

Chart 2. Detailed Summary of Annexation Methods

State	Annexation Method
Alabama	Cities can annex territory upon receipt of a petition signed by 100% of electors in the territory. Cities may initiate annexation by referendum, and it must be approved by a majority of voters in the territory. The state legislature may also approve annexations. Unilateral annexation of unincorporated islands surrounded by the city is authorized in certain cities.
Alaska	Annexation can be initiated by a city or petition signed by at least 10% of a city's resident registered voters or at least 10% of the resident registered voters of the area proposed for annexation. An annexation has to first be approved by the state level Local Boundary Commission. If it has support of all owners and residents, no further approval is required. If it does not have the support, the annexation must be approved by a majority of voters in the territory in an election or by majority of voters of the city and territory in an election. Annexations can also be approved by the state legislature. The Local Boundary Commission authorizes the unilateral annexation of city owned property.
Arizona	Annexations can be initiated by a city or interested citizens. An annexation must be approved by a petition signed by the owners of 1/2 or more of the assessed value of the real and personal property and more than 1/2 of the persons owning real and personal property in the territory to be annexed. A city located in a county with a population of more than 350,000 persons may unilaterally annex any territory within an area that is surrounded by the city or that is bordered by the city or town on at least three sides if the landowner has submitted a request to the federal government to take ownership of the territory or hold the territory in trust.
Arkansas	The city or a majority of owners in territory may initiate annexation. An annexation must be approved by a majority of electors in the annexing city and in the territory in an election. Cities may unilaterally annex islands.
California	Annexation may be initiated by city or by a petition signed by at least 5% of voters in the territory or least 5% of the owners within the territory who also own 5% of the assessed value of land. An annexation must be approved by the local level Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). After approval, if 25-50% of voters in the territory protest the annexation, an election on the question must be held. A majority of voters in the territory must approve the annexation in the election. If more than 50% of voters protest, then the annexation is terminated. Cities can unilaterally annex contiguous and noncontiguous islands and city owned property.

State	Annexation Method
Colorado	A city can annex territory upon receipt of a petition signed by 50% of the owners in the territory who own at least 50% of the assessed value of land in the territory. Electors can initiate an annexation by election by submitting a petition signed by 75 electors or 10% of electors in the area to be annexed, whichever is less, in counties with more than 25,000 inhabitants or 40 registered electors or 10% of said electors, whichever is less, in counties with twenty-five thousand inhabitants or less. The signees must be resident landowners in the territory. The annexation must be approved by a majority of owners in the territory. Cities may unilaterally annex islands and city owned property.
Connecticut	All the territory in the state is incorporated.
Delaware	For cities over 50,000, annexation may be initiated by the city or a petition signed by 25% of voters in the territory. The city and county governments have to approve the annexation before an election is held. A majority of voters in the territory must approve the annexation. Cities under 50,000 use annexation procedures outlined in their town charters.
Florida	Territory can be annexed upon petition of 100% of owners in the territory. Annexation may be initiated by a city but it must be approved in an election by a majority of voters of the territory. The governing body of the annexing city may also choose to submit the annexation to voters of the annexing city. In the case of a dual referendum, a majority of voters in the city and a majority of voters in the territory must approve the annexation. Cities are authorized to annex an islands by interlocal agreement with the county.
Georgia	Cities can annex territory upon receipt of a petition signed by 100% of residents in the territory. Cities are authorized to annex land by ordinance upon the signed applications from: not less than 60% of the resident voters in the area and the owners of not less than 60% of the land area by acreage. Territory may also be annexed after the annexation is approved in a referendum by a majority of the voters from the area proposed to be annexed. Cities are authorized to unilaterally annex islands.
Hawaii	There are no cities in Hawaii.
Idaho	Cities may initiate annexation. If the territory sought to be annexed has more than 100 private landowners owning lots five acres or less, a majority of the owners must approve the annexation by written consent. Annexation is not required to be approved by owners if the territory contains less than 100 private owners owning lots five acres or less. Cities may also unilaterally annex islands or land that is subject to a development moratorium or water or sewer restriction.
Illinois	Cities, owners, or electors may initiate annexation by filing a petition with the circuit court. If the court approves the annexation, it must be approved by a majority of electors in the territory. Islands of 60 or fewer acres may be unilaterally annexed.

