

**372.9 Home rule charter procedure.**

A city to be governed by the home rule charter form shall adopt a home rule charter in which its form of government is set forth. A city may adopt a home rule charter only by the following procedures:

1. A home rule charter may be proposed by:
  - a. The council, causing a charter to be prepared and filed and by resolution submitting it to the voters.
  - b. Eligible electors of the city equal in number to at least twenty-five percent of the persons who voted at the last regular city election petitioning the council to appoint a charter commission to prepare a proposed charter. The council shall, within thirty days of the filing of a valid petition, appoint a charter commission composed of not less than five nor more than fifteen members. The charter commission shall, within six months of its appointment, prepare and file with the council a proposed charter.
2. When a charter is filed, the council and mayor shall notify the county commissioner of elections to publish notice containing the full text of the proposed home rule charter, a description of any other form of government being presented to the voters, and the date of the election, and to conduct the election. The notice shall be published at least twice in the manner provided in [section 362.3](#), except that the publications must occur within sixty days of the filing of the home rule charter, with a two-week interval between each publication. The council shall provide copies of a proposed charter for public distribution by the city clerk.
3. The proposed home rule charter must be submitted at a special election on a date specified in [section 39.2, subsection 4](#), paragraph “b”, and in accordance with [section 47.6](#). However, the date of the last publication must be not less than thirty nor more than sixty days before the election.
4. If a proposed home rule charter is rejected by the voters, it may not be resubmitted in substantially the same form to the voters within the next four years. If a proposed home rule charter is adopted by the voters, no other form of government may be submitted to the voters for six years.
5. If a petition for the appointment of a charter commission is filed at any time within two weeks after the second publication of a charter proposed by the council, the submission to the voters of a charter proposed by the council must be delayed, a charter commission appointed, and the council proposal and the charter proposed by the charter commission must be submitted to the voters at the same special election.
6. The ballot submitting a proposed charter or charters must also submit the existing form of government as an alternative.
7.
  - a. If only two forms of government are being voted upon, the form of government which receives the highest number of votes is adopted.
  - b. If more than two forms are being voted upon and no form receives a majority of the votes cast in the special election, there must be a runoff election between the two proposed forms which receive the highest number of votes in the special election. The runoff election must be held within thirty days following the special election and must be conducted in the same manner as a special city election.
8. If a home rule charter is adopted:
  - a. The elective officers provided for in the charter are to be elected at the next regular city election held more than sixty days after the special election at which the charter was adopted, and the adopted charter becomes effective at the beginning of the new term following the regular city election.
  - b. The adoption of the charter does not alter any right or liability of the city in effect at the time of the special election at which the charter was adopted.
  - c. All departments and agencies shall continue to operate until replaced.
  - d. All measures in effect remain effective until amended or repealed, unless they are irreconcilable with the charter.
  - e. Upon the effective date of the home rule charter, the city shall adopt by ordinance the

home rule charter, and shall file a copy of its charter with the secretary of state, and maintain copies available for public inspection.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §372.9]

[89 Acts, ch 39, §8](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1134, §103, 115](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §65, 71](#)

Referred to in [§372.3](#), [372.4](#), [372.5](#)