

2018: A YEAR OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

2018 was another strong year for the Oregon Justice Resource Center. As we enter 2019, I'd like to take this time to share a few highlights from this past year and preview some of the highlights of the year to come.

The Oregon Justice Resource Center deploys a justice center model. This model allows us to offer several distinct projects that can operate semi-autonomously and provide direct representation or limited legal advice to individuals who otherwise would not have access to legal services. The benefits of this model allow what would otherwise be stand-alone nonprofits to share administration, management, and development resources under a single organizational banner. Additionally, with the diversity of programs and expertise under a single umbrella, the OJRC is the only organization in Oregon that is involved in all non-prosecutorial aspects of the criminal justice system, from arrest through reentry. This is a nationally innovative and unique model, and allows the opportunity to address criminal justice reform holistically and grounded in client experiences.

In 2018, the Oregon Justice Resource Center operated and administered five statewide projects, each of which offers a unique service. To our existing programs (Oregon Innocence Project, Women's Justice Project) we added three new ones: the Immigrant Rights Project, the Civil Rights Project, and the Youth Justice Project.

Since beginning this work with my co-founder Erin McKee in 2011, I'm repeatedly reminded of how great the need is for an organization like ours that is immersed in Oregon's criminal legal system. We're now seeing the fruits of our work to identify systemic problems and propose solutions, as policymakers, media, and others adopt our ideas. All of this depends on what we do together with likeminded others. We're grateful for strong relationships with many individuals and organizations around the state who are united with us in a common goal of reimagining and transforming Oregon's criminal justice system.

Thank you for standing with us and tens of thousands of justice-involved Oregonians.



Bobbin Singh
Executive Director and Co-Founder

Oregon Innocence Project

The goals of the Oregon Innocence Project are to exonerate the wrongfully convicted; educate and train students; and promote legal reforms aimed at preventing wrongful convictions. OIP is currently representing five clients. Since our launch in 2014, we have received more than 500 requests for assistance. We are in the process of reviewing and investigating these requests. Oregon Innocence Project is staffed by Legal Director Steve Wax, Staff Attorney Brittney Plesser, and Paralegal/Office Administrator Elora Cosper. We are grateful to our volunteers Amy Alpern, John Comery, and Caren Rovics.



*Welcome home,
Josh Horner*

Photos by Jenny Coleman, Lisa Christon

In September 2018, the Oregon Innocence Project had its first exoneration. Our client, Joshua Horner of Redmond, Oregon, walked free from court in Deschutes County after his indictment was dismissed. In 2015, he was living with his wife Kelli and running his plumbing business when he was accused of sexual abuse of a child. He was wrongfully convicted in April 2017 and sentenced to fifty years in prison, effectively a life sentence for the then 41-year-old. Josh Horner was sent to Eastern Oregon Correctional Facility in Pendleton to serve his sentence.

Within months of his conviction, the Horners contacted us asking for help. It took many months of work by our office to investigate information that would convince the Deschutes County District Attorney, John Hummel, of the problems with Mr. Horner's case. Our investigator, Lisa Christon, then worked with John Hummel's office to further look into the case. This case attracted international media attention because of the role played by a black labrador named Lucy. [To read the full story, visit our website.](#)



1998: Harriet Lavern "Sunny" Thompson is brutally murdered at her Salem home. Jesse Johnson is charged with her murder.

2004: Jesse Johnson is convicted of aggravated murder and sentenced to death. He continues to protest his innocence as he has done since his arrest.

2017: A hearing takes place to hear arguments from both sides about whether or not to grant DNA testing.

2016: OIP files a motion under Oregon's post-conviction DNA testing law asking a Marion County court to grant testing in the case. The Marion County DA opposes granting testing.

2014: Oregon Innocence Project takes up Mr. Johnson's case to try to obtain DNA testing of evidence from the crime scene that was never tested or tested with outdated methods.

2018: The Marion County Circuit Court denies the motion for DNA testing. OIP has appealed on Jesse Johnson's behalf.

