



The Slavic Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile

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Overview

- Introducing the research project
- Introducing the community
- Key findings
 - Profile of experiences
 - Impact of this recession
- Recommendations



Coalition of Communities of Color

The Coalition's mission is:

- To address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities
- To organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity



Origins of the Research

- The context among policy makers
 - Facing invisibility and exclusion in policy development
 - Rarely invited to the table
 - Once there, had to waste much time making the arguments for the needs of the community
 - Lack of understanding of racial issues and challenges
 - Treated as irrelevant to policy development
 - When shared information, suspicion was pronounced



- Six-year history of partnered research
- Initiated by the Coalition
- Grant funding of \$552,000
 - City, County
 - Foundations
 - Northwest Health Foundation, Kaiser Permanente Community Fund, United Way
 - Portland State University
 - In-kind contributions from Coalition members



Academic Partner

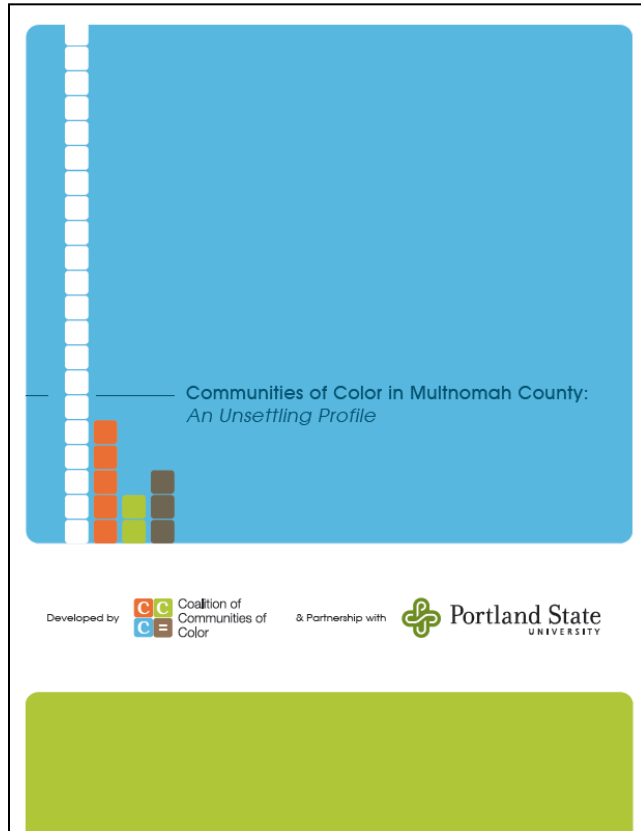
- PSU
 - “Let knowledge serve the city”
- School of Social Work
 - “The School of Social Work is committed to the enhancement of the individual and society. We are dedicated to social change and to the attainment of social justice for all people, the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of those who are oppressed, the rights of all individuals and groups to determine their destiny, and the opportunity to live in cooperation.”

Where have disparities been uncovered?

1. Population counts
2. Education
3. Occupation
4. Unemployment
5. Poverty levels
6. Access to food banks
7. Government procurement and contracting
8. Small business numbers
9. Hiring in public service
10. Incomes
11. Wealth
12. Bankruptcy
13. Lending institutions
14. Housing discrimination
15. Voter registration and voting
16. Volunteering
17. Public office
18. Philanthropy funding
19. Police hiring
20. Juvenile Justice
21. Child welfare
22. Health insurance
23. Health disparities
24. Racial harassment
25. Health risk behaviors (varied results)
26. Criminal justice
27. Access to public housing
28. Homeless numbers

= domains where Slavic data exists

First Report – June 2010



- Integrated for “communities of color”
- Significant media and policy attention
- Presentations to civic leaders, bureaus, school boards, foundations...

Breaking News, Multnomah County »

Communities of Color Coalition finds 'toxic' conditions for Multnomah County minorities

By Janie Har, The Oregonian
May 06, 2010, 5:33PM

A new report by a coalition of minority groups labels Multnomah County a "uniquely toxic place" for people of color, where minorities consistently lag behind whites on nearly every indicator, from poverty rates to jobs.

Conditions here are worse than in other parts of the country and continuing slide, said lead researcher Ann Curry-Stevens, an assistant professor of the graduate school of social work at **Portland State University**.

*Investing in Lasting Change:
The Benefits of Advocating
for Communities of Color*

By Thomas Aschenbrenner
President, Northwest
Health Foundation

Opinion

New Research on Urban Indian Community Amplifies Leaders With Tools for Change

By Leah Gibson November 9, 2011

On November 2, policy makers, Native American leaders, National Congress of American Indian's conference attendees and other Native professionals witnessed the release of the unique report *The Native American Community in Multnomah County: an Unsettling Profile*. This research is the product of a collaboration among the Coalition of Communities of Color, Portland State University, the Portland Indian Business Center, and the Portland urban Indian community, melding academic research and community input.

The report includes findings and recommendations that prioritize community research, a method that equally prioritizes community input. Unique to this report, the information is not only

Needed: A way to keep on area racial disparity

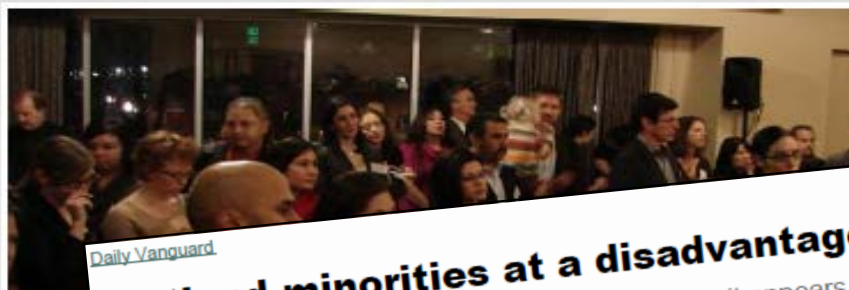
A surprising report from Portland State University and groups documents the canyon between who we are and

We now know the score, and it's deeply disturbing: Whites winning. Everyone in Multnomah County loses.

Of course, it's not that simple. It's fair to say that few Oregonians are doing brilliantly in this economic climate. Nevertheless, whites are not and minorities are doing worse, far worse.



Report reveals 'unsettling' disparity for Latinos in Multnomah County



Daily Vanguard

Portland minorities at a disadvantage

Study shows that Portland is not as progressive as it appears

By Courtney Graham

Vanguard staff

Published: Tuesday, May 25, 2010
Updated: Tuesday, May 25, 2010



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Portland State recently released a report in conjunction with the Coalition of Communities of Color that found that communities of color, including African immigrants and S

