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The Landscape: Equity

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Equity

by Elizabeth Morehead

The past two years have been marked by protests against police violence across the country. The protests, and resulting media coverage, cast a spotlight on persistent racial disparities in economic status and disproportionate contact with law enforcement. Cities across the country are looking inward to assess equity within their own communities. In an equitable community, all individuals, regardless of “markers of difference,” including but not limited to race, ethnicity, income, disability, and age, have equal privilege and opportunity to access the basic needs, services, skills, and assets required to succeed in life. Economic and social indicators show many communities of color in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro Metropolitan Statistical Area have less access to educational and economic resources while experiencing disproportionate contact with law enforcement.

Between 2000 and 2010, the population of the Portland region increased 15 percent. Populations of color, however, grew at a much faster rate. The Hispanic population nearly doubled, while Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders saw an increase of 67 percent, and Asians 50 percent.

Children of color are more likely to live in poverty than their white peers. Between 2011 and 2013, roughly 17 percent of kids in the Portland MSA were living below the poverty line. In 2013, white and Asian* children were significantly less likely to live in poverty than their black or African American, Hispanic, or Native Hawaiian peers. Some of the populations with the fastest rates of growth are also those whose children are most likely to live in poverty.

Children of color are also more likely to have experience with the juvenile justice system. In 2012, black or African American

juveniles were four times as likely to be arrested as their white peers.

Rates of adult educational attainment are closely tied to child poverty. With the exception of Asians, populations of color are less likely to have a bachelor’s or advanced degree. Hispanics and Native Hawaiians, the two groups experiencing the highest population growth, have some of the lowest rates of educational attainment, 15 percent and 11 percent respectively.

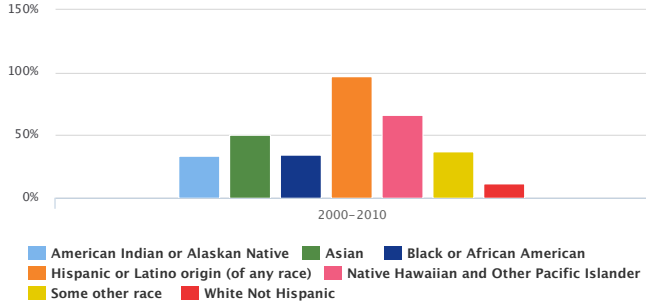
Household income is strongly correlated with adult educational attainment. Between 2011 and 2013, populations with the highest rates of educational attainment had the highest median household incomes. Hispanics, blacks and African Americans, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Alaskan Native households earned between 61 percent and 67 percent of the median white household income.

Faced with less access to financial resources and a legacy of exclusionary lending practices, it is not surprising that, with the exception of Asians, populations of color in the Portland MSA are much less likely to own their home than their white counterparts. At nearly 65 percent, the rate of homeownership for whites is nearly double that of black or African Americans (33 percent), Hispanics (34 percent), and people identifying as some other race (29 percent) and nearly triple that of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders (23 percent).

The pattern of disproportionate involvement with the criminal justice system is evident with adults as well as juveniles and is particularly striking for blacks, who are two to three time more likely to be incarcerated, on probation, or parole. **M**

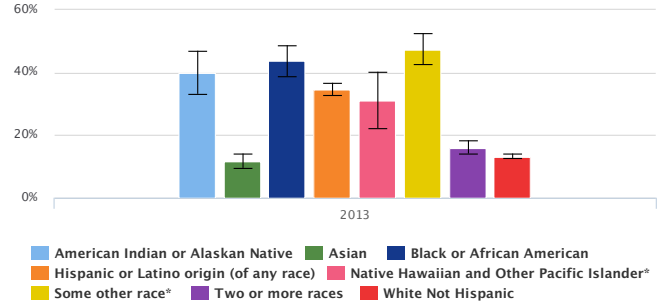
Change in population by race (alone or in combination with one or more races) and Hispanic origin, Portland MSA, 2000-2010

Source: US Census, Table QT-P5,P4,QT-P9



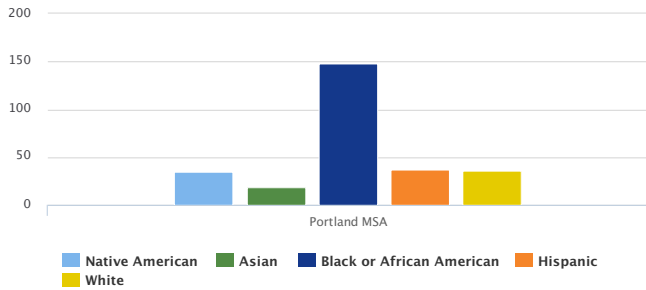
Percentage of children in poverty, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, Portland MSA, 2011 - 2013 three-year estimates

