

# WORLD'S HIGHEST STANDARD OF LIVING



EMPRESS RULES EQUITY CONSULTING  
PRESENTS:

## TRAVEL OREGON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

*Our actions and decisions today will shape  
the way we will live in the future.*

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NOVEMBER 2021 // PREPARED BY  
KHEOSHI OWENS

TRAVEL



OREGON

EQUITY

# EMPRESS RULES

CONSULTING



[www.Empressrules.net](http://www.Empressrules.net)

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Special thanks to all of the survey participants, round table discussion participants and the  
Empress Rules Collaborative Team:

Lara Media  
MamaBerry Consulting  
Sumiko Monique Consulting  
Ubuntu Services

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## Introduction

Anti-Racism + Accountability + Empowerment + Resources + Cultural Responsiveness = Safety. According to a study conducted by Mandala Research, African-Americans are traveling more due to increases in disposable income and the development of culturally responsive and relevant historical sites (1). Spending by African-Americans increased from \$48 billion to \$63 billion, which accounts for more than just inflation, which would've brought the number to approximately \$55 billion. Researchers account for this additional increase due to having a Black president—a catalyst for Black people to feel more pride in themselves and their culture. Representation in all forms of leadership is pivotal for change.

Unfortunately, 15% of African-Americans shared that the fear of racial profiling impacts their willingness to travel.

*"Sometimes, I fear for my safety traveling to places where there are not a lot of other African-Americans."*

Another Mandala Report entitled "The African-American Traveler study" outlines African-American travelers' travel habits and preferences and suggests a significantly higher

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percentage of these vacationers would visit more parks if they saw greater diversity among employees and visitors (2). Knowing how and where to find black and brown people is essential to safety and travel.

Locally, in Eugene, Oregon, Brown people face similar challenges. Sergio Reyes and two other Mexican immigrants were busy landscaping at their worksite in early 2018 when they were accosted by a man hurling racial epithets and threatening to cut off the head of one of them.

*“It doesn’t matter if I become an American citizen,” Reyes said. “If your skin color is not white and your English is not perfect, you don’t blend. Bottom line.”*

Hate-crime experts, victims, and witnesses told News 21 that two significant factors exacerbated the problem recently: a perceived climate of anti-immigrant animosity encouraged by the election of Donald Trump for president; and fears of reporting to authorities, especially among undocumented immigrants who fear deportation. How can Black and Brown people enjoy traveling when we are in constant fear for our lives?



Travel Oregon, a white-led organization that has historically centered the needs and desires of white travelers and residents, has the responsibility to institutionalize Anti-Racism, Racial Equity, and Inclusion into their policies, practices, and procedures. Travel Oregon has the responsibility to create structures of accountability for themselves and their partners. Travel Oregon must take responsibility as an organization to implement reparations and restorative justice for their participation in the exclusion of Black and Brown peoples’ institutions,

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partnerships, and communities. We are one, and the Empress Rules team and our Black and Brown community members are excited for Travel Oregon to lead the fight for change in creating an inclusive travel industry—beginning with self.

## Project Description

This project sought to build a direct relationship between Travel Oregon and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities to ensure that BIPOC has a seat and is empowered to make decisions at Travel Oregon's decision-making table. The BIPOC community has the solutions to the challenges we collectively face; however, we continue to be the most marginalized and the most strapped for resources due to systemic inequities. To achieve Racial Equity, reparations and restorative justice need to occur. Through Anti-racist actions, Travel Oregon has the opportunity to be an industry leader in implementing Racial and Economic Justice throughout Oregon. The intentions of this community engagement include:

- Understand perspectives from diverse stakeholders most affected by historical inequities, about the most effective and most needed services and support for BIPOC-owned businesses and travelers in the tourism industry.
- Cultivate positive relationships with communities that have been traditionally marginalized by the tourism industry.
- Identify community solutions to improve outcomes for BIPOC employees, businesses, and travelers that have been marginalized by the tourism industry.
- Promote community understanding of OTC.

Empress Rules' hope for the outcome of this process is that Travel Oregon will institutionalize recommendations from the community engagement into its strategic plan.



## Project Team

Empress Rules' philosophy on community engagement centers equity in action by empowering the community to be the change that we want to see in the world. Empress Rules is committed to excellence, integrity, and empowerment to create inclusive environments. Empress Rules uses the collective approach of valuing multiple perspectives, especially community engagement. Equity requires that we directly invest in those impacted by historical disparities, thus the intentional selection of this highly qualified and diverse team. All members of this project team are passionate community members who have dedicated their lives to healing our community. We are stronger together.

Empress Rules Equity Consulting is an MBE/WBE/ESB certified firm founded by Kheoshi Owens. Empress Rules' mission is to end the dehumanization of people. Kheoshi specializes in AREI (Anti-racism, Racial Equity & inclusion), Strategic Planning, Workshops, Executive Coaching, Community Engagement, and Business Development utilizing the transformational and engaging consciousness-raising technique called the "Experiential Learning Cycle."





Kheoshi Owens, MBA (Project Lead)

Kheoshi Owens holds an MBA and is a mother, activist, and North Portland Native. Empress Rules has facilitated AREI services for executives, governing bodies, unions, legislative bodies, and government entities such as Village Family Capital, the City of Gresham, the City of Salem, the City of Tigard, Oregon Tradeswomen, Safe from Hate, Rose City Justice, Portland Public Schools, Energy Trust of Oregon, TRC Industries, Prosper Portland and more. Empress Rules is one of 4 AREI consultants to create the Culture Change Roadmap for organizations participating in the Portland Means Progress Initiative for the City of Portland.

Ayomide is a Business owner, Master facilitator, and Mindful Movement practitioner who creates environments where people can expand their comfort zones and reflect on their behavior. As a mindful movement practitioner and the founder of the Humans of Color Movement Alliance and Milieu Business Collective, Ayomide supports Indigenous people



Ayomide Nikzi (Facilitator)

and people of the African diaspora to move away from a culture of destruction and engage in a culture of self-care and financial Sovereignty. Ayomide utilizes Mindfulness and Collective Economics as a tool for social justice and community bridging. Ayomide has provided AEI services for executives and governing bodies such as the City of Tigard, Oregon Trades Women, Village Family Capital, Picky Bars, She Bop the Shop, Killer Burger, Jacobsen Salt, and more.

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Sumiko is a graduate of Portland State University with a BA in Communications. She worked



Sumiko Taylor-Hill (Community Engagement Support)

as a Community Engagement Specialist for the Head Start program, where she received firsthand experience with early childhood development. Sumiko provided community engagement and case management services for Casa of Oregon, working with migrant farmworkers to access resources. CASA of Oregon improves the lives of Oregonians in underserved communities by building affordable housing, neighborhood facilities, and programs that increase families' financial wellbeing.

Victoria Lara is the founder and CEO of Lara Media. She brings more than 20 years of experience developing research-based strategic engagement, communication, multicultural



Victoria Lara (Community Engagement/Communications/Facilitator)

advertising outreach plans, and campaigns through an equity lens. Her work is driven by a desire to eliminate racial inequities and ensure that future generations have access to a more prosperous society.

Governor Brown recognized Victoria as a resilient and successful business owner, and the Mexican Embassy named her an Outstanding Mexican in the USA. Victoria currently serves or has served on the boards of Latino Network, Causa, Hacienda CDC, Familias en Acción, Oregon Latino Health Coalition, All Hands Raised, Portland Business Alliance, and the Governor's Complete Count Committee for Census 2020. Her relevant clients include Real ID

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information campaign audit and research; Prosper Portland Broadway Corridor; Cover Oregon (Latino Market); Healthy Kids; TriMet; Energy Trust of Oregon; The Oregon Health Authority; Portland General Electric; Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters; Providence Health & Services; HECC; H1N1 Latino Outreach; Kaiser Permanente Fit Test; PSU Exito Program Development; and PSU Teachers Development Brand.

## Scope of Work

The scope of work for this project included:

- Design and implement a community engagement process focused specifically on involving the community in a conversation about the most effective and most needed programs and services and support for BIPOC-owned businesses and travelers in the tourism industry.
- Collecting and analyzing the data to produce a community engagement report that describes methods used to engage the community, summarizes findings and recommendations related to program and service needs, and proposes solutions to implement into Travel Oregon's strategic plan, in addition to any other key findings from the community engagement process.
- The community engagement report will be presented to Travel Oregon. The findings and recommendations will inform the development of funding priorities, leading to the selection of programs and activities to achieve positive outcomes for BIPOC Communities.



## Methods and Approach

For the community engagement process, the ER team utilized two collection methods for input, which included: surveys, and facilitating three community roundtable discussion groups with community members from the Black Community, the Latino/a/x Community, and Community-based Organizations.

## Surveys Implementation

In October 2021, the community engagement survey was designed in a collaborative effort between Travel Oregon liaisons and the Empress Rules (ER) team. The survey was reviewed and approved by the Travel Oregon liaisons and then translated into Spanish. The ER team disbursed the survey utilizing Survey Monkey via email, direct messaging, calling, posting links in culturally specific social media groups, attending community events, and posting on community boards and social networks throughout the seven regions of Oregon. Community members were asked to participate in community discussion groups to provide feedback and

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solutions to challenges identified in the tourism industry. Our team utilized geographic location, participant availability, and other demographic data to select Community Round Table Discussion participants, paying close attention to intersecting identities.

## Community Discussion Group Implementation

Upon analyses of the initial results of the survey data, the ER team collaborated with Travel Oregon liaisons to design a discussion group structure and questions. Our team reached out and invited participants who expressed interest in engaging in discussion groups, making sure to include participants that worked, lived, and / or served community members throughout the seven regions of Oregon. The ER team reached out to additional community members and invited them to participate in discussion groups to ensure our team had representation from all seven regions. During the discussion groups, community members were provided with a consent form and asked to give verbal consent to participate in the discussion groups. The discussions were conducted via zoom structure and consisted of:

- Providing Participants with informed consent
- Community Check-in
- Providing participants with a slide deck that encompassed discussion group questions and asked them to write for 30 minutes. Facilitators read each question aloud, and participants were allowed approximately 3 - 5 minutes to write out their responses to each question and paste them into the chat.
- Upon responding to the writing prompts, the community revisited each question, and facilitators allowed community members to provide additional comments.
- Participants were invited to email the ER team if they had additional insight that they forgot to mention.

## Data Analysis

The ER team recorded discussion groups and utilized written transcripts provided by zoom to analyze data. The ER team used the Empress Rules Method, which includes: listening deeply to what participants stated; combining common themes; and arranging participants' thoughts and ideas to form one voice that encompasses a flow that represents the overall consensus of what the community shared. The team also listened deeply and searched for



and identified community-recommended solutions for identified challenges in the participant's written and verbal responses. Lastly, the ER team created authentic, bulleted recommendations for Travel Oregon to intentionally integrate into their strategic plan.

## Community Member Demographics

Two hundred ten community members responded to the survey, and 117 participants completed the study. Below are highlights of some of the demographics for the 117 participants who engaged in the community engagement process from both the English and Spanish surveys. Exhibit 1. A and 1. B are survey demographic highlights.