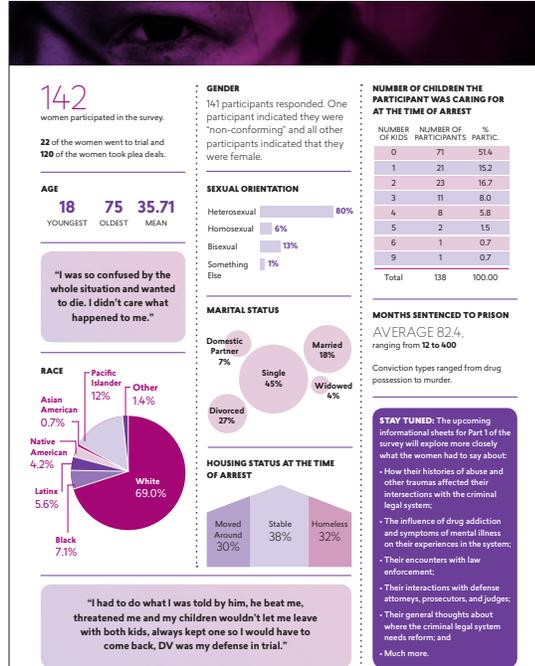
2019: Oregon Innocence Project continues to fight for post-conviction DNA testing in Jesse Johnson's case.



In 2019, we will continue to advocate for our clients, review cases for representation, and encourage the legislature to pass SB 321 to reform Oregon's post-conviction DNA testing law so people asserting innocence have fairer access to the courts to prove wrongful conviction.

Women's Justice Project

The Women's Justice Project is the first and only program in Oregon to exclusively address the needs of women who are intersecting with the criminal justice system. WJP's goals are to ensure that the criminal justice system treats women fairly, protects their health and safety, and makes it possible for them to successfully rejoin their communities when they are released. It provides individual legal assistance to primarily Native American women incarcerated in Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville, Ore., and to formerly incarcerated women. The project is staffed by Project Director and Attorney Julia Yoshimoto.



HerStory Oregon Survey

We surveyed women incarcerated at Coffee Creek in partnership with Portland State University's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice and with the cooperation of Oregon DOC. More than 140 women participated to share experiences in the criminal legal system: from arrest to sentencing, from intake at the prison to thoughts about their future release. The HerStory survey is, to our knowledge, the first of its kind in Oregon. It was inspired by the many stories justice-involved women have told us. In the coming months, we will release a series of information sheets with the results. [The first is available at our website.](#)



Women in Prison Conference

Every fall, we host a Women in Prison Conference to bring together those in our community who are interested in issues affecting justice-involved women. Attendees include social service providers, lawyers, formerly incarcerated people, state and local policymakers, and community members. This year, our focus was on the impact of Oregon's mandatory minimum sentencing law Measure 11 on women and girls. [Read our conference report to learn more about the information and stories shared by our panelists.](#)

Clients

We work with and represent around 20 women a year who need assistance with a range of civil legal issues. We help women - while they are still incarcerated - to resolve or work out how to deal with civil legal issues that would likely be obstacles to success after their release from prison. Many of the women we work with are facing the challenge of healing from and overcoming difficult backgrounds. They have often experienced trauma, poverty, substance abuse, or mental illness. Reentry after incarceration is a huge transition, full of systems to navigate and numerous demands and requirements to meet. Most have few resources or supports available to them. Our work has shown that women are better prepared for reentry if they address their responsibilities while they are in prison which puts them on a stronger footing to be successful once they are back in the community.

20

number of women we worked with/represented with civil legal issues.

Some of the civil legal issues we have assisted with in 2018.

- Family/child custody
- Debt
- Driver's licenses
- Property
- Occupational licensing

Coming up in 2019: we have ambitious plans for the Women's Justice Project. We're working on ways to expand our scope so we can work with more women and provide more robust services and resources. Our Women in Prison Conference will return in the fall and we look forward to bringing our community together once again for this important conversation.

Immigrant Rights Project

The Immigrant Rights Project provides free personalized legal analysis to Oregon public defense providers about the immigration consequences of pleas and convictions for their non-citizen clients. This was the first year of operation for the project. It is administered by the Oregon Justice Resource Center and funded by the Office of Public Defense Services. Joseph Justin Rollin and Erin McKee are co-directors of the project.

367

intakes received. Goal: 300 intakes.

