



2022 NATIONAL ENERGY & UTILITY AFFORDABILITY COALITION CONFERENCE

Rising with Resiliency

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Rising with Resiliency

How Data Can Help Energy Affordability Advocates Improve Racial Equity

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Goals for this presentation:

Start a conversation on how data can reflect racial and ethnic realities

Give a few examples of data that has been useful for OPC

Introduce tools for how to utilize this data to improve outreach to vulnerable communities

Offer ways of evaluating success

Create interest in starting similar conversations in your own organizations

Q&A

The Office of the People's Counsel:

The Office of the People's Counsel is an independent agency of the District of Columbia government.

Advocate for consumers of natural gas, electric and telephone and Water services in the District.

District of Columbia law designates the Office as a party to all utility-related proceedings before the Public Service Commission.

The Office also represents the interests of District ratepayers before federal regulatory agencies.

The Office is authorized to investigate the operation and valuation of utility companies independent of any pending proceeding.

The Office's mandate is to advocate the provision of quality utility service and equitable treatment at rates that are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory

Assists individual consumers in disputes with utility companies about billing or services; and to provide technical assistance and consumer education to lay advocates and community groups.



Sandra Mattavous-Frye
People's Counsel for the District of Columbia

From the Beginning: How did this conversation get started?

-OPC's FY2022 Budget Priority





Mission

The Office of Racial Equity (ORE) works in collaboration with District leadership and agencies to apply a racial equity lens across government operations. The office also works to:

Provide **leadership, guidance, and technical assistance** to District agencies on racial equity to improve the quality of life for Washingtonians.

Promote **strategic alignment and coordinate** the District's efforts toward achieving racial equity.

Strengthen **external partnerships** with local racial and social justice organizations through meaningful **community engagement**.



Vision

We envision a District of Columbia where everyone can thrive with a sense of agency and where race will no longer predict opportunities, outcomes, or the distribution of resources.

