



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Opening Pathways to Justice and Improving Support for Populations Impacted by Inequity

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2020 **COMMUNITY** Conversations

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Acknowledgements

Dear friends,

I would like to express my appreciation for the hard work and thoughtful leadership that our Civil Rights Unit and Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division gave to this project. I would also like to personally thank the over one-thousand participants who joined the Summer 2020 Community Conversations and entrusted us with their experiences and valuable perspectives.

We launched these community-wide forums to hear directly from individuals impacted by inequity—both to learn and understand, as well as to take targeted action based on that information to reform our programs and services. I was honored to welcome the participants who joined us during the twelve sessions. These conversations gave us many important ideas and suggestions, and we are already taking them to heart.

I am especially indebted to Benjamin Bradshaw in CVSSD; Johanna Costa and Fay Stetz-Waters in our Civil Rights Unit; and Jennifer Lawrence, Darrin Jones, and Jeff Milam in our IS Department for their commitment to making this program inclusive and accessible to all participants.

We value the many and diverse contributions we received, and fully recognize that the time to dismantle institutional racism in the pursuit of delivering fair and unbiased justice is *now*. Thank you to all who moved us further along the path toward holistically addressing access, voice, discrimination, bias, and hate.

We look forward to continued collaboration and meaningful strides in the future.

With sincere best wishes,
Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum

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Introduction

All Oregonians deserve meaningful access to their government, acknowledgement of bias and hate experiences, and insight into the work that the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) does to support those harmed by exclusion, bias, and hate. Pursuing these ideals, in July and August of 2020, DOJ's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) and Civil Rights Unit held twelve community conversations with people from demographic groups who have historically been discriminated against, experienced exclusion, and who are currently impacted by ongoing inequity. The sessions were a continuation of in-person discussions begun in the Fall of 2019 by DOJ's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division.

We find ourselves in a unique moment in history: our nation is experiencing the intersection of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism. We have seen a mass awakening and support for the Black Lives Matter social justice movement and the nation's readiness both to acknowledge persistent individual and systemic inequities and to work toward equity. It is clear the opportunity for change is now.

The conversations focused on topics including access, voice, justice, profiling, institutional racism and discrimination, implicit bias, and explicit hate. These conversations were intended to help DOJ better understand the needs and challenges of these communities, to better understand the barriers they face when interacting with DOJ and DOJ-funded programs, and to improve these programs and services to better meet individual needs.

While many people have previously shared their experiences with bias and barriers to accessing services in other forums, DOJ had not previously hosted a community-wide forum, to hear from individuals from these specific communities, with an eye toward DOJ change and reform. There is no doubt that sharing experiences of discrimination, exclusion, bias, and hate can be emotionally exhausting and retraumatizing. Over 1,000 attendees listened to each other, shared willingly their experiences and perspectives, and built community. We, as facilitators, were both humbled and honored to be entrusted with the experiences and stories shared. We hope to be an open and accessible point of contact well into the future.

Throughout the Summer 2020 Community Conversations, participants inquired about documentation and plans for action. Specifically, participants asked if DOJ would release a summary report of the public sessions, and what action would come from the sessions. This report documents the information, concepts, and issues gathered from the sessions and will serve as a compass to push longstanding injustices toward equity.

The report will be disseminated to the Governor as well as other elected leaders in Oregon; participants in the Community Conversations who requested updates; culturally and population specific stakeholders and community-based agencies around the state; all DOJ-funded victim service programs; Tribal Councils, Chiefs, and/or Boards of Trustees from all nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon; media; and population-specific affinity groups that represent

nearly 16,000 Black/African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Latinx, LGBTIQ2S+, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, disabled, religious minority, houseless, immigrant, refugee, migrant farmworker community members across Oregon.

This document follows accessibility guidelines identified in *The Accessibility Playbook* shared by NWeLearn.

A Note about Language and Intersectionality

The language we use reflects our openness, training, respect for dignity, and cultural humility. The importance of understanding and being willing to use correct pronouns and language that does not treat someone as “other” can allow them to be seen, while misgendering someone or using othering language can erase their identity.

Some feedback we heard in the Community Conversations about language included that many American Indian/Alaska Native people will refer to themselves as Indian. Participants shared that, to some, “Native American” is considered a colonizing or whitewashing term taught in mainstream schools to indoctrinate a false history. Some people prefer being called “Black” as opposed to “African American,” while some still prefer “African American.” Asian identity is separate and different from Pacific Islander identity, and the acronym API serves only to merge multiple populations that should not be. Within LGBTIQ2S+ populations, there is a great variety of terms used to describe identity. Language evolves. Labeling language belongs to the person whose identity it reflects. It is very important for service providers to listen to their clients and adjust language to embrace how their clients would like to be addressed.

