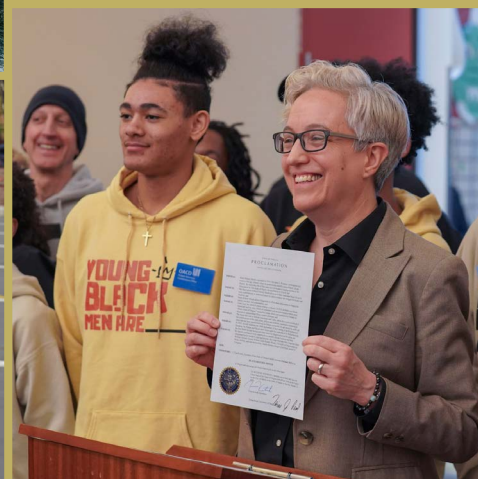


State of Oregon 2025 Racial Justice Council Report



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Acknowledgment of new and returning RJC and Committee members

Chair, Governor
Tina Kotek
Latiffe Amado
Marin Arreola
James Cador
Drae Charles*
Melinda Del Rio*
Tristen Edwards
Maria Elena “Meg” Guerra
Dr. Jimmy Howard
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Marcus Mundy

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James Alan Parker
Jenny Pool-Radway
Ciara Pressler*
Cynthia Richardson
Josie Silverman-Mendez
Paul Solomon
Angela Uherbelau
Annie Valtierra-Sanchez
John Washington*

*New Members

RJC Annual Report Workgroup

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Tristen Edwards
Maria Elena “Meg” Guerra
Melinda Del Rio
Dr. Jimmy Howard

Mark Jackson
Kim McCarty
Jan Mason
Ana Molina
James Alan Parker

Cynthia Richardson
Josie Silverman-Méndez
Paul Solomon

RJC Annual Report Contributors

Andre Bealer
Carlee Justis

Javier Cervantes
Anca Matica

Yasmin Solorio
Elisabeth Shepard



Message from the Governor

This year has been defined by steady, focused progress on the issues that make a real difference in the lives of Oregonians. We began with my “Building on Progress” recommended budget and moved through a legislative session where we advanced meaningful work on housing and homelessness, improving education outcomes, and expanding access to mental health and addiction care, each informed by the wisdom of the Racial Justice Council (RJC). When the budget landscape changed, we faced tough choices, together, about what to protect. We achieved progress against the backdrop of a federal government marked by chaos and unpredictability and an administration that repeatedly undermines and attacks Oregon values.

The RJC is a moral compass at a time when too many in power are defining right and wrong based on self-interest rather than the public good.

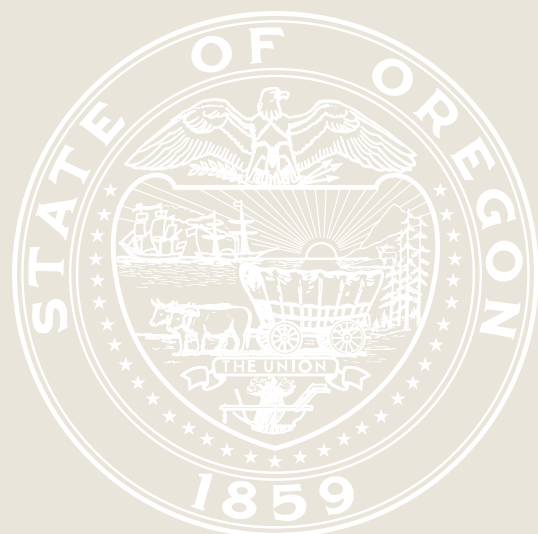
As I reflect on what we have accomplished together and the challenges we have confronted, I know we are resolute in our belief that state government has a responsibility to strive toward equity and justice and be a reliable partner to communities that have long been overlooked or underserved. This north star cannot be reached overnight or all at once. Government must continually evolve alongside the people it represents. Justice is not static – it is dynamic, expanding and contracting with the world around it, and we must adapt with it.

Our work is not just about forward motion – it is also about bringing people with us, creating feedback loops and systems that test our words, our values, and our commitment to real change. In turn, your commitment, using your voice, your time, and your energy to ask hard questions and bring what is often unseen into the light is what truly helps deliver on that promise. This is how we achieve the public good: by listening, responding, adapting, and refusing to give in to cynicism, which remains one of the most powerful tools for preserving the status quo.