Exhibit 1.A : Demographic Data from the English Survey



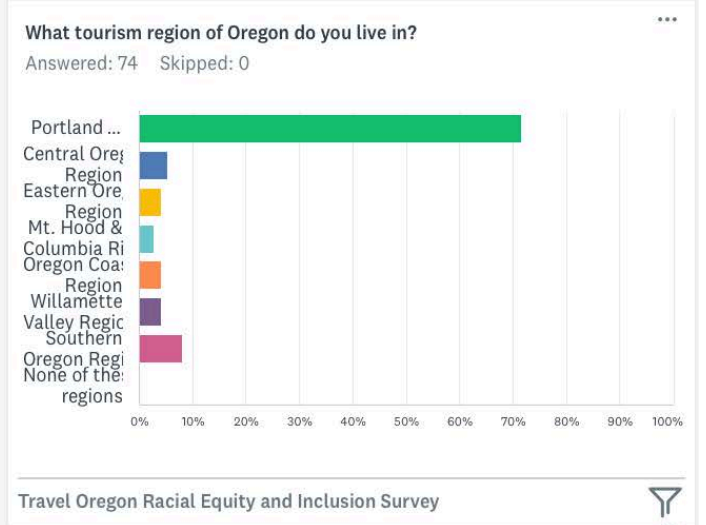
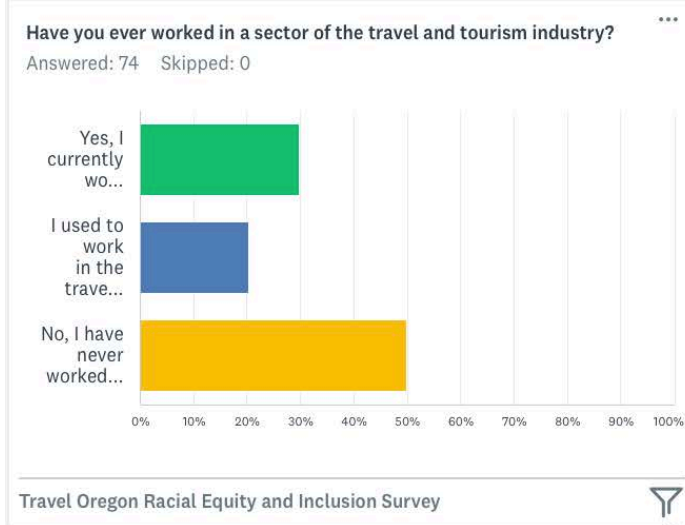
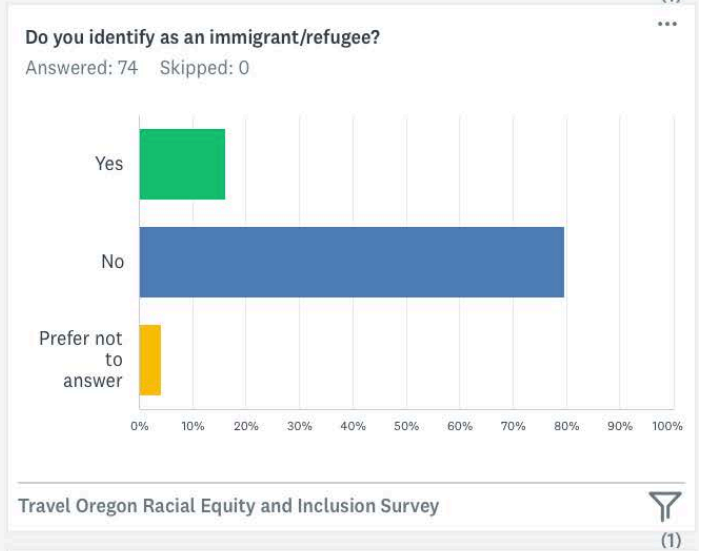
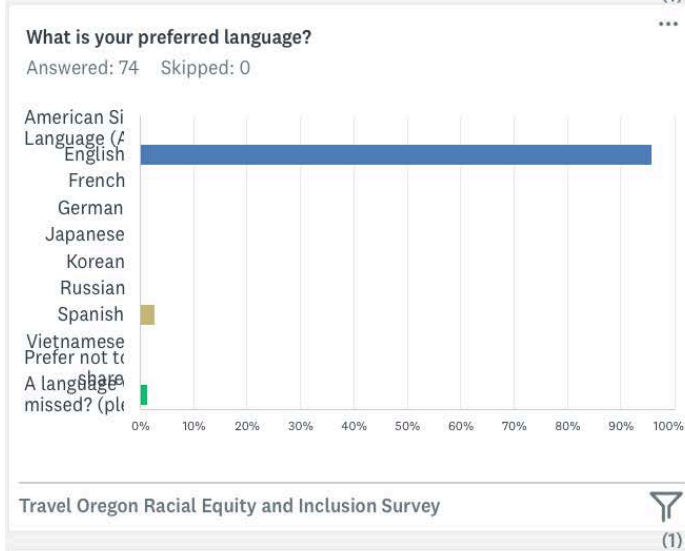
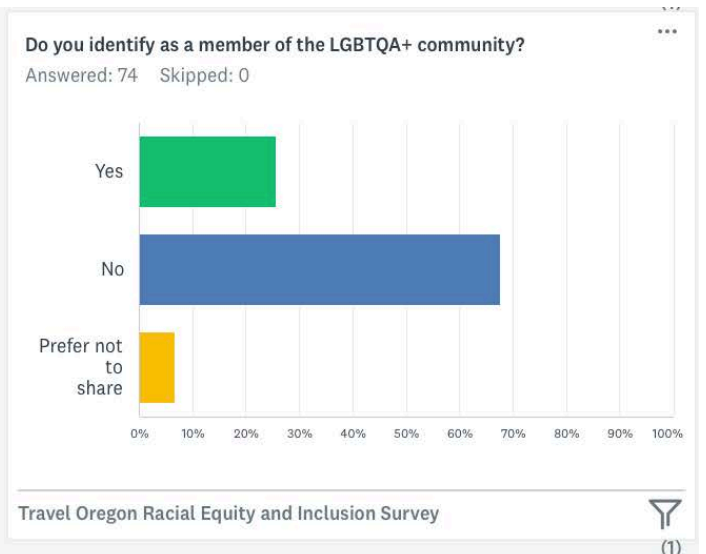
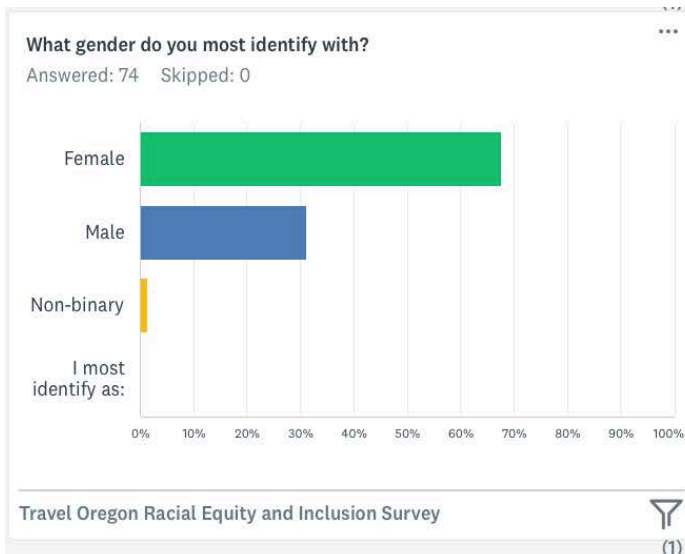
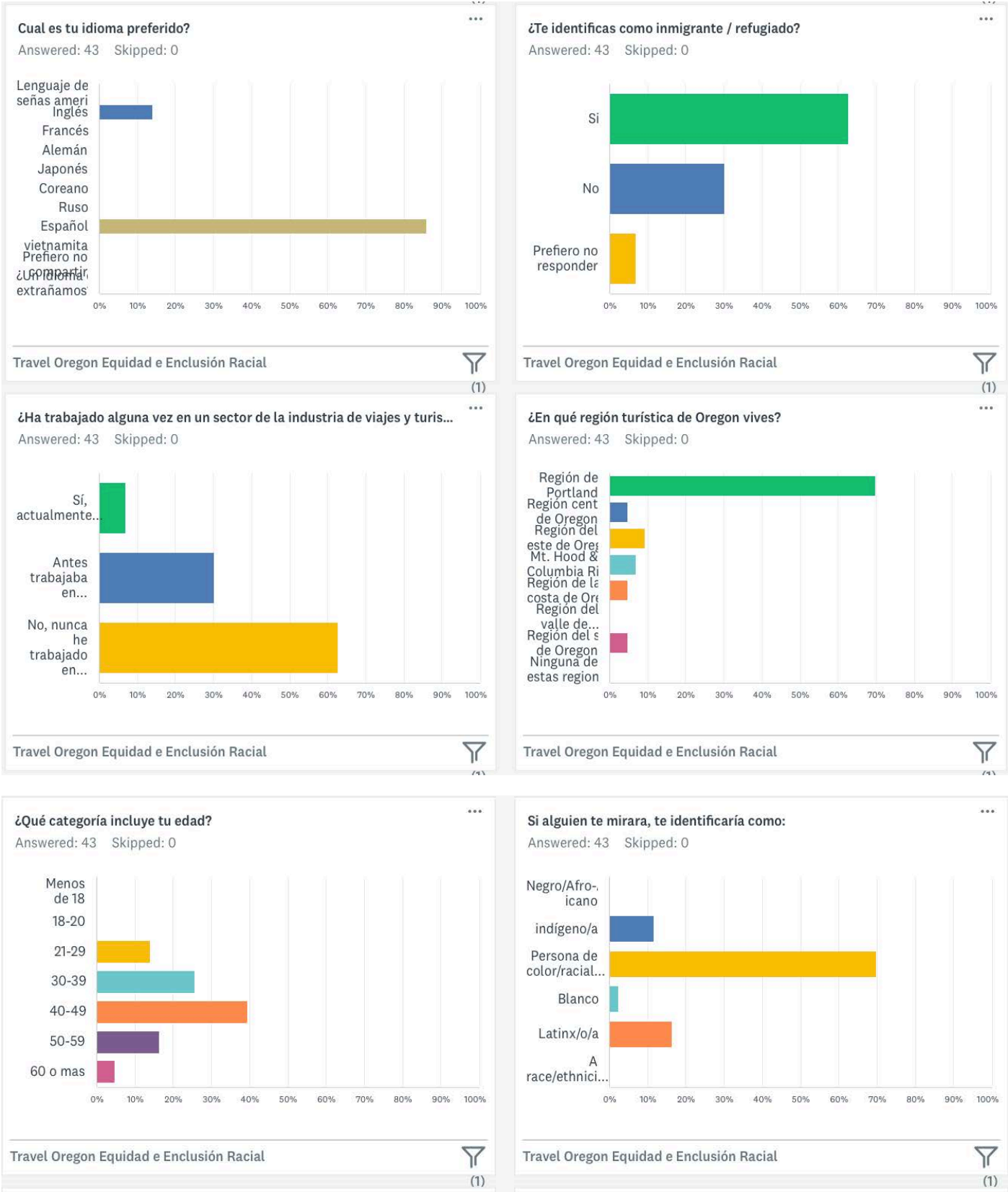
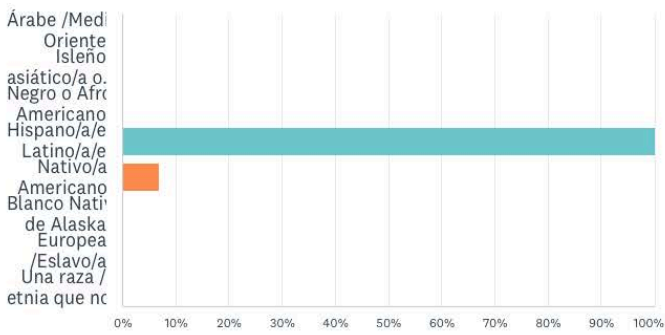


