



Ballot Measure 26-221 - Multnomah County

Five year levy: Oregon Historical Society Library, Museum, educational programs.

Question: Shall County renew 5-year history museum, library, educational programs levy; maintain \$.05 per \$1,000 assessed value, oversight, beginning 2021? This measure renews current local option taxes.

Summary: In 2016 voters approved a five-year local option levy of \$.05 per \$1,000 assessed property value to support the Oregon Historical Society (OHS). Renewal of this levy will continue support to the OHS's museum, library, educational programs, and fund the following without increasing taxes:

- Educational programs;
- Free admission to school groups and Multnomah County residents;
- Preservation of important Oregon treasures and artifacts;
- Support four County historical societies: Fairview-Rockwood-Wilkes Historical Society, Gresham Historical Society, Troutdale Historical Society, and Crown Point Country Historical Society;
- OHS will continue to build on its efforts to provide exhibits and services that reflect the diverse histories of our region, and engage all parts of our county.

Levy continues rate of \$.05 per \$1,000 assessed property value, and replaces the 2016 levy. A home assessed at \$200,000 pays \$10 a year.

An independent citizen oversight committee will review expenditures to verify that funds are used as approved by voters. Annual audits will be conducted and made public.

The levy will produce an estimated \$3.35 million for fiscal year 2021-2022; \$3.41 million for fiscal year 2022-2023; \$3.57 million for fiscal year 2023-2024; \$3.72 million for fiscal year 2024-2025; and \$3.87 million for fiscal year 2025-2026.

The estimated cost for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of estimate.

Explanatory Statement

Established in 1898, the Oregon Historical Society (OHS) collects, maintains, and preserves the vast majority of historical records and artifacts for Portland and the state of Oregon. About 60% of the library materials relate directly to Multnomah County history, and OHS acts as the Multnomah County Historical Society.

In addition to OHS' collection of over 85,000 artifacts, 5 million photographs, 25,000 maps, and more, OHS maintains a museum and public research library in downtown Portland. Approximately 70,000 visitors use these facilities a year, including about 8,000 schoolchildren who visit the museum for guided tours, and access the library to research Oregon history.

This Multnomah County local option levy will keep OHS' museum open seven days a week (47 hours a week) and the library open to the public 32 hours a week. It supports curation for the museum, and the continued collection and protection of Oregon's historical artifacts and documents. Levy funds will also protect the collection of Oregon history documents and artifacts, and public access to those, at four East Multnomah County Historical Societies -- Fairview-Rockwood-Wilkes Historical Society, Gresham Historical Society, Troutdale Historical Society, and Crown Point Country Historical Society - - which together will receive \$160,000 of the levy each of the five years.

The levy supports continuation of educational programs including free admission for all school groups who visit the museum and library, and for all County residents -- providing access to those otherwise unable to visit due to cost. Funds shall be allocated in a manner that supports an OHS board, partnerships, staff, exhibits and programs that proactively represent Multnomah County's diverse cultures.

The cost of the levy renewal is \$.05 (five cents) per \$1,000 assessed property value, beginning 2021 through 2026. For example, the owner of a home assessed by the County at \$200,000 will continue to pay \$10 a year for this levy.

Accountability is a component of the levy. The Multnomah County Chair will continue to appoint an independent citizens oversight committee -- representative of Multnomah County's diverse communities -- to review all levy expenditures and ensure funds are spent as approved by voters, and shall advise and support OHS in ensuring that its board, partnerships, staff, exhibits and programs proactively represent Multnomah County's diverse cultures. In addition, Multnomah County will continue to select an auditor, for which OHS will pay, to conduct annual audits of levy funds that will be made available to the public.

This levy will fund approximately one-third of operations at OHS. Other funds come from admissions, grants, and private donations.