State	Annexation Method
Indiana	Territory may be annexed if a petition signed by 100% of owners who reside in the territory, 51 % of owners or 75 % of the owners of the total assessed value of the land in territory is submitted to the city. A city may unilaterally annex territory by ordinance. A city may annex noncontiguous property if it is city owned.
Iowa	Annexation may be initiated by the city development board, a city council or 5% of the registered voters of the city or territory to be annexed. The city development board then will approve any annexation it considers to be in the public interest. The annexation must then be approved in an election. Registered voters of the territory and city may vote. The annexation is approved by the majority of those voting in the election. If all owners of the territory consent to annexation, then that territory can be annexed with the approval of the city council only. In these situations, it is not necessary to get the approval of the city development board unless it is within the urbanized area of another city.
Kansas	Cities can annex territory upon receipt of a petition signed by 100% of owners in the territory. Cities are authorized to unilaterally annex territory in certain situations if the land is platted and contiguous to the city, the land lies mainly within the city and has a common perimeter with the city of more than 50%, annexing the land will make the city's boundary more harmonious (21 acre limit), the tract is situated so that 2/3 of any boundary line adjoins the city (21 acre limit), land is owned or held in trust for the city, the land adjoins the city and is owned by another government. petition the county in order to annex the territory. If a city wants to annex a tract that is less than 40 acres and is not covered under the provisions above, the annexation must be approved by the board of county commissioners by a 2/3 vote. If a city wants to annex a tract that is not covered under the above provisions and is 40 acres or larger, then a city may petition the county in order to annex the territory. The board of county commissions must approve the annexation by a 2/3 vote. Then, the majority of land owners in the territory to be annexed must approve the annexation in a mail ballot election.
Kentucky	Cities can annex territory upon receipt of a petition signed by 100% of owners in the territory. Cities can initiate annexation by enacting an ordinance stating its intent to annex. In cities with a population fewer than 100,000, if no petition is presented in the 60-day period following the publication of notice of the ordinance, then the city can enact a second ordinance annexing the territory. Residents and owners can petition for an election by filing a petition signed by 50% of the voters or owners in the territory. If 55% or more of those persons voting in the election oppose annexation, the property will not be annexed. In cities with a population of 100,000 or more, residents must file a petition in circuit court protesting the annexation. If the jury finds that 75% or more of the resident owners of the territory have protested against the annexation then the annexation shall not take place. Islands can be unilaterally annexed.

State	Annexation Method
Louisiana	Residents living in the territory may request to be annexed but it must be approved in a dual referendum. The annexation must be approved, first, by a majority of the voters living in the territory and then it must be approved by voters in the annexing city. Cities may also annex by ordinance but the annexation must be approved with a petition signed by a majority of the registered voters and a majority in number of the resident owners as well as 25% in value of the property of the resident owners within the area proposed to be annexed.
Maine	The state constitution and statutes do not address the issue of annexation.
Maryland	Cities can initiate annexation after getting the consent of at least 25% of the residents who are registered voters and the owners who own at least 25% of the assessed value of property in the territory. The city may then introduce an annexation resolution. Prior to the effective date of the resolution, the county, or at least 20% of the registered voters in the city or in the area to be annexed may petition for a referendum. If the petition was submitted by the county or the residents of the territory, the voters in the territory may participate in the referendum. If the petition was submitted by city residents, the voters in the city participate. If both circumstances exist, separate elections are held for both the existing city voters and for voters in the territory to be annexed. In the case of two elections, both sets of voters must approve the referendum in order for the annexation to proceed. A majority of voters must approve the annexation.
Massachusetts	There is no unincorporated territory in Massachusetts. Annexation is not authorized by the constitution or general law.
Michigan	Home rule villages have to get permission from the county commission and hold an election to annex property. Home rule cities can unilaterally annex city owned property. Annexation can take place by the adoption of a joint resolution of the legislative bodies of the home rule city and the township. If the property is in a charter township, the county is petitioned to hold an election in the city and in the area to be annexed. Most other annexations are approved through petition to the State Boundary Commission (SBC). Petitions can be filed by the city, 75% of the owners in the territory, 25% of the voters in the territory to be annexed or by 1% of the entire population of the city and township. Once the SBC and the head of the Consumers and Industry Services Department approve the annexation, it will become final unless 5% of the voters in the territory file a petition to hold an election. If both the majority of the electors in the territory and the majority of the city or township electors voting separately approve the annexation, the decision of the SBC stands. If either group fails to register a majority vote, the SBC decision is overturned.

