

Multnomah County: Governance Structure

**October 8, 2025
Susheela Jayapal**

Governing Documents

- **County Charter = County Constitution**
 - General powers - “authority over matters of county concern”
 - Elected officials, terms of office, term limits
 - Elections and campaign finance
- **County Code = County Legislation**
 - Detail on administrative structure and operations
 - List of county departments
 - Ordinances - outward facing legislation
- **Administrative Rules**
- **Board Resolutions**

Chair and Board of Commissioners

County Chair

- Elected county-wide
- Chief Executive Officer
 - Sole authority to appoint and direct administrative officers
 - Appointment of department heads require consent of majority of Board of Commissioners
 - Prepares and submits budget for board approval
- Member and Presiding Officer of Board of Commissioners

Board of Commissioners

- Chair plus four commissioners elected by district
- Approve budget with majority vote (i.e. 3 members)
- Approve appointment of department heads with majority vote
- Vote of 4 members required to create or abolish departments
- Approve ordinances and resolutions by majority vote

Other Elected Officials

- Sheriff
- District Attorney
- Auditor

County Charter Review - 2027-2028

- The charter requires that every six years, county creates a Charter Review Committee
- Last committee was empaneled 2021-2022; referred seven charter changes; six passed
 - Gender neutral language
 - Extending voting rights to the limit of the law
 - Instant Runoff Ranked Choice Voting
 - Jail inspections
 - Created an ombudsperson
 - Auditor access to information
 - Expansion of charter review process
- Next committee will be empaneled March 2027

Relationship with Cities and Metro

Homelessness

- Housing - Portland Housing Bureau, Metro
- Shelter - County, Cities
- Services - Primarily county
- Space Management - Cities
- Supportive Housing Services Measure Oversight - Metro

Public Safety

- Policing - Cities, Sheriff
- Prosecution - District Attorney
- Jails - Sheriff
- Community Justice - County