

Racial Justice Research Project

What is research justice?

A research approach that goes beyond collecting a needs assessment of groups. It recognizes that those who are a part of underrepresented and marginalized communities are the experts in their lived experiences. It uplifts the voices within those communities so that they may lead jurisdictions as a whole on how to remove barriers and dismantle oppressive practices throughout community life.

Why are you leading with race? What about other marginalized identities?

We want to have a Clackamas County where every single person has full access and opportunities to be successful in all areas of life, health, jobs, schools, civic engagement, public safety, etc. We also know that there are many underserved/vulnerable populations in our County. Leading with race is not ignoring those factors, it is strategic. When all else is equal, race is the factor that points to inequities across all indicators for success. When we address inequities from that frame, we will also help to address other areas of marginalization. For more information on this, visit the [Government Alliance on Race Equity](#). *Yet, we will not know how to address it unless we know who are the communities of color and what are the strengths, challenges and needs that exist within those communities.*

What work has already been done?

Clackamas County partnered with the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) to put together an initial environmental scan that provides a snapshot of the lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in Clackamas County. We have sent out that scan for you to review.¹

Why is this important for my jurisdiction? Why should I join?

The urgency to act upon the perspectives and takeaways outlined in the environmental scan is clear. We must create an environment that is more welcoming and safe for the communities of color in our county. Each jurisdiction is connected to the overall system that contributes to the lived experiences of our residents. We need to look within city limits and outside of those jurisdictions to the surrounding areas and the region to understand the full experiences of those who operate within a system of one county. To do so in any meaningful way, we must work together to study, learn, engage, and listen to our BIPOC communities and dig deeper into the themes raised through the environmental scan.

How do I get involved? What is next?

Clackamas County is asking you to join us in this multi-year research justice project by participating in each step of the process a long side us.

- 1. Engage** to better the experiences of BIPOC communities.
 - a. Participate in community engagement meetings
 - b. Disseminate information, surveys, and other useful data.
- 2. Support**
 - a. Financially support to fund the project
 - b. Support the effort with community members, stakeholders and other leaders in the County.

¹Highlights on the Environmental Scan report is on the second page.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- Identified organizations and leaders that represent and organize communities of color in the county.
- Recognized internal County and jurisdictional diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) trends and occurrences.
- Documented external county factors such as demographics, politics and public policy, labor markets, housing, education, civic life, and other areas of interest that affect the quality of life for communities of color in Clackamas County.
- Assessed and analyzed current CCC connections with Clackamas County including partners, constituents, and activities.
- Connected and helped build relationships between the County Equity and Inclusion Officer and community-based organizations/leaders of communities of color in the County.
- Provided plans for next steps.

What are the next steps?

1. *Create a steering committee* comprised of community based organizations and leaders of communities of color to guide the research and project implementation.
2. *Engage in community*, including holding culturally specific community sessions and administering other research tools. Community engagement will also help to verify community data, draft the report, and develop a call to action.
3. *Presenting research findings and call to action* when the report has been finalized.