



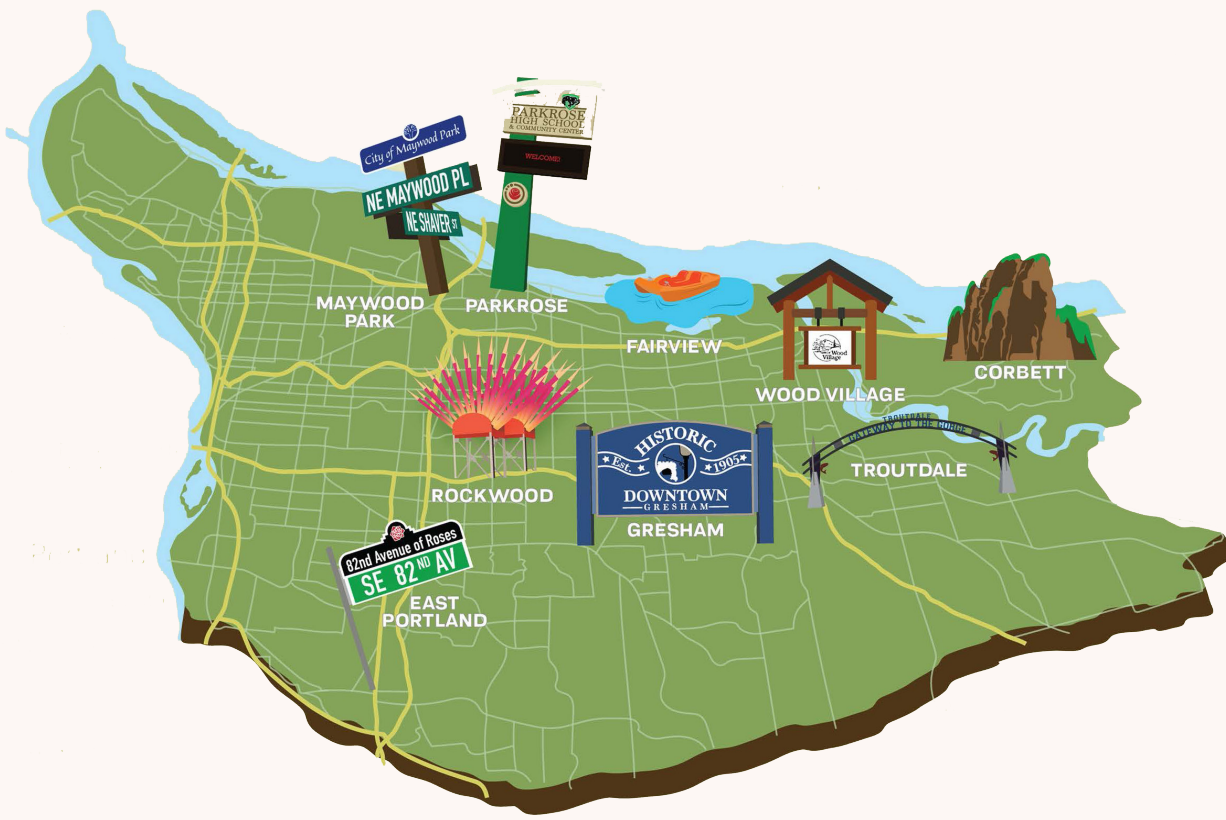
East County Rising
**IMPACT
REPORT**
2023-2024

ABOUT EAST MULTNOMAH COUNTY

We describe East Multnomah County (East County) as the area encompassing the section of Portland east of 82nd Avenue, as well as the cities of East Portland, Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview, and Wood Village. The area is home to a rich mix of cultures and languages, making it one of the most diverse parts of Oregon. However, East County residents have been historically disengaged and underrepresented in local elections. In the aftermath of the 2016 Presidential election, many community members felt a strong need for an organizing body to cultivate the power of the people and help East County ensure that *all* its community members are heard.

ABOUT EAST COUNTY RISING

Through organizing, policy advocacy and electoral politics, East County Rising Action Fund 501(c)(4) and its sister organizations, East County Rising Community Projects 501(c)(3) and East County Rising (PAC), work together to energize civic engagement and meaningful change in East County. Together, the organizations are actively working to create a vibrant, sustainable community with equitable opportunities that meet the needs of all of East County’s community members.



A MESSAGE FROM EAST COUNTY RISING LEADERSHIP



As we step into East County Rising’s seventh year, I’m in awe at where we find ourselves. In just six short years, East County Rising has evolved from a grassroots initiative born from pure community need into a powerful force for community change. We’ve strengthened our infrastructure, built and deepened key relationships, and engaged with a wide variety of community members, all to build long-term and lasting power and capacity to create the change East County needs.

