

# Visión Comunitaria

## Listening & Learning from the Growing Latine/x/a/o Community's Vision



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“In times like these,  
even coming together like  
this is revolutionary.”

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

## Introduction

In summer and fall 2022, Latine/x/a/o community leaders from across Oregon gathered virtually, listened and learned from one another as they outlined aspects of a vision for their community’s future. Community participants shared interconnecting values and lived experiences, *cultura y tradiciones*, and they proactively promoted a sense of belonging for youths, elders, farmworkers, immigrants, DACA recipients and those most marginalized in this state we call home.

These Latine/x/a/o community leader gatherings formed part of a broader community engagement process to inform Meyer’s developing work and grantmaking under its new mission: *to accelerate racial, social and economic justice for the collective well-being of Oregon’s lands and peoples*. In addition to input from the Latine/x/a/o community, Meyer also sought advice on priorities from the Native, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities and gender justice advocates. Since 2021, priorities raised by the Black community have been integrated into Meyer’s Justice Oregon for Black Lives Initiative.

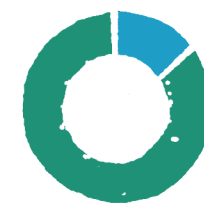
At 13.9% of the state population, Latine/x/a/os comprise the largest community of color in Oregon. This community has grown 30% over the past 10 years, outpacing the national rate over the past three decades and is projected to be 24% of the state’s population and 42% of the overall student population in Oregon by 2030.

### DEFINING “LATINE/X/A/O”

*The usage of Latine/x/a/o seeks to respect all entry points to self-identification within the diaspora. The Spanish ending -e and the English -x are gender-neutral alternatives to the traditional, gender-explicit endings -a/o and are commonly used by the LGBTQ2SIA+ community and allies.*

### A POPULATION ON THE RISE

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2010, 2020. Oregon Department of Education data 2000–01, 2017–19.



13.9%

Percentage of Oregonians who are Latine/x/a/o



30%

Growth rate of Latine/x/a/o community since 2012



24%

Projected percentage of Latine/x/a/o population in Oregon by 2030.

**“We’re a coalition amongst ourselves. We’re very diverse and come together to meet the moment. We’re a complete ecosystem.”**

– COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Recognizing the strengths of this young, growing and interconnected community, Meyer staff extended invitations to Latine/x/a/o leaders from a wide range of sectors who brought varying perspectives and lived experiences. Among the broad composition, participants identified as and/or supported people across the gender spectrum, including Afro-Latine/x/a/o, Indigenous and immigrants. They brought experience on mixed-immigration status families, working families and youth, as well as on issues like health, housing, economic justice, education, criminal justice, environment and organized labor. This diversity among the community participants led to rich, dynamic and layered discussions.

**“THIS WAS SUCH A VIBRANT CONVERSATION WHERE ALL THAT WAS SAID HOLDS URGENCY.”**

– COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

To kick off conversations, participants were guided through a futurist-thinking practice. Following the five principles of futurism, community leaders envisioned accomplishments by the Latine/x/a/o community 10 years out. They considered a future in which Latine/x/a/os were able to reach their full human potential and to recognize that their culturally responsive practices saved lives and their collective imagination led to justice for their communities. The vision included approaches and accomplishments as multilayered and diverse as the diaspora: investments in reparations and land back, communal healing, culturally affirming education, Indigenous ways of life, immigration reform, inclusion in the green economy and so much more.

## Creating Space for Collaborative Learning

The following structure served as a guide to outline the intentions and approach for a shared space between philanthropy representatives, nonprofit leaders and community organizers.