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table C17001B-I



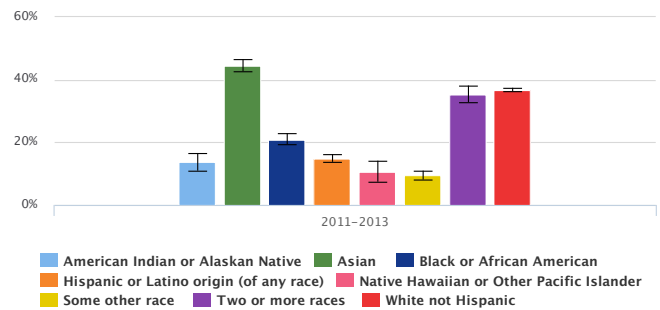
Rate of juvenile criminal referrals per 1,000 juveniles age 10-17, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, Portland MSA, 2012

Source: Oregon Youth Authority; Washington Office of Financial Management; US Department of Justice



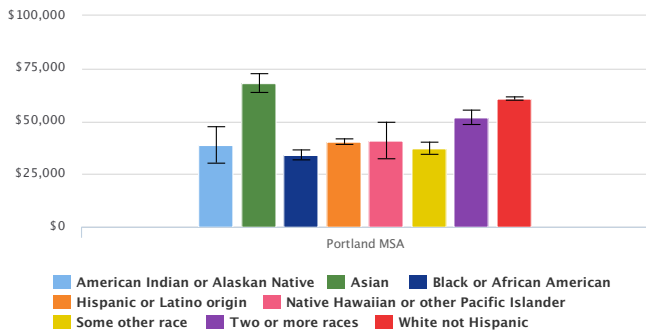
Percentage of adults age 25 and over with a bachelor's or advanced degree, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, Portland MSA, 2011-2013 three-year estimates

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table B15002B-I



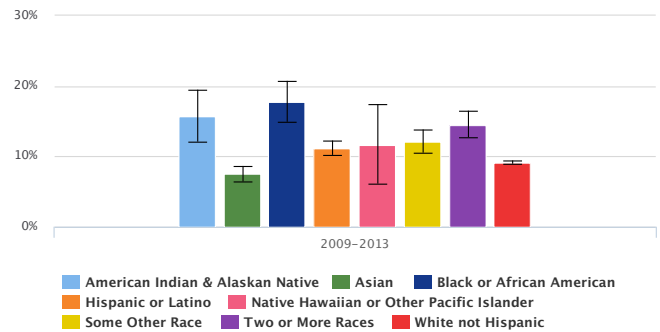
Median household income, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, Portland MSA, 2011-2013 three-year estimates

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table B19013 B-I



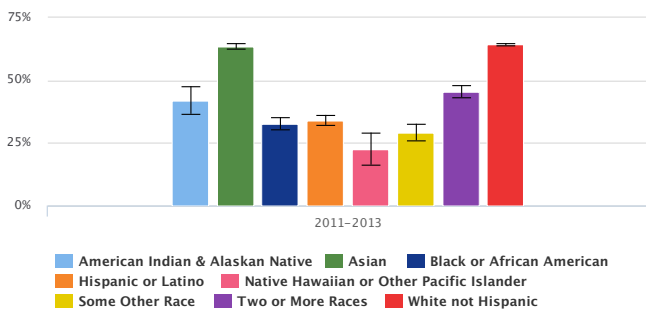
Unemployment by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, Portland MSA, 2011-2013 three-year estimates

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table S2301



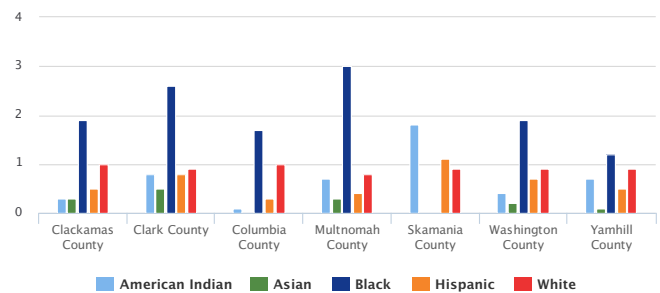
Percentage of households who own their home, by race (alone) and Hispanic origin, Portland MSA, 2011-2013 three-year estimates

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, Table B25003B-I



Ratio of percentage under supervision to percentage in population, by race and Hispanic origin (alone or in combination), by county, Portland MSA, 2013

Source: Oregon Department of Corrections; Washington Department of Corrections; U.S. Census Table PEPR5H



*It is important to note that this analysis uses data from the US Census American Community Survey which does not publish data for Asian subgroups. For more charts like these, go to Greater Portland Pulse at portlandpulse.org.