

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a County Charter?

The Lane County Charter is the document that describes how the county operates.

It sets the rules for how the county manages its governing duties and includes information about:

- The county name;
- The form of governance and management the county uses;
- How the Board of Commissioners is selected;
- Timeframes for certain activities related to governance;
- The services the county offers;
- Which positions at the county should be appointed versus elected;
- And more specifics about what how the county serves the community.

Not all Oregon counties have their own charter. A 1958 amendment to the Oregon Constitution allowed Oregon county voters the right to adopt **home rule charters**, and Lane County is one of nine counties which does. The Lane County Charter was first approved by voters in 1962.

Have there been changes to the charter since it was approved? Yes. All the changes to the Lane County Charter are documented in the [final pages of the charter document](#), beginning on page 21.

What is a Charter Review Committee?

Every ten years, the Board of County Commissioners appoints seven community members to the charter review committee. This group of your neighbors identify parts of the charter that might need to be updated or changed. Interested community members complete an application to be considered for the appointments, and each Commissioner selects one person to represent their district (for a total of five members). The appointees then select two at-large members to serve on the committee.

You can [view vacancies for all Lane County advisory committees and boards](#) on the Lane County website.

How is the County Charter changed?

Any changes the Charter Review Committee proposes must be approved by Lane County voters. The vote happens once the Board of County Commissioners refer the updated charter to the voters, or when 8% of qualified voters petition to put the charter changes on the ballot.

How can community members participate in this process?

Community members are welcome to attend any [committee meeting](#), provide public comment at the beginning of every committee meeting, [provide written comment](#) to the committee at any time, and provide [public comment directly to the Lane County Commissioners](#).

What happened last time there was a charter review committee?

The materials from the last Charter Review Committee are available under the "Prior Action" tab on [this committee website](#). These materials include [the committee report and recommendations](#) to the Board of County Commissioners made in 2011.