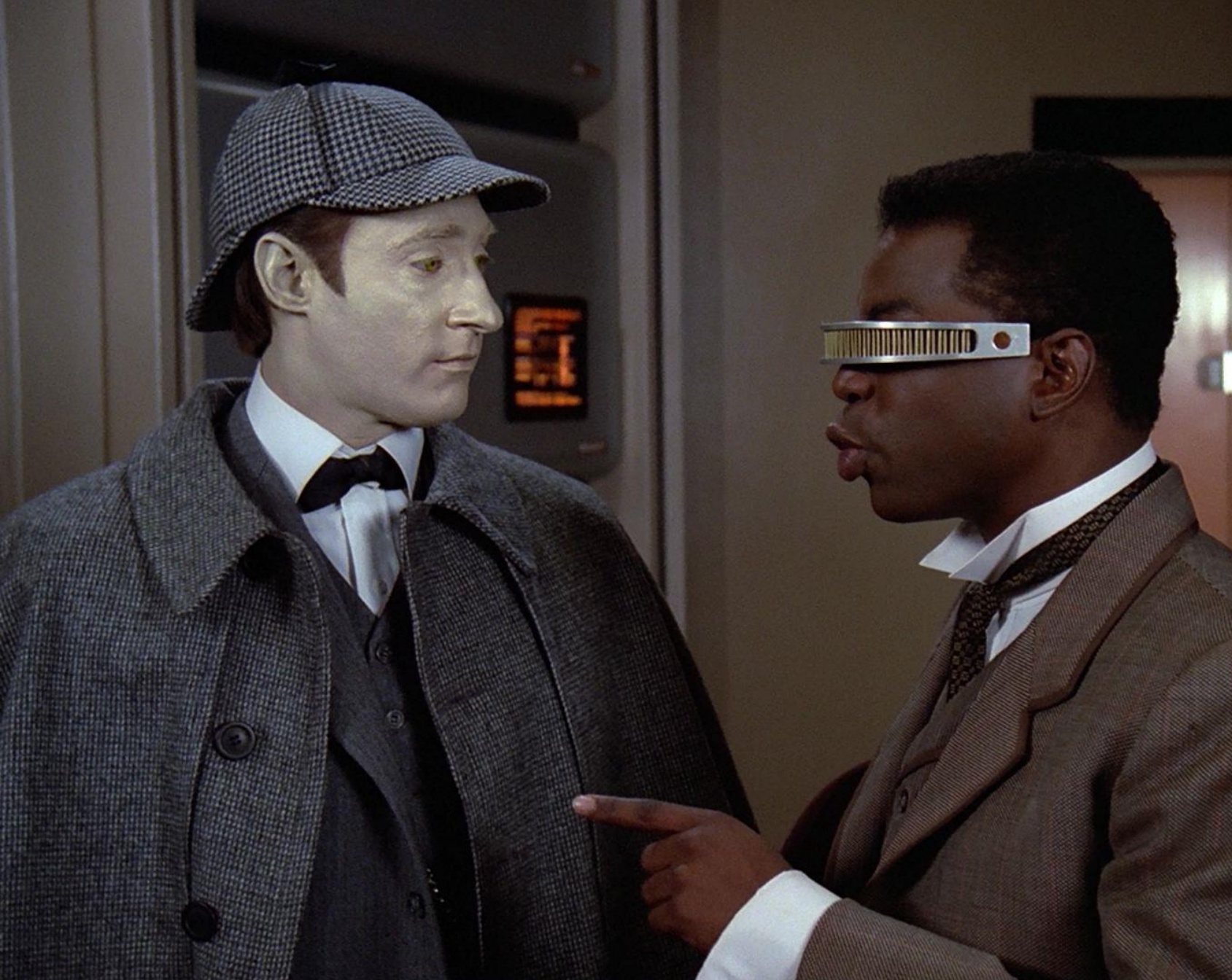


Racial Equity Definition

Racial equity is both a **process** and an **outcome**. ([Source](#))²⁸

As a **process**, we apply a racial equity lens when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.

As an **outcome**, we achieve racial equity when race will no longer predict opportunities, outcomes, or the distribution of resources for District residents—particularly for communities of color.



Data and OPC

- “It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data.”- Sherlock Holmes
- “What gets counted, counts.”-Government Alliance on Race and Equity



The District of Columbia at a Glance



Washington, DC

- Population Estimate as of July 2019- 705,749
- 8 Wards
- 127 Neighborhoods
- 2019 World Series Champions (Go Nats!)



By Peter Fitzgerald - self-made, tracing done from PD satellite imagery, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3600981> 9

District of Columbia

LIHEAP FY2020 State Profile

Total Funding Available
\$14,769,286

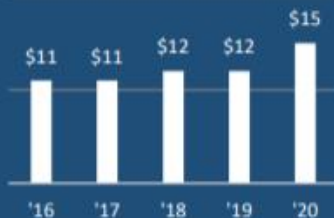
Total Households Served
9,564

Income Eligibility
Requirements
\$63,104
for a 4-person household

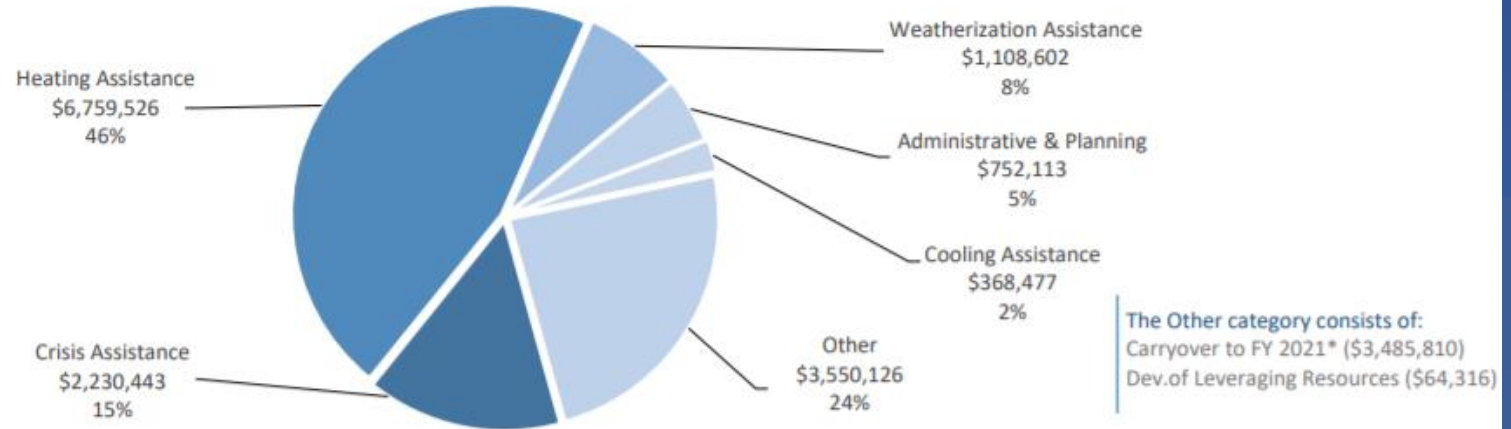
% of State Income-Eligible
Population Served
12%

State Income-Eligible
Population
76,602

Annual Funds, 2016-2020
(\$ millions)

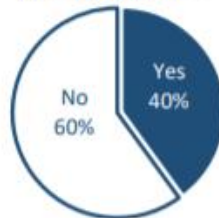


Uses of Funds



Vulnerable Recipient Households

Households with
Elderly Member



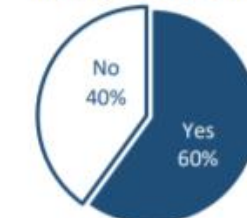
Households with
Young Child



Households with
Disabled Member



Households with Any
Vulnerable Member



Types of Assistance

Heating Assistance served 8,608 households with reported average benefit of \$785.

