



Landscape Assessment:

Workforce Development and Transition
Services for Black, Indigenous and Other
People of Color Impacted by
Incarceration

Presented to METRO RID by
Metropolitan Group May 15, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

For the past several years, Metro has increasingly made a commitment to a leadership role in advancing racial equity. In 2016, the agency released a strategic plan that identified racial equity, diversity and inclusion as the core approach to ensure a thriving community. In February 2019, the Metro Council voted unanimously to approve the 2030 Regional Waste Plan. The plan will shape the way greater Portland manages the garbage and recycling system for the next decade. It identifies racial equity as the foundation of good governance, and includes goals and strategies for improving racial equity. Specifically, the plan identifies goals and actions to address the impacts of materials—from production to disposal—as well as addressing the legacies of racial discrimination rooted in our solid waste systems and in systems that impact the social fabric of the criminal justice system and beyond.

To advance these goals, Metro Council President Lynn Peterson has identified as a priority to:

- Help dismantle systems that perpetually exclude communities of color from obtaining family wage jobs with good benefits.
- Advance equitable workforce outcomes such as diversifying the solid waste sector and minimizing the wage disparities for communities of color.
- Build programs that provide lower barriers for communities disproportionately impacted by incarceration.

Metro's RID Program is responding to Council President Peterson's charge. Focused on providing entry-level experience in the solid waste compliance and cleanup industry, RID functions as a transitional opportunity for individuals experiencing barriers to employment. The program has prioritized hiring people of color and indigenous peoples who have been impacted by incarceration, because of the increased obstacles and disparities faced by these communities. Individuals employed with RID have transitioned into the trades and other solid waste industries, indicating the program's success. The agency is now interested in expanding this effort and contracted with Metropolitan Group to conduct a landscape assessment of workforce and transitional services in the Portland tri-county area, as well as to document needs that can be used to guide the development of a RID strategic plan.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

About 1.5 million people are now imprisoned in the United States, producing the highest rates of incarceration in the world. Since 1980, the number of people in U.S. federal, state or local prisons and jails has increased more than 450%.¹ This number becomes exponentially bigger when considering the more than 7 million individuals under some form of correctional control in our nation.²

The Prison Industrial Complex

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world and the highest number of people behind bars,³ far higher than the rates of other heavily populated countries. As a result of the growth in prisons, the “punishment industry,” estimated at \$182 billion per year,⁴ has become a key contributor to the U.S. economy—from private prisons that require investments, design, financing and new construction to build—to developers of new technologies used by law enforcement, all the way down to the phone cards sold at higher than market rates to inmates.

Private businesses, corporations and public agencies tap into prison labor and compensate workers at a rate far below that of minimum wage.

People who are incarcerated are paid very little based on the belief that their expenses are lower than those of people on the outside, and that they are receiving a wage that is less the cost of their incarceration. So, not only is someone “paying for their crime” by facing incarceration, they are then forced to literally pay for the cost of their incarceration. A study by Worth Rises points to more than 4,000 corporations (and growing by 800 companies per year) that profit from mass incarceration of the nation’s marginalized communities.⁵ In 2018, Angela Davis coined this phenomenon the “Prison Industrial Complex,” which she described as “the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems.”⁶

Companies and public agencies in Oregon also benefit from prison labor, primarily through the efforts of Oregon Correctional Enterprises (OCE), a self-funded agency under the Department of Corrections. Created in 1999 by Measure 68, OCE operates 28 industry programs within 11 of Oregon’s 14 prisons. According to OCE’s annual report, the agency generated a record \$28.5 million in revenue in 2017.⁷ Undoubtedly, a significant portion of that revenue is coming from the purses of Oregon’s public agencies as administrative rule OAR 125-247-0200 establishes a Buy Decision priority order that requires state agencies to consider four priority procurement methods before turning to the open market; inmate labor is third on the list.⁸

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017, <https://bjs.gov>.

² Report to the United Nations on Racial Disparities in the U.S. Criminal Justice System, April 19, 2018.

³ https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All.⁴ Following the Money of Mass Incarceration, Peter Wagner and Bernadette Rabuy, January 27, 2017, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/money.html>.

⁵ The Prison Industrial Complex: Mapping Private Sector Players, April 2019,

<https://worthrises.org/picreport2019>.⁶ History Is a Weapon: Masked Racism: Reflections on the Prison Industrial Complex, Angela Davis, <https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/davisprison.html>.

⁷ Oregon Correctional Enterprises 2018 Annual Report, https://oce.oregon.gov/images/2018_OCE_Annual_Report.pdf.

⁸ State of Oregon Buy Decision Priority <https://www.oregon.gov/das/OPM/Pages/method.aspx>

People who are incarcerated can receive a job through the prison or through OCE. Non-OCE jobs are capped at a maximum of \$0.61 per hour; OCE job wages average \$1.25 per hour.⁹ However, according to the Prison Policy Initiative, Oregon non-OCE wages range from \$.05 per hour to \$.47 per hour, while the national average is \$.14 to \$.63, and prisons appear to be paying incarcerated people less today than in 2001.¹⁰ This makes it difficult for incarcerated people to save the money needed to successfully transition from prison and cover basic costs such as stablehousing, food, health care and transportation. Some may leave prison “with just a bus ticket and \$50 of ‘gate money’ if they have no other savings,” making it hard to survive when they return to their community.¹¹

People are leaving prison with burdensome debt.

The inability of people to save while working in prison, is exacerbated by the debt they are saddled with when they leave. There was \$10 billion dollars of criminal justice debt in the United States in 2015. This debt can be incurred via court fees, mandatory restitution, treatment costs, and even requirements to cover the costs of incarceration.¹² Some jails charge the people incarcerated there per diems on par with a motel stay – in Oregon, those with the ability to pay in state prisons were charged \$94.55/day in 2016.¹³ If one fails to pay fees or meet their financial obligations, they may be faced with high interest rates or additional fines. In some cases, nonpayment may even be considered a violation of parole terms and cause for re-incarceration.¹⁴ Given racialized dynamics around generational wealth as well as incarceration, it is no doubt that the burden of this debt falls more significantly on Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and their families.

Overrepresentation of People of Color and Indigenous People in Prison

More than 70% of people in prison are people of color.¹⁵ “African Americans are more likely than white Americans to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, they are more likely to experience lengthy prison sentences.”¹⁶ The imprisonment rate for African American women is twice that of white women.¹⁷ Although there is limited data about formerly incarcerated Native and Indigenous peoples, the 2010 Census data reveals that Native peoples are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and are incarcerated at a rate more than double that of white Americans. In states with large Native American populations, such as North Dakota and Oklahoma, incarceration rates of Native peoples can be up to seven times that of whites.¹⁸

BIPOC make up 12.4 of Oregon’s general population and 21.6% of its

⁹ Prison Legal News, April 2, 2019, <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2019/apr/2/oregon-prison-industry-program-nets-record-285-million-prisoners-earn-125hour/>.