273

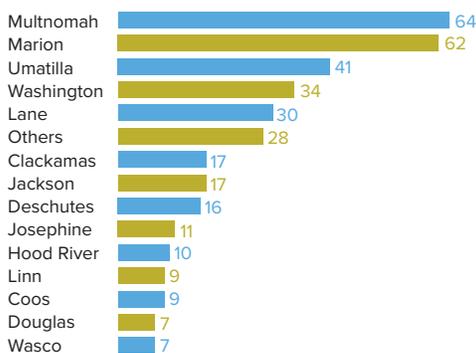
intakes completed.

Reasons for non-completion include: cases still active, cases dismissed, private immigration counsel hired, no further information received from the public defense provider.

143

public defense providers from 27 counties used our services.

Intakes by county



Immigration statuses of non-citizens IRP assisted



* Also known as "green card" holders
 ** Including visa overstay and unauthorized entry

IRP assisted non-citizens from 38 countries of origin. The top five were:



amicus ("friend of the court") briefs signed onto.



3

legislative concepts submitted to the legislature:

- ✓ allowing people with diverted, discharged or expunged offenses to seek post-conviction relief if the offense continues to have adverse immigration consequences
- ✓ improving court immigration admonishments and allowing non-citizens not to disclose immigration status in court
- ✓ allow no-plea conditional discharges and diversions

11

presentations to public defense consortia, conferences, community groups and churches.

6

press appearances.

3

articles and reports.



Read our report ["Crimmigration in Oregon"](#) to understand how our state can better protect non-citizens.

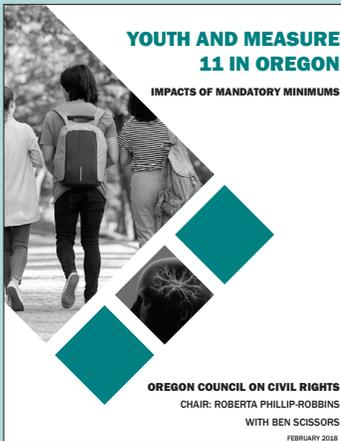
Youth Justice Project

Launched in 2018, the Youth Justice Project takes a holistic approach to addressing systemic flaws in Oregon's treatment of youth in the adult justice system. The YJP is committed to reducing the criminalization and incarceration of young people, particularly youth from disenfranchised communities. Youth in Oregon are vulnerable to automatic involvement in the adult criminal justice system from as young as 15 years old. Our state has one of the highest rates of incarceration of youth remanded to the adult system in the United States. We are also one of only a few states that continue to sentence juvenile offenders to life without the possibility of parole. The punitive "tough on crime" response to youth crime and misbehavior does not work. Youth should not be subjected to mandatory minimum sentences and should always have a meaningful opportunity for earned release. We must recognize and accept that young people are still developing and should be given opportunities for treatment, habilitation, rehabilitation, and positive reinforcement. Ending excessive sentences and extreme punishments of youth is of the utmost importance to protect young people in the justice system and our wider communities. Conrad Engweiler, Althea Selover, and Trevor Walraven are co-directors of the project.



Subscribe at our website

Report and Policy: Youth and Measure 11 in Oregon



In collaboration with the [Oregon Council on Civil Rights](#), we released the seminal report [“Youth and Measure 11 in Oregon: Impacts of Mandatory Minimums.”](#) Prompted by the findings of the report, the legislature has begun conversations about changing the approach Oregon takes in its treatment of youth. The YJP is involved in conversations at the legislature about policy initiatives to address the criminal legal system's overly punitive approach to youth. We are optimistic that the legislature, informed by current understanding of youth brain development, will make changes to the law.

Youth Justice Project Launch and Public Education

Youth Justice Project team member Trevor Walraven has taken part in more than 100 conversations and presentations in our community since his release, sharing his personal story and the importance of having a justice system that is sensitive and responsive to the unique characteristics of youth. At our Youth Justice Project Launch Event, Trevor hosted a powerful panel discussion with four other people who were justice-involved as teenagers or emerging adults. We believe it is critically important to have people who have been most affected by the criminal legal system leading the conversation about how to achieve meaningful reform. It is time to dismantle the dehumanizing narrative that has built up around young people's offending. Centering these stories will be an important priority for the YJP in 2019.



