

# MultNoMo Overview

If you live in Portland, you're paying for two governments that spend more time fighting each other than solving your problems.

## 1. We're One City with Two Governments

- **4 out of 5** county residents live in Portland — we're 80% of the population and 70–80% of the tax base
- Both governments maintain separate HR, IT, legal, and communications departments
- City: 7,000+ employees. County: 5,600. Largely serving the same population.
- Portland is Multnomah County in everything but name

## 2. Two Governments Can't Solve Big Problems

Two overlapping jurisdictions create a confusing patchwork not equipped for complex challenges:

- **Homelessness:** The Joint Office of Homeless Services spent \$1.3 billion while homeless deaths quadrupled. More people left county shelters for the streets than moved into permanent housing.
- **Public Safety:** After a fatal shooting at Central Library, the county called it "the city's sidewalk." The mayor said safety was "within the power of county leadership." 55 days later, a man was stabbed at the same spot.

## 3. No One's Accountable

- When something goes wrong, each government points at the other
- One commissioner described it as "being at a dysfunctional family dinner" where "we can't talk about our respective responsibilities"
- Only 25% of residents trust local officials — down from 63% in just five years

### Oregon Law Provides a Solution

The **City-County Act of 1971** (ORS 199.715) gives us a legal path forward:

- Signing our petition starts a study process — it's not a vote for consolidation
- A 13-member charter commission designs the new government with public input
- Voters get the final say — consolidation only happens if approved
- Other cities like Gresham and Troutdale choose for themselves

Jacksonville, Nashville, Louisville, San Francisco, Denver, Philadelphia, Honolulu, Kansas City and other jurisdictions all consolidated successfully.

**One community needs one government.**

# MultNoMo FAQ

## What does signing the petition do?

Signing the petition says the question deserves serious study — it doesn't vote yes on consolidation. If we gather enough signatures, a 13-member charter commission spends up to two years designing a proposal with public input. Then voters decide if consolidation should happen.

## Will my taxes go up?

The goal is to reduce waste, not raise taxes. You're currently paying for duplicate administrative departments across two governments. The charter commission determines the exact structure, and voters approve or reject it.

## What happens to city and county employees?

The law explicitly protects employees after consolidation, including employment status, pensions and benefits, collective bargaining rights, and protections against worsening positions. Employees transition to the new government with these legal safeguards. The target is wasteful duplication in management, not frontline workers who deliver services.

## What about Gresham and other cities in the county?

Each city votes separately on whether to join. Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview, Wood Village, and Maywood Park can opt in or stay independent. Nobody is forced to join.

## Has this worked elsewhere?

Yes. Jacksonville merged with Duval County (1968), Nashville with Davidson County (1962), Louisville with Jefferson County (2003). San Francisco, Denver, Philadelphia, Honolulu, Kansas City and other jurisdictions all operate as combined city-counties.

## Who designs the new government?

A 13-member charter commission including state legislators, city and county representatives, and representatives from other cities. They have up to two years to design the charter with public input.

## What if voters reject the charter?

Nothing changes. Consolidation only happens if a majority of both Portland and Multnomah County voters approve.

### How can I help?

- Sign the petition
- Go to [MultNoMo.org/how](https://MultNoMo.org/how) to volunteer and get involved
- Tell your friends and neighbors!

