

Charter County Overview

There are two types of counties recognized by the California Constitution, general law counties and charter counties. General law counties adhere to state law; whereas charter counties have a limited degree of “home rule” authority that may provide for limited, alternative, or expanded options, when compared to state law. A charter does not give a county extra authority over local regulations, revenue-raising abilities, budgetary decisions, or intergovernmental relations.

Of California’s fifty-eight (58) counties, there are currently fourteen (14) charter counties, with Shasta becoming the fifteenth (15), effective January 1, 2025.

Those counties are (ordered based on when their charter was adopted):

County	Year Ratified	Amendments	Last Year Amended
Los Angeles	1912	85	2002
San Bernardino	1912	27	2022
Tehama	1916	Various	
Butte	1918	Various	
Alameda	1926	25	2000
San Mateo	1932	23	2012
Fresno	1933	19	2018
Sacramento	1933	40	2009
San Diego	1933	76	2018
Santa Clara	1950	20	2016
Placer	1987	Various	
San Francisco	1995	Various	2016
El Dorado	1996	6	2016
Orange	2002	6	2016
Shasta*	2024	2**	2024

The specific structure and content of each county’s charter varies substantially; however, each charter was ratified by voters during an election, adopted the following calendar year, and chaptered by the Secretary of State thereafter.

Every charter county has proposed or adopted a wide variety of amendments to their charters, which were either initially proposed by members of their Board of Supervisors, recommended by their respective Charter Review Committee, or proposed via ballot initiative. Each amendment is subject to approval of the electorate before being adopted and operative as part of a charter.

References:

[California Constitution, Article XI](#)
[California Government Code §23700-23714](#)

**The Shasta County Charter (SCC) was ratified by the electorate at the March 2024 Primary Election and becomes operative January 1, 2025*

***Two (2) proposed amendments to the SCC may be considered by voters during the November 2024 General Election, also becoming operative January 1, 2025, if approved*