State	Annexation Method
Minnesota	Cities may unilaterally annex by ordinance if there is unincorporated land completely surrounded by the city, it is city owned land outside the corporate limits, all the landowners consent to the annexation and the territory is less than 120 acres and the territory is presently served or capable of being served by available public wastewater facilities, or the land is within two miles of the city and has been approved for platting, and the platted lots average 21,780 square-feet or less. All other annexations must be approved by the state level Municipal Boundaries Adjustment Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings.
Mississippi	Cities may initiate annexation by filing a petition in chancery court. Annexation may also be initiated by filing a petition signed by 2/3 of the electors residing in the territory in chancery court. The chancery court must approve the annexation. The chancellor shall enter a decree approving the annexation if he finds that the annexation is reasonable and is required by the public convenience and necessity and that reasonable public and city services will be rendered in the annexed territory within a reasonable time.
Missouri	Territory can be annexed upon a petition of 100% of owners in the territory. If an objection to the annexation is filed, an election must be held. A city can initiate an annexation by filing an action in circuit court asking for a declaratory judgment authorizing the annexation. If the court authorizes the annexation, then the annexation has to be approved by a majority of votes cast in the area to be annexed, and by a majority of votes cast in the city. Cities can annex noncontiguous territory if 50% of the city is liable to be inundated as a result of the construction of a lake or other body of water.
Montana	If the city initiates the annexation, then the annexation must be approved in an election by the voters who reside in the territory to be annexed. If the annexation is initiated by residents, then the annexation must be approved in an election by voters in the city and the territory to be annexed. A city may unilaterally annex islands.
Nebraska	Cities may unilaterally annex property. An owner can petition to be annexed in first class cities. An owner or a majority of owners and inhabitants in the territory can petition to be annexed in second class cities.
Nevada	Annexation may be initiated by a city or by petition of a majority of owners in the territory. A city can't annex the property if the annexation is protested by a majority of owners. In cities located in counties with a population of less than 700,000, the city may unilaterally annex islands 40 acres or less in size or land that is subdivided and the city will be able to provide the city services required for public health, safety, convenience or welfare.
New Hampshire	Annexation is not authorized by the constitution or general law.
New Jersey	No unincorporated land in the state. The only annexation that takes place is between cities.

State	Annexation Method
New Mexico	Cities or majority of land owners may initiate annexation. The annexation is determined by an arbitration board that consists of three members from the territory to be annexed, three members from the annexing city and a neutral member from the county that does not live in the city or the territory to be annexed. The annexation may also be determined by a state level city boundary commission. In counties with a population less than 300,000, a majority of owners of acres of land in the area may request annexation. The city may pass an ordinance expressing its consent or rejection of the annexation. Islands may be unilaterally annexed.
New York	Annexation may be initiated by residents or owners or by joint resolution of the governing bodies of the affected territory. Each of the governing bodies of the affected local governments determine whether to consent to or deny the annexation. If one but not all of the local governments approve the annexation, the governing board of any of the affected local governments may apply to the appellate division of the supreme court for determination if the annexation is in the best interest of the public. Once the annexation has been approved by the court or the affected local governments, the annexation must be approved by a majority of those residing in the territory.
North Carolina	One hundred percent of owners in territory can petition for annexation. Seventy five percent of owners may petition for annexation in a high poverty area, and 2/3 of residents can petition for annexation in distressed areas. Cities may initiate an annexation but it must be approved by a referendum of voters living in the territory to be annexed. Noncontiguous property can be annexed in limited circumstances. Cities may unilaterally annex city owned property.
North Dakota	Annexation may be initiated by a petition signed by at least ¾ of the qualified electors or by the owners of not less than ¾ in assessed value of the property in the territory. A city may also initiate annexation on its own initiative but if the owners of 1/4 or more of the territory protest the annexation, then the dispute must be submitted to mediation and possibly adjudication by the office of administrative hearings.
Ohio	Annexation may be initiated by a petition signed by a majority of owners in the territory. Cities may only initiate annexation of territory if it is owned by the city, county, or state government. The board of county commissioners must approve the annexation.
Oklahoma	Cities may initiate annexation but it must obtain the written consent of the owners of at least a majority of the land in the territory. Owners may also request annexation by filing a petition signed by at least ¾ of the registered voters and the owners of at least ¾ (in value) of the property in any territory adjacent or contiguous to the city.

