

City of Portland Voter Education Report



March 2025

Prepared by the City of Portland's Transition Team

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Voter Education Report

November 5, 2024

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to report on the City of Portland's non-partisan voter education program that educated Portlanders on the new form of government and election method leading up to the November 2024 election. This report will be included as an appendix to the Charter Transition Team final report.

Background

Charter Mandates

In summer 2022, the Charter Commission voted to advance measure 26-228 which proposed to overhaul the City of Portland's form of government and election methods. On Nov. 8, 2022, Portlanders voters passed ballot measure 26-228 with a vote of 58% to 42%.

The voter-approved amendments to the City's charter included three interconnected changes:

- Allow voters to rank candidates in order of preference, using ranked-choice voting;
- Create four new geographic districts with three members elected to represent each district, expanding city council to a total of 12 members; and
- Establish a mayor-council government structure in which the city council would set policy, a mayor would carry out laws and supervise a professional city manager that manages city services.

The passage of measure 26-228 required the City of Portland to conduct periodic voter education campaigns to familiarize voters with the ranked-choice voting election method.

The Charter Transition team, the team responsible for the implementation of measure 26-228, was charged with leading the City's nonpartisan voter education program for the November 2024 election.

Overall Voter Education Approach

Key Partners

The Charter Transition voter education team worked in close partnership with City of Portland Elections Office and Multnomah County Election Division to plan, coordinate, and contribute to a robust and complementary voter education campaign. The City's voter education team was composed of staff from both the Charter Transition team and City Elections office staff, who collaborated and coordinated on strategies, outreach, and funding for activities. The City's voter education team also collaborated with:

- The Government Transition Advisory Committee Voter and Candidate Outreach and Education subcommittee to provide feedback and support implementation of voter education activities.
- 311 Program to answer community questions and amplify our materials and activities.
- Neighborhood Coalition Offices, City of Portland Central Communications, and Portland City Council offices to share and amplify activities and messaging.

Vision

The City's voter education program aimed to eliminate barriers to civic participation by promoting inclusivity and ensuring that every voter, regardless of background or circumstance, had access to the information and resources needed to exercise their right to vote. Accessible voter education is essential for all Portlanders. A successful voter education program:

- Allows voters to feel confident in casting their vote, and that their votes will be tabulated in the ways that they intended.
- Addresses misinformation and provide voters with factual and non-partisan information.
- Caters to the needs of our diverse and vibrant communities.
- Contains material that are co-created whenever possible into the nine primary languages identified by the City of Portland, to include: Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, Somali, Ukrainian, Romanian, Nepali, Chuukese.
- Addresses access, cultural, and technological barriers.

Best Practices

In building the voter education program, the voter education team developed a voter education program that centered best practices at its core which included:

- Focusing on the voter experience.
- Providing clear, consistent, accurate and timely information.
- Ensuring information and materials are accessible for all voters – information that caters to different needs, and is available in multiple formats.
- Using multiple platforms for outreach— combining digital and in-person activities.
- Collaborating with key community groups, organizations, and trusted messengers.
- Fostering trust and transparency.

In addition, the team used the “bite, snack, meal” education framework for structuring learning experiences based on the depth and duration of engagement with content. This framework helped design flexible, scalable learning materials that cater to different levels of attention and need. The bite, snack, meal education framework is as follows:

- **Bites are quick learning moments.** They are short, digestible pieces of content, such as a short video, infographic, definition, or key fact.
- **Snacks are medium-length learning activities.** They feature more in-depth content, such as the comic or a longer video.
- **Meals are a deeper learning experience.** They offer an extended dynamic learning opportunity, such as town halls or community meetings.

Voter Education Program

To meet the City's vision for its voter education program, the City's voter education program, used best practices to develop a voter education program based on three strategies:

1. **Broad voter education utilizing existing communications channels.** The focus of this strategy is for the City and County to coordinate a broad public education campaign using established government communication and outreach systems.