Exhibit 1B: Demographic Data from the Spanish Survey



### ¿Cuál de las siguientes te describe mejor? (Seleccione todas las que c...

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



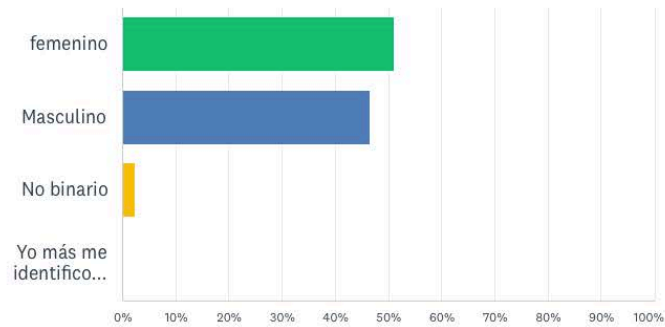
Travel Oregon Equidad e Inclusión Racial



(1)

### ¿Con qué género te identificas más?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0

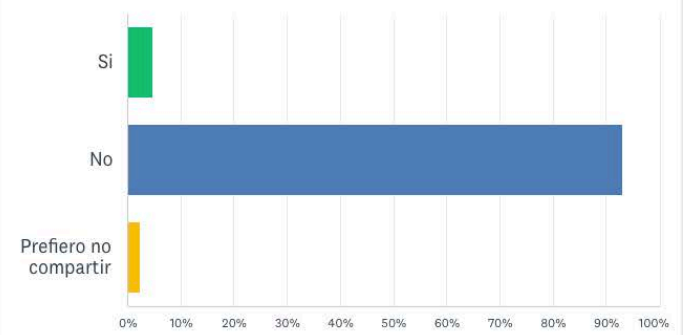


Travel Oregon Equidad e Inclusión Racial



### ¿Está afectado por una discapacidad?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



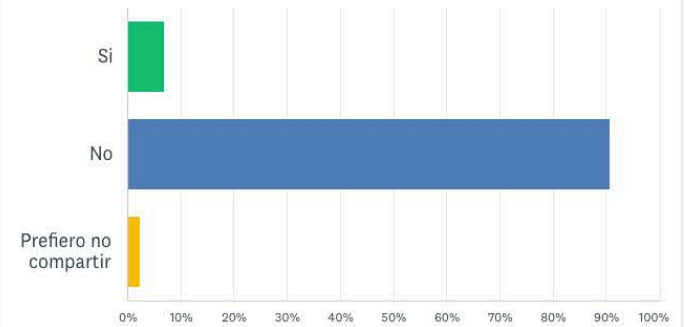
Travel Oregon Equidad e Inclusión Racial



(1)

### ¿Te identificas como miembro de la comunidad LGBTQA +?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



Travel Oregon Equidad e Inclusión Racial





## Key Highlights and Findings From the Black Community Discussion Group

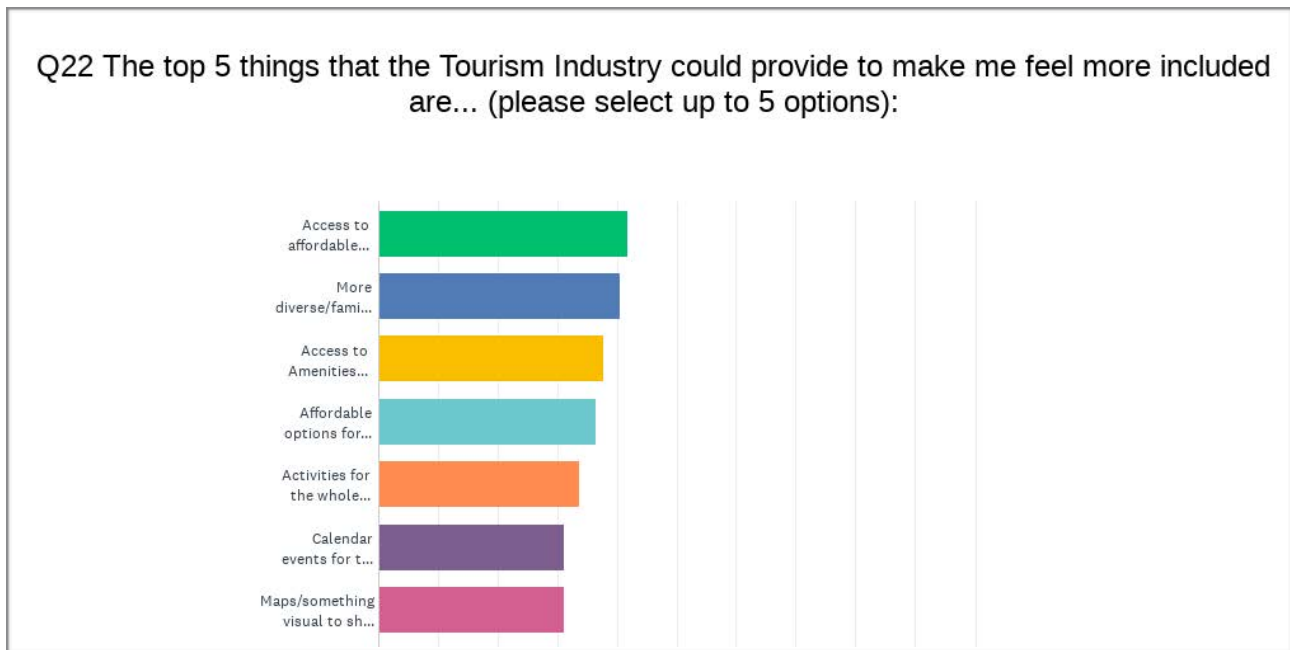
The following pages represent Black Community Round Table Discussion Group Summaries, key highlights, findings, and recommendations from the community engagement process. Complete survey results are located in "appendix A." Questions asked from Travel Oregon are highlighted in red, and quotes from participants are highlighted in italic blue.

*"I don't know why. You know, it's kind of like when they say dumb s\*\*\*...pardon my French... dumb things about animals. Oh, that mother; that mother deer looks like she was upset that her baby was killed."*



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**Out of these choices, please pick the top 3 choices that would make you/your family feel more included and inclined to travel in Oregon?**



*“Nothing worse than visiting a place a finding out I missed experiencing the most known thing after I left.”*

**A. Maps/something visual to show me the locations of where things are located**

Participants expressed that maps help with independence in travel. They shared that often they learn about an exciting local place or activity after they have already left the destination. Having a way to find all of the highlights of an area before or upon arrival would be very helpful. Some participants continue to use maps even after living in places for years. Some community members don't feel comfortable asking random people where to go and what activities they might recommend. The community also mentioned that maps that clearly state

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where Black businesses are in proximity to nature spots would also be helpful. Lastly, a brief cultural description or background about the land and thinking of different ways to root culture and context for spaces would be genuinely beneficial.

*"Traveling alone can be dangerous so having reliable and affordable transportation is key to promoting travel."*

## **B. Access to affordable transportation**

Affordable travel incorporates accommodations, meals, transportation, activities, and commerce, which add up very quickly. Participants expressed that everyone doesn't have working vehicles that can get them out to nature. Suppose there were tour buses or car rental discounts to create more accessibility for community members would be great. Having an idea of high to low expenses for visiting participants is very helpful and allows community members to plan accordingly. A community member expressed wanting to go snowboarding since they moved to Oregon but traveling to Bend or Mt. hood alone is intimidating, especially as a Black person. Some community members lack the proper type of vehicle to be able to access these areas.

*"I am a single person, so traveling with a family only multiplies the need to budget and plan."*

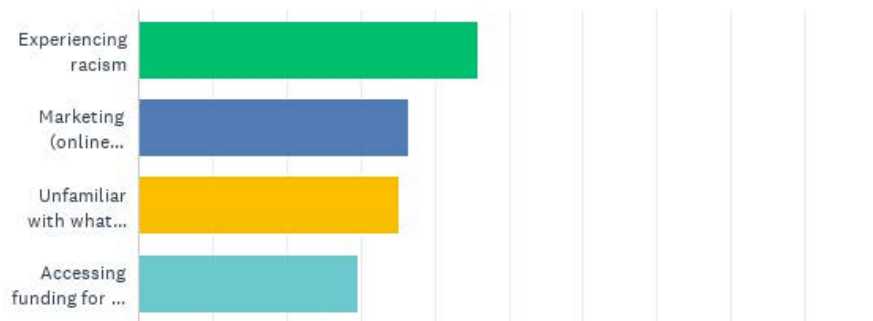
## **C. Affordable travel services/discounts families**

Community members need to see tour guides that look like them to make them feel more comfortable. A trusted guide can direct them where they should go instead of where they are referred to go from media materials or people who do not share the same cultural identity or background. People will spend dollars based on tour guide recommendations. Cost is an issue because some participants are retired and/or on a fixed income. Affordability means providing grants, etc., to support marginalized communities. Community members shared that safe, family-friendly travel as a Black person means traveling with or having access to other Black and Brown families, and access to resources (example: if someone were to go hiking, providing access to special equipment needed, etc.)

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**Out of the options below, what do you think are the top 3 challenges that BIPOC-owned/operated, tourism-related businesses face in Oregon?**

Q24 The biggest challenges that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) owned businesses face in the tourism industry are... (please select up to 5 options):



*"The truth is racism is a disease that needs curing. The whole society needs curing, but in order to begin that process the nation would have to admit to racism, which would have huge impacts on society and growth."*

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## **A. Experiencing Racism**

Oregon has a tiny BIPOC community that has been ignored for the entirety of its existence in the state. The past 1.5 years have put the BIPOC community on the minds of White America in a humanizing way and made the inequities that have been handed to Black people in Oregon more apparent. To deal with this issue, it will take a concentrated effort. Colonizers built this state exclusively for white people. With all the exclusion laws that excluded Black people from owning land, homeownership, higher-waged jobs, etc., Black people still experience racism from Trump stickers, flags, and discrimination in every institution. Community members need tangible, systematic, economic opportunities.

*"I think funding tends to be the biggest issue regarding traveling. It's a luxury to travel, and it shouldn't be."*

## **B. Accessing Funding**

Invest in Black businesses to participate in more tourism opportunities and help their communities feel safe. Community members expressed that funding is a complicated issue, as funding needs depend on the business's needs. A community member shared that one of the biggest challenges for businesses is getting the "right" clientele into the establishment to support organic growth. Black businesses need financial support, in addition, to helping with promotions to consumers and travel agencies. Black families need grants and stipends. Community members recommend that Travel Oregon honestly consider investing in financial resources and accessible transportation (especially for those who don't/can't drive).

## **C. Marketing (online listings, photos, website, advertising)**

*"We need more BIPOC leadership/representation. Even in the video that was shared, the first image is a white person standing on a rock."*

Marketing is critical to bringing in new customers, and social media and technology are essential in this day and age for business. Preserving cultural integrity in a predominately racist state means many tourists come here seeking white culture and white people, rather

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than Oregon culture, which is more coastal, outdoors, and tied with tribal ancestral influences.

Black people represent 2% of Oregon's population, and business owners struggle to market services due to access to funds, resources, and general racism. It can be difficult to access business grants when some people face obstacles such as a lack of technical knowledge to complete forms and little access to legal guidance. Community members expressed that many grants and funding initiatives have stipulations that make it hard to access funds. Some of the grant requirements include things like "must have 10+ employees, etc."

To be seen as just as valuable as non-Black-owned businesses, Black businesses have to work harder to promote themselves, figure out how to market appropriately, and have the money and resources to tap into the tourism economy. A professional website and a consistent, active presence on various social media platforms are essential to growth and exposure.