¹⁰ How much do incarcerated people earn in each state?, 2017. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2017/04/10/wages/> ¹¹ How much do incarcerated people earn in each state?, 2017. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2017/04/10/wages/> ¹²

The US inmates charged per night in jail, BBC News, Sept. 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34705968>

¹³ Oregon’s price tag on a run-in with the law, Street Roots, June 2016, <https://news.streetroots.org/2016/06/07/oregon-s-price-tag-run-law>

¹⁴ How Prison Debt Ensnarers Offenders, The Atlantic, June 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/06/how-prison-debt-ensnares-offenders/484826/> ¹⁵ NAACP Criminal Justice Fact Sheet, <https://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/>.

¹⁶ Report to the United Nations on Racial Disparities in the U.S. Criminal Justice System, 2018. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/un-report-on-racial-disparities/>.

¹⁷ NAACP Criminal Justice Fact Sheet, <https://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/>.

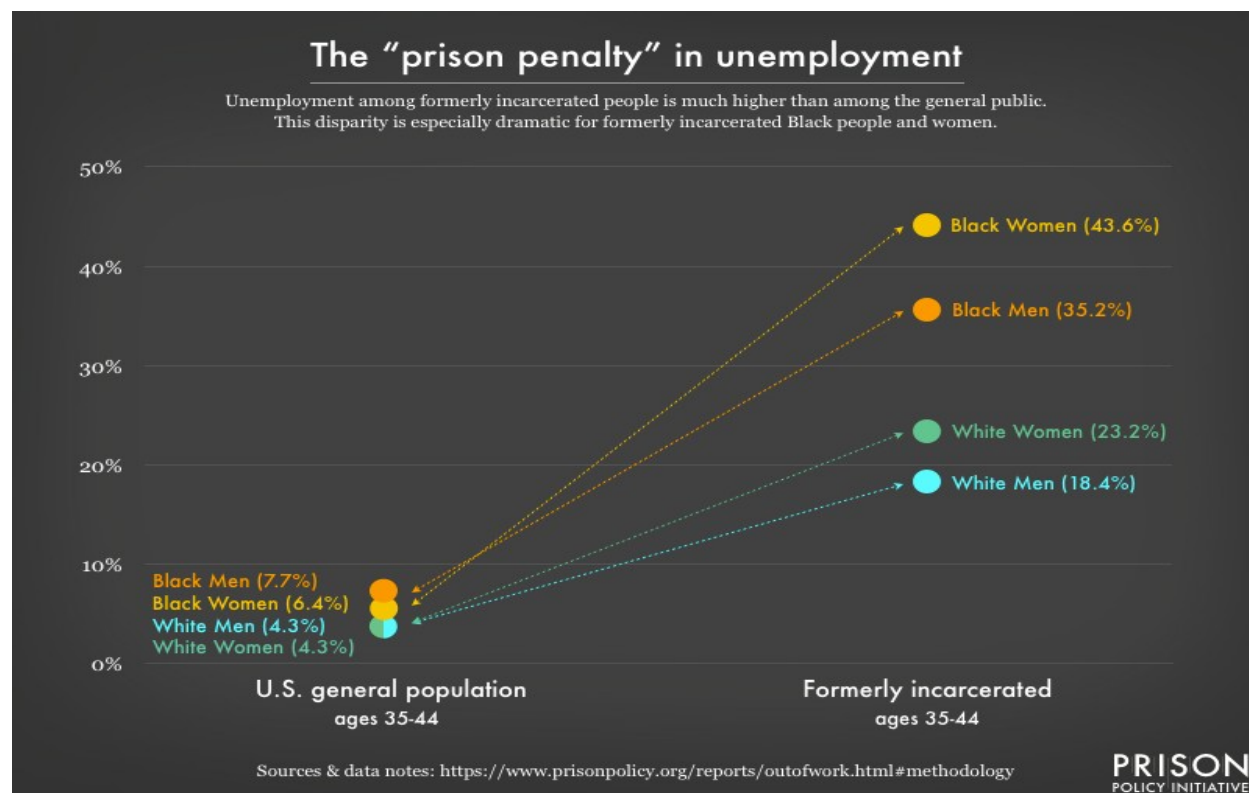
¹⁸ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/04/22/native/>.

population.¹⁹ A 2016 study found that one of every 21 African Americans in Oregon was behind bars. At that time, this rate was almost double that of Washington state's and 46% higher than the national average.²⁰ A Racial and Ethnic Disparities report examining Multnomah County's adult criminal justice system in 2018 found that Black people continue to be overrepresented at each stage—"from initial contact and arrest through prosecution, sentencing and parole or probation violations." The report found that Black people in Multnomah County are six times more likely than whites to be in jail; Native Americans and Hispanics are 1.8 and 1.2 times more likely than whites to be incarcerated, respectively.²¹

Employment: an Equalizer *and* Huge Hurdle

Employment is critical for helping formerly incarcerated people gain economic stability after release and reducing the likelihood that they return to prison. Stable employment following prison release increases public safety, reduces incarceration costs and results in more people actively contributing to our economy and society. But despite these obvious benefits, formerly incarcerated people—especially BIPOC—across the country and in Oregon—face high levels of discrimination and huge barriers to employment, resulting in economic exclusion, as illustrated by the graph that follows.

Figure 1: Working age (35-44) unemployment rates for people formerly incarcerated are higher than the rates of unemployment for any of their peers in the general population. Formerly incarcerated Black people and women are the most disadvantaged when it comes to finding work.



¹⁹ Prison Reentry Program Report, 2017, Mercy Corps, https://www.mercycorpsnw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/FINAL_MF_LIFE-REPORT_0501.pdf.

²⁰ https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2016/02/blacks_overrepresented_in_ever.html.

²¹ Safety and Justice Challenge, Racial and Ethnic Disparities and the Relative Rate Index, Multnomah County, Jan 2019.

Barriers to finding and keeping a job faced by BIPOC impacted by incarceration are further detailed below.

- **Formerly incarcerated people are unemployed at higher rates than the general population; people of color have an even higher rate.** The unemployment rate for people impacted by incarceration is 27%. This is five times higher than our national unemployment rate of 3.6%²² and our Oregon state rate of 3.7%.²³ National unemployment rates among people impacted by incarceration are higher for Black men (35%) and Hispanic or Latino men (27%). Women impacted by incarceration face even higher unemployment rates, with 39% of Hispanic or Latino women, 44% of Black women and 23% of white women experiencing unemployment after incarceration. In contrast, white males impacted by incarceration experience the lowest unemployment rate at 18%.²⁴
- **Having a record results in greater barriers to employment despite the fact formerly incarcerated people are more likely to be active in the labor market than the general population.** Research shows that employers discriminate against people who have criminal records, and regardless of an employer's stated willingness to hire a person with a criminal record, a candidate with no record will be more likely to receive the position.²⁵ Having a record reduces employer callback rates by 50%; this effect is even greater among Black people with a criminal record, with less than half of Black candidates receiving a call back from employers compared to their white counterparts.²⁶ Among people between the ages of 25 and 44 years old who have been incarcerated, 93.3% are either employed or actively looking for work, compared to 83.8% among their peers in the general population.²⁷ Considering the unemployment rates for formerly incarcerated people as stated above, these results show that formerly incarcerated people want to work.
- **Unemployment is highest within the first two years of release and is a leading cause of recidivism.** The inability to secure gainful employment is one of many barriers that restricts successful reentry to the community following incarceration. In the period immediately following release, people impacted by incarceration are likely to struggle to attain their basic needs, such as housing, food, health care, transportation and child care. Research shows that people who have been impacted by incarceration are almost 10 times more likely than the general public to experience homelessness²⁸ and also face multiple barriers in attaining support for addiction and mental health conditions.²⁹ This population also faces disproportionately high rates of death within the first two years of release due to drug overdose, cardiovascular disease, homicide and suicide.³⁰

²² <https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/unemployment-rate>.