Portland isn't as white as figures show, coalition contends

Published: Saturday, December 19, 2009, 10:00 AM

Updated: Saturday, December 19, 2009, 8:06 PM

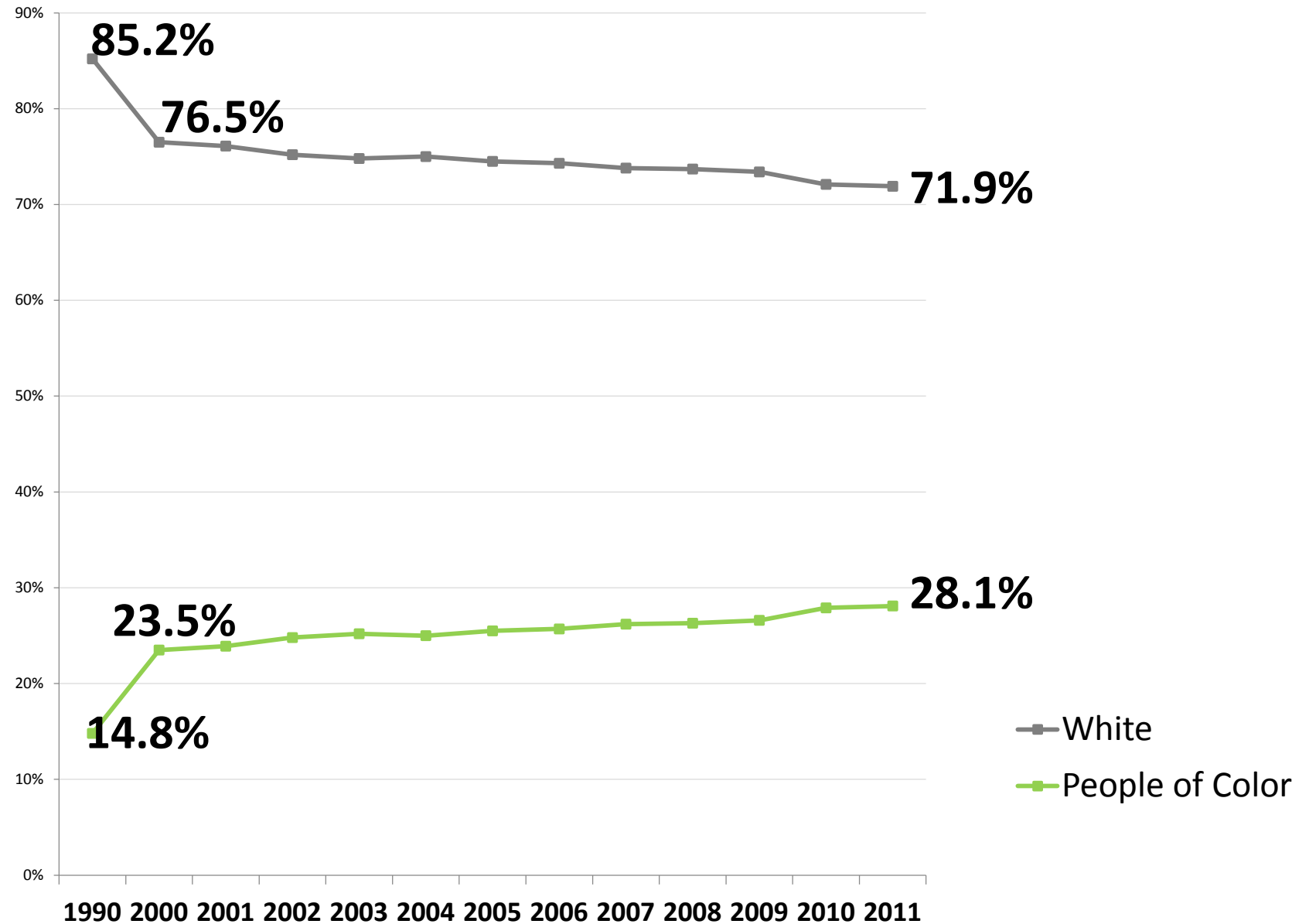
By Nikole Hannah-Jones, The Oregonian

Subsequent Reports

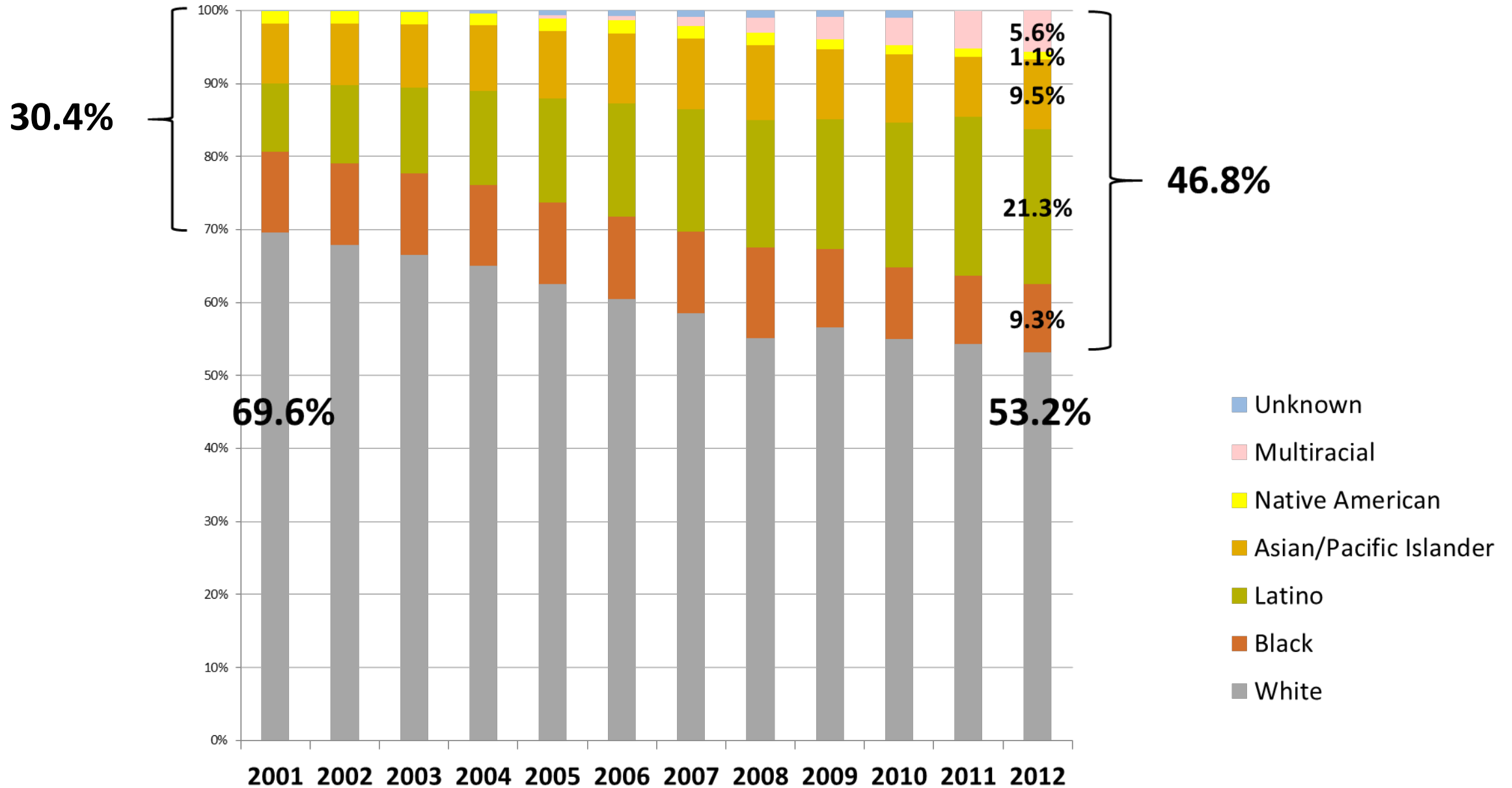


- Native American
- Latino
- Asian & Pacific Islanders
- African
- African American
- Slavic... TODAY!

Population of Multnomah County



Race/Ethnicity of Students in Public Schools, Multnomah County



NOTE: When we add the approx. 5000 Slavic youth to this chart in 2012, kids of color = 53.1% = majority culture is of color!

Slavic community = people from the former Soviet Union

- Russia
- Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania)
- Ukraine
- Belarus
- Moldova
- Azerbaijan
- Armenia
- Georgia
- Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan)



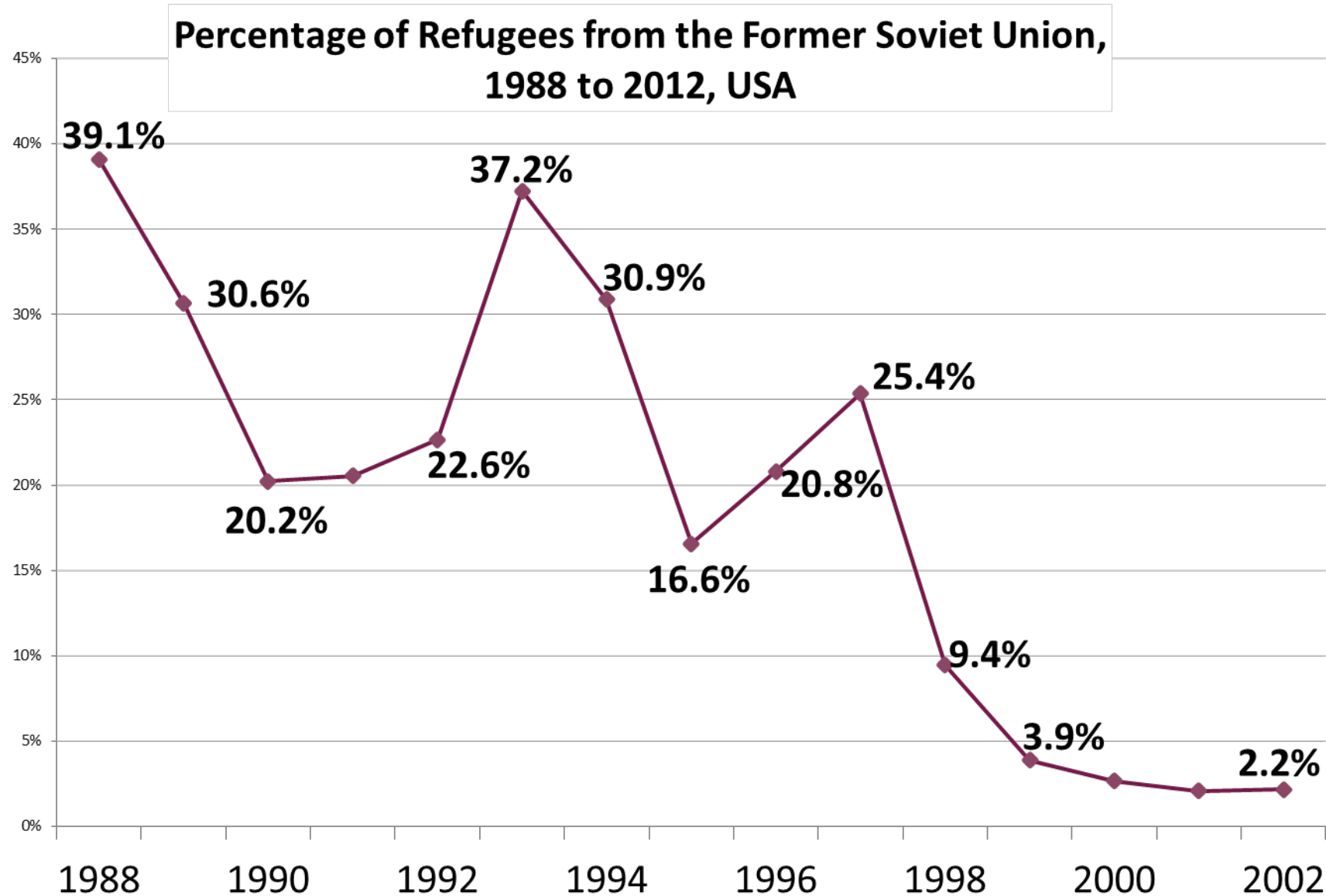
History of Arrival: 3 Major Waves

- Early 20th Century
 - Russian Orthodox members moved here, and largely unable to retain roots
- Close of Russian Revolution in 1922, fleeing violence
- End of Soviet Union
 - 1988 – President Gorbachev allows religious minorities to leave
 - 1989 – USA recognizes Soviet religious minorities as refugees
 - Arrived with history of persecution
 - Denied employment and access to higher education in Russia
 - Frequently imprisoned
 - Faced high levels of violence

