

HOW TO RUN FOR OFFICE

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACKET



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How to Run for Office – Candidate Information Packet

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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.

TIMELINES

Timelines listed in this document are correct as of July 2025. Candidates are strongly urged to check changes to the Colorado Revised Statutes and the Secretary of State's Rules or consult legal counsel regarding specific questions and timelines addressed in this document.

Running For State Office

If you are considering running for a statewide office (i.e. Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, etc.), State House or Senate seat in the General Assembly, Judge or District Attorney, please contact your political party and/or the Colorado Secretary of State.

Colorado Secretary of State	www.sos.state.co.us	(303) 894-2200
State Court Administrator	www.coloradojudicial.gov	(720) 625-5000
Colorado Democratic Party	www.coloradodems.org	(303) 623-4762
Colorado Republican Party	www.cologop.org	(303) 867-7916

If you are seeking information related to County or District Court Judge, contact the Secretary of State or the office of the State Court Administrator, as indicated above.

Running For County Office

Qualification and Duties

The La Plata County Clerk and Recorder have prepared this summary to outline La Plata County candidate qualifications and access to the ballot. This document provides a general overview of candidate qualifications and should be used as a reference guide only. Always refer to the Colorado Constitution and Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) for applicable laws.

Any Public Office	Minimum Age Requirement – 18 years of age [1-4-501(1) C.R.S.]
	Residency Requirement – Resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 10; 1-4-501(1) C.R.S.]
	Citizenship – U.S. Citizen [1-2-101(1)(a) C.R.S.]
	Voter Registration Requirement – Registered with party affiliation no later than first business day of January of said election year [1-4-802(g)(II) C.R.S.; 1-4-601(4)(a) C.R.S.]

County Assessor	All Requirements for Any Public Office, plus:
	Term of Office - 4 Years [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; 1-4-206 C.R.S.; 30-10-801(1) C.R.S.]
County Clerk & Recorder	All Requirements for Any Public Office, plus:
	Term of Office - 4 Years [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; 1-4-206 C.R.S.; 30-10-401(1) C.R.S.]

County Commissioner

La Plata County has three (3) seats.

- One seat is elected at the General Election beginning in 1982 and every 4 years thereafter
- Two seats are elected at the General Election beginning in 1984 and every 4 years thereafter
- For the 2026 General Election, County Commissioner District #1 will be elected

All Requirements for Any Public Office, plus:

Term of Office - 4 Years [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 6; 1-4-205(1)(a) C.R.S.]

Residency Requirement – Registered elector and resident of the District for at least 1 year prior to the election.

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 10; 1-4-205(1)(b) C.R.S.]

County Coroner

All Requirements for Any Public Office, plus:

Term of Office - 4 Years [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; 1-4-206 C.R.S.; 30-10-601(1)(b) C.R.S.]

Education Requirement – Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent or a college degree. [30-10-601.5(1)(b) C.R.S.]

Other Requirements [30-10-601.5(1)(d), (2), and (3)(b) C.R.S.]

- In counties with populations greater than 150,000, coroners elected after November 5, 2024, must be a death investigator certified by and in good standing with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators or is a forensic pathologist certified by and in good standing with the American Board of Pathology
- Contact the County Clerk and Recorder for specific requirements in regards to fingerprinting when filing a written acceptance or candidate affidavit.
- 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 coroner unless pardoned.

County Sheriff

All Requirements for Any Public Office, plus:

Term of Office - 4 Years [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; 1-4-206 C.R.S.; 30-10-501(1) C.R.S.]

Education Requirement – Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent or a college degree. [30-10-501.5(1)(b) C.R.S.]

Other Requirements [30-10-501.5(1)(c) C.R.S.]

- Contact the County Clerk and Recorder for specific requirements in regards to fingerprinting when filing a written acceptance or candidate affidavit.
- 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.

County Surveyor

All Requirements for Any Public Office, plus:

Term of Office - 4 Years [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; 1-4-206 C.R.S.; 30-10-901(1) C.R.S.]

Education Requirement – Professional Land Surveyor [30-10-901(1) C.R.S.]

County Treasurer

All Requirements for Any Public Office, plus:

Term of Office - 4 Years [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; 1-4-206 C.R.S.; 30-10-701(1) C.R.S.]

County Candidate Responsibilities and Liabilities

Candidate Definition

COLORADO CONSTITUTION ARTICLE XXVIII, 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 an 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.