Midway through these Community Conversations, we decided to stop using the phrases “marginalized and oppressed communities” as well as “minority communities,” and began to use the phrase “communities and groups impacted by inequity.” This shift in language was prompted by the Conversations. A participant indicated this latter phrase reflects a more accurate and honorable representation, as “There are influencers and leaders, resilient and hope-inspiring actions and initiatives, and much to learn from and respect in these cultures.” Our language should empower those people whom the words intend to reach and reflect and should not be spoken to reinforce the speaker’s dominance as a savior or rescuer.

In addition to language, aspects of a person’s intersecting identities can combine to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality may increase the already existing disproportionality of victimization rates, violence during victimization, bias, discrimination, and fear of engaging with systems. With intersecting and overlapping identities, sometimes a person is forced to choose one identity or alliance, and the whole of their identity can become lost. Indeed, people can experience invisibility within systems, for all or part of their identity. Throughout our Community Conversations, we heard repeatedly that each inequity, disproportionality, disparity, harm, or bias can be compounded for those whose intersectionality further implicates their privilege or lack of privilege, their power, their voice, and their standing in society. With this in mind, service providers should understand and recognize a person’s intersectionality as a “prism to bring to light dynamics within discrimination” as stated by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, who first coined the term intersectionality in 1989.

Our Logistical Processes for the Summer 2020 Community Conversations

Populations

DOJ facilitated sessions for the following communities:

- LGBTQIA2S+
- Religious Minority
- Latinx
- Black/African American
- Asian and Pacific Islander
- Undocumented/Migrant Farm Worker
- Houseless/Mental Illness/Addictions
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Disabilities
- Refugee/Immigrant communities

Future Community Conversations will include separate sessions for Asian, Pacific Islander, Blind and Low Sight, and people of color communities more broadly.

Community Coordination

Our DOJ facilitators hoped to create a safe space to allow for BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, people with disabilities, religious minorities, and immigrant and refugee community members to share experiences. We recognized that government, especially government connected to law enforcement, can be an uncomfortable or unsafe space for the populations that participated. We intentionally and explicitly took the following steps to make it as safe as possible for people to share:

- We asked attendees to prioritize input and speaking time for these community members; at the end of each session, advocates who work with these communities were welcomed to give input as well.
- Registration was not required.
- Sessions were not recorded.
- Attendees could call in or log on anonymously.
- Attendees' videos and chats were not public and speaking or sharing was completely voluntary.
- We also provided a designated email address for people to share their experiences, rather than having to speak in a public forum if they did not want to.
- For those who still preferred an offline phone conversation, we took down phone numbers by email for individual follow-up conversations.

Outreach

Our outreach efforts were broad and intended to be as inclusive as possible:

- We sent invitations to hundreds of culturally and population specific community-based agencies around the state.
- All DOJ-funded victim service programs were invited to attend, including prosecutor- and law enforcement-based service providers.
- Tribal Councils, Chiefs, and/or Boards of Trustees from all nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon received formal invitations to attend and to share the session information with tribal programs and services.
- The Attorney General's Office issued a press release and several official tweets on Twitter, which were picked up by several news agencies.
- DOJ's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division conducted social media-based outreach to 35 population-specific affinity groups that represent nearly 16,000 Black/African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Latinx, LGBTIQ2S+, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, religious minority, houseless, immigrant, refugee, and migrant farmworker community members across Oregon.

We built a [webpage for the Community Conversations](#), readily available in eight languages and translated upon request into additional languages. The site included extensive login, access, participation, privacy, and safety instructions provided both in writing and with image instructions. On this website we also established an accommodations request point of contact. Accommodations that were requested and provided included interpreters, closed captioning, enlarged materials, and materials provided in advance of sessions. We did make mistakes, but we tried to learn from them, and in fact hosted the Deaf and Hard of Hearing session a second time after we acquired a different hosting platform to improve the view of the ASL interpreters.

