo conversion. Sharie managed to find a much smaller place to live. She's on a waiting list for better housing, but she knows people who have been on the list for years. Her dream is to get on the homeownership ladder through a program like Habitat for Humanity, but that seems like a long way off. In the meantime, she says she's trying not to let the stress of her situation get her down. "When I'm stressed, my MS flares up, so I try not to let it get to me. I really support those who are campaigning for renters' rights, but nobody seems to be able to help you with housing right now unless you have money."

CASE STUDY #2

Gloria Ceaser Lives on the Brink of Foreclosure

Gloria Ceaser is fighting to stay in her home. Like millions of other African Americans, Gloria has been hit hard by a subprime mortgage. The foreclosure crisis in this country has led to the greatest loss of African American wealth in recent history.

Gloria and her husband sold their Northeast Portland home when they decided to downsize. For more than 20 years, her husband had owned the roomy old house in a prime location. But now the kids were gone, utility bills were very high and illness and rising repair costs made it impossible to keep up with maintenance. "That's how we got into buying this manufactured home," Gloria says. "It was all on one floor, easy to maintain. At the time, buying it seemed like such a good idea."

How it all starts

Despite transferring equity from one home to another, the Ceasers could only get a loan at a subprime rate. "We just couldn't get a decent loan. I couldn't

get a loan from a major bank. Even though I've been a member of my credit union for 15 years, I've never been able to get more than checking and savings accounts there. I was never able to finance a car, never able to get a line of credit or anything."

The Ceasers were resigned to paying an unfavorable rate, partly because of the way her husband's home had been purchased years ago. Gloria says, "He bought the house with a third party servicing the mortgage contract at 10 percent interest. That practice goes back to the time when African Americans were barred from buying homes within the city limits and couldn't get bank loans. It was just how Black people used to buy homes here in Portland. It seems as though not much has changed."

The problems mount up

Gloria's story is typical of how vulnerable people get pulled deeper and deeper into a spiral of debt. "You never qualify for favorable credit. Something is always wrong."

Her husband passed away. His medical bills tipped the scales, making the subprime rate unmanageable.

She looked to refinancing as a quick fix. "That's supposed to clear your credit and make you eligible for a low interest rate. But the new refinanced adjustable rate ended up costing me $10,000, and I sank even deeper into debt."

Just as she finally got a bank to agree to modify her loan, Gloria says she lost her job as a result of racial tension at work. "I fought a lot of battles and just didn't feel like fighting anymore. Any hope I had of modifying my loan was finished because of my employment situation."

After falling six months in arrears on her mortgage, she felt she had no choice but to put her house up for sale. It's in an area that is going through radical transformation from a largely African American neighborhood into one of Portland's hottest new arts districts. Despite that, she got only one offer in six months—even though houses around her were selling in a single day. She soon faced foreclosure. "I know that some buyers planned to wait until it was in foreclosure and get it for next to nothing," Gloria says. "The next step would be the sheriff coming and telling me to get out. All I have is the equity that's in my house. It seems like everything's stacked against you."

The nearly $3,000 that would have stopped the foreclosure was out of Gloria's reach until she told her story on television and a Good Samaritan helped out with the arrears. Her son was able to come up with the rest. Gloria bought a little more time.

A threat that never goes away

The threat of foreclosure will be ever-present unless Gloria can negotiate a reverse mortgage (an option open to seniors over 62) or get a mortgage rate lower than what she's paying currently. "But a reverse mortgage requires me to have more equity in my house than I do," she says. "I know I could manage if the bank lowered the mortgage rate to 4 or 5 percent, but that's not likely. And these transactions have hefty up-front fees."

She's been following Oregon Senator Ron Wyden's proposed bill that would let homeowners modify their loans to an affordable rate. Gloria says that more information for people in the process of purchasing a home would help many avoid the pitfalls she's encountered.

While Gloria welcomes the attempts to curb predatory lending, she feels more needs to be done. "Regulation of the lending industry is so overdue. Homebuyers have been represented as irresponsible in all this, but most have just tried to do what's best for their families. They could certainly use some help right about now."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawmakers can help stem the tide of lost home equity and expand homeownership even in this economic downturn. They need to address racial disparity in homeownership through targeted education and assistance efforts. Oregon's new Housing Opportunity Bill (HB 2436) provides funding for these efforts, but overcoming generations of discrimination and lack of access to good loans will require other steps as well.

- **Strengthen laws and enforcement to reduce the incidence of high-cost and predatory lending.**

- **Explore new ways to buy or keep a home.** Partnerships between state and local agencies, financial institutions and non-profits must provide early and aggressive foreclosure mitigation efforts, such as counseling and refinancing. Non-traditional avenues to homeownership must be explored and developed—such as individual development accounts, land trusts and sweat-equity homebuilding.

- **Preserve the stock of affordable housing.** Even with these efforts, the majority of African Americans will rely on the availability of affordable housing. Oregon lawmakers must expand the Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit and other resources available to preserve the state's existing affordable housing stock. Preservation is cost-effective, prevents displacement of low-income residents and keeps millions of federal subsidy dollars flowing into Oregon.

- **Anticipate and manage future development.** Resources from state and local government entities must be targeted at supporting community development corporations that work in poor and disenfranchised communities.

Health

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

–Constitution of the World Health Organization

Health

Death rates per 100,000 population for selected health conditions

Infant mortality per 1,000 live births

- Black children are 50 percent more likely to be born with a low birth weight.
- Black violent death rates (17:100,000) are lower than White violent death rates (22:100,000).
- The African American incidence of high blood pressure is 42 percent, vs. 25 percent for Whites.
- Infant mortality is 50 percent higher for the children of Black mothers than for those of White mothers.
- 32 percent of Black adults report having a physical disability that substantially limits basic physical activity, compared with 21 percent of White adults.
- The diabetes rate for African Americans is 13 percent, vs. 6 percent for Whites.
- Black death rates by stroke (85:100,000) are significantly higher than for Whites (56:100,000).
- Black death rates by diabetes (73:100,000) are considerably higher than White rates (29:100,000).
- African Americans are significantly more likely than Whites to die from heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.

Complex Health Issues

Require Complex Solutions

By Tricia Tillman
Multnomah County Health Department

What is the essence of good health care? Media coverage could easily lead you to believe that it's having the latest medical technology and drugs, plus insurance to pay for them. Our health systems are organized and funded with the focus on *curing disease.* However, in many tangible ways, a focus on *promoting health* provides more effective and equitable care.

We pay a lot for health care, but what are the outcomes?

The rate of infant deaths per 1,000 is widely considered the hallmark measure of a nation's health care. In 2004, the last year that the data are available for all countries, this rate was just under 3 per thousand for Japan and 6.78 for the United States.[1] Just the year before, the United States had spent $5,711 per capita on health expenditures, or 15.2 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). In contrast, it's estimated that Japan's 2003 per capita health expenditure was $2,249, or 8.0 percent of the GDP.[2] So, measured by infant mortality rates, America spent considerably more on health care than Japan, but the outcomes were considerably worse.

Of course, having the right antibiotic for a severe infection saves lives. So do high-tech medical equipment, solid preventive care, management of chronic illness and balanced nutrition. But improving the health of Americans depends on a wide range of less obvious factors:

- *Jobs that pay a decent wage;*
- *Safe, affordable, healthy housing;*
- *Quality education and the opportunity to go to college;*
- *Chronic stress caused by racism;*
- *Mass media's influence on social norms;*
- *Investment in communities and neighborhoods;*
- *Location of highways, garbage dumps and toxic industries.*

1953 **1954** 1959 1961 1962 1963 1964 1967 1968 1970

historical timeline

Brown VS. Board of Education declares that separate public schools based on race denied African American children a chance of an equal education.

The factors listed above are linked closely together when it comes to chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma or heart disease. For example, sound nutrition helps a person control diabetes; a better income promotes access to more nutritious food, which is often more expensive; and culturally competent nutrition counseling reinforces healthy and culturally affirming food choices.

African Americans in Oregon face many health disparities

Both nationwide and in Oregon, health disparities for African Americans span the life cycle. Ranging from babies who are born too soon and too small to heart attacks among adults, rates of poor health outcomes are higher than they are among Whites.

Racial disparities are often greatest, and most crucial, when it comes to chronic illnesses. It's here that social, economic and environmental factors are especially likely to play a key role. Among African Americans in Oregon, high blood pressure is substantially more common than among Whites, and the diabetes rate is more than double.

Poor access to medical care is one obvious factor in racial disparity. This can mean no health care coverage, no available doctor or health care providers who are not culturally competent. Poor access impacts preventable or manageable health conditions like asthma and diabetes. These complicated chronic illnesses, responsible for such a high human and financial cost, don't respond well to our national focus on curing sickness. Delays in care balloon them into emergency situations.

However, physician access only accounts for some of the variation in health that we see in different populations. Though health care services are important, solutions to health disparities do not hinge on increasing them. To eliminate health disparities, we need strategies that tackle social issues and support healthy lifestyles. Currently, such strategies only account for about 3 percent of our national health expenditures. [3]

We need to look at the broader picture

Our policy-makers are rapidly realizing that health is more than an absence of disease. This view is not news in a number of countries across the globe. The State of Black Oregon report highlights many aspects of life that can promote or compromise health. These include where people live, work and play: their access to parks and nature; the quality and content of their education; their ability to make a decent income, save money and pass wealth and financial know-how to their children; their ability to shape public policies; their ability to buy or rent a healthy home in a safe neighborhood; and their ability to relax and live free of chronic stress.

Research is exposing how health is also impacted by the subtle and persistent experience of differential treatment, such as institutionalized racism. This plays out in lower expectations of achievement in school, lack of authority at work, barriers to advancement on the job and higher costs of mortgages, car loans, insurance and food (also known as the "race tax" and the "poverty tax"). These inequities contribute overwhelmingly to the health disparities that African Americans experience.

Supporting healthy individual behaviors helps to counteract inequity in our community. However, these behaviors are shaped by social and physical environments, and by what community leaders do, or fail to do, through public policy, mass media and funding.

A commitment to racial justice must lie at the heart of efforts to eliminate disparities. This commitment to equity cannot be realized through race-neutral policies, which often have different implications for African Americans and Whites. Such policies may improve conditions in the broad community while racism and class privilege perpetuate disparities. Avoiding this trap requires education and critical self-reflection on the part of policy-makers.

Instead, public and organizational policies must target specific inequities and be developed in partnership with multiple members of the communities most impacted by disparities – not tokenized individuals who cannot represent the entire African American community.

Promoting health through an equity lens

Communities across the nation increasingly use an equity review process to ensure that policies will promote health. Projects like Solar Richmond are examples of how public investment in the "Green Economy" can use principles of equity. This program ensures that people of color have access to green jobs, with living wages and health benefits, as well as solar power. It also helps low-income residents worry less about whether to "heat or eat," and it decreases illness caused by inadequately heated housing.

In this example, combining an equity lens with sustainability means that all communities experience the advantages and benefits of "going green." Applying an equity review to education, transportation, housing, community safety and other policy arenas will lead to long-term health improvements in communities historically burdened by inequity.

Both nationwide and in Oregon, health disparities for African Americans span the life cycle.

CASE STUDY #1

Na'Zyia Gets a Rocky Start on Life

The five generations of Na'Zyia's family

LaSeda is a confident new mom, despite being 24 years old. She's had a great role model in her own mother, Angie Hall-Thompson, who is never more than a phone call away, even during her busy work day. In addition, the baby's Aunt Tiara (her father's sister) has always been there for LaSeda.

LaSeda's daughter is named Na'Zyia, which means "a mother's love." She's alert and happy but was born prematurely. In Oregon, more premature or low birth weight babies are born to African American mothers than to Whites, especially in Multnomah County. The percentages vary from one area to another and from year to year, but the gap is persistent. Poverty and stress may be factors in this disparity.

Support starts at home

From the beginning, it was not going to be an easy pregnancy for LaSeda. It was unplanned; her relationship with her partner was unsettled; and she

had just finished her medical assistant training and was about to start her first job. On top of that she had terrible morning sickness.

"We'd supported her through school," says her mother, "and we looked forward to her being grown and independent. But it didn't work out that way. It was stressful from the moment she decided to go ahead with her pregnancy. I was a single mom myself, so I knew how much help she'd need. Even though there was never a question that we'd be there to support her, she felt that she and the baby were going to be a burden on the family."

LaSeda agrees that it was stressful being dependent on her mom and feeling that she had let her down. But the mother and daughter worked as a team to get LaSeda through the maze of agencies and benefit offices she needed to make sure she would deliver a healthy baby. Angie's experience working for the county health department helped them navigate the medical and social services system. Before she intervened, LaSeda had been passed around from one welfare office to another. She says, "I felt as though I was being treated like just another number."

"A lot of people in Oregon face that situation every day," adds Angie. "If you have no support, the system just knocks you down. The whole dynamic tells you, 'You're nothing.' This is the kind of stress that affects your health and the health of your baby."

Just past the age for coverage through her mom's health care plan, LaSeda was uninsured. She had to apply for welfare to get the Oregon Health Plan care she and the baby would need. "I didn't want to go on welfare," says LaSeda, "but I didn't have a choice. My primary concern was to have a healthy baby."