²³ <https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-unemployment-rate-december-2019/>.

²⁴ <https://www.projectcensored.org/17-more-than-25-percent-of-formerly-incarcerated-people-are-unemployed/>.

²⁵ https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/pager/files/asr_pagerquillian2.pdf.

²⁶ https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/pager/files/pager_ajs.pdf.

²⁷ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html>.

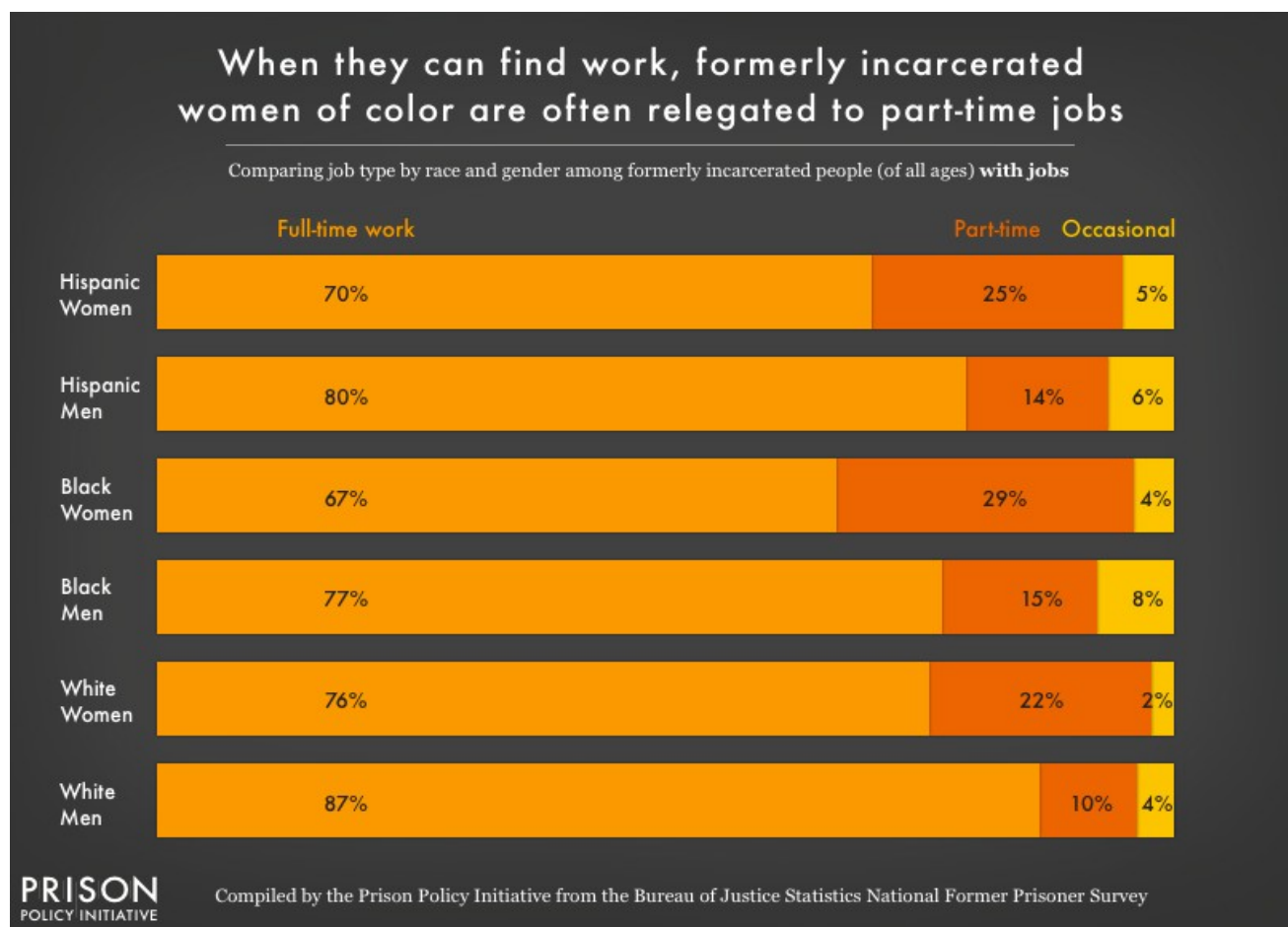
²⁸ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>.

²⁹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6102909/>.

³⁰ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html>.

- **When people impacted by incarceration—particularly people of color—do obtain employment, the positions they receive are often those that offer the lowest pay and the least job security.** The Brookings Institute conducted an analysis of Internal Revenue Service data which revealed that the majority of people recently released from prison who are employed are living on an income below the poverty line, with 49% earning less than \$500 in the first full year after release and 32% earning between \$500 and \$15,000.³¹
- **Formerly incarcerated Black women are especially disadvantaged when seeking employment and attaining economic security.** Among formerly incarcerated white men (the group most likely to be employed), almost all who are employed work in full-time positions (87%). In contrast, formerly incarcerated Black women (the group least likely to be employed) have a full-time employment rate of only 67% and are overrepresented in part-time (29%) and occasional (4%) jobs, as illustrated in Figure 2.³²

Figure 2: Of the formerly incarcerated people who have found work, women of color most often end up in part-time jobs.



³¹ https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/es_20180314_looneyincarceration_final.pdf.

³² <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html>.

- **Unemployment is accompanied by multiple other barriers.** As previously noted in this report, in addition to the stigma of incarceration and high levels of discrimination, formerly incarcerated people have a difficulty accessing support services, and more importantly, finding a safe, stable place to live. Half of the people being released from custody don't have identified housing when they are released.³³ The Prison Policy Initiative found that formerly incarcerated people are almost 10 times more likely to be homeless. This experience is especially high among formerly incarcerated Black men, and Black and/or Hispanic women.³⁴ The report also found that being homeless leads to being arrested and incarcerated again. This "revolving door" is attributed to policies that criminalize homelessness.³⁵ In Oregon, African Americans and Native Americans are overrepresented, making up 6% and 4.3% of the unhoused population respectively and 1.8% and 1.2% of the general population.³⁶ An ACLU of Oregon report found 224 laws on the books that criminalize behavior associated with homelessness, such as obstructing sidewalks, camping in public space, panhandling/soliciting, and loitering.³⁷

³³ <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2019/apr/2/oregon-prison-industry-program-nets-record-285-million-prisoners-earn-125hour/>.

³⁴ Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people, Prison Policy Initiative, August 2018, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>.

