

# COUNT HER IN

A REPORT ABOUT WOMEN AND GIRLS IN OREGON



WOMEN'S  
FOUNDATION  
of OREGON



Every day, in  
ways big and  
small, women  
and girls make  
Oregon a great  
place to live.





## Eight to Celebrate

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Oregon's 2 million women and girls make extraordinary contributions to the well-being of our state. Here are just 8 ways where they lead the way.

### **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Oregon women vote at higher rates than Oregon men and at higher rates than women in most other states.

### **CAREGIVING**

Oregon women and girls perform nearly one-half a billion hours of unpaid caregiving each year for children, relatives, neighbors, and friends.

### **MINIMAL VIOLENT CRIME**

Fewer than 5% of the violent crimes in Oregon are committed by women and girls.

### **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Oregon women and girls engage in more daily physical activity than women and girls in any other state.

### **EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE**

Women comprise 70% of Oregon's public school teachers and over 80% of the state's health care workers.

### **GENEROSITY WITH MONEY AND TIME**

Oregon women give charitably and volunteer their time at higher rates than Oregon men, and than women in most other states.

### **PUBLIC SERVICE**

Oregon women serve in statewide elected office at some of the highest rates in the country. Oregon women also serve in the U.S. military at higher rates than women in many other states.

### **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

Oregon girls met the state's 2025 goal for college graduation rates in 2014, eleven years ahead of schedule.

The contributions of women and girls are keeping Oregon strong and livable.

# Eight That Can't Wait

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

An estimated 1 million Oregon women and girls—over half of the state's female population—have experienced some form of sexual or domestic violence. This is one of the highest rates in the country. (See page 24)

## **SYSTEMIC RACISM**

Women and girls of color in Oregon experience disproportionate barriers to success, including poverty rates that are nearly twice as high as those of white women and girls. (See page 48)

## **COST OF CAREGIVING**

Child care costs in Oregon are among the least affordable in the nation. A year of daycare is now more expensive than annual tuition at a state university in Oregon. (See page 32)

## **GAPS IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ACCESS**

Hundreds of thousands of women lack access to the information and services they need to decide if, when, and how they become pregnant. Almost half of Oregon pregnancies are unintended, a rate that has barely dropped in 20 years. (See page 58)

## **WAGE AND WEALTH GAP**

Oregon women earn between 53 and 83 cents (depending on race or ethnicity) for every dollar men in Oregon earn. The gender wealth gap, based on the sum of a person's assets, is even larger: approximately 35 cents on the dollar. Oregon's gender wealth gap is among the largest in the nation. (See page 39 and 41)

## **ECONOMIC FRAGILITY**

Nearly a third of Oregon's women and girls are struggling to make ends meet. As a result, most cannot cover an unexpected expense of even \$100 without having to sell something or borrow money. (See page 46)

## **MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES**

Oregon women have the highest incidence of reported depression in the country, as well as the highest rate of alcohol use. Women are almost twice as likely to attempt suicide than men, and Oregon women have higher rates of childhood trauma than the national average. (See page 60)

## **PUBLIC/PRIVATE GLASS CEILING**

In 2016, only one of Oregon's 39 publicly traded companies is led by a woman CEO. Several Oregon counties do not have a single woman serving in county-wide office. (See page 76)

**Oregon has a big problem with gender equity.**

**Mental health challenges**



**Economic fragility**



THESE EIGHT INTERCONNECT  
TO CREATE A SYSTEM OF DAILY  
CHALLENGES FOR OREGON'S  
WOMEN AND GIRLS.

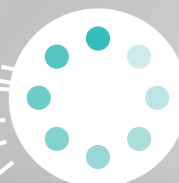
Public/private  
glass ceiling



Violence  
against women



Systemic  
racism



Cost of  
caregiving



Wage and  
wealth gap



Gaps in  
reproductive  
health access



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# Dear Oregon,

We have crunched the numbers. We have traveled the state. We have consulted the experts. We have listened to women in nearly every county. The result is *Count Her In*: the most expansive, actionable, and inclusive analysis of Oregon's women and girls to date. This report is a baseline and a call to action, a celebration of resilience, and an opportunity to do things differently for future Oregonians. Above all, *Count Her In* is an irrefutable imperative for change.

Over 20 years have passed since the last report on this topic was published. As a result, our state has been operating in a gender data-blind for nearly a generation. During that time, many of us have sensed that progress has been either slow or nonexistent, but a comprehensive summary of empirical evidence remained out of reach, until now.

*Count Her In* is not only a data-driven imperative for change, it's a human-driven one. We heard from over a thousand women and girls during our spring 2016 Listening Tour. We learned that the challenges conveyed by the data are felt every day and in each community across the state. The photos, concerns, and stories we gathered accompany the data on every single page. This report also breaks new ground by providing gender-specific, local data for every Oregon county. We hope the county dashboards will prompt insight, inform decision-making, and spur accountability. No single community is responsible for state-level data. But the local data show that every Oregon county struggles with the challenges outlined here, and it will take efforts by each of our communities to propel statewide change.

If you read only one page of this report, read "Eight That Can't Wait" (page 4). Together, these eight key findings illustrate the sweeping challenges that Oregon's women and girls face every day. As you continue through the report, you'll note that the breadth of our coverage means that every subject discussed merits deeper consideration. By offering complex realities in bite-size pieces, we hope that we've whetted the state's appetite for much more in the years to come.

*Count Her In* will likely spur shocking realizations for many Oregonians. The difficult facts on these pages do not reflect who we believe ourselves to be or the many values we share. But we can take heart in the knowledge that it doesn't have to be this way. In areas where Oregon lags behind the rest of the nation, we can learn from the examples of other states, many in our region, with better outcomes for women and girls. Systemic change often begins with simple actions. Toward that end, we have included lists of things every Oregonian can do to make a difference for the state's women and girls.

This is a sobering report, but it is not without optimism. We start with "Eight to Celebrate"—just a few of the ways that Oregon women and girls are making our state a better place to live. Each section of the report begins with a story about how women from diverse communities all over the state are coming together to create bold solutions and make progress on their own terms. Finally, we trust that this report will be a fresh mandate to build an Oregon in which all women and girls can thrive.

Oregonians who are determined to make progress for women and girls aren't alone. There are leaders, organizations, and individuals all over the state who share your compassion and commitment. And finally, after 157 years, there is a statewide, member-supported Women's Foundation whose singular purpose is to make Oregon a great state for all women and girls. We're here for the long haul and, thanks to this report, armed with information that compels us to action. Won't you join us?

## Forward together, The Women's Foundation of Oregon

# Five Things Every Oregonian Can Do



**Ask.** In many communities, the problems explored in this report aren't even being discussed. Parents, ask school leaders why there are so few girls in your daughter's STEM classes, why her basketball team has worse equipment than the boys' team, or why there aren't school-wide anti-bullying efforts. Employees, ask why your employer doesn't have pay transparency, paid family leave, or more women in leadership positions. Let's start asking the right questions.



**Vote.** Our elected officials have a substantial impact on the public policies that affect Oregon's women and girls. Ask candidates where they stand on issues like the "Eight That Can't Wait" and how they are going to make things better for women and girls—particularly women and girls who experience additional barriers to success.



**Donate.** Organizations serving women and girls in your community are doing incredible work—and are typically underfunded. Support these organizations that are making a difference by donating both time and money.



**Share.** The information in this report is not widely known and it's hard to solve problems that no one is talking about. If everyone who read this report shared what they learned with five neighbors, colleagues, family members, or friends, we could change the conversation about gender equity in Oregon overnight. Let's start talking.



**Recognize.** Oregon's women and girls are making our communities and state better and more livable through service, care, philanthropy, and social capital. Their contributions are both substantial and under-celebrated. They deserve our recognition and thanks.

# Five Things Oregon Leaders Can Do



**Demand Better Data.** Our decisions are often only as good as our information. Right now, a startling amount of Oregon's data is old, inaccurate, or simply nonexistent. What gets measured, gets done. And we need better measurements—particularly for underrepresented and underserved populations. In an era of big data, it's time to collect and share information that reflects the daily realities of Oregon's 2 million women and girls.



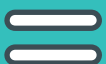
**Make Decisions with a Gender Lens.** Interrogate every decision—from policies and programs to services and outreach—based on the impact it will have on women and girls. Are women and girls likely to be disproportionately affected? Are gender-specific needs being considered and met? Are women and girls, particularly those who are most affected, being asked for their input?



**Fund Gender-Specific Programs and Services.** Women and girls often have different needs than the state's men and boys. From health care options to youth development programs to job training opportunities, we can better meet the needs of Oregon's women and girls if we choose to support thoughtful, effective, gender-specific programs and services.



**Embrace Intersectionality.** It's a big word, but it has a simple meaning: People don't come in pieces. Gender is an important component of identity, but it's not the only one. Race, age, location, disability status, income, religious affiliation, sexuality, gender identity, immigration status, and primary language are just a few of the many elements that come together to shape our experiences and needs. Until we all acknowledge that every person falls into multiple categories, and begin to make decisions accordingly, every Oregonian will be disserved by one-dimensional policies and systems.



**Find Common Ground.** The issues identified in this report—like safety, opportunity, and education—are not inherently partisan issues. We can and should collaborate to find innovative solutions that work.

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# User's Guide

Below are some brief notes that we hope will facilitate the use of this report for policymakers, service providers, community leaders, and anyone else who shares our commitment to gender equity in Oregon.

- Each content page is designed to be self-contained and easily extractable. As such, the text and content doesn't flow from page to page as it does in most reports. This format is intended to help users print or share a page or two without having to include the entire rest of the chapter for context.
- We've prioritized intersectionality by disaggregating wherever the data allow, with particular emphasis on race/ethnicity, county, and age.
- The graphic information throughout the report has a consistent color scheme: Oregon women (in aggregate) are always represented as turquoise; U.S. women (in aggregate) are represented in dark gray; Oregon or U.S. women, when disaggregated by race/ethnicity, are depicted by population using a consistent set of colors throughout.
- Direct quotes and stories from women and girls who participated in our Listening Tour appear in dark gray boxes. Survey results from the Listening Tour are set off with a megaphone graphic and a "Heard on Tour" caption.
- The "Oregon Women in Action" stories that begin each section are brief celebrations of successful, women-driven, often culturally specific efforts to address challenges faced by Oregon women and/or girls. These are just a few of the tremendous such efforts across the state. We will continue to document and share stories like these in the hope that they will inform and inspire similar efforts to embrace community-specific needs, values, traditions, and resources.
- For the most part, graphs are in ascending order from the smallest value to the largest, to help readers create comparative context. However, graphs that are disaggregated by race/ethnicity are offered in alphabetical order to resist unproductive comparisons between communities.
- Throughout, we've used the categorization, and the terms for each category, that were used in the original data sources. We understand, and agree, that many of these categorizations and terms are deeply problematic, particularly when it comes to race/ethnicity (see "The Need for Data Equity," page 10). Our use of any given term is by no means an endorsement, but rather an effort to preserve the integrity of the source data and the manner in which it was collected. That's why, for instance, some graphs use the term "Black" while others use "African American"; and some graphs use "Hispanic" while others use "Latino."
- The sources for each graph or table are listed beneath the graphic. Any sources used in the creation of the text on a given page appears underneath the text.

We're proud of this report and have learned a great deal while creating it. We also acknowledge that it is a first attempt. With your feedback and support, we are committed to creating future reports that are increasingly useful, inclusive, and compelling, and that deepen our understanding of the many contributions and challenges of women and girls in Oregon.





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# The Need for Data Equity

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Oregon is home to a diverse set of communities, each with its own set of resources and challenges. Many women—especially women of color, LGBTQ women, women with disabilities, women who live in sparsely populated areas, immigrant and refugee women, and older women—face greater barriers to health, economic well-being, and life success.

However, much of the intersectional data that could help us better understand challenges, set disparity reduction goals, and track progress is simply not available for these underrepresented women. When data is missing, outdated, oversimplified, or unable to be disaggregated, we do not have the full picture, and we lack an essential tool for change. Worse still, we make invisible whole groups of people who are as deeply deserving of equity in the realm of data as they are in every other part of life.

Data equity relies upon the expansion of data sources large and small. Federal, state, and local data sources—including those from the US Census Bureau, the American Community Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Bureau of Labor Statistics, must all make substantial changes in order to effectively capture and convey information about our increasingly diverse and complex world. True data equity will remain out of reach until decision-makers at all levels demand, and invest in, better data on behalf of every Oregonian.

# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## Sistah Sistah

Nearly 50,000 women and girls of African descent live in Oregon; they are beautiful, successful, and loved. Girls of African descent also face social, emotional, and academic challenges, including stereotyping, colorism, and low self-esteem. This is especially true in North and Northeast Portland, where gentrification has erased homes, businesses, and churches in the African American community, breaking bonds that have provided community support for decades. Nationally, 7 in 10 girls of African descent believe that they are inadequate in some way, whether it is their looks, academic performance, peer acceptance, or friendships.

Sistah Sistah was born in Portland as the first community-designed, community-led effort to connect girls of African descent with the wraparound services they need. Applying real-world strategies to research-based curricula, Sistah Sistah delivers programs and activities through a lens of equity, cultural identity, and self-actualization. For example, they host forums on stereotyping, colorism, and self-esteem. They've also created a Rites of Passage program to educate and connect each young woman to her ancestral lineage and ancient cultural traditions, paying homage to their African roots.

Through relationships with other women and various forms of social media, Sistah Sistah has succeeded in showing girls a positive reflection of themselves in their communities and the world at large—something absolutely essential to building a better future. These girls are connected to positive leadership that reflects the Sistah Sistah principles as represented through their mantra:

*Beautiful, successful, and loved  
I believe in the power of me  
I am beautiful, successful, and loved  
My fate is not based on what you see  
Beautiful, successful, and loved  
I believe in the power of me  
I am beautiful, successful, and loved  
I name it, I claim it, my mind is free  
(By S. Renee Mitchell)*

*Thank you to Sah'Rah Kelsey Bey for helping to write this story.*



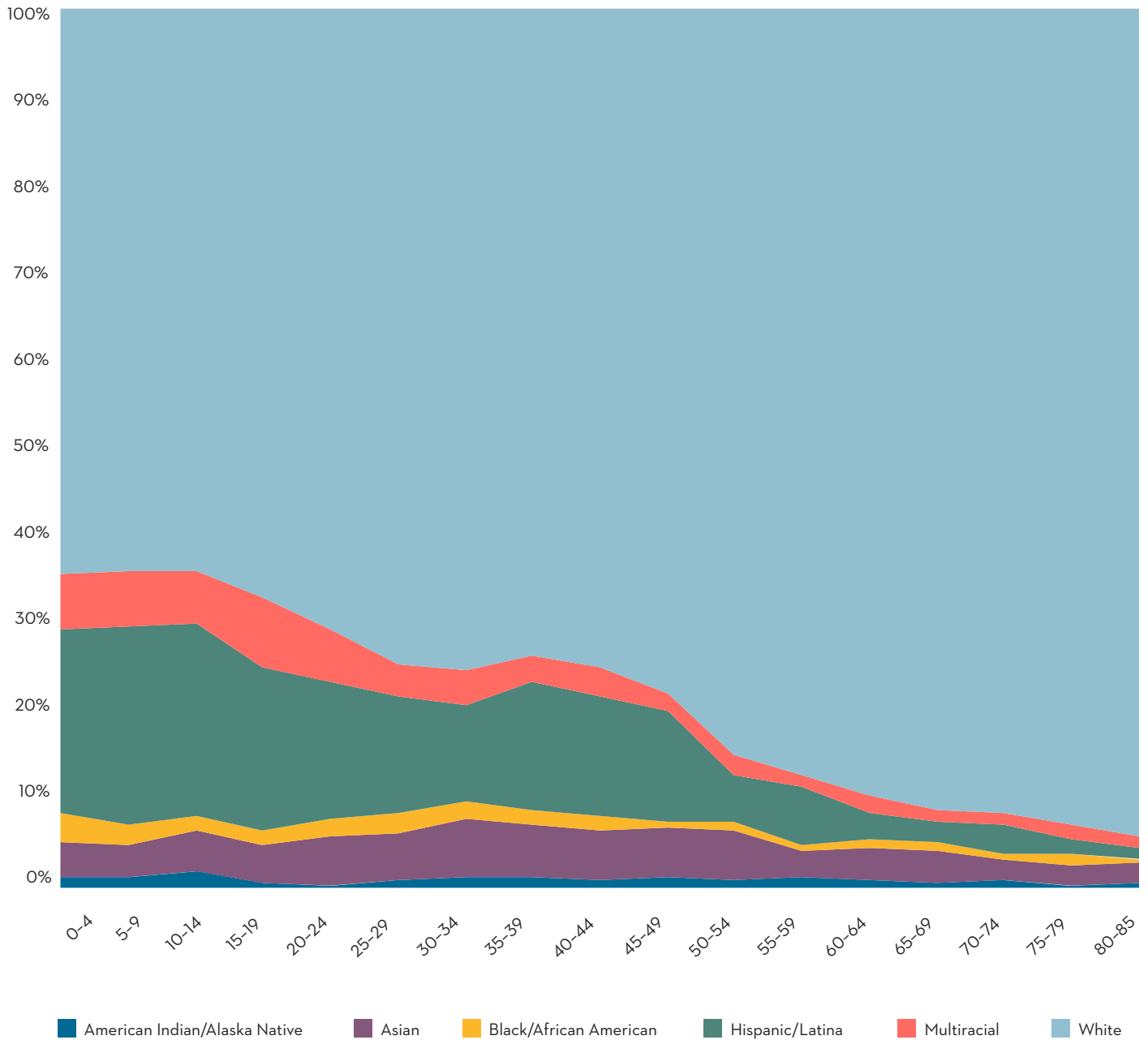
**MEET  
OREGON'S  
WOMEN  
AND GIRLS**

# Oregon Women and Girls as 100 People



May not sum to 100 due to rounding. Original graphic by ECONorthwest.  
 Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau and Gallup Daily Tracking data.

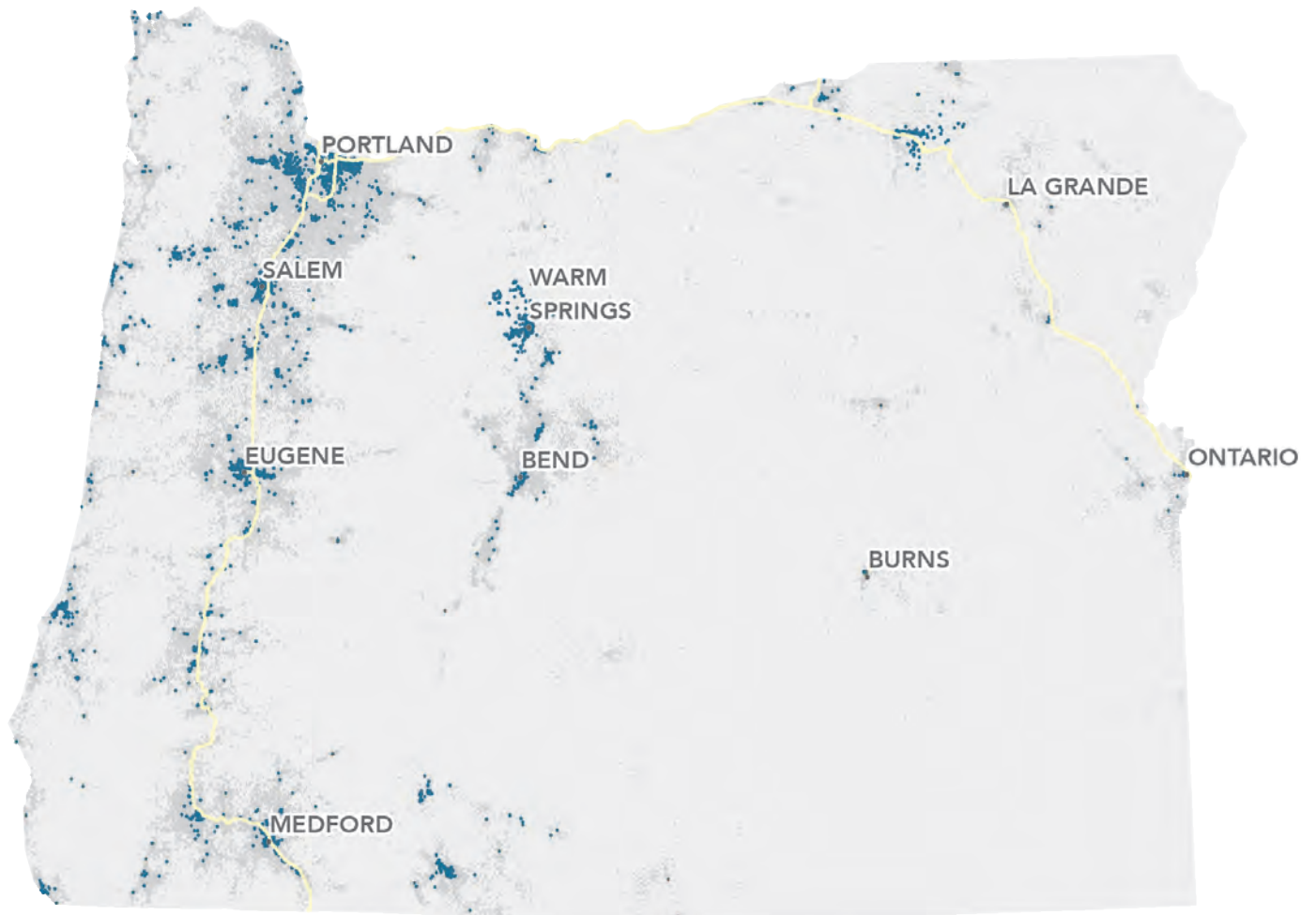
# Female Population by Age and Race/Ethnicity, Oregon 2013



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 PUMS 1-year estimate data

# Where Oregon Women and Girls Live by Race/Ethnicity

## AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE

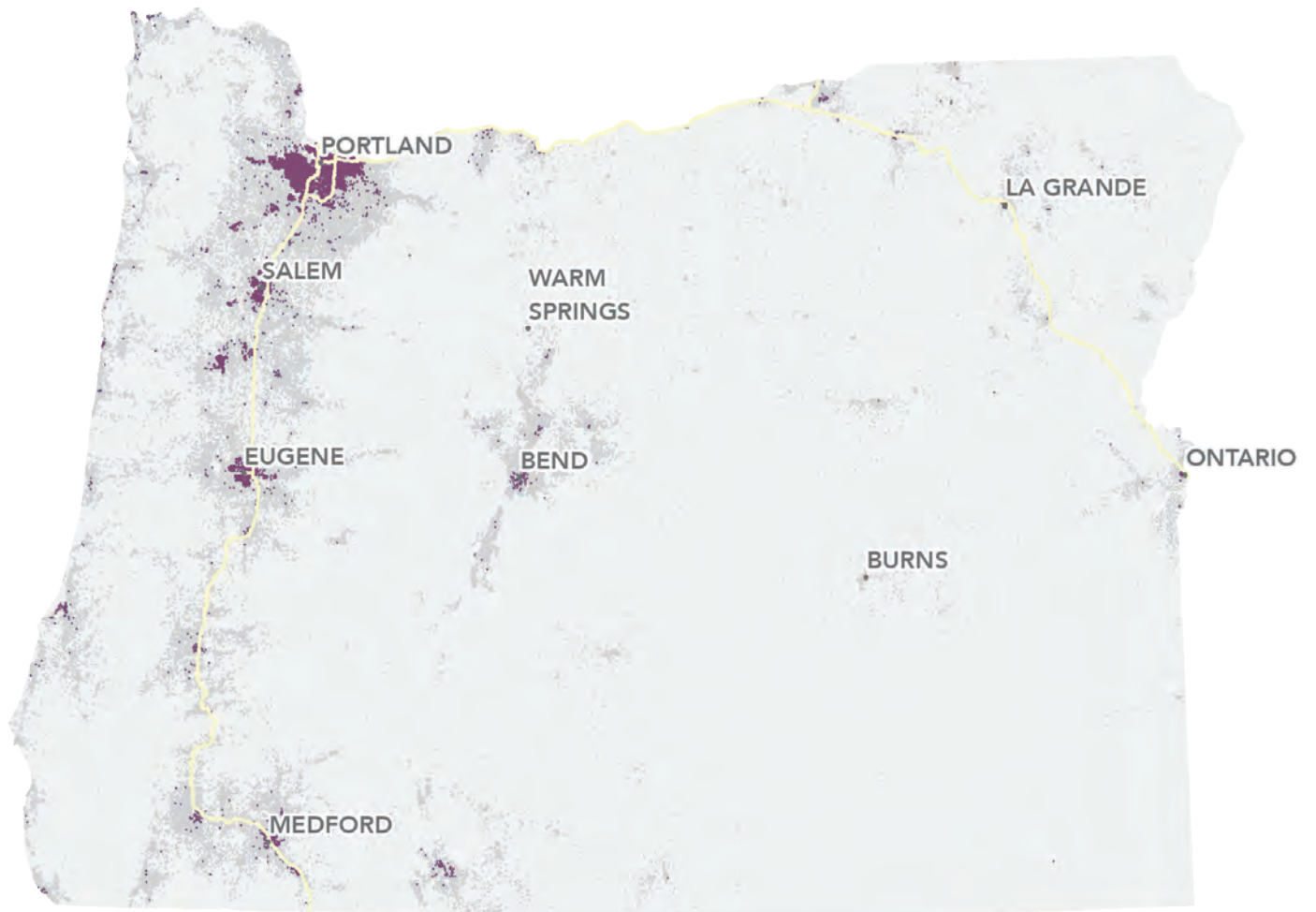


Each dot represents 5 women or girls  
● American Indian/Alaska Native  
● All other women