Community resources pitch in

Another source of support for LaSeda was the county's Healthy Birth Initiative. This program for African American women in North/Northeast Portland provided her with prenatal care and classes in Lamaze birth techniques, baby care and infant CPR. A nutritionist made sure all the mothers-to-be were eating right. Mental health classes helped young women facing uncertain times deal with anxiety and depression.

This support group was an eye-opener for LaSeda. "It showed me that a lot of Black women face common problems when they're pregnant. So many of them didn't have money, health care or family to help out with anything. I was one of the lucky ones."

Arriving early but doing well

LaSeda, Angie and Tiara did everything possible to give the baby a healthy start. But Na'Zyia came into the world two months early, weighing only 3 pounds, 15.7 ounces. Fortunately, LaSeda's prenatal regimen had paid off; the baby had developed normally, with no medical problems. After 2 1/2 weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit, with LaSeda in constant attendance, Na'Zyia had made enough progress to go home at just 34 weeks gestation—six weeks before her original due date.

With a new baby in the house, both mother and grandmother are tired, but Na'Zyia's progress has given them an enormous sense of accomplishment. "I'm really proud of LaSeda," says Angie. "In spite of what she was going through, she was really determined to have a healthy baby. And she worked really hard to meet the needs of this premature baby—right down to the breastfeeding that's so vital to the baby's growth and development."

Her family's help makes it possible for LaSeda to think about resuming her life where she left off. "I've always had family support, and I'm really grateful for that. I plan to go back to work, but I'm not sure how soon."

At the moment, she enjoys being a mom and watching her baby thrive.

CASE STUDY #2

Kevin Howard Weighs

Tough Health Care Choices

For the last 20 years, Kevin Howard has worked hard to transform his life from dead-end jobs and substance abuse to qualifying as a self-employed plumber. He's sure that the stress of his long climb has contributed to his high blood pressure and heart disease. "I spent years striving to maintain steady work," he says. "I had all kinds of jobs, some good, some not so good. I never knew secure employment."

Even after he trained as a plumber, the fear of unemployment kept him on edge. "You could almost sense when you were going to be laid off," Kevin says, "it happened so many times. There's a 'good old boy' system in all the trades, and African American males are rarely part of it. If you don't fit in, you may not be able to voice what's causing your anxiety, but it has an effect just the same—on everything, including relationships at home."

Setting up his own business solved some of the problems. He was his own boss, with no one looking over his shoulder, but at a cost. While working as a union plumber, he had health insurance. Once he set up on his own, the cost of keeping health care coverage was too much.

Pay now or risk paying later

Kevin says, "If I kept my hand to the plow and worked as hard as I could, I still had to lay out 30-40 percent of my income for bonding, insurance and licenses. It eats up all the profit you worked so hard for, but it's the law."

Costs for business insurance and bonding rose from $900 to $2,600 a month. As the economy tightened, Kevin's business suffered a downturn. He had to give up his $750-a-month health insurance. He fell behind on his blood pressure and heart disease drugs, which cost up to $200 a month.

Like many uninsured patients, when Kevin started having breathing problems, he ended up in the emergency room. They gave him an inhaler, filled his medication prescription and sent him home. At first, his symptoms subsided, but he suffered a relapse and ended up in the hospital for two days. "I had no health insurance," he says, "but I had to go somewhere. So when I went to the hospital they took care of me."

1962 **1963** 1964 1967 1968 1970 1973 1982 1983 1992

historical timeline

Organized resistance delays a Portland Planning Commission proposal to build a 135-unit housing project.

He had congestive heart failure and pneumonia. The hospital stay came to $7,000, but they wrote off $5,000 under a charity care plan. "The hospital was great," he says. "They didn't kick me out to the curb because I couldn't pay."

How can you fill the gap?

For further care, they referred him to the North by Northeast Community Health Center, which has been serving the uninsured since 2005. More than a thousand patients receive the clinic's free services. In Multnomah County, where many residents do not have health insurance, this clinic provides an essential service to those with nowhere else to go.

Two local women established North by Northeast. One is Pastor Mary Overstreet Smith, who led a rescue mission to New Orleans to help the survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Back home, she realized that there wasn't a free clinic in her neighborhood. Many of her neighbors went without the care or medications they needed, even if they worked full time.

She was joined by Dr. Jill Ginsberg, a Portland family physician. "Everyone needs basic health coverage," Jill says. "It's about priorities. If the community isn't healthy, we all end up paying for it. We spend a fortune on a 26-week premature baby but often won't support prenatal care. We can provide some of our patients with three months of care for $10. If that same patient goes to the ER, it costs hundreds of dollars."

One clinic patient hadn't seen a doctor in 20 years. He decided to drop in when he was driving by and saw the sign. As it turned out, Jill and her team discovered he had colon cancer. "Without insurance," says Jill, "these things don't get sorted out. We've diagnosed lung cancers and breast cancers. Our being here has saved people's lives."

The clinic strives to provide a basic but thorough level of care. It focuses on prevention and managing of chronic conditions. About three-fourths of its patients are afflicted with diabetes, high blood pressure or asthma. The clinic even provides six patient advocates, who refer patients to other community services, such as help with housing and mental health care.

Kevin's voice cracks a little when he talks about Jill and the volunteers at North by Northeast. "I get emotional when I think about the wonderful work they're doing. Our people are suffering. You go to some hospitals and you're just a number. When you go to the clinic, they look beyond your color and your circumstances. It means a lot to the community. If you go up there to the clinic after work at 5:30, that place is packed. People know that they're going to take care of you; they leave with a smile. Those guys are giants and they hardly get any recognition."

Jill is the first to admit that free clinics are not the answer. "It's not a solution," she says, "but at least we can do something. We're here for people who are falling through the safety net. None of the free clinics get government funding. We have to raise every penny."

Kevin considers himself lucky, despite his hardships, when he looks back on how far he's come. His life mirrors the experience of other African American men, he says, and many of them have not managed to overcome the odds stacked against them. African American males have among the worst health and mortality stats.

He says that he's learned to take responsibility for his own health and well-being. "You know, we need to exercise more; get off the couch and sacrifice some Monday night football. Get on a bike or go for a walk. That's why I like Dr. Ginsberg and those guys. She says, 'Kevin what have you been doing? Have you been exercising?' They're like family, really concerned about your welfare."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

President Obama's election brings renewed hope for a national overhaul of the health care system. But Oregon's children can't wait for the recession to end and health care to rise on a policy calendar.

- **Extend health coverage** to more low-income children and anticipate bold federal health care reform. Every child in Oregon deserves the right to see a doctor. Children with health insurance receive health care when they need it. This keeps long-term costs down. Specifically, the legislature should expand Oregon Health Plan coverage to children's families with incomes up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Line. Maximize the number of eligible children covered by funding local minority organizations and communities for sustained outreach and enrollment activities.

- **Universal coverage for all Oregonians.** The Urban League supports the recommendations of the Oregon Health Fund Board for Health Care Reform that result in universal coverage for all Oregonians. These recommendations also tackle health disparities that result from social injustices like poverty, the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, unequal distribution of resources, racism and other forms of discrimination.

- **Support community-based prevention activities** in order to reduce the high rates of chronic diseases, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases among African Americans. Health reform legislation must support community-based prevention activities that tackle chronic diseases by reducing health disparities.

- **Promote culturally competent care.** New legislation should include plans to develop, pilot and evaluate community-based strategies using health workers to enhance culturally and linguistically competent care for the underserved. Policy-makers must ensure a diverse health care workforce at all occupational levels to serve a diverse population.

Environmental Justice

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."

–Chief Seattle

Environmental Justice

- 80 percent of Latinos and 65 percent of African Americans live in areas that fail to meet Environmental Protection Agency air quality standards, as compared with 57 percent of non-Hispanic Whites.

- Minority residents in Northeast Portland had an asthma rate of about 14 percent—twice the national average.

- 65 percent of the neighborhoods that have the worst access to nature in the region also have above average numbers of people of color living in them, while only 8 percent of the neighborhoods with the best access to nature in the region are those with above average numbers of people of color residents. (Coalition for a Livable Future, 2007)

- African Americans produce 19 percent lower carbon emissions per capita than Whites. *

- African Americans spend an estimated 25 percent greater share of their income on energy than the national average. *

*Based on national population statistics.

Every Breath You Take

By Kevin Odell
Organizing People, Activating Leaders (OPAL)
and Jill Fuglister
Coalition for a Livable Future

Environmental Justice is treating all people fairly, regardless of race, ethnicity or income, when we develop and enforce environmental policies and laws. It embraces the principle that all people have an equal right to safe and healthy living and working conditions. Equally important is their access to the decision-making processes that affect their environmental health.

Are impoverished communities or communities of color disproportionately burdened with a substandard physical environment? The data are complicated because environmental justice intersects with other public policy issues, such as housing, health, urban planning and transportation. Environmental justice is determined by: the quality of housing; degree of exposure to air, ground and water pollution; and access to public infrastructure, such as good parks, schools and public health clinics.

A common response to the issue of disproportionate exposure is the suggestion that people simply move away from unhealthy neighborhoods. However, these residents are also less likely to have the financial means to leave a stressful physical environment. And even if they can relocate, others may simply move in and take their place, with the new residents vulnerable to the same set of health problems. Not only does a group's location determine its exposure, but a lack of access to resources, including education, employment and social mobility, limits its members' options to protect their health.

Are you walking on toxic ground?

A "brownfield" site is one example of disproportionate exposure to environmental risk. Brownfields are properties that are contaminated—or are perceived to be contaminated—by their past use. This contamination restricts how the land is used in the future. The sites may be potential health risks to the community, but often little is known about their particular contaminants. Developing these sites can disturb and release the contaminants into the community. Nevertheless, there's often pressure to develop these sites in order to bring jobs and businesses to struggling neighborhoods.

Many brownfields are in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color—adding to the view that these neighborhoods are blighted and ripe for urban renewal. Cleaning up a brownfield often doesn't occur until such an area has been designated for urban renewal, leading to gentrification and displacement.

This pattern is evident in Portland Metro's "renewed" communities, where churches, schools and cultural centers in formerly blighted neighborhoods are replaced by market-rate condominiums, fine dining

establishments and the other cultural accoutrements that serve a new community and consumer market.

Organizations like the Urban League of Portland have launched campaigns to identify and clean up brownfield sites. More recently, a coalition of concerned community stakeholders and grassroots non-profit advocacy groups, led by Organizing People, Activating Leaders (OPAL), has partnered with the city to form Groundwork Portland. This land trust uses a community-first model for redeveloping brownfields and connecting green spaces. The land trust is one way that OPAL and related groups focus on public health and environmental justice for at-risk communities.

Who's breathing toxic air?

In Oregon cities, people of color are more likely than Whites to live in areas with high levels of toxic chemicals in the air. Diesel particulate exposure has been of special concern, since this soot increases the risk of developing cancer. Some areas of Portland have air toxics levels more than 100 times higher than what's considered safe by Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality. Maps developed by Portland State University researchers show that such toxic risk levels are concentrated close to Interstate-5.[1] The Portland I-5 corridor is disproportionately home to communities of color and low-income residents.

Lung cancer can take decades to develop, but asthma begins to strike early in life and affects great numbers of people. And asthma is one of the health concerns associated with exposure to diesel particulates.

In nationwide data comparing them with Whites, non-Latino African Americans:

- are 25 percent more likely to suffer from asthma currently;
- have 18 percent more outpatient doctor's office visits because of asthma;
- visit an emergency department because of asthma 350 percent more often;
- are hospitalized for asthma 240 percent more often;
- and are 200 percent more likely to die from asthma.[2]

Comparable recent data are not all available for Oregon. However, counting all ages, 16.5 percent of the state's African Americans have asthma, vs. 10.1 percent of the Whites.[3] In the Multnomah Education Service District, 10.9 percent of African American *children* have asthma, vs. 7.3 percent of White *children*.[4]

Oregon makes progress on environmental justice

Disparate toxic burdens are an indirect result of the lack of diverse leadership and equitable representation in local and statewide politics and environmental leadership positions. In the fall of 2007, State Senator Avel Gordly introduced Senate Bill 420, which created an Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF). This group reports directly to the governor about environmental justice concerns and the progress of state agencies toward meeting environmental justice requirements. The new law also requires natural resource agencies to address environmental justice issues as part of their standard operating procedures and to report annually to EJTF and the governor about their actions in under-represented communities.

This is a good start, but continued vigilance and innovative programs will be necessary in the future to establish environmental justice as our society's norm.

CASE STUDY #1

Sylvia Evans Works for a Better Environment

Sylvia Evans was 32 when she had her first heart attack. Her 4-year-old daughter developed asthma so severe that several attacks landed her in the hospital. Among Sylvia's neighbors in her North Portland public housing complex, someone was always being diagnosed with asthma, heart problems or cancer. Sylvia began to wonder why. "I knew something was wrong," she says. "I started looking at my surroundings and decided to ask for help."

Sylvia contacted a local environmental justice group and gave them a tour of her complex. That's when she learned how the freeway and air pollution were affecting their lives. "We're one block from Interstate 5," Sylvia says. "We tested diesel emissions and learned that in some apartments the air quality was worse than outdoors—especially those closest to the freeway. The playground registered the highest levels of toxins. The building layout made the wind trap the toxic emissions in the center of the complex, where the children played."

1964 **1967** 1968 1970 1973 1982 1983 1992 2004 2007

historical timeline

Members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) are accused of inciting racial violence on Union Avenue (now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard).