Cooling Assistance served 672 households with reported average benefit of \$548.

Year-Round Crisis Assistance served 2,601 households with reported average benefit of \$497.

Weatherization Assistance served 110 households with a calculated average benefit of \$10,078.

*Includes supplemental CARES funds, of which 100% were allowed to be carried over to FY 2021.

What is DEI data and how does OPC use it?

DEI stands for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

OPC believes that all DC residents should have access to high quality utility services that are safe, reliable and universally affordable

What role do age, race, ethnicity play in OPC's outreach methodology?

The agency uses this information to help target outreach methods across multiple in-person and online platforms

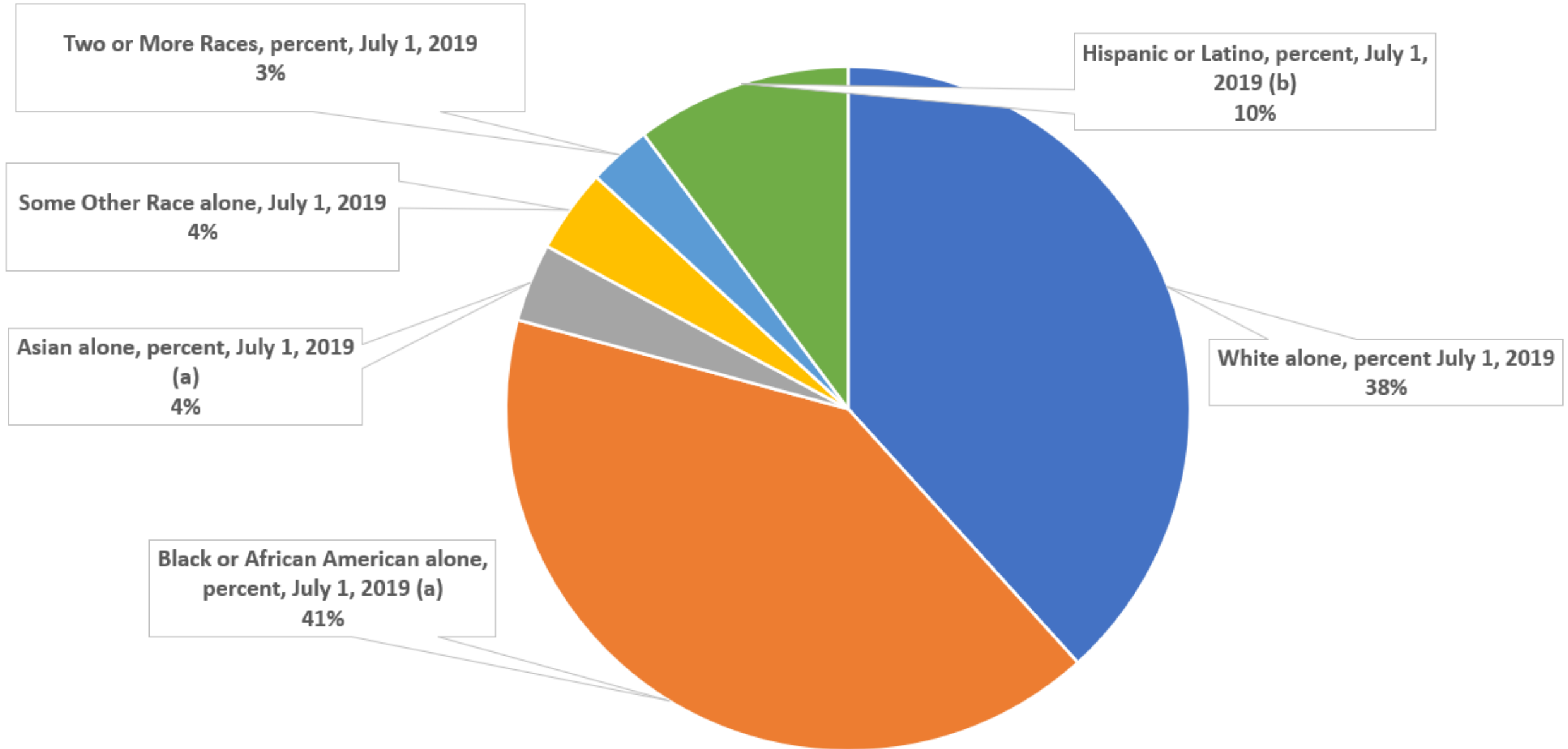
Some Definitions

- Equity vs. Equality
- Equality=Sameness
- Equity=Fairness
- “Racial equity”-when race is no longer a factor for predicting life outcomes (Government Alliance on Racial Equity)

