

LEADING WITH A COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The community-led Oversight and Accountability Council (OAC) was foundational to the goals of Measure 110 to include those most impacted by criminalization in the governing process for expanding access to services.

The OAC Met the Diversity Goals of Measure 110

Comagine Health researchers surveyed key decisionmakers in Oregon about implementing Measure 110, including nine OAC member participants.

Researchers also interviewed key decisionmakers, including OAC leadership and members.

Survey participants agreed that OAC membership was racially and ethnically diverse (77%); regionally diverse (73%); and diverse in beliefs about harm reduction, treatment, and recovery (61%).

In interviews, OAC leadership pointed to the diversity in background as a key strength of the group.

OAC Members Were Happy to Participate in the Council

Their collective strength is, ‘Here’s a spectrum of harm reduction and substance use, and here’s clinical and substance use disorder.’

No matter what the spectrum is, **everybody wants change, and they have a voice to say, ‘This is the change I want to see.’**

“” OAC LEADER

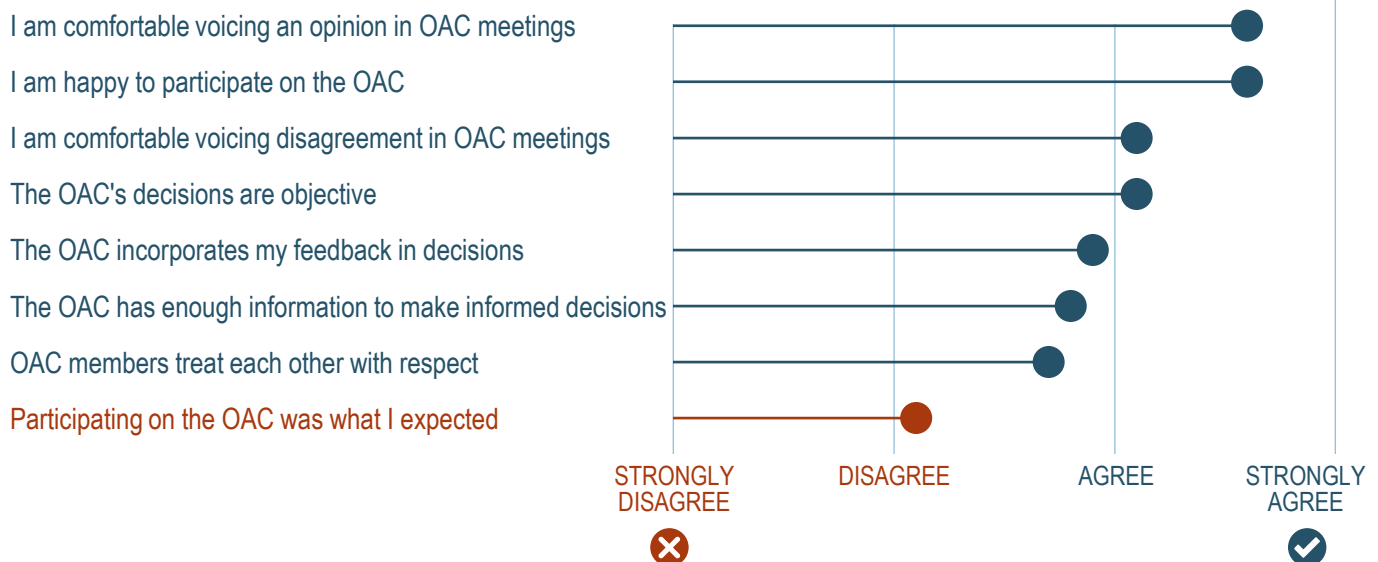
On average, OAC survey participants agreed with positive statements about the council. Respondents most strongly agreed that they were comfortable voicing an opinion in OAC meetings and were happy to participate on the council. Respondents did not agree that participating on the OAC was what they expected and that OAC members treat each other with respect.

Some OAC members noted gaps in representation, particularly traditional treatment providers (“existing treatment systems, such as counselors and clinical supervisors”), the criminal legal system (public defenders and law enforcement), the community at large, and harm reduction specialists.