Source: ECONorthwest analysis of 2010 decennial U.S. Census Bureau data



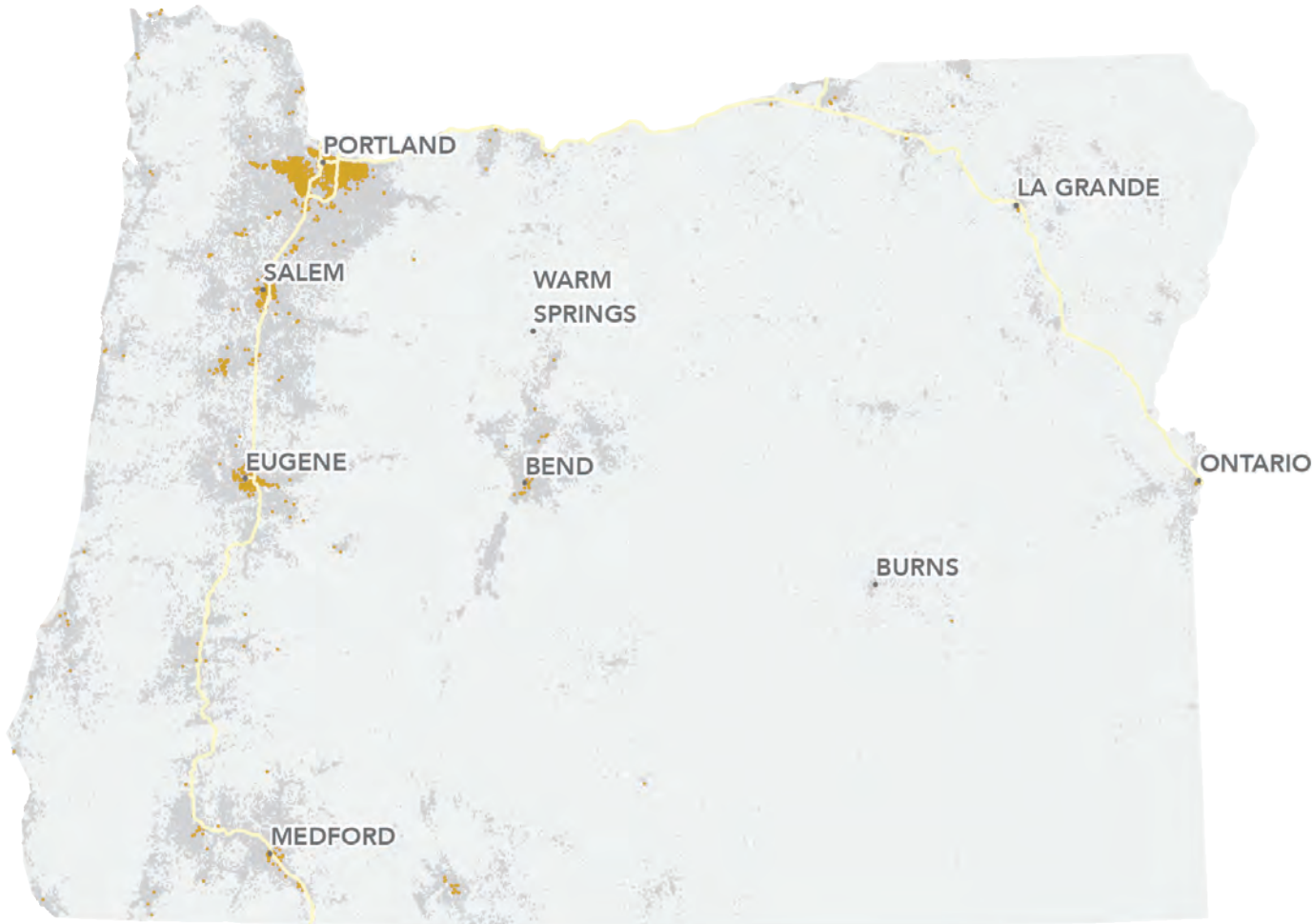
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER



Each dot represents 5 women or girls  
● Asian/Pacific Islander  
● All other women

Source: ECONorthwest analysis of 2010 decennial U.S. Census Bureau data

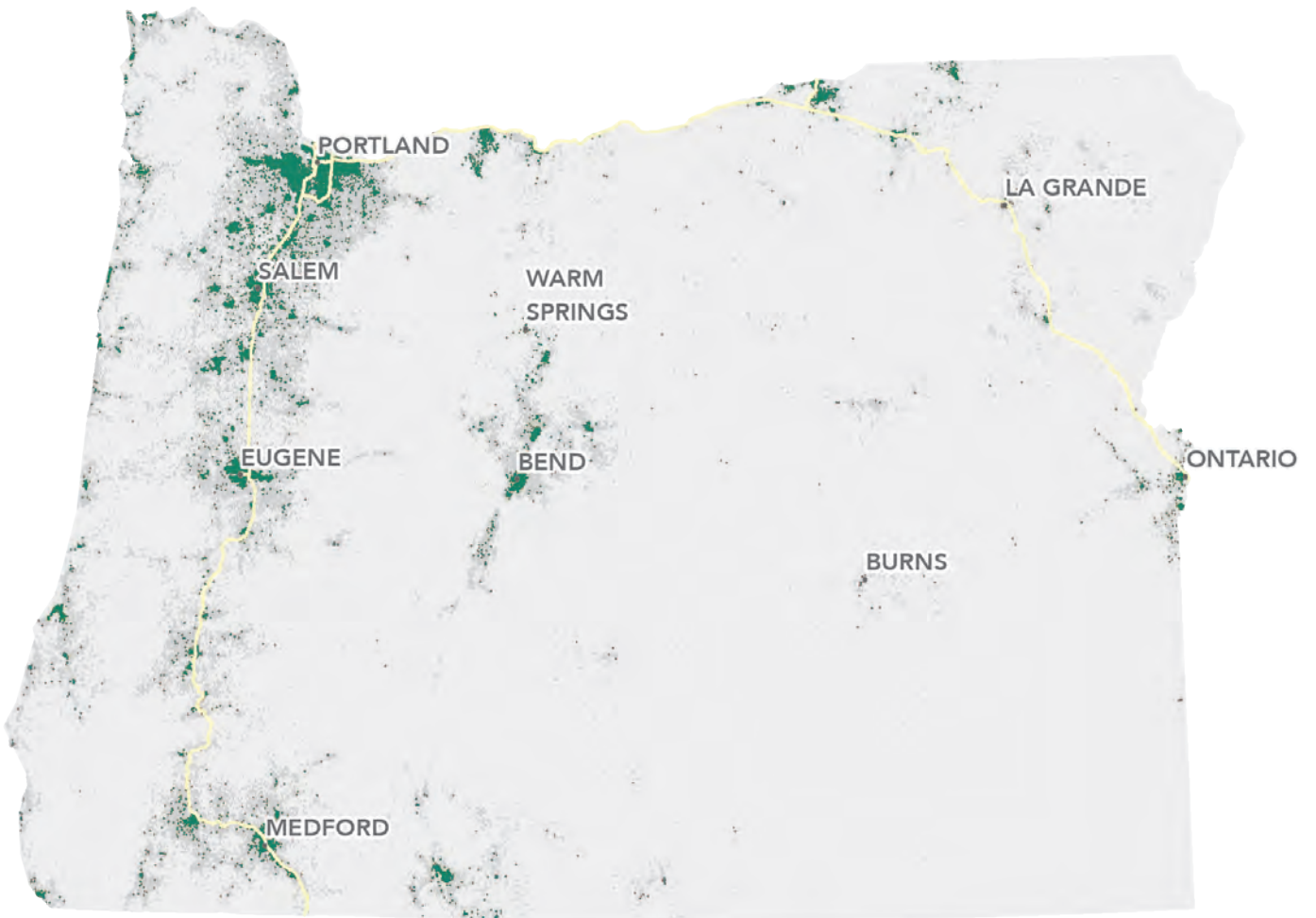
**BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN**



Each dot represents 5 women or girls  
● Black/African American  
● All other women

Source: ECONorthwest analysis of 2010 decennial U.S. Census Bureau data

HISPANIC/LATINA



Each dot represents 5 women or girls

- Hispanic/Latina
- All other women

Source: ECONorthwest analysis of 2010 decennial U.S. Census Bureau data

# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## Red Shawl Project

Almost 60,000 Native American women live in Oregon today. Native communities are rooted in strong cultural values and extraordinary traditions. So when Amnesty International's interviews with Native women nationwide found that most could not think of a woman in their community who had not experienced sexual violence, ending the violence and achieving healing became an undertaking for many Native communities.

Parents and elders at the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) were inspired by the women of the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition and the Sacred Hoop Coalition. Those groups created a program where Solidarity Shawls woven by Native women conveyed solidarity and support for other Native women and children who had been victimized by sexual assault and/or domestic violence. The Portland chapter of the Red Shawl Project was founded to bring this idea to Oregon and create a community space to use intertribal cultural values and traditions to create healing in a Native setting. The founders affirm that interpersonal and sexual violence has never been a Native tradition or value.

The Red Shawl Project works with survivors and families to end the silence about interpersonal and sexual violence by promoting community strength, respect, and balance in relationships. The red shawl honors all Native people who have survived centuries of violence, including rape as a tool of war, physical and sexual assault in boarding schools, loss of parental custodial rights, and high domestic violence rates often resulting in Native women's deaths. Elders teach that the drum is the heartbeat of the people and to dance is to bring good feelings and send up prayers to the Creator for community protection and healing. Dancing in red shawls for all to see is a powerful reminder that Native women who have survived violence are modern-day warriors.

*Thank you to Chantel Pewewardy and Lindsay Goes Behind for helping to write this story.*

Sources: Amnesty International: *Maze of Injustice*, 2006; [www.MIWSAC.org](http://www.MIWSAC.org)



# SAFETY, TRAUMA, AND VIOLENCE

# Adverse Childhood Experiences

Nearly half of Oregon’s women and girls have experienced a childhood traumatic event, such as abuse or neglect. This rate is substantially higher than the national average, and it means an estimated 1 million Oregon women and girls are living with the daily consequences of trauma.

Social scientists now understand that having one or more adverse childhood experiences (referred to as ACEs) is a strong driver of negative and long-lasting effects on well-being. Effects can include mental health challenges, intimate partner violence, substance abuse, economic instability, and homelessness.

Women and girls who experience childhood trauma are far more likely to end up in the foster care, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems. The women and girls involved with those systems are in particular need of trauma-informed services and supports.

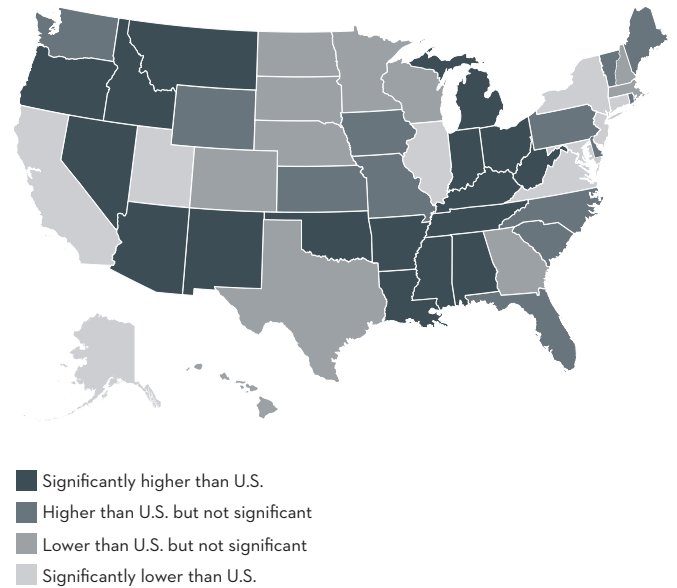
“Being raised with dysfunctional parents, I was in and out of foster care and lived with my grandparents. All the abuse and drug addictions affect learning, patience, and sometimes the ability to make healthy choices. I made it a point to change the patterns after my own daughter was born. But without programs and resources it wouldn’t have been possible.”

ANONYMOUS | PENDLETON

## ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
- Witness to violent treatment of mother
- Household substance abuse
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member

## PERCENT OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE HAD TWO OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, BY STATE



Source: 2011-12 National Survey of Children’s Health

**NATIONALLY**  
**62%** of girls involved with the juvenile justice system have had 4 or more adverse childhood experiences

Source: Gender Injustice Report 2015

# Safety

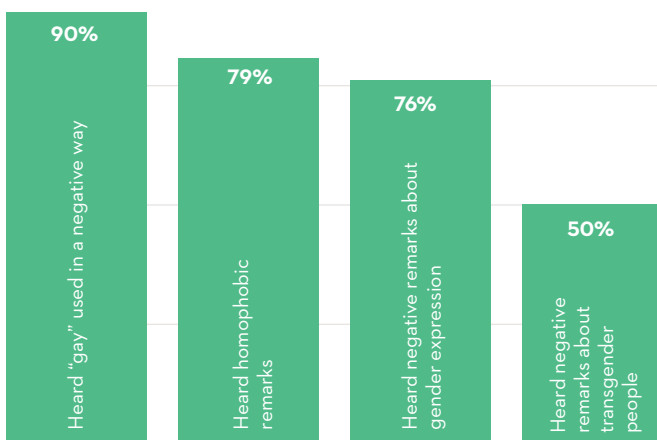
Oregon women and girls deserve to be safe in their homes, schools, and communities. Yet thousands of Oregon's women and girls experience verbal, physical, and sexual violence every day. It starts early. School-based harassment in Oregon is decidedly gendered. While no amount of harassment is acceptable, according to a recent survey, Oregon girls are subject to nearly twice as much school-based harassment as Oregon boys.

Harassment is compounded for girls and young women who belong to other disproportionately targeted communities. Young women of color often experience both race- and gender-based harassment in school. LGBTQ students—especially transgender girls—are frequently the targets of verbal and sexual harassment as well as physical assault. In 2013, 50% of LGBTQ 11th grade girls in Oregon experienced bullying, compared to 25% of straight girls.

Identity-based intolerance and bullying in school fuels a daily lack of safety for thousands of Oregon's girls and young women. Beyond the schoolhouse, sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, and transphobia undermine the safety of Oregon women and girls at all ages.

Source: Oregon Healthy Teens Survey 2013

## ANTI-LGBTQ REMARKS IN SCHOOLS, OREGON



Source: Anti-LGBT Speech: GLSEN School Climate in Oregon 2013

"As a young 14-year-old woman I feel very aware, at all times, of my safety in my community. I am aware of unwanted attention from men on the street. I am scared to the point that I barely feel OK going on a walk alone."

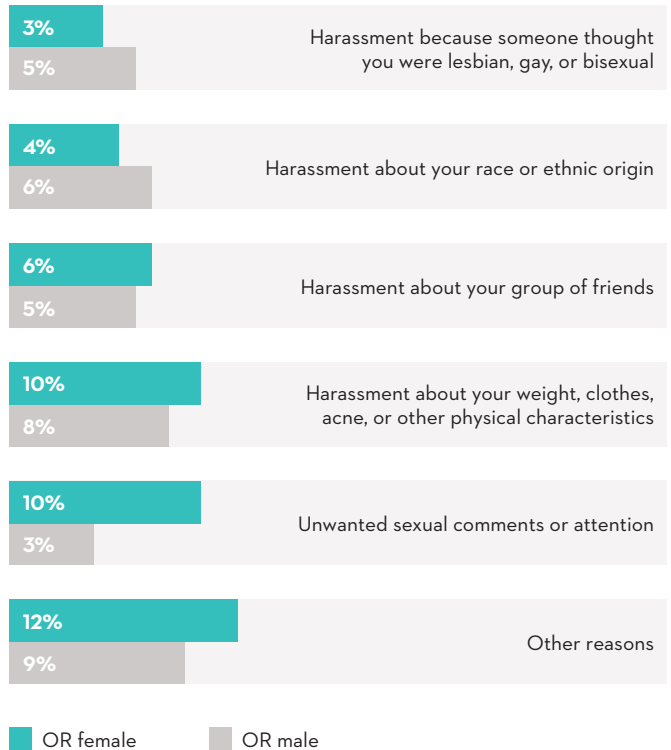
ANONYMOUS | EUGENE



### HEARD ON TOUR

**ONLY 36%** of the women we heard from said they feel "very safe" in their daily life

## SCHOOL-BASED HARASSMENT BY GENDER, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, 2011-2013

# Sexual Violence

Oregon women and girls are raped and sexually assaulted at rates that far exceed the national average. An extrapolation of Oregon survey data from the Centers for Disease Control indicates that perpetrators have sexually assaulted over 1 million women and girls in Oregon—more than half of the state’s female population.

Women and girls in every community and at every income level experience sexual violence. However, rapists and assailants attack women of color, particularly Native American women, at much higher rates. Perpetrators also attack houseless women, women with disabilities, women with mental health challenges, and women who live in isolated areas at higher rates.

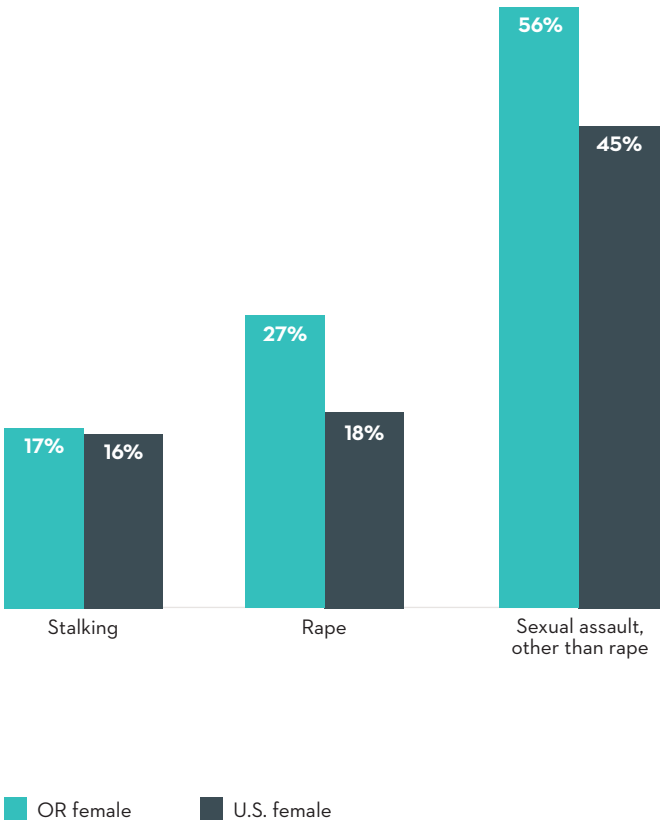
In 2014 alone, Oregon crisis lines and sexual assault response services received nearly 11,000 calls from survivors of sexual violence. Many communities are ill-equipped to support these survivors. They lack enough trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, as well as the funding and infrastructure to process physical evidence like rape kits. Most communities have few if any long-term services like support groups to help the hundreds of thousands of survivors in our state cope with their experiences.

*Sources: Intimate Partner Violence in Rural America Policy Brief March 2015; Striving to Meet the Need 2015; National Transgender Discrimination Survey 2010*

“When I was 12 years old, I was raped by a stranger. Soon after, my addiction to meth started. I was in and out of youth correctional facilities and detention centers. I never got the counseling I needed. My way of coping was by doing drugs. I still struggle with addiction and with many other issues. But right now I am 4 months clean and sober and doing my very best.”

ANONYMOUS | MEDFORD

**PERCENT OF WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE, OREGON VS. U.S.**



Source: CDC National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2011



# Domestic Violence

Over a third of Oregon’s women—nearly 700,000 individuals—have experienced intimate partner violence. Not only is this higher than the national average, but Oregon communities do not have sufficient capacity to serve women and girls in danger. In 2015 alone, over 10,000 survivors of domestic violence had their requests for shelter unmet.

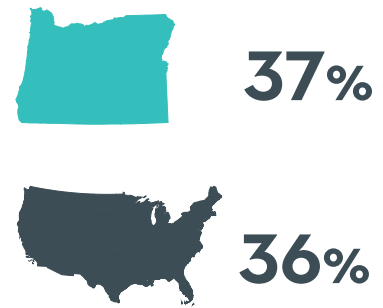
Women and girls of color are substantially more likely to be abused by an intimate partner, as are LGBTQ women, women with disabilities, and houseless women. Nationally, 61% of bisexual women report sexual assault, physical violence, or stalking from a partner, followed by 43% among lesbians and 35% among straight women. More than 25% of survivors in Oregon report having a mental, physical, or emotional disability. Almost 20% of Oregon’s houseless women report domestic violence as a primary reason for their houselessness.

Women in rural areas face additional challenges. In sparsely populated areas of the state, shelters are few and far between, typical shelter stays are longer (resulting in fewer available spots), and attacks are often more severe.

Finally, one of the primary reasons why women stay in abusive relationships is because they can’t afford to leave. Therefore, economic hardship for Oregon women is deeply intertwined with the state’s rates of intimate partner violence.

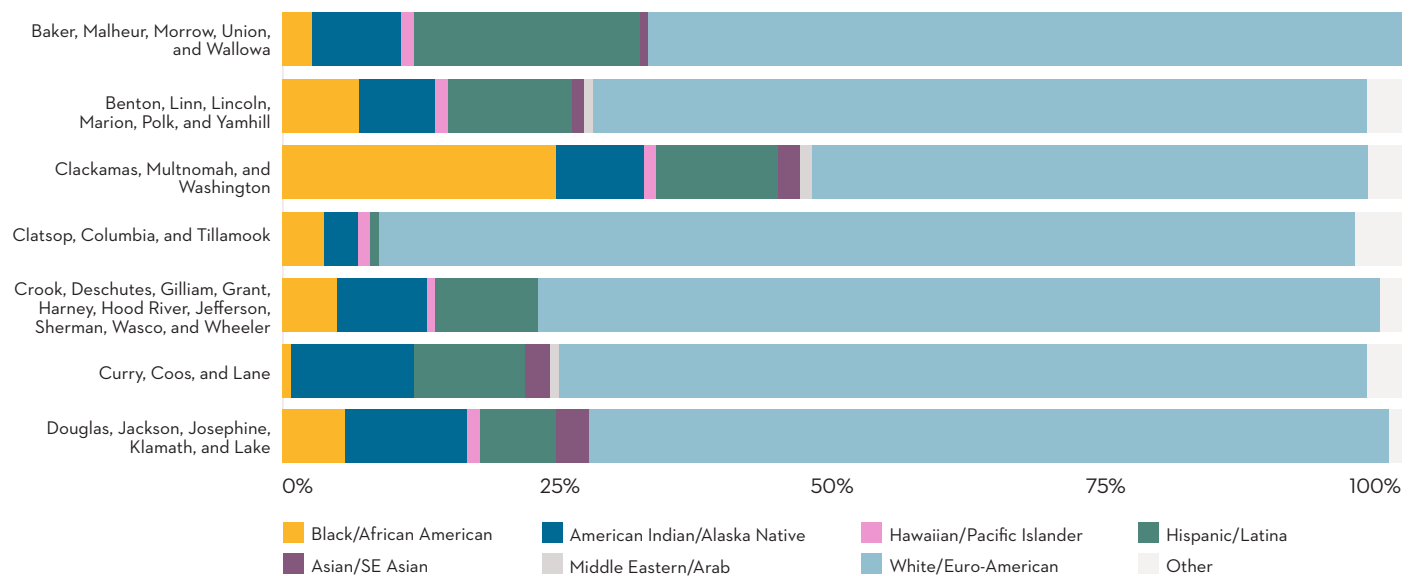
Sources: NISVS National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: An Overview of 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation; Striving to Meet the Need 2015; 2015 Point in Time Count

## PERCENT OF WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, OREGON VS. U.S.



Source: CDC National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2011

## PRIMARY SURVIVORS IN OREGON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND REGION



Source: Oregon DHS Child Safety Unit, Striving to Meet the Need: Summary of Services Provided by Sexual and Domestic Violence Programs in Oregon, 2014

# Gun Violence and Deaths

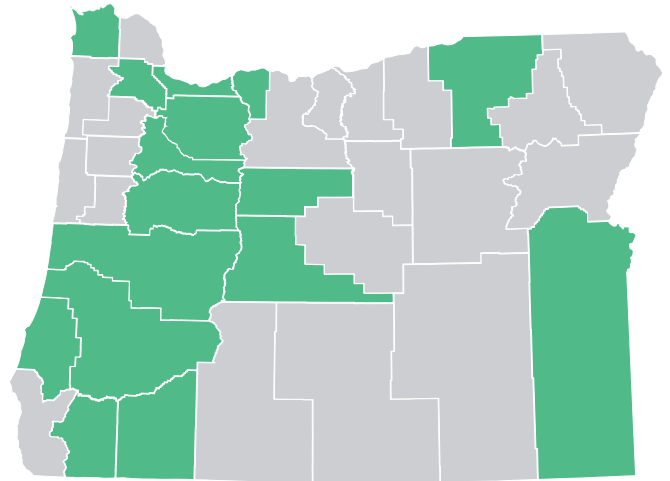
Gun violence poses a mortal threat to Oregon’s women and girls—especially for those experiencing violence in the home. Recent studies have shown that high rates of gun ownership are linked to a higher incidence of women killed by an intimate partner.

Many Oregon counties have at least one domestic violence incident each year that results in the murder of a woman. Most years, Oregon’s female murder rate is close to the national rate. But men have murdered 18 Oregon women to date in 2016, making this year likely to be the deadliest in over a decade. In the majority of these killings, children witnessed the murder of their mother.

Gun violence affects Oregon’s women and girls both directly—through threats, injuries, murders, unintended deaths, and suicides—and indirectly, through fear for children, spouses, and neighborhoods. Women who are part of or related to communities that are often victim to gun violence—young Black men, LGBTQ people, veterans, and law enforcement—are most affected by these daily burdens.

Source: Siegel Michael B. and Rothman Emily F. *Violence and Gender*. March 2016, 3(1): 20-26. doi:10.1089/vio.2015.0047

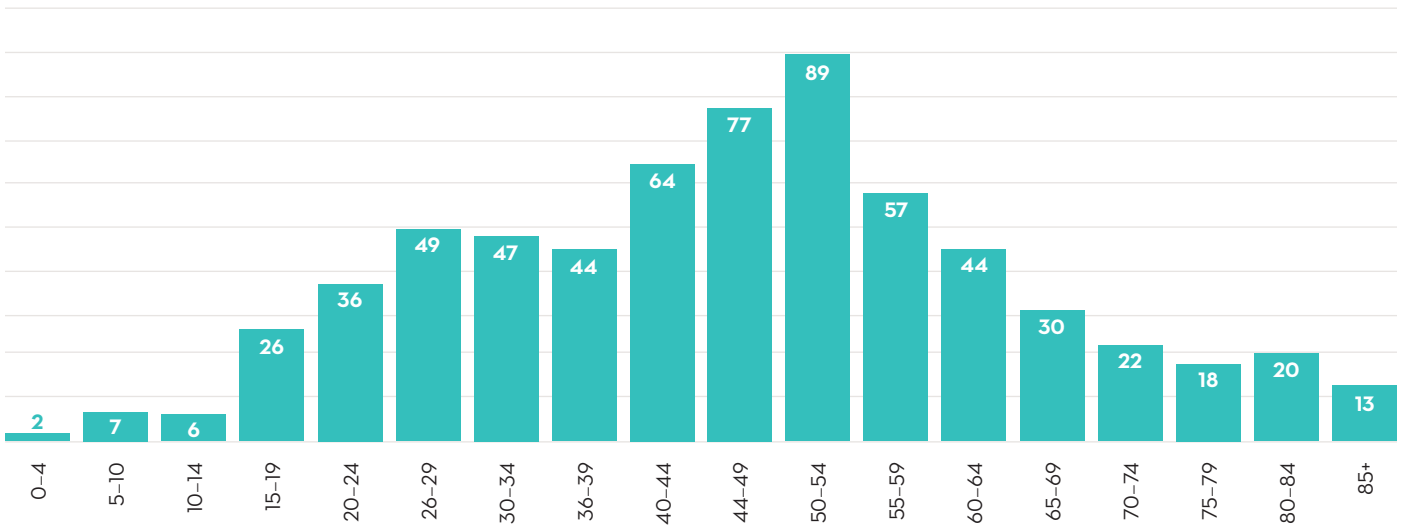
**OREGON COUNTIES WITH AT LEAST ONE FATAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENT, 2014**



■ Counties with at least one fatal domestic violence incident

Source: OCADSV Fatality Report 2014

**FEMALE GUN DEATHS BY AGE, OREGON 2003-2013**



Note: Includes homicides, suicides, legal intervention, unintentional deaths, and undetermined intent. Source: National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), 2003-2013



# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## Adelante Mujeres

Oregon is home to approximately 240,000 Latina women who are essential to our thriving communities. However, many of Oregon's Latina women face steep barriers to reaching their potential, including poverty, a new language and culture, and the difficult task of raising children in an unfamiliar community. Many have little formal education, speak little or no English, and feel isolated in their homes.

