

Diversity and Civic Leadership Program

Year-end performance summary

FY 2012-13

July 2012 through June 2013

Organization: **Urban League of Portland**

GOAL: Community Involvement, Increase the number and diversity of people who are involved and volunteer in their communities and neighborhoods.

1. Examples of developing culturally appropriate strategies to bring constituency together to build community identity, understanding of existing City governance structures, and/or skills to analyze City power dynamics.
 - **Social Justice and Civic Leadership Cohort:** First year convened a year-long training cohort starting with a two day retreat to discuss continued engagement. Two of the cohort have applied for the Comprehensive Plan Policy Expert Groups (PEGS). New model provides us with the consistency we need to develop skills and leadership for our organization and provide the skills needed to effectively engage in civic engagement opportunities.
 - **Youth voter engagement project:** Engaged students from Grant and Roosevelt High Schools; conducted voter registration canvasses in East Portland and organized 3 phone banks to urge people to get out the vote. We contacted over 2500 primarily African American voters. The league also involved African American churches in our voter engagement activities. Working with the black sororities and fraternities and our Young Professional groups, we register voters on three consecutive Sundays at 14 area churches.
 - **Candidates Forum for Mayoral Candidates:** Partnered with African American Alliance and PAALF, attended by over 100 people; city issues including the Office of Equity, housing, transportation, education, jobs, hiring and contracting, and the Columbia River Crossing were discussed by the community.
 - **Ballot measure info sessions:** Organized 2 information sessions on the ballot measures; and conducted phone banks involving 20 volunteers that reached 2500 voters.
 - **The Racial Equity Strategy Guide:** Published guide to help City leadership and Bureaus develop and implement equity strategies designed to improve outcomes in service delivery, planning, programs and city operations for communities of color and other marginalized communities.
 - **Lift Every Voice:** Issue-briefing on the Black LGBT community, produced in partnership with Black PFLAG. First of its kind on Black LGBT Oregonians. Contains national and local research (the local research was conducted through collection of over 300 surveys). The Briefing also contained policy recommendations on education, health and employment.

- **Health forum:** Organized forum about The African American Response to the State of Equity Report. 200+ policymakers and community members attended.
- **Low-income renter engagement activities in East Portland:** Worked with We Are Oregon, organized community meetings in four different housing complexes and a community picnic, attended by 300 residents. Issues identified included public safety and the need for after-school services in the area.
- **Oregon Alliance for Education Equity:** Launched new statewide advocacy Community Education Partners working on disproportionate discipline issue. Recognized by PPS Board with award for partnership work to reduce disproportionate discipline in 10 PPS Schools. Community Education Partners is comprised of several organization including DCL Partners Latino Network and IRCO. Yvette Maranowski, a 2012 SJCL Graduate has served as a community representative at CEP Meetings.
- **Water Fluoridation campaign education:** Educated community on City policy issue that has an impact on community's health and job security. Black community has some of the greatest disparities in dental health. With a grant from the Northwest Health Foundation, joined a coalition of community groups serving Portlanders of color in promoting the successful passage of Ballot Measure 26-151 Health Kids, Healthy Portland Campaign. This opportunity was the first large scale campaign that included an organizing model that intentionally partnered with People of color organizations to engage the full diversity of our population. This campaign brought opportunities for us to engage our base through phone bank, outreach events paid and earned media and more.
- **Earned Sick Leave campaign:** Engaged in successful campaign for Paid Sick Days policy issue that has an impact on community's health and job security. Turned out supporters at Council hearing during winter. Only 45% (average) of African Americans are covered by earned sick leave compared to 60% of the general population in Portland.
- **Healthy Birth Initiative** - Support their civic engagement goals.
- **Links:** Efforts to engage traditional African American institutions such as the black sororities and fraternities - Deltas, AKAs and Zeta Phi Beta.
- **Youth violence:** Host and support for Black Women for Peace, group of black women seeking to eliminate youth violence in the African American community.
- **Legislative Action Day:** February 19th, 2013, 200 Urban League supporters - students, seniors and representatives of over 30 organizations met with legislators, shared their stories and advocated for jobs, culturally competent health care, an end to police profiling, housing, education and a bill to promote natural hair care.

