



# CITY OF FAIRBANKS

## Initiative and Referendum Informational Packet and Application

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This packet contains general information about initiating a charter amendment, ordinance, or resolution and referring an ordinance or a resolution to the voters of the City of Fairbanks.

- The qualified voters of the city may propose and enact ordinances by initiative and approve or reject ordinances and resolutions by referendum.
- The powers of an initiative or referendum extend only to matters that:
  - include a single subject;
  - relate to a legislative rather than an administrative matter; and
  - do not dedicate revenues, nor make or repeal appropriations.
- Before circulating a petition, a registered voter of the city must submit an application to the City Clerk using the enclosed form.
- The application must contain the name and address of both a primary and alternate contact person.
- The application must be signed by at least 10 registered city voters who will sponsor the petition.
- The application must include the full text of the charter amendment, ordinance, or resolution to be initiated or the ordinance or resolution to be referred.
- Currently, the minimum number of qualified voter signatures required for an initiative petition for a resolution or an ordinance to amend the Fairbanks General Code or for a referendum petition is **554** (15% of the 3,691 votes cast in the 2025 Regular Election).
- Currently, the minimum number of qualified voter signatures required for an initiative petition to amend the Fairbanks City Charter is **923** (25% of the 3,691 votes cast in the 2025 Regular Election).
- An application for an initiative petition may be filed at any time; an application for a referendum petition must be filed within 30 days after the action by the City Council adopting the ordinance or resolution sought to be referred.

## **City of Fairbanks**

### **Initiative or Referendum General Information**

**Before circulating a petition** for an initiative or referendum, a petition application must be filed with the City Clerk. The application must include:

1. A copy of the charter amendment, ordinance, or resolution to be initiated or referred.
2. The names and addresses of the primary and alternate contacts for the petition.
3. At least 10 registered city voter signatures (including residence addresses) who will serve as petition sponsors.

**After an application has been filed** with the City Clerk, the Clerk will certify the application within two weeks of submittal if the Clerk finds that the application is in proper form and, for an initiative petition, that the matter:

1. would be enforceable as a matter of law;
2. includes only a single subject;
3. relates to a legislative rather than an administrative matter; and
4. does not dedicate revenues, nor make or repeal appropriations.

**After an application has been certified** by the City Clerk, the Clerk will prepare the petition for circulation by the sponsors within two weeks.

1. The City Clerk will notify the primary contact person when the petition is available.
2. The primary contact person is responsible for notifying sponsors that the petition is ready for pickup at the City Clerk's Office.
3. Petition(s) are issued to each sponsor who requests copies from the City Clerk and may be mailed to a sponsor upon request.
4. At any time before a petition is filed, additional sponsors may be added if the registered voter comes to the City Clerk's Office and signs the sponsor log with the same information as an original sponsor (printed name, signature, residence address).

**After a petition has been issued:**

1. Signatures must be obtained within 90 days of petition issuance.
2. Signatures must be affixed in the presence of a petition sponsor.
3. Signatures must be in ink or indelible pencil.
4. Signatures totaling at least 15% of the number of voters who voted in the last regular election will be required for a resolution or an ordinance to amend the Fairbanks General Code or for a referendum petition (see page 1 of this packet for the actual number of signatures currently required).
5. Signatures totaling at least 25% of the number of voters who voted in the last regular election will be required for an initiative petition to amend the Fairbanks City Charter (see page 1 of this packet for the actual number of signatures currently required).
6. The City Clerk will reject illegible signatures unless accompanied by a legible printed name.

7. Signatures not accompanied by a legible residence address will be rejected by the City Clerk.
8. A petition signer may withdraw their signature upon written application to the City Clerk, so long as the petition has not been certified.
9. All copies of the petition must be assembled and filed together with the City Clerk.

**After a petition has been filed:**

1. The City Clerk will have 10 days in which to certify whether a petition is sufficient, and, if a petition is deemed insufficient, identify the insufficiency and notify the primary contact person by certified mail.
2. A petition that is insufficient may be supplemented with additional signatures obtained and filed within 10 days of the contact person's receipt of notification by the City Clerk that the petition was insufficient. Signatures may be gathered while the Clerk is determining petition sufficiency, either by issuance of a new petition or upon petitions not initially turned in by the sponsors.
3. Within 10 days after a supplementary filing, the City Clerk will recertify the petition. If it remains insufficient, the petition will be rejected and filed as a public record.
4. If a petition is deemed insufficient by the City Clerk, a signer of the petition may file a protest with the City Clerk within seven days. The City Clerk will present the protest to the City Council at its next regular meeting (or special meeting called for that purpose). The City Council will hear and decide the protest. The Council's decision will be subject to judicial review.
5. A new petition substantially the same in content may not be filed within six months after the petition is rejected as insufficient.
6. If the City Council adopts substantially the same measure proposed by an initiative, the petition is void and the matter may not be placed before voters.
7. If the City Council repeals an ordinance or resolution that is the subject of a referendum before the referendum election, the referendum petition shall be deemed void and the matter may not be placed before voters.

