



City of Gainesville Charter Initiative Process

(Per City of Gainesville Charter and Ordinance)

Charter Amendments

Electors may initiate amendments to the Charter of the City of Gainesville by petition.

A political committee must be formed in order to submit a petition proposal and to collect petition signatures.

Only registered voters of the City of Gainesville may sign the petition.

Petitions equal to **10%** of the registered voters as in the last City regular election are required.

Petitioner must submit text of the proposed charter amendment and petition form to the Supervisor of Elections for approval of form. The form of the petition must comply with that described in s. 9-17 of the City of Gainesville Code of Ordinances. (Attached)

On the date of approval of the petition form by the Supervisor, petitioners shall have **90 days** to acquire the required petitions (not counting the date of approval) and file them with the Supervisor of Elections.

Required fees (\$.10 per petition) shall be paid upon submission of the petitions to the Supervisor of Elections.

The Supervisor shall have **45 days** after submission to verify the signatures.

If the Supervisor certifies that the requisite number of signatures were verified, the City Commission shall place the proposed amendment on the ballot of either the next statewide primary or general election which occurs on or after 135 days from the day all petition forms were submitted to the Supervisor of Elections not counting the day of submittal). Alternatively, the City Commission may at its discretion place the proposed amendment before the electors at a special election called for the purpose. This special election shall not be called earlier than 90 days following the date of the Supervisor's certification, not counting the date of the certification.

All petitions must be submitted at least 135 days before the election on which you want to place the issue.

2022 City of Gainesville Statistics

Number of Registered Voters 2022 Gainesville Regular Election = 79,736

Required Number of Signatures = 7,974

Gainesville City Code of Ordinances Chapter 9

Sec. 9-16. - Submission of petition proposing Charter amendments to supervisor of elections.

(a) Any petition form proposing an amendment to the Charter of the City of Gainesville shall be submitted to the supervisor of elections for approval as to format prior to the petition being circulated for signatures. Such submission shall be in writing and shall include a copy of the petition form proposed to be circulated. The supervisor of elections shall review the form as to the sufficiency of the format only and render a decision. No review of the legal sufficiency of the text of the proposed charter amendment is to be undertaken by the supervisor of elections.

(b) The petition drive shall start on the date of approval by the supervisor of elections of the form of the petition and shall terminate 90 days after that date, not counting the date of the approval. In the event sufficient signatures are not acquired during that 90-day period, the petition initiative shall be rendered null and void and none of the signatures may be carried over to another petition.

(Ord. No. 3969, § 1, 4-11-94; Ord. No. 980736, § 1, 1-11-99)

Sec. 9-17. - Petition format.

(a) A petition proposing a charter amendment shall be circulated for signatures only if the format of the petition is deemed sufficient by the supervisor of elections. To be sufficient, the petition form must be printed on separate cards or individual sheets of paper. The minimum size of such forms shall be 3" × 5", and the maximum size shall be 8 1/2" × 11", as measured at the outer boundary of the form. Additional material may be attached; however, when detached, the petition must be consistent with the dimensions and content of the form approved by the supervisor of elections. Each form shall contain space for only one elector's signature. Forms providing for multiple signatures shall not be approved by the supervisor of elections.

(b) The top of the petition form shall be clearly and conspicuously entitled "Charter Amendment Petition Form" followed by "I, the undersigned, a registered voter of the City of Gainesville, hereby petition pursuant to Section 5.01 of the Charter of the City of Gainesville and Chapter 9 of the City of Gainesville Code of Ordinances, to have the following proposed amendment to the Charter of the City of Gainesville submitted to a vote of the electors at a regular city election, a state-wide general election, or at a special election called by the City Commission for the City of Gainesville for that purpose." The petition form shall conspicuously contain the full text of the amendment being proposed which shall be presented in a legislative strike through (delete)/underline (addition) format. Should the text be required to be printed on both sides of the form, it shall clearly indicate that the text is continued or begins on the

other side. The petition form shall conclude with adequate space for the signer's printed name, residence street address, city, precinct number, date signed, and signature. Additional materials supporting the proposed amendment, or providing a method by which the petition form may be returned by mail to the sponsors, may be attached to the form. The supervisor of elections shall not review the content of such material.

(c) Each form shall be deemed a political advertisement as defined in F.S. § 106.011(17), and must contain the information required by F.S. § 106.143.

(d) Petition forms may be reproduced in newspapers, magazines, and other forms of printed mass media, provided such forms are reproduced in the same dimensions and format as approved by the supervisor of elections. The petition forms may be included within a larger advertisement, provided the forms are clearly defined by a solid- or broken-line border of the approved dimensions and format. Forms included within a larger advertisement must be removed from the larger advertisement prior to being submitted to the supervisor of elections for signature verification and counting.

(e) Any change in a previously approved petition form, or additional types of petition forms for the same proposed amendment, shall be submitted to the supervisor of elections for approval in advance of circulation, in accordance with this section.

(Ord. No. 3969, § 2, 4-11-94; Ord. No. 980736, § 1, 1-11-99)

Sec. 9-18. - Verification of signatures on petition.

The person or organization sponsoring the petition shall submit signed and dated petition forms on or before the expiration of the 90-day period, and upon submission pay all fees as required by F.S. § 99.097. The supervisor of elections shall verify the signatures on the submitted approved petition forms in accordance with the provisions of F.S. § 99.097 to determine whether or not ten percent of the registered voters of the city as of the last preceding municipal regular election have petitioned for an amendment to the city charter. The supervisor of elections shall within 45 days of submission (not including the day of submittal) verify the signatures thereon and certify to the city commission whether or not the requisite number of signatures has been verified. If the supervisor of elections certifies that the requisite number of signatures were verified, the city commission shall place the proposed amendment on the ballot of either the next statewide primary or general election which occurs on or after 135 days from the day all the petition forms were submitted to the supervisor of elections (not counting the day of the submittal). Alternatively, the city commission may at its discretion place the proposed amendment before the electors at a special election called for the purpose. This special election shall not be called earlier than 90 days following the date of the supervisor's certification, not counting the date of the certification.

(Ord. No. 3969, § 3, 4-11-94; Ord. No. 960153, § 1, 10-28-96)