Summary of Themes

Themes that emerged from the Summer 2020 Community Conversations:

- **Community Engagement and Information Sharing:** Systems and service providers should engage intentionally with populations and communities impacted by inequity and with their community leaders to explain services, laws, and limitations of programs.
- **Education for Service Providers:** Service providers benefit from focused training to enhance understanding when providing culturally- and population-responsive victim services that are nuanced and that promote equity.
- **Services:** Services should exist, be consistently funded, be prioritized, be welcoming, and actively promote dignity and respect for people and populations impacted by inequity.
- **Trust:** Service providers within government systems and victim and survivor service programs should reflect the actual Oregon community, not just the dominant Oregon community, in leadership, staffing, hiring, and decision making. Providers should regularly and intentionally engage, build, and grow relationships with BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, people with disabilities, religious minorities, and immigrant and refugee communities, leaders, and community members to establish and grow trust.
- **Access:** Systems and service providers should reduce barriers for populations impacted by inequity to access services, including building trust, showing cultural humility, addressing systemic discrimination and institutional bias, increasing representation in leadership and staffing, and providing accommodating, welcoming, adequate, and equitable services.
- **Safety:** Safety is a fundamental aspect of valuing an individual's humanity and should be addressed in order to provide meaningful access to services and engage communities impacted by inequity.
- **Sharing of Power:** Agencies and systems should have leadership, staff, volunteers, managers, and board members who identify as BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, religious minorities, people with disabilities, immigrants, and refugees at the table, and their vision, ideas, and voices should lead.
- **Complaint Processes:** Agency complaint processes should exist and there should be an external option to effectively address complaints, including bias.
- **Overreach:** White, cis, and abled supremacy thrive on power and limiting access, and are perpetuated by providers when they place excessive restrictions or manufactured requirements on access to services.
- **Bias and Stereotypes about Identity:** Community Conversations resulted in many reports of bias, stereotyping, inadequate cultural understanding, and dominant culture supremacy. Participants expressed an increase in explicit bias in general and specifically reported being depersonalized – treated as a waste of resources – and being disbelieved by service providers and law enforcement. Institutional discrimination exists in part because people have biases; it is a people issue, not just a system issue.

- Culturally Specific Agencies: In many cases, culturally specific agencies can open access, reduce barriers, reflect identity, and promote safety. But it is not always best that one's cultural community serves its own community members. For some, culturally specific agencies can pose new barriers. Choice is key.
- Vulnerability: Communities impacted by inequity can be very vulnerable to victimization and hesitant to engage in systems.
- People Doing this Work: People doing this work face retaliation for promoting equity and access, which ultimately builds up and affects networking, promotional opportunities, and career trajectory.

Themes

Throughout the Community Conversations, participants across population sessions shared some common experiences, service gaps, and recommendations reflective of opportunities for growth toward equity. In some cases, a recommendation is specific to serving a community member of a particular identity or population, and in those instances, we specifically identify the population in our report. In other instances, we heard reoccurring feedback that informed the larger themes we have identified in this report. Below are the themes that emerged from the Summer 2020 Community Conversations.

We, the authors of this report, recognize and must explicitly state that the themes listed below were organized with our best intentions to truthfully and accurately reflect the reoccurring elements presented to us during the Community Conversations; however, we recognize that any information is filtered through our own lenses, identities, life experiences and biases. We listened diligently, took extensive notes, reviewed comments in the chat box, and engaged in follow-up with community members upon request, but we recognize that our own voices, perspectives, and experiences inherently influenced this report. We continue to welcome ongoing feedback, dialogue, and conversation, as well as eagerly anticipate our next series of Community Conversations in Spring 2021, so that we may continue hear and elevate your voices and experiences and work with you toward equity.

Community Engagement and Information Sharing

Theme 1 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Systems and service providers should engage intentionally with populations and communities impacted by inequity and their community leaders to explain services, laws, and limitations of programs, including:

- What is a bias crime vs. bias incident?
- What are law enforcement's obligations to crime victims and bias victims?
- What are service providers' obligations to crime victims and bias victims?
- What programs and services does DOJ oversee and what does it not oversee; what programs and services does CVSSD oversee?
- What are Oregon crime victims' rights?
- What is advocate privilege vs. victim confidentiality and when does each attach? How do we effectively convey these obligations to clients?
- What support services are available for victims and survivors of crime?
- Where to report bias, service disparities and inequity, and exclusion from services.
- Residency is not required to access services.

Education for service providers

Theme 2 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Service providers benefit from focused training to enhance understanding when providing culturally- and population-responsive victim services that are nuanced and that promote equity. Training should include:

- Comprehensive, population-specific cultural competencies that highlight the needs and considerations of victims within specific populations.
- Importance of establishing communication first, then providing services.
- “Equity as a Process: We achieve equity when those most impacted by historic and current structural biases and injustices are leading or meaningfully engaged in efforts to prioritize issues, to craft and implement solutions, to develop accountability measures, and to monitor progress.” (Note: this is a definition provided by a participant from one of the Community Conversations. We have not provided the participant’s name as part of our commitment to protect the identities of individuals who were part of these conversations.)
- “Equity as an Outcome: We achieve equity when identity no longer systematically exposes people to risks or grants people privileges with regard to socioeconomic and life outcomes, and when people who need them most are prioritized to receive the resources required to thrive.” (Note: this is a definition provided by a participant from one of the Community Conversations. We have not provided the participant’s name as part of our commitment to protect the identities of individuals who were part of these conversations.)
- Levels of literacy.
- Cultural competency vs. cultural humility vs. cultural responsiveness among service providers.
- Understanding cultural differences and customs to accurately interpret non-verbal communication and cues such as eye-contact (or lack thereof), wardrobe, and body language.
- Medical model vs. cultural model of disability.
- Forensic interviewing techniques for people with cognitive or developmental disabilities.
- Anti-racism, -homophobia, -transphobia, and -ableism.
- Culturally sensitive, trauma-informed communication.
 - Often abusers in Deaf and Hard of Hearing community control communication, and therefore, access to law enforcement and safety.
 - Masks and the importance of facial expressions for Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.
 - Cultural articulation and expression are communicated with a culturally reflective interpreter and lost when a culturally reflective interpreter is not available.
- Addiction as a medical condition.

- The nexus between trauma, a lack of support resources, mental health ramifications, and substance abuse as a coping mechanism or method of self-medication.
- Importance of basic needs that affect physical, emotional, behavioral, and mental health.
- Service providers should have a foundational understanding and an authentic desire for equitable, culturally responsive services.
- Jurisdiction: tribal vs. local vs. federal.
- Reaching beyond ADA requirements, which are legal minimums.
- Relationship building between community, tribal, and system agencies.
- Education should be ongoing, should provide opportunities to train, practice, learn, unlearn, and should include accountability for implementation and enforcement.
- Culturally specific agencies should be included in ongoing equity training.

Services

Theme 3 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Services should exist, be consistently funded, be prioritized, be welcoming, and actively promote dignity and respect for people and populations impacted by inequity.

- Services should respect the humanity of every person.
- Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault response services including shelter should be available for LGBTIQ2S+ victims, male victims, and victims of caretaker abuse (not just inter-personal violence).
- Forensic interviewing should include capacity for people with developmental delay, neurocognitive disorders, or traumatic brain injury.
- On-scene and in-field services in addition to in-office services should be equitably administered and available.
- Services should be culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and help reduce secondary victimization, including:
 - No requirement of repeated disclosure.
 - Reduce the degree of irrelevant questioning as a requirement to access services.
 - Provide an explanation for questions asked—is information needed for evidence vs. is information needed to qualify for services?
 - No request to provide social security number.
 - Prioritize survivor safety and support offender accountability.
 - Reduce barriers including bureaucracy and cumbersome steps and paperwork.
 - Explicitly state that there are no financial or residency status requirements.
 - Explicitly state the limitations including time limits for services at the outset, the reason for the limitations, and what is available after limitations are surpassed.
 - Offering consistency and continuity of care.
- There is a need for attorneys to represent victims.
- Depending on the setting (court, child abuse advocacy center, interview), interpreters should be used even if the service provider is fluent in the victim's language.

- Service providers should set aside funding specifically designated for interpreters, recognizing that this can be a significant cost that cannot then limit other services available to the individual requiring interpretation.
- Service providers should establish ongoing relationships with interpreters, so they are a quick phone call away.
- Survivors should be given choice for gender or culturally appropriate interpreters, and service providers should communicate these individual needs to companies providing certified interpreter interpreters.
- In virtual settings, also use closed captioning for those who do not know ASL, are single-sided deaf, or are Deaf or Hard of Hearing later in life.
- If someone identifies within a specific demographic or population, they should not be automatically or immediately sent to “their” program. Coordinated, established relationships should exist when warm handoffs are appropriate.
- There is a need for general services shelters.
- There is a need for judges who are supportive of mental health, houseless, and drug court programs.
- Lack of utilities, such as clean drinking water, electricity, garbage, or Wi-Fi availability affect physical, emotional, behavioral, and mental health; focusing on meeting basic needs makes it difficult to address other needs.

Trust

Theme 4 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Service providers within government systems and victim service programs should reflect the actual Oregon community, not just the dominant Oregon community, in leadership, staffing, hiring, and decision making. Providers should regularly and intentionally engage, build, and grow relationships with BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, people with disabilities, religious minorities, and immigrant and refugee communities, leaders, and community members to establish and/or grow trust.

- Mainstream, dominant culture organizations should value BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, people with disabilities, religious minorities, and immigrant or refugee community members.
- Procedural justice is key – when a crime is reported, law enforcement should engage and respond.
- Law enforcement should be an ally in terms of taking populations’ safety seriously.
- Promoting population-specific welcoming signage without the training/support to respond appropriately and equitably diminishes procedural justice and therefore diminishes trust.
- Many people who are undocumented, BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, religious minorities, disabled, refugees, and/or immigrants fear other mainstream, dominant community members, law enforcement, and government agencies based on lived experience, recent history, and lessons taught within the culture for safety.