I am filled with gratitude for your service and resolve. The RJC is a moral compass at a time when too many in power are defining right and wrong based on self-interest rather than the public good. Whether it is the policies we craft, the processes we improve, or the way resources are invested, I know I have strong and trusted advisors in the Racial Justice Council.



Governor Tina Kotek



Racial Justice Council Highlights

Advocacy is a core function of the work of the Racial Justice Council (RJC) and its six sub-committees. The RJC is constantly evolving its processes to be more effective in how it engages with state agencies and legislators and works to create policy and build budgets aimed at developing more inclusive and equitable outcomes, and increased accountability. The RJC believes varying values, opinions, and beliefs should be respected and encouraged as part of a healthy democratic process, which leads to better understanding, deliberation and outcomes for all.

The RJC took the necessary steps to diligently prepare itself for the 2025 Legislative Session. Building upon existing skills and leaning into the expertise of its members, the RJC offered recommendations to increase agency collaboration and improve systems. This year, the RJC's legislative preparation included an Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) training focused on how to track key legislation and members attended an Oregon Government Ethics Commissions (OGE) led ethics training to identify potential conflicts of interest.

Additionally, the RJC and its committees increased the cadence of their meetings from bi-monthly to monthly during the legislative session. The added meetings offered members the ability to coalesce, offer insight, and report back to the Governor on their priorities in real-time as decisions were made.

To track its advocacy efforts more effectively, the RJC established an endorsement process in which the committees elevated priorities to the full council. The RJC then heard, offered its input, and discussed the priorities that led to an official RJC endorsement.

Learning from the experiences during the 2025 legislative session, the RJC laid the groundwork for further relationship-building in 2026 by creating a committee focused on fostering connections with state legislators. Council members took the opportunity to get ahead of the 2026 session and engage earlier and more intentionally around their priorities. During 2025 Legislative Days, Council members met with legislators and their staff with the aim of sharing their priorities and build rapport. The committee met with the offices of Senator Sollman, Representative Kropf, Representative





Nathanson, Representative Sanchez, Senator Campos, Representative Valderrama, Representative Ruiz, and House Speaker Fahey. For the 2025 November Legislative Days, RJC members connected with Senate President Wagner, Senator Jama, Senator Lieber, and Representative Andersen.

The Council believed it was not only vital to have open lines of communication with lawmakers, but to identify opportunities to deepen engagement in the work of the council through guest presentations and opportunities to listen. Legislators who attended meetings this year were, Senate President Rob Wagner, House Speaker Julie Fahey, and BIPOC Caucus Leader, Representative Ricki Ruiz. The Council also reached out to directors to learn about their vision for equity and racial justice within their respective agencies. The agency directors included: Leah Feldon, Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon State Police Superintendent, Casey Coddling, Department of Agriculture Director, Lisa Charpillouz-Hanson, Department of Administrative Services Director, Betsy Imholt, Director of the Office of Culture Change, Melinda Gross and Director of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement, Jessica Ventura.

To increase representation of Oregonians from across the state the RJC opened two recruitment periods in 2025. Those recruitment efforts produced a total of 11 new members that were added to the Council for a current total of 31 members. Expanded regional representation has been an area of focus for recruiting new members. Currently, 15 members live in the I-5 Corridor or rural areas of the state while 16 members come from the Portland Metro area. In addition, seven new members joined three RJC Committees. Across the RJC and the six Committees, 71 Oregonians have taken up the mantle of engaging, partnering, and collaborating in the work of racial justice and equity. The RJC remains committed to partnering, building relationships, and continuing to advocate for racial justice and equity. Centering equitable practices in state government not only benefits marginalized and vulnerable populations, but every Oregonian.

RJC Committee Highlights

Criminal Justice Reform Committee

“At a time when many state governments are shying away from the term equity in response to the rampant racist policies and rhetoric at the federal level, it is especially important and encouraging that the State of Oregon continues to pursue racial justice initiatives. Though there is much work ahead, especially in the criminal system where BIPOC members of the community are disproportionately targeted and punished, I am proud to serve as a voice on the Racial Justice Council alongside other community leaders who care deeply about creating a more equitable Oregon. Our partnership with the Governor is invaluable and I have been impressed by her leadership in the area of restorative justice, an issue of deep importance to the Criminal Justice Reform Committee, which seeks to examine and improve current practices while advocating for investments in effective public safety alternatives.”

