



# Candidate Information Guide

*How to Run for Office in Chaffee County*

General Requirements for Access to the Ballot for County Elected Offices

## Office of the Clerk and Recorder

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## **NOTICE**

*This manual was created for reference and training purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for legal advice. It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain knowledge of any and all campaign laws and regulations*

## Letter from the Chaffee County Clerk and Recorder

Dear Chaffee County Citizen:

Congratulations on taking an interest in running for a County Elected position. Being a candidate for public office is one of the most challenging and satisfying efforts you can undertake in our democracy.

This publication will serve as a resource for potential candidates for Chaffee County elected offices including Assessor, Clerk and Recorder, Commissioner, Coroner, Sheriff, and Treasurer. Please note that our office does not oversee ballot access for federal, state, municipal, special district, or school district elections.

Election laws can change, so please make sure you are following the most current rules. Candidates are responsible for making sure they follow all state and local election laws.

If you have any additional questions after reviewing this guide please contact our Elections Office at (719) 530-5604 Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or by email at [elections@chaffeecounty.org](mailto:elections@chaffeecounty.org).

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori A. Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue background.

Lori Mitchell  
Chaffee County Clerk and Recorder

## Definition of a Candidate

### COLORADO CONSTITUTION ARTICLE XXVIII (Amendment 27)

Section 2 (2) "'Candidate" means any person who seeks nomination or election to any state or local public office that is to be voted on in this state at any primary election, General Election, school district election, special district election, or municipal election. 'Candidate' also includes a judge or justice of any court of record who seeks to be retained in office pursuant to the provisions of section 25 of article VI. A person is a candidate for election if the person has publicly announced an intention to seek election to public office or retention of a judicial office and thereafter has received a contribution or made expenditure in support of the candidacy. A person remains a candidate for purposes of this Article so long as the candidate maintains a registered candidate committee. A person who maintains a candidate committee after an election cycle, but who has not publicly announced an intention to seek election to public office in the next or any subsequent election cycle, is a candidate for purposes of this article.

## Basic Qualifications for County Offices

The table below provides a general overview of candidate qualifications for County elected offices and should be used for reference only. Please review the Colorado Constitution and Colorado Revised statutes for current applicable laws. Please note that no person is eligible to be a candidate for more than one office at a time, except for special district boards.

Office	Min. Age	Requirements	Citizenship	Length of Term	Educational Requirements	Other Requirements
<b>County Assessor</b> Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 8	<b>18 years</b>	U.S Citizen, eligible elector, and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	N/A	N/A
<b>County Clerk and Recorder</b> Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 4	<b>18 years</b>	U.S Citizen, eligible elector, and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	N/A	N/A

<b>County Commissioner</b> Colo. Const. Art. XIV, Section 6, Colorado Revised Statutes Title 1, Article 4, Part 205	<b>18 years</b>	U.S Citizen, eligible elector, and resident of the county in the Commissioner District for which they are running for at least 1 year prior to the election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	N/A	N/A
<b>County Coroner</b> Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 6	<b>18 years</b>	U.S Citizen, eligible elector, and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	High School Diploma or its equivalent or a college degree	Complete set of fingerprints taken by a qualified law enforcement agency and submit a receipt evidencing such fingerprinting at the time of filing his or her written acceptance or candidate affidavit.  Cannot have been convicted of or pleaded guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to any felony charge under federal or state law unless pardoned.
<b>County Sheriff</b> Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 501.5	<b>18 years</b>	Registered elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	High School Diploma or its equivalent or a college degree	Complete set of fingerprints taken by a qualified law enforcement agency and submit a receipt evidencing such fingerprinting at the time of filing his or her written acceptance or candidate affidavit.  Cannot have been convicted of or pleaded guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to any felony charge under federal or state law unless pardoned.
<b>County Treasurer</b> Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 7	<b>18 years</b>	Registered elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	N/A	N/A

## Steps for Candidacy

The following are recommended steps to become a candidate for elected office in Chaffee County Government, including Assessor, Clerk and Recorder, Commissioner, Coroner, Sheriff

and Treasurer. There are three possible ways to get certification of designation as a candidate on the ballot: petition, party assembly nomination, or write-in. These processes are described briefly below. For detailed information, please see Colorado Revised Statutes Title 1, Article 4 on Access to the Ballot by Candidates at [www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Colorado/](http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Colorado/)

### **Step 1 — Confirm Eligibility**

Review office qualifications in the Colorado Constitution and C.R.S. Review the candidate requirements and office responsibilities and duties of county elected offices in the Colorado Constitution and Colorado Revised Statutes and ensure you meet the qualifications. These may be found online at [www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Colorado/](http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Colorado/). You will be required to swear and affirm by oath that you meet the qualifications for county elected office in a Candidate Affidavit (Step 3).

