

Experiences of Discrimination in Olympia, Washington

2023 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Results



Truclusion

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Commissioned by: **Social Justice & Equity Commission**
City of Olympia

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A screen-reader friendly version of this report is available upon request.

Terminology

This report uses some terms and abbreviations to help readers understand research findings. Below are descriptions of those terms and abbreviations mean:

American Indian and Alaska Native (seen as nonwhite) – this identifier describes survey respondents who self-identified their race as American Indian or Alaska Native *and* said that strangers generally see their race as other than “white.” These individuals may also be described as *nonwhite American Indian and Alaska Native*.

American Indian and Alaska Native (seen as white) – this identifier describes respondents who self-identified their race as American Indian or Alaska Native *and* said that strangers generally see them as “white.” These individuals may also be referred to as *American Indian and Alaska Native (white)*.

Diminishment Discrimination – a category of discriminatory acts that diminish or devalue one’s standing in the community based on an identity or identities they have. Specific forms of diminishment discrimination studied in this research include: being treated with less respect; being seen as less smart; having others act afraid of them; and being harassed or threatened. Diminishment discrimination may be... difficult to legally prevent, downplayed by those not being impacted, cause mental and physiological trauma, and contribute to other forms of discrimination such as acts of impediment discrimination. This term may also be referred to as *Discriminatory Acts of Diminishment*.

Hispanic/Latino (nonwhite) – describes those respondents who self-identified their race as Chicana/o, Español, Guatemalan, Hispana/ic/o, Latin/a/o, Mexican/a, or Mexican American *and* said that strangers generally see their race as other than “white.” This term may also be referred to as *nonwhite Hispanic/Latino*.

Hispanic/Latino (white) – term describing those respondents who self-identified their race as Chicana/o, Español, Guatemalan, Hispana/ic/o, Latin/a/o, Mexican/a, or Mexican American *and* said that strangers generally see them as “white.” This term may also be referred to as *white Hispanic/Latino*.

Impediment Discrimination – a category of discriminatory acts that impede an individual’s access to opportunities because of an identity or identities that they have. Examples of opportunities impeded include: being encouraged to pursue further education; being hired or promoted at work; living in a desired neighborhood; and safe from law enforcement harassment. Impeded access can also mean receiving inferior healthcare or services such as plumbing or car repair/maintenance, compared to those services received by people of different identities. This term may also be referred to as *Discriminatory Acts of Impediment*.

LGBQ+ – this identifier refers to respondents who self-identified themselves as asexual, bisexual, demisexual, gay, homosexual, lesbian, pansexual, polyamorous, queer, or another sexual orientation that is not heterosexual.

Mixed-race (nonwhite) – this identifier refers to respondents who self-identified their race as biracial, mixed-race, multiracial, or indicated that they have more than one racial identity *and* said that strangers generally see their race as other than “white.” This term may also be referred to as *nonwhite mixed-race*.

Mixed-race (white) – this identifier refers to respondents who self-identified their race as biracial, mixed-race, multiracial, or indicated that they have more than one racial identity *and* said that strangers generally see them as “white.” This term may also be referred to as *white mixed-race*.

Overview

The goal of this research was to paint a picture for the City of Olympia’s *Social Justice and Equity Commission* about how individuals in the Olympia community experience discrimination. To conduct this study, a mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data collection was conducted through a survey. Qualitative data was collected by interviewing community members and through reviewing previous community input provided by the City. The survey was developed using two of the most widely used instruments for assessing experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment: *Everyday Discrimination Scale*¹ and *Major Experiences of Discrimination*.² These survey scales were selected due to their intentionality in capturing individual experiences of discrimination in housing, healthcare, employment, education, banking, law enforcement, service providers, and interpersonal interactions. Following survey participation, respondents were offered an opportunity to participate in interviews, where they expounded upon their responses by providing detailed narratives about their experiences. Respondents who volunteered for interviews were also asked what they believe the City of Olympia can do to help alleviate future occurrences of discrimination.

The research team sought to capture a subset of Olympia’s population that best represents those living in the community. Through recruitment strategies such as organizational outreach, presence at local events, social media, and more, the research sample of 1,981 responses was found representative of Olympia’s diversity (e.g., ability, age, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation) and sufficient to make statistical conclusions.³ This research was approved by Temple University’s *Institutional Review Board*, meaning the project and its procedures adhere to FDA ethical research regulations. Data collection ran from June 12, 2023 through October 20, 2023.

The primary research focus was to understand occurrences of discrimination from the perspective of individuals who experience it. The research did not explore disparities in outcomes such as gaps in housing access, healthcare outcomes, wages, etc.; nor were motives or intentions of people who cause discrimination examined. Benefits to learning how Olympians experience discrimination is that understanding the causes and impacts may help identify interventions that will effectively mitigate future occurrences and support those most impacted by discrimination.

Through employing statistical analysis techniques, the research team analyzed the data to understand the disparities of participant experiences. For example, when analyzing healthcare data, the research team sought to understand the ways various demographic groups reported how they are treated in healthcare, and then evaluated disparities across demographic categories. To provide further insight into the research, narrative accounts from more than 60 respondents are included throughout this report.

Primary Themes and Possible Intervention Points

Colorism (discrimination negatively impacting people based on skin tone) appears to be more prevalent in Olympia than **racism** (discrimination negatively impacting people because of their race). Colorism can be viewed as racism by those experiencing it because those with darker skin tones are typically members of a minority race. However, Alaska Native, American Indian, Latino, Hispanic, and mixed-race respondents in Olympia with lighter skin tone were found to be less

¹ Everyday Discrimination Scale – Short Version (Sternthal, M., Slopen, N., Williams, 2011)

² Major Experiences of Discrimination: 9 item version from MIDUS (Kessler, R.C., Mickelson, K., and Williams, 1999)

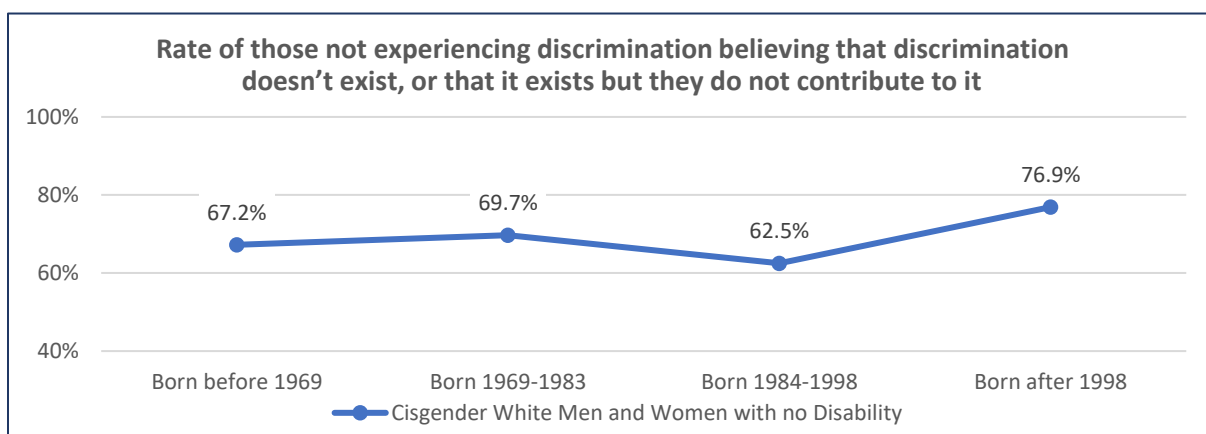
³ Taherdoost, 2017

likely to report race-based discrimination than those of their same race with darker skin tone. All Black/African American respondents in this study self-reported being seen as having darker skin tones (not counting those who identified themselves as mixed-race). Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander respondents were found to be an exception to colorism, where skin tone was not found to impact experiences of discrimination one way or another. Specifically naming colorism as a common driver of discrimination in Olympia may be key to reducing future experiences of discrimination in the community for Alaska Native, American Indian, Black/African American, Latino, Hispanic, and mixed-race individuals.

Transgender oppression was the leading cause for six of the ten measured categories of discrimination (education; healthcare; accessing services; being treated with less courtesy/respect; being treated as if not smart; and feeling threatened or harassed). The most effective remedies will likely elevate the esteem in which transgender individuals are seen by the community as smart, knowledgeable, and capable. Such remedies include education across the community, and further inclusion of the entire LGBTQ+ Community with pride imagery, events, and communications. Secondary remedies may include ordinances, policies, and/or best practices for curtailing harassment of transgender individuals.

Being perceived to not understand English and/or having an accent was found to negatively affect experiences of foreign-born individuals more than nationality or race alone. Imperfect English can: (1) serve as a signal that someone “doesn’t belong;” (2) cause judgement of “less educated” or “incompetent;” and/or (3) make speech harder to process for native English speakers. The research found evidence that the first two reasons lead to discrimination in Olympia, but not the third. Evidence was found that native English-speaking Asian individuals in Olympia may be perceived by other people in the community as not able to understand English. Addressing this perception and promoting tolerance for those who do not speak ‘perfect’ American English may prove to be key intervention points for lowering two common forms of discriminatory acts of diminishment: (a) being treated with less respect and (b) being seen as not smart.

Olympia survey respondents under 25 years old were 63.0% more likely than those over 54 years old to say that discrimination has interfered with them having a full and productive life. Respondents under 25 years old also had the highest rate of white cisgender men and women without disabilities believing discrimination doesn’t exist—or that it exists but they do not contribute to it (see chart below). Both perspectives can foster unintentional discrimination. As Olympians born after 1998 increase their share of power and influence in the community, there is a risk that occurrences of discrimination will increase. To ensure such an expansion does not occur, specifically focusing interventions on Olympia’s younger community members is recommended.



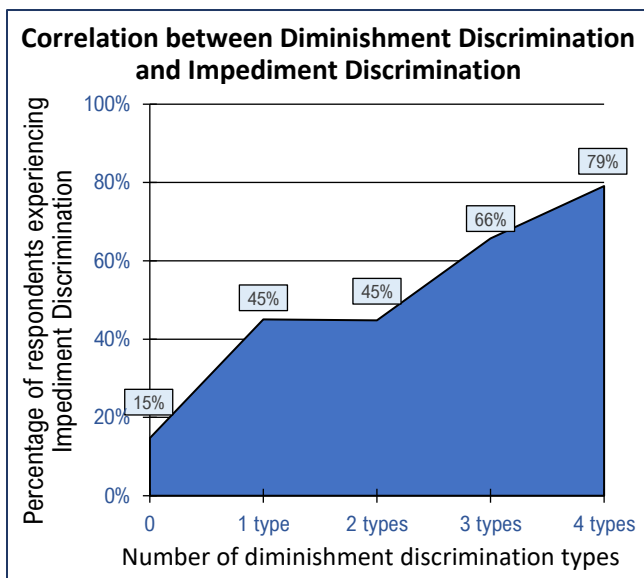
Age was also found to have a difference in the correlation of age groups and self-identifying as LGBTQ+. Respondents who self-identified as transgender represented 28.2% of those under 25 years old, 16.2% of those 25-39 years old, 6.0% of those 40-54 years old, and 1.1% of those over 54 years old. Respondents who self-identified their sexual orientation as something other than heterosexual represented 62.0% of those under 25 years old, 39.0% of those 25-39 years old, 21.0% of those 40-54 years old, and 11.8% of those over 54 years old.

Cisgender heterosexual men who are seen as white experience discrimination in Olympia, albeit at rates of occurrence lower than other identity groups studied. None of the 346 respondents who self-identified into this group provided any qualitative evidence for experiencing discrimination in education, housing, banking, healthcare, law enforcement, or procuring services in Olympia (from 325 respondents). Qualitative evidence was provided about experiencing not being hired or receiving a promotion in Olympia because of race. For example, one study participant said:

“I have previously applied for positions with [potential employer] and not interviewed or hired. No reason was given. My suspicion is that I was not moved into the pool due to age and ethnicity.” - Gallagher (white cisgender heterosexual man)

The City may prioritize the mitigation of discrimination that affects the individuals impacted most frequently and prevalently. It is recommended that the City not neglect addressing discrimination that impacts cisgender heterosexual white men. However, until occurrence and severity rates for cisgender heterosexual white men match the rates for other groups, prioritizing the elimination of discrimination affecting cisgender heterosexual white men may expose the City to criticism that Olympia values cisgender heterosexual white men more than other community members.

Diminishment discrimination is the likely leading cause of impediment discrimination. The chart to the right illustrates how 15% of respondents experiencing no diminishment discrimination said that they experienced impediment discrimination. That rate rose to three times higher (45%) for respondents experiencing only one type of diminishment discrimination, and five times higher for respondents experiencing all four types of diminishment discrimination. The correlation suggests that reducing discriminatory acts of diminishment will also effectively reduce impediment discrimination in Olympia.



Included in this Report

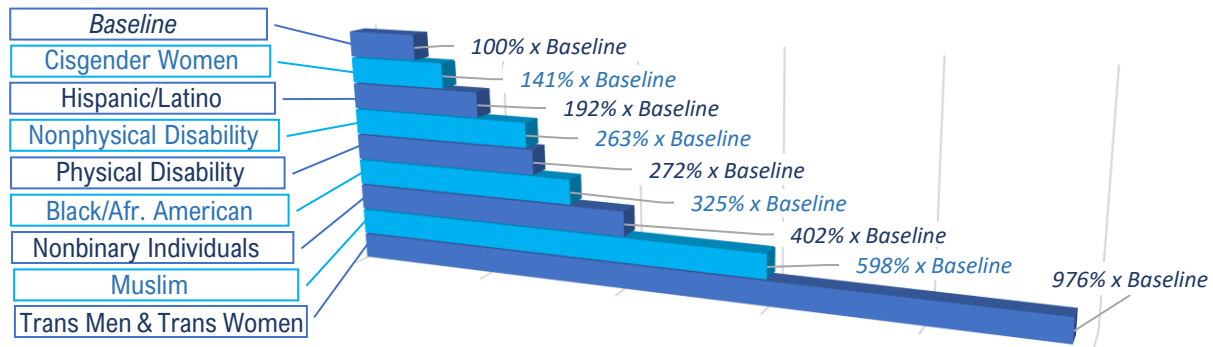
Experiences are reported in three groupings:

- **Experiences by Social Group Identity** (pages 4-8) describes the impacts of the social groups reporting the highest rates of experiencing discrimination.
- **Experiences of Diminishment** (pages 9-18) focuses on forms of discrimination that diminish or devalue one’s standing in the community based on an identity or identities.
- **Experiences of Impediment** (pages 19-31) explores types of discrimination that impede an individual’s access to opportunities that people with other identities have access to.

This report also explores *how Olympia compares nationally* (pages 32-33) and *people who do not experience discrimination* (pages 34-35). A summary of research methodology starts on page 36.

Discrimination by Social Group Identity

The graph below illustrates the extent that discrimination impacts individuals based on social group identities in Olympia. The baseline, *Baseline*, is how difficult discrimination makes life for the average white cisgender Christian man with no disabilities. The subsequent bars represent expected increases of difficulty in life caused by discrimination when changing only one identity.



Changing more than one identity will cause a cumulative effect. For example, a cisgender Christian man who is Black (325%) and has a nonphysical disability (263%) would have an expected increase in life difficulty due to discrimination of 588% x *Baseline* (325% + 263%). Below are summaries of findings for each group that research either confirmed or were reported at rates multiple times higher than the rates of other groups.

Age – After ruling out other potential variables, individuals 24 years old and younger were twice as likely as those between 40-54 years old to be discouraged by an educator or advisor from pursuing further education in Olympia.

American Indian and Alaska Native – American Indian and Alaska Native individuals were found to receive different experiences in Olympia based on darkness of skin tone. Not one American Indian or Alaska Native respondent who self-described themselves as seen as “white” reported experiencing race-based impediment discrimination (education, housing, employment, medical, law enforcement, services). Nonwhite American Indian and Alaska Native respondents reported experiencing race-based discrimination in all six impediment categories, including having the highest rate of housing discrimination of any identity (20.8% of respondents) and experiencing law enforcement discrimination at 15 times the rate of white respondents. While no American Indian or Alaska Native respondents named race as a main reason for being denied or provided inferior medical care, more than one in five American Indian and Alaska Native respondents reported experiencing healthcare discrimination (19% higher than white respondents).

Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander – After ruling out other potential variables, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals are 3 times more likely than white people to be treated with less courtesy or respect than others. Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander respondents also reported being forced out of neighborhoods by neighbors and hassled by law enforcement. Research did not confirm race-based impediment discrimination for Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals. The non-confirmation of impediment discrimination, combined with lower rates of being seen as not smart compared to other people of color suggests discrimination of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals in Olympia roots more from a socialized dislike/hatred than out of unconscious bias.

“Openly ignoring me when I introduce myself or talking to others around me and referring to me in the third-person as if I am not there.”
- Nick (Asian individual)

Black/African American – Black/African American individuals in Olympia experience high rates of both diminishment discrimination and impediment discrimination. Approximately 91% of Black/African American respondents reported experiencing discrimination in Olympia, while appearing to avoid “white” spaces when possible and cautiously engaging when interacting in predominantly “white” spaces. Due to frequency and severity of past experiences, the anticipation of entering a space may be enough to cause adverse psychological and physiological impacts, even before interacting with another person.⁴

“I’m scared of every interaction, because behind it, I have to worry when you get mad at me what happens?”

- Wilma (Black individual)

While in the community, Black/African American individuals are 3 times more likely than white people to be treated with less courtesy or respect than others; 3 times more likely than white people to be treated as if they are not smart; and 8 times more likely than white people to experience others acting afraid of them. These acts of diminishment likely develop socially, and fuel perceptions that Black/African American individuals are ‘less than’ other community members. These acts also likely contribute to high rates of impediment discrimination.

With a confidence rate of 99.9%, and controlling for other variables, the research found that Black/African American individuals are: 4 times more likely than white people to be prevented from renting or buying a home in their desired neighborhood; 6 times more likely to be denied a loan; 5 times more likely to be hassled by law enforcement or security; 3 times more likely to be discouraged by an educator or advisor from pursuing further education; 3 times more likely to be not hired or promoted; and 4 times more likely to be fired than white people.

While the research could not confirm it to be true, one-in-four Black/African American respondents reported being denied or receiving inferior healthcare, with half of those naming race as the primary reason for their experience. It is possible that Black/African Americans may experience healthcare discrimination more in the form of adverse quality of care and outcomes, and less in of denial of care. Quality of care and outcomes was not explored in this research.

