



How to Run for Office Candidate Information Guide

Elections Division
200 S Spruce Street
Grand Junction, CO 81501
Phone: 970-244-1662
Fax: 970-255-5039
voter.info@mesacounty.us



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NOTICE

The Mesa County Clerk and Recorder has prepared this information guide to provide a general overview of candidate qualifications and should be used as a reference guide only. This guide should not be used as a substitute for legal advice. Please seek legal counsel when considering petition initiatives. It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain knowledge of any and all campaign laws and regulations.

The Clerk and Recorder's office may not give legal advice.

Information for State and Federal Candidate Requirements may be found on the Colorado Secretary of State's website at <https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/Candidates/CandidateHome.html> or by phone at 303-894-2200.

Information for Campaign Finance for Candidates may be found on the Colorado Secretary of State's website at <https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/CampaignFinance/home.html> or by phone at 303-894-2200 x 6383.

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."

Helpful Tips to Get You Started

Tip 1: 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 <http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Colorado>.

Tip 2: Review your voter registration at www.GoVoteColorado.gov to ensure that you are registered to vote and qualified to run for office, including your voter registration date, party affiliation and affiliation date. Confirm with the county, city, school district, or special district in which you are running that you are a resident of that jurisdiction.

Tip 3: You become a candidate when you publicly announce your intent to run for office and receive a contribution or make an expenditure in support of your candidacy. You must register a candidate committee with the Secretary of State at tracer.sos.colorado.gov before receiving or spending any money.

Tip 4: Familiarize yourself with Colorado campaign finance rules and laws, as well as the Secretary of State's TRACER system for all campaign finance disclosure reports and committee registration using the following resources:

- Colorado Campaign and Political Finance Manual published by the Colorado Secretary of State, available online at tracer.sos.colorado.gov
- Colorado Constitution Article XXVIII (Campaign and Political Finance) and XIV (Counties)
- Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) Title I, Article 45 (Fair Campaign Practices Act) and Article 4 (Elections-Access to Ballot Candidates)
- Current-Year Election Calendar and campaign finance filing calendars at <https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/CampaignFinance/filingCalendar.html>

Be prepared to register a candidate committee and submit your campaign finance disclosure reports within the timeframes allotted by Colorado law. Failure to file on time can result in monetary penalties.

Tip 5: Get your name on the ballot in one of three ways (see page 7-10 for details):

- 1) Certificate of Designation by Assembly
- 2) Certificate of Designation by Petition
- 3) Certificate of Designation by Write-In

Tip 6: If you are running for county coroner or sheriff, you are required to undergo a fingerprint analysis for a background check. This can be done at the Mesa County Sheriff's Department located at 215 Rice Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501. The sheriff's office phone number is 970-244-3510.

Tip 7: Complete a Candidate Affidavit Form within 10 days of becoming a candidate. (C.R.S. § 1-45-110)

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. (C.R.S. § 1-4-501) (XIV Section 10 Colorado Constitution)

Office	Minimum Age	Requirements	Length of Term	Educational Requirements	Other Requirements
County Assessor Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 8	18 years	U.S. citizen, eligible elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election.	4 years	N/A	N/A
County Clerk and Recorder Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 4	18 years	U.S. citizen, eligible elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election.	4 years	N/A	N/A
County Commissioner Colorado Revised Statutes Title 1, Article 4, Part 205	18 years	U.S. citizen, eligible elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election.	4 years	N/A	N/A
County Coroner Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 6	18 years	U.S. citizen, eligible elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election.	4 years	High school diploma or its equivalent or a college degree	Complete set of fingerprints and receipt submitted with written acceptance or candidate affidavit. C.R.S. § 30-10-601.5. Cannot have been convicted of or pled guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to any felony charge under federal or state law unless pardoned.

Office	Minimum Age	Requirements	Length of Term	Educational Requirements	Other Requirements
County Sheriff Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 5	18 years	U.S. citizen, eligible elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election.	4 years	High school diploma or its equivalent or a college degree	Complete set of fingerprints and receipt submitted with written acceptance or candidate affidavit. C.R.S. § 30-10-501.5. Cannot have been convicted of or pled guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to any felony charge under federal or state law unless pardoned.
County Surveyor Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30 Article 10, Part 9	18 years	U.S. citizen, eligible elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election.	4 years	Shall be a professional land surveyor as provided in Part 3 of Title 12, Article 120.	N/A
County Treasurer Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 7	18 years	U.S. citizen, eligible elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election.	4 years	N/A	N/A

Becoming a Candidate

There are three ways to get your name on the ballot, depending upon your party affiliation. These options include assembly nomination, petition, or write-in process. [C.R.S. § 1-4-102] Candidate forms are available on the Colorado Secretary of State's website at www.coloradosos.gov. For detailed information, please see Colorado Revised Statutes Title 1, Article 4 on Access to the Ballot by Candidates at <https://lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Colorado/>.

