



Association of Local Government Auditors

May 20, 2022

Dear Government Accountability Subcommittee members,

The Association of Local Government Auditors recently became aware of proposed amendments to the Multnomah County Charter that will enhance the independence of the County Auditor's Office and provide greater transparency to the public about the County Auditor's roles and responsibilities. Specifically, the proposed amendments will:

- Ensure that the existing fraud, waste, and abuse hotline reports to the County Auditor and will be operated in accordance with state law and with best practices for fraud, waste, and abuse hotlines
- Establish a county ombudsman who reports to the County Auditor
- Ensure the County Auditor's access to information, data, and officials
- Remove the threat to County Auditor independence that exists in Multnomah County's budgeting-setting process

ALGA is a professional organization with more than 300 member organizations located primarily in the United States and Canada. ALGA is committed to supporting independent performance auditing in local governments, and membership includes local government auditors as well as local government inspectors general.

ALGA believes that an independent performance audit function, operating under applicable auditing standards, plays a key role in effective governance and public accountability. An independent audit function also provides assurance to elected officials, residents, and management that resources are protected by strong management controls and practices; reports on the results and outcomes of programs and services; and helps ensure compliance with laws, policies and procedures.

ALGA has published best practices for local government auditing on our website, at www.algaonline.org under the "Build an Audit Function" tab. These publications include [*Auditor Independence*](#) and [*Model Legislation Guidelines for Local Government Auditors*](#). We note the proposed charter amendments are consistent with our guidelines and model legislation. For example:

- Model legislation states that auditors should have unrestricted access to local government employees, officials, records, and physical properties. Clarifying language in the Multnomah County Charter about the Auditor's access to information would provide a needed safeguard and improve transparency about the Auditor's information access.



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- Model legislation states, “Auditor’s budget shall be submitted to the governing body directly by the Auditor or by an Audit Committee independent of management” and notes that some jurisdictions allocate funding to the audit function through a percentage formula. Because the Multnomah County Chair is both the chief executive officer and a member of the legislative body, there is no budget consideration that is independent of management. The proposed amendment to set the Auditor’s budget by establishing an allocation formula removes a threat to independence based upon funding decisions being controlled by managers or officials subject to audit.
- Model legislation states that legislation to support auditor independence “should be enacted at the highest possible level of authority, such as by voter-enacted amendments to a city charter or other applicable legislation.” Enacting the proposed amendments in the County Charter enhances the Auditor’s independence.

ALGA's Advocacy Committee would be happy to offer additional information, or to meet with you to discuss these matters. You can reach me at anoble@atlantaga.gov or 404-330-6750.

Sincerely,

Amanda Noble, CIA, CISA
Atlanta City Auditor
Chair, ALGA Advocacy Committee

CC: Justin Anderson, ALGA President