Teams of advocates and leaders, many of whom had been trained in how the legislative system works, discussed issues facing the African American community and spoke with over 20 lawmakers seeking support for legislative solutions. Our Voice United was sponsored by the Urban League of Portland, in partnership with the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs and the Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF). During the Senate floor session, a

proclamation was introduced by Senator Shields honoring Mr. Charles Jordon who has made significant contributions to the African American community and Rob Ingram, a community leader and Urban League Young Professionals president who passed last year.

In preparation for the Legislative day, visits were made to 5 high school Black Student Unions. The visits included presentations about the importance of being engaged and information about the Urban League Legislative day and our priorities. There were many discussions about tuition equity and racial profiling and the importance of sharing their stories. Approximately 45 students attended our Leg Day and were given opportunities to speak directly to legislators about issues that were important to them and the community. Attached is a great picture of youth from Grant High School outside of the Governor's Office.

On Tuesday, February 12th, in partnership with the Portland Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Portland African American Leadership Forum and the Urban League of Portland Young Professionals, we provided an activist training session titles: Lifting the Voice of African Americans at the State Capitol. Approximately 50 Participants received training on: The Oregon State Legislature and 2013 Legislative Session; Legislation affecting African Americans and Communities of Color; and How to be an effective activist in the State Capitol. In addition 5 members were identified as legislative leads for Our Legislative Lobby Day.

Amber Starks a 2013 Social Justice and Civic Leadership training graduate is making waves at the Capitol. Amber's story is one of people power. Amber saw a need in the community and wanted to help. In early April, her hard work will be rewarded with a vote on the house floor. Below is an excerpt from an article entitled: The Power of One describing Amber's Work.

"A bill introduced in the Oregon House of Representatives would exempt African hair braiders from the arduous and costly requirement of attaining a cosmetology license to conduct business in the Beaver State. Oregon is one of seven states that require hair braiders to obtain a cosmetology license before they can practice this traditional art form. These natural hair care specialists are subject to "up to 1,700 hours in beauty school, where tuition can run anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000." That's thousands of dollars wasted, as the beauty school curriculum focuses heavily on cutting, styling and chemically-treating hair, none of which apply to braiders.

A recent study conducted by the Institute for Justice found that while it takes emergency medical technicians 35 days to qualify for a license in Oregon, it takes cosmetologists, including hair braiders, a whopping 338 days.

This overregulation has driven at least one dedicated braider and Oregon resident, Amber Starks, to conduct her business on the other side of the state border in Vancouver, Wash.

She explained the motivation behind starting her own natural hair care business this past year: “What I wanted to do was provide a sense of empowerment. I wanted to create choice and access.” But Oregon state law would not even allow her to “volunteer her services [free of charge] to black foster children without breaking the law.”

Amber has done this work using the skills she gained in the SJCL Program and with the Support of The Urban League of Portland. We have spent days in Salem testifying, meeting with legislators and even bring community members to Salem to show support for this important bill. *Amber will be showcased in the DCL Profile for the upcoming yearbook.*

- **Cultural Lunchtime Discussion:** Partnered with The Oregon Department of Human Services partnered to present discussion attended by 70 people - Challenges of the Northwest: The African American Experience. Community participants and DHS employees heard the voices of multiple generations in the African American Community sharing their experiences, challenges, barriers, triumphs and future implications for strengthening our families and communities.
- **Get Out The Vote Visibility event:** Aside from general GOTV effort with UL constituents, partnered with SUN Program at Boise ~Eliot K-8 School during May election cycle to engage a group of young African American girls participating in a leadership program. The students we're given information about the history of the right to vote, the importance of voting and unbiased information about the issues and candidates on the ballot. After the brief training, the 15 young women went out into the community to conduct a GOTV event. The young women knocked on approximately 127 doors in the neighborhood around the Urban League and Boise-Eliot School. After finishing their doors early, the young women created a visibility event and engaged prospective voters with chants of turn in your ballots by tomorrow and handing ballot drop location sheets to bicyclist and pedestrians passing by.
- **Annual Seniors day at the Capitol:** Seniors from our Multi Cultural Senior Center participated in an Annual Seniors day at the Capitol.
- **Portland African American leadership Forum (PAALF):** Our staff and several members serve on the advisory committees in the areas of housing, education and economic development. Our CEO serves on the Steering Committee. This groups allows us to come together with other African American Organizations to increase our collective power and voice.
- **Good in the Hood food and Music Festival and Parade:** Participated in this annual NE Portland community event next to King Elementary School.
- **East Portland Neighborhood Office partnership:** We continue to offer weekly office hours in East Portland where many of our constituents currently live and