The diesel emissions dropped to federally acceptable levels about two miles from the apartments. "But we're just a couple of yards away from the source," Sylvia says.

Other major problems are even closer

Built in 1973, the apartment complex is in disrepair and riddled with mold and mildew. An independent inspection also found asbestos in its ceilings. "We have it all," Sylvia says. "There's one drain for all 68 apartments. That makes water pool up against the walls, so we even have mushrooms growing up our siding. It used to be nine months to a year before you'd hear a new neighbor start to wheeze. But now it happens a lot earlier, in the first three to six months."

It can be hard to blame a single environmental problem for ill health, but many things add up for people with limited choices about where they live. "Toxins, mold, mildew, roach excrement—they all affect your lungs. It just keeps going on. It's the freeway; it's the substandard housing; it's living in this urban corridor and near certain types of business. Seeing my neighbors become ill just got to me, and I wanted to do something about it."

Taking action

Sylvia helped start a tenants' initiative to document the conditions of the complex and come up with recommendations for the housing authority. "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see the problems here. But it's still 68 units of affordable housing, and we have a five-year waiting list. You can't just take 68 units off the market."

The tenants' activities culminated in the Healthy Homes Report. One of the recommendations was a five-year plan to knock down the complex and start again. So far, that plan is still just on paper. These public housing units were built to have a lifespan of about 30 years. Tenants expected to stay no longer than a few years before moving into market rate housing. But urban renewal in North/Northeast Portland has made the neighborhood around these apartments unaffordable for most residents of the complex. As a result, Sylvia and her family have now lived in the same complex for 20 years.

Sylvia says, "People ask me if it's that bad, why don't I just move? I could never afford to move. Besides, I'd have to move away from all the history I have right here."

Watching the old neighborhood change around her, Sylvia has warned many of her new, more affluent neighbors about the environmental issues she and her community have fought against for years. "People were snapping up these gorgeous old houses along the freeway. Then they were getting sick, and so were their kids. Now a lot of those houses are empty. Investors can't keep anybody in their rental units for more than six months."

Others have bought unsuspected brownfield sites because nobody disclosed that a furniture painting and stripping business had left toxins in its soil—or even a meth lab. Sylvia says, "We told one guy that he was the third person in a year to own the house he had just bought. He really liked the house, but it used to be a meth lab, and he had to gut it and strip it down to the studs before he could live in it."

Despite the location's problems, Sylvia still believes there's hope for her housing complex and neighborhood. She's pushing for a tenant buyout. "I wouldn't mind rebuilding here. Oregon is setting an example for the entire nation on green technology and green living. And if we redesigned it with the freeway in mind, the air could move easily through the complex instead of being trapped there."

CASE STUDY #2

Ben Duncan Teaches

Residents New Strategies

The families that Multnomah County Health Department works with are often examples of the need for environmental justice. Low-income families struggle to find housing that is adequately safe and healthy. They face many obstacles, ranging from moldy homes to periods of having no home at all.

They receive some help through Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act. Under this law, the Housing Authority of Portland administers rental assistance for low-income residents. They rent from a private landlord, and the rental units must pass inspections. This is one example of programs that let families move into places that are more stable and affordable.

Teams help families make a difference

But what if a family can't move? What if asthma is a chronic problem because their home is filled with its triggers? Multnomah County's Healthy Homes Initiative has worked to make existing homes healthier environments. This three-year demonstration program pulled

1968 **1970** 1973 1982 1983 1992 2004 2007 2008

historical timeline

The Black United Front challenges school segregation in Portland Public Schools and the first African American superintendent, Dr. Matthew Prophet, is appointed.

together a nurse, an environmental health specialist and community health workers to assess home environments for asthma triggers. They helped parents better understand their children's asthma and asthma treatments. The team also taught families about resources that could help them change their environment.

Ben Duncan works for Multnomah County as a community health educator. "This is environmental justice," Ben says. "Our intervention program focuses on meeting families where they're at. It works to empower them and make them self-sufficient."

The county analyzed results in 2008. The program had increased parents' knowledge about asthma and decreased exposure to environmental asthma triggers, such as tobacco smoke and mold. The program's efforts had also significantly reduced emergency department visits and hospitalizations related to asthma.[1]

The Healthy Homes Initiative encouraged individual families to connect with the community around them and with social services that are vital to eradicating asthma triggers. Such resources have ensured adequate heating, removed mildew, weatherized rental units and replaced carpets and furniture that were heavily soiled with dust mites and mold. Families have also learned how to connect with a renters' rights organization in situations needing dispute resolution between landlords and tenants.

Ben says, "Families we work with can better control their own environment and make educated choices about their indoor space. But not all families have this access, and many families have little choice over where they live."

Policies in action

The prevalence of asthma among poorly housed families shows the strong connection between housing policies and health outcomes. When Multnomah County Environmental Health Services partnered with the community to prioritize environmental issues, at the top of the list was healthy, affordable housing. Mold and mildew, lead, trash and a general feeling of being ignored were the primary concerns heard from this community.

A breakthrough in addressing the community's concerns was a change in housing inspection programs in Portland and Gresham. Housing codes were adopted to clamp down on conditions that were having a negative effect on health, such as high moisture levels that worsen asthma by encouraging mold growth.

Educating tenants on health issues was also an important prevention strategy. It opened the door to citing landlords who violated new humidity guidelines. To gain from the new requirements, tenants needed to understand them and recognize problems. The Healthy Homes Initiative has provided a model that health educators want to duplicate around the state. "Our team is educating policy-makers about the lessons we've learned," Ben says. "We hosted an asthma briefing for the entire Oregon Legislature where families testified about the success of home-based asthma care programs."

In addition to educating families, the Healthy Homes Initiative has projected a broader goal over the long term. Ben says, "We want policy-makers to use an equity lens to eliminate health disparities. Our goal is to raise awareness that asthma cases are increasing and that asthma is a health disparity among people of poverty and color. We urge that policies and funding decisions reflect a commitment to healthier, more stable housing."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Disaggregate data on environmental disparities by race, ethnicity and income.** Oregon has little reliable data that tracks environmental conditions by race, ethnicity and income. However, anecdotal evidence shows that people of color and low income tend to live in areas with higher toxic air emissions, brownfields and other environmental hazards. An inter-agency study should map the location of these hazards and their proximity to specific populations.

- **Ensure equal protection in regulating environmental conditions.** Regulatory agencies like the Department of Environmental Quality must review their priorities to ensure that they address the disparate environmental hazards in communities of color.

- **Adopt tougher inspection codes to ensure healthy homes.** These should aim to eliminate conditions like damp and mold that increase rates of asthma and other respiratory illness.

- **Encourage the activism of residents.** Multnomah County successfully piloted a healthy homes program that educated and empowered residents. A proposed bill in the legislative health subcommittees would extend funding for similar projects statewide and deserves support.

- **Weigh the consequences of urban renewal** and redevelopment projects on African American communities. Planning policies must include environmental justice impact assessments in the project development process. Assessments must cover anti-displacement measures and avoiding environmental risks like air and water pollution, land contamination and noise.

Child Welfare

"The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to."

–Marian Wright Edelman

Child Welfare

Population of youth in Multnomah County (Portland)

9.5%
Black Children

66%
White Children

Share of Multnomah County Foster Care youth in placements lasting four years or more

24%
Black Children

45.5%
White Children

- 4 percent of Black children (663) were maltreated in 2006 compared with 1 percent of White children.
- Black children represent 6 percent of the state's foster care population (7 percent among children of known race).
- African American children make up 2 percent of Oregon's youth population and 7 percent of the foster care population. White children make up 72 percent of the youth population and 63 percent of the foster care population as reported by DHS's 2007 Status of Children in Oregon's Child Protection System Report.
- African American youth make up 9.5 percent of Multnomah County's youth population and 24 percent of foster care placements lasting four years or more as reported by the Oregon Child Welfare Equity Project.
- Disproportionate rates of foster care are caused by multiple factors including parental and family risk factors--such as unemployment and single parenthood, community factors--such as substance and alcohol abuse, poverty and inadequate housing, as well as organizational and systemic factors--including racial biases and/or cultural misunderstandings.

When Child Welfare Is the Issue,

One Size Does Not Fit All

By Angela G. Cause, Oregon Department of Human Services
& Kory Murphy, Oregon Department of Human Services

"Too many children of color, particularly Native American and African American children, are in foster care. The time has come for us to move beyond good intentions to intentional action so we can ensure that children with the same needs are treated equitably, no matter the color of their skin." **-- Governor Ted Kulongoski, January 5, 2009, press release**

The governor's words address a growing concern about African American and Native American children being disproportionately represented in the state's foster care system. A higher percentage of them receive foster care than their percentage in the overall population. To many, this is no surprise.

Children enter foster care because of physical abuse and/or neglect; they can't remain safely in their families. The Oregon Department of Human Services, Children, Adults and Families Division (DHS-CAF) is charged with the responsibility of investigating allegations of child abuse and managing the state's foster care system. DHS reports that in 2008, the most prominent issues related to child abuse and/or neglect were drug and alcohol abuse; parental involvement with law enforcement and domestic violence; and combinations of these factors.

In fiscal year 2008, Oregon served 13,965 children in various kinds of foster care arrangements—8,775 of them on a daily basis.[1] Nearly a third of them were placed with relatives. This reflects the state's goal of care that is "child-centered, family-focused and community-based."[2]

Of the children in a foster care setting, about 7 percent were African American.[3] This is three times their representation in the state's population. Such over-representation is a major national issue. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the same ratio holds true nationwide, even though African

1970 **1973** 1982 1983 1992 2004 2007 2008

historical timeline

North Portland residents picket Emanuel Hospital after a 1970s urban renewal project that expanded patient capacity displaced many residents.

American children do not experience a higher rate of neglect or abuse. And they remain in foster care an average of nine months longer than White children.

Oregon and several other states (including Washington, Texas and Michigan), have recently addressed this disparity. Last fall, Oregon's DHS-CAF formally entered into a new partnership with the Oregon Commission on Children and Families and Casey Family Programs to reduce safely the number of children in foster care, especially African American and Native American children. CAF hired a full-time child welfare equity coordinator, part of its new Diversity Unit. They're charged with strengthening the diversity and cultural competency of CAF's workforce, ensuring that CAF services are culturally responsible and setting specific goals to reduce foster care disparity in Oregon.

What causes the disproportionate rates of foster care?

According to the GAO, various parental and family risk factors play significant roles—unemployment, single parenthood and substance abuse. So do community factors like poverty, inadequate housing and poor access to effective support services.[4] However, studies also acknowledge that organizational and systemic factors, including racial bias or cultural misunderstandings, are also major contributors. This can mean bias on the part of caseworkers, courts or those reporting abuse or neglect. It can mean inadequate training for placement decisions.

Differences in family definitions and structures, discipline methods and medical practices often are mistaken for abuse and/or neglect. For example, in African American tradition, the community pitches in to care for the child. This involves many fictive kin such as "aunties," "cousins," "big moms" and others who often do not match the legal definition. Gaining access to effective support services for families of color is also an enormous challenge in Oregon, and throughout the country. Although a handful exist, many of the available services have long waiting lists and unaffordable costs and lack necessary cultural relevance.

Elsewhere in this report, the areas of income, affordable housing, health care and other family resources have all been identified as exhibiting disparity where African American families are concerned. When families are poor, in Oregon and across the country, their circumstances create challenges in meeting the everyday demands of life. While these circumstances may contribute to abuse and/or neglect of children, it does not mean that African American children are abused and/or neglected in poor families more so than other households.

Poverty is not a new challenge for the African American community. Inequitable treatment by the systems designed to help is also not new for African Americans. Fighting against injustices has historically been an ongoing battle for African Americans, poor and otherwise.

What's different in this case is the inability to maintain our children within our own families and communities. Traditionally, caring for children through the extended family, fictive kin, churches and other neighborhood supports has been a strength within the African American community.

Improving the disparities

Although little has been proven to eliminate these long-standing and complex disparities, some steps are promising. States have found that recognizing the influence of institutional racism is a most important starting point in moving toward equity. We all know that racism is difficult to talk about, let alone to eliminate in a social system. However, without understanding its impact on the foster care system, we will continue to dance around the issue.

Promising practices include family group conferencing. This increases the family's engagement and voice in the decision-making process. Other "good practice" models use effective relative and family engagement to find and support suitable kin and identify preventive and sustaining services that can be tailored to the family's needs, including cultural needs.

Addressing disparate treatment of minority children in foster care has become a top priority in Oregon's system. On January 5, 2009, Governor Kulongoski issued an executive order creating a statewide taskforce to study the issue and make research-based policy, practice and workforce recommendations to the Legislature. State Senator Margaret Carter is sponsoring Senate Bill 630, which would add legislative support to the executive order.

CAF has also commissioned a child welfare decision point research project through Portland State University. This research will analyze the points in a child welfare case where racial bias may influence decision-making. Critical pieces of this research are focus groups and public forums in the community, to gain the all-important, and many times overlooked, voice of the people our system actually serves. CAF aims to hold these sessions in Fall 2009, with hopes of new and stronger community partnerships as a result.

As Governor Kulongoski said, it is vital that we—together—move from "good intentions to intentional action." This is a shared responsibility between the state system and its communities. We have worked too long in opposition to each other. We can no longer afford to isolate and blame, while children remain in foster care and families are fragmented. We cannot depend on the state to address this issue alone, without the help, voice and resources of our community. Conversely, the state system must improve its relationship with communities of color, form inclusive community partnerships and work with us to create an equitable system that keeps ALL children safe, healthy and in permanent homes, whatever the color of their skin.

