

**Arapahoe County
Candidate Guide
2026**



**Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder's Office
Elections Division**

www.ArapahoeVotes.gov

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NOTICE

This guide 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.

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Letter from the Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder

Dear fellow Arapahoe County citizen:

Congratulations on your decision to explore candidacy for elected office! When citizens like you take the initiative to campaign for public office, our community and our democracy thrive.

This guide was prepared to serve as a resource for potential candidates for Arapahoe County elected offices, including **Assessor, Clerk and Recorder, County Commissioner, Coroner, Sheriff, and Treasurer**. Note: Our office does not oversee ballot access for federal, state, municipal, special district, or school district candidates.

If you are considering running for a state office, such as Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, State Attorney, House or Senate in the Colorado General Assembly, or District Attorney, please contact your political party and/or the Colorado Secretary of State for information and procedures. Go to www.sos.state.co.us for Secretary of State information; political party contact information is included on page 11 of this guide.

If you are considering running for elected office in a municipality, special district, or school district within our county, please contact the Designated Election Official in that jurisdiction for information and procedures. You can find this contact information at www.arapahoevotes.com/run-office.

Potential candidates are advised that legal provisions are subject to amendment. It is the sole responsibility of the candidate and their committee to determine and comply with any and all applicable state or local laws, statutes, ordinances, rules, regulations, and policies in order to run for and be elected to office. **Specifically, all County Candidates must comply with all applicable Secretary of State candidate-filing requirements in addition to materials submitted to our office.**

If you have any questions after reviewing this guide, please feel free to contact our team in the Arapahoe County Elections Division at 303-795-4511, or the Designated Election Official in the local jurisdiction where you are running.

I hope your candidacy is a worthwhile and fulfilling experience,



Joan Lopez
Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder

Definition of a Candidate

COLORADO CONSTITUTION ARTICLE XXVIII (Amendment 27)

Section 2(2) states: “‘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

The following are recommended **steps to become a candidate for elected office in Arapahoe County Government**, including Assessor, Clerk and Recorder, Commissioner, Coroner, Sheriff, 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. Find candidate forms at www.arapahoevotes.com/candidate-forms.

STEP 1: Review the candidate requirements and office responsibilities and duties of county elected offices in the Colorado Constitution and Colorado Revised Statutes to ensure you meet the qualifications of the office that you are seeking. These can be found online at www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Colorado/. You will be required to swear and affirm by oath that you meet qualifications for county elected office in a Candidate Affidavit (Step 3).

STEP 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.

STEP 3: Complete a Candidate Affidavit Form within 10 days of becoming a candidate, have it notarized by a Notary Public, and **file with the Colorado Secretary of State's Office**. 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. Contact the Secretary of State with any questions: www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/Candidates/county.html

STEP 4: You **must register a Candidate Committee with the Secretary of State** at tracer.sos.colorado.gov before receiving any contributions. Familiarize yourself with Colorado Campaign Finance rules and laws, as well as the Secretary of State TRACER system for all 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 Articles 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.

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: Candidates for **County Coroner** or **Sheriff** are required to undergo a fingerprint analysis for a background check. Candidates must make an appointment [online](#) and pay for fingerprinting through one of two Colorado Bureau of Investigation vendors.

- Scroll down and click on "Coroner Candidate" or "Sheriff Candidate" and follow the instructions.
- Use the CONJ code "5990 CCRI" for Coroner candidates and "5990 SCAI" for Sheriff candidates. The "employer" address is 5334 S. Prince Street, Littleton, CO, 80120.
 - Your fingerprints will be submitted electronically to the CBI and a background check report will be returned to the Elections Division. **Candidates do not need to pick up or turn in a card or any paperwork regarding fingerprint analysis from our office.**

We will notify you in writing whether, by law, you are qualified or unqualified, but we cannot share the report. Candidates for these offices can contact our Election Division at 303-795-4511 if they have questions about this process.

STEP 6: Get your name on the ballot in one of three ways (see pages 8-10 for details):

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

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	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 2 and Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 3	18 years	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.	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.

Basic Qualifications for County Offices - continued

Office	Age	Residency 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 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

Candidate Forms

Candidate forms are available at www.arapahoevotes.com/candidate-forms or by contacting the Arapahoe County Elections Division at 303-795-4511, emailing elections@arapahoe.gov, or visiting in-person at the County Administration Building, 5334 S. Prince St., Littleton, CO, 80120.

File with Secretary of State	File with Arapahoe County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate Affidavit • Committee Registration • Campaign Finance Documents 	Certificate of Designation by Petition <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 Certificate of Designation by Party Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Party Certificate of Designation by Assembly • Candidate Acceptance of Designation Certificate of Designation by Write-In <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affidavit of Intent for Write-In Designation

Becoming a Candidate on the Ballot

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, regarding Access to the Ballot by Candidates at www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Colorado/.

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, unless party rules state otherwise.