In Washington County, the Latino population has grown quickly, but many communities lack adequate culturally specific resources. In response, Adelante Mujeres (Spanish for "women rise up, move forward"), a local nonprofit organization, created programs tailored to the specific needs of Latina women. Their unique Adult Education program allows Latina women to go back to school while their children prepare for kindergarten in a certified Head Start or preschool program. While the children are in preschool, their moms are next door studying in the Adult Education program. When mothers and children learn together, Latina women are empowered to get involved in their child's education and are supported in pursuing their own.

This culturally responsive, gender-specific program fosters community and empowers Latina women to overcome barriers to education, employment, and leadership. Women in the program experience life-changing outcomes. They overcome self-doubt and confront their fears. They learn to read, develop their English, and earn their GEDs. As they engage in their child's education, they also make connections, grow support networks, further develop parenting skills, and create a space for growth and change.

*Thank you to Megan Eatough for helping to write this story.*



# CAREGIVING AND TIME

# Caregiving

Collectively, Oregon women and girls spend nearly one-half a billion hours each year caring for family members. This caregiving is vital to Oregon’s families and communities. Over a lifetime, nearly all of Oregon’s women and girls experience negative consequences related to providing essential care.

When Oregon women take time out of the workforce to care for a new child, forgo further education because of a lack of child care, or miss days of work to care for an ailing parent, there are negative consequences. Over the years, the consequences can include lost lifetime earnings in the hundreds of thousands, incomplete college degrees, unpursued careers, missed promotions, and insufficient retirement savings.

Paid family and medical leave policies, as well as other supports for women providing care, can minimize many of the negative consequences associated with caregiving. Such policies allow people time to care for each other in moments of medical crisis, welcome a new family member, or raise the next generation of Oregonians, without facing years of financial repercussions.

*Source: DOL Factsheet: Paid Family and Medical Leave*

“When I was pregnant with my second child, we could not afford child care for two kids. I had to quit my job, as my husband made more than I did. I was home for nine months on unemployment, really wanting to work. We had very little money. I lucked out and found a great part-time job, but am still exhausted with all of the scheduling I have to do for my kids to find them adequate care.”

SARA, 42 | PORTLAND

## HEARD ON TOUR

Every woman and girl we talked to participates in some form of family caregiving

Over half the women we heard from said that a lack of affordable, high-quality child or elder care options had a negative effect on them and their family



## Caring for Elders

Thousands of Oregonians will retire in the next few years, adding to the already pressing need for quality elder care in our state. It's overwhelmingly women and girls who will provide, coordinate, and support the care of Oregon's aging population.

The cost of long-term elder care has increased, pushing many non-family care options out of reach for older Oregonians and the family members who care for them. Most workplaces make no accommodation for the reality of elder caregiving, so women who take time away from work to care for aging loved ones often face stiff financial consequences.

Paid caregivers for the elderly (who are predominantly women) are often both underpaid and underappreciated. Furthermore, caring for older family members in the home is an integral, and often overlooked, part of many communities' cultures, particularly communities of color. Caring for our elders with dignity and respect also means supporting the values, choices, and well-being of their caretakers.

"I needed help caregiving for my elderly parent. There was no training for issues like how to move someone from a car to a wheelchair. There was no support for caregivers who need someone to talk to. My mom lived with me for 20 years—I loved her with all my heart, but I needed help!"

ANONYMOUS | PENDLETON

**18%** of women in the U.S. provided elder care to at least one person age 65+

**3.5** hours per day spent providing unpaid caregiving (on days when women provide eldercare)

Source: Findings from the 2013–14 ATUS surveys [www.bls.gov/TUS/CHARTS/elder\\_care.htm](http://www.bls.gov/TUS/CHARTS/elder_care.htm)

### AVERAGE COST OF ADULT LONG-TERM CARE, OREGON

Average cost of long-term services and supports in Oregon				
Oregon	Nursing facility	Assisted living and residential care facility	In-home care worker	Adult day services
	Daily rate	Monthly cost	Hourly rate	Daily rate
Albany	\$280	\$4,463	\$27	\$92
Bend/Redmond	\$261	\$4,105	\$23	N/A
Corvallis	\$250	\$4,326	\$22	\$92
Eugene	\$264	\$3,865	\$23	\$105
Grants Pass	\$259	\$4,300	\$20	\$93
Medford	\$283	\$4,496	\$22	\$75
Portland/Vancouver/Hillsboro	\$265	\$3,895	\$23	\$85
Salem	\$273	\$3,230	\$22	\$40
Rest of state	\$259	\$3,683	\$22	\$87
State average	\$263	\$3,880	\$23	\$89

The above costs are averages that may be different in your area. Source: Genworth 2015 Cost of Care Survey, 2015 Oregon Medicaid Base Rate + for Adult Foster Homes

# Child Care

In recent years, Oregon’s child-care costs have increased dramatically, especially relative to median wages. As of 2015, the cost of child care in Oregon was the second least affordable in the country for infant care and the fourth least affordable for toddler care. For thousands of Oregonians, child-care costs are consuming an increasingly large portion of family income. These prohibitively high costs are made even worse by very limited access to paid parental leave.

High costs force working parents—mostly mothers—into the difficult position of leaving the paid workforce to care for their children because their earnings aren’t enough to pay for child care. The financial bind can hurt the future earning potential of mothers who leave the workforce.

According to the most recent data on the availability of child care spots, no county in Oregon has enough spots to accommodate even 50% of the children in that county—and most counties have less than 25% availability. Oregon families need affordable, quality child care that is accessible near their homes and workplaces.

“I end up paying for child care even when I’m not working to ‘hold’ my child’s spot in care. My full wage goes to child care. I’m working for free just to keep my foot in the door.”

ANONYMOUS | PORTLAND

**12%** of workers have access to paid family leave, nationally

Source: DOL Factsheet: Paid Family and Medical Leave

## TOP FIVE LEAST AFFORDABLE STATES FOR CENTER-BASED INFANT CARE

Rank	State	Average annual cost of infant care in a center	SINGLE PARENT	MARRIED COUPLE
			Cost of care as a percentage of median income	Cost of care as a percentage of median income
1	Minnesota	\$14,366	53.6%	15.2%
2	Oregon	\$11,322	50.7%	15.2%
3	New York	\$14,144	54.5%	15.2%
4	Massachusetts	\$17,062	62.8%	15.1%
5	Colorado	\$13,154	46.6%	15.1%

## TOP FIVE LEAST AFFORDABLE STATES FOR CENTER-BASED TODDLER CARE

Rank	State	Average annual cost of a 4-year-old care in a center	SINGLE PARENT	MARRIED COUPLE
			Cost of care as a percentage of median income	Cost of care as a percentage of median income
1	New York	\$11,700	45.1%	12.6%
2	Missouri	\$9,308	42.5%	12.2%
3	Vermont	\$9,970	40.5%	12.0%
4	Oregon	\$8,787	39.4%	11.8%
5	Minnesota	\$11,119	41.5%	11.8%

Source: Center-Based Infant Care: Parents and the High Cost of Child Care 2015 Report



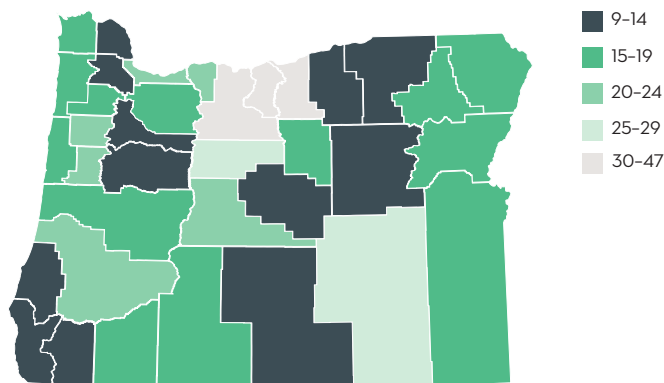
Put simply, child care in Oregon just isn't working. It's too expensive for most families. Even for those who can afford it, there are never enough openings for center-based care. Very few child-care workers—most of whom are women—are paid enough to support themselves, let alone afford the child care they are providing for others. This broken system keeps Oregon women who want to work from fully participating in the workforce and undermines the well-being of families all over the state.

One of the only programs available to help low-income workers in Oregon pay for child care is Employment Related Day Care (ERDC). As currently structured, ERDC serves a very small portion of Oregon's lowest income population for a limited number of users, meaning that the need for child-care financial assistance in Oregon far outpaces the program's capacity.

In June 2016, Oregon's ERDC program served 7,179 families with 13,843 children, leaving 5,400 children on the ERDC waiting list. Analysts predict that if the program received more funding, flexibility, and visibility, demand would increase dramatically.

*The data represented refer to center-based child care only. Centers are more highly regulated, but in-home facilities can also be good options for parents, and can be more affordable*  
 Source: Oregon House Bill 2015

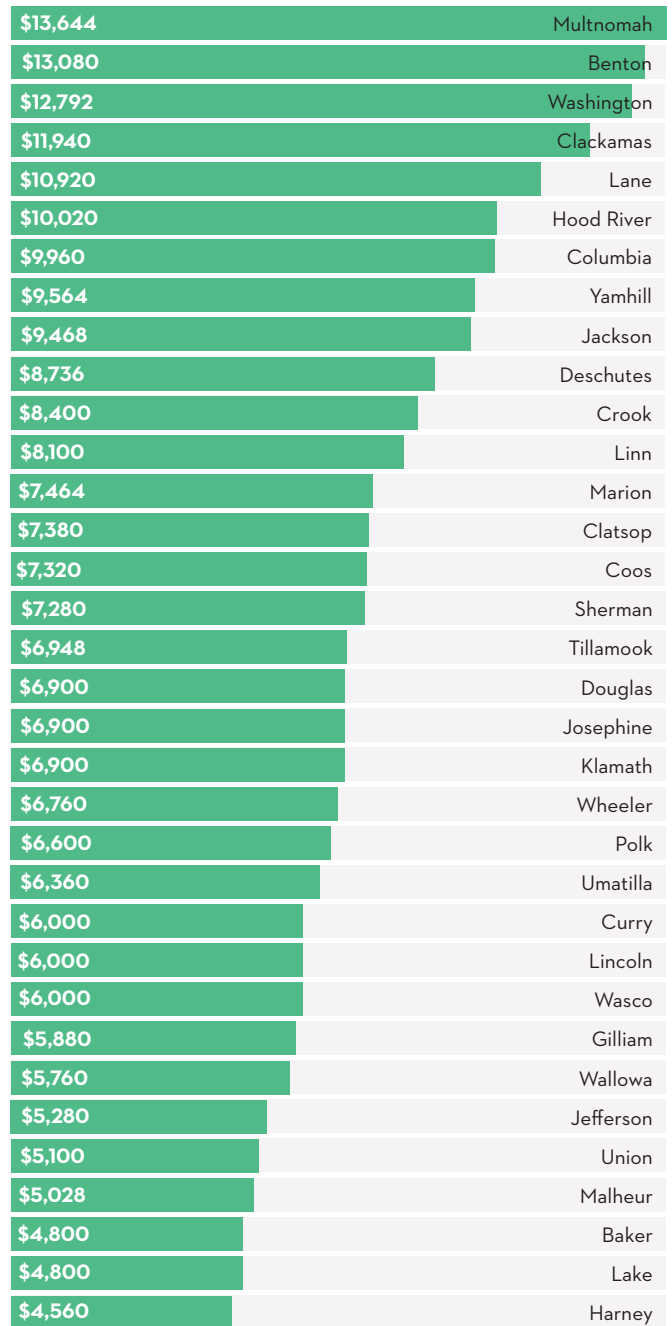
**CHILD-CARE CENTER SLOTS PER 100 CHILDREN BY COUNTY, OREGON**



Source: Oregon State University, College of Public Health and Human Services, 2014

**MEDIAN ANNUAL PRICE FOR TODDLER CARE IN A CHILD-CARE CENTER, BY OREGON COUNTY**

**\$11,976** is the median annual price for toddler care in a child-care center in Oregon



Source: Oregon State University, College of Public Health and Human Services, 2014

# Time Use

Oregon women, like women nationally, have less free time than their male counterparts. This relative lack of free time, often referred to as “time poverty,” can have a negative impact on women’s physical and mental well-being as well as economic success.

The available data on time use provides a comparison for heterosexual, married, full-time workers with at least one child. For this population, women report spending an average of two additional hours a day on household- and caretaking-related activities than their male counterparts report spending. This is time away from work, professional development, continuing education, personal care, exercise, and other meaningful activities. For the thousands of Oregon women who are single parents, the rates of time poverty are far worse.

In a related measure, a third of Oregon women report getting fewer than six hours of sleep per night. The stress, chronic lack of sleep, and other negative outcomes associated with gender-based time poverty affect women of every age from all over the state.

“When my girls were young, balancing 50+ hours of work per week and spending valuable time with them in the evenings was very difficult. Most days, I operated on 4-5 hours of sleep. Homework, dinner, baths, etc., all took so much time. But we did it happily, hoping it would pay off in the end.”

ANONYMOUS | MEDFORD

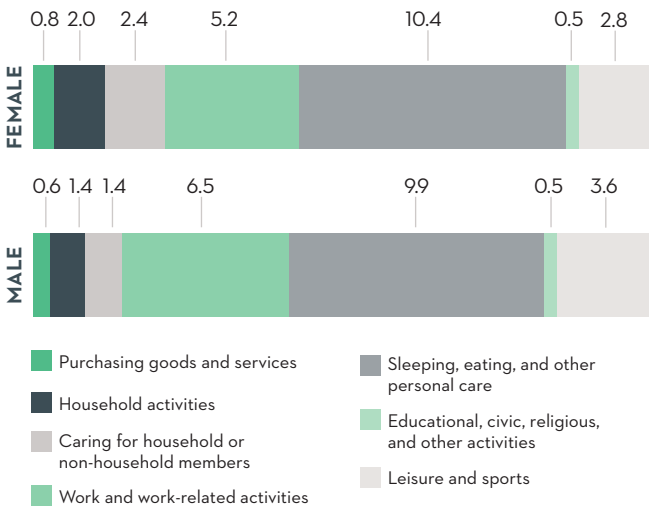


### HEARD ON TOUR

92%

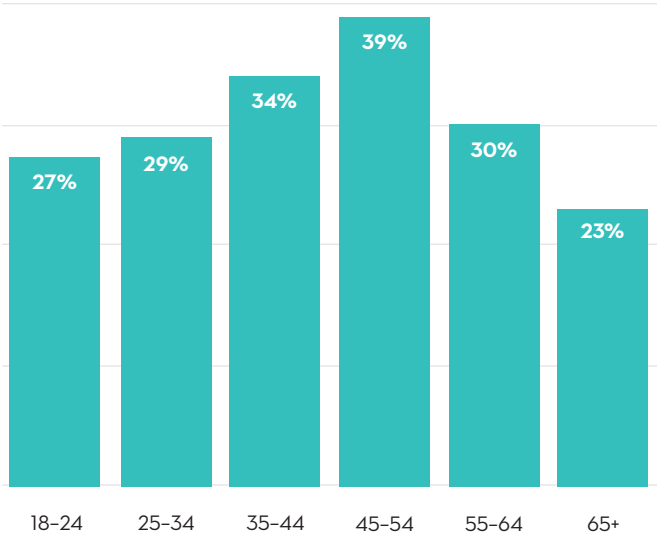
of the women we heard from experience stress on a daily basis because there isn’t enough time to get things done

**TIME USE FOR AN AVERAGE 24-HOUR DAY FOR A MARRIED, FULL-TIME MALE AND FEMALE WORKER WITH A CHILD, OREGON**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ATUS-X U.S. microdata, 2014

**WOMEN WHO REPORT GETTING FEWER THAN 6 HOURS OF SLEEP PER NIGHT BY AGE, OREGON**



Source: Oregon 2013 BRFSS



# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## GABRIELA Portland

Over 11,000 Filipina women live in Oregon today. Many Filipina women made the courageous decision to leave their homes and families in the Philippines to pursue a better life in the United States. Once here, common themes emerge: migrant women who have made deep sacrifices for their families and future; second-generation Filipina Americans who contribute richly to U.S. culture but rarely see themselves depicted in the media; women who feel the tension between being a U.S. citizen and still being intimately connected to life in the Philippines. The voices of Filipina women in Oregon are strong, but many have been erased or marginalized by these realities.

Oregon needed a political space where Filipinas could gather and understand current conditions in the Philippines, life in Oregon, and how the two intersect. The Portland Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (PCHRP) began organizing to meet this need, and from that work came GABRIELA Portland, a local chapter of GABRIELA USA, a national alliance of progressive women that educates, serves, and advocates for Filipinas. GABRIELA Portland highlights the conditions of Filipina women in the Philippines and the United States, mobilizing communities into action through political education and organization.

GABRIELA Portland facilitates community conversations that link migration and displacement to Portland's ongoing gentrification. They elevate the visibility of Filipina women through larger events, such as International Women's Day, and partner with advocacy organizations like Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO). The women of GABRIELA Portland have been instrumental in connecting local struggles to global issues. Centering their work around leadership development and the value of their contributions, they are creating long-lasting change.

*Thank you to members of GABRIELA Portland for helping to write this story.*



# WORK, WEALTH, AND WAGES

# Workforce Participation

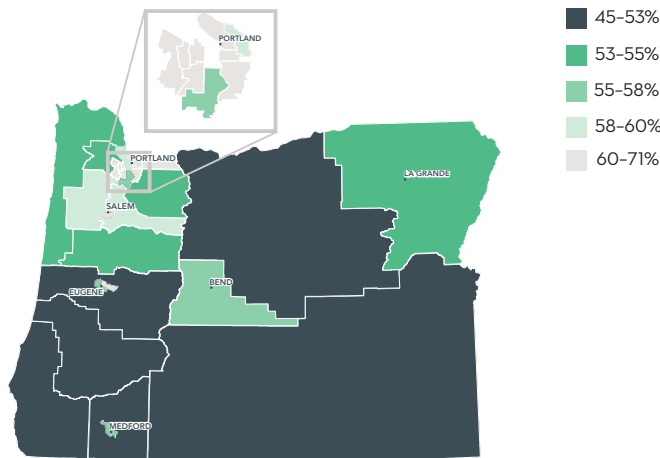
Oregon's women contribute to the state's economy both as participants in the paid workforce and as unpaid caregivers who make others' paid work possible. However, Oregon women participate in the state's full-time, paid workforce at rates that are well below the national average.

While some women in Oregon may choose not to be in the workforce, and should be supported in that decision, many others face limited employment opportunities and structural barriers that prevent them from fully participating in the state's labor market. These barriers include: child- and elder-care costs, low-paying jobs, minimal opportunities for advancement, opportunity gaps in education, and systemic discrimination based on gender, race, age, sexuality, or disability status.

Oregon women who have children under six or who don't have high school degrees have particularly low workforce participation. Lower labor force participation among Oregon women overall keeps thousands of families trapped in poverty, results in millions of dollars in lost income tax revenue, and contributes to a state that is not tapping into the full potential of its human capital.

Source: *Status of Women in the States Report, 2015*

## WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION FOR WOMEN BY REGION, OREGON



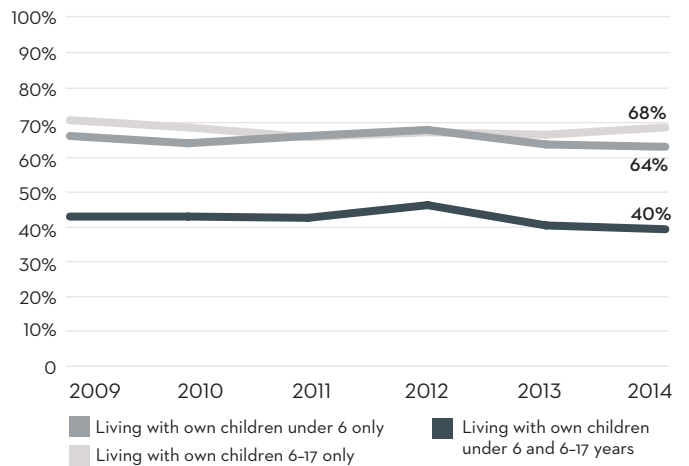
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 PUMS 1-year estimate data



## HEARD ON TOUR

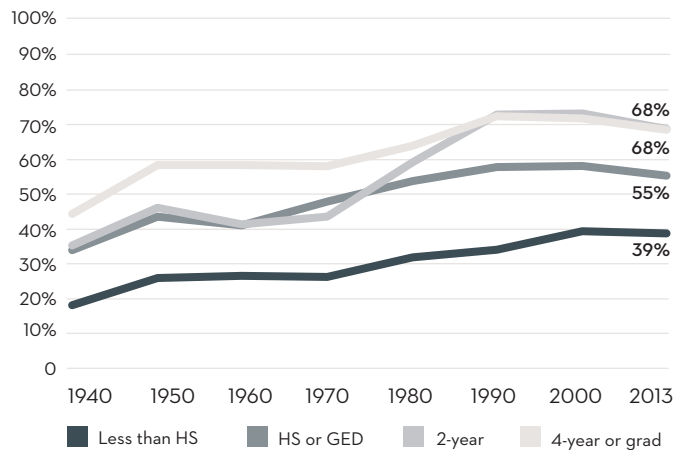
**36%** said a lack of affordable, high-quality child or elder care has been a barrier to their participation in the workforce

## WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION FOR WOMEN BY AGE OF CHILDREN, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau 2009-2014 1-year estimate PUMS data

## WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION FOR WOMEN BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau 1940-2013 PUMS 1-year estimate data  
Note: Statistics are for working-age population 16+

Labor force participation is a particular challenge for women in rural areas. Less than half of the women in Oregon’s southern and eastern counties are currently in the paid workforce. Many of these women are kept out of the workforce by circumstances beyond their control.

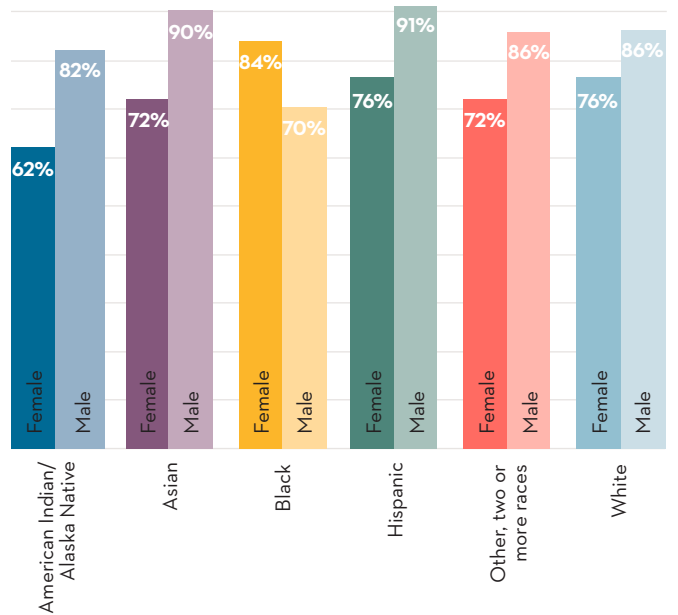
The overall unemployment rate for Oregon women is comparable to that of Oregon men and to the national unemployment rate. However, Oregon women of color, older women, rural women, women with disabilities, and women without high school degrees face substantially higher rates of unemployment.

Oregon’s current labor force participation and unemployment data show only a partial picture. Estimates suggest that over 13% of the state’s workers are foreign-born immigrants, many of whom are undocumented. An estimated 20% of migrant farm workers are women, and they face unique challenges in the workforce, including substantial health hazards. Oregon’s undocumented workers contribute millions of dollars to the state economy, but we cannot adequately measure, let alone ensure the safety and fair treatment of, these workers without accurate data.

Current Oregon data also do not include state-specific employment information on many other important populations, including LGBTQ women and formerly incarcerated women. These groups face substantial barriers to employment and their realities deserve to be reflected in the state’s data.

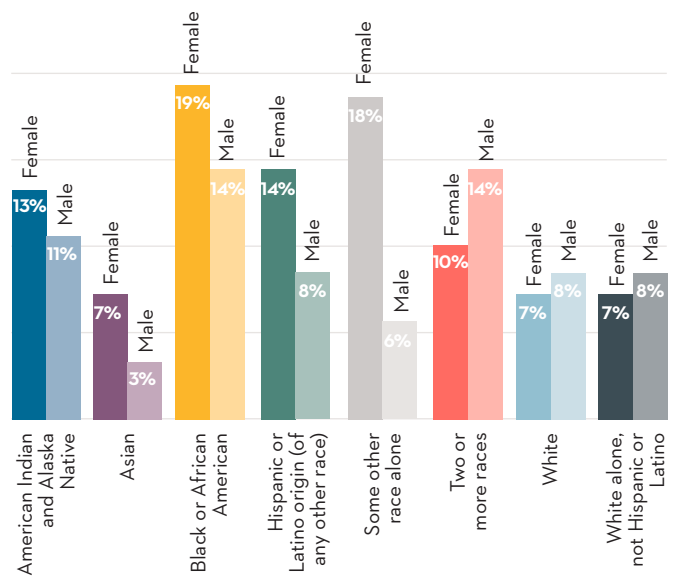
Source: American Immigration Council *New Americans in Oregon: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Beaver State*

**WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION FOR WOMEN BY RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 PUMS 1-year estimate data  
Notes: Statistics are for working-age population age 25–54

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 PUMS 1-year estimate data

# Wage Gap

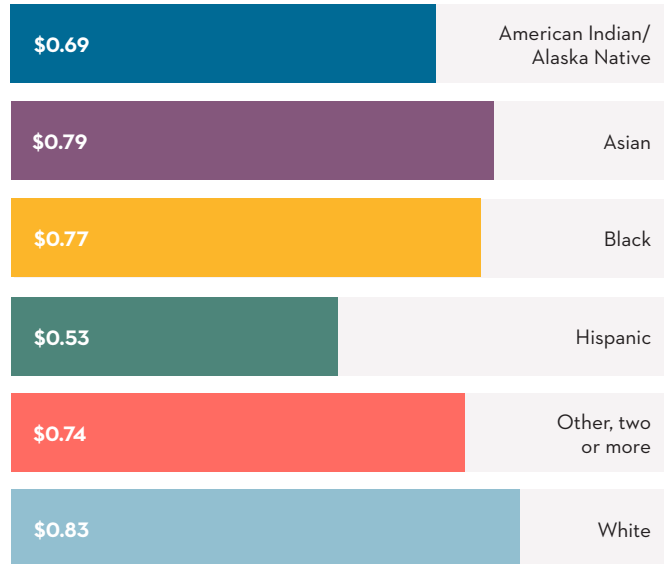
As in the United States, the wage gap in Oregon has proven stubbornly difficult to eradicate. Women who earn less than their male counterparts continue to endure negative consequences due to this fundamental inequality.