State of the Village:
Children Youth and Families

By Dr. Samuel D. Henry
Portland State University
Chair, Oregon Commission on
Children and Families

While no two families are exactly alike, clearly some patterns and commonalities help us manage our daily lives, understand our multiple situations and create the leadership and policy needed to further the success of our people. I view several issues as the areas of greatest risk for African American families. In most of these areas, little progress has been made in the 16 years they've been tracked by the Oregon Progress Board.

At the top of my list is child abuse. The adults in the home commit most abuse and are responsible for most neglect. It is intolerable that family and community silence contribute to this horror. The tragedy continues with inadequate family foster care, under-resourced governmental supervision and a collective apathy. Common-sense ways to build healthy families are self-respect and respecting others; getting our kids ready to learn; participating in their education; discouraging the use of drugs and alcohol; and making sure they have good nutrition and regular health care. Teens having babies—especially when the father abandons them—explodes girls' lives and aspirations, and the whole family is affected. Positive role models make a difference. Providing them is the job of families, neighborhoods and the whole area.

Policy-makers need to do a better job of addressing the disproportionate number of African American children and youth who end up in the care of social services. But our community and leaders also have to take responsibility for our future generations.

Recommendations to Enhance African American Families

1. Count the toys in your house. If you have young kids or grandkids, there should be as many books as there are toys—balance it.

2. Be a recognized role model in your neighborhood; be the one who is law-abiding, who helps create a positive environment.

3. Demand more from young people, including sobriety, regular school attendance with high grades and college graduation. Kids who complete college should be as celebrated as the ones who drop 40 points in a basketball game.

4. Insist on schoolwork that supports creativity, raises the bar in science and math and connects every kid with what is going on around the world.

5. Discourage [don't buy] media that negatively portray African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans or Native Americans—or media that ignore us.

6. Support those businesses that enhance community and build civic participation.

CASE STUDY

Phillip Johnson and Cynthia Thomas-Johnson Redefine Foster Care

Phillip Johnson and Cynthia Thomas-Johnson have touched the lives of hundreds of African American youth in the juvenile justice and foster care system. When the couple founded New Decision Treatment Foster Care Inc., they drew upon years of experience with Portland youth. Phillip had worked with high-risk and gang-related young men for years, and Cynthia had worked in schools as a manager for a non-profit agency. They grew up in a close-knit community rooted in the church and community activities. All of this, combined with their own past experiences and struggles with overcoming addiction and criminality, uniquely prepared them to open the first African American-owned private treatment foster care agency in Oregon.

Cynthia and Phillip observed Portland rapidly expand as their own neighborhood became more marginalized, facing challenges of unemployment, substance use and gang involvement. Cynthia says, "We've seen so many of our people grow up, some getting into trouble with the law. Some managed to turn their lives around and others didn't. Phillip and I were able to overcome our own issues, and we were blessed with the opportunity to give back to our community."

Before setting up the agency, Phillip and Cynthia were foster parents for many years. Phillip says, "As foster parents, we saw that our youth weren't being served. They'd come to us in need of drug and alcohol services and crucial mental health treatment. The foster care agencies wouldn't coordinate

1983 **1992** 2004 2007 2008

historical timeline

City Council adopts Albina Community Plan,
a major initiative to raise economic and educational achievement of area residents.

services, and the youth would leave us without ever getting the proper range of help."

There were also few African American foster parents. For young men in particular, the absence of a positive male role model is an overlooked, but critical, issue. Other resources for African American youth were also missing: school advocacy; mental health assessments; community and spiritual support; and a culturally sensitive approach.

"I watched how those kids came in," Phillip says, "and then I watched how they left. There was no difference. They were trying to use one treatment model that just didn't work for our kids."

Research had demonstrated the benefits of serving youth within the community. Cynthia and Phillip forged a new model of direct intensive case management and community support to connect their youth with the services they needed. They almost always knew the family of the young person living with them. They could draw in family members to help during and after the young person's time in foster care. New Decision is now a leader in culturally competent treatment foster care.

Youth are typically referred through Multnomah County's Department of Community Justice (DCJ) by a Juvenile Court counselor. Most of the youth are in detention or have been adjudicated. Some have violated the rules of their probation. On occasion, judges make direct referrals when they believe that a young person will be better served by New Decision.

New Decision provides housing and treatment. The agency places the youth with a foster family and pulls together a service plan. The service team will usually include the foster parents, Juvenile Court counselor, New Decision staff and other mentors and/or positive family members. This evidence-based model is becoming a highly effective practice nationwide.

A good placement needs a stable, two-parent family environment. Most clients are young men, so the man of the household is established as the primary provider, or foster parent. He provides constant support and guidance. For many of the young men involved in New Decision, this is the first time they've been around a positive male role model.

Phillip says, "We also want our kids to get individual attention, so we never place more than two of them in a home. That way, they don't have to put on a face. They can engage freely in their treatment."

Community involvement is encouraged and sometimes required. Spirituality and church activities define much of Portland's African American community, and the foster kids are encouraged to participate in them. Cynthia says, "For some, church involvement ends up being a long-term constant in their lives. For others, it provides a stable environment for a time. But it's always a positive part of their treatment."

New Decision's name has gained a reputation with judges as the "go-to" for African American youth. However, Phillip and Cynthia are not looking to expand too quickly. They know that long-lasting results with kids take time.

Phillip says, "We just aim to get the kids the information they need in a way that they can really take in. They might still go back to jail or prison. But eventually, it'll kick in and they'll understand what we were talking about. It's important to help create the positive memories and role models that young people can revisit later when they've grown up a bit more. But if you don't remember that you were cared for and have a community, then you are at a severe disadvantage."

Phillip and Cynthia have their own evidence of the impact they've made. Every month, they get phone calls, visits and letters from young people they served. "It's always rewarding to see one of them all grown up, with kids of their own, being the positive parent and adult we helped them become."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Measure, document and analyze disparities.** The Oregon Department of Human Services must address disproportionate representation of minority children in the child welfare system. They will need to use methods like the ones being developed to reduce disproportionate contact with the juvenile justice system. Having the right data is the first step. At each decision point, agencies must collect and analyze data that is culturally and racially specific in order to implement a plan to eliminate disparities, set benchmarks, develop practice strategies, monitor progress and ensure racially equitable treatment and outcomes.

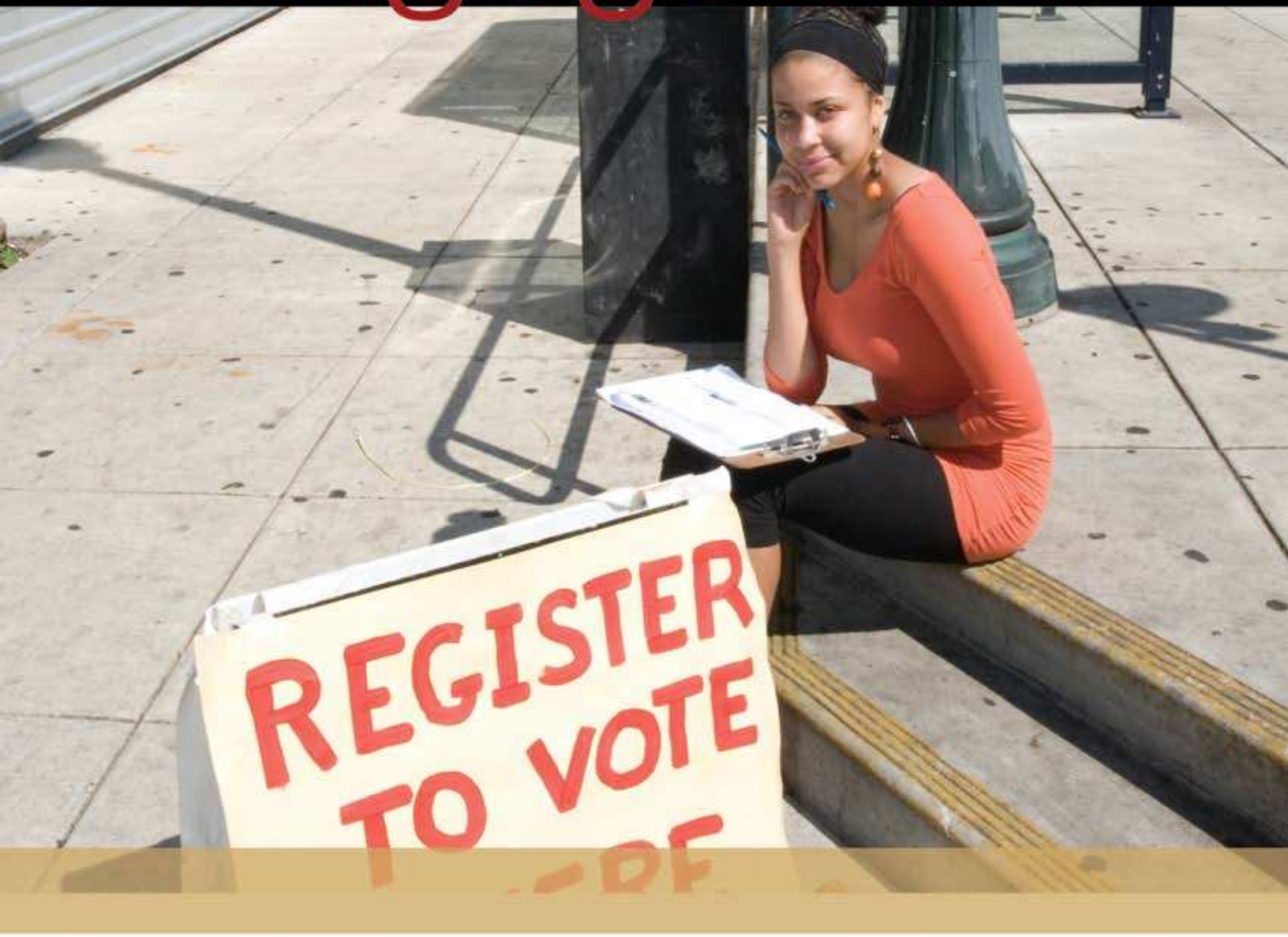
- **Support and adequately fund task force recommendations.** The Urban League applauds the creation of a statewide taskforce to address disparities of minority children in foster care. State lawmakers must support and devote adequate resources to implement the research-based policies, practice and workforce recommendations proposed by the task force.

- **Tackle cultural misunderstanding and racial bias head-on.** Hire more bi-cultural and multi-cultural staff; add cultural competency as a core requirement for all agency policies, procedures and training. Enhance equity through the adoption of specific practices such as community partnerships, family group decision-making and structured decision-making that can minimize bias where discretion exists.

- **Recruit African American foster and adoptive homes.** Agencies should actively encourage the recruitment of African American parents by adopting and implementing targeted recruitment and support strategies.

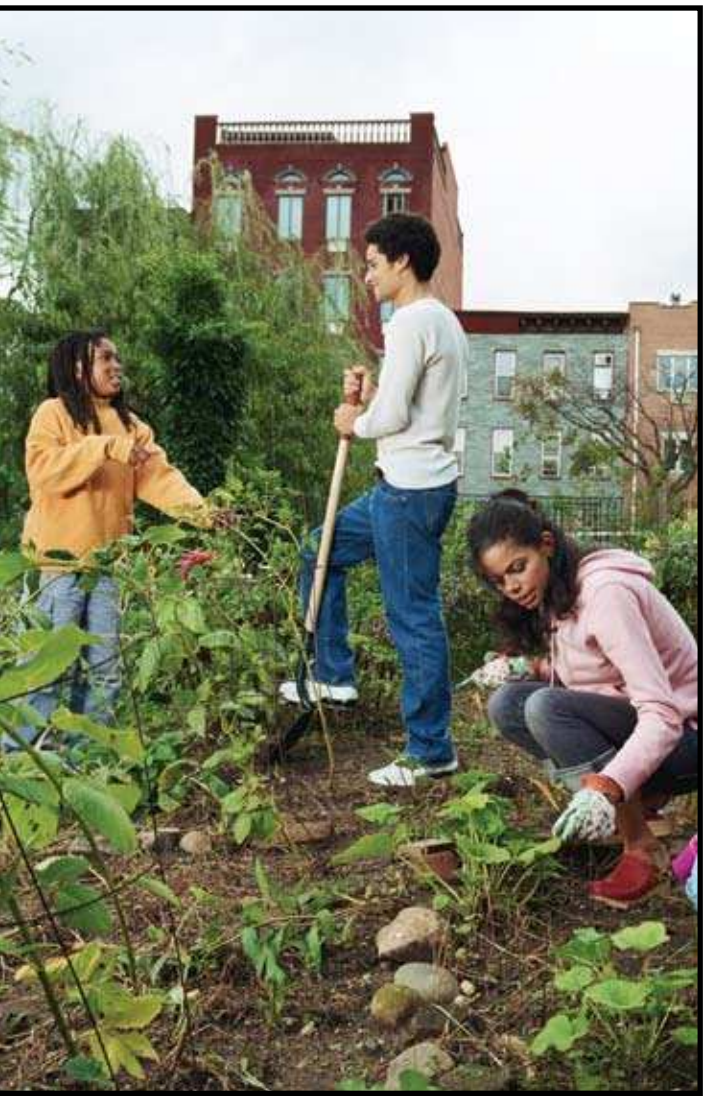
- **Recognize kinship arrangements and support them** through subsidized guardianships for relative care and greater access, incentives and resources for home-based services. Programs like Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (Kin-GAP) should be expanded. Many family caregivers want to provide a permanent home for a child but can't afford to lose the financial support they receive.