One of our most significant advancements in recent years was the launch of the East County Rising Action Fund (ECRAF) in 2023. By complementing the existing work of our PAC and 501(c)(3), ECRAF has strengthened our advocacy and political impact, creating a powerful three-pronged structure that maximizes our influence across East County. This addition enabled us to engage more deeply in local politics during the 2024 elections, ensuring that more voices of East Multnomah County residents were heard and represented.

As part of this exciting new chapter, we are also thrilled to be welcoming fresh faces – and positions – to our team in the first quarter of 2025. For the first time ever, we will welcome a full-time Communications and Development Director to help us expand our reach and secure funding and collaborations. In addition to this new role, we look forward to welcoming a new Program Manager who will grow and oversee our field programs for endorsed candidates and initiatives, train and engage members, volunteers, build coalitions with community partners, and organize impactful events. With a solid organizational structure beneath our feet, we feel primed to bring in new energy and capacity that will help us drive our mission forward.

Because one thing is certain – investing in politics and community engagement at the local level is crucial, perhaps now more than ever. By doing so, we can hear what our communities need, build their power to advocate for themselves, and ultimately create a better future for all. Thank you for being part of our growth. I can’t wait to see what we’ll accomplish together in this next chapter.

In community,
Josué Peña Juárez
Operations Director

A MESSAGE FROM EAST COUNTY RISING BOARD MEMBER



In 2018, my friend and colleague Eddy Morales founded East County Rising PAC to build power amongst our county's underserved communities, and I'm proud to have had the privilege of stepping in and serving as the inaugural Executive Director. In those early days, our focus was clear: to uplift and amplify the voices of East County residents. Today, as a committed member of the board, I am honored to have a front seat at witnessing how far we've come. Our efforts have expanded beyond grassroots mobilization to include so much more - from leadership development to civic engagement to policy advocacy. Our comprehensive strategy now ensures that we address the needs of our community from every angle, creating sustainable and inclusive growth.

It is clear to me that our dedicated team of staff and members, board members, passionate volunteers, and unwavering supporters have made this progress possible. Together, we have cultivated a stronger, more connected East County, where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

As we look to the future, I am so excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. With our collective commitment and energy, I am confident that East County Rising will continue to drive positive change and set new benchmarks for community power.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. The best is yet to come!

Luz Reyna
Board Member

OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

In 2024, East County Rising was proud to support voters in East Multnomah County as they took steps to strengthen our democracy and elect strong leadership committed to fighting for every member of our community. By activating both the PAC and 501(c)(4), the East County Rising team ensured that members of the East County community were informed, supported, and excited to participate in our democracy.

Our Wins



17 out of 24
ECR-endorsed
candidates won their race



3 out of 6
ECR-supported ballot
measures passed

Our Contributions

In 2024, the ECR team:



knocked on more than
50,000 doors



held more than
**1,800 educational
conversations** about ranked
choice voting



employed 40
part- and full-time
paid field team members



EAST COUNTY RISING A TIMELINE OF OUR GROWTH

In the aftermath of the 2016 elections, a concerned community comes together to discuss issues they want to change for the better in East Multnomah County, and the idea to form East County Rising PAC (ECR PAC) is born.

ECR PAC is officially launched and announced to the community with an event of over 200 East County residents, including elected officials and early organizational partners.

ECR PAC staff and board work to endorse, train, and support its first slate of candidates, including ECR's founder, Eddy Morales, who ran for Gresham City Council and beat out long-time incumbent and President of the City Council by just 59 votes. Out of the 10 candidates ECR PAC supported, 9 won their race.

ECR PAC gets the wheels turning for the May Special Election for school boards. The slate of candidates was majority BIPOC women with strong LGBTQ+ representation and over half were first-time candidates. 10 of the 11 candidates won, securing seats in 5 school districts.

ECR PAC endorses 8 candidates in its first Primary election, with 6 advancing to the general election and one winning the Multnomah County District Attorney position in that special election.

ECR PAC's fall slate includes 15 candidates, the largest yet, with 6 who won their primaries and 9 new endorsements. The PAC expanded its reach to Wood Village and Fairview city councils. Youth staff launched a program to engage young people in election work, allowing 14 youth to become embedded in campaigns and gain hands-on experience.

After the fall election victories, ECR PAC refocused on the May special election for school boards. ECR PAC endorsed its largest slate to date. With community support, 13 of the 16 candidates won.