- This fear is exacerbated by other systemic disparities in collateral service industries (healthcare, education, DHS).
- Explicit and implicit bias occur in every profession, but they are particularly harmful in law enforcement and efforts should be continually taken to identify and eliminate bias from law enforcement.
- Law enforcement should reflect the community, not just in identity, language, and culture, but also in values.

Access

Theme 5 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Systems and service providers should reduce barriers for populations impacted by inequity to access services, including building trust, showing cultural humility, addressing systemic discrimination and institutional bias, increasing representation in leadership and staffing, and providing accommodating, welcoming, adequate, and equitable services.

General Access

- If the attitude is not welcoming or understanding, laws do not help.
- Programs should provide after-hours services.
- Urban and rural regions should recognize that minority populations exist in every community even when they are not visible, and thus each need population-specific programs, including LGBTIQ2S+ services. Just because people aren't visible to you doesn't mean they aren't there.
- Lack of culturally specific or culturally responsive services within programs often requires clients to seek services in another geographic location and can contribute to an overall feeling of not belonging and/or being "othered."
- To encourage and promote access, organizations should have leadership and staff representation of BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, religious minorities, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and other populations impacted by equity.
- Services are needed for male and gender expansive victims.
- Services should promote, assure, maintain, and regularly remind clients of program confidentiality, which is critical for people who disclose identity, especially for people who are LGBTIQ2S+, undocumented, and/or disabled. Often people outed during service acquisition face real consequences such as losing their children, safety repercussions, and other dire consequences. People will forego services that present a risk to their safety and well-being regardless of whether they desperately need those services.

Language Access

- Written materials should be at the ready in various languages.
- Services cannot be technology- or English-language-literacy-dependent.

- Provide non-English-speaking resources, points of contact, education/awareness, and intentional outreach.
- Translations should be reviewed by people familiar with the program and services, as direct translations can sometimes change the intended meaning. (E.g. the English word “advocate” translates to “attorney” in some languages).
- Outreach and services should be tailored to serve those who cannot read or write and cannot assume that Deaf and Hard of Hearing community members can read and write English.
- Interpreters should be more accessible regardless of the ability to pay when accessing services.
 - Clients who retain attorneys should not also pay for ASL interpreters if others, including indigent clients, receive ASL interpreters at no cost. People should not have limited or different access to basic communication based on language or disability.
- It is inappropriate and often unsafe to utilize a bilingual family member, witness, or non-certified interpreter as an interpreter in any setting.
- 9-1-1 dispatchers should inform responding law enforcement that a caller/victim/witness is Deaf or non-English-speaking, inquire with the caller about language needs, and take steps to provide on-scene accommodations including ASL and other interpreters.
- Utilize services of ASL interpreters who are intersectional; otherwise we lose the expression of someone’s true identity.
- Service providers should provide the client’s requested accommodation(s) and not coordinate accommodations based on provider assumptions.
- Society operates assuming a hearing and speaking default or norm; this is not accurate and in fact not reflective of Oregon’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities and creates significant problems in service accessibility. ASL interpreters should be provided for Deaf Oregonians, and other accommodations upon request for Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals should be provided. With no interpreter and/or other accommodations, people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing lose access.
- Service providers should have access to on-demand interpreters, including video ASL interpreters, for unscheduled meetings.

Access for people with disabilities

- Provide an ADA access point of contact within law enforcement, governmental systems, and victim services in prosecutor’s offices.
- When appropriate, use technology as an aid for access for individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or who have disabilities.
- Programs cannot require people to prove a disability/disabilities in order to access services or be provided their requested accommodations.

- Oregon should provide community advocates for Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims at no cost. Oregon is one of 12 states in the Western U.S. with no Deaf advocate services provided for Deaf and Hard of Hearing community members.

Access for those with addictions disorders

- Seeking services including basic needs like food, shelter, and medical care declines sharply for individuals in their addiction, as fear of legal and other consequences are heightened.
- Services should not be based on abstinence and should not exclude individuals using medication assisted treatment (MAT). Access to treatment often requires money and therefore prevents access or excludes people.

Access for undocumented community members

- Programs should address the fear of deportation for parents/family/self to promote engagement/access.

Safety

Theme 6 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Safety is a fundamental aspect of valuing an individual's humanity and should be addressed in order to provide access to services and engage communities impacted by inequity.