where many do not benefit from the social ties and community identity the once had when they lived in inner N/NE Portland.

- **East Portland Open House:** Held event to get the word out that the Urban League is working in the area and heard from East Portland residents about resources and service gaps.
- **2013 annual meeting:** Attended by 100 people. Reported out to the community on UL work and highlight the successes of several programs and participants.
- **LEARNING FROM HISTORY, A conversation with Lois Leveen:** Partnership with Member-Led Forums, co-sponsored by the City Club of Portland, Allen Temple CME Church, NE Coalition of Neighborhoods, and First Unitarian Church. Educator and author of *The Secret Life of Mary Bowser, A discussion about how to achieve educational equity for all young people in Portland.*

2. Have you convened any gatherings/meetings or events to accomplish this goal/program function? If so, how many gatherings/meetings? Attendance?
 - 1st and 2nd QTR, 1,50 mtgs/events and 874 people;
 - 3rd QTR, 32 mtgs/events, 600 people
 - 4th Quarter, 32 mtgs/events, 600 people

GOAL: Capacity Building, Strengthen neighborhood and community capacity to build identity, skills, relationships and partnerships.

Communications

3. Describe the methods of communication currently used to outreach to your group.
 - Support for our Urban Senior monthly newsletter for community elders
 - Email alert system
 - Phone banks
 - Website
 - Door to door canvas
 - E-newsletter
4. How many people are receiving these communications on a regular basis?
 - Up to 4656 people on listserv
 - 4331 phone tree contacts - phone banks including GOTV phone bank, 2 phone banks for Legislative Lobby Day
 - 344 people one-on-one meetings with organizers
5. Describe one example of how one of these communication strategies is supporting your community building and livability efforts, fostering dialogue on policy issues, or publicizing opportunities for involvement with the City?
 - In April 2013, we updated our website to a new user friendly site which included adding pictures and contact information for all of our staff and scrolling highlights of our programs. Our web hits increased tenfold. It also helped promote effective communication by allowing website visitors to directly contact staff from the

website and better keep up with events and opportunities. There is also a new option to sign up as a volunteer on the website.

Leadership development

6. As a result of this project describe one method to develop leadership opportunities for your constituents to become effective advocates on City public involvement initiatives and/or initiatives by your organization to achieve economic and social equity? How many people have participated?

- **Social Justice and Civic Leadership trainings**
 - 1st/2nd Qtrs - 1 training, 16 participants
 - 3rd Qtr – 1 training, 50 participants
 - 4th Qtr – 1 training, HKHP Volunteer Training
- **Lifting the Voice of African Americans at the State Capitol:** Tues., Feb 12th, in partnership with the Portland Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Portland African American Leadership Forum and the Urban League of Portland Young Professionals, provided an activist training session titles: Lifting the Voice of African Americans at the State Capitol. In addition 5 members were identified as legislative leads for Our Legislative Lobby Day. Approximately 50 Participants received training on:
 - The Oregon State Legislature and 2013 Legislative Session;
 - Legislation affecting African Americans and Communities of Color; and
 - How to be an effective activist in the State Capitol.
- **Hired Community Organizer, Lakeitha Elliott:** Native Oregonian and graduate of our Social Justice and Civic Leadership programs. Participated in all three of our State of Black Oregon Task Forces, served as the President of The Jefferson High School PTSA, served on the Portland Public Schools Long Range Facilities Committee and Bond Development Committee, and been a delegate to the Democratic National Convention and more.
- **Resolutions Northwest's Facilitating with Grace training:** Our Community Organizer participated with other DCL leaders and Neighborhood program staff.