*"Last summer, we saw a boom in support for black businesses, but most of us know that was a trend for many."*

*"Black businesses literally have to hire white people to work the counter so the business is not perceived as a 'Black business,' which is a major problem."*

Community members would appreciate opportunities to receive marketing services and opportunities to collaborate with large organizations that have a big following on Instagram like Travel Oregon. Marketing, online listings, photos and website advertising make a big impact. Some community members follow travel Oregon on Instagram and have been following them for years. They are hesitant to tag Travel Oregon because they don't believe that they will be reposted based on Travel Oregon's social media behavior. Who Travel Oregon reposts and builds authentic relationships shows who they value.

*"Black businesses literally have to hire white people to work the counter, so the business is not perceived as a 'Black business,' which is a major problem."*



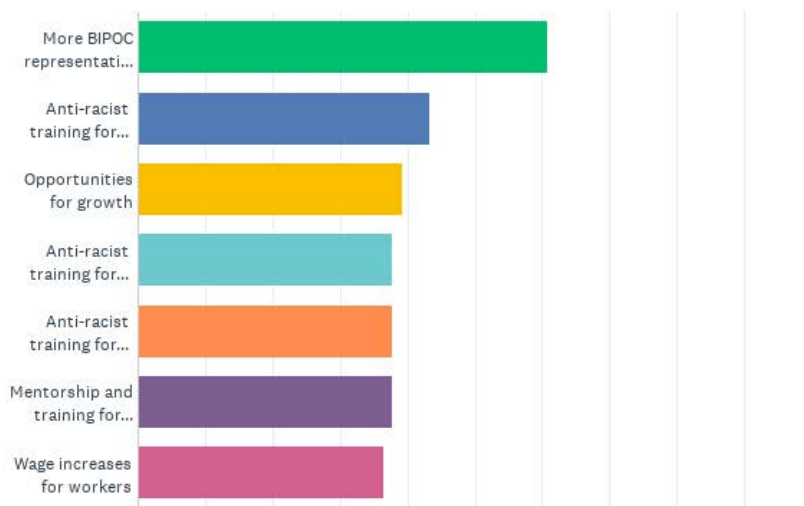
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## D. Unfamiliar with what services and programs Travel Oregon provides

Many services are unfamiliar to BIPOC communities because they do not reach out to the Black Community. Most BIPOC are “relational,” so reaching out through all modalities—online, mailers, phone, and personal interface would probably be appreciated. Some participants have experienced the best destinations due to friends who grew up visiting these destinations, which then shared stories about these experiences. If communities have access to knowledge and are informed about what destinations and activities are available, people will have better experiences.

**Out of the options below, what do you think are top 3 things that would make the Oregon tourism industry more inclusive for you/your family?**

Q26 To be more inclusive, business owners and people who work in the tourism industry need (please select up to 5 options):



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*“Racism is a true hinderance to Black people advancing in any industry; Tourism is no exception.”*

### **A. Wage increases for workers**

Setting people up for success in any industry should be a given. Fair wages and compensation for people’s skills are among the essential roadblocks for growth, particularly in the restaurant industry. Cooks and chefs are often brilliant people with many talents, but they are stuck in low-paying restaurant jobs with very little or no opportunities for growth. They deserve to be well-paid, meaning wage increases with the cost of living and investment in employees, vacations, and access to mental health support. Team building is essential and beneficial to employee retention.

*“They say the issues come from the top, so in order to create real change we need to change who is at the top.”*

### **B. More BIPOC representation in leadership**

*“Don’t just put a Black face in a space and call it good.”*

Shared leadership opportunities are essential. All industries need multiple diverse forms of leadership throughout the organization, paying close attention to Anti-blackness. Community members expressed that there is a need to ensure that the retention of those in leadership is placed at the forefront. Racism is an actual hindrance to Black people advancing in any industry; tourism is no exception.

### **C. Anti-racist training for the community**

*“I think the anti-racism training should be handled by Black and Brown training professionals who are compensated for their expertise. No longer should BIPOC workers be exploited by their employers to give free labor under the guise of volunteering for DEI committees.”*

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Participants agree that Anti-racism training is needed, even if they are not attended well. Some community members are a bit over "Anti-racist training," not because it doesn't work, it's because:

*"I feel it's 2021 and white people are still trying to figure how to connect to Black People. Participants are wondering how much education needs to be done before action is taken?"*



*"Racism can only be tackled after it's truly acknowledged."*

A community member shared that they felt that it's easy to hide behind the fact Portland is a "progressive" place in Portland. But Oregon doesn't just consist of Portland. While it is true that Portland is a "blue" or liberal state, it gets "redder" or more conservative as one goes further away from Portland. There was a consensus that participants would like to see Anti-blackness training and interpersonal oppression awareness toward BIPOC communities as pivotal.

#### **D. Mentorship and training for different jobs within the industry/Opportunities for growth in the workplace**

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BIPOC employees need the SAME opportunities as White workers—a friendly, genuinely supportive work environment; advancement. Promotion and growth opportunities keep folks interested. Participants would like Travel Oregon to over-invest in Black communities, and businesses need to be intentional to correct for the historical divestment that has occurred throughout the state's history

## Recommendations

### Culturally Responsive/Specific

- Provide access to culturally specific tour guides
- Provide culturally specific tour busses
- Set up Black bus tour trips to go to plays that include housing and discounts on travel
- Bring Black plays and activities to Oregon that include the opportunity for us to interview and meet the cast and crew so that communities can build a connection
- Provide a map of black businesses, like a “Green Book” For Oregon
- Create opportunities for Black people to meet and connect with other Black people who live in tourist/travel areas
- Create opportunities and spaces for Black and Brown people to do their Anti-racism and healing work, absent from the presence of white people

### Marketing/Advertising/Promotions

- Increase photo representation of BIPOC utilizing actual candid photos of Black people living life
- Promote Black Businesses on a website so that residents and tourists can be educated about the services that Black businesses offer
- Hold special events, special training, and give out unique gifts to get people interested and expose tourists to Black-owned businesses

### ACCESS TO FUNDING/RESOURCES

- Provide grants for communities marginalized by the tourism industry to cover the cost of traveling to outdoor spaces

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- Create a passbook that identifies when and where it is more affordable to travel and opportunities for Black people to share space with other Black people
  - Provide "meet and greets" and opportunities for education for residents, especially in rural areas
  - Provide Land Grant Opportunities for Black people

## **TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/EDUCATION**

- Hire and provide young people with training in marketing and media and promote opportunities for them to make videos and take photos in these areas
- Provide a "fast track" training program to increase the representation of Black people in Business leadership and ownership
- Work with local colleges or work systems to recruit people at the beginning stage of leadership, as they may have skill sets that will be good for leadership positions.
- Hire more than 1 Black person at a time and avoid tokenism
- Work with leadership to create "Safer" spaces for Black people and support them with resources to develop a culture that will hire and retain Black people.
- Provide opportunities for tourists to be indoctrinated with Black culture such as movies, music, plays, etc.
- Create opportunities and workshops on identifying "Anti-blackness" and how to be "Pro-Black" institutions

## **ADVOCACY**

- Pay thriving wages - Frequently, people who work in restaurants are paid minimum wage when they have a wealth of intelligence and experience that is not taken into consideration
- Promote profit sharing, tuition reimbursement, and other benefits to hire and retain Black workers

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Support Equity audits to ensure that Black people are getting paid the same wage as white workers and the education and that the lived experience of Black people is taken into account when determining salaries.
- Hire and vet Black and Brown consultants to facilitate Anti-racist training



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- Hire and adequately compensate Black and Brown Consultants with lived experience in the state of Oregon instead of exploiting employees or consultants by placing them on a “DEI Counsel” to pay them less than their actual wage
  - Stop hiring white people and bringing in outsiders who don’t understand the history and lived experience of Black and Brown communities.
  - When hiring AREI consultants and Black people with lived experience on Governing Boards, they need to be compensated hourly at their actual rate in addition to a stipend as this is the consultant’s area of expertise.
  - Acknowledge and account for the fact that Black people bring a wealth of knowledge that is not tangible in a degree



## Key Highlights and Findings From the Latino/a/x Discussion Group

The following pages represent Latino/a/x Community Round Table Discussion Group Summaries, key highlights, findings, and recommendations from the community engagement process. Complete survey results are located in "appendix A." (Questions asked

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from Travel Oregon are highlighted in red, and quotes from participants are highlighted in italic blue.)

## How do you feel visitors and tourism impacts the place you live? Please describe both the strengths and areas for growth. Have you had the opportunity to travel around Oregon? What was your experience?

Synopsis of City Tourism through the Lens of Focus Group Participants:

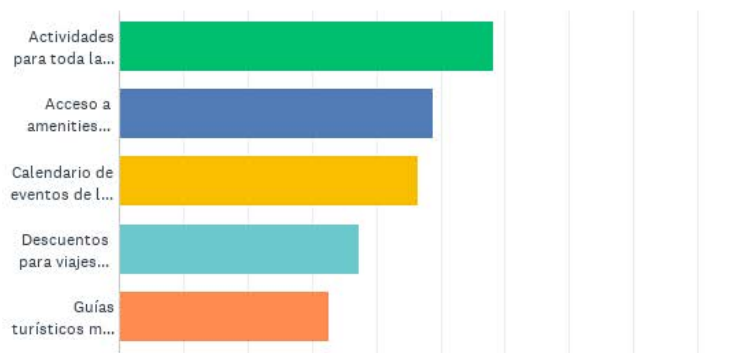
- **Boring** is a beautiful town known for its scenery, mall, and pumpkin patch in the fall. Its name and lack of adequate transportation, however, discourage tourism. Since there are two lanes to get in and out, congestion and car accidents on HWY 212 are frequent. A lack of public transportation within city limits also leaves many residents isolated or without easy access to the central community. In winter, the situation only worsens, as snow and ice make the town inaccessible.
- **Yamhill County** is well known for its vineyards, museums and for fostering a love of Aviation.
- The **Alberta Art District** is a much-toured area of Portland, with a reputation for art, events, and a sizable food sector. It's cafes, restaurants, bars, and musical events—such as “Last Thursday”—bring many people to the district. However, the sizable amount of trash these events generate also discourages many from visiting. Although the pandemic has helped to control this issue, graffiti has now become problematic in the area.
- **Umatilla** draws in many people in the summer for its annual Pendleton Roundup. However, it is also a cultural center, with deep historical ties to the Umatilla tribe of Oregon.
- **Ashland, Oregon**, is a well-known cultural hub and tourist destination. It hosts many outdoor activities year-round, including skiing and snowboarding, and many artistic events, such as their famed Shakespeare Art Festival. The town itself is known as a slow, safe, and tight-knit community. However, with the festival bringing in many high-income people and constant tourism, the community has seen an increase in rent, criminal activity, and cost of living.

