



Office of Community Involvement

# Multnomah County Charter Review Subcommittee Recommendation Form



<b>Subcommittee name:</b>	Government Accountability Subcommittee
<b>Summary of recommendation:</b>	<p>We recommend establishing an ombuds office under the Auditor's office. The purpose of the office would be to provide an impartial office that is authorized to investigate administrative acts of County departments and offices with the goal of safeguarding the rights of persons and promoting high standards of fairness, competency, efficiency and justice in the provision of County services.</p>
<b>What section(s) of the Charter is this recommendation likely to impact?</b>	<p>Chapter VIII. Finance  Section 8.10 Auditor.</p>
<b>What does this recommendation aim to accomplish?</b>	<p>This amendment would establish an ombuds office to protect the rights of the public in their interactions with Multnomah County and incorporate best practice as suggested by the Association of Local Government Auditors. Currently the auditor's office receives tips and complaints from the public that may be singular issues or events that do not rise to the level of a performance audit, but that should still be investigated and addressed. The auditor's office is not currently equipped to actively investigate all of these issues. An ombuds office would be dedicated to investigating and addressing these issues, adding another layer of accountability for county government.</p>
<b>What MCCRC values is this recommendation grounded in?</b>	<p>Justice; Transparency; Innovation</p>
<b>What are the potential fiscal impacts of this recommendation?</b>	<p>The subcommittee's recommendation does not include a requirement about the size of the ombuds office. However, there will be a fiscal impact that includes salaries and benefits for new employees and for the establishment and administration of a new office.</p>
<b>What potential negative impacts could result from this recommendation? What are potential obstacles to implementation?</b>	<p>The MCCRC Government Accountability subcommittee sees no negative consequences from establishing an ombuds office.</p>

--	--

<p><b>What resources did the subcommittee rely on in making this recommendation?</b></p> <p>(Link or cite documents)</p>	<p>Written and oral testimony from Multnomah County Auditor Jennifer McGuirk including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Public comment</a> summarizing several proposals for the Charter Review Committee to consider.</li><li>• Invited testimony from the auditor at the subcommittee's meetings on <a href="#">March 3<sup>rd</sup></a> and <a href="#">May 12<sup>th</sup></a>.</li><li>• <a href="#">A letter</a> responding to information shared by other invited speakers.</li></ul> <p>The subcommittee heard invited testimony from Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal at the subcommittee's <a href="#">April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting</a>. Chair Kafoury also wrote about her perspective on the ombuds office in <a href="#">this letter</a> responding to MCCRC questions.</p> <p>The subcommittee heard from invited speakers, Portland Auditor Mary Hull Caballero and former Multnomah County Auditor Gary Blackmer at its <a href="#">April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting</a>.</p> <p>The subcommittee reviewed the section of the <a href="#">Portland Charter</a> establishing its ombuds office and <a href="#">received a letter</a> from the current Portland ombudsman.</p> <p>The subcommittee also referenced the <a href="#">Governmental Ombudsman Standards</a> as a resource for informing the expectations of an ombuds office, particularly in relation to confidentiality.</p> <p>The subcommittee received several public comments in support of the auditor's proposals, including an ombuds office.</p>
--	---

--	--

## Multnomah County Charter Review Committee

### Shared Values

#### Justice:

- Healing and justice are central to Multnomah County's government
- Justice extends to all people, and especially people who have been historically marginalized.
- Leading with race is important because of the inequities embedded in governance, with the understanding that it will help create an intersectional approach to this work.

#### Inclusive democracy:

- Multnomah County's government depends on active participation and representation of the communities people live in.
- People can access and participate in government using their preferred language.
- Outreach is a key value of democracy:
  - Decisions are informed by culturally-specific research and outreach.
  - Relationships should be an authentic, long lasting partnership; they should not be transactional in nature.

#### Access and belonging:

- People know how to access their leaders and decision-makers.
- People feel that they (and their communities) are a part of decision-making.
- Government reflects the communities it represents.

#### Transparency:

- People understand how their county government works.
- People are able to be heard by their government, and influence decision-making.
- Communication with the public by the government is clear, and communities are sought out for their input.

#### Innovation:

- Government is able to change and adapt to address historic and persistent problems.
  - Change is embraced as a way to better serve communities.
-