



Department of County Management

MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

Budget Office

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TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Shannon Busby, Senior Budget Analyst

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SUBJECT: Multnomah County Master Fee Schedule

New for FY 2012, the Budget Office is creating a master fee schedule that will capture a significant portion of the fees the county charges to the general public. The intent of this project is to create a central and easy to use access point for information on the county's fees for the general public, as well as to provide better internal visibility and management of the County's revenue streams.

Background:

Multnomah County charges fees to the public for certain services. These fees range from the more common, such as restaurant inspection charges through the Health Department, or recording fees through the County Clerk, to the more esoteric disposition of an off-road vehicle fee through the Sheriff's Office. For fees that are not set by other jurisdictions such as the state, department directors are responsible for determining fee amounts. As stated in the county code (see appendix A), fee amounts are to be based upon actual costs of providing the service though there are exceptions where fees amounts are determined by ability to pay. Fee amounts are also often evaluated and approved by a citizen board or council within departments and most are presented to the board for approval.

The fees that the county charges are currently found piecemeal throughout the county website and offices. Some fee schedules are posted on the related department pages, while others are located in the county code and some are only available in the office where the service is provided. For members of the public new to the process some of the fees can be difficult to source and internally it can be challenging to form a broad picture of the scale and scope of fee revenues. Getting information about historical fee amounts or when a fee was last evaluated and updated is often a cumbersome process. Relating fees charged to revenues collected at a granular level can be time consuming as the county's SAP system does not necessarily have this information. To get the information one has to make requests to the department's that collect the fees for reports.

Master Fee Schedule:

In order to help alleviate some of the difficulties in the current process the budget office is creating a master fee schedule that will be a central resource for fees the county charges to the public. The fee schedule will be available on the budget office's website and will provide general information on and amounts of the fees, as well as give links to additional resources for individual fees, such as the location of the fee in the county code, fee schedules on department websites, and outside sources such as the state's website.

The budget office will also collect and maintain information that is not included in the published schedule. This information includes: which fund and cost element the individual fee revenues are applied to, which individual in the county to contact for information on a fee, when the fee was last evaluated or updated, and what the fee amounts were in previous years. The budget office will use the information collected to ensure that fees are applied consistently across departments and that fees are being evaluated and updated in a timely manner. Revising and publishing the fee schedule will become part of the annual budget process, though current procedure for board approval on changes in fees will remain.

Going Forward:

In the coming fiscal year the budget office intends to:

- Evaluate consistency of fees charged across departments
- Review fees that have not been updated in recent years
- Review systems and processes for maintaining fee data
- Continue Operations Council Involvement

Appendix A- Fee Policy from the County Code:

§ 11.001 POLICY AND PURPOSE OF FEES.

Because of the increasing costs to the county of providing services to the public and of discharging the legal responsibilities of the county, and because of the decreased availability of general county revenue to defray costs, the Board declares it to be in the interests of the people of the county for the fees established in this code of ordinances to be imposed and collected by the county from the persons directly served or affected by the provision of such services and the performance of such responsibilities.

(' 90 Code, § 5.10.005, 07/01/1998; Ord. 105, passed, 07/10/1975)

§ 11.002 FEES FOR PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS.

The director of each department of the county shall establish a schedule of fees, which shall be conspicuously posted at appropriate locations, for publications and copies of records provided by the department. The fees for copies of records shall, where appropriate, differentiate between and specify fees for copies according to the method and format of reproduction. The fees authorized by this section shall be based upon actual cost as determined by the directors.

(' 90 Code, § 5.10.060, 07/01/1998; Ord. 157, passed, 12/29/1977)