

City of Gresham's Employee-led Equity Initiative

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Employee-led Equity Initiative

- Historical perspective
- What is equity and why is it important?
- How we got started
- City of Gresham Equity Program Structure
- Equity in Budget and Finance Roles

Historic Timeline

1791- Article 4 of the Constitution Defined People as Property and laws developed that way for non-whites from very beginning. The Authors of the Constitution were interested in protecting their property, including slaves.

1830 – (Indian Removal Act) over 10 years 100,000 Native American adults and children marched for 1000's of miles out of their land (15,000 do not survive) taken and given to white settlers. Over 25 million Acres of Land is made available for white settlers

1854 – People vs. Hall (California Supreme Court) non-whites barred from testifying in court not allowed any rights to testify in court.

1857 – (Dred Scott vs. Sanford) Free Blacks are Taxed but no rights of citizenship granted to Whites – not only land and no pay, also required to pay (taxed)

1862 – Emancipation Proclamation in District of Columbia. (Legislative Action) – Slaves are free in D.C. but Slave Owners are reimbursed for Slaves given up. (Whites paid over \$1 million for lost property)

1862 – Homestead Act (Legislative Action) 50 Million Acres of formerly indigenous land is distributed by the Government at low cost to white settlers only. 100 Million acres of indigenous land are given for free to Railroad Developers

1882 – Chinese Exclusion Act (Legislative Action) Bans immigration of both skilled and unskilled Chinese Laborers

1924 – Johnson Reed Act (Legislative Action) Creates an Immigration quota system based on National Origin.

1934 – The National Housing Act (Roosevelt's new deal) Creates Federal Housing Authority to provide loans and federal subsidies for home ownership. FHA discriminates against non-whites in a process called "Redlining" (Redlining is an unethical practice that puts services (financial and otherwise) out of reach for residents of certain areas based on race or ethnicity).

1942 – Japanese American Concentration Camps (Executive Order 9066) Forces 111,000 Japanese Americans into concentration camps

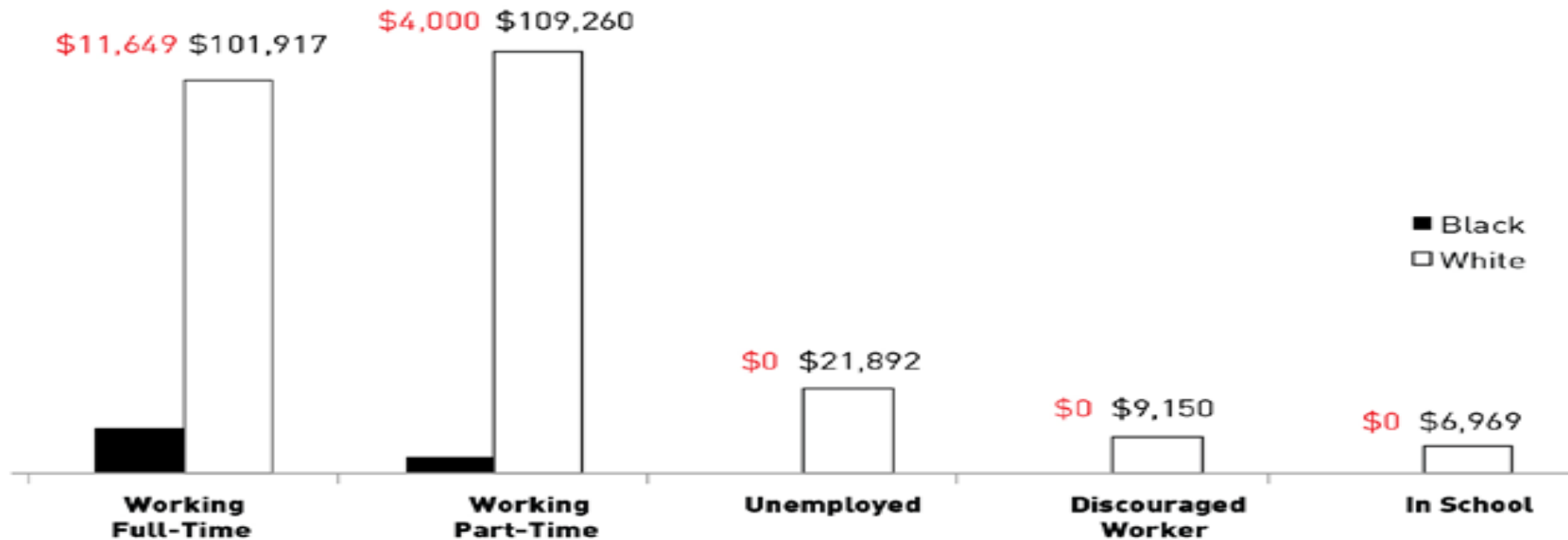
1971 – Nixon's War on Drugs (Presidential Initiative) Targets and imprisons people of color disproportionately through today

Oregon History

- Oregon was known as the most discriminatory state north of the Mason-Dixon Line.
- Until 1926, Oregon's Constitution prohibited African Americans from living in the state.
- Oregon once had the largest Ku Klux Klan, per capita, in the nation.
- As late as the 1960s cities and towns throughout our state had "sundown laws" that prevented African Americans and Asians from staying overnight.
- Before 1988 the majority of rental housing prohibited children.