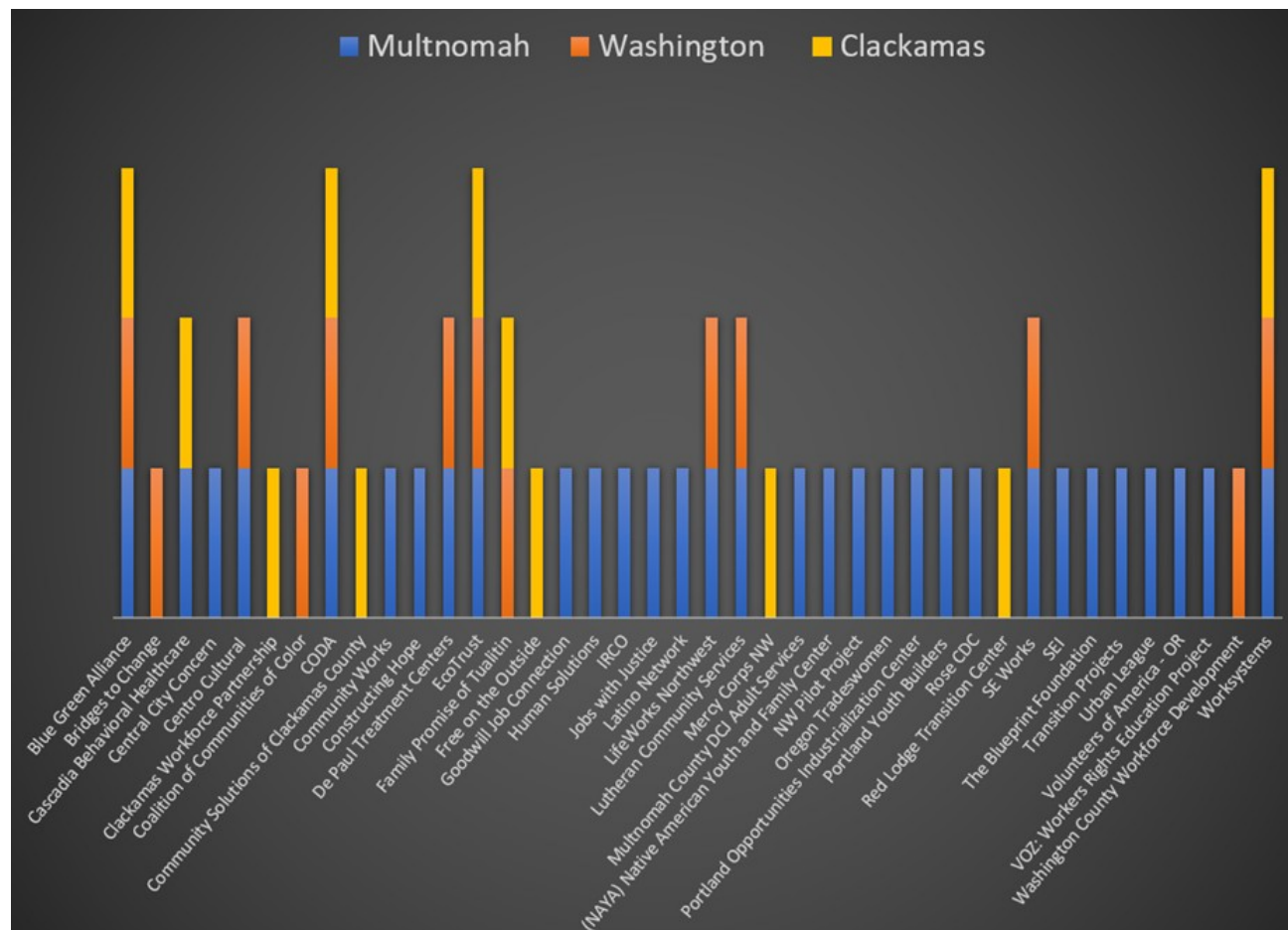
³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Decriminalizing Homelessness, ACLU Oregon, 2017, https://aclu-or.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/acluor_decriminalizing_homelessness_report_ink-friendly_final.pdf ³⁷ Decriminalizing Homelessness, ACLU Oregon, 2017, https://aclu-or.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/acluor_decriminalizing_homelessness_report_ink-friendly_final.pdf

METHODOLOGY

To conduct the landscape assessment, Metropolitan Group conducted desktop research of 52 workforce development and transitional services in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties, as well as organizations that advocate for policy changes that impact formerly incarcerated Black, Indigenous and other people of color. Thirty-nine organizations have programs in Multnomah County, 14 in Washington County and 14 in Clackamas County as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Workforce development and transition service providers in the landscape assessment and counties where they operate



To gain additional information, a survey that was disseminated to 63 individuals at the 52 organizations. The survey was administered on February 18, 2020, and closed on March 11, 2020. Participants were offered gift cards for their participation. Fifteen individuals responded to the survey, for a 24% completion rate. Eleven organizations were represented. One respondent was removed from the analysis due to incompleteness for a total of 14 respondents. Three respondents from IRCO contained information regarding overlapping programs; these responses have been combined into one response that combines all programs.

Information from the desk top research and survey was used to populate a snapshot overview of workforce development, transition and wraparound services to support people of color impacted by incarceration in the tri-county area. The information was supplemented with some telephone interviews. The database of services was submitted to Metro RID.

The findings that follow are primarily based on the responses to the survey of the following organizations:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare

- Cascadia Supported Employment program
- IPS Supported Employment program

Central City Concern

- Clean Start

Clackamas Workforce Partnership

Constructing Hope

- Pre-Apprenticeship Adult Program

Ecotrust

- Green Workforce Academy

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)

- Community Works Project, A Home for Everyone, Living Solutions, NW Promise, and Clackamas Works

Oregon Tradeswomen

- Pathways to Success

ROSE Community Development

- Resident Assets

SE Works, Inc.

Self Enhancement, Inc.