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- **Klamath Falls** is known for its beautiful nature, rich agriculture, hunting lands, and artistic events; it hosts a musical event every Thursday that attracts many tourists; with how small the town is, travel is also very easy as everything is very close together, and the town has an excellent public transport system.
  - The town of **Bend** is dedicated to tourism, hosting downtown festivals on the weekends and drawing in tourists with a wealth of outdoor activities. Although this has brought a lot of money to the town, it has also increased the cost of living, threatening to push out the local community. Additionally, the drinking culture and DWI have increased as tourists flood the town year-round.
  - While small, **Lincoln City** receives many visitors, especially during spring break and summer. The City provides tourists with many outdoor activities, including surfing competitions, beach-going, scenic parks and lookout areas, and summer festivals. However, the town has also seen many visitors disrespect the town, taking the local community for granted and harassing business employees.
  - **Columbia Gorge and Cascade Locks** have many tourist destinations in close reach; Lost Lake, the Bridge of the Gods, Mount Hood, the Columbia River, Multnomah Falls, and various other rivers and waterfalls; that draw in many people for the chance to sightsee and experience multiple outdoor activities, including skiing and windsurfing. The town itself hosts many restaurants and events, and vineyards and agricultural fruit fields litter the surrounding area making it a beautiful destination. However, although there is a sizable Hispanic community, most come only as seasonal workers, and a lack of bilingual advertising provides a missed opportunity for Hispanic tourism.
  - A college town, **Eugene, Oregon**, receives a lot of tourism for its forests, rivers, and outdoor activities. It also hosts a large Latinx population, from being a large immigration/refuge center. However, residents have seen that the lack of the City's bilingual advertisement is a lost opportunity for tourism awareness in the Latinx Culture.
  - **Tualatin, Oregon**, is host to scenic landscapes and wildlife, including the Missoula Floods area. Its beautiful rivers and parks, natural museums, and the many migrating birds that pass through the area draw in many people. However, the increasingly visible homeless population is impacting the image of the City and suburbs. This situation is unique to Tualatin and constitutes a massive problem in Portland, Oregon, and its surrounding area.
  - A scenic destination, **Ontario, Oregon**, is best known for its naturally occurring hot springs.

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**Out of these 5 choices, please pick the top 3 choices that would make you/your family feel more included and inclined to travel in Oregon?**

Q22 Las 5 cosas principales que la industria del turismo podría proporcionar para hacerme sentir más incluido son ... (seleccione hasta 5 opciones):



## Cultural Events

There is a lack of public Hispanic Cultural events, and with many Latino/a/x very entrenched in their own culture, it would be nice to see that represented both in and to the general public. Ashland is a good example. Its Day of the Dead Run attracts many Latino/a/

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x, and if more culturally specific events could either be created or better advertised, it could attract a lot more Latino/a/x tourism.

Additionally, other cultures also suffer from a lack of cultural representation. A space, area, or event that would facilitate and increase interactions with and learning about other cultures would benefit all communities. It would encourage people to participate in different cultural events, increasing cultural acceptance and awareness and increasing the availability of such events on a larger scale.

### **Monetary Aid**

The biggest issue when it comes to traveling is the cost. Time, money, and resources are required and, in many cases, can be particularly discouraging to the low-income population, large families/travel groups, and families with small children. In short, more affordable travel is needed and would incentivize more Hispanic tourism.

Since the Latino/a/x culture is very family-oriented, many tend to travel in larger groups. Coupons or discounts for large families or small children would benefit those who like to travel in such groups because they are often discouraged by the cost of events or unable to pay the sums.

A lot of our people also work in agriculture and have lower budgets, making travel difficult. Discounts for essential workers might also help incentivize them to travel more often.

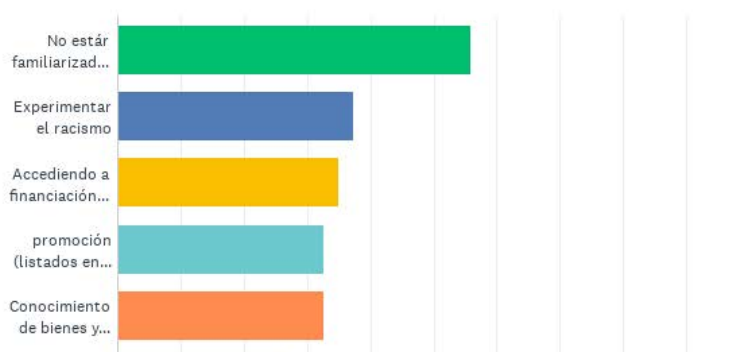
Another idea was for parks or organizations to set up resources that help these people minimize the risk of traveling and spending—such as helping provide and find food and other commodities during events or travel.

**Out of these 5 choices, please choose the top 3 challenges you think BIPOC-owned/operated tourism-related businesses face in Oregon?**



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Q24 Los mayores desafíos que enfrentan las empresas propiedad de BIPOC (negros, indígenas, personas de color) en la industria del turismo son ... (seleccione hasta 5 opciones):



## Monetary Aid

Many businesses also require monetary aid to help advertise and promote tourism. Many need reconstruction, and small businesses especially usually lack advertisement. While some government funds and grants are available, many business owners either remain unaware or distrustful of this aid. Enterprises run by undocumented immigrants, for example, often worry that they do not have the correct paperwork to apply for assistance or that applying for such aid would bring unwanted attention and get them deported. Thus, direct advertisement of such grants and more accessible information on them would be very beneficial.

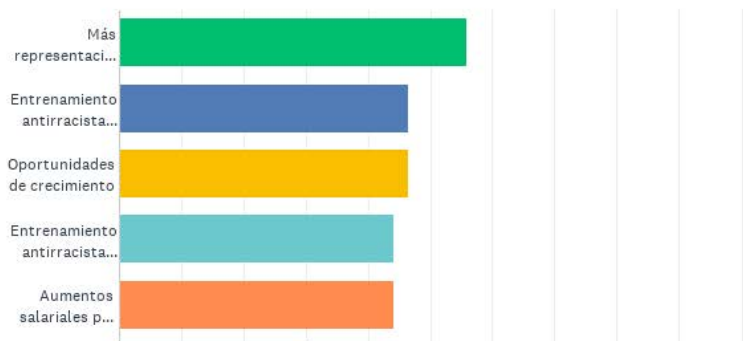
## Multicultural Advertisement

Another issue businesses face is a lack of advertisement and knowledge on advertising in a multicultural environment. Many small businesses are often culturally centered or receive clientele from specific groups of people. Knowing how to expand to a more extensive range of clients or draw in clients from different cultures could prove helpful for small businesses and the surrounding area. Advertising directly to certain cultures/groups of people would also be beneficial in increasing community awareness of whatever event, organization, destination, or business is being advertised.

The advancement of bilingual advertising is one step in such a direction. The Latino/a/x community is a substantial multi-generational community, and many of its members are not or are only partially bilingual for various reasons. As the population of the Hispanic community continues to grow, it would be beneficial to increase the bilingual advertising of tourist centers, thereby expanding the range of people they can reach.

**Out of the 5 options below, what do you think are top 3 things that would make the Oregon tourism industry more inclusive for you/ your family?**

Q26 Para ser más inclusivos, los dueños de negocios y las personas que trabajan en la industria del turismo necesitan (seleccione hasta 5 opciones):



**Accessible Information**

While there are many well-known tourist hubs, many are only known to small communities, and many more are not well advertised. Accessible travel guides, such as blogs, videos, pamphlets, and many other forms of media, have been suggested to help expand the availability of information on events and tourist centers within the state of Oregon. More accessibility would help make tourist centers even more well known and help small businesses to expand the range of their clientele.

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A series of bilingual videos featuring cultural hubs, tourist hotspots, small businesses, and food are suggested to expand peoples' knowledge of tourist destinations within Oregon and expand the people's knowledge of other cultural aspects. It should have accessible information making it easier to know where to travel and how to interact with culture-dominated areas-including events, stores, and specific destinations.

Virtual traveling would be welcomed as an alternative for accessibility and provide many people with a travel experience without spending too much on physical resources. Or, at the very least, give an idea of how interested they would be in visiting specific destinations.

**Having more accessible information on or about events would be incredibly beneficial to a variety of people.**

Having a database of event calendars for the whole of Oregon would be very beneficial to those who would like to participate in events but have trouble finding ones they would like to attend, as many events often occur with only local advertisements. If the area also organized these calendars or databases, it would help people find events closer to their location.

Often it isn't easy to get information for events and activities, whether it be pricing or the equipment/ resources necessary to participate. This leaves people hesitant to travel as they have little to no way to calculate expenditures or the feasibility of specific trips. This is especially a problem for large groups and the low-income population. If people were to provide resources to know what equipment is needed for activities, what to pack for specific trips, and pricing of events upfront, it could help many people to travel more easily.

It is also often difficult to gauge how family-friendly events or festivals will be and whether or not events and activities are inclusive for younger children and people with disabilities. This discourages many families from traveling with young children due to the perceived difficulty of such a trip. Partnering with school districts to develop family-friendly traveling and activities is one way to help navigate this issue, prompting event organizers to provide thorough descriptions of events.

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One way to have more accessible information is for Travel Oregon to partner with local community leaders, schools/school districts, and businesses to distribute information, resources, and opportunities to travel to the general public. There is so much to see in the state, and this connection provides a two-way street for towns and businesses to get much-needed attention and to put out information that would encourage people to travel.

An app, for example, that included everything from pricing information to location guides would be handy for helping businesses and towns connect to the public, and people could see what was around the area when you visit a place. The information and technology exist, but participants want to integrate all local, regional events and information in an accessible platform.

### **Payment methods**

The ability to pay in cash is not always available for those traveling and is a great discouragement to limited payment options. Some, like migrant workers, often only carry cash and lack debit or credit cards. The lack of ability to pay in cash provides a missed opportunity to reach out to these groups and incentivize them to travel.

### **Resources for Employee Training**

Most businesses have experienced their fair share of demanding or racist customers; the biggest problem, however, is knowing how to handle these situations. Many employees do not receive training for these situations, and it would thus be prudent to help provide small businesses with accessible resources for employee training that would allow them to better their responses. Additionally, equity training resources would help deal with the staff's biased behaviors towards their customers.



## Recommendations

### Cultural Responsiveness

- Create spaces, areas, and events that would facilitate and increase interactions with and learning about other cultures, creating cultural acceptance, awareness, and availability
- Create and promote access to Hispanic Cultural Events
- Accessible travel guides, such as blogs, videos, pamphlets, and many other forms of media
- A series of bilingual videos featuring cultural hubs, tourist hotspots, small businesses, and food
- Promote family-friendly events
- Advertise directly to certain cultures/groups to increase community awareness of whatever event, organization, destination, or business is being promoted.

### Accessible Information

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- Provide information for events and activities that includes pricing or the equipment/ resources necessary to participate
  - Partnering with school districts to develop family-friendly traveling and activities
  - Partner with local community leaders, schools/ school districts, and businesses to distribute information, resources, and opportunities to travel to the general public
  - Create an app that includes everything from pricing information to location guides to integrate all local, regional events and information into an accessible platform
  - Create a database of event calendars
  - Promote bilingual advertisements

## **Access to Affordable Transportation**

- Advocate for public transportation within cities to promote easy access to the main community

## **Structures of Accountability/Safety**

- Create structures that hold event holders accountable for cleaning up trash after events
- Organize a cleaning crew to clean up graffiti in neighborhoods
- Put structures in place to prevent gentrification and criminal activity due to increases in rent and living costs due to tourism.
- Create travel vouchers or systems for safe local travel to prevent DUI's from tourists
- Promote activities that aren't entrenched in the drinking culture
- Create structures of accountability to prevent racism and hold racist customers accountable for their behavior
- Work with community partners to address the homelessness challenge by finding people housing and wrap-around services

## **Affordability/Investment**

- Create and promote virtual traveling opportunities
- Highlight and promote activities that are inclusive for younger children and people with disabilities and prompt event organizers to provide descriptions of events
- Provide ways for families to pay for activities and travel-related expenses in cash
- Provide grants, discounts, and other resources to promote equitable travel
- Provide discounts for essential workers





- Create affordable travel opportunities that operate on a sliding fee scale based on income
- Advocate or Partner with parks or organizations to provide free resources to families, such as free food and other commodities
- Provide direct monetary aid to businesses to help advertise and promote tourism
- Provide funding for business construction and renovation

## **Training/Professional Development**

- Providing training support to the travel industry workforce on how to deal with racist/inappropriate customers

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## Key Highlights and Findings From the Community-based Organization Community Discussion Group

The following pages represent Community-based Organization (CBO) Round Table Discussion Group Summaries, key highlights, findings, and recommendations from the community engagement process (questions asked from Travel Oregon are highlighted in dark red and quotes from participants are highlighted in italic blue).