– Tristen Edwards, Co-Chair Criminal Justice Reform Committee

The Racial Justice Council Criminal Justice Reform Committee (CJRC) is comprised of 11 members, three of whom were added in 2025. Advocacy efforts by the CJRC endeavor to make the legal system more just, effective, and elevate how a fairer justice system makes for a more humane system. The Committee also focused on providing recommendations to the Governor to address the crisis in indigent criminal defense. From those recommendations, an opportunity emerged for the CJRC to meet and engage Interim Executive Director of the Oregon Public Defense Commission, Ken Sanchagrin to learn more about the Commission’s vision and establish an entry point for further collaboration.

The CJRC partnered with New York University’s Center on Violence and Recovery to develop a restorative justice model that utilizes peacemaking circles to address harm while focusing on accountability and healing. CJRC members participated in a workgroup, partnering with the Department of Corrections and transitioned the Circles of Peace program to the Restorative Justice Coalition in 2025. The Restorative Justice Coalition is a partnership of Oregon restorative justice practitioners and programs. The Restorative Justice Coalition promotes and supports the implementation and practices of restorative justice principles – such as pathways for victims

to circumvent the re-traumatization that often originates from the traditional criminal system, and for the accused to repair the harm they caused rather than simply facing punishment and models in the state’s justice, law enforcement, educational, and other community institutions. The Circles of Peace program has since transitioned to being led by external volunteer efforts in partnership with the group of adults in custody (AICs) that have been on the ground floor of creating the program.

During the 2025 legislative session, the CJRC composed three letters that promoted expansion of the Justice Reinvestment Equity Program, opposed the net widening of the criminal justice system and use of prior convictions as impeachment.

Justice Reinvestment Equity Program (JREP)

The Justice Reinvestment Equity Program (JREP) was a key priority of the CJRC for inclusion in the Governor’s Recommended Budget (GRB). The GRB incorporated \$10 million for JREP within the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) budget.

The RJC urged the state to fund the critical investment that would help historically underserved communities while saving the state money by keeping people in their communities and

building capacity. JREP invests in culturally specific organizations that provide recidivism reduction services, victim and survivor programming, and upstream support that prevents involvement in the criminal justice system. The program is based on the successful Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), which reduces counties' reliance on sending people to the state prison system. Ultimately, JREP was not included in the CJC budget bill (HB 5005).

Opposed legislation in conflict with data and research on improving public safety outcomes

The CJRC is committed to prioritizing investments and strategies that promote healing, restoration, education, rehabilitation, for victims and the accused, and public safety.

The CRJC underwent a robust process to develop their position and approach to raising concerns over HB 2465A which upgraded an unlawful departure from custody to a felony charge. Expanding felony classifications raises questions for the committee in general. Of particular concern is that it transforms technical violations into criminal conduct, potentially saddling individuals with new felony charges. The Department of Corrections has reported that nearly two-thirds of adults in custody have a history of substance use disorder, and many are living with mental health challenges and rarely are people in healthy states of mind when attempting to flee parole officers for supervision failures, and criminalizing those supervision failures pushes individuals deeper into the system instead of addressing root causes of instability. Moreover, Oregon has witnessed how increased sentencing fails to produce better public safety outcomes. Instead, it expands state obligations to costly incarceration and exacerbates racial disparities without addressing the underlying issues. The CRJC submitted a letter of testimony with the goal of demonstrating their shared commitment to public safety and expanding the dialogue around this legislation. The bill ultimately passed; however, the committee remains proud of the conversation they helped to prompt and committed to their overarching position.

The Criminal Justice Reform Committee continues to seek better paths and encourages legislators to invest in ways that promote improved public safety that addresses root causes and provides effective interventions such as behavioral health, trauma-informed care, substance use treatment, diversion, education, reentry programs and restorative justice.

The CJRC will continue to offer recommendations in the hopes of contributing to solution-oriented investments in evidence-based, proportional, and healing-focused interventions. In doing so, the committee believes these investments offer opportunities for improved accountability and safer communities through recovery, restoration, and redemptive opportunity.

Use of prior convictions as impeachment

HB 2641, which modifies when a prior conviction is admissible to impeach the character of a witness, the committee believed ran counter to principles of due process, fairness, racial equity, and justice. The CJRC found that the bill would make it harder to get to the truth by allowing very prejudicial evidence with little real value, without any judge reviewing it. It would also stop people from fully defending themselves and could violate their constitutional rights. The CJRC also believes the bill creates a high risk that jurors would rely on a person's past record instead of the actual facts of the case—shifting attention from evidence to assumptions about someone's general likelihood of criminal behavior. Research shows that jurors often use prior convictions to judge guilt rather than credibility, even when instructed not to. These impacts fall disproportionately on defendants of color, who are policed, prosecuted, and convicted at higher rates. HB 2641 was ultimately referred to the Rules Committee, where it remained when the legislative session adjourned.