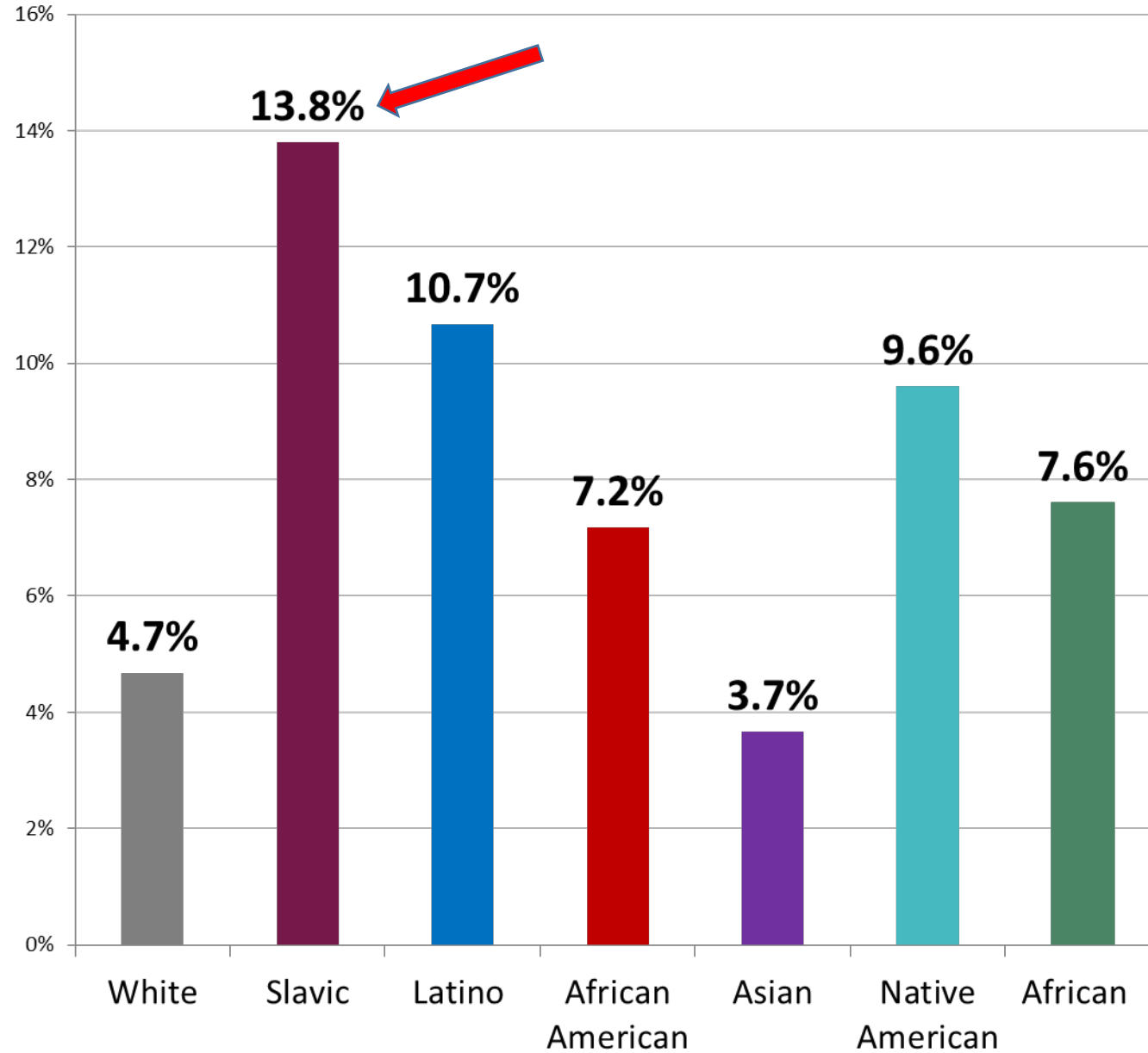
Region rapidly diversifying; strong Slavic presence

- Largest immigrant group after Latino, at
- Most common language after English and Spanish
- Geographically dispersed
- Without strong community hubs
- Emerging from “sleeping” influence (said Mayor Potter), to “emerging” influence as more from the community gain visibility and voice
- Civic engagement beginning to be supported

Immigration levels slow; fertility rates high



Fertility Rate, Women from 15 to 50, Multnomah County, 2011

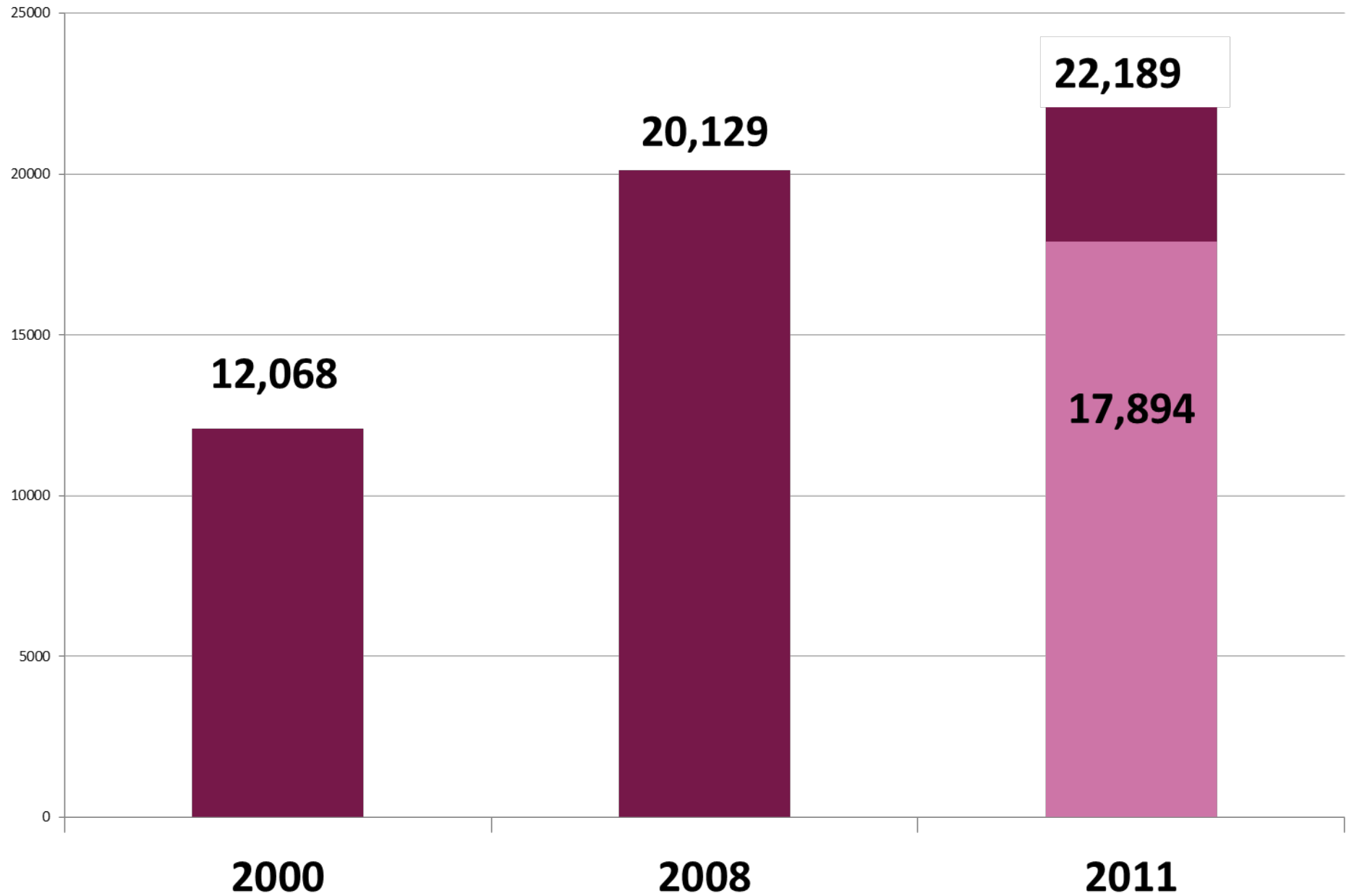


How big is the community?

- Significant undercounts
 - The result of language, moving, literacy, without a phone, large families, and avoiding participation due to distrust of the government
 - Estimated undercount is 31.6%
 - Population is over 22,000, and thus approx. 3% of the County's population



Slavic Population in Multnomah County



Key Findings

- The Slavic community is mostly invisible, as only 8 of 28 systems identify community members
 - In most areas, we don't know how they fare
 - In the known areas, they face huge challenges
 - We thus suspect they do not fare well in other institutions and systems
- This community faces similar disparities as other communities of color
 - Struggling to gain a toe-hold in the region economically, academically, and occupationally
- The community has been decimated by the recession, exhibiting the worst losses of any community of color
- Despite challenges, optimism among many of its young leaders
 - Though we do not know how non-leadership youth are faring
 - No data from juvenile justice, school discipline, youth health, or child welfare systems

Data Systems & Required Improvements

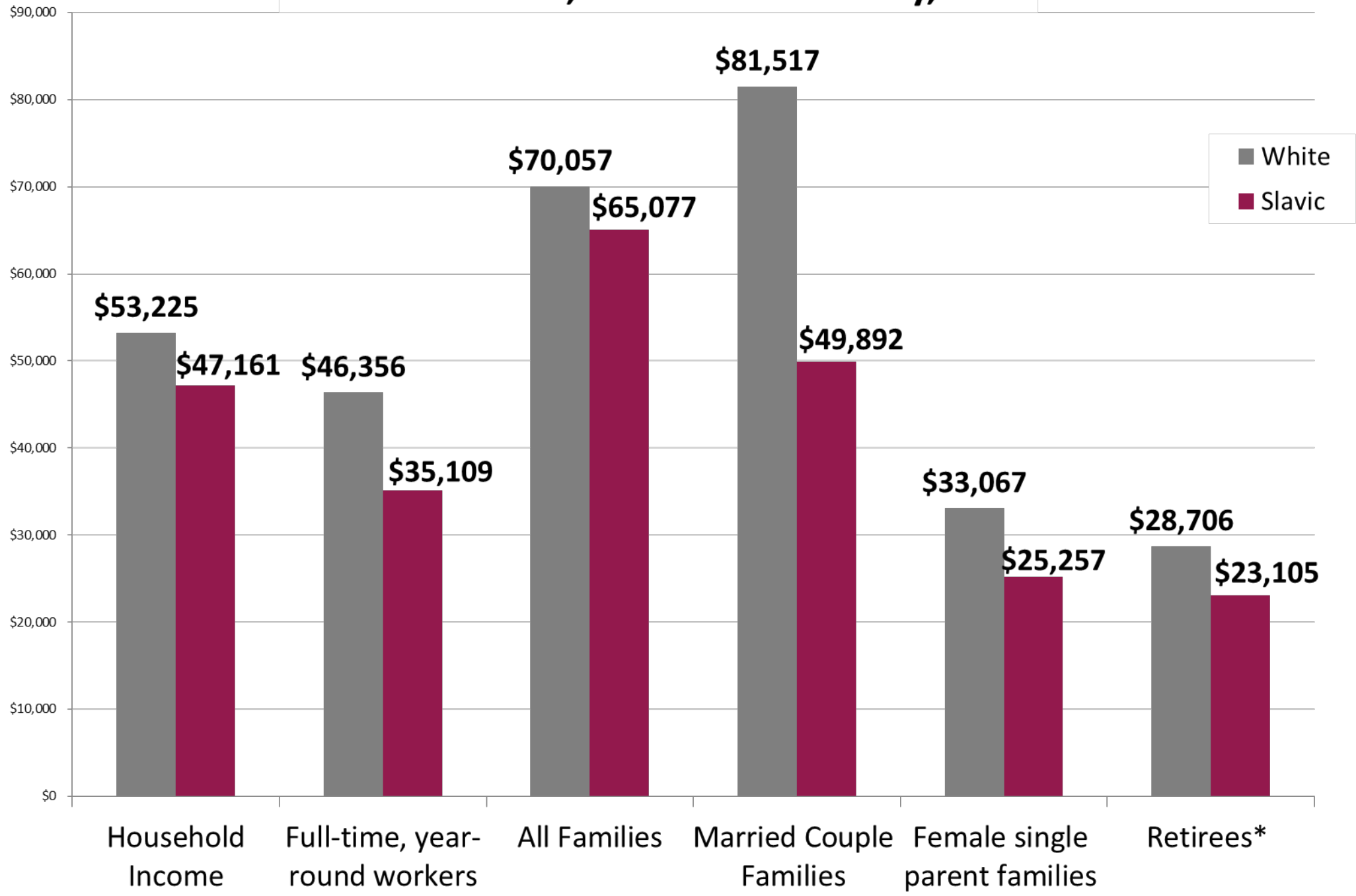
- Community is designated “white” in most systems
 - And subsets rarely capture refugee status or language spoken
- Improvements being made through House Bill 2134
 - “Slavic” is a mandated category in “racial or ethnic identity” on data collection and intake forms
 - Applies to OHA and DHS , and their agency contractors and subcontractors
 - Reporting is required in February 2016