- Community and Family Programs

The Blueprint Foundation

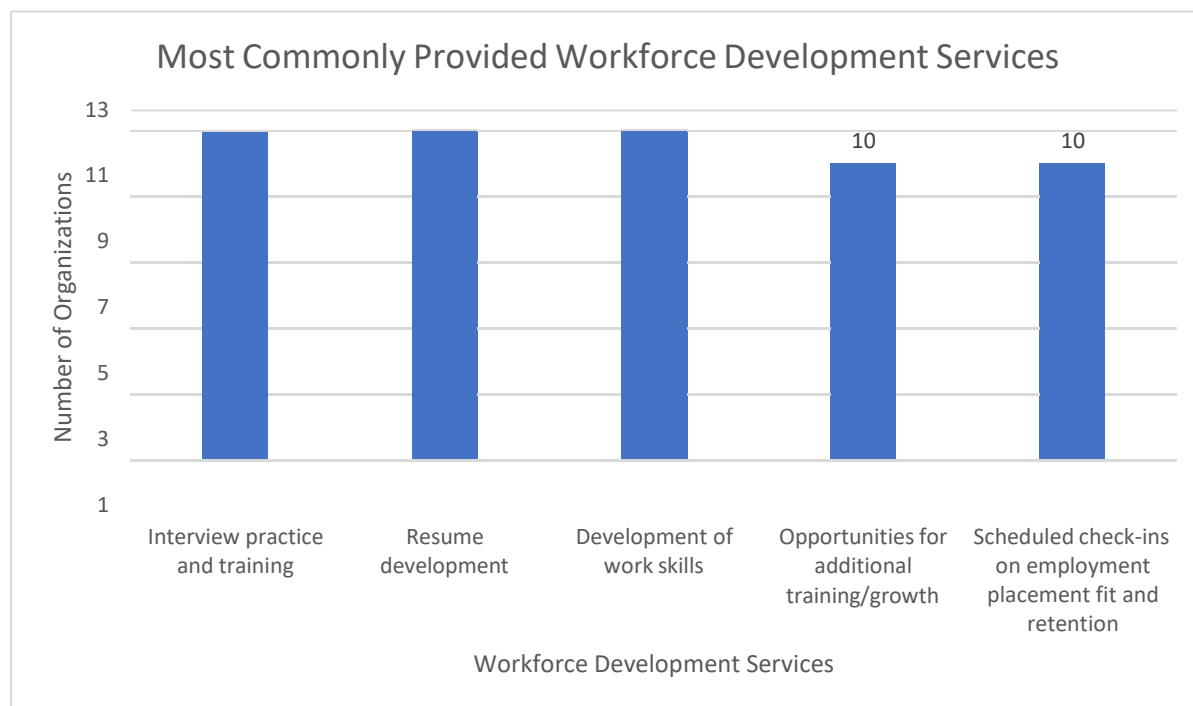
- Grounding Waters and Constructing Careers

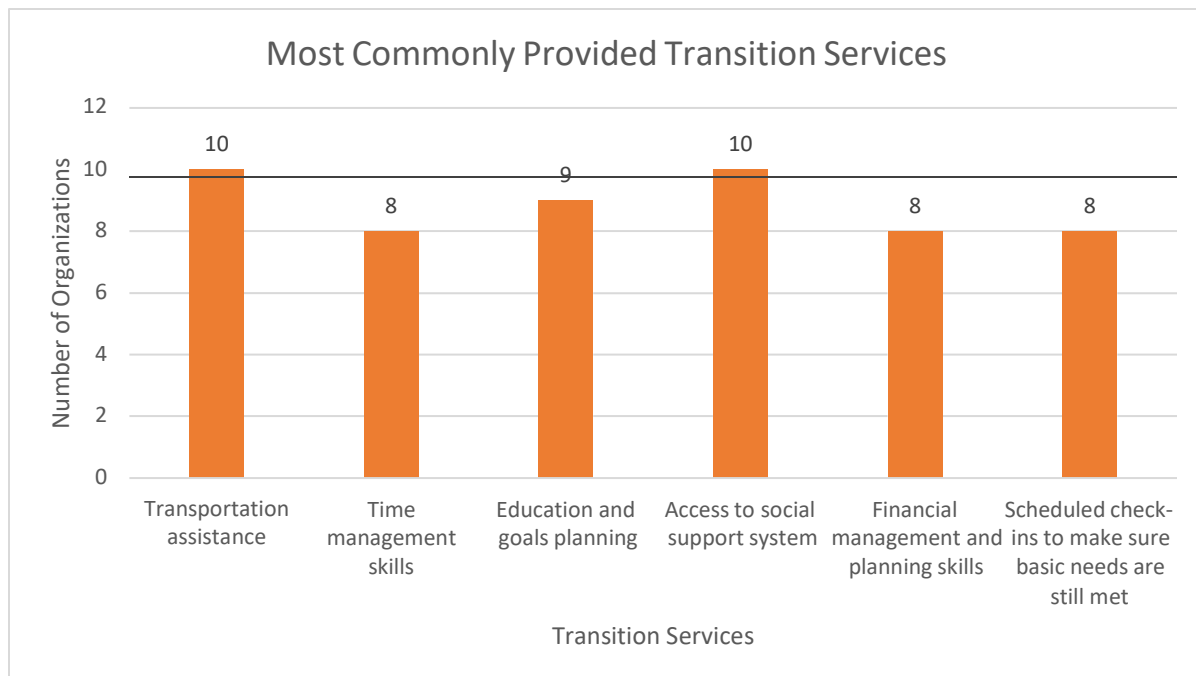
FINDINGS

The findings that follow are primarily based on the information obtained from survey respondents. In some cases, Metropolitan Group offers additional relevant information obtained through desktop research and phone calls. The information obtained from all sources was added to the snapshot and the contact list.

Finding 1: Workforce development and transition services are provided by all of the respondents, even among organizations that do not consider themselves to be workforce development or transition oriented.

All of the organizations provide at least one workforce development service, despite three organizations (Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – Cascadia Supported Employment, ROSE Community Development, and Self Enhancement, Inc.) that classify themselves as support/wraparound services rather than workforce development and/or transition services. Half of the respondents (seven) classify their organizations as workforce development. No respondents classified their organizations as transition services, and only four classified their organizations as both workforce development and transition services, despite the fact that the majority of organizations indicated services they provide within the continuum of workforce development and transition services.





Finding 2: There appears to be a discrepancy between the services needed by individuals impacted by incarceration and the services that are available, especially those that help people obtain higher-paying jobs.

Less than half (four of 14) of the organizations assist participants in obtaining a GED or high school diploma. Since people who have been in prison are twice as likely to have not graduated from high school,³⁸ this may pose an additional barrier for this population. Without a high school diploma and higher education or specialized job training, individuals are often relegated to low-paying jobs. However, six of the 14 respondents indicated that their organization offers specialized job training.

Assistance in obtaining a GED or high school diploma:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – IPS Supported Employment program
 Clackamas Workforce Partnership
 IRCO
 SE Works, Inc.

Specialized job training:

Central City Concern
 Clackamas Workforce Partnership
 IRCO
 SE Works, Inc.
 The Blueprint Foundation

³⁸ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/education.html>.

Finding 3: The majority of respondents reported that their organizations provide culturally specific services. When asked to specify which populations are served, fewer organizations provided responses, so it is unclear how each organization defines culturally specific services.

Eight respondents reported that their organizations provide culturally specific services. At the most basic level, culturally specific services are those created by and with communities of color, whose staff and board leadership reflect the communities being served, and which the community itself recognizes as being culturally specific. Multnomah County has a much more detailed definition that is included in Appendix iv.

Of the respondents who reported their organizations provide culturally specific services, seven out of eight serve the Black and African American community; four out of eight provide services to Latinos/as/x communities; and three out of eight provide services to Indigenous or Native peoples. Clackamas Workforce Partnership, IRCO and Ecotrust indicated that they provide services to all three populations specified on the survey.

Organizations offering culturally specific services (based on the survey). Refer to the snapshot for additional culturally specific resources.