- **The following tactics were executed or developed to support this strategy:** a voter education website, mock RCV election platform, city-wide mailer, ballot insert, coloring pages, frequently asked questions document, fact sheets, social media toolkit, e-newsletter, paid media strategy, educational videos, intern program, community presentations, community townhalls, and tabling.
- 2. **Education led by the Portland Elections Office.** Expanding the City’s capacity to educate candidates through candidate learning sessions. Since candidates are a primary point of contact for voters, they can help communicate about changes to Portland’s election method.
 - **The following tactics were executed or developed to support this strategy:** Candidate guide, candidate information learning sessions, elections dashboard, and additional engagement led by the auditor’s office.
- 3. **Partnership focused on hard-to-reach voters.** Plan and coordinate a voter education plan focused on educating harder-to-reach voters, especially Portlanders who historically have been left out of city hall decision-making.
 - **The following tactics were executed or developed to support this strategy:** non-partisan voter education materials including fact sheet, door hanger, talking points, social media content, ads, translation, paid multilingual paid campaign, coalition outreach and subgrants to 11 community-based organizations.

Timeline

The City of Portland and Multnomah County began to plan and budget for Portland’s first nonpartisan voter education effort after the passage of measure 26-228. Below is a high-level timeline of key voter education activities:

- April 2023: Hard to Reach Voter contract Request for Proposals released for community proposals.
- July 2023: Hard to Reach Voter contract awarded.
- August 2023 – December 2024: Voter Education Plan Development.
- December 2024: Candidate guide & Information Sessions begin.
- January 2024 – May 2024: Material and collateral development.
- May 2024: Official external launch of voter education.
- May 2024 – August 2024: Spring and summer outreach.
- September – October 2024: Focused outreach.
- November 2024: Last voter education push.
- December 2024 – February 2025: Reporting and final presentations.

To avoid voter confusion and to adopt best practices, the voter education team waited to begin robust ranked-choice voting education conversation and strategies until after the May 2024 primary election. The voter education team wanted to ensure voters did not confuse the May 2024 election (old voting method) with the new election method for the November 2024 election. After the May 2024 election, the City and its partners gradually increased their voter education strategies, outreach, and events in spring and summer, leading up November 2024 election.

Strategy 1: Broad Voter Education

Overview

The Broad Voter Education Strategy focused on a coordinated far-reaching public education campaign using existing government communication and outreach channels. The first phase of the strategy focused on creating a series of multilingual and accessible voter education materials, and the second phase focused on then using those materials to educate voters using existing communication and outreach channels. The City and Multnomah County developed a series of materials that were created and coordinated on providing consistent messaging and distribution of those materials in community.

Materials Created

The following is an inventory of the City of Portland and Multnomah County's educational materials used to implement the broad voter education strategy.

- [Voter education website](#): A multilingual website for community members to access all the created materials, watch videos and learn about upcoming voter education events.
 - Also available in [Spanish](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Somali](#), [Ukrainian](#), [Arabic](#) and [Simplified Chinese](#).
- [Mock ranked-choice voting election platform](#): An online mock ranked-choice voting platform was embedded on the City's voter education website so that community members could practice using ranked-choice voting in a variety of mock elections. Community members had the option to participate in an existing election and/or customize and run their own election.
- [Mailer](#): A double-sided mailer showing a district map, a mock ballot, and common mistakes was delivered to every Portland household using direct mail.
- [Ballot insert](#): A double-sided insert as part of the ballot packet, that included tips on filling out your ballot, information on where to call for help, and how to fix your ballot if you make a mistake.
- [Educational comic](#): A six-page educational comic that describes the overall changes to the City of Portland's form of government and election method.
 - Also available in [Spanish](#).
- [Multnomah County's educational comic](#): A double-sided comic describing ranked-choice voting.
 - Available in [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Ukrainian](#), and [Vietnamese](#).
- [Coloring sheet](#): A coloring sheet of the new district map for children.
- [Fact sheet about new election methods](#): A factsheet focused on the upcoming changes to elections including district representation and ranked-choice voting.
 - Also available in [Spanish](#), [Russian](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Somali](#), [Ukrainian](#), [Arabic](#), [Japanese](#), [Romanian](#), [Swahili](#) and [Lao](#).
- [Fact sheet about city council](#): An educational factsheet highlighting upcoming changes to City Council in 2025.