Findings

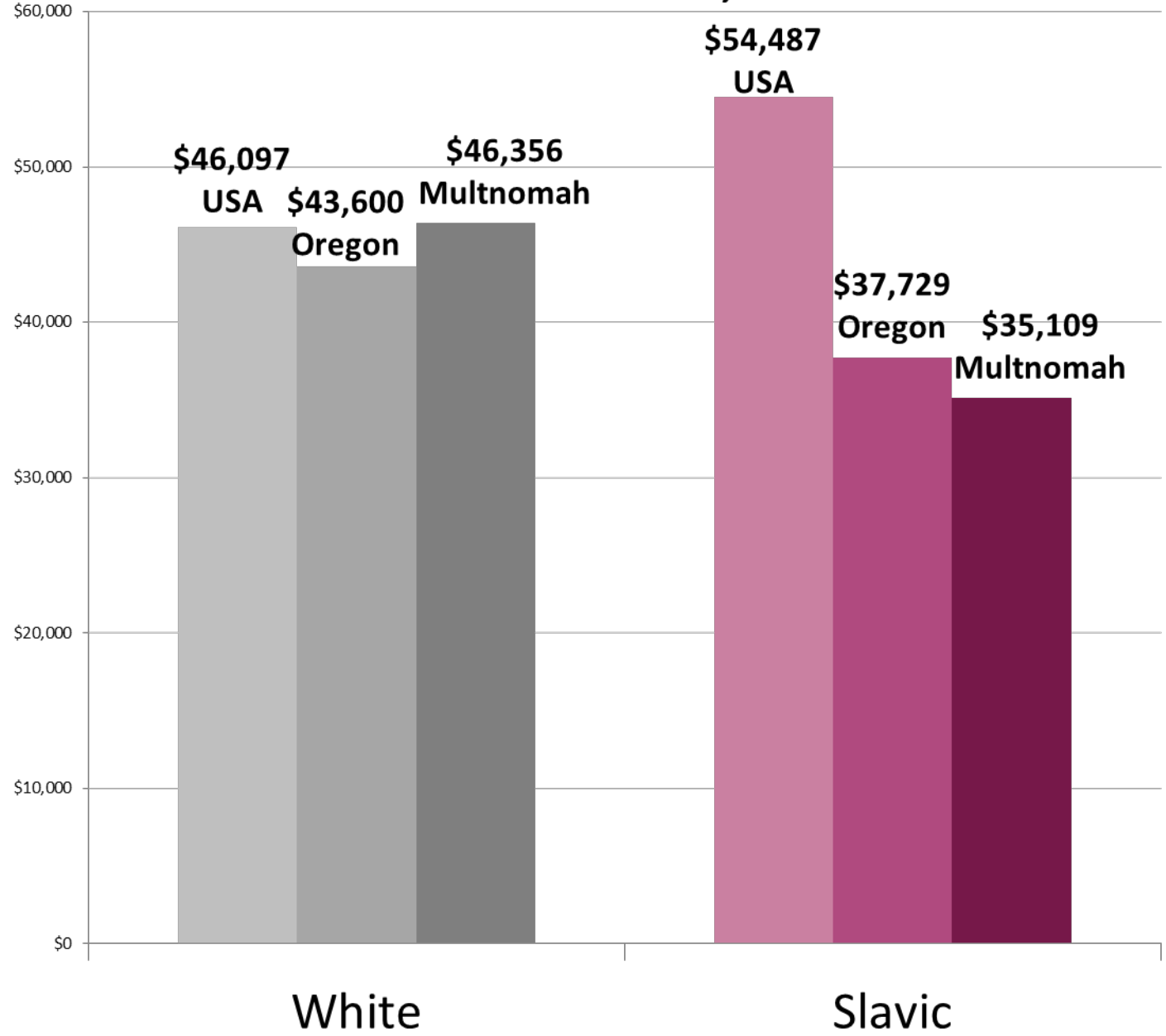
- Income
 - “Best” situation? Only a \$5,000 lesser income, but can go up to \$31,600 gap, and a disparity of 39%
 - Even for full-time, year-round workers, face 32% disparity and a loss of \$11,000
- Poverty rates
 - Child poverty rate = 29.6%, while that of Whites is half that at 15.6%
 - And like other communities of color, much worse than national averages.. Locally “toxic” situation