Case Study 1: Racial Equity

- OPC's Consumer Engagement Division has been working on implementing a new Case Management System
- During this upgrade, OPC has focused on what type of DEI information the agency should collect
- Staff met with the newly created Office of Racial Equity in November 2021.
- OPC asks consumers to identify certain demographic information including age, gender, ethnicity, and language
- Often consumers are uncomfortable providing some of this information and decline to answer. OPC uses Census by Ward to draw conclusions on the demographic makeup of consumers

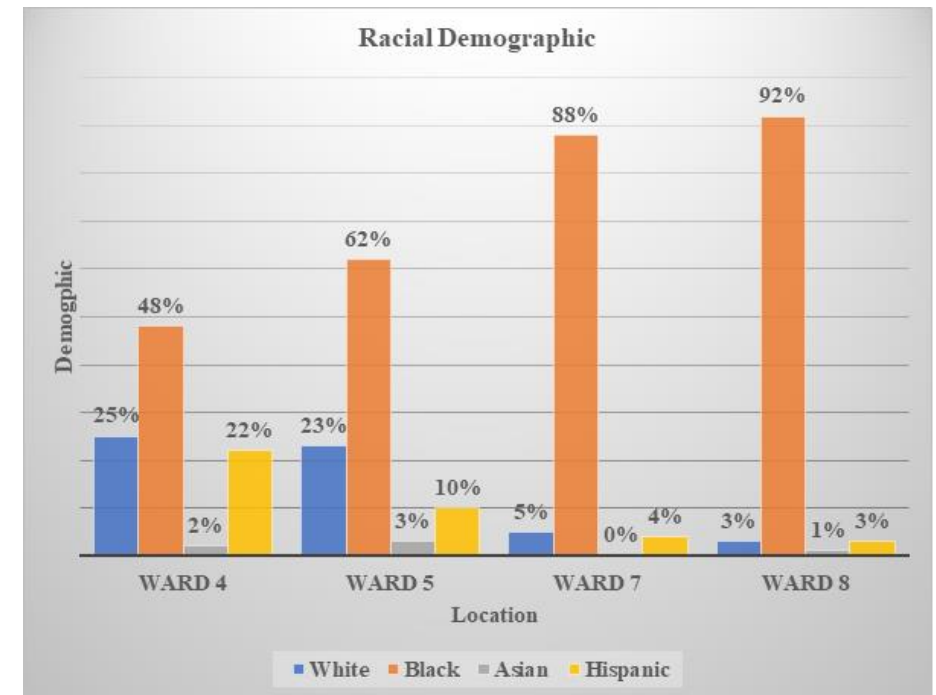
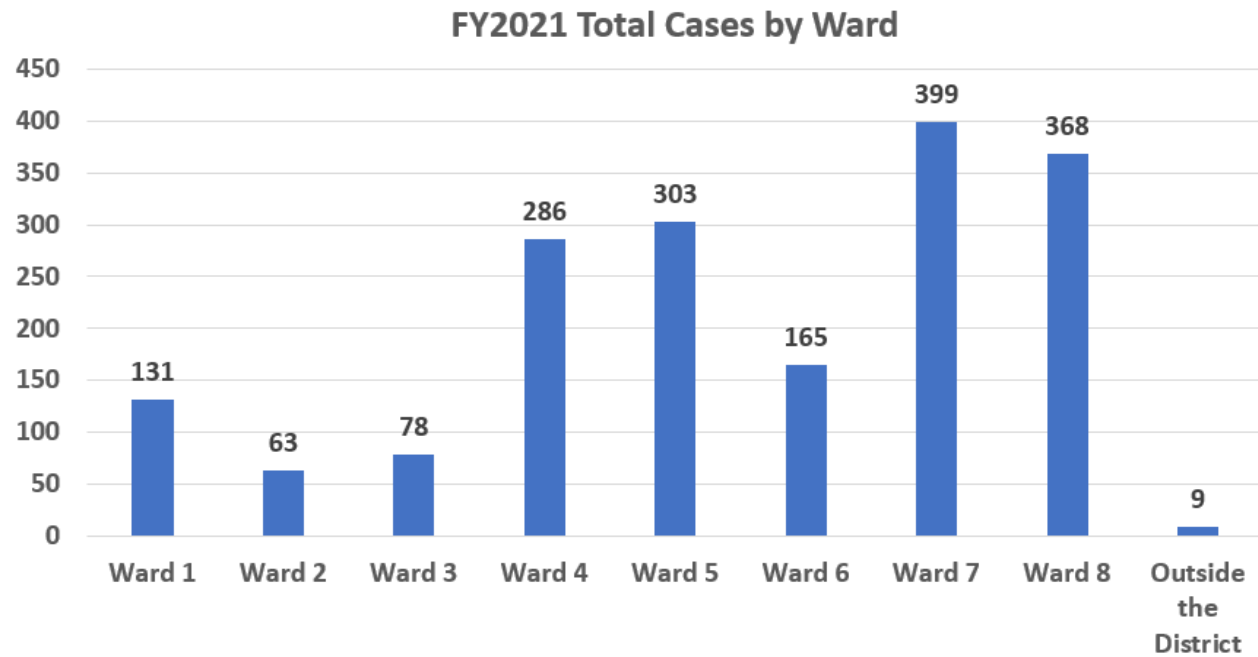
DC Race and Ethnicity (Est. 2019)