### **Are you/your organization familiar with Travel Oregon? If yes, what has been the experience? If no, what barriers keep you/your organization from being familiar with Travel Oregon?**

The majority of community members, some of whom have families that have lived in Oregon for generations, are not familiar with Travel Oregon. Some community members relied on resources such as AAA, and others, to find tourism support and are interested in learning more about Travel Oregon. Community members expressed the desire to expose students to areas where BIPOC typically aren't seen. One community member was very familiar with Travel Oregon and regularly visited the website to check resources as they enjoy traveling around Oregon. Some community members aren't familiar with Travel Oregon due to distance from Portland, not seeing Travel Oregon in circulation, and Travel Oregon has not extended the invitation to connect.

### **Travel Oregon's current vision is "A better life for all Oregonians through strong, sustainable local communities"**

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## that welcome a diversity of explorers.” What are the strengths of this vision?

Most community members felt that the vision was concise, inclusive, and addressed a broad audience. They also appreciated that Travel Oregon focused on investing in the local community. Community members also expressed that their CBO mission aligned with Travel Oregon’s vision.

### Areas of growth?

*“In my reaction, as we're talking about, as we're reading through these and seeing racial equity for all Oregonians, our state is primarily white. And so with that being said, who are all Oregonians? Why are we not calling it out and calling it transparent what it is? And the same thing, where's the action piece? Yes, I know; visions are supposed to be short. But there should be at least a little bit of action to let me know what your plan is to enact this vision that you have or give me something to know what direction you're going in. And I don't see that in a lot of this.”*

Community members expressed concern with authenticity due to Travel Oregon setting such significant goals; that there were a lot of "buzz words" and wanted to know where their action plan was, or at least hear about a few actionable items that the organization was going to take to achieve these outcomes.

Black, Indigenous, People of Color need to feel safe and welcomed. Travel Oregon didn't explicitly name race or identify the specific group or group(s) impacted by historical inequities. The way the vision was written focused on supporting communities by attracting outsiders instead of focusing on the inclusion of BIPOC Oregonians. The term "explorers" also reminded community members of colonization or something that a white person would write. Community members are unsure of how bringing diverse explorers creates a better life for all Oregonians. The vision highlights two very broad concepts in a very abstract way that sounds good but unclear. Community members were curious to know, "How is Travel Oregon, as a state agency that focuses on travel and information, uniquely positioned to facilitate 'strong, sustainable local communities' or make them more welcoming for diverse visitors?" Opportunities?

(Please see recommendations)

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## What do you think Travel Oregon's vision should be?

Community members felt that Travel Oregon's vision should include creating strong, sustainable local communities by creating equitable opportunities to travel and experience Oregon's natural wonderlands and cultural traditions, attracting and welcoming a diversity of explorers. Travel Oregon should have a vision that meets or exceeds needed opportunities, providing tools to groups and races lacking resources to fulfill this vision. The concept should include a live atmosphere, friendly people, and more of a specific focus on what Travel Oregon's resources are and how Travel Oregon can leverage those resources to create a more welcoming destination for those wanting to explore Oregon outside of cities and well-known destinations (although, even many of those most popular destinations, especially in rural areas, don't necessarily feel all that welcoming for BIPOC folks). People need the opportunity to feel empowered to embrace and explore our beautiful state.

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## What does a welcoming and inclusive community look and feel like to you?



*“Never having to worry about whether or not I’ll be able to find a safe place to rest, whether I’ll have a comfortable and accessible place to sit, whether or not I can find food that meets my dietary restrictions, whether or not I can hold my partner’s hand in public”*

A common theme throughout this conversation was that community members want to see people who look like them and feel welcomed, respected, and seen by people who look different from them. Welcoming spaces are diverse in every aspect of inclusion for all races, cultures, languages, abilities, and leadership. It also has to include the present representation of those who have and continue to contribute to its existence, historical sites, and places to visit, providing authentic representation of the area's history and the contributions of all who have participated in the creation of Oregon's rich culture. A welcoming and inclusive community looks racially and socioeconomically diverse. Most importantly, it "feels" safe to be there.



## **Can you share some things that you feel would make your life and the lives of the communities that you serve better as an Oregonians?**

*“X amount of dollars from the very top needs to be tagged as to where it's going to go, which one of these goals that they're talking about, and how they're going to do it. And that's where the rubber meets the road; we've all stated that, you know, it sounds like a perfect world. It's...it's basically...it's talk right now. We're all agreeing that, hey, you know that we like it, how are you going to make it happen?”*

Some things that would make community members' lives and the lives of the communities that they serve better as Oregonians include honoring Culturally and Racially specific spaces in tourism and creating intentional visibility for Black, Indigenous, People of Color. Invite the BIPOC community should engage with Travel Oregon and be promoted on the Travel Oregon website and allotted a specific section in Travel Oregon's printed materials.

Communities would be better if there were more jobs and economic activities that center BIPOC communities. Stop "othering" or separating BIPOC histories from "whitewashed"



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versions of history, and educate people with the truth in "American History" or local history. Communities would be more enriched if some more historical markers and destinations provided education about the true history of Black and Brown communities in Oregon. In addition, that education should be paired with engaging sites that offer the kind of recreational activities that BIPOC folks would enjoy, regardless of how many Black and Brown communities are or are not present in those areas.

Travel Oregon could utilize its resources to interrupt the "School to Prison" pipeline by investing resources to create better schools and less policing of Black and Brown communities. If the areas visited were previously inhabited by Indigenous peoples, then land acknowledgment and understanding of culturally significant concerns for the tribes, such as first foods, cultural resources, etc., would be appreciated and provide more inclusion for Indigenous communities.

## **How do you think visitors and tourism impacts BIPOC communities in Oregon? Please describe the strengths? Areas for growth? Opportunities?**

### **Tourism Impacts on BIPOC**

*"Travel Oregon centered how BIPOC communities are directly affected by tourism. But actually, it may be more affected by indirect tours or indirectly affected by tourism. It's more about a livability issue and how desirable a place that Oregon is to live. A lot of it has to do with how Travel Oregon has played a part in branding Oregon; how Travel Oregon helped shape the narrative of Oregon as this wonderful place with all these great resources, and people want to be here, and people who have the means to travel freely, and potentially even purchase second or third homes for themselves are doing that. So they're coming in to take advantage of all the great things that Oregon has to offer. But that has a cost to the people who barely make ends meet, even if they were born and raised here. For example, on the coast, there are Latin X folks who are migrant workers who come into work, you know, in the fisheries. They're working processing fish, and if people are coming in buying homes on the Oregon Coast and turning them into Airbnbs, that directly impacts the livability of these communities."*

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*This type of behavior has a direct impact on people who are making poverty wages. And it's because other people have been shaped by or affected by the narratives of tourists. So, there needs to be a balance between celebrating all the things that make Oregon a special place, which encourages people to come, because it will have economic impacts on the businesses, but not everybody owns a business. And the people who are just trying to make ends meet are suffering the consequences of that."*

Tourism has impacted BIPOC communities, but not as much of an impact as tourism has made for white people. There are opportunities for visitors and tourism to impact BIPOC and provide a massive boost for BIPOC-owned small businesses and communities in Oregon by strengthening the economy, creating local jobs, and supporting BIPOC businesses by building a customer base not just determined in the local market.

## **Areas of Growth**

Tourism for the sake of tourism—meaning, without the input of local BIPOC leaders—is harmful; BIPOC needs to be a part of the decision-making process.

*"Our state doesn't want tourists to see our BIPOC communities. The whole "keep Portland weird" gimmick has given the rest of the country a skewed perception of who lives in this city/state. There isn't much diversity in other parts of the state. BIPOC from other states aren't prepared for racism because people view Oregon as a liberal state. "*

Some of the challenges of tourism are that BIPOC communities in Oregon need more visibility, representation, and awareness about what Travel Oregon is and what they offer to BIPOC communities and businesses. Feature BIPOC businesses just as prominently as white-owned wineries, restaurants, donut shops, outdoor companies, etc., and they currently are not.

*"The Mexican food in Woodburn rivals anything in Portland, but that doesn't get a lot of attention in tourism media."*

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When community members have traveled to certain “touristy” places in the state, they’ve noticed that stores frequently sell culturally specific items. When asked where those items are sourced from, they’re frequently bought from large corporate-owned manufacturers rather than from local and culturally particular vendors. This type of behavior does a disservice to small and local businesses and the culture that may not be appropriately and/or adequately represented. It also impacts the potential for economic development within communities of color.

The tourism industry, in general, could provide more jobs and economic opportunities for BIPOC communities in places that BIPOC community members could take pride in or feel represented in positive ways. Community members have experienced visitors/tourists coming to Oregon with pre-conceived ideas of the significance, or lack thereof, of BIPOC communities, are to the history and strengths of Oregon, and there is likely to be minimal interactions during their visits and experiences here to counter those narratives. This also includes BIPOC individuals who move here and typically feel “siloed” and isolated from what rich culture does exist here. There also needs to be better recognition of the Native history and presence here that half of everything is named after, but no one outside those communities knows about.

**“We work to achieve racial equity for all Oregonians in indicators of wellness — from education, housing, economics, criminal justice and health, to a sense of belonging.” What do you think about this outcome? What do and don’t you like? Do these match the goals your organization has for the people/members you represent?**

*“I am stuck at what defines achieving racial equity. Being a Black, native Oregonian, I can’t recall a time that I heard Travel Oregon in my community or connected to an organization or event in the community.”*



Until now, some community members have not seen the focus on helping BIPOC communities whatsoever. Community members want opportunities to employ BIPOC, providing grants and other technical education opportunities, such as grant writing.

Community members are curious about how the staff inside of Travel Oregon will "work to achieve" this goal, particularly in housing and criminal justice? Does Travel Oregon currently have hiring policies and supports in place to hire formerly incarcerated individuals? Do they pay family wages with benefits for employees? If a houseless person was asleep in the doorway of Travel Oregon's office, what would they do?

Some community members felt that this outcome is "a lot to bite off for an agency whose sole focused is on travel." Community members were left wondering if it is truly realistic for Travel Oregon to impact all of those things significantly within the scope of their work? Perhaps Travel Oregon should focus on investing a significant number of resources into two areas, such as education and/or helping create a sense of belonging to make more of a substantial impact. As a proposed outcome, it sounds excellent, and community members would like this to be the desired culture in all communities. They wonder, though, how Travel Oregon will deliver on these outcomes.

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## **What are some of the specific actions that Travel Oregon can take to achieve this goal? In Education? In Housing? In Economics? In Criminal Justice?**

### **Recommendations**

#### **In Education**

- Provide culturally specific acknowledgment and education for all. Educate the truths to all, do not sugarcoat what American culture is. Whitewashed histories have left out and oppressed so many BIPOC communities and have forced them into low-income housing that is not safe or desired by anyone.
- Construct more and better historical markers, exhibits, museums, etc., that highlight the history of Indigenous Peoples of the land and the many contributions of BIPOC folks to this area, despite its very racist history, instead of sugarcoating that history or leaning into the stereotypes of Oregon being this liberal utopia or priding itself on its weirdness.
- Creating presentations to share at schools or engagement opportunities, STEM connections, and supporting outdoor schools and other programs that provide outdoor education related explicitly to Oregon and tourism opportunities
- Provide scholarships and paid internships at Travel Oregon and their collaborating partners to students interested in the travel industry as a conduit for student success.