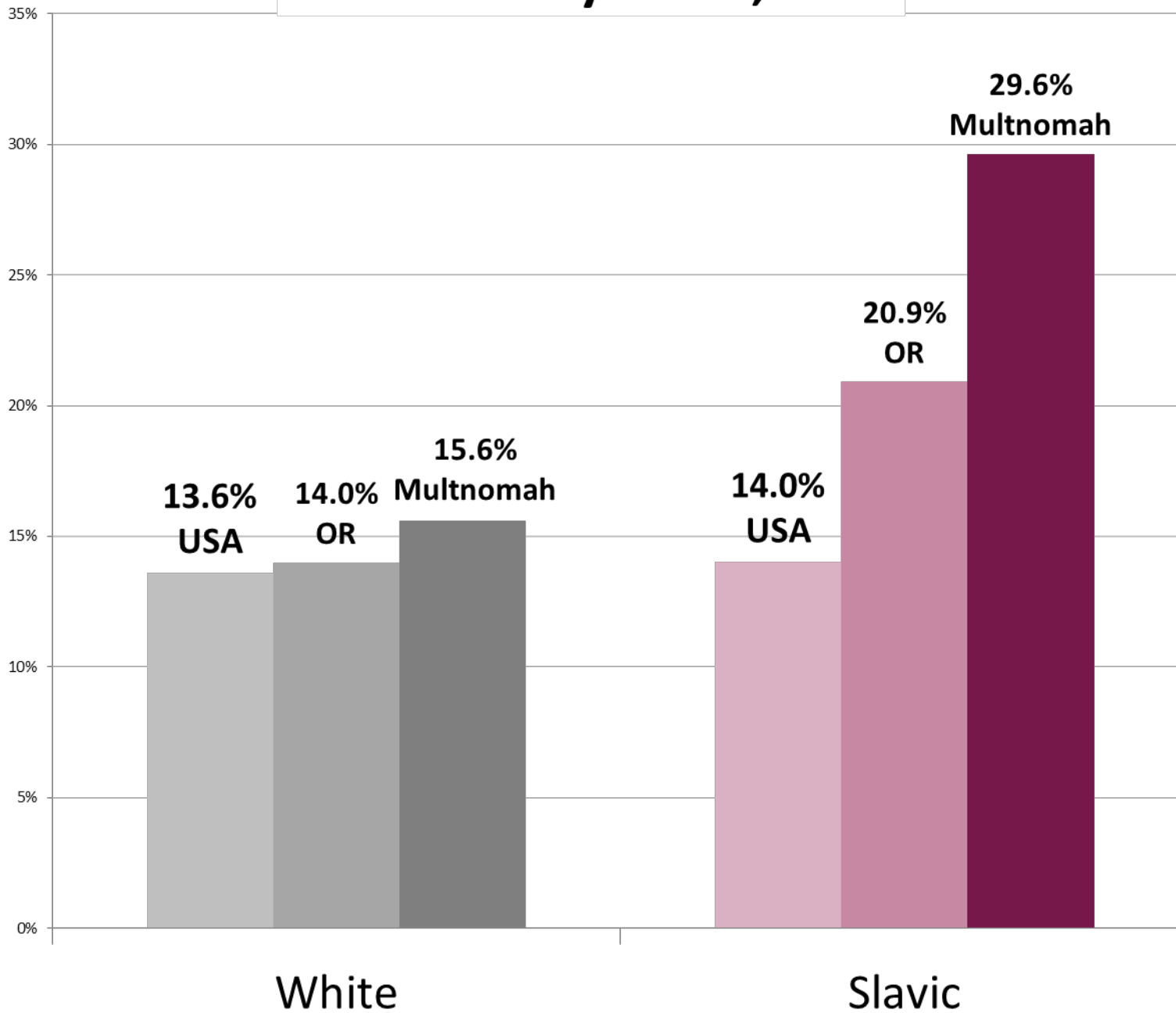
Annual Incomes, Multnomah County, 2011



Annual Incomes for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers, 2011



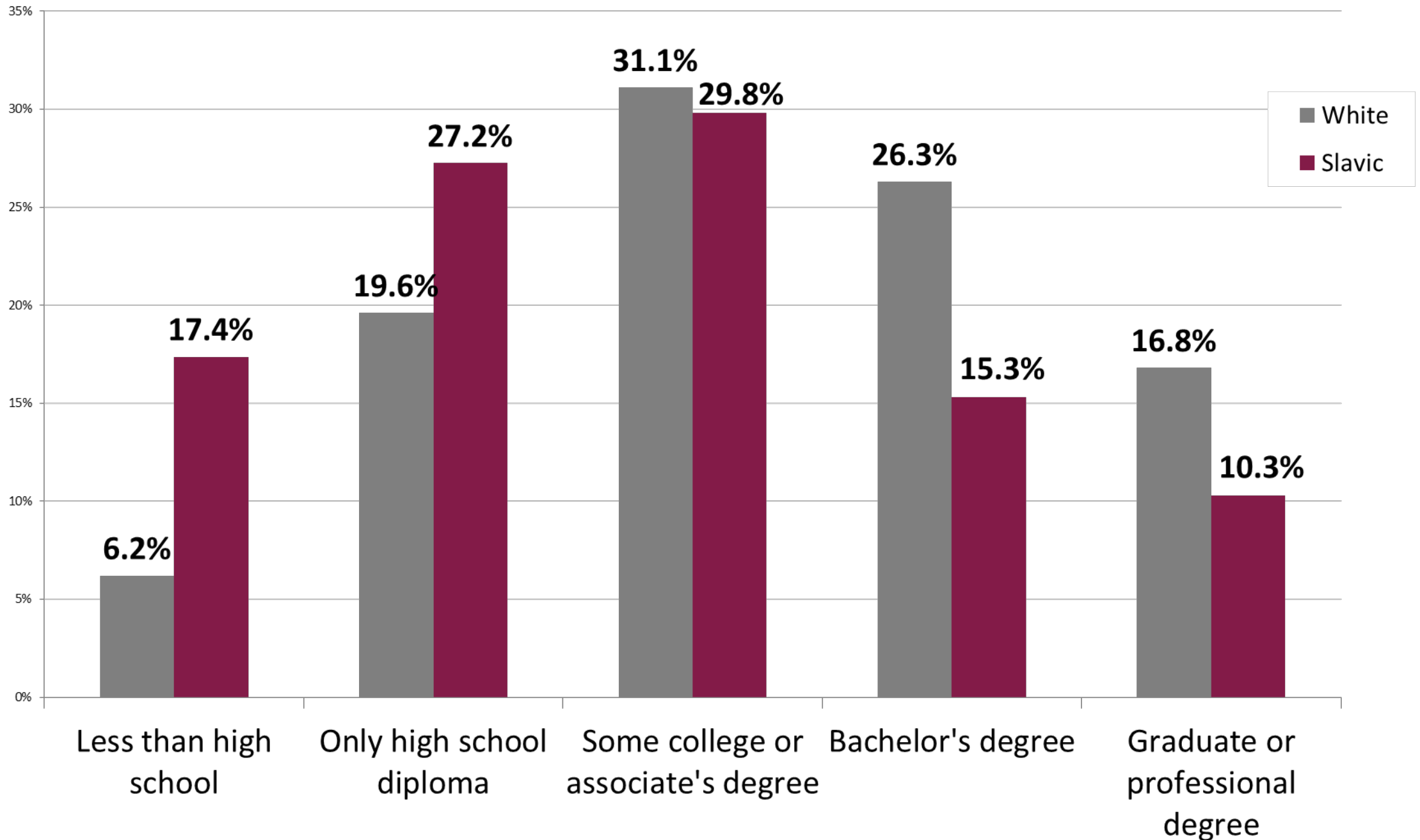
Child Poverty Rates, 2011



Education – Challenged

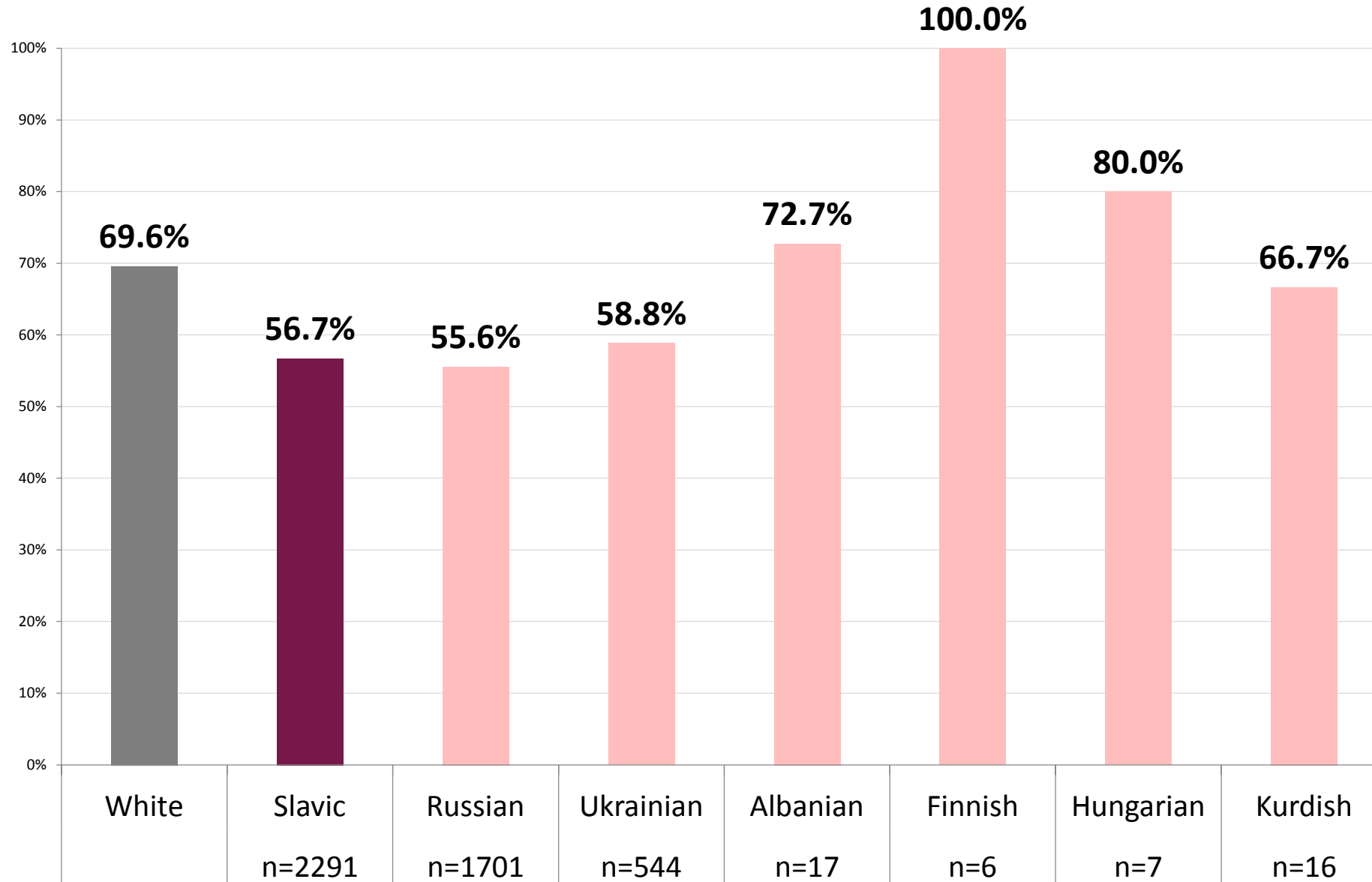
- Only $\frac{1}{4}$ of adults hold a university degree, while close to $\frac{1}{2}$ of whites hold a degree
- The achievement gap is pronounced, as $\frac{1}{4}$ fewer Slavic students pass standardized tests
- One-in-five high school students report being harassed due to their language or ancestry
- 23% of students report working while at school with $\frac{3}{4}$ of them stating this is a barrier to academic success
- 38% of high school students are looking for but unable to find part-time jobs
- Only $\frac{1}{4}$ of Slavic students report finding no barriers to impede their academic progress