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### **2026 CITY REGULAR ELECTION DEADLINE INFORMATION**

It is recommended that petitions be filed with the City Clerk no later than July 1, 2026, in order for the City Clerk to certify the petition as sufficient and submit the matter before the voters in the October 6, 2026 Regular Election. The petition **MUST** be certified no later than August 1, 2026.

- The City Clerk will have 10 days after a petition is filed to certify that it is sufficient (no later than July 11).
- A petition that is insufficient and rejected may be supplemented with additional signatures obtained and filed within 10 days of the contact person's receipt of notification by the City Clerk that the petition was insufficient.
- Supplemental petitions are due by July 22. The City Clerk's review of supplemental signatures will occur July 23 – August 1.
- After a supplementary filing, the City Clerk will recertify the petition. The petition must be recertified by August 1.

# **PART I - HOME RULE CHARTER**

## **ARTICLE XII. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL<sup>1</sup>**

### **Sec. 12.1. Initiative and referendum.**

The qualified voters of the city may propose and enact ordinances by the initiative, and approve or reject ordinances and resolutions by the referendum.

### **Sec. 12.2. Initiative and referendum: Application.**

An initiative or referendum is proposed by filing an application with the city clerk containing the ordinance to be initiated or the ordinance or resolution to be referred and the address to which all correspondence relating to the petition may be sent. An application for an initiative may be filed at any time; an application for a referendum shall be filed within thirty (30) days after the action by the council adopting the ordinance or resolution sought to be referred. An application shall be signed by at least ten (10) qualified voters who will sponsor the petition. Within two (2) weeks the city clerk shall certify the application, if the city clerk finds that it is in proper form and that the matter (1) is not restricted under the state constitution; (2) includes only a single subject; (3) relates to a legislative rather than an administrative matter; and (4) would be enforceable as a matter of law.

A decision by the city clerk on an application for petition is subject to judicial review.

### **Sec. 12.3. Initiative and referendum: Petitions.**

Within two (2) weeks after certification of an application for an initiative or referendum petition, a petition containing a summary of the subject matter shall be prepared by the city clerk for circulation by the sponsors. The petition shall be filed with the city clerk within ninety (90) days after the clerk issues the petition provided that the petition is signed by qualified voters equal to at least fifteen (15) percent of the votes cast in the preceding regular election. Within ten (10) days after the date the petition is filed the city clerk shall certify on the petition whether it is sufficient and, if the petition is insufficient, identify the insufficiency and notify the sponsors by certified mail. A petition that is insufficient may be supplemented with additional signatures obtained within ten (10) days after the date the petition is rejected.

If the city clerk certifies an initiative or referendum petition as insufficient, a signer of the petition may file a protest with the city clerk within seven (7) days after the certification. The city clerk shall present the protest at the next regular meeting of the city council which shall hear and decide the protest. Denial of certification shall be subject to judicial review.

### **Sec. 12.4. Initiative: Election.**

After certification of an initiative petition the city clerk shall prepare a ballot title and proposition summarizing the proposed ordinance, and shall place them on the ballot for the next regular election or on the ballot at a special election, if already scheduled and occurring not sooner than sixty days after the certification of the petition. If no election is scheduled within seventy-five days after the certification of a petition and the City Council determines it is in the best interest of the city, the Council may, by ordinance, order a special election be held on the matter before the next election that is already scheduled but not sooner than sixty days after certification of the petition. If, before the election, substantially the same measure has been ordained, the petition shall be void.

## **FAIRBANKS GENERAL CODE CHAPTER 23**

### **INITIATIVES AND REFERENDUM**

#### **Sec. 23-1. Initiative and referendum.**

The qualified voters of the city may propose and enact ordinances, resolutions and charter amendments by the initiative, and approve or reject ordinances and resolutions by the referendum.

#### **Sec. 23-2. Application for petition.**

(a) An initiative or referendum is proposed by filing an application with the city clerk containing the ordinance, resolutions, or charter amendment to be initiated or the ordinance or resolution to be referred and the address to which all correspondence relating to the petition may be sent. An application for an initiative may be filed at any time; an application for a referendum shall be filed within 30 days after the action by the council adopting the ordinance or resolution sought to be referred. An application shall be signed by at least ten city residents who will sponsor the petition. One sponsor will be designated as the contact person. Additional residential sponsors may be added at anytime. Within two weeks the city clerk shall certify the application if the city clerk finds that it is in proper form and that the subject matter would be enforceable as a matter of law. The city clerk shall notify the contact person when the petition is available. The contact person is responsible for notifying sponsors. Copies of the petition shall be provided by the city clerk to each sponsor who appears in the city clerk's office and requests a petition, and the city clerk shall mail the petition to each sponsor who requests that the petition be mailed.