- [Frequently asked questions](#): A frequently asked questions document answering key questions about the November 2024 election and ranked-choice voting.
 - Available in [Spanish](#), Russian, [Vietnamese](#), and [Simplified Chinese](#).
- [Election presentation](#): Slides of a presentation that goes over ranked choice voting and how to fill a ballot.
- [Recording of elections education presentation](#): A recording of an elections education presentation by City of Portland and Multnomah County.
- [Community posters](#): A series of community posters form of government and election methods, including district maps, mock ballots, overall changes.
- [District map](#): A map of the City of Portland’s geographic districts and a place for Portlanders to look up their district.
- [Blank ballot](#): A blank mock ballot, for folks to visual a potential ballot and practice filling it out.
 - Also available in [Spanish](#), [Russian](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Somali](#), [Ukrainian](#), and [Arabic](#).
- [City’s district video](#): A short educational video highlighting the four city council districts.
- Multnomah County RCV Videos: [Long](#) and [short](#) versions of ranked choice voting explainer videos.
 - Short version available in [Spanish](#), [Ukrainian](#), [Somali](#), [Russian](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), and [Vietnamese](#)
 - Long version available in [Spanish](#), [Ukrainian](#), [Somali](#), [Russian](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

Distribution of materials

Voter education materials were made available on the City’s voter education website for printing and for distribution at the Portland Building’s front desk, East Portland Community Center, Multnomah County Elections Division, district coalition offices, and Multnomah County libraries. Community members could also request printed copies of educational materials via email or by calling 3-1-1. In total, the City provided an estimated 32,700 copies to more than 36 community groups. Materials and activities were also amplified through Charter Transition monthly e-newsletters, with over 3,400 subscribers. Materials and opportunities were also promoted through Civic Life and other bureaus’ e-newsletters, through citywide employee emails, and in 45 posts on social media (@portlandgov).

Every Portland household, 324,838 households, received an educational mailer.

Materials were also provided at all the tabling events, community town halls and in-person briefing events.

Community events

As part of the second phase of this strategy, the voter education team shared the educational materials at a variety of community events, briefings and townhalls. Staff, volunteers, and interns staffed various of these events amplifying voter education materials.

Community Town Halls

The education team hosted six community town halls. Two of the town halls were hosted virtually for City employees and four were hosted in person and virtually and open to anyone. At the town halls, participants got the opportunity to hear an educational presentation from City of Portland and Multnomah County staff and spend time asking questions. At all the townhalls there ASL and Spanish interpretation available. In total, 1,042 participants attended.

- RCV Town Hall 9/24/24 from 6 – 7:30 p.m. at Parkrose High School
- RCV Town Hall 9/24/24 from 3 – 4 p.m. hosted virtually for City employees
- RCV Town Hall 9/26/24 from 11 – 12 p.m. hosted virtually for City employees
- RCV Town Hall 10/10/24 from 2:30 – 4 p.m. at Blanchet House, co-hosted with Street Roots
- RCV Town Hall 10/10/24 from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. hosted virtually
- RCV Town Hall 10/19/24 from 1:00 – 2 p.m. hosted virtually

Tabling at Community Events

The voter education team attended various community events and tabled with voter education materials. Additionally, the voter education team partnered with 3-1-1 team, and they distributed voter education materials at all tabling events they attended. In total there were voter educational materials at 22 tabling events.