### OVERARCHING GOALS

1. To provide a space for leaders to connect with each other
2. To create opportunity for leaders to share their visions for the Latine/x/a/o community’s future
3. To invite the Latine/x/a/o community’s reflections on Meyer’s new strategic direction and ensure community priorities inform its grantmaking

### CONVERSATION ARC

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|------------------|--|
| <b>Session 1</b> | Thinking Like a Futurist —<br>10-Year Visioning With the Latine/x/a/o Community                                      |
| <b>Session 2</b> | Latine/x/a/o Community Priority Areas  |
| <b>Session 3</b> | Cross-Community Areas Identified through Meyer’s Process:<br>Alignment and Gaps With Latine/x/a/o Community’s Vision |

### OFFERINGS TO COMMUNITY

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Space to critically discuss priorities with leaders of varying perspectives in the Latine/x/a/o community | Latine/x/a/o visioning summary document for participants’ use |
| Window into Meyer’s strategic planning process  | Honoraria for each session attended                           |
| Ability to make recommendations on Meyer’s funding priority areas   |   |

The three-part conversation series highlighted a central theme among the Latine/x/a/o community — a collectivist vision — that unites the wealth of shared and distinct lived experiences and cultures within the diaspora. While holding the natural tensions of diverse points of view among a dynamic community, the aspirations and priorities contained in their growing collectivist vision consistently pointed to **the intersection of Indigenous practices, racial justice and economic justice** as driving forces for scaling change by, with and for the Latine/x/a/o community. An expanded interpretation of this intersection follows the community priorities and their call to action.

**A CENTRAL THEME:  
INTERSECTIONAL PRIORITIES**



## Community Priorities Identified in the 10-Year Vision

The community envisions a future of well-being and abundance, one that distributes power to *comunidad* and builds momentum for movements that transform systems at large. What follows is a holistic view of community-identified priority areas. Meyer hopes that in documenting all of them, community organizers and nonprofits throughout Oregon can utilize this document to inform their own work and inspire conversations for transformative change across many sectors.

### Basic Needs

Among the fundamental needs within the Latine/x/a/o community, the participants recognized that access to stable and secure **housing** for all is key. Addressing the entire housing spectrum is essential in a society where community health and safety are paramount to building just systems. Within the range of housing opportunities, Latine/x/a/o folks experiencing houselessness and requiring specific resources need to be made visible. Immigrant and refugee communities face unique obstacles to securing housing and building intergenerational wealth. More resources are needed to provide homeownership opportunities, purchase land and increase financial access and education.

In addition to the need for resources, the community uplifted the notion that the sustainability of a society depends on its community members' long-term **health**. They shared that it's essential to provide access to healthy culturally specific food and sustenance directly from the land, support folks practicing traditional methods of healing and wellness and guarantee affordable health care. To achieve this, it's necessary to increase representation of Latine/x/a/o mental health professionals, doulas and health care workers who are leading community-based solutions.

### Immigration

Although not all Latine/x/a/o community participants identify as immigrants, Immigration was identified as a top priority area given the compounded impact for communities living at the intersection of marginalized identities, historic exploitation and simultaneous invisibilization of this population, extreme harsh and violent practices grounded in anti-Blackness and connection between the immigration and prison systems.



# “We need to be seen as Oregon and not just immigrants. We are home.”

– COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

The community envisions a future in which Latine/x/a/os experience healing on a societal level — free from fear of the immigration system. In this future, borders would be removed to allow people to travel freely, especially since border lines have moved and the U.S. is on stolen land. While that long-term vision looms in the distance, participants cited granting automatic or more easily accessed dual citizenship as a viable first step in contending with the violence within the current system.

They highlighted that immigration reform cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach. Educating the public on how this intersects with the school-to-prison pipeline and policing — and how those systems and policies actively enact targeted, anti-Black violence — can lead to wide support for a much-needed overhaul within criminal justice reform.

## Civic Engagement + Leadership

Representation and building political power within a just democracy were also central to the community’s discussion. According to the 2020 census, Latine/x/a/os comprise 19% of the U.S. population but make up only 2% of elected officials. In addition to aiming for increased civic participation, the community urged campaign finance reform for fair competition, more support for workforce training to ensure Latine/x/a/o senior and executive level staff in government, expanded training to run for public office and bolster support for those who are already inside the system to make transformative change viable and sustainable.

Latine/x/a/os assert that significant, community-accountable representation is critical to harness enough power to change systems at scale. In 2018, 11-year-olds were the most common age group among the Latine/x/a/o community compared with 58-year-olds for the white population. Therefore, representation is crucial now and into the future for this community. Youths must see themselves reflected in public office and government careers as viable options.