Educational Attainment, Multnomah County, 2011

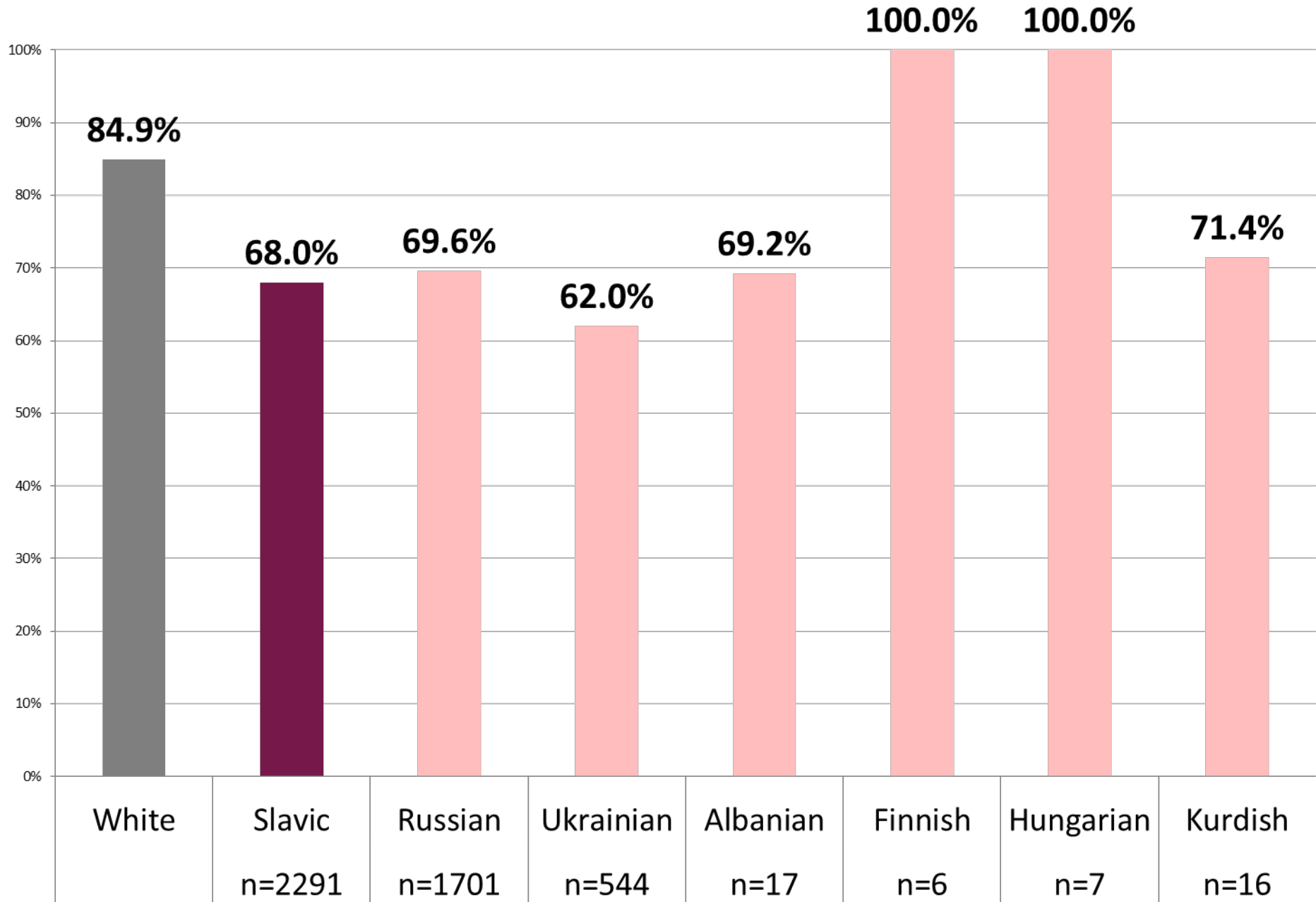


Achievement Gap, Math, Multnomah County, 2011

(% of students who meet or exceed testing benchmarks)



Achievement Gap, Reading & Literature, Multnomah County, 2011
(% of students who meet or exceed testing benchmarks)

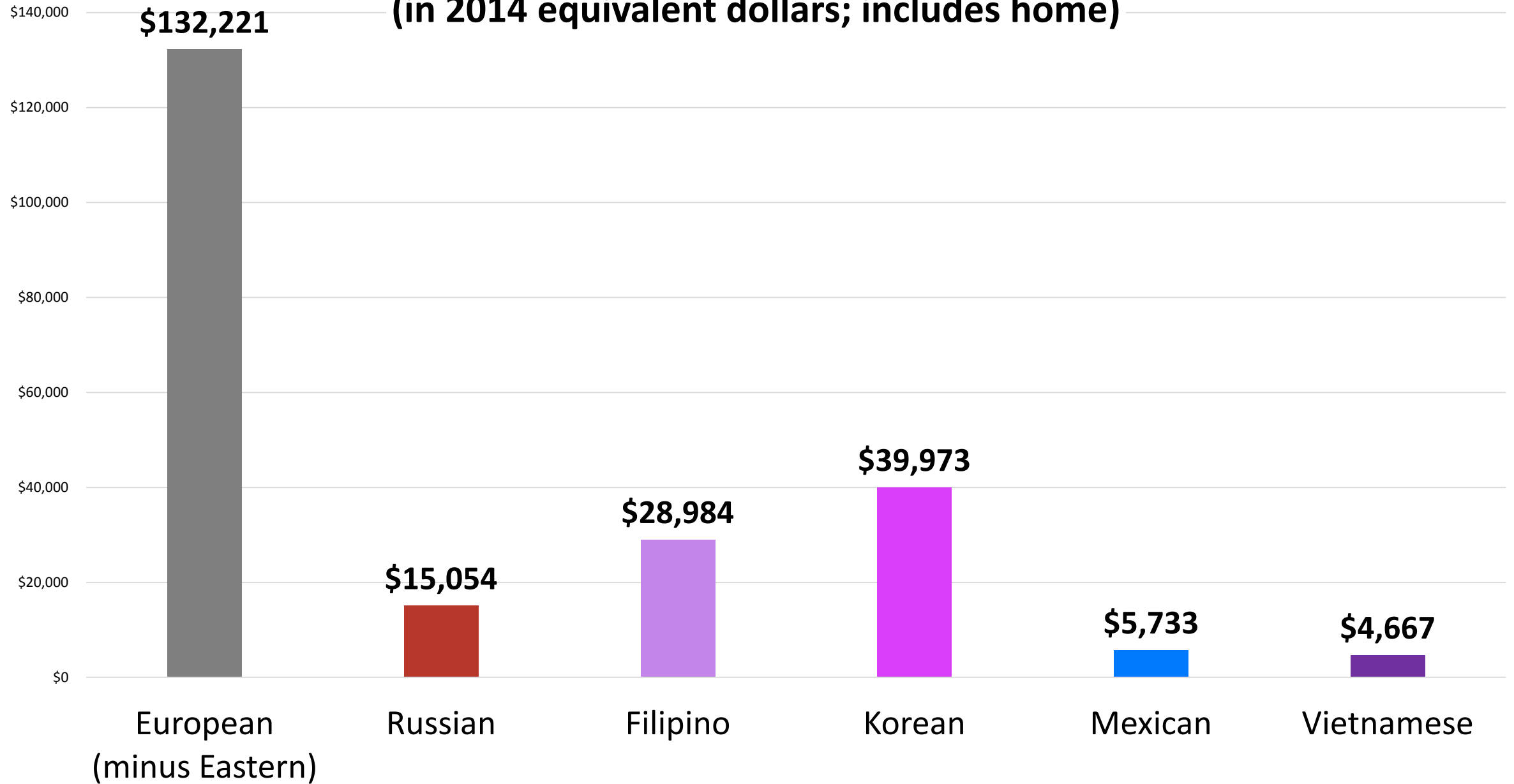


Wealth of Russian Immigrants

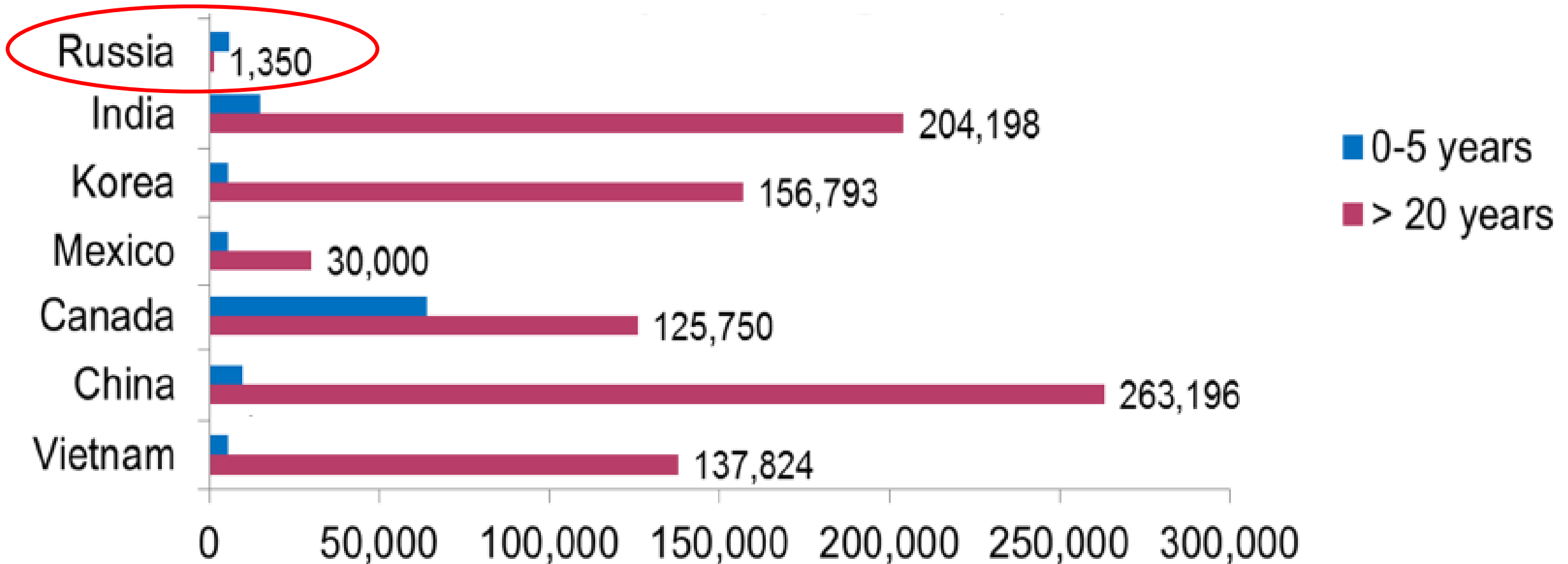
- The benefits of wealth
 - Is our personal safety net
 - To protect us from job loss, death and illness
 - Allows us to pass assets to our children
 - Allows us to take financial risks
 - Like changing jobs, going back to school, opening a business, moving neighborhoods

Total Wealth of Immigrants, USA, 1992

(in 2014 equivalent dollars; includes home)