- Rigler Elementary School Resource Fair on 05/23/24
- Sunday Parkway: Cully Neighborhood on 6/1/24
- Juneteenth Celebration on 6/15/24
- Summer Free for All: Concert in Gilbert Heights Park featuring Tequila Highway on 7/13/24
- Mississippi Street Fair on 07/13/24
- Summer Jam Music Festival on 07/19/24
- Portland Pride Festival on 7/20/24
- Summer Free for All concert in Knott Park featuring Bridge City Soul on 7/20/24
- Summer Free for All concert in Columbia Park Annex featuring Jim Pepper Fest 2024 on 7/27/24
- Summer Free for All concert in Kenton Park featuring Glass of Hearts on 7/27/24
- Montavilla Street Fair on 7/28/24
- Portland Pickles Game on 7/28/23
- Summer Free for all concert in Verdell Rutherford Park featuring Barrio Mestizo on 8/3/24
- Jade Night Market 8/10/24
- Summer Free for All Concert in K^hunamokwst Park, Hip Hop in the Park on 8/22/24
- Soap Box Derby 8/28/24
- Summer Free for All Concert in Columbia Park featuring Bottleneck Blues Band on 8/30/24
- Sunday Parkway: SW Multnomah on 9/22/24
- Mt. Olivet Baptist Public Services Fair on 9/28/24
- Dia De Los Muertos on 10/01/24
- Scare Grounds PDX on 10/12/24
- Blazer Game on 11/01/2024

Voter Education Interns

The voter education team was fortunate to have the support of two college undergraduate voter education interns. The interns supported outreach and events, specifically summer tabling. The interns were headquartered in the City Elections Office and worked closely with the Charter Transition Team to support voter education outreach.

Government Transition Advisory Committee

The Government Transition Advisory Committee (GTAC) Voter & Candidate Education & Outreach Subcommittee, composed of eight committee members, worked with the voter education team to refine and provide feedback on strategies, materials, and voter education budget. The voter education team met with the Subcommittee 12 times between November 2023 through January 2025. In addition to aiding the work of the voter education team, the Subcommittee did their own voter education outreach and completed 140 community presentations on ranked-choice voting. Please see the final GTAC report to see the full list of presentations and lessons learned.

Media Campaign

The voter education team coordinated for a paid media campaign throughout summer and the weeks leading up to when ballots dropped. Print, digital and social media ads were placed in both local neighborhood publications and larger publications. Ads were placed on Willamette Week, Portland Mercury, Oregonian, Portland Tribune, SE examiners, The Bee, St. Johns Review, Street Roots, Star News, NW Examiner, Bike Portland, and Portland Business Journal. Multnomah Elections Division and the City Elections Office coordinated for paid billboards and bus wraps on TriMet busses. All the ads directed readers to the City's voter education website.

In addition to the paid media campaign, the Charter Transition Team's public information officer arranged for a variety of broadcast interviews for City staff and the voter education contractor.

Ranked Vote Platform

The voter education team purchases a license to use the Ranked Vote web application platform. The Ranked Vote platform was used to demonstrate what a mock ranked-vote election would look like, a way for community members to practice and customize their own election. The platform was available in over 30 languages. The city staff partnered with different city bureaus and groups to run specific ranked choice voting contests. For example, one of the tabling events was at a Portland Trail Blazers game. The City partnered with the Moda Center to run a mock election, and game attendees were able to rank their favorite food from the stands.

Approach 2: Hard-to-Reach Voters

Overview and purpose

The City of Portland released a request for proposals for a partner to help the City and Multnomah County coordinate a voter education plan focused on educating voters the city has had a challenging time reaching. The focus of this funding opportunity was to communicate to hard-to-reach voters by forming a coalition of, and sub-grant opportunities with, local nonprofit and community-based organizations. These organizations could assist in disseminating this vital information through trusted mediums to members of populations who traditionally lacked access to inclusive voter education and are most likely to benefit from focused, supplemental outreach.

The City defined harder-to-reach voters such as Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color; immigrants and refugees; seniors; people with disabilities; members of the City's minority language communities; unhoused and housing insecure residents; communities with limited digital access; and residents of neighborhoods with turnout below the City average. The City of Portland recognized that other Portland residents may also benefit from focused outreach, and therefore encouraged applicants to identify other potentially vulnerable or hard-to-reach populations in their proposals in addition to, or instead of, the populations specified.

