

Elections Division • Tim Scott, Director

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Promoting Access to Voting

NIST Request for Information

Multnomah County, Oregon

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Multnomah County has 571,441 registered voters as of July 2021, the largest of any county in Oregon.

Oregon is an entirely vote by mail state, which alleviates many challenges faced by people with disabilities when it comes to voting. All voters can vote in their own homes and on their own timeframe. Vote by mail keeps cost per voter low, allowing us the opportunity to assist those with barriers to voting.

Voters with Cognitive Disabilities Need Recognition and Support

One group we want to call attention to are those voters with cognitive disabilities. This important article points out that these citizens are barely recognized, but according to the CDC make up 10.8% of the adults in the United States. See the abstract [Last Suffrage Movement: Voting Rights for Persons with Cognitive and Emotional Disabilities](#)

What Multnomah County does to support voters with disabilities

1. Provide access to Alternative Format Ballots (AFB) online. It is a legal ballot and the web site provides a marking tool that the voter uses at home on their own



computer. Once the AFB is marked it can be printed and returned in the standard vote by mail return envelope that is mailed to every voter.

2. Provide online and phone responses to voter's questions. See <https://www.multco.us/elections/accessible-voting-options> for our accessible voting options.
3. Same day call back to begin discussion of what will make voting accessible to that individual voter.
4. Use as much existing infrastructure as possible; when there are gaps we assist with ballot delivery and pick-up, reading and marking a ballot at the voter's direction and review, provide signature guides and voter mark alternatives (Attestation), language support including video American Sign Language (ASL), Independent Voter Units (IVU), large print materials, and many highly individualized supports.
5. Outreach efforts to residence homes for disabled and elderly voters. We establish relationships with operators of smaller residence homes as well. We provide an Effective Address Report which gives operators a list of who is registered at their address and the status of that registration. By providing this information well in advance of any elections deadline, staff at the facility can help make sure the voter receives their ballot in the mail.
6. Provide Voter Assistance Teams (bipartisan pairs of deputized election officials) that meet the voter where they are to assist in every phase of voting, from registration to casting a ballot up to the 8pm Election Day deadline.
7. Assist voters who are homeless and disabled by creating specially formatted addresses and assigning the appropriate precinct, working with them to determine a safe and accessible place to receive and vote their ballot.
8. Many acts of special handling for voters who are overseas, disabled, and lack support.
9. Continuous training for elections workers to assist and use all enabling technologies.
10. Formal annual evaluation of elections support for all vulnerable voters.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions about the services we provide to voters with disabilities.

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Voter Assistance Team Coordinator