Total Wealth of Immigrants, USA, 2003



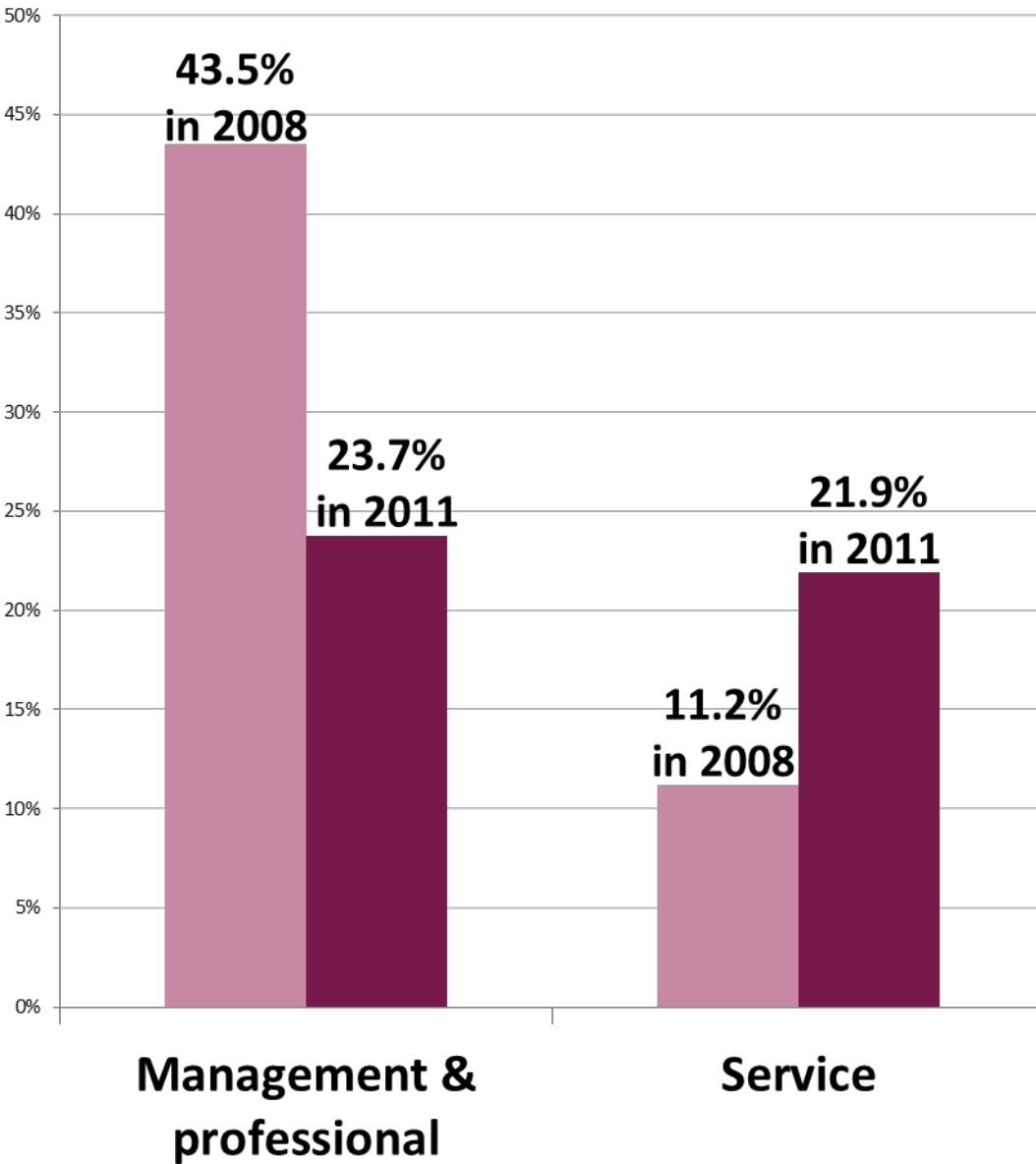
Source: New Immigrant Survey, 2003

Figure Author: Borelli, 2014, downloaded from http://wealthinequality.org/Immigrants_and_Wealth.html.

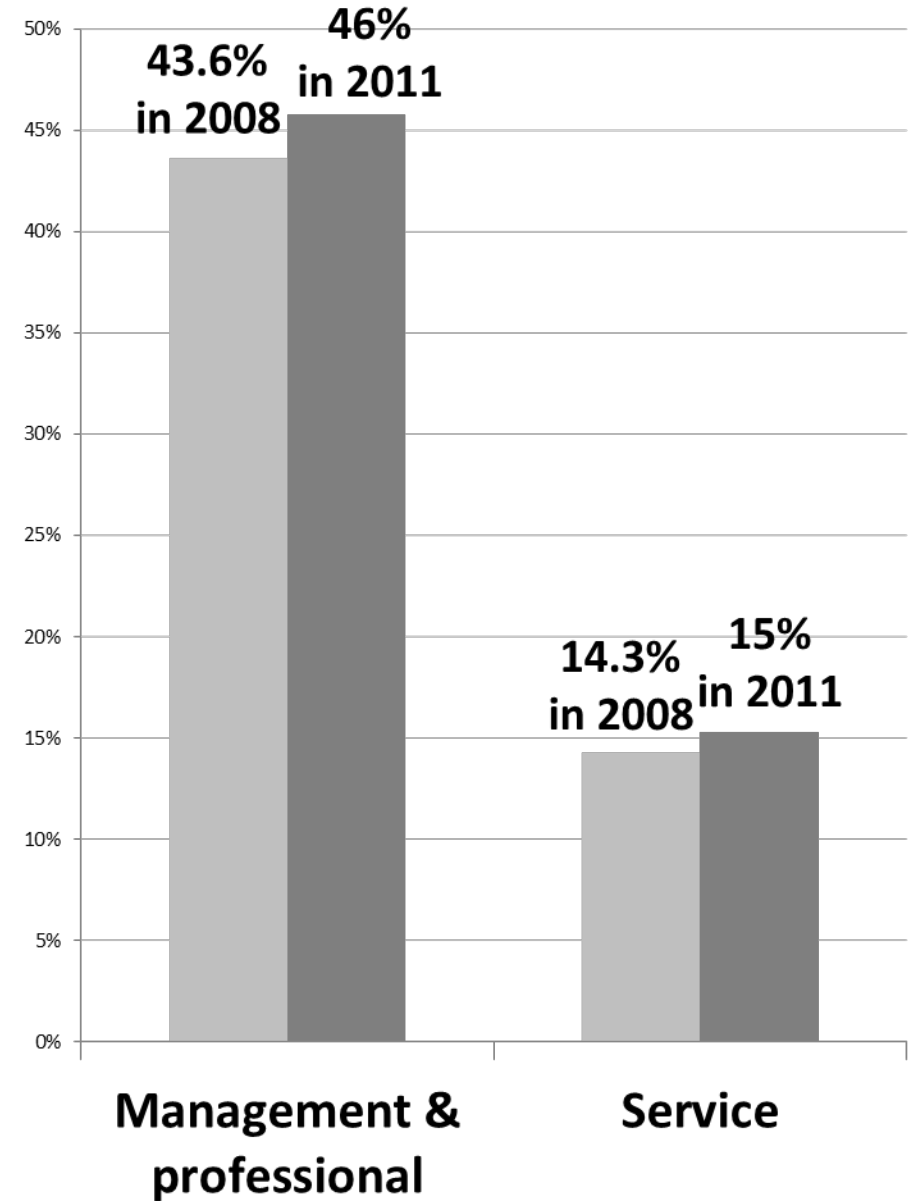
Impact of this Recession: Between 2008 and 2011...

- Levels of employment in good jobs shrunk by about 50% while they doubled in service jobs
- Incomes were decimated with the average household losing $\frac{1}{4}$ of their annual income.
 - Married couple families lost, on average, more than \$20,000 per year
- Poverty levels got worse in every category
 - Child poverty rates surged from 16% to 30%
- Unemployment more than doubled from 5.6% to 13.0%
- More of the Slavic community lost their homes
 - Homeownership rates dropped from 57.6% to 54.4%
 - The average Slavic homeowner lost \$100,000 of home equity in three years; the White community lost \$24,000

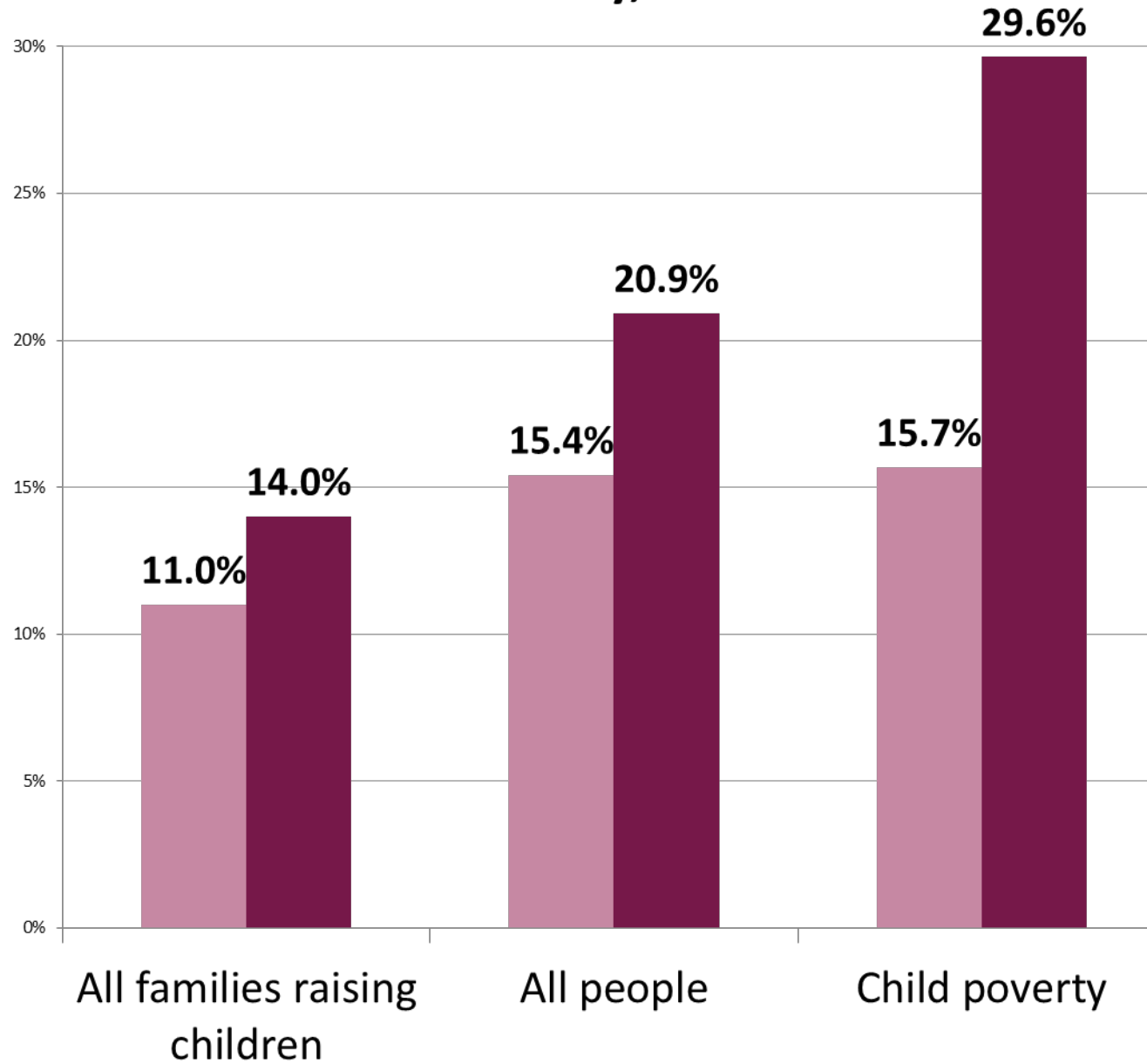
**Slavic Employment in "Good" and "Bad"
Jobs, Multnomah County**



