



Modernizing the Civil Service Commission

Charter Amendment Ballot Referral



PURPOSE

To refer a Charter amendment to the voters that modernizes outdated Civil Service Commission and Classified Service provisions to better align Charter language with current operations, remove the citizenship requirement, update with gender neutral language, allow for approved extended leave during probation, provide flexibility for future command staffing needs in the police and fire departments, and move certain administrative details to ordinance. If voters approve the Charter amendment on November 3, 2026, a companion ordinance will take effect in **mid-December 2026** to codify the operational details removed from the Charter.

PROBLEM

Denver's Civil Service Commission (§ 9.3) and Classified Service (§ 9.4) Charter provisions have been amended selectively since 1904, with the last significant amendment approved by voters in 2003. As a result, some sections contain outdated terminology, overly prescriptive language, and inconsistent procedures. This creates several challenges:

- Some current department practices do not align with Charter requirements, creating compliance risks and operational inefficiencies.
- Gender specific language and the requirement for U.S. citizenship are outdated.
- Timelines for discipline, suspension, and notice do not always align with operational realities.
- The fixed cap on the total number of command assignments for the police and fire departments limits future growth without voter approval.
- Some operational details are embedded in the Charter that would be better suited for ordinance.

PROPOSAL GOALS

- Makes certain personnel procedures clearer, more consistent, and easier to administer.
- Updates Charter with gender neutral language and removes citizenship requirement.
- Revises timelines for disciplinary review and suspension pending investigation.
- Removes fixed caps on command assignments to support future operational needs.
- Moves some operational detail from Charter to ordinance.

LEGISLATIVE TIMELINE

Date	Milestone
07/13/2026	City Council Budget and Policy Committee
07/21/2026	City Council Governance and Intergovernmental Relations Committee
07/27/2026	City Council First Reading
08/03/2026	City Council Final Reading & Ballot Referral Vote
11/03/2026	Voter Election on Charter Amendment
December 2026	Companion Ordinance Effective, Pending Voter Approval

KEY AMENDMENTS BY CHARTER SECTION

Section	Subject	What Changes in Charter	Explanation
§ 2.6.7	Public Safety Cadet Program	Adds section defining the public safety cadet program and requiring it to operate under the Manager of Safety.	Reaffirms cadets are not permanent employees, may be dismissed at any time, and do not receive Classified Service credit. Gives the Manager of Safety sole authority over terms, conditions, procedures, and entry qualifications.
§ 9.3.2	Civil Service Commissioners	- Removes U.S. citizenship requirement. - Removes citizen reference in diversity consideration. - Replaces “his or her” references with “their”.	- Aligns with a prior voter-approved Charter change that removed the U.S. citizenship requirement for Classified Service applicants. - Updates Charter with gender neutral language.
§ 9.3.5	Powers and Duties of Council	Adds new section allowing Council, at the Commission’s request, to update language, grant rights, duties, and privileges to the Civil Service Commission.	- Allows City Council to expand the Commission’s authority as needed to administer and enforce its rules without amending Charter. - Authorizes companion ordinance [Sec. 2-250].
§ 9.3.7	Hearing Officers	Removes prescriptive language regarding selection of Hearing Officers.	Selection process for Civil Service Hearing Officers moves to ordinance [Sec. 2-251].
§ 9.3.11	Eligible Registers & Appointments	Removes prescriptive language regarding police lateral hires.	Details on pay-grade criteria for police lateral hires moves to ordinance [Sec. 2-252].
§ 9.3.18	Public Safety Cadet Program	Removes the cadet program from the Civil Service Commission section of the Charter.	Public safety cadet program moves to Charter § 2.6.7 under the Manager of Safety.
§ 9.4.1	Qualifications of Applicants	Removes the phrase “shall be of good moral character.”	Undefined and ambiguous language.
§ 9.4.6	Probationary Period & Permanent Appointment	Adds Charter language allowing extension of a probationary period for approved leave extending 30 days or more.	Current language does not allow probationary extensions like CSA rules do. The update would accommodate extended FMLA, ADA, and military service leave without requiring dismissal.
§ 9.4.10	Longevity Pay	Removes longevity pay from Charter.	Duplicative without additional protection. Longevity pay is already covered by collective bargaining agreements.
§ 9.4.14	Disciplinary Procedures	- Updates Charter to extend Manager of Safety review from 15 calendar days to 20 business days. - Removes prescriptive language related to the notification process.	- Provides additional review time per the Manager of Safety’s request. - Notification process for disciplinary action moves to ordinance [Sec. 2-253(a)].
§ 9.4.15	Review of Disciplinary Actions	- Removes prescriptive language related to the notification process. - Replaces “his or her” references with “the Member’s”.	- Updates Charter with gender neutral language. - Notification process for the Hearing Officer’s decision moves to ordinance [Sec. 2-253(b)].
§ 9.4.16	Suspension Pending Investigation	Updates Charter to extend the time the Fire Chief or Police Chief has to either file formal disciplinary charges with the Manager of Safety or end a suspension pending investigation from 10 days to 20 business days.	Reflects allows more time to complete an investigation and clarifies time as measured in working days.
§ 9.4.17	Suspension	Replaces or removes “his or her” references.	Updates Charter with gender neutral language.
§ 9.5.2	Deputy Chief and Division Chiefs	- Removes cap on the total number of command assignments. - Replaces “his or her” references with “their”.	- Provides flexibility to meet operational needs and accommodate growth, subject to budget availability. - Updates Charter with gender neutral language.
§ 9.6.3	Deputy Chief, Division Chief, and Commander	- Removes cap on the total number of command assignments. - Replaces “his or her” references with “their”.	- Provides flexibility to meet operational needs and accommodate growth, subject to budget availability. - Updates Charter with gender neutral language.