

What is a Charter County

A Charter is a document that spells out the powers, duties and structures of government and the rights of citizens. It is often compared to constitutions at the local level.

The way public officials are elected, the form of government, and the role citizens play in local government.

Florida Constitution 1968 Revision

Home Rule

A local government has all powers of self-government except those that are specifically prohibited or pre-empted by the State.

Look for Prohibition. Absent prohibition, empowered to act.

Charter can -

- Alter a form of government (size, terms, Executive Branch)
- Alter electoral representation (districting schemes; Executive Branch)
- Convert elected governmental positions (Sheriff, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections) and may transfer duties to other positions.

Charter cannot -

- Be inconsistent with the Florida Constitution or the Florida Statute

Example – Florida Constitution establishes property taxes as the major local government funding source and vests control over other local tax sources with the state legislature. County can levy only those types of local government taxes specifically authorized by state law.

If voters want to place a special tax on new development to help pay for additional school teachers and police officers, they cannot do so.

Florida Charter Counties

Electorate in 20 of 67 Counties Have Adopted Charters

COUNTY	YEAR CHARTER ADOPTED	PARTISAN ELECTIONS	DISTRICTING SCHEME	5 ELECTED CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS	TERM LIMITS	*POPULATION
Alachua	1987	Yes	5 at-large	Yes	No	246,770
Brevard	1994	Yes	5 single-member	Yes	Yes – 2 terms	545,625
Broward	1975	Yes	9 single-member	No	Yes – 3 terms	1,771,099
Charlotte	1986	Yes	5 at-large	Yes	No	163,357
Clay	1991	Yes	5 single-member	Yes	Yes – 2 terms	192,071
Columbia	2002	No	5 single-member	Yes	No	67,729
Duval	1968	Yes	Mixed 14/5	Yes	Yes – 2 terms	869,729
Hillsborough	1983	Yes	Mixed 4/3	Yes	Yes – 2 terms	1,256,118
Lee	1996	Yes	5 at-large	Yes	Yes – 3 terms	638,029
Leon	2002	No	Mixed 5/2	Yes	No	277,670
Miami-Dade	1957	No	13 single-member	No	Yes – 2-terms	2,551,290
Orange	1987	No	6 single-member	No	Yes-2 terms	1,175,941
Osceola	1992	Yes	5 at-large	Yes	No	280,866
Palm Beach	1985	Yes	7 single-member	Yes	Yes – 2 terms	1,335,415
Pinellas	1980	Yes	Mixed 4/3	Yes	No	920,381
Polk	1998	Yes	5 at-large	Yes	Yes – 2 terms	606,888
Sarasota	1971	Yes	5 at-large	Yes	Yes – 2 terms	383,664
Seminole	1989	Yes	5 at-large	Yes	No	428,104
Volusia	1971	No	Mixed 5/2	No	Yes – 2 terms	497,145
Wakulla	2008	Yes	5 at-large	Yes	No	30,771

**About 80% of Florida's residents live in a charter county.*