Race and Hispanic Origin	DC	US
Black or African American alone, percent, July 2019 (a)	45.4%	12.8%
White alone, percent July 1, 2019	42.5%	72.0%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2019 (b)	11.3%	18.4%
Some Other Race alone, July 1, 2019	4.4%	5.0%
Asian alone, percent, July 1, 2019 (a)	4.1%	5.7%
Two or More Races, percent, July 1, 2019	3.3%	3.4%

What Did the Data Say?

1802 Cases FY2021





How Reliable Is this Data?

- How difficult is it to collect this information?
- Many individuals may feel uncomfortable asking/answering this question
- When consumers are in crisis, the question is often skipped even when this answer was required by the previous CMS platform

Conclusions:

- FY21 OPC received 1802 total cases between CSD and WSD. 75% of those cases come from Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8. The racial demographics in these Wards average about 73% Black, 14% White, 10% Hispanic, and 1.5% Asian.
- Using US Census Data, these Wards contain majority non-White residents and OPC receives a significant majority of its caseload from these Wards, it can be said that OPC routinely deals with traditionally underserved racial populations.



How can OPC improve this information?

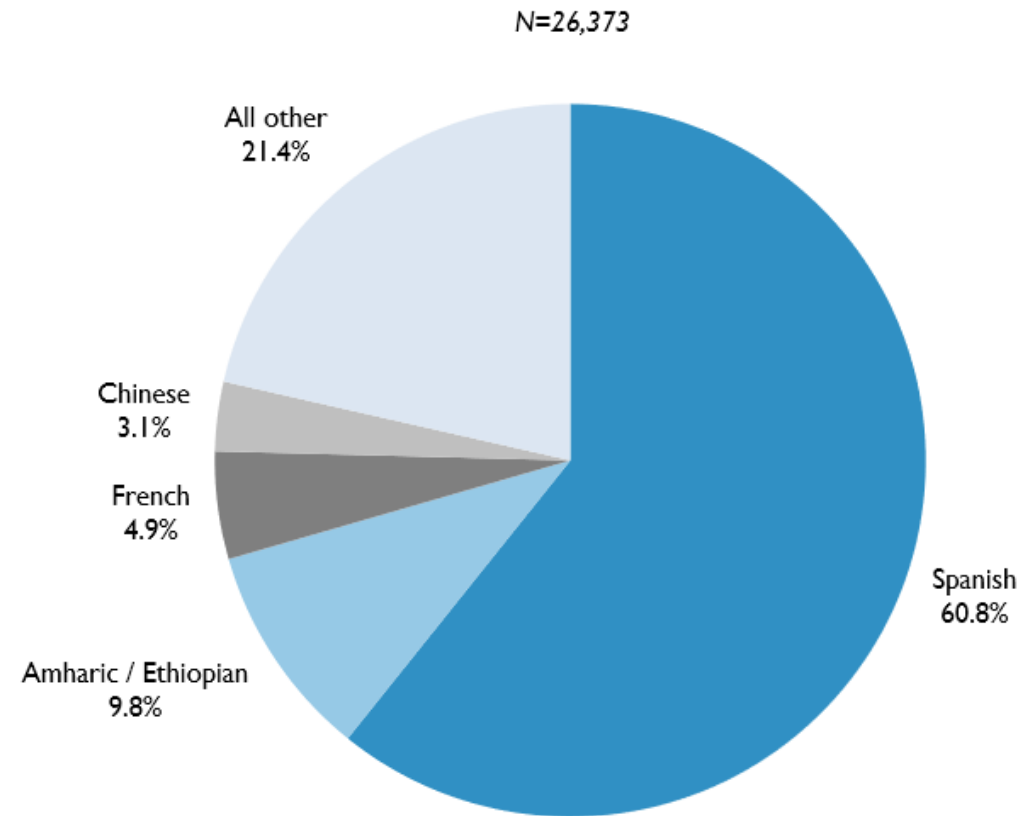
- Staff is working on the development of a survey to be completed by consumers
- Consumers will be asked to self-identify DEI information. This takes the staff factor out of the equation
- This data can be used to help OPC identify the type of outreach needs for different neighborhoods

