

2026 Honolulu Charter Questions

What a YES vote and a NO vote mean

Neutral voter reference guide

This guide summarizes the practical effect of each choice using the approved ballot questions and justification language dated July 20, 2026. It is intended as a plain-language reference and does not advocate for either choice.

Reading tip: A YES vote adopts the proposed Charter change. A NO vote leaves the Charter unchanged on that question.

Question 1: Food Security Fund

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter require annual funding for a Food Security Fund, without having to simultaneously increase real property tax rates to fund the appropriation, to support programs and grants that provide locally grown or produced food to Oahu residents, as well as non-local food only in an emergency?*

YES

A YES vote creates a Food Security Fund as a sixth Charter special fund. Total annual funding for all six special funds rises from 2.5% to 3% of estimated real property tax revenues, divided equally. The new fund supports access to locally grown or produced food and may use a limited amount for other food during a declared emergency.

NO

A NO vote leaves the Charter unchanged. No Food Security Fund is created, no annual Charter funding is required for it, and the five existing special funds continue to share 2.5% of estimated real property tax revenues.

Question 2: Charter preamble

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter be amended to replace its preamble with language recognizing the relationship between the people of the City and County of Honolulu and the 'āina, honoring the wisdom of kūpuna and the legacy of Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole, and affirming commitments to transparent, accountable government and stewardship of natural, civic, and cultural resources?*

YES

A YES vote replaces the Charter preamble with language recognizing the relationship between the people and the 'āina, honoring kūpuna and Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole, and affirming transparent, accountable government and stewardship. It changes guiding principles, not the City's legal powers or duties.

NO

A NO vote keeps the current preamble. The added references to 'āina, Native Hawaiian cultural values, Prince Kūhiō, and stewardship commitments are not adopted.

Question 3: Office of ‘Ōiwi Resources and Cultural Stewardship

BALLOT QUESTION *Should an Office of ‘Ōiwi Resources and Cultural Stewardship be established within the Office of the Mayor to oversee the management of ‘Ōiwi resources within the City, develop related programs, and create a Cultural Advisory Council of kūpuna, cultural practitioners, and community representatives?*

YES

A YES vote creates an Office of ‘Ōiwi Resources and Cultural Stewardship in the Mayor's Office and a Cultural Advisory Council. The office coordinates Native Hawaiian cultural and natural-resource stewardship, supports Hawaiian-language use, develops programs, works with partners, and reports annually.

NO

A NO vote does not create the office or Cultural Advisory Council in the Charter. Existing historic-preservation responsibilities and current City arrangements remain in place.

Question 4: LGBTQIA+ Commission

BALLOT QUESTION *Should a nine-member LGBTQIA+ Commission be established to advise the Mayor, City Council, and City agencies on matters affecting the LGBTQIA+ community and recommend policies, programs, and legislation promoting social, economic, and political equality?*

YES

A YES vote creates a nine-member LGBTQIA+ Commission to advise City leaders and agencies, recommend policies and programs, act as a liaison, and employ staff as needed.

NO

A NO vote leaves the Charter without a commission dedicated specifically to advising the City on issues affecting LGBTQIA+ residents.

Question 5: Ranked-choice voting beginning in 2032

BALLOT QUESTION *Beginning in 2032, should the City use ranked-choice voting to elect the Mayor, City Council, and Prosecuting Attorney, allowing voters to rank candidates in the order they prefer (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) in a single November election?*

YES

A YES vote replaces the current August/November two-step system for Mayor, City Council, and Prosecuting Attorney with ranked-choice voting in a single November election beginning in 2032. Voters rank candidates, and rounds continue until one candidate has a majority.

NO

A NO vote keeps the current nonpartisan election system: when three or more candidates run, an August election may elect a majority winner or narrow the field to two candidates for November. Ranked-choice voting is not established for these offices.