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. See page 12 for contact information. You must be registered and affiliated with that party no later than the first business day of January of the election year, unless party rules state otherwise. [C.R.S. § 1-4-601(4)(a)] 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 will not appear on the primary ballot unless there is more than one person for that office nominated by assembly and/or petition.*

If you receive your party's nomination, a Certificate of Designation by Assembly must be filed by the political party with the Mesa County Elections Division no later than four (4) days after the adjournment of the assembly. [C.R.S. §1-4-604(3) and 1-4-1304(3)] Certificates of Designation may be transmitted by fax or email; 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 Mesa County Election Division 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. [C.R.S. § 1-4-601(3) and 1-4-1304(4)]

Assembly of major political parties shall be held no later than 73 days preceding the primary election. [C.R.S. § 1-4-601(1)]

A candidate must receive 30% or more of the assembly votes to be certified as a candidate for office. [C.R.S. § 1-4-601(2)]

If no candidate receives 30% or more of the votes cast, a second ballot shall be cast on all candidates for that office by the assembly. If on the second ballot, no candidate receives 30% or more of the votes cast, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes must be certified as candidates for that office by the assembly. [C.R.S. § 1-4-601(2)]

Forms to be filed with County Clerk and Recorder (filed by political party)

- ✓ Certificate of Designation by Assembly
- ✓ Candidate Acceptance of Designation

Certificate of Designation by Petition

The petition process involves circulating a written petition to other electors eligible to vote who share your party affiliation and obtaining their signature in support of your candidacy. See C.R.S. § 1-4-8 et seq. 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.

Forms to be filed with County Clerk and Recorder:

- ✓ Unaffiliated Candidate General Election Designation Petition

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.

Forms to be filed with the County Clerk and Recorder:

- ✓ Major Political Party Primary Designation Petition
- ✓ Minor Political Party Designation Petition
- ✓ Candidate Acceptance of Petition Nomination

Petition Circulation

The Mesa County Elections Division may provide a sample petition, or a candidate may create his or her own following the requirements in C.R.S. § 1-4-901 and 902. The Clerk must approve all petition formats prior to circulation. Each petition may contain only one candidate's name. After collecting signatures, the completed petition must be filed with the Mesa County Elections Division by the statutory deadline. The Elections Division will verify the signatures and notify the candidate of sufficiency or insufficiency of the petition.

Requirements for Petition Circulators and Signers (County Only)

	Major Party / Minor Party / Unaffiliated – C.R.S. § 1-4-905 and 905.5	
Petition Circulators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen of the US • At least 18 years old • Personally circulate the section of the petition to which the Affidavit of Circulator is attached • Ensure each signature on the petition is affixed in their presence • To the best of their knowledge and belief each of the persons signing the petition section was, at the time of signing, an eligible elector. • Has not paid or will not in the future pay and believes no other person has paid or will pay, directly or indirectly, any money or other thing of value to any signer for the purpose of inducing or causing the signer to sign the petition. • Sign and have notarized the Affidavit of Circulator attached to each of his or her completed sections(s). • Review C.R.S. § 1-4-905 and 905.5 to determine additional requirements, including the exact wording of the circulator affidavit, notary requirements, and whether the petition entity needs to obtain a license from the Colorado Secretary of State. 	
	Major Party - C.R.S. § 1-4-801 and 904	Minor Party / Unaffiliated – C.R.S. § 1-4-802 and 904
Signatures Required and Circulation Dates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only eligible electors residing within the political subdivision may sign the petition. • Signers must be affiliated with the political party named in the petition for at least 22 days prior to signing. • The petition requires the lesser of 1,000 signers or signers equal to 10% of the votes cast at the last primary election for the same office and political party. • No petition may be circulated for signatures prior to the third Tuesday in January. After collecting signatures, a completed petition must be filed with the Mesa County Elections Division no later than the close of business on the third Tuesday in March. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only eligible electors residing within the political subdivision in which the officer is to be elected may sign the petition. • May be signed by any eligible elector who has not signed any other petition for that office. There are no party affiliation requirements. • The petition requires the lesser of 1,000 signatures or signers equal to 2% of the votes cast for all candidates for that office in the most recent General Election. • Minor Party: The petition shall not be circulated prior to the first Monday in February in the general election year. After collecting signatures, a completed petition must be filed with the Mesa County Elections Division no later than the close of business 85 days before the State Primary Election. • Unaffiliated: The petition shall not be circulated prior to 173 days before the General Election. After collecting signatures, a completed petition must be filed with the Mesa County Elections Division no later than 5 p.m. on the 117th day before the General Election.