Candidate Filings

Please ensure that you are familiar with these rules and laws prior to submitting your candidate affidavit. You may download Colorado's campaign finance rules, laws and become familiar with the online campaign finance disclosure, TRACER, system by accessing the Colorado Secretary of State website (www.sos.state.co.us). Helpful information will be found in:

- Colorado Constitution, Article XXVIII
- Title 1, Article 45, Colorado Revised Statutes (Fair Campaign Practices Act)
- Colorado Secretary of State's Rules Concerning Campaign and Political Finance
- TRACER – Online Filing System
- Colorado Secretary of State's Election Calendar

Campaign and Political Finance

All campaign finance disclosure reports and committee registrations are handled through the online campaign finance disclosure, TRACER, system on the Secretary of State's website: www.sos.state.co.us.

You may contact the Secretary of State Campaign Finance Support team by email at cpfhelp@sos.state.co.us or by telephone at (303) 894-2200, extension 6383.

Municipal Candidates should contact their municipal clerk's office

Where to File a County Candidate Affidavit and Committee Registration

All county, special district and school board candidates, candidate committees, issue committees, political committees, independent expenditure committees, and small donor committees file with the Secretary of State.

[Click here to go to the Campaign Finance webpage.](#)

Timeliness

All filings must be submitted within the time allotted by Colorado Law. Failure to file reports on time may result in \$50 per day penalties. Please see the Secretary of State's website (www.sos.state.co.us) for current year election and campaign finance filing calendars.

[Click here for filing calendars](#)

BALLOT ACCESS for County Candidates

During the General Election (even-numbered) years there are four ways for a candidate to get their name on the ballot:

On which ballot will the Candidate's name appear?

1. Political Party Candidate Nomination

"Neither the secretary of state nor any county clerk and recorder shall place on the official general election ballot the name of any person as a candidate of any major political party who has not been nominated in accordance with the provisions of this article, or who has not been affiliated with the major political party for the period of time required by section 1-4-601 C.R.S., or who does not meet residency requirements for the office, if any. The information found on the voter registration record of the county of current or previous residence of the person seeking to be placed on the ballot is admissible as prima facie evidence of compliance with this article." 1-4-101(3) C.R.S.

**PRIMARY
BALLOT**

Please contact your political party for more information regarding political party nominations

La Plata County Democratic Party	www.laplatadems.org	(970) 759-4019
La Plata County Republican Party	https://laplatacountyrepublicans.org/	(970) 799-2267
American Constitution Party	www.americanconstitutionparty.com	(720) 722-4ACP
Green Party of Colorado	https://www.gp.org/colorado	(720) 378-4761
Libertarian Party of Colorado	www.LP.org	(800)ELECT-US
Unity Party of Colorado	https://unityparty.us/	

2. Political Party Candidate Petition

Candidates for political party nominations may also be placed on the Primary Election ballot by petition.

Please read 1-4-801 C.R.S. for more information.

NOTE: No person who attempted and failed to receive at least ten percent of the votes for the nomination of a political party assembly for a particular office shall be placed in nomination by petition on behalf of the political party for the same office. [1-4-801 C.R.S.]

**PRIMARY
BALLOT**

3. Minor Party and Unaffiliated Candidate Petition

Candidates for minor political party or for partisan public offices who do not wish to affiliate (unaffiliated) with a political party may be nominated, other than by a primary election. Please read 1-4-802 C.R.S. for more information.

**GENERAL
BALLOT**

4. Write-in Affidavit

A person who wishes to be a write-in candidate for an office in an election may do so by filing a Write-in candidate affidavit of intent. For more information, please read 1-4-1101 C.R.S..

NOTE: "No person who has been defeated as a candidate in a primary election shall be eligible for election to the same office by ballot or as a write-in candidate in the next general election unless the party vacancy committee nominates that person." [1-4-105 C.R.S.]

**PRIMARY or
GENERAL
BALLOT**

Running For City / Municipal Offices

Please contact your local city clerk.

<u>City</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Zip</u>
Bayfield	970. 884. 9544 ext. 109	1199 Bayfield Parkway	Bayfield	81122
Durango	970. 375. 5010	949 E 2 nd Ave	Durango	81301
Ignacio	970. 563. 9494	540 Goddard Ave	Ignacio	81137

Running For School District

Please contact your School District's Designated Election Official

<u>School District</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Zip</u>
District 9-R (Durango)	970. 247. 5411	281 Sawyer Dr, Ste 100	Durango	81303
District 10 Jt-R (Bayfield)	970. 884. 2496	24 Clover Dr	Bayfield	81122
District 11 Jt (Ignacio)	970. 563. 0500	455 Becker St	Ignacio	81137

Running For Special Districts

Please contact your Special District's Designated Election Official.