- Some tribal nations lack dedicated and/or responsive law enforcement.
- Some rural communities have law enforcement who may be hours away from a call for service, and/or won't respond when called for service.
- Criminalizing houselessness drives victimization further underground.
- Lack of available services and safety planning that are culturally focused, responsive, and sensitive leaves already vulnerable populations at a greater risk of harm.
- 75% of domestic violence related homicides occur upon separation, including law enforcement mandated separation. A lack of training on the needs of specific populations for service providers may do more harm.

Sharing of Power

Theme 7 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Agencies and systems should have leadership, staff, volunteers, managers, and board members who identify as BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, religious minorities, people with disabilities, immigrants, and refugees at the table, and their vision, ideas, and voices should lead.

- When people see someone with whom they can identify or to whom they can relate, they feel seen and understood.
- Cis/hetero white people should step back to make space for new perspectives.

- For agencies and programs in areas that serve specific populations, including tribal populations and tribal nations, boards and leadership should reflect the service population.
- No matter the location or dominant/mainstream populations served, leadership should include and come from within communities impacted by inequity.
- Agencies should consider how strategy, administrative rules, and systems can give power back to communities.
- Bringing tribal elders to the table is important.

Complaint Processes

Theme 8 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Agency complaint processes should exist and there should be an external option to effectively address complaints, including bias.

- Equity complaint processes should exist.
- Requiring victims or witnesses of bias to report to the offending institution or agency (whether law enforcement or other government system) is nonsensical and unsafe in many situations.

Overreach

Theme 9 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: White, cis, and abled supremacy thrive on power and limiting access, and are perpetuated by providers when they place excessive restrictions or manufactured requirements on access to services.

- When people in government withhold resources, put stricter rules around using resources, question documents and/or IDs, and otherwise over-enforce rules that are outside of the scope of their position and expertise, the intent is to wield power, intimidate, other, exclude, and retain the status quo of White, cis, and abled supremacy.
- Excessive restrictions exclude and prevent people from accessing services. Such restrictions create or perpetuate fear and drive people underground, increasing vulnerability to victimization.
- When agencies are known to work with ICE, providing services to many populations is all but impossible.

Bias and Stereotypes about Identity

Theme 10 emerged from information shared by from Community Conversation Participants: Community Conversations unearthed many reports of bias, stereotyping, inadequate cultural understanding, and dominant culture supremacy. Participants expressed an increase in explicit bias in general and specifically reported being depersonalized – treated as a waste of resources – and being disbelieved by service providers and law enforcement. Institutional discrimination exists in part because people have biases; it is a people issue, not just a system issue. Below are some of many situations our participants have encountered:

- Individuals not knowing the difference between migrant and immigrant.
- Bias that the Latinx population “over-utilizes” resources.
- Bias that is based on last names, subsequent grouping of community members, assumptions about the need for services, and assumptions about native language and/or preferred language.
- Misinterpretation of a Muslim victim’s averted gaze and body language as evasive and suspect.
- Cultural practices that encourage quiet, no eye contact, or other traits/behaviors that can lead to the victim’s needs not being prioritized in a dominant culture setting.
- Questioned validity of student’s birth certificate during high school registration and threats to call Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The student dropped out of school due to these administrative threats.
- Request to show state issued ID for access to a foodbank.
- Non-responsive or dehumanizing responses from law enforcement.
- Over-policing BIPOC populations.
- Housing discrimination regarding deposits, availability.
- Removal of signage about religious minority events.
- Explicit disrespect of religious clothing and pressure to remove it in a governmental service delivery setting.
- People with accents, non-English speakers, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and people with disabilities assumed to be uneducated, lacking capacity, or living with dementia.
- Bias resulting in disparities in the quality of healthcare provided.
- Healthcare systems fail in treatment of people using substances and people who have a mental health disability, which impacts housing and then funnels people into the criminal justice system.
- Bias that has health, life expectancy, and life and death impacts.
- Targeting and losing one’s job for being open about gender identity/sexual orientation.
- Assumptions made about chronic health conditions that are visible vs. those that are “invisible.”
- Bias regarding perceived economic advantages that tribal casinos provide their communities; non-tribal communities discouraging tribal members from utilizing non-tribal programs.
- Assumptions that someone is not an Oregonian based on appearance.