#### **Sec. 23-3. Residency requirements for circulating sponsors.**

Sponsors circulating petitions shall be at least 18 years old and residents of the City of Fairbanks and shall affirm the same in affidavit form supplied by the city clerk.

Residency in the city may be established by being physically present in the city with the intent to remain in the city indefinitely and to make a home in the city. A sponsor demonstrates the intent requirement by maintaining a principal place of abode in the city for at least 30 days immediately preceding the date of the signing of a petition application.

#### **Sec. 23-4. Restrictions.**

The powers of initiatives and referendum shall only extend to a matter that:

- (1) Includes only a single subject;
- (2) Relates to a legislative rather than an administrative matter; and
- (3) Does not dedicate revenues, nor make or repeal appropriations.

#### **Sec. 23-5. Contents of petition.**

(a) Within two weeks after certification of an application for an initiative or referendum petition, a petition shall be prepared by the city clerk for circulation by the sponsors. Each copy of the petition must contain:

- (1) A summary of the ordinance, charter amendment, or resolution to be initiated or the ordinance or resolution to be referred;
- (2) The complete ordinance, charter amendment, or resolution sought to be initiated or the ordinance or resolution referred as submitted by the sponsors;
- (3) The date on which the petition is issued by the city clerk;
- (4) Notice that the signatures must be secured within 90 days after the date the petition is issued;
- (5) Spaces for each signature, the printed name of each signer, the date each signature is affixed, and the residence and mailing address of each signer;

- (6) Sponsor's statement: A statement, with space for the sponsor's sworn signature and date of signing, that the sponsor personally circulated the petition, that all signatures were affixed in the presence of the sponsor, and that the sponsor believes the signatures to be those of the persons whose name they purport to be; and
- (7) Space for indicating the total number of signatures on the petition.
- (b) If a petition consists of more than one page, each page must contain the summary of the ordinance, charter amendment, or resolution to be initiated or the ordinance or resolution to be referred.

### **Sec. 23-6. Signature requirements.**

- (a) The signatures on any initiative or referendum petition shall be secured within 90 days after the city clerk issues the petition. The sponsor statement shall be signed and dated by the sponsor. Signatures shall be in ink or indelible pencil.
- (b) The city clerk shall determine and notify the contact person of the number of signatures required on a petition. A petition shall be signed by a number of qualified voters equal to at least 15 percent of the votes cast at the last regular election held before the date notice is given to the contact person that the petition is available. A petition for a charter amendment shall be signed by a number of qualified voters equal to at least 25 percent of the votes cast at the last regular election held before the date notice is given to the contact person that the petition is available.
- (c) Illegible signatures shall be rejected by the city clerk unless accompanied by a legible printed name. Signatures not accompanied by a legible residence address shall be rejected. Signatures shall be presumed valid voter signatures in the absence of compelling evidence that the signatures are not those of qualified city voters.
- (d) A petition signer may withdraw their signature on written application to the city clerk before certification of the petition.
- (e) Petitioners trying to achieve ballot placement on a general or special election already scheduled in which the deadline for inclusion would occur sooner than the regular 90 days allowed will be notified immediately by the city clerk via certified letter to the contact person stating the date for submission of the original petition. This date will be 20 days prior to the final deadline set by the city clerk to achieve ballot status. Once established, dates will not be changed or altered. Petitioners failing to achieve ballot status may still gather supplemental signatures if under the 90-day deadline set for the original petition.

### **Sec. 23-7. Sufficiency of petition.**

- (a) Copies of the initiative or referendum petition to be turned in on the original filing date shall be assembled by the petition sponsors and filed together with the city clerk. Within ten days after the date the petition is filed, the city clerk shall:
  - (1) Certify on the petition whether it is sufficient, and
  - (2) If the petition is insufficient, identify the insufficiency and notify the contact person by certified mail.
- (b) A petition that is insufficient may be supplemented with additional signatures obtained in the same manner by the petition sponsors and filed together with the city clerk before the 11<sup>th</sup> day after the date following receipt by the contact person of the notice of insufficiency. Signatures may still be gathered while the city clerk is determining the petition sufficiency, either by issuance of a new petition or upon petitions not initially turned in by the sponsors.
- (c) A petition that is insufficient shall be rejected and filed as a public record unless it is supplemented. Within ten days after a supplementary filing the city clerk shall recertify the petition. If it is still insufficient, the petition is rejected and filed as a public record.
- (d) Petitions turned into the city clerk will remain secured at city hall except for signature validation with state agencies. Under no circumstances shall the petition be removed over night.
- (e) Any petition sponsor falsifying sworn information shall be subject to prosecution for sworn falsification.