Through the competitive recruitment process, the contract was awarded to United Way of the Columbia-Willamette for a collaborative project between Portland United for Change, Democracy Rising, and Hearts & Minds Communications. The main components of the contract included:

- Nonpartisan voter education materials
- Coalition outreach and voter education grants
- Multilingual paid media campaign

Voter Education Grants

The Portland Votes 2024 Grants could be used for projects that conduct different types of voter education activities and programming about the new elections system to priority populations. Voter Education Grant Program offered \$210,000 in grant funds. There were three types of grant categories available including:

- **Direct voter education grants:** Applicants have citywide reach and a track record of educational opportunities provided to the listed priority populations.
- **Community education grants:** Applicants are culturally specific or population-based organizations with paid staff (priority to language groups).
- **Communications grants:** Applicants may be priority population based social service providers.

Community-based organizations and nonprofits interested in a voter education grant were required to submit a robust application which included organization and project team, project plan and benefits, and a budget. Applications were reviewed, scored, and selected by an evaluation committee composed of staff from the City of Portland transition team, City Elections Office, and Multnomah County Election Division.

Use of Funds

Grants activated could not be used for political campaigning or electioneering. Use of funds were to be used solely for non-partisan voter education on City of Portland's new election methods. Project activities were strictly prohibited from being used for or combined with any activities in support of or opposition to any candidate(s) for public office. Grantees were required to sign legal agreements that outlined how funds may be used. Grantees could have been removed from the program with funding rescinded if violations of this policy occurred. In addition to legal liability under the law, misuse could have result in the grantee having to repay 100% of grant funding to the City regardless of any incurred expenses or may result in grantee not qualifying for future grants.

Recipients of Voter Education Grants

The program team was thrilled with the number of organizations interested in supporting voter education efforts. Nearly \$1 million in requests were submitted, far exceeding the \$210,000 available in the grant opportunity.

The grant portfolio has strong representation from culturally specific organizations and covers activities across all three of the program areas and funding levels: direct voter education (range: \$30,000-\$50,000), community education (\$15,000), and communications (range: \$4,000-\$5,000).

Direct Voter Education Grantees received \$40,000 in funding:

- **APANO:** Provide culturally and language-specific educational events, canvassing, digital outreach, and more to reach AANHPI communities.
- **Native American Youth and Family Center:** Provide mock RCV election sessions, ballot information, and education at cultural and community events to reach Native communities.
- **Urban League of Portland:** Engage voters at community lunch and learns, youth events, social media, and more to reach African Americans and other communities.

Community Education Grantees received \$15,000 in funding:

- **East County Rising Community Projects/Ebony Collective CDC:** Provide train-the-trainers, door-to-door outreach, mock elections, and more to reach BIPOC and East County communities and residents.
- **Future Prairie and the Pacific Northwest Museum of Queer Art:** Provide voter education through arts events, productions, networks, to reach queer artists in LGBTQIA+ and ALAANA communities.
- **Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization:** Provide town halls, mock elections, member outreach, and more to reach refugee and immigrant communities across cultures and generations.
- **Latino Network:** Engage voters through town halls, social media, training, phone canvassing, and more to reach Latino youth, families, and communities.
- **Next Up:** Provide peer-to-peer outreach, canvassing, phone banking, and more to reach young people ages 13-35 from BIPOC and other communities.

Communications Grantees received \$5,000 in funding:

- **Cascade AIDS Project:** Provide information through existing networks, publications, and sites, to reach LGBTQ+ people and people affected by HIV.
- **League of Women Voters of Portland:** Provide education through training workshops, materials, speaking engagements to serve all residents of the City and Multnomah County.
- **YWCA of Greater Portland:** Provide outreach, education through digital communication, direct outreach, virtual events, to reach marginalized voters and communities.

Paid Media Campaign

Together with the City, the voter education contractor engaged in culturally specific media, and paid communications to ensure citywide coverage. The contractor collaborated with the City and County to cross reference individual media plans to maximize coverage.

The media plan included outreach in several different mediums to meet voters where they are. This included in-language radio, paid search, social media ads, and digital display. Radio ads were written by Hearts & Minds and then recorded by grantee organizations to ensure information was coming from trusted voices in the community

The media plan had two distinct phases:

- Phase 1 Education and confidence building: Build confidence in the new voting procedure, and address barriers for those who may not initially understand or trust it.
- Phase 2: Drive potential voters to the City of Portland's landing page to access tools and resources around ranked choice voting and district-based elections. In particular this phase focused on encouraging voters to fill out a practice ballot.

