



# How to Run for County Office

## Candidate Information Guide



*Garfield County*

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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 the actual knowledge of the campaign finance laws and regulations.

## **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."

## Steps for Candidacy

Following are recommended **steps to become a candidate for elected office in Garfield County Government**, including Assessor, Clerk and Recorder, Commissioner, Coroner, Sheriff, Surveyor and Treasurer. These guidelines are 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 campaign laws and regulations.

**STEP 1:** Review the candidate requirements and office responsibilities and duties of county elected offices in the Colorado Constitution and 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 7).

**STEP 2:** Review your voter registration at [www.govotecolorado.com](http://www.govotecolorado.com) to ensure that you are registered to vote and qualified to run for office, including your voter registration date, party affiliation and affiliation date.

**STEP 3:** You become a candidate when you publicly announce your intent to run for office and thereafter 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](http://tracer.sos.colorado.gov) before receiving or spending any money.

**STEP 4:** Familiarize yourself with Colorado Campaign Finance rules and laws, as well as the Secretary of State 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](http://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 by Candidates)
- Current year Election Calendar and campaign finance filing calendars at [www.sos.state.co.us](http://www.sos.state.co.us). 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.

**STEP 5:** Get your name on the ballot in one of three ways (see pages 7-8 for details):

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

**STEP 6:** If you are running for County Coroner or Sheriff, you must have your fingerprints taken by a qualified law enforcement agency and submit a receipt evidencing the fingerprinting at the time of filing your written acceptance or candidate affidavit. If you are not running for County Coroner or Sheriff, disregard this step.

**STEP 7:** Complete a Candidate Affidavit Form within 10 days of becoming a candidate, and file electronically with the Colorado Secretary of State Office via TRACER.  
<http://tracer.sos.colorado.gov/PublicSite/homepage.aspx>

### 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   | Minimum Age | Residency Requirements  | Citizenship  | Length of Term | Educational Requirements                                  | Other Requirements   |
|--|-------------|---|--------------|----------------|---|--|
| <b>County Assessor</b><br>Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 8   | 18 years    | Registered elector and resident of the county.  | U.S. Citizen | 4 years        | N/A   | N/A  |
| <b>County Clerk and Recorder</b><br>Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 4   | 18 years    | Registered elector and resident of the county.  | U.S. Citizen | 4 years        | N/A   | N/A  |
| <b>County Commissioner</b><br>Colorado Revised Statutes Title 1, Article 4, Part 205<br>Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 3 | 18 years    | Registered 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><br>Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 6  | 18 years    | Registered Elector and resident of the county.  | 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 his or her written acceptance or candidate affidavit |

| Office  | Age      | Residency Requirements                         | Citizenship  | Length of Term | Educational Requirements                                  | Other Requirements  |
|---|----------|--|--------------|----------------|---|---|
| <b>County Sheriff</b><br>Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 5   | 18 years | Registered elector and resident of the county. | 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.<br><br>A person who has been convicted of or pleaded guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to any felony charge under federal or state law is unqualified for the office of sheriff unless pardoned. |
| <b>County Surveyor</b><br>Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30 Article 10, Part 9   | 18 years | Registered elector and resident of the county. | U.S. Citizen | 4 years        | N/A   | Colorado licensed and registered land surveyor (see Section 12-25-201, C.R.S.)  |
| <b>County Treasurer</b><br>Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 7 | 18 years | Registered elector and resident of the county. | U.S. Citizen | 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. 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/).

## Certificate of Designation by Party Assembly

Major and minor party candidates may seek nomination to office at their political party's assembly, which is held no later than 25 days after the Precinct Caucus. **Candidates who want to be a part of this process should contact their political party for assembly protocol, dates and rules.** See page 9 for party contact information.

At the assembly, the Party delegates vote on the candidates. The candidate 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.

- **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.

The Certificate of Designation by Assembly must be filed by the political party with the designated election official no later than four (4) days after the adjournment of the assembly. [1-4-604(3) C.R.S.] Certificates of Designation may be transmitted by fax; however, the original certificate must also be filed and postmarked no later than ten days after the adjournment of the assembly.

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## Certificate of Designation by Petition

The petition process involves circulating a written petition to other registered electors who share your party affiliation and obtaining their signature in support of your candidacy.

- **Unaffiliated candidates** must get on the ballot through the petition process. Unaffiliated candidates nominated by petition are placed directly on the General Election ballot; there is no primary election for unaffiliated candidates. An unaffiliated candidate must be registered as unaffiliated no later than the first business day of the election year to petition onto the ballot.
- **Affiliated candidates (major or minor party)** may use the petition option when they do not believe they have their party's support to get on the Primary or General Election ballot through their party's assembly process, or do not wish to go through 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 the election year to petition onto the ballot.

The County Clerk must approve all petition formats prior to circulation. Each petition may contain only one candidate's name. The Clerk's Office also must verify signatures and notify the candidate of sufficiency or insufficiency. Please see Title 1, Article 4, Part 8 of Colorado Revised Statutes on Nomination of Candidates by Petition for requirements. Call our Elections Division at 970-384-3700 Ext. 1820 for more information about nomination by petition to be a candidate for county offices.

**How many signatures are required for a major party candidate seeking to be placed on the primary election ballot by petition?**

- Major party candidates for Garfield County need petition signatures equal to 20% of the votes cast in the prior primary election for the office or, if no primary was held, 20% of the votes cast in the prior general election for the office. See Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) § 1-4801(2)(a).
- The number of signatures required for a 2018 petition is based on the votes cast totals from the 2014 Primary Election.