The wage gap is much larger for women of color than for white women. Hispanic women in Oregon earn only \$0.53 per dollar earned by all men, followed by American Indian/Alaska Native women and Black women, who earn \$0.69 and \$0.77 on the dollar, respectively. These numbers do not take into account undocumented workers, who earn substantially less than workers in the documented workforce.

The county-by-county earnings analysis in Oregon reveals that Oregon women face a substantially different wage gap based on where they live. The gender wage gap in any given area is driven by multiple factors, including, but not limited to:

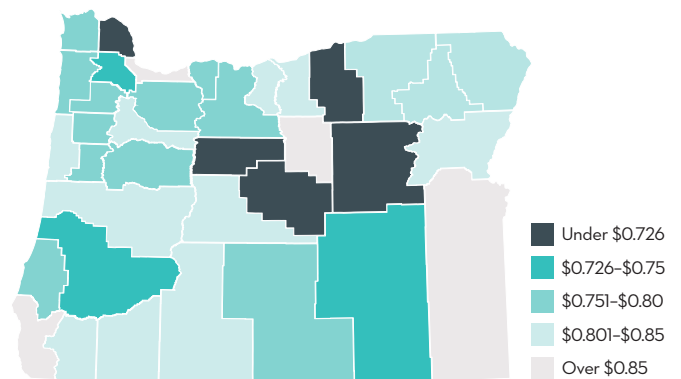
- The systemic undervaluing of sectors and positions traditionally thought of as “women’s work”;
- Family caregiving responsibilities that take women out of the workforce at various points or force them to accept different, often lower-paying jobs;
- Inflexible work environments that limit advancement potential for women;
- Gender discrimination that results in women being paid less than their male counterparts in the same or similar positions;
- How well men in a given geographic area are doing economically—in areas where men, often men of color, face steep barriers to employment, the gender wage gap is often smaller; and
- Structural racism, homophobia, ableism, and ageism, which result in direct earnings discrimination and systemic barriers to educational and occupational opportunities.

## GENDER WAGE GAP BY RACE/ETHNICITY 2010-2014, OREGON



Per dollar earned by all men  
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 PUMS 5-year estimate data

## GENDER WAGE GAP BY COUNTY, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 PUMS 5-year estimate data



# Careers and Earnings

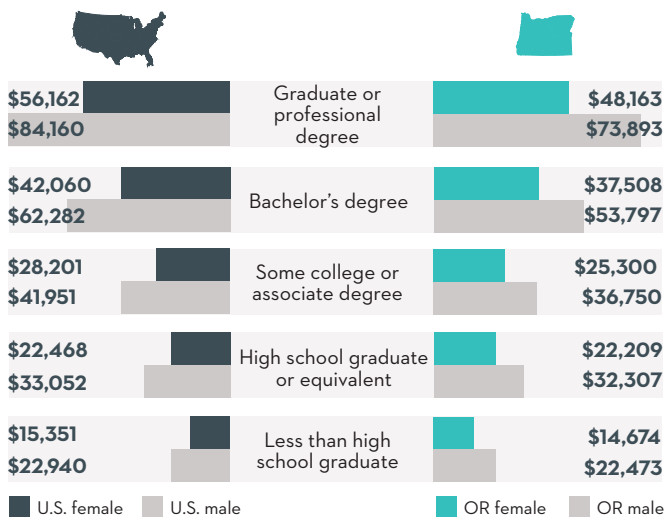
In both rural and urban areas, Oregon women make substantially less than their male counterparts and are overrepresented in occupations with earnings below the state median. Simply improving educational outcomes for Oregon's women won't solve this problem; the earnings gap for women actually widens with more educational attainment.

Oregon's female workers make up the majority of our lowest-paid and fastest-growing sectors of the labor force: retail, home and personal care, food service, and temporary administrative jobs. In fact, 60% of all minimum wage workers in Oregon are women.

Given that Oregon women are highly concentrated in the state's lowest-wage occupations, it's worth noting that non-union women workers earn \$200+ less per week than those represented by a union. This trend holds true across the country, largely because union membership affords women collective bargaining opportunities, transparency in pay and benefit levels, clear grievance procedures, and higher rates of paid leave that allow for caretaking responsibilities.

Sources: *The High Cost of Low Wages Report*; *The Union Advantage for Women*, Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2015

## ANNUAL EARNINGS GAP BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Source: *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Oregon 2014*

"I work in a professional field dominated by men. While some male colleagues have supported my work, there are far more who have intentionally or unintentionally undermined my efforts. It is exhausting. It makes it difficult for me to encourage other women to join the field. I am committed to fighting for improvements, but I wish it felt like I had some support. And that it did not feel so lonely."

KAARIN, 39 | EUGENE

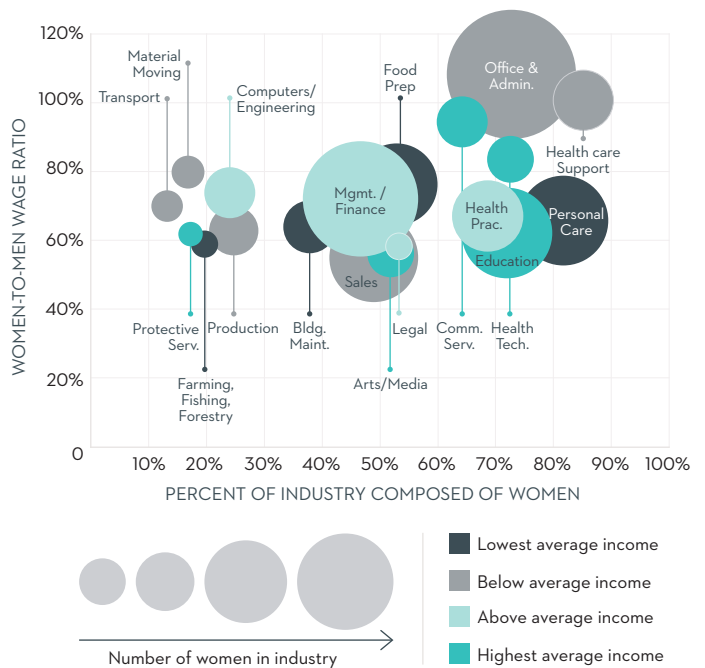


### HEARD ON TOUR

ALMOST  
**90%**

of the women we heard from experienced challenges accessing job opportunities and employment

## WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS RATIOS, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey data

# Wealth Gap

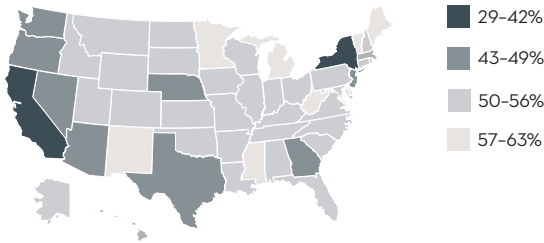
At some point, almost every Oregonian has needed to rely on a resource other than their paycheck to get by. Assets like rainy day funds, retirement accounts, or second mortgages allow many Oregonians to be resilient in times of unexpected financial hardship, especially in a state where college, housing, and child care are increasingly unaffordable.

Yet almost half of Oregon's female-headed households are what economists call "asset poor." That means if these women lost their incomes, their savings and other assets would be insufficient to meet their household's basic needs, even at a poverty level, for three months. According to this key measure of financial health, Oregon women face the second highest rate of asset poverty in the nation, among reporting states.

For women of color, the racial wealth gap combines with the gender wealth gap to create a compound negative effect. Without wealth to pass on in the form of housing or savings, families of color are often trapped in an intergenerational cycle of poverty that white families are much less likely to experience. Women with disabilities and LGBTQ women are also much more likely to face extreme disparities in wealth.

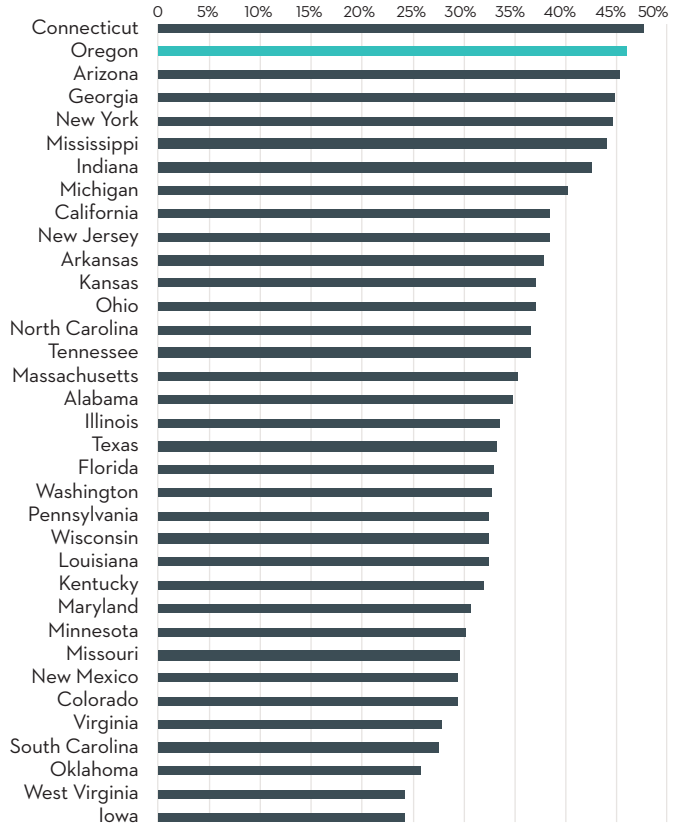
The gender wealth gap in Oregon is created and perpetuated by the state's wage gap, limited home ownership opportunities, barriers to workforce participation, discrimination, and the increased cost of family care. These realities compound year to year, generation to generation, and they form a wealth gap that cripples the financial resilience of Oregon women and their families.

## HOMEOWNERSHIP, SINGLE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS BY STATE



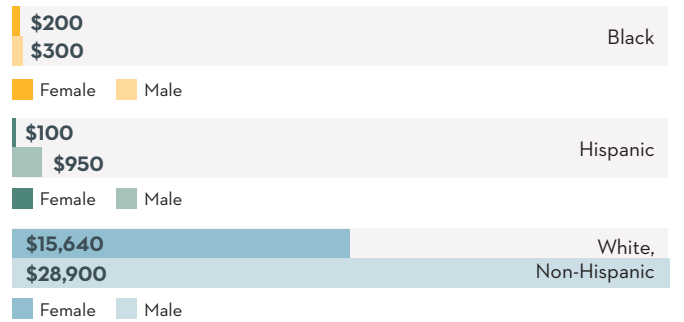
Source: 2013 American community survey. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2014. Data calculated by CFED using Public Use Microdata Sample files

## ASSET POVERTY, SINGLE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, BY STATE



Notes: States not noted have no reported data. The asset poverty rate is the percentage of households without sufficient net worth to subsist at the poverty level for three months in the absence of income. Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2008 Panel, Wave 10. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2013. Data calculated by Haveman Economic Consulting

## NET WORTH BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY, U.S.



Source: Asset Funder's Network Women and Wealth Brief 2015

# Retirement Gap

Over time, the wage and wealth gaps compound and leave many older women in Oregon particularly economically fragile. Compared to men, women are 80% more likely to live in poverty at age 65 and older.

Women typically live longer than men, face higher medical expenses, have substantially lower lifetime earnings, and have left the workforce more often and at higher rates to provide family caregiving. These realities force many women to work long beyond the traditional age of retirement, simply to make ends meet.

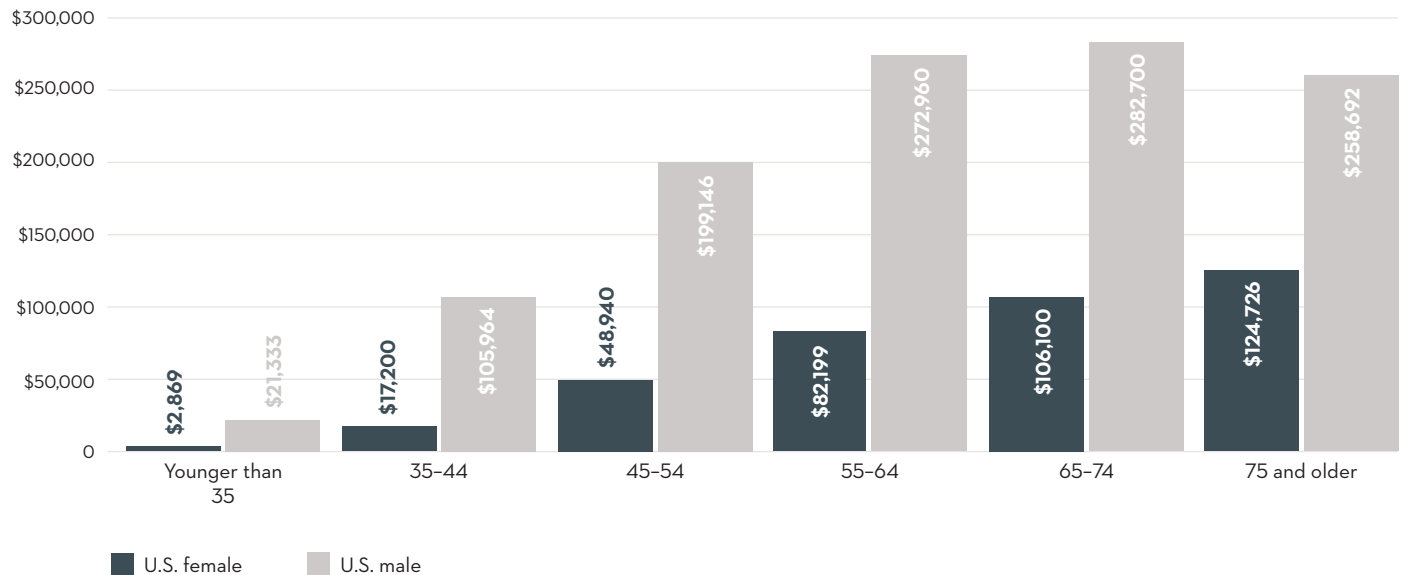
The wealth gap between Black and Latino households and white households is the widest it has been since 1989 (roughly 17 times higher), and this affects the financial security for women of color even more as they age. LGBTQ couples also face higher retirement insecurity due to lack of spousal benefits and years of economic and gender inequity.

Source: *Shortchanged in Retirement*, 2016

“The challenge I’m facing right now is planning for retirement when I’ve spent the last 20 years working for a nonprofit with no retirement benefits. The fear of not having enough money in retirement for health care or other emergencies keeps me up at night. As I get older, I feel less and less attractive to employers, so shifting careers isn’t even an option.”

ANONYMOUS | PENDLETON

## MEDIAN NET WORTH BY AGE AND GENDER OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD, U.S.



Source: *Federal Reserve, 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances*

# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## Sisters of the Road

Nearly 5,000 Oregon women are houseless. Women and families are the fastest growing segment of the houseless population—but they are often the least visible. Keeping a low profile is often a survival skill in order to escape domestic violence, maintain child custody after the loss of stable housing, or evade harassment, violence, and abuse. Houseless women face additional challenges related to their lack of access to around-the-clock bathroom facilities, particularly during their menstrual cycle.

In 1979, Sisters of the Road was founded to address the unique issues facing Portland's houseless population. Located in Portland's Old Town neighborhood, they provide nourishing meals in a safe, dignified space while working to create systemic change to end poverty and houselessness. Sisters of the Road provides priority seating, no wait time, and low-cost daily meals for women, men, and children as well as public restrooms and free hygiene products like sanitary pads and tampons.

While Sisters of the Road has always aimed to create a safe space especially for women and children, its regular customer base has historically been mostly male, making it challenging for many women. To address this issue, the cafe began women-only hours on the first Friday of each month. The windows and doors are covered to provide privacy from the outside world, and the cafe offers complimentary breakfast, do-it-yourself manicures and facials, and chair massages. This has sparked discussions about how to make the cafe a more welcoming place for women experiencing extreme poverty and houselessness.

*Thank you to Lauren Lubowicki for helping to write this story.*



# POVERTY AND OPPORTUNITY

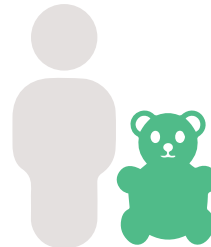
# What is Economic Fragility?

When the realities of poverty, housing instability, unemployment, and other systemic barriers collide, the result is an environment of widespread economic insecurity for women and the families that rely on them.

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DENTIST VISIT



UNEXPECTED DAY  
OF CHILD CARE



FLAT TIRE

**1 IN 3 OREGON FAMILIES CAN'T  
WITHSTAND EVEN A MINOR  
UNEXPECTED EXPENSE**



TRIP TO THE  
EMERGENCY ROOM



UNINSURED PRESCRIPTION  
MEDICATION



APPLIANCE REPAIR

# Economic Fragility

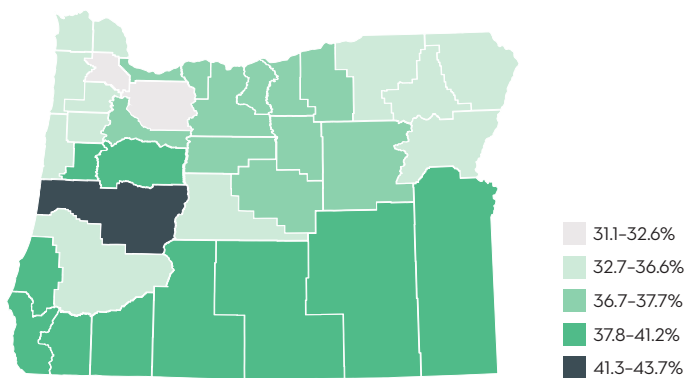
Making ends meet—being able to afford a safe place to live, food, and a way to get around—can be measured by the “self-sufficiency index.” This budget-based alternative to the federal poverty measure uses local cost of living and family size to calculate how much income a household needs just to get by.

The self-sufficiency picture in Oregon is bleak. More than a third of our families—most headed by single women—live below the self-sufficiency standard. In Multnomah County, a typical household with children must bring home \$4,376 per month simply to cover its basic needs.

In Oregon, 86% of Black and Latino female-headed households with children do not have sufficient income to meet their basic needs. Over 40% of families in southern Oregon also fall below the self-sufficiency standard.

Current data limitations prevent index measurements for LGBTQ households and immigrant and refugee communities, but we know that housing and income disparities, displacement, and gentrification place these communities at greater risk of being unable to afford basic needs.

**PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS BELOW THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD BY COUNTY, OREGON**

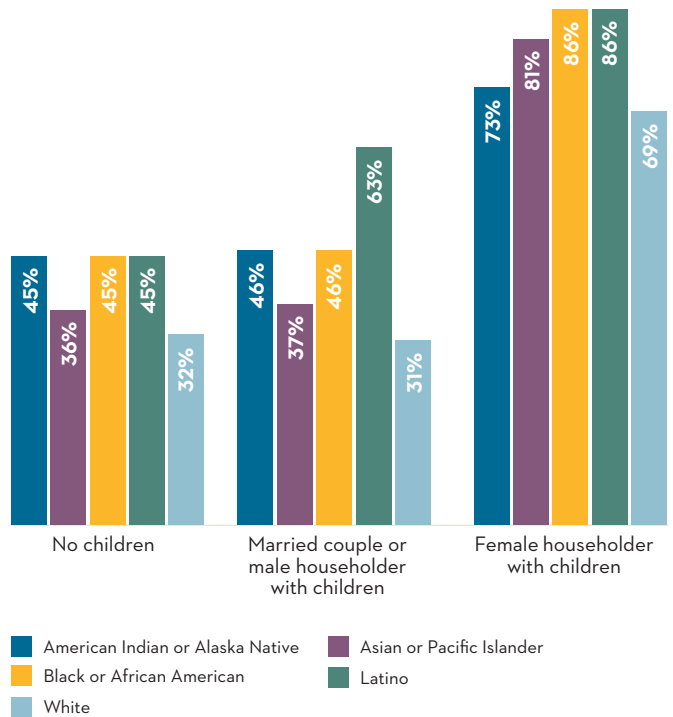


Source: Morehead, E., and Martin, S. (2014). *Where the Ends Don't Meet in 2014: Measuring Poverty and Self-Sufficiency among Oregon Families*. Note: The Self-Sufficiency standard is a budget-based measure of the cost of living and an alternative to the federal poverty measure. It determines the amount of income required for working families to meet basic needs at a minimally adequate level, taking into account family composition, ages of children, and geographic differences in costs. An estimated 37% of Oregonians are below the self-sufficiency standard for their county and household type.

“When I was a single parent raising two teenage daughters, one daughter was diagnosed with a medical condition that required expensive testing and prescriptions. Even though I had good health coverage through my work, it did not cover everything. One month I had to choose between prescription drugs for my daughter and rent. With the help of a local nonprofit I was able to get rent money and then I borrowed the remainder from a friend.”

SUSAN | LINCOLN CITY

**PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS BELOW THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND FAMILY STRUCTURE, OREGON**



Source: Morehead, E., and Martin, S. (2014). *Where the Ends Don't Meet in 2014: Measuring Poverty and Self-Sufficiency Among Oregon Families*

# Chronic Scarcity and Poverty

Chronic scarcity—poverty—disproportionately affects Oregon’s women and children, particularly those in communities of color. 40% of Black women in Oregon live in poverty—a rate that is 12 percentage points higher than Black women nationwide. Native and Hispanic women experience similar rates. More than 1 in 3 women of color in Oregon live in poverty.

Other communities of women in Oregon also experience poverty at rates that exceed the national average for those populations. At over 30%, poverty rates for people with disabilities in Oregon rank among the highest in the nation. Immigrant and refugee women, women living in rural counties, and LGBTQ women also experience startlingly high poverty rates in Oregon. For instance, 17% of trans Oregonians live on incomes of less than \$10,000 per year, compared to only 4% of Oregon’s general population.

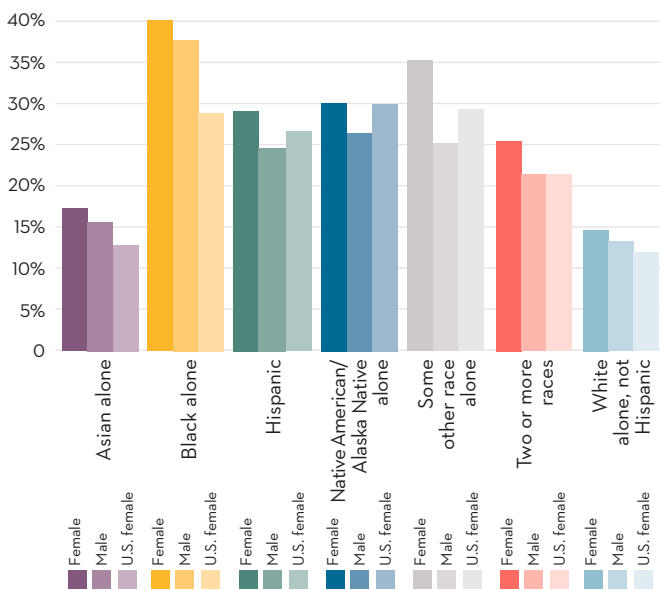
These Oregonians deserve anti-poverty strategies that work for those most affected and that prioritize both culture- and community-specific approaches.

Sources: Disability Statistics Annual Report 2014; National Transgender Discrimination Survey 2010

“Women’s shelters have been the hardest. Shelter after shelter was full when I needed them, leaving the street as the only place to sleep. I slept behind a pizza shop, on sidewalks, on park floors, or walked endlessly through the night until coffee was available for the homeless. This coffee was my savior after those walks.”

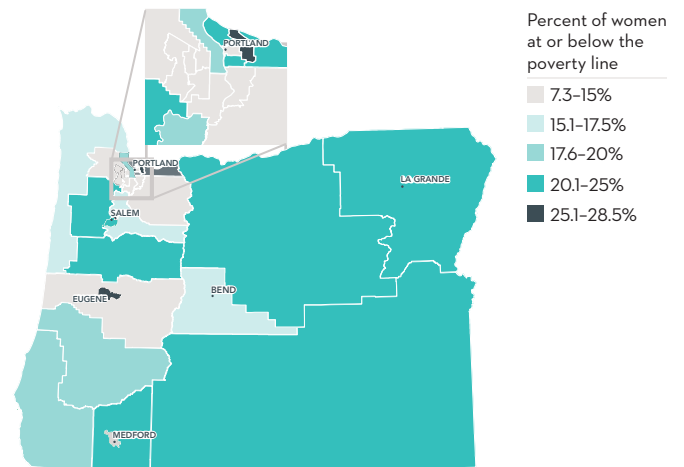
MELISSA SUE, 37 | MEDFORD

## POVERTY BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014, American Community Survey data

## POVERTY FOR WOMEN BY REGION, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 PUMS 1-year estimate data

**24%** of LGBTQ women nationally live in poverty, compared with only 19% of straight women

Source: “Beyond Stereotypes: Poverty in the LGBT Community,” The Williams Institute



# Opportunity

Opportunity—a fair shot at building a better life for yourself and your family—is a value that Oregonians hold dear. This dream is a reality for girls and women in some areas of the state, but it’s out of reach for many others. Statistical analysis allows us to describe economic mobility by measuring the effect of location on future household income, while holding other variables constant.

In Oregon, this measure of opportunity reveals that location matters. Girls who grow up in certain counties benefit from the opportunity for greater future earnings, while others face steep odds to increased income. Oregon counties with large communities of color are among those where girls experience some of the lowest economic mobility.

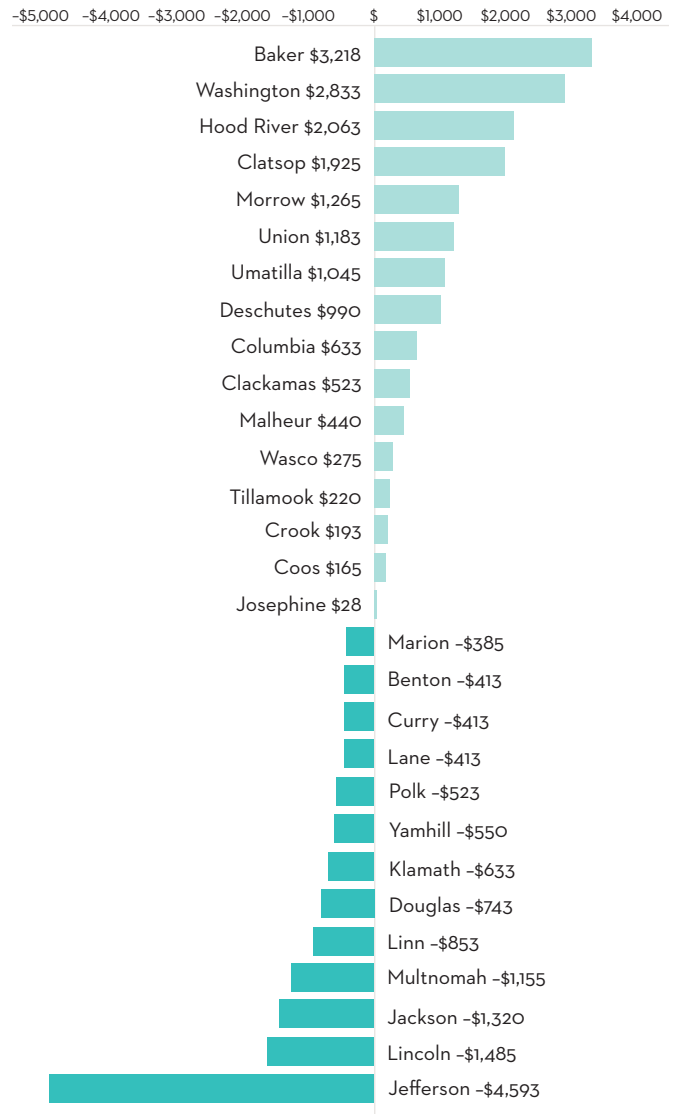
Oregon’s girls deserve the opportunity to work hard and build better lives for themselves. But the status quo forces them to battle wage inequity, racism, sexism, obstacles to employment, rising child care and housing costs, and insufficient safety net supports. Obstacles like these are likely contributors to low economic mobility in counties across the state.