Civil Rights Project

The Civil Rights Project was the third program launched in 2018 by the Oregon Justice Resource Center. The CRP examines, tracks, and litigates civil rights issues related to the criminal justice system. The goals are to secure equal and fair treatment for people intersecting with the criminal legal system as well as promote accountability and systemic reform. This is achieved through strategic litigation, public education, programming, and policy advocacy. Through the CRP, the OJRC is currently involved in four cases. The program is staffed by Project Director and Attorney Juan Chavez.

Civil Rights Project Current Cases



Suit against the Oregon Department of Corrections on behalf of the family of a woman incarcerated at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility who died of the flu.



Suit against the City of Portland and others on behalf of a man struck in the head by a “flash bang” fired by police at counter-protestors.

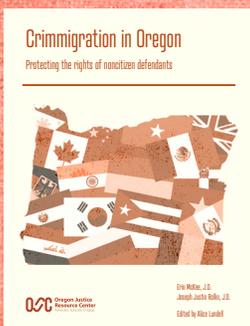


Representing the Mental Health Alliance, an interested party in the U.S. Department of Justice action against the City of Portland regarding police use of force against people experiencing mental illness.

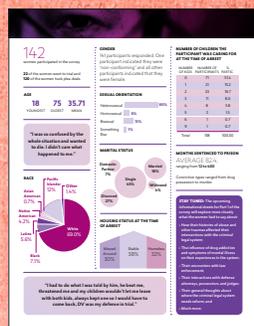


Suit against the Oregon Department of Corrections on behalf of two men subject to retaliatory use of solitary confinement and fabrication of evidence by prison staff.

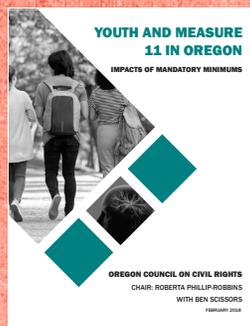
Reports Published in 2018



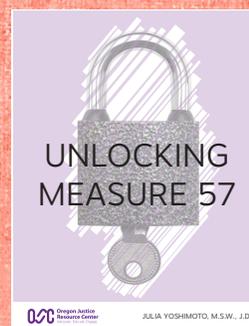
Crimmigration in Oregon



HerStory Survey



Youth and Measure 11



Unlocking Measure 57*



WIPC 2018: Measure 11

*Updated May 2018. First published February 2017.

Amicus Committee

Through our Amicus Curiae (“friend of the court”) Committee, we provide amicus assistance to cases in Oregon that present significant social justice issues related to criminal defense, civil rights, or juvenile justice, or are of particular importance to communities typically underserved by the legal system. As part of our mission to advance civil rights and liberties through advocacy, we draft as well as sign on to amicus briefs on cutting-edge social justice issues facing Oregon courts. Amicus curiae briefs are an important way in which we contribute our analysis of significant but undeveloped aspects of critical cases. The committee continues to track important civil rights and criminal justice cases in the appellate courts, and regularly participates as amicus, having submitted more than 30 briefs in the past few years. All of the committee members are attorney volunteers. [Our amicus briefs are available for review at our website.](#) The committee is chaired by Sarah Laidlaw.

Amicus Briefs Filed in 2018



State v. Arreola-Botello

On the disproportionate impact of traffic stops on minorities. (With OCDLA.)



State v. Black

On memory science and false accusations. (Oregon Innocence Project.)



State v. Brewer

On non-unanimous juries.



State v. McFerrin and State v. Sparks

On the costs of over-incarceration and racial disparity in probation revocation sentencing. (With Pacific Sentencing Initiative, LLC.)



State v. Norgren

On police interrogation of people experiencing mental illness.



State v. Stevens

On the inherently coercive nature of police-citizen contacts and the disproportionate use of stops and arrests against minorities.



State v. Tinoco-Camarena

On brain development and culpability.



State v. Vallin and Foote v. Oregon

In support of HB 3078 which constitutionally amends sentencing under Measure 57.



White v. Premo

On Eighth Amendment protections for children and *Miller/Montgomery* applying equally to sentences for multiple offenses. (With multiple amici.)

Find these amicus briefs and more at our website

Events



January

200
attendees



Arauis Ayala



March

550
attendees



DeRay Mckesson



April

190
attendees



"Perception"



May

175
attendees



THIS IS INNOCENCE



October

180
attendees



Women in Prison Conference



November

100
attendees



YJP Launch



November

250
attendees



Sau Siyangwe



December

50
attendees



Welcome Home, Josh