Civic Engagement



"Power concedes nothing without a demand."
–Frederick Douglass

Civic Engagement



- Seventy African Americans, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Oregon Senate, currently serve on state boards and commissions.

- Only two African Americans, out of a total of 90 legislators, are in the Oregon State Legislature. There are no elected African Americans on Oregon county boards of commissioners.

- 14.2 percent of African American Oregonians have served or are serving in the military.

Public Opinion Survey

- 62 percent of African Americans view Oregon's provision of healthcare as poor, compared to 54 percent of Whites.

- 56 percent of African Americans believe Oregon does not do a good job controlling drug use.

- 50 percent of African Americans believe Oregon does a bad job controlling crime, compared to 31 percent of Whites.

- 75 percent of Blacks believe Oregon does a good job in providing for families in need.

Civic Engagement:
Past Legacy, Future Leadership

By Avel Louise Gordly
Associate Professor, Department of Black Studies,
Portland State University
Former Oregon State Representative
and Oregon State Senator
American Leadership Forum
Senior Fellow and Board Member

My transition from public service in the Oregon State Legislature to teaching university students has been a time of reflection and great promise. I've had the privilege of a role in increasing political leadership by African Americans in Oregon. It's rewarding to know that many seeds have been planted to grow successive generations of African American civic leaders and policy makers.

Overcoming a long history of exclusion

Oregon has had a long history of racial exclusion—dating back to the years before statehood. In 1849, the Oregon Territorial Assembly passed an act that expressly excluded African Americans from entering the territory. This act was later repealed, but other restrictions followed it concerned with living in Oregon, voting and owning property here.

In 1999, the legislature declared the 150th anniversary of the territorial exclusion act a "Day of Acknowledgement." Governor Kitzhaber's proclamation stated, "One lingering effect of this history causes harm and pain to people of color and limits the quality and dignity of all of our lives."

He went on to say in the proclamation that "we believe that an honest acknowledgement of our racial history and open dialogue can lead to racial healing and reconciliation and free us to move constructively into a better future for all if we take personal responsibility for change by examining and changing our personal attitudes that perpetuate structural, economic and racial separation."

Moving on in many areas

The legacy of recent decades includes the Civil Rights Movement and subsequent campaigns to realize its promise. This work has made African Americans among the most

1992 **2004** 2007 2008

historical timeline

Portland Housing Authority selects Northwest Housing Alternatives to rebuild Columbia Villa Housing project in Portsmouth neighborhood.

politically active and community engaged of all groups in Oregon. Many African Americans, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Oregon Senate, currently serve on state boards and commissions.

African American civic leaders have insisted on a non-racist quality of education for underserved and miseducated African American students—indeed for *all* students. More options, accountability and transparency within our education system have improved it for everyone.

The African American community took a leading role in calling for investments in early childhood education. Efforts like Albina Head Start set the national standard and leadership model for early childhood education and significant parental involvement. This advocacy is directly responsible for increased funding of the Oregon Pre-Kindergarten Program.

Over the years, civic engagement has produced an array of focused organizations: the Black United Front, founded 1978; Black Leadership Conference, 1980s to early 1990s; African American Legislative Issues Roundtable, 1990s; and currently, the African American Alliance. Through such groups, African Americans have expressed their needs, advanced an agenda and advocated for their tax dollars to be invested in programs and services that directly address their concerns:

- The educational achievement gap;
- Disparities in health care, jobs and homeownership;
- Environmental justice;
- Over-representation in the criminal justice system.

Such issues, documented in this *State of Black Oregon* report, disproportionately affect African Americans. They are issues that have not been effectively addressed by elected state officials and other policy-makers, largely because African Americans are under-represented in elected office. Policy-makers have failed to affirm and act on the expressed and documented needs of the African American population.

New leaders on the horizon

When I retired from elected office, only two African Americans, out of a total of 90 legislators, remained in the Oregon State Legislature. Oregon needs more culturally competent elected leadership that includes African Americans—and we need it quickly. Otherwise, we'll miss opportunities to engage the diverse talents and creativity that can help us benefit current residents and those who will come in the future.

Many examples of skilled leadership are developing in Oregon's towns and cities. African American policy advisers serve in the governor's office, the office of Multnomah County's chairman, key state and city agencies and as student leaders at Oregon's universities and community colleges.

A growing number of African Americans in their 20s and 30s are in the pipeline of public service leadership in education, economic and community development, public health, housing and local government. African American high school students are being groomed and are entering the civic and public policy leadership pipeline. For example, students have served as representatives on the Portland School Board.

The African American community consciously practices leadership development through churches, civic organizations, sororities, fraternities, schools and clubs. The Department of Black Studies at Portland State University is establishing the Black Studies North Star Youth Leadership Institute. This institute will develop leadership skills in both high school and college students who are disadvantaged and/or students of color.

Organizations like the Urban League are providing civic engagement leadership training. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is grooming a young corps of leaders. Bridge Builders and Reaching and Empowering All People (REAP) are doing the same. The African American Chamber of Commerce and Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs (OAME) are developing business leaders and preparing them for the global economy. The Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs continues its trailblazing role of proactively engaging the political process and establishment.

Some people point to changing demographics in Oregon as an indication that the African American community is losing political power and visibility. This transition comes as people, such as myself, make life decisions in the face of aging, demographic change and gentrification. At the same time, a great deal of talent is being cultivated and is waiting in the wings. I am encouraged by what I see.

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

It took 18 legislative sessions to pass a law that banned discrimination in public accommodations. That's 36 years of perseverance and struggle by African Americans and others of good will. This law finally passed in 1953—when Avel Gordly was six years old. An Oregon Historical Society photograph now hangs (at Senator Gordly's initiative) outside the Oregon House of Representatives chamber as a memorial to that historic achievement.

CASE STUDY #1

Calvin Henry Is a Strong, Clear Voice in the Oregon Community

Calvin Henry is the embodiment of civic engagement in Oregon. For more than three decades, he has worked to amplify the political voice of African Americans through the statewide organization he founded—the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs (OABA). Launched in 1977, OABA's mission is to improve the political, educational, social, legal and economic status of African Americans and build a better Oregon for them. Inclusion is a cornerstone of OABA; it is open to all. "OABA is a diverse organization," he says. "Anybody who wants to work with OABA is welcome. What is done to improve the status of Black Oregonians benefits all Oregonians."

In the 1970s, Calvin established Corvallis, Eugene and Salem branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He served as the Corvallis NAACP president and as a consultant on affirmative action. His work with the state government has been credited with strengthening the statutory force of affirmative action in Oregon and creating the position of director of affirmative action in the governor's office.

However, he could see that African Americans in Oregon needed an organized voice. "The political voice of Blacks in Oregon

back then was almost non-existent," he says. "We had about 60 people come together to discuss the structure of an organization that would truly address the issues affecting Black Oregonians."

Shaping change over time

Every other year, OABA holds the Oregon Black Political Convention, which brings people together from across the state to establish, through resolutions, a political platform on major issues that impact

2004 | 2007 | 2008

historical timeline

Barack H. Obama becomes the first African American to win the Democratic Party nomination for president of the United States.

their communities. Convention delegates also endorse those Oregon primary candidates for public offices who are sensitive and responsive to OABA priorities and to the conditions of African Americans in Oregon.

In the years when the Oregon Legislature is in session, a Call-To-Action Leadership Conference follows the convention. The conference crafts a legislative agenda and strategies to make the maximum impact in the legislature.

Better legal representation for African Americans in Oregon topped OABA's list of priorities last session. It will be brought to the floor of the legislature again in 2009. The organization exposed the problems many African Americans face in finding a lawyer. Too few Oregon lawyers are African Americans, and White lawyers are often reluctant to take on cases that are perceived as racial.

Calvin says, "It's the biggest problem faced by Black Oregonians from all walks of life. We've been getting complaints about this since 1977, and not a lot has changed. Many Blacks in Oregon feel they must tolerate crimes or discrimination against them rather than be further victimized, even humiliated, by not being able to get effective legal representation. When they're asked about it, they say, 'That's just the way it is.'"

Calvin and others from OABA lobbied legislators, the Oregon State Bar and the Oregon Supreme Court about ensuring unbiased legal representation for African Americans. As a result, the Oregon Supreme Court Taskforce on Racial and Ethnic Issues released a study in May 1994. The study concluded: "All non-minorities involved in the justice system—judges, court staff, lawyers, law school professors and law students—need ongoing, cross-cultural training. Non-minorities brought about many of the problems that minorities encounter. Addressing these problems, and ultimately solving them, is the joint responsibility of minorities and non-minorities."

Calvin says, "Although the report is an excellent study of the bias that exists in the legal system, the conclusions and recommendations are not law."

During the 2007 Oregon legislative session, OABA worked with Northeast Portland State Representative Chip Shields to introduce HB 2886—13 years after the taskforce report. This bill would amend Oregon statutes to require Oregon attorneys to "provide unbiased and effective representation for all clients." In addition, the bill would require that "minimum continuing legal education requirements of the Oregon State Bar include cultural competency training designed to educate members on providing unbiased and effective representation of clients."

Calvin says, "I feel optimistic that we will make progress on the bill this session."

Looking back over the last 31 years, Calvin counts as his greatest achievement the number of people he's encouraged to get involved with the political process. "We've seen more than 30 Black elected and appointed officials take office since we started."

He's taken a personal lead in such involvement. He served on the Oregon Governor's Taskforce on Equality in 2006, and for 14 years he was the business manager in the office of Oregon's secretary of state. He also worked for the state as voters' pamphlet coordinator, public records manager, assistant elections manager, and the first administrator of the Oregon Appraisal Certification and Licensure Board.

Calvin also served as an officer in the U.S. Air Force and captain in the Oregon Air National Guard.

Teaching and communicating pave the way

Calvin's other passion is education. He's an experienced and progressive educator with a doctorate in education from Oregon State University (OSU) as well as master's degrees in mathematics and chemistry. He's a member of OSU's graduate faculty and an adjunct professor with OSU's School of Education. "I'm a non-traditional educator who wants to prepare others to meet the diverse needs of all the students in our society. I'm also committed to training administrators who can provide the leadership and support that teachers require in order to meet their students' educational needs."

He's also written more than 50 editorial columns for the *Salem Statesman-Journal*, *The Skanner* and *Portland Observer* dealing with issues of empowerment, education, race, racism and civil rights. "I believe that everything is politics and politics is everything," he says. "Politics is just a way of influencing the things around us. Without communication, coordination and cooperation, very little can be achieved effectively."

Calvin describes himself as a "change agent" in society. He's both an activist and deeply reflective on the challenges faced by his community. "I believe that it's imperative to understand one's self in order to be effective as an instrument of educational, economic, social and political change. It takes a long-distance runner, not a sprinter."

For more than three decades he has held himself to exacting standards in his efforts to benefit society. And he has asked no less of others.

CASE STUDY #2

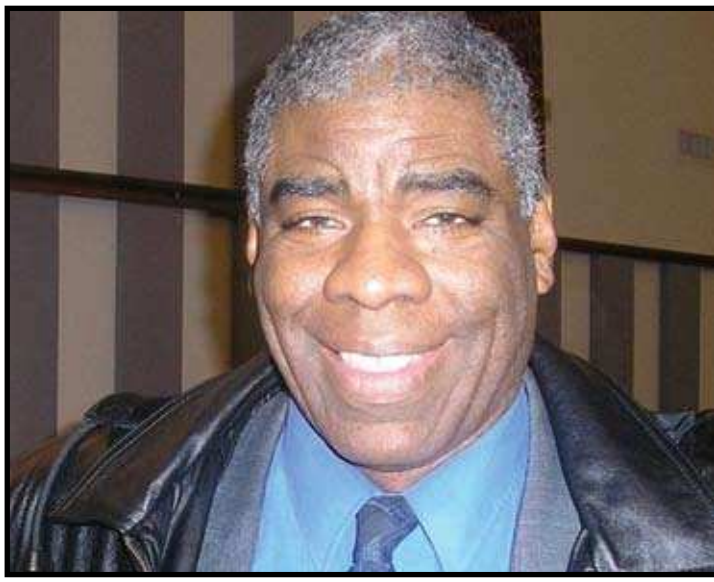
Henry Luvert

Makes the Most of 1 Percent

If you're looking for Eugene's "go-to" guy for issues concerning the area's small African American community, Henry Luvert is the man. He's president of the city's branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He's a familiar face at local school board meetings, in courtrooms and in the chambers of Eugene and Lane County councils. Armed with a distinctive style—and a formidable knowledge of African American culture, history and the law—Henry and his team are the eyes, ears and voice of their community.

Over 30 years ago, this former teacher and his wife bought a van in Chicago and headed west. Henry got accepted to grad school at the University of Oregon.

