



Racial disparities permeate through the criminal justice system in Oregon. The lack of investment in culturally-specific organizations and the history of discrimination leads to racial disparities in prison populations and the need for the Justice Reinvestment Equity Program.

Oregon was founded as a white-only state and Black Oregonians make up a disproportionate share of Oregon's prison population. Discrimination can be overt, hidden, or unintentional, but it remains ingrained in many policies and must be uprooted.

"What this means is that despite advances in civil rights legislation and its protections, and despite the end of segregation and other more overt forms of discrimination and exclusion, communities of color suffer the consequences of racism by living shorter lives, with more ill health, and with much reduced chances of thriving economically, politically and socially. At the same time, white people are more likely to be on the beneficial end of these systems and institutions, with higher graduation rates, access to better employment, with assets and protections that support their wellbeing. When institutions to support individuals and families are studied, we find that white people are more likely to penetrate a positive system (such as higher education or civil service employment) while people of color are more likely to penetrate a negative system (such as the criminal or juvenile justice system or the child welfare system)." [In Defense of Culturally-Specific Organizations: Understanding the Rationale and the Evidence.](#)

The lack of investment from JRI in culturally-specific organizations has contributed to the negative outcomes in the criminal justice system that communities of color face. The lack of investment in culturally-specific organizations since the inception of the JRI program is a symptom of systemic racism, barriers, and discrimination:

"A final caution in allocation decisions: the conventional granting practices need to be troubled. Funding decisions typically value prior funding history, pre-existing relationships between funders and grantees, the ability to evaluate programs, high-stature recommendation letters and low cost competitive bids. All these factors serve to reinforce the conventional funding patterns and preference for larger mainstream institutions. Serious commitments to the needs of communities of color simultaneously involves examining decision making practices and discourses—and reworking them to ensure equity in access to funds." [In Defense of Culturally-Specific Organizations: Understanding the Rationale and the Evidence.](#)



With SB 1510 and the establishment of the Justice Reinvestment Equity Program, Oregon will address the systemic exclusion of culturally-specific programs from funding through JRI and drive down racial disparities in our criminal justice system. This program will allow our state to continue tearing out the roots of racial discrimination and disparities and lead to a healthier, safer, and more equitable Oregon.

SUPPORT SB 1510