However, this county-by-county understanding of opportunity has the potential to inform further inquiry and fuel change. For instance, decision-makers now have the ability to make additional investments in counties with low economic mobility or to conduct further research to understand and duplicate what is working well in counties with high economic mobility.

“I’m growing up in a family that just immigrated to U.S.. One of the struggles that I face is being the first one to go to college. I’m looking to find the American Dream that has been advertised across the world. But I have no mentor but myself to find what path I need to take.”

ANONYMOUS | BORING

**CAUSAL EFFECTS ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR GIRLS IN ADULTHOOD BY COUNTY, OREGON**



Data include parents in the 25th percentile of the national income distribution. Source: Raj Chetty et al. Note: Missing counties include Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Lake, Sherman, Wallowa, Wheeler (insufficient data)

# Unmet Needs: Housing

Every Oregonian is affected by the state's rising housing costs. Oregon's homeownership rate among single female-headed households is among the lowest in the country, so most of those households rent. And women who rent are the most "cost burdened" in the state. That means over half the women who rent in Oregon are paying a larger share of their income to housing than is considered financially sustainable.

In nearly every metro area in the state, the housing shortage combines with the lack of comprehensive, affordable housing policies and market dynamics that drive gentrification and displacement, especially for communities of color. This movement interrupts long-standing social support networks, breaks up communities, and increases barriers to opportunity.

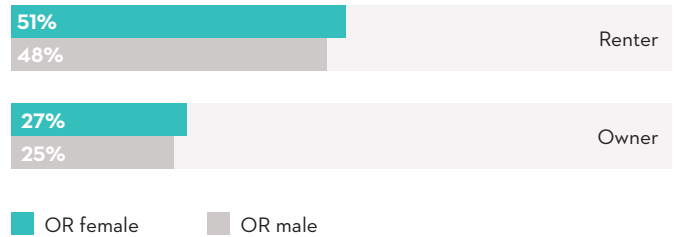
The rising cost of housing also drives up the number of women and girls who are houseless. In Oregon, the number of women in the statewide houseless population is 38% and growing.

Sources: 2013 American Community Survey. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2014. Data calculated by CFED using Public Use Microdata Sample files; Point in Time Count Summary, 2015

"A few months ago, my landlord unexpectedly terminated my lease. As a single mother with 5 kids, I wasn't able to find a house right away. In order to keep my kids in their school, I commute 3 hours each day to drop them off, go to work, and then pick them up again."

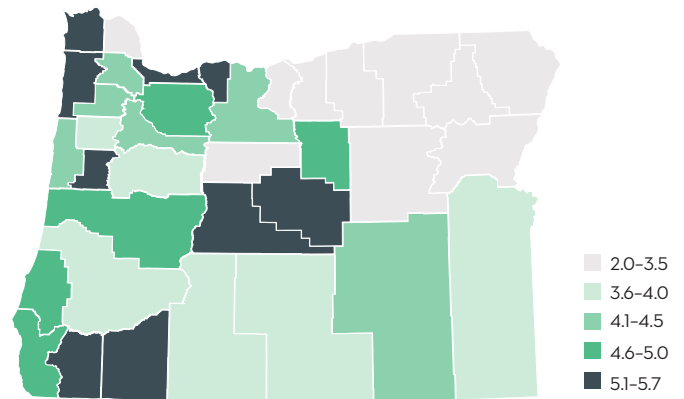
ANONYMOUS | SOUTHERN OREGON

## PERCENT OF POPULATION THAT IS COST BURDENED, BY GENDER, OREGON 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2010-2014

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY (PRICE TO INCOME RATIO) BY COUNTY, OREGON



Data are price-to-income ratio  
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 PUMS 1-year estimate data

# Unmet Needs: Food and Health Care

Women and girls in every county in Oregon are affected by food insecurity—the inability to reliably access sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food. In fact, Oregon’s food insecurity rates are the worst in the western region and well above the national average. Food insecurity most often affects single female-headed households with children.

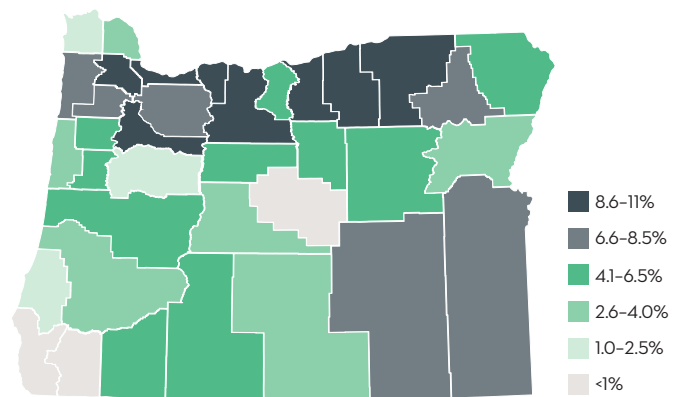
Similarly, hundreds of thousands of Oregon women lack health insurance or affordable co-pays. Still others experience discrimination in accessing services. Even after the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, at least 10% of residents in many of Oregon’s most populous counties still lack health insurance. Estimates suggest that over half of the state’s undocumented workers do not have access to health insurance.

Sources: OHSU, *Health Insurance Coverage in Oregon, 2014*; *Causa Oregon Latino Health Equity*

“I came to Oregon as an immigrant from Somalia and am struggling to find housing and health care. I am 71 years old and have no stable home. I am willing to work but as an elder it is hard to obtain a job and I have a lot of health issues.”

ANONYMOUS | GRESHAM

## OREGONIANS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE BY COUNTY

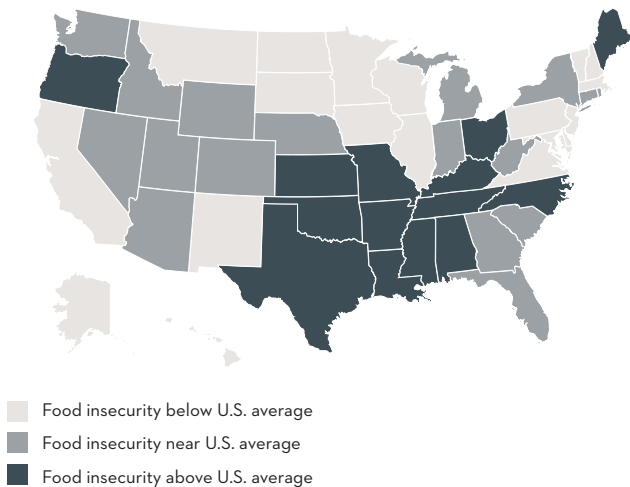


Source: “Impacts of the Affordable Care Act on Health Insurance Coverage in Oregon,” OHSU, 2015

**OVER 500,000**  
OREGONIANS SUFFER FOOD INSECURITY

Source: *USDA Household Food Security in the U.S. 2012*

## FOOD INSECURITY, U.S.



Source: Calculated by ERS based on *Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement Data, 2012–2014*

# Insufficient Supports

In an environment filled with chronic scarcity and unmet needs, too many of Oregon’s women and girls lack a basic safety net of support. Safety net supports help women and families get by as they look for a job, complete school, or search for a safe and affordable place to live. These supports also help stabilize families in difficult times, often keeping them from falling further behind as they regroup.

Due to the economic fragility outlined in previous pages, thousands of Oregon women and girls rely heavily on the safety net supports that are currently available. Programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, often referred to as food stamps); and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provide financial support and food to many Oregon women and girls. The majority of Oregon’s TANF recipients are women ages 20–39 and their children. Rural counties have a disproportionate share of pregnant women accessing WIC benefits.

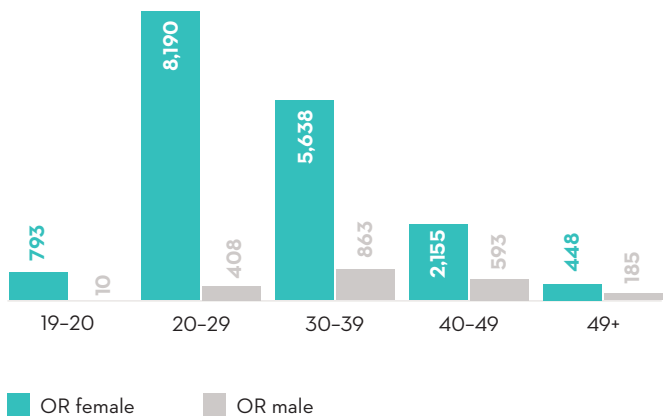
The total benefit available to single female-headed households through Oregon’s combined TANF and SNAP programs is just above the national median, but the benefits are still less than 60% of the federal poverty level. As a result, Oregon’s current supports for vulnerable families through these programs do not come close to meeting the need, especially given Oregon’s female poverty rates and the rising cost of living across the state. Additionally, because of how these programs are structured, any cuts to them will disproportionately affect Oregon’s women and girls.

*Source: Effective Policy for Reducing Inequality? The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Distribution of Income, 2015*

“When I applied for food stamp assistance, they said I did not need my car and that I should get rid of it to save the \$220 car payment. Salem does not have an evening or weekend transit system. How would I keep my job? How would I get my two daughters after school? Or get to the grocery store to use the food stamps?”

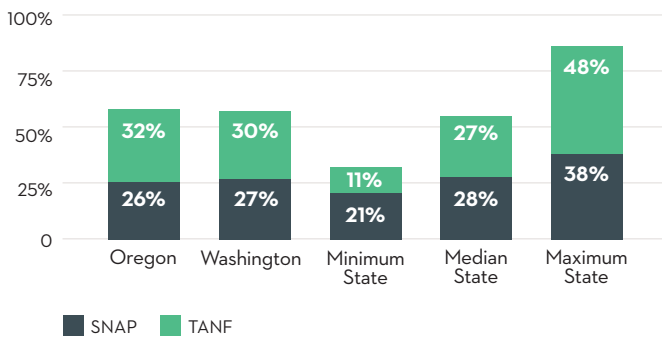
ANONYMOUS | SALEM

TANF RECIPIENTS BY GENDER AND AGE, OREGON



*Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Assistance*

MAXIMUM COMBINED TANF/SNAP BENEFIT FOR A SINGLE PARENT WITH 2 CHILDREN, OR VS. WA VS. U.S.



*Source: Falk, Gene, Congressional Research Service, July 2014*

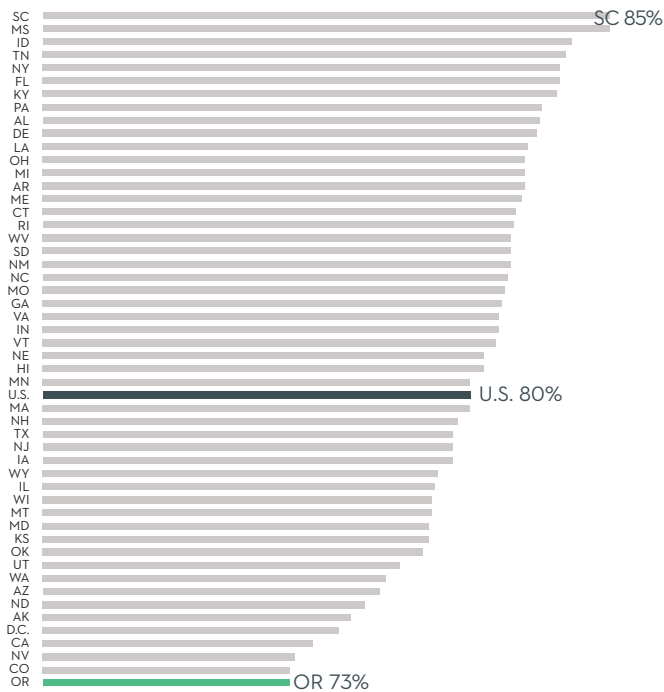
In addition to the TANF, SNAP, and WIC programs, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal tax credit available to low-income, working Oregonians. Eligible Oregonians can receive up to \$6,000 per year through EITC, depending on family size and income. There is also a state-level EITC that is based on the federal credit.

Economists have found the EITC to be an effective anti-poverty tool, particularly for female-headed households. However, the EITC is only effective when eligible Oregonians apply for and receive the benefit. Right now, Oregon ranks last in the nation for EITC participation. This dramatic underutilization is of particular concern from a gender perspective, because 55% of EITC recipients nationwide are single women.

Current projections are that low-income Oregonians, many of whom are women, could receive a combined total of \$29 million in federal tax credits if the state's EITC participation increased by even 10%.

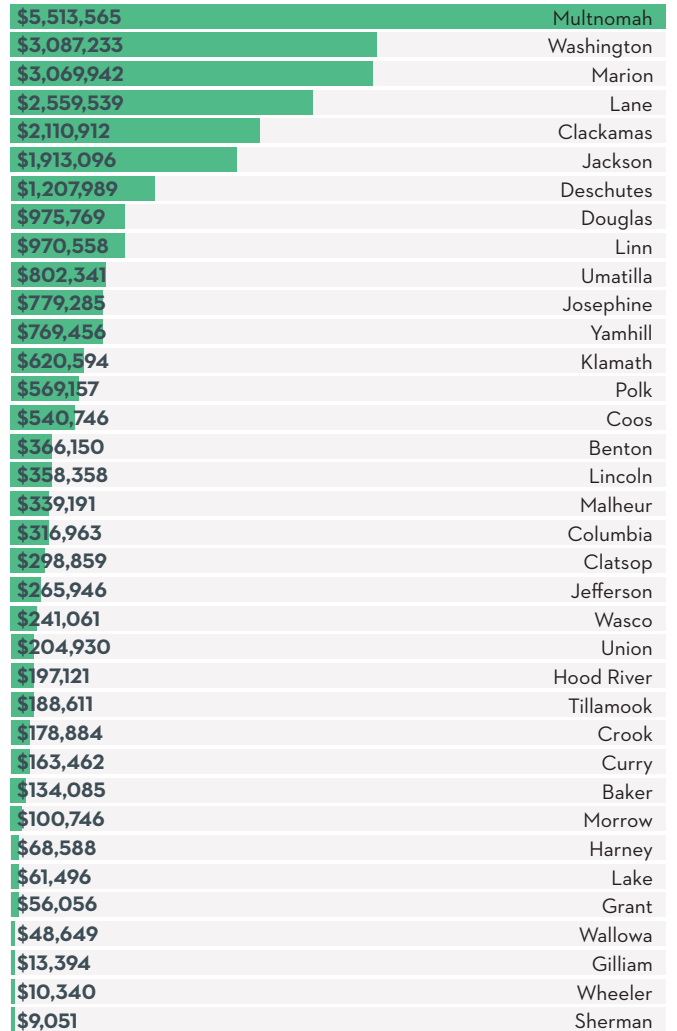
Source: *Effective Policy for Reducing Inequality? The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Distribution of Income, 2015*

**EITC PARTICIPATION, U.S.**



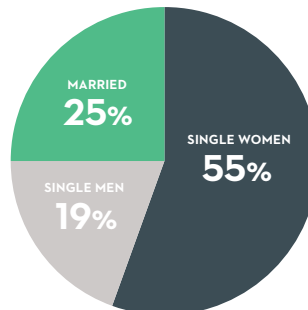
Data from 2012 tax year  
Source: OCPP analysis of Internal Revenue Service data

**POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL EITC DOLLARS IF PARTICIPATION INCREASED BY 10%, BY COUNTY**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Brookings Institution data, 2013

**EITC PARTICIPANTS NATIONALLY BY GENDER AND MARITAL STATUS, U.S.**



May not sum to 100 due to rounding.  
Source: Gunter S. (2013). *State Earned Income Tax Credits and Participation in Regular and Informal Work*. *National Tax Journal*, March 2013, 66 (1), 33–623. Relies on 2005 Statistics of Income Data

# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## Vietnamese Women's Health Project

Vietnamese American women are a strong and resilient community, with an estimated 15,000 living in Oregon. Yet high incidences of cervical cancer and breast cancer have resulted in higher mortality rates for this set of Oregon women. Only 69% of Vietnamese American women are regularly screened for cervical cancer, and only 46% who are 50+ have had a mammogram. These rates are much lower than the national targets set by public health experts, and they indicate a critical need to identify and adopt better and more culturally specific practices for screenings of Vietnamese American women.

When Vietnamese American women in Portland identified women's health screenings as priorities, local nurse scientist Dr. Connie Kim Yen Nguyen-Truong, PhD, RN, PCCN, decided to act. She launched a multi-year project to drive health policy change in Oregon through improved data collection on race, ethnicity, language, and disability status. To do that, she created a supportive teaching and mentoring environment that partnered community members with academic investigators and scientists. Her goal was not simply research but community-based participatory research. She partnered with community members at the Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) Asian Family Center and Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute to ensure that the findings are translated into action through health policy and collective empowerment.

This research partnership successfully dismantled power structures that limit community involvement. Dr. Nguyen-Truong and IRCO created a trust-filled, empathetic environment where participants felt safe being vulnerable and co-owned the learning process. The Vietnamese Women's Health Project continues to pursue the creation of best practices and culturally appropriate care for Vietnamese American women in Oregon.

*Thank you to Dr. Connie Kim Yen Nguyen-Truong for helping to author this story.*

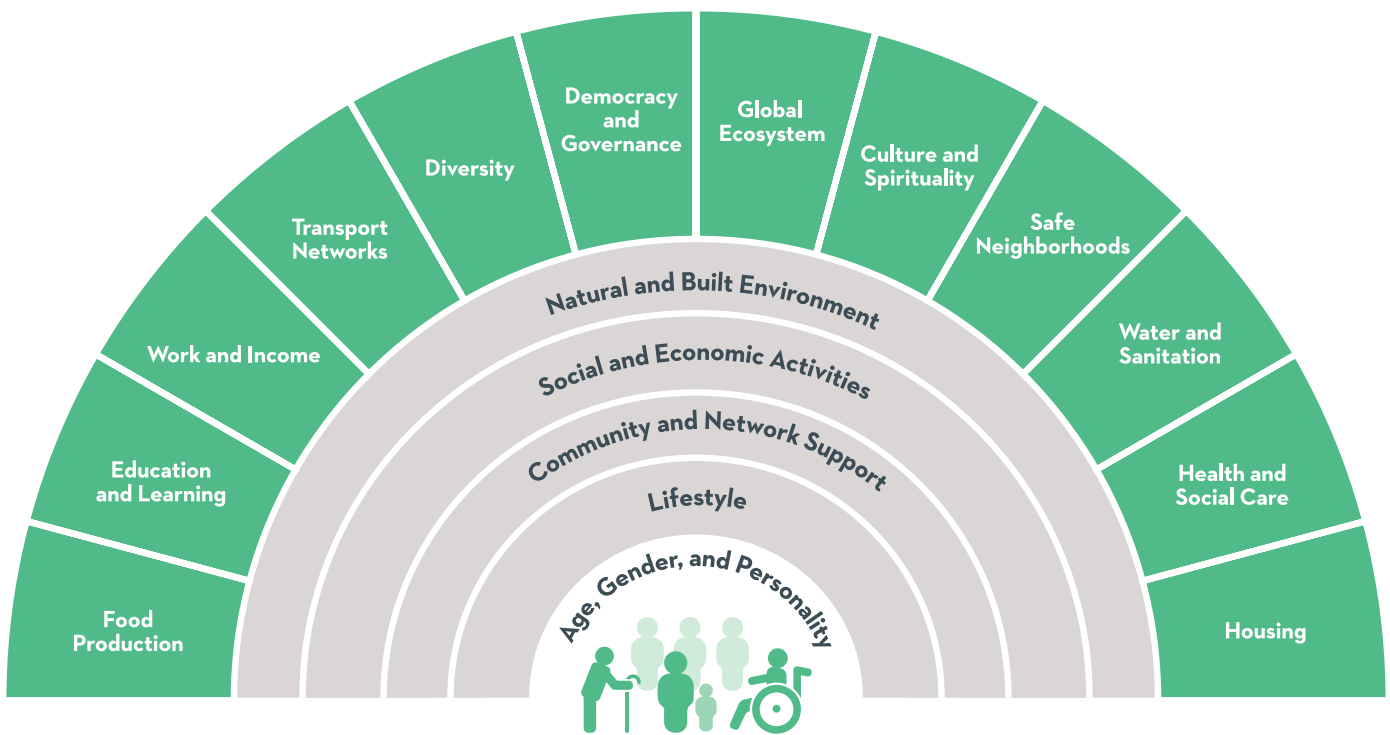
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009–2011; Miller et al., 2008; Nguyen-Truong et al., 2012; Hiatt et al., 1996



# HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

# What are Social Determinants of Health?

Economic and social conditions, called social determinants of health by public health experts, have a substantial impact on short- and long-term health outcomes. Health equity is founded upon the understanding that these key factors advance or impede women’s well-being; how connected women feel to their community, whether they feel safe and stable in their homes, whether or not their workplace environment feels discriminatory, how far they have to travel to access nutritious food, and other daily realities.





# Child and Maternal Health

Oregon's women deserve the healthiest conditions possible, especially when planning a family. Research shows that the health of a baby from birth through adulthood strongly correlates to the mother's health and environment. Specifically, stress levels and access to quality health and prenatal care have a substantial impact on birth outcomes such as infant mortality and birth weight (which is a strong predictor of cognitive development and future educational outcomes).

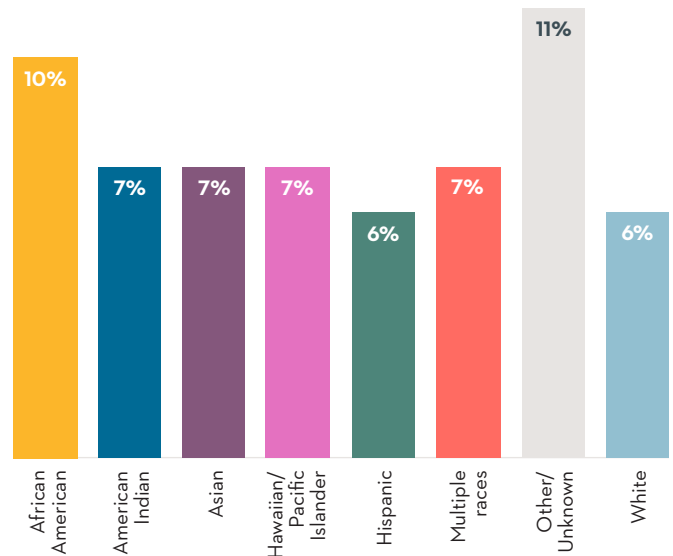
Given these facts, public health officials have identified support for Oregon's women of childbearing age through adequate information and services as a key public health metric. The U.S. has among the highest infant mortality and low birth weight outcomes in the industrialized world.

While Oregon does better than many other states on these metrics overall, women and babies of color in Oregon experience extreme disparities in birth outcomes. For instance, low birthweight rates for African American babies are nearly 4 percentage points higher than those for white babies, and Native American infant death rates are nearly 10 percentage points higher than white infant death rates.

Living in poverty is a contributor to the kind of chronic stress that negatively affects birth outcomes. Furthermore, living with the daily stress of racism has also been proven to drive disproportionately poor birth outcomes for women of color at any income level, especially for Black, Native American, and Latina women. Given these realities, culturally responsive approaches are critical to improving the state's birth outcomes.

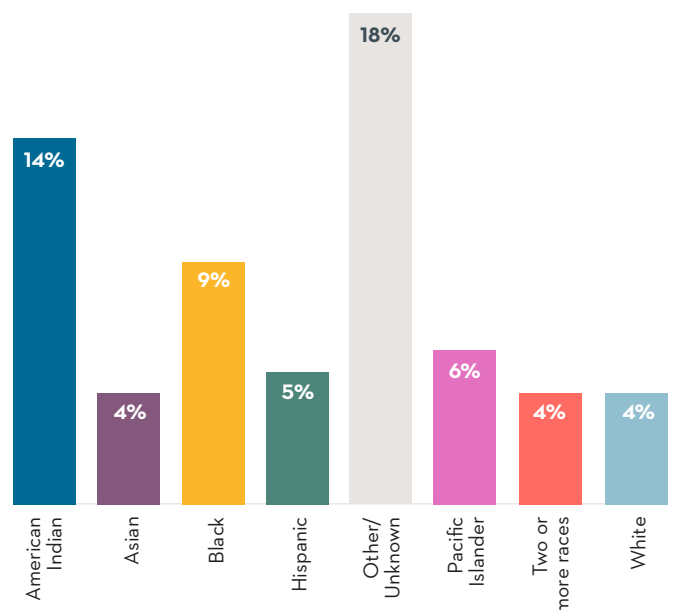
Sources: *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 2013: *The Social Determinants of Infant Mortality and Birth Outcomes in Western Developed Nations: A Cross-Country Systematic Review*; *American Journal of Public Health* 2004: *Very Low Birthweight in African American Infants: The Role of Maternal Exposure to Interpersonal Racial Discrimination*; "The Effects of Poor Neonatal Health on children's Cognitive Development," David Figlio

**LOW BIRTHWEIGHT RATES BY MOTHER'S RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



Source: Oregon DHS Vital Statistics 2014 annual report, Table 2–32

**INFANT DEATH RATES BY MOTHER'S RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



Source: Oregon DHS Vital Statistics 2014 annual report, Table 7–18

# Reproductive Health

Oregon has a strong history of protecting reproductive rights. However, the state’s persistently high rate of unintended pregnancies, disparities in maternal and child health outcomes, and a recent rise in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) demonstrate that rights are only a part of reproductive health and autonomy for Oregon’s women and girls.