Black/African American populations	Latino/a/x populations	Indigenous/Native populations
Constructing Hope	Clackamas Workforce Partnership	Clackamas Workforce Partnership
Clackamas Workforce Partnership	Ecotrust	Ecotrust
Ecotrust	IRCO	IRCO
IRCO	SE Works, Inc.	
SE Works, Inc.		
Self Enhancement, Inc.		
The Blueprint Foundation		

The respondents from Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare did not indicate specific populations and noted in the “other” category: “We work with all kinds of people and try to be aware of cultural needs and biases.”

While Central City Concern did not specifically mention in its survey response that it provides culturally specific services, it does operate Imani Center for services specific to Black and African American populations and the Puentes program for Latino populations. This information is included in the snapshot.

As previously noted, there is little data about Native peoples in the criminal justice system, within labor statistics and in general. A vital source of information and support locally is Red Lodge Transition Services, a Native American-led organization that provides a wide variety of services to men and women released from jail or prison in addition to providing programming in state prisons.

According to Red Lodge, Native Americans are experiencing an all-time high in regard to incarceration:³⁹

- Native Americans represent less than 2% of the total population, yet comprise almost 4% of the Oregon prison population.
- In Oregon prisons, Native American women are more overrepresented than Native American men.
- One out of every 30 Native people in Oregon currently has some connection to the corrections system as a victim or an offender.
- Native peoples are more than twice as likely to be victims of violent crime, and Native Americans are more likely than people of other races and ethnicities to be victims of violence from a person of a different race or ethnicity.
- Most crimes are connected with substance abuse.

Finding 4: Organizations were most likely to work with individuals who have experienced incarceration, and least likely to work with youth on probation and individuals on probation from federal supervision.

There were only four respondents who said that their organizations serve individuals in each of the incarceration-impacted categories: Clackamas Workforce Partnership, Ecotrust, Constructing Hope, and SE Works. Self Enhancement, Inc. serves individuals in all categories except those on probation under federal supervision, and Cascadia BHC serves all individuals except youth on probation from the Oregon Youth Authority. Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare serves individuals on probation from a state facility, but not from county facilities. IRCO noted it serves individuals who have experienced incarceration, but not individuals on probation. Four respondents skipped the question, so most likely do not serve this population.

Serve individuals who have experienced incarceration:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – Cascadia Supported Employment, IPS Supported Employment
Clackamas Workforce Partnership
Constructing Hope
Ecotrust
IRCO
SE Works, Inc.
Self Enhancement, Inc.

Serve individuals on probation from a state facility:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – Cascadia Supported Employment, IPS Supported Employment
Clackamas Workforce Partnership
Constructing Hope
Ecotrust
SE Works, Inc.

³⁹ <https://redlodgetransition.org/>

Self Enhancement, Inc.

Serve individuals on probation from county facilities:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – IPS Supported Employment
Clackamas Workforce Partnership
Constructing Hope
Ecotrust
SE Works, Inc.
Self Enhancement, Inc.

Serve individuals on probation under federal supervision:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – IPS Supported Employment
Clackamas Workforce Partnership
Constructing Hope
Ecotrust
SE Works, Inc.

Serve youth on probation from the Oregon Youth Authority:

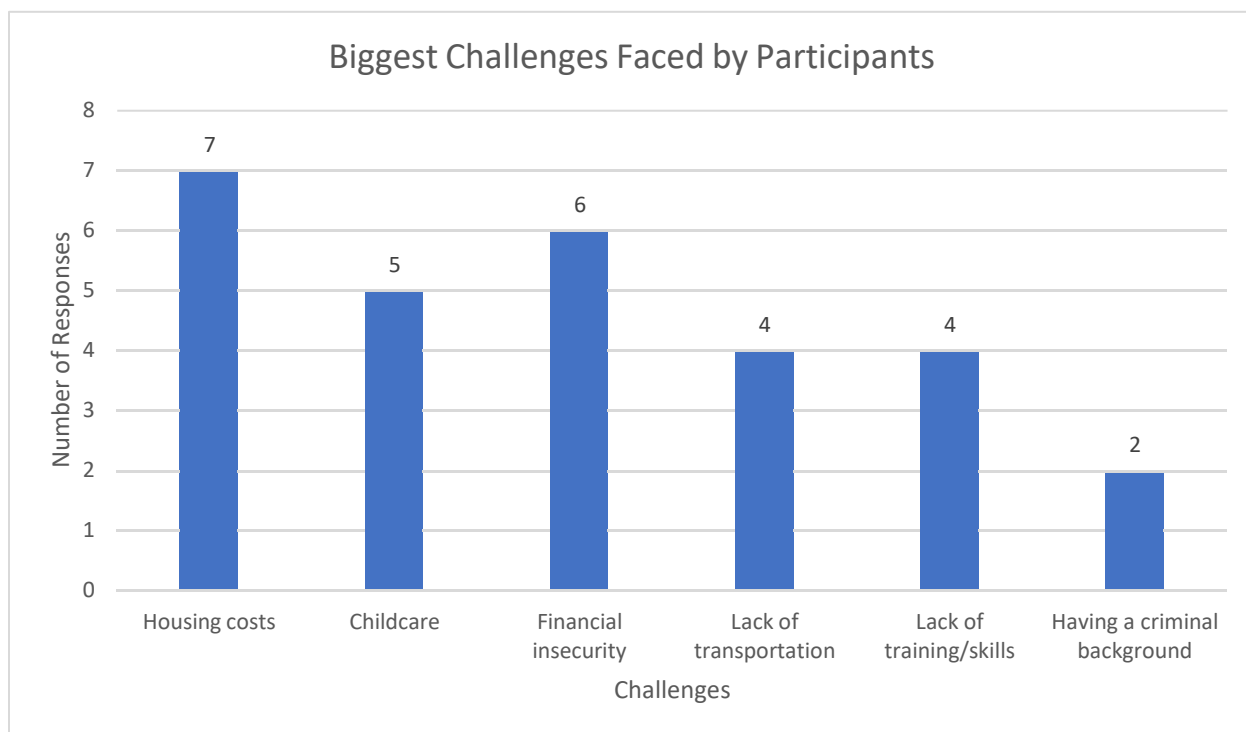
Clackamas Workforce Partnership
Constructing Hope
Ecotrust
SE Works, Inc.
Self Enhancement, Inc.

Respondents that skipped the question:

Central City Concern
Oregon Tradeswomen
ROSE Community Development
The Blueprint Foundation

Finding 5: The biggest challenges faced by program participants, according to respondents, are housing costs, child care, financial insecurity, lack of transportation, lack of training/skills and having a criminal background. These challenges represent a gap that needs to be filled in order to help individuals impacted by incarceration transition to stable and successful community life.

Organizations are working to address some of the challenges facing participants. This is evidenced by transportation assistance and financial management being among the most commonly provided workforce development and transition services. These challenges correspond to the lack of educational attainment and lower availability of higher-paying jobs for people with a criminal history, relegating this population to a lower socioeconomic status.



Finding 6: A gap appears to exist in the provision of several transition services important for successfully integrating into community life following incarceration. These services include conflict resolution, assistance understanding probation terms, access to debt counselors, and access to necessary behavioral and physical health care services.