What are we talking about?

FIGURE 3

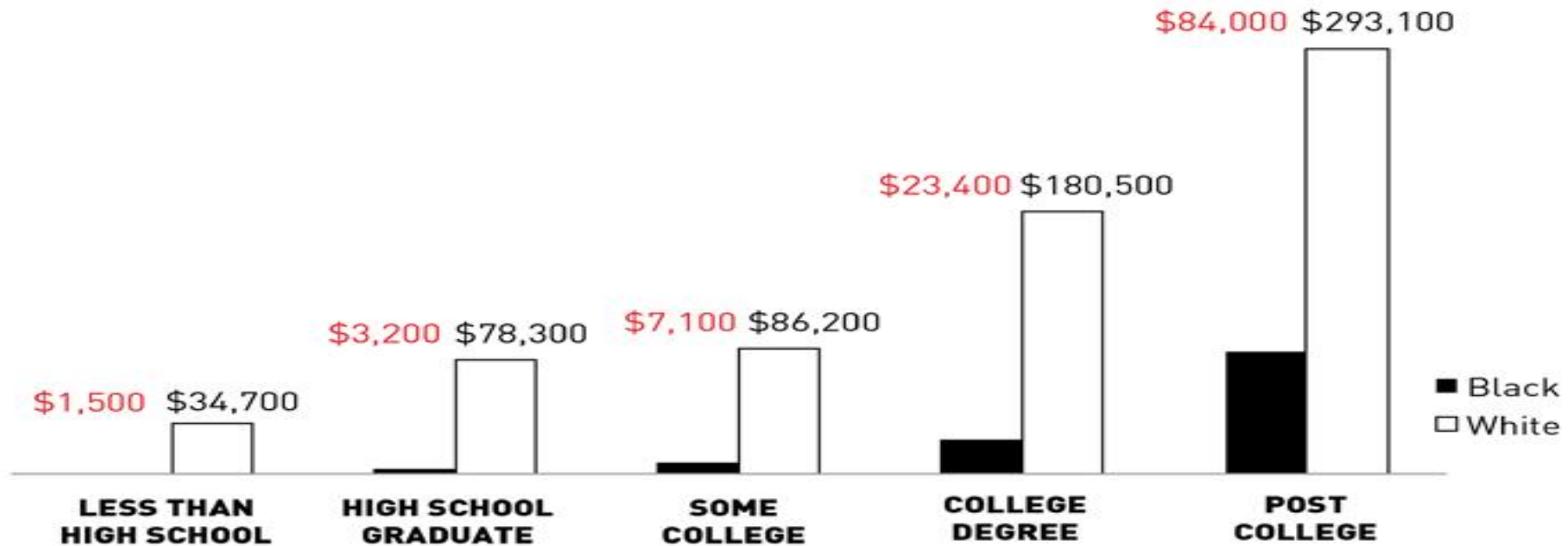


Employment is Not the Great Equalizer

Median wealth by employment/labor force status and race, SIPP 2011

What are we talking about?