Cisgender Women – Controlling for other variables, the research confirmed that cisgender women are: 2 times more likely than cisgender men to be denied or provided inferior medical care; 2 times more likely than cisgender men to be treated as if they are not smart; 2 times more likely than cisgender men to feel threatened or harassed; and 3 times more likely than cisgender men to be denied or provided inferior service by a plumber, car mechanic, or other service provider. Qualitative data suggests that most discrimination against cisgender women is caused by cisgender men, and that acts of diminishing discrimination (e.g., being seen as not smart or being harassed) stem from a socialized perspective that cisgender men are smarter and more capable than other genders. This perspective likely contributes to discrimination of cisgender women at work and from service providers.

“I have even been told that a man could do the job better and when I asked how they knew that, they just said it was fact.”

- Maisie (cisgender woman)

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and other non-heterosexual Sexual Orientations – Sexual orientation was not found to contribute to respondents being treated with less respect, seen as not smart, or having people act afraid of them. LGBQ+ individuals were found to be 54% more likely than heterosexual people to be threatened or harassed in Olympia. In other words, while LGBQ+ individuals may not be statistically perceived as “less than,” they may still experience higher and disproportionate levels of harassment. This juxtaposition suggests discrimination based on Sexual Orientation stems more from a socialized dislike/hatred for LGBQ+ individuals than out of bias.

⁴ MacIntyre MM, Zare M, Williams MT. Anxiety-Related Disorders in the Context of Racism. *Curr Psychiatry Rep.* 2023 Feb;25(2):31-43.230.)

The research results support—while falling short of confirming—such outcomes. On the one hand, while controlling for other variables, sexual orientation was not found to be a significant indicator of any form of impediment discrimination. On the other hand, there is strong qualitative evidence that LGBTQ+ individuals do experience impediment discrimination because of their sexual orientation. These experiences can be severe in nature, such as being fired from work, sexual assault by a healthcare worker, residence relocation, and harassment by law enforcement. The contrast between quantitative and qualitative findings intimates that experiencing discrimination may likely be more instigated by intentional individual actions, and less likely caused by systemic or institutional processes. Such a causative relationship likely results in fewer incidents of discrimination, but with each incident having higher levels of direct and overt harm.

“One day my same-sex partner picked me up and the manager saw us holding hands. The next day I came in and was fired on the spot with no explanation.”

- Ella (lesbian individual)

The research did not investigate whether LGBTQ+ individuals being “out” may lead to higher levels of experiencing discrimination. It is recommended that future research specifically examine the potential relationship between being “out” and experiencing discrimination.

Hispanic/Latino – Hispanic/Latino individuals were found to have two subgroups in Olympia: (a) darkness of skin color and (b) English fluency. Nonwhite Hispanic/Latino individuals are 2x more likely than white Hispanic/Latino people to be seen as not smart, 2 x more likely not to be able to rent or buy a home, 3x more likely to be hassled by law enforcement, 5x more likely to be discouraged from further education, and 5x more likely to be harassed or threatened in the community. While this study did not explicitly collect information about respondents’ aptitude in speaking English without accents, having accents was qualitatively named by Hispanic/Latino respondents more often than race as cause for discrimination.

Nonwhite Hispanic/Latino individuals were confirmed to experience diminishing discrimination, such as feeling threatened or being harassed. These cases of discrimination likely contribute to the increased occurrence rates of impediment discrimination that were also confirmed, such as nonwhite Hispanic/Latino individuals being 3x times more likely than white people to have a loan denied; 3x times more likely than white people to be prevented from renting or buying a home in their desired neighborhood; and 3x times more likely than white people to be hassled by law enforcement or security. Nonwhite Hispanic/Latino individuals reported not receiving a work promotion at 6x times the rate of white people.

“When the snide remarks start coming you start to feel unsafe, and then when the threatening gestures start and aren’t stopped you leave for your safety.”

- Dalia (Latina individual)

White Hispanic/Latino individuals did not report experiencing race-based diminishing discrimination. Controlling for other identities, three forms of impediment discrimination were confirmed: being denied/provided inferior medical care, being hassled by law enforcement, and being discouraged by an educator or advisor from pursuing further education than white people.

Jewish – Controlling for other variables, Jewish individuals are 3 times more likely to be denied medical care or provided inferior medical care than Christians. There was also qualitative evidence that Jewish individuals feel threatened and harassed in public and in their neighborhood because of their religion, and often resort to hiding their religion while in the Olympia community.

Mixed-race – Controlling for other variables, mixed-race individuals who self-describe as passing for “white” are 2 times more likely than white people to be denied medical care or provided inferior medical care; 2 times more likely than white people to be hassled by law enforcement or security; and 2 times more likely than white people to be discouraged by an educator or advisor from pursuing further education.

Nonwhite mixed-race individuals are 3 times more likely than white people to experience others acting afraid of them. Nonwhite mixed-race individuals reported not being promoted at work 11 times more often than white people, being hassled by law enforcement 20 times the rate of white people, and being denied/provided inferior services at 26 times the rate of white people. Nonwhite mixed-race individuals also reported being discouraged to pursue education 8 times more than white mixed-race individuals, and reported being denied/provided inferior healthcare 4 times more than white mixed-race individuals (39 times that of white people).

“There are times I feel uncomfortable in my own neighborhood.”

- Kyra (mixed-race individual)

Middle Eastern – All survey respondents who identified as Middle Eastern self-identified that they are generally seen as “white.” Controlling for other variables, Middle Eastern individuals are 2 times more likely to be denied medical care or provided inferior medical care than white people.

Muslim – Controlling for other variables, Muslims in Olympia are: 8 times more likely than Christians not to be hired; 4 times more likely than Christians to not receive a job promotion; 5 times more likely than Christians to be hassled by law enforcement or security; and 8 times more likely than Christians to be denied medical care or provided inferior medical care. Muslim respondents also reported elevated rates of experiencing diminishing discrimination in: being treated with respect (53.8%), others being afraid of them (39.5%), and being threatened or harassed (30.8%). Since other identities with high rates of job discrimination (e.g., nonwhite Hispanic/Latino, Black, transgender men, transgender women) had high rates of being seen as not smart and Muslim individuals did not, it is fair to speculate impediment discrimination for Muslims may be based more from a socialized dislike/hatred for Muslims than out of bias.

Nonbinary – Controlling for other variables, the confirmed research findings for nonbinary individuals include: 3 times more likely than cisgender men to be prevented from renting or buying a home in their desired neighborhood; 3 times more likely than cisgender men to feel threatened or harassed; 4 times more likely than cisgender men to be treated with less courtesy or respect than others; 4 times more likely than cisgender men to be denied or provided inferior service by a plumber, car mechanic, or other service provider; and 5 times more likely than cisgender men to be denied or provided inferior medical care.

Other than housing, discrimination for nonbinary individuals occur in the same types and at similar levels as discriminatory experiences reported by cisgender women. These quantitative similarities with cisgender women combined with qualitative data suggest that most discrimination against nonbinary individuals and cisgender women is likely instigated by cisgender men. Qualitative stories suggest that the acts of diminishing discrimination (e.g., being seen as not smart or being harassed) stem from a socialized perspective that cisgender men are smarter and more capable than other genders. These acts also likely drive the experiences in treatment by services such as plumbers and mechanics, and not accessing desired housing.

“I can tell when people are staring, are giving me shorter interactions, and are uncomfortable...”

- Karl (nonbinary individual)

Nonphysical Disability – Controlling for other variables, individuals with nonphysical disabilities were not confirmed to experience diminishing discrimination. Data confirmed that individuals with nonphysical disabilities are: 2 times more likely than people without disabilities to not receive a job promotion; 3 times more likely to be prevented from renting or buying a home in their desired neighborhood; 5 times more likely to be denied or provided inferior medical care; and 3 times more likely than people without any disabilities to be hassled by law enforcement or security. Each of these experiences is predicted to occur at a higher rate when individuals with nonphysical disabilities also have a physical disability.

Physical Disability – Controlling for other variables, individuals with physical disabilities were confirmed to experience both diminishment discrimination and impediment discrimination. Experiences of diminishment include: 2 times more likely than people without disabilities to be treated with less courtesy or respect than others; and 2 times more likely to experience others acting afraid of them. When individuals with physical disability also have a nonphysical disability, they are 3 times more likely to be treated as if they are not smart than people with no disabilities.

Experiences of impediment include being: 2 times more likely than people without disabilities to be prevented from renting or buying a home in their desired neighborhood; 2 times more likely to be discouraged by an educator or advisor from pursuing further education; and 4 times more likely to be denied or provided inferior medical care than people without any disabilities. Each of these experiences is predicted to occur at a higher rate when individuals with a physical disability also have a nonphysical disability.

“I’ve been pushed because I haven’t heard someone behind me is trying to get by.”

- Michael (hearing impaired individual)

Transgender Men and Transgender Women – While transgender men and transgender women are different genders, both groups are combined together under this heading because their experiences in the study were similar in quantity, form, and severity. Transgender men and transgender women were found to experience high rates of all four forms of diminishing discrimination and had the highest rates of any group in three of the four forms. Every transgender man and transgender woman were confirmed by the research to experience both being treated with less courtesy/respect and being treated as if they were not smart. While controlling for other variables, transgender men and transgender women are: 3 times more likely than cisgender men to experience others acting afraid of them, and 8 times more likely than cisgender men to feel threatened or harassed. With these high rates of diminishing discrimination, it is expected that discriminatory acts of impediment will also correlate as high.

Compared to all other identities, transgender men and transgender women were found to have the highest rates of experiencing discrimination in education, healthcare, and accessing services. Controlling for other variables, transgender men and transgender women are: 11 times more likely than cisgender men to be denied or provided inferior medical care; 3 times more likely to be prevented from renting or buying a home in their desired neighborhood; 3 times more likely to not receive a job promotion; 3 times more likely to be hassled by law enforcement or security; 5 times more likely to be discouraged by an educator or advisor from pursuing further education; and 8 times more likely than cisgender men to be denied or provided inferior service by a plumber, car mechanic, or other service provider.

Other Groups – Although some respondents from the following groups reported experiencing discrimination, after controlling for other variables there were no types of discrimination based on the below identities confirmed by this research. This does not mean that discrimination does not occur; only that the current research cannot confirm that any one of the following identities directly lead to experiencing discrimination in Olympia:

- Cisgender men (573 survey respondents)
- Heterosexual people (1,220 respondents)
- White people (1,561 respondents)
- Christian (564 respondents)
- Have no disability (1,463 respondents)
- No religion or a religion other than Christian, Jewish, and Muslim (1,362)

Twenty-nine respondents (1.5% of all respondents) reported experiencing discrimination in Olympia because of political views, all of whom self-reported race said they are seen as white.

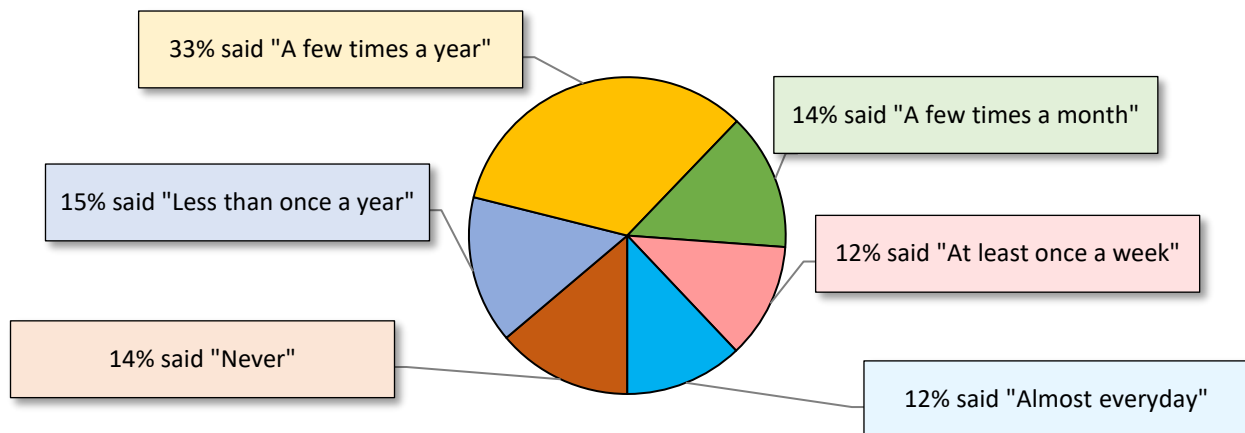
Discriminatory Acts of Diminishment

Diminishment discrimination refers to acts that diminish or devalue one’s standing in the community based on an identity or identities they have. Specific forms of diminishment discrimination studied in this research include: being treated with less respect; being seen as less smart; others acting afraid of you; and being harassed or threatened. Diminishment discrimination may... be difficult to legally prevent; be downplayed by those not being negatively impacted; cause mental and physiological trauma; and contribute to other forms of discrimination such as impediment discrimination.

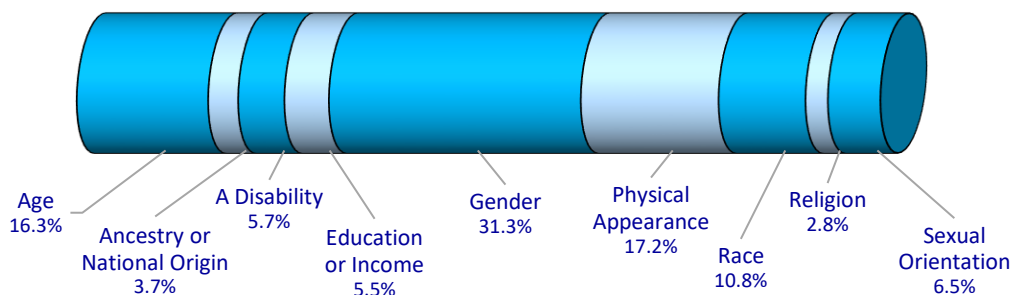
The forms of discrimination in this section have a compounding effect because they cause direct harm in the moment and subsequent damage in acts of impediment discrimination downstream. For example, someone seen as less smart may also be less likely to be hired for a job, or someone being threatened or harassed may have to move out of a neighborhood.

Two out of five (37.8%) survey respondents said they experience at least one form of diminishment discrimination in Olympia anywhere from every day to a few times each month. (37.8% represents about 20,500 Olympians.)

How often survey respondents said they experience discriminatory acts of diminishment:



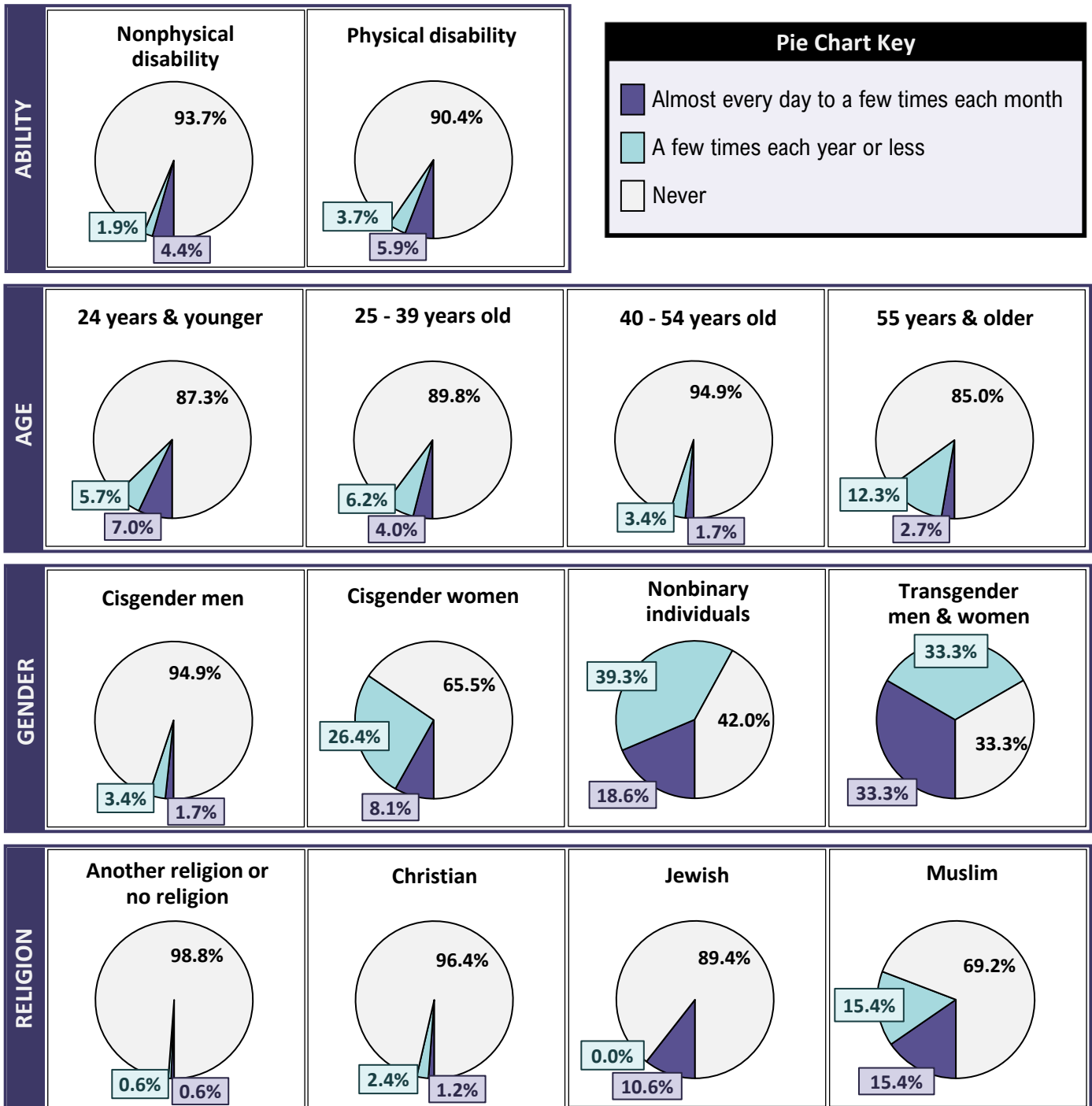
The “main reason” respondents said they experience discriminatory acts of diminishment:

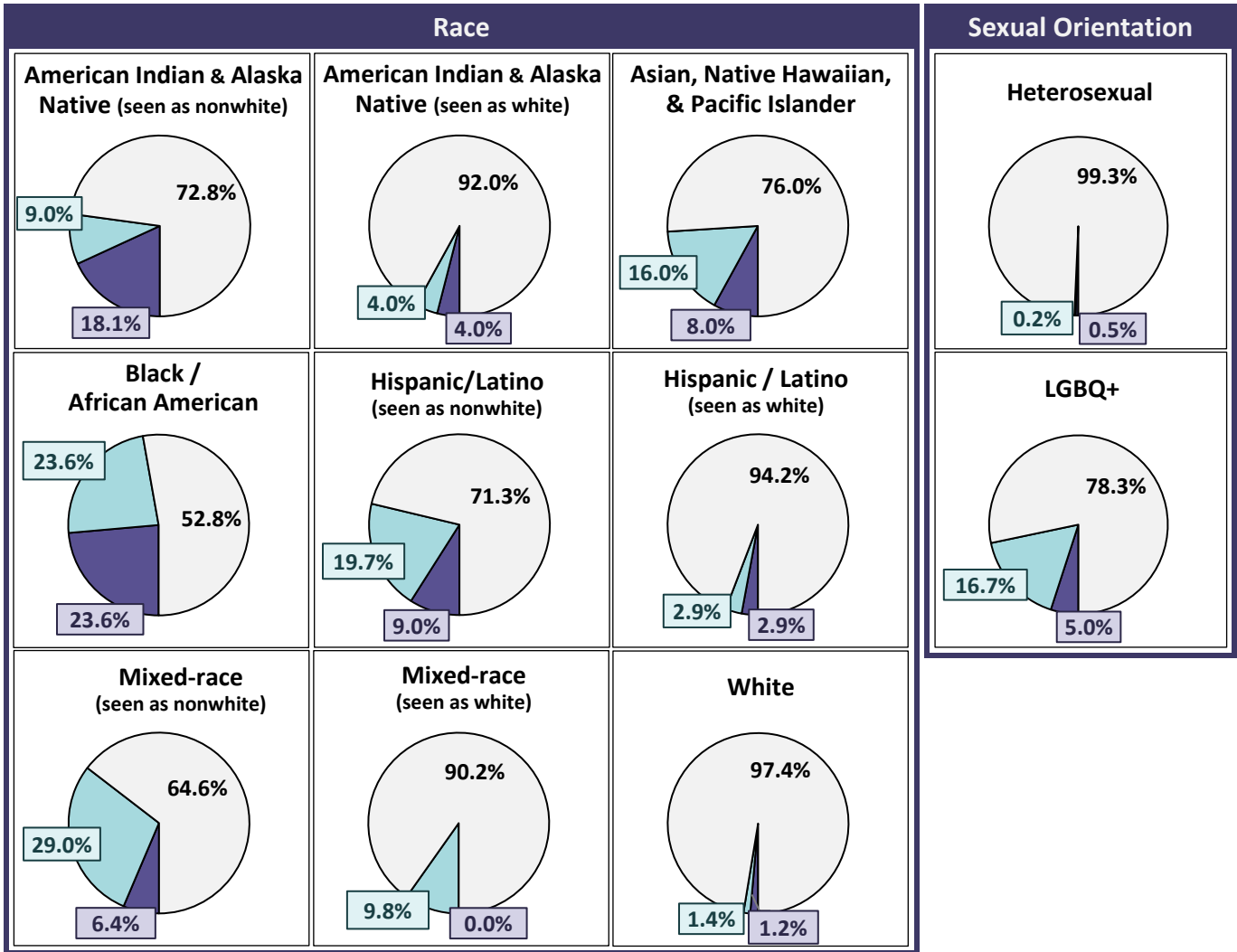


Being Threatened or Harassed

Survey respondents were asked “In your day-to-day life in Olympia, how often have you felt threatened or harassed?” and those who selected something other than ‘never’ were asked the follow-up question, “What do you think is the main reason?” Only respondents who answered something other than “never” to the first question are reported in this section.

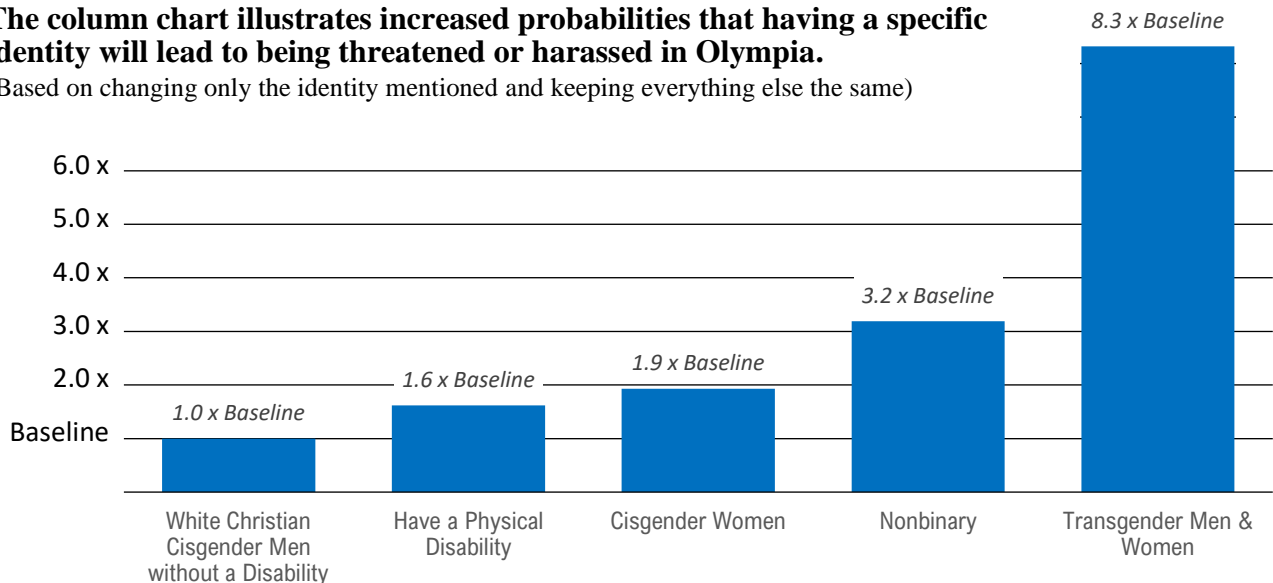
The pie charts illustrate the percentage of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for being threatened or harassed in Olympia:





The column chart illustrates increased probabilities that having a specific identity will lead to being threatened or harassed in Olympia.

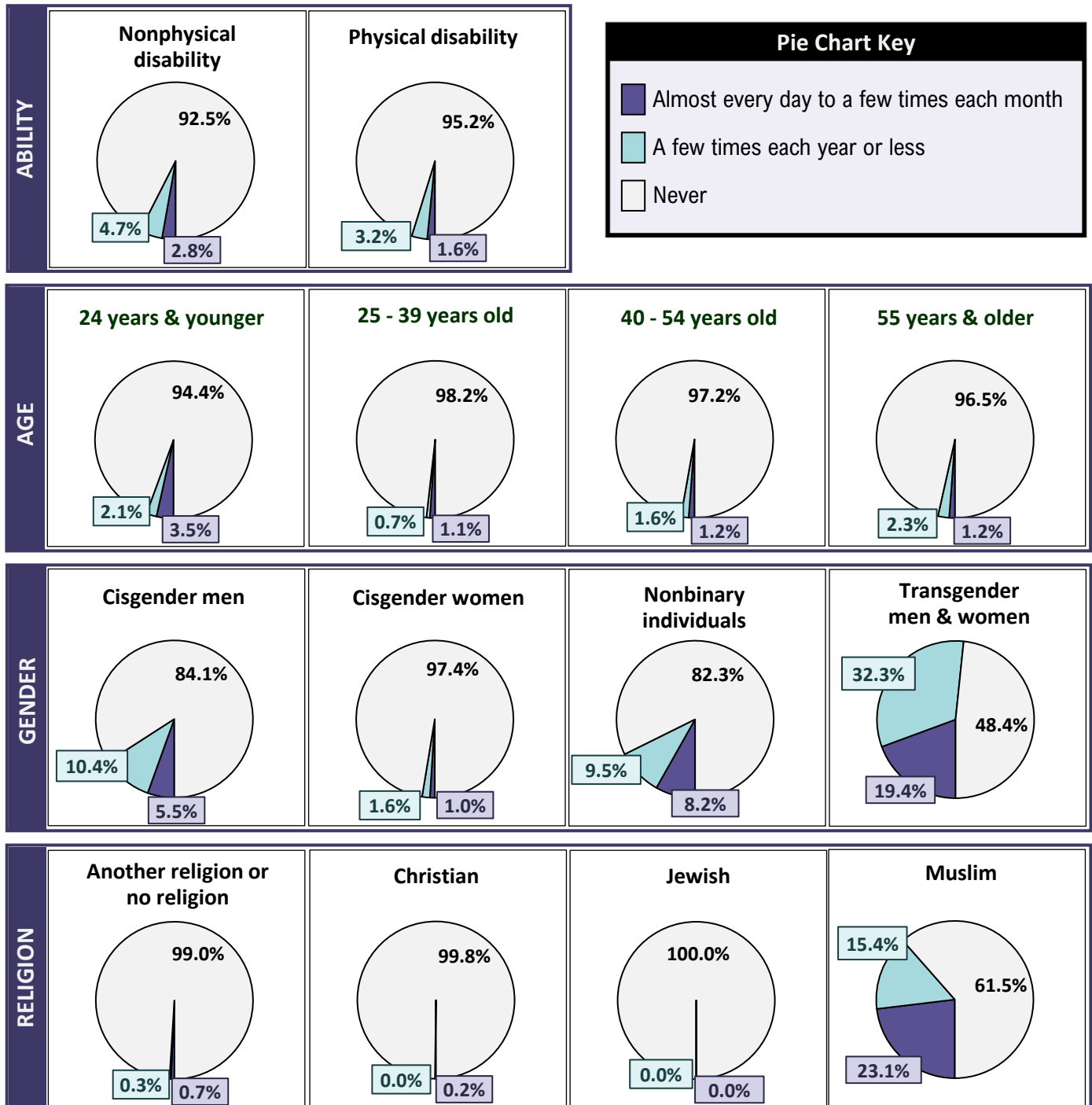
(Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same)

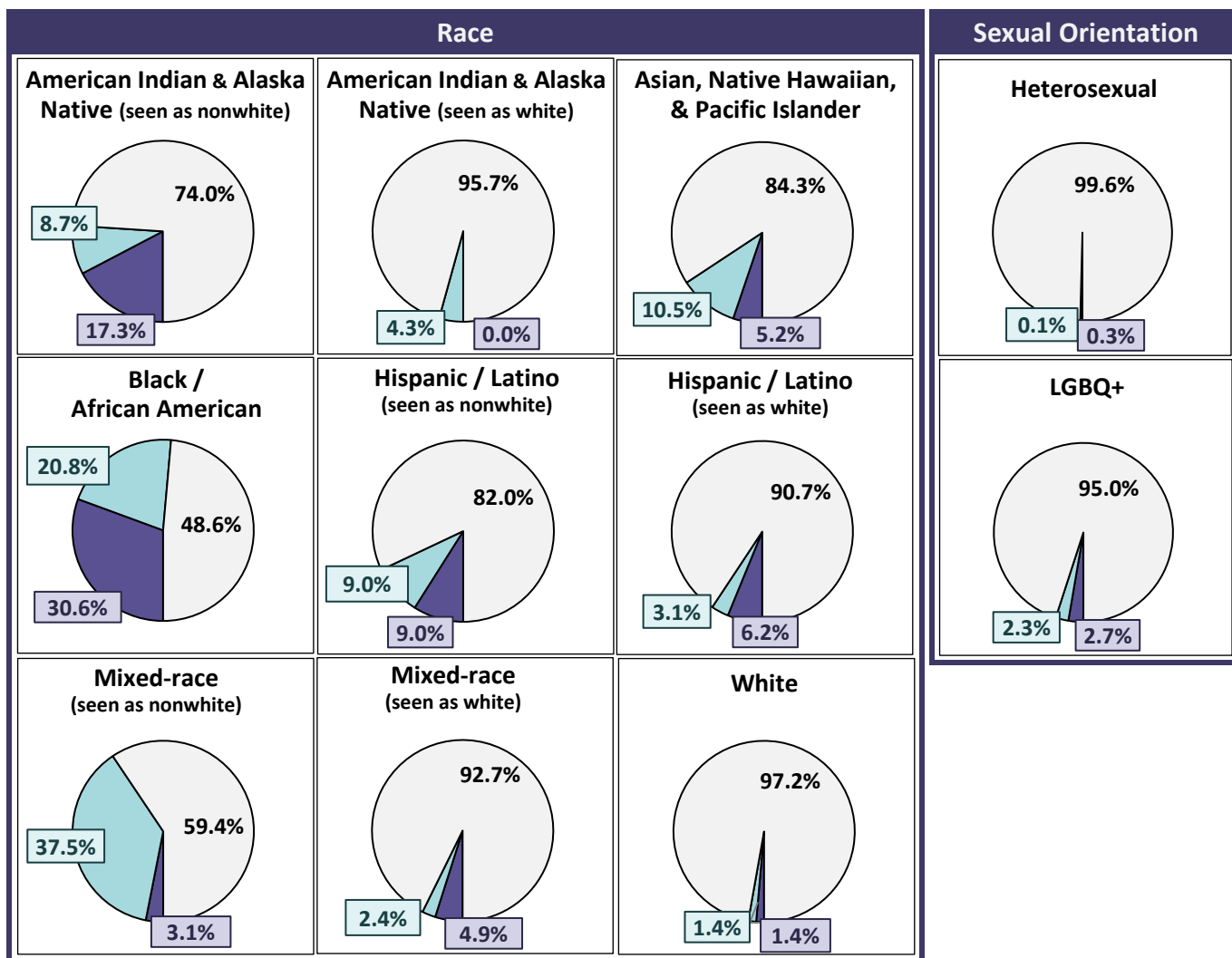


Other People Acting Afraid

Survey respondents were asked “In your day-to-day life in Olympia, how often have people acted as if they are afraid of you?” and those who selected something other than ‘never’ were asked the follow-up question, “What do you think is the main reason?” Only respondents who answered something other than “never” to the first question are reported in this section.

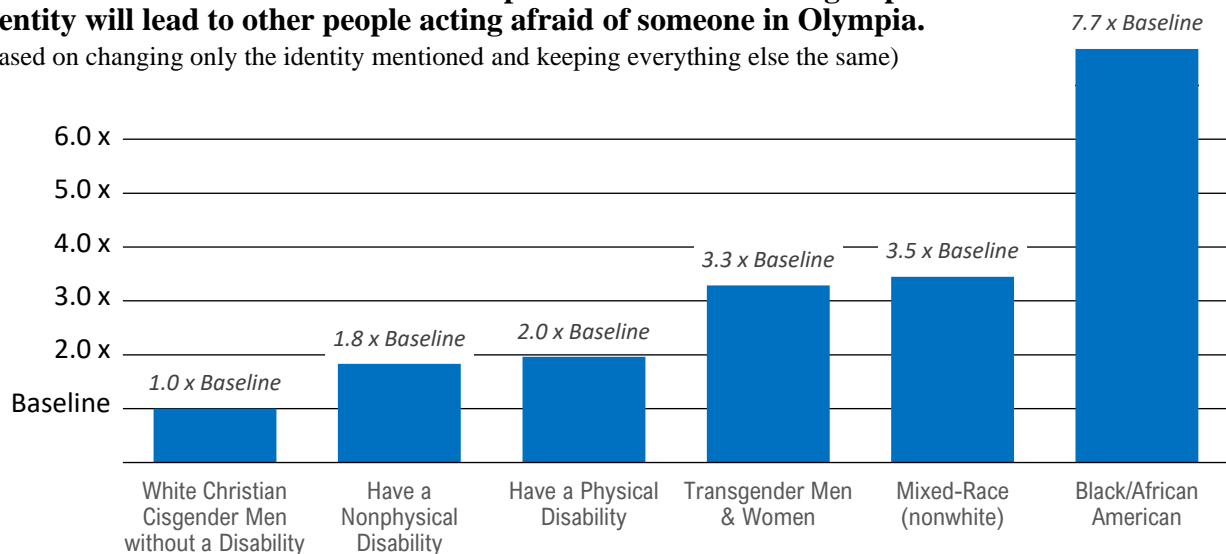
The pie charts illustrate the percentage of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for other people acting afraid of them in Olympia:





The column chart illustrates increased probabilities that having a specific identity will lead to other people acting afraid of someone in Olympia.

