

# **Advancing Racial Equity Initiative**

Vision Action Network and community partners Adelante Mujeres, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Bienestar, and Coalition of Communities of Color came together to advance racial equity in Washington County and improve outcomes for people of color in education, economic well-being, and civic engagement.

From January through April 2019, we held two county-wide forums and six culturally-specific community conversations that gathered over 500 people from local governments, nonprofits, businesses, and underrepresented communities. At the first county-wide forum, attendees generated dozens of great ideas to advance racial equity, and these are the ones that rose to the top:

- 1. Equity-based education including implicit bias training for students and parents in schools (and teachers and administrators)
- 2. Reduce/remove criminal background criteria used to screen applicants for eligibility for programs that assist or house low-income households
- 3. Increase engagement and representation of people of color on all civic boards and commissions
- 4. Free before and after school programs and including transportation
- 5. Mentorship programs for youth of color and underrepresented groups including how to run for office
- 6. Increase number of students of color accessing higher education through hiring/modeling diverse representation of educators and leaders; and public officials working collaboratively with schools, community colleges, and local universities



"The lack of representation of the Latinx community (in government) is concerning and damages faith and trust."

## **COMMUNITY VOICES**

Some of the findings from the community conversations included the need for more effective **training** on cultural proficiency; more **public spaces** that embrace diversity and inclusivity; greater **representation** of people of color in government and public life; and **essential resources** for everyone, regardless of immigration status.

- Community Member











#### **ACTION**

Participants of the second county-wide forum took the best ideas and suggested ways to act on them which led to the following key findings:

### **LEADING TOPICS**

- Create a path for youth of color through mentorship programs with officials/community leaders
  that encourage them to engage in the community and step into leadership roles.
- Provide training on implicit bias, cultural competency, and diversity to improve responsiveness to hate/bias/racist incidents.
- Connect and reallocate essential resources to prioritize people of color. Collaborate to remove barriers and create better access for people of color who feel uncomfortable and unwelcomed while navigating systems today.
- **Recruit** diverse teachers and school staff to better reflect the student body and community, and to inspire youth of color to follow in their path.



#### **LEADING THEMES AND INITIATIVES**

- More representation from people of color to truly reflect the community.
- Empower people of color so that decision making reflects the entire community.
- Invest in youth of color to create a hopeful path for the future.
- Remove current systemic barriers to increase opportunities for people of color across sectors.



"Efforts like making sure high school seniors are registered to vote makes a difference."

For more information, contact:

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