He was determined to set down roots in Lane County, despite the tiny number of African Americans in the region. "Oregon can be a very isolating place," Henry says. "That's especially true in a place like Eugene, where a concentrated Black community is nonexistent—less than 1 percent of the population. I can't take you to a specific neighborhood. You live pretty much wherever you can afford to be, so that's where you end up. Still, there's a strong sense of identity and the same institutions you'd find in any Black community; the barbers, hairdressers and churches that give cohesion to a dispersed population."



Making a difference

For Henry, living in a small community was an opportunity to make a difference. He's focused on the fight for quality, equitable education for all the children of Eugene. He says, "A lot of kids get destroyed in the education process, not only in Eugene, but all over the country."

2007

November 4, 2008

historical timeline

Barack H. Obama is elected 44th President of the United States.

Drawing on his years of experience as a classroom teacher and education advocate, Henry attributes this persistent achievement gap to many teachers and administrators expecting too little of some students. He says, "In the early years, they're on a par with their peers. They start to fall behind in third or fourth grade. Their self-esteem spirals downward and they begin to fall farther and farther behind. By the time they're in middle school, they're really far behind in essentials like reading and math."

Henry emphasizes that the achievement gap in the early years is a major contributor to the over-representation of African American youth in the corrections system. "In Oregon, they can predict the need for future prison construction by the failure rate of third and fourth graders. And if you check on the academic level of kids in Skipworth Juvenile Correction facility, you'll find that the average reading level is fourth grade."

To even the odds for *all* disadvantaged youth, Henry is working with the Eugene school district on an after-school program. "The same things happen to White and Latino kids who are economically deprived," he says. "If a kid's parents had trouble in school, the academic failure perpetuates itself. This is a cycle that we need to break."

Beyond the schoolroom

Other forms of inequity persist as well. Henry knows the region's history of racial intolerance. The Ku Klux Klan and other White supremacist organizations were active in that part of the state. He says that discriminatory attitudes and practices still have a profound effect on minority groups in the area. A vivid storyteller, Henry shares some of the cases that he comes across in his role as head of the local NAACP. Some involve individual acts of violence and racial abuse in towns and neighborhoods considered "no-go" zones by local people of color. Others are perceived miscarriages of justice or bias on the part of the police or the justice system. For example, he tells of African Americans convicted by all-White juries on little evidence, or routinely picked up by the police—encounters that usually result in jail time and diminished prospects. Henry tells his own story of struggling to build a viable business after he left teaching. He thrived for 14 years, with a computer store in downtown Eugene and successful bids for state contracts—until he became a certified minority owned business. "As soon as I gained official minority status, it seemed that every bid I made had to be rebid. And when I won a bid that required the contractor to provide training, my ability to do the training was questioned, even though I was the only contractor with a degree in education and education experience."

Like many other African Americans, he's faced challenges financing his business. Major banks have turned down his business plans despite his previous successes.

Sowing seeds for a better future

Despite setbacks, Henry fully embraces his adopted city and continues to make a difference as an NAACP leader and mentor, and by teaching African American history and culture in Lane County schools to students of all backgrounds. Why is this so important? "Our kids have to build their self-esteem through pride in their culture, especially when they may be the only one in their class who looks like them. At the same time, the other kids need to know that racism and discrimination have consequences. We try to make the most of teachable moments and put a human face on history."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Ensure equal and fair access to elections.** Oregon has made strides in promoting fair elections through its vote-by-mail system. However, more action is needed to reduce barriers, especially for those traditionally under-represented in the voting process. Every individual must register to vote and make sure to vote in all elections. Lawmakers should modify voter identification requirements to promote the widest participation in the voting process and ensure that Oregon's election process is free of all voter suppression and intimidation. A positive step has been changing policies that allow ex-felons to vote. Oregon's Congressional delegation must support: the reauthorization and strengthening of the Voting Rights Act; a constitutional amendment to secure a federal right to vote for all American citizens.

- **Support the development of civic leaders in the African American community.** We must aggressively develop strategies and incentives to keep talented African Americans in Oregon or we will continue to experience a "brain drain" to other states. We need to be intentional about developing homegrown talent by identifying and creating opportunities to gain experience and through mentoring future civic leaders. This requires the efforts of educators, business leaders and social agencies. It will take funding, training and organizing activities. State and local governments should develop consistent standards for public involvement and fund initiatives to build meaningful participation by African American communities. Ensure that public policy decision-making is transparent and accountable, with processes for evaluation.

- **Invest in Early Civics Education in Schools.** Understanding government processes is the first step toward civic engagement. School districts should ensure that all students take classes in civics and have a working knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement that earned the right to vote for African Americans.

1788
Markus Lopius becomes the first person of African descent on record known to have set foot on Oregon soil.

1805
York, William Clark's slave, comes west with Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery.

1844
Slavery is declared illegal in the Oregon Country and the original exclusion law, called the "Lash Law," is passed.

1848
Oregon's provisional government enforces exclusion law following the Whitman Massacre in 1847.

1854
Oregon's exclusion law is repealed.

1857
A new exclusion law is added to the state constitution's Bill of Rights: African Americans can't reside, own property, work or vote in Oregon.

1859
On February 14, Oregon becomes the first state admitted to the Union with an exclusion law written into the state constitution.

1865
The 13th Amendment, banning slavery in the United States, passes by referendum in Oregon.

1866
Oregon's citizens do not pass the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship to African Americans, and the state's ban on interracial marriages is extended.

1867
William Brown attempts to admit his children to public schools and is denied because they are African American.

1868
The 14th Amendment passes in Oregon.

1870
The 15th Amendment, granting African American men the right to vote, is added to the U.S. Constitution, despite failing to pass in Oregon.

1872
As a result of William Brown's struggle for equal access to public education, the Portland school district votes to include African American schools in the public school system.

1883
An attempt to remove a ban on black suffrage from the Oregon Constitution fails, despite passage of the 15th Amendment.

1914
The Portland chapter of the NAACP is founded—the oldest continually chartered chapter west of the Mississippi River.

1926
Oregon repeals its exclusion law, amending the state constitution to remove it from the Bill of Rights.

1927
The Oregon State Constitution is finally amended to remove a clause denying African Americans the right to vote.

1929
Oregon pioneer Beatrice Morrow Cannady takes over as chief editor and owner of *The Advocate*.

1931
Due to the Great Depression, most African American-owned companies closed by 1931, making it even harder for African American people to find work.

1933
The Advocate folds; it is the last African American press company until after the Depression.

1937
Kathryn Hall Bogle writes an article in *The Oregonian* entitled "An American Negro Speaks of Color" addressing the few employment opportunities in professions for educated African American people.

1941
The Portland Housing Authority is established to address housing shortages after WWII wartime shipbuilding efforts boost African American population tenfold.

1945
The Urban League of Portland is established with Edwin C. Berry as its first director.

1947
Federal postwar housing mortgage insurance program issues maps using red ink to indicate bad risk areas, including NE Portland.

1948
On Memorial Day, the Columbia River overflows and floods the Vanport community, displacing 5,000 African American Oregonians.

1948
The Oregonian ceases to use racial identification in its reporting and coverage of events.

1949
The Fair Employment Practices Law is passed.

1950
City of Portland anti-discrimination ordinance is defeated in referendum by petition in the general election.

1951
Oregon repeals its law prohibiting interracial marriages.

1952
Portland Realty Board changes code of ethics to exclude the view that "…the presence of African Americans depresses property values."

1953
Public Accommodations Law is passed prohibiting discrimination in any facility or service made available to the general public.

1954
Brown vs. Board of Education declares that separate public schools based on race denied African American children a chance of an equal education.

1959
Oregon Legislature passes the Fair Housing Act.

1959
Oregon voters ratify the 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

1961
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addresses the Urban League of Portland's Equal Opportunity Program.

1962
Local groups organize against and successfully stop a Housing Authority of Portland plan to build a 58-unit housing project.

1963
Organized resistance delays a Portland Planning Commission proposal to build a 135-unit housing project.

1964
Portland Chapter of NAACP reaches 50th anniversary.

1967
Members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) are accused of inciting racial violence on Union Avenue (now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard).

1968
The Albina Corporation is established to help overcome shortcomings in the early government ghetto revitalization efforts.

1970
The Black United Front challenges school segregation in Portland Public Schools and the first African American superintendent, Dr. Matthew Prophet, is appointed.

1973
North Portland residents picket Emanuel Hospital after a 1970s urban renewal project that expanded patient capacity displaced many residents.

1982
Members of the African American community protest the planned closure of Harriet Tubman Middle School in North Portland.

1983
Black United Fund of Oregon is created to address the disproportionately low level of charitable dollars given to organizations serving communities of color.

1992
City Council adopts Albina Community Plan, a major initiative to raise economic and educational achievement of area residents.

2004
Portland Housing Authority selects Northwest Housing Alternatives to rebuild Columbia Villa Housing project in Portsmouth neighborhood.

2007
Barack H. Obama becomes the first African American to win the Democratic Party nomination for president of the United States.

November 4, 2008
Barack H. Obama is elected 44th president of the United States.

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The Color Line Clouds Criminal Justice in Oregon

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GEOGRAPHY

Oregonians by race and geography, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
North Portland	14,196	23.1	2,909	10.6	60,974	2.0	20,234	3.3	98,313	2.7
Remainder of Portland	19,701	32.0	4,444	16.3	335,522	11.3	75,146	12.1	434,813	11.8
Remainder of PDX metro area	15,316	24.9	9,755	35.7	806,315	27.1	207,319	33.4	1,038,705	28.2
Remainder of Oregon	12,343	20.1	10,207	37.4	1,777,025	59.6	318,092	51.2	2,117,667	57.4
Oregon total	61,556	100.0	27,315	100.0	2,979,836	100.0	620,791	100.0	3,689,498	100.0

Notes: "PDX metro" area includes Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties.
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Black, Non-Hispanic Oregonians by geography, 1990 to 2005-2007

	1990	% of Oregon total	2000	% of Oregon total	2005-2007 average	% of Oregon total	Net change, 1990 to 2005-2007	Annual rate of change, 1990 to 2005-2007, non-Hispanic Black only	Annual rate of population growth, 1990 to 2005-2007, all races
North Portland	22,821	50.7	20,547	38.5	14,196	23.1	-8,625	-3.0	0.2
Remainder of Portland	10,021	22.3	13,848	26.0	19,701	32.0	9,680	4.2	1.5
Remainder of PDX metro area	4,666	10.4	9,031	16.9	15,316	24.9	10,650	7.4	2.1
Remainder of Oregon	7,474	16.6	9,899	18.6	12,343	20.1	4,869	3.1	1.5
Oregon total	44,982	100.0	53,325	100.0	61,556	100.0	16,574	2.0	1.6

Note: The 1990 Census did not allow individuals to identify as multiple races. Some people who chose the Black category in 1990 are in the multi-racial category in later surveys. Sources: US Census Bureau—1990 Census; 2000 Census; American Community Survey 2005-2007

GEOGRAPHY

Oregonians by race and county, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
Multnomah	38,957	63.3	8,617	31.5	491,919	16.5	127,772	20.6	667,265	18.1
Clackamas	3,144	5.1	2,642	9.7	318,626	10.7	44,676	7.2	369,088	10.0
Washington	7,112	11.6	5,849	21.4	392,266	13.2	130,251	21.0	535,478	14.5
Polk & Yamhill	1,232	2.0	856	3.1	135,958	4.6	28,590	4.6	166,636	4.5
Marion	2,680	4.4	2,107	7.7	223,159	7.5	79,212	12.8	307,158	8.3
Benton & Linn	1,363	2.2	617	2.3	165,707	5.6	23,715	3.8	191,402	5.2
Lane	3,273	5.3	1,865	6.8	293,532	9.9	41,160	6.6	339,830	9.2
Jackson	1,287	2.1	543	2.0	171,898	5.8	23,077	3.7	196,805	5.3
Remainder of Oregon	2,508	4.1	4,219	15.4	786,771	26.4	122,338	19.7	915,836	24.8
Oregon total	61,556	100.0	27,315	100.0	2,979,836	100.0	620,791	100.0	3,689,498	100.0

Note: Geographic boundaries included in the Census microdata files analyzed do not align exactly with the true political boundaries.
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007, US Census

Percent of Oregonians who were born American Citizens, by race, 1990 to 2005-2007

	1990	2000	2005-2007
Black non-Hispanic	96.9	92.3	90.6
White non-Hispanic	97.6	97.1	97.0
All Oregonians	95.1	91.5	90.3

Sources: US Census Bureau—1990 Census; 2000 Census; American Community Survey 2005-2007

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Poverty status of Oregon households with kids present, by race of household head, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total
Greater than 200% FPL	3,754	46.2	850	44.9
Greater than 100% FPL less than 200% FPL	1,816	22.4	494	26.1
Less than 100% FPL	2,552	31.4	550	29.0
Oregon total	8,122	100.0	1,894	100.0

White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
249,417	70.2	37,117	41.9	291,138	64.2
63,634	17.9	28,988	32.7	94,932	20.9
42,052	11.8	22,413	25.3	67,567	14.9
355,103	100.0	88,518	100.0	453,637	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Poverty status of Oregon households with no kids present, by race of household head, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total
Greater than 200% FPL	7,797	57.9	1,168	43.9
Greater than 100% FPL less than 200% FPL	2,378	17.7	750	28.2
Less than 100% FPL	3,297	24.5	744	27.9
Oregon total	13,472	100.0	2,662	100.0