ECR PAC joined the We Draw Oregon coalition to advocate for fair redistricting. The coalition's efforts focused on educating the community about redistricting's impact and mobilizing participation in the district mapping process, resulting in more equitable lines for East County.

East County Rising Action Fund 501(c)(4) is launched to bolster advocacy and political impact, solidifying a dual 501(c)(3)-501(c)(4) structure.

ECR PAC transitions into acting primarily as a fund and ECR Action Fund assumes political engagement activities.

ECR Action Fund endorses its largest slate to date. With community support, 17 of 24 endorsed candidates win and 3 of 6 ballot measures are passed.

ECR Action Fund implements its most robust, and collaborative political and civic engagement program to date, playing a pivotal role in East Portland's first election under the voter-approved changes to Portland's government system, including ranked choice voting.

East County Rising Action Fund

East County Rising PAC (ECR PAC)

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

East County Rising Community Projects (ECRCP)

KEY

- East County Rising PAC
- East County Rising Community Projects
- East County Rising Action Fund

East County Rising Community Projects (ECRCP) is formed from the idea that we need year-round organizing around issues in East County to continue building on the momentum of the PAC's successes, develop community leadership, build a volunteer and voter base that will turn out and hold elected officials accountable, and advocate for improving the community.

ECRCP is selected to be a part of the We Count Oregon Census Coalition (WCO) to increase census equity and participation in the upcoming 2020 Census.

Through its community education program, Our Communities, Our Voices, ECRCP partnered with Washington County Ignite to virtually train 20 aspiring candidates from across the state.

Through community organizing, ECRCP identifies housing instability as a rising concern. This leads to the formation of the Housing Stability and Dignity Campaign, which focused on addressing housing issues in Gresham and East County.

Participatory Budget (PB) Oregon invites ECRCP to join the Youth Voice, Youth Vote PB project, a multi-year initiative to collaboratively implement Oregon's first participatory budget process.

ECRCP launches its first cohort of Rising fellows. The cohort of six fellows were all women and the majority identified as people of color. This inaugural program set the foundation for future cohorts, amplifying underrepresented voices in local advocacy and politics.

ECRCP's first Rising Fellows cohort graduated. Following the achievements of these fellows, ECR reevaluates its curriculum for the Rising Fellows initiative, choosing to increase hands-on experience for its next round of fellows.

ECR continues work with Our Parks, Our Future coalition, which has approximately 30 members, and helps to secure first funding of recreation in Gresham and also saved Shall Forest.

ECR continues work on the Youth Voice, Youth Vote PB project, doing general community education on what participatory budget is and encouraging youth to participate in initial surveys for participatory budget.

ECRCP brings together more than 175 organizers, renters, small business owners, students, volunteers, policymakers, and advocates across East County for the East County Rising Summit of 2023. This is a transformative day for diverse members of East County to network, participate in informative workshops, and engage in conversations about their East County's history, challenges, and effective strategies for progressive governance and cultural change.

ECRCP begins an exciting partnership with Metro to offer and manage 2024 Rise Up! Community Enhancement Grants in East County. The initiative is part of Metro's regional program aimed at improving communities surrounding the region's 9 waste transfer facilities.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

Youth Voice, Youth Vote

In 2021, Participatory Budgeting Oregon invited East County Rising to join a multi-year initiative to collaboratively implement Oregon's first participatory budget process, Youth Voice, Youth Vote PB, in East County. The goal was simple, to allow youth living in Oregon State districts 24 & 25 an opportunity to develop projects and decide how to invest \$500k to help them recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

From Fall 2022 to the end of 2024, youth brainstormed more than 243 ideas on COVID-19 recovery projects and partnered with East County Rising and other participating organizations to narrow down the ideas, develop them into 5 key projects, and implement them. Over 800 young people between 13 and 25 years of age in East County voted to select the winning projects. These projects were completed by the end of 2024 and addressed issues such as connecting youth with employers, establishing mentorship programs for youth artists, supporting youth facing challenges with housing and homelessness, and more.

Ultimately, this collaboration made clear that youth who get involved, stay involved. We're proud of our work to engage and support more East County Rising community members and look forward to fostering these relationships in the years to come.



Rise Up Grants

In 2023, East County Rising began an exciting partnership with Metro to offer and manage 2024 Rise Up! Community Enhancement Grants in East County. The initiative is part of Metro's regional program aimed at improving communities surrounding the region's nine waste transfer facilities. The grants were made available to nonprofits, schools, and local governments who provide services or implement programs within the Rise Up! grant boundary area, which includes the cities of Troutdale, Fairview, and Wood Village. This initiative allowed our community to learn about grant making and empowered them to make funding decisions that impact their community.