For more information regarding special districts you may also contact the [Department of Local Affairs](#)

Web Site: www.dola.colorado.gov

Telephone: 303. 864. 7720

Address: 1313 Sherman St, Ste # 521
Denver, CO 80203

Email: dola_web@state.co.us

Election Campaign Signs

The La Plata County Clerk and Recorder has no authority over campaign signs. Please contact the County Planning Department, City of Durango, Town of Bayfield or Town of Ignacio for specific information or concerns.

La Plata County Residential Sign Code – Planning Department – 970-382-6263

- Temporary signs (which are non-permanent and displayed on private property for not more than 30 consecutive days and up to no more than twice per calendar year for a total of no more than 60 days during a calendar year) are exempt from county sign standards (Sec. 70-20.II.B.2).
- Shall not exceed 24 square feet.
- No freestanding sign shall exceed 5 feet in height.

No sign shall be placed in a way to interfere with, limit, or obstruct snow removal, easements, sight distance, or pedestrian clearances or otherwise impair the health, safety and welfare of the public (Sec. 70-20.III.F).

City of Durango – Planning and Community Development – 970-375-4850

- In residential zones, temporary signs up to an aggregate area of 12 square feet may be displayed without a permit for an unlimited amount of time. An aggregate area of up to 48 square feet is allowed 30 days prior to an election.

Town of Bayfield – Planning Department – 970-884-9544

- There is no permit required
- Shall be six (6) square feet or smaller
- May be displayed for up to sixty (60) days before the election. The sixty (60) days may be counted from the date ballots are mailed
- Shall not be placed on public property or within Town right-of-ways
- Must be removed no more than ten (10) days following the election

Town of Ignacio – Please contact 970-563-9494

2026 Election Deadlines – Candidates

Date	Event
Jan 2, Fri	• Last day to affiliate with a major or minor party in order to run as a party candidate in the primary (either through nomination or petition). • Last day to register as unaffiliated, in order to be nominated by petition as an unaffiliated candidate for the general election. • First day to circulate major party candidate petitions • First day to circulate minor party candidate petitions
Mar 18, Wed	• Last day to file major party candidate petitions. • Last day to file minor party candidate petitions.
April 24, Fri	Last day a write-in candidate may file an Affidavit of Intent for the June 30th Primary Election .
May 14, Thurs	First day an unaffiliated candidate may circulate or obtain signatures on a petition for nomination for the November 3rd General Election .
May 16, Sat	Deadline to send mail ballots to military and overseas electors for the June 30th Primary Election .
June 8, Mon	• Last day for voters who are affiliated with a political party to change or withdraw their affiliation if they wish to vote in a different party's primary election for the June 30th Primary Election. • First day mail ballot may be mailed to voters for the June 30th Primary Election.
June 22, Mon	Voter Service and Polling Centers open for the June 30th Primary Election .
June 30, Tues	Primary Election Day
July 9, Thurs	Last day to file an unaffiliated candidate nomination petition for the November 3rd General Election .
July 16, Thurs	Last day for a write-in candidate to file an Affidavit of Intent for the November 3rd General Election .
July 30, Thurs	Last day for County Clerk to provide a notice of sufficiency/insufficiency regarding unaffiliated candidate nomination petitions for the November 3rd General Election .
Sep 4, Fri	• Last day for the designated election official of each political subdivision to certify the ballot order and content for the November 3rd General Election to the County Clerk • Last day for the Secretary of State to send notice and certification of the General Election ballot to the county clerks.
Sep 24, Sat	Deadline to send mail ballots to military and overseas electors for the November 3rd General Election .
Oct 9, Fri	First day mail ballots may be sent to voters for the November 3rd General Election .
Oct 19, Mon	Voter Service and Polling Centers open for the November 3rd General Election .
Nov 3, Tues	General Election .
Nov 12, Thurs	• Last day for ballots cast by military and overseas electors to be received by the county clerk in order to be counted. • Last day for elector to cure signature discrepancy, wrong return envelope, missing signature, or to provide missing ID for mail and provisional ballot to be counted.
Nov 25, Wed	Last day to complete the canvass and submit official abstract of votes cast for the November 3rd General Election .