

Coming to a Ballot Near you . . .

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW (LGR)

An Alphabetized Glossary

Administrative Power: Day-to-day government operations, such as licensing, maintaining infrastructure, policing, etc.

Charter: Like a constitution, it outlines the legislative, executive, and administrative power of a local government. Provides for “self-government powers” if adopted by the voters.

City/Town Incorporated: A municipal corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana with powers to provide services such as policing, roads, emergency response, and with the power to levy taxes.

City/Town Unincorporated: A community lacking local government authority that relies on a county to provide its government services.

Commission or Council: a group of elected people in a city, town, or county who govern.

County: A legal jurisdiction created by the State of Montana to provide government services to both rural and urban populations. Montana has 56 counties.

Consolidation: The combining of county and city governments. *Butte-Silver Bow* and *Deer Lodge-Anaconda* are examples of consolidated government.

Election on Local Government Review. The ballot question of conducting a local government review and establishing a study/review commission submitted to the electors every ten years. Includes funding for the study, number of study commission members, and specific government (city or county) to be studied.

Forms of Local Government

Montana State Statute provides for six forms of local government. They are:

Commission-Executive form, also known as Council-Executive, Council-Mayor, or Commission-Mayor, consists of an elected Commission (or Council) and one elected executive (Mayor) who is elected at large.

Commission-Manager form, also known as a Council-Manager, consists of an elected Commission and a Manager appointed by the Commission, who is the chief administrative officer of the local government. The Manager is responsible to the Commission for the administration of all local government affairs.

Commission form consists of an elected Commission or Council. The Commission has legislative, executive, and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved for other elected officers, such as Clerk and Recorder or Justice of the Peace.

Commission-Presiding officer form consists of an elected Commission or Council and a presiding officer (known as "Mayor" or as "President") elected by the members of the Commission from their own number.

Town meeting form consists of an assembly of the qualified electors of a town, an elected town presiding officer, and an optional elected town meeting moderator. Only incorporated cities or towns of less than 2,000 persons may use the town meeting form of government.

Charter form is like a county or municipal constitution. Charter provisions establishing executive, legislative, and administrative structure and organization.

Governance: The system/structure an organization uses to operate. Includes the mechanisms and rules for making decisions and accountability. Governance is not politics, but the framework in which politics takes place. Local government study commissions focus on the governance structure.

Important Dates:

June 4, 2024. Montana State Primary Election at which the voters will be asked whether they wish to undertake local government review of their County and/or municipality.

November 5, 2024. Montana General Election at which local government review commission members are elected (provided the local government study was approved at the Primary Election.).

June 2, 2026. Montana State Primary Election at

which voters will vote on the recommendations contained in the local government review commission's Final Report.

Legislative Power: The government authority to pass laws, adopt budgets and levy taxes.

Local Government: The government structure that serves the people of Montana counties, and incorporated cities and towns.

Local Government Review (or Study): an examination and evaluation of the current form of local government. The study examines the structure and powers of local government as well as its efficacy in delivering government services to the people.

Local Government Study Commission: (also known as “local government review commission”): Citizens elected to conduct a LGR (see above) and make recommendations for the voters’ approval.

Local Government Study/Review Costs. In establishing the ballot language for the election on LGR, the local government must also provide an amount of the estimated funds required for the Study/Review Commission’s work.

Manager: A professional executive hired or appointed by a local government to provide managerial and chief administrative functions. Typically, such managers are subject to a contract for services and serve at the pleasure of the local government.

Mayor or Executive: The chief elected executive official in a city or town.

Montana Constitution: The supreme law of the State of Montana. The people of Montana ratified their Constitution on June 6, 1972. Among its provisions is the requirement that the people be given the opportunity to vote on the question of reviewing their local government(s) at least every ten years.

Montana State Statute: The laws enacted by the Montana Legislature and signed by the Governor. The most useful form of the statutes is the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) which can be found at <https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/index.html> .

Politics: The process of deciding who gets what through a practice of orderly deliberation and decision-making. Decisions are made by the voters or by the people they elect through the political process. Local government review/study is an activity that focuses primarily on **governance** and not politics.

This voter information is provided by the League of Women Voters of the Helena area.



Is there a group you know who would enjoy learning about local government review? Have them contact the Helena LWV.

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<https://my.lwv.org/montana/league-women-voters-helena>