Economic Opportunity Committee

“My service with Oregon’s Racial Justice Council and Economic Opportunity Committee (EOC) has revealed a sobering truth: Oregon’s economic systems are not yet sufficient to meet the scale of need in our communities. Despite progress, too many small business owners, workers, and families, particularly those from historically marginalized backgrounds or regions, remain disconnected from pathways to prosperity. Ensuring access to opportunity must be an intentional and sustained commitment, not a secondary consideration or after-thought.

Evolving investment benefits historically marginalized communities and advancement demands both courage and partnership. It requires leaders willing to challenge established systems, agencies ready to collaborate across silos, and policies that are co-created with the people they are meant to serve. Data alone does not drive change. Trust, persistence, and shared purpose do. Economic justice is achieved not through programs alone, but through structures that reflect the community it serves and commitment in practice.”

– Jan Mason, Co-Chair Economic Opportunity Committee

The Racial Justice Council Economic Opportunity Committee (EOC) consists of diverse experts with experiences growing Oregon’s businesses. Because of this, the EOC has a unique ability to identify gaps and growth areas and identify when the state’s economic levers are not meeting the scale of need in Oregon’s increasingly diverse business sector. Despite progress, too many small business owners, workers, and families, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds are confronted with barriers to pathways to prosperity. Access to opportunity must be intentional, and not an afterthought.

To address equitable access to prosperity, the EOC has been diligently working to develop recommendations critical to opening economic opportunities for as many Oregonians as possible, particularly supporting communities of color. The engagement of the EOC, ensures diverse perspectives are incorporated in policy recommendations that more effectively connect statewide priorities with local impact. Oregon’s recovery depends on bold leadership of government, business, and community. Deliberate collaboration leads to more modern workforce systems and investments in small business infrastructure that drives an economy that works for everyone.

The following is a summary of the EOC’s advocacy and work to champion efforts to increase procurement and contracting accessibility, address a rapidly changing workforce, and restore funds for Oregon’s technical assistance program for underrepresented small businesses.





The Committee has been engaged in a process to offer recommendations for updating Executive Order 22-15, which addresses equity in procurement and contracting. The intention is to ensure equitable procurement processes, effective governance and public service delivery of state programs. In turn, this will lead to increased access with an attention to communities that have experienced barriers to access or opportunity due to historical and systemic factors.

The EOC has also focused on writing a series of recommendations related to workforce development built from the Future Ready Oregon program. Future Ready Oregon is an investment package that supports workforce education, training programs and talent development strategies. The program engages employer and industry partners, education and training providers, and community-based and culturally specific organizations in the co-creation of solutions to our most complex workforce and talent development challenges for priority populations.

The EOC commissioned a workgroup with the charge of creating recommendations that further support historically underserved communities, including adult learners, displaced workers, and youth disconnected from the educational system. With a focus on racial justice and economic opportunity, investments in culturally and linguistically specific career-connected learning have been prioritized centering on

recruitment, retention, and career advancement. Furthermore, the workgroup aims to improve systems to meet the workforce needs of key industry sectors (construction, behavioral health, and semiconductor), with the goal of addressing critical workforce shortages and responding to strategic workforce opportunities.

Operating under the framework of moving the state toward real systems change, the EOC also pushed for the renewal of funding for Oregon's Technical Assistance Program for Underrepresented Small Businesses, which was successfully reinstated during the 2025 legislative session. The EOC's advocacy offered the following recommendations:

- Reinstating and expanding permanent funding for technical assistance to underrepresented small businesses.
- Embedding this investment into Oregon's core economic development strategy, not as a pilot, but as a proven pillar.
- Trusting community-based organizations to lead delivery, backed with long-term support.

The EOC continues to encourage building capacity to improve the systems that shape economic equity. The EOC believes that investing in small business ecosystems and inclusive workforce development, expands ownership and wealth-building opportunities across Oregon.