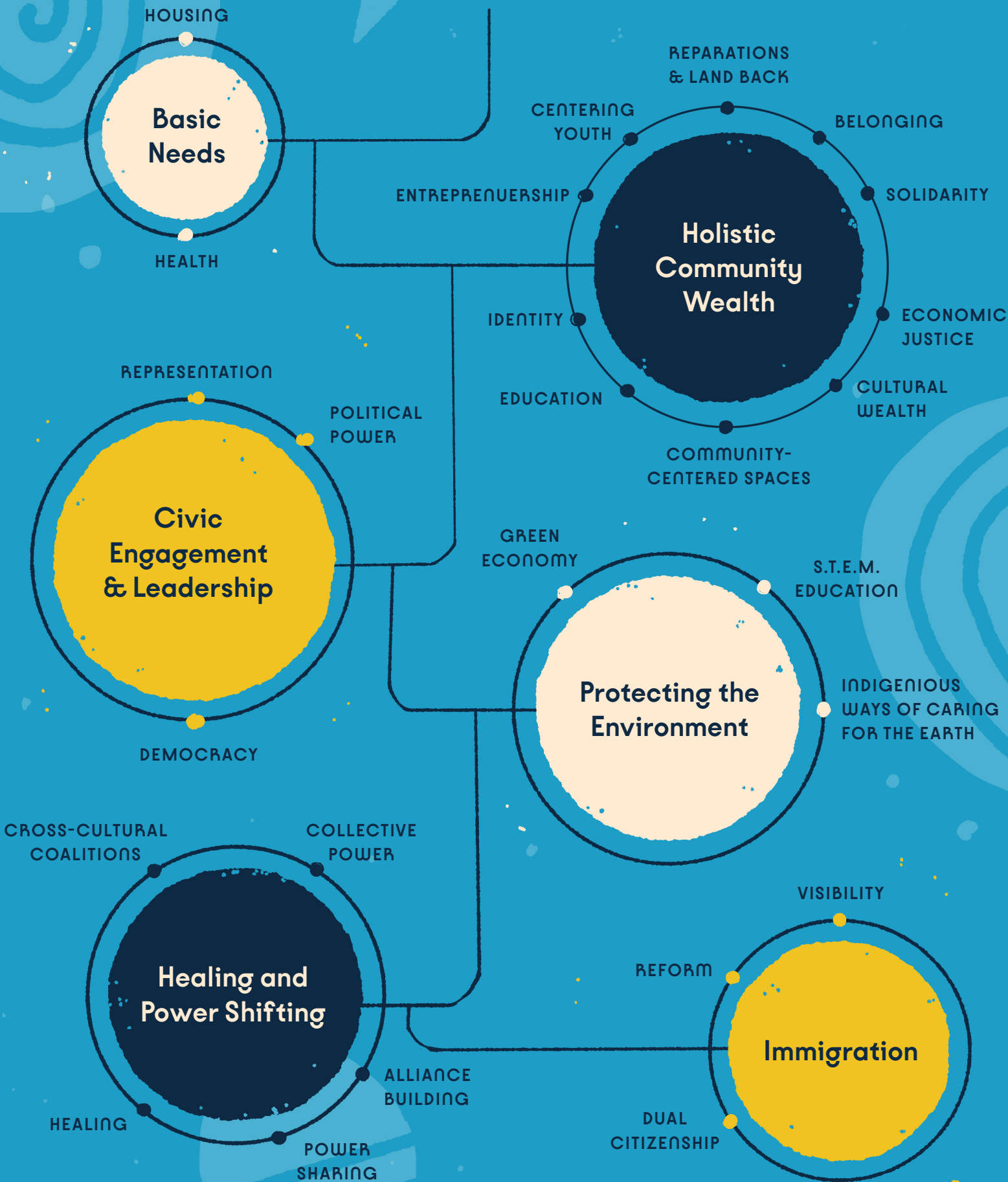
## THE VISION OF OUR FUTURE

The illustrations to the right are graphic recordings from the first virtual convening with Latine/x/a/o community leaders. Created by Liisa Sorsa with Drawbridge Innovations LLC, each image documents the collective vision of what Latine/x/a/o Oregonians need to build a transformative and sustainable future.