- Language deprivation for Deaf children born into hearing families.
- Reporting or addressing bias that is perpetrated by people in power results in further harm to the bias victim.
- Exclusion from partnerships; Department of Human Services (DHS) and law enforcement fail to include population-specific advocacy programs with population-specific advocates.
- Substance Use Disorder viewed as a choice, not a medical condition or disease.
- Exclusion of clients from program services if they need mental health, houseless, or addiction treatment services. The message is “you’re not wanted, your life doesn’t have value.”
- Law enforcement failing to investigate reports or failing to believe victims from populations impacted by inequity. An assumption among some law enforcement that these victims lack credibility.
- White persons in active addictions have safe, positive experiences with law enforcement, while BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ are disproportionately more likely to be arrested and be incarcerated.
- Biased treatment in medical settings where people are not taken seriously, written off, not provided any accommodations for interpreters, or are provided substitute accommodations that are subpar and/or ineffective.
- Experiences of being turned away from medical services due to no insurance coverage.
- Longer turnaround time for COVID-19 testing results for the migrant farmworker community.

Culturally Specific Agencies

Theme 11 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: In many cases, culturally specific agencies can open access, reduce barriers, reflect identity, and promote safety. But it is not always best that one’s cultural community serves its own community members. For some, culturally specific agencies can pose new barriers. Choice is key.

- Victims may have a lack of understanding or trust in the confidentiality protections and requirements within culturally specific victim service programs.
- Power dynamics may exist.
- Culturally specific agencies should be trained and open to serve all, beyond their own community.

Vulnerability

Theme 12 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: Communities impacted by inequity can be very vulnerable to victimization and hesitant to engage in systems. They can be vulnerable:

- To arrest.
- To losing livelihood.

- To losing family.
- To targeting for bias and victimization.
- To deportation.
- To assault by law enforcement.
- To being “outed” (people who are LGBTIQ2S+, undocumented, disability).
- To constant toxic stress experienced currently and passed down intergenerationally, which impacts lifespan.

People Doing this Work

Theme 13 emerged from information shared by Community Conversation Participants: People doing this work face retaliation for promoting equity and access, which ultimately builds up and affects networking, promotional opportunities, and career trajectory.

- Retaliatory tactics include power wielding, removal from committees, exclusion from the conversation, shunning, dismissal, denial, explicit hostility, false allegations regarding work product, gaslighting, platitudes, weak excuses, treatment as a bother or burden, treatment as us vs. them, and othering.
- Boards/managers/people in positions of power should value and celebrate employees who are BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, religious minority, people with disabilities, immigrant, and refugee community members.
- There should be mutual respect for gender identity/sexual orientation.
- Reports at Community Conversations reflect that currently, organizations tokenize employees but ignore real change, which creates an environment of microaggressions and hostility.
- There should be leadership, staff, volunteers, managers, and board members who represent BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, religious minority, people with disabilities, immigrant, and refugee community members.
- Management cannot be content with the idea that “something is better than nothing.”
- Organizations that employ people who do identify as BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, religious minority, people with disabilities, immigrant, and refugee service providers should prioritize these employees’ self-care, as there is a burden of doing everything (service delivery, educating other staff, being a point of contact for vulnerable victims, etc.).
- Equity should be primary work; it cannot be seen as “other” work.
- Employees who are BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, religious minority, people with disabilities, immigrant, and refugee community members need protection from “case-building” when it is actually retaliation for doing equity/human rights work.
- Institutional racism exists because of the people working within institutions who have biases. It is a people issue, not a system issue.

Actionable Items

Community Conversations revealed many needs as well as readily actionable items. Some of these concepts are readily achievable by DOJ for DOJ-funded programs. Others are outside of the scope of our work at DOJ.

Achievable by DOJ for DOJ-Funded Programs

- Develop ongoing training for advocates, volunteers, leadership and boards in victim and survivor service programs that address cultural competencies, bias, privilege, equity and historical/generational trauma. Establish and uphold accountability markers for delivery of services.
- Complaint processes—create external options and ensure this information is readily and publicly available.
- The ADA requires a public entity that has 50 or more employees to designate at least one responsible employee to coordinate ADA compliance. ADA requirements are the floor not the ceiling. Require an ADA accessibility coordinator or point of contact in every DOJ program and DOJ-funded program. Create an online list of ADA accessibility coordinators or points of contact within DOJ programs and DOJ-funded programs for ease of access.
- Accommodations should be available post-COVID-19 (in many cases, they are only available now that the majority are benefitting from teleworking, Zoom, other tech accommodations).
- Create a list of regional, unhoused-friendly providers across the various services needed—dental, medical, prescription, etc.
- There should be a campaign to raise awareness across Oregon that mental health is physical health, and people with mental health disabilities are still people deserving of unbiased care.
- Encourage BIPOC to have conversations among themselves without White allies present.
- Remove the Social Security number question from CVSSD documents and forms, such as Crime Victims Compensation Program application.
- Agencies should ask carefully crafted screening questions, and then be ready with working equipment to meet the needs of people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Other Community Needs Currently Outside the Scope of Work at DOJ

- Jury duty pool—broaden to include BIPOC.
- Mandatory reporting for people with disabilities—allow for autonomy and self-determination.
- There should be something like the Oregon Commission for the Blind (OCB), for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing communities. OCB is funded and resourced in Oregon, while the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing communities lack funding and

resources to meet basic and daily needs. Oregon should also have more signing service providers and make it easier for people to access ASL interpreters.