Court-imposed fines can leave individuals impacted by incarceration with severe and lifelong financial debt. In Washington state, 19,000 new debt accounts are added each year for people who have been incarcerated.⁴⁰ Of the organizations surveyed, only one, SE Works, Inc., provides several key services, such as conflict resolution, assistance understanding probation terms and access to debt counselors. The ability to obtain access to necessary physical and mental health care services is also critical to a successful transition, particularly because individuals impacted by incarceration have higher rates of physical and mental health conditions.⁴¹ Of the surveyed organizations, two said they offer behavioral health services and two offer health care assistance. It is likely that most or all organizations refer clients out for health care and behavioral services.

Understanding probation terms:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – Cascadia Supported Employment
SE Works, Inc.

Access to debt counselors:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – IPS Supported Employment

⁴⁰ <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/06/how-prison-debt-ensnares-offenders/484826/>.

⁴¹ <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/incarcerationandhealth.html>.

Clackamas Workforce Partnership
SE Works, Inc.
Self Enhancement, Inc.

Behavioral health services:

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare – Cascadia Supported Employment
IRCO

Health care assistance:

IRCO
SE Works, Inc.

Finding 7: Sobriety is a requirement for access to services for some of the organizations; however access to substance use treatment is limited.

Sixty-five percent of individuals in prison have a substance use disorder, and an additional 20% did not meet the criteria for a substance use disorder but were under the influence of a substance at the time of their arrest.⁴² In Oregon, a formerly incarcerated person in prison for a drug-related crime cannot receive TANF benefits unless they have attended treatment.⁴³

Of the five organizations that require sobriety in order to access services, one organization, The Blueprint Foundation, specified that sobriety is a requirement for its construction training program, and Self Enhancement, Inc. specified that the organization does not ask about sobriety nor does it impact services; however if it is informed about this need, it will refer an individual to treatment services. One organization, SE Works, Inc., skipped the question.

Organizations that require sobriety in order to access all or some services:

Central City Concern
Constructing Hope Oregon
Tradeswomen Self
Enhancement, Inc. The
Blueprint Foundation

None of the survey respondents identified that they provide substance abuse treatment. However, Metropolitan Group's research found that Central City Concern (CCC) provides substance use and addiction treatment at its Blackburn Center through medication support recovery services, peer and group support, and counseling. All of CCC's housing units are an Alcohol and Drug Free Community and require 90 days verifiable sobriety and participation in an ongoing treatment program. CCC's Puentes program provides culturally specific recovery services for Latinos and their families. Cascadia Behavioral Health operates the Turning Point program in three Department of Correction facilities, and provides group and individual therapy to address substance dependence and related issues. Bridges to Change operates inside the treatment dorm in Washington County and pairs participants with mentors after they complete the first phase of recovery treatment. In Multnomah County, its Reentry Enhancement

⁴² <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/criminal-justice>.

⁴³ Can Felons Get Welfare? <https://www.jobsforfelonshub.com/can-felons-get-welfare/>

Coordination program provides substance use treatment inside the prison and then provides continued support through 90 days of intensive supervision, outpatient treatment, supportive housing and support finding employment upon release. Bridges' Short Term Transleave program allows for 90 days early release, and participants receive substance use disorder treatment at Volunteers of America. For services not specifically for incarcerated individuals, DePaul Treatment Centers offer a wide range of recovery services for adults, youth and families that range from detox to outpatient and continued mentorship.

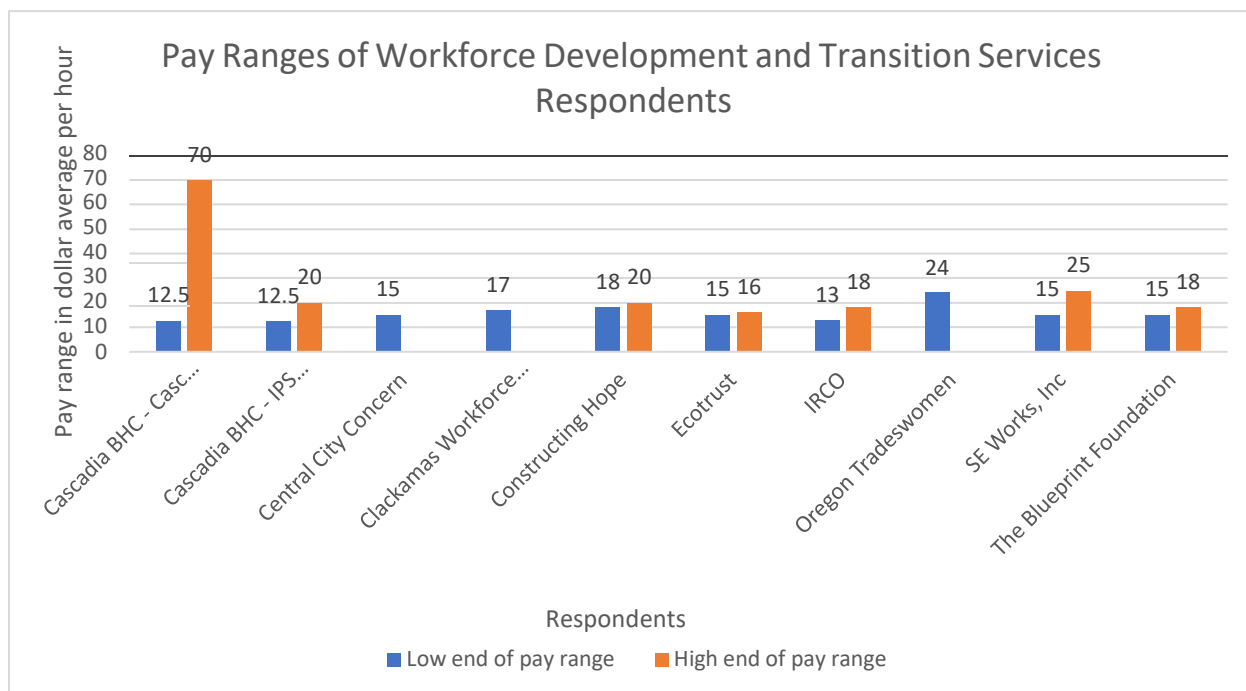
Finding 8: There is a discrepancy between the number of organizations that say they provide placement in jobs that offer a living wage and the cost of living in the Portland tri-county area.

Nine of the respondents reported that the jobs in which they place individuals provide a living wage. In Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties, a living wage for one adult with no children is \$15.16/hour, and a living wage for one adult with two children is \$35.53/hour.^{44,45,46} In contrast, the hourly wages reported by survey respondents ranged from \$12.50/hour to \$70/hour—however, six of these include jobs with wages below \$15.16/hour. It is also worth taking into consideration that one of the biggest challenges reported by survey respondents is child care, implying that clients have children. Thus, it is likely that \$15.16/hour is not actually a living wage. The pay ranges offered by each organization that responded to the survey are included in the chart that follows.

⁴⁴ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/41051>.

⁴⁵ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/41067>.

⁴⁶ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/41005>.



Finding 9: There are various pathways into programs, including referrals, outreach, walk-ins and applications. Success is often defined by participant goals, usually in terms of job attainment, and marks the pathway out of the program.

