

Department: Nondepartmental

Program Contact: Eric Arellano

Program Offer Type: Operating

Program Offer Stage: Proposed

Related Programs:
Program Characteristics:
Program Description

The Oregon Historical Society (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 \$220,000 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 2024-25 to the OHS for its programs and operations.

One of highlights of 2024 was the June opening of the new permanent exhibition, "Rivers, Roses, and Rip City: The Remarkable History of Portland." The exhibition has received very favorable reviews, and many Portland Public School classrooms are visiting. Attendance, school tours, educator training programs, and in-person lectures and events continue to increase from the 2020-2021 COVID years. Visits to OHS digital operations, which includes the Oregon Encyclopedia, now top over 1,000,000 annually. A record number of students participated in Oregon History Day. Legislation passed by the Oregon State Legislature assigned OHS the responsibility of planning for Oregon's recognition of the July 4, 2026, 250th signing of the Declaration of Independence.

In 2024, the OHS website (www.ohs.org), was visited by almost 300,000 viewers. Additionally, 1,900 educators around the state received our educator e-blasts, 22,000 subscribers received our weekly e-digests, and our social media pages were followed by over 48,880 followers. In addition to the 4,800 hard copies that were mailed to subscribers, the Oregon Historical Quarterly was available to countless students and patrons at public and academic libraries, as well as online. The Oregon Encyclopedia had 1,416,165 pageviews and based on user data, we estimate that a third are students and educators.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Performance Measure	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budgeted	FY25 Estimate	FY26 Target
Output	Multnomah County residents admitted free of charge	16,574	12,500	22,000	24,500
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	1.5	0	1.75	0

Performance Measures Descriptions

The 2024 OHS exhibition series was enjoyed by 37,529 visitors to our museum, up from 34,840 the previous year and rebounding substantially from 2021's 11,608 and 2022's 27,463 visitors. The theme of 2024's series was Oregonians as innovators and artists, portraying the diversity of places, people, and interests of Oregonians through various artistic mediums. Portland Past and Present (December 15, 2023–July 7, 2024): Through historical photographs from the OHS research library paired with contemporary photographs from Peter Marbach, explores how Portland has changed over time.

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 \$220,000 per year from the levy proceeds.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2025	2025	2026	2026
Contractual Services	\$0	\$3,975,337	\$0	\$3,815,422
Internal Services	\$0	\$29,000	\$0	\$29,000
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$4,004,337	\$0	\$3,844,422
Program Total:	\$4,004,337		\$3,844,422	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Program Revenues				
Taxes	\$0	\$3,978,116	\$0	\$3,818,421
Interest	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$5,000
Beginning Working Capital	\$0	\$23,721	\$0	\$21,001
Total Revenue	\$0	\$4,004,337	\$0	\$3,844,422

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 2025: 10023 OHS Local Option Levy