Question 6: Police policies and federal immigration enforcement

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter be amended to require the Honolulu Police Department to 1) adopt policies to ensure the constitutional rights of all persons regardless of immigration or citizenship status are protected, and 2) assist federal immigration enforcement activities only when required by statute or court order, and after the requesting agency's identity and authority have been confirmed?*

YES

A YES vote requires HPD policies protecting constitutional rights regardless of immigration or citizenship status. Officers may assist federal immigration enforcement only when required by a verifiable statute or court order and after confirming the requesting agency's identity and authority for each action.

NO

A NO vote does not add these requirements to the Charter. HPD remains governed by existing Charter duties and applicable state and federal law, including current state limits on providing information for immigration enforcement.

Question 7: Housing availability and preservation as City policies

BALLOT QUESTION *Shall the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu be amended to encourage increasing housing availability and preserving available housing as policies for the City and County of Honolulu?*

YES

A YES vote adds a Charter statement recognizing the shortage of long-term housing, describing housing-related outmigration as an existential threat, and declaring encouragement of existing housing for City residents a compelling governmental interest.

NO

A NO vote leaves the Charter without this housing policy statement and these findings.

Question 8: Affordable Housing Fund as a revolving fund

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter be amended to clarify that the Affordable Housing Fund is a revolving fund, with repayments, interest, earnings, proceeds, and other receipts derived from the Fund to be redeposited into the Fund?*

YES

A YES vote clarifies that repayments, interest, earnings, proceeds, and other receipts return to the Affordable Housing Fund for future use. It also allows support for a wider range of affordable rental housing, including mixed-use and mixed-income developments.

NO

A NO vote leaves the current Charter language in place. It does not expressly require repayments and related proceeds to be redeposited into the Fund or make the stated expansion.

Question 9: Second public hearing for City real-property transactions

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter be amended to no longer require a second public hearing for any transaction related to City real property interests?*

YES

A YES vote removes the separate public hearing requirement for City real-property transactions. The public may still learn about and testify on transactions when they appear on City Council meeting agendas.

NO

A NO vote keeps the separate Department of Housing and Land Management hearing requirement, including the additional district hearing for affected interests larger than one-quarter acre, along with existing Council review.

Question 10: Affordable housing functional plan

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the City be required to prepare and carry out a functional plan for the development of affordable housing?*

YES

A YES vote requires a ten-year Housing Functional Plan, maintained by the Director of Housing and Land Management and updated at least every five years, beginning January 1, 2030. It would guide housing policy, capital improvements, and budgets.

NO

A NO vote leaves housing outside the Charter's required long-range functional-plan system. Housing priorities continue to be addressed through existing programs and policies without this mandated plan.

Question 11: Nonprofit grants from two special funds

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter be amended to allow the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund and the Climate Resiliency Fund to award grants to federal income tax-exempt non-profit organizations that provide services that are consistent with each Fund's purpose?*

YES

A YES vote allows the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund and Climate Resiliency Fund to award grants to federally tax-exempt nonprofit organizations for services consistent with each fund's purpose.

NO

A NO vote leaves those two funds without this express nonprofit-grant authority. The Grants in Aid Fund remains the Charter fund specifically authorized to make the described nonprofit grants.

Question 12: Additional funding sources for special funds

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Revised City Charter be amended to allow the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund, Affordable Housing Fund, Climate Resiliency Fund, and other funds established under Section 9-204 to receive funding from federal, state, philanthropic, and other sources?*

YES

A YES vote expressly allows the special funds under Charter Section 9-204 to receive federal, state, philanthropic, and other authorized funding in addition to dedicated property-tax revenues.

NO

A NO vote leaves the Charter without express authorization for those special funds to accept these additional sources.

Question 13: Historic preservation uses and renamed fund

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter be amended to allow the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund to be used for historic preservation, and to preserve and protect buildings, sites, structures, and objects that have been acquired by the fund; to rename the Fund the Land, Natural Resources, and Historic Preservation Fund, and the advisory commission for the Fund the Land, Natural Resources, and Historic Preservation advisory commission; and to allocate proposal review for Fund use between the advisory commission and the O'ahu Historic Preservation Commission?*

YES

A YES vote expands the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund to preserve, restore, maintain, and rehabilitate historic and cultural resources; renames the fund and its advisory commission; and assigns review of certain proposals to the O'ahu Historic Preservation Commission.