- Agencies, especially government-based and healthcare facilities, should ask carefully crafted screening questions, and then be ready with working equipment to meet the needs of people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- Oregon Health Plan (OHP) eligibility should not be cut off when someone goes to jail; upon release, it makes life very difficult for the person to reenroll.
- Medication access when in custody should be a priority; it rarely occurs.
- Extended eviction moratorium during COVID-19.
- Plan for post-COVID-19—there will be an intense and massive houselessness crisis.

Conclusion

Oregon DOJ's Community Conversations will be ongoing. We anticipate the next round of Community Conversations in the Spring of 2021. They will continue to serve as an access point for input regarding DOJ programs and DOJ-funded programs, an opportunity for community members to hold us to account for change and growth, as well as a platform to update the communities on DOJ's action efforts to push longstanding injustices toward equity. To sign up for notice of future Community Conversation sessions, please email us at Community@DOJ.State.or.us.

This summary is not an all-inclusive plan for equity or improving systems and programs. It summarizes information shared by participants in the Summer 2020 Community Conversations. We are deeply grateful to learn, share, and build community with attendees and participants. We know that many attendees are or were scared, took great risk in attending and sharing, and may have even experienced targeting as a result—thank you for sharing your voice and your valuable contributions.

To report bias experienced in communities or in systems, contact Oregon DOJ's Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents Response Hotline at 1-844-924-BIAS (2427), utilizing Language Link for interpreters in over 240 languages, dial 711 for Oregon Relay, or report online at [StandAgainstHate.Oregon.gov](https://standagainsthate.oregon.gov). To report bias experienced in DOJ-funded victim service programs, review [DOJ CVSSD's Civil Rights Policies and complaint processes](#) and/or contact [Shannon Sivell](#) with any questions or to request assistance.

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Definitions

Term	Definition
ADA	This is an acronym for the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability and mandates accessibility requirements and reasonable accommodations by places of public accommodation and employers.
ASL:	An acronym for American Sign Language.
BIPOC:	An acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
Communities/populations impacted by inequity:	This phrase refers to communities and populations that experience discrimination, oppression, marginalization, and exclusion in social, political, and economic realms because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. These communities and populations include BIPOC, LGBTIQ2S+, people with disabilities, religious minorities, immigrant and refugee community members and any other identified historically marginalized or oppressed population. As one of the participants noted in a session, “There are influencers and leaders, resilient and hope-inspiring actions and initiatives, and much to learn from and respect in these cultures.” It is disempowering to label these communities as simply “marginalized and oppressed communities.”
Dominant/ mainstream culture:	The dominant culture in a society refers to the established language, religion, behavior, values, rituals, and social customs. These traits are often considered the norm for the society.
Equity:	The distribution of resources, services, and treatment of individuals based on the needs of the recipients. This concept is starkly different from equality, where distribution of resources, services, and treatment of individuals is the same, no matter the needs of the recipients.
Explicit bias:	Refers to the attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level. These biases and their expression may arise as the direct result of a perceived threat.
Gender Expansive:	An umbrella term sometimes used to describe people that expand notions of gender expression and identity beyond what is

perceived as the expected gender norms for their society or context (beyond just man or woman, male or female, masculine or feminine; sometimes both; sometimes neither).

Implicit bias:	Refers to the attitudes, beliefs, and/or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions on an unconscious level.
Intersectionality:	The idea that race, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, and other individual characteristics can overlap with one another and impact one's experiences and worldview, especially related to privilege and discrimination.
LGBTQIA2S+:	An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit, and the countless affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify on the gender expansive and sexual identity spectrums.
Othering:	To view or treat a person or group of people as intrinsically different from, alien to, and less than oneself or the dominant/mainstream culture.
Procedural justice:	Refers to the idea that when individuals and communities experience and see fairness and equity in the processes and systems that resolve disputes and allocate resources, they believe in and engage with those systems, creating safer and healthier larger communities.
Services:	Any direct action taken to help, aid, support, assist, or respond to a person within a governmental or non-profit organization or system that serves the public.
Service providers:	Any person who provides a direct service to a person within a governmental or non-profit organization that serves the public. Service providers within the criminal justice system include law enforcement officers, 911 dispatchers, victim advocates, prosecutors, front desk staff, hotline operators, etc.