Partnerships and Collaborations

7. Describe a new or update on a collaboration or partnership developed as a result of this project with other community organization(s), neighborhood and/or business association(s) where there may be opportunities to work on common community and neighborhood livability issues?

- **African American churches** - voter engagement activities.
- **Deltas, AKAs and Zeta Phi Beta** - Links, Black sororities and fraternities
- **Urban League's Young Professional groups** – lobby day, etc.
- **Grant and Roosevelt High School students** – voter engagement
- **Black PFLAG** - Joint published *Lift Every Voice*

- **We Are Oregon** – Low-income community engagement in East Portland
- **Latino Network** - OR Alliance for Education Equity, Coalition of Ed Partners
- **IRCO** - Oregon Alliance for Education Equity, Coalition of Education Partners
- **African American Alliance** – candidate’s forums
- **PAALF** – candidate’s forums and Our Voice United (Legislative Lobby Day)
- **30 organizations** – For State Legislative Lobby Day, Feb. 2014
- **Oregon Commission on Black Affairs:** Our Voice United (Legis.Lobby Day)
- **Healthy Birth Initiative** - Support their civic engagement goals.
- **Black Women for Peace** – eliminating youth violence
- **The Oregon Department of Human Services** - Cultural Lunchtime Discussion
- **Governor’s Office, DHS, Vocational Rehabilitation** - Closing the Employment Gap Working Group:
- **Oregon Alliance for Education Equity:** Launched new statewide advocacy Community Education Partners working on disproportionate discipline issue. Recognized by PPS Board with award for partnership work to reduce disproportionate discipline in 10 PPS Schools. Community Education Partners is comprised of several organization including DCL Partners Latino Network and IRCO. Yvette Maranowski, a 2012 SJCL Graduate has served as a community representative at CEP Meetings.
- **All Hands Raised** – educational disparities
- **Portland Public Schools** – educational disparities
- **Coalition of Communities of Color** – educational disparities
- **Office of Youth Violence Prevention** - Black Male Achievement Initiative
- **Multnomah County** - Black Women for Peace, and budget hearings w/CCC.
- **Metro** - Equity Strategy Working Group
- **Basic Rights Oregon**
- **Western States Center**
- **Oregon Voice**
- **East Portland Action Plan**
- **Housing Bureau** – focus groups on economic opportunity mapping
- **SUN Program at Boise ~Eliot K-8 School** - Get Out The Vote visibility event
- **PDC** - N/NE Economic Development Summit
- **City Club of Portland** – Learning from History lecture
- **Allen Temple CME Church** – Learning from History lecture
- **Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods** – Learning from History lecture
- **First Unitarian Church of Portland** – Learning from History lecture

GOAL: Public Impact. Increase community and neighborhood impact on public decisions.

Representation on City advisory committees

8. How many people have participated on city advisory committees, boards, commissions?

- **Office of Equity and Human Rights** – Steering Committee
- **Office of Equity and Human Rights** - Bureau Advisory Committee
- **Office of Neighborhood Involvement** – Bureau Advisory Committee
- **BPS Comprehensive Plan Policy Expert Groups** (Education, Infrastructure PEG and the Economic Opportunity PEG) – 3 members
- **Office of Youth Violence Prevention** - Black Male Achievement Initiative
- **All Hands Raised** – City supported effort working on educational disparities

Culturally appropriate public involvement models

9. Please describe any opportunities this quarter you have had to engage with City public involvement efforts. What have been some of the successes or challenges in engaging in this process?