NO

A NO vote keeps the existing fund name, advisory structure, and general limits on using the fund for preservation or restoration of historic buildings, sites, archaeological resources, and culturally significant objects.

Question 14: Maintenance allocation for acquired lands

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter be amended to increase the annual appropriation for costs related to operation, maintenance, and management of lands that were acquired using the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund, from 5% of the moneys that were deposited into the Fund in the previous year, to 10%?*

YES

A YES vote raises the maximum annual amount available for operation, maintenance, and management of lands acquired through the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund from 5% to 10% of the amount deposited in the previous year.

NO

A NO vote keeps the current 5% limit.

Question 15: Office of Data and Innovation

BALLOT QUESTION *Should an Office of Data and Innovation be established to use data to improve city services, promote government transparency and civic engagement, ensure that the city uses artificial intelligence responsibly, and protect residents' digital privacy?*

YES

A YES vote establishes an Office of Data and Innovation in the Charter, reporting to the Managing Director, with citywide responsibilities for data strategy and standards, digital privacy, responsible artificial-intelligence use, and service innovation.

NO

A NO vote does not establish the office in the Charter. Existing data positions created by ordinance and the Department of Information Technology remain subject to current law and future administrative or legislative changes.

Question 16: Permanent residents on City boards and commissions

BALLOT QUESTION *Should permanent resident aliens who are residents of the City and County of Honolulu be permitted to serve on City boards and commissions?*

YES

A YES vote allows permanent resident aliens who live in the City and County of Honolulu to be appointed to most City boards and commissions if they meet all other qualifications.

NO

A NO vote keeps the registered-voter eligibility requirement, so permanent residents who are not registered voters remain ineligible for these appointments.

Question 17: Quorum and voting rules for boards and commissions

BALLOT QUESTION *Should quorum and board action be based on the majority of members eligible to vote, excluding vacancies and non-voting members?*

YES

A YES vote excludes vacancies and non-voting members when calculating quorum and generally allows action by a majority of members present and voting once quorum exists. Higher thresholds in state law or the Charter remain, and Neighborhood Boards are unaffected.

NO

A NO vote keeps the current approach, under which vacancies and non-voting members may count toward the full membership used to determine quorum and approval, potentially preventing action even when participating voting members are present.

Question 18: Civil-service status of Human Resources First Deputy

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the First Deputy of the Department of Human Resources be exempt from civil service provisions, like similar roles in other City departments?*

YES

A YES vote makes the First Deputy of the Department of Human Resources an appointed position exempt from civil service, effective January 1, 2027.

NO

A NO vote keeps the First Deputy as a civil-service position.

Question 19: City Clerk support for the Charter Commission

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the City Clerk be required to provide technical and secretarial services to the Charter Commission?*

YES

A YES vote requires the City Clerk to provide technical, secretarial, and administrative support to the Charter Commission. The Commission's authority and independence do not change.

NO

A NO vote leaves the Charter without a designated permanent administrative home or guaranteed City Clerk support for the Charter Commission.

Question 20: Two-year ineligibility after impeachment or related resignation

BALLOT QUESTION *Should the Charter make a Councilmember, the Mayor, or the Prosecuting Attorney ineligible for election to any City office for two years if impeached, or if the official resigns after an impeachment petition has been filed, consistent with the provision for being recalled from office?*

YES

A YES vote makes a Councilmember, Mayor, or Prosecuting Attorney ineligible for election or appointment to any City office for two years after impeachment, or after resigning once an impeachment petition has been filed.

NO

A NO vote leaves no such two-year restriction for impeachment or a resignation after an impeachment petition is filed; the existing restriction following removal by recall remains separate.

Source and scope note

Source: “Final Approved Ballot Questions and Justification Language,” approved July 20, 2026. The ballot-question wording and official “Present Situation” and “If Proposal Passes” explanations control. This guide condenses those materials; it does not add arguments for or against any proposal.