White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
638,438	71.5	51,397	60.8	698,800	70.3
153,461	17.2	18,133	21.5	174,722	17.6
101,212	11.3	15,000	17.7	120,253	12.1
893,111	100.0	84,530	100.0	993,775	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Poverty status of Oregon children by race, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
Greater than 200% FPL	7,348	39.8	8,880	52.7	401,664	67.3	81,432	39.7	499,324	59.6
Greater than 100% FPL less than 200% FPL	4,034	21.9	3,972	23.6	117,971	19.8	65,928	32.1	191,905	22.9
Less than 100% FPL	7,067	38.3	3,985	23.7	76,838	12.9	57,982	28.2	145,872	17.4
Oregon total	18,449	100.0	16,837	100.0	596,473	100.0	205,342	100.0	837,101	100.0

Note: The table excludes children for whom the census does not determine poverty status. Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Oregonians' median household income, by race of household head, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	White, Non-Hispanic	Other	All Oregonians
Median Income	$30,000	$37,500	$46,800	$37,200	$45,000

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Median Oregon household income by race of household head, 1990 to 2005-2007

	1990	1999	2005-2007 Average
Black Non-Hispanic	18,912	30,000	30,000
White Non-Hispanic	27,959	41,500	46,800
Black-White ratio	67.6	72.3	64.1

Note: The 1990 Census did not allow individuals to identify as multiple races. Some people who chose the Black category in 1990 are in the multi-racial category in later surveys. Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Labor force participation of Oregon men aged 25-64 by race, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
Men in labor force	13,000	74.2	3,276	81.9	688,730	83.5	141,095	86.8	846,101	83.9
Men not in labor force	4,517	25.8	724	18.1	136,119	16.5	21,506	13.2	162,866	16.1
Oregon total	17,517	100.0	4,000	100.0	824,849	100.0	162,601	100.0	1,008,967	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Labor force participation of Oregon women aged 25-64 by race, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon Total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon Total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon Total	Other	% of Oregon Total	Total	% of Oregon Total
Women in labor force	8,492	65.3	2,094	69.1	603,606	71.5	97,869	66.0	712,061	70.6
Women not in labor force	4,503	34.7	937	30.9	240,065	28.5	50,516	34.0	296,021	29.4
Oregon total	12,995	100.0	3,031	100.0	843,671	100.0	148,385	100.0	1,008,082	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Employment of Oregon men aged 25-64 in the labor force by race, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
*Men with no steady job**	1,403	11.3	261	8.1	39,166	5.8	7,776	5.6	48,606	5.8
*Part-Time Employment only***	1,834	14.8	498	15.5	86,756	12.7	21,137	15.2	110,225	13.2
Full-Time Job	9,144	73.9	2,449	76.3	554,676	81.5	110,371	79.2	676,640	81.0
Oregon total	12,381	100.0	3,208	100.0	680,598	100.0	139,284	100.0	835,471	100.0

*Not employed or employed less than 20 hours a week and/or less than 20 weeks a year
** Less than 35 hours a week and/or less than 40 weeks a year
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Employment of Oregon women aged 25-64 in the labor force by race, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
*Women with no steady job**	859	10.2	173	8.3	66,898	11.2	13,043	13.8	80,973	11.6
*Part-Time Employment only***	2,080	24.7	648	30.9	153,339	25.7	23,875	25.2	179,942	25.7
Full-Time Job	5,474	65.1	1,273	60.8	375,449	63.0	57,858	61.0	440,054	62.8
Oregon total	8,413	100.0	2,094	100.0	595,686	100.0	94,776	100.0	700,969	100.0

*Not employed or employed less than 20 hours a week and/or less than 20 weeks a year
** Less than 35 hours a week and/or less than 40 weeks a year
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Oregonians' business ownership by race, 2002

	Black	White	All
Number of firms	2,222	274,783	299,505
Total receipts ($1,000s)	371,029	102,307,505	252,100,428
Number of firms with employees	324	72,172	83,217
Total receipts for firms with employees ($1,000s)	321,232	93,993,285	242,966,242
Number of employees	1,916	652,187	1,310,947
Annual payroll ($1,000s)	49,414	18,657,970	42,571,201

Notes: Business ownership is not restricted to a single race because owners can identify as multiple races or ethnicities on the Survey of Business Owners.
Source: U.S. Economic Census and U.S. Survey of Business Owners, 2002

Oregonians' access to checking accounts by race, 2006

	Black alone or in combination	White, Non-Hispanic	Other	Total
Does not have a checking account (adults)	20%	7%	25%	9%
Paid a fee to cash a check in the last year (adults)	22%	7%	11%	8%

Notes: The "Black alone or in combination" category refers to all individuals who reported their race as Black or African American alone or in combination with another race. The Oregon Population Survey includes Hispanic ancestry as a race rather than as a distinct ethnicity.
Source: 2006 Oregon Population Survey

HOUSING

Mean Oregon household size by race of household head, 2005-2007

	Black alone or in combination	Black Hispanic or Black and another race	White, Non-Hispanic	Other	Total
Number of households	21,594	4,556	1,248,214	173,048	1,447,412
Average household size	2.38	2.88	2.32	3.13	2.42

Notes: The table excludes individuals living in dorms and other group quarters.
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Oregon households with kids present, by marital status of household head and race, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and another race	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
Married	3,327	41.0	1,078	56.9	251,675	70.9	59,473	67.2	315,553	69.6
Single	4,795	59.0	816	43.1	103,428	29.1	29,045	32.8	138,084	30.4
Oregon total	8,122	100.0	1,894	100.0	355,103	100.0	88,518	100.0	453,637	100.0

Notes: The table excludes individuals living in dorms and other group quarters.
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Oregon households with no kids present, by marital status of household head and race, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
Married	3,661	27.2	480	18.0	392,872	44.0	34,044	40.3	431,057	95.0
Single	9,811	72.8	2,182	82.0	500,239	56.0	50,486	59.7	562,718	124.0
Oregon total	13,472	100.0	2,662	100.0	893,111	100.0	84,530	100.0	993,775	100.0

Notes: The table excludes individuals living in dorms and other group quarters.
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

HOUSING

Household tenure for households headed by non-Hispanic Blacks, 1990 to 2005-2007

	1990	% of Black non-Hispanic Oregon total	2000	% of Black non-Hispanic Oregon total	2005-2007 Average	% of Black non-Hispanic Oregon total
Own with mortgage	4,026	28.1	5,525	30.1	6,322	29.3
Own free and clear	1,402	9.8	1,282	7.0	1,646	7.6
Rent	8,819	61.5	11,305	61.5	13,397	62.0
No cash rent	84	0.6	264	1.4	229	1.1
Oregon total	14,331	100.0	18,376	100.0	21,594	100.0

Note: The 1990 Census did not allow individuals to identify as multiple races. Some people who chose the Black category in 1990 are in the multi-racial category in later surveys.
Sources: American Community Survey 2005-2007 and US Census

Household tenure, by race of household head, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total
Own with mortgage	6,322	29.3	1,540	33.8	586,306	47.0
Own free and clear	1,646	7.6	162	3.6	256,293	20.5
Rent	13,397	62.0	2,593	56.9	385,929	30.9
No cash rent	229	1.1	261	5.7	19,686	1.6
Oregon total	21,594	100.0	4,556	100.0	1,248,214	100.0

Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
66,625	38.5	660,793	45.7
17,817	10.3	275,918	19.1
84,606	48.9	486,525	33.6
4,000	2.3	24,176	1.7
173,048	100.0	1,447,412	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

HOUSING

Oregon households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, by race of household head, 1990 to 2005-2007

Population	1990	% of population total	2000	% of population total	2005-2007 Average	% of population total
Black non-Hispanic	14,331	36.8	18,376	45.0	11,568	55.3
White non-Hispanic	991,336	24.5	1,179,274	29.2	424,143	34.8
All Oregon households	1,099,870	25.2	1,334,413	29.9	512,425	36.3

Note: The 1990 Census did not allow individuals to identify as multiple races. Some people who chose the Black category in 1990 are in the multi-racial category in later surveys.
Sources: American Community Survey 2005-2007 and US Census

Oregon households with no kids present by percent of income spend on housing and race of household head, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
Thirty percent or less	6,292	48.7	1,142	47.0	573,764	66.0	47,043	58.2	628,241	65.0
More than thirty percent	6,618	51.3	1,286	53.0	296,012	34.0	33,758	41.8	337,674	35.0
Oregon total	12,910	100.0	2,428	100.0	869,776	100.0	80,801	100.0	965,915	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
Thirty percent or less	3,060	38.2	990	54.3	221,554	63.4	45,444	52.7	271,048	60.8
More than thirty percent	4,950	61.8	833	45.7	128,131	36.6	40,837	47.3	174,751	39.2
Oregon total	8,010	100.0	1,823	100.0	349,685	100.0	86,281	100.0	445,799	100.0

HOUSING

Oregonians by race and home loan application disposition, 2007

	Black	Non-Hispanic White	Total (all races)
Number of loan applications submitted	1,012	68,453	94,547
Number of loans originated	529	45,503	59,944
Loan origination rate	52%	66%	63%

Notes: Loans refer to conventional home-purchase loans, 1 to 4 family and manufactured home dwellings.
The table covers areas of Oregon within a metropolitan statistical area.
Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act 2007 reports for Oregon, Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council

HEALTH

Health insurance coverage	Black alone or in combination	Non-Hispanic White	Other	Total
Share lacking health insurance at any time in the previous 12 months	17%	16%	29%	17%

Notes: The "Black alone or in combination" category refers to all individuals who reported their race as Black or African American alone or in combination with another race. The Oregon Population Survey includes Hispanic ancestry as a race rather than as an ethnicity. Source: 2006 Oregon Population Survey

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

Oregonians age 5 or greater by race and language proficiency, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total
Speaks only English at home	48,766	79.2	18,780	68.8	2,693,695	90.4
Oregon total	61,556	100.0	27,315	100.0	2,979,836	100.0

	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
Speaks only English at home	207,975	33.5	2,969,216	80.5
Oregon total	620,791	100.0	3,689,498	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

Oregonians aged 25-39 by race and educational attainment, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
No HS diploma	1,152	9.6	809	19.7	42,594	7.4	59,149	34.4	103,704	13.5
HS diploma opnly	4,026	33.6	1,142	27.8	153,664	26.5	41,070	23.9	199,902	26.1
Some postsecondary, no degree	3,692	30.8	1,109	27.0	152,771	26.4	28,012	16.3	185,584	24.2
Postsecondary degree	3,101	25.9	1,047	25.5	229,929	39.7	43,844	25.5	277,921	36.2
Oregon total	11,971	100.0	4,107	100.0	578,958	100.0	172,075	100.0	767,111	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007, US Census

Oregonians aged 40-64 by race and educational attainment, 2005-2007

	Black Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Black Hispanic or Black and one or more other races	% of Oregon total	White, Non-Hispanic	% of Oregon total	Other	% of Oregon total	Total	% of Oregon total
No HS diploma	2,418	13.0	302	16.1	71,866	6.6	39,773	30.4	114,359	9.2
HS diploma opnly	5,244	28.3	269	14.4	279,854	25.7	27,500	21.0	312,867	25.2
Some postsecondary, no degree	5,867	31.6	528	28.2	301,097	27.6	24,494	18.7	331,986	26.8
Postsecondary degree	5,012	27.0	772	41.3	436,745	40.1	38,914	29.8	481,443	38.8
Oregon total	18,541	100.0	1,871	100.0	1,089,562	100.0	130,681	100.0	1,240,655	100.0

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007, US Census

NCES high school graduation rate by race, School Year 2006-07

	Black, Non-Hispanic	White, Non-Hispanic	All
Number regular diplomas	806	26,220	33,438
NCES graduation rate	68.1%	84.8%	81.4%

Notes: "Black" and "White" populations include only individuals identifying as a single race. "All" includes individuals identifying as other races or as more than one race.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Share of the Oregon's 2006 12th graders ever enrolled in Oregon public colleges or universities between Summer 2005 and Spring 2008, by ethnicity

System attended	Black, Non-Hispanic	White, Non-Hispanic	All
Oregon CCWD	806	26,220	33,438
Oregon University System	68.1%	84.8%	81.4%
Any Oregon public college			

Notes: "Black" and "White" populations include only individuals identifying as a single race. "All" includes individuals identifying as other races or as more than one race.
Source: ECONorthwest, using matched student-level data provided by the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon University System, and Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development.

ABSENTEEISM, DROPOUTS, DISCIPLINE

Chronic absenteeism by race and grade level, School Year 2006-07

	Black, Non-Hispanic	White, Non-Hispanic	Other	Total
Elementary grades				
Number enrolled	7,406	167,430	74,203	249,039
Number chronically absent	1,683	25,126	12,666	39,475
% chronically absent	22.7%	15.0%	17.1%	15.9%
Middle grades				
Number enrolled	3,801	90,588	33,178	127,567
Number chronically absent	961	17,773	6,603	25,337
% chronically absent	25.3%	19.6%	19.9%	19.9%
High school				
Number enrolled	5,237	133,846	40,315	179,398
Number chronically absent	2,267	39,267	14,411	55,945
% chronically absent	43.3%	29.3%	35.7%	31.2%

Notes: "Black" and "White" populations include only individuals identifying as a single race. "All" includes individuals identifying as other races or as more than one race. For every student who attended an Oregon school in 2006-2007, the number of days present and days absent are counted. If there is at least one day present or absent, then the student is included in the denominator (# Total Enrolled). The student is determined to be a chronic absentee and is included in the numerator (# Chronic Absentee) if (total days absent/(total days absent + total days present)) is greater than or equal to 10%. ODE reports days present and days absent for all full-time and half-time students. If a half-time student misses a day of school, it counts for 1 day missed, just like for full-time students, so no FTE adjustment is necessary.
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Department of Education data.