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 that the candidate desires the office and is qualified to assume duties, if elected. The Affidavit of Intent shall be filed with the appropriate office by the close of business on the 67th day before a primary election and by the close of business on the 110th day before any other election. C.R.S. § 1-4-1101 and 1102.

Forms to be filed with the County Clerk and Recorder:

- ✓ Affidavit of Intent for Write-In Designation

Running for Municipal Office

If you are considering running for municipal office, you should contact the municipal clerk's office in the city/town where you live. You will file any documents, petitions or write-in affidavits through their office.

Municipality	Phone	Address	City	Zip	Website
City of Grand Junction	970-244-1509	250 North 5 th Street	Grand Junction	81501	https://www.gjcity.org
City of Fruita	970-858-3663	325 East Aspen Avenue	Fruita	81521	https://www.fruita.org
Town of Palisade	970-464-5602	175 East Third Street	Palisade	81526	http://townofpalisade.org
Town of Collbran	970-487-3751	1010 High Street	Collbran	81624	https://townofcollbran.colorado.gov
Town of De Beque	970-283-5475	381 Minter Avenue	DeBeque	81630	https://townofdebeque.colorado.gov

Running for School District Director

If you are considering running for School District Board of Directors, you should contact the school district and ask for their designated election official. You will file any documents, petitions or write-in affidavit through their office. This entity will then coordinate with the Mesa County Elections Division to place your name on the ballot.

School District	Phone	Address	City	Zip	Website
MCSD #51	970-254-5100	2115 Grand Avenue	Grand Junction	81501	https://www.d51schools.org
De Beque	970-283-5596	730 Minter Avenue	De Beque	81630	https://www.dbschools.org
Plateau Valley	970-487-3547	56600 Highway 330	Collbran	81624	http://www.pvsd50.org
Delta	970-874-4438	145 West Fourth Street	Delta	81416	http://www.deltaschools.com

Running for Special District Office

If you are considering running for a Special District Board, you should contact the special district and ask for their designated election official. You will file any petitions or write-in affidavits through their office. This entity may conduct its own election or coordinate with the Mesa County Elections Division to place your name on the ballot. There are more than 100 special districts in Mesa County. For information about these special districts, please contact the Colorado Department of Local Affairs at 303-864-7720 or visit <https://cdola.colorado.gov>.

Running for State Office

If you are considering running for a statewide office, such as Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer or Attorney General, a House or Senate seat in the Colorado General Assembly, or for a District Attorney seat, please contact the Colorado Secretary of State's Office and your statewide political party (see page 12).

Colorado Secretary of State Campaign Finance Support

Filing Candidate Affidavit

Filing Campaign and Political Finance Paperwork

Website: www.coloradosos.gov

Phone: 303-894-2200 x 6383 press option 3

E-mail: cpfhelp@coloradosos.gov

Colorado Political Parties: See page 12 for contact information

Candidate Forms

Candidate forms are available at <https://www.mesacounty.us/departments-and-services/clerk-and-recorder/elections/candidate-information-elections/run-office-mesa-county> or by contacting the Mesa County Elections Office at 970-244-1662, 200 South Spruce Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501

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

Political Parties (in alphabetical order)

