

**FOR RELEASE: Wednesday, July 19, 2000**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL:**

**5:00 A.M.**

**Wednesday**

**July 19, 2000**

**CONTACT:**

**Jeff Tryens - Oregon Progress Board**

**(503) 986-0173**

**Chuck Sigmund - Sigmund Research Associates**

**(503) 510-9819**

### **Report Documents Minority Progress Toward Oregon Benchmarks**

SALEM – A new report from the Oregon Progress Board shows that Oregon's racial and ethnic minorities are making progress on key educational and social measures. "Oregon's racial and ethnic minorities continue to improve and get closer to Oregon's benchmark goals in almost all arenas," said report author, Chuck Sigmund of Sigmund Research Associates. The report, based on data from the Oregon Population Survey as well as data collected from other state and federal sources, documents minority groups' progress concerning the state's Oregon Benchmark targets. The state report examines recent trends in eight areas, including education, health, and community for each of Oregon's minority communities: African-American, Asian-America, Native-American and Hispanic.

Not all the news is positive, however. Jeff Tryens, executive director of the Oregon Progress Board, observed that, compared to state averages, Hispanics and African-Americans actually lost ground between 1990 and 1998 in many instances. "For almost every indicator we looked at, African-Americans and Hispanics improved less rapidly than the state average, said Tryens. If this trend continues, these Oregonians will fall farther and farther behind the rest of the population."

#### *Education*

. Eighth grade reading and math scores earned by minority students in Oregon showed mixed results between 1991 and 1998. While all groups improved, only Native-Americans improved more rapidly than the state average in both reading and math. Asian-American continued to out score all other racial and ethnic minorities in math.

"While these results are encouraging," stated Chuck Sigmund, of Sigmund Research Associates, "with the exception of Asian-Americans, none of Oregon's minority groups currently meet the state benchmarks for meeting reading or math standards." In fact, math scores for Hispanics and African-Americans are less than half the state average.

Over seven percent of all high school students dropped out during the 1997-98 school year, compared to 5.8 percent in 1991-92. The highest dropout rate is found among Hispanics who drop out at more than twice the state average.

A record number of Oregon adults had a high school diploma and college education in 1998 and these numbers continue to grow for all groups except Native-Americans and African-Americans. In addition, all of Oregon racial and ethnic groups have higher education levels than their counterparts nationally.

### *Health*

The percentage of minority mothers receiving early prenatal care grew across all minority groups from 1990 to 1998. African-American mothers experienced the most rapid increase, climbing from 61 percent in 1990 to 79 percent in 1998. The proportion of Hispanic mothers accessing early prenatal care moved up from 55 percent to 67 percent. The overall state average was 80 percent in 1998.

Hispanic adults are the least likely to have health insurance. In 1998, 22 percent of Oregon's Hispanic adults were without health care coverage, double the state's average of 11 percent. Native-Americans were also considerably more likely to be uninsured, with 18 percent of this minority group lacking health care coverage.

### *Community*

Not only are African-Americans over-represented in Oregon's criminal arrest rate, the proportion of arrests attributable to African-Americans has almost doubled (from six percent to eleven percent) since 1990. In 1998, Hispanics made up six percent of the state's population, but accounted for seven percent of all arrests. African-Americans continue to be the least likely to own their own homes in Oregon. Fifty-two percent of African-Americans in the state were homeowners in 1998, compared to 72 percent of Whites, the highest rate. Overall, the state has achieved its benchmark goal of 68 percent home ownership.

Oregon's public offices continue to be dominated by Whites. While they only make up 88 percent of the state's population, Whites comprise 98 percent of all local officials in the state. Only two percent of elected and appointed officials are Hispanic, and each of the other minority groups represents one percent or less of all officials.

Oregon's population is becoming more diverse. Hispanics are the state's fastest growing minority group. Their population increased from four percent to six percent between 1990 and 1998. During that period, Oregon's racial and ethnic minorities increased from six percent to twelve percent of the population.

### *Data*

Much of the data for this report are drawn from the *Oregon Population Survey*, a telephone survey of approximately 5,000 households conducted in even numbered years. The state agencies that fund the survey use the results to make public policy decisions. The Oregon Progress Board and the state Office

of Economic Analysis jointly manage the survey, which Clearwater Research conducted in 1998.

In addition to the *1998 Oregon Population Survey*, several state and federal data sources were used to write this report. In some cases data from different samples are compared. In each instance the different data sources are described in the endnotes.

zoë\publications\2000\minorities report 7-00.doc