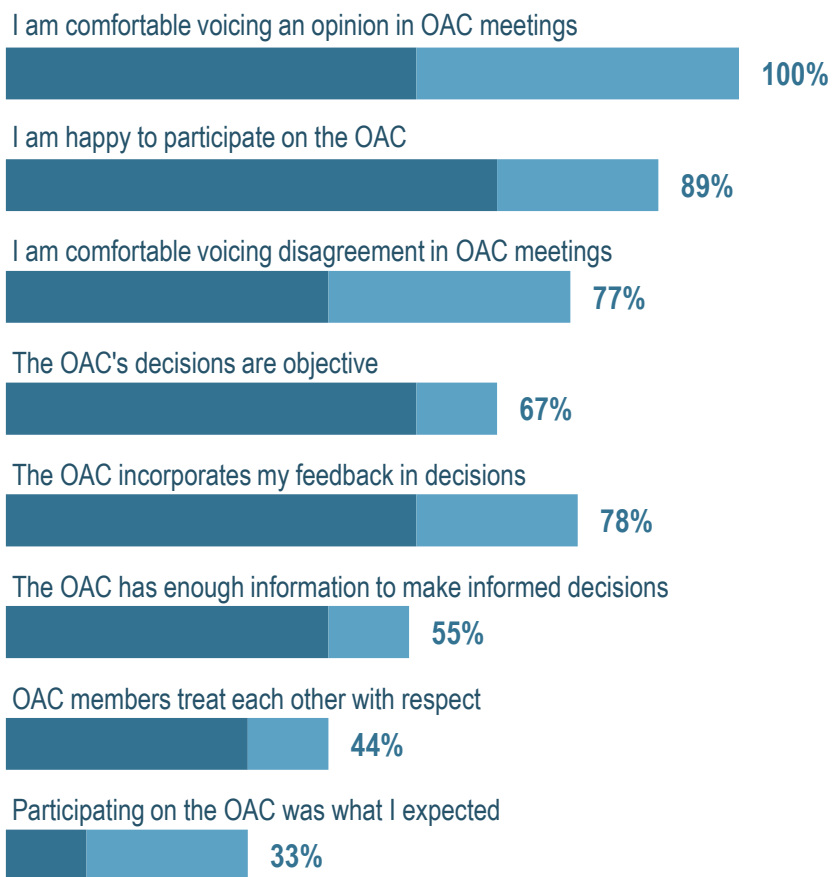
Several survey respondents also noted the OAC lacked representatives who had with policy and governing experience and supplementary training in systems of rulemaking, public procurement, and grantmaking.

In terms of demographics, respondents noted that the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities were underrepresented and suggested a need for more Latinx diversity and youth representation.

Most OAC survey participants were positive about the council, though participation was not what they expected.



All OAC survey participants **strongly agreed** or **agreed** that they were comfortable voicing an opinion in OAC meetings. **The majority (67%) strongly agreed that they were happy to participate on the OAC.**



Total ratings of STRONGLY AGREED and AGREED



Although OAC members reported that their experience on the council was positive overall, a few described a power imbalance among members and expressed frustration with interpersonal dynamics.

These frustrations, which generally emerged in discussions of Behavioral Health Resource Network (BHRN) funding decisions, highlighted that members felt that harm reduction, rural communities, and evidence-based practice were not fully supported by the council.

My advice would be: . . . **when you get your team, your committee—let them know upfront what it's going to be about.** I know that, since we're the first ones to do it, [future OAC members] are going to be able to learn from what we did and what works and what didn't work and move forward. We came into it blind, and we created something out of nothing.

“ ” OAC MEMBER

OAC Members Struggled With the Demands of the Role

OAC members spent a considerable amount of time conducting council business. Interviewees stressed that prior to joining the council they had been unaware of how demanding the role would be, and several had not realized the role was public facing.

 19 hours a week

The average number of hours OAC members reported spending on council-related tasks.

The average of the least hours of council work per week reported by OAC members was 3 hours, whereas **during weeks with the most amount of work members reported spending an average of 35 hours on OAC-related tasks.**

Two thirds reported being able to work on OAC-related tasks at their primary workplace at least some of the time.

I didn't anticipate weekly meetings. I thought, 'Well, I'm going to apply to be on a council. We'll probably meet monthly. OHA will prepare a lot of things and bring them to us for votes and approval' but **I had no idea that I would actually feel like a part-time OHA employee.**

“” OAC MEMBER

Recommendations

The OAC was foundational to the goals of Measure 110 to include those most impacted by criminalization in the governing process. We recommend state governing agencies prepare to support a community-led council through:

- Independent and trauma-informed facilitation
- Extensive direction on funding and governing processes
- Position descriptions with accurate time commitment, responsibilities, and clarity about the role being public facing