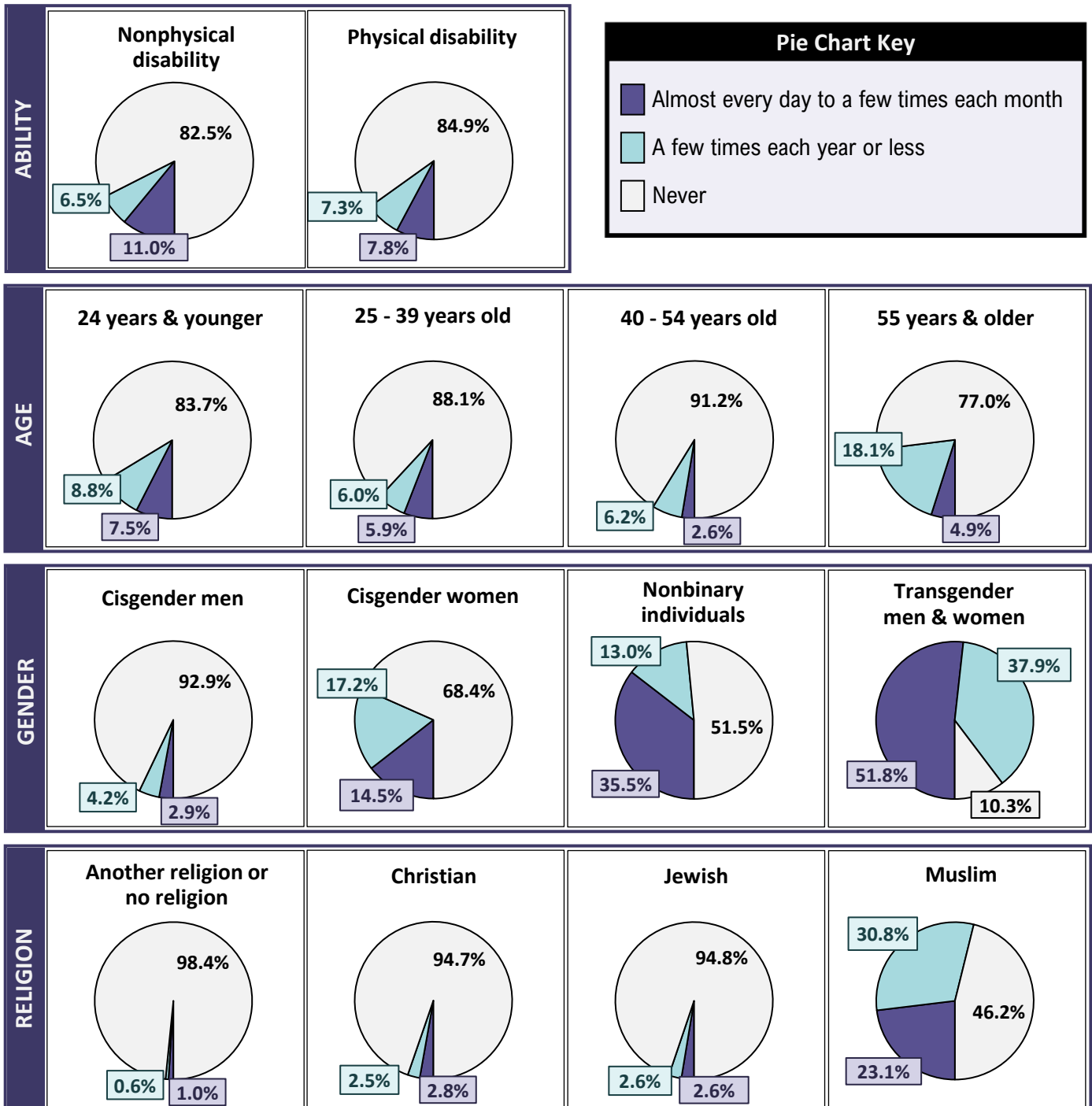
(Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same)

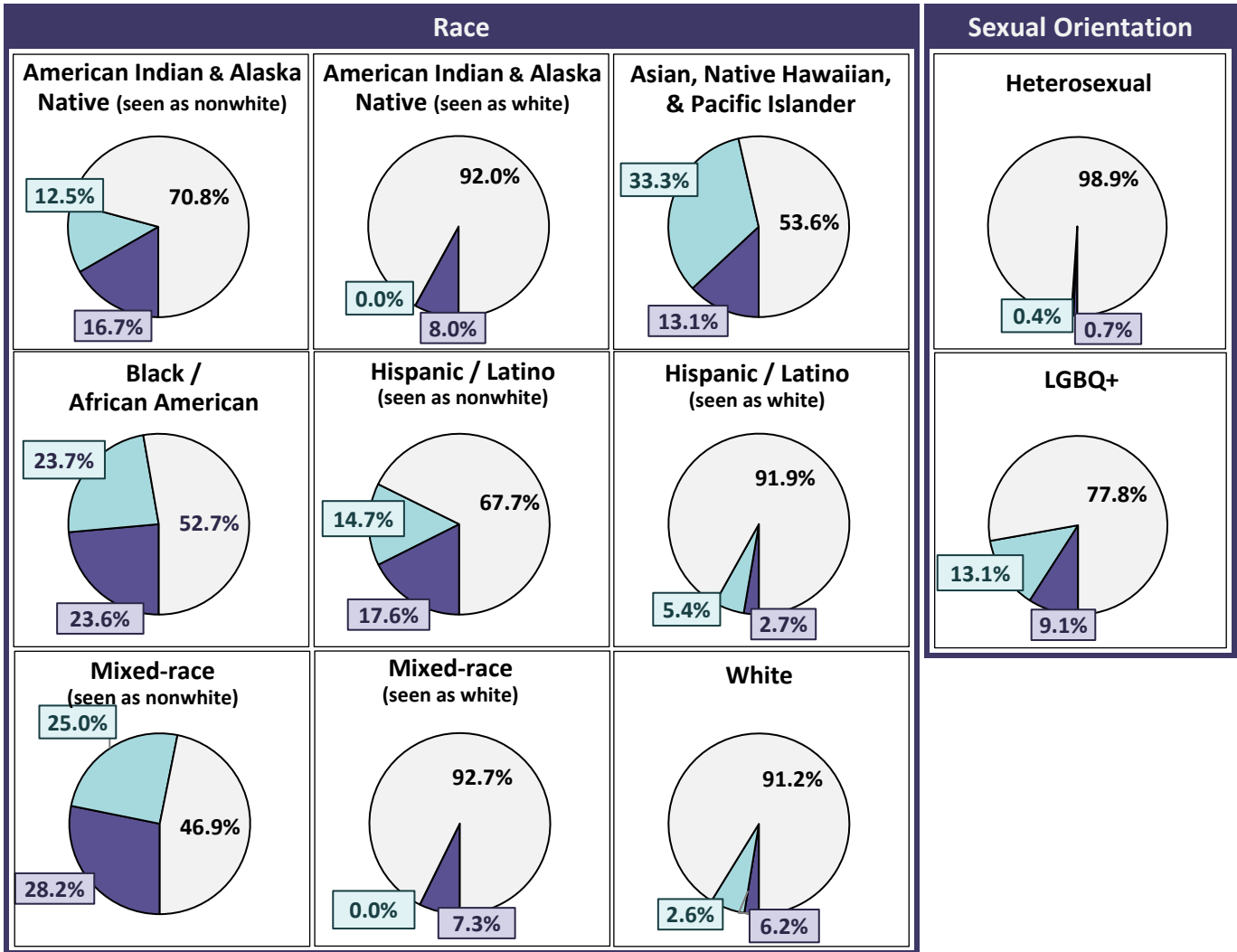


Being Treated with Less Respect

Survey respondents were asked “In your day-to-day life in Olympia, how often have you been treated with less courtesy or respect than other people?” and those who selected something other than ‘never’ were asked the follow-up question, “What do you think is the main reason?” Only respondents who answered something other than “never” to the first question are reported in this section.

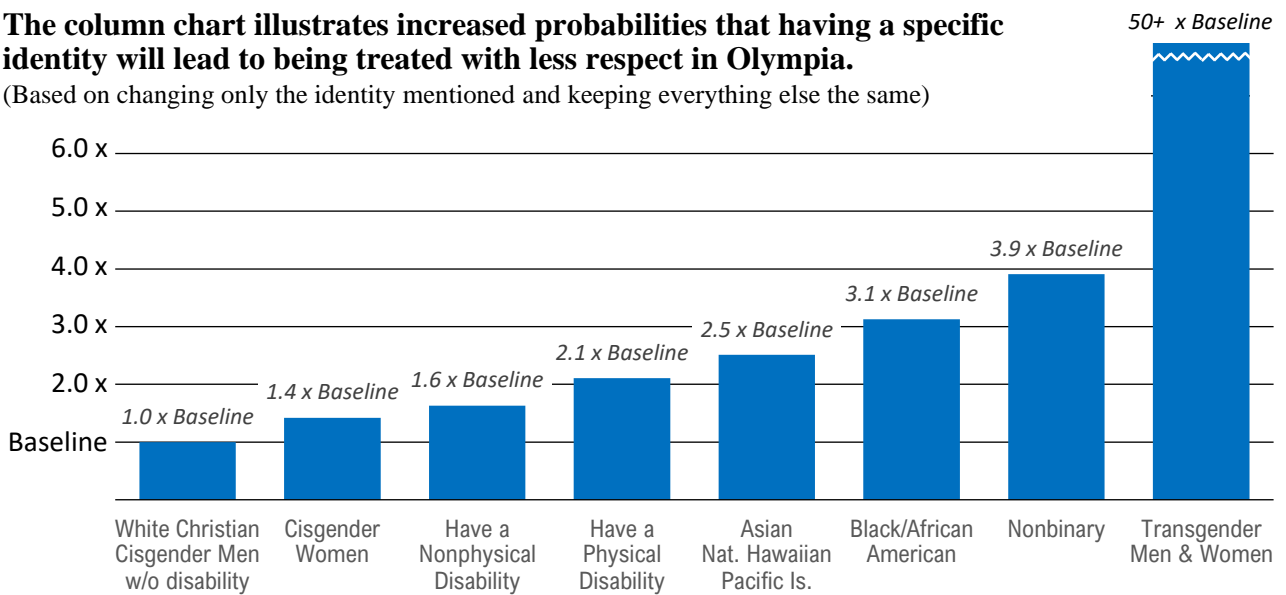
The pie charts illustrate the percentage of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for being treated with less respect in Olympia:





The column chart illustrates increased probabilities that having a specific identity will lead to being treated with less respect in Olympia.

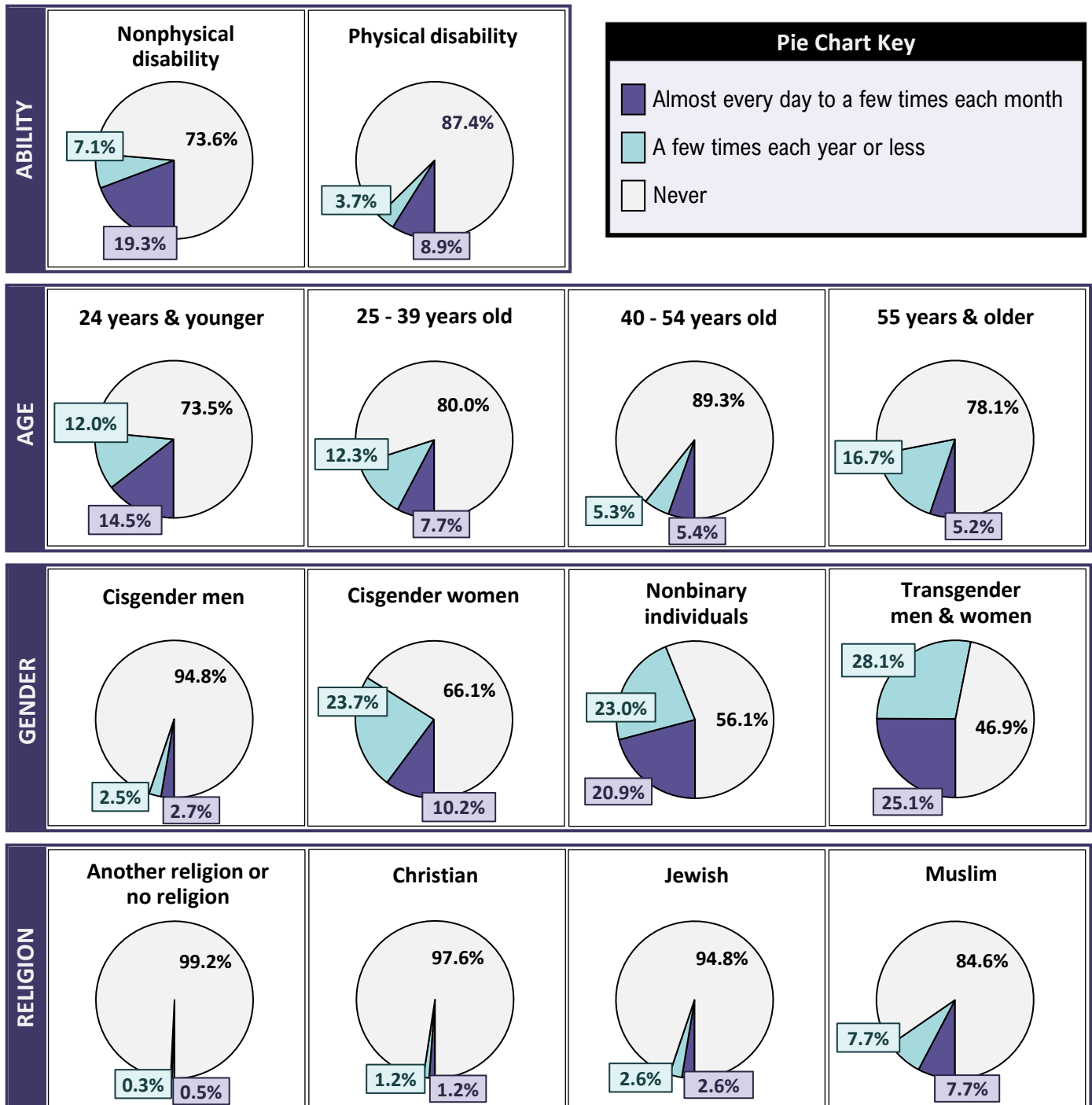
(Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same)

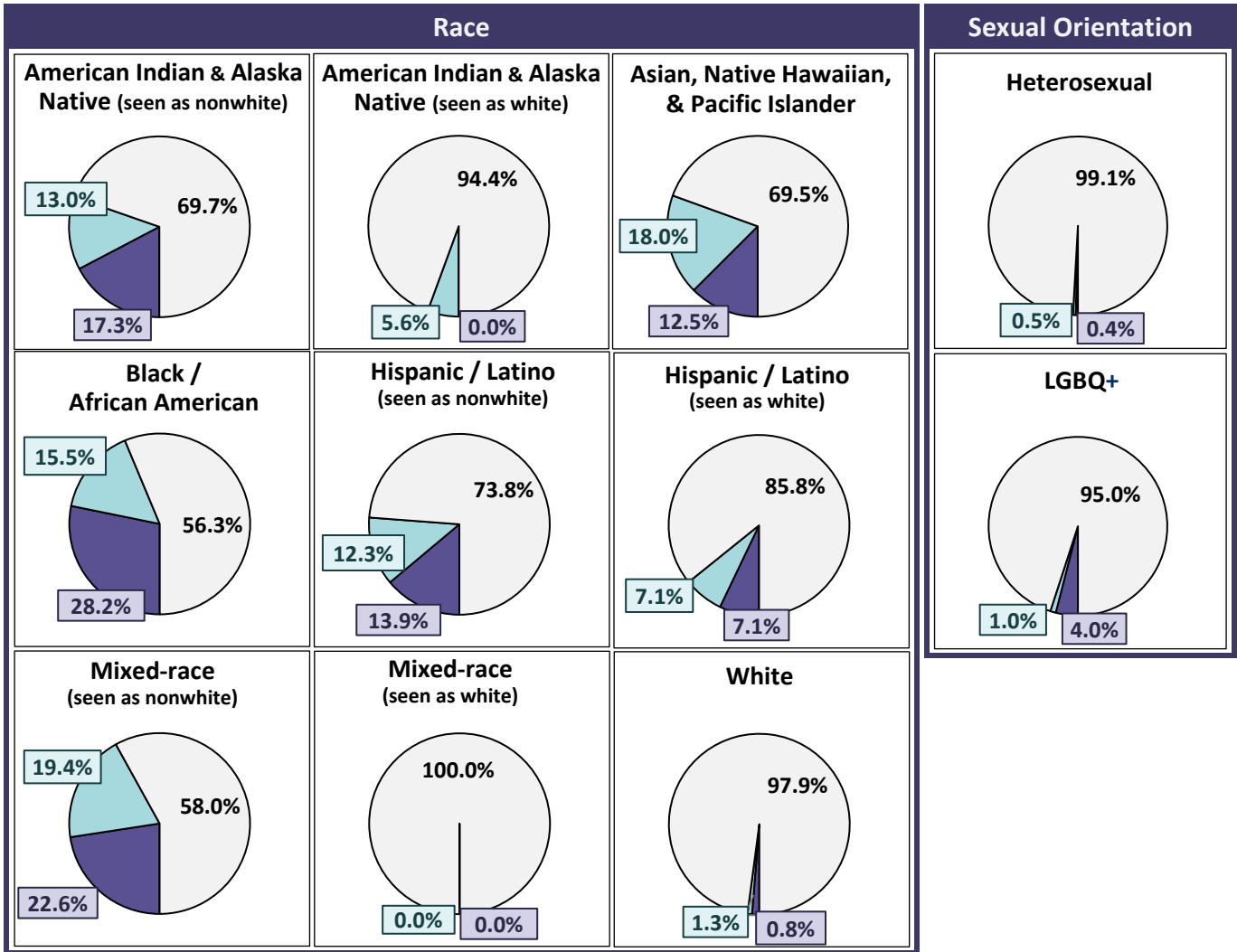


Being Seen as Not Smart

Survey respondents were asked “In your day-to-day life in Olympia, how often have people acted as if they think you are not smart?” and those who selected something other than ‘never’ were asked the follow-up question, “What do you think is the main reason?” Only respondents who answered something other than “never” to the first question are reported in this section.

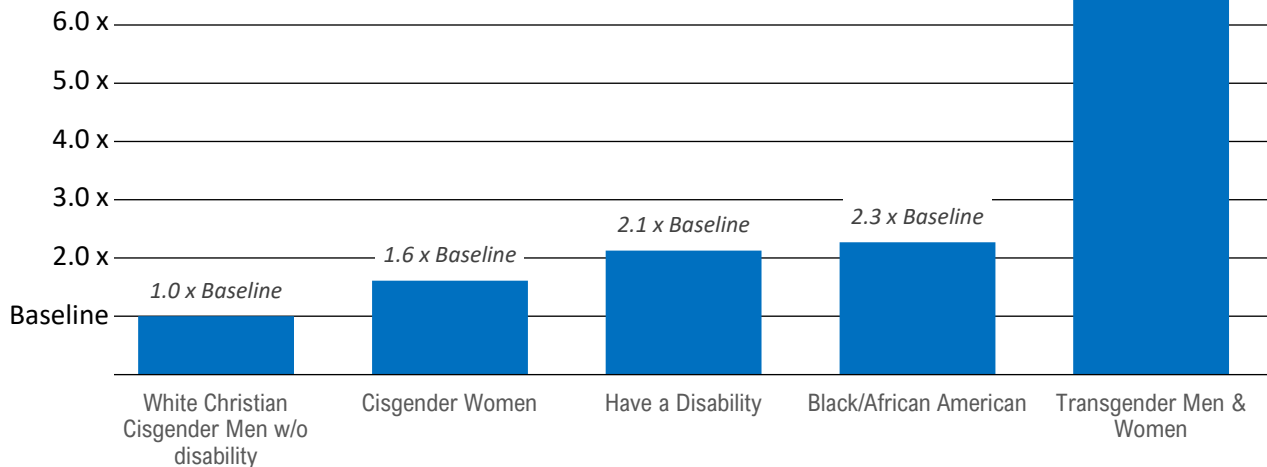
The pie charts illustrate the percentage of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for being seen in Olympia as not smart:





The column chart illustrates increased probabilities that having a specific identity will lead to being seen in Olympia as not smart.

(Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same)



What experiencing diminishing discrimination can look like in Olympia

The below testimonials were taken from interviews with survey respondents who self-identified as Asian, asexual, Agnostic, Atheist, Christian, cisgender men, cisgender women, disabled, gay, genderqueer, heterosexual, intersex, Jewish, lesbian, Muslim, nonbinary, pansexual, queer, transintersex and/or white.

I regularly get hostile remarks from people I'm passing on the sidewalk.

Everyday people give me weird looks, stink eye, cross the street when I'm walking by them. I'm followed around stores by staff, people have said [discriminatory] things to me while I was protesting in the past and I experience tons of microaggressions all the time.

People [with a different identity and in their car] will slow down to yell slurs at me.

