

Dear Multnomah County Charter Review Committee members,

I am writing you this letter today as a member of the Multnomah County Auditor Community Advisory Committee. I am also a 4th year PhD student with areas of emerging expertise in civic engagement and ethics as it pertains to equity in organizations.

As a community member of this committee, I have gained a lot of information as it pertains to audit work in Multnomah County. The County Auditor not only audits for financial improprieties (my initial, anecdotal thought), but acts as a primary mechanism of ensuring accountability to the community by performing audits related to best practices in terms of treatment and conditions. As you may know, accountability is a cornerstone of our democratic values—and this office in particular is uniquely situated to represent that value for Multnomah County. In order to do this properly, a clear independent authority for this office must exist. It helps align the office with best practices and can help them continue to follow the ethical principles set forth in the Government Accountability Officer's code of ethics which is largely centered on pursuing the public interest independent of conflicts of interest.

I have also been moved by the office's sensitivity to issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2021, we are at a moment where this work is critical to maintaining the legitimacy of government work. This office takes the County's motto of "leading with racial equity" to heart by incorporating trauma- and equity-informed practices in the way they approach audits.

Despite this good work, capacity issues remain. The County Auditor and her staff have used many creative ways to add capacity to the organization, but the simple truth, in my opinion, is that resources are needed. Comparative to other institutions, the resources provided to this office has not kept up with the growing need within the community and inflationary financial landscape. It is my opinion that any resources provided would enhance the office's functioning by allowing them to engage in more projects in line with accountability and responsiveness to the community.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with further questions or concerns related to my letter.

Sincerely,

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