Some organizations require specific referrals from the Department of Human Services, or case managers, or attendance at a mandatory training before offering services. These include IRCO, both programs from Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare, and Oregon Tradeswomen. Other organizations conduct outreach or accept walk-ins. This is the case with Clackamas Workforce Partnership, Constructing Hope, IRCO, and Self-Enhancement, Inc. There are also organizations that have an application process. This includes ROSE Community Development; The Blueprint Foundation, which has a noncompetitive application process; and Central City Concern, in which individuals apply to job postings on its website.

For almost all programs, individuals are able to decide when to leave. Most programs define a successful exit as one in which participants have “reached their goals,” or are “working in their job of choice with acceptable wages and hours.” The exceptions are programs that have a specific job career path, such as Constructing Hope, in which individuals go on to Bureau of Labor and Industries certified apprenticeships with local union and non-union sites; and Oregon Tradeswomen, in which individuals finish training and begin an apprenticeship.

Finding 10: Some organizations provide services *inside* prisons to help people prepare for a successful transition as they approach their release date. The majority of these programs provide substance use treatment and referral to services upon release, as well as providing mentors and support groups.

Transitioning from the intensely supervised and regimented experience of life inside prison to life outside can be a jarring adjustment. Services that begin before release can be key in helping people successfully navigate this drastic adjustment by providing continued, consistent support throughout the process.

Although not a question on the survey, MG conducted research to identify organizations that support people prior to release. Many of the reach-in services MG came across are linked to a substance use or behavioral health program operated on the inside. Bridges to Change offers two reach-in mentorship programs in Washington County, one specifically for those in the Treatment Dorm and one for others generally referred. In Multnomah County, its Re-entry Enhancement Coordination and Multnomah County Justice Reinvestment Program (MCJRP) provide significant support for people exiting prison who have engaged in their substance use treatment programs. Cascadia Behavioral Health offers Turning Point, which helps coordinate care and refer people with behavioral health and substance use challenges to services. The Multnomah County Department of Community Justice also operates a reach-in program for people in state prisons that helps link them to relevant services upon release.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The data suggests that formerly incarcerated people—especially BIPOC—are disadvantaged educationally, economically and socially, nationally and in Oregon as a result of historic and systemic racism and long standing policies that disproportionately impact certain populations. This further widens disparities and perpetuates inequality.

The data suggests that there is a great need for workforce development and transition services leading to employment that pays a living wage and support /wrap around services that remain with people for one to two years, to reduce recidivism, help formerly incarcerated people integrate back into society and become contributing members of their communities.

There are several actions that Metro RID and the WPES department in which it is housed can take to help eliminate barriers and create a more inclusive workplace for formerly incarcerated BIPOC, and in so doing advance the vision of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan for increased racial equity.

1) Take a people-centered lens and approach to programmatic decision making and RID communications.

- Expand on the current WPES decision-making lens for equity guidance for budget and programmatic decision making to take into consideration hourly workers
- Consider how RID, WPES and Metro overall, can offer stability for hourly workers, who are most vulnerable to cuts in hours and fluctuating schedules from week to week.
- Elevate voices and people's ability to be resilient (strength based) through storytelling.

2) Recognize how unconscious bias may impact decision-making and how people are treated in the workplace.

- Create welcoming, safe, inclusive space at deployment center
- Continue to create awareness within MRC about historic and systemic racism and the need for racial equity
- Provide more education/training for Metro employees on prison system and related disparities and inequities, including the connection between homelessness and incarceration

3) Create a higher quality and more equitable employment experience for RID contract employees.

- Create a higher baseline hourly wage for RID contract employees.
- Extend Metro employment benefits such as financial literacy and access to Employer Resource Groups to RID contract employees
- Include support services as part of the benefits package for program participants (see number 5 below for more details)
- Consider job shadows, mobility coaching and basic workforce development services (job search, resume writing etc.) to support advancement.

4) Eliminate the use of background checks that keep formerly incarcerated people and people impacted by the justice system from being hired at Metro, even after years of contract work at the agency.

- Consider how Metro can be an exemplar for other public agencies as well as major employers by creating pathways and eliminating barriers for people with records.

5) Expand strategic partnerships to leverage Metro's ability to provide baseline needs (housing, health, social system, legal aid, GED) and/or bring experience with and culturally specific services for RID's priority populations. Some of the providers that stood out in the survey and may merit deeper exploration, include: Red Lodge, IRCO, Mercy Corps, Clackamas Workforce Partnership.

- Examine values alignment (restorative justice, trauma informed care, whole systems approach) with organizations as a core criteria for partnership (restorative justice, trauma informed care, whole systems approach)
- Ensure exploration of partnership is at an organization level rather than solely at a programmatic level in order to take full advantage the full spectrum of services they offer. It is strongly recommended that RID begin this process with Central City Concern, that could be a full service partner.
- Consider accessibility of support services offered to RID employees (so people don't have to run around town, adding to current transportation barriers)
- As RID identifies its partners, synchronize with DEI to determine if the potential partner organizations are eligible for a capacity-building grant

6) Leverage Metro's influence as a public agency by advocating for key policy issues and modeling way for the greater Portland community.

- Examples of potential policy work include:

- Living Wage: not exploiting prison workers
- Plan to protect most vulnerable works in a disaster/crisis
- Strengthen the link between housing and the needs of the formerly incarcerated
- Identify which of Metro's vendors use inmate labor and do not pay living wages. Set up expectations of other governmental partners that receive funding from Metro that they pay living wages for inmate labor. State equity expectations and ask that they report on equity goals and define what those are (such as "our goal is 50%

APPENDIX I. MULTNOMAH COUNTY DEFINITION OF CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SERVICES

Organizations providing Culturally Specific Services demonstrate alignment of founding mission with the community proposed to be served (creation of mission was historically based in serving communities experiencing racism) and alignment with the outcomes desired by the program.

Organizations providing Culturally Specific Services demonstrate intimate knowledge of lived experience of the community, including but not limited to the impact of structural and individual racism or discrimination on the community; knowledge of specific disparities documented in the community and how that influences the structure of their program or service; ability to describe the community's cultural practices, health and safety beliefs/practices, positive cultural identity/pride/resilience, immigration dynamics, religious beliefs, etc., and how their services have been adapted to those cultural norms.

Organizations providing Culturally Specific Services demonstrate multiple formal and informal channels for meaningful community engagement; participation and feedback exists at all levels of the organization (from service complaints to community participation at the leadership and board level). Those channels are constructed within the cultural norms, practices and beliefs of the community, and affirm the positive cultural identity/pride/resilience of the community. Community participation can and does result in desired change.

Organizations providing Culturally Specific Services demonstrate commitment to a highly skilled and experienced workforce by employing robust recruitment, hiring and leadership development practices including but not limited to valuing and screening for community and/or lived experience; requirements for professional and personal references from within the community; training standards; professional development opportunities and performance monitoring.

Organizations providing Culturally Specific Services demonstrate commitment to safety and belonging through advocacy; design of services from the norms and worldviews of the community; reflect core cultural constructs of the culturally specific community; understand and incorporate shared history; create rich support networks; engage all aspects of community; and address power relationships.