Education Committee

“Over the past year, serving on the Racial Justice Council’s Education Committee has deepened my understanding of how policy, equity, and advocacy must work hand-in-hand to advance educational justice in Oregon. The recent legislative session underscored both the progress and challenges we face, particularly the need to safeguard equity-centered programs amid shifting political priorities and budget constraints. I’ve learned the importance of building strong, bipartisan relationships and grounding our work in data and lived experience to sustain impact. Collaboration with educators, students, and community partners has reinforced that racial equity in education is not a single initiative but a long-term commitment to system transformation. Despite reduced investments, our collective efforts continue to affirm that every Oregon student deserves equitable access to quality learning, belonging, and opportunity. Active participation ensures that the voices and experiences of marginalized communities continue to shape public policy, even amid shifting priorities.”

– Mark Jackson, Co-Chair Education Committee

Ahead of the 2025 legislative session, the Racial Justice Council Education Committee (EC) advocated for the continued funding for individualized Student Success Plans based on the uniqueness of needs. The four areas of need centered on African-American/Black students, Latina/o/x/e students, LGBTQ2SIA+ students, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island students.

Recognizing the challenging decisions facing state leaders as the federal government considered funding reductions, the EC worked to minimize the impact of the reductions on Oregonians, particularly for BIPOC communities. Members of the RJC and the EC noted the Oregon Department of Education’s budget bill, SB 5515, and its consolidation of all the Student Success Plans into one funding stream. The RJC and its EC urged the state to fund these critical investments in historically underserved communities to:

- Continue essential service without interruption for our most vulnerable populations that have been historically under-resourced.
- Prioritize educational equity and keep Oregon’s promise in creating schools that are welcoming and inclusive of the needs of all students.
- Provide the support students and families need to navigate student success.

Post-session, the EC has focused on relationship-building with legislators including Representative Sanchez, House Speaker Fahey, Senator Jama, Representative Kropf, Representative Nathanson, Representative Ruiz, and Senate President Wagner. Moving forward, they will work more collaboratively to seek the best possible outcomes given the economic reality and challenges facing the state.

Conversations with state agency leaders such as Oregon Department of Education Director Dr. Charlene Williams, Higher Education Coordinating Commission Director, Ben Cannon, and Department of Early Learning and Care with Director Alyssa Chatterjee, and Assistant Superintendent Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Michael Essien also continue.



Environmental Equity Committee

“This year, our committee learned how to more effectively engage Oregon’s natural resources agencies to advance racial and environmental justice. We’ve helped uplift the challenges faced by communities of color while connecting environmental equity to racial and social justice. Our goal is to make sure state agencies move beyond statements into lasting, accountable change for communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis.”

– Ana Molina, Chair Environmental Equity Committee

Racial Justice Council’s Environmental Equity Committee (EEC) advocates for the rights that Oregonians of color have a clean and healthy environment in which to thrive. The EEC advocates for equity, knowing communities of color have historically been adversely impacted by polluting industries, landfills, and large infrastructure projects like freeway construction which creates systemic inequity or unfair zoning policies. Much of the advocacy of the EEC aimed at supporting specific bills associated with water research grants, resilience hubs and networks, and creating better Spanish language pesticide education.

The following describes the recommendations and outcomes of the EEC’s priority bill from the 2025 legislative session.

HB 3528 sought a funding allocation of \$4 million for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to be distributed to the University of Oregon and Portland State University for water-related research and grants. In its advocacy, the EEC highlighted several examples of previous

successes that impacted vulnerable populations across the state such as the tribal restoration of waterways in the Wallowas, emergency preparedness and response in the Portland Metro area, and food security and food sovereignty in Clatsop County and Jackson County. The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, where it remained upon adjournment of the session.

HB 3170, sought a funding allocation of \$10 million to the Oregon Department of Human Services to provide grants for resilience hubs and resilience networks. Resilience Hubs and Networks will keep communities safe, healthy, and well-connected before, during, and after disasters such as extreme weather and wildfire. The committee continues to believe and advocate for continued investment in community resilience and that supporting resilience focused organizations with adequate funding is of high importance. The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, where it remained upon adjournment of the session.





HB 3010, sought a funding allocation of \$784,124 for Oregon State University to develop and publicize a program for Spanish language pesticide education. Farmworkers, many of whom are Spanish-speaking, form the backbone of Oregon's agricultural workforce. While resources for pesticide education do exist, additional funding is needed to expand access by incorporating cultural relevance, multilingual materials, and improved accessibility across diverse communities. The hope is that by allocating funds to Oregon State University for the initiative, the state can support the development of a Spanish-language pesticide education licensing program modeled after successful efforts in other states. This will help ensure that all workers can better understand safe pesticide use practices and minimize potential risks associated with exposure. The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, where it remained upon adjournment of the session.