### **Step 2 — Verify Voter Registration**

Check your voter registration status, affiliation, and dates at:  
[govotecolorado.gov](http://govotecolorado.gov)

### **Step 3 — File a Candidate Affidavit**

- Must be filed **within 10 days** of becoming a candidate.
- Filed electronically with the Colorado Secretary of State.

### **Step 4 — Register a Candidate Committee**

You must register a committee **before accepting any contributions**.

Use TRACER: [tracer.sos.colorado.gov](http://tracer.sos.colorado.gov)

## **Candidate Forms**

Candidate forms are available at [www.chaffeeclerk.colorado.gov](http://www.chaffeeclerk.colorado.gov) or by contacting the Chaffee County Elections Office at 719-530-5604, emailing [elections@chaffeecounty.org](mailto:elections@chaffeecounty.org), or visiting in-person at the County Elections

File with the Secretary of State	File with Chaffee County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate Affidavit</li> <li>• Committee Registration</li> <li>• Campaign Finance Documents</li> </ul>	<p>Certificate of Designation by Petition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major political Party Designation Petition</li> <li>• Minor Political Party Designation Petition</li> <li>• Unaffiliated Candidate General Election Designation Petition</li> <li>• Candidate Acceptance of Petition Nomination</li> </ul> <p>Certificate of Designation by Party Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political Party Certificate of Designation by Assembly</li> <li>• Candidate Acceptance of Designation</li> </ul> <p>Certificate of Designation by Write-In</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affidavit of Intent for Write-In Designation</li> </ul>

## Certificate of Designation by Petition

The petition process involves circulating a written petition to other eligible electors and obtaining their signature in support of your candidacy. See Colorado Revised Statutes Title 1, Article 4, Part 8 on Nomination of Candidates by Petition.

- **Unaffiliated candidates** must get on the ballot through the petition process. There is no assembly or primary election for unaffiliated candidates. Unaffiliated candidates nominated by petition are placed directly on the General Election ballot. An unaffiliated candidate must be registered as unaffiliated no later than the first business day of January immediately preceding the election for which the person desires to be placed in nomination.
- **Affiliated candidates (major or minor party)** may use the petition option, in addition to or as an alternative to the assembly process. However, a candidate may not petition onto the ballot if they have attempted and failed to receive at least 10 percent of the votes for nomination for the same office at their party's assembly. A candidate must be affiliated with the political party no later than the first business day of January immediately preceding the election for which the person desires to be placed in nomination.

## Petition Circulation

The Chaffee County Elections Office provides a sample petition (through our forms online), or a candidate may create his or her own following the requirements in Colorado Revised Statutes Title 1, Article 4, Part 901 and 902. **The County Clerk must approve all petition formats prior to circulation.**

After collecting signatures, the completed petition must be filed with the Chaffee County Elections Office by the statutory deadline (see chart below for deadlines). The Election Office will verify the signatures and notify the candidate of sufficiency or insufficiency of the petition.

## **Requirements for Petition Circulators and Signers**

**Major Party / Minor Party / Unaffiliated - C.R.S. 1-4-905 and 905.5**

### **Circulators Must:**

- Be U.S. citizens
- Be at least 18
- Personally witness signatures
- Complete and sign the circulator affidavit
- Not pay signers

### **Signers Must:**

- Be eligible electors of the district
- Follow party affiliation rules (for major parties)
- Sign only one petition per office



## Signature Requirements

- **Major Parties:**

Lesser of 1,000 signatures or 10% of votes cast in the last primary

- **Minor Parties & Unaffiliated:**

Lesser of 1,000 signatures or 2% of votes cast in the last general election

## Certificate of Designation by Party Assembly

Major and minor party candidates may seek nomination to run for office at their political party's assembly. **Candidates who want to be a part of this process should contact their political party for assembly protocol, dates and rules.** You must be registered as affiliated with that party no later than the first business day of January of the election year, unless party rules state otherwise. At the assembly, the Party delegates vote on the candidates, and:

- Major party candidates nominated by assembly are placed on the Primary Election ballot.
- Minor party candidates nominated by assembly are placed on the general election ballot unless there is more than one candidate for that office nominated by assembly and/or petition; then the candidates are placed on the Primary Election ballot.