Programmatic display ads were created in English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese. Terrestrial radio ads went live on iHeart Radio and Jamn107 in English, and in Spanish on Bustos and KGDD. Social media animated ads were posted on Facebook and Instagram in English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese.

Materials

The voter education contractor combined national best practices as well as local expertise for best approaches for reaching hard-to-reach Portlanders and material creations. The voter education contractor team worked with the City, County, and community partners to develop unified messaging to deliver accurate, non-partisan information to the public by ensuring that messaging remained consistent. The suite of materials made available through the contract included a one pager, door hanger, talking points, and a train the trainer presentation accompanied by a voter education presentation. The voter education contractor also used transcreation rather than translation to develop culturally resonant content and material in English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean.

One of the primary best practices that surfaced through the material creation process was that the primary focus of all materials to be on the voter experience, additional steps in the election process, such as tabulation, would be explained to voters in additional resources but the first point of contact should only focus on the role of the voter.

Approach 3: Candidate Education and Education led by the City of Portland Elections Division

Overview and purpose

The City Elections Division (“Division”), housed in the Auditor’s Office, largely supported the voter education work lead by the Transition Team and outside of the City by Multnomah County Elections. There were two main areas of voter education that the City Elections Division led, candidate and news media education. Additionally, the Division conducted some large-scale post-election analysis in preparation for leading the City’s voter education efforts in the 2026 election cycle.

For both candidates and news media, the purpose was to provide key individuals with the material and knowledge about ranked-choice voting that would then trickle down to their much larger audience. Candidates, through their own campaigning and the news media’s coverage of the election, had vested interests in making sure Portlanders understood the new system of elections. It is also often the case that the most dangerous source of misinformation can come from candidates and news organizations. This provides an additional incentive to ensure they are well informed.

Candidate Education

In large part, this program consisted of three main components:

- **Candidate Guide:** This comprehensive guide on how to run for election is standard practice for most election jurisdictions. It is the first and most important tool that a candidate turns to when making the decision to run for office. We dedicated an entire chapter of this guide to ranked-choice voting and the new charter changes. By doing so, we could pass the information on to candidates through a source they were accustomed to without creating a large capacity strain on our Division. The following is a link to that Guide for reference: [City of Portland Candidate Guide 2024](#).
- **Candidate Learning Sessions:** Five learning sessions were held in total. Two “Introductory” sessions were held in January of 2024 that were focused on the base knowledge that a candidate might need in order to make the decision to run. The other three were run in early June 2024 and focused more on the process of candidate filing and the charter changes. Many of the attendees of these sessions did not end up filing to run for office, but approximately 30% of the overall candidates attended at least one of our sessions. An additional Candidate session was held in September that was primarily focused on common misinformation at the time related to ranked-choice voting and the election. This session was done in partnership with Multnomah County Elections and included a tour of the ballot processing facility. 50-60% of the filed candidates attended this session and the feedback received was generally positive. This session was focused on building trust in the process and should become a standard informational session for candidates in the future.
- **Relationship Building:** A concerted effort was made to build an educational and informational relationship with the candidates in 2024. As our intention was to have them act as trusted messengers to the voters they approached, we wanted them to see us as trusted messengers on election information. This partnership paid off in October 2024, when we worked together with the candidates to quickly disseminate information that was meant to counter specific

misinformation occurring at the time. Analysis indicated to us that a misunderstanding related to overvotes on ranked-choice ballots was causing confusion which could (and eventually did) lead to some voters not having their ballot counted as intended. Over 20,000 flyers were distributed in District 1 alone and this distribution could not have occurred without the assistance of the candidates.

Media Education

The bulk of the media education occurred during two “pre-bunking” events which were intended to cover the general information needed to report on a ranked-choice election, and provide an extensive question and answer session for interested media. These events were conducted in partnership with Multnomah County Elections and outside partners such as the University of Oregon’s journalism school. Although these sessions likely prevented some amount of misinformation from being reported, there were still regularly errors that appeared in news stories. The relationships and initial delivery of information to journalists at these events was helpful when working to correct inaccuracies in news reports.