Case Study 2: Language

- OPC uses US Census Data on language to help understand the city's needs
- 17% of the city speaks a language other than English in the home

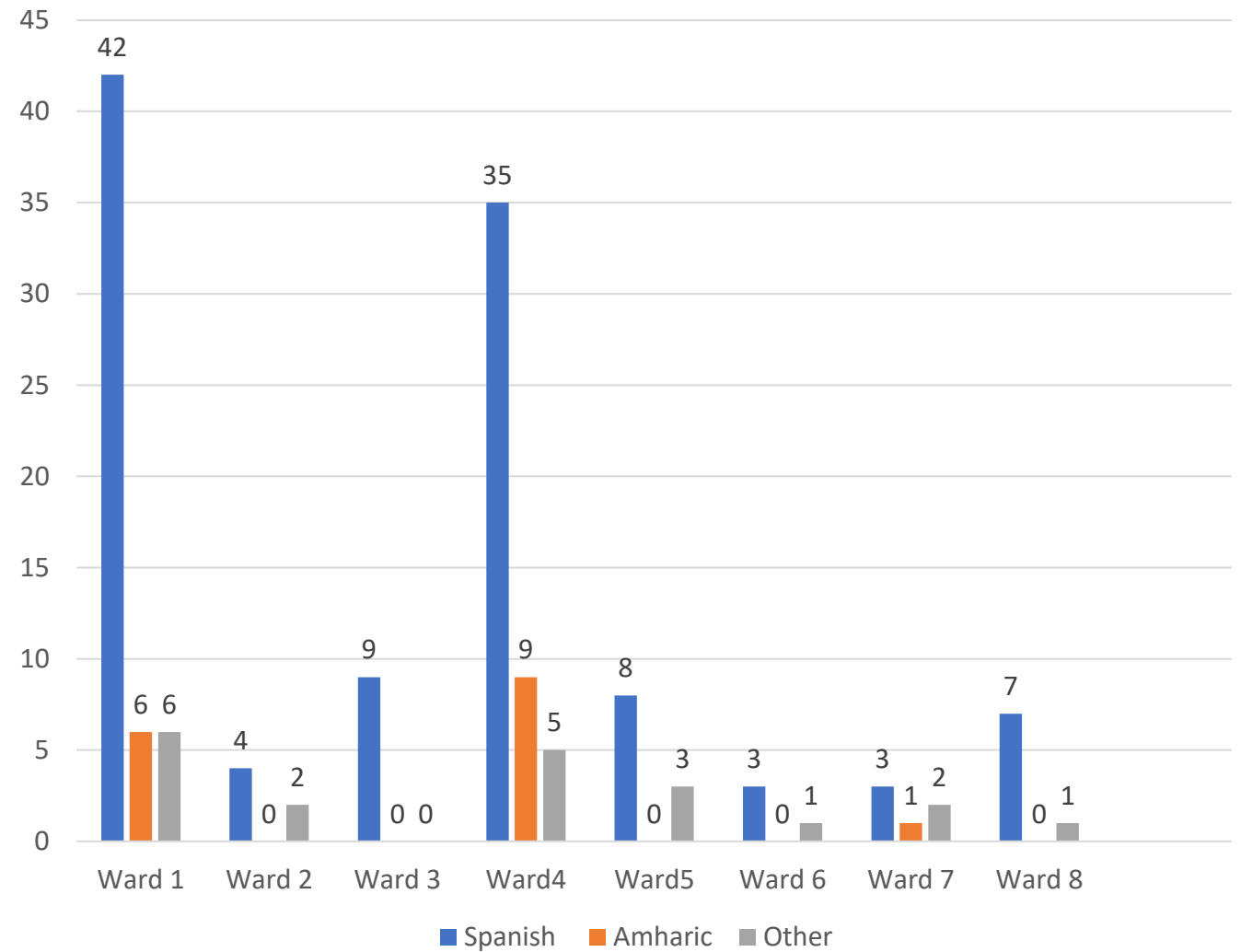
Language Makeup of DC

Figure 7. Language Spoken among LEP/NEP Population in the District of Columbia |



Source: 2012 three-year public-use microdata from the American Community Survey, accessed through IPUMS (Ruggles et al. 2010).