Though these bills did not ultimately move forward last session, each enabled an opportunity to build awareness around the issues we collectively seek to solve and plant a flag for future discussion. As the EEC continues to monitor and advocate for the priorities listed above, it also has begun to lend its expertise in the process to distribute Oregon Environmental Restoration Funds. Members of the EEC are currently participating in the rule-making process

and will contribute in the program application process that will evolve in the future.

There have been increased opportunities for both the EEC and the Environment Justice Council (EJC) to explore symmetry and overlap during 2025. Intentional coordination and combining efforts eliminates confusion and duplication that currently divides attention and resources across the two overlapping bodies. The ability to consolidate work offers a single, focused entity where the state of Oregon's environmental justice mapping tool will be finalized and where Environmental Justice Council members can advise on how the state of Oregon and the Governor's Office can advance issues of environmental justice.

In 2022, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 4077 that renamed and codified the existing Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) as the Environmental Justice Council (EJC). The EJC is a 13-member statewide council responsible for advising the Governor and state natural resource agencies on environmental justice issues.

At a time when partner organization capacity is stretched thin, a collective effort among both entities will reduce burden on community organizations and ensure environmental equity remains a central goal while building a more sustainable, effective path forward, and one that serves environmental justice communities through focused action.

Health Equity and Human Services Committee

“The active engagement and advocacy of members on the Racial Justice Council’s Health Equity and Human Services Committee are vital during these critical and challenging times. Our voices ensure that Oregon’s health policies and funding decisions truly reflect the lived realities of communities most impacted by inequities. By sharing on-the-ground insights, members help shape culturally responsive, accessible, and just health systems that close long-standing gaps in care and opportunity. Our advocacy amplifies community perspectives within state agencies and the legislature, advancing accountability and equity across programs. Each member’s commitment is essential to building a healthier, fairer Oregon where every person can thrive, regardless of race, language, immigration status, or income.”

– Marin Arreola, Co-Chair Health Equity and Human Services Committee

In an era of rising health disparities among vulnerable communities, federal Medicaid cuts, and strained public systems, the Racial Justice Council’s Health Equity and Human Services Committee plays a critical role in safeguarding community trust. Its engagement strengthens collaboration across government, providers, community-based organizations, and local partners, and keeps racial and social justice at the center of policy reform. The HEHSC supported the development of the Governor’s Recommended Budget, particularly advocating for ways to mitigate the federal impacts of H.R. 1 on programs like Medicaid and Supplemental

Nutrition Assistance Program. The HEHSC has been increasingly focused on providing feedback regarding communicating the impacts of H.R. 1 to Oregonians.

Based on recommendations from the HEHSC, the Racial Justice Council wrote a letter, endorsing the following:

House Bill 5025 and Senate Bill 5526: These bills maintain current service level for 1.4 million people on the Oregon Health Plan and vital safety net programs like the Healthier Oregon Program (HOP). Both pieces of legislation passed and were signed into law.



House Bill 2059: This bill addressed Oregon's ongoing behavioral health crisis and long-standing gaps in the continuum of care by increasing residential behavioral health capacity across the state for both adults and children. The bill passed and was signed into law.

Senate Bill 142A: The bill supported the development of Oregon's behavioral health workforce with an important focus on the training, recruitment and retention of diverse health care providers to ensure the future workforce reflects the growing diversity in Oregon. The bill was referred to Ways and Means, where it remained upon adjournment of the session.

House Bill 3835A: This bill had two important elements as it relates to protecting and caring for children. First, it changed how restraints are investigated and applies a uniform definition of "abusive restraint" and "abusive seclusion" across child-serving settings to eliminate confusion and ensure consistency to support child and family behavioral health workers in serving children safely. Second, it increased access and quality of behavioral health treatment for children in Child Welfare custody allowing for out-of-state medical treatment when medically appropriate and necessary. The bill was referred to Ways and Means, where it remained upon adjournment of session.

Although not all the HEHSC's desired outcomes were achieved, the exercise of offering its input has helped the committee focus its efforts moving forward. Because the HEHSC is composed of

members of community-based organizations and providers that serve and advocate for people in need, it is playing an instrumental role in disseminating information on critical changes to programs like SNAP. Communicating updates quickly and clearly to impacted communities, organizations, and providers is a vital component in responding to the needs faced by many Oregonians.

The HEHSC's intent is to offer ways to protect the health and well-being of Oregon's most vulnerable populations including those who experience disproportionate rates of health disparities such as people on the Oregon Health Plan, people with behavioral health conditions, people involved in the justice system, and children.

