

Chart 10. Merger of Cities

Current Tennessee Law	Proposed Changes	Other States' Laws
Two or more contiguous cities located in the same county are authorized to merge into one city. Each of the cities must pass a joint resolution (or ordinance in the case of home rule cities) requesting a referendum in the cities to approve or disapprove the merger. The resolution must be passed by each of the governing bodies by a majority vote. A majority of those voting in each city must approve the merger in order for the cities to be able to merge. Registered voters in each of the cities may petition for a referendum on the merger of cities.	Public Chapter 441 directed the Commission to study the issue of annexation as part of a comprehensive review and evaluation of the efficacy of state policies set forth in Tennessee Code Annotated Title 6, Chapters 51 (Change of Municipal Boundaries) and 58 (Comprehensive Growth Plan). The laws governing city mergers are in Title 6, Chapter 51.	Thirty-six other states have laws authorizing merger of cities. Thirty-three of these states require a referendum before the merger can be finalized.

Other States' Laws on Merger

State	Initiation		Referendum	Approval by 3rd party	Other
	Cities	Voters			
Alabama	X	X	X		
Alaska	X	X	X		
Arizona	X		X		
Arkansas		X	X		
California					
Colorado	X		X		
Connecticut					
Delaware					
Florida	X	X	X		
Georgia					
Hawaii					
Idaho	X	X	X		
Illinois	X	X	X		
Indiana	X	X	X		
Iowa					
Kansas	X - cities may submit to election or may enact by ordinance		X - cities may submit election, voters may protest an ordinance, or voters may petition for consolidation		
Kentucky	X		X		
Louisiana	X	X	X		

State	Initiation		Referendum	Approval by 3rd party	Other
	Cities	Voters			
Maine					
Maryland	X	X	X - if 20% of landowners petition		
Massachusetts					
Michigan		X	X		
Minnesota	X	X	X - if initiated by the city or 10% petition		
Mississippi	X			chancery court	
Missouri	X	X	X - if the greater of 100 voters, or 15% of votes cast in the last preceding election, petition		
Montana	X		X - unless initiated by more than 50% of landowners or electors		
Nebraska	X	X	X - depends on class of city		
Nevada					
New Hampshire					
New Jersey	X	X	X	consolidation commission	
New Mexico	X		X		
New York	X	X	X - if initiated by the city		
North Carolina					
North Dakota	X	X	X	municipal consolidation review commission	
Ohio	X	X	X		
Oklahoma	X	X	X		
Oregon		X	X		
Pennsylvania		X	X		
Rhode Island					
South Carolina	X			X - optional	X- cities may agree to merge
South Dakota		X - both cities must then approve	X		
Tennessee	X	X	X		

State	Initiation		Referendum	Approval by 3rd party	Other
	Cities	Voters			
Texas		X - if at least 100 voters of each municipality petition, the government may call an election. If 15% of voters petition, then the government must call an election	X		
Utah	X	X	X		
Vermont	X		X		
Virginia	X	X	X - at judge's discretion	approved by judge who may submit to an election	
Washington	X	X	X		
West Virginia					
Wisconsin	X		X		
Wyoming	X		X - no vote, but cities must get consent signed by majority		

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