## Community Wordmap



### Holistic Community Wealth

The Latine/x/a/o participants defined wealth expansively where cultural heritage and community were central and prominent, while still upholding the necessary right to ownership of material wealth by this community for individual and collective prosperity.

Community leaders deeply recognized that acknowledging descendants of enslaved and colonized people and providing **economic justice** in the form of **reparations and land back** for those groups are vital steps toward building wealth within the Latine/x/a/o diaspora. To build intergenerational wealth, the community stated that we must center the lives of those most impacted by white supremacy. Eliminating the wage gap for Black, Latina and Native women; creating care infrastructure; building pathways from workforce development to successful **entrepreneurship**; opening access to capital and land ownership; and laying the groundwork for the permanent well-being of DREAMERS, DACA recipients and undocumented folks are all necessary.

To support this effort, participants pointed out that building **solidarity** within and beyond the Latine/x/a/o community strengthens collective visibility and the sense of **belonging** needed to activate their own power within the collective and reach their full potential. They believe having a strong sense of **identity** reinforces a deeper understanding of a person's place in the world. They challenged Oregon to shed light on the contributions of undocumented immigrants, farmworkers and Indigenous communities and recognize them as integral to our country's economy and culture while also dismantling the xenophobia and othering that run rampant within Oregon's history and current culture.

They affirm that by investing in and creating more **community-centered spaces** to show Latine/x/a/o folks exist, Oregon's narrative can shift to acknowledge that Latine/x/a/os are home. The Latine/x/a/o community dreams of the creation of a Center for Intergenerational Excellence that holds Latine/x/a/o-run businesses and incubators, educational workshops and community spaces. Creating environments where access to native languages, cultural practices and ways of caring for the earth, they said, preserves and augments the **cultural wealth** and legacy of the community.

Building upon wealth, *la comunidad* spotlighted reexamining **education** as a culturally affirming practice and instrument for creating space for multiple ways of knowing to reinforce the notion that everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher. They said, from childhood to adulthood, everyone should have access to affordable and relatable education, which means more cultural representation in the classrooms. In addition to increasing Latine/x/a/o educators, support systems need to exist

### DEFINING CULTURAL WEALTH

*Cultural wealth, as defined by community participants in Janet Soto Rodriguez's report "From Survival to Stability and Freedom: A Vision of Collective Community Wealth," builds upon the notion of material wealth to include "la prosperidad/prosperity and roots itself in our many languages, our homes, our health, our livelihoods, our lived experience, our existence."*

“Whether young or old, we work and learn together. We carry lessons from our elders to our younger folks as a legacy culture with pride as part of the Oregon story.”

– COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

for them to thrive and guide Oregon toward academic, financial and cultural advancement. By **centering youth's** journey from an early age, the community leaders stated, our society can cultivate a generation of leaders who are immersed within their culture and communities and able to show up authentically as Latine/x/a/o.

#### Protecting the Environment

By increasing Latine/x/a/o participation in the green movement and **green economy**, Oregon can augment **Indigenous ways of caring for the earth**, preserve green spaces and mitigate aspects of climate change to create a livable future for and with all, especially the communities most impacted. With robust systems of cultural support, Latine/x/a/o leaders also highlighted how **science, technology, engineering and math** learning can increase knowledge in the environmental justice sphere and bolster support for protecting the environment.

#### Healing and Power Shifting

By expanding and distributing power to marginalized communities within the diaspora and systems at large, and bringing those marginalized voices into the conversation, Latine/x/a/o communities can unite for greater impact through building **collective power** and **cross-cultural coalitions**. *La comunidad* supports building powerful connections to one another to ignite **healing** within the diaspora and systems at large. As a nation, they said, we must acknowledge the diversity and oppression within the global Latine/x/a/o community in order to create equitable **power-sharing** models and invest in **alliance building**. Cultivating collective power within the community continues to be an imperative for Latine/x/a/os in Oregon and beyond.

## Community's Call to Action for Philanthropy

Community members ask philanthropy, and Meyer specifically throughout these conversations, to think broadly and systemically about its role in supporting their growing vision. With a median age of 28 years, Latine/x/a/os are the youngest ethnic community and collectively represent multiple countries, languages, races, cultures, strengths, needs and aspirations. This multifaceted community is one that works to address the compounded impacts of inequities and to enact justice on multiple fronts. This being "the case, they seek to establish partnerships that understand this complexity and not require them to prioritize or categorize issues in such a way that upholds status quo narratives of scarce resources and perpetuates competition, rather than activating available abundance to address root causes.