Non-English Language by Ward FY2019-2021





Non/Limited English

- Data from CMS indicates Wards 1 and 4 have highest complaints from non-English-speaking consumers
- OPC utilizes Language Line for speaking with non-English speaking residents
- Has a full-time staff member that speaks Spanish and is dedicated to outreach to these communities
- OPC translates all educational materials into seven languages: English, Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Amharic, Chinese, and Korean

OPC IS YOUR UTILITY LAWYER

As your utility lawyer, the Office of the People's Counsel advocates for District of Columbia consumers of electric, natural gas, water, and landline telephone services.

OPC Can Help You With:

- Disconnections
- Service Complaints
- Scams and Annoying Marketing
- Third Party Suppliers
- Utility Bill Disputes
- Payment Arrangements
- Energy Efficiency
- Consumer Education
- Solar Energy Resources

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People's Counsel
Sandra Mattavous-Frye



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人民法律顧問
Sandra Mattavous-Frye



주민 시민 자문
Sandra Mattavous-Frye



የህዝብ ተወካይ
Sandra Mattavous-Frye



Des conseils aux personnes
Sandra Mattavous-Frye

OPC À LUẬT SƯ TIỆN CH CỦA QUÝ VỊ!

As your utility lawyer, the Office of the People's Counsel advocates for District of Columbia consumers of electric, natural gas, water, and landline telephone services.

Luật sư Nhân dân Giúp Quý vị Về:

con los siguientes
udes:

您解决以下问题:

같은 도움을 드립니다.

ተሳተፍሎ ሊያግዝዎት ይችላል፡-

aider pour:

La OPC ES SU ABOGADO. SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS

abogado de servicios públicos, la Asesoría Legal Pública del Columbia aboga por los de servicios de electricidad, agua, y tele-fono de red fija de

OPC 是您的 公共事业律师

法律顾问办公室 (Office of the People's Counsel) 作为您的公共事业律师，我们尽力支持哥伦比亚特区的居民解决用电、天然气以及固定电话方面的问题。

CHINESE

OPC 어분의 유틸리티 변호사입니다

유틸리티 변호사로서, 시무소 (Office of the People's Counsel)는 전기, 천연가스 서비스 등을 사용하는 특약户的 권익을 옹호합니다.

KOREAN


OPC የመገልገያዎች ጠበቃ ነው

የህዝብ ተወካዮች ምክር ቤት ጽ/ቤት ገልገያዎች ጠበቃ እንደመሆኑ መጠን ለራሷ የኤሌክትሪክ፣ የተፋጥሮ ጋዝ፣ የውሃ መስመር ስልክ አገልግሎቶች ይከራከራል፡፡

AMHARIC

OPC EST VOTRE AVOCAT E AUX FOURNISSEURS

est que votre avocat face aux fournisseurs, le Bureau de l'avocat du défend les consommateurs de services d'électricité et de gaz et des opérateurs de téléphonie