- **Office of Equity and Human Rights:** Leading role in the development of this new bureau. Served on the Steering Committee to develop the Workplan, and to develop the mechanism to establish and serve on Bureau Advisory Committee.
- **Community Benefit Agreement:** Participated in a partnership of organizations that campaigned for, negotiated and achieved a Community Benefit Agreement, which covers hiring, apprenticeships and contracting the constructions trades.
- **Housing Bureau:** Worked on equity strategies and community outreach.
- **Bureau of Planning and Sustainability:** Worked on equity strategies and community outreach.
- **Comprehensive Plan Policy Expert Groups (BPS):** Helped support two Social Justice and Civic Leadership graduates to apply and then serve on the Education, Infrastructure PEG and the Economic Opportunity PEG including:
 1. Gary Hollands - SJCL graduate, Economic Development PEG
 2. Troy Tate, SJCL graduate and director of non-profit church-based preschool in NE Portland; active with Overlook Neighborhood Association, is on the Education and Youth Success PEG
 3. Midge Purcell, Director of Public Advocacy, Infrastructure Equity PEG.
- **City Council member visits:** Presented findings of the Lift Every Voice report to each elected City Council member through one on one meetings, along with partner Black PFLAG.
- **Cradle to Career initiative:** Worked on project started through the City of Portland being coordinated by All Hands Raised. We are working with Portland Public Schools, Coalition of Communities of Color, and community-based organizations, community members, and administrators on advocating for the elimination of educational disparities for students of color and ELL students.
- **Portland Bureau of Housing:** Partnered to host two focus groups attended by 60 people that yielded tremendous response, the results of which are reverberating as the Bureau continues to evaluate its 15 year plan. We will be focused on mapping and evaluating economic, social and cultural opportunity in Portland. The invitation was extended to the Urban League to convene a broad range of African/African-American Portlanders in effort to assess how the

Housing Bureau can better serve the community as it develops and implements its fifteen-year plan. While the conversations covered a range of specific survey-questions, the discussion included: Where are the best economic, educational, social and cultural opportunities in Portland; housing affordability; community opportunity; and barriers to housing and economic opportunity. There was a strong desire from the participants to continue these conversations and go deeper into issues of housing equity. We are planning to hold several housing related engagement opportunities in the near future. In April we met with the Bureau to review the draft report and give additional input.

- **Black Male Achievement Initiative:** Participated with the Office of Youth Violence Prevention to develop a proposal to foster black male achievement and reduce gang violence.
- **Black Women for Peace:** Participate in, host the Multnomah County initiative.
- **Closing the Employment Gap Working Group:** Participated in statewide group aimed at improving outcomes for historically unemployed and under employed Oregonians. The Initiative is sponsored by the Governor's Office, DHS and Vocational Rehabilitation. The working group is due to release a report, *Improving Employment Outcomes: Findings and Recommendations from the Closing the Employment Gap Initiative*; and work to develop an implementation strategy.
- **Prosperity Initiative:** Participating in statewide project launched by First Lady Sylvia Hayes to develop strategies to tackle poverty in the state.
- **Metro Equity Strategy Working Group**
- **City Budget Hearings:** Staff and participants testified at City Budget hearings, advocating for continued funding for Youth Pass, Summer Works, EPAP, SUN Programs and three of our Senior Center participants testified on Parks pass through dollars to support Senior Activities.
- **Multnomah County Budget hearing:** Helped coordinate the Coalition of Communities of Color budget hearing for the County.
- **PDC's N/NE Economic Development Summit:** Urban League CEO, Michael Alexander, was one of the days speakers. Two Social Justice and Civic Leadership graduates, who are also business owners, were featured on panels.
- **Title VI program:** Met with City's Title IV coordinator at DCL staff meeting.
- **BPS equity audit:** Met with BPS for discussion about Anita Yap audit report.
- **Portland Children's Levy:** Engaged as they developed strategies to engage a large number of community members in helping to decide how the Levy prioritizes their funding and uses an equity lens to distribute funding.
- **Senator Jeff Merkley meeting:** Participated in an African American Community conversation with Senator Jeff Merkley.
- **Joint Ways and Means Committee:** Several Seniors testified at committee hearing held in Portland.