



Office of Community Involvement

Multnomah County Charter Review Subcommittee Recommendation Form



Subcommittee name:	Equitable Representation
Summary of recommendation:	Multnomah will adopt the use of Ranked Choice Voting in county elections by 2026.
What section(s) of the Charter is this recommendation likely to impact?	Chapter XI , section 11.15 on election of officers Chapter IV, section 4.50 1(a) on filling vacancies
What does this recommendation aim to accomplish?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives voters more power and more choices • Increases voter participation • Encourages coalition-building • Rewards positive campaigning • Elects candidates with the broadest possible public support • Solves the "spoiler" issue and means that no vote will ever be a "wasted" vote
What MCCRC values is this recommendation grounded in?	Inclusive Democracy Innovation
What are the potential fiscal impacts of this recommendation?	<p>High potential to share costs with the City of Portland if voters approve RCV at the City level.</p> <p>High likelihood of state funding as Oregon Secretary of State has dedicated dollars toward supporting counties in making these types of changes.</p> <p>Costs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voter education • Election machine/ software certification • Additional ballot printing costs since it is likely to use more pages • Personnel costs in the elections office? Would people need to be hired to give the office the capacity to do the research and work needed to roll out the first election?
What potential negative impacts could result from this recommendation? What are potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may not like RCV in practice • Opponents make these arguments, which advocates strongly refute: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduced transparency and increased complexity ○ Exhausted ballots more likely to harm historically marginalized groups

<p>obstacles to implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uneven voting power; some rankings are skipped, some voters have more rankings counted than others, and some voters' votes will backfire (15% of the time or more in competitive elections) ○ Does not do a better job of electing preferred candidates than plurality + top two (which MultCo already uses) • The subject of voting is currently a hot topic nationally (voter fraud/steal the vote rhetoric) and this may bring the conversation closer to home. • It's hard to reach everyone in the county and some folks will miss out on education efforts and find the voting process confusing/difficult/etc.
<p>What resources did the subcommittee rely on in making this recommendation?</p> <p>(Link or cite documents)</p>	<p>For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benton Better Ballot: https://bentonbetterballot.com/ • FairVote: www.fairvote.org • Oregon RCV: www.oregonrcv.org • Testimony for SB 791, which would have established RCV as the voting method statewide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next Up Action Fund ○ NAYA Family Center ○ Coalition for Communities of Color ○ Forward Together Action ○ Dr. Paul Gronke, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Early Voting Information Center at Reed College ○ League of Women Voters ○ More Equitable Democracy Action • Northwest Health Foundation: "We Support Ranked Choice Voting" • Portland Tribune Editorial Board: "Innovation, not suppression, benefits Oregon voters" • <i>Roll Call</i>: "Ranked Choice Voting Upholds Voter Rights" • <i>WWeek</i>: "Oregon Democrats and Republicans Disagree on Many Points but Both Used Ranked-Choice Voting at Party Summits" • Report: Pathways to a Racially Just Democracy (by a working group of many local community based organizations) • Subcommittee conversations including presentations from More Equitable Democracy and Oregon RCV at the subcommittee's March 7th meeting, and Equal Vote at the subcommittee's March 21st meeting • Benton County Ballot Example (they use RCV for county elections) • The subcommittee received several public comments in favor of adopting Ranked Choice Voting <p>Against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Vote Canada*: Out of the Frying Pan Into the Fire: Lessons on Ranked Ballot from Australia *Note: Fair Vote Canada is not affiliated with FairVote (U.S.). Both organizations advocate for STV, but Fair Vote Canada is opposed to single-winner RCV (which they call Alternative Vote). • The Center for Election Science: The Limits of Ranked Choice Voting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maine Policy Institute: False Majority: The Failed Experiment of Ranked Choice Voting• Alaska Policy Forum: Report: The Failed Experiment of Ranked Choice Voting• Equal Vote: www.equal.vote; Equal Vote presented at the subcommittee's March 21st meeting
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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.
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