

WHO'S WHO? in Oregon Politics



Voting is a public way of saying, "Our families count, and our voices matter!"

Civic engagement means getting everyday folks involved in the decisions that affect our families and communities. Election season is an important time for us to speak up, and there are many ways we can all get involved in the process, regardless of our citizenship status.

Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities know the decisions elected leaders make impact our daily lives. Today, there are more than 250,000 APIs in Oregon, and our community is growing. API families come from more than 100 different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups—we have diverse needs and experiences.

Many API families are struggling with the rising cost of housing, being pushed out of our neighborhoods and communities due to high prices, struggling to support students



in our schools, and trying to find affordable healthcare. Elected leaders have the power to pass policies, create and fund programs, and listen to API communities when coming up with solutions.

This guide focuses on Oregon's statewide and locally elected positions. You can find information about federal elected office and who is on the ballot in your voter guide.

CAN I VOTE?

You must be a US citizen and at least 18 years of age at the time of the election. Oregon's expanded Motor Voter law makes voter registration automatic when an eligible, unregistered voter visits the DMV to apply for, renew, or replace an Oregon driver's license, ID card, or permit.

In 2016, 20,000 API voters, about 50% of the unregistered API voters eligible to vote, will be enrolled through the new Motor Voter law.

If you have a past felony conviction, you may re-register after release from prison, and people on parole and probation can vote. Not sure if you're registered? Check at: sos.oregon.gov.

Regardless of your voting status, you can still make a difference!

- Encourage and educate people who can vote.
- Share this guide at your church or with your neighbors.
- Write letters to your local paper about issues you care about.

HOW TO VOTE IN OREGON



Oregon is a vote by mail state. A ballot will be mailed to all registered voters.



1 Complete your ballot, place it in the secrecy envelope, seal it and put it in the return envelope.



2 Sign the return envelope after double checking your name and address are correct.



3 Place stamp on the envelope and mail it back.



NOV 5

If it's after November 5, you'll need to drop off your ballot at an official ballot site.

All ballots must be received by 8:00pm on Election Day in order to be counted.

OREGON STATEWIDE ELECTED POSITIONS

GOVERNOR

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Chief of the state. Elected every four years.

- Chief of the state military and armed forces.
- Appoints representatives to commissions and vacant agency positions.



Signs bills into law.



Can veto legislation, recommend laws, and ensures existing laws are being executed properly.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Heads the state's chief legal and law enforcement office. Elected every four years.

- Represents the state in legal matters.
- Supports statewide crime victim service programs.



Represents the state's position in all legal matters in court, including housing discrimination and racial profiling.



Issues opinions and interpretation of Oregon law or proposed laws, including voting rights, immigration, and healthcare implementation.

SECRETARY OF STATE

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Oregon's chief elections officer. First in the line of succession for Governor. Elected every four years.

- Helps ensure the right to participate in federal, state, and local elections.
- Serves as the state's auditor, ensuring public money is used appropriately.



Helps ensure that no Oregonian is unfairly denied the right to vote.

OREGON STATE LEGISLATURE • The Oregon Legislature is divided into two houses: the Oregon State Senate and the Oregon State House of Representatives. During odd years, Oregon Legislators meet for 160 days, and meet for 35 days during even years.

OREGON STATE SENATOR

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

The state is divided into 30 State Senate Districts and each district elects one senator. State Senate seats are up for election every four years.

- Enacts state laws in areas such as state taxes, education, child care and conservation of natural resources.
- Shares budget-making responsibilities with the Governor.



Makes decisions about funding priorities, such as Oregon public schools and other services, including English Language Learning programs throughout the state.



Can expand healthcare access for API communities facing barriers due to citizenship status or income.



Can change planning regulations to ensure development of low and moderate income housing.

OREGON STATE REPRESENTATIVES

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

There are 60 State House Districts. Each district elects one representative. All State House seats are up for election every two years.

Same as above.

Same as above.

LOCAL ELECTED POSITIONS

Positions in local government may be elected by voters in a specific district or city/county wide. City governments in Oregon have different structures, in some the Mayor is the most powerful and in others the City Council has more power. Learn more about your city government structure to cast your vote.

CITY MAYOR

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Elected official who leads city government. Serves a four-year term.

- Determines policies for all city services and proposes the budget for a city.

 Can provide financial support to community services which support low income families.

 Makes zoning and budgetary decisions that could promote or prevent development of affordable and temporary housing, such as emergency homeless shelters for mothers and children.

 Can introduce a new tax or fee for a council vote.

CITY COUNCIL

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Council composition may vary by city. This elected position works with the mayor to manage city government. Each member can serve a four year term. Half of city council members are up for reelection every two years.

- Determines policies for all city services, such as building codes, zoning, and managing public services.
- Responds to emerging community needs and issues.

 Can provide financial support to community services which support low income families.

 Makes zoning and budgetary decisions that could promote or prevent development of affordable and temporary housing, such as emergency homeless shelters for mothers and children.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Elected officials who lead county government. Each commission has between three and five members.

- Determines policies for all services provided by county agencies.
- Provides community services like county health departments, public transportation, public housing and libraries.

Same as above.

SHERIFF

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Sheriffs are the only locally elected law enforcement positions. Each of the 36 counties elects a sheriff.

- Provides law enforcement for unincorporated areas of a county, but sheriffs do not normally patrol in cities which have their own police agency.
- Maintains the county jail.

 Serves warrants and civil papers.

 Has enforcement discretion regarding federal immigration detainees in county jails.

 Makes arrests.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Prosecutes all felonies, misdemeanors, and serious traffic offenses.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Screens, files, and prosecutes all criminal cases in the county.
- Has discretion to decide which cases to pursue and how to pursue them.
- Provides assistance to victims including navigating the Victims Compensation program.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



Decides what to charge in prosecuting cases from domestic violence to drugs.



Decides if cases should be referred to drug court or other alternative sentencing or diversion programs.

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD

Oregon has 220 school districts, and each one has a locally elected school board. School boards usually have five to seven members, elected at-large or by district.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Adopts policies to guide the school district.
- Hires and evaluates the superintendent for the district.
- Approves the annual budget.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



Decides what is taught in local public schools, such as Ethnic Studies, which APANO successfully campaigned for in 2016.



Makes decisions about campus security including the level of police interaction with youth.



ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NETWORK OF OREGON (APANO) is a statewide, grassroots organization, uniting Asians and Pacific Islanders to achieve social justice. We use our collective strengths to advance equity through empowering, organizing and advocating with our communities.

For more information, contact our Civic Engagement Manager, Kathy Wai at Kathy@apano.org or (971) 340-4861.

STRONG FAMILIES is a program of Forward Together. APANO is a member of Strong Families, joining more than 170 groups working to change how we think, feel, act, and make policy about families.



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