High school dropouts by race, School Year 2006-07

	Black, Non-Hispanic	White, Non-Hispanic	Other	Total
Number enrolled	5,332	135,615	41,038	181,985
Number dropped out	375	4,643	2,512	7,530
Dropout rate	7.0%	3.4%	6.1%	4.1%

Notes: "Black" and "White" populations include only individuals identifying as a single race. "All" includes individuals identifying as other races or as more than one race. For every student who attended an Oregon school in 2006-2007, the number of days present and days absent are counted. If there is at least one day present or absent, then the student is included in the denominator (# Total Enrolled). The student is determined to be a chronic absentee and is included in the numerator (# Chronic Absentee) if (total days absent/(total days absent + total days present)) is greater than or equal to 10%. ODE reports days present and days absent for all full-time and half-time students. If a half-time student misses a day of school, it counts for 1 day missed, just like for full-time students, so no FTE adjustment is necessary.
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Department of Education data.

Discipline by race and grade level, School Year 2006-07

	Black, Non-Hispanic	**White, Non-Hispanic**	**Other**	**All**
Elementary grades				
Number enrolled	7,918	174,641	79,111	261,670
% suspended	14.0%	6.3%	7.9%	7.0%
% expelled	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Middle grades				
Number enrolled	4,055	93,961	35,425	133,441
% suspended	25.4%	10.3%	14.7%	12.0%
% expelled	0.6%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%
High school				
Number enrolled	5,214	133,441	40,189	178,844
% suspended	16.2%	8.6%	12.4%	9.7%
% expelled	1.2%	0.6%	1.0%	0.7%

Notes: "Black" and "White" populations include only individuals identifying as a single race. "All" includes individuals identifying as other races or as more than one race. For every student who attended an Oregon school in 2006-2007, the number of days
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Department of Education data.

ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Black-White achievement gap with and without demographic controls, by grade, School Year 2006-07

Grade	Reading: White-Black difference in average RIT scores	Reading: Difference controlling for other demographic characteristics	Math: White-Black difference in average RIT scores	Math: Difference controlling for other demographic characteristics
3	6.0	4.0	5.3	3.9
5	5.5	3.5	5.5	3.5
8	5.4	3.3	7.3	4.8
10	6.5	4.2	7.4	5.0

Notes: Analysis includes students' scores for 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07. Demographic controls included in the analysis were: year, sex, age in months, free and reduced lunch status, esl status, participation in a migrant education program during year, intellectually gifted indicator, and special education status. All differerences are statistically significant at the 1% level.
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Department of Education data.

Students meeting or exceeding state reading benchmarks by race and grade, School Year 2006-07

Grade	Black		White		White-Black difference	Other		All	
	Number of test takers	Share meeting or exceeded benchmark	Number of test takers	Share meeting or exceeded benchmark		Number of test takers	Share meeting or exceeded benchmark	Number of test takers	Share meeting or exceeded benchmark
3	1,229	73.9%	28,061	87.9%	14.0%	11,267	72.7%	40,557	83.3%
5	1,230	57.7%	29,064	78.7%	21.0%	11,651	56.5%	41,945	71.9%
8	1,274	53.0%	30,824	73.7%	20.7%	10,826	52.5%	42,924	67.8%
10	1,203	38.0%	30,571	67.6%	29.6%	9,533	45.5%	41,307	61.6%

Notes: "Black" and "White" populations include only individuals identifying as a single race. "All" includes individuals identifying as other races or as more than one race. Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Department of Education data.

Students meeting or exceeding state math benchmarks by race and grade, School Year 2006-07

Grade	Black		White		White-Black difference	Other		All	
	Number of test takers	Share meeting or exceeded benchmark	Number of test takers	Share meeting or exceeded benchmark		Number of test takers	Share meeting or exceeded benchmark	Number of test takers	Share meeting or exceeded benchmark
3	1,251	55.4%	28,231	75.3%	19.9%	12,281	59.2%	41,763	70.0%
5	1,234	52.1%	29,131	73.1%	21.0%	11,787	58.1%	42,152	68.3%
8	1,285	50.5%	30,774	74.6%	24.1%	10,901	58.1%	42,960	69.7%
10	1,131	22.5%	27,841	51.5%	29.0%	8,897	34.8%	37,869	46.7%

Notes: "Black" and "White" populations include only individuals identifying as a single race. "All" includes individuals identifying as other races or as more than one race. Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Department of Education data.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT SCORES

Advanced Placement exam grades by ethnic group, 2008

	Black, Non-Hispanic			White, Non-Hispanic			All		
	Total exams	Number receiving a score of 3 or higher	Ave. score	Total exams	Number receiving a score of 3 or higher	Ave. score	Total exams	Number receiving a score of 3 or higher	Ave. score
Calculus AB	9	5	2.8	1,269	853	3.2	1,672	1,098	3.2
English literature and composition	41	8	1.9	2,056	1,370	3.0	2,676	1,680	2.9
U.S. History	27	15	2.6	2,526	1,252	2.6	3,215	1,570	2.6
All exams	223	90	2.2	14,365	8,831	2.9	19,232	11,567	2.9

HEALTH INDICATORS

Oregonians by race and mortality rate per 100,000 population, 2005

	Black	White	Other Races	Black-White ratio
Mortality rate	869	789	522	1.1

Source: Kaiser State Health Facts 2005, The Kaiser Family Foundation

Oregonians by race and mortality rate per 100,000 population, 2005

	Blacks Age 15-19	Whites Age 15-19	Black-White ratio
Adolescent deaths	5	117	N/A
Deaths per 100,000 adolescent population (by race)	66	49	1.3

Notes: ECONorthwest converted death statistics to rate per 100,000 population using population statistics from the 2005 American Community Survey. Blacks and Whites in this data are non-Hispanic.
Source: Oregon Vital Statistics 2005, Oregon Department of Human Services, 2005 American Community Survey

Oregonians by race and common causes of death per 100,000 population, 2005

	Black	White	Other Races	Black-White ratio
Cancer	201	189	115	1.1
Heart Disease	183	170	93	1.1
Stroke/Cerebrovascular	85	56	55	1.5
Diabetes	73	29	30	2.5

Source: Kaiser State Health Facts 2005, The Kaiser Family Foundation

Oregonians by race and violent deaths per 100,000 population, 2006

	Blacks	Whites	Hispanic	Black-White ratio
Suicide rate	8	16	7	0.5
Homicide rate	6	3	6	2.0

Source:" Violent Deaths in Oregon 2006" Report, Oregon Department of Human Services and Oregon Violent Death Reporting System.

Oregonians by race and prevalence of selected chronic conditions, 2004-2005

	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Whites Surveyed	Black-White ratio
High blood pressure*	42%	25%	1.7
Arthritis	36%	28%	1.3
High blood cholesterol	26%	32%	0.8
Asthma	16%	10%	1.6
Diabetes*	13%	6%	2.2
Heart attack*	8%	4%	2.0
Heart disease	4%	4%	1.0
Stroke	3%	2%	1.5

Notes: The asterisk (*) indicates that there is significantly significant difference between blacks and whites. Blacks and Whites in this data are Non-Latino.
Source: "Keeping Oregonians Healthy" report, Data from a special combined 2004-2005 file from Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

Oregonians by race and receipt of preventative services, 2004-2005

	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Whites Surveyed	Black-White ratio
Had cholesterol checked within 5 Years	72%	71%	1.0
Pap test within 3 Years (Women 18+ years)	89%	86%	1.0
Mammogram within 2 Years (Women 18+ years)	80%	73%	1.1

Notes: There is not a significantly significant difference between Blacks and Whites among these preventative services. Blacks and Whites in this data are Non-Latino.
Source: "Keeping Oregonians Healthy" report, Data from a special combined 2004-2005 file from Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

Oregonians by race and risk factors among adults, 2004-2005

	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Whites Surveyed	Black-White ratio
Obese	29%	24%	1.2
Overweight	40%	36%	1.1
Meets CDC physical activity recommendation	64%	59%	1.1
Eats 5+ servings of fruits/vegetables per day	28%	27%	1.0
Smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days*	30%	20%	1.5

Notes: The asterisk (*) indicates that there is significantly significant difference between blacks and whites. Blacks and Whites in this data are Non-Latino.
Source: "Keeping Oregonians Healthy" report, Data from a special combined 2004-2005 file from Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

Oregonians by race and risk factors among 11th grade youth 2005

	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Whites Surveyed	Black-White ratio
Overweight	13%	10%	1.3
At risk of overweight	23%	12%	1.9
Meets CDC physical activity recommendation	46%	51%	0.9
Eats 5+ servings of fruits/vegetables per day	16%	17%	0.9
Smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days	21%	18%	1.2

Source: "Keeping Oregonians Healthy" report, Data from Oregon Healthy Teen Survey 2005.

Share of population with a physical disability that substantially limits basic physical activities

	Black alone or in combination	White, Non-Hispanic	Other	Total
Has a condition that substantially	29%	21%	15%	21%
limits one or more basic physical activities				

Notes: The "Black alone or in combination" category refers to all individuals who reported their race as Black or African American alone or in combination with another race. The Oregon Population Survey includes Hispanic ancestry as a race rather than as a distinct ethnicity.

Oregonians by race of mother and mother's demographics 2007			
	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Whites Surveyed	Black-White ratio
Under 20	14%	7%	1.8
4th and Higher Order Births	17%	10%	1.8
Completed 12+ Years Education	76%	89%	0.9
Total Births	1,140	34,197	N/A

Source: Oregon Vital Statistics 2007, Oregon Department of Human Services

Oregonians by race of mother and mother's vital statistics 2007			
Mother's characteristic	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Whites Surveyed	Black-White ratio
Primary Cesarean	22%	17%	1.3
Tobacco Use	16%	15%	1.1
Multiple Births	4%	3%	1.2
Prenatal (1st Trimester) Care	72%	82%	0.9
Inadequate Care	9%	6%	1.6
(Less than 5 prenatal visits or care began in the 3rd trimester)			
Total Births	1,140	34,197	N/A

Source: Oregon Vital Statistics 2007, Oregon Department of Human Services

CHILD WELFARE

Oregonians by race and child (age 0-17) victims of abuse/neglect, 2006

	Black Children	White Children	Hispanic Children	Total (All Races)
Victim count	663	7,538	1,934	12,927
Victims as % of children in Oregon (by race)	4%	1%	1%	2%

Source: "Child Maltreatment 2006" report, Administration on Children, Youth and Families.

Oregonians by race and children served by foster care (age 0-18), 2006

	Black Children	White Children
Count of children served	799	7,455
Children (age 0-18) served per 1,000 population in Oregon (by race)	38	12

Notes: ECONorthwest converted foster care statistics to rate per 100,000 population using population statistics from the 2005 American Community Survey. Blacks and Whites in this data are non-Hispanic. The race of 13.6% of children served in foster care in Oregon in 2006 is not known.
Source: "Foster Care 2006" report, Oregon Department of Human Services

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Oregonians by race and incarceration rate per 100,000 population, 2005

	Blacks	Whites	Hispanics	Black-White ratio
Incarceration rate in Oregon	2,930	502	573	5.8
Incarceration rate in the USA	2,290	412	742	5.6

Source: "Uneven Justice: State Rates of Incarceration by Race and Ethnicity" report 2007, The Sentencing Project.

Oregonians by race and inmate population, 2008

	Black	White	Hispanic
Inmate count	1,313	10,117	1,698
% of total inmate population	10%	74%	12%

Source: Oregon Department of Corrections 2008

Oregonians by race and frequency of traffic stops in the last 12 months, 2007

	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Geographically-Matched Non-Blacks Surveyed	Black-Nonblack ratio
None	72%	84%	0.9
Once	17%	14%	1.2
Twice or more	12%	3%	4.0

Notes: The difference between the two races/ethnicities is statistically significant (95% level of confidence). 211 Blacks were surveyed. Source: "2007 Annual Report," Law Enforcement Contacts Policy Data and Review Committee.

Oregonians by race and frequency of a search following traffic stops in the last 12 months, 2007

	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Geographically-Matched Non-Blacks Surveyed	Black-Nonblack ratio
None	91%	91%	1.0
Once	2%	9%	0.2
Twice or more	7%	0%	N/A

Notes: The difference between the two races/ethnicities is not statistically significant (95% level of confidence). 211 Blacks were surveyed.
Source: "2007 Annual Report," Law Enforcement Contacts Policy Data and Review Committee.

Oregonians by race and perception of racial profiling used by Oregon police officers, 2007

	% of Blacks Surveyed	% of Geographically-Matched Non-Blacks Surveyed	Black-Nonblack ratio
Never/Rarely	11%	27%	0.4
Sometimes	24%	48%	0.5
Often/Always	66%	25%	2.6

Notes: The difference between the two races/ethnicities is statistically significant (95% level of confidence). 211 Blacks were surveyed.
Source: "2007 Annual Report," Law Enforcement Contacts Policy Data and Review Committee.

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