Rising Fellows Program

In Fall of 2021, East County Rising Community Projects launched the Rising Fellows program for civic-minded individuals to learn community organizing skills, gain real-time experience and build their local network. In 2024, we were proud to celebrate our second cohort of fellows as they graduated from the program, equipped with new tools and skills to contribute to their communities.

The Rising Fellows program guides fellows as they gain hands-on experience through workshops, direct involvement with decision-making bodies, and over 3,000 hours of community work, including registering voters, attending city council meetings, and engaging with local officials. The program emphasizes comprehensive development, offering training in strategic communication, project management, and networking. By fostering connections with community leaders and decision-makers, we aimed to enhance the organizing capacity of our fellows, empowering them to effectively mobilize their communities and influence local governance.

The Rising Fellows Program not only supported individual growth but also strengthened community-based organizations, bridging the gap between civic institutions and the communities they serve. As we expand, our focus remains on building a sustainable framework that amplifies the voices of East Multnomah County's diverse communities, ensuring they are well-represented and actively engaged in shaping local and regional policies.

I was motivated to apply to be a Fellow because of the previous work that ECR has done in my community. There was an educational opportunity and I felt honored to have been selected and taught about community organizing. The most significant impact my fellowship has had on my personal development was getting involved with an agency filled with like-minded people. I felt like I was not so alone in my thoughts and experiences in East County. I also had the opportunity to connect with community leaders that have put ECR's vision into action.

- Rosalie Diaz, 2024 Rising Fellow



East County Rising Summit

On October 14, 2023, East County Rising brought together more than 175 organizers, renters, small business owners, students, volunteers, policymakers, and advocates across East Multnomah County for a day-long summit. The East County Rising Summit of 2023 was a transformative day for diverse members of the East County to network, participate in informative workshops, and engage in conversations about their East County's history, challenges, and effective strategies for progressive governance and cultural change.

The summit focused on critical local issues such as housing affordability, transportation, and the future of schools, parks, and recreation. These topics reinforced a sense of community engagement and energy for the

progressive work ahead. With support and engagement from such a variety of community members, the summit was a game-changer in progressive politics, providing a much-needed opportunity for the East County community to rally together for inclusive growth and equal opportunity and give the community a shared lexicon to organize together.

As the summit drew to a close, there was a shared sentiment of gratitude, with many expressing hope for a future recurrence of this transformative gathering. Ultimately, the East County Rising Summit of 2023 catalyzed our collective commitment to a transformative future for East Multnomah County, serving as a model of a multicultural, pluralist democracy where every voice is respected and heard.

Being a place-based organization is what I believe sets ECR apart from other organizations who do similar work. This means that our work can extend across a multitude of demographics by doing a variety of types of organizing, as we are not as limited in the causes we can champion and the ways in which we can pursue solutions to those problems.

- Helena Guerrero Sullivan, Lead Field Organizer



Portland Votes (Voter Education)

In 2024, East County Rising was proud to play a pivotal role in East Portland's first election under the voter-approved changes to Portland's government system. This election allowed voters to rank up to six candidates in order of preference, using ranked-choice voting; established four geographic districts, with three city council members elected to represent each district (expanding city council to a total of 12 members); and established a city council that focuses on setting policy and engaging with community, transitioning day-to-day oversight of bureaus to a mayor elected citywide and a professional city administrator.

In collaboration with the Ebony Collective CDC, East County Rising led voter education initiatives to familiarize East Portland voters with the new ranked-choice voting system and district elections. These efforts mobilized the community to engage with these historic changes, setting a foundation for ongoing voter education to boost local election participation.

Our field team knocked on more than 40,000 doors and campaigned for more than two months, working alongside partners, candidates' campaigns, and volunteers during a challenging election year. We were proud to be part of the city's inaugural voter education campaign on ranked-choice voting, supporting candidates across the ballot and serving as the region's most active advocate for election engagement.

“While tabling, I met a man who was originally skeptical about Ranked Choice Voting. After speaking with him, he was excited to vote using the new system because he looked forward to the opportunity to rank candidates in preference order. I'm glad that someone who felt failed by the system was able to feel optimistic about voting - and that his voice would finally be heard.”

- Billy Fish, Field Manager



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P.O. Box 94, Fairview Oregon 97024



info@eastcountyrisingaction.org



(971) 202-0262