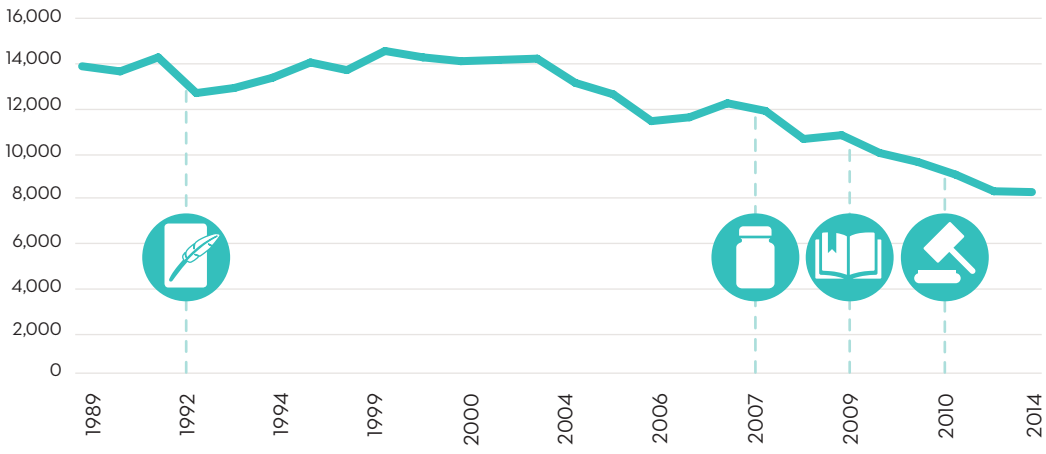
Though the unintended pregnancy rate has declined slightly since 2008, over 40% of Oregon’s pregnancies are still classified as unintended. This rate points to the persistent and systemic barriers that Oregon’s women and girls (and individuals who can become pregnant but do not necessarily identify as female) face while deciding if, when, and how they become parents.

Comprehensive reproductive health begins with understanding, and subsequent support, of a woman’s intentions around pregnancy. Access to the full range of reproductive health information and services empowers Oregon women and girls to fully participate in their communities. The current lack of information, access, and autonomy around family planning in Oregon leads to pregnancies that women and families are unable to prepare for or plan as they wish.

“I was born and raised as a girl and knew in my heart and mind I was a man. I began taking gender affirming hormones to become the man I am today. As a transgender Afro-Latino gay man, I recently tried to access abortion care in Portland. Like many transgender people needing an abortion, I encountered enormous challenges: facing an unintended pregnancy after my doctor insisted my husband and I could not conceive and did not need contraception when I asked for it. I was told to leave the clinic when I asked for information on termination. The person at the clinic laughed in my face when I said I needed info about terminating my pregnancy. I was told to leave and that I ‘was making the clinic unsafe for those women who really needed their help.’ I was anxious and had to navigate a system that is not set up to address the reproductive health care needs of transgender people.”

ANONYMOUS | MULTNOMAH COUNTY

## IN OREGON, THE ABORTION RATE HAS DECLINED AS REPRODUCTIVE INFORMATION, ACCESS, AND SERVICES HAVE INCREASED



Source: Oregon Public Health, Vital Stats

# Reproductive Health

People in Oregon face many gaps in reproductive health care access, including but not limited to:

- High-cost services or high co-pays/deductibles
- Lack of insurance coverage
- Ineffective sex education
- Misinformation from crisis pregnancy centers
- Transportation challenges
- Lack of cultural proficiency among health care providers
- Shame/fear/stigma
- Documentation status
- Discrimination in service provision

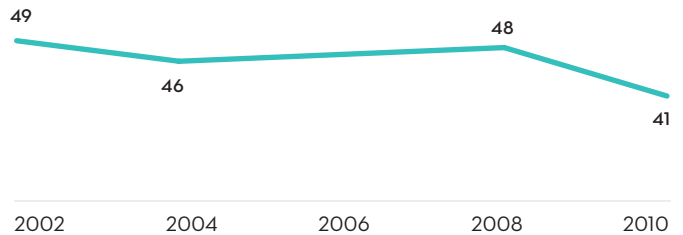
Studies show that race, geography, and socioeconomic status affect how women are advised in reproductive health. Providers are more likely to encourage Black and Latina women to restrict their childbearing. Rural women experience higher rates of unintended pregnancies and have access to fewer service providers.

Ensuring equitable access to effective reproductive health services, whether long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) or preconception care, is paramount. But first, Oregon health care providers must adopt culturally responsive approaches that address histories of reproductive oppression.

A recent increase in syphilis, chlamydia, and, to a lesser extent, gonorrhea also reflects the systemic lack of information and access to services in Oregon. If left untreated, these treatable infections often have more detrimental effects on female bodies, including pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility. The prevalence of these diseases reinforces the need for Oregon's health care providers and educators to pursue evidenced-based and culturally relevant approaches to prevention and treatment.

Sources: *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health 2014: Women or LARC First? Reproductive Autonomy and the Promotion of Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptive Methods*; *Health disparities in rural women. Committee Opinion No. 586. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*

## UNINTENDED PREGNANCY RATE, OREGON

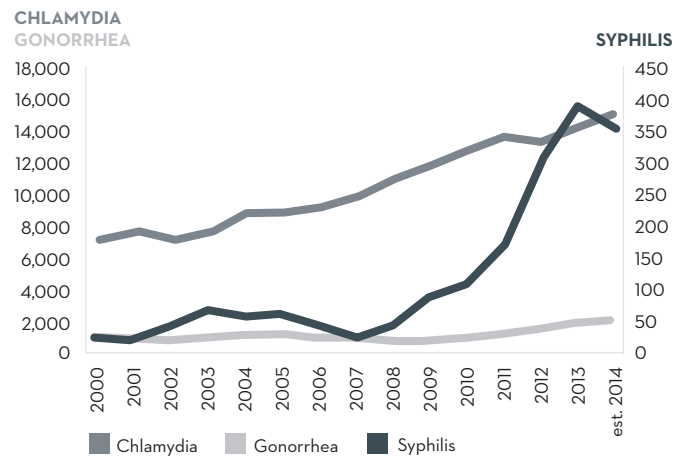


Rate per 1,000 women ages 15-44  
Source: Guttmacher Institute, 2015

## HEARD ON TOUR

**50%** of the women we heard from faced obstacles to accessing reproductive health care

## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS OVER TIME, OREGON



Source: [public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/CommunicableDisease/DiseaseSurveillanceData/STD/Pages/index.aspx](http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/CommunicableDisease/DiseaseSurveillanceData/STD/Pages/index.aspx)

**78%** of Oregon counties have no comprehensive reproductive health care providers (includes abortion care)

Source: Guttmacher Institute, 2011

# Mental Health

Oregon’s women and girls face some of the most severe mental health challenges in the nation. Nearly a third of Oregon’s young women have been subjected to two or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)—a higher rate than the national average. This trauma often leads to lifelong mental and physical health problems, lower educational attainment, and chronic limitations to overall success.

The lifelong impact of the state’s high rates of childhood trauma is evident in all of Oregon’s available mental health statistics. Nearly 50% of Oregon women report at least one poor mental health day each month. Oregon women also have the highest reported rates of both depression and alcohol consumption in the nation. And the state’s rate of illicit drug use among adults continues to be among the highest in the nation.

The negative effects of these challenges are compounded by a lack of available, affordable, high-quality mental health services in Oregon’s urban and rural areas alike.

Source: Oregon HIDTA 2013

“How can I afford mental health services when I make less hourly than the copay for one visit? Thus, the grin-and-bear-it attitude, because other needs must be met first.”

ANONYMOUS | PORTLAND

**9%**

of women in Oregon have 7+ drinks a week—the highest rate in the nation—compared to 5% nationally

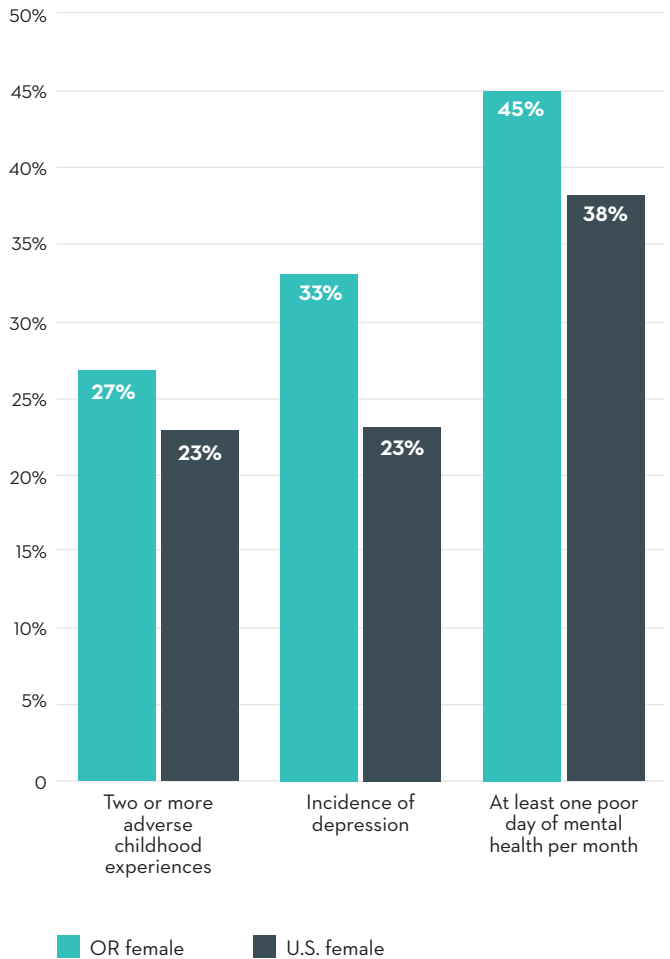


## HEARD ON TOUR

**70%**

of the women we heard from had faced a mental health issue that had adversely affected their work, family, physical health, and/or other relationships

### MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN, OREGON VS. U.S.



Sources: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2011-2012  
 CDC, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2012-2013  
 CDC, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2014

While some mental health challenges are genetic, many others are caused by trauma, lack of safety, economic fragility, chronic lack of sleep, and the daily stress of prejudices like homophobia, sexism, and racism. Mental health challenges, particularly those left untreated, can lead to tragic outcomes for Oregon women, including suicide, homelessness, and incarceration.

The state's indicators for each of these outcomes is sobering:

- In 2013, 166 women committed suicide in Oregon—and national data reveal that women are twice as likely to attempt suicide than men.
- 14% of all homeless people in Oregon have a serious mental illness, and 11% struggle with related substance abuse.
- The female incarceration rate in Oregon has tripled in the last 20 years. Over 50% of women prisoners have been assessed with severe mental health needs—twice the rate for male prisoners in Oregon.

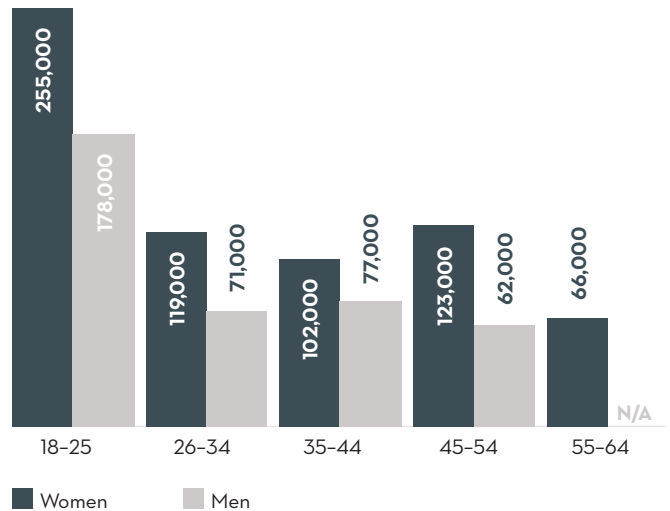
Oregon's women and girls face mental health challenges that are severe, complex, and have potentially life-threatening consequences.

Sources: National Violent Death Reporting System; Point in Time Count Summary, 2015; SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2002–14

“During my struggle with depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts I found that there were very few resources for those struggling with mental health. I did not want to put the financial burden of a therapist on my family, plus there were no options that fit into my work schedule. I ended up going without services that could have been so beneficial. With the help of friends and family I’ve mostly recovered. But it was a struggle and others may not have that support.”

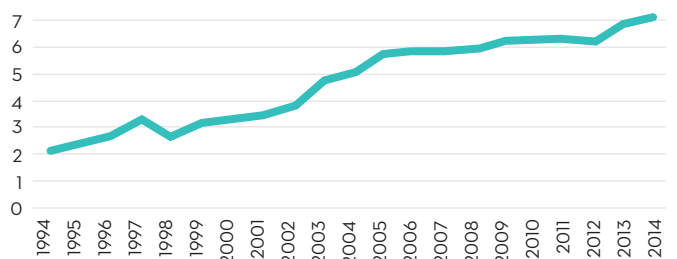
ANONYMOUS | MEDFORD

### CASES OF ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN 2014 BY GENDER AGES 18+, U.S.



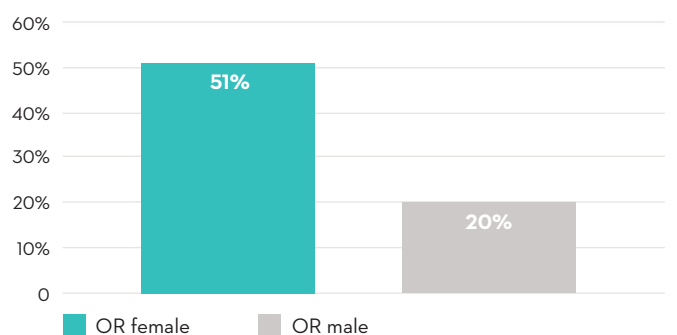
Data not available for 55- to 64-year-old men  
Source: Oregon DHS Vital Stats, 2014

### FEMALE INCARCERATION RATE OVER TIME, OREGON



Rate per 10,000  
Source: Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, 2015

### PERCENT OF PRISONERS WITH SEVERE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS BY GENDER, OREGON



Source: Oregon Department of Corrections Inmate Profile, July 2015

# Physical Health

Oregon women and girls lead the nation in some key health indicators—like being the most physically active in the country. However, high rates of asthma, pre-diabetes, and arthritis are of deep concern for women and girls all over the state.

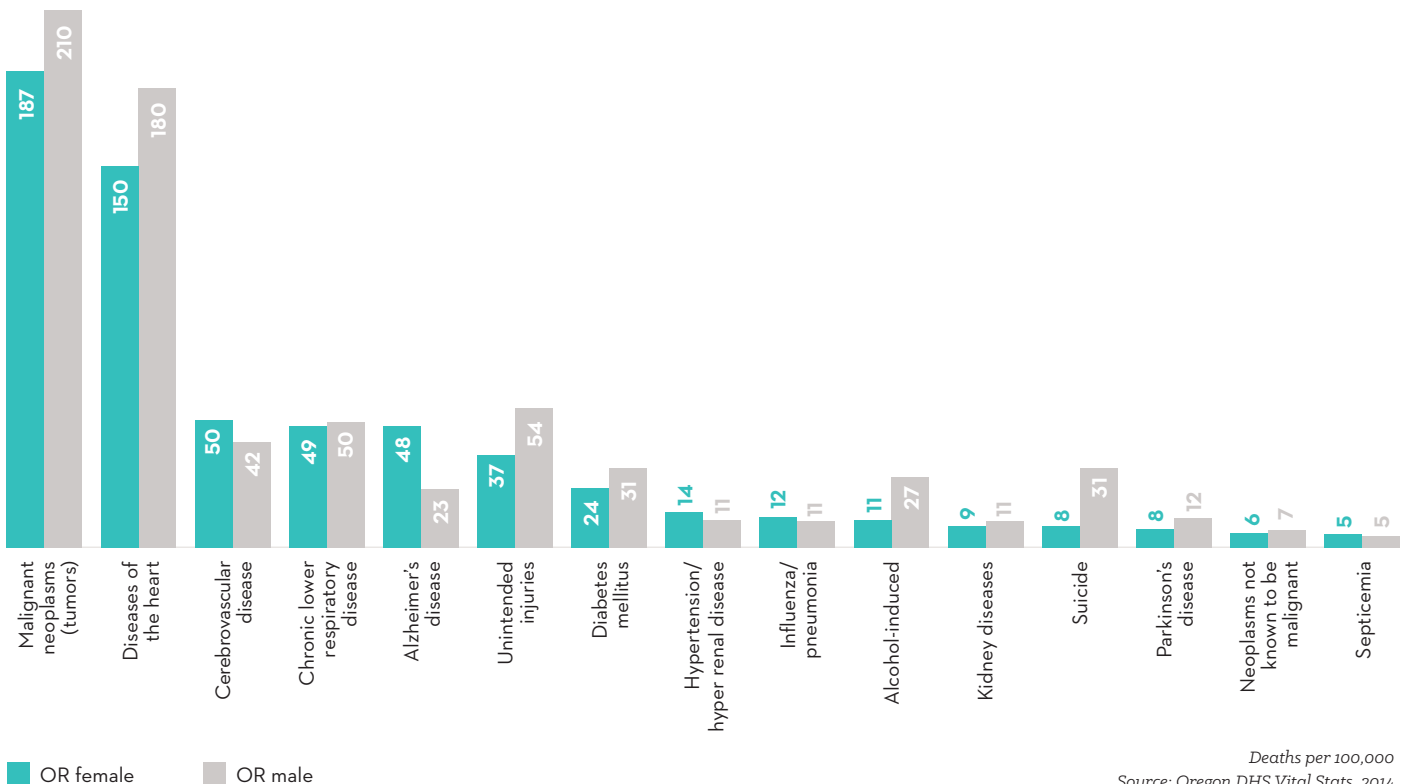
State-by-state comparisons reveal that Oregon’s women either seek or receive gender-specific preventative care at much lower rates than women in other states, including mammograms, pap smears, and routine check-ups.

Health outcomes for women of color in Oregon are worse than outcomes for white women or men of color in several key categories. Type II diabetes is of particular concern. The condition is attributable to high cholesterol rates, poor access to culturally responsive and comprehensive health care, and lack of access to nutritious food. Type II diabetes can also shorten the lifespan if not well-treated.

“I had to wait several months to get an appointment with a primary care physician. There is a real lack of quality health care on the Oregon Coast, and almost no options if you want a woman physician.”

ANONYMOUS | NEWPORT

## LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH BY GENDER, OREGON



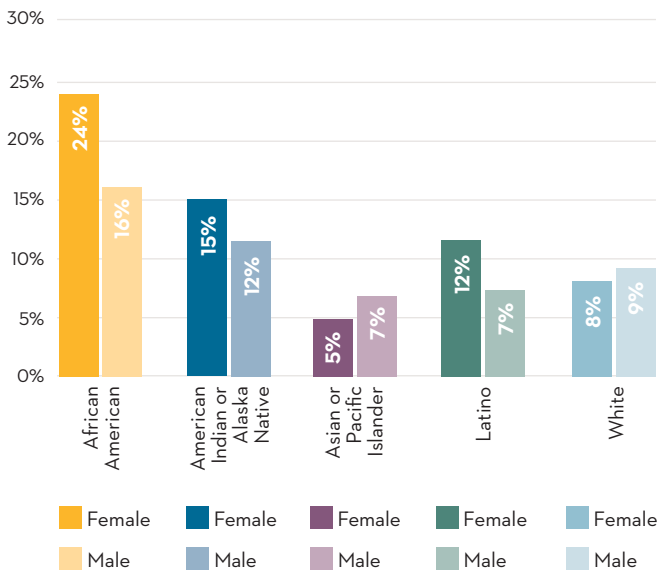
For women's and girl's bodies, cultural forces rooted in sexism can be as damaging as biological risk factors. Emerging research reveals that eating disorders and crash diets can cause permanent physical damage. Oversimplified and sensationalist reporting on obesity, as well as related bullying, are more likely to exacerbate physical and mental problems than remedy them.

The environments in which women and girls are the most successful in improving their overall physical health are those in which they can cultivate positive body image and are supported in healthy lifestyle and nutritional choices.

Source: Oregon Vital Statistics 2014

**22%** of women in Oregon report having asthma compared to 16% nationally—the second worst in the nation

**DIABETES RATES BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



Source: OHS Chronic Disease reports, 2010–2011

“I had a tough time going to school, working full time, and paying my bills. At the time I was insured with Medicaid, which only covered some of my health care needs. Going to the doctor became a scary thing. I would get a pit in my stomach whenever I got sick because I was afraid that I couldn’t pay for the health care I needed.”

**BRECKEN, 28 | PORTLAND**

**HOW HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR OREGON WOMEN COMPARE TO WOMEN IN OTHER STATES**

**Better Outcomes than Most Other States:**

<b>High Rates of:</b>	<b>Low Rates of:</b>
• Physical activity	• Heart attack
	• Obesity
	• Diabetes
	• Stroke

**On Par with Most Other States:**

**Average Rates of:**

• Adult smoking	• Cancer
• Uninsurance	• Dental visits
• Lung disease	• Heart disease
• Pre-diabetes	• Impaired vision

**Worse Outcomes than Most Other States:**

<b>High Rates of:</b>	<b>Low Screening Rates of:</b>
• Arthritis	• Mammogram (last 2 years, age 50+)
• Asthma	• Pap smear (last 3 years)
• Depression	• Cholesterol check (last 5 years)
• Heavy drinking	• Routine check-up (last year)

# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls

Oregon is home to over 200,000 girls between 10 and 18. These young women are the future of the state, but many don't have the support or opportunities they need to reach their fullest potential. They lack positive role models in their communities and face higher rates of bullying and school-based harassment than their male peers. Youth development programs all over the state are changing this atmosphere by carving out new spaces that lift up Oregon's young women and girls.

Fifteen years ago, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls was founded to create a space where the voices of young women and girls could be amplified to create social change. The Camp offers a week-long program where girls learn how to play an instrument, form a band, write an original song, and perform that song in front of a live audience. Through music instruction, workshops, and technical training, the Camp creates leadership opportunities, cultivates a supportive community of peers and mentors, and encourages social change and the development of life skills.

At Camp, girls have positive role models and, more importantly, have a space where they can express themselves without fear of judgment or ridicule. Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls gives them confidence and a sense of place. Toward that end, the program continues to work to make the camp an inclusive environment where LGBTQ youth and youth of color in particular feel safe and inspired. Rock 'n' Roll Camp has been so successful that there are now dozens of camps all over the globe, and more launch every year.

*Thank you to Kristi Balzer for helping to write this story.*





# EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

# Early Education

Ensuring that Oregon's girls are ready for school is one of the most effective ways to prepare them for overall life success. High-quality early education and school readiness efforts not only improve educational outcomes for all students, but economists have also demonstrated that early education investments pay off in lower social safety net costs, decreased crime rates, and increased tax revenue.

However, only 38% of Oregon's 3- to 5-year-olds are enrolled in pre-K programs. Low pre-K utilization is concerning because in addition to the many positive outcomes related to high-quality early education, pre-K programs also minimize the negative effects of parental unemployment, insufficient support for family caregiving, parental incarceration, and unstable housing, which affect thousands of Oregon women and families. High-quality pre-K programs are also an important way to close the opportunity gap in education, especially for girls living in low-income households and girls of color.

Sources: *Invest in Early Childhood Development: Reduce Deficits, Strengthen the Economy*, Heckman; *Center for Public Education: The Research on Pre-K*, 2008

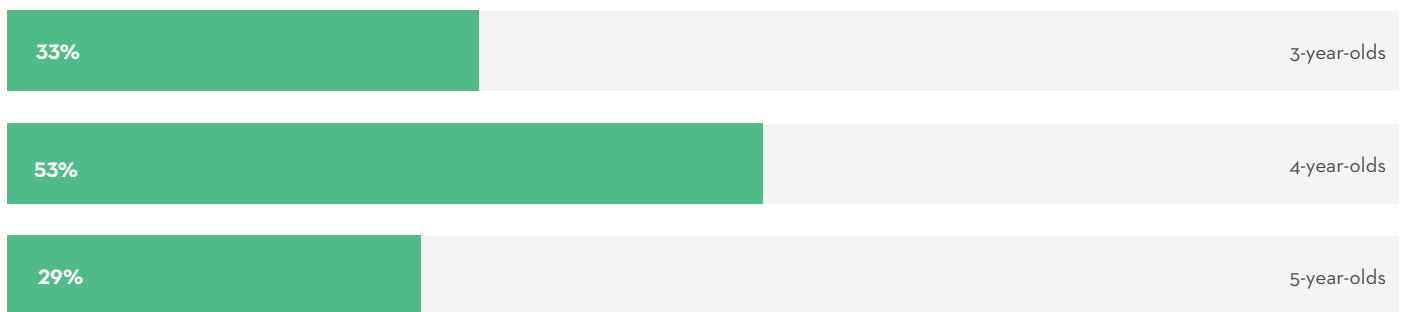
**82%** of Oregonians believe that early childhood education is important

Source: *DHM Survey, 2015*



## SHARE OF 3-, 4-, AND 5-YEAR-OLDS IN PRESCHOOL OR NURSERY SCHOOL, OREGON

**38%** of 3- to 5-year-olds in Oregon are in early education programs



Source: *ACS PUMS, 2014*

# Youth Development

Like early education, programs based on positive youth development have a substantial positive impact on school performance, physical health, and social and emotional well-being. Programs and supports for young people beyond the school day are also associated with fewer risky behaviors and help close opportunity gaps for both low-income students and students of color.

In Oregon, among the students who participate in out-of-school programs, 52% are boys while 48% are girls. Additionally, nearly 50% of families report that their students would be enrolled in out-of-school programs if barriers like high costs and transportation challenges were removed. Finally, the same studies show that Oregon children spend an average of six hours per day unsupervised, a factor that correlates to a wide range of negative outcomes for both boys and girls.

This underuse of youth development programs has an impact on Oregon girls both in and outside the classroom. Studies have shown that participation in youth development programs increased girls' participation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields as well as in sports and other forms of physical activity.

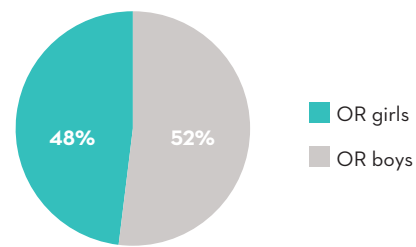
The link between youth programs and STEM fields and physical activity is meaningful because Oregon girls are far less likely to take AP exams in STEM-related fields than their male counterparts. Similarly, a 2015 report reveals that nearly 20% of Oregon public schools have a large (higher than 10%) gap in the number of girls who play sports compared to the number of boys who do. Out-of-school programs that encourage and support girls and young women in sports and/or STEM subjects help to break down gender barriers and have lasting effects on economic security and mental and physical well-being.

Sources: *National Collaboration for Youth: The Impact of Youth Development Programs on Student Academic Achievement*; *America after 3 pm: Oregon*; *What We Know about Girls, STEM, and Afterschool Programs*, Fancsali; *After-School Program Impact on Physical Activity and Fitness*, Beets; *National Women's Law Center: Girls, Sports, and Equality: A State-by-State Ranking on Title IX*

"I organize the assemblies at my high school and I was told that I needed a boy to be the emcee with me. This made me feel like girls' voices are not enough. According to my school, in order to get the messages across to the audience, I needed to be a boy."