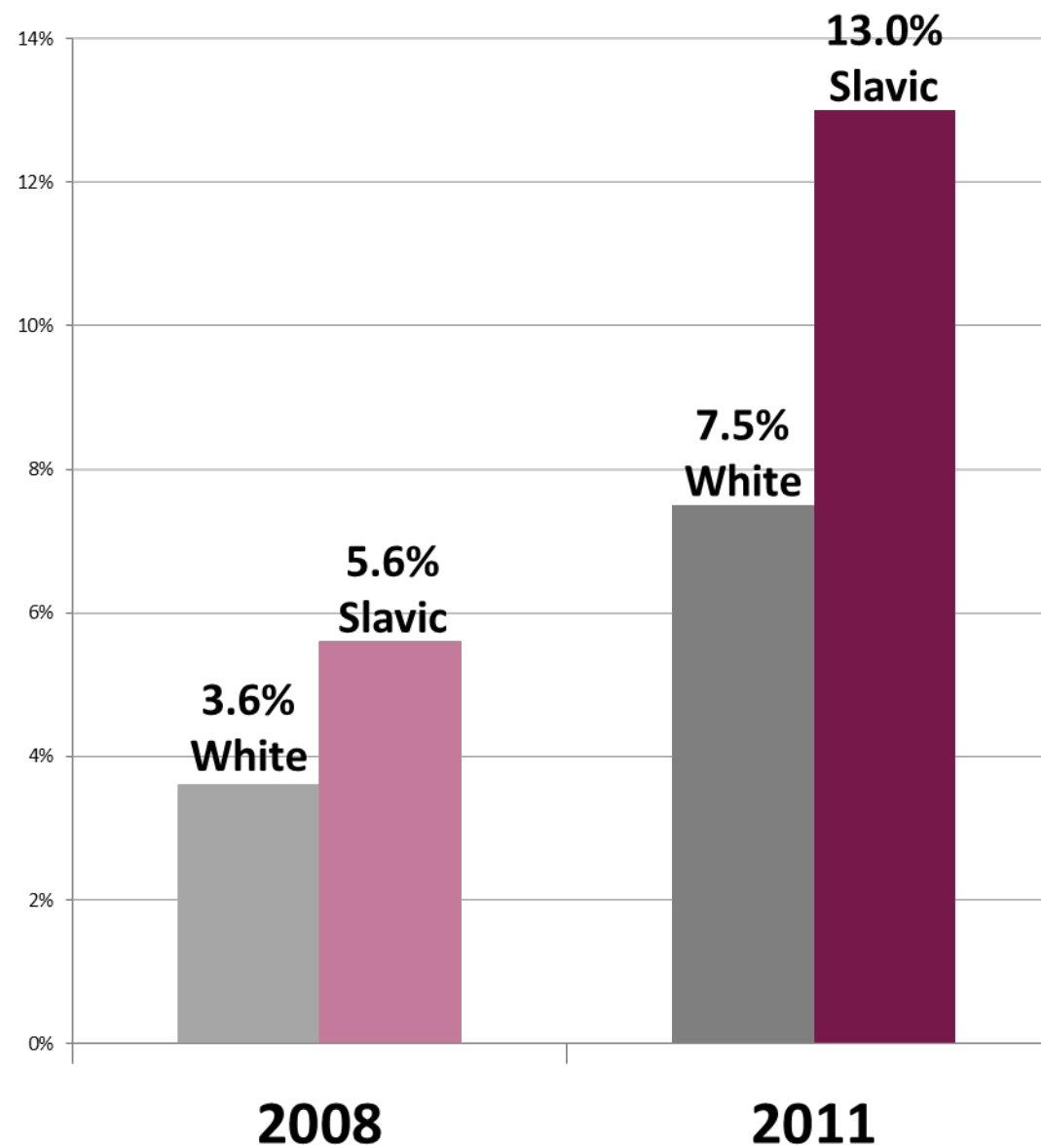
**White Employment in "Good" and "Bad"
Jobs, Multnomah County**



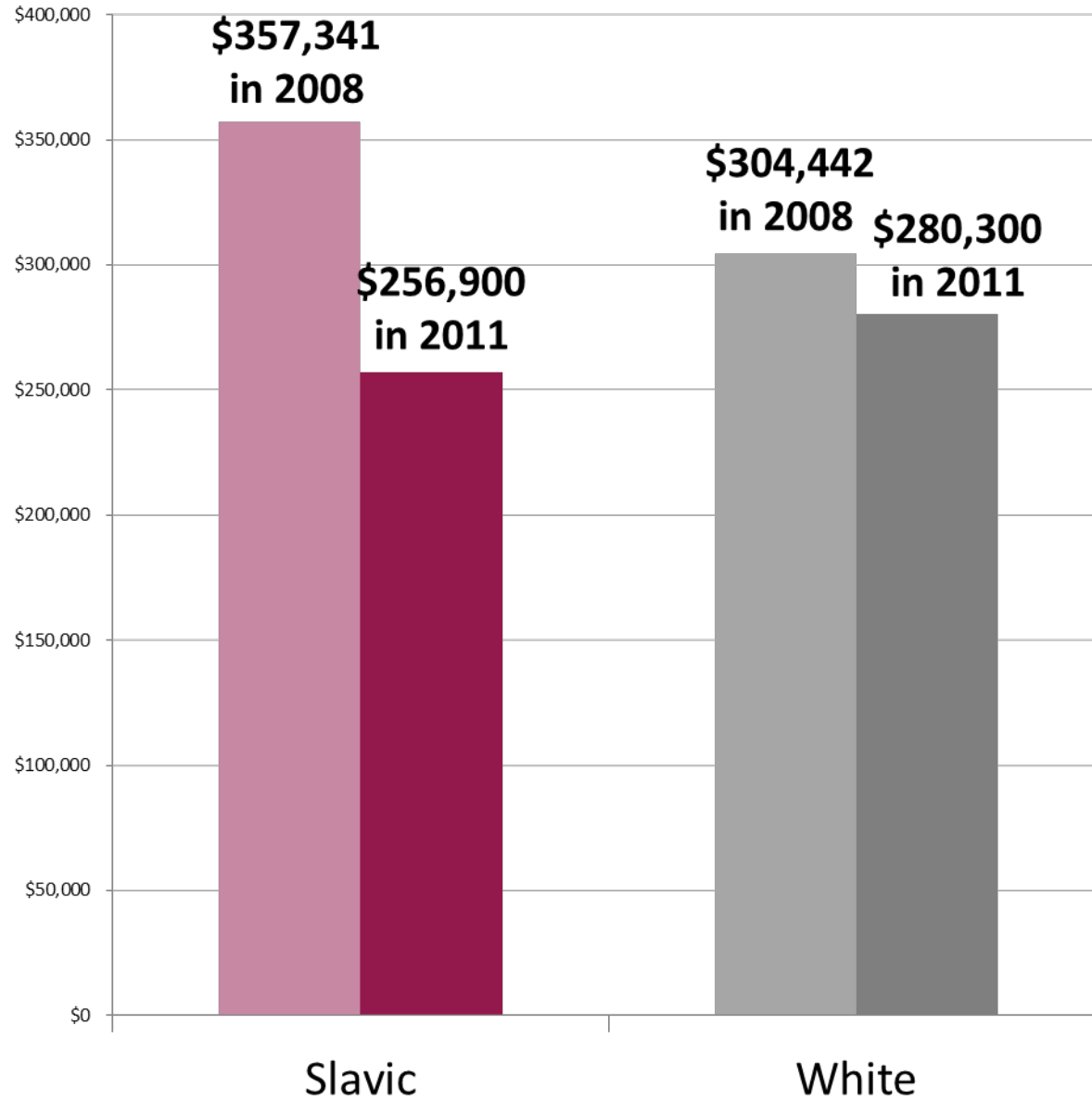
Rapidly Worsening Poverty Rates, Multnomah County, 2008 and 2011



Unemployment Rates, Multnomah County, 2008 & 2011



Value of Owned Homes, Multnomah County (in 2011 constant dollars)



Summary: Community's Precarious Situation

- Urgent need for investments, visibility, services, engagement in public policy



County-wide Recommendations

1. **Data Systems** - Add “Slavic” as a racial category in all County data systems, including County contracts.
2. **Workforce** - Increase the hiring, retention and promotion of Slavic workers in the County.
3. **Communications** - Develop Slavic-specific communication materials and strategies to increase awareness in the Slavic community about County services.
4. **Capacity-Building** – Invest in partnerships with the Slavic community to build the community’s capacity to increase community outcomes and provide wraparound culturally-specific services.

Department-Specific Recommendations

1. A collaboration with the **Department of County Human Services** to develop Slavic-specific funding and programming in a) **Domestic Violence**; b) **Mental Health & Addiction**; c) **Aging**; and d) **Homeless Services**.
2. A collaboration with the **SUN Service System** to develop Slavic-specific funding and programming in a) **Parent Education**; and b) **School Retention**.
3. A collaboration with the **Department of Community Justice** to develop Slavic-specific funding and programming in **Juvenile Services**.
4. A collaboration with the **Health Department** to develop Slavic-specific funding and programming in **Health Education**.