#### **In Housing**

- Encouraging travel and livability in areas that are less prone to gentrification
- Create a Travel Oregon liaison position with the Housing Authority in different counties
- Educate and onboard new low-income families to areas they can visit and explore
- Work with community-based development organizations and create a list or network of housing resources and support offered.
- Collaborate with the local Tribes to find a resolution to housing issues

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- Invest in building low-income living spaces

## **In Economics**

- Invest and/or partner with BIPOC tourism and travel industries and businesses
- Provide BIPOC with the same opportunities as white people to have the ability to strive and flourish in running and operating a successful business
- Hire more BIPOC candidates internally
- Providing competitive jobs for BIPOC folks in areas where they'd feel welcomed and proud to represent
- Sourcing all of Travel Oregon's merchandise at tourist destinations from local/Indigenous makers and artists
- Support AND increase exposure to underserved communities by providing them with an opportunity of a destination to visit.
- Support BIPOC owned businesses.

## **In Criminal Justice**

- Work with government agencies and community leaders to pass legislation that meets specific community needs such as racial profiling and immigration policies.

**“We work to ensure that racial equity exists for all visitors in their travel choices, sense of safety, well-being and belonging” What do you think about this outcome? What do and don't you like? Do these match the goals your organization has for the people/members you represent?**

*“This (safety) is my biggest concern when I travel. The fact that a white man can sit down in any bar in American without fear of being assaulted, or at the very least treated with contempt, is something I'll be jealous of my whole life. I've skipped many towns that I would otherwise have liked to visit because I did not feel safe. More than anything else, I think THIS is where*



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*Travel Oregon's equity work should be invested in; making local communities safe for BIPOC travelers."*

Community members are skeptical. There was a consensus with community members that this outcome is decisive, targets exactly what Oregon needs to work on, and aligns with organizational and tribal goals; however, the community wants to hear more about how the work is being done to ensure Travel Oregon's outcomes are reached.

*"It's hard to understand how this can be achieved in a state with such a lack of diversity. A lot of our own residents don't feel a sense of safety, wellbeing, and belonging."*

Some community members feel like Travel Oregon is throwing out catchphrases without emphasizing the specific things they have control or influence over.

There needs to be a focus on what would attract people of color to visit Oregon. Some community members are often asked by other BIPOC why a person of color would ever move to Oregon and what keeps them there as Oregon has a terrible reputation for being racially oppressive. Community members are curious to know what Travel Oregon will do when tourism partners do not align with Travel Oregon's standards.

*"Everyone wants' racial equity,' but how does that look at tourist destination sites around the state, especially those outside the city? Are they putting anti-discrimination policies in place at their locations? Do they have zero tolerance for hate postings or signage saturating sites? What mechanisms are in place to make BIPOC families feel safe at these locations, and how do BIPOC learn about safer places to go before visiting upon arrival? What type of background screening have individuals undergone? What kind of evaluation will Travel Oregon implement to know when an organization is providing racial equity or not?"*

**What does Racial Equity in the Travel Industry look like to you? What can Travel Oregon do to create culturally**

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## **responsive/inclusive travel choices? Create safer spaces for Black and Brown people? Well-being? Belonging?**

*“Racial Equity looks like utilizing BIPOC folks in your advertisements, make sure they are actually people FROM the local community folks can recognize and respect, not just random stock photos of folks off the internet or professional models”*

Participants agreed that a good first step in achieving Racial Equity includes providing more opportunities for community round table discussions to get direct feedback from BIPOC, ensuring to include lifelong residents, new residents, and tourists alike. Racial Equity in the travel industry looks like engaging with members of the BIPOC community to learn what they are interested in as tourists and visitors.

BIPOC communities demand representation in the workforce and empowered voices at decision-making levels. Racial Equity looks like representation at all levels of the organization, from the Executive Board to the cashier at gift shops who are actually from the same culture as the “authentic” artifacts sold there.

Racial Equity looks like BIPOC-owned Travel agencies, Airlines, Charter lines, and hotels. Assure people of Color that they can find culturally relevant experiences or accommodations within one hour or any part of Oregon. Racial Equity in the travel industry includes racially and culturally specific experiences of interest to BIPOC communities.

### **Recommendations for Culturally Responsive Travel Choices**

- Include BIPOC in strategic planning and screening before putting out ad campaigns, etc., to make sure those ads will land right for folks
- Engage with the current BIPOC community to determine their needs, find out how they can support the BIPOC economy, and learn how to collaborate with BIPOC Oregonians
- Highlight the existing BIPOC industries in rural spaces so that they become destinations for BIPOC travelers

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- Educate and promote to the tourism industry and others that the more diverse their operations increases business for everyone
  - Encourage and invest in providing cultural activities in all communities.
  - Include Tribal functions such as pow-wows and other culturally relevant events. Include these events on the calendar of events
  - Inclusive representation through highlighting BIPOC contributions to state
  - Recognize and elevate BIPOC-run businesses and travel and accommodation options

## Recommendations for creating safer spaces for Black and Brown people



*"If I go 2 hours out of my way to go to a business featured by Travel Oregon and its plastered in MAGA crap, I'd be pretty pissed at Travel Oregon."*

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- Create cultural events and /or visibility that represents, empowers, honors, and uplifts the voices of all Oregon Black and Brown communities
  - Ensure that if there are safety issues involving people of color that they are treated the same as whites people. Don't just send the Brown person to jail like always.
  - Amplify BIPOC spaces
  - Include signage that indicates ALL are welcome
  - Include BIPOC representatives in employment positions (leading tours, sharing culturally relevant and historical information, etc.)
  - Include and recognize the racial and cultural contributions of BIPOC communities in all spaces. Places that lack any appearance of diversity and inclusion deter BIPOC participation
  - Reduce State and local patrol at tourist sites, and increase tour guides and diverse service providers that represent Travel Oregon and other state agencies OUTSIDE of law enforcement

## Recommendations for Well-Being and Belonging

*"People will feel like they belong if they are all treated the same! I mean treat whites the same as people of color and vice versa. Don't stereotype the brown person when they enter a business or act like they do not belong."*

- Feature BIPOC people in your ads and billboards. Show BIPOC people doing stuff like riding bikes, drinking coffee, going to pow-wows.

*"BIPOC are not a monolith and we need to see our diversity reflected too."*

- Create a desirable culture for everyone by holding white people accountable for racial mistreatment or slandering.
- Honor, uplift, and celebrate Black and Brown Culture that will engage all Oregonians, visitors, and tourists

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- Create spaces for culturally and racially specific communities, ensuring that when these types of events are held, there is not a dominant presence of police

**Racial equity is achieved in tourism industry stakeholders contracting, employees, and business ownership. What do you think about this outcome? What do and don't you like? Do these match the goals your organization has for the people/members you represent?**

There is a consensus that community members agree that this outcome is measurable, specific, and aligned with their organizational goals.

*"This outcome is a great opportunity to invest in BIPOC businesses and incorporate them as core components of Oregon's tourism industry."*

Travel Oregon could utilize this outcome to support and promote BIPOC-owned and operated tourist agencies and /or independent agents looking to leverage their unique cultural experiences and help other BIPOC navigate areas of the state for their first time.

**What would achieving racial equity look like in contracting/hiring? Business growth/ ownership? What accountability structures need to be in place?**

## **Recommendations**

### **Contracting/Hiring**

- Ensure that staff and businesses that over-represent BIPOC as a percentage of the population. There needs to be overcompensation since the dominant culture has

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historically been the white and excluded BIPOC voices, experiences, and perspectives, especially regarding its Black and Native peoples.

- A DEI contracting practice that centers racial equity in contracting and hiring. Travel Oregon needs to ensure that they share opportunities in BIPOC communities and guarantee that the candidate pool is intentionally racially diverse.
- Make it mandatory that BIPOC businesses are strongly represented when sending out RFP's. If not, keep the opportunity open until there is an adequate representation.
- Having a staff that reflects the demographics of the United States, NOT of Oregon
- Contract with companies that are as committed to Anti-racism as Travel Oregon
- Intentionally seek out local Black contractors in historically Black communities.
- Prioritize contracting with BIPOC-owned /led orgs
- Hiring needs to prioritize outreach to BIPOC communities and give consideration to developing those from BIPOC communities who may not come to the table with the skillset desired but have the potential to do the job.
- Developing BIPOC-specific small business resources for our communities to build businesses that employ more BIPOC members of the communities we represent
- Interview more BIPOC candidates
- Offer higher incomes for multi-lingual candidates and candidates with lived experience.

## Business Growth

- Build a networking community so that BIPOC entrepreneurs have access to connect with other BIPOC owners across the state

*Invest in more culturally specific sites and primarily employ people from those cultures....Let white folks experience visiting sites where they are the minority, so they can better appreciate what that feels like for the rest of us.*

- Create spaces and partner with culturally specific organizations to offer information and resources for business growth and ownership to BIPOC communities



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- Promote ownership early on in people of colors' lives; provide education and mentorship programs should start in the early stages of school. Help guide and mentor young adults and help give them purpose.
  - Who are your freelance writers? Where do they shop? Get their hair done? Take their Mom on Mother's Day? Intentionally purchase from BIPOC businesses.
  - Business growth and ownership need to include and elevate BIPOC leaders from BIPOC communities.

## Structures of Accountability/Transparency

*"Travel Oregon is funded through lodging transient lodging tax. In 2018, it was about \$40 million, so when thinking about the monies that are brought in and how much monies are out there, I think that's where the planning part needs to come in. There's been a lot of tourism in Oregon because, during COVID, people ran to Oregon because they wanted to recreate, go the coast, get outside and not be around other people. They're staying places too. I would like to see the numbers for 2020. Out of that \$40 million, we need to say,... how many million dollars are going to each of these areas we talked about? And how is Travel Oregon going to hold everyone accountable, and grant dollars that are going out to people of color, helping them write their grants, helping them write their business plans, educating them so that it becomes part of their culture, and then they raise their kids, and that's part of their culture, and then it becomes the desired culture, not what we're talking about now."*

- Local independent review board/governing body that can oversee this vision and work with Travel Oregon.
- Third-party oversight
- There should be paid BIPOC people on staff to build racial equity infrastructure and review and evaluate the work being put into action and not just talk about it.
- If contracts are unjustly awarded, then Travel Oregon will rescind them. Accountability will happen when everyone is held accountable.
- Outsource DEI consultants to review HR and hiring policies/practices, etc....to have external accountability to your stated values
- Workplace equity teams. Transparency. Making contractors and staff visible to the outside
- Make staff salaries transparent so any racial (or gender) gaps in pay can be detected and corrected immediately.

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- Accountability structures need to include analysis and review directly from BIPOC communities. That may come in the form of surveying, roundtable discussions, blind feedback, etc. Equity team and transparency are crucial components of commitment.
  - Intentional deliverables, communication mechanisms, and “living” strategic plans
  - Travel Oregon should set restrictions on funding for regional partners and DMOs that ensure a commitment to Racial Equity and Anti-racism.

## **What needs to stay the same in the tourism industry?**

Minimal needs to stay the same. Travel Oregon needs to continue to invite tourists to Oregon, as Oregon is a special place, but they need to do it responsibly, in a manner that doesn't perpetuate gentrification and encourage low housing supply due to people moving to the state. Travel Oregon should keep the same intention of bringing revenue to Oregonians through travel and tourism.

Due to the intentional outreach being done to include Black and Brown communities, community members now know who Travel Oregon is and are interested in utilizing Travel Oregon as a resource.