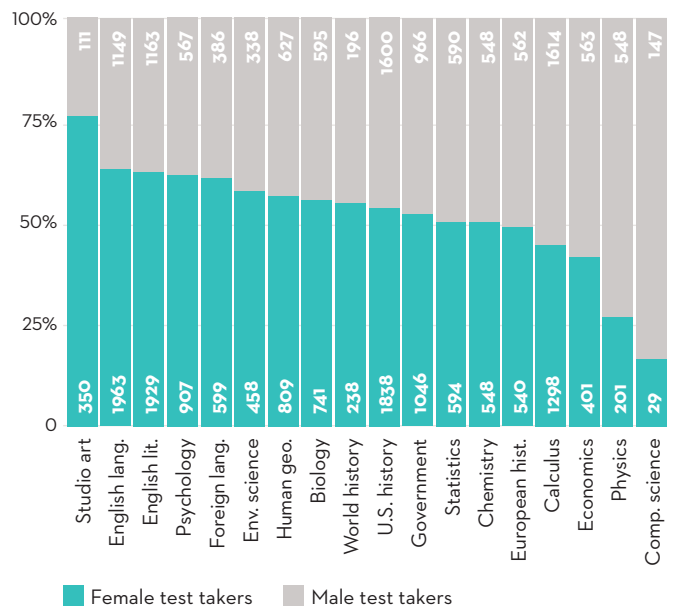
MARIN, 17 | EUGENE

## ATTENDANCE IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMS, OREGON



Source: Afterschool Alliance, *America After 3pm Report*, 2014

## NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO TOOK AP EXAMS BY GENDER, OREGON



Source: College Board, *AP Data for 2014*

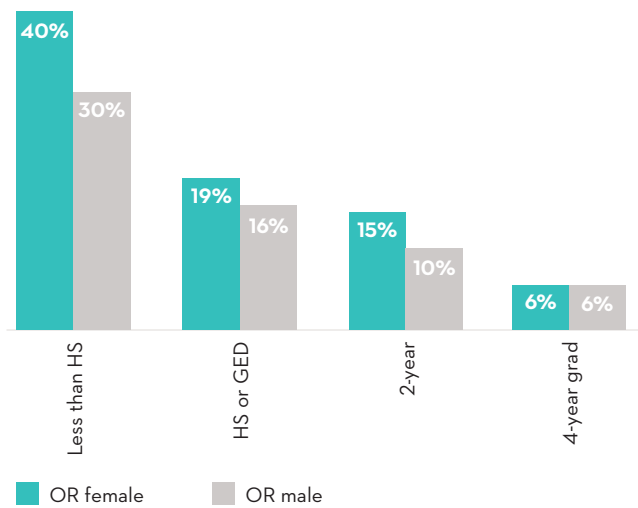
# K-12 Education

Graduation rates for Oregon’s students are consistently among the worst in the nation. While girls in Oregon are graduating at higher rates than their male counterparts, they are still graduating at lower rates than young women in most other states.

Even though these low graduation rates are of deep concern, perhaps the most troubling K–12 statistic for Oregon’s girls is what happens after they leave the classroom. A full 40% of Oregon girls who don’t finish high school end up living in poverty, a rate 10 percentage points higher than their male counterparts. This pattern continues across every step of educational attainment until it finally equalizes at a 4-year degree.

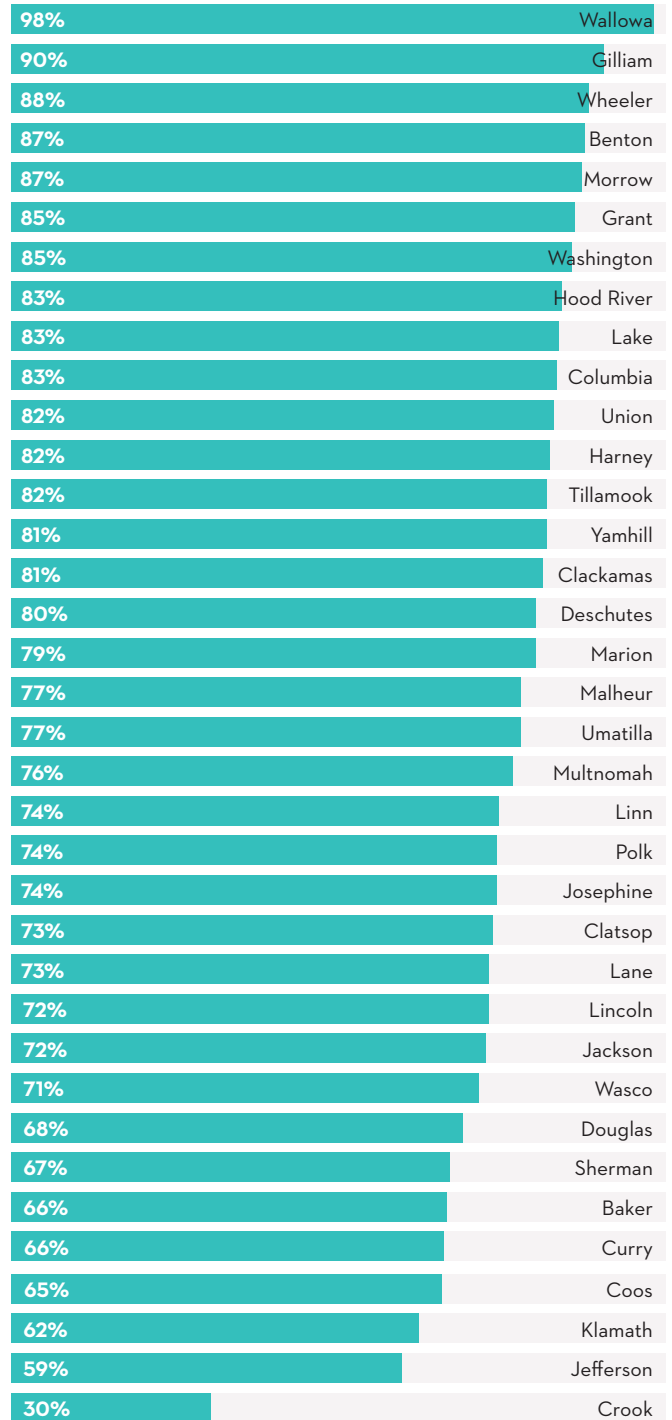
Many girls and young women of color, as well as young LGBTQ women, experience additional systemic barriers to success in the classroom, such as bullying, harassment, and insufficient supports. Lower graduation rates among those groups of young women reflect those obstacles and are particularly worrisome given the high prevalence of poverty for Oregon women with lower levels of educational attainment.

## POVERTY RATES BY GENDER AND EDUCATION LEVEL, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 PUMS 1-year estimate data

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES FOR GIRLS BY COUNTY, OREGON



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data for the 2013–2014 school year

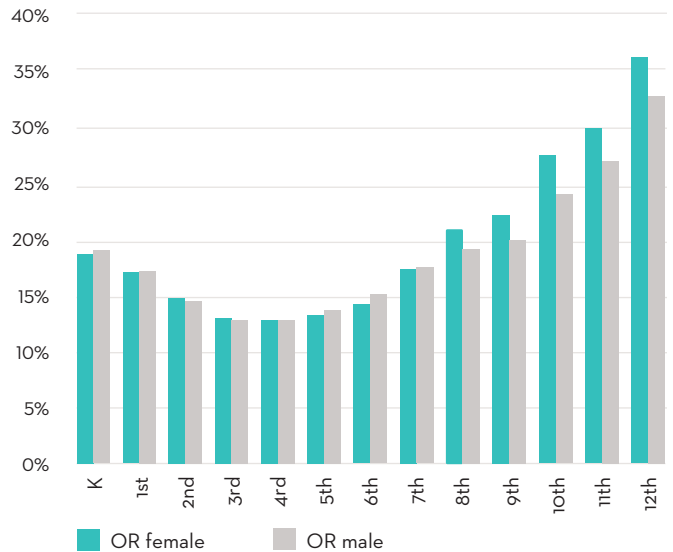


# K-12 Education

Although Oregon’s girls are graduating from high school at higher rates than Oregon’s boys, beginning in 8th grade they are absent from school more often than their male peers. Time in the classroom goes hand in hand with student success, and chronic absenteeism (defined as missing more than one school day per month) is associated with lower test scores as well as lower graduation rates.

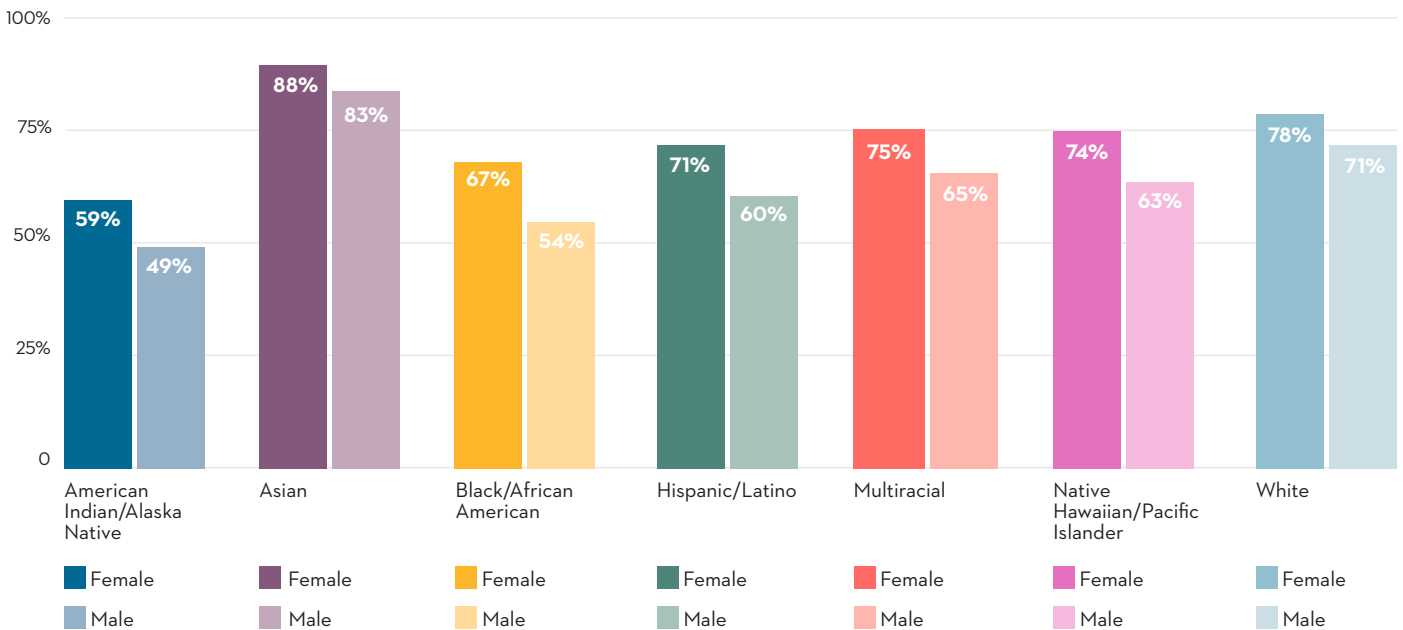
Gender-specific chronic absenteeism has multiple causes. For example, many girls miss school because they must take care of other family members, especially when their mothers lack access to paid sick time or family leave. Bullying—based on appearance, religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other factors—also keeps students at home. Low levels of student engagement and school connection spur absenteeism for both girls and boys. Finally, some young women of color miss time in the classroom because they are disciplined at higher rates than their white counterparts for equal or lesser offenses.

**PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO ARE CHRONICALLY ABSENT BY GENDER AND GRADE, OREGON**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data, 2014. Note: Includes the following diploma types: traditional diploma earned but not yet awarded, and modified diploma

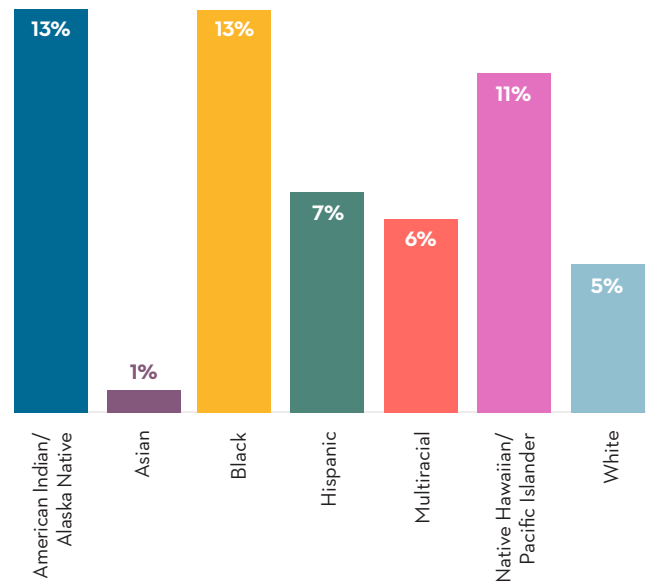
# K-12 Education

Though all drivers of chronic absenteeism deserve attention, disproportionate discipline is of particular concern. The consequences of disproportionate school discipline are a contributor to Oregon’s juvenile justice system. Involvement with the justice system has serious negative implications for education outcomes, economic opportunity, health outcomes, family and neighborhood cohesion, and upward mobility.

Expanding training for teachers, school counselors, and administrators to address gender and racial bias and adopt culturally relevant practices improves student engagement and overall education outcomes. Hiring and promoting teachers of color has also been proven to increase educational outcomes for all students.

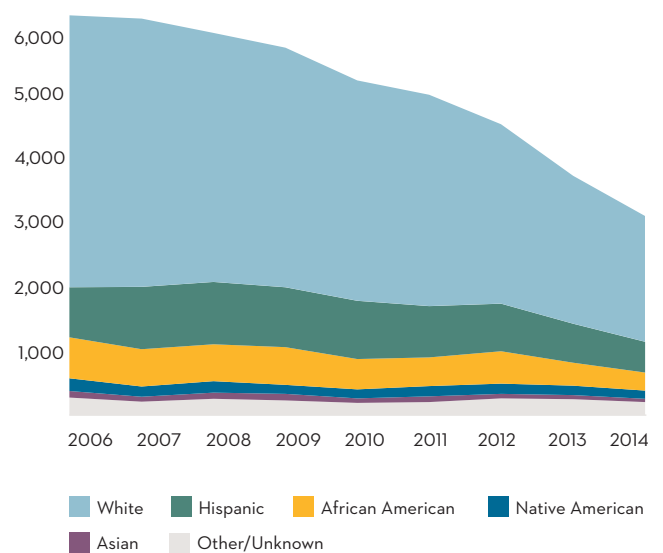
Sources: *Harvard Educational Review Spring 2014: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0*; Dee, Thomas. “Teachers, Race, and Student Achievement in a Randomized Experiment.” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86 (2004) 195–210

**K-12 DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS FOR GIRLS BY RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data

**FEMALE YOUTH REFERRED TO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM BY RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of referral data from JJIS, 2006–2014

# Post-Secondary Education

College graduation rates for women in Oregon over the past several decades reveal notable progress and disheartening realities. On the one hand, Oregon women overall are graduating from college at higher rates than ever before. Since 1980, Oregon women have closed the post-secondary attainment gap between them and Oregon men. In fact, women in Oregon between ages 25–34 are nearly 10 percentage points more likely to have a bachelor’s degree than Oregon men in the same age group.

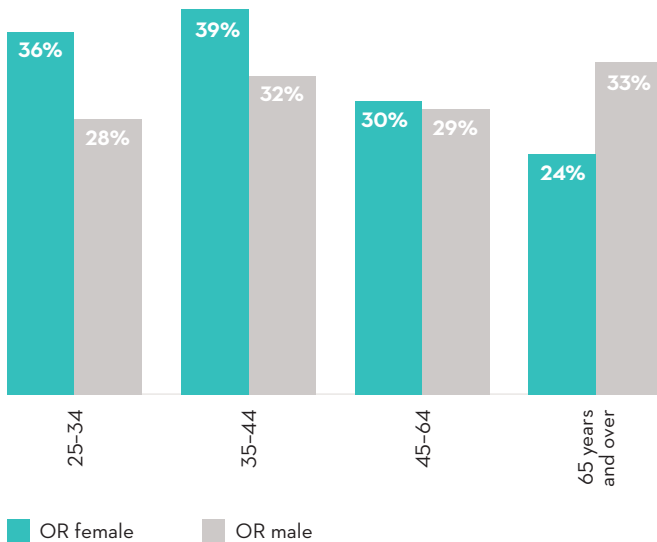
On the other hand, this post-secondary progress has not included all Oregon women. While college graduation rates for women of color have been increasing since 1980 as well, the attainment gap between white women and women of color has widened dramatically.

Full celebration is premature until the road to and through college is truly available to all Oregon women, and higher education institutions implement culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining practices.

“Three years ago I decided to go back to community college to finish the degree I started 20 years ago. It was a challenge because I didn’t know if it was worth it—where would it get me? How much would I have to give up as a single, divorced mother? Now I’m setting an example for my daughter and I graduate this June!”

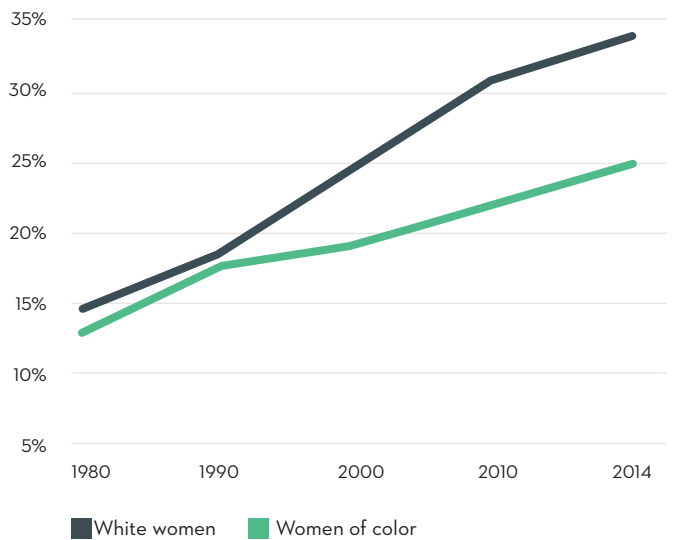
JENNIE, 43 | PENDLETON

**PERCENT OF ADULTS AGES 25+ WITH A BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER BY GENDER AND AGE, OREGON**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 PUMS 1-year estimate data

**PERCENT OF WOMEN AGES 25+ WITH A BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY, OREGON**



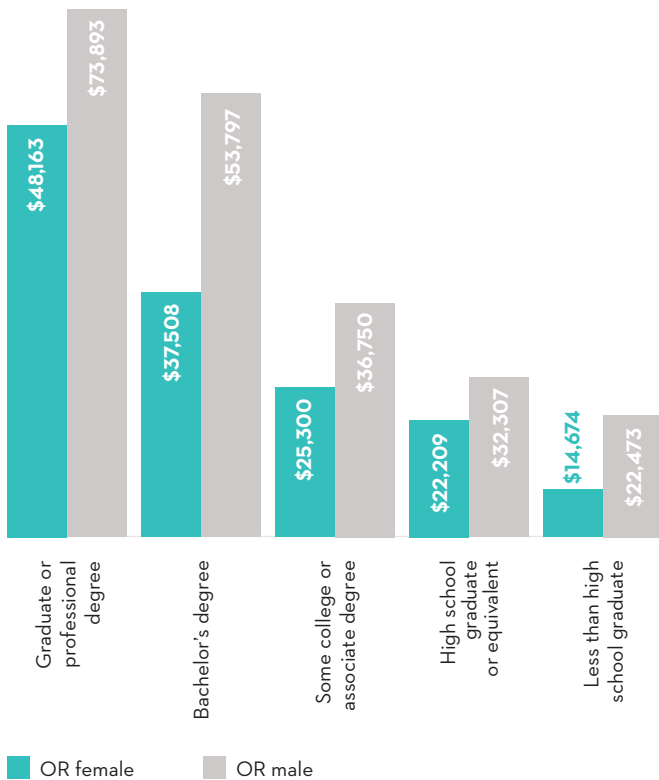
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 PUMS 1-year estimate data



Just as with K–12 education, what happens to Oregon women after they graduate from college is of deep concern. Oregon women complete certificate, associate, undergraduate, and graduate programs at higher rates than Oregon men. However, they earn less than their male counterparts with those same degrees once they enter the workforce. In fact, the earnings gap actually increases with educational attainment.

A substantial earnings gap is experienced by female graduates of every institution of higher education in Oregon. Women in Oregon have been diligent in their pursuit of post-secondary credentials. But no matter how many degrees they complete, they can't escape a statewide economy that fails to equally reward those achievements.

**ANNUAL EARNINGS GAP BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, OREGON**



Source: [depts.washington.edu/selfsuff/docs/Oregon2014.pdf](https://depts.washington.edu/selfsuff/docs/Oregon2014.pdf)

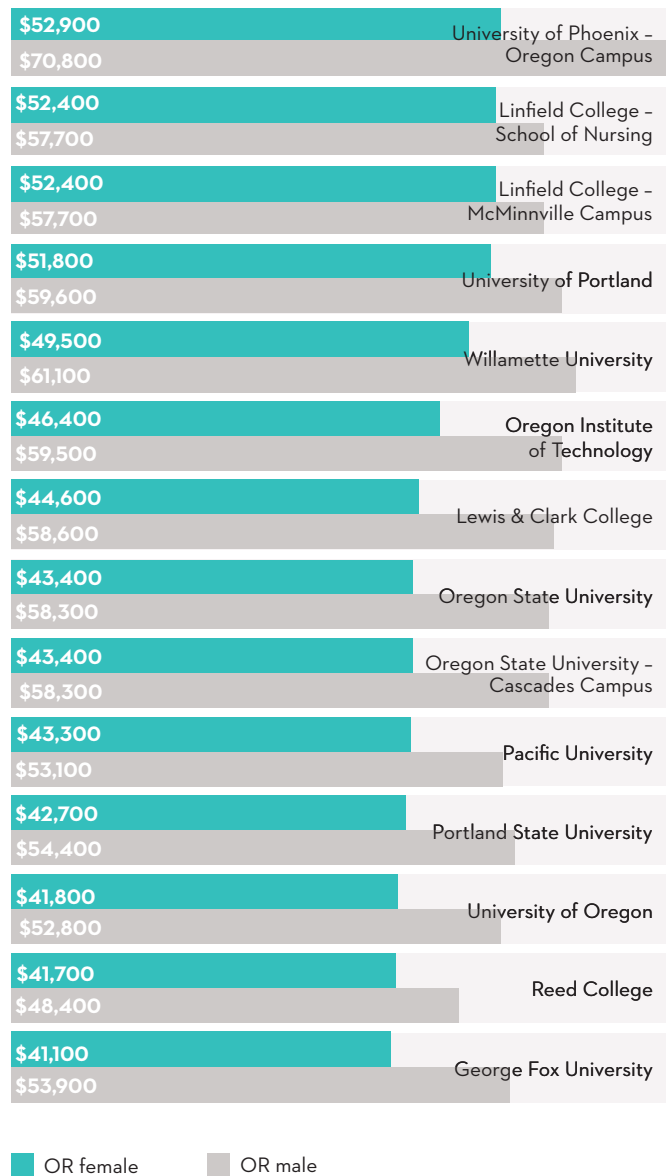


**HEARD ON TOUR**

ALMOST  
**90%**

of the women we heard from experienced barriers to pursuing their education

**MEDIAN SALARY OF BACHELOR'S PROGRAM GRADUATES OF OREGON HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY GENDER, 10 YEARS AFTER ENTRY**



Source: U.S. Department of Education, College Scorecard. Note: Data are for all not-currently enrolled students who received Title IV federal funding

# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## WILD

There are 500 million women with disabilities worldwide and 145,000 living in Oregon today. Women with disabilities live in every community throughout the state, and lead lives characterized by extraordinary resilience. Too many women with disabilities face barriers to success such as low literacy, poor access to employment opportunities, higher rates of HIV/AIDS infection, and limited access to quality health care. Women with disabilities are also more likely to experience violence—and less likely to see their perpetrators brought to justice.

In response to these many challenges, Eugene residents formed Mobility International USA (MIUSA) to support women with disabilities and to help build a global network of leaders. MIUSA created a space for women with disabilities to unite, cultivate a rights-focused attitude, reimagine what's possible, and equip themselves with tools, skills, and knowledge. The Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability (WILD) is the primary project of MIUSA.

WILD is a global institute that unites and informs potential women leaders with disabilities through intensive seminars and site visits. Delegates learn to work with the media, implement policy and legislation, network with international allies, and improve employment and educational opportunities. Delegates from other countries stay with local Eugene-area families, participate in team-building activities, and learn about U.S. culture. WILD includes women with a variety of disabilities and cultures, and provides translation in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language. In the future, WILD plans to expand programming to young women in Oregon with disabilities, connecting them to leadership training and opportunities. The leaders at WILD believe that investing in women with disabilities benefits every Oregonian.

*Thank you to Susan Sygall and Suz Dunn for helping to write this story.*



**LEADERSHIP**

# Public Sector Leadership

For decades, Oregon women have served in public office at higher rates than women in other states—another testament to the extraordinary contributions made by Oregon women.

However, the current rate of women serving in Oregon’s state legislature is 20 percentage points below the rate that would be proportionate to the state’s population. Rates of representation for people of color, and women of color in particular, are even lower—at no point exceeding even 5% of statewide elected leadership. And only one member of Oregon’s current federal congressional delegation is a woman.

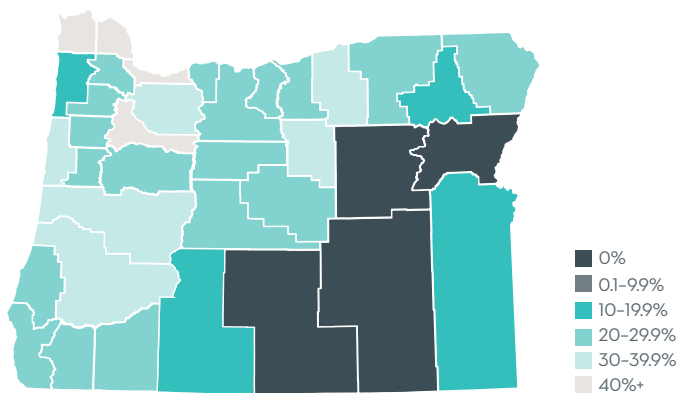
Public sector leadership at the local level in Oregon tells a similar story. Only 30% of elected or appointed leaders in prominent local positions are women. Nearly half of Oregon’s counties have zero women serving on their county commissions, which are responsible for critical leadership duties like overseeing social service systems in each county.

This lack of representation in local leadership is particularly disconcerting in eastern Oregon, where four counties do not have a single woman serving in a county-wide office. However, Native American women leaders in Oregon’s nine tribal governments are outpacing both state and local leadership rates. Nearly 40% of the tribal leaders in Oregon are women.

“I was elected the first female judge in my county. One of the challenges is changing people’s perception of a woman in a position of authority. For example, people struggle with what to call me—Ms. or Mrs.—when the correct term is ‘Judge.’ I know they would not struggle with how to address a male judge in court. I also struggle with the perception that because of my gender I will evaluate a case differently than a male counterpart. These stereotypes are particularly present in a small, rural community.”

