Social Determinants of Health
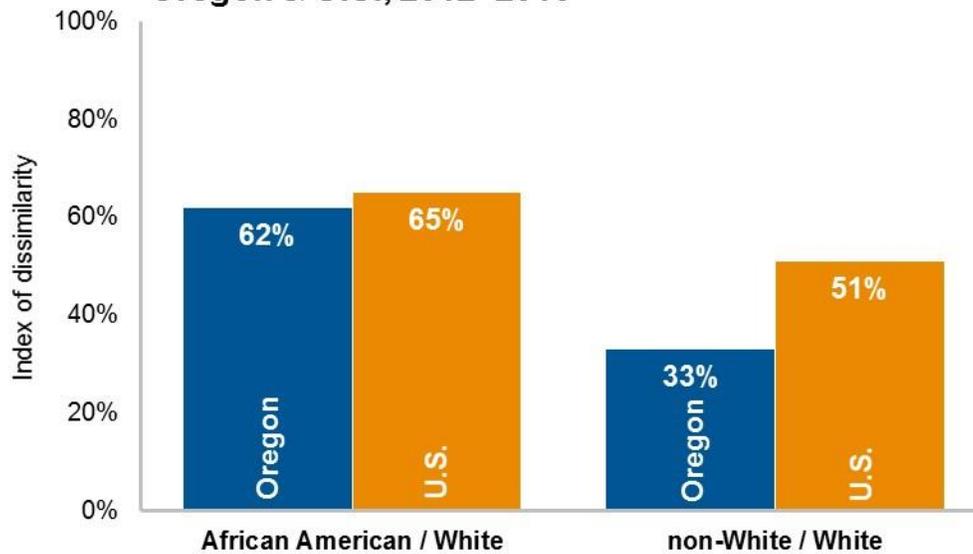
Residential racial segregation

Segregation caused by structural, institutional, and individual racism has been linked to poor health outcomes, including mortality, a wide variety of reproductive, infectious, and chronic diseases, and other adverse conditions. Individuals living in segregated neighborhoods often experience increased violence, reduced educational and employment opportunities, limited access to quality healthcare and restrictions to upward mobility.

The index of dissimilarity is a measure of the evenness with which two racial or ethnic groups are distributed across the communities that make up a larger area such as a state or county. The index score can be interpreted as the percentage of residents that would have to move to a different community in order to produce a more even demographic distribution. The larger the index of dissimilarity, the greater the degree of segregation.

Taking just the white and African American populations into consideration, Oregon is slightly less segregated than the U.S. as a whole (Figure 1). The degree of segregation between the white and total non-white populations is even lower in Oregon. Out of all the states, Oregon ranks #27 in African American/white segregation and #47 in non-white/white segregation where #1 is the most segregated.

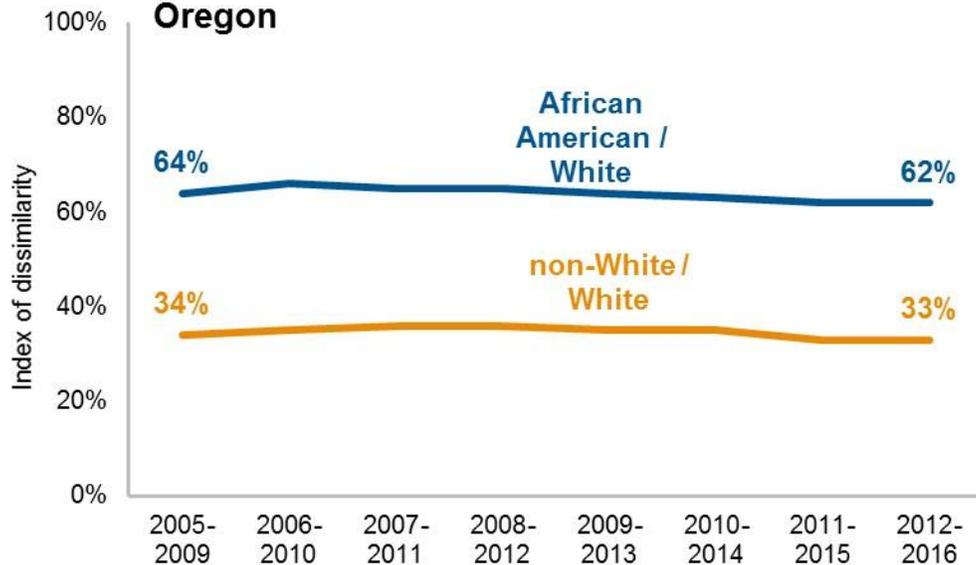**Residential racial segregation index by year, Oregon & U.S., 2012–2016**

Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Residential segregation in Oregon has only declined slightly since 2005-2009 (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

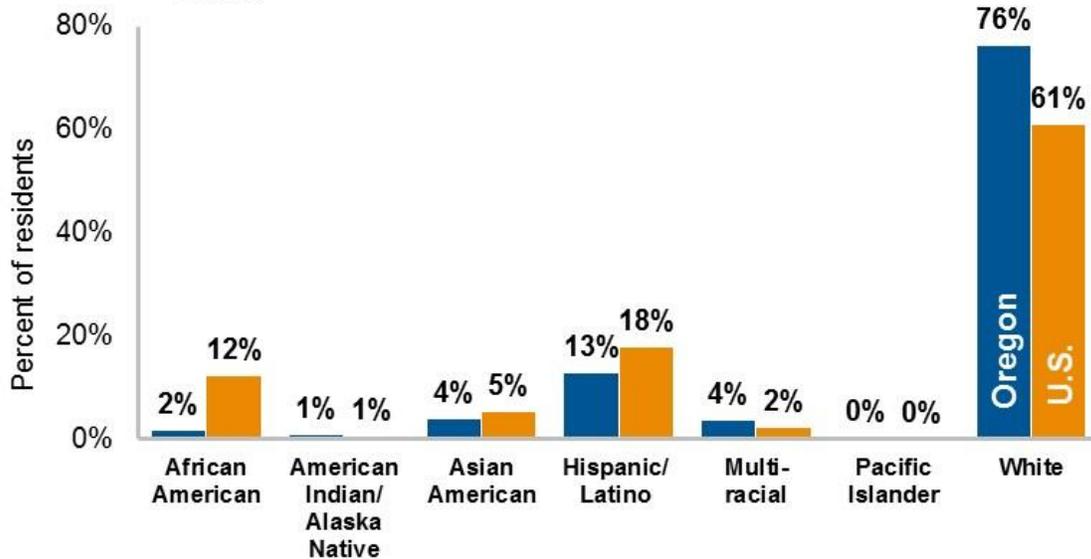**Residential racial segregation index by year, Oregon**

Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Although Oregon has less residential segregation than the U.S. as a whole, the population is also less diverse (Figure 3). In 2016, 76% of the Oregon population was non-Hispanic white versus 61% of the U.S. population.

FIGURE 3

Population by race/ethnicity, Oregon & U.S., 2016

Note: All other groups exclude Hispanic ethnicity

Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Additional Resources: U.S. Census Bureau

About the Data: Data source is the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an ongoing Census Bureau survey that samples a percentage of the population every year. ACS tables B11002, B11002A and B11002B are used to calculate the index of dissimilarity for the Black and white populations and for the white and non-white populations. Census tracts as used as proxies for neighborhoods.

The residential segregation index ranges from 0 (complete integration) to 100 (complete segregation). Racial/ethnic residential segregation refers to the degree to which two or more groups live separately from one another in a geographic area.

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Oregon State Health Profile