Petition Circulation

The Arapahoe County Elections Division 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 and Recorder's office must approve all petition formats prior to circulation – contact the Elections Division at 303-795-4511 or elections@arapahoegov.com if you plan to collect petition signatures.**

After collecting signatures, the completed petition must be filed with the Arapahoe County Elections Division by the statutory deadline (see chart below for deadlines). The Elections Division 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	
Petition Circulators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A U.S. citizen. ▪ 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 was, at the time of signing, an eligible elector. ▪ Has not paid or will not in the future pay and believe 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 such signer to affix their signature to the petition. ▪ Sign and have notarized the Affidavit of Circulator attached to each of his or her completed section(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 district of the office named in the petition 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 valid signatures or enough signatures 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. A completed petition must be filed with the Arapahoe County Elections Division no later than 4 p.m. on the third Tuesday in March. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only eligible electors residing within the district of the office named in the petition 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 valid signatures or total signatures 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 Arapahoe County Elections Division no later than 4 p.m. 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 Arapahoe County Elections Division no later than 3 p.m. on the 117th day before the 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 (see Page 11 for contact information). 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, Party delegates vote on the candidates. Then:

- **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. In that case, the candidates are placed on the Primary Election ballot.

If you receive your party's nomination, a Certificate of Designation by Assembly must be filed by the political party with the Arapahoe 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; 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 Arapahoe County Elections Division within four (4) days after the adjournment of the assembly.** 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)]. 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 Arapahoe County Elections Division 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 you wish to withdraw your candidacy, the correct procedure depends upon your status on the ballot.

- 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 Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder at elections@arapahoegov.com.
- If you have already been designated or nominated to the ballot by petition or by party assembly and wish to withdraw your candidacy, you may submit a signed and notarized **Statement of Withdrawal Form** to the Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder. 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 or reported. The Statement of Withdrawal Form is available online at www.sos.state.co.us.

Political Party and Political Organization Contact Information

Major Party	Minor Party	Minor Party Continued
<p>Arapahoe Democratic Party 15200 E. Girard Ave., Suite 1400 Aurora, CO 80014 Phone: 303-468-7968 Email: info@arapahoedems.org Web: www.arapahoedems.org</p>	<p>American Constitution Party 20487 Weld County Road 33 Lasalle, CO 80645 Phone: 303-596-8132 Email: acp4co@gmail.com Web: www.americanconstitutionparty.com</p>	<p>Unity Party of Colorado P. O. Box 745742 Arvada, CO 80006 Phone: None Email: tjrcole@hotmail.com Web: www.unityparty.us</p>
<p>Arapahoe Republican Party P.O. Box 12 Littleton, CO 80160 Phone: 303-779-1115 Email: chair@arapahoerepublicans.org Web: www.arapahoerepublicans.org</p>	<p>Approval Voting Party P. O. Box 653 Littleton, CO 80160 Phone: 720-260-1493 Email: info@ApprovalVotingParty.com Web: www.approvalvotingparty.com</p>	<p>No Labels Colorado Party P.O. Box 5473 Greenwood Village, CO 80155 Phone: 202-588-1990 Email: info@nolabels.org Web: www.nolabels.org</p>
<p>Colorado Democratic Party 789 Sherman St., Suite 110 Denver, CO 80203 Phone: 303-623-4762 Email: info@coloradodems.org Web: www.coloradodems.org</p>	<p>Colorado Center Party P.O. Box 272834 Fort Collins, CO 80527 Phone: 970-215-6755 Email: info@coloradocenterparty.org Web: www.coloradocenterparty.org</p>	
<p>Colorado Republican Party 5950 S. Willow Dr., Suite 210 Greenwood Village, CO 80111 Phone: 303-758-3333 Email: info@cologop.org Web: www.cologop.org</p>	<p>Colorado Forward Party P.O. Box 460395 Denver, CO 80246 Phone: 602-247-0684 Email: Info@coloradoforwardparty.com Web: www.coloradoforwardparty.com</p>	
	<p>Green Party of Colorado 1051 14th St., Unit 3005-4 Denver, CO 80202 Phone: 720-952-7090 Email: pldillon720@gmail.com Web: www.gp.org/colorado</p>	
	<p>Libertarian Party of Colorado 11757 West Ken Caryl Ave., F-124 Littleton, CO 80127 Phone: 303-837-9393 Email: statechair@lpcolorado.org Web: www.lpcolorado.org</p>	

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find candidate forms?

Candidate forms are available at www.arapahoevotes.gov/candidate-forms. You may also call the Arapahoe County Elections Division at 303-795-4511, email elections@arapahoegov.com, or come to our office at 5334 S. Prince St., Littleton.

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

The following forms will need to be filed with the Arapahoe 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 with the Secretary of State:

- Candidate Affidavit
- Campaign Finance Forms
- Committee Registration

When do I file my petition and certificate of designation for county office?

Please refer to the 2026 Election Calendar on the Secretary of State's website for important dates relating to your candidacy. Visit 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. 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 at www.govotecolorado.gov. Click on "Find my Registration." You may also call the Arapahoe County Elections Division at 303-795-4511 to verify your registration status, affiliation and affiliation date.

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

Please contact the Arapahoe County Elections Division at 303-794-4511, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. - 4 p.m., or by e-mail to elections@arapahoegov.com.

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

You can download a list of all registered voters on our website. Visit www.arapahoevotes.gov and click on "Records and Data," then "Voter Lists." The Registered Voter List is updated weekly. You may also request to purchase a targeted list by calling us at 303-795-4511 or by e-mail to elections@arapahoegov.com.

How can I find out who the other candidates are?

You can visit the Secretary of State website at tracer.sos.colorado.gov, then go to "Search Database" and "Candidate Search." This option allows you to search by several different methods, 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 www.arapahoevotes.gov.