State	Annexation Method
Oregon	Annexation may be initiated by the city or a majority of owners in the territory. The legislative body of a city need not hold an election when all of the owners of land in that territory and not less than 50% of the electors, if any, residing in the territory consent. Annexations must be approved by a petition signed by electors or owners in the territory or in an election where the majority of votes cast in the territory are in favor of annexation. Islands and territory that the Oregon Health Authority has declared to be a danger to public health may be unilaterally annexed.
Pennsylvania	There is no unincorporated territory in the state. Territory in one city can be annexed by another city.
Rhode Island	Boundaries locked in by statute.
South Carolina	Annexation may be initiated by a petition signed by all owners in the territory requesting annexation or a petition signed by 75% or more of the owners owning at least 75% of the assessed value of property in the area to be annexed. Upon agreement to annex the area and the enactment of an ordinance by the city governing body declaring the area annexed, the annexation is complete. Annexation may also be initiated by a petition signed by 25% or more of the electors who reside in the area proposed to be annexed. A referendum is held in the area to be annexed. The annexation is approved if a majority of electors in the territory vote in favor of the annexation. Government owned property may be unilaterally annexed.
South Dakota	Cities, upon receipt of a written petition, may annex the territory if the petition is signed by not less than 3/4 of the registered voters and by the owners of not less than 3/4 of the value of the territory sought to be annexed to the city. A city may also initiate annexation on its own initiative but the annexation has to be approved by a majority of the voters. Voters from both the annexing city and the territory to be annexed may vote in the election. The annexation must be approved by a majority of those voting.
Tennessee	Cities may unilaterally annex property on their own initiative within their urban growth boundary or when petitioned by a majority of residents and owners. Cities may also annex by referendum on their own initiative or when petitioned by interested parties. The annexation must be approved by a majority of voters in the territory. The city may also choose to submit the question to city voters. If the question is submitted to city voters, a majority of voters in the city must approve it.
Texas	Annexation may be initiated by owners or voters in general law cities. Approval by majority of voters or owners in the territory is required. The vote is not required to be done by ballot or at any type of formal election. The voter's intentions may be expressed by any method that is satisfactory to themselves and the city council. Home rule cities may annex unilaterally or by consent depending on their charter provisions. Islands may be unilaterally annexed by all cities.

State	Annexation Method
Utah	Annexation can be initiated by a petition signed by a majority of owners within the territory who own at least 1/3 of the assessed value of all the land in territory. The city legislative body then votes on the annexation. Private property owners in a first class county or a county legislative body may file a protest. If a protest is filed then the city can choose to deny the annexation or the matter will be submitted to the boundary commission. The commission will then make a decision on whether to approve the annexation. Cities can unilaterally annex islands.
Vermont	General law only addresses annexation of territory in a town by a village. There is very little unincorporated territory in the state.
Virginia	Cities, 51% of the voters of any territory adjacent to any city, or 51% of the owners in number and land area in a designated area can initiate annexation by filing a petition in circuit court. A special court comprised of three circuit court judges appointed by the Supreme Court of Virginia hears the case and decides whether the territory should be annexed.
Washington	Residents or property owners in the territory may initiate an annexation by submitting a petition to the city signed by 10% of the residents or the owners representing 10% of the assessed value in the territory. Depending on whether the traditional or new petition method is used, the annexation must be approved by a petition signed by owners representing 60% of the assessed value in the territory or by a majority of owners and voters in the territory. Annexation by election may be initiated by a petition signed by voters who live in the area or by the city. It requires approval by a majority of voters in the territory. Cities located in counties that plan under the Growth Management Act may only annex property that is located within their designated urban growth areas. City owned property may be unilaterally annexed.
West Virginia	Annexation can be initiated by petition signed by 5% or more of the city's landowners. A majority of city voters and a majority of voters in the territory to be annexed must approve the annexation in an election. A majority of the voters and all owners in the territory, whether they reside or have a place of business therein or not, may file a petition to be annexed with the city. The territory may be annexed once the city determines the petition meets the requirements of the law. Cities may get permission from the county to annex property in limited circumstances. Cities may unilaterally annex territory within the urban growth boundary in limited circumstances.

State	Annexation Method
Wisconsin	Territory can be annexed upon a petition of 100% of electors and owners in the territory. Cities may also annex property upon a petition signed by a number of electors residing in the territory equal to at least the majority of votes cast for governor in the territory in the last gubernatorial election and signed by either ½ the owners in the area or ½ of the owners of assessed value in the territory. The city legislative body must approve the annexation by a 2/3 vote. Annexation by referendum may be initiated by the city or a petition signed by a number of electors residing in the territory equal to at least 20% of the votes cast for governor in the last election and at least 50% of the owners of at least 50% of the real property either in area or assessed value. If a city initiates, it must apply for an order for an annexation referendum from the circuit court. The annexation must be approved by a majority of voters in the territory. City owned territory, both contiguous and noncontiguous, and islands in existence on December 2, 1973, may be unilaterally annexed.
Wyoming	Annexation proceedings may be initiated by a city or by a petition signed by a majority of owners owning a majority of the territory to be annexed. If the city finds that the requirements of the law have been met, it can annex the property. If more than 50% of the owners, or if an owner or owners owning more than 50% of the area to be annexed file written objections within 20 days of the public hearing no further action may be taken on any area within the proposed annexation territory within two years. A city may unilaterally annex property if 75% or more of the perimeter of the territory is contiguous.