*“Outreach like this is what needs to stay the same. Continue to listen to the people and the communities you serve.”*

## **What needs to change in the tourism industry?**

*“Very little, if anything, should stay the same....Thus this discussion. Changes in the industry need to include more diversity and representation in the industry, both visibly and behind the scenes/at the corporate level.”*

There was a consensus that very little needs to stay the same.

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*“We are evolving creatures, and we don’t need to wait for others to evolve to catch up to what BIPOC communities are already aware of. BIPOC need to be leaders in the industry, and Travel Oregon can be used as an instrument to push the envelope in their willingness to elevate BIPOC voices, representation, and presence in all spaces.”*

The way that Travel Oregon represents BIPOC needs to change. Don’t just feature BIPOC in biased images created by the white race. Travel Oregon should reflect on posters and print ads sent out. There are very few print materials with people of color as the face! Create opportunities in ownership in the travel and hospitality for BIPOC folks, including ownership of land.

*“Can’t have a great tourism experience if the community is a violent place.”*

*“Say out loud that this place is a place for all, especially Black and Brown people, that all are welcomed, and Travel Oregon needs to put accountability structures in place to help EVERYONE feel safe in familiar and unfamiliar places.”*

## **Recommendations for Changes in the Tourism Industry**

- Create more partnerships, build relationships, and include more BIPOC organizations into the networks and databases shared in tourism.
- Increase rural outreach and infrastructure to support sustainable travel increases
- Advocate for overrepresentation of marginalized peoples in positions of leadership (who can shape visions for where to go and what to do when traveling in Oregon)
- Over-invest in BIPOC businesses and communities
- Over-represent BIPOC communities engaged in creating and highlighting culturally specific or themed destinations
- Support and invest in the creation of infrastructure to increase of the number of BIPOC travel agency/agent options for folks to consult when looking to explore new spaces
- Increase in robust marketing to counter the narratives that Oregon is known by nationwide (weird, liberal, protesting, weed utopia, etc.)

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- Create a strategy to highlight the rich histories and areas of Black and Brown variety of cultures that exist in the Northwest



### To Sum Things Up...

*"There was a common thread in the answers and the questions. All of these things sound great, but what will Travel Oregon do to bring them to fruition or flourish? This exercise is helping Travel Oregon to decide. Many of these things are hard for community members to connect to personally and challenging to connect to the actual travel industry itself. It feels like Travel Oregon is asking, Does this sound good? And for Black and Brown folks and Indigenous folks in this work, it sounds good because we already feel that way. But what's the connection? Like, how are you, as Travel Oregon, positioning yourself to make any specific impact? There is a feeling that Travel Oregon's goals are a little too holistic to be realistic. This is a lot for Travel Oregon to do as a travel organization. Travel Oregon should focus on one or two things that it can immediately impact and go all-in on that. That (Travel Oregon's focused, immediate goals) would get a lot more support."*



## Common Themes

The following bulleted lists are common themes found throughout all four strands of the community engagement process including surveys and all 3 focus groups.

### Culturally Responsiveness

- Build authentic relationships with BIPOC communities, especially communities that live outside or have been gentrified from Portland
- Make information accessible to all communities (via apps, bilingual translation, Green Book, etc.)
- Provide authentic representation and celebration of the area's history and the contributions of BIPOC, who have participated in the creation of Oregon's rich culture
- Create Culturally and Racially specific spaces in tourism, creating intentional visibility for Black, Indigenous, People of Color
- Create authentic, culturally inclusive advertising and marketing
- Promote recreational activities that BIPOC enjoy regardless of how many Black and Brown communities are or are not present in those areas
- Create opportunities for multicultural events
- Recognize the Native history and presence here

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- Utilize authentic BIPOC images in your advertisements
  - Create a culturally inclusive, multicultural calendar of events
  - Accessible payment methods

## **Economic Opportunities**

- Create jobs and economic activities that center BIPOC communities
- Support BIPOC businesses with structural needs and build a customer base that is not just determined by the local market
- Overrepresent BIPOC businesses to account for historical disparities
- Promote regional and culturally specific vendors
- Promote BIPOC on the Travel Oregon website, and create a particular section in Travel Oregon's printed materials
- Provide discounts for families
- Provide grants and other technical education opportunities, such as grant writing
- Expose students to areas where BIPOC typically aren't seen

## **Vision**

- Steer away from colonizer language
- Explicitly mention race; this is not an "All lives matter" situation
- Focus on the inclusion of BIPOC Oregonians instead of attracting "outsiders."
- Stay within Travel Oregon's scope of work
- Create strong, sustainable local communities
- Create equitable opportunities to travel and experience Oregon's natural wonderlands and cultural traditions
- Provide tools to groups and races that are lacking resources to meet this vision
- Focus on Travel Oregon's resources
- Implement actionable items within Travel Oregon's scope of work that they can achieve

## **Accountability**

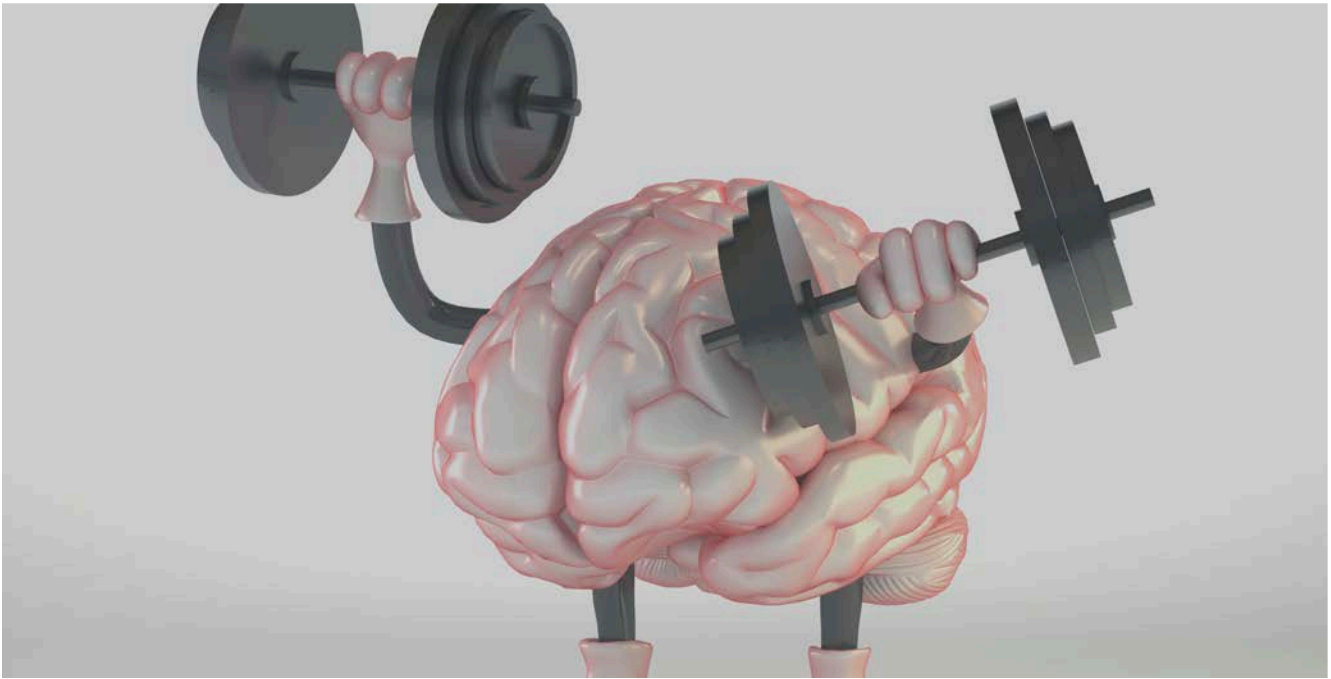
- Normalize community round table discussions to get direct feedback from BIPOC and compensate community members for their time



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- Hire/Contract with Black and Brown people in all levels of Travel Oregon, especially at the executive level
  - Advocate and/or incentivize community partners to overrepresent Black and Brown people in leadership positions
  - Stop “whitewashing” American history, and include authentic, decolonized History from a BIPOC perspective as a valid part of American History
  - If the areas visited were previously inhabited by Indigenous peoples, then land acknowledgment and understanding of culturally significant concerns for the tribes such as first foods, cultural resources.
  - Normalize community round table discussions to get direct feedback from BIPOC and compensate community members for their time
  - 3rd party oversight for Travel Oregon and their Community Partners
  - Utilize resources to advocate for racial equity in housing, education, economics, and criminal justice
  - Develop and implement safety and accountability measures in Travel Oregon and Collaborating Partners

## **Training/Education/Culture Change**

- Have community meet and greets where communities can get to know each other, especially in rural areas that have less exposure to the BIPOC community
- Advocate for more BIPOC-owned Travel agencies, Airlines, Charter lines, and hotels
- Anti-racist professional development for businesses



## Recommended Anti-Racism Training for Travel Oregon

The following is a list of recommended workshops from the Empress Rules Team to help support Travel Oregon in carrying out its goals to become an Anti-racist organization and eradicate racism:

- ❖ Support with interrupting Anti-blackness / colorism
- ❖ Support identifying and addressing micro-aggressions
- ❖ How to be a racial accomplice
- ❖ Practice building capacity, courage and utilizing the skills to interrupt racism
- ❖ Supporting staff with working with families who are experiencing diminished autonomy due to past traumas (past clients), language barriers, mental health, and substance abuse
- ❖ Tools for staff who are parents to have conversations about race with their children
- ❖ Awareness that implicit bias, racism, and white supremacy are forms of abuse that have been individualized and institutionalized in the systems that Travel Oregon participates in
- ❖ Education around how systemic inequities have impacted the communities that Travel Oregon serves and hopes to serve
- ❖ Education on "White Supremacy Culture" Hierarchy and Root Causes
- ❖ Utilizing an Equity Lens
- ❖ Anti-racist Resource Allocation

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- ❖ Racial auto-biographies
  - ❖ Racial Equity in hiring practices Pro-Blackness
  - ❖ Unpacking Xenophobia
  - ❖ Gender Identity Through a Racial Equity Lens Intersectionality
  - ❖ Cognitive Dissonance
  - ❖ Creating an more authentic and achievable Equity Statement
  - ❖ Racial Equity Policies and Practices Accountability Metrics
  - ❖ Strength-Based Language
  - ❖ Removing of "Labels"
  - ❖ Organizational Culture
  - ❖ Performing Equity Audits
  - ❖ Developing Accountability Metrics



## Conclusion

In conclusion, Travel Oregon has a responsibility to take a proactive approach to make this institution an inclusive place, free from racism and all of its intersectionalities plaguing our society today. Travel Oregon must intentionally become an Anti-racist organization by working with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to make a genuine, public, and authentic commitment to Anti-racism, Racial Equity, and Inclusion. Travel Oregon must allocate the proper resources to achieve Racial Equity. Travel Oregon must hold itself accountable for institutionalizing Racial Equity in hiring practices by collecting demographic data on staff, partners, and vendors to ensure adequate representation and that data is available and accessible to the public. Travel Oregon staff deserve

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transparency and a proper place to decompress, learn, and connect in affinity for Anti-racism and receive the training they deserve to interrupt their own internal biases and serve residents, travelers, and tourists of Oregon to the best of their ability. Travel Oregon must have concrete boundaries between themselves and community partners to create a safer environment for BIPOC communities. Lastly, protect the BIPOC community. If Travel Oregon truly wants to end racism in the tourism industry, it starts from within. Anything can be achieved with intention, integrity, determination, and follow-through.

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