**# of Signatures required for Major Party Candidate Petitions for the 2018 Election cycle.**

|                                      |            |      |          |      |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------|----------|------|
| Garfield County Commissioner Dist. 1 | Republican | 545  | Democrat | 283  |
| Garfield County Clerk & Recorder     | Republican | 2850 | Democrat | 306  |
| Garfield County Treasurer            | Republican | 520  | Democrat | 2655 |
| Garfield County Assessor             | Republican | 539  | Democrat | 2676 |
| Garfield County Sheriff              | Republican | 549  | Democrat | 2608 |
| Garfield County Surveyor             | Republican | 523  | Democrat | 3163 |
| Garfield County Coroner              | Republican | 529  | Democrat | 2575 |

**# of Signatures required for Minor Party and Unaffiliated Candidate Petitions for the 2018 Election cycle.**

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Garfield County Commissioner Dist. 1 | 379 |
| Garfield County Clerk & Recorder     | 285 |
| Garfield County Treasurer            | 266 |
| Garfield County Assessor             | 268 |
| Garfield County Sheriff              | 261 |
| Garfield County Surveyor             | 316 |
| Garfield County Coroner              | 276 |

|   | Major Party  | Minor Party   | Unaffiliated  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Requirements for Petition Circulators:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resident of the State</li> <li>▪ Citizen of the US</li> <li>▪ Must be at least 18 years old</li> <li>▪ Registered to vote</li> <li>▪ Affiliated with the political party mentioned in the petition at the time the petition is circulated</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resident of the State</li> <li>▪ Citizen of the US</li> <li>▪ At least 18 years old</li> <li>▪ Registered to vote</li> <li>▪ Affiliated with the political party mentioned in the petition at the time the petition is circulated</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resident of the State</li> <li>▪ U.S. citizen</li> <li>▪ Must be at least 18 years old</li> </ul>  |
|   | Major Party  | Minor Party   | Unaffiliated  |
| <b>Petition Signers and Signatures:</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only eligible electors from the political subdivision may sign the petition</li> <li>▪ Signers must be affiliated with the political party named in the petition for at least 29 days prior to signing.</li> <li>▪ The petition signatures must equal at least 20% of the votes cast in the previous primary election for that office. (If there was no primary, 20% of the votes cast at most recent General Election where there was a candidate for that office.)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only eligible electors from the political subdivision may sign the petition</li> <li>▪ There are no party requirements</li> <li>▪ The candidate needs the lesser of 750 or 2% of the votes cast for all candidates for that office in the most recent General Election (whichever is less).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only eligible electors in the district or political subdivision</li> <li>▪ Signers may be affiliated with a party or unaffiliated</li> <li>▪ The candidate needs the lesser of 750 or 2% of the votes cast for all candidates in the most recent *General Election (whichever is less)</li> <li>▪ Unaffiliated petitions may be amended once, no later than 3.p.m., 85 days before the General Election</li> </ul> |

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## 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 with the County Clerk and Recorder by the 67th day before a Primary Election or by the 110th day before any other election.

## **Political Parties**

### **Garfield Democratic Party**

PO Box 2637

Glenwood Springs, CO 81602

Chairperson: Gretchen Brogdon

Email: [garfieldcountydemocrats@gmail.com](mailto:garfieldcountydemocrats@gmail.com)

Web: [www.garcodems.org](http://www.garcodems.org)

### **Garfield Republican Party**

PO Box 223

Rifle, CO 81652

Chairperson: Carrie Couey

Phone: 970-618-3668

Email: [garfieldcountyrepublicans@gmail.com](mailto:garfieldcountyrepublicans@gmail.com)

### **Colorado Democratic Party**

789 Sherman St., Suite 110

Denver, CO 80203

Chairperson: Morgan Carroll

Phone: 303-623-4762

Fax: 303-623-2443

Web: [www.coloradodems.org](http://www.coloradodems.org)

### **Colorado Republican Party**

5950 S. Willow Drive, Suite 210

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Chairperson: Steve House

Phone: 303-758-3333

Fax: 303-753-4611

Web: [www.cologop.org](http://www.cologop.org)

## 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.
- 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 Garfield County Clerk and Recorder.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Where do I file my candidate paperwork for County office?

The following forms will need to be filed at the Garfield 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.sos.state.co.us](http://www.sos.state.co.us)

- 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.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 [www.sos.state.co.us](http://www.sos.state.co.us). 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.com](http://www.govotecolorado.com). Click on 'Find my registration.' You may also call the Garfield County Elections Division at 970-384-3700 Ext. 1770 to verify your registration status, affiliation and affiliation date.

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

Please contact the Garfield County Elections Division at 970-384-3700 Ext.1820 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. or by e-mail to [jalberico@garfield-county.com](mailto:jalberico@garfield-county.com).

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

You can request a list of all registered voters at [elections@garfield-county.com](mailto:elections@garfield-county.com).

### How can I find out who the other candidates are?

You can visit the Secretary of State website at [tracer.sos.colorado.gov](http://tracer.sos.colorado.gov), and then go to 'Search Database' and 'Candidate Search.' This option allows you to search by several different options.

### Where can I find results on Election night?

Unofficial election results are posted beginning at 7 p.m. on Election night at [www.garfield-county.com](http://www.garfield-county.com).