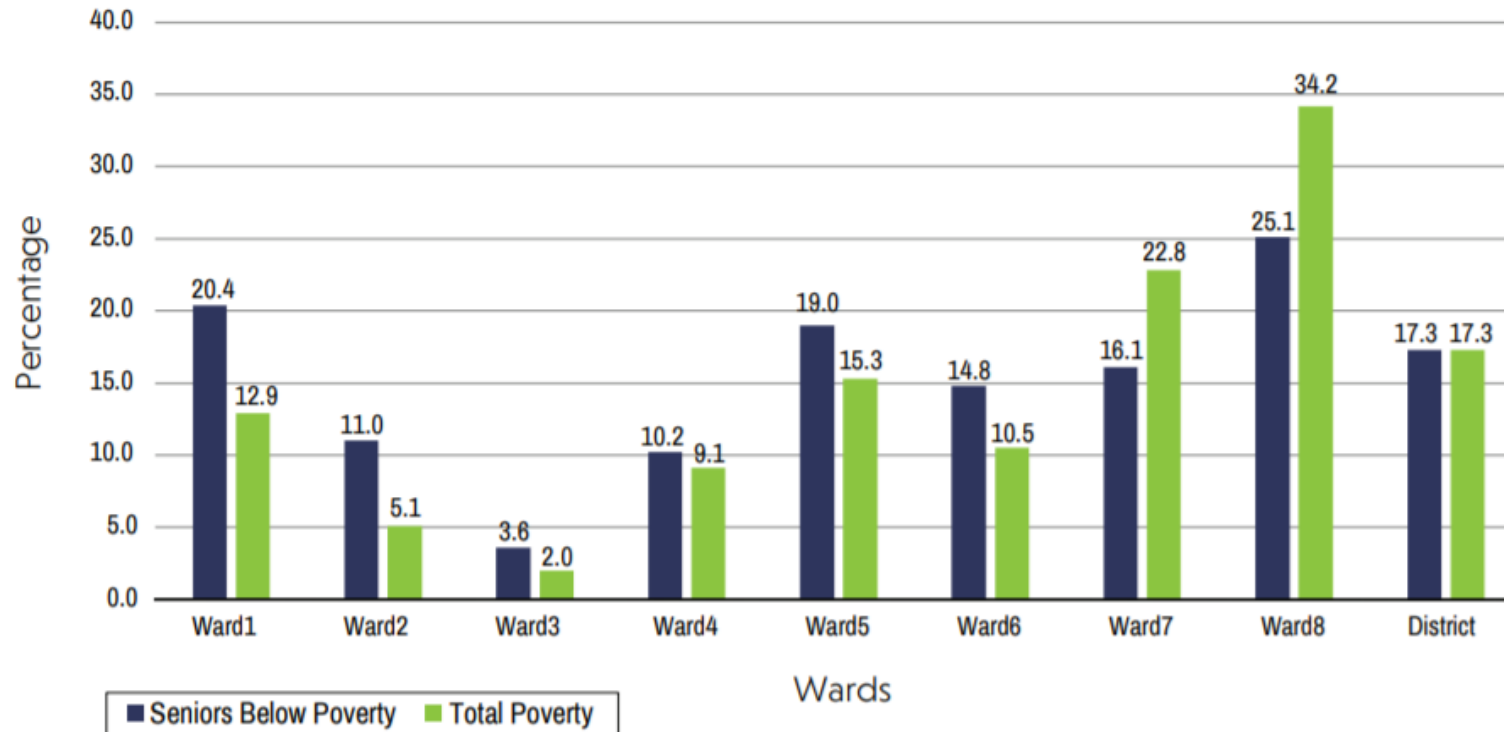


Case Study Three: Senior Outreach Awareness Campaign

- Goal of the campaign was to quantify and enhance outreach to DC Seniors
- OPC convened a diverse low- and limited-income senior focus group
- Used data on housing trends from DC Office of Planning Website

Percentage of Seniors Below Poverty and Total Poverty By Ward

Source: <https://planning.dc.gov/>



Note: Figure shows that there are more seniors below poverty than the total population below poverty for the Ward in Wards 1,2,3,4,5, and 6. However, the percentage of seniors below poverty is less than total poverty for the Ward in Wards 7 and 8. It appears that seniors living in relatively well-to-do Wards are experiencing the greatest poverty than those living in relatively lower-income Wards such as Wards 7 and 8.

What We Learned:

- From previous CMS platform 53% of consumers contacting OPC were listed as Seniors
- Most concentrated levels of poverty are in Wards 5, 7 and 8
- Seniors in other more affluent Wards more likely to live in poverty than general population in those areas



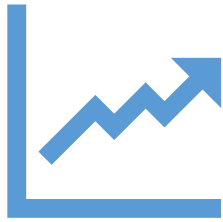
Conclusions and Next Steps:

- Contracted with an outside vendor to distribute OPC literature through traditional door-to-door marketing
- Disseminated information to 8,358 low-income and senior households in Wards 5, 7 and 8
- Conducted an extensive outreach campaign, which gained an estimated:
 - -109,000 views in newspapers
 - -3.3 million views on bus and train ads
 - -1.1 million listeners on radio stations

In Conclusion

- OPC has measurable success in utilizing DEI and Language data to improve outreach to vulnerable populations
- We continue to work and improve each technique to meet the needs of the community. TEST TEST TEST. You never fail because you always learn something new
- Leadership commitment is KEY. The People's Counsel in partnership with the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) and the City Administrator has made racial equity and inclusion a major focus in future budgets and oversight

Your Next Steps



The time to have the discussion on using data to improve equity in your organization is NOW



-Determine what you currently collect



-If you don't collect any data, start planning with a specific outreach goal in mind (reach x amount of people in a certain area etc.)

Q & A



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Continuing the learning

- <https://planning.dc.gov/>
- <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/DC>
- <http://opc-dc.gov/images/pdf/Senior%20Report%20by%20OPC%203-13-17.pdf>
- <https://planning.dc.gov/node/1504656>
- [Ten Years of Language Access in Washington, DC](#)