

Morgan County – Home Rule FAQs

Are there other counties in Colorado that have their own Home Rule Charter?

Yes. Weld and Pitkin. Denver and Broomfield are Cities and Counties and continue to perform the mandatory services delegated to counties (e.g., recording of deeds, assessment of taxes, collection of taxes, etc.) while also exercising home rule municipality authority.

What will it cost the County to implement this?

There is a cost for the special election in March 2026, which could be as much as \$40,000.00. The goal is to have the draft charter for the voters to consider at the November 2026 election. Because that election is a general election, there will be limited additional financial cost to the County for that second election.

Which of the municipalities in Morgan County are home rule municipalities?

Only Fort Morgan is home rule municipality.

Who chooses the Charter Commission members?

Voters will elect Charter Commission members during a Special Election on March 10, 2026.

Candidates appearing on the March 10, 2026 Special Election ballot to become a Charter Commission Member completed the official Candidate Nomination Petition process. The deadline for completed petitions to be returned to the Clerk's Office is January 5, 2026, at 4 p.m.

How can I be involved in the Home Rule process?

There are several ways to stay engaged in this process.

Qualified electors may run for a position on the Charter Commission.

If formed, Charter Commission meetings will be open to the public in person and via zoom. Meeting notices, agendas and minutes will be posted on the County's website.

Under Home Rule, would there be any disruptions in the state funding for the County?

No. Becoming a Home Rule Charter will not affect Morgan County's ability to receive state funding

What is the Board of County Commissioner's role in drafting the Charter?

If elected, the Charter Commission will operate independently from the Board of County Commissioners. Once drafted the Charter is presented to the Board for the Board to refer to the voters. The Board has no power to change the Charter presented.

What role will the Charter Commission members fill?

If voters approve the formation of a Charter Commission in the March 10, 2026 Special Election, the Charter Commission is charged with drafting the Charter.

The role of the Home Rule Charter Commission Members may include:

- Study current county government
- Research other Home Rule counties and best practices

- Draft a proposed charter that reflects local values and priorities
- Conduct at least three public meetings
- Submit the final charter by the legal deadline.

Who approves the Charter?

The elected Home Rule Charter Commission would write the County's charter – which would then go to voters for approval.

Should citizens vote to draft the Home Rule Charter on March 10, when will the charter be available for the public to review?

If approved, Colorado law allows up to 240 days to draft a Home Rule Charter, with at least three public meetings during this period. The final draft of the Charter will be available for public review when it is referred to the Board of County Commissioners.

What is the difference between a Home Rule county vs Home Rule municipality?

Home Rule Counties and Home Rule Municipalities are separate and distinct types of local government; the two forms of local government should not be confused. Home Rule Municipalities are governed by Article 20, Section 6 of the Colorado Constitution, while Home Rule Counties are governed by Article 14, Section 16 of the Colorado Constitution. Home Rule municipalities have broader authority and discretion, while Home Rule Counties are given the authority to self-regulate and address internal matters of local concern; Home Rule Counties must still perform mandatory county functions.

Why is the County having a Special Election?

Pursuant to Colorado law, the Home Rule Charters process requires two separate elections. Absent a special election, the earliest Morgan County could become a Home Rule County is 2028.

What changes with Home Rule?

Ultimately, the elected Home Rule Charter Commission will determine what topics get included in the Charter. However, a Home Rule Charter permits the voters to define the structure of county government. Home Rule Counties can make laws related to local concerns that are not prohibited by the State Constitution and Colorado Ordinance.

Other Home Rule counties have used to their charter to solidify their county's identity and priorities, including limits on debt, tax, and the use of parks and open space. Colorado Revised Statute §30-35-201 provides 47 topics of authority, including local rules for licenses, franchises, and land use that are unique to Home Rule Counties.

Where is the detailed analysis?

Pursuant to Colorado law, the elected Charter Commission are charged with conducting a comprehensive study of the operation of county government and of the ways in which the conduct of county government might be improved or reorganized.

Under Home Rule, would additional commissioners be added to the existing three?

This would be up to the elected Charter Commission to consider including in the Home Rule Charter. Then, voters would be asked to vote on that Charter.

Under Home Rule, could County Commissioners increase their, or other elected officials', salaries without voter approval under Home Rule?

This depends on how the elected Charter Commission writes the Charter. Currently, elected salaries are set by the state. Pursuant to the Colorado constitution, salaries are set at the beginning of each term and locked in for that term.

Under Home Rule, could County Commissioners change their, or other elected officials', number or length of terms under Home Rule?

This depends on how the elected Charter Commission writes the new charter.

In the future, if the Home Rule Charter needs to be amended, what does that process look like?

The voters of Morgan County can petition, or the Board of County Commissioners can pass a resolution to have a charter amendment added to the ballot and voted on by the people of Morgan County. Only the voters may amend a home rule charter.

Under Home Rule, would the County Commissioners be able to pass bonds without voter approval?

No. TABOR still applies to the County.

Under Home Rule, would the County Commissioners be able to change elected positions to appointed positions?

No, the Board could not make this change. It would be up to the Charter Commission to include appointed offices in the Charter.

Are elected officials eligible to be elected to the Charter Commission?

Yes. All candidates who appear on the ballot followed the same process and were required to submit a petition with 25 valid voters' signatures to appear on the ballot.

How can I learn about the individuals on the ballot for the Charter Commission?

The Clerk and Recorder is responsible for the conduct of each election, but individual candidates are responsible for providing information about themselves and their campaigns. The County is required to publish a second notice of election that will provide the names of the candidates for the Charter Commission.

Will the Home Rule Charter Commission Members receive compensation?

No.