

Department: Nondepartmental

Program Contact: Eric Arellano

Program Offer Type: Operating

Program Offer Stage: Proposed

Related Programs:
Program Characteristics:
Executive Summary

The Oregon Historical Society (OHS) is a private not-for-profit entity founded in 1898. Since 1899, it has received appropriations from 1) state government (except 2002-6) in recognition of its operation of the state history museum and a large Oregon history research library; 2) Multnomah County (\$335k per year, 1999-2003) as a participant in the county library levy; and 3) Multnomah County special purpose levy 26-118 in November 2010 that provides for levy support at the rate of \$0.05 per thousand of assessed value and renewal of the second five-year period at the same rate. In May of 2021, measure 26-174 approved a third levy renewal from fiscal years 2021-22 through 2025-26.

Program Description

OHS operates the Oregon Historical Society Museum, the Research Library, and educational programs for adults, families and school groups (and also serves as the Multnomah County history repository). After nearly a decade of cuts in appropriations, programs, and service hours, the levy funding (which started in 2011 and was overwhelmingly renewed by Multnomah County voters in 2016 and 2021) has provided basic operational support for our core programs, including our exhibit series; statewide education programs; public programs; Digital Collections website and online digital history resources like The Oregon Encyclopedia; research library services as well as funding to underwrite the improved hours of service in the library, free admission to residents of Multnomah County, improved collections development and care. OHS is committed to serving the diverse communities of Multnomah County and the State of Oregon, and it reflects that commitment in every aspect of its operations.

Four East Multnomah County historical societies-- East County Historical Organization, Gresham Historical Society, Troutdale Historical Society, and Crown Point Country Historical Society-- together now receive \$200,000 annually from the levy proceeds. These funds are critical to the continued operation of these four organizations. The levy allocates the balance, estimated at \$3.8 million in FY 2023-24 to the Oregon Historical Society for its programs and operations.

In 2023, 34,840 people visited our museum and viewed our exhibitions. In addition to popular permanent exhibitions, OHS also hosts short-term exhibits that are either curated in-house or travel from other institutions, including: Our Unfinished Past: The Oregon Historical Society at 125; Celebrating Birds of the Pacific Northwest; Immigrant Stories' I Am An American: Stories of Exclusion and Belonging; The Cornerstone of Our Construction Industry: A century of the Oregon-Columbia Chapter; Motown: The Sound of Young America; and The Odyssey of the Historic Jantzen Beach Carousel. OHS also hosted an exhibition about Bob Hope, on loan from the WWII Museum.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Performance Measure	FY23 Actual	FY24 Budgeted	FY24 Estimate	FY25 Target
Output	Multnomah County residents admitted free of charge	9,527	9,640	11,900	12,500
Outcome	Improved library hours per week	32	32	32	32
Output	Increased number of public programs	28	30	30	30
Quality	Care of Collections through additional curator/registrar	1	0	4	0

Performance Measures Descriptions

With no COVID-19 restrictions in place in Oregon for the entire year, 2023 was year when the Oregon Historical Society could return to "normal" pre-COVID operations. OHS museum attendance increased by 27% over 2022 attendance. There were also increases in school tours, educator training programs, and in-person lectures and events. The annual Oregon History Day competition was held in person for the first time since 2019. OHS also continued to offer a number of hybrid and livestreamed lectures.

Legal / Contractual Obligation

Measure 26-174 provides the Oregon Historical Society with a five-year property tax levy at the rate of \$0.05 per thousand dollars of assessed value. Four east county historical societies (Fairview-Rockwood-Wilkes, Gresham, Troutdale, and Crown Point Country) will together receive \$200,000 per year from the levy proceeds.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2024	2024	2025	2025
Contractual Services	\$0	\$3,873,074	\$0	\$3,975,337
Internal Services	\$0	\$29,000	\$0	\$29,000
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$3,902,074	\$0	\$4,004,337
Program Total:	\$3,902,074		\$4,004,337	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Program Revenues				
Taxes	\$0	\$3,861,074	\$0	\$3,978,116
Interest	\$0	\$3,000	\$0	\$2,500
Beginning Working Capital	\$0	\$38,000	\$0	\$23,721
Total Revenue	\$0	\$3,902,074	\$0	\$4,004,337

Explanation of Revenues

This program generates \$29,000 in indirect revenues.

This is a dedicated local option property tax levy collected by Multnomah County on behalf of the Oregon Historical Society (OHS). OHS receives no other County funding.

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2024: 10023 OHS Local Option Levy