Members of the HEHSC remain committed to helping individuals maintain access to the essential support for a healthier Oregon. Going forward the HEHSC will continue its advocacy by focusing on policy implementation while understanding the current budgetary and fiscal limitations faced by the state. They will also serve as a thought partner and provide guidance to agencies in the implementation of policy changes.

The committee remains steadfast in serving as a representative sounding board for the state, to ensure that vulnerable communities are taken into account and working collaboratively to achieve as many positive outcomes and reduce as many health disparities as possible.



Housing and Homelessness Committee

“In these crucial times, the engagement of our Racial Justice Council Housing and Homelessness Committee (HHC) has been both a moral compass and a driving force for change. Each member brings lived experience, cultural wisdom, and professional expertise that keep our policies grounded in reality and equity. Their collective voice ensures that communities historically left out of decision-making are now shaping Oregon’s housing future. The value of this engagement lies not only in the recommendations we produce, but in the trust we rebuild — between the government and the people it serves. Together, we are demonstrating that racial justice and housing justice are inseparable, and that inclusive participation is the foundation of lasting progress.”

– Maria Elena Guerra, Co-Chair Housing and Homelessness Committee

The housing crisis in Oregon is one of the most pressing challenges of our time, and the Governor’s recommended budget reflected a clear understanding of the urgency and scale of this issue. While the legislative actual budget (LAB) was not a mirror image, and had missed opportunities in funding homelessness prevention, we believe progress was made. By prioritizing critical investments, the Governor and legislature have taken meaningful steps to create a more equitable and prosperous future for all residents. The HHC sought multiple avenues to advocate for maintaining efforts to serve people that are struggling with housing related challenges.

The HHC’s commitment to offering insight to address the housing crisis in Oregon through strategic investments is timely and necessary. Specifically, the HHC highlighted its support for the following housing budget and policy items for their impact on equitable housing access for communities of color that would have an impact on the lives of countless residents and the overall well-being of our state.

Homelessness and support services, tenant rights and shelter: The HHCS’s goal was to continue efforts to prevent and end homelessness, maintain homelessness response systems and outcomes, support housing infrastructure and innovation, provide housing stabilization for people transitioning from state systems, prevent loss of current affordable housing and maintain homelessness response and accountability measures. Prevention funding was allocated to

the Oregon Housing and Community Services budget, although at lower levels.

Housing Policies with Racial Equity Impacts

HB3644: Established permanent state shelter program infrastructure in state statute. The HHC continues to advocate for the use of an equity lens for implementation of the shelter program to positively impact underserved communities. Specifically, the HHC believes a statewide program should prioritize, contracts with culturally specific providers to target and support outreach to BIPOC communities that experience homelessness at disproportionate levels. The bill was passed and signed into law.

HB 2139: Establishes a permanent tribal housing grant program in state statute. The Committee advocated for this bill understanding that indigenous Oregonians experience homelessness at a rate nearly six times their share of the population and shifts power and resources to tribal governments. The bill was referred to Ways and Means, where it remained upon adjournment of session.

SB 814: Expands access to long-term rent assistance for youth leaving Oregon Youth Authority facilities. Given that youth of color are overrepresented in Child Welfare, foster care, and juvenile justice and detention, the bill will work to stabilize these individuals before becoming chronically homeless. The bill was passed and signed into law.

Housing Production, Infrastructure and Innovation

HB 3031: Establishes a program that funds water, wastewater, stormwater, and transportation infrastructure needed for new housing production. The bill was passed and signed into law.

HB 2138: Expands allowable middle housing and expands middle housing requirements to include urban unincorporated lands, to legalize thousands of additional middle housing units. The HHC advocates for this bill in that middle housing reform diminishes exclusionary single-family zoning, which historically has been used to segregate by race and income. Additionally, more small, entry-level units can offer new pathways into homeownership or stable renting for BIPOC households. The bill was passed and signed into law.

The HHC has also been engaged in exploring ways to modernize and strengthen public participation under Oregon's Land Use Goal 1. Goal 1 affords the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process and requires each city and county to have a

citizen involvement program that addresses opportunities for widespread public involvement.

Representative Thủy Trần, Representative Susan McLain, and Representative Sarah Finger McDonald have been leading in the effort to improve public participation and requested participation from the RJC. The Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) provided a high-level background presentation on Goal 1 and on potential statutory and rulemaking pathways to expand and clarify participation, including timelines and cost considerations.