I was walking down the sidewalk. And this woman passed me right so she was behind me and she passed me and I'm just walking home. And she's up ahead of me, and then she starts looking behind me and are looking behind her at me. And she keeps doing it and doing it. And I eventually got the idea that she thought that I was following her right and I'm like, but I was here first you passed me I'm not following you. And then she made this big deal about getting on the phone and talking really loud and walking across the street to the other side of the street and looking over her shoulder at me the whole time on the phone.

I have been catcalled, honked at, followed, and harassed, all because I'm a [identity].

Typically, this means people openly ignoring me when I introduce myself or talking to others around me and referring to me in the third-person as if I am not there.

They didn't they didn't value who I was, as a person.

They just assumed I didn't know anything about anything because I'm [identity], and would talk down to me or condescend by requesting [a person with a different identity].

I don't want strangers to know I'm [identity] in Olympia anymore. Like it's not safe.

I was working and not in a position where I could give her an answer, but she demanded it anyway, expecting that I would give her my time and efforts ...

As [identity], people constantly act like they think I'm not smart. I've had people explain basic things to me.

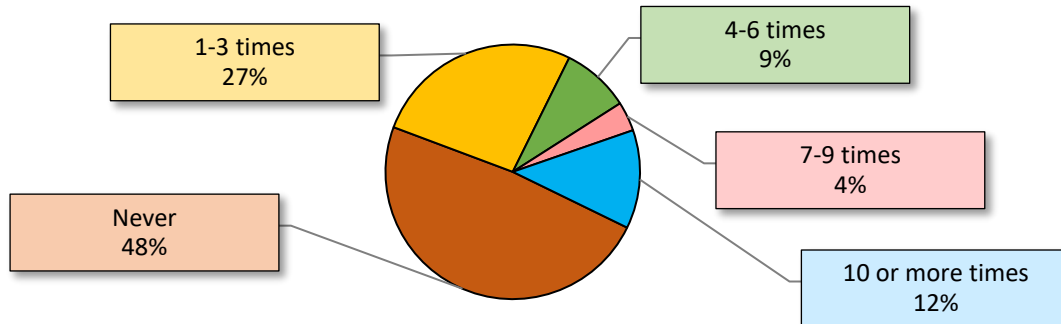
I can tell when people are staring, are giving me shorter interactions, and are uncomfortable...

Discriminatory Acts of Impediment

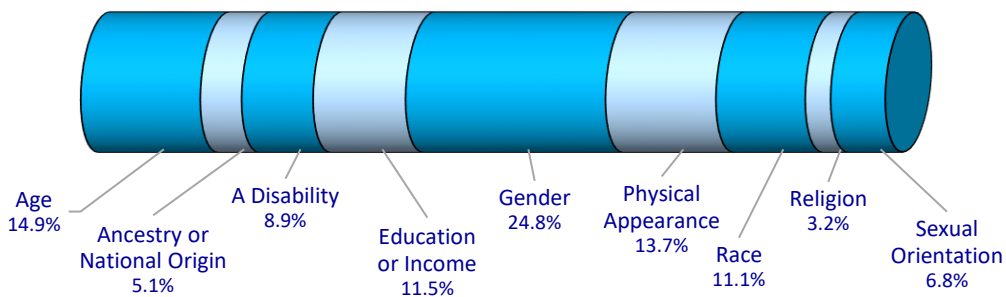
Impediment discrimination refers to acts that impede an individual’s access to opportunities because of an identity or identities that they have. The forms of discrimination in this section specifically impede access to education, employment, housing, healthcare, services, and positive interactions with law enforcement. In addition to limiting a person’s ability to have the same opportunities available to other Olympians, these discriminatory acts can also cause psychological and physiological injury to those impacted.

More than half (51.5%) of survey respondents said they have experienced one of the following forms of discrimination in Olympia. (51.5% represents about 28,000 Olympians.)

Survey respondents categorized by how many times they have experienced discriminatory acts of impediment in Olympia:

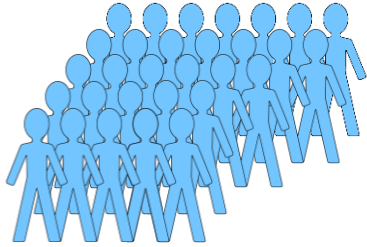


The “main reason” respondents said they experience discriminatory acts of impediment:

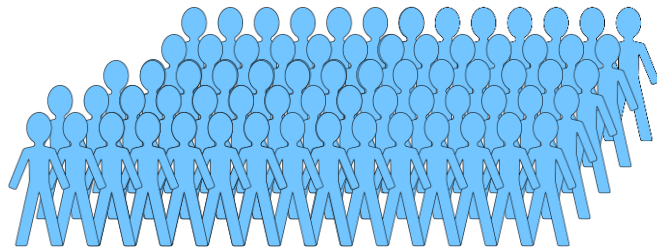


Employment

600 out of 1,925 (31.2%) of respondents who answered questions relating to employment reported experiencing employment discrimination in Olympia because of their identity. (31.2% represents approximately 17,000 Olympians.)



Experienced employment discrimination



Never experienced employment discrimination

What experiencing employment discrimination can look like in Olympia

The following testimonials are taken from interviews with survey respondents who self-identified as Asian, Christian, cisgender men, cisgender women, disabled, gay, heterosexual, lesbian, transgender women, and/or white.

I had two interviews and at the end of the last one they asked me more personal questions about my life and at the time I had identified as [identity] and they ended the interview there and I never heard back from the hiring managers.

People in the company were getting raises ... the boss said, 'Well, [they are in identity group]' so that was it was pretty obvious.

I completed the required exams to obtain my professional license to [practice profession]. I soon asked about a raise and/or a bump in title. I was asked by the CEO of the firm, 'what am I doing different today compared to yesterday?' No raise was due simply because I had obtained my license. However, it's known that firms can bill clients at much higher rates per hour when someone who is licensed is working on a project ... there were several other [employees matching the identity of everyone else] in the office, some of who became licensed before and after me. They received raises at that point.

Several months went by with glowing praise from customers and management. Then one day [my manager discovered my identity]. The next day I came in and was fired on the spot with no explanation.

Even though I was clearly qualified, and even though they didn't admit it, I knew it was because of [identity]. Even though they're not allowed to ask someone's [identity], they can easily figure it out...

There have been several times in the past few years where I have made it to the last round of interviews for supervisory positions to only be told I am very impressive and they can see the drive in me for advancement but they've given the position to someone else. Each time the position has been given to [someone not sharing my identity]. Makes me feel just because I'm [identity] I don't have the same opportunities for advancement.

I can tell you the reason I got fired was [identity]. ... my supervisor said, I don't agree with your choice. And it's like, you know, you're just too difficult to work with. We can't afford the time for you to be gone. And so they let me go...

I have even been told that [a different identity] could do the job better and when I asked how they knew that, they just said it was fact.

I knew that everyone was supposed to get a yearly raise yet when the new year came I didn't get a raise.

Chart 1: Percentages of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for not receiving a job promotion in Olympia:

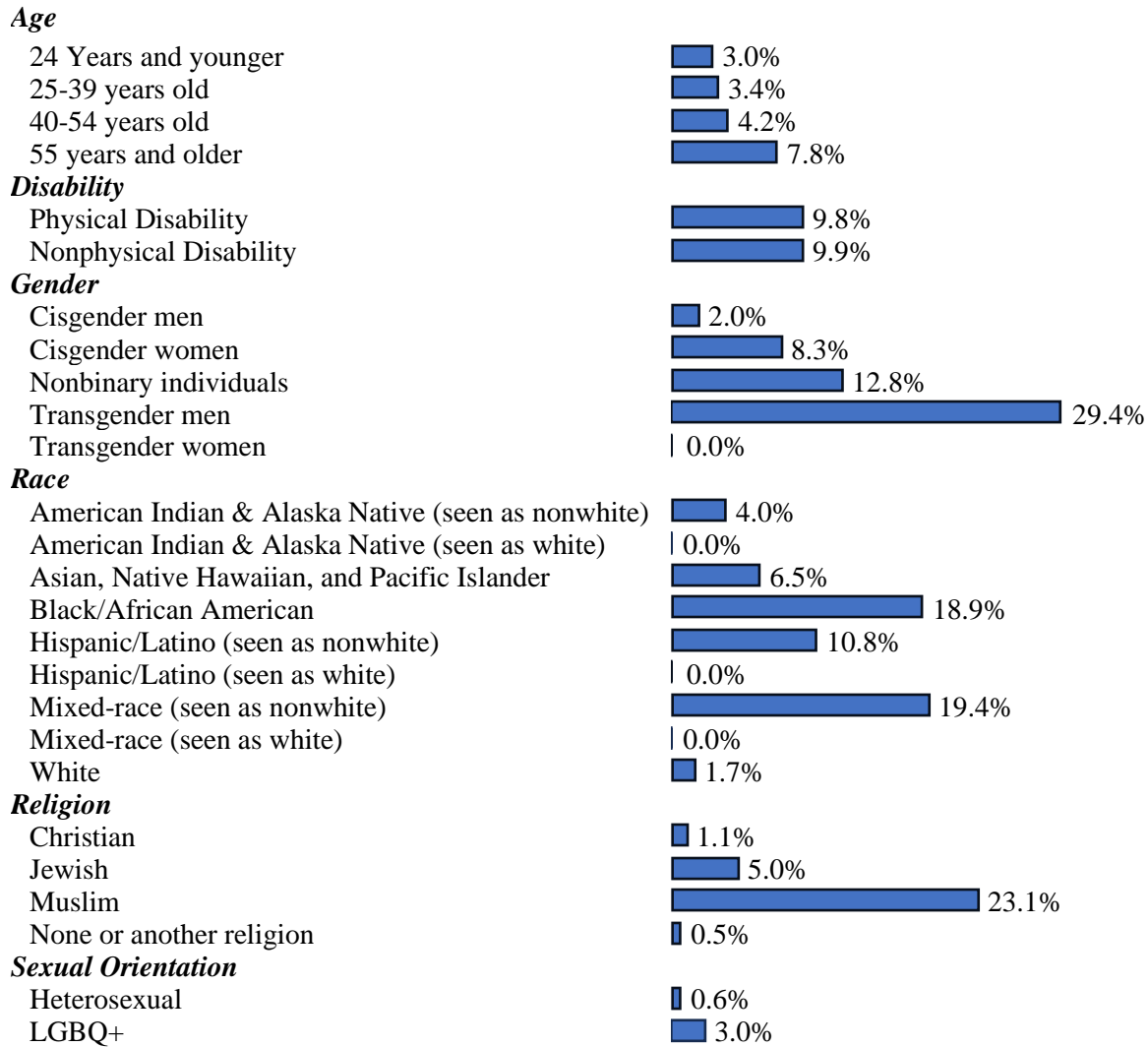
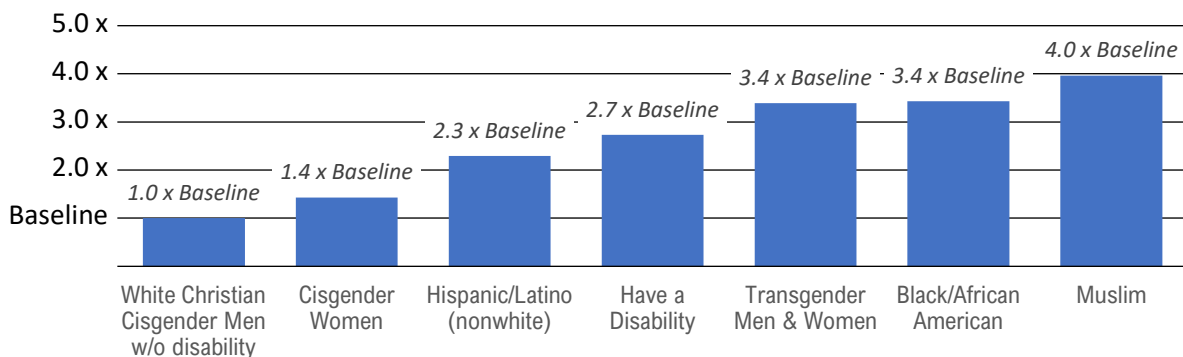
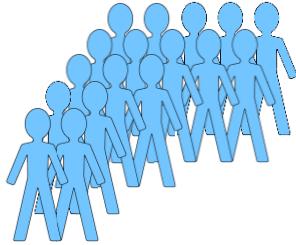


Chart 2: Increased probability that having a specific identity will lead to not receiving a job promotion in Olympia. (Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same.)

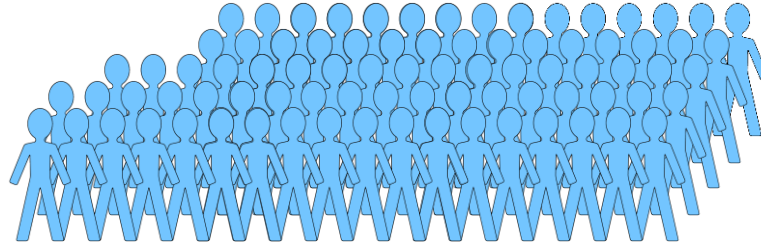


Housing

319 out of 1,886 (16.9%) of the survey respondents who answered questions about housing reported that they have experienced housing discrimination in Olympia because of their identity. (16.9% represents approximately 9,200 Olympians.)



Experienced housing discrimination



Never experienced housing discrimination

What experiencing housing discrimination can look like in Olympia

The following testimonials are taken from interviews with survey respondents who self-identified as African American, Atheist, bisexual, Black, cisgender men, cisgender women, disabled, genderqueer, heterosexual, lesbian, and/or white.

I was denied from every single apartment or straight up ignored by landlords or rental companies for two months but my partner [with a different identity] applied at the same places with worse credit and less income and was treated far better. ... the only reason we secured a place was because [my partner] was the one who did all the talking and viewing.

I met with a homeowner who was renting out a home in Olympia. I had the right credentials, the right amount of money, and a stable income. The landlord liked me and I put in an application. He told me it was as good as mine. Then I visited once more [and my identity was revealed]. This time the landlord was visibly uncomfortable and refused to look at either [my partner or me]. The tour was cut short and our application was denied.

[my partner] secured this loan online. And [my partner] went down to the bank. And when they saw that [my partner] was [identity], they've just all of a sudden denied the loan.

My landlord served me an eviction notice ... and called me [epithets], and also informed me she does 'not rent to [identity].'

I am [identity] and very proud of that. Unfortunately, not all people agree with people of my [living here] and when you live near a [neighbor] that is allowed to be openly [prejudice] with decor and such outside, you no longer feel welcome, when the snide remarks start coming you start to feel unsafe, and then when the threatening gestures start and aren't stopped you leave for your safety.

We've, we have had some issues with neighbors on [our] road driving down and screaming [epithets at my partner]. ... It just makes me nervous.

I've actually moved twice because I didn't feel safe as a [identity]. ... [my neighbor] starts screaming like about, just doing crazy stuff like you know the basics like, [identity-related epithet] ... after he did that I took my [identity-related symbolism] down because I was like I'm just sick of it like I don't want strangers to know I'm [identity] in Olympia anymore. Like it's not safe.

Housing discrimination leading to other institutional inequities

Not having access to desired housing—whether through a landlord not renting, realtor not selling, neighbors harassing, or loans not being provided—can lead to other forms of institutional inequities including: education, ability to earn or retain income/wealth, and mental and physical health.

Chart 3: Percentages of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for being prevented from renting or buying a home in their desired neighborhood in Olympia:

Age



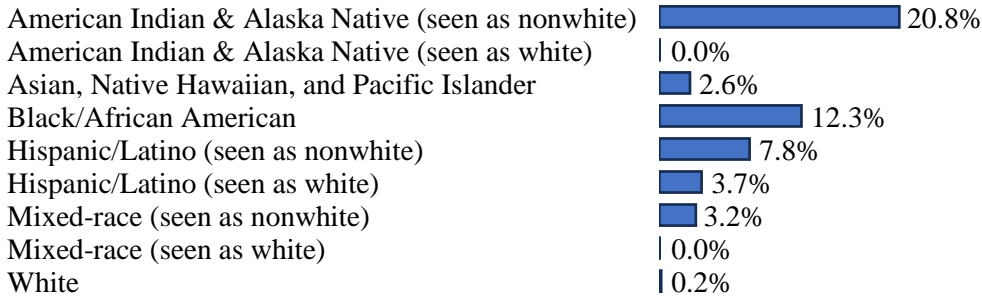
Disability



Gender



Race



Religion

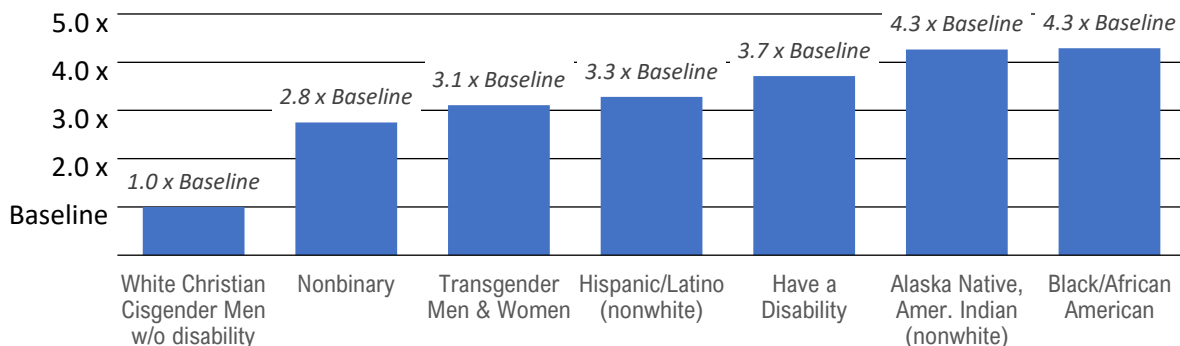


Sexual Orientation



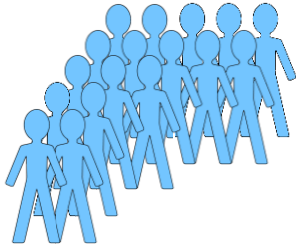
Chart 4: Increased probability that having a specific identity will prevent an individual from renting or buying a home in their desired neighborhood in Olympia.

(Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same.)

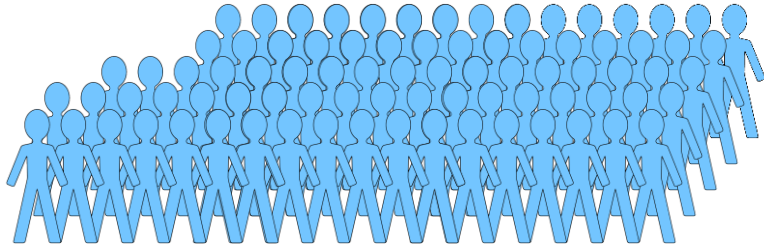


Law Enforcement / Security

297 out of 1,878 (15.8%) of respondents who answered questions relating to law enforcement/security reported experiencing harassment by law enforcement/security in Olympia because of their identity. (15.8% represents approximately 8,500 Olympians.)