**Sec. 23-8. Publication.**

Each initiative and referendum shall be published in full once a week for not less than four consecutive weeks immediately preceding the election on its ratification.

**Sec. 23-9. Protest; judicial review.**

If the city clerk certifies that an initiative or referendum petition is insufficient, a signer of the petition may file a protest with the city clerk within seven days after the certification. The city clerk shall present the protest to the council at the next regular meeting or a special meeting commenced for said purpose. The council shall hear and decide the protest. The decision of the council shall be subject to judicial review.

**Sec. 23-10. Adoption/repeal by council.**

- (a) If the council adopts substantially the same measure proposed by an initiative, other than an initiative for a charter amendment, the petition is void and the matter may not be placed before the voters.
- (b) If the council repeals an ordinance or resolution the subject of a referendum before the referendum election, the referendum petition shall be deemed void and the matter referred shall not be placed before the voters.

# How to Amend the Fairbanks City Charter or General Code

## Charter Structure and Organization

The [Home Rule Charter](#) of the City of Fairbanks is structured using articles and sections.

Example: Charter Sec. 12.1. - Initiative and referendum.

Article \_\_\_\_\_  
Section \_\_\_\_\_

## Code Structure and Organization

The [Fairbanks General Code](#) (FGC) is structured using chapters, articles, divisions, and sections. While Code citations may be referenced using all of the above, specific sections are commonly cited by using only the chapter and section [and sometimes subsection(s), when applicable].

Example: FGC Sec. 23-1. - Initiative and referendum.

Chapter \_\_\_\_\_  
Section \_\_\_\_\_

There are reserved sections within each chapter and unused chapters available for code additions.

## Format of Charter and Code Additions

If the proposed ordinance will add material not contained in the Charter (or Code), the ordinance will specify an “addition”; that is, the new chapter, article, division, and section to be added (whatever applies).

“That the Home Rule Charter (or Fairbanks General Code) of the City of Fairbanks, Alaska, is hereby amended by adding a new chapter, article, division, or section to be numbered as follows \_\_\_\_\_, which section shall read as follows: ‘The new section may then be set out in full as desired.’”

## Charter and Code Amendments

If the proposed ordinance will amend any of the provisions of the Charter (or Code), the ordinance will specify the section(s) to be amended and shall state: “That section \_\_\_\_\_ of the Home Rule Charter (or Fairbanks General Code) of the City of Fairbanks, Alaska, is hereby amended to read as follows: “The amendment shall set forth the provision sought to be amended showing all changes from the existing provision by underlining and placing in bold print all new material to be added to the provision and striking through all characters in such provision which is intended to be deleted.”

## Repeals

All chapters, articles, divisions, or sections of the Code desired to be repealed should be repealed by article and section number or chapter and section number, as the case may be.

City of Fairbanks  
800 Cushman Street  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
www.fairbanksalaska.gov



Office of the City Clerk  
Phone 907.459.6702  
Fax 907.459.6710  
cityclerk@fairbanks.gov

## INITIATIVE / REFERENDUM PETITION SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION

**Attach Ordinance/Resolution/Charter Section to be initiated or repealed**

Sponsors of this application are (list must include at least 10 City of Fairbanks registered voters):

	<b>Sponsor Signature</b>	<b>Printed Name (print clearly)</b>	<b>Residence Address (no PO Box #s)</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Identifier (DOB, last 4 of SSN, or Voter #)</b>
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					

ALL CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THIS APPLICATION/PETITION SHOULD BE SENT TO:

**PRIMARY CONTACT PERSON AND SPONSOR:**

Print Name	Signature
Mailing Address	Residence Address
Primary Phone Number	Alternate Phone Number
Email Address	DOB, last 4 SSN, or Voter #

**ALTERNATE CONTACT PERSON AND SPONSOR:**

Print Name	Signature
Mailing Address	Residence Address
Primary Phone Number	Alternate Phone Number
Email Address	DOB, last 4 SSN, or Voter #

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

This application was received in the City Clerk's Office on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

X \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk's Office Staff

**CERTIFICATION OF APPLICATION**

This application is in proper form, has met the requirements set forth in the City of Fairbanks Home Rule Charter and Fairbanks General Code, and is hereby CERTIFIED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

X \_\_\_\_\_  
D. Danyelle Snider, MMC, Fairbanks City Clerk