The initial step included hosting a workshop that brought together legislators, stakeholders, and community representatives to explore ways to increase public engagement in Oregon's land use planning process. HHC Co-Chair, Kim McCarty, attended and offered recommendations for improving the Goal 1 process.



RJC Committee Membership

Criminal Justice Reform Committee

Tristen Edwards, Co-Chair
Paul Solomon, Co-Chair
Dr. Nicholas Crapser*
Sterling Cunio
Cameron Hayes*
Shay Huber
Nansi Lopez
Michelle Love
Shaylie Pickrell
Mariana Urdaneta Sanchez*
Babak Zolfaghari-Azar

Policy Advisors

Valerie Colas

Economic Opportunity Committee

Jan Mason, Co-Chair
James Alan Parker, Co-Chair
Latiffe Amado
Marin Arreola
James Cador
Nicole Davison-Leon
Evann Goss-Lemelle
Marcus Mundy
Ciara Pressler
Justice Rajee*
Anthony Veliz

Policy Advisors

Kelly Brooks
Jesse Hyatt
Sarah Means

Education Committee

Cynthia Richardson, Co-Chair
Mark Jackson, Co-Chair
Djimet Dogo
Marie Chisholm-Burns
Ayrn Frazier*
Dr. Jimmy Howard
Jaclyn Caires-Hurley
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Kristina Narayan
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Housing and Homelessness Committee

Maria Elena Guerra, Co-Chair
Kim McCarty, Co-Chair
Melinda Bell
Jackie Follis
Cameron Herrington
Jimmy Jones
William Miller
Cathryn Murray
Nathan Teske

Policy Advisors

Svetha Ambati
Matthew Tschabold

*New Members

Acknowledgment of past RJC and Committee members

Past Racial Justice Council Members

Jesse Beason
Tiffany Monroe
Marisa Zapata

Past RJC Committee Membership

Past Economic Opportunity Committee Members

Kevin Bumatay
Cobi Lewis
Tiffany Monroe

Past Environmental Equity Committee Members

Tiffany Monroe, Co-Chair
Candace Avalos

Past Health Equity and Human Services Committee Members

Dixie Leigh Small
Jayln Suppah

Past Housing and Homelessness Committee Members

Chris Bonner
Marisa Zapata



Appendix 1



Racial Justice Council Legislative Priorities

Codified into law in 2021, the Racial Justice Council (RJC) is composed of six committees, with individuals from across Oregon consisting of people with unique backgrounds and life experiences. The aim of the RJC is to build a way for the state to better engage with, listen to, and support Oregon's Black, Indigenous, people of color, and immigrants and refugees. The RJC has been a critical partner and advisor to Governor Kotek, helping to align priorities and the state's policies and operations with a racial justice and equity framework.

Housing and Homelessness

Theme: Impacts of Race-Based Housing Disparities

- Implementation of existing programs
- Housing Development

Economic Opportunity

Theme: Maintain existing equity-focused programs and build resilience of front-line communities to decide for themselves their economic opportunity and prosperity.

- Analyzing Agency Effectiveness
- Finalize Recommendations for an Updated Executive Order-22-15
- Workforce Workgroup: Implemented Recommendations for Future Ready Oregon and Modeling Workforce Development

Environmental Equity

Theme: Strengthen current policy and laws for the protection of vulnerable populations and advocating cost-neutral fiscal impacts.

- Partner on Efforts Related to the Oregon Environmental Restoration Funds
- Engage on Resiliency Efforts
- Working with Environmental Justice Council

Health Equity and Human Services

Theme: Provide values and equity framework to consider as we move into a budget constricted environment and inform how changes are communicated.

- Federal Medicaid & SNAP impacts to Oregon
- Coordinated Care Organizations
- Behavioral Health
- Healthier Oregon Program
- Traditional Health Workers
- Regional Health Equity Coalitions

Criminal Justice Reform

Theme: Accessibility, monitoring, and learning for the appropriate alignment of criminal justice reform.

- Affirming Sanctuary Law
- Advocate and maintain 1115 Medicaid Waiver for People in Custody and Continuation
- Restorative justice and reinforcing efforts
- Track relevant criminal justice bills to prevent widening of penalization system

Education

Theme: Information and data sharing and collaboration.

- Messaging the Fiscal Impact of Cuts
- School District Accountability

Meeting Calendar

The calendar of meetings can be found online at

<https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/pages/racial-justice-council.aspx>

Contact information

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