## Party Assembly Deadlines

- Last day for precinct caucuses: **March 7, 2026**
- Assembly designations: **March 2 – April 2, 2026**
- Certificates of Designation due: **4 days after adjournment**
- Candidate Acceptance forms due: **4 days after adjournment**

## Major Party Petition Deadlines- *C.R.S 1-4-801 and 904*

- First day to circulate petitions: **January 2, 2026**
- Last day to file with the County Clerk: **March 18, 2026, by 4:00 p.m.**

## **Minor Party Petition Deadlines C.R.S 1-4-801 and 904**

- First day to circulate: **January 2, 2026**
- Filing deadline: **April 6, 2026, by 4:00 p.m.**  
(Per SOS Calendar)

## **Unaffiliated Petition Deadlines C.R.S 1-4-801 and 904**

- First day to circulate: **May 14, 2026**
- Filing deadline: **July 9, 2026, by 3:00 p.m.**

## **Write-In Deadlines**

- Primary Write-In Affidavit deadline: **April 24, 2026**
- General Write-In Affidavit deadline: **July 16, 2026**

*If you receive your party's nomination, a Certificate of Designation by Assembly must be filed by the political party with the County Clerk and Recorder no later than four (4) days after the adjournment of the assembly. [1-4-604(3) and 1-4-1304(3) C.R.S.] Certificates of Designation may be transmitted electronically; however, the original certificate must also be filed and postmarked no later than ten (10) days after the adjournment of the assembly. Each candidate designated by assembly must file a written acceptance of designation with the County Clerk and Recorder within four (4) days after the adjournment of the assembly, and if the acceptance is transmitted by fax, the original acceptance must be postmarked no later than ten (10) days after the adjournment of the assembly. [1-4-601(3) and 1-4-1304(4) C.R.S.] The written acceptance of designation for candidates can be found through our forms **online**.*

### **Certificate of Designation by Write-In**

*A write-in candidate is a candidate whose name does not appear on the ballot, but for whom voters may vote nonetheless by writing in the person's name. Any person who wishes to be a write-in candidate must file an Affidavit of Intent stating which office the candidate desires and that they are qualified to assume those duties if elected. The Affidavit of Intent can be found **online** and shall be filed with the Chaffee County Elections Office*

*by the close of business on the 67th day before a primary election or by the close of business on the 110th day before any other election. C.R.S 1-4-1101 and 1102.*

## **Withdrawal Process**

### **If NOT yet nominated:**

Submit a signed withdrawal letter to the County Clerk.

### **If ALREADY nominated or designated:**

Submit a **notarized Statement of Withdrawal**.

If submitted too late for ballot removal, votes will not be counted.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **WHERE can I find candidate forms?**

Candidate forms are available [www.chaffeeclerk.colorado.gov](http://www.chaffeeclerk.colorado.gov) or by contacting the Chaffee County Elections Office at 719-530-5604, emailing [elections@chaffeecounty.org](mailto:elections@chaffeecounty.org) or in person at 104 Crestone Ave., Salida, CO 81201.

### **WHERE do I file paperwork for a County elected office?**

- **County Clerk:** Petitions, Certificates of Designation, Write-In Affidavits
- **Secretary of State:** Candidate Affidavit, Committee Registration, Finance Reports

### **WHEN do I file my petition and certificate of designation for the County office?**

Please refer to the current year Election Calendar on the Secretary of State's website for important dates relating to your candidacy. Visit [www.sos.state.co.us](http://www.sos.state.co.us), click on 'Elections & Voting,' then 'Election Information'.

## **WHEN do I file my campaign finance paperwork?**

Please refer to the filing calendar at

<https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/calendars/2026ElectionCalendar.pdf> . Click on 'Elections & Voting,' then Campaign Finance.

## **HOW do I verify my status and affiliation as a registered voter?**

You may review your voter registration [www.govotecolorado.gov](http://www.govotecolorado.gov) . Click on 'Find my registration.' You may also call the Chaffee County Elections Office at 719-530-5604 to verify your registration status, affiliation and affiliation date.

## **WHO do I contact with questions about running for county elected office?**

Please contact the Chaffee County Elections Office at 719-530-5604 Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. or by e-mail to [elections@chaffeecounty.org](mailto:elections@chaffeecounty.org) .

## **HOW can I view candidate lists?**

Use Candidate Search in TRACER at:

[tracer.sos.colorado.gov](http://tracer.sos.colorado.gov)

## **HOW do I obtain a voter list?**

Email [elections@chaffeecounty.org](mailto:elections@chaffeecounty.org)

## **WHERE can I find results on Election night?**

Unofficial election results are posted beginning at 7 p.m. on Election night at [chaffeeclerk.colorado.gov](http://chaffeeclerk.colorado.gov)

## **Contact Information**

Chaffee County Elections Office

Web: [chaffeeclerk.colorado.gov](http://chaffeeclerk.colorado.gov)

Phone: (719) 530-5604  
Email: [elections@chaffeecounty.org](mailto:elections@chaffeecounty.org)

Colorado Secretary of State  
Web: [www.sos.state.co.us](http://www.sos.state.co.us)  
Email: [cpfhelp@sos.state.co.us](mailto:cpfhelp@sos.state.co.us)