Been hassled by law enforcement/
security because of an identity



Never been hassled by law enforcement/security
because of an identity

What experiencing law enforcement / security discrimination can look like in Olympia

The following testimonials are taken from interviews with survey respondents who self-identified as bisexual, Black, cisgender men, cisgender women, disabled, heterosexual, Latino, and/or white.

I've just, you know, been driving and going down the road and been pulled over because the way I look you know, pretty much really it's just like, Well, you look like you might be having some problems here. And I mean, there's no reason to have pulled me over whatsoever, but it's happened more than once.

I have been approached by cops and security before at city hall who have asked me to not sit down on the benches surrounding city hall. At the time there are often other people who also sitting and chatting who were not asked to move. I was sipping a coffee and reading a book at the time.

[law enforcement] seemed a little bit different towards me than the other kids that were there. So just kind of the way that I was talked to, you know, was different than my counterparts at that time.

[Law enforcement] has pulled me over many times, even though I am a good driver and never my partner. They give me a hard time every time as if I'm some kind of criminal ...

We were in the Olympia area when we got pulled over. In the evening, it was dark. For nothing, I mean, he was on the speed limit. And we were just coming from I think a friend's house and no drinks. ... [The officer] didn't have any reason to pull us over. [The officer] never came up with a reason.

I am [identity] so yes I have been hassled by [law enforcement] for this with derogatory remarks being made about [my traits] in the process.

I don't cause any trouble and yet, the police chased me from place to place to place. Once threatened to go into [my home] without a warrant and arrest me.

Law enforcement/security discrimination leading to other institutional inequities

Being harassed by law enforcement/security can also lead to mental and physical injury.

Chart 5: Percentages of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for being hassled by law enforcement/security in Olympia:

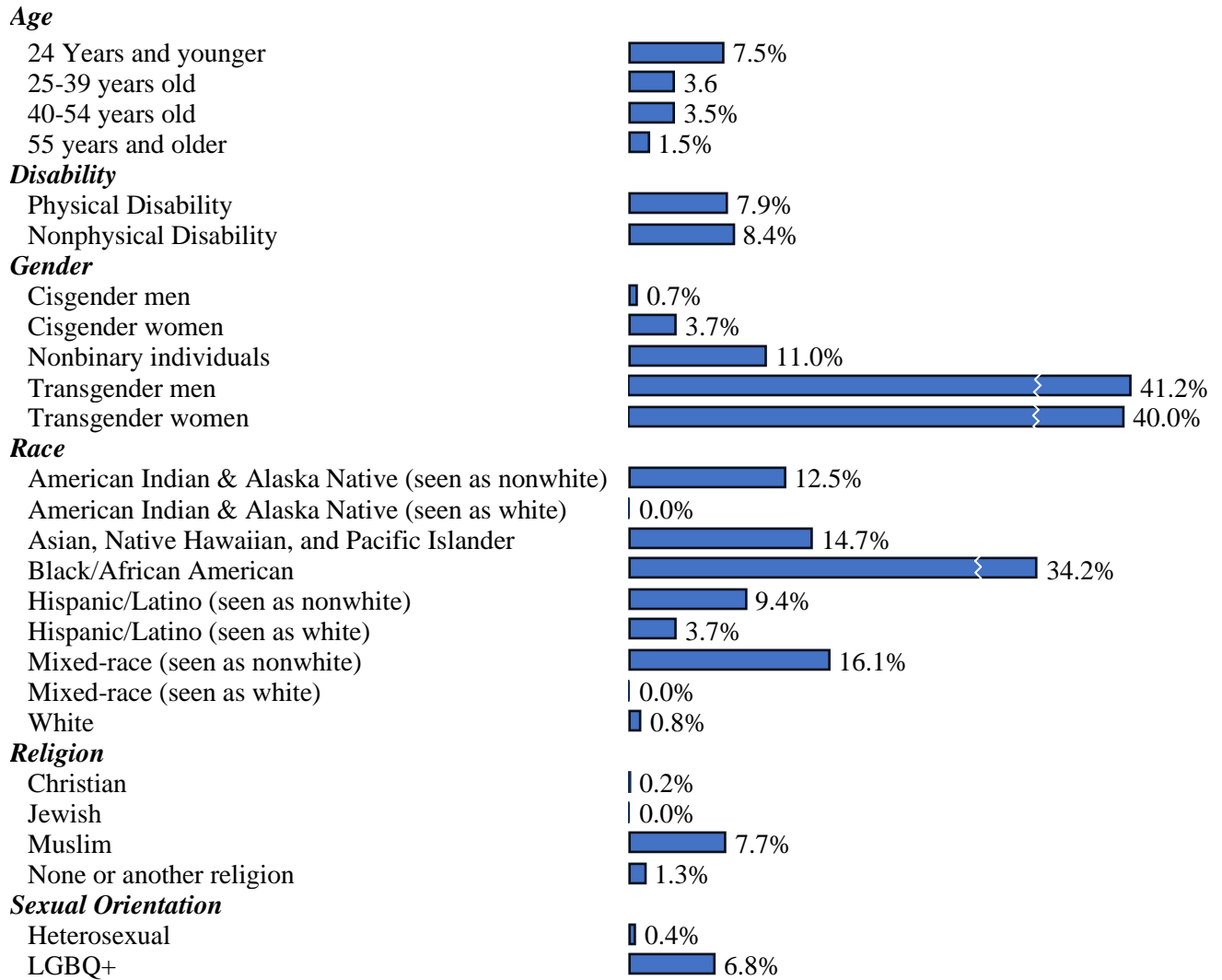
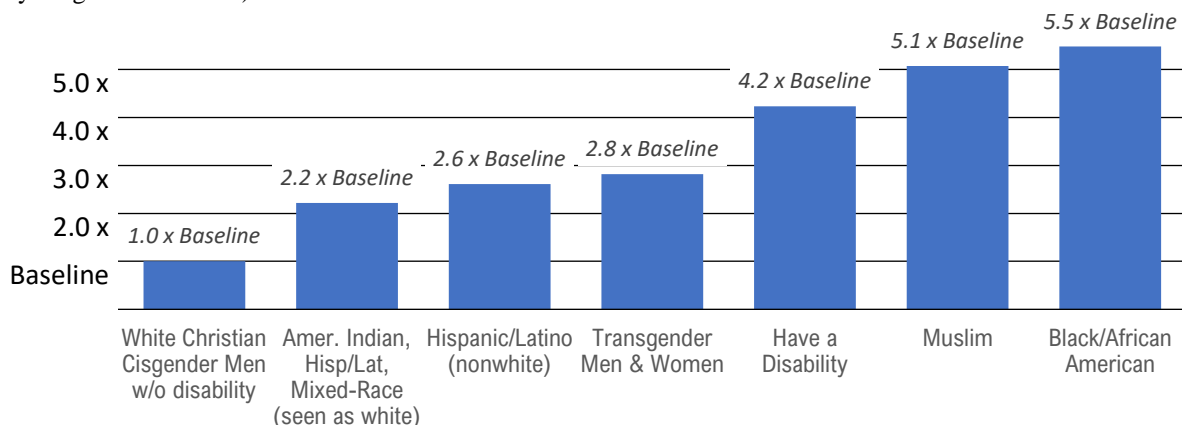
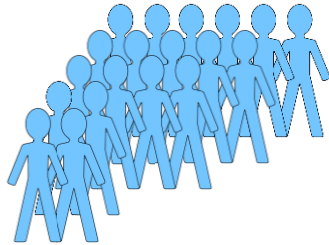


Chart 6: Increased probability that having a specific identity will lead to being hassled by law enforcement or security in Olympia. (Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same.)

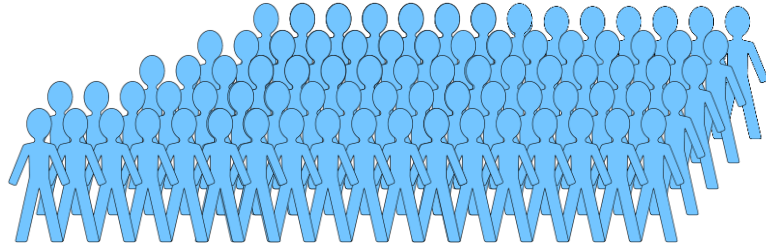


Education

376 out of 1,973 (19.1%) of respondents answered questions relating to education reported having experienced discrimination in education in Olympia because of an identity they have. (19.1% represents approximately 10,400 Olympians.)



Experienced discrimination in education



Never experienced discrimination in education

What experiencing education discrimination can look like in Olympia

The following testimonials come from interviews with respondents who self-identified as biracial, Christian, cisgender women, disabled, heterosexual, Hispanic, Jewish, queer, intersex trans showing, and/or white.

I would say that I definitely experienced some [discrimination]. And I wouldn't say that it was from the instructors themselves, but from fellow classmates...

I was [personal trait] and my teacher said I would fail in life.

I was denied an opportunity to participate in a program that offered financial support and business training to food producers, because what it felt to me was that I was [identity] who wanted to [run a business related a specific identity]. I had lots of experience and market info, but they didn't take me seriously as a [identity].

I just felt like I was being discriminated against because they're basically dismissing who I was....

[my school] scheduled the first day of class to be the absolute most [important] day of the year for [people with my identity]. And so whereas [the school] didn't say you have to go ... We're not penalized for not going to the first day of class, but we missed out on the information that all other students that [don't have my identity received].

I was told that, due to [my identity], I should think more about [alternative] and less about pursuing further education.

Told 'need not apply' [for a scholarship].

On two or three different occasions was told, 'Well, you know, manager jobs with the state are mostly [identity]. They're not [identity]. You need to just you know, if you want to do a manager, it's gonna have to be a low level manager. You know, you can only go so far in the state being a [identity].'

Education discrimination leading to other institutional inequities

Not having access to quality educational opportunities and/or being discouraged from pursuing education can lead to other forms of institutional inequities including ability to earn or retain income/wealth, and mental and physical health.

Chart 7: Percentages of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for being discouraged from pursuing further education in Olympia:

Age



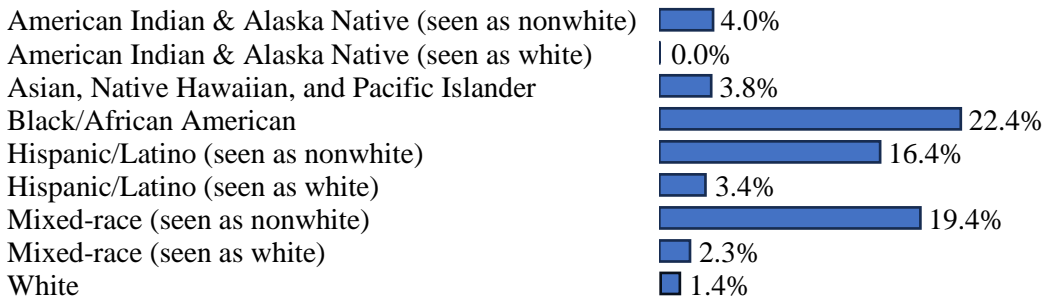
Disability



Gender



Race



Religion

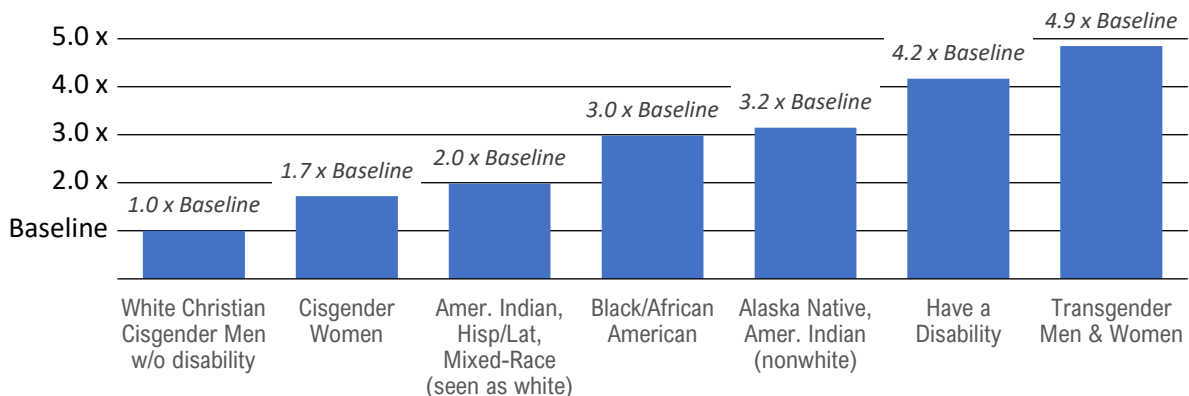


Sexual Orientation



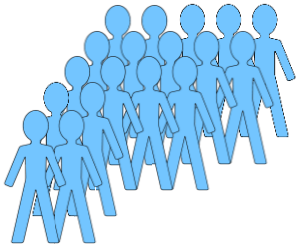
Chart 8: Increased probability that having a specific identity will lead to being discouraged by an educator or advisor from pursuing further education in Olympia.

(Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same.)

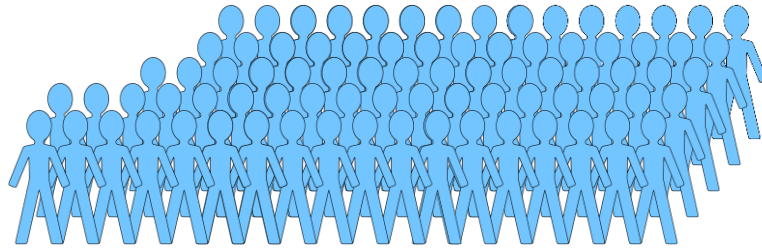


Healthcare

334 out of 1,864 (17.9%) of research participants who answered questions relating to healthcare reported that they have experienced healthcare discrimination in Olympia because of an identity they have. (17.9% represents approximately 9,800 Olympians.)



Been denied/provided inferior medical care because of an identity



Never been denied/provided inferior medical care because of an identity

What experiencing healthcare discrimination can look like in Olympia

The following testimonials are taken from interviews with survey respondents who self-identified as Agnostic, Christian, cisgender women, disabled, genderfluid, genderqueer, heterosexual, Latino, Muslim, queer, transintersex, and/or white.

Nobody takes me seriously when I go to the doctor or get injured. They are very condescending to me.

When I mentioned that I was worried about my [medical condition] to my doctor, and separately to my therapist, both essentially brushed me off and did not suggest further treatment at all. I believe it's because society tends to view [medical condition] as an issue that mostly [not people with my identity] have.

... can't count the number of times that my pain has been written off as a mental thing that I just need to get over.

If I fight back, this is one of the ways that [identity] people end up accidentally dead. Um, so I have not been back to [healthcare facility] since that incident because I don't feel safe there.

One doctor that I saw told me that I was [identity] and that people like me need to [descriptive instructions]. That made me break down in tears and I stopped going to the doctor completely for a while even though I was being seen for a very serious issue that can lead to cancer if left untreated/unmanaged.

[when receiving stitches at a hospital]... the doctor says, 'Well, you know, most women apologize when they haven't shaved their legs.' That's what the ER doctor said to me.

I have been denied care outright due to my [identity]. One clinic in town that I called trying to find behavioral health care simply said that they could not help me because they didn't have any providers who were [identity]-accepting.

I was sexually assaulted by medical providers on three separate occasions.

Healthcare discrimination leading to other institutional inequities

Not having access to quality healthcare can lead to other forms of institutional inequities including ability to earn or retain income/wealth.

Chart 9: Percentages of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for being denied medical care or provided inferior medical care in Olympia:

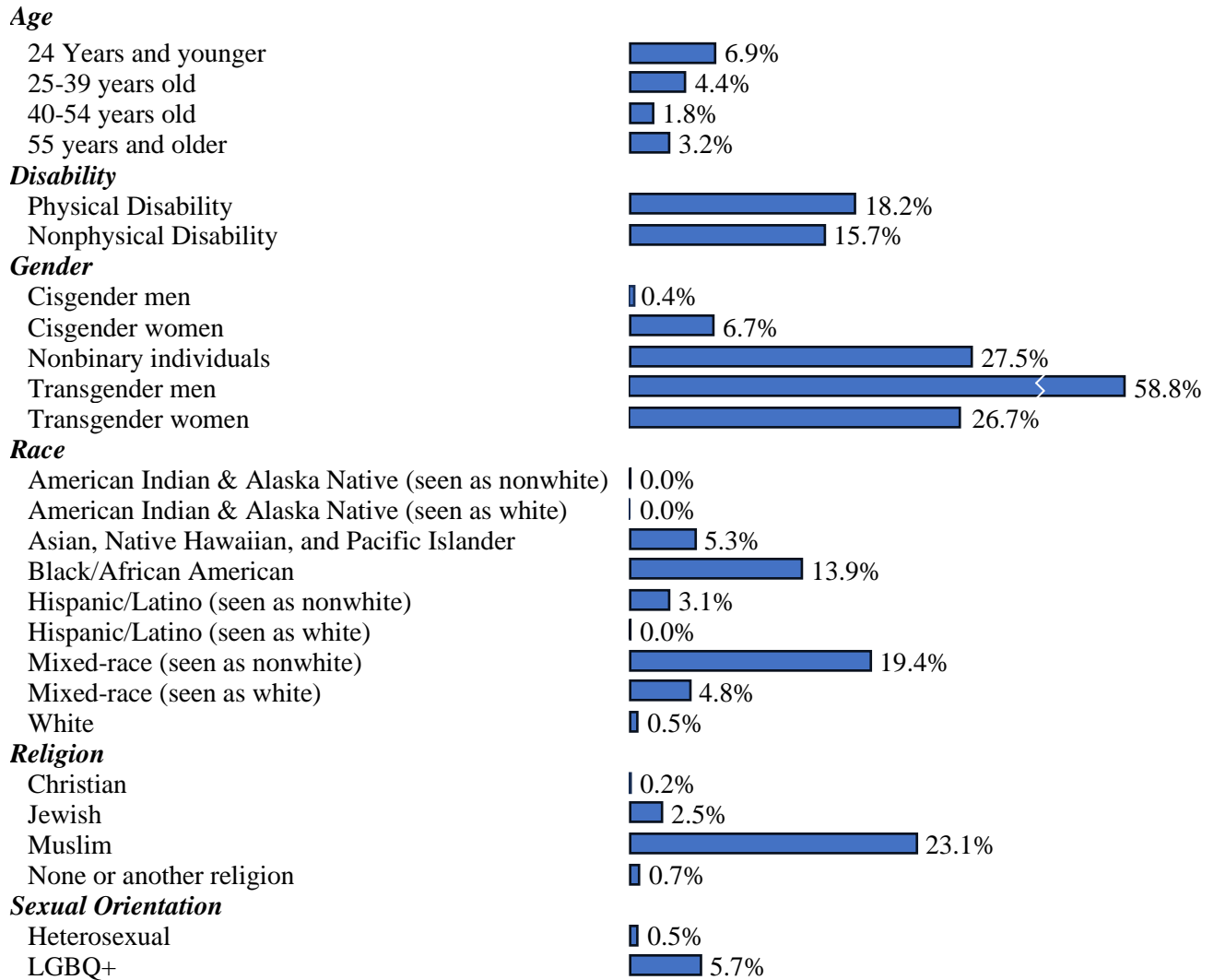
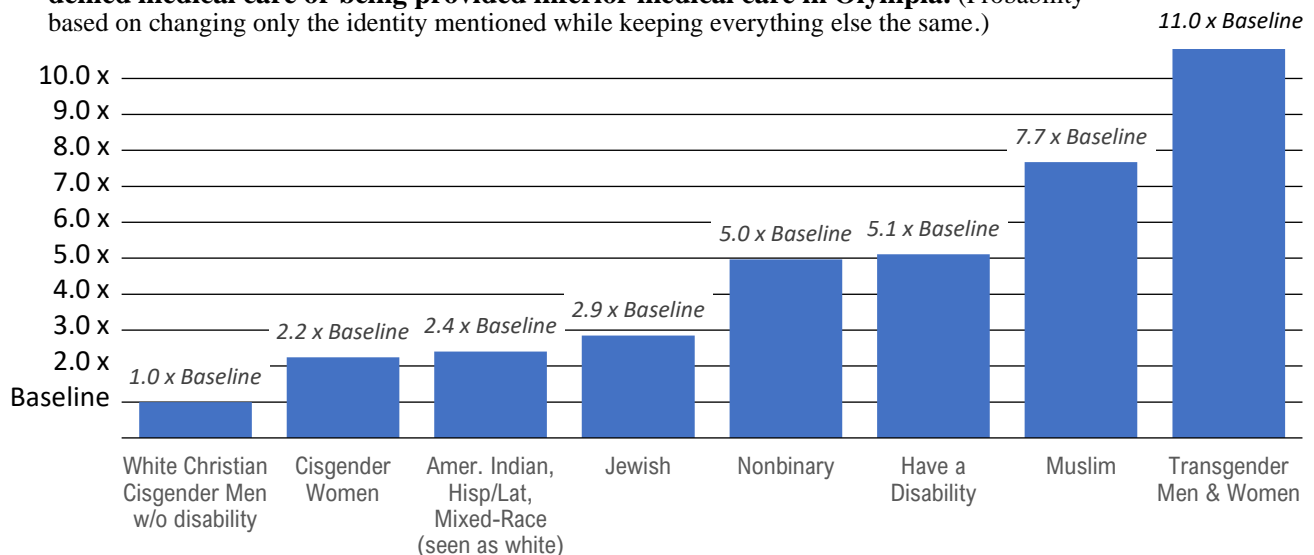
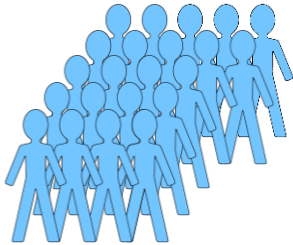


Chart 10: Increased probability that having a specific identity will result in being denied medical care or being provided inferior medical care in Olympia. (Probability based on changing only the identity mentioned while keeping everything else the same.)

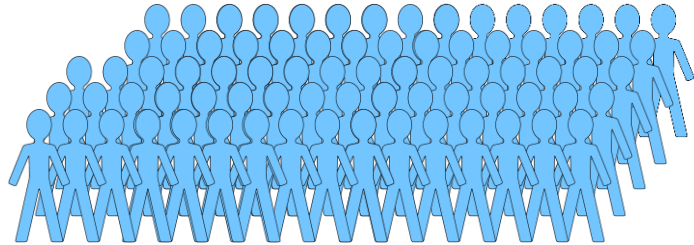


Access to Services

403 out of 1,856 (21.7%) of research participants who answered questions relating to receiving service by a plumber, car mechanic, or other service provider reported that they have experienced service-related discrimination in Olympia because of an identity they have. (21.7% represents approximately 11,800 Olympians.)



Denied service or received inferior service because of an identity



Never denied service or received inferior service because of an identity

What experiencing housing discrimination can look like in Olympia

The below testimonials are taken from interviews with survey respondents who self-identified as Agnostic, Asian, Atheist, Autistic, Black, Christian, cisgender men, cisgender women, femme, genderqueer, Latin-American, lesbian, neurodivergent, and/or white.

[A technician] refused to speak to me or answer my questions about my own [property], instead deferring to a [friend matching the technician's identity] I was with at the time. It was ridiculous. I was talking to the guy asking direct questions about my [property], and he was responding to my friend as if my friend was asking the question.

At [a business], my friend [same identity as me] and I were not approached by anyone, there were a couple [people with a different identity than me] that came and the salesmen went right up to them. We had to actually make the 1st move to ask for help. After we asked to look at a [product, ... an employee provided access] and then left us. It felt like we were a nuisance.

People assume that I am not able to afford things being a [identity]. I love to prove them wrong but I shouldn't have to.

We ordered and waited and waited and waited and waited. And finally, you know, we talked to the waiter like a couple of different times. It's like, what's happening with our food? ... we said, well, we have to go. Can we just get this food to go or just like nevermind, we'll pay for the drinks and we're going, they said, Oh no, no. We have your order. We'll pack it up. And when we got home, my [partner] didn't order this but they had given [stereotypical food dish].

When I have been provided inferior service by [service providers] it's areas I'm not knowledgeable about but I can clearly tell the price point was ridiculous ... It's tough to parse if it was because I'm [identity], because I'm [another identity] or both.

I am an [identity] and have been assumed to be unintelligent in several circumstances.

I wasn't denied a service, but I was definitely taken advantage of.

Chart 11: Percentages of individuals within each identity who named that identity as the main reason for being denied or provided inferior service from a plumber, car mechanic, or other service provider:

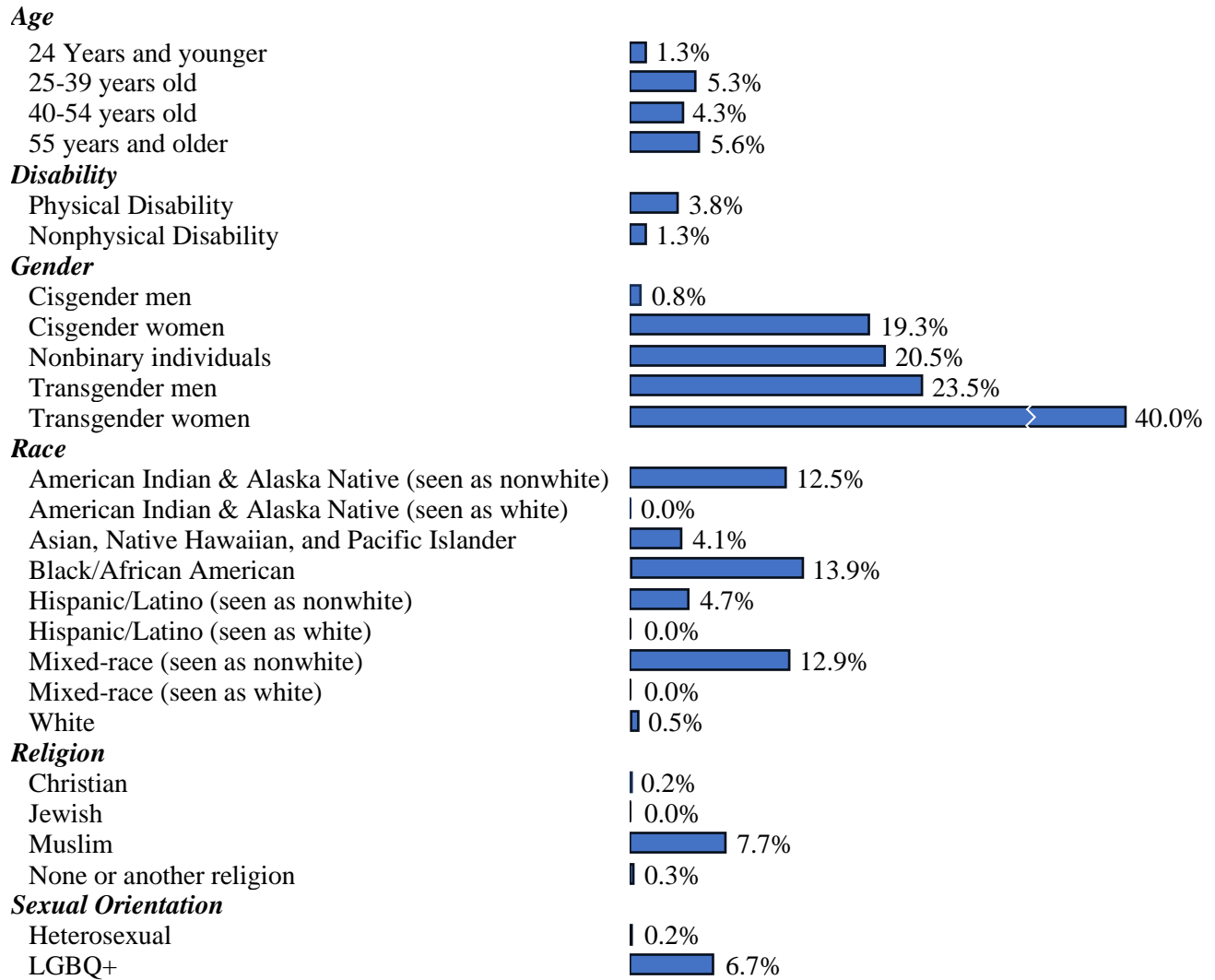
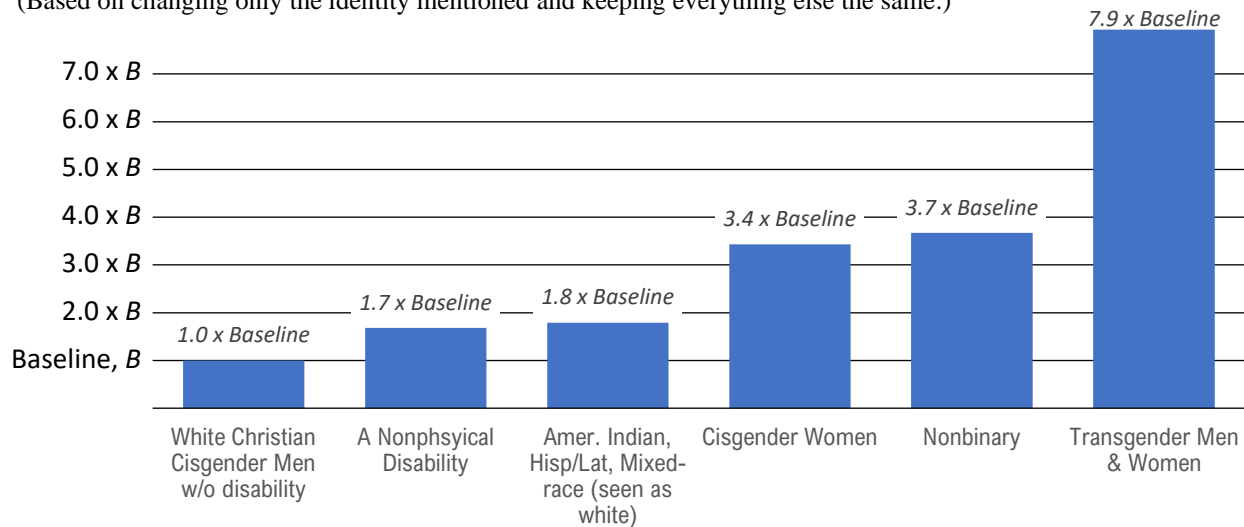


Chart 12: Increased probability that a specific identity will lead to being denied or provided inferior service by a plumber, car mechanic, or other service provider in Olympia.

(Based on changing only the identity mentioned and keeping everything else the same.)



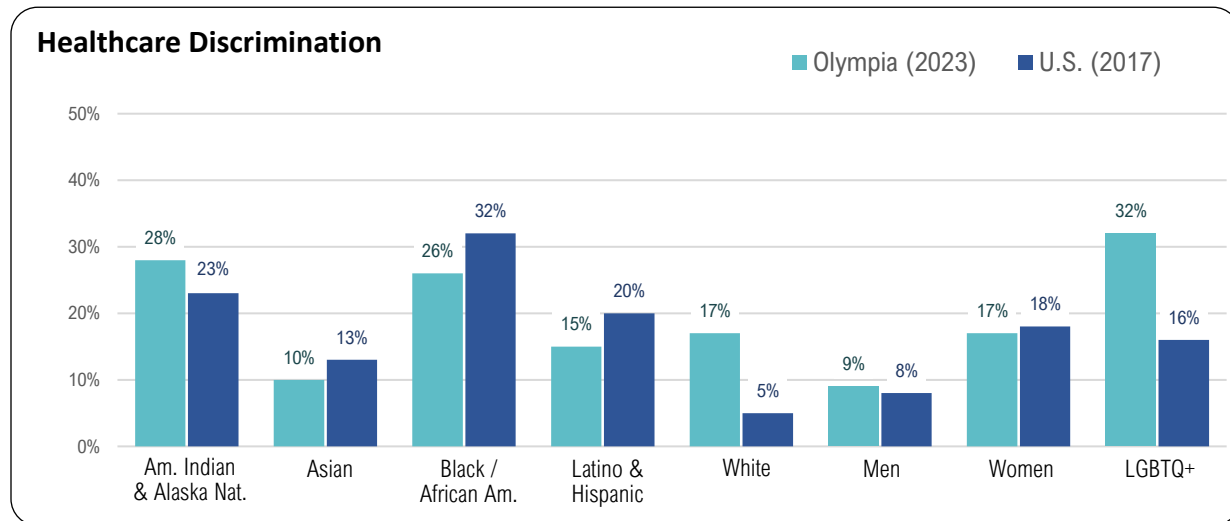
How Olympia Compares Nationally

Very little similar research exists across the United States. The closest comparative research is the 2017 survey *Discrimination in America* conducted for National Public Radio, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.⁵ That research surveyed 3,453 U.S. adults who were representative samples of Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latino, Asian Americans, Native Americans, white Americans; cisgender men and women, and LGBTQ+ adults. There were four questions that closely matched both the 2017 national study and the current 2023 Olympia research, which are illustrated in the comparison charts in this section. Generally, both studies found similar trends, with Olympia most often having lower rates of discrimination for most groups' experiences. One notable exception is Native American and Alaska Natives, where Olympia was higher in all categories except being hassled by law enforcement.

The largest single-item difference between the Olympia and national surveys is Asian individuals in Olympia experiencing housing discrimination at about 1/6th the national rate.

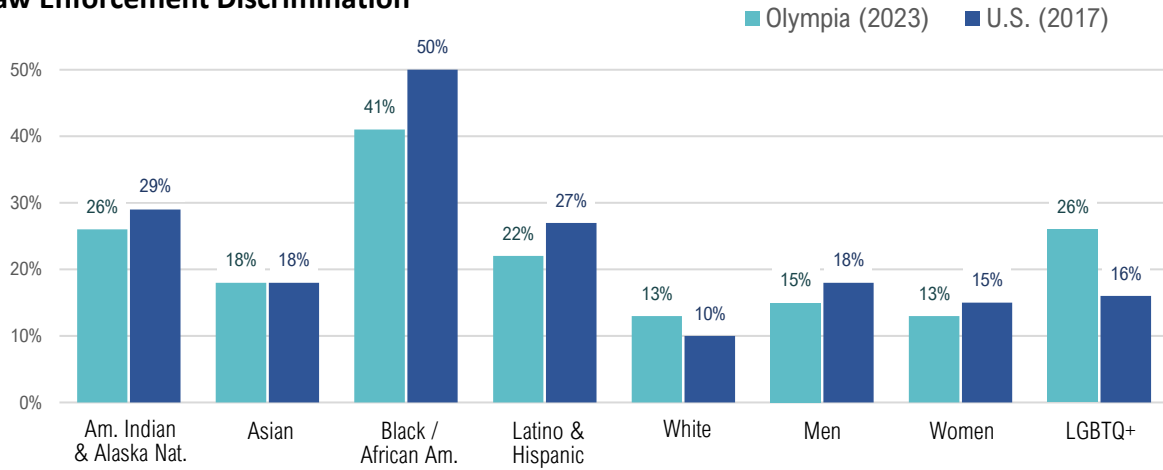
Some context to help explain some of the differences of LGBTQ+ experiences in Olympia versus the nation as a whole: In the national survey, transgender individuals accounted for 23% of the LGBTQ+ respondents, whereas transgender were 34% of the Olympia study. In the Olympia data, transgender people were confirmed to experience discrimination in almost every measure, versus sexual orientation in just two measures (law enforcement and being threatened/harassed).

It is not clear whether the gap in Black/African American experiences found in the Olympia research compared to the national study intimates that discrimination of Black/African American individuals is lower in Olympia than in other parts of the country, or if experiences of Black/African American discrimination in Olympia are underrepresented in the current research.