FIGURE 2



Education is not the Great Equalizer

Median wealth by educational level and race, SIPP 2011

Levels of Racism

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL

Internalized Racism

Interpersonal Racism

SYSTEMIC-LEVEL

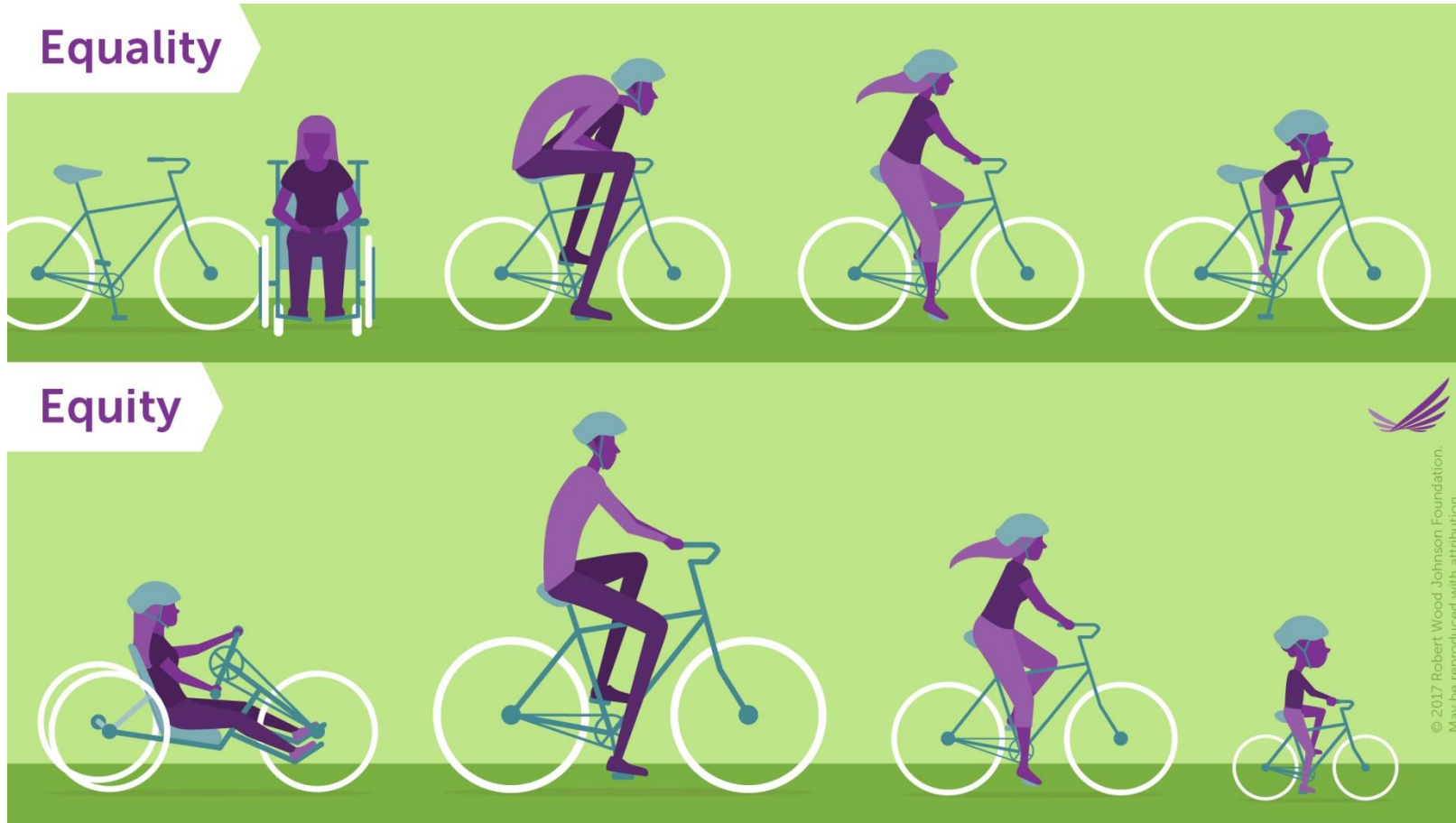
Institutional Racism

Structural Racism



Equity = Outcomes

• Equality = Intent



Systemic Challenges to Equity

- Systems are not broken. They working the way they were created to.
 - White Supremacy Within Systems – Organizational Culture (by Tema Okun)

Construct	Example
Perfectionism	We are not ready yet. Let's study this. Paralysis.
Urgency	Wait for an emergency to act.
Defensiveness	It's not my fault. Doubling down.
Quantity over quality	It is easier and faster to track numbers. Emphasis on number trained.
Worship of the written word	This is how we have always done it. No flexibility. It's not in the code.
Paternalism	Let's hire one person to lead the equity program. External consultants. Blaming. Avoiding responsibility.
Either / or thinking	There is no room in the budget.
Power Hoarding	Waiting for permission.
Fear of open conflict	Who are we protecting?
Individualism	It is not my problem. I've never seen/experienced this e.g. its not true.
Bigger! More!	Visible projects are more important than systemic change.
Objectivity	We treat everyone the same. Colorblindness.
Right to comfort	Whose comfort? Concentrating on tone over message.

How we started

- Three employees informally started meeting.
 - Represented different departments
 - Passionate equity professionals
- We identified an organizational need, wrote a proposal and presented it to City leadership.
 - Demonstrated need
 - Demonstrated employee support
- Found allies

Employee Led Equity Initiative

- Preliminary Work
 - Brownbag Series
 - Employee Forums
 - Equity Survey
- Program Structure
 - Hearts & Minds
 - Systems & Policies
 - Equity Coordinators
- Council Work Plan

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Employee led at all levels
- Action and outcome oriented
- Voluntary & within owner's control
- Empowers employees to speak out and act
- Understanding and acceptance of institutional racism/discrimination
- Organizational accountability

Empowerment

- How does DEI show up in your work?
- How do you start the conversation?

Answers may be different for each jurisdiction

QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!!

A hand-drawn graphic of the words "THANK YOU!!" in a colorful, childlike font. Each letter is a different color: T (green), H (yellow), A (pink), N (light blue), K (purple), Y (dark blue), O (orange), U (magenta), and two exclamation marks (green and red). The background is a white, textured surface.