“WE NEED PHILANTHROPY TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE YOUNGEST AND FASTEST GROWING POPULATION IN OREGON.”

– COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

### With utmost clarity, the Latine/x/a/o community calls on philanthropy to:

1

Take bold action and double the payout rate required by the IRS.

2

Commit dedicated funding commensurate to the impact of oppressive systems faced by this community.

3

Establish and/or increase equitable access to project-related investments.

4

Increase access to decision-makers and governing and decision-making seats.

5

Work collaboratively, leveraging sectoral and cross-sectoral funding, relationships and positional power to champion the holistic vision of the Latine/x/a/o community.



**“Leveraging private and public funds will signal to the Latinx community how we can accelerate this much-needed work”**

—  
COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

## Closing

The Latine/x/a/o collective insights shared here offer a profound and concrete opportunity for Oregon to meet the current moment while proactively building viable pathways to justice. To do so, the participants called upon the public and private sectors to understand which organizations and coalitions are already working in these circles to build a base of support and liberate resources to those most marginalized within the Latine/x/a/o community. This requires not only leveraging existing strengths but also distributing power to those who are invisibilized by mainstream systems to ignite a deeper sense of belonging in recognizing that Latine/x/a/o Oregonians are home. By leaning into the richness of *la comunidad*, participants said, it is possible to move beyond dismantling an unjust system and to begin to build momentum for cultural transformation.

These conversations made it clear that to make real strides in advancing **racial justice**, support for communities, systems change and movement building must be a multifaceted approach. Approaches must include ongoing commitment to address basic needs resulting from archaic systems and structural racism. Ensuring that people living closest to the issues and bearing the impact of injustice are centered and driving solutions alongside increasing community-accountable representation in traditional and non-traditional leadership roles are imperative for meaningful shifts. Supporting efforts to maintain momentum on diverse civic participation and cross-community solidarity can help sustain progress toward a more inclusive democracy, reinvigorate immigration reform advocacy and unveil new narratives of belonging and visibility.

Genuine partnerships require an understanding of Latine/x/a/o cultural wealth in and of itself as a form of power and its lineage as rooted deeply within

**Indigenous practices**, which uphold a holistic view of the meaning and composition of community. Equally important is the understanding of the community’s values of interconnectedness and approach to care for one another, the earth and the ecosystem, which lean on alternative ways of knowing and challenge societal norms that promote individualism over collectivism. This community knows that centering youths and elders, documented and undocumented immigrants, farmworkers and Indigenous communities will make way for intergenerational solidarity and healing within the diaspora. The Latine/x/a/o community calls on Oregon to build communities of support that promote health and well-being, with the understanding that collective liberation is rooted in individual and collective healing.

Finally, public and private funders are called to create equitable, right-sized access to resources and to take concrete action on commitments to **economic justice** by investing in new and existing methods of wealth building. Oregon can provide more access to capital and support infrastructure building for the future of workforce development, entrepreneurship, land acquisition and community-owned spaces to ensure the longevity of culturally specific organizations leading in this area. Well-resourced people and organizations can prioritize long-term systems change work instead of short-term outcomes to a fluctuating societal landscape. This community envisions a feminist future in which the care economy and green economy are encircled by Latine/x/a/o leaders who support futurist thinking and leverage their power for collective wins and thriving communities.



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## Facilitators

A special thank you to our partners and facilitators Cynthia Carmina Gomez, Portland State University's director of community and civic impact, and Amanda Aguilar Shank of Mid-Flight Consulting and a member of the RoadMap Consulting team. Their commitment to a co-created process, background in community organizing and dedication to centering Latine/x/a/o experiences provided a foundation for compassionate and robust engagement and discussions.

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## Participants

WITH DEEP GRATITUDE FOR THE EXPERTISE AND WISDOM FROM EACH AND EVERY LEADER WHO ENGAGED WITH MEYER DURING THIS INFORMATIVE PROCESS.

Alejandro Qeral

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