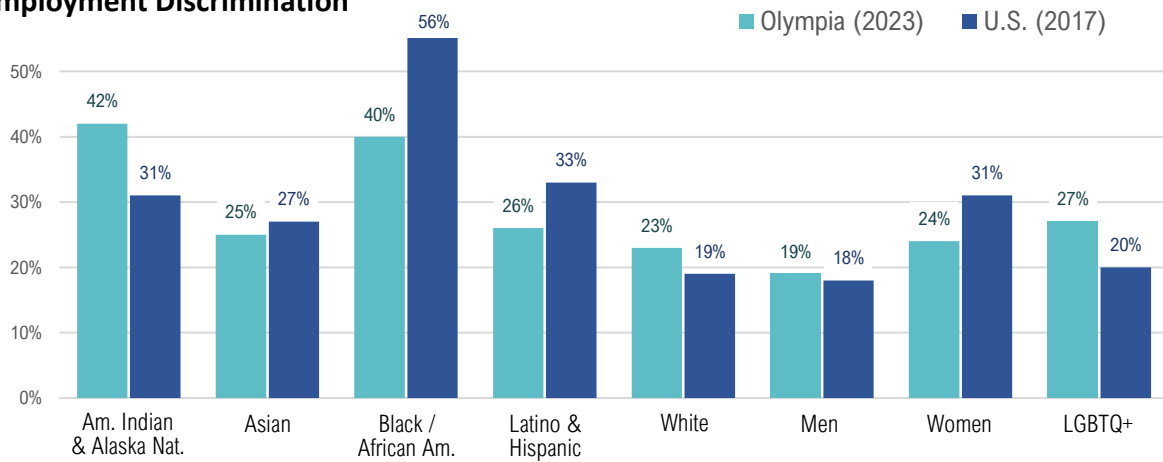


⁵ Social Science Research Solutions (2017)

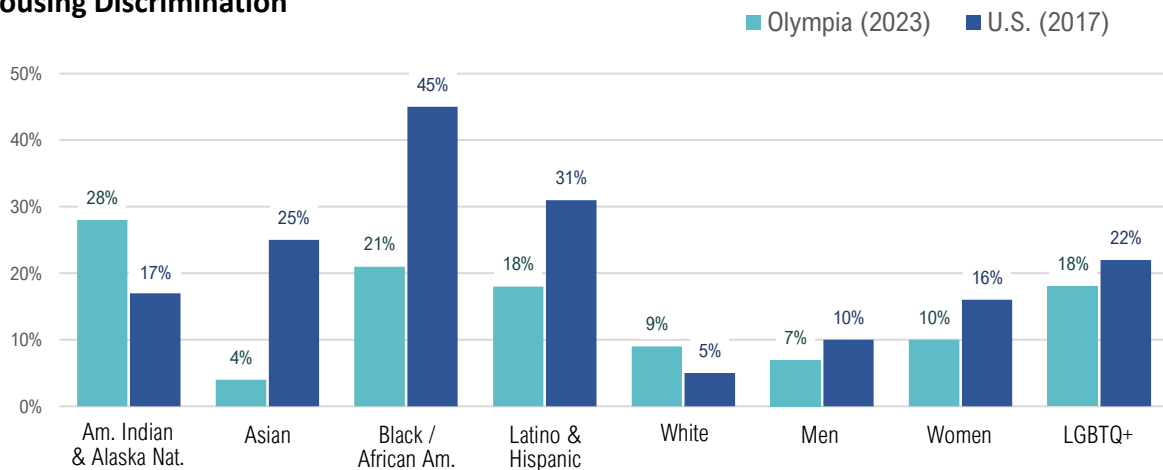
Law Enforcement Discrimination



Employment Discrimination

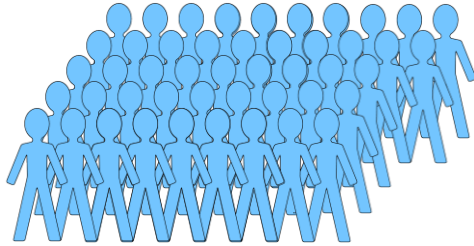


Housing Discrimination

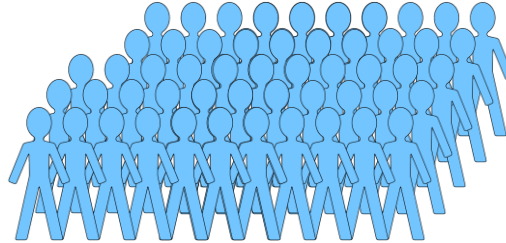


Perspectives of those not Experiencing Discrimination

There were 857 respondents of the 1,841 (46.6%) answering all eleven impediment discrimination questions who said they have never experienced any acts of impediment discrimination. (46.6% represents approximately 25,200 Olympians.)



Have never experienced any form of impediment discrimination in Olympia



Have experienced at least one form of impediment discrimination in Olympia

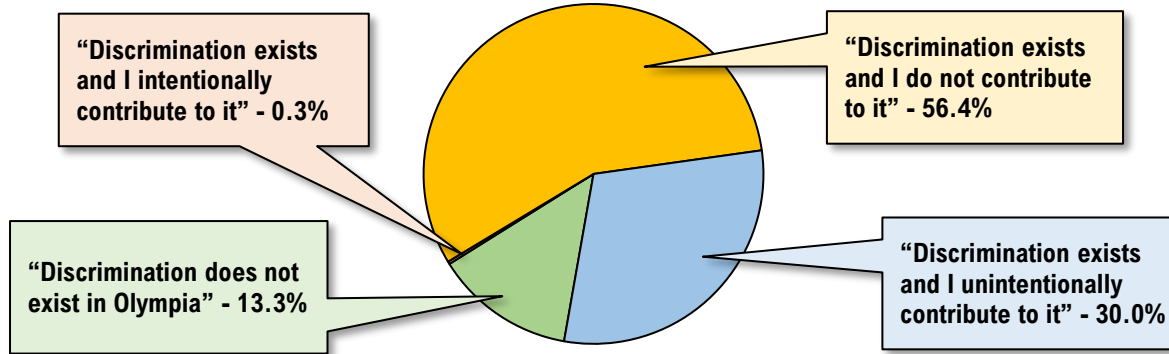
Detailed demographics of those 857 respondents are reflected in the following chart:

	Total All Survey Respondents	Have Never Experienced Impediment Discrimination
American Indian and Native Alaskan	51	14 (27.5%)
Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	81	39 (48.1%)
Black and African American	76	27 (35.5%)
Hispanic/Latino	111	44 (39.6%)
Mixed-race	75	22 (29.3%)
White	1,561	703 (45.0%)
24 years old or younger	166	59 (35.5%)
25-39 years old	644	281 (43.6%)
40-54 years old	596	247 (41.4%)
55 years old or older	561	266 (47.4%)
Cisgender men	573	321 (56.0%)
Cisgender women	1,175	486 (41.4%)
Transgender men	17	1 (5.9%)
Transgender women	16	2 (12.5%)
Nonbinary individuals	157	32 (20.4%)
Have physical disability only	191	62 (32.5%)
Have nonphysical disability only	245	77 (31.4%)
Have physical and non-physical disability	82	12 (14.6%)
Have no disability	1,463	706 (48.3%)
Christian	564	274 (48.6%)
Jewish	42	16 (38.1%)
Muslim	13	2 (15.4%)
Another Religion or Faith	718	276 (38.4%)
No Religion	644	289 (44.9%)
Heterosexual	1,220	584 (47.9%)
LGBQ+	546	183 (33.5%)

Note: Detailed demographics of the other 984 respondents who did report experiencing impediment discrimination in Olympia are reported in the table on page 37.

The 857 respondents who did not experience impediment discrimination were asked to describe their perception of discrimination in Olympia, and their responses are provided in the chart below:

Perceptions of those who do not Experience Discrimination



The experiences of people who don't hold societal power can typically be matched to the perspectives of those for whom power centers around. This may be true in a small group, large organization, or even a city. Below are the typical relationships between groups holding community power, the environment, and experiences for members of groups not holding power:

If power is centered around those who believe...	The environment typically looks like...	Typical experiences of members from groups without power look like...	The way to move the environment forward typically looks like...
"Discrimination does not exist"	Monocultural, reflecting the culture of those in power. Discussions about differences are generally avoided. Exclusionary status quos are openly justified and enforced.	Segregation and exclusion exist, and people are frequently devalued as individuals, and suppress parts of own identity and individuality to fit into the mold (assimilation). Inclusion is at 'mercy' of those in positions of power.	Valuing individuals from underrepresented groups through legally forcing or if it serves those in power (typically to avoid negatives occurrences such as bad press, lawsuits, boycotts, and/or potentially loss of power).
"Discrimination exists and I intentionally contribute to it"			
"Discrimination exists and I do not contribute to it"	A limited number of underrepresented group members who hold "proper" perspectives and credentials are allowed to share power.	Pressured to adopt norms set by the power-holding group, which are often unnatural and difficult to learn and adapt to. Remain careful to speak up or bring their own culture into the environment.	Valuing individuals from underrepresented groups when it benefits those holding power, either to avoid negative outcomes or gain positive outcomes (such as receiving accolades for being "good").
"Discrimination exists and I unintentionally contribute to it"	Past exclusive norms begin to no longer be in practice, but more inclusive ones are not quite universally present (which may cause friction). Powerholders may see themselves as 'welcoming' despite only a few underrepresented group members holding valued positions.	Start to feel safe to openly express identity/culture and may be burdened to explain and teach about own culture to others. May benefit from continued suppression of identity and culture. Roles may be assigned based on identity rather than ability or experience.	At first, valuing individuals from underrepresented groups may be symbolic and celebrate commonality over difference (and often help those in power feel good). Eventually culture opens and power is shared. (Change will stall from discomfort and uncertainty before progressing further.)

Methodology

Brief Literature Review: Discrimination Assessments

When exploring existing city and state-wide discrimination research studies, the researchers identified several projects exploring discrimination within a city or state-wide system such as law enforcement or health care, and discrimination against certain demographics within a city (e.g., age, race). A few examples of these studies include residents perceived discrimination on New York City police (Rice & Piquero, 2015), perceived discrimination amongst older adults living in rural Brazil (Braga, 2019), everyday discrimination in Canada (Godley, 2018), and discrimination in health care (Hausmann, 2022). However, the current study is novel, filling a gap in research, as one of the first studies in the United States to explore perceived discrimination in a city's systems and everyday discrimination from multiple relevant perspectives (residents and visitors).

Methodology

The purpose of this research was to capture individuals' lived experiences of/the ways individuals experience discrimination in Olympia. To conduct this study, the research team employed a mixed methods methodology, case study design, and collected qualitative and quantitative data through a survey and interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). These methods allowed the researchers to capture first-hand accounts of individuals' perceptions of experiencing discrimination in Olympia. The types of discrimination explored were through education, housing, employment, medical care, law enforcement, banking, service providers, and within everyday life. Mixed methods approaches are particularly useful because their methods and results serve to inform each other.

Survey Instrument & Measures: The Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS)

Developed in 1997, the Everyday Discrimination Scale (Williams et al., 1997) was designed to explore the ways "socio-economic status, social class, and perceived discrimination" (p.335) are related to racial differences in mental health. Thus, this scale included the measure of everyday discrimination, which assesses experiences of unfair treatment and perceived discrimination. Since 1997, the EDS is one of the most widely used instruments to assess perceptions of discrimination and unfair treatment. In fact, variations of the EDS have been used to explore experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment in more than 50 peer-reviewed research publications, including but not limited to perceived discrimination in Dominican Republic public health systems (Keys et al., 2019), discrimination in the workplace (Ulusoy, 2023), everyday discrimination in a sample of law students (Panter et al., 2008), and experiences of everyday discrimination in Canada (Godley, 2018).

To explore discrimination in Olympia, this study began by reviewing existing research the city of Olympia has conducted. Building off of that data, the researchers integrated two versions of the EDS, the EDS short-version (modified by Sternthal and colleagues, 2011) and the Major Experiences of Discrimination Scale: 9-item version from the MIDUS Study (modified by Kessler and Colleagues, 1999). These versions of the EDS were selected due to their intentionality in capturing perceptions of discrimination in housing, healthcare, employment, education, banking, law enforcement, service providers, and everyday interactions in Olympia. Through utilizing these scales, an online survey was conducted using the platform Alchemer. The survey contained three major components, 10 demographic questions, the discrimination assessment ranging between 17-34 questions (dependent upon which follow-up questions apply), and closing questions.

The survey was constructed to be as accessible as possible. In turn, the researchers dispatched in-person and online, providing options in English, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Interviews

As a mixed methods study, interviews were employed to provide confirming and emerging insight, informing the quantitative survey results (Andrew et al., 2020). Thus, at the end of the survey, each participant indicated if they would participate in a follow-up phone, email, or Zoom interview. If survey respondents indicated a willingness, they were immediately contacted with interview instructions. Through this process, 63 respondents participated in a follow-up email, phone, or Zoom interview.

The researcher team designed a semi-structured interview protocol (listed in Appendix B) in an effort to gather lived accounts of experiences of discrimination to further increase the validity of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Each interview was structured to provide an opportunity for each interviewee to follow up on their survey responses by providing detailed accounts of their discrimination experience. For example, if a participant indicated they experienced discrimination in employment due to their identity on their survey, the researcher asked the participant to provide examples of these experiences. Based on participants' responses to each question, the researcher proceeded with follow-up questions. Once the researcher reached information redundancy about their experiences of discrimination within the city of Olympia, the interview was complete. The average interview time was 17 minutes. Each interviewee was compensated with a gift card.

Sampling & Participants

The goal of data collection was to collect a representative sample of Olympia residents and visitors. Inclusion criteria included being (a) 18 years or older and (b) a resident of Olympia or a visitor of Olympia. Conversely, the exclusion criteria were (a) younger than 18 years old and (b) never a resident nor visited Olympia. Thus, the research team employed purposeful sampling techniques to capture insight from various identity-based and residential demographics. The recruitment methods included social media, booths at Olympia community events, and having tablets available at the library, senior center, and local organizations and businesses. Several local community organizations assisted in educating about the study and helped outreach

in the community. There was a targeted advertisement campaign streamed into radio and podcasts in English and Spanish. Each participant was either provided the opportunity to select a pseudonym or were assigned one by a random name generator.

Procedures

In April 2023, this research was approved by Temple University’s Institutional Review Board. In May 2023, the research team began recruiting participants for this project. In June 2023 our survey opened and in July 2023 the survey closed. August, September, and part of October 2023 consisted of interviews and data analysis. In October and November, the research team collaboratively produced the final report.

Ethics

Because this research was approved by Temple University’s Institutional Review Board, this project and its procedures comply with ethical standards and protect research participants. Specifically, each participant was informed of the study’s background, risks, and rewards, and ultimately provided informed consent through a signature at the beginning of the survey, giving the researchers permission to utilize their data for the duration of the study. Each participant’s identifying information is and will remain anonymous and their data is protected using password protected Google accounts of the researcher team.

Data Analysis

In totality, the survey captured 4,063 responses. However, the process of data cleaning eliminated duplicate responses, missing data, and ineligible participants. Through this process, 2082 responses were deleted and 1,981 responses remained for data analysis. To analyze the quantitative data, the research team utilized various statistical analysis techniques including measures of central tendency, simple linear regression, and multinomial logistic regression. The qualitative data was coded and themed utilizing in vivo and focused coding techniques (Saldana, 2021).

In addition to the survey results, the researchers also reviewed data previously collected by the City, including from a fair housing assessment, trans women town hall, public opinion survey, and a reimagining public safety process.

Demographics of Research Survey and Interview Respondents

There were 984 survey respondents who said that they have experienced acts of discriminatory impediment (53.4% of the 1,841 who answered all eleven impediment discrimination questions). The demographics of those 984 respondents are reflected in the following chart:

	Total All Survey Respondents	Have Experienced Impediment Discrimination at Least Once
American Indian and Native Alaskan	51	37 (72.5%)
Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	81	42 (51.9%)
Black and African American	76	49 (64.5%)
Hispanic/Latino	111	67 (60.4%)
Mixed-race	75	53 (70.7%)
White	1,561	858 (55.0%)
24 years old or younger	166	107 (64.5%)
25-39 years old	644	363 (56.4%)
40-54 years old	596	349 (58.6%)
55 years old or older	561	295 (52.6%)
Cisgender Men	573	252 (43.0%)
Cisgender Women	1,175	689 (58.6%)
Transgender Men	17	16 (94.1%)
Transgender Women	16	14 (87.5%)
Nonbinary Individuals	157	125 (79.6%)
Have physical disability only	191	129 (67.5%)
Have nonphysical disability only	245	168 (68.6%)
Have physical and non-physical disability	82	70 (85.4%)
Have no disability	1,463	757 (51.7%)
Christian	564	290 (51.4%)
Jewish	42	26 (91.9%)
Muslim	13	11 (84.6%)
Another Religion or Faith	718	442 (61.6%)
No Religion	644	355 (55.1%)
Heterosexual	1,220	636 (52.1%)
LGBTQ+	546	363 (66.5%)

There were 1,981 total respondents included in the research pool. Respondents self-described themselves and then were placed into categorical groups. The total number of respondents in each category are listed below:

Total # of respondents: 1,981 Unless noted, percentages below reflect only those providing an answer for that category.

Age	
24 years old or younger	166 (8.4%)
25-39 years old	644 (32.7%)
40-54 years old	596 (30.3%)
55 years old or older	561 (28.5%)
Not provided	14 (n/a)

Ability	
Have physical disability only	191 (9.6%)
Have nonphysical disability only	245 (12.4%)
Have both physical and non-physical disability	82 (4.1%)
Have no disability	1,463 (73.9%)

Connection to the City of Olympia	
Live in the City of Olympia	1,177 (59.4%)
“Larger Olympia Area” - visit daily or weekly	597 (30.1%)
“Larger Olympia Area” - visit monthly or less	42 (2.1%)
Outside Olympia Area - visit daily or weekly	103 (5.2%)
Outside Olympia Area - visit monthly or less	62 (3.1%)

Gender	
Cisgender Man	573 (29.6%)
Cisgender Woman	1,175 (60.6%)
Transgender Men	17 (0.9%)
Transgender Women	16 (0.8%)
Nonbinary Individuals	157 (8.1%)
Not provided	43 (n/a)

Race - Self-described race	
American Indian and Alaska Native	51 (2.6%)
Asian	70 (3.6%)
Black and African American	76 (3.9%)
Hispanic/Latino	111 (5.8%)
Middle-Eastern	6 (0.3%)
Mixed-race	75 (3.9%)
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	11 (0.6%)
White	1,555 (80.7%)
Not Provided	54 (n/a)

Twenty-eight respondents are in two groups.

Race - Those who are seen as “white” by strangers	
American Indian and Alaska Native	26 (51.0%)
Asian	8 (11.4%)
Black and African American	0 (0.0%)
Hispanic/Latino	39 (35.1%)
Middle-Eastern	6 (100.0%)
Mixed-race	43 (5.7%)
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	3 (27.3%)
White	1,542 (99.2%)

Percentages are of all people in the race category group.

Religion	
Christian	564 (28.5%)
Jewish	42 (2.1%)
Muslim	13 (0.7%)
Another Religion or Faith	718 (36.2%)
No Religion	644 (32.5%)

Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	1,220 (61.6%)
LGBTQ+	546 (27.6%)
Not Provided	215 (10.9%)

Race - Categories used in report	
Am. Ind. / Alaska Nat. (seen as nonwhite)	25 (1.3%)
Am. Ind. / Alaska Nat. (seen as white)	26 (1.3%)
Asian / Nat. Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	80 (4.2%)
Black / Afr. American	76 (3.9%)
Latino / Hispanic (seen as nonwhite)	72 (3.7%)
Latino / Hispanic (seen as white)	39 (2.0%)
Mixed-race (seen as nonwhite)	32 (1.7%)
Mixed-race (seen as white)	43 (2.2%)
White	1,560 (81.0%)
Not Provided	54 (n/a)

Twenty-six respondents are in two groups.

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