Post-Election Analysis

In preparation for fully taking over voter education during the 2026 election cycle, the City Elections Division worked on several projects to collect and analyze data. Below are links to some of this analysis and goes into far more detail, including some lessons learned and future considerations:

- [Voter polling data intended to fill the role of an exit poll.](#)
- [Focus groups for some of the priority voting populations in Portland.](#)
- [2024 Election Outcomes and Preliminary Voter Education Report.](#)

Several of the high-level takeaways from this analysis are:

- More and better peer-to-peer education.
- More education needs to occur around overvotes.
- Additional thoughtful engagement should be conducted in District 1 and with voters of color.
- Levels of awareness and understanding of ranked-choice voting in Portland outperformed other similar jurisdictions implementing first time elections.
- The number of candidates in Portland City elections was overwhelming to most voters.

Additional Engagement Led by Auditors Office, Elections Division

- Accessible Voting Event
- Paid Media in cooperation with Multnomah County Elections
- Train the trainer events with partners like 311, grantees, etc.
- Voter Education Internship Program
- Voters in Custody: voter education for eligible voters in the County Jail system
- And a number of one-off events where tabling or presentations on ranked-choice voting occurred.

Lessons Learned

Top considerations for future voter education programs:

Increased staffing: The Charter transition team operated with only one full-time project manager, responsible for strategy, project management, budget, contracting, committee meetings, timelines, deliverables, partnerships, and material reviews. Limited support from community engagement and communication staff, who were also juggling other priorities, was insufficient to meet all community requests. Volunteer members of the Government Transition Advisory Committee also contributed significantly by conducting community presentations. For future voter education programs, it is essential to increase staffing, particularly during the summer and late fall, to support outreach and tabling efforts effectively.

Graphic Design: Developing educational materials such as fact sheets, mailers, presentations, posters, and social media content required substantial time and design work, especially for multilingual materials. While the team benefited from a communications staff member with graphic design skills, they were stretched thin with competing priorities. Future programs should consider hiring dedicated graphic design staff or contracting design services to meet these needs efficiently.

Translations: The City sought to use Multnomah County's elections translation vendor for translating materials but faced contract delays that made this collaboration unfeasible. Establishing a contract with the vendor in advance will ensure consistency in translations between city and county educational materials.

Timeline coordination. Collaboration with jurisdictional partners provided comprehensive voter education but often faced misaligned timelines. Future planning should account for these discrepancies and allow ample time for coordinated efforts.

Sense of urgency: There was often a sense that ranked-choice voting was not being discussed enough. While there was some interest in voter education about ranked-choice voting during the early spring and summer, the majority of people showed greater interest in the fall. Having a prepared team to focus in summer and in the fall will be crucial.

Funding community-based organizations: There was significant interest from community organizations to support voter education, with over \$1 million in funding requests for the grant program. However, only \$210,000 was available for grants. Future programs should consider increasing grant funding to better support community involvement.

Working with community-based organizations: Many community-based organizations provide essential culturally specific services, language access, and are trusted messengers. These organizations are invaluable to civic engagement efforts and should remain central to future voter education strategies.

Ranked Vote Platform: The ranked vote platform proved to be an effective tool for helping community members practice ranked-choice voting through mock elections. While organizing partnerships and outreach required significant staff capacity, the platform was highly beneficial. Future programs should continue to use the platform and account for the staffing needed to maximize its impact.

Contracting: Establishing and amending voter education contracts required significant time. Future planning should include ample time in the contracting schedule leading up to the voter education

program. Additionally, incorporate an unrestricted contingency task order to address any emergency misinformation or communication crises, especially in the period leading up to the election.

Partnership with 311: The partnership with the City and County's 311 program proved to be an invaluable resource. They supported tabling events, connected us with constituents, and provided real-time information and feedback on questions from the community.

Appendices

Appendix A: [Voter Education Plan](#)

Appendix B: [Portland Votes 2024 Program Report](#)

Appendix C: [Voter Education Contract Questions from the Government Transition Advisory Committee January 2024](#)