Major Parties	Minor Parties
<p>Colorado Democratic Party 789 Sherman Street, Suite 110 Denver, CO 80203 Phone: 303-623-4762 Email: info@coloradodems.org Web: coloradodems.org</p>	<p>Colorado Forward Party P.O. Box 460395 Denver, CO 80246 Phone: Email: info@coloradoforwardparty.com Web: coloradoforwardparty.org</p>
<p>Colorado Republican Party 5950 South Willow Drive, Suite 210 Greenwood Village, CO 80111 Phone: 303-758-3333 Email: info@cologop.org Web: cologop.org</p>	<p>Green Party of Colorado P.O. Box 11171 Denver, CO 80211 Phone: 970-697-0022 Email: contact@coloradogreenparty.org Web: coloradogreenparty.org</p>
<p>Mesa County Democratic Party 310 North 7th Street, Unit 2 Grand Junction, CO 81501 Phone: 970-549-8544 Email: mesacountydemocraticparty@gmail.com Web: mesacountydems.org</p>	<p>Libertarian Party of Colorado 11757 West Ken Caryl Avenue #F124 Littleton, CO 80127 Phone: 303-837-9393 Email: statechair@lpcolorado.org Web: lpcolorado.org</p>
<p>Mesa County Republican Party 1227 North 23rd Street, Unit 107 Grand Junction, CO 81501 Phone: 970-314-9393 Email: mesacountyrepublicanparty@gmail.com Web: mesacountygop.org</p>	<p>Libertarian Party of Mesa County P.O. Box 1392 Clifton, CO 81520 Phone: 970-270-9617 Email: mesacolp@gmail.com Web: https://lpcolorado.org/mesa-county/</p>
Minor Parties	
<p>American Constitution Party P.O. Box 1776 Arvada, CO 80001 Phone: 303-399-5067 Email: acp4co@gmail.com Web: constitutionparty.com</p>	<p>No Labels Party of Colorado P.O. Box 5473 Greenwood Village, CO 80155 Email: info@nolabels.org</p>
<p>Approval Voting Party P.O. Box 653 Littleton, CO 80160 Phone: 720-439-6000 Email: info@approvalvotingparty.com Web: approvalvotingparty.com</p>	<p>Unity Party of Colorado P.O. Box 745742 Arvada, CO 80006 Email: mail@unityparty.us Web: unityparty.us</p>
<p>Colorado Center Party P.O. Box 272834 Fort Collins, CO 80527 Phone: 970-215-6755 Email: info@coloradocenterparty.org Web: coloradocenterparty.org</p>	

Withdrawal Process

If you wish to withdraw your candidacy, the correct procedure depends upon your status on the ballot.

- If you have already been designated or nominated to the ballot by party assembly or by petition and wish to withdraw your candidacy, you may submit a signed and notarized Statement of Withdrawal Form to the designated election official. If the form is not filed in time for your name to be taken off the ballot, the election will proceed and any votes cast for you will be deemed invalid and will not be counted. The Statement of Withdrawal Form is available online at www.coloradosos.gov.
- If you are a candidate but have not yet been designated or nominated to the ballot and wish to withdraw your candidacy, you may submit a signed letter of withdrawal to the designated election official.
- The designated election official for county elected offices is the Mesa County Clerk and Recorder. If you are running for municipal, school board or special district office, please submit your withdrawal to the designated election official in that jurisdiction.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find candidate forms?

Candidate forms are available at <https://www.mesacounty.us/departments-and-services/clerk-and-recorder/elections/candidate-information-elections/run-office-mesa-county> or by contacting the Mesa County Elections Division at 970-244-1662, emailing voter.info@mesacounty.us or in-person at 200 South Spruce Street, Grand Junction, Colorado 81501.

Where do I file my candidate paperwork for a County elected office?

The following forms will need to be filed with the Mesa County Elections Division.

- ✓ Certificate of Designation by Assembly (provided by the political party at the assembly)
- ✓ Candidate Acceptance of Nomination by Designation (provided by the political party at the assembly)
- ✓ Major Party, Minor Party or Unaffiliated Designation Petition Forms (provided by the county)
- ✓ Candidate Acceptance of Nomination by Petition (provided by the county)
- ✓ Affidavit of Intent for Write-In (provided by the county)

The following forms will need to be filed electronically with the Secretary of State or at www.coloradosos.gov

- ✓ Candidate Affidavit
- ✓ Campaign Finance Forms
- ✓ Committee Registration

When do I file my petition and certificate of designation for 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.coloradosos.gov.

When do I file my campaign finance paperwork?

Please refer to the filing calendar at www.coloradosos.gov.

How do I verify my status and affiliation as a registered voter?

You may review your voter registration at www.GoVoteColorado.gov. Click on “Find my registration.” You may also call the Mesa County Elections department at 970-244-1662 to verify your registration status, affiliation and affiliation date.

Whom do I contact with questions about running for county elected office?

Please contact the Mesa County Elections Division at 970-244-1662, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. or by email to voter.info@mesacounty.us.

How can I get a list of voters in the county/municipality/district for which I am a candidate?

You may request to purchase a targeted list by printing and filling out the Voter Registration and Election Report Request Form on our website at <https://www.mesacounty.us/departments-and-services/clerk-and-recorder/elections/election-results/records-and-data-elections>, calling us at 970-244-1662, or by requesting the form via email at voter.info@mesacounty.us.

How can I find out who the other candidates are?

You can visit tracer.sos.colorado.gov, and then go to “Search Database” and “Candidate Search.” This option allows you to search by several different options, such as Last Name, First Name, Party, Election Year, Jurisdiction, Office, District, or Status.

Where can I find results on Election night?

Unofficial election results are posted beginning at 7 p.m. on Election night at <https://www.mesacounty.us/departments-and-services/clerk-and-recorder/elections/election-results>.