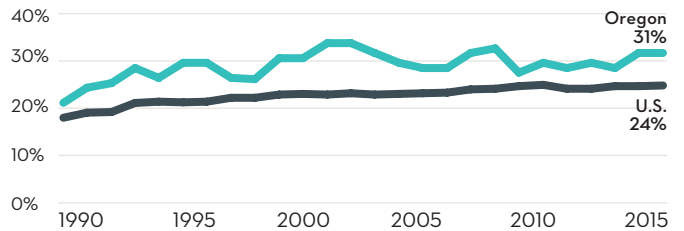
ANONYMOUS | OREGON COAST

## PERCENT OF SELECT COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD BY WOMEN BY COUNTY, OREGON



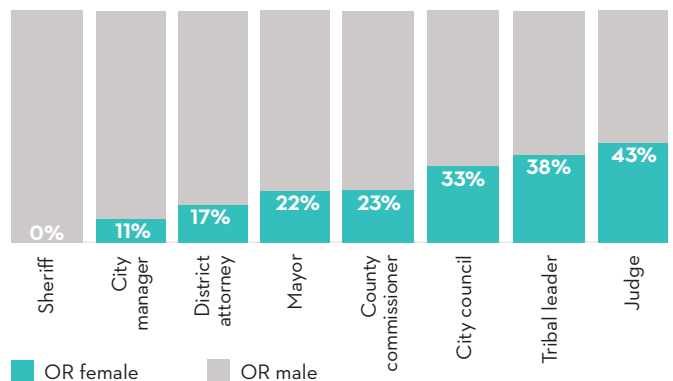
Positions included: sheriff, district attorney, county commissioner, judge, city councilor, mayor of city over 20,000, city manager of city over 20,000

## PERCENT OF WOMEN STATE LEGISLATORS OVER TIME, OREGON VS. U.S.



Source: Center for American Women and Politics Fact Sheets

## PERCENT OF WOMEN IN LOCAL LEADERSHIP BY POSITION, OREGON



Source: Women’s Foundation of Oregon analysis of public records

# Private Sector Leadership

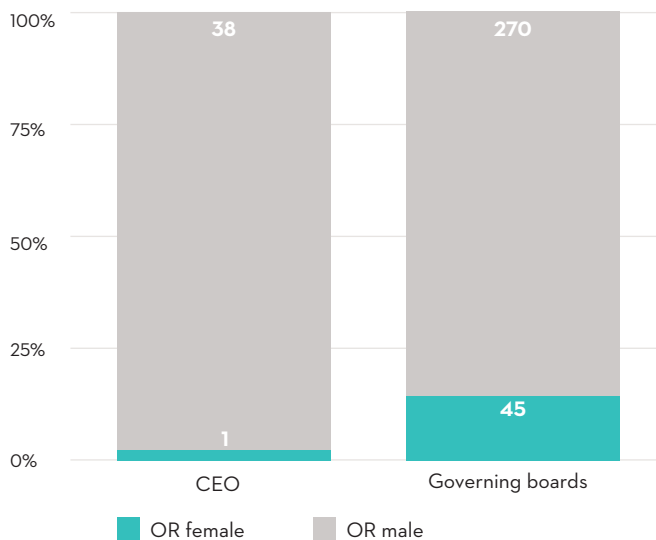
In the private sector, only one of Oregon's publicly traded companies has a woman CEO. Women make up just 17% of the boards of those companies. The number of women of color in either of those roles in Oregon is at or close to zero.

Oregon is underperforming even the Fortune 1000's meager rates of women in corporate leadership roles: 4.4% of Fortune 1000 CEOs are women, as are 18% of their board members. This pattern of underrepresentation in the private sector continues throughout all Oregon businesses, not just large corporations. Currently, women own 21% of Oregon businesses, only slightly better than the national average.

Studies show that increasing the number of women leaders in the private sector has a positive influence on the way companies hire, retain, and pay their employees, as well as fostering more equitable business practices across the sector. There is also ample evidence that increasing the number of women in private sector leadership boosts profitability. In fact, companies that have more women in leadership outperform companies that do not by nearly every measure.

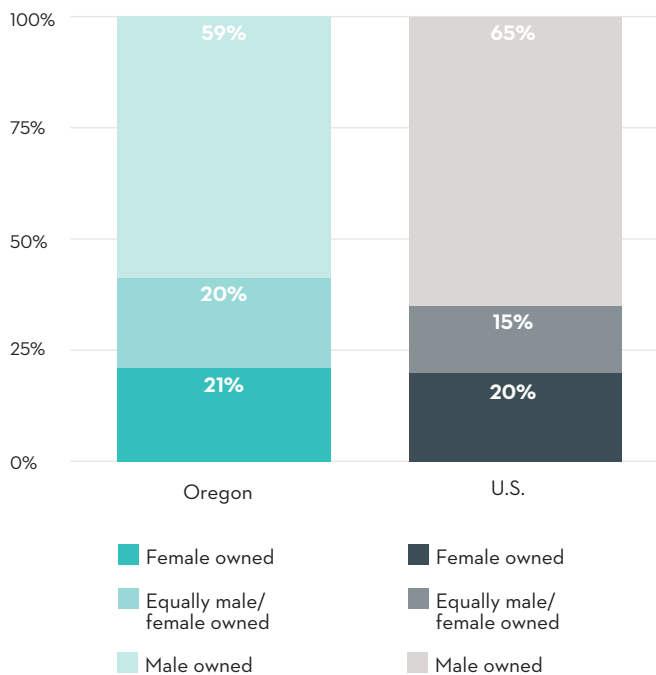
Sources: 2020 Women on Boards 2016; Forbes Women CEOs of the Fortune 500; 2016 Leaders in Transition Report

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN PUBLICLY TRADED BUSINESSES, OREGON



Source: Portland Business Journal, 2015; ECONorthwest research

## WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES IN OREGON AND THE U.S.



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Survey of Businesses data

# Nonprofit and Education Leadership

Professionally, Oregon women are highly concentrated in the nonprofit and education sectors. And yet, even in fields that employ the largest share of women, men still hold a disproportionate number of leadership positions.

Only 39% of the CEOs of Oregon’s 50 largest nonprofit organizations are women. In 2015, women accounted for more than 7 in 10 teachers in Oregon public schools but fewer than 1 in 3 superintendents. Only 16% of the presidents of Oregon’s 4-year higher education institutions are women.

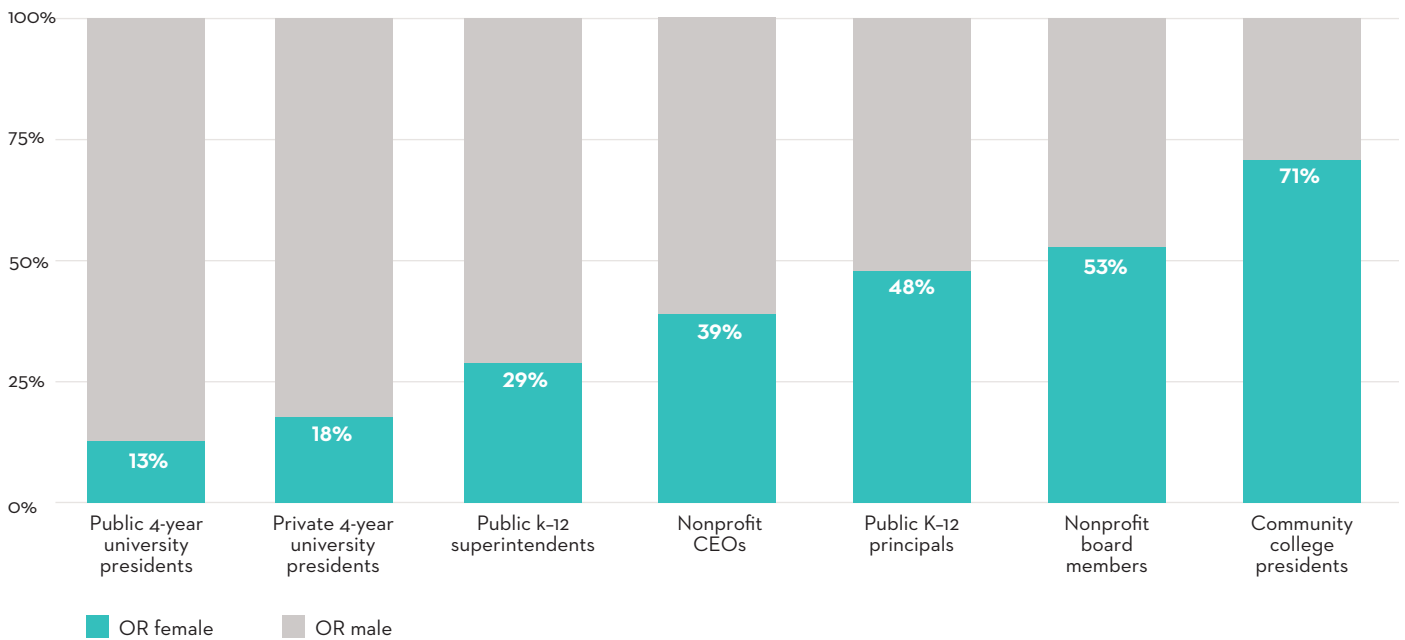
However, there are some bright spots in these sectors for women’s leadership. Women account for 53% of the seats on Oregon’s nonprofit boards and 71% of Oregon’s community college presidents. Though the nonprofit board positions often come with no compensation, and community college leadership positions generally bring less compensation and prestige than the other leadership positions noted here, they underscore the ways that Oregon women and girls make our state a better place for all of us.

“I remember my first day working at an organization in Eugene. I was selected to attend a leadership retreat, and I was completely dumbfounded that I was the only woman. I was surrounded by all men, and it was extremely difficult to get a word in edgewise. I knew at that moment that we needed more representation in leadership for a sector that is 80% women.”

ANONYMOUS | EUGENE

Sources: Oregon Nonprofit Sector Report 2011; Nonprofit Association of Oregon: The List: Metro-area public benefit nonprofits; Oregon Department of Education Statewide Report Card 2014–15

## WOMEN IN EDUCATION AND NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP, OREGON



Sources: Oregon Nonprofit Sector Report 2011; Nonprofit Association of Oregon: The List: Metro-area public benefit nonprofits; Oregon Department of Education Statewide Report Card 2014–15



# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

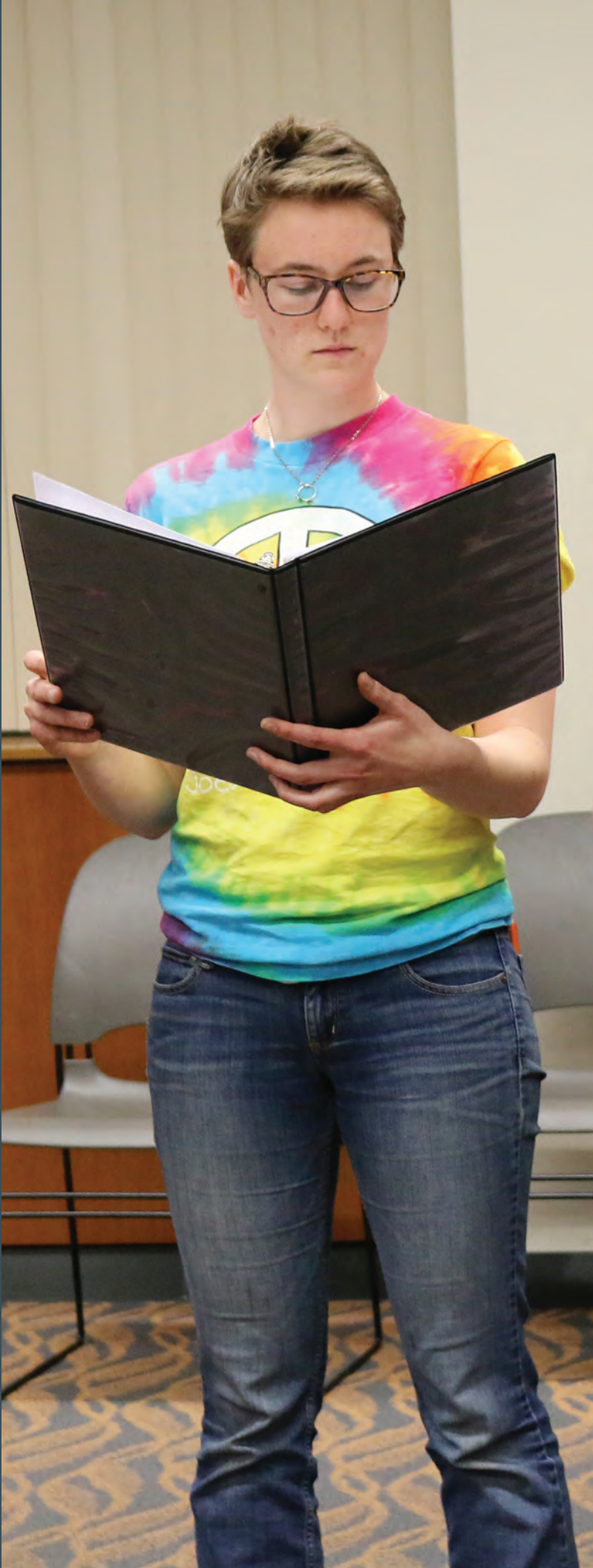
## Lotus Rising Project

Over 100,000 LGBTQ women live in Oregon today. The state's young LGBTQ women are vibrant, talented, and positive forces in their communities, but they are also disproportionately targeted for bullying, harassment, and intimidation in their schools and neighborhoods. Transgender youth have also faced increased bullying and harassment in recent years. These realities are heightened in rural southern Oregon, where 90% of LGBTQ and ally youth report they are negatively affected on a regular basis, often leading to reduced academic performance, missed school, and thoughts of suicide.

Southern Oregon's LGBTQ and ally youth needed a safe space—especially as young people are recognizing and asserting their sexual and gender identities at increasingly early ages. So Lotus Rising Project (LRP) created Youth Empowerment Theater in 2010, which dramatizes situations commonly faced by LGBTQ and ally youth for area students and residents. Using an interactive social-justice theater style, performances educate the audience on power and privilege issues such as bullying and sexual assault. Most recently, LRP created the Transgender Initiative to help expand Lotus Rising's safe space to transgender youth and adults. This program provides a social support network for transgender youth and adults of all ages who have different needs than those questioning or embracing their sexuality.

LRP's Youth Empowerment Theater and Transgender Initiative have facilitated open thinking, education, and action in southern Oregon. Through both programs, community members have gained a better understanding of how bullying and sexual assault impacts all students. Lotus Rising is growing a new generation of youth who have built and enhanced leadership skills, education, and self-esteem.

*Thank you to Lori Warfield for helping to write this story.*





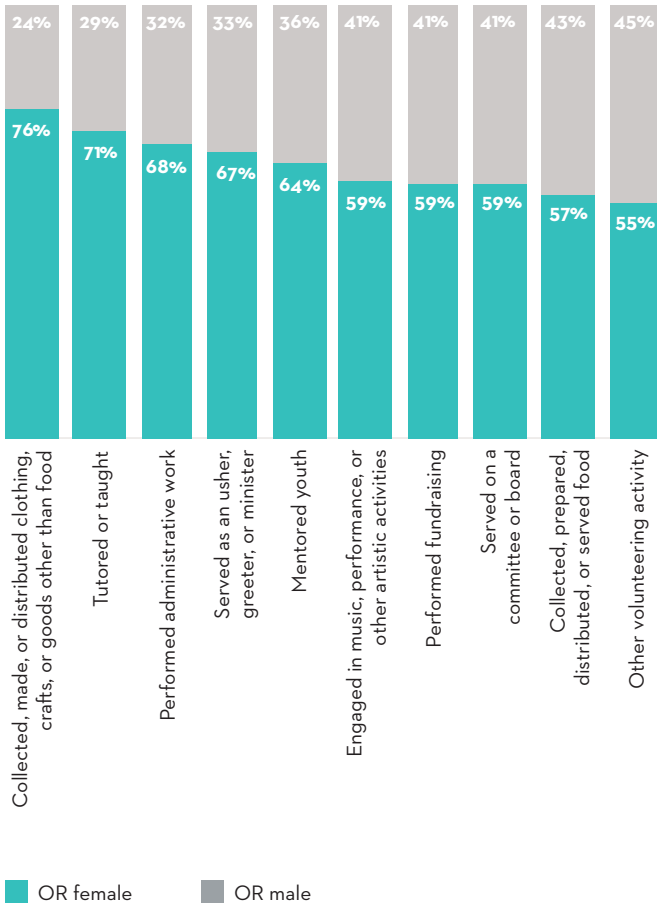
# CONTRIBUTIONS AND COMMUNITY

# Voting and Volunteering

Oregon's women are strong stewards of the democratic process. Oregon women vote at higher rates than Oregon's men, and at a rate that is 15 percentage points higher than the national average for women.

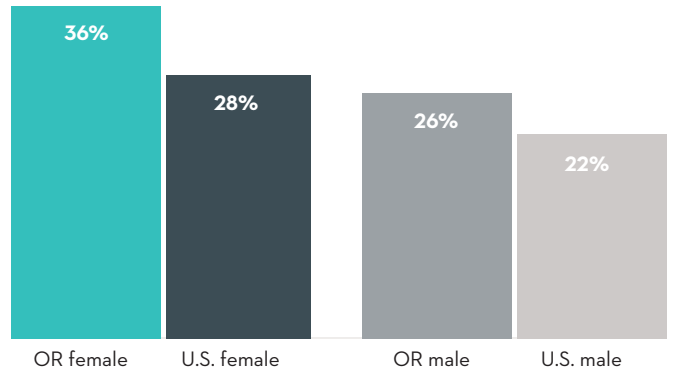
Oregon's women are also more likely to volunteer than either Oregon men or other women nationwide. These volunteer hours spent tutoring, mentoring, serving the underserved, and fundraising are critical to communities across the state.

**SHARE OF VOLUNTEERS BY GENDER AND ORGANIZATION TYPE IN PHILANTHROPY AND PUBLIC SERVICE, OREGON**



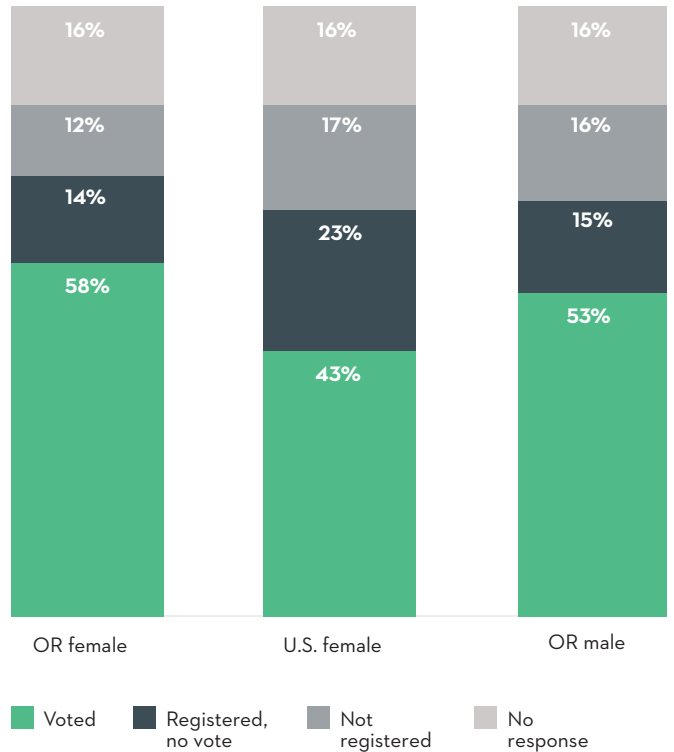
Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 Current Population Survey Volunteerism Supplementary survey data

**SHARE OF POPULATION WHO VOLUNTEERED BY GENDER, OREGON VS. U.S.**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 Current Population Survey Volunteerism Supplementary survey data

**VOTER REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION BY GENDER, OREGON VS. U.S.**



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplementary survey data

# Philanthropy and Public Service

Oregon women are just as generous with their money as they are with their time. At every income level, women's charitable giving is higher than men's.

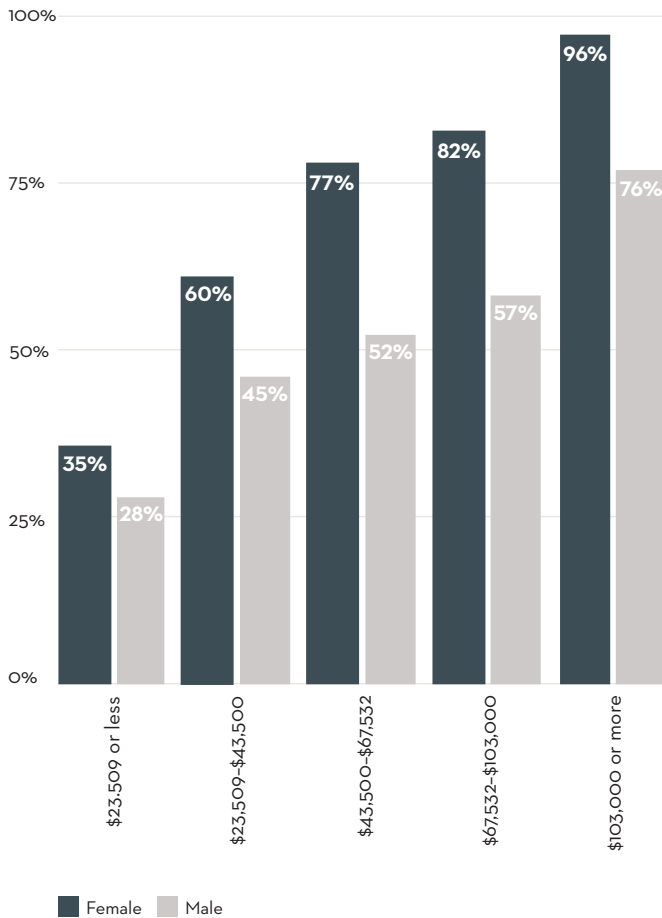
Nationwide, slightly more men than women donate blood. Not so in Oregon. According to Red Cross data, Oregon women give at the exact same rates as Oregon men.

Oregon's rates of women who have served in the U.S. military are higher than many other states, further highlighting the many ways that Oregon women are making our state and country safe, strong, and livable.

"I am a woman veteran. I attended a veteran's job fair and was approached by 5 different men explaining that the job fair was for veterans only. After 25+ years, I'm still not acknowledged for my contribution in the USMC. It is always assumed that men are veterans, while women are questioned for their time in service."

REBECCA, 46 | EUGENE

## LIKELIHOOD OF CHARITABLE GIVING BY GENDER OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD AND INCOME, U.S.

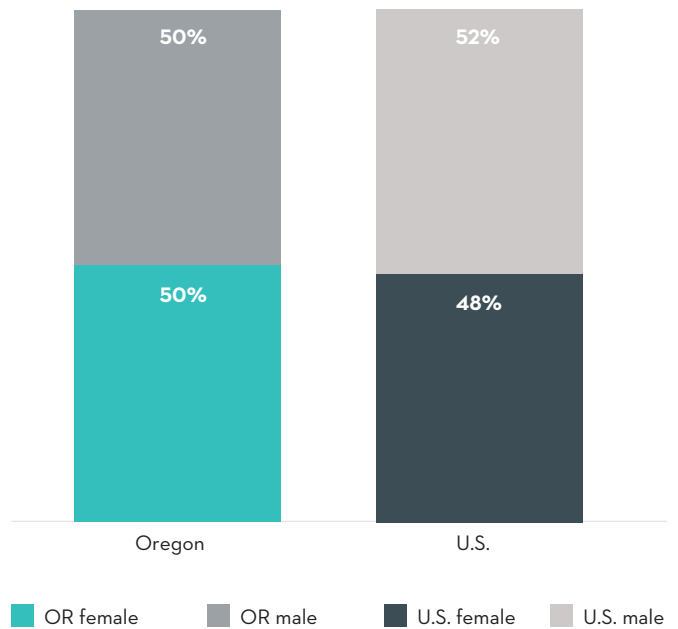


Source: Women's Philanthropy Institute, 2010

## NEARLY 30,000

women in Oregon have served in the U.S. military

## BLOOD DONORS BY GENDER, OREGON VS. U.S.



Sources: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014  
American Red Cross Cascades Region, 2015

# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## African Women's Coalition

Over 20,000 African immigrants and refugees have settled in Oregon. These families have remarkable collective strength and resilience and come from a variety of countries, ethnicities, tribal associations, religious affiliations, socioeconomic classes, and immigration histories. African women in Oregon face multiple barriers to success, health, and community well-being. These factors include racism, discrimination, residual trauma from experiencing the atrocities of war, and the complexities and stressors of resettlement and acculturation into the United States. Pregnancy and childbearing are often particularly challenging, given these daily obstacles faced by African immigrant and refugee women.

To address these obstacles, a group of women formed the African Women's Coalition (AWC) in 2007. Most recently, AWC partnered with an Oregon maternal and health initiative to research the challenges and collective strengths of African mothers, elders, and young women in the community. They heard women share the difficulties of pregnancy and childbirth in Oregon. Specifically, the AWC heard about the lack of social support, the lack of cultural competence among providers, and limited access to affordable housing, living-wage jobs, health care, and other social determinants of health. African women also reported severe discrimination related to being Black and having accents.

In response, AWC co-developed an African community health worker (CHW) training with IRCO Africa House. The program will train 25 African CHWs in Portland, dramatically increasing the number of African immigrant and refugee CHWs in Oregon. To connect community youth and elders, AWC also established a Daughters of Africa program, which helps bridge the gap between African-born and second-generation African women and girls. These targeted approaches not only support mothers' health and successful child-rearing directly, they also preserve the history and culture of the African Diaspora.

*Thank you to Charlene McGee for helping to write this story.*

*Source: The African Immigrant & Refugee Community in Multnomah County:  
An Unsettling Profile Report 2013*





# OREGON WOMEN IN ACTION

## Russian Oregon Social Services

An estimated 20,500 Russian-speaking immigrant women live in Oregon as of 2010. Russian-speaking refugee and immigrant women and girls are often overlooked but are a thriving force in Oregon's communities. However, those who experience domestic and sexual violence often can't access resources available to other Oregonians. Not only do many live in fear of coming forward, they also struggle with language barriers as well as securing living-wage employment and safe housing—critical needs when escaping an abusive relationship.

In 1994, that began to change. The Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon founded Russian Oregon Social Services (ROSS) to address domestic violence and sexual assault among Russian-speaking refugees and immigrants. ROSS provides culturally specific services including support, advocacy, and opportunities for self-empowerment, enabling survivors of domestic and sexual violence to make autonomous and informed life choices. The program provides a 24/7 crisis line; long-term case management including information, agency referrals, and crisis intervention services; legal and housing assistance; support groups; mentoring; and translation and advocacy when working with mainstream victim and social service providers.

In addition to helping hundreds of women directly, ROSS's wider education efforts and community partnerships build awareness and understanding of domestic violence. By using culturally appropriate strategies, ROSS has helped those affected by violence to break the cycle. This multi-tiered approach ensures these women can move forward and live safe and independent lives in Oregon.

*Thank you to Jane Turville, Michelle Bush, and Lisa Westarp for helping to write this story.*

