



Candidate Information Guide

How to Run for Office in Saguache 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 Saguache County Clerk and Recorder

Dear Saguache 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 Saguache 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.

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.

If you have any additional questions after reviewing this guide, please contact our Elections Office at (719) 655-2512 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or by email at clerkadmin@saguachecounty-co.gov

Best regards,

Trish Gilbert
Saguache 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 the 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 Saguache 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.

STEP 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 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: 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.

STEP 4: You must register a Candidate Committee with the Secretary of State at <https://tracer.sos.colorado.gov/PublicSite/homepage.aspx> 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 <https://tracer.sos.colorado.gov/PublicSite/homepage.aspx>
- 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 <https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/calendars/2024ElectionCalendar.pdf>

Be prepared to register as 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. Contact the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for more information on fingerprinting. Your fingerprints will be submitted to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation and a background check report will be returned to the Clerk and Recorder's Office. We will notify you in writing whether, by law, you are qualified or unqualified, but we cannot share the report.

STEP 6: Get your name on the ballot in one of three ways:

- 1) Certificate of Designation by Assembly
- 2) Certificate of Designation by Petition
- 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	Min. Age	Requirements	Citizenship	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 election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	N/A	N/A
County Clerk & 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 election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	N/A	N/A
County Commissioner Colo. Const. Art. XIV, Section 6,	18 years	U.S Citizen, eligible elector, and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to	U.S. Citizen	4 years	N/A	N/A

Colorado Revised Statutes Title 1, Article 4, Part 205		election.				
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 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.
County Sheriff Colorado Revised Statutes Title 30, Article 10, Part 501.5	18 years	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.
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 election.	U.S. Citizen	4 years	N/A	N/A

Becoming a Candidate

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/.

Candidate Forms

Candidate forms are available at <https://saguahcecclerk.colorado.gov/> or by contacting the Saguache County Elections Office at 719-655-2512, emailing clerkadmin@saguahcoco.gov, or visiting in-person at the County Elections Office.

File with the Secretary of State	File with Saguache County
• Candidate Affidavit • Committee Registration • Campaign Finance • Documents	• Certificate of Designation by Petition • 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 • Political Party Certificate of Designation by Assembly • Candidate Acceptance of Designation • Certificate of Designation by Write-In • Affidavit of Intent for Write-In Designation

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 Saguache 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 Saguache 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
Petition Circulators	• 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 a 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. 1-4-801 and 904
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**Signatures
Required and
Circulation Dates:**

- 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 Saguache County Elections Office no later than 4 p.m. on the third Tuesday in March.
- 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.
 - The petition requires the lesser 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 Chaffee County Elections Office 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 Saguache County Elections Office 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.** 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.

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

- If you are a candidate but have yet been designated or nominated to the ballot and wish to withdraw your candidacy, you may submit a **signed letter of withdrawal** to the Chaffee County Clerk and Recorder.
- 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 Chaffee 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find candidate forms?

Candidate forms are available <https://saguahcoclerk.colorado.gov/> under “Elections”, emailing clerkadmin@saguahcoco.gov or in person at 501 4th St Saguache CO 81149.

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

The following forms will need to be filed at the Saguache County Elections Office.

- 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.

- 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, 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 www.govotecolorado.gov. Click on ‘Find my registration.’ You may also call the Saguache County Elections Office at 719-655-2512 to verify your registration status, affiliation, and affiliation date.

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

Please contact the Saguache County Elections Office at 719-655-2512 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. or by e-mail to clerkadmin@saguahcoco.gov

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

Contact the Saguache County Elections Office at 719-655-2512 or by email at clerkadmin@saguahcoco.gov to order a list. The cost for a list is \$25.00.

How can I find out who the other candidates are?

You can visit the Secretary of State website at 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.sos.state.co.us/> or <https://saguahcoclerk.colorado.gov/>

Contact Information

Saguache County Elections Office

Web: <https://saguahcoclerk.colorado.gov>

Phone: (719) 655-2512

Email: clerkadmin@saguahcoco-county-co.gov

Colorado Secretary of State

Web: govotecolorado.gov

Email: cpfhelp@coloradosos.gov